



## the pioneer

HYDERABAD, THURSDAY AUGUST 13, 2020; PAGES 12 ₹3

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SS RAJAMOULI  
AND FAMILY  
TEST NEGATIVE  
FOR COVID

Page 11

COVID CASES HAVEN'T YET PEAKED  
OR EVEN PLATEAUED: AIIMS DIR

All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Director Randeep Guleria, one of India's leading medical experts, has asserted that the coronavirus cases in the country have not yet hit their peak or even plateaued. The remarks come at a time when the infections are racing ahead with the country adding at least a lakh new cases every two days. It has logged more than 23 lakh cases and over 46,000 deaths so far since the first case on January 30. "These are trying times. It has tested the resilience of the nation. We have not reached the peak or started plateauing as far as cases are concerned," Guleria, who is also the part of a core team monitoring the pandemic, said.

KAMALA HARRIS IS JOE BIDEN'S  
PICK FOR US VICE PREZ CANDIDATE

Presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden on Tuesday picked Sen. Kamala Harris, D-Calif., as his running mate, a historic decision that elevates the first Black woman and first Asian American woman to run for vice president at a moment when the country is grappling with its racial past and future. Biden's announcement, made in a text and tweet, aligns him with a former presidential rival whose most electric campaign performance came when she criticized his record on school integration during a debate.

Full Story on page 05

LINKEDIN SELLS SLIDESHARE TO  
DIGITAL LIBRARY LEADER SCRIBD

Microsoft-owned LinkedIn has announced to sell SlideShare, the hosting platform for presentations and other professional content to US-based e-book and audiobook subscription service Scribd for an undisclosed sum. "On September 24, Scribd will begin operating the SlideShare business, its 100 million users, along with its presentation upload and hosting tools, and tremendous archive of presentations and documents," LinkedIn said in a statement on Tuesday. Scribd's premium subscription service offers over 1,000,000 professionally published ebooks, audiobooks and magazines, alongside over 100 million documents uploaded from its community.

MUSLIM MAN NAMED SON BORN ON  
JANMASHTAMI AS KRISHNA

In a rare example of communal harmony, Aziz Khan, a Muslim living in Madhya Pradesh's Indore, gave a Hindu name to his son about 12 years ago. The child, born on the day of Janmashtami, was named Krishna. Khan said that initially his family members protested against the name, but later they agreed to it. Talking to IANS, Khan said: "About 12 years ago on August 23, 2008, my wife delivered a baby boy. The doctor Praveen Jadia then asked for the baby's name to be filled in for the form. I immediately named our boy as Krishna, as the day was Janmashtami". "Although the doctors and other family members objected to it, but I told them that a father has the right to give any name to his child."

While retired babus rule  
the roost, officers sulkL VENKAT RAM REDDY  
■ HYDERABAD

Retired officers are ruling the roost in the Telangana Government. As many as 54 retired officers have been in key and top positions in the state government for years after their retirement, denying promotions to their deserving in-service juniors.

Of these officers, 11 are retired IAS officers and three retired IPS officers, while one is retired IFS officer.

This apart, several HoDs (heads of departments) continue to cling on to their posts for years even after retirement.

Retired officials are calling the shots at all levels in the government -- right from HoD level in various government departments to Chief Minister's Office and even the Legislature. This has resulted in severe resentment among in-service officers who say that



Retired officials are calling the shots at all levels in the government right from HoD-level in various government departments to Chief Minister's Office and even the Legislature.

blue-eyed babus of Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao are forcing them to retire without getting promotions by occupying top positions even after their retirement.

As many as 31 retired HoDs in various departments continue to hold on to their posts by securing extensions after retirement, with some of them managing multiple extensions.

Facebook post leads to  
firing in Bengaluru, 3 killed

PNS ■ BENGALURU

At least three people were killed after police opened fire to quell a mob that went on a rampage, irked over a social media post allegedly put out by a Congress legislator's relative, as a city locality witnessed arson and violence.

"Three people have died (in police firing)," Bengaluru Police Commissioner Kamal Pant told PTI. Further, 110 people have been arrested in connection with the incident at Pulakeshi Nagar here. Scores of persons, including around 50 policemen, were injured in the violence that erupted on Tuesday night and continued till the wee hours of Wednesday, apparently prompted by the 'communal' sensitive' online post.

The Congress MLA's residence and a police station were among those targeted by the angry mob, prompting the government to issue a stern warning that rioting and law and order issues will not be tolerated.



A policeman takes notes next to burnt police vehicles. Prohibitory orders have been imposed in the city, while curfew was clamped in the DJ Halli and KG Halli

## PPEs minting money for private hospitals

NAMRATA SRIVASTAVA  
■ HYDERABAD

Personal protective equipment (PPE) have now become a cashcow for corporate hospitals that routinely fleece Covid-19 patients.

These hospitals have been extorting huge amounts towards PPE as part of the bills, which are rarely itemised. There are complaints that in several cases patients have been charged nearly Rs 50,000 towards PPE for just five days in hospital.

In many cases, patients are being charged for as many times as the nurses visit them each day. That is not all. The same costs are included in the bills of all the patients admitted



In many cases, patients are being charged for as many times as the nurses visit them each day. That is not all. The same costs are included in the bills of all the patients admitted in the ward at the time.

Reveals Saipraneeth Reddy, whose father (a COVID patient) died a few days back, "If there are two nurses and they come to see the patients in a particular ward three times, then each patient in the ward (five beds) will be

charged for three PPE kits for both the nurses. When my father was in the hospital, they charged Rs 920 for ward. So, the hospital would have earned Rs 9,200 per day from one ward. And this is just for the nurses.

MUST DISPLAY CORONA  
TREATMENT COSTS : TS GOVT

■ PPE must be charged at MRP only

**HYDERABAD:** The Telangana State government on Wednesday issued orders making it mandatory for all private hospitals treating Covid-19 positive patients to display treatment costs at prominent locations on their premises. As per the set of fresh instructions with immediate effect, Director of Public Health (DPH) Dr. G Srinivasa Rao directed all private hospitals treating Covid-19 patients to ensure that high-end drugs and personal protective equipment (PPE), excluded from package capping, are charged at Maximum Retail Price (MRP) only. It is also now mandatory for private hospitals to display the MRP of PPE equipment and high-end drugs at prominent locations within the hospital and provide itemised bills while discharging a patient. "There is a need to introduce greater transparency in the rates charged by private hospitals so that people are made aware about the medical bills."

KTR urges social media  
users to be responsible

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Industries Minister K. T. Rama Rao on Wednesday said that social media cannot turn into an instrument for antisocial behaviour.

The minister took to Twitter to share his thoughts after violence over a social media post rocked parts of Bengaluru overnight.

"Goes to show you how dangerous spreading fake news in social media can be," tweeted Rama Rao, who is the son of

Chief Minister K. Chandrababbar Rao. Rama Rao, who is also the president of the Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS), requested all social media users to be responsible. He urged them not to indulge in propaganda and stop spreading fake news.

A Facebook message posted allegedly by a relative of a Congress MLA triggered violent protests in Bengaluru on Tuesday night.



## CYBERFRAUD STARTS SINGING

Sunitha's fan cheated  
of Rs 1.7 cr; accused  
trapped manyDURGAPRASAD SUNKU  
■ HYDERABAD

Shocking details are emerging in the cyberfraud case involving 22-year-old Chaitanya who was picked up in Anantapur on August 4 on a complaint from Tollywood singer Sunitha, after he had claimed to be her nephew and collected money from several people on promise of getting them a "chance" to act in movies.

Subsequent investigations revealed that the accused had impersonated the singer, created fake social media accounts, and cheated a woman fan of the singer to the tune of Rs 1.7 crore. Chaitanya created fake facebook accounts to execute malicious activities by referring to himself as the singer's manager/co-singer.

In February, the accused had organised an event in the name of the singer at Sanapa Village near Anantapur. Besides, he claimed to have carried out several social welfare activities, concerts in her name to increase viewership for his pages on social media



and to trap her admirers. According to sources, several others similarly cheated by him have started lodging complaints against Chaitanya. While going into these complaints, the police have appealed to all those who have been cheated or otherwise victimised to provide details.

The woman fan of the singer has lodged a complaint with the Rachakonda Cyber Crime Police, stating that Chaitanya had cheated her to the tune of Rs 1.70 crore.

CMIE pegs  
unemployment rate  
at 9.1 in Telangana

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The number of unemployed in Telangana State has almost doubled since January. The rate of unemployment has climbed to 9.1 from 5.3 in January, according to a survey of the Indian economy conducted by the CMIE. The unemployment rate at the national level is 7.4. The CMIE sample survey involved 1,74,405 families, with its personnel reaching the families through mobile phones during the past four months in the state.

NSUI activists try to storm  
Pragati Bhavan, held

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Scores of National Students Union of India (NSUI) activists were rounded up on Wednesday after they made a vain bid to storm Pragati Bhavan to register their protest against the state government's announcement of the schedule for common examinations.

The NSUI activists wore PPE kits, but alert police personnel on security duty at the CM's official residence took them into custody.



## Sliding doors, coach surveillance, alarms in pvt trains

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Electronic sliding doors, windows with double-glazed safety glass, Braille signages, emergency talk-back mechanism, passenger surveillance system, and information and destination boards.

These are some of the specifications the Railways has demanded from private operators in trains that they will be running on the Railways network. A draft specification for



private trains, shared by the Railways on Wednesday, also says these trains would provide

Siemens Ltd, L&T Infrastructure, CAF India, GMR Infrastructure, Alstom Transport India Ltd were among 23 companies which participated in pre-bid meeting for running private trains

noise-free travel to passengers and be capable of running at a speed of 160 km/hr.

## RAILWAYS RELEASE DRAFT SPECIFICATION

The train shall be designed so that they can operate safely at a maximum speed of 180 kmph during testing. Train shall be capable of accelerating to a speed of 160 kmph from 0 kmph in a maximum of 140 seconds on level track, says the draft.

These trains will be fitted with an emergency brake which can bring them to a standstill in less than 1,250 m when travelling at 160 kmph, it says.

It also says that the trains should be designed for a life of 35 years.

Each coach shall have minimum four electrically/pneumatically powered, plug type doors, two on each side, it says.

The door mechanism shall have safety provision whereby the train shall not start unless all doors have been closed and electrically locked.



MCX market  
making in 'options  
on goods' in gold

8



Freedom fighters'  
valour, sacrifices  
should be  
highlighted: Naidu

5



City may miss  
traditional  
Bibi Ka Alam  
procession

3

## TODAY

## ALMANAC

**Month & Paksham:**  
Shravana & Krishna Paksha  
Panchangam  
**Tithi :** Navami: 12:57 pm  
**Nakshatram:** Rohini: 05:22 am  
(Next Day)  
**Time to Avoid:** (Bad time to start any important work)  
**Rahukalam:** 01:55 pm - 03:30 pm  
**Yamagandam:** 06:02 am - 07:36 am  
**Varjyam:** 08:43 pm - 10:27 pm  
**Gulika:** 09:11 am - 10:46 am  
**Good Time:** (to start any important work)  
**Amritakalam:** 01:55 am - 03:38 am  
**Abhijit Muhurtham:** 11:55 am - 12:46 pm

HYDERABAD  
WEATHER

**Forecast:** Cloudy  
**Temp:** 27/22  
**Humidity:** 86%  
**Sunrise:** 05:58 am  
**Sunset:** 06:43 pm  
Current Weather Conditions  
Updated August 12, 2020 5:00 PM





# Godavari brims after heavy rains

PNS ■ WARANGAL

The River Godavari is in spate on account of heavy rains lashing the area and the flow of the river picked up momentum at the bathing ghat in Ramannagudem in the district for the past two days. Since Monday morning, the flood level to the river is on the rise gradually and the flood level in the river at intake well in Kamalapuram in Mangapeta mandal of the district is increasing since Wednesday morning. The Water Resources Department officials predict that the flood level in the river is going to increase further.

The Bogota water falls, streams and other minor channels are emptying themselves into the River Godavari increasing its flood level. This is attributed to heavy rains lashing the upper reaches of the



river for the past two days causing significant rise in water level in Kaleswaram reservoir and barrage near Tupakulagudem.

The officials alerted the people living in low-lying areas. The water level at Mangapeta pushkar ghat has also

increased. As a result, people and farmers living in coastal area of the river have been taking precautions.

The Pedda Cheruvu located between Timmampet and Abbayigudem village is overflowing the sluices to the delight of the tank ayacut farmers. The

tank irrigates at least 500 acres of ayacut lands in Timmampet, Cherupalli, Malluru and Kottamalluru villages and provides irrigation facility for at least two crops. On account of heavy inflows into River Godavari due to rains in upper reaches of the river, the flood

level in the river has increased and crossed 9.05 metre mark, the CWC officials said.

The Laknavaram Lake in Govindrapet mandal is ready to overflow the sluices. The water level in the lake reached 33 feet mark. If the water level were to increase by another half feet, the water will overflow the sluices. The lake continued to receive floods from upper reaches. The paddy transplantation has been through in the ayacut lands of Laknavaram Lake. Farmers are jubilant at the prospects of reaping bumper harvest since the lake is full with water up to the brim.

Meanwhile, Moranchavagu, Jeedivagu and other streams in Jayashankar-Bhupalpally and Mulugu districts are in full flow. The Jampannavagu near Sammakka Saralamma temple at Medaram is also in full swing.

# Water will be provided till last ayacut, says Minister

PNS ■ KHAMMAM

Water for irrigation would be provided to the last the acre under Nagarjuna Sagar Project (NSP) in this Vaanakalam season, Transport Minister P Ajay Kumar said on Wednesday. The Minister, along with Palair MLA K Upender Reddy, Wyra MLA L Ramulu Naik and Sathupalli MLA Sandra Venkata Veeraiah, released water from Palair reservoir for crops under Sagar ayacut, at Palair in the district.

Speaking after releasing the water, Ajay Kumar said that as the present water storage in Nagarjuna Sagar reservoir had touched 225 tmc, Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao was requested to allow release of water for crops in Sagar ayacut. Following the Chief Minister's consent, about 24.61 tmc water was planned to be released on Warabandi basis (Rotational method for equitable distribution of available water) in seven phases to the crops.

The water would be supplied from Wednesday to September 3 continuously and again for



nine days from September 10 onwards. Water would be supplied to the last acre in the ayacut and farmers need not worry about water availability, he noted.

It would take two days for the water to reach the crops in the tail-end area in Sathupalli and officials need to monitor the water supply, Ajay Kumar said while directing the officials concerned to ensure enough supply of fertilisers as

the farmers have started agricultural activities in the district.

Zilla Parishad Chairman L Kamalraj, Rythu Bandhu Samithi district coordinator N Venkateswar Rao, NSP Superintendent Engineer Sumathi Devi, RWS Superintendent Engineer K Srinivasa Rao, Irrigation Department Executive Engineer Narsimha Rao and Joint Director Agriculture Vijaya Nirmala were present.

## CMIE pegs...

Continued from Page 1

The months of April and May accounted for the highest unemployment rate in the country. Barring the availability of essential commodities and other emergency services, almost all spheres of activity came to a grinding halt because of the pandemic. Although the lockdown has been lifted, daily wage earners bore the brunt of the unemployment. Majority of wage earners were employed in the unorganised sector. They did not get job in April and May. Many families were dependent on succour extended by government, philanthropic, public and civil society organisations for their survival. The two successive months recorded the highest unemployment rate of 23.5. After lifting of the lockdown, the month of June recorded unemployment rate of 11, while July recorded 7.4. The unemployment rate in urban areas was pegged at 9.15 per cent, while 6.66 per cent in rural areas.

## State reports 1,897 new cases

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In one of the highest daily jumps in Coronavirus infections, Telangana reported 1,897 new cases that increased its total tally to 84,544 while nine more fatalities during the last 24 hours took its death toll to 654, officials said on Wednesday. A spike in the number of new cases in Greater Hyderabad and surrounding districts led to the jump in daily count while the virus spread slowed down in other districts.

The state capital saw 479 new cases during the last 24 hours ending 8 pm on Tuesday. It had reported 338 of the 1,896 new cases the previous day. Medchal Malkajgiri and Rangareddy bordering Greater Hyderabad reported 172 and 162 cases respectively. Sangareddy, another district which shares borders with the state capital, reported 107 new infections.

Thus, Hyderabad and surrounding districts together accounted for nearly 50 per



cent of the new positive cases. After a sudden spike in new infections a day earlier, several districts reported a slow-down. Karimnagar, for instance, saw 64 new cases as against 121 a day earlier. The numbers came down from 95 to 87 in Warangal Urban, 85 to 38 in Jogulamba Gadwal, 71 to 48 in Kamareddy and 60 to 44 in Bhadradi Kothagudem.

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 corona fatality rate in the state stands at 0.77 per cent as against the national average of 1.99 per cent. Officials said 53.87 per cent of the deceased had comorbidities. A total of 39 testing laboratories and 323 rapid antigen testing centres conducted a record 22,972 tests as against the state's target of 5,600. The World Health Organisation (WHO) benchmark is 140 tests per million per day.

## Sunitha's fan cheated of ...

Continued from Page 1

It all began when the accused gave her a number, claiming it belonged to the singer. After chatting with the person she believed was her idol Sunitha, the woman transferred Rs 50,000 sought in the name of a trust named "Anandha cherlayam, Kerala".

The accused fraudster minted money from the victim stating various reasons like personal, financial problems, father's health, mother's problem, her son's higher education purpose and income tax in different transactions at different times since 2019 Feb to till July month 2020, cheated around Rs1.7 crores approximately," said police.

In one instance, the complainant had transferred the money on the promise of the fraudster's WhatsApp text that she has some land in USA and after selling the land she would return the amount.



## Concern over prevalence of 'Jogini system'

PNS ■ NARAYANPET

Accompanied by District Collector Harichandana and Maktal MLA Ram Mohan Reddy, SC and ST Commission Chairman Yerrolla Srinivas on Wednesday visited Dhanwada mandal to gain first hand knowledge of conditions of Joginis there.

Condemning the heinous practice, Srinivas felt that it was said that the despicable system is still continuing even in the current Internet age. The state governments have been passing laws prohibiting the practice, yet there is no let up in the problem. The Joginis in this region are as young as 20 years, he said expressing concern over the continuing of

the practice.

He asked district Collector to take disciplinary action against sarpanches if any girl were to be converted into jogini. Under any circumstances, lands allotted to Joginis should be given possession to them. He asked her to provide them livelihood clubbing all Jogins into a group. Extending pension to Joginis, educational benefits to them should be done unconditionally, he felt.

If Joginis were to be treated as untouchables, cases would be registered against such persons under the SC and ST Atrocities (Prohibition) Act. He congratulated those who work for the eradication of the system and for improving their living conditions.

## NSUI activists try to storm...

Continued from Page 1

The NSUI activists, led by their president Balmuri Venkat, challenged the release of the examination schedule and demanded postponement of all common entrance tests.

Later, addressing a gathering, Balmuri Venkat said that corona cases were rising with each passing day.

Yet, the state government was not paying attention to the conduct of tests and was not bothered about the lives of students. Although a petition challenging the common examinations was pending before the High Court, the state government had adamantly announced the examination

schedule.

This is not the first time that protests have been held at Pragati Bhavan by disgruntled political activists.

On July 8, the police detained youth for standing outside Pragati Bhavan with a placard asking "where is KCR".

It was the time when Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao was operating from his farmhouse briefly after some CMO staffers had tested Covid-19 positive.

The youth, said to be a worker of the Youth Congress, suddenly appeared at the gate of "Pragati Bhavan" holding a placard, which read "Where is KCR. He is my CM. It's my right to know."

## PPEs minting money for...

Continued from Page 1

They also charge for the PPE of doctors, including dietician and physiologist, who never visited my father. The charges for a single PPE is Rs 1,850 for ICU - why the difference, I fail to understand."

