

ANALYSIS 7 NOT A NEET SITUATION

MONEY 8 'RS 1L CR AGRI FUND TO BE CRUCIAL IN ENHANCING FARM SECTOR SHARE'

SPORTS 11 IPL TEAMS TO CARRY EXCLUSIVE NET BOWLERS TO UAE

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



# the pioneer



RENU DESAI BATS FOR ELECTRIC CARS

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## JAIRAM RAMESH TELLS JAVADEKAR DRAFT EIA NOTIFICATION FLAWED

Congress leader Jairam Ramesh has accused Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar of 'misrepresenting' the implications of the Draft EIA Notification on the country's environmental regulatory framework and its impact on environment.



## AI PILOT UNIONS DEMAND REMOVAL OF DGCA CHIEF ARUN KUMAR

Two leading pilot unions of Air India on Tuesday said DGCA chief Arun Kumar must be immediately replaced with a suitable candidate with substantial knowledge of the aviation sector and operational experience.



## NEW ZEALAND LOCKS DOWN BIGGEST CITY AFTER FIRST LOCAL VIRUS CASE

New Zealand announced on Tuesday it was shutting down its largest city, Auckland, after four new cases of COVID-19 were discovered in the city, the first evidence of domestic transmission after being coronavirus-free for 102 days.



## INDIAN TRICOLOUR TO BE HOISTED AT TIMES SQUARE INDEPENDENCE DAY

A leading diaspora group in the US will hoist India's National Flag at the Times Square this week, the first time the Indian tricolour will be unfurled at the iconic New York City destination.



Industry-friendly reforms in mining sector shortly: Pralhad Joshi

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Pilot Deepak Sathe cremated; Maha govt accords state funeral

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Power, responsibility and decision making

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# Russia develops vaccine, tested on Putin's daughter

Russian Prez claims 'Sputnik-V' stable amidst concerns by experts

PNS ■ MOSCOW

Russian President Vladimir Putin on Tuesday announced that his country has developed first vaccine that works quite effectively and forms a stable immunity against COVID-19.



Putin made the claim during a government meeting where he described it as "a very important step for the world", the Sputniknews reported.

He said that one of his daughters took part in the experiment and she was vaccinated against the coronavirus. "After the first vaccination, she had a body temperature of 38 degrees Celsius, while the following day it was slightly over 37 degrees Celsius, that's it. After the second injection, the second vaccination, her temperature also rose a little, and then everything cleared up, she feels good and the [antibody] titers are high, Putin said. It works quite effectively, and forms a stable immunity," he said.

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

"I hope that our colleagues abroad will also move forward, and there will be quite a lot of products that can be used on the market, on the world market for medicines and vaccines," Putin was quoted as saying by the agency. Health Minister Mikhail Murashko has said that the first



## Modi sidesteps call to ramp up medical infra

PM says TS needs to increase testing, dodges health infrastructure request

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday sidestepped a call from Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Reddy to focus on ramping up medical infrastructure in India by drawing on the lessons from the country's experience in dealing with the coronavirus pandemic.

KCR expressed his opinion during a videoconference held by the Prime Minister with Chief Ministers and representa-

tives of 10 states on the pandemic situation, wherein he said that Coronavirus spread has reminded everyone about the need to improve medical infrastructure in the country. "The Centre and States should jointly work to create better medical facilities in the country," KCR said, to which the Prime Minister responded by saying: "It has emerged from the discussion that there is an urgent need to ramp up testing in Bihar, Gujarat, UP, West Bengal, and Telangana."

Russian vaccine against the coronavirus will begin to be produced at two sites - the Gamaleya Research Institute and the company Binnopharm. He said that a number of

countries are already showing interest in the vaccine, and the Russian Direct Investment Fund (RDIF) is investing in the production and promotion of the vaccine abroad. The vac-

## 9,024 fresh cases, 87 deaths in AP

Andhra Pradesh's Covid-19 tally came close to the 2.5 lakh mark on Tuesday, with 9,024 fresh cases taking it to 2,44,549, even as 87 more deaths pushed the overall toll to 2,203.

More positive cases were detected in rapid antigen tests as compared to RT-PCR, TruNat and other tests in the last 24 hours in the state.

In all, 30,908 rapid antigen tests were conducted, of which 5,132 turned positive, according to the bulletin.

The other 27,407 tests turned out 3,892 positive cases. The infection positivity rate rose further to 9.43 per cent after a total of 25,92,619 tests were completed till date, the bulletin said. The State now has 87,597 active Covid-19 cases after 1,54,749 people recovered. East Godavari and Kurnool districts contributed to the bulk of the new cases with 1,372 and 1,138 respectively.

Anantapur was behind with 959. The district reported 13 deaths, Chittoor 12, Guntur nine and Prakasam and Visakhapatnam seven each in the last 24 hours.

cine was developed jointly by the Gamaleya Research Institute and the Russian Defence Ministry.

# First phase of Covaxin human trials ends at NIMS

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

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

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

As per the ICMR rules, Covaxin, a product of Hyderabad-based Bharat Biotech Limited, has been administered to 60 volunteers and later, blood samples of 50 were tested thoroughly. A ICMR-authorized lab at Delhi confirmed the fitness of the volunteers upon conduct of confirmatory tests of blood samples.

Initially, two volunteers were given the first dose. After 14

days, a booster dose was given to them. The NIMS authorities have said that the first phase of human trials has been through.

NIMS director Dr K Manohar is supervising clinical trials, which are being conducted under the watchful eye of clinical pharmacology professors, senior doctors, specialists in general medicine, anaesthesia, respiratory medicine and so on.

# Prime accused arrested in sanitiser deaths case

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A Special Investigation Team (SIT) appointed to probe the sanitiser deaths case in Kurichedu village of Prakasam district, arrested prime accused Sale Srinivas and 10 others on Tuesday.



Speaking to the media, Prakasam district SP Siddharth Kaushal reminded

that 16 people died on consuming "Perfect Solution Sanitiser" made in an illegal sanitiser manufacturing unit in a five-room godown at Jeedimetla near Hyderabad. Kaushal said that a gang of people had manufactured fake sanitisers in Jeedimetla without obtaining permission from the Telangana government.

# TS, AP 'water war' casts shadow on division of institutions

L VENKAT RAM REDDY ■ HYDERABAD

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

The division of these institutions, mostly located in Hyderabad, could not be completed even after the bifurcation of AP six years ago due to the political rivalry between Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Reddy and his



then AP counterpart N Chandrababu.

As many as 91 institutions are listed under Schedule IX

and 107 institutions are listed under Schedule X. Most of these institutions are located in Hyderabad by virtue of the city being the capital of undivided AP for about six decades. These institutions have huge assets in the form of buildings, lands, bank deposits etc.

AP government argues that the assets and liabilities of these institutions should be distributed between both the states in proportion to their population, that is in the ratio of 58:42, with AP getting 58 per cent and TS 42 per cent since they were created using the

resources of undivided AP. Naturally, the TS government strongly opposes this, arguing that they should be distributed based on their geographical location. If this rule is followed, TS will get all institutions since they are located in Hyderabad. Due to this, the division of these institutions has been a bone of contention between both the states till 2019.

After YS Jaganmohan Reddy took over as the Chief Minister of AP in 2019, relations between the two Telugu states improved.

# BJP's Ram Madhav walks the tightrope over 3-capitals

Why does AP need 3-capitals, when UP with more population has one, asks Ram Madhav

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

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

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

Madhav maintained that the Centre's role in the capitals issue was only limited. "Even now if in the state wants to take some decision on the capital, the Centre's role in that will only be limited. But it doesn't mean, if they want to build three capitals, it should not be questioned," he said, addressing a BJP event in Vijayawada on Tuesday.

He observed that the three capitals issue was now sub-judice (under judicial consideration).



## Don't bask in Modi's glory but work for power, AP BJP told

BJP national general secretary Ram Madhav on Tuesday warned his party leaders in Andhra Pradesh not to bask in the glory of Prime Minister Narendra Modi but work with a killer instinct to grab power in the state in 2024.

"Don't try to go into the battle placing the gun on Modi's shoulders. If you do it, you will remain in that one per cent (BJP's vote share in 2019 Assembly election). Modi will be Prime Minister for the next 10-15 years. We will derive benefit out of his

good governance and people-oriented programmes but that is not sufficient. Aim is to grow as a potent force," Madhav said.

He addressed an event where MLC Somu Veeraj assumed responsibilities as the new BJP state unit president.

He observed that BJP was in politics "not for charity." As any political party, it aimed to come to power and serve the people and develop the state, Madhav said.

# RLIS old project, lift bar, Jagan tells Centre

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Stating that Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation Scheme is an old scheme and not a new project, Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy on Tuesday wrote to Minister for Jal Shakti to attend the meeting... It appears that this fact was not brought to your kind notice, as in your letter dated August 7, 2020 it was stated that there is no response from our State, which is factually incorrect."



He said that AP has the right to draw water as per the AP Reorganisation Act.

In his letter, Jagan wrote to Shekawat that: "I was informed that the Apex Council chairman has proposed to convene a second meeting of the Council on August 5 with the Agenda. In that regard, I gave

a direction to my Water Resources Department to convey to the Ministry of Jal Shakti our views on the agenda items and also my consent to attend the meeting... It appears that this fact was not brought to your kind notice, as in your letter dated August 7, 2020 it was stated that there is no response from our State, which is factually incorrect."

Jagan said that due to the embargo, AP would be restricted to allocated share in Krishna, as agreed in a meeting with Telangana in June 2015 and which is still being implemented by KRMBC which puts no adverse impact on the share of water of Telangana in Krishna river.

# Faulty design blamed for crash of crane that killed 11

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The five-member committee formed by the Vizag district administration with professors of Andhra University Engineering College, on Tuesday, submitted its report blaming faulty design of the giant crane for the crash at Hindustan Shipyard Limited premises that killed 11 persons on August 1.

HSL is the nation's premier shipbuilding organisation catering to the needs of shipbuilding, ship repairs, submarine construction and refits as well as design and construction of sophisticated state-of-the-art offshore and onshore structures. The crux of the report according to sources was that the crane had a faulty design.

## TODAY

### ALMANAC

Month & Paksham: Shravana & Krishna Paksha Panchangam Tithi: Ashtami: 11:15 am Nakshatram: Kritika: 03:26 am (Next Day) Time to Avoid: (Bad time to start any important work) Rahukalam: 12:20 pm - 01:55 pm Yamagandam: 07:36 am - 09:11 am Varjyam: 02:11 pm - 03:57 pm Gulika: 10:46 am - 12:20 pm Good Time: (to start any important work) Amritakalam: 12:47 am - 02:33 am Abhijit Muhurtham: NIL

### VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Mostly cloudy Temp: 32/26 Humidity: 71% Sunrise: 05:58 am Sunset: 06:43 pm Current Weather Conditions Updated August 11, 2020 5:00 PM

It's a tragedy that the words of French philosopher Voltaire — with great power comes great responsibility — are very often forgotten by politicians soon after they come to power.

Once this happens, it's not only the people that elected such leaders end up suffering but the leaders themselves get their comeuppance, sooner or later.

We do not have too far to look for examples of leaders getting caught up in the false notion that their being elected with overwhelming majorities gives them the mandate to take any decision and that decision will be accepted by the people without question.

At one time or the other, such leaders face resistance not only from the electorate, but also from within their followers.

In undivided Andhra Pradesh too, there have been instances of leaders feeling the repercussions of their decisions years, sometimes decades, later, and regretting their mistakes.

# Power, responsibility and decision making



Often, personality traits may overshadow decisions on both political and administrative issues.

If the supremacy of the party forms an opinion in his mind about a particular issue, his desire trickles down the rank and file and it is invariably backed by those who want to remain in the good books of the boss. Sometimes, the effects of such a decision may be adversely felt by the people, even as the 'boss' remains untouched.

Democracy means taking collective decisions aimed at the well-being of the people, both in the immediate and the distant future. Most often, this is forgotten, to disastrous consequences.

