

ANALYSIS 7

CHINA THE EMERGING RING MASTER OF NEPAL?

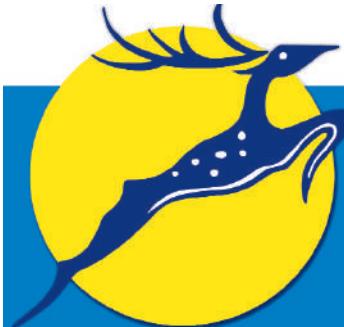
MONEY 8

'HIGHER OFFTAKE BY FCI CAN BOOST PROCUREMENT AGENCIES LIQUIDITY'

SPORTS 12

SLOW AND STEADY WINDIES BUILD THEIR LEAD

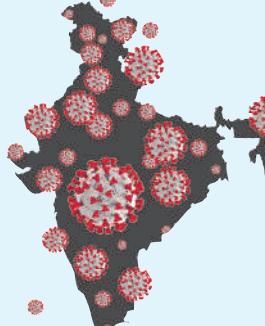
HYDERABAD, SATURDAY JULY 11, 2020; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com

Coronavirus cases in India rise from 7 to 8 lakh in three days

**8,21,493****MUKESH AMBANI, AT \$68 BN, NOW RICHER THAN WARREN BUFFETT**

Mukesh Ambani has had a rollercoaster 2020, cutting a string of deals for his digital business, undergoing wild swings in his wealth and having his brother's finances laid bare for the world to see. Now he can add another chapter -- eclipsing the fortune of Warren Buffett. The chairman of Reliance Industries Ltd is now worth \$68.3 billion, surpassing Warren Buffett's \$67.9 billion as of Thursday, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index. Shares of Ambani's Indian conglomerate have more than doubled after its digital unit got more than \$15 billion in investments from companies including Facebook Inc and Silver Lake. This week BP Plc paid \$1 billion for a stake in Reliance's fuel-retail business.

**'FAKE NEWS': KAZAKHSTAN AFTER CHINA WARNS OF WORST PNEUMONIA**

Kazakhstan dismissed as incorrect on Friday a warning by China's embassy for its citizens to guard against an outbreak of pneumonia in the central Asian nation that it described as being more lethal than the coronavirus. The Chinese embassy flagged a "significant increase" in cases in the Kazakh cities of Atyrau, Aktobe and Shymkent since mid-June. On Friday, however, Kazakhstan's healthcare ministry branded Chinese media reports based on the embassy statement as "fake news". The ministry said its tallies of bacterial, fungal and viral pneumonia infections, which also included cases of unclear causes, were in line with WHO guidelines.

**136 DEMOCRATS, 30 SENATORS FOR NO RESTRICTIONS ON INT'L STUDENTS**

A group of 136 US Democratic congressmen and 30 senators, including Indian-origin Kamala Harris, has urged the Trump administration to reverse its "cruel" order that bars international students from staying in the country if they do not have in-person classes to attend. The lawmakers, in separate letters to Acting Secretary, Department of Homeland Security, Chad Wolf and Acting Secretary, Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), Matthew Albence on Thursday, expressed concern over the ICE's recently announced modifications to the Student Exchange and Visitor Program (SEVP). The new guidelines have created panic among international students, a majority of whom come from China and India.

**FOREX RESERVES HIT ALL-TIME HIGH, TOUCH USD 513.25 BILLION**

The country's foreign exchange reserves surged by a massive USD 6.47 billion to touch an all-time high of USD 513.25 billion in the week ended July 3, the latest data from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) showed. In the previous week ended June 26, the reserves had increased by USD 1.27 billion to USD 506.84 billion. The reserves had crossed the half-a-trillion dollar mark for the first time in the week ended June 5 after it had increased USD 8.22 billion and reached USD 501.70 billion. In the week ended July 3, the reserves rose due to an increase in foreign currency assets (FCA), which is the major component of the overall reserves. FCA was up by USD 5.66 billion to USD 473.26 billion in the reporting week, the data showed.

**TODAY****ALMANAC**Month & Paksham:
Ashadha & Krishna Paksha
PanchangamTithi : Shashthi: 01:32 pm
Nakshatram: Uttara Bhadrapada:
Full NightTime to Avoid: (Bad time to start
any important work)

Rahukalam: 09:07 am - 10:44 am

Yamagandam: 01:58 pm - 03:36 pm

Varijam: 04:15 pm - 06:02 pm

Gulikam: 05:52 am - 07:29 am

Good Time: (to start any important work)

Amritakalam: 02:56 am - 04:44 am

Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:55 am - 12:47 pm

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Cloudy

Temp: 28/23

Humidity: 80%

Sunrise: 05:48 am

Sunset: 06:54 pm

Current Weather Conditions

Updated July 10, 2020 5:00 PM

CM regrets damage to temple, mosque

PNS ■ HYDERABAD



Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao on Friday expressed regret over the damage caused to places of worship at the secretariat premises here during the demolition of old buildings and assured that a new temple and mosque would be built on a spacious area.

Rao said he came to know that the religious places suffered some damage after debris fell on them when multi-storyed buildings abutting them were being brought down.

"I feel sorry about the incident. It should not have happened. The government's intention is to build a new complex by demolishing the old buildings without causing

any damage to the temple or the mosque," an official release quoted him as saying.

The Chief Minister said a new temple and mosque would be built over a more spacious area even if it meant spending crores of rupees.

He said he would soon hold a meeting with the management of the temple and mosque, and take their views.

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MONEY 8

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SPORTS 12

SLOW AND STEADY WINDIES BUILD THEIR LEAD

HYDERABAD, SATURDAY JULY 11, 2020; PAGES 12 ₹3

HYDERABAD DELHI LUCKNOW
BHOPAL RAIPUR CHANDIGARH
Bhubaneswar RANCHI
DEHRADUN VIJAYAWADA

*LATE CITY VOL. 2 ISSUE 271

*Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

RADHE SHYAM IT IS!

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**Maharashtra has the most cases -- 2,38,461****Tamil Nadu -- 1,30,261 and Delhi -- 1,09,140 cases****India's COVID-19 case fatality rate dips to 2.72%**

From 2.82 per cent a month earlier, India's COVID-19 case fatality rate has declined to 2.72 per cent which is lower than that of many other countries, the Union Health Ministry said on Friday. It also noted that 30 states and Union Territories have a fatality rate lower than the national average. Also, there is an upward trend in the recovery rate which was recorded at 62.42 per cent on Friday. In 18 states and UTs the recovery rates are higher than the national average, the ministry said.



The spot at Bhaunti in Kanpur district where the alleged 'encounter' took place when the car carrying Vikas Dubey reportedly overturned with the gangster making a futile bid to escape

Gangster Vikas Dubey killed in 'encounter' in UP

PNS ■ KANPUR (UP)

Video clips punch holes in STF theory

KANPUR: Videos of events that led to the encounter of gangster Vikas Dubey are contradicting the claims made by the Special Task Force (STF) that he was shot dead on Friday morning when he tried to escape.

The SUV met with the accident at Bhaunti in Kanpur district, toppling on the road which was slippery after the rains, police claimed. The car was part of a small convoy of police vehicles.

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Police said the gangster snatched a pistol from one of the policemen injured in the accident and was shot when he opened fire while trying to flee, an account being questioned by opposition parties.

Six policemen, including two from the Special Task Force, were hurt in the accident and the exchange of fire around 6 am, an official said.

Dubey was the sixth man to die in a police encounter after the ambush he allegedly masterminded in Kanpur's Bikru village past midnight on July 2, killing eight policemen who had come to arrest him.

Madhya Pradesh police arrested Vikas Dubey outside the Mahakal temple in Ujjain on Thursday morning. He was handed over to an Uttar Pradesh police team late in the evening.

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Scientists worried that dengue outbreak may aggravate COVID-19 crisis

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As dengue season sets in across large parts of India with the onset of the monsoon, scientists warn that COVID-19 and the mosquito-borne disease have overlapping symptoms and worry the country's healthcare infrastructure won't be able to cope with this double whammy.

The impact of a dengue-COVID-19' season would entail two different diagnostic tests and extract a huge toll on patients too, each disease making the other more complicated to deal with and perhaps more fatal.

While the number of COVID-19 cases races towards the 8,00,000 mark with 7,93,802 cases on Friday and 21,604 fatalities, the incidence of dengue is also high.

Based on 2016-2019 data, virologist Shahid Jameel esti-

mated that India gets about 100,000 to 200,000 confirmed cases of dengue each year.

According to the National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme (NVBDCP), 1,36,422 dengue cases were diagnosed in 2019 and an estimated 132 people died.

The virus is endemic and

present around the year in southern India, and in monsoon and early winter in northern India, Jameel, CEO at DBT/Wellcome Trust India Alliance, a public charity that invests in building biomedical sciences and health research framework, told PTI.

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Weavers seek succour from govt

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Handloom textiles and crafts hold a special place in India's cultural heritage. Weaving being a source of livelihood for millions of families. Nowhere in the world can so many diverse weaving techniques be found together in one country.

The crisis caused by Covid-19 has resulted in a sudden disruption of businesses across the globe and the Indian economy is not immune to this pandemic. Players across the spectrum have felt the effect of the resultant downturn. The handloom sector has too, been severely affected as with all sectors in the economy with their traditional and contemporary markets for artisans being totally closed.

Weavers are not able to make their both ends meet because of the Coronavirus impact on handloom sector. There are no takers for handloom products. Over 1.72-lakh weaver families are in dire straits for deprivation of work for the past three months.

Two weavers in each of



Sircilla and Janagoan districts allegedly committed suicide. Meanwhile, middlemen and traders are making moves to exploit the pitiable condition. As per official records, there are over 40,533 handloom weavers and 35,558 power loom weavers in the state.

While 615 weavers' cooperatives deal with cotton, wool and silk cloth, 157 cooperatives pertain to weaves of power loom. In fact, there are many

weavers than those found mentioned in official records. The virus has affected the handloom and power loom sector. Celebration of festivals and other events has become a low-key affair.

Consequently, stocks piled up with weavers and their value is put at

Rs 2 crore. For want of capital to weave new cloth, owners of power looms are also not able to show work to weavers

Players across the spectrum have felt the effect of the resultant downturn. The handloom sector has too, been severely affected

or not able to pay their wages. Many weavers' families somehow survived with the 12 kg of rice given to them free of cost and also with the Rs 1,500 given to them by the government.

At some places the weavers have some relief. The only solace for them is the state government is giving work orders to weavers of Sircilla and Siddipet to weave over one crore Bathukamma sarees.

Weavers of the two regions produce sarees worth over Rs 540 crore for distribution among the women of the state as state government's gift for Bathukamma festival.

Dubbaka weavers' coopera-

tive managed to sell 20 lakh towels produced by it through promotion of the products in social media platform with the support of the concerned individuals. They were sold at less than the MRP. The state government has announced investment support of Rs 2 crore to it and released Rs 1 crore through the state finance corporation, but the DCCB adjusted the funds against the loans outstanding.

Weavers of Sircilla and Siddipet are able to keep their head above water thanks to the work orders from the state government for weaving Bathukamma sarees, school students' uniforms, textiles distributed for Muslim and Christian festivals. In Nalgonda district, stocks of silk sarees worth Rs 300 crore remained unlifted with 500 power loom weavers.

The owners of power looms say that the stock work Rs 540 crore remained unsold with them. Meanwhile, middlemen and traders are out to exploit the miserable condition of weavers.

Season of two viruses?

Continued from page 1

TS conducts 10K tests in a day, 1278...

Continued from page 1

Both COVID-19 and dengue season may aggravate the COVID-19 situation as both viruses may supplement each other, warned Dhrubyoji Chattopadhyay, virologist and vice chancellor of the Amity University in Kolkata.

This situation is not yet well studied. But the information available from South America is dangerous and found to create major challenge to their medical infrastructure, he said.

The effect will be very critical. As major symptoms are overlapping, simultaneous infection will be much more fatal. Weakened immune systems will help the other to be more fatal.

Once the dengue season starts, added virologist Upasana Ray, the infection

spreads aggressively due to high prevalence of its mosquito vector, aedes aegypti.

Each season, we experience heavy loads in the hospital wards due to dengue outbreak and those times it gets almost unmanageable. So, have we thought about what will happen when we have two menaces to handle together? Both of them have overlapping

symptoms. Are we geared to distinguish if a person has dengue or COVID-19? asked the senior scientist, CSIR-IICB, Kolkata.

The challenges are many. Almost each patient with a three-day fever would need to undergo a test for dengue and another for the SARS-CoV-2 virus which causes COVID-19.

Although Osmania University is still discussing the possibility of reduction of the syllabus, keeping in mind

the latest UGC guidelines for final examinations, University of Hyderabad (UoH) has formed a task force to chalk out a road map for the upcoming academic year.

Shares Prof Vinod Pavarala, former Dean of the Sarojini Naidu School of Arts and Communication, who is heading the UoH Task Force, "We are in touch with all the stakeholders, teachers and students. We have been receiving advice from students to reduce syllabus for this semester. We are taking that into consideration; however, we are yet to chalk out a plan, and determine how much syllabus to reduce from which stream. UoH is a huge university, we teach students from various streams. So, it is not an easy task to cut down the syllabus. We are doing our best."

Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar on Friday reviewed the supply of oxygen to the hospitals in the state. In view of certain complaints being received regarding black marketing of oxygen cylinders leading to possible shortage in supply to hospitals, a joint teams of officers will inspect hospitals and dealers to assess whether sale and utilisation of oxygen cylinders has been in conformity with guidelines. The teams will initiate prosecution in case any violation.