Confirming the same, Jagan Goud, president of Telangana Private Hospital Public Problem Solution Association, says, "Many hospitals have been charging very high for the PPE kits. In some cases, they don't even disclose the break-up. A single PPE kit can be used for a whole day by the staff, and that is the standard practice."

## MUST DISPLAY OF CORONA...

Continued from Page 1





These instructions will enable people to verify the correctness of the medical bill raised by private hospitals," Dr Rao said. He warned private hospitals that any deviation from the instructions would be viewed seriously and action initiated as per the provisions of The Epidemic Diseases Act 1897 and the Telangana Allopathic Private Medical Care Establishments (Registration & Regulation) Act-2002. Private hospitals must prominently display package rates


that were prevalent on December 31, 2019. In June, the State government had issued instructions fixing rates for private hospitals to treat Covid-19 patients. The cost fixed was Rs 4,000 per day for isolation facilities to treat mild Covid-19 positive patients, Rs. 7,500 per day for positive patients needing ICU facilities but not ventilator support, and Rs.9,000 per day from critical Covid-19 positive patients who need both ICU and ventilator support. Certain investigations, therapies, expensive drugs and PPE kits were excluded from the rate chart.


## KTR urges social media users to...

Continued from Page 1

Three people lost their lives in the riots and police firing, and 60 police personnel were injured in the violent incidents of stone pelting and attacks by rioters.

HYDERABAD BULLION RATES	
<b>GOLD</b>	
	₹ 58,040 (10 gm)
	₹ 10 
<b>SILVER</b>	
	₹ 72,500 (1kg)
	₹ 0 

CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG	
	
Dressed/With Skin	₹152
Without Skin	₹173
Broiler at Farm	₹105

EGG RATES ₹/100	
	
HYDERABAD	350
VIJAYAWADA	375
VISAKHAPATNAM	375
<b>RETAIL PRICE (HYDERABAD)</b>	<b>₹3.75</b>

## While retired babus rule the roost, officers sulk

Continued from Page 1

Even additional secretary in the Finance Department, GS Rammohan Rao is also continued in the same post on extension after his retirement.

Retired IAS officer P Satyanarayana Reddy was appointed as commissioner of civil supplies after his retirement. Retired IAS officer V Anil Kumar is serving as endowments commissioner after his retirement from the same post. Among retired IPS

officers, former DGP Anurag Sharma is serving as advisor, home department affairs. Retired IPS officer AK Khan is serving as advisor, minority affairs department.

Retired IPS officer T Prabhakar Rao was given an extension soon after his retirement on June 30.

Legislature secretary Narasimha Charyulu is serving in the same post after his retirement in 2019.

Even additional collectors working in districts were given

extensions after their retirement.

They include S Padmakar (Siddipet), Y Surender Rao (Mancherla), S Dayanand (Warangal urban), R Mahender Reddy (Warangal rural).

Retired RDO was appointed as special officer, GADA (Gajwel Area Development Authority). Gajwel is the home constituency of KCR.

The key portfolio of irrigation engineer-in-chief is handled by retired officer C

Muralidhar Rao. Interestingly, he was given extension by the government of undivided AP. After bifurcation, the Telangana government has given him six extensions so far. In the latest extension orders, even his tenure was not specified, indicating that he will be continued in the same post for a few more years.

Even the CMDs of TSSPDCL and TSNDPCL G Raghuma Reddy and A Gopal Rao are serving in these posts on extensions.

## ‘Sans data Russian vaccine’s efficacy, safety unknown’

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The efficacy and safety levels of the vaccine developed by Russia for treating COVID-19 patients is not predictable in the absence of data, a top official of the CSIR-Centre for Cellular and Molecular Biology said on Wednesday.

His remarks come in the backdrop of Russian President Vladimir Putin's announcement that his country has developed the world's first vaccine against coronavirus.

Director of CCMB, Rakesh K Mishra said if people are



"lucky" then the Russian vaccine will work.

"Both efficacy and safety of

the vaccine are still unknown. They haven't conducted proper trials, which is stage-III trials. That is when you get to know the efficacy, when it is tested on a large number of people and should wait for two months to see whether they get a viral infection or not.

Doesn't look like they have carried out (large scale testings) because if you have done it, then show us the data. You cannot keep it confidential," Mishra told PTI.

He noted that the vaccine ought to be carefully evaluated before it goes to people and

any country or company not releasing the data with respect to vaccine was bad.

"It (Russian vaccine) is not safe.. normally in any country this should not be allowed unless the vaccine goes to stage 1, 2 and 3 trials.

I think the Russian government passed a law recently, a couple of months back, that they have to fast track the vaccine preparation," the CCMB official said.

CCMB is India's premier research organisation centre.

Asked about the progress of vaccines being developed by

Indian pharmaceutical companies, Mishra said the data pertaining to Stage-I and II are yet to be published and it is expected that they may come by the end of August or first half of September.

"I will not be surprised if this first stage and second stage results are encouraging, because many vaccines have passed it. The real test is in stage-III," he pointed out.

Putin has claimed that the vaccine has proven efficient during tests, offering a lasting immunity from the coronavirus.



## IN BRIEF

### Startups admit mentorship is instrumental to success

FICCI Ladies Organisation (FLO) unveiled its ambitious initiative FMC-FLO mentorship cell in the city. The mentorship cell of FLO provides support to existing and new entrepreneurs, to establish a new business or enhance existing ones shared Bindu Sastry, National Head, FMC speaking after launching the initiative. It is a PAN India initiative being introduced across 17 Chapters all over India. Guest speaker Prof Ramesh Loganathan, professor at IIIT-Hyderabad shared his wisdom. He covered areas such as women representation in startup space, an overview of mentorship, what it takes to be a good mentor, mentor overload etc. A good mentor shouldn't give answers. Instead, he or she must challenge mentee, Ramesh said. Make sure the need of the community or society is understood well and served, Ramesh added.



### Herbal garden inaugurated at University of Hyderabad

An herbal garden with about 250 medicinal plants has been set up at the University of Hyderabad (UoH) campus. About 60 species possessing various medicinal properties were planted

in the garden which includes rare and endangered species. The facility at the School of Life Sciences was inaugurated on Wednesday by UoH Vice-Chancellor Prof. Appa Rao Podile in the presence of faculty members, officials, researchers of the university. The garden has been created to support the teaching and research activities relevant to medicinal plants in the School of Life Sciences. It will also become a repository centre for the rare and endangered medicinal plants having various health benefits. The VC lauded efforts of the Dean and the Herbal Garden Development Committee in creating the facility within a short period especially during this pandemic time. According to the UoH, the School of Life Sciences envisages to expand the facility and further intensify the research on medicinal plants to explore these resources for treating various health ailments by mobilizing funding from various sources.

### TSPSC departmental tests postponed indefinitely

The Telangana State Public Service Commission (TSPSC) has decided to postpone the departmental tests. In view of the current pandemic situation, the government has decided to postpone the Departmental examination, which were suppose to be held in May 2020 session, vide notification no 04/2020. Looking at the situation, the government has not yet announced any date for the exams. Meanwhile, the TSPSC has invited online applications for a special qualifying test for the non-teaching staff of the department of technical education. The non-teaching staff of the department of technical education, who have been appointed by promotion as lecturers in government polytechnic colleges in the state can apply for the test. Detailed information and performa application will be made available on the Commission's website [www.tspsc.gov.in](http://www.tspsc.gov.in).



### REVIVAL OF A SPLENDOUR

One of the Hyderabad's most popular heritage landmarks Moazzam Jahi Market illuminating with lights. The structure was refurbished completely, and is all set to reopen to public from August 15.



# City may miss traditional Bibi Ka Alam procession

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

With the Covid pandemic casting shadow on Muharram, Hyderabad may miss traditional 'Bibi Ka Alam' procession. With religious gatherings banned under the Covid guidelines by the Union Home Ministry, this historic city may not see the annual procession for the first time in more than 400 years.

Though leaders of the Shia community and public representatives have urged the government to allow the procession, the authorities are not likely to give permission.

Thousands of people participate in the historic procession taken out every year on 'Yume-e-Ashoor' or the 10th day of Muharram, which may fall on August 30 -- depending on the sighting of the moon.

Thousands take part in the procession marking the martyrdom of Imam Hussain, the grandson of Prophet Muhammad, in the battle of Karbala.



'Bibi Ka Alam' is carried on a caparisoned elephant as the procession with hundreds of self-flagellating mourners pass through parts of the old city, including Charminar, while thousands of people line the procession route.

'Bibi Ka Alam' is said to contain a piece of the sacred wooden plank on which Syeda Fatima, the daughter of Prophet Muhammad, was given her ablution before burial.

It is said to have been brought from Iraq during the Qutub Shahi period.

Shia leaders demanded that the centuries-old tradition should not be disturbed.

They said that 'Bibi Ka Alam' should be allowed to be taken on an elephant while enforcing other Covid norms.

Moulana Syed Nisar Hussain Hyder Agha sought permission for organizing the procession.

The officials, however, argued that the procession with elephants may attract a large gathering. Home Minister Mohammed Mahmood Ali suggested the use of a camel to carry the 'Alam'.

Police Commissioner Anjani Kumar is expected to take a final decision on the procession in a day or two.

Officials said the installation of the 'alams' at the 'ashoor khana's' will be allowed and people will be permitted to make their offerings while maintaining social distancing.

Telangana has 11,866 ashoor khana's, the majority of them in Hyderabad. Over centuries, the local customs and traditions in different parts of the kingdom came to be associated with 'Azadari' or mourning.

In parts of Telangana, Hindus observe Muharram in their unique and distinct style.

With more than 2,00,000 Shias, city is home to the second-largest Shia community in India, after Lucknow.



### MISERY FOR RESIDENTS

## Bio-medical waste at Gandhi piles up

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Due to the increasing cases of Covid-19, the pressure of work on doctors and medical staff has also increased.

In such a situation, doctors, nurses and other medical personnel have to wear masks, gloves and PPE kits to protect themselves from the virus. In this sequence, a huge amount of biomedical waste is accumulating from hospitals, which has become a problem for those living near hospitals.

Residents around Gandhi Hospital are very upset with this waste as large amount of biomedical waste is accumulating in the Gandhi Hospital, which is becoming a threat to the people.

The biomedical waste has been piling up in the premises of the hospital for over one month as the contract for disposal of the biomedical waste expired a month ago.

The garbage that has been accumulating for a long time is smelling bad due to which people of the surrounding area are annoyed and they are not able to tolerate the odour.

It is being told that the hospital management removes biomedical waste after every two days, but due to the expiry of contract to dispose the waste, the garbage is dumped

**The biomedical waste has been piling up in the premises of the hospital for over one month as the contract for disposal of the biomedical waste expired a month ago**

there for the many days. The pile of garbage is producing foul smell and people living in the vicinity, especially those who reside at Padmarao Nagar, say that the piled up waste has been emitting reeking smell. They have appealed to the authorities over the issue.

Responding to the problem, Gandhi Hospital Superintendent Prof Raja Rao said that the bio-medical waste is being filled in special bags after processing them using sodium hypochlorite. There is no scope for the virus to be present in the waste. The same organisation would be given the contract again. He sounded optimistic, that the problem would get over very soon.

## Three booked for deceiving pvt hospital posing as VO's

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Punjagutta Police have booked case against three persons for threatening the staff of a hospital posing as vigilance officials (VO) on Wednesday.

According to the complainant Dr GV Praveen Kumar, a 45-year-old person infected with Covid-19 who was also suffering with pneumonia was admitted in the hospital. The hospital has explained complexity of case to the patient's son Shiva Kumar. He agreed and treatment was successful.

**The accused claiming to be vigilance officials entered into ward and took videos**

"After the hospital discharged the man, Shiva along with two other persons Shravanthi Kasaram and Vijay Kumar claiming to be officials from the vigilance department entered into the Covid

wards, took videos and posted them with false news on social media. Shiva Kumar demanded Rs 1 lakh from the hospital to remove the videos from social media. Further he threatened to lodge a complaint with Health Department and would make them cancel the Covid license," the complainant Dr Praveen said.

The complainant approached the Panjagutta police and lodged a written complaint following which the police officials booked a case on Wednesday.

## Fake travel agent held

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The South zone task force team on Wednesday arrested a fake travel agent and seized 4 Indian passports, several visas, fake job offer letters from his possession.

The accused identified as Sikander Khan, 40, went to Dubai in 2012 and stayed one year. Meanwhile, he gained knowledge on the procedure to process visa to countries.

Although he was arrested several times he didn't mend his ways. The accused and seized material handed over to Kalapather Police.

## BJYM secretary booked

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Th Dabeerpura Police on Wednesday booked a case against Bharatiya Janta Yuva Morcha Secretary Laddu Yadav for comments against Majlis Bachao Tehreek (MBT) spokesperson Amjed Ullah Khan. After MBT leader raised objection to the silence of the authorities over the controver-

sial banner, the police officials removed banner at MJ Market. A video of Laddu Yadav, who installed the banner threatening MBT leader Amjedullah Khan went viral on social media.

Condemning the same Khan lodged a complaint with police who booked a case against Laddu Yadav under relevant sections.

## Nehru Zoo celebrates Elephants Day

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Eighty two-year-old Rani was the centre of attraction on World Elephant Day at the Nehru Zoological Park here on Wednesday.

The day was celebrated with zoo authorities treating all five elephants to a scrumptious buffet, including a cake made of ragi and rice decorated with fruits, vegetables, sprouts and corn. The animal keepers and incharge of the elephants also laid out for the pachyderms treats like sugar cane, pineapple, jaggery, coconut and green grass.

It was a special occasion for the five elephants - one male and four females. Zoo authorities inscribed names of the elephants on cakes specially made for the occasion. Zoo curator N Kshitija said all elephants were in good health. She said



the day was celebrated with an objective to create awareness and educate people. Rani, the senior most elephant, was the

centre of attraction at the celebrations. While 3 elephants are aged 50, the fourth one is 34, and Rani is 82-years-old.

## OGH staffers seek salary dues

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Employees serving at Osmania General Hospital under contract and outsourcing basis staged a protest in the hospital premises on Wednesday demanding the authorities to release their salaries which are overdue for the past four months.

Contending that they are risking their lives at this hour of Coronavirus pandemic, the protesting employees exhorted the government to hike their wages at least now.

In spite of salaries being paid on time in such crisis situation, their salaries are being delayed. Stating that they are working under severe work

pressure, they felt that the state government is playing with their lives.

Therefore, the protesting employees demanded the Telangana government to hike wages on the lines of the hike in wages effected for contract and outsourced employees working in Osmania General Hospital.

## Six, including mom, held for selling infant

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Habeenagar police on Wednesday have taken 5 persons into custody and registered a case against a woman on charges of selling her two-month-old baby to a family for Rs 45,000.

According to the complainant, Abdul Mujahed, the father of baby, he married Abdul Zoya Khan a year ago and was blessed with a baby. Few days ago the couple quarreled with each other and due to their differences they are living separately.

"When the complainant approached his wife for compromise he came to know that she sold the baby to mediators Shaik Mohammad and Tabussum Begum for Rs 45,000. They return sold the baby to Ayesha Jabeen," said Narender, Goshamahall ACP.

The complainant contacted mediator over phone to hand over the baby. The mediators although agreed to hand over the baby, but they however failed to do so.

Following which the complainant lodged a complaint with Habeenagar Police who booked a case and investigated it and nabbed six persons including the mother of the baby in connection with selling of baby. All accused were sent to judicial custody.

## 14-year-old raped in orphanage, dies in hospital

■ State lacks proper policy for protection of vulnerable children, monitoring of private CCIs

DURGA PRASAD SUNKU  
■ HYDERABAD

The death of a 14-year-old orphan girl who was sexually assaulted in a private orphanage home in Ameenpura of Sangareddy district brought to the fore the lapses of government officials in monitoring the private child care institution (CCI) and lack of proper policy for Protection of vulnerable children.

The minor girl who was on ventilator since a few days had breathed her last on Wednesday morning in Nilofuer Hospital.

The incident came to light when the girl was sent to relatives' house due to lockdown and returned to stay in the orphanage. However the orphanage denied admission

and insisted for Covid-19 tests. Later relatives handed over the girl to other relatives in Bowenpally.

They smelled something fishy and approached a private doctor who suggested taking her to government hospital suspecting that it is a sexual assault case.

The government doctor confirmed the sexual assault and informed the police who registered an first investigation report (FIR).

The police have arrested N Venugopal Reddy, 51, a donor, Ch Vijaya, owner and warden of Maruthi Orphanage and her brother Jayadeep.

According to statistics there are around 130 CCIs in Medchal district, 70 in Rangareddy district and 80 CCI in Hyderabad.



**Activists demanded that child protection policy should be framed by the state government and foolproof monitoring systems should be incorporated**

Speaking regarding the same Ande Venkateshwarlu state coordinator of Bachpan Bachao Andolan opined that we have to retrospect that whether these many CCIs are necessary. "Rather than encouraging the private CCIs, government should take the responsibility and monitor the

CCI. Only one person in a district made responsible to look after all these CCI which is nearly impossible. Children from different districts and states are staying in one orphanage but local authorities do not know about their existence. This has to be changed," said Venkateshwarlu.



# KTR hard sells food processing sector

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

IT and Industries Minister KT Rama Rao on Wednesday chaired a meeting of Group of Ministers (GoM) to draft Telangana food processing policy and logistics policy. The policies are aimed to promote food processing and logistic industries in a big way in Telangana state.

KTR emphasised the need for a food processing policy and a logistics policy to promote the food processing industries which will ensure financial empowerment of farmers and employment opportunities for youth in the State. He said the group of ministers has examined these policies along with incentives being offered by other States as well as other countries, and have come up with proposals to offer subsidies and incentives to develop the food processing industry in the State.



IT and Industries Minister KT Rama Rao at a meeting with the Group of Ministers (GoM) in Hyderabad on Wednesday

The Group of Ministers meeting chaired by Minister KT Rama Rao was held to discuss the food processing and logistics policies apart from preparing necessary guidelines at Pragathi Bhavan here on Wednesday. Speaking on the occasion, Rama Rao said following the innovative measures taken by Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao, lakhs of acres in the State were freshly brought under cultivation under Krishna and Godavari Rivers. He pointed out that crops being

cultivated in each village, mandal and district, were being mapped across the State for comprehensive information on agricultural operations. "With the construction of new irrigation projects and subsequently increased cultivation area, the production of crops especially paddy, cotton, maize, pulses and spices has increased significantly after the State formation," he added.

The Minister stated that due to implementation of the sheep and fish distribution



**The Minister emphasised the need for a food processing policy and a logistics policy to promote the food processing industries**

schemes, there has been a significant increase in number of sheep and production of fish. He said the State was experiencing water revolution and was in the process of witnessing another Green Revolution (agriculture), followed by the Blue Revolution (fisheries), the Pink Revolution (meat production) and the White Revolution (milk). "Though the State was witnessing an increase in crop production, we do not have the capacity to fully process them. There is

an urgent need to promote food processing industry," he said.

Ministers S Niranjana Reddy, Talasani Srinivas Yadav, Errabelli Dayakar Rao, Koppula Eeshwar, Sabitha Indra Reddy and Satyavathi Rathod, Telangana State Planning Board vice chairman B Vinod Kumar, Government Chief Advisor Rajiv Sharma, Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar, Principal Secretaries and senior officials, attended the meeting.

# Political parties gear up for GHMC, graduate MLC polls

K VENKATESHWARLU  
■ HYDERABAD

The municipal elections for Hyderabad, Warangal and Khammam and Graduate MLC elections for Nalgonda-Khammam-Warangal and Mahbubnagar-Hyderabad-Rangareddy are fast approaching.