The former and present rulers of Andhra Pradesh — N Chandrababu Naidu and YS Jaganmohan Reddy — may do

**In undivided AP too, there have been instances of leaders feeling the repercussions of their decisions years, sometimes decades, later, and regretting their mistakes. Oftentimes, personality traits may overshadow decisions on both political and administrative issues**

well to look at each other's past decisions and learn.

For example, Naidu is still ruing his decision not to induct K Chandrasekhar Rao into his Cabinet after the elections of 1999.

KCR was a minister at the time of the elections, and naturally expected to retain his berth after the TDP returned to power.

This was not to be, since Naidu inducted the newly-elected legislator and former CBI director K Vijayarama Rao who

earned the tag of a 'giant killer' in that elections by defeating former leader of Congress Legislature Party (CLP) P. Janardhan Reddy from Khairatabad constituency.

No one can possibly fault Naidu for inducting Vijayarama Rao into his Cabinet, but he could have retained KCR as well.

However, being the unquestioned leader of the TDP, Naidu took a decision, one that he has undoubtedly regretted ever since, to have only one member



M D RATNA KUMAR  
Senior Journalist

from the Velama community in his Council of Ministers.

He offered KCR the post of Deputy Speaker in the Assembly, a 'humiliation' that was never forgotten by the leader from Telangana.

Be it political compulsions, or the thought that only his decision mattered, or perhaps drunk

on power as he not only headed the government in undivided AP, but was also instrumental in propping the NDA government at the Centre, Naidu decided that his Cabinet would be represented by only one member from each caste.

It's another matter altogether that Naidu did not bother to apply this decision when it came to members of his own caste.

Incidentally, Bojjala Gopalakrishna Reddy of Naidu's native district of Chittoor was also denied a Cabinet post along with KCR, but he was later inducted following political pressure.

Had Naidu inducted KCR into his Cabinet, the latter would have well continued as his most trusted lieutenant and played a key role in strengthening the TDP in Telangana region.

Instead, KCR has made it his life's goal to rid Telangana of the

TDP, and has succeeded to a very large extent.

Perhaps such a turn of events could have been avoided had Naidu adopted a more pragmatic approach and taken the opinion of his party leaders.

In the case of Jagan, it may be safe to say that the three-capital decision was taken only to counter Amaravati, the brain-child of his bete noire Naidu.

With an overwhelming majority in the Assembly, Jagan has the freedom to launch or work on any programme he likes, within the purview of law.

Of course, in the case of three-capitals, he has now got the approval of both the Centre and State Governor.

The question is, is the decision consensual?

The word 'consensus' appears almost irrelevant in regional parties like the YSR Congress Party since the opinion expressed by the party

supremo is naturally accepted across the party due to the unwritten policy of the 'boss is always right'!

The effects of Jagan's 'unilateral' decision remains to be seen. Incidentally, speculation continues among the people why Jagan had decided to shift the executive capital to Visakhapatnam.

One view is that Visakhapatnam, being a city with serene atmosphere despite having establishments of eastern naval command and industrial belt, has resisted influence from people of Rayalaseema region thus far, including rejecting the candidature of YS Vijayalakshmi in the 2014 General Elections.

If Vijayamma had won, the influence of people from Rayalaseema background would have been more.

By shifting the executive capital to Visakhapatnam, Jagan is keen to spread the Rayalaseema influence over coastal Andhra as well, according to one of the opinions doing rounds.



## Govt policies crippled all sectors, says Yanamala

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council Yanamala Ramakrishnu on Tuesday described the new Industrial Policy - 2020-23 announced by the YSRCP government as 'not reassuring' to revive all the ailing and crisis-hit sectors in the State's economy. He said the government had failed to create new confidence even as its policies till now had crippled the construction, manufacturing, real estate, pharma and other major contributors to the economy.

Ramakrishnu alleged that in just 14 months, industrial growth rate was brought down to 2.2 per cent in the State, which shows total failure of YSRCP government. He said that the new Industrial Policy had not given any hope of generating employment opportunities for the future generations. He lamented that lakhs of workers lost their job opportunities because of the retrogressive policies and further lamented that it was unfortunate that even the government employees were not getting full salaries.

Ramakrishnu said that because of the blackmail tactics of the YSRCP leaders, all past investments were withdrawn, which collapsed the industries in the State. He alleged that growth in the construction sector was only -1.1 per cent, trade and hotels -0.7 per cent, real estate -0.3 per cent and tertiary sector -1.0 per cent and expressed fear that this regressive growth will aggravate further due to Covid 19 threat.

# Ex-servicemen never denied treatment for Covid-19: ENC

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

● Navy not hiding Covid case data

The Eastern Naval Command has refuted allegations that Ex-servicemen (ESM), Defence Civilians and their dependents at Visakhapatnam being denied treatment at medical facilities under its jurisdiction for COVID cases.

The Eastern Navy also rebutted the allegations of suppressing data regarding positive COVID cases by the Navy. These allegations are unsubstantiated and baseless, which attempt to mislead the Defence Civilians and ESM community.

INHS Kalyani is a 206-bedded naval hospital setup with the primary aim of catering to the health of the personnel manning the frontline combat units at Visakhapatnam. The hospital also caters for medical cover in respect of over 28,000 dependents of serving Armed Forces personnel, Coast Guard personnel and over 35,000 ESM and their dependents residing in and around Visakhapatnam and the adjoining districts.

"With the easing of lock-



down, the number of ESM and their dependents visiting INHS Kalyani with flu-like symptoms has increased manifold. INHS Kalyani and ECHS Poly Clinic have not refused treatment to any ESM or their dependents. Cases are evaluated based on the latest Covid management protocols and mild to moderate cases as well as primary contacts are being advised home isolation or home quarantine," said the ENS.

"In view of a limited number of oxygen-supplied beds,

only critical cases are being admitted at INHS Kalyani based on the assessment of competent medical officers. Cases with mild to moderate symptoms are being referred to empanelled corporate hospitals for further management through the Ex-servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS). In all, 18 ESM and their dependents have been admitted at Kalyani for COVID while 49 ESM and their dependents were admitted for non-COVID related

diseases in the last two months. Data on all COVID cases are being updated on the ICMR Website by the hospital and there is absolutely no suppression of data," according to the ENS.

"Defence Civilian employees are an integral component of the naval team, providing support to the frontline units of the Indian Navy. The ENC has implemented various initiatives towards the well-being of the Defence Civilian community and their dependents. Manning of various units providing vital services and utilities has been limited to the minimum. Personnel residing in containment zones have been exempted from attending duties. Helpline numbers have been promulgated with details of medical officer to be contacted for guidance in case of any flu-like symptoms for further guidance. A team from ENC is actively coordinating with the district administration to ensure timely treatment from one of the empanelled corporate hospitals or at the government facilities," according to the ENC.

# New Industrial Policy will not favour weaker sections: APCC

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA



Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) came down heavily on the new Industrial Policy announced by the YSRCP government stating that it no way helpful to downtrodden sections of society.

S Sailajana, president of the APCC, alleged in a statement on Tuesday that the YSRCP, which came to power with the support of SC, ST and BCs, did nothing for their welfare. Moreover, the new policy cut down the concessions enjoyed by them all these years.

"The new industrial policy, which formulated depending upon various issues, including employment, equal development of all regions, environment-friendly, competing with the national average development, would actually result in loss of jobs, lifting of employment dole, regional difference in the name of decentralisation," he pointed out.

"Moreover, there was no incentive in the policy in favour of the government policy of 75 per cent of jobs

for local people. Successive governments used to give 50 per cent subsidy on the land price to the SC, ST, BC and Minorities if they start industries and there is no such subsidy in the new policy," he opined.

"The new policy had also cut down the investment incentives from 35 per cent to 15 per cent and the 45 per cent subsidy for women entrepreneurs was reduced to 35 per cent that, too, would be given after three years. The incentives are necessary for the industry in the early years, not in the later years," he

pointed out. "The new policy did not announce any concessions to the industry which provides 75 per cent of the jobs to the local people and reimbursement on GST was also reduced, he said. The government, which oppressed the SC, ST, BC and Minorities politically and socially, had done injustice in the industrial policy also. It was not implementing the SC, ST sub-plan introduced by the erstwhile Congress government. Overall, the new industrial policy was useful for the corporate sector only, he remarked.

## Students recreate virtual tour of Krea University

PNS ■ SRICITY

With 800 hours of development and able support from the university's Media Lab, four young Krea students have created a virtual tour of the smart and inclusive Krea campus, using Minecraft tool. With their relentless efforts, Arnav, Nikhil, Priyam and Shreya have re-created the Krea campus experience.

"In the midst of our online classes and Zoom coffee chats, we often thought of how the campus has been a hallmark in bringing us together as a cohort. Given the current state of the pandemic, a group of us decided to recreate our campus virtually to give our batch, faculty, and administration a sense of nostalgia while also giving

the incoming batch an immersive and exciting preview of our campus", adds a member of the student team.

For Krea students, the campus goes beyond being just a physical space. Nestled in the green but equally well connected to urban zones, the campus imparts a sense of belonging as students and faculty co-create a learning experience.

This is not the first time that Krea students have come together to articulate the university experience beyond the physical realm. In May this year, they created Kreakast, an open immersive platform, where activities, forums, discussions and events continued, sustaining the unique student experience, says a press release.

## Ex-prof seeks parole, HC issues notice to Maha govt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Nagpur Bench of Bombay High Court on Tuesday issued notice to the Maharashtra government on an application filed by Delhi University's former professor G N Saibaba for emergency parole to attend the post funeral rituals of his late mother. Saibaba, who is serving life term in the Nagpur Central Prison for links with Maoists, lost his ailing mother on August 1 even as his lawyers were seeking to arrange a video conference between the two.

Last week, the prison authorities rejected Saibaba's application seeking parole for attending the last rites of his 74-year-old mother, who died in Hyderabad.

## EXTRACTION MACHINE OPENED AT GGH

# Guntur district Collector appeals for plasma donation

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA



The Plasma Extraction Machine started functioning at the Government General Hospital (GGH) to provide plasma therapy to Covid-19 patients in Guntur on Tuesday. District Collector 1 Samuel Ananda Kumar inaugurated the extraction machine at the blood bank centre in GGH and appealed to those who cured from Covid to come forward to donate their plasma to save the lives of Corona patients. He said that the government is taking precautionary measures to save the lives of Coronavirus infected persons.

He observed the functioning of the machine and appreciat-

ed one Rajasekhara Reddy and Manikanta, who donated plasma. He said that the Clinical Expert Committee will decide the eligibility of the donors and accordingly the private and government blood banks should collect plasma following the norms. He said that three

patients of government hospitals and six patients of private hospitals have undergone plasma therapy in Guntur district and all are responding well to it.

He appealed to those in the age group of 18 to 50 years without any chronic diseases to come forward to donate plasma. He said that more than 5,000 beds at Covid Hospitals and 8,000 beds in Quarantine Centres are available in Guntur district. He said that there is no scarcity of ventilators and oxygen facilities for Coronavirus patients. He said that they are taking measures to enhance facilities for Coronavirus patients as per increasing number of positive cases in Guntur district.



## Civic chief inspects I-Day arrangements

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada Municipal Corporation Commissioner V Prasanna Venkatesh inspected the Independence Day arrangements at the Indira Gandhi Municipal Corporation Stadium here on Tuesday. The Commissioner visited the DRR Indore Stadium and Gurananak Nagar swimming pool development works, along with officials concerned, and gave a few suggestions on the ongoing works. He instructed the concerned to take measures in making seating arrangements with six feet distance marking at the IGMC Stadium. He also inspected the parade arrangements for the upcoming event. He told officials to take measures in arranging and providing drinking water for the visitors and other facilities.

He later inspected the development works like kabaddi court, tennis court, gallery, gym building, volley ball and other works, which are being constructed at an estimated cost of Rs 2 crore, and gave a few suggestions to officials concerned to complete the works soon.