He was chased and surrounded by policemen and was asked to surrender. When he started firing with an intention to kill, police opened fire in self-defence, Kanpur police said.

A press release said he was immediately taken to a hospital, where he died during treatment.

Ganesh Shankar Vidhyarthi Medical College principal Dr R B Kamal said he was brought dead to the hospital. Dubey sustained four bullet injuries, three in the chest and one in the hand, he told reporters.

Two policemen also suffered wounds, one in the arm and the other in the hand.

Dubey's post-mortem will be conducted by a panel of doctors. He had tested negative for coronavirus, the doctor said. Hours before the

encounter, an advocate had filed a petition in the Supreme Court seeking a direction to the Uttar Pradesh government and police to ensure that he is not killed.

The move came days after the Telangana High Court dismissed a bunch of PILs challenging the state's decision to construct a new secretariat complex here.

After the Court cleared the decks for the construction of the new secretariat, the demolition of the old secre-

tariat building complex began and the foundation stone for the new one was laid on June 27, 2019.

The state government had earlier indicated that the new secretariat, to come up in about seven lakh square feet, would cost around Rs 400 crore and it had decided to equip the new one with state-of-the-art connectivity and other features.

CM regrets damage to temple, mosque

Continued from page 1

He promised that the places of worship would also be built along with the new Secretariat complex.

"Telangana state is a secular state. We will continue the secular spirit come what may. This incident happened unexpectedly. Everyone should understand this properly without prejudice," he said.

The CM's statement comes a day after Senior Congress leader in Telangana Mohammed Ali Shabbir had alleged that the places of worship in the Secretariat complex were demolished along with the old buildings that are being razed.

The state government began demolition of the old secretariat complex on July 7 to pave the way for construction of a new building.

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HC stays demolition of TS secretariat till...

Continued from page 1

The court ordered the state government to file its counter with all necessary details that were pointed out by the petitioner.

The K Chandrashekhar Rao-led Government began razing the secretariat building complex on July 7, days after the High Court dismissed a bunch of PILs challenging the state's decision to construct a new complex by demolishing the existing one.

The petitioners alleged that the demolition of the existing is an 'arbitrary action' of the state government in a pandemic situation, and deprives five lakh people of the surrounding areas from getting clean air.

On June 29, the High Court had dismissed a bunch of PILs challenging the state's decision to construct a new secretariat complex by demolishing the existing one.

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KCR in a tight spot due to Jagan's gesture

Continued from page 1

APSLTC into the state government last year, it triggered demand for a similar step in Telangana. As the TS government did not yield to the demand, TSRTC employees launched a strike that lasted nearly three months last year.

KCR was the first Chief Minister in the country to announce salary and pension cuts for state government employees and retired staff in March this year, citing financial crisis on account of corona.

This is not the first time that Jagan's decisions in Andhra Pradesh have brought pressure on KCR to follow suit.

When Jagan merged

suit, he restored full salaries from May in AP. This too had prompted Telangana government employees and pensioners to demand in vain payment of full salaries for May in Telangana. Finally, KCR had to restore full salaries and pensions from June.

The larger unanswered question in informed circles across TS is: When Jagan, helming a revenue-deficit state, can implement welfare schemes for all sections and adopt employee-friendly poli-

cies, why can't KCR, heading a revenue-surplus state, do it.

Although the Telangana government has capped treatment charges for Covid-19 in private hospitals, none of them is following this rule.

If the Telangana government also reimburses Covid-19 treatment costs like in AP, there would be no trouble for poor and middle class people as well as government employees and pensioners, say observers.

Some BJP leaders have

demanded that the state government should implement Ayushman Bharat scheme of the Centre in the state.

The Centre has included Covid-19 testing and treatment under Ayushman Bharat scheme.

"KCR has rejected the central scheme, saying that Arogyasri is better than Ayushman Bharat. Now, he is refusing to include Covid-19 in the Arogyasri scheme," said BJP state president Bandi Sanjay.

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CRIME CORNER

Man duped of Rs 2L in e-commerce fraud

HYDERABAD: In yet another e-commerce scam, a youngster was duped by fraudsters posing as Army personnel who were promising to sell a used car. According to the police, the victim, from Madhapur area, saw an advertisement on an e-commerce site about a car for sale for Rs 2 lakh and called the contact number. "A person answered the call and introduced himself as an Army official from Maharashtra and shared a vehicle's pictures on WhatsApp," said the police, adding that the accused asked the victim to deposit Rs 2 lakh into his account for sending the car in the Army courier, which the latter did. The victim then got suspicious and approached the Cyberabad Cyber crime police," added the officials. Following the complainant, a case was booked and an investigation has begun.

Fraudsters use Geetha Arts to trap models

HYDERABAD: The Cyber Crime Police of Hyderabad have registered a case against an unknown person, who claimed to be an employee of Telugu movie production company 'Geetha Arts', and tried to dupe aspiring models and actors. The fraudster created an Instagram account claiming to be a costume designer at Geetha Arts. He approached models and actors, claiming that they were soon starting a film and to send him money if they wanted a role in it," said KVM Prasad, ACP, Cyber Crimes. At least three persons approached the management and alerted them about the fraudster. Realising that the reputation of the company was at stake, Satya Gamidi, the executive producer of the company, lodged a complaint with the Cyber Crime Police.

Prostitution racket busted, 3 rescued

HYDERABAD: Three women were rescued from a prostitution racket which was busted by the SOT at Ayyappa Society in Madhapur here Thursday night. The officials nabbed one customer during the raid, sources said. "The organisers, who are absconding conduct business through social media and share images before making 'the meet,'" police said. Following a tip-off, the SOT raided the premises and nabbed them. They were handed over to the Madhapur law and order police station for further investigation.

Educational institutions aim to 'save' the academic year

NAMRATA SRIVASTAVA
■ HYDERABAD



With the number of Covid-19 patients increasing each day, and being locked in house as the only solution to stay safe, most educational institutes are now planning to start the new academic session online for the students to ensure that the academic year is saved.

Sunury Dutt, Head of Communications, International Institute of Information Technology Hyderabad (IIITH), shares that online classes are now going to be the new normal. "IIITH is altering its syllabus, across all streams offered by the institute, in view of the online mode of teaching and learning. Our current semester (August-November) is being conducted completely online for the students," says Sunury.

Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University (JNTU) is also planning certain part of syllabus to be conducted online. Jayesh Ranjan, Vice-Chancellor of JNTUH said,

"Looking at the current situation, we are planning to complete syllabus for Engineering, Pharma and MBA students, in a blended format. Some concepts which are easy to understand, which can be recorded and posted as videos in YouTube, will be taken online.

But those which require lab work or more detailed attention of the students will be conducted in a classroom, taking all Covid-19 precautions, and only after things become permissi-

ble."

Meanwhile, University of Hyderabad (UoH) is also planning to give lab access to certain science stream students and go ahead with online classes for few other streams.

Talking about the matter, Prof Vinod Pavarala, former Dean of the Sarojini Naidu School of Arts and Communication, who is heading the UoH task force says, "We are planning to have online classes for our students pursu-

University of Hyderabad is planning to give lab access to certain science stream students and go ahead with online classes for few other streams

ing Arts, Communication, Humanities and Commerce. However, certain science students, especially those doing their PhDs need to access labs. We also did an online survey asking our students if they can take online classes and 18 per cent said they cannot. Thus, we are thinking of rather than live streaming, we will make videos and upload them on our server. This will make it convenient for the students to access the classes."

57 Covid-19 survivors of Hyd Police felicitated

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

As many as 42 police officials with the Hyderabad City Police, who had earlier tested positive for Covid-19, have recovered and joined duty on Friday.

The 42 officers include an inspector, two SIs, two ASIs, four HC's, 28 PC's and five HG's, all from the West Zone of the Hyderabad Police, working in different police stations.

Hyderabad Commissioner of Police Anjani Kumar while congratulated and felicitated them for their successful recovery and joining back for duties.

Meanwhile, 15 police officials from Cyberabad Police Commissionerate, who had tested positive and recovered, were welcomed on their joining back to duty from Friday. The commissioner said that those who have recovered from Coronavirus should be brave enough to educate others about virus,

A Corona survivor lost his mom, brother to infection

PNS ■ HYDERABAD



COVID WINNER SPEAKS...

Coronavirus pandemic has not shown any mercy to anyone at all. Many patients, who battled the disease themselves, lost their dear ones during the journey.

Hyderabad's wrestler Shailender Singh, who has participated 15 times in National level wrestling competitions and won many state and national medals, also has a similar story.

Having lost his elder brother to Covid-19 on May 12, Shailender was tested positive on May 16 and was admitted in Gandhi Hospital. "I had cough and sore throat. But the bigger challenge was dealing with my brother's death," shares Shailender.

"Soon after I was tested positive, my mother, brother's wife and children were found positive too. A few days later my wife was tested positive as well," he says, adding, "It was a difficult time for the family." With so many people diagnosed positive in his family,

Shailender was very concerned about everyone's health. However, the 45-year-old wrestler did not lose hope. "I believe there is hope till the time we are alive. Also, no matter how good the treatment is, it is only effective when the patients will, to get better. I remained with positive attitude throughout. I stayed in touch with the family members through phone."

Talking about how the medical staff are very helpful to the patients, Shailender says, "The

nurses and doctors were very attentive and caring. The staff gave required nutrients through food and kept a track of the slightest change or development in our symptoms. The doctors, in fact, visited the patients three times a day."

However, just when he thought things were getting better, Shailender faced another tragedy. "My mother, who was diagnosed positive, also passed away on May 25. I was getting discharged on May 26 and was told about this tragedy over phone while I was still admitted. It was difficult, since I had lost my brother the same month. But, someone had to anchor their feelings and stand strong for the family. And I did just that."

Shailender, whose rest of the family members are also discharged now, advises to continue with the same nutritious diet even after getting back home.

Assets worth Rs 4.5 crore unearthed from CI's home

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

settled the cases of the farmer in Lok Adalar and the complainant approached us, said an ACB official. ACB sleuths raided Shankaraiah's home in Vanasthalipuram and seized Rs 16.4 lakh cash along with some documents.

The tainted cop was found to be in possession of assets worth Rs 4.58 crores. These included two residential houses worth Rs 1.05 crores, 11 house plots worth Rs 2.28 crores, 41 acres 3 gunta of agricultural land worth Rs 77 lakhs, Maruti Suzuki worth Rs 7 lakh, gold ornaments worth Rs 21.14 lakhs, net cash of Rs 17.88 lakhs, household articles worth Rs 6.13 lakhs and silver ornaments worth Rs 81,000.

The police reached the spot and shifted the injured persons to a nearby private hospital for treatment.

4 injured as car falls off ORR

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Four persons of a family were injured in a road mishap on the Outer Ring Road when the car they were travelling in, went out of control and fell off the ORR at Ghatkesar on Friday.

According to the Police, five persons in the car, all residents of Dammaguda, were returning from a trip and were on their way to Hyderabad when the mishap occurred. Police suspect that the driver lost control of the steering wheel and crashed the car through the iron railing of the ORR, with the car falling onto the road under it.

The police reached the spot and shifted the injured persons to a nearby private hospital for treatment.

FGG complaints against unethical practices by school managements

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Complaining against abnormal hike in fees, Forum for Good Governance (FGG) has written a letter to the Governor of Telangana, Dr Tamlisai Soundararajan on Friday.

The letter highlights the unethical practices by school managements like forcing the parents to purchase school uniforms, shoes, bags and others from the stores opened in school premises.

Raising the issue of schools' unethical practices, Forum for Good Governance states, "Since last couple of years private

schools are turning into stationary and book shops. They are forcing the students to purchase stationary from the stalls in the school premises."

"Ignoring the GO, school managements have hiked the fee in addition charging transport cost for the last three months though the schools have not opened," they added.

Pointing out that local authorities are scared to investigate schools, the letter states, "Since one week, irregularities being committed by private school management is

Fraudsters focus on health emergency

PNS ■ HYDERABAD



Cyber criminals are adopting innovative ways to cheat the citizens during the Covid-19 pandemic. The Cyber Crime Police at Cyberabad are receiving complaints of cheating by fraudsters who seek help in the name of medical emergency by sending mails, messages on WhatsApp, Facebook and other social media platforms.

In a case, officials received a complaint from a resident of Nizampet, in which the victims stated that they received a message from 'Anthony', a Facebook friend. Anthony claimed that his grandmother fell down, suffered serious injuries and was hospitalised in Delhi. He requested for money. Soon after, a caller called her, claiming to be 'Dr Rajesh' from Delhi and confirmed about the admission of the patient at the hospital.

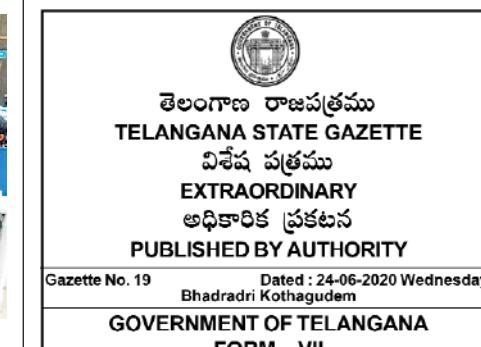
Believing it to be true and hoping to be a good samaritan, the victim transferred Rs 85,000 into the bank account of the fraudster, before realising that they were cheated by the Facebook 'friend'.