The ruling parties in the State and Centre -- TRS and BJP, have already launched efforts to win big in these elections. However, the Congress party is yet to start any efforts in this regard. These elections will be held in the limits of 7 erstwhile districts and 11 parliament constituencies and 78 Assembly constituencies.

A Congress leader on condition of anonymity said that the ruling TRS is reaching out to the people in GHMC, Khammam and Warangal, where municipal elections would be held, in the name of development. TRS working president KT Rama Rao is keen on winning these municipal elections. It may be recalled that KTR is busy in laying foundation or opening flyovers in GHMC limits almost on every day basis.



On the other hand, BJP is also keen on these municipal elections as they want show their strength this time. As part of it, the BJP split the city party into 6 zones (including Medchal-Malkajgiri and part of Rangareddy district) and is likely to appoint six chiefs to these zones to strengthen the party. However, the Congress has no such plans it seems. It may be recalled that Congress won two divisions out of 150 divisions in the city. Another leader said that the party has to do something or else it will not get even those two divisions this time as TRS and BJP parties are silently doing their ground work.

However, the Congress is hopeful of winning graduate elections as it won Karimnagar-

Nizamabad-Medak.

Already, some leaders have started projecting themselves as candidates for graduate MLC constituencies hoping that graduates are against ruling TRS.

However, Mahbubnagar-Hyderabad-Rangareddy graduate constituency present MLC N Ramchandra Rao is from BJP, Nalgonda-Khammam-Warangal graduate constituency MLC is Palla Rajeshwar Reddy from TRS.

The same leader said that the party fared better only in Lok Sabha elections but did dismal performance in all elections. The party has to chalk-out an action plan now only to do some good performance or else the results would be same as last elections.

# Cong dares TRS leaders to debate on Pothireddypadu

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

AICC Secretary Challa Vamshi Chand Reddy threw a challenge at ruling Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) leaders to participate in a debate on Pothireddypadu and Sangameswaram projects on Andhra Pradesh. In an open letter to Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao, he said that he is prepared to interact with any number of TRS leaders on the issue of river water sharing with the neighbouring State of Andhra Pradesh. "While the Telangana government has failed to fulfil any promise that it has made to the people of the State, the Chief Minister seems to be inclined to benefit Rayalaseema region of Andhra Pradesh. The Chief Minister's indifferent attitude towards the water theft of AP gives rise to many questions," he said.



He alleged that it is conspicuously evident that KCR is deliberately not responding on this issue. His interest in calling for an impromptu, insignificant and inappropriate cabinet meeting on 5 August in order to avoid attending the apex council meeting that was scheduled on the same day clearly indicates his evil intentions, Vamshi said.

The truth behind KCR's stratagem to attend apex council meeting only after 20 August clearly tells us that he wants to

favour a smooth and successful tendering of Raayalaseema lift Irrigation project, scheduled on 19 August, and subsequently make the apex council meeting redundant. He recalled that during 2017 when he was MLA of Kalwakurthy, he has participated in a debate with the present-day Agriculture Minister Singireddy Niranjana Reddy about the extension of subcanal D-82 of Kalwakurthy Lift, and amicably solved the problem. "I saw to it that the debate was fruitful respecting the TRS leader," Vamshi Chand Reddy wrote.

# Contributions pour in for 'Gift-a-Smile' to buy ambulances

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Contributions under Gift-a-Smile programme of KT Rama Rao, Municipal Administration Minister, have started pouring in response to the call given by him to donate liberally to purchase ambulances. On Wednesday, several MLAs, ZP Chairperson, TRS leaders gave cheques towards their contribution to the programme to KTR while some others gave them to Panchayat Raj Minister Errabelli Dayakar Rao.

Bhupalapalli MLA Gandra Venkata Ramana Reddy and his spouse Gandra Jyoti, chairperson of Warangal Rural ZP, contributed funds for purchase of one ambulance, similarly, Parakala MLA Dharma

Reddy contributed the sum equivalent to the cost of an ambulance. TRS leaders Vaddiraju Ravichandra, Kakulamanu Lakshman Rao also contributed sums equivalent to the cost of ambulances.

KTR appreciated the contributions from the party leaders and described it as an example of their philanthropy. Errabelli Dayakar Rao, Woman and Child Welfare Minister Satyavathi Rathod described the response from party leaders as their commitment to public service.

Earlier, Dayakar Rao, Vardhannapeta MLA Aruri Ramesh gave their contributions to KTR. Mahabubabad MP Maloth Kavita and others were present.



# Constable succumbs to Coronavirus

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A 49-year-old police constable working in Saidabad police station limits of Hyderabad commissionerate succumbed to Covid-19 on Tuesday late night.

According to the sources he had heart problems. A year ago he underwent a heart surgery and also suffering with hypertension.

The police constable tested positive on August 3 and was admitted in a private hospital after getting treated for almost 10 days. Since day one, his condition was critical and was on ventilator support.

He was shifted to Gandhi Hospital for Covid-19 treatment Tuesday. While undergoing treatment he breathed his last on Tuesday late night.

# YSRCP suspends its leader for land grab

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The ruling YSR Congress Party on Wednesday suspended its senior leader and former chairman of Andhra Pradesh Technology Services Koyya Prasad Reddy from the party, following allegations of land grabbing using the name of Rajya Sabha MP V Vijayasai Reddy.

The disciplinary committee of the YSRCP, which heard large scale complaints against Prasad Reddy, announced his suspension from the party after due inquiry.

An official statement by the party said that the suspension of Prasad Reddy, who hails from Visakhapatnam, came into immediate effect.

Among the charges levelled against Prasad Reddy was that he misused the name of YSRCP general secretary V Vijayasai Reddy to settle land deals in Vizag.

In a stern warning, the YSRCP central office told all the party leaders to refrain themselves from land dealings and land grabbing and from misusing the names of the party MPs or any other leader.

# Stree Nidhi staff donate to CMRF

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Stree Nidhi employees working under the purview of the Panchayat Raj and Rural Development Department have contributed their one-day wages to the Chief Minister's Relief Fund amounting to Rs 4,00,491. Errabelli Dayakar Rao on Wednesday presented a cheque for the same to KT Rama Rao, Minister for industries, when he called on him at Pragathi Bhavan. KT Rama Rao and Dayakar Rao appreciated their gesture. The Stree Nidhi Bank has 425 employees. They contributed their one-day wages to the CMRF.

# Curb commercialisation of schools, advises HSPA

HSPA SUGGESTS CHANGES IN NEP 2020

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Hyderabad Schools Parents' Association (HSPA) has submitted a few changes in the National Education Policy 2020, to the Ministry of Human Resource Development.

As per the association, all the schools, irrespective of their segment, have been increasing their fees exponentially over the years to an extent where it has become almost unsustainable for many.

The HSPA suggested, "All private schools must form an School Management Committees like any public

school and have an SDP reviewed and endorsed by the SMC on a continuous basis. They must also transparently report their annual audited financial statements and other reports submitted to the Income Tax Department, the SMC and the public. The SMC must endorse the statement for it to be valid. The financial disclosure standards must be the same as for Section 8 companies. The SDP and the financial statements shall be freely and publicly available."

They also suggested public disclosure of all information by all the schools. "Parents should

be able to make informed choices while admitting their child to a school. To achieve this, all relevant information of schools must be available in the public domain; this will include information in addition to what is available as a part of the accreditation process, including fees structure, facilities, learning outcomes, details of teachers and their qualifications, and other matters relevant to the decision making of the parents on choosing a school for their child." They further requested ministry to propose a regulatory mechanism to regulate school fee.

# GO GREEN!



Cyberabad Police Commissioner VC Sajjanar distributing eco-friendly 'Seed Ganeshas' in the city on Wednesday



# Water levels on the rise at Bhadrachalam

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The flood level in River Godavari at Bhadrachalam is on the rise due to heavy rains in the upper reaches of the river. The water level at Bhadrachalam is rising as River Indravati is emptying its flood water into River Godavari. The water level in the reservoir on Tuesday night was measured as 25 feet. Around 12 noon on Wednesday, it

increased further to 29.5 feet. As many reservoirs were up to the brim in the upper reaches, water is being discharged downstream. The Water Resources Department authorities predict more flooding to the river. However, the authorities placate the feelings of people living in low lying areas that the flood level is not alarming and will become alarming only when water level crosses 40 feet mark.

# 'Centre's right decisions at right time' contained virus spread: Guv

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Governor Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan on Wednesday exhorted the commerce and industry leaders to intensify their efforts in mitigating the crisis caused by Covid-19 pandemic and support the government. She said that the commerce and industry sector was showing lot of resilience in overcoming the crisis and has been sustaining the livelihoods of the millions of people.

The Governor was participating as the chief guest in the video conference organised by the Federation of Telangana Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FTCCI) from the Raj Bhavan, here, on the topic of "Strategic interventions of Central and State governments for the mitigation of Covid-19 Crisis."

Referring to the strategic interventions by the Central



government, Tamilisai Soundararajan pointed out that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has taken 'right decisions at the right time' to contain the spread of Covid-19 and thus saved many precious lives. The Governor said that the India, which faced the shortage of PPE kits and other equipment, is now exporting PPE kits, N95 masks, ventilators and other life saving medicines to various other countries through

the sustained efforts of the government.

"India is conducting around 7 lakh Covid-19 tests a day and it will soon achieve the target of carrying out at least 10 lakh tests a day. The governments are implementing three-pronged strategy of aggressive testing, comprehensive tracing and efficient treatment," she added. Suggesting the new mantra of testing, testing and more testing, Dr. Soundararajan said

**India is conducting around 7 lakh Covid-19 tests a day and it will soon achieve the target of carrying out at least 10 lakh tests a day. The govts are implementing three-pronged strategy of aggressive testing, tracing and efficient treatment, she said**

that early detection; contact tracing and isolation would reduce the risk of Covid-19 spread.

Expressing anguish over the non-compliance of preventive measures like maintaining physical distance and mandatory wearing of mask even by a section of politicians, the Governor said that wearing of masks would effectively prevent the spread of virus by at least 80 per cent. "Rs 20 lakh crore relief Atma Nirbhar package, special emphasis on MSME and agriculture sectors and wel-

fare of migrant labourers were some of the major interventions of the governments," she pointed out

FTCCI president Ramakanth Inani urged the Governor to impress upon the governments to chalk out roadmap for economic revival soon. He said that FTCCI in association with the FICCI and ASCI has set up a think tank titled Centre for Monitoring Covid to research, analyze and create awareness on different areas related to Covid-19 in Telangana.

# IMD warns of heavy rains in parts of AP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Heavy rains have been forecast for parts of Andhra Pradesh for the next four days. According to a bulletin issued by the IMD, heavy rains will lash parts of the State for the next four days as a low pressure area is likely to form over north west Bay of Bengal on Thursday. Following the warning, State Disaster Management Authority has urged people residing in low lying areas to be alert and take necessary safety measures.

According to IMD, the cyclonic circulation will form between 4.5 and 5.8 km above mean sea level over northwest and adjoining west central Bay of Bengal, off Odisha and north Andhra Pradesh coasts. The State Disaster Management Department stated that there is possibility of heavy rains on August 13 (Thursday) in certain places of Visakhapatnam and East Godavari districts.



SHORT READS



Pranab Mukherjee continues to be critical: Hospital

**NEW DELHI:** The condition of former President Pranab Mukherjee continues to be critical and he remains on ventilator support, the Army's Research and Referral hospital said on Wednesday. He was admitted to the hospital in Delhi cantonment on August 10 and was operated for removal of a clot in the brain. "Shri. Pranab Mukherjee's health condition continues to remain critical. Presently he is haemodynamically stable and on a ventilator," a statement from the hospital said. The condition of the former president had worsened on Tuesday and he had not shown signs of improvement, the doctors attending on him said. The 84-year-old had also tested positive for COVID-19 prior to the surgery on Monday.

Rajasthan a lesson for BJP, its 'horse-trading' politics defeated: Adhir

**KOLKATA:** Leader of the Congress in the Lok Sabha Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury on Wednesday said the resolution of the Rajasthan political crisis has dealt a blow to the BJP's "horse-trading" politics. Describing young leaders such as Sachin Pilot as the future of the party, the veteran Congress MP also hailed the political acumen of Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot for "beating BJP at its own game". "The Rajasthan episode has destroyed the myth that the BJP and its theatrics cannot be beaten. The horse-trading politics of the BJP has been defeated. "It was a pleasure to watch BJP shifting its MLAs to other states out of fear that they might switch over to the Congress," Chowdhury said. The BJP can be defeated at their own game and Rajasthan is an example of it, he said.

Covid patient jumps off AIIMS building; dies

**RAIPUR:** A 65-year-old COVID-19 patient undergoing treatment at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) allegedly committed suicide by jumping off the second floor of the building in Chhattisgarh's capital Raipur, police said on Wednesday. The incident took place in the C-block of the institute located under Amanaka police station area on the intervening night of Tuesday and Wednesday, said Bharat Bareth, station house officer of Amanka police station. A resident of the city's Lalpur locality, the sexagenarian was admitted to AIIMS on August 7 and on finding some behavioural abnormalities, the patient was sent for psychiatric consultancy, he said.

'PM SVANIDHI'

Over 5 lakh loan applications from street vendors

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government has received over five lakh applications under the 'PM SVANidhi' scheme which aims to provide street vendors loans of up to Rs 10,000 to restart their business post the COVID-19 lockdown, according to an official statement issued on Wednesday. The Union Housing and Urban Affairs Ministry said the PM Street Vendor's AtmaNirbhar Nidhi scheme has generated considerable enthusiasm among the street vendors. The number of loan sanctioned and applications received under 'PM SVANidhi' scheme have crossed one lakh and five lakh respectively within 41 days of commencement of the lending process. Under the scheme, vendors



can avail a working capital loan of up to Rs 10,000 which is repayable in monthly instalments in a year. "The PM SVANidhi envisages bringing banks at the door steps' of these 'nano-entrepreneurs' by engaging the non-banking financial companies (NBFCs) and the micro-finance institutions (MFIs) as lending institutions in addition

to scheduled commercial banks — public and private, regional rural banks, cooperative banks, SHG banks etc.," the statement said. Onboarding vendors on digital payment platforms is a very important component to building their credit profile and help them become part of the formal urban economy, it stated. Last week, the ministry had

**The number of loan sanctioned and applications received under 'PM SVANidhi' scheme have crossed one lakh and five lakh respectively within 41 days of commencement of the lending process**

launched the "Letter of Recommendation module" through which street vendors, who don't have identity cards or certificate of vending, can also avail benefits under scheme.

Unemployment rate in WB reduced by 40%: Mamata

PNS ■ KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Wednesday claimed that the unemployment rate in the state has been reduced by 40 per cent at a time when the country is witnessing an all time high of 24 per cent joblessness. Moreover one lakh unemployed youths in the state will be provided with soft loans and subsidies to become self reliant under the government's 'Karma Sathi Prakaipala', she said on International Youth Day. "Today is #InternationalYouthDay. #GoWB is committed to empowering the youth. A new scheme 'Karma Sathi Prakaipala' was launched by #Bengal Govt. One lakh unemployed youth will be provided



soft loans and subsidies to make them self-reliant," she tweeted. "When the unemployment rate in India is at an all-time high of 24%, unemployment rate in #Bengal reduced by 40%," she added. Banerjee said she is hopeful that like in the past, the hardworking and talented youth of Bengal will lead the country to a bright future.

PIL in SC seeks guidelines for identification of minority groups

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A PIL has been filed in the Supreme Court seeking directions to the Centre to formulate guidelines for identifying minority groups at the state level to ensure they get the benefit of the schemes meant for them. The PIL filed by BJP leader and advocate Ashwini Kumar Upadhyay has also challenged the validity of Section 2(f) of the National Commission for Minority Education Institution Act 2004, for not only giving unbridled power to the Centre but also being manifestly arbitrary, irrational and offending. The plea, filed through advocate Ashwani Kumar Dubey, said denial of benefits



to the "real" minorities and arbitrary and unreasonable disbursements under schemes meant for them to the absolute majority, infringes upon the fundamental right under the Constitution. "Direct and declare that followers of Judaism, Bahaism &

Freedom fighters' valour, sacrifices should be highlighted: Naidu

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu on Wednesday stressed on the need to provide a comprehensive, authentic and objective account of the historical events and said stories of the valour and sacrifices made by freedom fighters from across the country should be highlighted in the textbooks. Speaking at the release of a book 'Netaji — India's Independence and British Archives' authored by Kalyan Kumar De, he underlined the need to make the younger generation aware of India's history. De is an associate member of the Netaji Subash Bose-INA Trust. The vice president said there were many shades and facets of freedom movement which need to be taught to the younger generation. "Many people from different parts of India made sacrifices for our independence. Their stories should also be highlighted," he said according to an official statement. Referring to the



prominent role played by Subhas Chandra Bose in the freedom struggle, Naidu said his dynamic and courageous leadership during the freedom movement will continue to be a major source of inspiration to the people, particularly the youth. Stating that the revival of Indian National Army (INA) made it a force to reckon with, Naidu said as the documents in this book indicate, the British were quite alarmed at the rising tide of public sympathy for the INA. It was one of the main contributing factors in the country's

freedom struggle. Referring to the International Youth Day on Wednesday, the vice president called upon the youth to take inspiration from the life of Netaji and strive towards building a 'new' India. Regretting that even seven decades after Independence, the country continues to face many challenges on different fronts, he asked the youth to be at the forefront of building a new India, which is free of poverty, illiteracy, corruption, caste, gender discrimination and where every Indian has equal opportunities.

We don't give any importance to what Parth says: Sharad Pawar

PNS ■ MUMBAI

NCP president Sharad Pawar on Wednesday said he gives "absolutely no importance to his grand-nephew Parth Pawars recent demand for a CBI probe into the case of actor Sushant Singh Rajput's death, and also termed the young leader as immature. Sharad Pawar also said he has faith in the Mumbai Police, but added that he will not oppose if someone still wants the central agencies investigation into the case. Rajput, 34, was found hanging at his apartment in suburban Bandra on June 14. "We attach absolutely no



importance to what my grand-nephew says. He is immature...I have clearly said that I have 100 per cent trust in the Maharashtra Police. But if someone still wants a CBI probe into it, then there is no reason to oppose that too," the NCP chief said.

Scientists sceptical about Russia's Covid vaccine

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Responding with scepticism to Russia's approval of a COVID-19 vaccine, several scientists around the world, including in India, suggest it hasn't been tested properly given the time constraint and there may not be enough evidence to prove its efficacy. Announcing the breakthrough on Tuesday, Russian President Vladimir Putin vouched for the safety and efficacy of the vaccine, named Sputnik V, and said one of his daughters has already received a shot. While the country hopes to start mass-producing the vaccine by October and plans to offer the first doses to essential workers, many in the science community seem unimpressed. The announcement should be taken with a pinch of salt, said Indian



immunologist Vineeta Bal. Unless some data are out in the open for people to see, including clinical trial phases and numbers, it is hard to believe that vaccine efficacy studies are successfully conducted between June 2020 and August 2020, Bal, an immunologist from the Indian Institute of Science, Education and Research in Pune, said. Are they talking about controlled human challenge studies? If yes, that evidence is also use-

ful to examine protective efficacy, she noted. Florian Krammer, a professor at the US-based Mount Sinai's Icahn School of Medicine, questioned the safety of the vaccine. "Not sure what Russia is up to, but I certainly would not take a vaccine that hasn't been tested in phase 3. Nobody knows if it's safe or if it works. They are putting HCWs (health care workers) and their population at risk," Krammer said on Twitter. Indian immunologist Satyajit Rath agreed with Krammer. Russian authorities seem to be depending on the generation of 'neutralising' antibodies in Phase 2 clinical trials for deciding that the vaccine candidate works, he said. A neutralising antibody defends a cell from an infectious particle by neutralising any effect it has biologically.