# Naidu-era projects saving grace for Jagan, boasts TDP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Top industrialists and multinational companies are not interested to invest in the State due to the oppressive and chaotic policies of the YSRCP government, alleged TDP official spokesperson Panchumarthy Anuradha. She asserted that for highlighting its new Industrial Policy, the Jaganmohan Reddy government was now banking on the projects and achievements made in the industrial sector during the Chandrababu Naidu's regime.

Addressing a press conference here on Tuesday, the TDP leader said lakhs of job opportunities



were lost, per capita incomes came down and economic crisis had hit all sectors in the past

14 months. The government was giving numbers regarding industrial exports during the

"Lakhs of job opportunities were lost, per capita incomes came down and economic crisis had hit all sectors in the past 14 months. The government was giving numbers regarding industrial exports during the TDP regime for 2018-19 but not during the YSRCP rule for 2019-20," TDP official spokesperson Panchumarthy Anuradha said

TDP regime for 2018-19 but not during the YSRCP rule for 2019-20, she pointed out.

Anuradha said that the new policy had nothing for the weaker and backward sections. Industrial and current subsidies were withdrawn. If this was allowed to continue, the SC, ST, BC and Minorities would not be able to enter the industrial sec-

tor in future. The government was not making proactive steps to encourage entrepreneurs among the weaker sections.

Stating that Naidu attracted industries with Ease of Doing Business, Anuradha said that the present Chief Minister has not bothered to meet industrialists. Even at a meeting, Jaganmohan Reddy met just two to three out

of the 17 industrialists, who turned up. Jagan should explain to the people why the industrialists were withdrawing investments from the State and why they were afraid of making future investments. The YSRCP has no idea of how to create wealth and job opportunities for the common public, she opined.

Anuradha said that the industrial policy brought by the TDP contributed to industrial growth and created 5.7 lakh jobs. Another 10 lakh jobs have been created indirectly. Over Rs 2 lakh crore investments were withdrawn due to the YSRCP government practices and unbearable political interference in industries.

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VISAKHAPATNAM	375
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# Focused testing strategy paying dividends in Covid fight: Jagan

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

A "focused testing" strategy to detect Covid-19 cases early was paying dividends as the State has succeeded in keeping the peak positivity rate below 20 per cent, while "rigorous clinical management" ensured the mortality rate remained below one per cent, disclosed Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy.

Community-based targeted testing, testing of every primary and secondary contact of positive cases and testing of all high-risk category patients in containment zones have been the government's focus in combating the pandemic, he noted.

Addressing a video conference of Prime Minister Narendra Modi conducted with the Chief Ministers of various States on Tuesday, Jagan said the State's ultimate objective at any point in time was to save lives by providing correct and high quality care and treatment.

"We are not only doing more tests but are doing



**CM YS Jaganmohan Reddy remarked that in the spirit of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat', all districts and the State as a whole have become self-reliant, more resilient to this pandemic and the medical challenges of the future**

more focused testing. We are testing in areas and groups where we feel there is a chance of higher positive cases being detected. Our aim at any point in time continues to be to identify cases early on, decrease stigma, provide correct and high quality care and treatment and save lives," the Chief Minister said.

Referring to the recent surge in Covid-19 cases in the State, Jagan said, "it has been captured by increased testing."

"In the past few weeks,

many of our districts are facing their peak. Through testing, early detection, contact tracing and continuous involvement of more than two lakh volunteers at the ground level, along with rigorous clinical management, we have succeeded in keeping the mortality less than 1.5 per cent in every district in the last two months and below 1 per cent overall in the state through the course of the pandemic," he added.

he Chief Minister said the State has used the Coronavirus lockdown peri-

od to embark on a massive medical infrastructure improvement drive, from village clinics to medical colleges

"We see the pandemic not just as the biggest challenge of our times but also an opportunity to increase spending and focus on public health, to enhance primary health infrastructure at the grassroots level and tertiary medical infrastructure across our districts," he pointed out.

Jagan remarked that in the spirit of 'Atmanirbhar Bharat', all districts and the State as a whole have become

self-reliant, more resilient to this pandemic and the medical challenges of the future. "From zero in March, when the first Covid-19 case was reported in the State, our present lab capacity alone is the highest in the country at 35,000-plus tests per day.

Number of tests conducted per million (population) is greater than 45,000, and is more than 2.5 times the national average," Jagan said. The State now has 37,189 beds in 138 hospitals (government and private) for Covid-19 patients, including 4,320 ICU and 17,228 with oxygen supply facilities.

The Chief Minister said apart from filling vacant posts in hospitals, 5,000 additional posts have been created to run the health facilities even after the pandemic ended.

He summed up saying the State made a concerted effort towards de-stigmatisation (of Coronavirus) through a communication strategy that also included dissemination of epidemic literacy.

## FIRE MISHAP AT COVID CARE CENTRE

# Ramesh Hospitals MD at large

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The prime accused in the fire accident case in Swarna Palace Hotel in Vijayawada that claimed the lives of 10 Covid patients, Ramesh Hospitals Managing Director Dr P Ramesh Babu, was at large.

Police teams are on the search to arrest him. Police produced the three accused in the fire accident at Covid Care centre maintained by Ramesh Hospitals before the Judge on Tuesday. Hospital Chief Operating Officer (COO) Dr Kodali Rajagopala Rao, Ramesh Hospitals GM Dr K Sudarshan, Covid Care Centre coordinating manager Venkatesh P were sent in 14-day police remand. The police shifted them to Machilipatnam special sub-jail.

According to a preliminary investigation into the fire mishap, officials said that the fire accident took place in the hospital due to negligence of the management and lack of safety measures. At least 10 Covid-19 patients were killed and several others sustained injuries in the fire. The facility was used as Covid-19 treatment centre.

On Monday, three special teams comprising officers and



**Police teams are on the search to arrest him. Meanwhile, police produced the three accused in the fire accident at Covid Care centre maintained by Ramesh Hospitals before the Judge on Tuesday. Hospital Chief Operating Officer (COO) Dr Kodali Rajagopala Rao, Ramesh Hospitals GM Dr K Sudarshan, Covid Care Centre coordinating manager Venkatesh P were sent in 14-day police remand. Later, police shifted them to Machilipatnam special sub-jail**

police conducted inspections on Ramesh Hospitals, including Swarna Palace. According to the municipal guidelines, the inspection team found irregularities in the construction of the building and the hospital is overcrowded with

patients, charging unusually high fees in lakhs of rupees from patients.

Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy on Sunday announced an ex-gratia of Rs 50 lakh to the families of those killed in the fire accident.

## Dogs gnawing at Covid victim's body inhuman: Naidu

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

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

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

He said that it was heartrending that nobody bothered to do anything even while dogs gnawed at the corpse. The Government was behaving in an inhuman manner, the TDP supremo said.

## TS-AP 'water war' casts shadow on division of...

Continued from Page 1

However, the latest 'water war' between both the states seems to have brought the situation back to square one.

As soon as Jagan became the CM, he extended the hand of friendship, by handing over AP blocks in the Secretariat complex besides buildings in which AP government offices were located in Hyderabad, to the Telangana government. This cleared the way for KCR to demolish the Secretariat complex and go ahead with his plans to build a new Secretariat complex in its place.

This was a marked departure from the stand adopted by Naidu, who refused to hand over Secretariat and other AP office buildings in Hyderabad to Telangana government even after shifting of the AP Secretariat and all AP offices in Hyderabad to Amaravati by linking this issue with pending division of common institutions located in Hyderabad.

However, with Jagan's 'friendly' gesture led everyone to believe that the contentious issue of division of common institutions would be easily resolved.

Accordingly, Jagan deputed AP Chief Secretary Nilam Sawhney to meet her TS counterpart Somesh Kumar to discuss and resolve the issue in January 2020.

In the meeting, the two CS agreed to meet more frequently and resolve all bifurcation issues amicably.

However, due to the corona pandemic situation since March, the next round of CS-level meeting could not be held even after six months. With relations between both the states turning sour yet again due to 'water war', the chances of resolving bifurcation of common institutions amicably now look increasingly remote.

In the first meeting of the CSs, the AP government reportedly claimed that it had no dispute over bifurcation of 53 institutions out of 91 listed under Schedule IX, while TS government claimed that it had problem over bifurcation of 68 institutions. Both the states raised objections over distribution of assets and liabilities belonging to RTC, power utilities and a few more organisations that own huge buildings and lands in Hyderabad worth several thousands of crores.

## BJP's Ram Madhav walks the tightrope over 3-capitals

Continued from Page 1

The Union Ministry of Home Affairs filed a counter-affidavit in the AP High Court last week on the YS Jaganmohan Reddy government's decision to establish three capitals for the state Executive in Visakhapatnam, Legislative in Amaravati and Judiciary in Kurnool.

"The Centres stand is a constitutional response. Lets see what the courts decide," Madhav said.

The BJP general secretary recalled that Hyderabad was supposed to be the joint capital (of AP and Telangana, post-bifurcation in 2014) for 10 years but the previous Chief Minister (Chandrababu Naidu) "came running" to Vijayawada.

"The government functioned from rented offices. Did the Centre interfere? The CM functioned from a bus, did the Centre interfere? When Amaravati was declared the capital, did the

Centre say no?" Madhav asked.

Rather, the Centre gave Rs 2,500 crore to AP to build the (new) capital, he continued. "It was no interference from the Centre. It only fulfilled its responsibilities," Madhav said.

"Which Indian state has three capitals? UP has four times more population than AP but has only one capital, Lucknow. Is not the administration there running smoothly," he asked.

But if the three capitals idea was mooted against the so-called corruption (by the previous government) in Amaravati, BJP should fight against the corruption in the three capitals as well, he said.

"This should not become a tool for triple corruption. BJP should be in the forefront in the fight to protect the interests of Amaravati farmers (who gave up their lands).

The three capitals should not lead to corruption," he stressed.

## Don't bask in Modi's glory, but work to grab power, AP BJP told

Continued from Page 1

The national general secretary said there was a vacuum in the opposition position in AP.

"We have to fill that vacuum and work with a killer instinct so that we grab power in 2024," he exhorted. Madhav chided the party state leadership for seeking the intervention of the BJP high command on every issue.

"Don't call Delhi (leadership) all the time and seek action. Delhi will do whatever needs to be done but the local party should travel the hard way and fight for the people," he said.

"For long, the BJP had been a junior partner in the state, we developed that mindset. Today we have to grow into a dominant party. For that, we have to change our mindset.

"We have to come on to the streets and fight in a democratic way," Madhav, who hails from the state,

stressed. Noting that there was "no strong opposition voice" in AP, Madhav said the BJP should build it.

"Be it TRS (in neighbouring Telangana) or YSR Congress... they would want no opposition. We are observing the YSRCP government's attitude towards opposition parties. We have to confront that as well. This is not a smooth ride," he remarked.

When people in power were abusing it, BJP should be geared up to fight it, Madhav added.

He wanted the BJP in the state to be like a constructive opposition, a critical friend. Veerajuu took over as the party state president from his predecessor Kanna Lakshminarayana.

Former Union Minister Daggubati Purandeswari, Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan national vice-president Vishnuvardhan Reddy, BJP state in charge Sunil Deodhar, MLC P V N Madhav and other senior leaders attended.

## RLIS old project, lift bar, Jagan tells Centre

Continued from Page 1

"As per the AP Reorganisation Act, 2014, Section 85(8)(d) the function of KRMB/GRMB is 'making an appraisal of any proposal for construction of new projects on Godavari or Krishna rivers and giving technical clearance, after satisfying that such projects do not negatively impact the availability of water as per the awards of the Tribunals constituted under the Inter-State River Water Disputes Act, 1956 for the projects already completed or taken up before the appointed day."

Jagan stated that the RLIS would only be supplementing the existing projects through

the same existing canal system without adding any additional ayacut or canal or storage only to ensure AP's legitimate share of water, and therefore should not be called as a new project, as per AP Reorganisation Act only from where the definition of new projects can be derived.

He pointed out that Telangana is constructing four new irrigation schemes having withdrawal capacity of about 3 TMC ft./day at a sill level of 800 feet to utilise about 200 TMC ft from the foreshore of Srisailem Reservoir.