In another case, a resident of Kothagudem received a message on WhatsApp from the number +6583142730 with a photograph of his friend Chakravarthi who is in the USA. The message said that his mother is hospitalised and he is in need of money for her treatment. Believing it to be his friend, he transferred Rs 75,000

into two different accounts furnished by the fraudster and later he realised that he was cheated by fraudsters posing as his friend.

"The cyber fraudsters are verifying the social media platforms and collecting the mobile numbers and mail IDs of persons who are having good reputation in the society," said an official.

"Once the fraudster goes through the content of the compromised mail IDs, he is sending mails to the persons who are in the friends list of the compromised mail ID, with a request to send the money by showing some kind of medical emergency in the family. Apart from the above, for a few days cyber fraudsters are sending messages on WhatsApp and Facebook requesting for the amounts in the name of medical emergency," the official added.



TELEMEDECINE

TS Covid-19 call centre attends 1.5k calls a day

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The state government has set up a dedicated call centre for the public to provide counselling and care instructions to patients, both asymptomatic and isolation cases.

It is being followed up on day to day basis.

Telemedicine consultations for mildly symptomatic cases are also being provided. Distress management through inbound calls are also being addressed round the clock. Emergency management through 108 lineup and transfer facility to the hospital is being provided.

The call centre is working in two shifts. The capacity has been enhanced to take up 10,000 calls a day. The inbound call centre is a 20 seater emergency care centre (1800 599 4455) working in three shifts with an enhanced capacity to handle up to 1,500 calls daily. A telemedicine call centre attends 1,000 calls daily and providing information to around ten thousand Covid patients who are under home isolation. The precautions to be taken, information about balanced diet besides enquiring about their health conditions as well as providing timely advise and suggestions are provided by the call centre.

In order to further scale up the operations, the 104 call centre is being upgraded and will have dedicated 75 seats identified for outbound calls.

SCHEDULED								
Village: Yerragunta of Palvancha Mandal: Palvancha District: Bhadradi Kothagudem								
Sl. No	St. No.	As per SOR	Type of Title	Type of Land	Area under acquisition (inacs. Gts.)	Name of the Pattadar	Name of the Enjoyer ad possessor	Survey and record
1	378/2 21	378/2	Patt.	Dry	0.041/2	Meka Simmappa Caste: BC (SC/ST) Case: OC (Lams)	Shanu Kumar Balaji S/o Patelababu Case: OC (Lams)	Nil
2	379	379/4	Patt.	Dry	0.05 (605 Sq Yds)	Kamarapu Nagabhushana Mam-Caste: OC Brahmana	1. Sharvan Kumar Balaji S/o Patelababu AC sheet Room (10.05 Sq Yards)	1 Church & 1 AC Sheet Room
3	378/31	378/2 2	Patt.	Dry	0.23 34	Chandra Venkateswari Case: OC (Kamm)	2. Sharvan Kumar Balaji S/o Patelababu Lal Balaji (Ac: 0.05 14 Sq Yards) Case: CC (Jams)	1 Church & 1 AC Sheet Room
4	378	378/4	Patt.	Dry	0.28 34	Kamarapu Naga Bhushenam Case: CC (Brahmanam)	3. Chandra Venkateswari S/o Sri Venkatesh (Ac: 0.15 Sq Yards) Case: CC (Kamma)	Nil
5	124	124 Khade 2/2	Patt.	Dry	0.19 34	Jamalapuram Ramakrishna Rao Case: OC (Brahmanam)	4. Basu Rajanna Nia Malaika (Lato) (Ac: 0.01 Sq Yards) Case: BC-B (Padmasali)	Nil
6	358	358/2	Govt.	Dry	0.271/2	Kharaj Kathada	5. Diddi Venkateswar Rao S/o Laxmee (Ac: 0.05 14 Sq Yards) Case: BC-B (Padmasali)	Nil
7	358	358/4	Govt.	Dry	0.21 34	Kharaj Kathada	6. Basu Rajanna W/Mallika (Lato) (Ac: 0.01 Sq Yards) Case: BC-A (Vadang)	Nil
8	-	Donka 2/2	Govt.	-	0.01 31 (151.25 Sq Yds)	Government	7. Ernaki Nagabhushanam S/o Srinivas (Ac: 0.06 34 Sq Yards) Case: BC-B (Gowda)	Nil
Total 3.12 1/4 gts								

This declaration is made after hearing of objections of persons interested and due enquiry as provided U/s 15 of the Act No.30/2013. The number of families likely to be resettled due to land acquisitions is Nil.

Mines of Coal, Iron-stone, slate or other minerals lying under the said land or any particular portion of the said land except such parts of the mines and minerals which may be required to be dug or removed or used during the construction phase of the project for the purpose of which the land is being acquired are not needed.

A plan of the land may be inspected in the office of the Land Acquisition Officer & Revenue Divisional Officer, Kothagudem on any working day

Sd/-
Land Acquisition Officer & Additional Collector
Revenue Divisional Officer
Bhadradi Kothagudem Dist.
Bhadradi Kothagudem

DIPR No.351/LA/PP-Adv/Agency/2020-21

Hyd realty to bounce back soon

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

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'Take cue from Siddipet municipality'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Minister for Municipal Administration KT Rama Rao on Friday called upon all municipalities in the state to emulate Siddipet municipality and noted that all vacancies in municipalities would be filled since the Cabinet has given its green signal for the same.

Reviewing the progress of municipalities of erstwhile Medak district here on Friday, KTR said that municipalities should fulfil 42 aspects to become a model municipality. The checklist would be given to municipal chairman and commissioners and they were asked to compare the performance of their municipalities with the check list.

He wanted them to plan the development programmes to be implemented in the next three years. As per the Chief Minister's style of thinking, all municipalities should plan



Municipal Administration Minister KTR said that 400 old RTC buses would be converted into SHE toilets in the towns and cities across the state

development of their municipality, he said. The Minister laid emphasis on resource audit, power audit and sanitation audit. He asked the municipalities to pay electricity bills every month and also should save electricity.

"The names of sanitation staff should be displayed in wards and also their phone numbers. A register should be maintained at one of the houses to find out whether the

sanitisation personnel are collecting garbage daily or not. The sanitary staff should be paid Rs 12,000 each towards salary in the first week of the month. The municipalities should provide shoes, uniform, masks and other equipment needed by them," he said.

He said that 400 old buses would be converted into SHE toilets in the towns and cities. Each municipal commission-

er should undertake field visit by 5.30 am. He asked municipalities to take up biological, biomedical, construction and demolition waste management effectively.

The Minister wanted the municipalities to speak to meat and chicken sellers and take good care of biological waste. Similarly, municipalities should speak to hospital managements on bio-medical waste management in mod-

ern methods. Manufacturing of tiles using construction and demolition waste should be taken up in Medak. Animal care centres should be set up to save people from dog menace, he said asking municipal commissioners and officials to visit Siddipet municipality as it set an example for others in garbage collection and disposal.

Laying emphasis on water audit, KTR said that transit loss in Telangana is nearly 40 per cent. For every 100 liters supplied, not even 60 per cent is reaching the people. He said the situation should change for the better. If the supply of water is planned perfectly, people would not hesitate to pay bills. Tap connection should be given to white ration card holders at Re 1 each. For other card holders, the tap connection should be given for rs 100 each. The same policy should be followed all over the state, he said.

KTR releases book penned by SK Joshi

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Municipal Administration Minister KT Rama Rao released 'Echo T Calling – Towards People's Centric Governance,' a book authored by former Chief Secretary SK Joshi.

Joshi termed his tenure in the Telangana State government especially as the Chief Secretary as the best experience in his career that lasted for about three decades. He said the governance in the young State of Telangana had been people-centric catering to their needs. KTR appreciated Joshi's attempt to chronicle his experiences as a civil servant for over three decades with special mention of the people-centric initiatives of the State government. He said the book will inspire several serving officers and future generation of civil servants in the government. He was confident that it will also create awareness among people about the functioning of the government.

Include Covid treatment in Aarogyasri: CPI

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Activists of CPI-Khammam unit demanded the State government that treatment of persons infected with novel coronavirus disease be included in the Aarogyasri scheme.

The party workers led by party State secretariat member Bagam Hemantha Rao staged a dharna in front of the collectorate in Khammam on Friday. Speaking to pressmen on the occasion, he alleged that the private hospitals were looting people in the name of treatment for Covid. He said that in Andhra Pradesh, Covid treatment was included in Aarogyasri Scheme and the same should be replicated in Telangana also. He also wanted the government to declare a health emergency and to provide at least three months financial aid to Covid-19 patients and eligible persons.

CM's statement self-contradictory: Uttam

PNS ■ HYDERABAD



The impact of demolition was not analysed and no precautions were taken to protect the places of worship, which included a heritage structure. He said several laws pertaining to protection of Places of Worship and preservation of heritage structures were violated

Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) president N Uttam Kumar Reddy on Friday strongly condemned the demolition of places of worship in the Secretariat complex and also described the reaction of Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao's on the issue as 'adding insult to the injury.'

Uttam said that the statement given by the Chief Minister on the damage caused to two mosques and a temple during the demolition of the Secretariat structures was self-contradictory. "It is extremely unfortunate that the temple and mosque in the Secretariat complex, which were considered very sacred by all the government employees and all others in both in undivided Andhra Pradesh and now separate Telangana, were seriously damaged/demolished in the ongoing Secretariat demolition. If the Secretariat demolition was bad enough and a Tughlaq like decision, the damage of the temple and mosque has hurt the sentiments of people belonging to all communities," he said.

Uttam said that the Chief Minister's claim that while demolishing the multi-sto-

ried old buildings, the temple and mosque adjacent to the old buildings were damaged due to fall of the debris on them proves that demolition was carried out in a haphazard manner. The impact of demolition was not analysed and no precautions were taken to protect the places of worship, which included a heritage structure. He said several laws pertaining to protection of Places of Worship and preservation of heritage structures were violated.

The TPCC chief said CM's statement assuring construction of a new mosque and temple indicates that the places of worship were completely damaged. Else, the Chief Minister would have assured immediate repair and restoration. Further, he said that the Chief Minister did not assure construction of temple and mosque at the same place.

His assurance is quite vague which shows that he had no intention to reconstruct the damaged places of worship at the same place, he said.

Uttam found fault with the

Chief Minister for not consulting the religious heads of the temple and mosque before carrying out the demolitions. He said KCR has lost the trust of people belonging to all communities. If the mosque and temple in the Secretariat complex are not safe from illegal demolition, they are unsafe everywhere in Telangana under the TRS regime.

Congress demands sedition case

PNS ■ HYDERABAD



Owaisi, employees unions welcome CM's statement

Welcoming Chief Minister's decision, AIMIM chief and Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi, in a series of tweets on Friday said that he had received the statement regarding the places of worship in the recently demolished Secretariat complex in which the Chief Minister has expressed his regret pain. "I welcomed the statement issued by the CM expressing government regret on the demolition of masjids and temples during the demolition of the secretariat buildings. Detailed statement will be issued by United Muslim Forum very soon," he said. Meanwhile, Home Minister Mahmood Ali also welcomed the decision of the Chief Minister to construct the places of worship on a grand scale in the same premises. "Chief Minister has made clear that a new temple and mosque will be constructed on a much larger scale. The new secretariat which will soon come up will be useful for the people as it will be technically advanced and people's friendly," he said.

CPI slams govt over demolitions

CPI national secretary Narayana on Friday condemned pulling down secretariat buildings and described the measure as inhuman. He objected to demolishing the buildings at a time people of the state are reeling under the impact of Coronavirus. In a statement on Friday, he alleged that by pulling down the buildings Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao wants to project building of Hyderabad commenced from his era. The CPI leader said that one of the buildings of the secretariat fashioned after the famous Buckingham Palace design should have been entrusted to the Archaeology Department for conservation. Pulling down such a historic building would diminish the glory of Hyderabad, he said. In fact, the building was built by Sir Viqar-ul-Umra, paternal uncle of the sixth Nizam Nawab Mahabub Ali Khan. Vikarabad was named after Viqar-ul-Umra, he pointed out. The CPI leader said that pulling down old buildings is not proper.

Towns go for self-imposed lockdown

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Following rise in number of Corona positive cases in the state, many towns are going for self-imposed lockdown. Imposing self lockdown curfew on the market, traders and vendors in the towns have decided to run their businesses between a scheduled time. The measure was taken to curb the spread of Covid in densely packed areas. Already many villages across the state opted for self-imposed lockdown. Now Peddemul mandal in Vikarabad district joined the list by going for self-imposed lockdown on Friday.

Earlier, towns like Devarakonda declared self-imposed lockdown due to rise in number of Corona positive cases. In Vikarabad district, shop owners, hotels, dhabhas and others in Peddemul mandal headquarters have decided



town police urged people not to venture out unnecessarily as Corona cases are increasing manifold in the state. "The cases are increasing each day, and we have reduced the timing of the shops keeping in mind the increasing cases of Corona patients. Although we have been taking proper measures to maintain social distance, use face masks and sanitizers, one never

knows if the next customer walking in is a carrier of the virus. This step is to make sure the safety of our staff as well as our customers," said a trader.

However, the officials didn't announce self-imposed lockdown. In some districts, the officials are setting up containment zones where positive cases were registered. Nizamabad and Karimnagar districts come under this list.