Kamala Harris nomination moment of pride: OPS

PNS ■ CHENNAI

The nomination of US senator Kamala Harris, who has her connections with Chennai, as the vice-presidential running mate for the American Presidential elections 2020, is a moment of pride for Indians and Tamil Nadu, said state deputy chief minister O Panneerselvam. Reacting to Tuesday's announcement, Panneerselvam recalled her roots and conveyed his hearty wishes. "It is a moment of pride for Indians and TamilNadu especially, as Kamala Harris, the first Indian senator, whose mother hails from TN has been nominated as the Vice Presidential candidate by the US Democratic party.

Bengaluru violence: Cong, JD(S) extend support to govt in maintaining peace

PNS ■ BENGALURU

Opposition Congress and JD(S) in Karnataka on Wednesday extended complete support to the state government in establishing peace in violence-hit parts of the city and demanded immediate action against the culprits. Leaders of both the parties have said that there are reports raising apprehensions that this could have been a 'pre planned conspiracy'. "I condemn both violent incidents that erupted in Kaval Byrsandra & also the social media post that instigated the mob. I humbly request both Hindus & Muslims of the area to stay calm, maintain peace & live in harmony," Leader of opposition Siddaramaiah tweeted.

**"I condemn both violent incidents that erupted in Kaval Byrsandra & also the social media post that instigated the mob. I humbly request both Hindus & Muslims of the area to stay calm, maintain peace & live in harmony," Leader of opposition Siddaramaiah tweeted**

Noting that he spoke to the Bengaluru Police Commissioner on the matter, the Congress leader assured full support to the Karnataka government in establishing peace. "Our experience tells us that only innocents suffer in the communal riots. I urge leaders from both the religions to discuss and resolve the issue amicably & restore peace in the area," he added. Condemning the violence,

state Congress chief D K Shivakumar said, no one should take law into their hands and we extend complete cooperation to the government in taking action as per law. "Causing destruction to public property cannot be accepted... I have also heard from the media about the provocative tweet. Whoever has done it, it is wrong, the entire incident is wrong," he said.

Kamala Harris is Joe Biden's pick for US vice prez candidate

■ WASHINGTON

Presumptive Democratic presidential nominee Joe Biden on Tuesday picked Sen. Kamala Harris, D-Calif., as his running mate, a historic decision that elevates the first Black woman and first Asian American woman to run for vice president at a moment when the country is grappling with its racial past and future. Biden's announcement, made in a text and tweet, aligns him with a former presidential rival whose most electric campaign performance came when she criticized his record on school integration during a debate. The decision is the most consequential of Biden's presidential campaign and has major implications not only for the November election but for the future of the Democratic Party. Biden, 78 years old by Inauguration Day, would be the oldest president ever and has said he considers himself "a transition candidate." The choice places Harris, who was a more vibrant and energetic presence on the campaign trail but was also at times unsteady, at the forefront of the party's future as, potentially, the



first woman vice president. Harris will now become a vessel for Democratic hopes for a diverse party empowered by women, as well as for Republican attempts to funnel a barrage of attacks that have so far been largely unsuccessful when waged against Biden alone. Harris, 55, is the daughter of Indian and Jamaican immigrants. The first-term senator previously served as San Francisco district attorney and California attorney general. She developed a close friendship with Biden's late son Beau, a relationship that Biden said he reflected upon in making his decision. The move puts Biden, who served as vice president to the nation's first Black president, in

**Harris will now become a vessel for Democratic hopes for a diverse party empowered by women, as well as for Republican attempts to funnel a barrage of attacks that have so far been largely unsuccessful when waged against Biden alone**

activists, athletes and actors who urged Biden to pick a Black woman - and threatened that his candidacy would be doomed if he didn't. "My advice was sought," said Rep. James Clyburn, D-S.C., a top Biden ally who had urged him to pick a Black woman and said that Biden called him Tuesday morning to inform him of the decision. "I talked to him [Biden] over the past several days more than I talked to him all year," he said. The months-long process before the decision included vetting nearly a dozen women as potential nominees. Biden on Tuesday informed some of the others that they were not chosen.

Know our ancestors are smiling: Sister

Hours after Democratic Presidential candidate Joe Biden made history by picking Indian-origin Senator Kamala Harris as his running mate, Ms Harris' sister tweeted an emotional video introducing the woman "who made it all possible" - their mother. Ms Harris is now the first Asian-American woman and the first Black woman to be selected as the vice-presidential nominee of a major party. "You can't know who Kamala Harris is without knowing who our mother was. Missing her terribly, but know she and the ancestors are smiling today. #BidenHarris2020," Maya Harris tweeted as the world scans through the credentials of the 55-year-old daughter of Indian and Jamaican immigrants.



'Surprised' at Joe Biden's pick: Trump

President Donald Trump on Tuesday called Kamala Harris the "most horrible" member of the US Senate and said he was "surprised" Joe Biden had picked her as his vice presidential candidate. Trump told reporters at the White House that Harris did not impress him when she was vying for the Democratic nomination in primaries eventually won by Biden. "I was more surprised than anything else because she did so poorly," he said. He also said that during the bruising 2018 Senate confirmation hearings of Supreme Court Justice Brett Kavanaugh, Harris was "the meanest, the most horrible, the most disrespectful of anybody in the US Senate."

'AMERICA MEIN KHILA KAMAL' Indian-Americans celebrate Kamala Harris's selection

■ WASHINGTON

Leading Indian-American groups and individuals, including former PepsiCo chief Indra Nooyi, have hailed the nomination of Indian-origin Senator Kamala Harris as Democratic Vice Presidential candidate, saying it was a "great choice" and a "moment of pride" for the entire community in the US. However, there were also some community members who questioned Ms Harris's contribution towards the Indo-US ties and said they would not be swayed by identity politics.

Presumptive Democratic party Presidential nominee Joe Biden on Tuesday named 55-year-old Kamala Harris as his Vice Presidential running mate, making history by selecting the first black woman to compete on a major party's Presidential ticket. Kamala Harris, whose father is an African from Jamaica and mother an Indian, is currently the US Senator from California. "This is a great choice for our country," tweeted Ms Nooyi, who is seen as a role model by millions of women across the world.





## Women legal heirs

SC allows daughters to claim their rights on parental property with retrospective effect in a landmark ruling



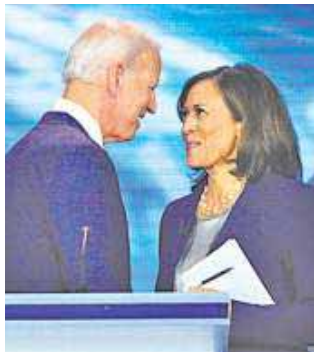
Giving hope to millions of women, who have traditionally been denied a share in their parental property owing to the cultural preference for a son and the idea of “keeping the wealth within the family”, the Supreme Court has said that daughters now have a birthright to parental property with retrospective effect. In essence, this allows women to challenge past injustices, coercion and denials and claim restoration of their economic rights. A three-judge Bench headed by Justice Arun Mishra ruled that a Hindu woman’s right to be a joint heir to the ancestral property does not depend on whether

her father was alive or not when an old segregatory law was amended in 2005. The Hindu Succession (Amendment) Act, 2005 gave Hindu women the right to be coparceners or joint legal heirs with men but did not clarify whether it could apply retrospectively. Not only does the ruling take away the gender bias from inheritance, one that has disempowered girls socially and led to their differential upbringing and value systems, the court also lauded daughters as more suitable and responsible heirs who deserve a share of parental legacy. “A son is a son till he takes him a wife...a daughter is a daughter all of her life,” Justice Arun Mishra said while reading out the order. “A daughter remains a loving daughter throughout life,” he added, emphasising the compassionate nature of women as care-givers. This also clears the decks for settling countless appeals on the issue that have been pending before different High Courts and subordinate courts on whether the amendment would be time-bound or not. Now that its applicability is crystal clear, this will not only open the floodgates for thousands of ancestral property-related disputes that had been put to rest but will also give women and their children, especially those who are not too well-heeled or financially independent, a fallback cushion. Traditionally, women have been denied a share in their fathers’ property in the belief that a girl’s share is given to her in the form of dowry and that one day she would inherit the property of her in-laws. Some enlightened families may have been reformist of their own accord but this has largely been the accepted social code. Yet it has been erroneous, for most women have been denied a share in the in-laws’ ancestral property after the husband’s death. Another drawback among women so far has been their poor or no legal awareness of their status as rightful stakeholders in family affairs. Even if they were aware of their rights, most women have been hesitant to claim their share in family estates as that would have meant going against their own flesh and blood for a piece of land or house. Plus, with most women in India brought up in a patriarchal society, they were made to believe that in case of a marriage going south or their single status, they would be supported by their father and in his absence, by the brother. Hence, most of them, over the years, have meekly given up their rights on property in exchange for this familial anchor. While mindset changes will only come with time, the ruling of the apex court unfetters those who are willing to stand up for their coparcenary rights.

It is no secret that access to property empowers women economically, provides them with a sense of security and self-worth and strengthens their decision-making powers. Research shows that ownership of property by women has reset the asymmetry in gender relations, resulting in reduced domestic violence, both physical and psychological. Owning assets also gives women caught in abusive relationships an exit route, which they might not have had otherwise, particularly if they are not financially independent. All in all, this judgment is a reassertion of the constitutional value of equality to women in personal law without any pre-conditions. However, one aspect that is being largely ignored in the media over the jubilation on this ruling is that there is a flip side, too. Coparcenary right is an undefined liability and any liability of the father, including the family debt and other dues, will be extended to daughters as well. So, it is not just about the right, it is about inheriting responsibility as well. Besides, what of women in other religious communities, who are governed by separate personal laws in several matters, including inheritance rights? While Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists and Jains are governed by laws on property rights codified in the amended Hindu Succession Act of 2005, Christians and Parsis are governed by the Indian Succession Act, 1925. Property rights of Muslims — both Shias and Sunnis — are yet to be codified. Till we uniformly address gender inequalities in the area of inheritance and have a representative civil rights framework for women across the spectrum, they would be subjected to abuse.

## Kamala blooms

Kamala Harris is the third woman to stand for Vice-President of the US. Can she do better than the earlier two?



Kamala Harris’ selection as the running mate of Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden is a momentous one. She is just the third woman to stand for Vice-President of the United States after Geraldine Ferrero in 1984 and Sarah Palin in 2008 but the first woman of colour to do so. This, four years after Donald Trump unexpectedly defeated Hillary Clinton, the first female US presidential candidate for the White House. In India, too, Harris’ nomination is being celebrated since her mother was a Tamilian. Yet, it’s not her origin but what she represents that might just tilt the scales.

Biden has been less than charismatic and Harris’ activism and focussed campaigns on the Afro-American cause give the Democrats a sales pitch to fall back upon, that of upholding civil rights. Not new really, but tested enough. And likely to find some resonance when race relations have taken centrestage following the killing of George Floyd by a White officer. Besides, the Black community has been the worst affected by Trump’s selective pandemic management. In all issues, be it of race, gender, healthcare and law enforcement, Harris has maintained a centrist record. But her drive has helped her push walls so far. Which is why Trump made his discomfort very much visible by calling her “extraordinarily nasty.” He also accused her of being “the meanest, most horrible” of all US Senators.

With the US extremely fractured today, Harris possibly stands the best chance ever of having a woman occupy one of the top offices. That said, everyone expected Hillary Clinton to win in a landslide in 2016 and we all saw what happened. With Biden’s mental acuity being questioned by many and Trump mobilising the Republican base, it would be fatal for the Democrats to take things for granted, particularly in some crucial battleground states which Trump snatched unexpectedly. While Harris was brought up single-handedly by her mother, after her parents divorced when she was five, and her father, the Jamaican-born economist Donald Harris, did extensive work in India, she identifies herself as a “Black” woman to build her political capital. Despite several in the Indian community urging her to recognise her heritage, she has consistently sought to downplay it. Incidentally, she is distantly related to India’s External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar. So while many in the Indian diaspora will celebrate her nomination, her politics is more often than not at variance with Indian interests. Indeed, she is as guilty as several other politicians of making some major policy flip-flops over the years. But with global geopolitics undergoing a sea change over the past few years and with China increasingly asserting itself, her views on India might change as well.

# Politics of defection

MLAs jumping ship and resort politics are condemnable. There’s a lot that our elected representatives need to learn from what Gandhi had expected of them



JS RAJPUT

One can easily recall umpteen instances of MLAs changing their ideological and political loyalties for reasons best known to them. Leaders who defect justify it as “the wish of the people.” When the floor-crossing happened for the first time in Haryana, when an MLA switched party thrice in a day, the term, *Aaya Ram Gaya Ram* (party-switching) gained prominence in the political discourse — right from the chaupals to the Central Hall of Parliament — but was brushed aside as an “aberration.” Slowly but steadily, the practice gained ground. Who can forget Bhajan Lal, the former Chief Minister of Haryana, who migrated to the then newly-elected ruling party at the Centre, lock, stock and barrel and retained his position?

The practice was subsequently polished and upgraded by leaders of all hues. One could go on counting the number of luxury hotels that have been used by parties to house their MLAs on numerous occasions. What happened in Rajasthan says it all. The MLAs, who enjoyed a comfortable stay in hotels at different locations in Haryana, Rajasthan and Gujarat, were convinced that if they went to their home State and their constituencies, they would not be able to resist the temptation of lucrative offers that would be waiting outside to change hands.

What normally should be considered as a humiliating slur by any dignified individual is now taking shape as an “unwritten” but “acceptable” code across the board and has become a parliamentary practice in Indian democracy. Every major political party has tried this on several occasions. One wonders how these MLAs would react if Mahatma Gandhi walked into their room and asked them, “*kaise hain aap?*” (How are you?)” The Rajasthan episode is almost over and nobody condemned the happenings, not even those who have risen on several occasions to express their concern regarding the attack on constitutional values. I find their silence amazing.

What’s even more surprising is that those, who usually come up with joint statements expressing concerns about what they consider “Constitutional impropriety, an attack on secular values and ethical lapses”, never come up to denigrate this unethical and immoral practice that makes fun of democracy and lowers the esteem of the elected representatives themselves. It is a shameless strategy that should not find a place in a vibrant, functional democracy.

Why isn’t there all-round condemnation of the Rajasthan drama of



MLAs being herded from one hotel to the other — under strict State security — as unconstitutional, unethical and immoral? Even known groups of retired bureaucrats — who suddenly appear on the scene to showcase their concerns about the erosion of social cohesion, religious amity and constitutional propriety — never thought it fit to condemn this derogatory practice of herding of elected representatives. Do they find this practice to be in sync with the Constitutional framework and in consonance with moral and ethical considerations?

In 1922, Gandhiji had written in a letter that Swaraj would not bring happiness to his people. He had said that four things would weigh heavily against it. Three of them were injustice, burden of administration and treachery of the rich. The fourth, that surprised me the most when I came to know about it, related to “defects of elections.” How could he write about defections in 1922? I was told the Mahatma had studied the British election system very thoroughly. Gifted with a prophetic futurist vision, he could anticipate the shape of things so accurately.

I often wonder whether the MLAs in Rajasthan, who enjoyed a comfortable all-expenses-paid stay in luxury hotels, even remember that they are inheritors of the legacy of Mahatma Gandhi, Lal

Bahadur Shastri, Rajendra Prasad and other stalwarts of the freedom struggle. These worthy elected representatives are, in fact, *panch parmashwars* of democracy. They are occupying a seat, the incumbent of which is bound to the Constitution by an oath of affirmation.

One wonders how many of them are aware of that eternal eye-opener sentence by Mahatma Gandhi: “If, instead of insisting on rights, everyone does his duty, there will immediately be the rule of order established among mankind.” Are such herded stays part of the duty of the elected representatives? Do they not realise that they are being presented in public as weaklings, who would not be able to resist monetary temptations if allowed to move out of the hotel?

If these worthies could sit together with their family members, including their children, and seek their opinion on being made a part of the “pliable group”, one is confident they would get the right advice. No child would like his parent to be treated as a saleable commodity. Many of them may have read or attended speeches where references were made to a query put before Mahatma Gandhi: What is your message to the people? He replied, “My life is my message.” Would our MLAs be in a position to tell their children that they could derive strength from their experi-

ences? It appears that everyone — right from the Chief Minister to the Speakers; the party in power to those in the Opposition; and all others who matter — have their interpretations of the Constitution and Constitutional propriety. It is worthwhile to recall that under the Government of India Act of 1935, elections were held in 1936-37 in various provinces and provincial Governments were formed. All Ministers of the then Congress Government had resigned in November 1939. Gandhiji was ever vigilant, he consistently expressed his opinion on how legislators and Ministers should be performing their new duties and they should always think about the welfare of the people. He was, in a way, educating the legislators and Ministers in those days when his overarching presence on the scene itself was a deterrent against anyone breaking the norms: “The holding of any office in the Congress Government must be in the spirit of service, without the slightest expectation of personal gains.”

Our distinguished legislators can ponder over Gandhian thoughts: “There is a beauty and an art in simplicity which he who runs may see. It does not require money to be neat, clean and dignified. Pomp and pageantry are often synonymous with vulgarity.” It is indeed a pity that our young ones are

witnessing a political world in which — exceptions apart — elected representatives, Ministers and legislators have forsaken the Gandhian philosophy, ideas and dreams. They are doing all this knowing it fully well that it would hurt the Mahatma’s memory.

When reports emerge of legislators’ assets multiplying by a factor of say 500, the common man’s reaction is obvious — it would definitely be devoid of respect, confidence or a connect. In 1937-39, those who became legislators and Ministers were men and women who had entered the freedom struggle — not a political party but a national movement that offered only sacrifice, toil, sufferings and jail terms. Elections and legislative positions came just by chance. But allurements were still there and senior leaders were alert to guide and to “examine the utility value of the legislators.”

And for the Ministers, the guidelines were: “The Ministers are [the people’s] servants. They can do nothing against the express wishes of the people. They will not stay in office a day longer than the people wish.” There is much more for the Chief Ministers, Ministers and the legislators to ponder over. Are the Gandhian ideas totally out of bounds for those who still swear to be the inheritors of his legacy? If not, how could they ignore Gandhiji’s words and deeds? “This office-holding is a step towards either greater prestige — or its total loss. If it is not to be a total loss, the Ministers and the legislators have to be watchful of their own personal and public conduct. They have to be, like Caesar’s wife, above suspicion in everything. They may not make private gains for themselves or their relatives or friends.”

The least people expect from their legislators is that they do not surrender courage of conviction that a citizen can be proud of, particularly those who are in public life and are expected to enjoy the trust and confidence of their electors. They must ultimately be true to the people. They must not subjugate themselves to the whims and fancies of those who wish to retain power or gain power at any cost.

There is a lot for the elected representatives to whom Gandhiji advised not to “arrogate to themselves greater knowledge than those experienced men who do not happen to occupy the ministerial chairs.” Obviously, this applies equally to every elected person.

(The writer works in education and social cohesion)

## SOUNDBITE

I have known Harris for a long time. She is more than prepared for the job. She’s spent her career defending our Constitution and fighting for folks who need a fair stake.



Former US President  
—Barack Obama

This whole insider vs outsider debate was not supposed to be an ugly witch-hunting battle. It was supposed to be debate, a conversation



Actor  
—Sandhya Mridul

With Harris as his political living will, he (Biden) is surrendering control of our nation to the radical mob with promises to raise taxes, cut police funding and appease socialist dictators.



American consultant  
—Katrina Pierson

Every cricketer goes through a rough patch. I am sure this break would have helped us both unwind and chalk out a plan. It’s a matter of time before we click.