Jagan said that besides these projects, there is a facility for power on the left side of Srisailem Reservoir from a

level of 796 feet itself with a discharge capacity of 42,000 cusecs on Telangana side which they often operate unilaterally ignoring the directions of KRMB depriving Rayalaseema, Nellore and Prakasam districts of both the drinking & irrigation needs.

The CM also said that AP's Pothreddypadu head regulator on Srisailem Reservoir is not a separate project, but it only facilitates supplying of water to KC Canal, SRBC, TGR, GNSS besides drinking water to Chennai city and can operate if only the reservoir level is above 854 feet and Pothreddypadu head regulator can draw its full capacity from Srisailem Reservoir, only when

its level is above 881 feet, which is hardly possible for 10-15 days in a year.

Jagan lamented that the existing projects of Telangana i.e. Bheema, Koilsagar and Nttempadu draw water from upstream Jurala project before realisation into Srisailem and Kalvakurthy LIS draws water 800 level from the foreshore of Srisailem.

"If all Telangana projects are at 800 feet level itself and yet they say that they would confine themselves to what is allocated to them and will not draw anything more, then how is it fair that Andhra Projects continue to operate only at above 854 feet and that's too drawing only a meagre discharge at 854

level?" Jagan wrote. He said that under the prevailing conditions, AP is left with no other option except to take up RLIS to lift 3 TMC ft./day from Srisailem Reservoir when its level falls below 854 feet to facilitate drawal of drinking and irrigation needs of the critically and chronically drought prone areas of Rayalaseema, Nellore and Prakasam districts. This will serve the needs of the existing projects allocated by KWDT-I and ongoing projects mentioned in para 10 of 11th schedule of AP Reorganisation Act 2014." The chief minister sought minister Shekawat to lift the embargo and facilitate AP to go ahead with all preliminary steps.

## Gross negligence of Covid Centre led to mishap: Panel

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

District level committee constituted by Collector Md Imtiaz to probe the reasons for the ghastly fire accident and the death of 10 Covid patients in Swarna Palace Hotel turned Covid Care Centre submitted the report to the Collector here on Tuesday.

The committee headed by Joint Collector L Sivasankar has noticed that the gross negligence of the hotel and Dr Ramesh Hospitals in the maintenance of the Covid Care Centre where 10 Covid patients lost their lives due to fire accident on Sunday morning.

The committee headed by joint collector L Sivasankar and other members Vijayawada Sub-collector HA Dhyana Chandra, Vijayawada Municipal Corporation Chief Medical and Health Officer Dr G Geetabai, Vijayawada Municipal Corporation Regional Fire Officer T Uday Kumar and other officials from CPDCL inspected

Swarna Palace Hotel, Dr Ramesh Hospitals located in two places in Vijayawada and Swarna Heights Hotel, which was also taken on lease to run Covid Care Centre and prepared a detailed report.

Md Imtiaz on Tuesday evening convened a meeting with the committee members and enquired about the reasons for the mishap and other lapses they noticed during the two days inspection of hotel and hospitals.

It may be noted that Dr Ramesh Hospitals had taken Swarna Palace Hotel on lease to run Covid Care Centre in Governorpet, Vijayawada.

The committee during the inspection had noticed that the Swarna Palace Hotel management had grossly neglected the fire safety norms. Alarm bell and smoke detectors had failed to function after the mishap was started at 4.30 am. Later, the fire spread to upper floors within half an hour causing damage and loss of lives.

## Russia develops vaccine, tested on Putin's daughter

Continued from Page 1

It has two separately-injected components that together are expected to build a long-term immunity against the virus.

Clinical trials of the vaccine kicked off on June 18 and included 38 volunteers. All of the participants developed immunity.

The first group was discharged on July 15, the second group on July 20.

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

## Modi sidesteps KCR's call to ramp up medical infra

Continued from Page 1

Interestingly, Modi did not mention States like Maharashtra, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh that have reported the highest number of cases and deaths in the last 24 hours by name, perhaps because they are either ruled by the BJP or by parties that are seen as its potential allies.

While Maharashtra has the highest number of Covid-19 cases, Tamil Nadu and Andhra Pradesh come second and third respectively.

Undaunted, KCR continued: "Corona experience has taught us a lesson that there is an urgent need to step up the medical facilities in the country. A visionary outlook and thinking is necessary to take proper and adequate measures in the medical sector for a better

future. Strategic planning should be done to create comprehensive medical facilities in the country. Both the Centre and state should jointly implement this comprehensive strategy."

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

The Prime Minister said that a view has emerged that India will win against coronavirus if 10 states defeat it, adding: "We need to follow a new mantra - all those who have come in contact with an infected person should be traced and tested

within 72 hours... It has emerged from the discussion that there is an urgent need to ramp up testing in Bihar, Gujarat, UP, West Bengal, and Telangana."

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

The Chief Minister called for taking measures to face any eventuality in the future. "We have to think about what should be the ideal Doctor to people ratio? How many new medical colleges we need? We have to consult institutions like the Indian Medical Association (IMA), take proper advice and plan measures. The medical

sector should be prepared to face the threat of Corona like viruses in the future. The PM should take the initiative in this regard."

Explaining the measures taken by the state government, the chief minister informed the PM that the recovery rate in the state is 71 per cent while the death rate is 0.7 per cent. He said the state increased the number of tests many fold and was giving better treatment to Corona affected patients.

KCR said Telangana had kept adequate number of beds, medicines, staff and other equipment ready and was diligently following the guidelines issued from time to time by the ICMR, Niti Aayog and the Central government.

The meeting comes after "Unlock3" or the third phase of lifting of coronavirus-related restrictions across the country began last month.

## Prime accused in sanitiser deaths case arrested

Continued from Page 1

He said that during investigation, it was found that methyl chloride was used in excess quantity in making the sanitisers.

Police said they have offered bribes to officials for unauthorised manufacture and marketing of sanitiser. The accused had supplied the fake sanitisers to Bengaluru and Hyderabad, said Kaushal.

During interrogation, S Srinivas told police that financial problems forced him to choose this field and stated earning money by making sanitiser from home during the lockdown. He learnt making sanitiser by watching videos on YouTube and sold it under the brand name 'Perfect Hand Sanitiser'. As most of the sanitisers he had made was sold out within 10 days, he decided to expand the business to different states.

Along with the two men, Srinivas set up the Perfect Chemicals and Solvents Company on the industrial pipeline road in Jeedimetla. Srinivas hired two distributors to supply the sanitiser made in the unit to the Telugu states.

However, he sold sanitiser made from different solutions instead of ethyl alcohol due to insufficient revenue and the increased costs.

After Srinivas was infected with Covid-19, he handed over the illegal business responsibilities to his younger brother. Meanwhile, the Kurichedu incident came to light and Srinivas hid at his friend's residence in Vijayawada.

# Single day Covid cases dip below 55K, recovery rate rises

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Fresh coronavirus infections in India dipped below 55,000 in a single day on Tuesday after the country recorded over 60,000 cases daily for four days on the trot, according to the Union Health Ministry data.

With the new cases, India's COVID-19 tally rose to 22.68 lakh. The recoveries have surged to 15,83,489, pushing the recovery rate to 69.80 per cent, while the COVID-19 case fatality rate dropped below 2 per cent and was recorded at 1.99 per cent as on date, the data updated at 8 am showed.

The total coronavirus cases have increased to 22,68,675 with 53,601 new infections being reported in a day, while the death toll climbed to 45,257 with 871 fatalities being reported in a span of 24 hours, it stated.

India had crossed the 20-lakh mark on August 7.

There are 6,39,929 active cases of coronavirus infection in the country presently which com-



**The total coronavirus cases have increased to 22,68,675 with 53,601 new infections being reported in a day, while the death toll climbed to 45,257 with 871 fatalities being reported in a span of 24 hours, it stated**

prise 28.21 per cent of the total caseload in the country.

According to the ICMR, a cumulative total of 2,45,83,558 samples have been tested up to August 9, with 4,77,023 samples being tested on Monday.

Of the 871 fresh deaths reported, 293 are from Maharashtra, 114 each from Tamil Nadu and Karnataka, 80 from Andhra Pradesh, 51 from Uttar Pradesh, 41 from West Bengal, 20 each from Delhi and Gujarat, 19 from Madhya Pradesh, 18 from

Punjab, 14 from Odisha, 11 each from Jharkhand and Rajasthan.

Ten fatalities have been reported from Bihar, nine from Uttarakhand, eight from Telangana, seven from Kerala, six each from Assam, Haryana and Jammu and Kashmir, five from Goa, three from Chhattisgarh, two each from Himachal Pradesh and Puducherry while Tripura has registered one fatality.

Of the total 45,257 deaths,

Maharashtra has reported the maximum at 18,050 followed by 5,041 in Tamil Nadu, 4,131 in Delhi, 3,312 in Karnataka, 2,672 in Gujarat, 2,120 in Uttar Pradesh, 2,116 in Andhra Pradesh, 2,100 in West Bengal and 1,015 in Madhya Pradesh.

So far, 800 people have died of COVID-19 in Rajasthan, 645 in Telangana, 604 in Punjab, 489 in Haryana, 478 in Jammu and Kashmir, 397 in Bihar, 286 in Odisha, 188 in Jharkhand, 151 in Assam, 134 in Uttarakhand and 115 in Kerala.

## PM'S VIRTUAL MEET ON COVID-19

# TN CM urges Centre to share 50% RT-PCR test cost

PNS ■ CHENNAI

The Centre should fund 50 per cent of the cost of RT-PCR tests done for detecting COVID-19 and also finance the procurement of high-end ventilators, Tamil Nadu Chief Minister K Palaniswami on Tuesday.

Raising the demand with Prime Minister Narendra Modi during a virtual meet he (Modi) held with chief ministers of ten states on COVID-19, Palaniswami also said a proactive strategy has led to a slide in new positive cases in Chennai and the model was being replicated in other parts of the state.

Pointing to aggressive, targeted testing, a key component of the strategy, he said Tamil Nadu was conducting the maximum number of RT-PCR (Reverse transcriptase-Polymerase chain reaction) tests, the gold standard for COVID-19 screening, in the country.



"Tamil Nadu presently has 130 labs for COVID testing with 61 government and 69 private labs, with an average testing capacity of 65,000 tests per day. These tests cost nearly five crore rupees a day. I request the government of India to fund 50 per cent of the cost of the PCR tests from the PM CARES fund," he said.

The chief minister said over 32.92 lakh samples have been tested so far in the state.

The recovery rate was 80.8 per cent, one of the highest in the country and death rate of

1.6 per cent among the lowest, he said.

"Experts treating critically ill COVID patients have requested for a higher degree of ventilatory care," he said and urged the Centre to "provide funds to Tamil Nadu for procuring high-end ventilators."

Outlining the strategy in the state capital, he referred to door-to-door surveys, fever camps, mobile and 'fixed' sample collection centres and the screening of about 17 lakh people.

## SHORT READS



### Online yoga sessions for TN prisoners

**COIMBATORE:** Inmates of central prisons across Tamil Nadu are attending yoga classes online to remain healthy and beat the coronavirus during the COVID-19 lockdown period. Considering the request from Tamil Nadu Prisons Department, Isha Yoga Centre is conducting the virtual sessions for inmates at almost all central prisons in the state from July 28. Isha teachers trained by the centre's founder Sadhguru Jaggi Vasudev, are delivering the online modules in Tamil to participants in Chennai, Vellore, Cuddalore, Tiruchirappalli, Salem and Palayamkottai. The prisons department had made the request to teach yoga to improve physical and mental health of the inmates, a release said on Tuesday. The online classes include Yoga Namaskar, Simha Kriya and Isha Kriya.

## Punjab CM seeks liberal fiscal package from PM

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Tuesday sought from Prime Minister Narendra Modi a liberal financial package to fill the revenue collection gap caused by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The chief minister raised the demand during a video conference meeting of the prime minister with chief ministers to review the coronavirus situation.

Punjab has seen 50 per cent decline in revenue for the first quarter of the current financial year.