74 new sand reaches identified

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Availability of sand is all set to improve in the state as the government has identified new 74 reaches to quarry 1.20 crore cubic metres of sand. Of the 74 reaches, 58 are located in scheduled areas and the rest in the Kamareddy, Bhupalapally and Kothagudem. Sand reaches allotted to the nine tribal societies in Bhadrakali-Kothagudem district have received environmental clearance. The reaches in Mulug district are in the process of getting environmental clearance. The availability of the sand is put at 9 lakh cubic meters. Besides these, another 41 reaches have been allotted to tribal societies.

Rains disrupt coal production

PNS ■ MANCHERIAL

Several parts of Mancherial district registered light rains from early morning on Friday, affecting coal production and traffic. The district recorded a rainfall of 10.8 mm during the day.

Kotappalli mandal received the highest rainfall by 43 mm, followed by Nennal which saw 28 mm of rainfall. Bellampalli, Luxettipet and Chennur recorded somewhere between 11 mm and 18 mm of rainfall. Jannan, Dandepalli, Kasipet, Tandur, Bheemini, Venmanapalli, Mandamarri, Mancherial and Jaipur mandal witnessed below 10 mm of rainfall.

Consequently, the mining of coal in opencast projects of Srimarpur Area and Mandamarri Area of Singareni Collieries Company Limited have been stalled. The projects saw a dip in excavation of the

coal. Local streams were swelled, hitting traffic in some interior parts of the district. Supply of power was also disrupted, but it was restored by the evening.

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA

REVENUE (LAND ACQUISITION) DEPARTMENT

(As per the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparent Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Settlement Act of 2013 (Section 11 (1) of the Act 30/2013) and Rule 19 (1))

FORM-VI

PRELIMINARY NOTIFICATION

Collector's Office File No.G1/1340/2020 Dated: 01/07/2020 Revenue Divisional Officer File No. C/557/2020 Dated: 03/07/2020 Gazette No: 409/2020 Dated: 07/07/2020

As per the directions from the Government of Telangana/ District Collector, Siddipet a notification has been issued to acquire Ac 7.11 guntas in Gundaram village of Bejaniki mandal of Siddipet district for public purpose i.e. for Kaleshwaram Project package-10 execution (MDC7-3L,MDC7-2L MDC7-1L) under Section 11 (1) of the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparent Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Settlement Act of 2013. By an order bearing no 35 03-06-2017, the Irrigation and Command Area Development Department gave exemption to conduct social impact assessment under 10-A as well as food security.

Therefore, a notification has been issued to acquire Ac 7.11 guntas in Gundaram village of Bejaniki mandal of Siddipet district from those mentioned in the following annexure

SCHEDULE

Sl. Sy. No.	Land Type	Area of land to be acquired	Name & Address of Pattiadar		Name & Address of castudar	Type of structure & Area in Sq.yards	Limits				
			1	2			7	8	9	10	11
1 627	Patta Metta	0.10	Gajala Minewa W/o Venkata Malliah				36	622	626	629	--
2 37	Patta Metta	0.05	Gajala Pameesh Kumar S/o Balah				38	626	625	627	--
		0.55	Gajala Ananeyulu S/o Retaiah				--				
		0.05	Gajala Balaiyah S/o Sharalu				--				
3 626	Patta Metta	0.05	Gajala Balaiyah S/o Sharalu				37	625	625	627	--
4 625	Patta Metta	0.31	Venula Balakshan S/o Rajah				37	622	--	625	2 Pipe line Mango 75 4 Coconut
5 41	Patta Metta	0.04	Venula Amith S/o Balakshan				45	625	42	40	--
6 43	Patta Metta	0.03	Kothulu Anjala S/o Balaiyah				55	41	--	44	--
7 50	Patta Metta	0.05	Chirani Rangiah S/o Ramach				75	49	51	21	--
		0.05	Chirani Neave Kumar S/o Ramach				--				
		0.05	Chirani Seetha S/o Ramach				--				
		0.05	Chirani Rajesam S/o Ramach				--				
8 51	Patta Metta	0.05	Komppaly Mesalah S/o Rajah				75	49	52	50	--
9 67	Patta Metta	0.33	Boddu Reju S/o Narsiah				-	61	--	70	--
10 68	Patta Metta	0.065	Nampally Valkuntam S/o Antala				-	69	67	71	--
		0.045	Nampally Amerendra S/o Antala								--
		0.045	Nampally Amendra S/o Antala								--
		0.045	Nampally Srinivas S/o Valkuntam								--
		0.450	Nampally Srinivas S/o Valkuntam								--
11 71	Patta Metta	0.01	Nampally Amerendra S/o Valkuntam				-	70	68	72	--
		0.065	Nampally Valkuntam S								

SHORT READS


Pak shells border areas in Rajouri, Army personnel killed

JAMMU: A 36-year old Army personnel was killed in a ceasefire violation by the Pakistan Army along the Line of Control (LoC) in Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir on Friday, officials said.

Pakistani troops opened fire and shelled forward posts along the LoC in Nowshera sector in the early hours.

Havildar Sambar Gurung was injured in the firing and rushed to a hospital where he succumbed to injuries. Indian troops guarding the borderline retaliated, resulting in exchanges, they said. A defence spokesman said,

"Havildar Sambar Gurung was a brave, highly motivated and a sincere soldier. The nation will always remain indebted to him for his supreme sacrifice and devotion to duty."

Prohibitory order on fake social media posts not extended: Govt

MUMBAI: The Maharashtra government on Friday informed the Bombay High Court that the prohibitory order against spreading of incorrect or false information on social media amid the COVID-19 pandemic has ended and no extension has been given to it. Advocate General Ashutosh Kumbhakoni told a division bench of Justices A A Sayed and M S Karnik that the order dated May 23 passed by the deputy commissioner of police (Operations) under section 144 of the Code of Criminal Procedure (CrPC) had been in effect only till June 8. "The same has not been extended after June 8 and presently there is no prohibitory order in place," Kumbhakoni said. The court was hearing two public interest litigations challenging the legality of the prohibitory order.

HC rejects Sharjeel Imam's plea on extn of time to probe UAPA case

NEW DELHI: The Delhi High Court Friday dismissed a plea by JNU student Sharjeel Imam, arrested in a case related to alleged inflammatory speeches during the protests against CAA and NRC, challenging a trial court order granting more time to police to conclude the investigation. Justice V Kameswar Rao pronounced the verdict through video conferencing and said the detailed order will be uploaded on the court's website. "I have dismissed the petition," the judge said. The Delhi Police had opposed Imam's plea saying there was no infirmity in the trial court's April 25 order by which the agency was granted three more months, beyond statutory 90 days, to complete the investigation in the case under the stringent Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA).

SC refuses to entertain plea for moratorium on school fees

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Friday refused to entertain a plea by parents from different states seeking deferment/moratorium on school fees for the COVID-19 lockdown period and asked them to approach the high courts for relief.

The top court said it was a fact-intensive situation as problems in each state are different and observed that it would a stroke of genius if petitioners can solve everybody's problems.

A bench of Chief Justice S A Bobde and Justices R Subhash Reddy and A S Bopanna said: "Fee hike issue should have been raised before the state High Courts. Why has it come to the Supreme Court? It's a fact intensive situation.

"Problems in each state are different. Parties are involving jurisdiction of this court as an omnibus case. But these are fact intensive situations in each state and even each district."

Advocates Balaji Srinivasan



and Mayank Kshirsagar said the Punjab and Haryana High Court has allowed schools to charge hiked fee. The bench told the counsels, then the petitioners can file an appeal against that order of Punjab and Haryana High Court.

"It would be a stroke of genius if you can solve everybody's problems," the bench said.

The top court said that it is not inclined to interfere at this stage and the petitioners may withdraw plea and approach the high courts. Parents of school

"Problems in each state are different. Parties are involving jurisdiction of this court as an omnibus case. But these are fact intensive situations in each state and even each district."

going children from different states have moved the top court seeking declaration of moratorium or deferment of payment of school fees during the COVID-19 induced lockdown.

The plea also sought that the Centre and all states be asked to direct the private unaided/aided schools to only charge the proportionate fees based on actual expenditure towards the conduct of the online virtual classes and no other fees from the students since April 1 till the commencement of physical classes.

"The Petitioners belonging to different states of the country have come together being constrained to approach this Court seeking inter alia the protection of fundamental right to life as well as education guaranteed under the Constitution of India, 1950 which the children & students enrolled up to the Class XII of various Indian states are being deprived of due to supervening factors namely, the ongoing pandemic- COVID-19 period..."

the plea said.

Rahul Gandhi seeks cancellation of varsity exams

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Defence PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Friday demanded cancellation of university exams and urged the UGC to promote students on the basis of past performance during the coronavirus pandemic.

Accusing the University Grants Commission (UGC) of creating confusion, Gandhi said it is unfair to conduct examinations during the COVID-19 pandemic and the UGC should listen to the voice of students.

"COVID has harmed many people. Students in schools, colleges and universities are being made to suffer. While the IITs and colleges have cancelled exams and have promoted students, the UGC is creating confusion. UGC should also cancel the exams and promote students on the basis of past performance," he said in a video message.



"COVID has harmed many people. Students in schools, colleges and universities are being made to suffer. While the IITs and colleges have cancelled exams and have promoted students, the UGC is creating confusion. UGC should also cancel the exams and promote students on the basis of past performance," he said in a video message

and posted a short video message on Twitter.

"It is extremely unfair to conduct exams during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The UGC must hear the voice of students and academics. Exams should be can-

celled and students promoted on the basis of past performance," he also tweeted.

The Congress has launched a campaign in favour of students, demanding cancellation of exams during the pandemic and urging their promotion.

PCI seeks replies from UP, HP over alleged targeting of journalists

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



The Press Council of India on Friday sought replies from the governments of Uttar Pradesh, Chhattisgarh and Himachal Pradesh in connection with separate incidents of alleged targeting of scribes over their reporting on problems faced by the people during the COVID-19-induced lockdown. In a statement, the Press Council of India (PCI) said it takes suo motu cognizance regarding alleged targeting of journalists during the COVID-19 lockdown period in Uttar Pradesh.

An FIR has been lodged against four journalists in Gopiganj police station in Bhadohi district of Uttar Pradesh, and in a separate incident, a notice has been issued to

Vijay Vineet, a reporter, and Subhash Rai, Editor-in-Chief of Jansandesh Times, for reporting on issues that concern the plights of people during the lockdown period, this year, it said in a statement.

In the last five months, 1.41 crore individuals were screened for hypertension, 1.13 crore for diabetes and 1.34 crore for oral, breast or cervical cancer, the ministry said.

Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic,

8.8 cr footfall recorded at health centres under Ayushman Bharat

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



Over 8.8 crore visits by patients have been recorded since February 1 at over 41,000 health and wellness centres (HWCs) made operational under the government's flagship Ayushman Bharat scheme, The Union health ministry said on Friday.

This is almost equivalent to the number of footfalls recorded in the previous 21 months - from April 14, 2018, to January 31, 2020, -- despite restrictions on the movement of people during the lockdown period.

In the last five months, 1.41 crore individuals were screened for hypertension, 1.13 crore for diabetes and 1.34 crore for oral, breast or cervical cancer, the ministry said.

Health and wellness centres form the primary pillar of the Ayushman Bharat scheme envisaging to the provisioning of universal and comprehensive primary healthcare through the

medicines were dispensed to about 5.62 lakh hypertension patients and 3.77 lakh diabetes patients at the HWCs in June alone, according to the statement. As many as 6.53 lakh yoga and wellness sessions have also been organised at HWCs since the COVID-19 outbreak.

Health and wellness centres

transformation of 1,50,000 sub-health centres and primary health centres into HWCs by 2022. Giving an example of the contribution being made by HWCs in the fight against COVID-19 in Jharkhand, the ministry said that as part of a statewide intensive public health survey week, HWC teams screened people for influenza-like illness (ILI) and severe acute respiratory illness (SARI) symptoms and facilitated coronavirus testing.

DELHI AIRPORT: Lounge manager, colleague arrested as fired employee alleges sexual harassment

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



A 42-year-old general manager of a lounge at the Delhi airport and his 37-year-old colleague were arrested on Thursday after a woman employee accused them of sexual harassment at workplace, police said.

The lounge is operated by a tenanted privately-run third party operator.

The 26-year-old woman worked as a Food and Beverages Assistant in the lounge at Terminal-3 of the Indira Gandhi International Airport, they said.

In her complaint filed on Tuesday, the woman said that she was sacked from the job the same day, and alleged sexual harassment by the lounge's gen-

eral manager and the duty manager, police said.

According to the complainant, the two allegedly used to harass and threaten her that she will be fired if she raised a voice against it. The woman was eventually thrown out of her job after she refused their sexual advances, the complaint stated.

KERALA ELEPHANT TRAGEDY:

SC seeks reply of Centre, 13 States on plea against barbaric practices

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



including Kerala and sought their responses.

The petition sought declaration of the practice of using barbaric means/snare/shaved sticks/explosives to ward off wild animals as illegal, unconstitutional, and violative of Articles 14 and 21 of the

HC suggests VC facility for prisoners, families

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court Friday suggested to the jail authorities to consider the requirement of prisoners for having video conferencing with their family for the duration when physical meetings in jails are suspended due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The court made it clear it was not passing any direction as it was conscious of the fact that the resources are limited. The court made the recommendation while hearing a plea by Bhushan Steel's former chief financial officer Nittin Johari, who was arrested by the SFIO for alleged fraudulent activities, seeking direction to Tihar Jail authorities to allow him to meet his family and lawyers through video conferencing.

Chief Metropolitan Magistrate Gurmohina Kaur granted the relief to the foreigners on furnishing a personal bond of Rs 10,000 each. Till date, 371 foreign nationals from 31 different countries, who were charged in the case, have been granted bail by the court.