Indian cricketer  
—Mithali Raj

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Clear old accounts

Sir — There are huge amounts in unclaimed deposits at post-offices and many of these account holders may have even died. There are chances of fraud happening, with unscrupulous persons staking claim to such deposits. The Department of Posts should send letters to account holders who have not operated their accounts in, say, the last three years and give them reasonable time to either renew or close them. If no response is received, all such unclaimed money may be frozen in some fixed account, which may be allowed to be withdrawn by legal heirs after careful verification.

Madhu Agrawal  
New Delhi

### Long road ahead

Sir — This refers to the editorial, “*Atmanirbhar raksha*” (August 11). With a view to boost defence manufacturing in India, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh announced a ban on a range of defence imports. Defence manufacturing under the *Atmanirbhar Bharat* scheme

### Language discrimination

In the repeated invocation of culture in the National Education Policy, (NEP) — the distaste of its frequent repetitions apart — one finds a long-term strategy to resurrect a particular culture in India. The civilisation that flourished between 3300 BCE and 1300 BCE in South Asia, popularly called the Harappan or the Indus Valley civilisation, is an important era in our recorded history. And 600-700 years after the Harappan civilisation waned, a new culture evolved with the arrival of the Eurasian Steppes pastoralist groups. A new language and lifestyle emerged. The Vedic culture and the ancient Harappan civilisation were unlike each other in every aspect. Researchers have converged on the view that the present-day gods, religion, literature and traditions in most of India are adaptations from the Brahminical Vedic culture, which was rooted in caste system and rituals, and not from the ancient Indus Valley civilisation. There are, therefore, reasons to doubt the loud advocacy of culture, heritage and traditions in the NEP.

The NEP professes, “the three-language formula will continue to be implemented while keeping in mind the Constitutional provisions, aspirations of the people, regions and the Union and the need to promote multi-lingualism as well as promote national unity.” The catch here is, “the three languages learned by children will be the choices of States, regions and, of course, the students themselves

is estimated to save about four lakh crore rupees. No matter how lofty the goals appear, the fact is that India’s defence sector suffers from a few drawbacks. Already, projects worth ₹3.5

lakh crore under the Make in India scheme are stuck in the pipeline. Projects are often not completed on time. Recently, India became a global exporter of arms but we ranked 23rd in

the list of major arms exporters for 2015-2019 and 19th for 2019.

Another grey area is the quality of products. The ammunition supplied by the Ordnance Factory had damaged tanks,



field guns and caused fatalities. The French company that manufactures Rafale fighter planes had expressed doubts about the manufacturing quality of Hindustan Aeronautics (HAL) during the defence deal. HAL-made Jaguar and Mirage-2000s have caused many fatalities. While defence manufacturing under *Atmanirbhar Bharat* looks ambitious to make India self-reliant in defence manufacturing, there’s a long way to go. The Government must overcome existing challenges.

Venu GS  
Kollam

### Wake-up call

Sir — Back-to-back fire cases at COVID-19 facility centres are a wake-up call for the Government. All such tragic events have proved that those bearing the responsibility of safety regulations have paid lip service. Exemplary action is the need of the hour, or else such cases will continue to occur.

Aman  
Via email

Send your feedback to:  
letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

## Staff health is company's asset

We will survive this contagion but the key to this is adaptation. Till that happens, all firms must take care of their employees



HIMA BINDU KOTA

The pandemic has changed the way we perceive every aspect of our daily lives as we struggle to adapt to a new normal. The World Health Organisation's (WHO) statistics on the magnitude and scale of the outbreak have a mind-numbing impact. There are currently 1.97 crore active cases around the world, in 216 countries. The most disturbing aspect is that global casualties have crossed the seven lakh mark. India has 2.2 million active cases and there have been 44,000 deaths. Needless to say, some aspects of the Indian economy and the corporate landscape have changed forever, and that includes the way businesses are conducted.

The economy is in turmoil and the corporate sector is having to bend over backwards to ensure that businesses stay viable. As companies struggle to find balance in these critical times, lay-offs have become common, instilling fear and insecurity among the remaining employees who, in addition to their own work, are being piled up with the duties of their erstwhile colleagues. These conditions are stressful and a drain on the psyche of the employee as s/he fights fears of unemployment, financial insecurity and rising expenses. In these conditions, the mind and body are being stretched to their limits with major collateral damage to human health.

This staff distress is unfortunately paving the way for what is being increasingly termed as "non-Coronavirus casualties." According to data compiled by a group of researchers led by public interest technologist GN Tejesh and Kanika Sharma, 338 deaths have been recorded on account of the lockdown-spurred unemployment, financial distress and isolation. The work from home (WFH) conditions are also making it an uphill task for the Human Resource departments of firms to gauge the physical and psychological health of their staff. Sometimes problems like depression are identified too late in the day.

The Bengaluru-based Suicide Prevention India Foundation (SPIF) conducted a study on the rising spate of suicides in the country and the results are not reassuring. The study based its findings on the responses received from 300 therapists, who found that suicide ideation and self-harm intentions have risen sharply during the pandemic. Out of this, 76 per cent of the people feared job loss. Additionally, 30 per cent of the patients of the therapists have already inflicted some sort of self-harm. This data is alarming to say the least and does not bode well for the future of the corporate sector.

Recently, people have been experiencing a slew of emotions due to social isolation, change of lifestyle and loss of personal income. In a recent study of 673 workers in China, their mental health showed disturbing signs with a significant proportion recording conditions of post-traumatic stress disorder, moderate or severe anxiety, depression, stress and insomnia. Other psychiatric symptoms that are prevalent are worries about physical health, anger, discrimination during the outbreak, paranoid ideations, hallucinations, suicidal thoughts, alcohol usage and intent to hurt others. In the COVID-19 scenario, the corporate sector is already learning the ropes quickly and is trying to maintain employee health. But haemorrhaging profits and lay-offs tell a different story. There needs to be a turnaround in the manner employee mental and physical health is being managed, not only in the best interests of the company but for the larger good of the economy as well. There are a slew of measures being taken across the global corporate landscape which can have a direct relevance for India. Many businesses around the world are taking the current stressful times as an opportunity to connect with their employees and are comforting them. Health and fitness are being accorded priority over productivity. This, among other things, showcases the humane side of the management.

In order to secure the health of the employees, the Indian corporate sector must encourage its staff to share their daily exercise routines with Human Resources managers and instead of over-burdening the employees with work-related Zoom and Skype calls, they must focus on some rest and recreation interactions, too.

The critical aspects impacting the health of any employee are broadly three: Fear of job loss, financial insecurity and a rising workload. The corporate sector must design rehabilitating measures that seek to address these three issues, but for this, financial well-being of the companies is a must and this is where timely Government assistance comes into the picture.

There is no saying when this mayhem will get over. But once things start becoming clearer, would businesses return to their normal self or will the "new normal" become permanent? Although we may not like the answer, the "new normal" is likely to stay. However, humans are known to adapt. That is the underlying strength that ensures the survival of our species. We will survive this contagion but the key to this is adaptation. Till that happens, it is the responsibility of all firms to take care of the mental and physical health of their staff.

(The writer is Associate Professor, Amity University, Noida)

OUR FRIENDS WHO HAD GONE AWAY HAVE COME BACK. I HOPE THAT WE WILL DO AWAY WITH OUR DIFFERENCES AND FULFIL OUR RESOLVE TO SERVE THE STATE.

—RAJASTHAN CHIEF MINISTER  
ASHOK GEHLOT

POINTCOUNTERPOINT



I AM PAINED BY THE KIND OF WORDS THAT WERE USED. BUT I HAVE NOT MADE ANY DEMANDS. I AM AN MLA AND I WILL DO WHATEVER THE PARTY ASKS ME TO DO.

—CONGRESS LEADER  
SACHIN PILOT

# EVs not the best choice

The FAME policy is pumping ₹10,000 crore of taxpayer money into an industry which is strategically counter-productive. It needs a broader definition of e-mobility and innovations in sustainable storage



ARIJIT DAS

The Delhi Government recently announced its electric vehicle (EV) policy aimed at faster adoption of cleaner vehicles in the national Capital. This policy is on the same lines as the Centre's Faster Adoption and Manufacturing of Electric Vehicles or FAME-II scheme, 2019. Under Delhi's EV policy, purchase incentives will be given worth ₹30,000 for e-autos, e-rickshaws, goods carriers and up to ₹30,000 and ₹1.5 lakh for e-two-wheelers and e-cars respectively, depending on their battery capacity. This will be in addition to the existing incentives provided by the Centre.

The good thing about Delhi's EV policy is its detailing but it falls apart when it comes to fund allocation. FAME-II offers an incentive of ₹1.5 lakh to electric four-wheelers with an ex-factory price cap of ₹15 lakh and it also has a provision for an incentive of ₹50,000 for three-wheelers, including e-rickshaws and ₹20,000 for e-two-wheelers. E-buses can claim subsidy up to ₹50 lakh at a rate of ₹20,000 KWH battery capacity.

Given the incentives being offered, two questions should be considered. First, are EVs environmentally sustainable? Second, are they viable options for the Indian economy in the long-run? The answers to both these questions are debatable.

To produce an Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) vehicle, 10 metric tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> are released in the atmosphere and it is the same for an EV without the battery. Manufacturing of a 30 KWH battery releases 5.3 metric tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> while manufacturing a 100 KWH battery releases 17.5 metric tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>. A petrol/diesel car emits an average of 5.2 metric tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> in a year whereas the average usage emission from EV is 2.02 metric tonnes per year. EVs are non-polluting (at the level of the vehicle), and by design, if and only if, renewables are used as the power source. This is an unlikely phenomenon in the near future as a wide spectrum of allied infrastructure needs to be built around EVs to ensure renewable use for charging.

More than 90 per cent incentives (especially for two-wheelers and three-wheelers) are availed by lead-acid type batteries and they are environmentally hazardous. These batteries were already in high demand and competitive against the fossil fuel at least for slow vehicles. Even e-rickshaws were a hit much before the FAME scheme was announced. Over-incentivising lead acid batteries can significantly harm the environment.

Coming back to the economics of EVs, FAME correctly identified that the cost of batteries is a major price differential but failed to investigate intricate details behind such a difference. It is a common mistake often made while evaluating eco-friendly solutions. EVs should not be compared with ICEVs or regular car engines in totality. EVs are a combination of an engine and life-time fuel whereas ICEVs are valued only for the engine. Anyone buying an EV is essentially pre-owning fuel for a lifetime. Both EV and ICEV engines are comparable and cost the same. Providing an incentive to EVs is against fair competition norms and gives an undue advantage to the EV producer, which ultimately is going to hurt the technological advancement of the automobile industry as a whole.

Plus, about 40-50 per cent of the cost of manufacturing an EV accounts for reliable fuel storage i.e. the Li-ion batteries. These are the best storage options available but highly unsustainable. The raw material required for manufacturing is limited and concentrated in a very few countries. Not only that,

“FOR A TYPICAL MIDDLE CLASS AND UPPER MIDDLE CLASS FAMILY, A CAR IS AN ASPIRATION AND AN INVESTMENT WITH REASONABLE RESALE VALUE. AT PRESENT EVs HAVE NO RESALE VALUE. HENCE, IT IS UNJUSTIFIED TO EXPECT A CUSTOMER TO INVEST HARD-EARNED MONEY IN AN UNTESTED, RISKY TECHNOLOGY IN THE NAME OF POLLUTION CONTROL WHILE THERE IS NO DEFINITE PROOF THAT IT IS A CLEANER ENERGY OPTION”



a significant tendency is observed to capture such reserves through mergers and acquisitions. The raw material comprises approximately 60 per cent of the total cost of manufacturing Li-ion batteries. So, the price is not likely to decline if we use more of these batteries, unlike what we had observed for other electronic items like computers, solar panels and LEDs. The price of these batteries will increase in future if demand exceeds a certain limit as the price of raw materials will rise. For instance, the price of lithium increased from \$8,500 per tonne in 2015 to \$17,000 per tonne in 2018. Similarly, the price of cobalt rose from \$30,000 per tonne to \$95,000 per tonne between 2015 and 2018. These increases were in anticipation of a growing EV market but later their price dropped on its dismal performance. India does not have any lithium reserves, supply chain or an ecosystem to manufacture Li-ion batteries in order to ensure a steady supply. So EVs are not an economically-viable option for the country.

Both FAME and the Delhi EV policy talk about setting up public EV charging stations around Delhi's congested roads. This would require vast swathes of public land to serve a handful of wealthy owners and violates the basic principles of public good. Plus, parking is a major issue in Delhi, so allowing public charging is only going to legitimise capture of sidewalks. Also, charging an EV in the blazing summer sun in Delhi is neither advisable nor safe.

**The China factor:** Li-ion batteries account for almost 50 per cent of the cost of an EV. While China has a thriving lithium chemical, battery cathode, battery cell and EV supply chain, India has none. China dominates the battery supply chain and around three-quarters of the global battery cell manufacturing capacity is in our neighbouring country. On top of that,

Chinese companies have unparalleled control over battery raw materials and processing facilities. At present, almost all Li-ion batteries used for EVs are imported from China. This means incentives aimed at Indian manufacturers are directly going to Chinese battery producers. For example, buying a ₹15 lakh EV (with Li-ion batteries) in India means a transfer of ₹7.5 lakh to China, including ₹3 lakh of the taxpayers' money. The amount could go up to ₹1 crore for an e-bus. Strategically, too, over-dependence on China is dangerous and given the current geo-political scenario, it is not advisable to take such risky steps.

**The way forward:** FAME or other State Government clean vehicle schemes are an excellent platform to promote indigenous production of EVs. They should stick to the principles of *Atmanirbhar* (self-reliant) *Bharat* to promote localised production at global standards and stop incentivising unsustainable means of storage technologies.

**Unbundling of EVs:** Separating the vehicle from its fuel, i.e. batteries, is a necessary condition for the development of the EV market in India. At present, EVs have a low-capacity engine with super-expensive fuel options. This is an absurd arrangement and makes a mockery of fair competition. It is like British Petroleum selling cars for their oil or Ford digging oil wells for their car, leading to inefficiency in both the segments.

**Make it consumer-centric:** At present, EVs are policy-centric. They hardly consider consumers as end-users and rather aim to cater to the needs of development activists. Consumers need flexibility in choosing a fuel source, mileage, durability and so on. Their mobility requirement also varies from a few kilometres to hundreds of kilometres in one run. They possess varied tastes, concerns

and limitations. Unless consumers are given such flexibility and choices, EV sales in India won't pick up. For a typical middle class/upper middle class family, a car is an aspiration and an investment with reasonable resale value. At present EVs have no resale value, hence, it is unjustified to expect a customer to invest hard-earned money in an untested, risky technology in the name of pollution control while there is no definite proof that it is a cleaner energy option.

**Competing alternatives:** The FAME policy is biased towards EVs, which might be discriminatory against other environment-friendly mobility options like hydrogen fuel cell buses. We already have experience in running CNG buses and we can run hydrogen cell variants, too. These buses can be manufactured in India without any fuel constraint as hydrogen is the most abundant element in the universe and multiple renewable sources can easily be used to generate it. Apart from being zero-emission, it does not have to face logistical challenges like EVs. In a nutshell, FAME is pumping ₹10,000 crore of the taxpayers' money into an industry which is strategically counterproductive and not even environment-friendly. This policy should immediately be replaced with a guideline which uses a broader definition of e-mobility, encourages innovations in sustainable storage that rely on the *Atmanirbhar* *Bharat* ethos.

The worst is the increasing tendency to use public money for the elite. If pollution is a concern, then why not give induction cookers to the poor or ban diesel generators? Automobiles do not require State backing, consumers will automatically adapt to EVs if they fit in with their requirements.

(The writer is Fellow, India Development Foundation. Views expressed are personal)

## Collective effort will make India *atmanirbhar*

Self-reliance is not a short race, it is a marathon and can be completed only when all engines start firing together in the desired direction



PRIYA GUPTA

If the Centre's biggest agenda is the revival of the economy, then it can only be achieved by implementing the *Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan*. We may get some idea if we analyse the progress of four neighbouring nation, China. In 1987, its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was almost equal to India's GDP at \$279 billion. Then, in December 1978, Deng Xiaoping announced the "Open Door Policy" and it was a major turning point for the Chinese economy. Beijing experienced 15 per cent growth year on year at a time the global economy was not even growing, dipping to a rate of three per cent.

This brought China from the

32nd position in global exports to first position in 2013. The Chinese Government checked all the right boxes, whether it was a lower tax regime, industry-friendly wage rules, cheap capital, free land or even allowing the misuse of patent and knowledge laws.

When multinational corporations (MNCs) realised that manufacturing costs in the US and Europe were skyrocketing due to the high cost of manpower, land and their stringent pollution norms, they began looking for alternative locations and evaluated a few South Asian countries like Malaysia, Vietnam, Thailand, China, Indonesia and many more.

They ignored India due to the Licence Raj, stiff labour laws, unclear policy on land acquisition, poor power supply, lack of skilled manpower, a closed foreign trade policy and many more such hurdles. We were one of the lowest-ranked nations on the Ease of Doing Business index.

Upon the evaluation of all South Asian countries, it was found that China was best suited for moving manufacturing business from the

US and Europe, as it had a huge population which could be skilled and brought into the workforce. It had huge tracts of land, too, for setting up manufacturing bases.

Now, given the global anger against Beijing due to the spread of the Coronavirus contagion, nations are looking to shift their manufacturing businesses and supply chains out of China. This is another opportunity for India to attract global business. But we need to check all the right boxes like Beijing did.

It might take time, maybe five-six years minimum to savour the fruits of an *atmanirbhar* (self-reliant) *Bharat* instead of the very next quarter like many people are hoping. If we want to act on self-reliance, we need to focus on all segments of manufacturing, starting from big manufacturing companies to the Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME), which can feed the former.

However, unless we invest in Research and Development (R&D), unless we create products that are better and more economical than products made around the world and in

China, we can't sell them in internal or global markets. If we want to make *Atmanirbhar Bharat* more than a slogan, then we need to provide capital-rich global players an equal footing for their investment and have an open and consistent trade policy; an easy land acquisition policy; cheap and skilled labour and a consistent power supply.

According to the Government, the five pillars of the *Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyaan* focus on the economy, infrastructure, the system, a vibrant demography and the creation of internal demand. An economy is the sum total of many small components of business, starting from the consumer, markets, traders, banks, utility companies, manufacturers, Government policies and institutions. Hence, any leakage of resources will not bring about effective use of the same.

Infrastructure always remains a talking point in our country but no one has ever worked seriously towards developing it. As a result of this, many infrastructure projects have been delayed by as much as 20-

25 years. It is difficult to believe that projects conceptualised at a cost of ₹20 crore in 1968 cost ₹200 crore in 2010 and are still pending. If we are really interested in an *Atmanirbhar Bharat*, then fiscal self-discipline is mandatory and it must start from Government departments. Plus, we need to fix responsibility for time and cost overruns in order to get work done on time. India still lacks good infrastructure and *Atmanirbhar Bharat* will not be possible if we don't connect all the dots.

Consistent Government policies on trade and taxation are key to creating any manufacturing base as it takes time to reap the benefits of the same. The Government must announce policies for 15-20 years which can't be changed by any new Government of the future. Projects of national importance must not be scrapped or altered by a new set of Ministers.

Another key component that must be aligned is demography. Though India is a democratic country and everyone has the right to follow their own free will, if we want

to make India *atmanirbhar*, then we need to have a "India First" policy.

Self-reliance is not a short race, rather it is a marathon and can be completed only when all engines start firing in the desired direction and in synchronisation with each other. Start-ups can act as a catalyst and be stakeholders in manufacturing, service delivery and a support element in creating a consensus among the masses for this mega project.

The Government will act as the agent to expedite and bind the entire process by easing policies around it. Involve all stakeholders and give adequate compensation to them. If this is implemented, then it can be the biggest employment generator, forex earner and a huge support to the Indian economy.