The chief minister also said the cap of 35 per cent in the State Disaster Relief Fund (SDRF) for COVID-19 related expenditure, as per the Ministry of Home Affairs guidelines, is not sufficient to meet the current requirements and sought flexibility in coronavirus-related terms of expenditure.



Singh also thanked the Union government for accepting Punjab's proposal to set up a National Institute of Virology for the north zone and said the state government will soon give 25 acres of land for the institute, a government statement said.

The chief minister also urged Modi to review the University Grants Commission's decision on mandatory exams for final year classes to be held by September 30.

## INDEPENDENCE DAY

# Delhi Police issues traffic advisory

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ahead of the Independence Day function and the full dress rehearsal ceremony on August 13, the Delhi Police on Tuesday issued a traffic advisory to ensure safe and smooth vehicular movement across the national capital.

According to the advisory, the traffic around Red Fort from where Prime Minister Narendra Modi will address the nation on Independence day will remain closed for general traffic from 4 am to 10 am and only labelled vehicles will be permitted. Traffic restrictions for the full dress rehearsal on August 13 and for Independence Day function will remain same, police said.

According to the advisory, eight roads -- Netaji Subhash Marg, Lohian Road, SP Mukherjee Marg, Chandni Chowk Road, Nishad Raj Marg, Esplanade Road and its Link



Road to Netaji Subhash Marg, Ring Road from Rajghat to ISBT and Outer Ring Road from ISBT to IP flyover will be closed for general public from 4 am to 10 am.

Vehicles without parking labels for the rehearsal and the Independence Day function have been advised to avoid C-Hexagon India Gate, Copernicus Marg, Mandi House, Sikandra Road, Tilak Marg, Mathura Road, Bahadur Shah Zafar Marg, Subhash Marg, Jawaharlal Nehru Marg and the Ring Road



between Nizamuddin Bridge and ISBT bridge.

For north-south destinations -- commuters need to take alternative routes from Aurobindo Marg - Safdarjung Road, Connaught Place-Minto Road and Nizamuddin bridge to cross Yamuna -- Pushta Road-GT Road, it said. For east-west corridor, commuters will need to follow alternative routes from DND-NH24-Vikas Marg, Vikas Marg- DDU Marg, and Boulevard Road-Barfkhana, the traffic advisory stated.

## AIADMK leader junks colleague's line, roots for Palaniswami

PNS ■ CHENNAI

AIADMK leader and Tamil Nadu Minister K T Rajenthra Bhalaji on Tuesday strongly pitched for projecting incumbent K Palaniswami as the party's chief ministerial candidate in the 2021 assembly elections, contradicting the stand of a cabinet colleague. Madurai-based party leader and Minister for Cooperation Sellur K Raju had on Monday said elected MLAs would choose the Chief Minister following the assembly elections next year if the ruling party was voted to power.

Bhalaji, Minister for Milk and Dairy Development, Bhalaji, from Virudhunagar district neighbouring Madurai and known for his sharp remarks on many issues, threw his weight behind Palaniswami.



"Edappadiyar (a reverential reference to the M, addressing him by the name of his native) Endrum Mudalvar (is the Chief Minister for ever)," he said.

On his twitter handle, Bhalaji asked party leaders and workers to face the poll battle after fixing the target. "Let us face the elections by projecting Edappadiyar (as CM)," he said and also wanted to build the campaign around the persona of the incumbent.

### ATM catches fire at Lucknow railway stn

**LUCKNOW:** An ATM at the Lucknow railway station caught fire on Tuesday morning, an official said, added that while the machine was damaged, no passenger was injured. Government Railway Police (GRP) SP Saumitra Yadav said the ATM was located near the entrance of the railway station on the Charbagh side. "Fire brigade personnel were informed and flames were controlled within 15 minutes," he said. Yadav said prima facie it seems a short circuit triggered the fire. "The matter is being investigated. The fire damaged the ATM but no passenger or any other person was injured," the SP added. When asked whether the currency kept in the ATM has been destroyed, Yadav said he does not have any information about this.

## ED questions Sushant Singh Rajput's friend, manager, sister

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Enforcement Directorate on Tuesday questioned actor Sushant Singh Rajput's friend and roommate Siddharth Pithani, business manager Shruti Modi and elder sister Meetu Singh in connection with a money laundering case linked to his death.

While Pithani and Modi arrived at the office of the central probe agency in the Ballard Estate area around 11 am in response to their scheduled summons, Meetu Singh reached a little after 1 pm.

She was escorted by women officials of the Mumbai Police to the ED office, thronged by scores of media personnel since questioning in the case began last week.

This is the first time that a



member of Rajput's family is appearing before the ED. Rajput has four sisters.

Both Pithani and Modi were questioned by the agency on Monday and their statements were recorded under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA). Modi was questioned last week as well.

Pithani, an IT professional, had told various news channels

that he was present in the Bandra flat on June 14 when the 34-year-old actor allegedly hanged himself.

Pithani, who Rajput called 'Buddha', was stated to be living with the actor for about a year. He had earlier recorded his statement with the Mumbai Police as part of its accidental death report (ADR) probe in the case.

## 9 tribal museums will be ready by 2022-end: Govt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Tribal Affairs Ministry on Tuesday said all nine museums dedicated to tribal freedom fighters will be completed by the end of 2022. Out of the nine museums sanctioned for tribal freedom fighters, two are nearing completion and the rest are at different stages of progress, it said in a statement. "It is expected that all the museums will come into existence by the end of 2022. New museums will be sanctioned in the future in collaboration with the states," it said.

The largest of these museums is being built in Rajpipla in Gujarat at a cost of Rs 102.55 crore. The rest are being built in Ranchi (Jharkhand), Lambasingi (AP), Raipur (Chhattisgarh), Kozhikode (Kerala), Chhindwara (MP), Hyderabad (TS), Senapati (Manipur) and Kelsi (Mizoram).

## TABLIGHI JAMAAT

# HC transfers cases from different trial courts to Saket district court

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court Monday ordered transferring a batch of cases pending against various foreign nationals, who attended the Tablighi Jamaat event here and allegedly indulged in missionary activities in violation of visa norms and breached anti-COVID-19 guidelines, to Saket district court for being decided expeditiously.

Justice Anup Jairam Bhambhani directed that the charge sheets arising out of different FIRs mentioned in eight petitions be transferred from different trial courts in Delhi to the court of chief metropolitan magistrate, South-East Delhi, Saket district court here



and said the matters be disposed of expeditiously in accordance with the law.

The high court, which was hearing the matters through video conferencing, passed the order after the counsel for the foreigners urged it to issue directions similar to that issued by the

Supreme Court on August 6. The high court passed the direction while allowing the plea by senior advocate Rebecca John, appearing for the foreign nationals, to withdraw the petitions seeking quashing of separate FIRs lodged against them.

## BJP MP Sakshi Maharaj gets threat calls from Pak

PNS ■ UNNAO

BJP MP Sakshi Maharaj has given a written complaint to the police claiming that he has received calls from a Pakistani number threatening to kill him in a bomb blast.

In the complaint to inspector in-charge of Sadar Kotwali, Dinesh Chandra Mishra, the MP from Unnao said that he got two phone calls from some terrorist organisation of Pakistan threatening to blow him up along with his residence.

According to the letter, the caller claimed that Kashmir would soon become a part of Pakistan and he also used foul language for the Ram Temple groundbreaking ceremony at Ayodhya.

The caller said that he and his mujahideens were keeping an eye on him round the clock, the MP said in the letter, adding that he also abused Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home



Minister Amit Shah, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.

The MP has demanded that immediate steps be taken to save his life and property.

Acting on the complaint, Superintendent of Police Rohan P Kanay directed circle officer Yadendra Yadav and Kotwali in-charge to probe the matter and take help of surveillance teams. The SP said that a report has been registered.

## NGT serious over murder of forest home guard in Sariska, asks for ban on mining

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal Tuesday expressed concern over mowing down of a forest home guard by alleged mining mafia in Sariska tiger reserve and directed the Centre and the Rajasthan government to ensure ban on the excavation of minor minerals.

The green panel noted that mining is taking place inside the tiger reserve in violation of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, 1972 and mining norms laid down under the Sustainable Sand Mining Management Guidelines 2016 by Central Pollution Control Board under the provisions of the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

It said that there appears to be a failure of the oversight regulatory mechanism in the enforcement of the provision of the Wildlife Act as well as Sustainable Mining Guidelines.



"While this Tribunal is not directly concerned with the enforcement of criminal law, the same being incidental to the enforcement of environmental norms, we cannot refrain from expressing our concern at such incidents in eco-sensitive areas and the defiance of environmental laws remaining unchecked.

"We do hope the State of Rajasthan will monitor the enforcement of law in this direction at appropriate higher level

and the Union Environment Ministry will coordinate with the concerned authorities," the NGT said adding that illegal mining must be strictly dealt with.

The NGT said to maintain morale of the guards and other enforcement officials and to uphold rule of law, family of the deceased ought to be suitably rehabilitated and police machinery must ensure that guilty is apprehended expeditiously and brought to justice.

**"We do hope the State of Rajasthan will monitor the enforcement of law in this direction at appropriate higher level and the Union Environment Ministry will coordinate with the concerned authorities," the NGT said adding that illegal mining must be strictly dealt with**

A bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel formed a committee comprising officials from the state pollution control board, Alwar District Magistrate and Principal Chief Conservator of Forests (Head of Forest Force) and directed it to submit a report.

## Ensure swift, fair probe into death of 20-yr woman in road accident: NCW

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Commission for Women (NCW) on Tuesday asked the Uttar Pradesh Police to ensure swift, fair and thorough probe into the death of a 20-year-old woman in a road accident in Bulandshahr district.

The family of the victim, Sudiksha Bhati, has alleged that the accident happened in the Aurangabad area on Monday morning as motorcycle-borne men were allegedly following her two-wheeler and harassing her, officials said on Tuesday.

NCW chairperson Rekha Sharma wrote to UP Police chief H C Awasthy and asked him to ensure swift, fair and thorough investigation in the matter.

"Considering the gravity of



the matter, it is requested that CCTV footage may be checked and also ensure swift, fair and thorough investigation be done in the matter," she said in the letter.

She also demanded that a detailed action taken report reflecting the true nature of the incident be sent to the commission at the earliest.

SHORT READS



Pilot says there shouldn't be any vendetta politics

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

Vikas Dubey's aide arrested in UP

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

No parade during I-Day celebration in Odisha this year

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

PM discuss Covid situation with CMs of 10 states

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

"Our experience so far is that



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

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

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

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

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

After rapprochement, Gehlot assures to resolve MLAs grievances

PNS ■ JAIPUR

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Tuesday said he will address grievances of MLAs, a day after the Congress set up a committee to look into the issues raised by rebel legislators.

A meeting between Sachin Pilot and Rahul Gandhi on Monday signalled an "amicable resolution" of nearly a month-long Rajasthan crisis ahead of the crucial assembly session from August 14.

Gehlot said he does not know why some MLAs rebelled and what promises were made to them.

"If any MLA is annoyed with me, then it is my responsibility to address that. I have kept doing this in the past and will do this now also," he told reporters before leaving for Jaipur.



However, he evaded a question on using harsh words against Pilot including calling him a 'nikamma'.

Referring to the Congress meeting on Monday, he said decisions were taken and now the future strategy will be decided.

He said he has no idea about the formula for Pilot's return. "High command knows this.

He will tell his grievances to the three-member committee formed by the party," he said.

Asserting that the Congress government in the state will not only complete its five years but will also win the next assembly elections, Gehlot again accused the BJP of conspiring to topple his government at any cost.

The BJP has in the past dismissed the allegations.

Pilot Deepak Sathe cremated; Maha govt accords state funeral

PNS ■ MUMBAI

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

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

The number of people allowed to attend the last rites was restricted in view of the COVID-19 outbreak. Relatives, friends and others, including Mumbai Mayor Kishori Pednekar, paid floral tributes at his residence before the final procession began. Slogans of "amar rahe" were raised when his body was being taken to the cremato-



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

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

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

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

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

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

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



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

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

he said in written replies.

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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



therefore an apprehension of bias.