The police had in June filed 59 charge sheets, including supplementaries, against 956 foreign

TABLIGHI JAMAAT:

Delhi court grants bail to 82 B'desh nationals

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A Delhi court Friday granted bail to 82 foreign nationals from Bangladesh who were charged for attending Tablighi Jamaat congregation here allegedly in violation of visa norms, indulging in missionary activities illegally and violating government guidelines issued in the wake of COVID-19 outbreak.

Under plea bargaining, the accused plead guilty to the offence, praying for a lesser

punishment. The Criminal Procedure of Code allows for plea bargaining in cases where the maximum punishment is 7-year imprisonment; offences don't affect the socio-economic conditions of the society and the offence is not committed against a woman or a child below 14 years.

With 26,506 new cases India's Covid tally report record single day spike

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India saw yet another record single-day jump of 26,506 COVID-19 cases pushing its tally to 7,93,802 on Friday, while the death toll climbed to 21,604 with 475 people succumbing to the infection, according to the Union Health Ministry data.

The number of tests for detection of COVID-19 has crossed the 11-million mark. According to ICMR, a cumulative total of 1,10,24,491 samples have been tested up to July 9 with 2,83,659 samples being tested on Thursday.

The number of recoveries stands at 4,95,512 while there are 2,76,685 active cases of coronavirus infection presently in the country, the updated data at 8 am showed. "Thus, around 62.42 per cent of patients have recovered so far," an official said.

The total number of confirmed cases included foreigners.

Of the 475 new deaths reported so far, Maharashtra

Delhi manages to control Covid spike but experts cautious, say dip in cases has to be sustained

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The national capital's COVID-19 count crossed the grim one lakh milestone this week but the number of active cases is dipping as is the positivity rate while the recovery rate is going up, raising hopes of the epidemic curve flattening if the trends continue. As testing is significantly ramped up, the death rate, too, has fallen marginally and the projected explosion of cases hasn't happened. The signs are undoubtedly good but these are just baby steps as Delhi moves ahead in its fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, cautioned experts.

It is early days yet, they said, stressing the urgent need to continue with social distancing, masks, hand hygiene and other dos and don'ts to ward off the infection. Lowering the guard could lead to cases surging again.

"We can say the curve seems to be flattening, though this virus is novel and can spring a surprise," a senior doctor at the front-line of the fight in a private hospital said on the condition of anonymity.



surprise," a senior doctor at the front-line of the fight in a private hospital said on the condition of anonymity.

The dip in cases is encouraging but it would be prudent to have multiple data points created over the next two weeks to better map the trends and to be able to say the curve has flattened. In order to draw an inference about effective containment, the decline that is being observed has

to be sustained over a period of time," added Dr Samiran Panda, head of ICMR's Epidemiology and Communicable Division.

Several experts are encouraged

by the trend of average fresh cases per day and the slide in positivity rate over the last fortnight.

On March 1, the city recorded its first COVID-19 case. More than three months later, the number of cases is 1,07,051 with 3,258 fatalities, according to the

Health Ministry on Friday. However, 82,226 cases have recovered and 21,567 cases are still active. The number of active cases is the lowest in 28 days. The peak came on June 23 when the city recorded 4,250 fresh cases. For three days after that, there were 3,000 cases a day. But then the figures dipped.

From June 27 to July 3, the average fresh cases per day was

2,494 compared to 3,446 cases the previous week. The trend has continued -- July 4 (2,503), July 5 (2,244), July 6 (1,379), July 7 (2,008), July 8 (2,033) and July 9 (2,187). The positivity rate in Delhi has been consistently going down as well - from 31 per cent in the June 8-14 week to 11 per cent in June 29-July 5 week, according to official figures.

"So, from 3,947 peak cases so far on June 23, the average fresh cases in the last several consecutive days have shown a fall, hovering between 1,379 and 2,889. Also, the positivity rate has come down. But we need both these metrics to come down over a sustained period of time," said the doctor at the private hospital.

"Things are looking up and data trends have been very encouraging," said Mahesh Verma, head of a panel set up by the Delhi government to strengthen the preparedness of hospitals to battle the coronavirus.



Encounter the truth

The UP police theory on why it killed Vikas Dubey doesn't stand to reason. The politico-criminal nexus will never be exposed



UP gangster Vikas Dubey may not have anyone mourning his death in a stage-managed accident cum encounter, responsible as he was for many killings, the last being of eight policemen. But does this sit easy on the conscience of the police, which has put out the most outrageous and improbable theory of his attempt to escape, one that triggered it to open fire? Is it not its job to deliver the culprit for courts to decide? Does it not indicate that the political patrons of Dubey and their protector policemen had too much to lose had the don spilled details of the unholy politician-criminal nexus that has entrenched itself in the State in a mutually self-serving manner? Does this not damage Chief

Minister Yogi Adityanath's image of a no-nonsense leader with zero tolerance for corruption and mafia, for good, considering he was personally supervising Dubey's case? Or is it that his individual will stands no chance in front of systemic imperatives, which his party, too, has endorsed? Dubey himself was sensing that he would be eliminated, what with the police announcing a bounty on his head and five of his aides killed in orchestrated scenarios. So he surrendered, to negotiate a longish jail term for the right to live. But his protectors and creators were scared that with all the media attention on his arrest, he could have just spilled the beans or leaked prized information. So they got rid of him. This haste is troublesome for the simple reason that had the police followed processes and built a solid case on his killing of their colleagues in Kanpur, they could have anyway got the death sentence for him. Even assuming that some among the forces had tipped Dubey about an impending raid, which he used as a trap to ambush the cops, the UP police could have used his past crimes to justify the severest penalty. Why did it feel so disadvantaged and compromised as to ignore the provisions of the law and shoot to kill? Unless the men in uniform were told to play executioner. The sad part is that the focus has now shifted from Dubey, the criminal, to Dubey, the victim of police excesses. And nobody is even discussing the heinous nature of his crimes. This, too, is then an equal travesty of justice.

According to the UP police, while Dubey was being transported back to the State, one of the cars in the convoy overturned. Taking advantage of the situation, he allegedly attempted to snatch a weapon and flee the scene, following which the police opened fire and shot him. If the narrative sounds familiar, that is because it is. Most of Dubey's aides died in such "encounters" after "attacking" the police and trying to "escape." It matters little why the policemen "conveniently" forgot to secure their weapons as per rules, did not handcuff Dubey or how he managed to escape from an upturned car with all doors shut. The police theorists also forgot to factor how a car that skids on a smooth tarmac doesn't leave tyre marks. In the end, many questions will be left hanging like aerosols that disintegrate beyond a certain point in time. Who were the political leaders who promoted the mobster's criminal empire and his clout? Which all policemen in the force are in cahoots with criminals? The fact that deputy SP Devendra Mishra, who was among the eight policemen killed, had warned his seniors of Dubey's hold over the justice system but was ignored speaks a lot about the don's clout. Which *netas* are involved with criminals in the State? Dubey, who has been patronised by the ruling BJP and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) at various times, had of late tried to curry favour back with the BJP. Apart from intensifying caste wars for votebank consolidation, he was also a quick facilitator of land and business deals that political parties, their sponsors and bureaucrats found attractive. So, who is the UP Government trying to protect? India is a democracy after all and even criminals with such intimidating rap sheets like Dubey's have a right to justice, representation and being heard in a court of law. Besides the Supreme Court has declared encounter killings as unlawful. But it is very obvious that the Adityanath administration and senior Ministers have given their tacit approval to this "encounter culture" which abounds in the State as does police impunity. And with the killing of Dubey, one wonders if Adityanath is indeed serious about flushing out criminals and cleaning up the police at the same time. If we do not break the politico-police-criminal axis, cleansing is not possible. In a society governed by the rule of law, the death of a policeman cannot be avenged by encounters of criminals. Considering the scale of Dubey's crimes and the involvement of Government officials and politicians, the State Government should have entrusted the probe to an independent and impartial agency immediately after the arrest of the don and his henchmen. But it seems the Government, too, is trying to protect someone, somewhere and has given the police a carte blanche. Will we ever know?

New film locales

The Tourism Ministry has allowed the film industry to shoot at ASI sites and monuments. A good move to promote domestic travel



Ike every other sector, the film industry, too, has started adapting itself to the new normal of a post-pandemic world. So though it sells dreams, fantasy and larger than life experiences on the big screen, filmmakers have now decided to restrict their cast and crew to local talent and shoot projects within the country in small, contained sets. And since Bollywood has so far thrived on the grandeur of locales and the panoramic outdoors — Yash Chopra's romance with Switzerland being almost legendary — it is now going "vocal about local" as well, choosing unique backdrops at home. It is here that the Ministry of Tourism and Culture is chipping in to do its bit to help the industry that has used

its soft power to promote destinations and cultures. It has allowed filmmakers to shoot at more than 3,000 Archaeological Survey of India (ASI)-approved historical monuments. It has also put in place a mechanism to fast-track requisite clearances from various Ministries and departments. To cite an example, locations involving archaeological sites in metro cities required clearances from the ASI, the Home Ministry, Ministry of Environment and Forests and several other departments in the metropolis as also the police and its traffic wing. In addition to this, scripts and locations had to be vetted in advance along with the specifications on the number of shooting days. Perhaps this has been one of the biggest reasons why our monuments and museums have never featured in films to the extent that story-tellers wanted them to. In comparison, foreign locales seemed attractive because of the local tourism boards' incentives such as tax credits, cash rebates, refunds, fee-free location scouting *et al.* It took a pandemic for the Tourism Ministry to be rational about earning revenues. So it is now allowing single-window clearances, including facilitating some from various departments and States. Applications will be online and approvals may come within 15-20 days.

In the end, the locale is just a prop and packaging, what sells is content. While popular cinema in India has largely been aspirational, many of our contemporary hits have actually celebrated the local milieu. Be it Ladakh for *3 Idiots*, Kashmir for *Lakshya*, Delhi for *Rang De Basanti* or *Bajrangi Bhaijaan* and the slew of small town stories around Lucknow, Allahabad, Kanpur and Jaipur, each city and town has emerged as a distinct character and layered the stories with heartfelt warmth. Qutub Minar, Taj Mahal and the fort palaces of Rajasthan have all featured prominently. But Shah Rukh Khan's *Paheli* will be remembered for that scene at a stepwell in Rajasthan. If some unknown wonders and sites could be filmed, it would be the best campaign for domestic tourism. Not many of us will be travelling abroad anyway. As for Switzerland, there's always our Northeast.

opinion

Passivity and its causes

It is the defining quest of consumer culture that makes for passivity as it is mainly externally-driven by advertising. How then do we overcome the feeling of insecurity?



After the publication of my last column on June 27, several readers have requested me to elaborate further as to how television breeds passivity. Hence this piece. Before proceeding further, one needs to be clear as to what is meant by passivity. At the visible level, it is reflected in the lack of active response leading to the absence of intervention to ensure follow-up action even in cases where one is deeply moved — such as the arrest of the culprit who prepared the explosives-packed coconut that so savagely killed the pregnant elephant in Kerala on May 27. Even if, however, there had been such intervention, it might not necessarily have indicated the absence of passivity.

The entire issue has to be seen in the context of Erich Fromm's differentiation in his book, *To Have or to Be?*, between passive and active states of mind and activity related respectively to "having" and "being" modes of existence. According to him, the "having" mode of existence, marked by alienated activity, makes for passivity. "In alienated activity" he writes, "I do not really act; I am acted upon by external or internal forces." An important manifestation as well as an ingredient of the "having" mode of existence is a situation in which my relationship with the entire world is one of possessing and owning, one in which I want to make everybody and everything, including myself, my property. This tendency becomes so pronounced that it extends even to people, and one talks of "My doctor," "My employer," "My boss" and so on.

Fromm makes it clear that passivity does not mean the absence of activity but activity prompted by external forces in contrast to that arising from the autonomous dynamics of the perpetrator's inner self. One, therefore, can be in a passive state even when engaged in hectic exertion if the latter is prompted by a force outside one. Similarly, physical inaction does not mean passivity if it goes with autonomous inner activity. Fromm associates the active, as opposed to the passive state, with the "being" mode of existence. The latter has as its "prerequisites independence, freedom and the presence of critical reason. Its fundamental character is that of being active, not in the sense of outward activity, of busyness, but of inner activity, the pro-



ductive use of human powers. To be active means to give expression to one's faculties, talent, to the wealth of human gifts through which — though in varying degrees — every human being is endowed. It means to renew oneself, to grow, to flow out, to love, to transcend the prison of one's isolated ego, to be interested, to list, to give."

The "being" mode of existence is characterised by non-alienated activity. "I experience myself," says Fromm, "as the subject of my activity. Non-alienated activity is a process of giving birth to something, of producing something and remaining related to what I produce. This also means that my activity is a manifestation of my powers, that I and my activity are one. I call this activity productive activity."

The question is: How does television promote the "having" mode of existence? It is a technological device for transmitting images and sound over ether. Its evolution as a cultural medium has been largely determined by its symbiotic relationship with the consumer culture, which is marked by self-indulgence and compulsive, competitive and conspicuous consumption, fanned by unbridled advertising, association of personal worth and social status with a high level of consumption and the spread and intensification of the competitive spirit, a critical factor in capitalism. It is the result of a new phase in the evolution of capitalism in which the market plays a dominant role in the system, and which, in turn accounts for an unprecedented emphasis on ensuring higher turnover and surplus. Marketing has emerged as a specialised field and advertising as its cutting edge. Television, which has given advertising a reach and impact

upon a person with his/her growing awareness of himself/herself separate from the surrounding nature and people.