To achieve a \$5 trillion economy from a \$2.8 trillion one in about five years, we need to achieve a growth rate of more than 15 per cent per annum. It can be done only by firing all engines of growth, including MSME and big industries.

(The writer is Associate Professor, JNU)



FOREIGN EYE



### MANY WAYS TO RESIST CHINA

Freedom of speech and of the Press, both vital to the rule of law and the city's vibrancy, are under attack. China is extending to Hong Kong the regime of media regulation and repression that it applies on the mainland. Today, it's the media. Tomorrow, who knows who will be China's next targets. But Hong Kongers will respond then, too, by demonstrating solidarity creatively. (The NYT editorial)



CAPSULE



Volvo Car offers Rs 3 lakh discount on XC40

**NEW DELHI:** Volvo Car India on Wednesday said it is offering a discount of Rs 3 lakh on the ex-showroom price of its SUV XC40. Under the 'Hassle-Free Offer', customers can buy the model at a special offer price of Rs 36.9 lakh and receive complimentary accessories worth Rs 1 lakh as well, Volvo Car India said in a statement. The XC40 is currently tagged at Rs 39.9 lakh (ex-showroom). "We want to create an ecosystem where our customers can focus on technology and comfort features of XC40 without worrying about the price.



Rupee settles 5 paise lower at 74.83 against \$

**MUMBAI:** The rupee slipped 5 paise to close at 74.83 (provisional) against the US dollar on Wednesday tracking muted domestic equities. The local unit opened at 74.78 at the interbank forex market, then lost ground and finally settled at 74.83 against the US dollar, down 5 paise over its last close of 74.78. During the session, the domestic unit witnessed an intra-day high of 74.77 and a low of 74.93 against the greenback. The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, fell 0.03 per cent to 93.59.

New tariff plan is not a new service: VIL counters Trai

**NEW DELHI:** Vodafone Idea Ltd (VIL) has justified its pay-more-for-priority-experience plan offered to its subscribers, and also said that telecom operators face a double whammy of having to make continuous investments in an era of call and data charges falling way below cost due to cut-throat competition. Responding to questions raised by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) over the priority plan, Vodafone Idea argued that a new tariff plan is not a new service. "It is not a new service and the service remains same... A new tariff plan is not a new service," VIL said in its reply to Trai.

'Don't reduce import duty on tea'

**KOLKATA:** The Consultative Committee of Plantation Associations (CCPA), the apex body of tea associations in India, has urged Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal not to reduce import duty on tea as any move in that direction will disturb the equilibrium of the industry. CCPA chairman Vivek Goenka in a letter to Goel said that any such move will lead to erosion of domestic prices and subsequently affect the economic viability of the tea gardens and livelihood of lakhs of people.

# MCX market making in 'options on goods' in gold

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Multi Commodity Exchange of India on Wednesday said it will launch a liquidity enhancement scheme in the newly launched segment 'options on goods' with gold mini contract.

The liquidity enhancement scheme, popularly known as market making, will start from September 1, MCX said in a circular.

"The Exchange, based on a competitive bidding process, will appoint the lowest (qualified) bidder in terms of 'bid incentive amount' as a single designated market maker for the product till the scheme remains in force. The maximum incentive bid amount is Rs 40 lakh per month," the exchange circular added.

The Securities and Exchange Board of India had allowed a liquidity enhancement scheme in 2018. Under the scheme, brokers and other market intermediaries are given incentives to bring in liquidity and



generate investor interest in securities for a specified period of time. MCX, which had launched options on futures in gold in 2017, had successfully experimented with market making in the contract in April-October 2018.

The average daily turnover in the gold options on futures, which was around Rs 82 crore during six months prior to introduction of the market

making in the contract, shot up to Rs 791 crore during the six-months of the market making.

The options on goods segment is much easier a product from traders' perspective and market making is likely to brighten the prospects of gold mini contract, particularly due to unprecedented interest in bullion trading due to the global rally to record in gold, MCX said.

## Tata Power June quarter profit grows 10 % to Rs 268 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Tata Power on Wednesday said its consolidated net profit rose by 10 per cent to Rs 268 crore for quarter ended June on the back of reduced expenses.

The company had posted a net profit of Rs 243 crore during the same period a year ago, Tata Power said in a BSE filing.

During April-June, the company reported a total income of Rs 6,540 crore as compared to Rs 7,874 crore in the year-ago quarter.

Total expenses during the quarter under review stood at Rs 6,555 crore as against Rs 7,228 crore in the year-ago period.

In a separate statement, the company said, it was able to maintain stable performance despite lower profits from Solar EPC businesses mainly on account of lower financing cost and stable performance across all clusters.

# Govt panel proposes 2 formats of business responsibility for cos

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In efforts to have a single source for all non-financial disclosures by corporates, a government-appointed panel has made various proposals on business responsibility reporting, including putting in place two formats for disclosing information.

The committee, constituted by the Ministry of Corporate Affairs in 2018, has proposed that the Business Responsibility Report should be called as the Business Responsibility and Sustainability Report (BRSR).

This would help better reflecting the "intent and scope of reporting requirement," the report said.

As per the report, reporting may be done by top 1,000 listed companies in terms of their market capitalisation or as prescribed by markets regulator Sebi.

"The reporting requirement may be extended by MCA



(Ministry of Corporate Affairs) to unlisted companies above specified thresholds of turnover and/or paid-up capital," it noted.

The panel has suggested two formats for disclosures -- a comprehensive format and a "lite version" -- and also called for implementation of the reporting requirements in a gradual and phased manner.

Smaller unlisted companies may adopt a lite version of the format, on a voluntary basis, it added.

The committee on Business Responsibility was constituted for finalising business responsibility reporting formats for listed and unlisted companies under the National Guidelines on Responsible Business Conduct (NGRBC).

Among others, the panel has recommended that the BRSR could be integrated with MCA 21 portal as that would ensure that all information already filed on the portal by companies would be automatically filled while filing the BRSR.

# Bharat Forge posts Rs 127.3 cr loss

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Bharat Forge on Wednesday reported a consolidated loss of 127.3 crore for the quarter ended June 30. The company had posted a consolidated profit of Rs 171.9 crore in April-June period of the previous fiscal, Bharat Forge said in a filing to the BSE.

The company's income during April-June period declined to Rs 1,199.2 crore from Rs 2,372.7 crore in the year-ago period. The spread of COVID-19 has severely impacted business in many countries, including India, and there has been severe disruption to regular business operations due to lockdown and other emergency measures, Bharat Forge said.

The group has made assessment of liquidity, recoverable values of its financial and non-



financial assets, including carrying value of its subsidiaries, and has concluded that there are no material adjustments required in the interim financial results. However, the impact assessment of COVID-19 is a continuous process, given the uncertainties associated with its nature and duration, it said. "The impact of global health pandemic might be different from that estimated as at the date of approval of these financial results. The group will continue to closely monitor any material changes to future economic conditions," the filing said.

## Man Industries June-qtr net grows over 4-fold to Rs 17 cr

**NEW DELHI:** Pipe manufacturer Man Industries (India) Ltd on Wednesday posted an over four-fold jump in consolidated net profit to Rs 17.11 crore for the June quarter, helped by increased income.

The company had posted a net profit of Rs 3.63 crore during the same period a year ago, it said in a BSE filing.

Total income increased to Rs 410.10 crore during the quarter under review, from Rs 244.87 crore earlier.

Total expenses also rose to Rs 386.23 crore from Rs 240.64 crore in April-June

period of the preceding fiscal. In a separate statement, the company's Chairman R C Mansukhani said, "All our plant operations have resumed successfully and we are back on track in terms of order execution."

"We are seeing good traction from domestic as well as international markets on the back of revival of demand from key geographies and domestic sector already doing well with ample opportunities from several upcoming oil and gas and water projects like Nal se Jal and river linking," he added.

## GST intel detects over Rs 17 cr tax evasion

PNS ■ BHOPAL

The GST intelligence officials have detected over Rs 17 crore tax evasion by a major cement manufacturer in Satna and arrested one of its directors, according to an official statement issued on Wednesday. They also conducted multiple searches in the states of Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh from August 5 to August 11 at various premises belonging to the cement manufacturer located at Maihar, Satna and their registered dealers and distributors, it said.

"Searches have indicated that substantial quantities of cement and clinker have been supplied clandestinely without payment of Goods & Service Tax (GST) in the states of MP and UP," the statement issued by the Directorate General of GST Intelligence (DGGI), Bhopal zonal unit. The searches were conducted at Maihar, Satna, Allahabad, Kushinagar, Agra, Kanpur and New Delhi. In all, 28 searches were conducted during the one-week long operation, it said.

# Thermax posts Rs 15 cr loss for Jun quarter

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Thermax Ltd on Wednesday reported a consolidated net loss of Rs 15.27 crore for the quarter ended June 30.

It had posted a Rs 62.76 crore net profit during the corresponding quarter of the previous financial year, Thermax Ltd said in a BSE filing.

The company during April-June 2020 reported a total income of Rs 685.86 crore. It had posted a total income of Rs 1,414.01 crore in the year-ago quarter.

Its total expenses during the June 2020 quarter stood at Rs 708.35 crore. It had stood at Rs 1,323.96 crore a year ago.

In a statement, it said Thermax Group Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer M S Unnikrishnan will retire on August 31, 2020, after serving the company for 13 years in the capacity.

Ashish Bhandari, who joined as the firm's joint MD on April 7, 2020, will succeed him as the new MD & CEO.

"The group's operations and financial results for the quarter were adversely impacted by the lockdown imposed to contain the spread of COVID-19.

## Sebi slaps Rs 25 lakh fine on entity for fraudulent trading

**NEW DELHI:** Capital markets regulator Sebi has imposed a penalty of Rs 25 lakh on Yochana Vyapaar Pvt Ltd for indulging in fraudulent trading in illiquid stock options segment on the BSE.

Trading activities of certain entities in the illiquid stock options segment on the exchange had come under the scanner of the watchdog, which conducted an investigation for the April 1, 2014 to September

30, 2015 period.

During that period, Sebi observed that a total 2,91,643 trades comprising substantial 81.38 per cent of all the trades executed in stock options of the BSE were non-genuine trades.

Yochana Vyapaar (noticee) was one of the entities who had indulged in creating artificial volume of 6,90,99,386 units through 614 non-genuine trades in 219 stock option contracts, as per the regulator.



The operations gradually resumed with requisite precautions during the quarter with limited availability of workforce and disrupted supply chain," according to the filing. It added that the results for

the June 2020 quarter are therefore not comparable with those for the previous quarter. "The group continues to monitor the economic effects of the pandemic while taking steps to improve its execution efficiencies and the financial outcome."

Thermax Chairperson Meher Pudumjee said, "On behalf of the board and the family, I thank Unnikrishnan for his association with Thermax for 28 long years."

## Fuel demand dips 11.7 pc in July

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's fuel demand is beginning to flatline after showing signs of returning to life, as consumption dipped 11.7 per cent in July, official data showed.

Fuel consumption, a barometer of economic activity in the country, had slumped by over 45 per cent in April as nationwide lockdown halted most vehicular traffic and shut industries. However, with easing of lockdown restrictions, the demand picked up in May and June with month-on-month increase in consumption numbers.

However, mini-lockdowns imposed by states to contain the spread of coronavirus seemed to have stopped this recovery, with fuel demand falling 3.5 per cent in July over the previous month.

# Deutsche Bank infuses Rs 2,700 cr in India

PNS ■ MUMBAI

German lender Deutsche Bank on Wednesday announced a capital infusion of Rs 2,700 crore into its India operations for expansion across segments.

This is the second time in less than two years that the bank has infused money into local operations consisting of 17 branches, after the Rs 3,800 crore investment in early 2019.

Banks have to set aside capital for every new loan that they make and also when the loan slips into non-performing territory.

A bank statement said the fresh capital will be used to support further expansion of Deutsche Bank India across all of its businesses, including corporate banking, investment banking, and interna-



tional private banking that have been consistently growing over the years.

Its chief country officer Kaushik Shaparia said the incremental capital injection should be seen as a strong validation of the lender's confidence in the business model and potential in India.

It is also "demonstrative of our intent to further deepen our presence here", he said, adding that the recent months have thrown up opportunities to work ever more closely with clients and support them with services and advice in steering through the tough environment.

# Ultratech Cement plans Rs 1,500 cr capex in FY21

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Largest cement manufacturer Ultratech Cement has lined up investment of Rs 1,500 crore in FY21 in multiple initiatives, its chairman Kumar Mangalam Birla said on Wednesday.

The company is also targeting to increase its annual capacity to 118 million tonnes from 114.8 million tonnes currently, he informed the company's shareholders during its virtual annual general meeting. Birla, who heads the diversified conglomerate Aditya Birla Group, said periods of turmoil create champions, adding that Ultratech has the



capacity, leadership across markets and a strong balance sheet to emerge as one.

"Your company has planned total capex cash outlay of Rs 1,500 crore for a range of key initiatives," he informed the shareholders.

This will include spends on

installing 66 MW of waste heat recovery systems (WHRS), 1.2 million tonnes per annum brownfield cement capacity addition in West Bengal and Bihar, pending work for phase 2 of Bara grinding unit in Uttar Pradesh, coal block development in Madhya Pradesh, new ready mix concrete plants and other plant upkeep capex, he said.

The consolidated cement capacity will stand augmented to 118 million tonnes per annum, and green power capacity will increase to 185 MW for WHRS and over 350 MW for solar and wind power, he said.

# Natco Pharma Q1 net profit declines 14.5 pc to Rs 122 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Drug firm Natco Pharma on Wednesday reported a 14.49 per cent decline in its consolidated net profit to Rs 122.1 crore for the quarter ended June mainly on account of margin pressure on formulations.

The company had posted a net profit of Rs 142.8 crore for the corresponding period of the previous fiscal, Natco Pharma said in a BSE filing.

Total income of the company stood at Rs 582.1 crore for the quarter under consideration as against Rs 513.3 crore for the same period year ago,



it added.

During the quarter, the company faced margin pressure on

both domestic and international formulations, Natco Pharma said.

"In spite of lower margins during the first quarter, the company is confident of its business for remaining part of the financial year based on the order book and earnings outlook. The company expects a growth of over 25 per cent in its earnings for FY2020-21 compared to prior year," it added.

The board of directors has approved an interim dividend of Rs 1.25 per equity share of Rs 2 each for FY2020-21, the filing said.

Shares of Natco Pharma were trading at Rs 843.60 per scrip on BSE, down 2.57 per cent over previous close.

## CIL seeks lower rail tariff

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned CIL on Wednesday said it has sought 15 per cent distance-based freight concession from Indian Railways for transportation of domestic coal to customers located at a distance of 701 to 1,400 km from its mines. The move is aimed at broadening the client base and bring in more customers under import substitution plans, CIL said in a statement.

Out of 126 coal-based thermal plants linked with CIL, 14 plants located over 1,400 km distance are eligible for the freight concession presently.



## RIISING THROUGH THEM ALL

Just when a lot of us were on the verge of losing hope and some others of giving up, a few from the city decided to make the most of what they do best, to both - be productive and make some quick money. *The Pioneer's* RACHEL DAMMALA speaks to the community of such newbie artists in town, who decided to neither give in to the uncertainties nor give up, but rise through them all

He enjoyed making art, he made a lot of fan art that stemmed from his love for them, and to his surprise, his work was reposted by celebrities like Amanda Cerny and Kat Graham among others. Aryaman Singh, all of 18, decided to and succeeded at perfecting his art of graphite pencil and colour pencil portraits amid the lockdown and is now also making money out of it, because why not! "I never thought I'd make money off this someday. After celebs reposted my work, I began getting requests from friends and followers on Instagram, and after a few of them, I asked myself, 'Why not monetise it' and that's how it all started," shares the BBA 1st year student, who hopes to be a businessman one day.

Then there's Harika Bantupalli, who's more things than one — a digital nomad who's a writer, editor, gourmand, teacher, and more. She's one who is always trying her hand at different skills and this lockdown, it was Digital Art. "Earlier, I'd draw or doodle a bit on paper and then scan it and illustrate and make phone covers, etc., for myself. It was during the lockdown that I received my iPad and began exploring proper digital art using the Apple pencil," says Harika. Now that she's taught herself well enough, she is making money out of it. "Since I'm already in the field of editing where I offer proof-reading, formatting services, mentoring, coaching to writers, etc., I now have added Digital art for

book covers too, as part of my package under harika.ink," she adds.

Yashwanth Busani started wall art as a hobby. He decorated his home and shared pictures of the same with friends who loved it and asked if he could do the same for them too. He later began getting more and more requests from well-wishers and their friends. "That's when I was asked 'why do it for free?' and that's how it turned monetary. I never saw this coming, but the lockdown did give me more time and thought to polish my art, and make money from it too," says the IT professional.

Now meet the sisters behind Mehraan Collection — Mehak Sisodia and Simran Sisodia whose brand is a combination of both their names. They were like any two normal siblings who watched a lot of videos about clay art and one day decided to try their hand at them. What started out as a fun DIY project with polymer clay, translated into something creative and beautiful, and they are now spreading their love for statement jewellery through their home-grown brand. "We make statement handmade earrings and pendants with Polymer Clay. We also customize as per client requirements. Each design is made in small batches and we do not mass produce. We take orders via Instagram or our online store on InstaMojo. Shipping is done through our courier partners. If you place an order from our online store, MojoExpress

takes care of the shipping and if the order is placed through any other platform DTDC takes care of the shipping, as simple as that," explains Simran, the older of the two siblings.

"During the lockdown, despite all the noise and mental disturbances, we were fortunate enough to have found our happy place," Simran adds. The sibling duo soon hopes to take it big and venture further into creative jewellery.

Srinidhi Mateti, another 18-year-old, who, like most teenagers with a flair for card making and more, used the period during the lockdown to focus on lettering and decided to combine art with letter words, phrases, quotes, illustrations and also tried adding her photography skills to make money off her love for them all. These combined, and boom, she has been receiving commissions for customised work after people saw and loved her work on Instagram. "I recently discovered gouche - a kind of paint, considered the love child of water acrylics, and the artwork has been coming out great. I've been receiving more work ever since," shares Srinidhi, who is still discovering her skills, honing them, and is yet to zero-in on what she wants to pursue as a career.

The lockdown sure has given several artists like them and more a lot of time to reflect upon what they've always seen as a hobby and helped them discover that there is so much more that they could do than just deriving joy and fun out of it.



Mehak Sisodia and Simran Sisodia



## Journey to entrepreneurial success!

With more and more youngsters looking to be their own boss and considering entrepreneurship today, here's a book by Kanthi Dutt, a young entrepreneur from Hyderabad, that promotes and teaches right leadership, the why's and how's of life-altering decisions, and more. In an exclusive chat with SHIKHA DUGGAL, he talks about what made him want to write the book, what made him who he is today and more

If there is one aspect of entrepreneurship people want to get right, it is leadership. Because with the right leadership you can get your workforce to reach heights they didn't think they could achieve. And to be a good leader, you have to make learning a priority. Kanthi Dutt, a young entrepreneur from Hyderabad has launched a brand new book titled *Rediscovering path to success*, which promises to hold you to the y-junctions of your life helping you know the why's and how's of life-altering decisions. The foreword for the book has been written by none other than politician Renuka Chowdhury!

"I always believe that we should rediscover ourselves with the ever-changing environment and attain satisfaction in whichever path we are travelling. So it's important to re-discover at different stages in life, hence the book," shares the author of the book. 'Rediscovering path to success' has the right balance of facts, stories, inspiration, actions, and somehow leave you changed after-



ward. The book offers you a chance to learn about Kanthi's path to success at such a young age and point of view helping to change perspectives and also leading to unexpected oppor-

tunities — it can inspire someone to launch a start-up, pivot to a new business model or even alter a life approach.