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

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

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

Sooraj Pancholi says he is being defamed in Sushant case

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

DELHI VIOLENCE

HC grants bail to accused

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

According to the plea, he was taken into custody on April 3 in connection with another FIR lodged at Dayalpur police station in north east Delhi for alleged offences of rioting and mischief by fire or explosive substance

with an intent to destroy a house under the IPC. Subsequently, he was arrested in this case.

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ IDUKKI (KERALA)

The toll in the landslide in Pettimudi in the high range Idukki district rose to 52 with three more bodies being recovered from the debris as rescue operations continued on Tuesday to trace those missing. The bodies of two men and a woman were recovered, officials said.

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

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

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



Tuesday. The Idukki district Collector had held discussions with the Collector of Theni in neighbouring Tamil Nadu, with regard to the release of water through the tunnel to Vaigai dam when the water level touched the 136-foot mark.

The Kerala government had on Saturday asked the Tamil Nadu government to release water from Mullaperiyar to

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



water and sanitation services, it said.

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

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

this urgent contribution will help our humanitarian partners on the ground in providing crucial support to those who have lost their shelters, belongings and sources of livelihood," said Taheeni Thammanagoda, who oversees EU humanitarian programs in Asia and the Pacific.

"Focusing on the worst affected countries, we are providing the means for people to survive through this difficult time so that they can get back on their feet as soon as possible," Thammanagoda said.

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

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

PNS ■ BENGALURU

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

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

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

## Nepal at it again

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



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

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

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

## Muted festivities

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



No matter what your opinion about Lalit Modi, the fact of the matter is that with the Indian Premier League (IPL), he managed to create a globally competitive and recognised sports league. So much so that the IPL is the world's top franchise-based cricket league and one must keep in mind that China, for all its success in creating brands, has failed in creating a global sports league. That said, as sports have been ravaged, thanks to China's gift to the world, the Coronavirus, the IPL also fell a victim, missing its scheduled slot at the start of the Indian summer. But now sports — from Formula 1 to football — have

returned to television screens and spectator-less formats. Even cricket has restarted in England in the safety of a "bio bubble." So the IPL is looking at playing its season in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) this winter, or at least has plans of playing.

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

# The border challenge

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



ASHOK K MEHTA

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

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

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



counter intrusion?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## SOUNDBITE

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



Congress leader — Sachin Pilot

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



Actor — Radhika Madan

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



US President — Donald Trump

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



Congress leader — Shashi Tharoor

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Ill-conceived decision

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

Bal Govind  
Noida

### Lessons from Beirut

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

### Big boost to agriculture

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

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



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

N Sadhasiva Reddy  
Bengaluru

### Breather for Congress

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

Azhar A Khan  
Rampur

Send your feedback to:  
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

**FIRST COLUMN**

## Modi the messiah of Hindus?

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



KALYANI SHANKAR

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

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

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

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

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

(The writer is a senior journalist)

**POINTCOUNTERPOINT**

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

—CONGRESS LEADER RAHUL GANDHI



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

—UNION ENVIRONMENT MINISTER PRAKASH JAVADEKAR

# Not a NEET situation

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



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

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

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

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

The most disturbing pattern globally is that one young person out of every five (20 per cent) and 30 per cent of the girls and 13 per cent of the boys among them— those aged between 15 and 24 (which is the international definition of the youth) — are currently classified as NEET. This means that a whopping 267 million out of 1.3 billion young people worldwide are neither gaining experience in the labour market, nor receiving income from work or enhancing their education and skills. This suggests that their labour remains under-utilised.

India, at present, is home to the largest population of youth in the world. The National Youth Policy of India, 2014 defines them as people belonging in the age group of 15-29 years. According to the census data for 2011, the youth constitute 28 per cent of the total population in the country and contribute to over 34 per cent of India's national income. The latest estimates show that they comprise around 27 per cent of the total Indian population of 1.3 billion.

However, a major positive development has been their growing enrolment in the secondary and tertiary-level of education, which has resulted in better-skilled employees and proliferation of decent employment in many countries around the world.

WE ARE GOING TO HAVE A LARGER YOUTH POPULATION FOR THE NEXT TWO DECADES, WHICH POSES AN IMMINENT CHALLENGE AS WELL — OF LEVERAGING THE POTENTIAL OF THE ABUNDANT HUMAN RESOURCE. THE SPIRAL OF THE UNEMPLOYED IS POSING SOME SERIOUS QUESTIONS ON HIGHER EDUCATION, SKILL DEVELOPMENT, DEMOGRAPHIC DIVIDEND AND INDIA'S FUTURE. THERE ARE OTHER CONCERNS ABOUT QUALITY OF JOBS, DECENT WORKPLACES, UPWARD MOBILITY, WAGES, ASPIRATIONS, COMPETITION ACCRUED BY LIMITED SUPPLY OF NEW JOBS, CONTRACTUAL NATURE OF JOBS, MENTAL HEALTH, OPPORTUNITIES FOR ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND FOSTERING INNOVATIONS AMONG THE YOUNG MINDS



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In sum, as argued by economists and researchers, if the youth are properly skilled and absorbed in the labour market, they can contribute to higher economic growth of the country. We are going to have a larger youth population for the next two decades, which poses an imminent challenge as well — of leveraging the potential of the abundant human resource. The spiral of the unemployed is posing some serious questions on higher education, skill development, demographic dividend and India's future. There are other concerns about quality of jobs, decent workplaces, upward mobility, wages, aspirations, competition accrued by limited supply of new jobs, contractual nature of jobs, mental health, opportunities for entrepreneurship and fostering innovations among the young minds. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, as the country is moving towards the vision of a new India and an *Atmanirbhar Bharat* (self-reliant India), we need to prioritise the aspirations of the young population for inculcating and strengthening their *atma vishwas* (confidence).

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

## UP B.Ed 2020 JEE a benchmark in many ways

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



MONIKA S GARG

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

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

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

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

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

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

to be convinced by those at the highest level.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CAPSULE



**Triumph Motorcycles drives in Street Triple R at Rs 8.84 L**

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



**Bajaj Electricals reports Q1 net loss of Rs 16.60 cr**

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



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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

"Agriculture currently contributes to over 14 per cent of



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

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

the country's agriculture infrastructure, it added.

"It will also allow the agriculture sector to help enhance its contributions to the GDP, improve balance of trade, stimulate greater export potential of the farm sector and ensure a stable and prosperous life for farmers by increasing incomes," the farmers' body said.

Welcoming the fund, FAIFA

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

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

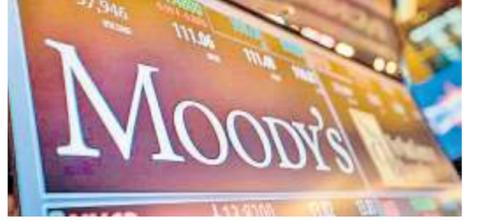
According to Moody's the trend toward a more fragmented and protectionist global economy will likely accelerate as a result of the pandemic, with restrictions on trade, investment and technology transfers.

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

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

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

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



**Virus surge makes US weak link in economic recovery**

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

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

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

**Passenger vehicle wholesales dip 4% in July**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

**'Industry-friendly reforms in mining sector shortly'**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Mines Minister Pralhad Joshi on Tuesday said the government will come out with more industry-friendly reforms in the mining sector very shortly.

"More industry-friendly, productive friendly reforms will be brought to the mining sector very shortly," Joshi said during a webinar on "Indian Mining Industry: Contribution Towards Aatmanirbhar Bharat" organised by FICCI.

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

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

The minister said that other issues like illegal mining, environment clearance and forest

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

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

Mining as a sector creates wealth and employment and strengthens the nation from within, Joshi said. The sector, he said, contributed Rs 4.1 lakh crore to India's GDP in the last financial year by employing about 1.1 crore people.

Yearly, 5.5 crore people depend upon the sector for their livelihood.

India is a mineral rich country producing 95 different minerals, including metallic and non-metallic and minor, he said adding the mineral sector therefore is the backbone of the country's economy. Stating that commercial coal mining is the biggest reform in coal sector the country has ever seen, he said.

**HDFC raises Rs 10,000 cr equity capital in QIP**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

"We wish to inform you that the committee of directors -QIP 2020 of the Corporation at its meeting held today approved the allotment of securities to eligible qualified institutional buyers pursuant to the issue," HDFC said in a regulatory filing. HDFC said it has issued 5,68,18,181 equity shares at an issue price of Rs 1,760, aggregating to Rs 10,000 crore.

**India Inc goes slow on increments**

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Salary growth for Indian professionals may range from a marginally positive to stagnant or even negative, given the dire situation created by COVID-19, but increment for some of the "super-specialized" profiles can go beyond 15 per cent, a report said on Tuesday.

According to TeamLease

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

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

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

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

of work. It has brought to forefront the trinity between skills, performance and rewards," said Rituparna Chakraborty, co-founder & executive vice president, TeamLease Services. Chakraborty further said that "the 15 per cent increment that companies are willing to offer to specialized profiles is a testimony of this.

**Sensex jumps 225 points; Axis Bank rallies 4%**

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark Sensex jumped 225 points on Tuesday following gains in HDFC Bank, ITC and Axis Bank amid sustained foreign fund inflows and positive global cues.

After touching a high of 38,556.27, the BSE Sensex pared some gains to end 224.93 points or 0.59 per cent higher at 38,407.01.

The NSE Nifty jumped 52.35 points or 0.46 per cent to fin-

ish at 11,322.50.

Axis Bank was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, rallying around 4 per cent, followed by IndusInd Bank, ITC, HDFC Bank, Tata Steel, HDFC, ICICI Bank and Reliance Industries.

On the other hand, Titan, Bharti Airtel, HCL Tech and ONGC were among the laggards. According to traders, investor sentiment was positive tracking positive cues from other global indices and consistent foreign fund inflows.

**Confidence of Indian professionals on steady rise as lockdown eases**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The confidence level of Indian professionals is on a steady rise with 1 in 3 expecting their personal savings to increase in the next six months, amid easing of COVID-19 lockdown curbs, a survey said on Tuesday.

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



the June 15-28 survey.

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

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

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

**Aramco doing due diligence for buying 20% in Reliance O2C**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Saudi Aramco, the world's largest oil exporter, is doing due diligence on buying a USD 15 billion stake in Reliance Industries Ltd's refining and petrochemical business, its CEO Amin Nasser said.

Billionaire Mukesh Ambani had in August last year announced plans to sell to Aramco a 20 per cent stake in RIL's oil-to-chemical (O2C) business, which he valued at USD 75 billion. The deal was to close by March 2020 but has been delayed.

"With regard to the Reliance deal, all I can say at this stage (is that) it's going through the due diligence," Nasser said in June quarter earnings call with investors.

"So, depending on the due diligence, we will make our decision after we complete the due diligence on that deal."

According to the transcript of the investor call, he went on to state that the deal to buy a stake in the world's largest single-

**Reliance breaks into top 100 global companies**

**New Delhi:** Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries has jumped 10 places to break into the world's top 100 companies on the Fortune Global 500 list. The oil-to-telecom conglomerate is ranked 96th in the 2020 ranking released by Fortune on Tuesday.

This is the highest any Indian company has been ranked on the Fortune Global 500 list. Reliance had broken into the top 100 in 2012 ranking when it was ranked 99th but slipped in subsequent years to rank 215th in 2016.



**Economic impact of Airbnb stood at \$ 320 mn in 2019**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The economic impact of online accommodation platform Airbnb in India last year stood at USD 320 million (around Rs 2,200 crore), a report said on Tuesday.

The contribution by Airbnb made to the Indian economy was driven by guest spending during their stay, hosts investment in their properties, among others, the report said.

"The economic activity supported by Airbnb's presence in India sustained 49,900 jobs in 2019. The sector with the most jobs supported by Airbnb was



the agriculture, forestry and fishing sector," the report said. India's tourism economy is

one of the largest in Asia-Pacific (APAC) in terms of spending, with its growth hav-

ing accelerated significantly in the years preceding the coronavirus pandemic, it added.