This defining quest of the consumer culture makes for passivity as it is mainly externally-driven by advertising. The process is reinforced by a compulsion internal to the psyche of people which reinforces the compulsive, competitive and conspicuous consumption that is a hallmark of the consumer culture. In *The Tear of Freedom*, Fromm shows how a feeling of insecurity comes inexorably

in which the market dominates the system and competition is war with no holds barred. Thus, corporations are stalked by the fear of being taken over or run to the ground by other corporations and individuals by that of losing their jobs or of uncertain futures in their own corporations taken over by new masters.

According to him, this awareness "remained very dim over long periods of history," and the process of its growth, which he calls "individuation," seems to have reached its peak in modern history in the centuries between the Reformation and the present." Stating that the same process is found in the life history of the individual, he says that despite biological separation, the child "remains functionally at one with the mother for a considerable period." It is linked to her by what he calls "primary ties," an expression he also uses to signify the ties connecting "the member of a primitive community with his clan or nature, or the medieval man with his clan or social caste." Their existence implies a "lack of individuality but they also give security and orientation to the individual."

In the case of the child, he/she slowly becomes aware of his/her separateness from his/her mother and others, with physical, mental and emotional development. This leads to the emergence of an "organised structure guided by the individual's will and reason." He adds, "If we call this organised and integrated whole of the personality as the self, we can also say that the one side of the growing process of individuation is the growth of self-strength." The other side is a growing feeling of aloneness which leads to a growing feeling of insecurity given the many dangers that beset a person in every society. This feeling of insecurity is ever-present in market capitalism which is the matrix of the consumer culture

and in which the market dominates the system and competition is war with no holds barred. Thus, corporations are stalked by the fear of being taken over or run to the ground by other corporations and individuals by that of losing their jobs or of uncertain futures in their own corporations taken over by new masters.

The way to overcome a feeling of loneliness and insecurity is, Fromm states, to "relate spontaneously to the world in love and work," in the genuine expression of "one's emotional, sensuous and intellectual capacities," becoming one with man, nature and himself "without giving up the independence and integrity of one's individual self." Unfortunately, conditions under market capitalism hinder the adoption of such a course. The several ways — including resort to sadistic and masochistic relationships — in which people seek to overcome their feeling of insecurity, include compulsive acquisition of possessions and conformism.

According to Fromm, "Incorporating a thing, for example by eating or drinking, is an archaic form of possessing it." An infant's form of taking possession is by swallowing a thing. Referring to many forms of swallowing, including symbolic incorporation, Fromm says, "The attitude inherent in consumption is that of swallowing." And swallowing under the influence of televised advertising is yet another example of how the idiot box and the consumer culture promote passivity.

(The writer is Consultant Editor, *The Pioneer*, and author)

SOUND BITE

Both (India and China) are powerful nations yet neither one can destroy the other one. So both will have to live side by side.

Tibetan spiritual leader
—Daiji Lama

I don't think there is anything called an outsider or an insider. It is about favouritism, that's the word that should be used. And this exists everywhere.

Actor
—Divya Dutta

The magnitude of this pandemic, which has touched virtually everyone in the world, clearly deserves a commensurate evaluation, an honest evaluation.

WHO chief
—Tedros A Ghebreyesus

It is the job of the courts to deliver justice. It is the job of the police to deliver the accused. The only thing killed in Yogi's encounter raj is justice.

Senior TMC leader
—Mahua Moitra

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Rough ride

Sir — Private companies, which solely pursue profit, cannot be expected to have a charitable approach towards society or the country. So it will not come as a surprise if the private owners, approved by the Government, come up with arrangements that will serve only the privileged classes and exclude the common people with their revised fare structures. Class barriers exist in every sphere of life, be it hospitals, schools or higher educational institutions, residential apartments and hotels among others. Thus, one could expect the tradition of exclusion to continue with the privatisation of the Indian Railways.

Having already made the decision to privatise 109 pairs of routes, the least the Government should do is to make sure that the number of existing trains or routes is not reduced. The enjoyment of the elite should not come at the cost of the lower and middle classes for whom railways are often the lifeline for travel. Adequate alternatives should be available so that people, who cannot afford the prices set by the

A new education paradigm is needed

This refers to the editorial, "No lessons to be learnt" (July 10). The ostensible reason for the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE)'s removal of topics such as secularism, citizenship and federalism from its syllabi for classes IX to XII is 30 per cent reduction in the study load of students during the Coronavirus pandemic. But the choice of topics for deletion from course materials raises questions about the motivation behind the move. The board's justification, that it was meant "to reduce the exam stress of students due to the prevailing health emergency situation and prevent learning gaps" begs the question as to why the topics need to be learnt.

The CBSE has not made clear the rationale behind dropping some subjects as "dispensable" while retaining others as "indispensable." There is a strong case for every student to have exposure to India's composite culture — its heterogeneity, diversity and pluralism. It helps in the cultivation of

tolerance as a virtue. What children learn in their impressionable age moulds and colours their whole life. Nonetheless, it is some consolation that the "banishment" of key components of what we cherish as liberal education is "temporary," a one-time measure and the expunged contents have not yet been replaced by new content, propagating a constricted vision of India and the world.

G David Milton
Maruthancode

Overhaul education

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "No lessons to be learnt" (July 10). While the CBSE's decision to reduce the syllabus up to 30 per cent is welcome, one fails to understand the very purpose of education when students will not learn anything about secularism,

Partition and citizenship among other subjects.

Are curricula only meant to help the students pass the examinations? For the students, textbooks are just an assemblage of facts that need to be memorised, only to be forgotten later in life. Our pedagogical systems are disconnected from lived realities. It is time to evolve teaching

methods that encourage students to apply facts to real-life problems while encouraging them to seek knowledge. The sad reality is that concepts like secularism and federalism are not really practised anymore.

Bhavik Jain
Via email

The race is on

Sir — With TikTok being banned in India, various social media apps have been rushing to take its place. One of the top contenders is Instagram, which has showed its intention to fill the gap with a new app called "Reels." With thousands of content creators, who had amassed millions of followers, being stranded overnight due to a ban on TikTok, it will be interesting to see if Reels will be able to capture the same market. For influencers, the challenge will be to direct their loyalists to newer platforms. They will have to regain what they have lost.

Juhu Singh
Via email

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

EIA 2020 needs more teeth

The draft notification should have brought in tougher measures but it has notable weak points that severely undermine its very purpose



KOTA SRIRAJ

The new Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Draft Notification, 2020, that seeks to replace the 2016 version, could not have come at a better time as both the environment and humans are in the throes of suffering. The abuse of the environment by the human race has led to nature striking back in the form of zoonotic diseases such as COVID-19. The writ of mankind has run large and in the process has played havoc with the delicate balance between various ecological features of our planet. In India as well, in the name of economic development, ill-conceived projects from the environmental perspective have continuously overreached into the realm of nature and compromised the ecological well-being of our nation. This has been allowed to happen due to the absence of a robust EIA mechanism that focusses on a stringent appraisal of a project before its launch and which not only assesses its environmental sensitivity but also measures the responsibility shown by the project designers towards the local/indigenous communities that stand to be impacted by it. India direly needs to have rigorous regulations which ensure that the "polluter pays" rule is applied strictly in letter and spirit. It also needs to be ensured that the environmental clearance (EC) certificate is not abused as a licence to pillage the environment in the name of development. But all said and done, such an ideal EIA still remains a pipe dream in the country.

The EIA was started in India in 1977-78 for the evaluation of river projects. Since then it has come a long way but interestingly, even today there is a high number of instances where projects have caused immense harm to the environment, humans and wildlife alike. How these projects passed the EIA and obtained an EC is a pertinent question that needs urgent answers. The recent Oil India Limited (OIL) gas well blowout at Baghjan in Assam's Tinsukia district is an apt example of how the environment is getting adversely impacted in the absence of a robust EIA mechanism. The disaster has caused huge damage in the Dibrugarh-Saikhowa National Park situated just 900 metres from the well and to the Maguri-Motapung wetland as well, killing birds and endangered wildlife. Houses, farms, trees and water are covered with a film of oil right next to the place where three rivers join to form the transboundary Brahmaputra river. The whole area is experiencing repeated seismic tremors. Yet it has been allowed to continue operations with impunity. That such blatant violation of environmental laws is being done by a public sector undertaking is nothing short of a disgrace and a mockery of the concept of EIA. Yet another example is the LG Polymers Plant in Visakhapatnam from where the Styrene gas leak occurred on May 7, leading to disastrous consequences. It has since emerged that the plant was operating without the requisite clearances for the last two decades. Sadly, there are many more such examples which raise the question as to who is actually granting these projects permission to operate.

The EIA is essentially the bedrock of Indian environmental conservation and needs to be firmly anchored to the concept of "precautionary principle" or put simply, the creation of foresight to grasp the consequences of our actions on the environment and humanity. This "foresight" is sorely missing and needs to be urgently built into our EIA systems so that the hidden cost of economic development is not painfully paid every time an environmentally insensitive project is cleared. In conditions such as these, the EIA 2020 draft notification should have brought in tougher measures to filter projects on the basis of the threat perception to the environment, but surprisingly it has notable weak points that severely undermine the very purpose of EIA.

The draft notification allows for *post facto* clearance, which means that even if a project has come up without requisite approvals and environmental clearances, it can still continue to operate. This feature is quite unacceptable as it will create a rash of projects that will operate without critical clearances. Additionally, the draft makes a curious provision that not only undermines the environment but is also directly detrimental to the very fabric of our democracy as it neglects consultation with local communities by limiting public consultation pertaining to the impact of a proposed project. This amounts to silencing the opinion of the common man and therefore undermining his/her democratic rights. The draft has listed a series of projects which have been exempted from public interaction. These are area development projects, modernisation or irrigation projects, highway projects and, of course, projects pertaining to defence and national security.

Although the last-mentioned projects are understandably out of the ambit of public consultation due to security considerations, the rest of the projects mentioned on the list do not deserve to be exempted from public participation and debate. With loopholes such as these, the draft cannot build on the 2016 version and may even undermine some of the good work done under the earlier version of the EIA. The Government must relook at some of the worrying features of the draft 2020 so that the future of Indian environment and humanity stand a chance against the onslaught of so-called economic development that is parallelly eroding the environment.

(The writer is an environmental journalist)

POINT COUNTERPOINT

IT'S THE JOB OF COURTS TO DELIVER JUSTICE. IT'S THE JOB OF THE POLICE TO DELIVER THE ACCUSED. INDIA UNDER THE BJP HAS CONFUSED THE TWO.

—TMC MP
MAHUA MOITRA



THERE IS NO NEED TO SHED TEARS OVER THE KILLING OF DUBEY IN AN ENCOUNTER. WHY IS THE POLICE ACTION BEING QUESTIONED?

—SHIV SENA MP
SANJAY RAUT

Stop population explosion

With the global population estimated to touch nine billion by 2050, the huge surge is identified to be the causal factor of developmental concerns in several countries



BALWANT MEHTA

SIMI MEHTA

ARJUN KUMAR

When the world's population reached five billion on July 11, 1987, it was observed as the "Five Billion Day" by the United Nations (UN). Taking inspiration from this, the then Governing Council of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) for the first time in 1989 launched an initiative to observe July 11 as the World Population Day to draw attention towards the urgency and importance of related issues. As population explosion began to take centrestage as a cause of serious concern, the themes of the World Population Day focussed on the health problems faced by childbearing women and the importance of family planning, gender equality, poverty, maternal health and human rights. With the current global population at 7.8 billion and estimated to touch nine billion by 2050, the massive surge in population is identified to be the causal factor of developmental concerns in several countries. It becomes more conspicuous for developing and lesser developed countries. Therefore, World Population Day assumes paramount importance because it highlights the problems of population explosion and raises awareness about the effects of over-population on the environment and the planet. This year's theme is to raise awareness about safeguarding sexual and reproductive health needs and vulnerabilities of women and girls during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is very timely and significant because many pregnant women succumb to poor reproductive healthcare. A study by the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) revealed that 800 women die every day during the process of childbirth. The research highlighted that if the lockdown continues for six months, with continued major disruption to health services, then 47 million women in low and middle-income countries might not have access to modern contraceptives. This would, in turn, lead to seven million unintended pregnancies. This could lead to a rise in gender-based violence, female genital mutilation and child marriages and thus threaten the transformative results attained thus far in raising the health conditions of women.

India's concerns: The concerns for India on this World Population Day are clear. It has just two per cent of the world's landmass and 16 per cent of the global population. Between the Census of 2001 and 2011, the country added 18 per cent more people to its population — translating to around 181 million. It is the second-most populous country in the world with an estimated population of around 1.37 billion by 2019. According to the Population Division of the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs, India is expected to add nearly 273 million people in the next three decades and surpass China's population within the next seven years. In this context, the importance of sexual and reproductive health of women and planned parenthood underscores some major concerns for the country.

Birth rate and death rate: These are important factors for the population explosion in India. The death rate and birth rate was almost the same up to the mid-20th century, which meant a slow rate of growth of population. However, with gradual improvement in healthcare facilities, level of education, availability of proper nutrition and diet, people began to live longer and the death rate began to decline. This mismatch in birth and death rate resulted in faster growth of the population in the last few decades. As on 2020, India has a registered birth rate

of 18.2 per 1,000 population and death rate of 7.3 per 1,000 population.