"My book will help my readers grow both in life

and in business in order to become a successful entrepreneur. Self-discovery is the key to success. In this busy urban lifestyle, we often miss doing that! This book is guaranteed to change your life forever.

**THE BOOK PROMISES TO HOLD YOU TO THE Y-JUNCTIONS OF YOUR LIFE HELPING YOU KNOW THE WHY'S AND HOW'S OF LIFE-ALTERING DECISIONS.**

Not only will it teach you all the do's and don'ts of the entrepreneurial life, but it will also teach you how to be a better socialite," adds the business tycoon.

As an entrepreneur, your ultimate goal is to take your business idea towards success which cannot happen overnight. There is no end to learning in the entrepreneurial business. Every industry keeps on changing and growing with time. To match up with the pace and survival in the industry, this book is a must-read!



## A photo-journey through 'diverse Asia'

A kaleidoscopic journey across Bali, Hong Kong, Kyrgyzstan, Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam captures the diverse landscapes, textures and people of Asia. The exhibit is live in an online exhibition titled 'Diverse Asia' and is available on view till August 23.

The pictures are captured by Ajit Rana, who swears by two philosophies in life - taking the road less travelled and following your heart. His photography is driven by a passion for nature,

food, human emotions and different cultures. The present exhibition is an example of Ajit's travels over the last couple of years in Asia, which offers a rich palette of choices making each country a unique experience.

From the tropical luxuriance of Myanmar to the sparse landscapes of the high plateau of Central Asia, from the modern skyscrapers of Hong Kong to Hanoi's narrow frontage buildings, one is faced with shifts of shape, colour and people.

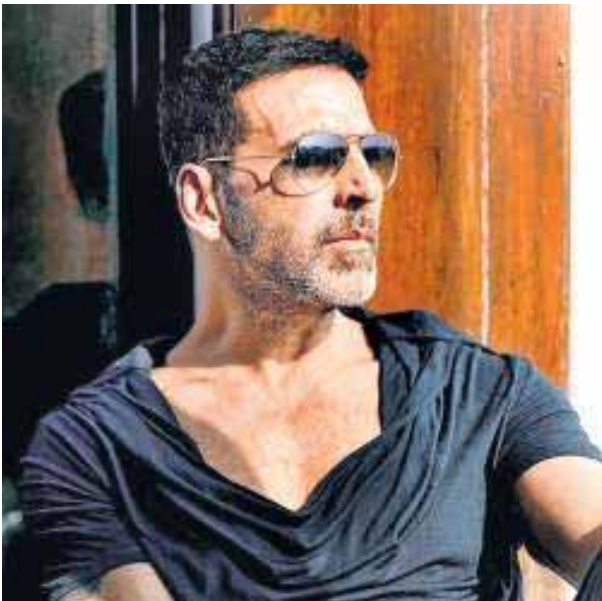
Equally unique is Bali, with its extraordinary outpouring of Hindu heritage

temples and sculptures, studied within a largely Muslim Indonesia. The diversity lives in Asia's landscapes, cities, natural habitat and most of all it's people. Each culture has an ancient history and traditions that stem from an authentic heritage.

The exhibition on the India International Centre website aims to give a flavour of the diversity of the region, without any pretences. As per the photographer, no single exhibit collection can do justice to even one of the country's richness, let alone what is arguably the world's most varied continent.



# AKSHAY KUMAR ONLY B'WOOD STAR AMONG FORBES' HIGHEST-PAID ACTORS OF 2020



Wrestler-turned-movie star Dwayne Johnson clung to the top slot on the list of the world's highest-paid male actors for a second straight year, according to an annual tally released by Forbes magazine on Tuesday.

Johnson, also known by his ring name The Rock, earned \$87.5 million from June 1, 2019 to June 1, 2020, Forbes said, including \$23.5 million from Netflix Inc to star in movie thriller Red Notice. He also benefited from his Project Rock fitness wear

line for Under Armour Inc. Ryan Reynolds, who co-stars with Johnson in Red Notice, came in second in the Forbes ranking of male stars. He earned \$20 million for that film, plus another \$20 million for Netflix movie Six Underground, the magazine said, part of his \$71.5 million total for the one-year period.

Actor and producer Mark Wahlberg, star of Netflix action comedy Spenser Confidential, finished third with \$58 million. Next on the list were actors Ben Affleck with \$55 million and Vin Diesel

with \$54 million. Akshay Kumar, the only Bollywood star in the top 10, landed in sixth place with earnings of \$48.5 million. Most of his income came from product endorsements, Forbes said.

Rounding out the list were Hamilton creator Lin-Manuel Miranda, actors Will Smith and Adam Sandler, and martial-arts star Jackie Chan.

The figures are pre-tax and do not include deductions for fees given to agents, managers and lawyers, Forbes said. The magazine releases a separate list of highest-paid actresses.

# Swara Bhaskar plays action heroine in new web series

Actress Swara Bhaskar says her fans will get to see her performing some high-octane action sequences as a cop in an upcoming digital project.

Talking about the series, titled *Flesh*, Swara said, "Human and child trafficking is one of the most damning realities of the world and it's important that we keep highlighting the issue through the fictional content that we create."

"I am honoured to be a part of *Flesh* and given the opportunity to work with the team was an absolute pleasure. For the very first time in my career, I will be seen essaying the role of a cop which I am hoping will be appreciated by fans. They will witness me performing some high-octane action sequences," added the actress.

The web series, which is a crime-thriller, also stars Akshay Oberoi, Vidya Malvade and Mahima Makwana. *Flesh* is written by Pooja Ladha Surti and is directed by Danish Aslam.

The series will stream on Eros Now from August 21.



# Rhea made 569 calls to ex-manager, called Aamir too

More details are emerging from Rhea Chakraborty's call records which show that the girlfriend of late Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput was also in touch with several celebrities like superstar Aamir Khan, Shradha Kapoor, Rakul Preet Singh, Aditya Roy Kapoor, Rana Daggubati, Sunny Singh and dance maestro late Saroj Khan.

Rhea is being investigated by the CBI and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) along with her family members in connection with the death of Sushant Singh Rajput on the basis of the Bihar Police complaint filed by Sushant's father K.K. Singh.

According to the call detail records of Rhea, she had called Aamir Khan once while the superstar reverted to her in the form of three SMSs.

There has been much debate over the silence of Bollywood's three Khans (Salman, Shahrukh and Aamir) in Sushant's death case till date. And now, Aamir Khan's name has been found in Rhea's call records.

According to the CDR, Rhea made 569 calls to Shruti Modi, Sushant's former manager and the latter called her 222 times.

Rhea was also in constant touch with Sushant's house manager Samuel Miranda. The CDR showed that she called him over 259 times while the latter called her 28 times.

The call records showed that Rhea had made 30 calls to actor Rakul Preet Singh while the latter called her up 14 times. The two also exchanged two SMSs between them.

The CDR also revealed that Rhea has called Aashiqui 2 fame star Aditya Roy Kapoor 16 times while he made seven calls to her. Similarly, she called up Shradha Kapoor thrice while the latter called her up twice.

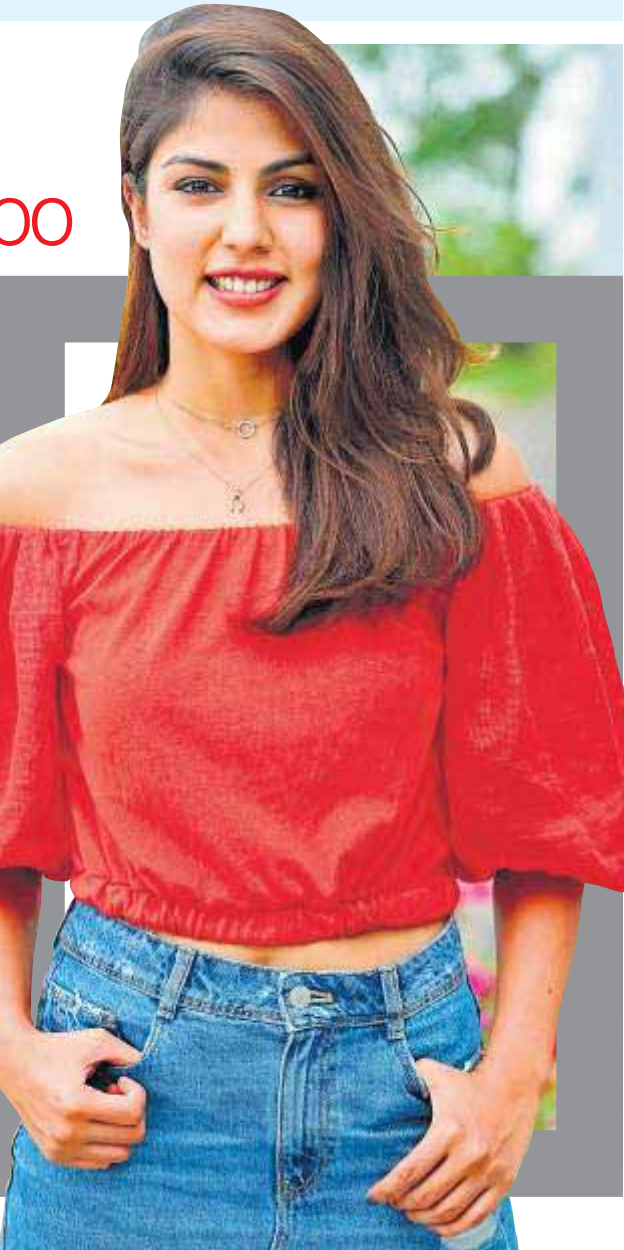
The actor was also in touch with *Sonu Ke Titu Ki Sweeti* actor Sunny Singh. Rhea had called her seven times, while the latter called her back four times.

Similarly, Rana Daggubati, who starred in the *Baahubali* franchise, was also in touch with Rhea who had called him seven times and he called her back four times.

Dance maestro Saroj Khan who passed away last month was also in touch with Rhea. According to call records, Rhea called Saroj Khan thrice while the latter called her back twice and the two also shared one SM.

The CDR further revealed that Rhea was also in touch with Mahesh Bhatt. In the month of January this year, the two exchanged 16 calls among themselves. Nine calls were made to Bhatt by Rhea while he called her seven times. The ED has recorded the statement of Rhea twice, her brother Showik thrice, her father Indrajit once, her ex-manager Shruti Modi thrice, Sushant's house manager Samuel Miranda twice, her Chartered Accountant Ritesh Shah once, Sushant's CA Sandeep Sridhar once and Sushant's sister Mitu Singh once.

On Monday, a CBI team also recorded the statement of Sushant's father and his elder sister Rani Singh.



# KAREENA AND SAIF ANNOUNCE: WE ARE EXPECTING AN ADDITION TO OUR FAMILY



Actress Kareena Kapoor and her husband, actor Saif Ali Khan, announced on Wednesday that they were expecting an addition to their family.

"We are very pleased to announce that we are expecting an addition to our family!! Thank you to all our well wishers for all their love and support. Saif and Kareena," said the announcement issued on Wednesday afternoon by the star couple through their office.

Saif and Kareena tied the knot on October 16, 2012. The couple have a son Taimur, who was born on December 20, 2016.

Interestingly, the announcement from the couple came on Wednesday, which happens to be the birthday of Bollywood actress Sara Ali Khan, Saif's daughter from his first wedding with actress Amrita Singh.

## FUN

### ARCHIE



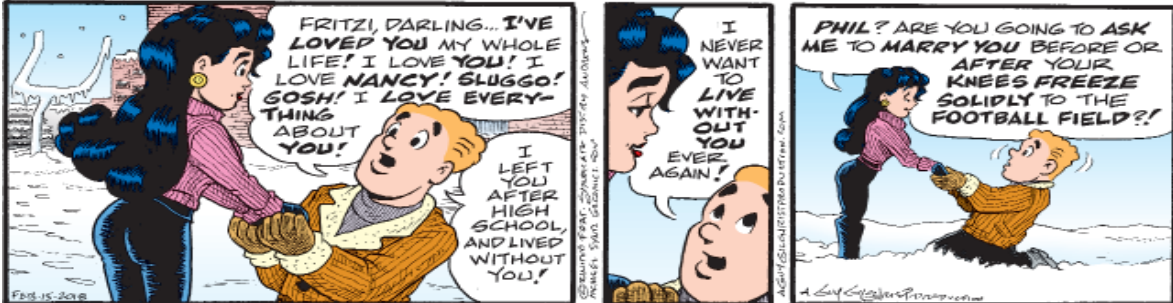
### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### GARFIELD



### NANCY



### GINGER MEGGS



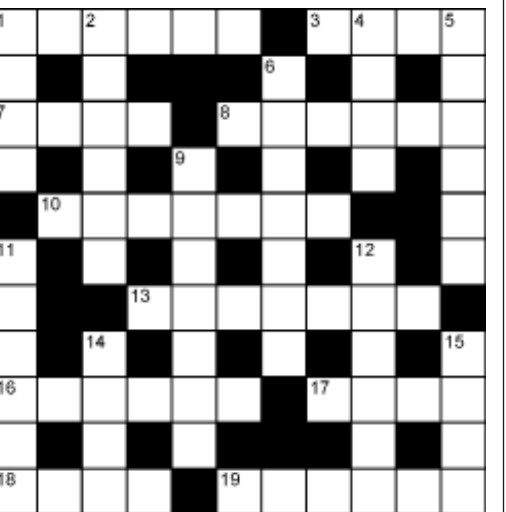
### REALITY CHECK



### SPEED BUMP



### CROSSWORD



#### ACROSS

- Noon
- Costing nothing
- Contact by telephone
- Purchasing
- Rich
- Very sore
- A floor covering
- Large boat
- A red gemstone
- Selected
- Going very quickly
- Less dirty
- Cup and
- Small trees
- A nipping sea creature
- Twirl around

#### DOWN

- One of the planets
- A meal
- Water from the sky
- Ninety less ten



### SUDOKU

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

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

#### Rules

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



Not just *Wild Dog* and Prakash Raj-starrer *Ranga Marthanda*, *Bigg Boss* helped him bag a Hindi-Telugu web series, where he is playing one of the leads alongside Tony Luke. In a candid conversation with NAGARAJ GOUD, the actor gives insights about his upcoming projects and more

# ALI REZA ON THE MOVE

first learned about my *Bigg Boss* experience. He wanted to know whether I was interested in playing only lead roles or have any leaning towards supporting roles as well. I told him I'm okay with any role as long as it's a good one. He asked me to come down to his office afterward before offering me a significant part in *Wild Dog*. He didn't even audition me, as he was impressed with the monologue I performed on the show," Reza tells us animatedly in an interview.

Not just *Wild Dog* and Prakash Raj-starrer *Ranga Marthanda*, *Bigg Boss* helped him bag a Hindi-Telugu web series suspense thriller for ZEE5, *The Expiry Date*, where he is playing one of the leads alongside Tony Luke (Hindi movie *Badla* fame). "I've also signed a Hindi web film with a new production house. Then there is a music video I will be shooting from the 17th of this month," he shares.

The experience of sharing screen space with Nagarjuna in *Wild Dog*, he maintains, was wonderful. "Sir is very cool and down-to-earth. He never made us feel that we were working with a superstar. My conversations with him mostly centered on fitness, his eating habits, skin and hair etc," he smiles.

Right now, Reza is looking forward to gauging the reac-

tion of audiences for his gig in *Palasa 1978* director Karuna Kumar's *Metro Kathalu* for *aha*. His role alongside Sana's forms one of the four stories of the anthology drama. "My episode is titled *Ghatana*. I play a role who meets with an accident after he comes out of a cinema hall. A small story unfolds from there. I can't reveal more as the episode's duration is only 20 minutes but it's a situation that can happen to anyone at any time. When Karuna garu narrated the story, I found it natural and was immediately drawn towards it," he notes.

*Metro Kathalu* was shot when coronavirus positive cases in Hyderabad began to spike exponentially but that hardly dissuaded Reza from accepting it. "When the makers asked me whether I have any reservations about shooting, I promptly replied with a no. COVID-19 never scared me. Instead of getting scared and hunkered down at home, I wouldn't have minded if I got infected," he declares.

As the drama marks his debut on an OTT platform, Reza is excited and at the same time confident about it winning the audience's love. "With the advent of OTT, actors like me can be a part of shows where we get to play the lead roles and enrich our craft further," he points out.

Before *Bigg Boss*, the Hyderabad-lad has been a part of a string of films which didn't lead him anywhere in Telugu cinema landscape. While conceding that it did bother him, he expresses happi-

ness where he is right now after starting his career 14 years ago with "a junior artiste kind of model role" in Nagarjuna-starrer *Boss*. The experience of being part of small films which had little takers made his wiser. It is the reason why he wants to associate with big films playing key supporting roles for a certain time period. "The idea is to get more visibility and acceptance from people before branching out to lead roles again," he reveals his plans, signing off.



is Nani-starrer *V* headed for a direct-to-web release? At least that's what the buzz is pointing at. Despite repeated assurances from Nani that the film will see a theatrical release, multiple reports doing the rounds indicate producer Dil Raju has clinched a handsome OTT deal for the film, which is a win-win situation for both the parties. The film is believed to drop in the first week of next month.

With the film held back from release after its Ugadi deadline couldn't be met due to the lockdown triggered by the pandemic, the rapidly escalating interest rates pushed Raju to explore the digital offers on the table, word on the street has it. At the same time, some other unverified reports indicate that OTT release is just another rumour and as the film is Nani's landmark 25th, the makers are still looking at a theatrical roll out. Amid all this though, the makers chose to remain mum-not even releasing a statement (till we went to press time).

An action thriller, directed by Mohan Krishna Indraganti, *V*, co-stars Sudheer Babu, Nani, Aditi Rao Hydari, Jagapathi Babu, Vennela Kishore, Nassar and Srinivas Avasarala.

## V back in the news



## After *Metro Kathalu*, another anthology drama from *aha*

Gearing up for the release of *Palasa 1978* director Karuna Kumar's *Metro Kathalu* tomorrow, *aha* think-tank, in its bid to ramp-up production activities further, has given consent to another anthology drama. Prasanna, Varalaxmi Sarath Kumar, Kannada Kishore, Gayathrie, Abhirami Venkatachalam, Shantanu Bhagyaraj, Rohini and Jayaprakash are spearheading the show.

A source close to the development tells us that the show has recently moved to floors in Chennai in adherence with all the COVID-19 guidelines. "It's a four-episode anthology drama being shot in Telugu. All the four episodes will run with a similar theme. Sujatha Narayanan and Devasena are producing it, while three directors Barath Neelakantan, Siva Ananth and Sarjun KM are manning the director's chair."

Barath and Sarjun have directed Tamil

films like *K13* and *Airaa*, while Ananth has made his directorial debut with Siddharth-starrer *Chukkalo Chandrudu* in Telugu in the noughties.

The source further adds that the show's shoot is likely to be wrapped up by mid-September, with *aha* planning to slot it for an October drop.

The anthology show will be a long list of shows that *aha* is banking on to emerge as a one-stop destination for Telugu entertainment, particularly web shows. They've recently agreed to bankroll the screen adaptation of Archana Sarat's novel *Birds of Prey - The Hunt Begins*, to feature Sarath Kumar in the lead. A psychological crime thriller that deals with the theme of child abuse and how it affects the children, Pradeep Nayyar, Goutham Vasudev Menon's former associate, is directing it.

— NG



## Nishikant Kamat hospitalised in Hyd with liver cirrhosis

Filmmaker Nishikant Kamat is unwell and admitted to hospital in The city. The filmmaker is reportedly battling liver cirrhosis and his condition is critical.

The 50-year-old filmmaker has battled liver cirrhosis in the past, which has relapsed again, according to a report in spotboye.com.