"Around 83 per cent of Airbnb guests staying in the more than 55,000 Airbnb listings in India in 2019 were domestic visitors, seeking options for overnight stays in Indian destinations," the report said.

Inbound Airbnb guests from the United States represented 35 per cent of all foreign Airbnb guests in 2019. Guests from the United Kingdom represented the next largest segment, making up 12 per cent of the total, it added.

In 2019, Airbnb guests spent USD 249 million (around Rs 1,800 crore) in India.

A significant majority of Airbnb guests' spending in India was spent on goods and

services other than their accommodation, the report "The economic impact of Airbnb in India" by Oxford Economics said.

Commenting on the report, FICCI Travel Technology



## INDIA'S LUNCHBOX PARADOX



**A**re you careless with your meals? Do you skip them often? Are you one that almost never makes a conscious effort to watch what you eat? If your answer to even one of these questions is yes, you probably are one among the 60 per cent of people who care-less about what they eat, according to a survey by Nu-Shakti, a brand of Royal DSM, on India's 'Diet Paradox'.

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

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

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

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

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

they have not necessarily resulted in the right action. The survey revealed one of the reasons for this gap between awareness and action is because meals were being skipped regularly and most of them confessed they forgo a meal because of an important work meeting. 31 per cent of Indians consider working timings the top barrier to a healthy lifestyle.

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



## DEEPIKA TO PROMOTE 'MELANGE'

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Telugu industry is more glamorous, luxurious

### WAS A GOOD STUDENT...

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

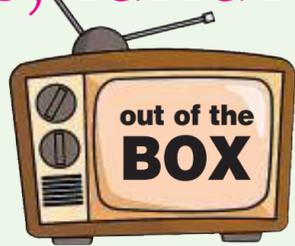
### HYDERABAD HAS BECOME MY SECOND HOME TOWN...

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

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

### NOT TELLING PARENTS ABOUT MY ACTING...

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



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

### SHOOTING IN A SAFE ENVIRONMENT...

### LOVE FROM TELUGU AUDIENCE...

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

### SHOOTING IN A SAFE ENVIRONMENT...

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

(The *Hitler Gari Pellam* concept is inspired by Zee TV's *Guddan Tumse Na Ho Payega*, which has pioneered and revolutionized the television industry and continues to win the hearts of people. *Hitler Gari Pellam* will start from August 17, every Monday to Saturday at 6.30 PM on Zee Telugu and Zee Telugu HD)



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# LOCKED AND HITCHED: STAR COUPLES WHO GOT MARRIED AMID LOCKDOWN

For many stars, the new normal has been all about new beginnings. Despite lockdown, several among the gitterati have tied the knot in an intimate affair. *The Pioneer* brings to you a list of star couples in Tollywood, who sealed their 'forever together' in the time of Covid-19.



**ANA DAGGU-BATI and MIHEEKA BAJAJ**  
The *Baahubali* star got married to Miheeka Bajaj on August 8 in the presence of close family and friends. The close-knit yet glamorous affair was hosted at the Ramanaidu Studios in

Hyderabad. In May, Rana made his relationship with Miheeka public. Sharing a photo of the couple, the actor wrote on Instagram, "And she said yes! #MiheekaBajaj." He used a red heart emoji along with his caption.

Hyderabad. In May, Rana made his relationship with Miheeka public. Sharing a photo of the couple, the actor wrote on Instagram, "And she said yes! #MiheekaBajaj." He used a red heart emoji along with his caption.



**NITHIIN REDDY and SHALINI KANDUKARI**

Hyderabad. In May, Rana made his relationship with Miheeka public. Sharing a photo of the couple, the actor wrote on Instagram, "And she said yes! #MiheekaBajaj." He used a red heart emoji along with his caption.

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**DIL RAJU AND REVATHI**

Hyderabad. In May, Rana made his relationship with Miheeka public. Sharing a photo of the couple, the actor wrote on Instagram, "And she said yes! #MiheekaBajaj." He used a red heart emoji along with his caption.

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**MAHESH AND PAVANI**

Hyderabad. In May, Rana made his relationship with Miheeka public. Sharing a photo of the couple, the actor wrote on Instagram, "And she said yes! #MiheekaBajaj." He used a red heart emoji along with his caption.

Hyderabad. In May, Rana made his relationship with Miheeka public. Sharing a photo of the couple, the actor wrote on Instagram, "And she said yes! #MiheekaBajaj." He used a red heart emoji along with his caption.

**SUJEETH REDDY and PRAVALLIKA**

Hyderabad. In May, Rana made his relationship with Miheeka public. Sharing a photo of the couple, the actor wrote on Instagram, "And she said yes! #MiheekaBajaj." He used a red heart emoji along with his caption.

Hyderabad. In May, Rana made his relationship with Miheeka public. Sharing a photo of the couple, the actor wrote on Instagram, "And she said yes! #MiheekaBajaj." He used a red heart emoji along with his caption.

**NIKHL SIDDHARTHA and PALLAVI VARMA**

Hyderabad. In May, Rana made his relationship with Miheeka public. Sharing a photo of the couple, the actor wrote on Instagram, "And she said yes! #MiheekaBajaj." He used a red heart emoji along with his caption.

Hyderabad. In May, Rana made his relationship with Miheeka public. Sharing a photo of the couple, the actor wrote on Instagram, "And she said yes! #MiheekaBajaj." He used a red heart emoji along with his caption.

## FUN

**ARCHIE**

GUESS WHO?  
UM... VERONICA?  
WHY ARE YOU MAD? I GOT IT RIGHT!  
YOU SOUNDED LIKE YOU HAD TO GUESS!

**CALVIN AND HOBBS**

HI, MOM, I'M AN OWL.  
YOU DON'T LOOK LIKE A VERY HAPPY OWL.  
NOPE. I'M NOT. MAYBE SOME LUNCH WOULD HELP.  
I DON'T IT. I DON'T LIKE MICE.  
THIS IS SOUP.  
IS IT MOUSE SOUP? I DON'T LIKE MICE.  
I HEARD YOU. IT'S TOMATO.

**GARFIELD**

DO YOU THINK I SHED TOO MUCH?  
ARLENE, IF ANYTHING, YOU DON'T SHED ENOUGH.  
CAT SWEET TALK

**NANCY**

PHIL, IT'S A LITTLE COLD FOR A VALENTINE'S DAY WALK DOWN "MEMORY LANE."  
I MEAN, I LIKE OUR OLD HIGH SCHOOL, TOO... BUT...  
IT'S WHERE I FIRST FELL IN LOVE WITH YOU!  
IT HAD TO BE HERE, DARLING...

**GINGER MEGGS**

Q: What is the collective noun for beans?  
A:

**REALITY CHECK**

OH-OH! THEY'VE GOT THE CANDLES, WINE AND CHOCOLATES OUT AND THE ADLE LOVE SONGS GOING! LET'S GET OUT OF HERE! FRANK! TRUST ME- YOU DO NOT WANT TO SEE HOW SAUSAGES ARE MADE!

**SPEED BUMP**

TUNNEL OF LOVE

**SUDOKU**

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

**Yesterday's solution**

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

**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.

**CROSSWORD**

1	2	3	4	5
6			7	8
9				
10				
11				
12	13		14	15
16				
17				18
19				

**ACROSS**

- Saying again
- These brown fruit grow on a palm tree
- A clothing size
- A hard black fuel
- Boat in a battle
- A fire-breathing monster
- The number in a quartet
- Frown
- Played a part in a play
- Replying

**DOWN**

- More than is needed
- A compass direction
- Had a conversation
- A health professional
- Makes a decision
- Went in
- Go after
- Nut from an oak tree
- Frequently
- This grows on heads

**SOLUTION**

P	R	E	G	N	A	N	T		
A	L	E	S	P	O	N			
R	V	E	R	S					
A	N	S	E	R					
C	H	I	S						
U	P	C	H	A	T				
T	E	S	T						
L	A	G							
D	R	E	P	I	N	G			

Most Read NEWS

Industrialist installs late wife's statue at residence

Industrialist Shrinivas Gupta, celebrated house warming function in Karnataka's Koppal with his wife Madhavi's silicon wax statue, who died in a car accident in July 2017. Commenting on the ceremony and installing the silicon statue of his deceased wife, Shrinivas Gupta said it is a great feeling to have my wife again at my home, as this was her dream home. "An artist Shreedhar Murthy from Bengaluru took a year to prepare my wife's statue," Shrinivas Gupta said, adding "Silicon was used for the statue for durability." The statue was built inside Madhavi's dream house with the help of architect Ranghannanavar. "Our artist suggested me to have silicon statue instead of the wax statue as we live in Koppal which is a hot place, and an AC cant be open all the time to maintain the wax. So as per the suggestion, we got the silicon statue prepared," Gupta added.



Pair of Mahatma Gandhi's iconic glasses go on sale

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



Triassic reptile's neck was 3 times longer than torso

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



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

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



SINGLES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

United effect

AFP ■ COLOGNE



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

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

The Portugal international notched his competition-best seventh goal of the season as United set up a semi-final clash against Sevilla or Wolves, joining Inter Milan in the last four following the Italian side's 2-1 victory over Bayer Leverkusen in Dusseldorf. "Third time this season we've been to the semis, every competition we've been in. Delighted we've gone through,

we deserved to win tonight," United manager Ole Gunnar Solskjaer told BT Sport. "Their keeper was fantastic, unbelievable. We hit the post a few times, there were a couple of VAR decisions against us. It could have been one of those nights that you end up with penalty shoot outs. They made it hard for us." All games from the quarter-finals onwards in this season's Europa League are being played behind closed doors as one-off ties across four venues - Cologne, Duisburg, Dusseldorf and Gelsenkirchen - in a unique format following a five-month interruption. Solskjaer recalled Fernandes, Paul Pogba, Marcus Rashford, Mason Greenwood and Anthony



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

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

Greenwood looked to have put United ahead as he drilled in via the far post moments later only for the teenager to be ruled offside following a VAR review. He again went close early in the second half when he slammed against the upright, with Fernandes promptly smacking the opposite post with a dipping 20-yard drive. The Portugal international, who scored five times in the group stage with Sporting, stung the palms of Johnsson with another hit from distance - shortly after Aaron Wan-Bissaka made a desperation block to thwart Bryan Oviedo after a mesmerising dribble from Rasmus Falk.

OUTSTANDING JOHNSSON

Appearing in their first European quarter-final, and the first Danish club to reach this stage since 1997, Copenhagen continued to frustrate United as they sought a repeat of their 1-0 win when the clubs last met in the Champions League group stage in 2006. Martial nearly won the game in normal time but again a sprawling Johnsson tipped away his curling attempt that appeared destined for the top corner. The France striker was once more repelled by Johnsson at the start of extra time, but Martial won a penalty as United kept the attack alive and the striker was upended by Andreas Bjelland. Fernandes blasted home from the spot on 95 minutes but

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

United though ultimately ensured their 2019-20 campaign will extend into a second year, having started the season 365 days ago with a 4-0 Premier League win over Chelsea. Awaiting them on Sunday will be Sevilla - who have won the Europa League and its precursor, the UEFA Cup, a record five times - or domestic rivals Wolves.



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

Inter struck first as Nicolò Barella guided in from the edge of the area on 15 minutes, with Lukaku bundling in a second six minutes later. Kai Havertz reduced the deficit in possibly his final game for Leverkusen on 25 minutes after exchanging passes with fellow Germany international Kevin Volland, but Inter held on to seal their place against Shakhtar Donetsk or Basel in next week's semi-final. "The defence did a tremendous job again tonight. We are growing but we have to learn to kill games off when we have the chances to do it, and we didn't tonight," said Lukaku. "Now we have time to recover physically and prepare for another great game. We will have to be ready."