ACCORDING TO THE POPULATION DIVISION OF THE UN DEPARTMENT OF ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS, INDIA IS EXPECTED TO ADD NEARLY 273 MILLION PEOPLE IN THE NEXT THREE DECADES AND SURPASS CHINA'S POPULATION WITHIN THE NEXT SEVEN YEARS. IN THIS CONTEXT, THE IMPORTANCE OF SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH OF WOMEN AND PLANNED PARENTHOOD UNDERSCORES SOME MAJOR CONCERN FOR THE COUNTRY

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of 18.2 per 1,000 population and death rate of 7.3 per 1,000 population.

Poverty and illiteracy: These factors also contribute immensely to the population explosion. In particular, children in rural areas are considered a blessing and support for parents in their old age, while in poorer families, more children mean more wage earners. On the other hand, the level of girls' education has a direct impact on fertility, as it is evidenced that the fertility rate of illiterate women tends to be higher than that of those who are literate. Lack of education prevents women from having full knowledge about the use of contraceptives, of the consequences of frequent childbirth as well as of their reproductive rights. On the other hand, educated women understand their rights and choices of contraception, are often vocal against early marriage and choose not to have many children. In India, female (39 per cent) illiteracy was almost twice than male illiteracy in 2011.

Family planning and other social factors: Even after 69 years of the creation of the National Family Planning Programme, the pattern of family planning has not changed much in the country. The National Family Health Survey (2015-2016) revealed that the use of condoms declined by 52 per cent over eight years and vasectomies fell 73 per cent. Added to this, women still lack the power to negotiate and choose if they are willing to get pregnant or wish to give birth to a baby, whether it is a boy or a girl. Preference for male children by families is still prevalent in the overwhelming patriarchal society in the country. In this process, a woman ends up being pregnant multiple times and producing many children till a male child is born.

Total Fertility Rate: TFR is the average number of children born to women during their reproductive years. For the

population to remain stable, an overall TFR of 2.1 is needed. Hence, a TFR of 2.1 is known as the replacement rate. India has witnessed a steady decline in its TFR, which touched 2.3 in 2016. However, there is a huge variation across States and the income level of people. Poorer States like Bihar (3.2), Uttar Pradesh (3.1), Jharkhand (2.7) and Rajasthan (2.7) still have TFRs above 2.5, while the poorest household has a TFR of 3.2 children per woman compared to 1.5 children per woman from affluent families. This shows that population growth is more concentrated in economically weaker sections of society and poorer regions of the country.

High youth unemployment: India has the highest youth population in the world, i.e. around 28 per cent of the total population. This youth potential is often referred to as the "demographic dividend" which means that if the youth available in the country are equipped with quality education and skills training, then they will not only get suitable employment but can also contribute effectively towards the economic development of the country. Every year around 25 million people enter the workforce, but only seven million are able to secure jobs, resulting in huge unemployment rates. Around 18 per cent of the young labour force is unemployed in the country today and around 33 per cent of the total youth are not in employment, education and training (NEET), which is the highest in the world. This huge unemployed and NEET category of youth are turning the demographic dividend into a "demographic disaster" for India.

The way forward: Population growth constantly acts as a hurdle in effectively addressing the problem of poverty, hunger and malnutrition and in providing a better quality of health and education, with limited resources. COVID-19 has accentuated these challenges and also raised

concerns on the timely attainment of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is, therefore, important to understand that in order to have a better future for all on a healthy planet, attainment of the SDGs is critical.

Family planning is an effective tool to ensure a stable rise in the population, which in turn is crucial for the achievement of some of these SDGs. The Government at all levels — Union, State and local, citizens, civil societies as well as businesses — must take the responsibility to promote awareness and advocate the sexual and reproductive rights of women and encourage the use of contraception.

This would go a long way in ensuring that every child who is born would prove to be an asset for the country, as all the research shows that investing in family planning and well-being measures have significant benefits over per Rupee spent *vis-à-vis* other investments.

Additionally, the key stakeholders need to be committed to well-researched planning and implementation on how to harness the population growth for the maximum economic benefit of the society and country. Providing adequate education and training to the young population would make them productive, effective and competent, thereby making them key contributors to economic growth. The World Population Day, 2020, is an opportune time to discuss these important issues and raise awareness about safeguarding sexual and reproductive health needs and vulnerabilities of women and girls during crises like the pandemic, so that corrective measures can be taken to overcome these challenges towards the vision of New India and an Atma Nirbhar Bharat.

(Balwant is Research Director, Simi is CEO and Editorial Director and Kumar is Director, IMPRI)

China the emerging ring master of Nepal?

It is time for the people to question the Government, especially KP Oli, for turning a blind eye to Chinese high-handedness



RISHI GUPTA

The recent border issues raised by Nepal show structural deficiencies in building trust and willingness to keep relations with India healthy. The self-centred politicisation of centuries-old peaceful ties exposes the darker side of Nepalese Prime Minister KP Oli. He has not only derailed the prospects of peace and cooperation between Nepal and India, but his hollow projection of nationalism, solely based on anti-India manoeuvring, exhibits his short-sightedness to serve vested interests in the political and diplomatic space of Nepal. This includes his growing closeness and frequent interactions with China.

Even though China has penetrated the Nepalese political space, Oli is

not paying heed since recent moves by the Chinese Ambassador in Nepal are aimed to protect his interests. Ambassador Hou Yanqi has been meeting with the members of the NCP to keep Oli in office. Her direct meetings with the Prime Minister are cherry on the cake for China. However, Yanqi attracted criticism after she held a one-on-one meeting with the President of Nepal on June 5, a day before the Standing Committee of the NCP was to decide on Oli's fate. While the agenda of the meeting was not revealed, it is clear that China wishes Oli to continue as the Prime Minister.

On his part, Oli is hell-bent on bringing a Chinese-style one-party rule in Nepal. Members of the Communist Party of China were invited to provide training to the Central Committee members of the NCP before its second convention was to begin in Kathmandu on February 15. At the convention, NCP allegedly passed a resolution to amend the Constitution to make Nepal a "People's Democracy" from the existing "People's multi-party Democracy". In case, the NCP pushes to remove the word "multi-

party" from the Constitution, it will further lead the country towards a one-party rule.

This pro-China inclination may be considered an independent sovereign act of a country. But allowing Chinese intervention in the political affairs of Nepal is dangerous. While the high-handedness of Yanqi is not a hidden fact, pumping of Chinese funds through the Madan Bhandari Foundation, named after a late Communist leader seen as a source of Oli's political aspirations, needs to be seen.

It was Yanqi who had convinced Oli and his administration to sign a extradition treaty during Xi Jinping's visit to Nepal last October. While the treaty was not signed due to internal opposition, Oli gifted a Treaty on Mutual Legal Assistance in Criminal Matters on the lines of the extradition treaty to China. The treaty has not only jeopardised the fate of 13,000 Tibetans living in Nepal but Kathmandu has also risked violating the pact with the UNHCR to protect the rights of Tibetan refugees.

The frequent meetings between

the Chinese officials and officers of the Nepal Army give a clear understanding of the Chinese mindset in Nepal for two reasons. One, the army has always been looked upon as the most stable institution in Nepal. No matter the political party in power, a stable relationship with the army will prove beneficiary for Chinese interests in Nepal. Two, in the last three years, the security cooperation between China and Nepal has moved from minimal to an advanced level. To promote ties in the security sector, China and Nepal have continued to strengthen cooperation through the exchange of visits of security personnel, joint exercises and training, disaster prevention and reduction, personnel training and supply of arms and ammunition to the Nepalese army.

Also, the Chinese business community in Nepal has been defying domestic laws of the host country, but local political support has kept it safe. Thamel, a tourist spot in the heart of Kathmandu known for lavish restaurants and hostels, has a complete area allegedly owned by the Chinese. They are known to lease properties from

Nepali owners on a maximum bid and run these hotels and restaurants with all-Chinese staff, who allegedly visit Nepal on tourist visas. Similar cases of fraud have come into the public sphere where Chinese-run hotels in Nepal accept payments through the China-owned WeChat app. Meaning, the Chinese tourists do not make cash transactions in local currency or on local online payment platforms. Therefore, revenue contribution by the Chinese tourists has negative implications for the Nepalese tourism industry.

In December 2019, 122 Chinese nationals were arrested by the Nepal Police for their involvement in cyber-crimes and bank frauds. Later, these criminals were deported at the request of the Chinese Government and to provide an explanation to the media, the police claimed that it had failed to frame charges against them. China is known to have little respect for the laws of other countries but local support from the Prime Minister's office is indeed a sell-off. It is believed that Oli had personally attempted to avoid embarrassing China by deporting

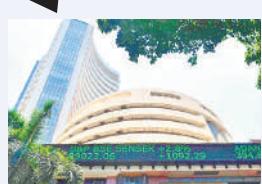
these criminals. In February, the editor of a leading English daily in Nepal was also forced to resign after the newspaper ran an op-ed on the Coronavirus and questioned the Chinese Government's intentions in hiding its spread.

For years, leaders in Nepal have propagated a neutral position between India and China, knowing the importance of both the neighbours in trade, transit and security. They have also understood the geographical compulsions of a landlocked Nepal, but with its hollow acts of ultra-nationalism, Oli has merely served his personal aspirations.

In reality, a Chinese-style political system in Nepal will be a curse on Nepal's long fight for democracy, where thousands had sacrificed their lives. Nepal has examples of Chinese debt-traps in Sri Lanka and Africa and brain-washing in Pakistan. Therefore, it is time for the people to question the Government, especially Oli, for turning a blind eye to Chinese high-handedness.

(The writer is ICSSR Doctoral Fellow at the CSAS, JNU)

CAPSULE



Sensex sheds 143 pts on weak global cues

MUMBAI: Equity benchmark Sensex dropped 143 points on Friday, dragged by losses in financial stocks and negative cues from Asian peers. The 30-share index ended 143.36 points, or 0.39 per cent, lower at 36,594.33. The NSE Nifty shed 45.40 points, or 0.42 per cent, to close at 10,768.05. Axis Bank was the top loser in the Sensex pack, skidding over 3 per cent, followed by IndusInd Bank, Titan, HDFC, ICICI Bank, ONGC and HDFC Bank. On the other hand, Reliance Industries, Sun Pharma, HUL, Bharti Airtel and TCS were among the gainers. According to traders, domestic benchmarks followed the negative trend in other Asian equities as concerns over a fresh spike in COVID-19 cases and its impact on economic recovery weighed on investor sentiment.



Torrent Power seeks shareholders' nod to raise Rs 2,000 cr

New Delhi: Torrent power will seek shareholders' approval next month for raising up to Rs 2,000 crore through issuance of NCDs. The special resolution for issuance of non convertible debentures (NCDs) by way of offer or invitation, up to an aggregate Rs 2,000 crore, on a private placement, is listed on the agenda of the annual general meeting scheduled for August 6, according to a regulatory filing. It said the approval of members is sought for raising the amount within the overall approved borrowing limit of the company. The funds are proposed to be raised from qualified institutional buyers or banks other than scheduled commercial banks, companies, bodies corporate, Foreign Portfolio Investors or various funds (like pension, gratuity etc.)



Tata Motors reports decline in group global wholesales

MUMBAI: Tata Motors on Friday reported a 64 per cent decline in group global wholesales, including that of Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) to 91,594 in June quarter of the current financial year over year-ago. Global wholesales of all Tata Motors' commercial vehicles and Tata Daewoo range in Q1FY21 were at 11,598 units, lower by 89 per cent over Q1FY20. Tata Motors said in a regulatory filing. Global wholesales of all passenger vehicles in June quarter of the current fiscal dropped 49 per cent to 79,996 units over the same quarter of the previous fiscal, it said. Global sales of JLR stood at 65,245 vehicles in the June quarter, it said adding that Jaguar wholesale units during the period were 17,971 vehicles, while Land Rover wholesales for the quarter were 47,454 vehicles.

T-Hub partners with MeitY, Digital India for helping hardware startups

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

T-Hub, an initiative by the Telangana government for startups, on Friday said it has joined hands with the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MeitY) and Digital India for helping hardware and IoT startups across the country.

T-Hub will lead Digital India's Scale Up program for hardware and Internet of Things (IoT) startups across India, a statement said.

The aim is to help provide scale up opportunities to the startups and make them ready in terms of product, investment and new market access, it added.

About 10-15 startups with leading-edge solutions in mobility, energy, agriculture, aerospace, manufacturing,



consumer, healthtech, medtech, smart cities and logistics and supply chain sectors will be shortlisted.

The call for application for the program will commence in July 2020, and startups will be shortlisted after an extensive screening process, it added.

"India has already developed a reputation for its expertise in the software technology space. We are beginning to

see startups emerging in the hardware space that are solving important problems.

"Schemes such as FAME II and Manufacturing-Hub plans by the Indian government has already laid a strong foundation," Ravi Narayan, CEO of T-Hub and chief innovation officer of the state of Telangana, said.

He added to further fuel the growth of hardware and IoT startups in India, T-Hub will be the "energetic champions" of free trade to boost small businesses, UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said on Friday as he pitched the two nations as leaders in tackling challenges posed by the coronavirus pandemic.

Addressing the Annual UK-India Day during India Global Week 2020 on Friday, the senior Cabinet minister acknowledged India's help at the height of the coronavirus pandemic with "vital supplies of paracetamol".

"Britain and India will be energetic champions of free trade, to boost small businesses, to cut the cost of living for consumers and to create the jobs of the future," said Raab, addressing the event held virtually.