Kamat is known for

directing Bollywood films like the Ajay Devgn-Tabu starrer "Drishyam", Irrfan Khan-starrer "Madaari" and the John Abraham starrers "Force" and "Rocky Handsome", among others.

He has also directed critically acclaimed Marathi films like his debut directorial "Dombivali Fast" and "Lai Bhaari". He also featured as an actor in the Marathi film "Saatchya Aat Gharat" and his 2016 directorial "Rocky Handsome".



## SS Rajamouli and family test negative for COVID

Nearly two weeks after he said that he and his family members have tested coronavirus positive, SS Rajamouli on Wednesday revealed that he and the family have now tested negative. Taking to Twitter once again, he noted that they've completed two

weeks in quarantine and are devoid of any symptoms. "Completed 2 weeks of quarantine! No symptoms. Tested just for the sake of it... It is negative for all of us... Doctor said we need to wait 3 weeks from now to see if we've developed enough antibodies for plasma donation! (Sic)," the director, whose fame transcended boundaries courtesy

his two-part costume drama Baahubali, shared the information. Filmmakers like Puri Jagannadh and Harish Shankar immediately expressed their relief on their colleague testing negative.

Before the coronavirus-induced nationwide lockdown was announced in March, Rajamouli was working on his ambitious period drama *RRR*,

starring Jr NTR and Ram Charan. He was at the forefront along with others when it came to getting the consent of permission from Telugu states governments to resume shootings in June. While the industry did get the go-ahead, a surge in positive cases in GHMC limits meant that Rajamouli and Co. had to abort their plans.



## Sanjay Dutt diagnosed with lung cancer

Actor Sanjay Dutt has been diagnosed with lung cancer, it was revealed on Tuesday. The news was confirmed by trade analyst and film industry insider Komal Nahta on Tuesday night. "Sanjay Dutt diagnosed with lung cancer. Let's pray for his speedy recovery," tweeted Nahta on his verified Twitter account, @KomalNahta.

According to reports, Dutt will fly to the US for treatment soon. Earlier on Tuesday afternoon, as the news spread that the 61-year-old actor may have cancer, Dutt had taken to social media to urge well-wishers not to worry or unnecessarily speculate.

"Hi friends, I am taking a short break from work for some medical treatment. My family and friends are with me and I urge my well-wishers not to worry or unnecessarily speculate. With your love and good wishes, I will be back soon," he tweeted on his verified account, @duttсанjay.

Dutt's health came into focus last Saturday evening when he was rushed to hospital in Mumbai after complaining of chest discomfort and breathlessness. The actor had subsequently been discharged from hospital.

## Cancer survivors Manisha Koirala, Yuvraj Singh pen messages for Sanjay Dutt

Cancer survivors, actress Manisha Koirala and former cricketer Yuvraj Singh, have taken to social media to pen words of encouragement and prayers for Bollywood actor Sanjay Dutt, who has been diagnosed with lung cancer.

Manisha Koirala is not only a good friend of Sanjay Dutt but has been his frequent co-star since the early nineties.

On Wednesday, Manisha Koirala took to her verified Twitter account and wrote to Dutt, who is fondly referred to as Baba in the industry, "Sadden to hear about your health challenge dear baba @duttсанjay .. but I know you are tougher !! There has

been tremendous struggles in your life and you overcame them, this too shall be yet another win .. praying for your well-being."

Former cricketer Yuvraj Singh on Wednesday tweeted on his verified account: "You are, have and always will be a fighter @duttсанjay. I know the pain it causes

but I also know you are strong and will see this tough phase through. My prayers and best wishes for your speedy recovery."

Shortly before that in the afternoon, the actor had taken to social media to inform his fans and well-wishers that he is taking a short break from work due to medical treatment.

According to reports, the 61-year-old actor will fly to the US for treatment soon.





## Most Read NEWS

### Motorcycle 'Jugaad' for waterlogged roads is here!

The Indian spirit of jugaad never fails to impress. The Hindi word, which has even made it to the Oxford English dictionary, roughly translates to a clever hack. Jugaad is often celebrated as an example of the Indian spirit of resourcefulness and enterprise. It signifies doing more with less, or making the best out of meagre resources available. Videos and photos that embody the spirit of jugaad often go viral on social media and invariably garner praise for the innovation they display. This time, it is a jugaad for riding motorcycles on waterlogged streets that is winning a lot of appreciation on social media. The videos which have surfaced on Twitter and are being widely circulated online show a couple of men riding bikes on waterlogged streets, which is generally not recommended, especially if the water level is above the exhaust. These men, however, have made modifications to their motorcycles which make them easier to drive on waterlogged roads. IAS officer Awanish Sharan praised their jugaad in a tweet shared on Tuesday. "Have never seen before!! 'Jugaad' at its best," he wrote while sharing the video.



### World's most expensive mask to cost Rs 11 crore

You may have seen some designer face masks out there, but they can't compare to the creation by a high-end jeweller. Luxury jewelry brand Yvel, out of Israel, is creating what they say is the world's most expensive COVID-19 face mask. The custom-made, ultra-luxe mask is making safety sparkle. When it's finished, the 18-karat white gold face covering will be encrusted with 3,600 white and black diamonds and can be fitted with the top-rated N99 filters. The jeweler says it was commissioned by a Chinese businessman living in the U.S. He's paying \$1.5 million dollars for the mask. Designer and owner at Yvel, Isaac Levy, says the man who requested the mask had three conditions. "The first one, it must be a N99 approved by the FDA and the European standards," Levy said. "The second condition was that it will be delivered before Dec. 31 this year and the third condition, which was the easiest to fulfill, was that it will be the most expensive mask in the world." Another designer at Yvel says he's never seen anything like the mask. Bezael Cooper says, "Setting this many diamonds is a little bit stressful, but we'll get by." The glitzed-up face mask may not be a practical piece of protective equipment to wear. It is expected to weight over half a pound.



### Air pollution making honey bees sick

Whether it's exhaust fumes from cars or smoke from power plants, air pollution is an often invisible threat that is a leading cause of death worldwide. Breathing air laced with heavy metals, nitrogen oxides and fine particulate matter has been linked to a range of chronic health conditions, including lung problems, heart disease, stroke and cancer. If air pollution can harm human health in so many different ways, it makes sense that other animals suffer from it too. Airborne pollutants affect all kinds of life, even insects. In highly polluted areas of Serbia, for instance, researchers found pollutants lingering on the bodies of European honeybees. Car exhaust fumes are known to interrupt the scent cues that attract and guide bees towards flowers, while also interfering with their ability to remember scents. Now, a new study from India has revealed how air pollution may be depleting the health of honey bees in the wild. These effects may not kill bees outright. But like humans repeatedly going to work under heavy stress or while feeling unwell, the researchers found that air pollution made bees sluggish in their daily activities and could be shortening their lives.



### 20,000 paper birds help fund Covid-19 units

A flock of 20,000 multicoloured origami birds has been installed in a cathedral in Brussels, Belgium, as part of a fundraising artwork that has paid for two Covid-19 units at a local hospital. Suspended from the ceiling of the medieval Cathedral of Saint Michael and Saint Gudula by thin wires, the paper creations have come from as far afield as Hong Kong, New York and Tokyo, after Belgian designer Charles Kaisin asked people to send in home-made birds, or deposit them in boxes in 160 shops around Brussels. Each bird was matched by a donation from companies including French energy firm Engie, raising 101,625 euros (\$119,744) for two units for Covid-19 patients at the Erasmus hospital in Brussels. "I had a very serious heart surgery and I was well taken care of by this hospital. It's why I wanted to help them," Kaisin told Reuters. Kaisin also organised an art auction which raised a further 300,000 euros (\$353,000) for the hospital, which he said would support its medical research, including into the side effects of potential Covid-19 treatments.



### No action for Blue Tigers this year

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian football team will not see any action this year with the Asian qualifying matches for the 2022 FIFA World Cup on Wednesday getting postponed to 2021 owing to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The Asian Football Confederation postponed all men's qualifiers scheduled in October and November for the 2022 World Cup and the 2023 Asian Cup. India's last international match was the joint qualifying round match against Oman in Muscat in November last year, which they had lost 0-1.

Though out of contention for a place in the next round of World Cup qualifiers, India are still in the reckoning for a spot in the 2023 Asian Cup. They were scheduled to play Qatar at home on October

8 followed by matches against Afghanistan (home) and Bangladesh (away) in November.

A third-place finish in the group will help India get a direct berth in the third round of the qualifiers for the 2023 Asian Cup.

Both FIFA and AFC stated that the decision was taken keeping in mind the safety of all participants during the Covid-19 pandemic.

The games will be rescheduled in 2021. India are currently fourth in Group E with three points from five games. Qatar top the table with 13 points with Oman a point behind them in second.

Eight group winners and four best runners-up will progress to the continent's 12-team final qualifying stage for the World Cup.

## LATE WINNER

Ocampos' 88th minute header break Wolves hearts; Shakhtar thump Basel to reach semis

AFP ■ DUISBURG

Sevilla qualified for the semi-finals of the Europa League on Tuesday after Lucas Ocampos' late header broke Wolverhampton Wanderers' hearts, while Shakhtar Donetsk thumped Basel 4-1 to join the Spaniards in the last four.

Five-time competition winners Sevilla face Manchester United in Cologne on Sunday thanks to a brilliant header from Argentine Ocampos with less than two minutes left on the clock which gave them a deserved 1-0 win, while Shakhtar take on Inter Milan on Monday in another intriguing tie.

Sevilla dominated their English opponents over the course of the match, as a tired-looking Wolves'



Sevilla players celebrate after Lucas Ocampos scores Spanish club's first goal against Wolves Europa League/Twitter

dreams of European glory ended with a whimper.

"I am very proud of my players. We needed to have lots of patience against a very good team," said Sevilla coach Julien Lopetegui, whose team are now unbeaten in 19 matches in all competitions, to BT Sport.

"We have ambition we work very hard... but we are going to play against Manchester United... the biggest team in world football."

Premier League outfit Wolves thought they were set to make the perfect start in the 11th minute when

Adam Traore set off on a sensational surge towards goal from his own half and was chopped down in the area by Diego Carlos.

However, Raul Jimenez, who had scored all of his previous eight penalties for Wolves, sent a weak spot-kick towards Yassine Bounou, who could hardly believe his luck as he battled the Mexican's tame shot aside.

There were claims that Bounou had left his line while Sevilla players seemed to enter the area before the

penalty was taken, but in any case, that was to be Wolves' last shot on target of the match as chances became hard to come by.

In Gelsenkirchen, Shakhtar booked their spot in the last four with a commanding win over Basel that will give Inter Milan something to think about ahead of their semi-final clash on Monday.

"I'm feeling amazing because we have worked hard and we trust we can reach the final," said goalscorer Junior Moraes.



"If you want to test yourself, you have to play against teams at this high level."

The Ukrainian side got off to a flyer thanks to Brazil-born Moraes, who headed home Marlos' corner with less than two minutes on the clock, and they never looked back from that point on.

Taison put Shakhtar two ahead 20 minutes later when his deflected shot flashed past Basel's bamboozled goalkeeper Dorde Nikolic.

Alan Patrick put the result beyond doubt from the penalty spot with 14 minutes left after Taison's burst into the box was ended by a clumsy challenge from Basel defender Yannick Marchand.

Shakhtar rounded off a fine display in the 88th minute when right-back Dodo combined with Tete before smashing home a superb finish.

Ricky van Wolfswinkel's close-range strike for Basel a minute into stoppage time made no difference to a thumping defeat for the Swiss.

## Serena sets Venus clash in Top Seed Open

AFP ■ LEXINGTON

Serena Williams had to fight for a winning return from her six-month coronavirus lay-off on Tuesday, defeating lowly ranked Bernarda Pera in three sets at the WTA Top Seed Open tournament in Kentucky.

Serena, who before Tuesday had not played a competitive game since a Fed Cup appearance in February, came from behind to defeat American world number 60 Pera 4-6, 6-4, 6-1 in two hours and 15 minutes at the Top Seed Tennis Club in Lexington.

Venus Williams started her campaign with a straight sets wins over Victoria Azarenka in a battle of former World No 1 players. The 40-year-old American won 6-3, 6-2 and set up an exciting encounter between the Williams sisters in the second round.

Rising American star Coco Gauff had to work hard for her straight-set win over qualifier Caroline Dolehide, winning 7-5, 7-5 while Canadian qualifier Leylah Fernandez knocked out seventh seed

Sloane Stephens in their opener.

This week's tournament — the first WTA event in the US since the Covid-19 pandemic — is taking place without spectators.

Williams, 38, later revealed that the sedate surroundings had suited her game.

"It was a really calm atmosphere, it was really chill," Williams said. "I can't say I disliked it. I didn't mind it at all. I've been through so many things in my career and this was totally different. I think I won today because I was calm for once in my career. Kind of reminds me of junior days. Something nostalgic about that. I kind of enjoyed it."

The 23-time Grand Slam singles champion looked to be flirting with an early exit in the second set, but recovered from 0-40 down at 4-4 before holding and eventually winning the set.

"I just knew I could do better," Williams said. "It was an interesting game. I just had to get used to her game a little bit. She played really well."



## CSK expect Dhoni to play until 2022

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Chennai Super Kings CEO Kasi Vishwanathan feels their talisman Mahendra Singh Dhoni, who has not played any competitive cricket since last year's World Cup semifinal, will be part of the franchise in 2021 and 2022 IPLs.

The 39-year-old Dhoni is set for a return to competitive cricket in the upcoming IPL, to be played in the UAE from September 19 to November 10.

"We can expect MS Dhoni to be part of both (IPL 2020 and 2021) and probably for even the next year —

2022," Viswanathan was quoted as saying by *indiatoday.in*.

"I am getting updates through the media only, saying he has been training in Jharkhand in indoor nets. But we don't have to worry about the skipper, boss. We don't worry about him at all."

"He knows his responsibilities and he will take care of himself and the team."

N Srinivasan, the vice-chairman and managing director of India Cements, owners of the CSK franchise, in January said that Dhoni would be retained by the team for the 2021 IPL mega-auction.



### RR fielding coach tests virus +ve

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Rajasthan Royals' fielding coach Dishant Yagnik has tested positive for Covid-19, the IPL team announced on Wednesday, making it the first such case among the league franchises ahead of their departure next week to this year's tournament venue, the UAE.

Yagnik is currently in his hometown Udaipur and has

been advised to get admitted to hospital for his 14-day quarantine.

"Post 14 days, Dishant will be undergoing two tests as per the protocols of BCCI. On return of two negative reports, he will be allowed to join the team after self isolating for 6 days and receiving 3 further negative tests upon his arrival in the UAE," said Royals in a statement.

CSK have planned a short training camp at their base from August 16 to 20.

While CSK are hoping to leave for the UAE on August 21, Vishwanathan confirmed

that all the players will assemble in Chennai on August 14.

"It will be a skill-based plus training camp. It can't immediately start off with skills because they are coming back after a long off," he said.

The former skipper, who is not a part of the Test squad is there for the limited overs leg. On Wednesday, Hafeez tweeted a picture of himself with an elderly lady from the golf course adjacent to the team hotel despite strict instructions that they shouldn't interact with anyone outside the bubble.

A source close to the Pakistan team said Hafeez's breach of protocol had upset everyone as all players had been told specifically to avoid interaction with anyone outside the bio secure bubble, since the course is open to the public in

## Unacademy to fight for IPL title sponsorship rights

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Education technology company Unacademy, which is already one of IPL's sponsors, is eying the league's title sponsorship rights now and is set to submit its bid to replace

Chinese mobile phone company Vivo this season.

A BCCI official confirmed that Unacademy has picked up the bid papers but refrained from making any comments beyond that.

"I can confirm that Unacademy has shown interest and picked the bid papers. I have heard they will be submitting a bid and are pretty serious. So Patanjali if they

bid, will have competition," the senior official told PTI.

Vivo, which annually paid ₹440 crore, dropped out as title sponsor this year due to the Sino-India border stand-off.

The BCCI is now looking at a lesser value — between ₹300 to 350 crore

— for a period of four months and 13 days.

The official said Unacademy is a part of IPL's central sponsorship pool with other companies like Dream11 and Paytm.

"Yes, Unacademy is already in IPL's central sponsors' pool from 2020 to 2023," the BCCI official said.



## Sri Lanka, UAE kept as back up for 2021 WT20

NEW DELHI: Sri Lanka and United Arab Emirates are the two back-up countries being zeroed in on by the ICC, in case India is unable to host next year's T20 World Cup.

While there is still one year to go before the mega event which was set to be held in Australia this year but got postponed due to Covid-19.

According to a report in *ESPN Cricinfo*, "Sri Lanka and the UAE are among the back-up venues for the 2021 men's T20

World Cup, should the Covid-19 pandemic make India an untenable host."

The ICC confirmed last week that India will host next year's tournament as scheduled in the original FTP while this year's postponed edition in Australia goes ahead in 2022.

However it is a standard protocol to have back-up venues listed for any global event.

"Identifying potential back-up venues is standard practice for every ICC event, but it takes

on extra significance in this time because of the nature of the pandemic.

"India is currently the third-worst-hit country in the world in terms of cases, according to most data studies, with over 2 million cases so far and over 45,000 deaths."

"The current situation has forced the BCCI to relocate the IPL to the UAE, and only tentative plans are in place for the domestic season," the website further stated.

## Hafeez breaks bio-bubble

PTI ■ KARACHI

The Pakistan Cricket Board is furious at former captain Mohammad Hafeez for his apparent breach of the biosecurity protocol imposed by the England and Wales Cricket Board for the ongoing away series.

The former skipper, who is not a part of the Test squad is there for the limited overs leg.

On Wednesday, Hafeez tweeted a picture of himself with an elderly lady from the golf course adjacent to the team hotel despite strict instructions that they shouldn't interact with anyone outside the bubble.

A source close to the Pakistan team said Hafeez's breach of protocol had upset everyone as all players had been told specifically to avoid interaction with anyone outside the bio secure bubble, since the course is open to the public in



Mohammad Hafeez tweets picture with a 90+ year old lady at Golf course

Southampton. Hafeez put himself in trouble when he posted a tweet of himself and the lady

termining her as inspirational. The ECB medical team is aware of the breach of protocol and Hafeez will most likely have to isolate himself for five days and then undergo two negative Covid-19 tests before he rejoins the team again.

## Eng will sweep Pak series: Vaughan

SOUTHAMPTON: Former England captain Michael Vaughan predicted the hosts will sweep the three-test series against Pakistan despite the absence of talismanic all-rounder Ben Stokes for the last two matches.

Stokes was part of the England team which pulled off a thrilling three-wicket victory in the first Test at Old Trafford.

"He (Stokes) plays a big, big role in that dressing room," Vaughan wrote in a blog, although he had no doubts about the depth in the England squad.

"Even though Ben Stokes is out I think England will be too strong. England will win the series 3-0, that's my prediction."

He also felt England might rest veteran quick James Anderson in the second Test beginning on Thursday.

PTI ■ DHAKA

Serving a ban for not reporting corrupt approaches, Bangladesh's premier all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan is likely to return to the national fold

for a tour of Sri Lanka later this year, with his suspension ending on October 29.

The southpaw was banned for two years, one year of it was suspended, for failing to report corrupt approaches by an alleged

bookie during the IPL.

Bangladesh's tour of Sri Lanka is more or less confirmed and given the schedule, Shakib could feature in the proposed three-match T20 series.

"I think Shakib being out

for a year is not that much different to the rest of our squad who have been out for six or seven months as well," Bangladesh head coach Russell Domingo was quoted as saying by *ESPNcricinfo*.

"We are hoping all the players are fit. Obviously, there are standards that they need to attain in terms of fitness level. We have to organise a bit of game time for Shakib, as well as for all the players."