Sarfraz should retire from Tests: Ramiz

PTI ■ KARACHI



Former Pakistan captain Ramiz Raja believes wicket-keeper-batsman Sarfraz Ahmed should retire from Tests and focus on white ball cricket. Sarfraz, a former captain, was seen performing the duties of 12th man in the series opener between England and Pakistan in Manchester. "In my book I am clear once you have been captain and remained on a pedestal then it is very difficult to come down and be on the bench," Raja said on the Youtube channel, Cricket Baaz. "I would advise Sarfraz to think about it and retire from Test cricket and just focus on white ball cricket, a format in which he is very good and known for his aggression," he added. Raja, who featured in 57

"There is nothing wrong with that because even James Anderson carried drinks when he didn't play in the second Test against West Indies. But in our cricket culture these things are not looked upon nicely and if they involve a former captain," Raja said. "I don't see him getting a chance in the Test format soon so he should focus on white ball cricket where he will play and be respected as well," he added. Raja feels the presence of Sarfraz in the squad also adds pressure on Muhammad Rizwan, who kept the wickets for Pakistan in the first Test. "He being in the Test squad also adds pressure on Muhammad Rizwan who knows there is a former captain keeper breathing down his neck and that is not good for him. I think Sarfraz should not be on the bench. He should call it a day from Test cricket."

Inaugural Lanka Premier League postponed

PTI ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) has postponed the inaugural edition of the Lanka Premier League (LPL) due to unavailability of top foreign players who would have had to undergo 14-day compulsory quarantine owing to rising cases of Covid-19 in the island nation. The T20 League was scheduled to start on August 28, subject to approval from the Government and Ministry of health but the 14-day compulsory quarantine period turned out to be an issue with regards to foreign players. "We had a discussion with the health authorities and the 14 day quarantine period for anyone entering the country is compulsory. So it's difficult to play the tournament at the end of August," SLC President Shammi Silva told NewsWire. "We will play the tournament in mid-November after IPL," Silva's information indicated that they are looking at roping in the best T20 freelancers. A total of 23 matches were scheduled in LPL which was supposed to end on September 20. According to reports, a total of 93 international cricketers, including England's World Cup-winning pacer Liam Plunkett and New Zealand seamer Tim Southee, were also listed for the tournament.



IPL teams to carry exclusive net bowlers to UAE

NEW DELHI: The Indian Premier League shifting its base to the United Arab Emirates for the 2020 edition may prove to be a blessing in disguise for at least 50 unheralded cricketers, who are set to travel with the eight teams as "exclusive" net bowlers. At least three franchises, Chennai Super Kings, Kolkata Knight Riders and Delhi Capitals confirmed that they are preparing a roster of net bowlers. The list comprises mostly first-class, U-19 and U-23 state level cricketers who will get to bowl to the likes of MS Dhoni, Suresh Raina, Rishabh Pant for close to a month. The convention all these years has been using local bowlers for nets apart from the junior fringe players but the strict bio-security measures for the tournament means that all franchise will have to arrange for quality bowlers during practice sessions. While BCCI has capped the squad strength (players) to 24, the franchises have not been specified contingent volume which will vary from team to team but it could be safely assumed that most of the eight sides will not avail any local net bowlers.

"If all goes well, we are planning to take around 10 bowlers exclusively to UAE for the practice sessions. They will be accompanying the team and will remain till the tournament starts," Chennai Super Kings CEO Kashi Vishwanathan said on Tuesday. The Kolkata Knight Riders also confirmed that they will also have 10 net bowlers in their roster, likely to be hand-picked by former Mumbai captain and their academy coach Abhishek Nayar. "It will be a blend of players of who have played Ranji Trophy while some of have played U-23 and U-19 national level tournaments," someone who is privy to developments in the KKR camp informed. The Delhi Capitals are also taking around six net bowlers who will be a part of the team's "bio bubble". "They will be staying with the squad and will travel with the team for the net sessions," a franchise source said. The Rajasthan Royals are also on course to finalise the number of net bowlers they will carry. Royals as well as Royal Challengers Bangalore can fly out bowlers from their own respective academies.

Nieva seeks 7 more boxers at national camp

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Resumption is done and said Indian boxing's High Performance Director Santiago Nieva, revealing that addition of seven more boxers has been proposed at the ongoing national training camp for the Olympic-bound in Patiala. Nine male boxers and a few of their women counterparts are training at the National Institute of Sports (NIS) in Patiala, taking the first step towards a restart amid the Covid-19 pandemic. These include world Silver-medallist and top Olympic medal hope Amit Panghal. "We are looking to add

seven more boxers, two coaches and a support staff member to this list in the next few weeks. Approval has been sought (from SAI). We are assessing things one month at a time," Nieva said. "The boxers who are here are training under the strict health safety protocol given to us and things have been smooth. I can't give you names but the ones we want included next are second in rankings of their respective categories," he said. The camp started in the first week of this month after boxers, willing to take the trip to Patiala were quarantined, tested and then allowed to enter the NIS. In between, a controversy

flared up when the Olympic-bound duo of Vikas Krishan and Satish Kumar "unknowingly" broke the quarantine protocol. The two have since made Bengaluru's Inspire Institute of Sports (IIS) their training base and won't be coming back, despite getting a SAI go ahead, due to the travelling involved. "We are currently able to do 70 per cent of the things that we used to do," Nieva said of the training regimen in Patiala. "As per the SOP (Standard Operating Procedure), we cannot enter the ring or do sparring or pad work. But we can do running, strength training, and lot of (punching) bags. That's enough for now," he added.

Kiwis to host Windies, Pak, Aus & B'desh in summer

PTI ■ AUCKLAND

New Zealand Cricket CEO David White on Tuesday said Pakistan, Australia, Bangladesh and the West Indies have confirmed they will tour the country during the summer. White said New Zealand Cricket (NZC) is working to implement bio-secure bubble, similar to the one the ECB is using in their ongoing season. "We are making tremendous progress. I was just on the phone

to the West Indies, they're confirmed, Pakistan is confirmed, Australia and Bangladesh... So 37 days of international cricket," White was quoted as saying by ESPNcricinfo. White added that women's team will tour Trans-Tasman rivals Australia in September with the reverse fixture slated for February. "The White Ferns will tour Australia in September and then the Australia Women's team will tour New Zealand in February," White said.

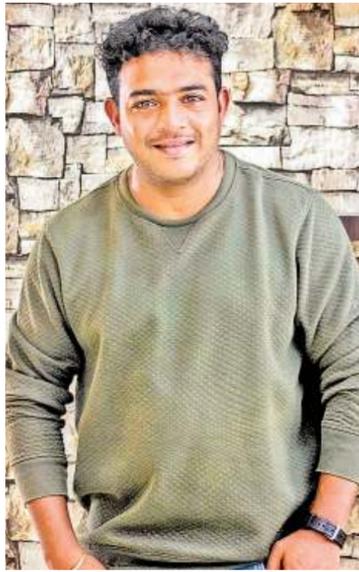
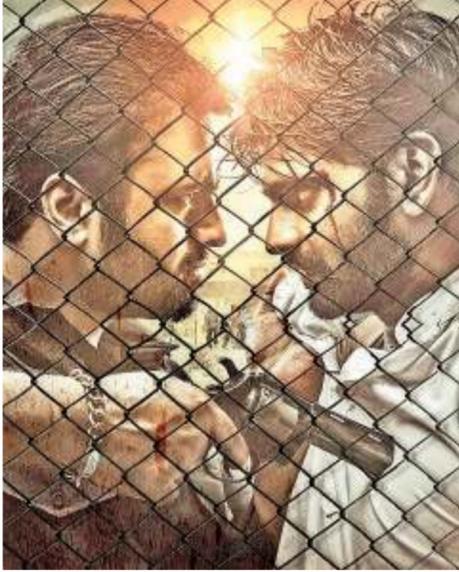
Halep makes second round of Prague Open

PRAGUE: Top-seeded Simona Halep had to fight hard to advance to the second round of the Prague Open in beating unseeded Polana Hercog 6-1, 1-6, 7-6 (3) on Tuesday. It was the first competitive match for Halep since she won the Dubai Championships in February. The Romanian will face next Czech wild card Barbora Krejickova. Second-seeded Petra Martic, who reached Palermo semis last week, overcame Varvara Gracheva 7-6 (2), 6-3 to face Kristyna Pliskova in the second round. Third-seeded Elise Mertens recovered from a second set scare to beat Jasmine Paolini 7-5, 4-6, 6-3. AP



# Now, *Appatlo Okadundevadu* SET FOR HINDI REMAKE

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



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

ago, nothing concrete surfaced. Now though, *The Pioneer*, from multiple sources, can confirm the Hindi remake, with original director Saagar K Chandra attached to direct. One source close to the development tells us, "Impressed by the film's rich content and visual palette, a couple of prominent production houses have shown interest to remake the film in Hindi and even approached Saagar, who owns the rights along with

Rohith and Vishnu, besides offering a carte blanche to narrate the story the way he fancies. The Naxalite angle will be tweaked to suit the needs of a wider audience. The cast will be determined by the production house that chooses to associate with the film in the end but Saagar will bounce off his preferred names." The other source informs us that Saagar will take up the Hindi remake only after he wraps up the filming of his next still-untitled

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

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

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

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

simultaneously sharing a photo of her fruit bowl. On the work front in Telugu,

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



## Akhil, Suri project is on!

Akhil Akkineni's next after he wraps up *Bommarillu Baskar's Most Eligible Bachelor* (MEB) has been firmed up, at last! Although the suave actor was in talks with filmmakers like Prashanth Varma and Tamil director PS Mithran, it seems he has made up his mind to go ahead with Surender Reddy. Known for his popcorn entertainers with a high dose of action and comedy, Reddy, points out a source, prepared a similar subject for Akhil. "The film will be a slick action-entertainer that will be high on romance and comedy. It will be a perfect follow up to Akhil after a rom-com like MEB and one that will put the actor on the action star map. The script



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

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

## Deva Katta and Vishnu Induri at loggerheads

On Monday evening, news broke out that that producers Vishnu Vardhan Induri and Thirumal Reddy were set to make a two-part fictitious web series based on beloved Telugu political heavyweights YS Rajasekhara Reddy and Nara Chandrababu Naidu, narrating how their friendship began, the challenges they confronted and how they turned rivals over their illustrious political careers. Chadarangam web series director Raj was attached to the project as a director. However, filmmaker Deva Katta took strong objection to this piece of news and leveled plagiarism charges against the makers by taking to Twitter. He noted that he has penned a fictional story imagining YSR/CBN political life as a three-part film which he converted into web series format and that the idea is now being hijacked. "In 2017, I have written a script paying homage to the iconic YSR/CBN political life imagining a fictional friendship/professional rivalry between them and registered it under the copy rights act. I have also registered multiple versions of this script since 2017. The 'idea' is being hijacked by some ppl here over several 'party talks' but hope they limit their fiction to the public domain and don't invite any legal action by copying any of my registered

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



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



In another post, he added, "Earlier this same person stole another script I pitched directly and made a disaster out of it!! This time I won't let him toil another exciting script out of sheer respect for YSR gaaru and CBN gaaru!! (Sic)." As speculations continued whether the 'same person' was Raj, the director later clarified that he was mentioning about Induri

with whom he had held NTR biopic discussions in 2015 December. The issue snowballed into a bigger controversy after this post of Katta. Giving his version that it was he who narrated the basic idea of NTR biopic to Katta, Induri wrote on Twitter, "I would like to clear it once and for all. I met Deva Katta for a Remake I selected in December 2015. I also narrated the idea of NTR Biopic to him with basic screenplay. He liked My idea of NTR and I would like to clear that he never narrated anything to me about NTR Biopic (sic)." This certainly didn't go down well with Katta who tried to jog Induri's memory that there was a witness when he pitched the biopic idea to him. "My dear friend I think you forgot there was also a witness when I pitched the biopic idea to u in our first meeting itself in 2015!! There are many more in the industry to speak for ur lies, so take it easy don't try too hard!! (Sic)." "I



## Renu bats for electric cars

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

She added, "Also important part is that my petrol/diesel bills used to be more than 15k a month but now because of my electric car the current bill is hardly 700-800?, so I am saving a lot of money while saving the planet." Stating that humans are a cancer to the planet and other species, she further noted that in the future, she will live on a farm away from city life and try to reduce her contribution to the destruction of the planet. "Till then trying to do my best to reduce the existing damage," she pointed out.