"A vaccine created by British scientists and manufactured in India, if successful in clinical trials, will reach one billion people across the developing world,

UK, India 'energetic champions' of free trade: Dominic Raab

PNS ■ LONDON



Britain and India will be energetic champions of free trade, to boost small businesses, said UK Foreign Secretary

international COVID-19 response, the UK and India also co-authored the G20 Action Plan, providing an immediate package of USD 200 billion of global support to the most vulnerable countries around the world.

"A vaccine created by British scientists and manufactured in India, if successful in clinical trials, will reach one billion people across the developing world,

thanks to Oxford University and India's Serum Institute," he said.

The UK has committed 313 million pounds to research and development to support the development of a possible vaccine to COVID-19, and British pharma giant AstraZeneca is leading the development work with Oxford University and the Serum Institute of India.

'Higher offtake by FCI can boost procurement agencies liquidity'

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The COVID-19 pandemic is likely to have a positive impact on the cash flow from operations (CFO) of state procurement agencies (SPAs) in the current financial year, due to higher offtake by the Food Corporation of India, according to a report by India Ratings and Research.

The higher offtake by FCI is in response to various welfare schemes announced by the government that resulted in the liquidation of SPAs' unsold inventory and debtors, the rating agency said in the report released on Friday.

In view of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant lockdown, the government has announced various welfare schemes to alleviate the stress faced by the poor, it said.

Under the PM Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana, free distribution



of 5 kg of foodgrains and 1 kg of pulses per person per month for the next three months was announced in March 2020 for the 80 crore beneficiaries covered under the National Food Security Act, it added. This scheme has now been extended up to November-end.

As all such welfare schemes are being routed through FCI, Ind-Ra said, the same

would free up the storage space available with FCI, thereby making them ready to accept fresh produce coming in from various SPAs, it said.

Ind-Ra expects that this would reduce the inventory holding and consequent debtors at SPAs and accordingly facilitate the liquidity through CFO generation.

Maha Hotels assets declared fraud

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Public sector Punjab & Sind Bank on Friday said it has declared NPA account Maha Associated Hotels, with outstanding dues of Rs 71.18 crore, as fraud and reported the matter to the RBI.

Further, the lender said it is in the process of filing complaint/FIR with Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

Pursuant to the applicable provisions of Sebi regulations and the materiality policy of the bank, "it is informed that an NPA account Maha Associated Hotels Pvt Ltd with outstanding dues of Rs 71.18 crore having provisioning of Rs 44.40 crore has been declared as fraud and reported to RBI as per regulatory requirement", the bank said in an exchange filing.



Engineering firms' Q1 revenue to take a hit

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The COVID-19 pandemic-induced lockdown and subsequent shortage of labourers during the first quarter of the fiscal is likely to push many engineering firms into losses as revenue has been impacted due to execution challenges, Emkay Global Financial Services said in a report.

According to the agency, engineering companies having a diversified profile and which have been able to continue with the execution, though at moderate levels, are likely to be better placed, but would see a decline in their profit after tax as compared to Q1 FY2020.

"First quarter of this fiscal may turn out to be a forgettable quarter for engineering and capital goods sector as the lockdown has severely impacted execution for over two months for several companies in the sector," it said.

While factories and construction works resumed in several states mid-April onwards, lower demand and workforce challenges led to little execution. The agency further said that few of the companies under its coverage are expected to see a lower impact on revenue as parts of their business were active, which helped moderate the overall revenue decline.

The company has received abbreviated new drug application (ANDA) approval to market its Baclofen tablets USP 10 mg, 20 mg from the United States Food and Drug Administration (USFDA), Unichem Laboratories said in a BSE filing.

The product is a generic version of Novartis Pharmaceuticals Corp's Lioresal tablets in the same strengths, it added.

The tablets will be commercialised from the company's Ghaziabad plant, Unichem Laboratories said.

Baclofen tablets are indicated for the alleviation of signs and symptoms of spasticity resulting from multiple sclerosis, particularly for the relief of flexor spasms and concomitant pain, clonus, and muscular rigidity, it added.

PM bats for solar energy, says it's 'sure, pure and secure'

PNS ■ REWA



Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said India has emerged as the most attractive global market for clean energy and maintained self-reliance in electricity is a key component of the Centre's 'Atmanirbhar Bharat' campaign.

Launching a 750 MW solar project in Rewa in Madhya Pradesh through video-conferencing, Modi also said the state will emerge as a major hub for clean and cheap power in the country.

"Solar energy is sure, pure and secure and the country is now among the top five solar power producers in the world," he said.

The Rewa solar power plant

will not only supply power to Madhya Pradesh, but also to the Delhi Metro, Modi said.

Rewa Ultra Mega Solar (RUMS) project is Asia's largest such power facility and Delhi Metro will be one of its institutional customers outside the state.

Modi said self-reliance in electricity is integral for

'Atmanirbhar (self-reliant) Bharat', adding solar energy will play an integral part in achieving this objective.

The world is in a dilemma on whether to focus on the environment or on the economy, Modi said.

However, India has shown to the world that the environment and economy are not at odds,

but are complementary to each other, the PM said.

The country has successfully demonstrated this in implementing programmes like Swachh Bharat, LPG connections to the poor (under Ujjwala scheme), CNG and electricity-based transportation, among others, he said.

He said solar energy is sure, pure, and secure and will be a major source of power in the 21st century.

"It is sure because the sun would shine throughout the world; it is pure because solar energy rather than polluting the environment, helps replenish it; it is very secure as it is a symbol of self-dependence and fulfills energy requirements," he said.

He further said, "Run-out of some of the key BS-IV volume models and also COVID-19 related restrictions lead to sales challenges in H1."

total sales in the month.

Commenting on the performance, Mercedes-Benz India Managing Director and CEO Martin Schwenk said, "We are glad to witness a slow movement from previous months and we expect this trend to gather momentum."

He further said, "Run-out of some of the key BS-IV volume models and also COVID-19 related restrictions lead to sales challenges in H1."

cases. Further, the stronger US dollar against key rival currencies also put pressure on the domestic unit.

The dollar index, which measures the American currency's strength against a basket of major currencies, was at 96.7910, up 0.09 per cent.

At the interbank foreign exchange market, the rupee opened weaker at 75.16 a dollar against the previous day's close of 74.99. During the session, it swung between a high of 75.12 and low of 75.33 before settling at 75.20, showing a loss of 21 paise.

Mercedes-Benz India H1 sales down 55 pc at 2,948 units

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



German luxury carmaker Mercedes-Benz on Friday reported a 55 per cent decline in sales in the first half of the year at 2,948 units in India amid COVID-19 related challenges.

The company had sold 6,561 units in the January-June period last year.

Mercedes-Benz India said it witnessed positive momen-

total sales in the month. Commenting on the performance, Mercedes-Benz India Managing Director and CEO Martin Schwenk said, "We are glad to witness a slow movement from previous months and we expect this trend to gather momentum."

He further said, "Run-out of some of the key BS-IV volume models and also COVID-19 related restrictions lead to sales challenges in H1."

top five private sector banks may see their slippages double to 5 per cent this fiscal due to the poor loan offtake and the moratorium-driven contraction in net interest margins, warns a report.

These five banks—HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Axis Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank, IndusInd Bank and Yes Bank—collectively control a quarter of the system and three-fourths of the private banking space, according to a report by India Ratings on Friday.

We forecast FY21 slippages to nearly double to around 5 per cent for these banks from 2.3 per cent in FY19 and 2.7 per cent in FY20, even though net slippages would be lower if refinancing remains a challenge, resulting in a 4 per cent

contraction in their net interest margin," says the report.

As loan demand remains tepid, banks are parking their excess liquidity in low yielding alternatives such as government bonds and top-rated corporate securities due to their

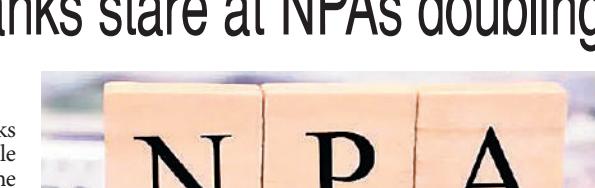
higher credit risk perception and widening duration spreads, even as deposit inflows have been robust.

On the other hand, growth in deposits for these top five private banks in FY20 was 18.8 per cent which was 18.5 per cent in FY19, while loan growth declined to 15 per cent from 19.1 per cent during this period.

Additionally, the Reserve Bank has injected Rs 1.7 lakh crore of liquidity into the system over the last six months through open market operations and secondary market purchases.

Top 5 pvt banks stare at NPAs doubling to 5% in FY21

PNS ■ MUMBAI



"We forecast FY21 slippages to nearly double to around 5 per cent for these banks from 2.3 per cent in FY19 and 2.7 per cent in FY20, even though net slippages would be lower if refinancing remains a challenge, resulting in a 4 per cent

contraction in their net interest margin," says the report.

As loan demand remains tepid, banks are parking their excess liquidity in low yielding alternatives such as government bonds and top-rated corporate securities due to their

line had operated seven flights.

The paper reported that the permission for the remaining five flights had now been revoked, according to the sources.

Pakistan has already suspended licenses of 34 more PIA pilots after the national flag carrier terminated the services of 52 employees on various charges, including fake degrees.

The dubious license issue emerged after the preliminary probe report of the Karachi plane crash blamed the pilots for the tragedy that killed 97 people.

US bans PIA ops over dubious licences issue

PNS ■ ISLAMABAD



Sarwar Khan had termed "dubious" in the National Assembly.

The Express Tribune reported quoting sources that the US authorities have notified the national carrier of the ban through an email. They added that the special flight licences obtained by the PIA had also

The US has imposed a ban on Pakistan International Airlines flights for at least six months, citing dubious pilots' licenses, according to a media report on Friday.

On Tuesday, the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA) ordered its 32 member states to bar Pakistani pilots from working, following reports of fake licenses being issued them.

The decision has been taken after 262 Pakistani pilots were grounded, whose licences the Aviation Minister Ghulam



'Hyderabad promotes HOLISTIC GROWTH'

C AN YOU SHARE YOUR ASSOCIATION WITH HYDERABAD?

I have been associated with Hyderabad for a few decades. Earlier I came here as a visitor for work as my previous company had its operations here. I moved to Hyderabad in 2008, when I joined Karvy Group. Ever since then, I have grown to love this city, and have now decided to make this my base for the future. I am quite well entrenched in the city over these 12 years. I slowly made a place for myself while being welcomed with open arms in the investor and mentoring space with the start-up ecosystem, where I now play a crucial role. Besides running my own consulting company Upsurge Enterprise Solutions as their Founder and CEO, I am also the co-founder and partner with HIT Seed Fund, a board member and a charter member of TiE Hyderabad, and a past board member with Hyderabad Angels. One significant aspect that connects me to this city is my father - a retired army officer.

HOW HAS THE CITY BEEN TREATING YOU?

The city has been very kind and loving in my journey so far. While I moved to Hyderabad in 2008 from Mumbai, my family joined me here in 2012. We had overcome some very trying conditions. The city quickly allowed us to get settled and be part of various initiatives. Everyone has mostly been particularly warm and accommodating to us, helping us adjust and settle well. I started with phase 2 of my life, when I moved my family here, post losing my first wife after a long battle with cancer. I got remarried and Hyderabad became the city we chose to start our new life. It has been a wonderful journey so far and I am sure there is more to discover, going forward.

WHAT KIND OF THOUGHTS YOU HAD ABOUT HYDERABAD BEFORE MOVING HERE AND HOW DO YOU FIND IT NOW? WERE YOUR APPREHENSIONS RIGHT?

I had visited Hyderabad many times before I actually moved here so I was very well aware of the city, however, shifting base from Mumbai to Hyderabad was not an easy decision to make. There were several apprehensions about the opportunities and pace this city could offer to a professional like me. We were also a bit apprehensive about how the family would adjust to the pace and make new circles in a place where we didn't understand the language and culture very well. I was also told by many of my friends and family that I might be making a hasty decision as I might experi-

who started his career in Hyderabad in the late sixties. The DNA of the city resonates with me, because some of my closest friends, who are like second family, live here.

Most of us are familiar with TEDx, a global platform usually known for a free, lively, and conversational series, but do you know who organises it here in our city? The metropolitan city's own TEDx Hyderabad is governed by Viiveck Verma, who was born in a beautiful town of Gondia, Maharashtra. His ideas have always reflected compassion and wisdom in whatever work he does. Just like the

Ted talk that gave the world, scientists, artists, leaders, etc., we have Viiveck Verma who is a strategic thinker, well-experienced with top-level corporates, founder of Upsurge Enterprise Solutions, co-founder of IIT Seed Fund, curator-cum-licensee for TEDx and an ex-director for Hyderabad Angels. Apart from this, he was also formerly associated with the Rotary Club of Miyapur as the president. To foster a rich understanding of his moving Maharashtra to Hyderabad Viiveck about his journey to Shikha Duggal



At some places that do play a role but overall life in the past 12 years in Hyderabad has been pretty good.

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

The one thing that comes to my mind when I think of Hyderabad is the uniqueness it has held since time immemorial, as a place attracting and absorbing people from all over, the country so beautifully as one of its own. This started during the time of the Nizams and has continued to this day. Hyderabad is such a melting pot of different people, cultures, cuisines, languages, and work ethics, that it makes life superb living here. The primary reason for the tremendous growth of the city especially in the Pharma and IT sector is due to this very nature of the city. The other thing about Hyderabad which is unique is the intersection of small city culture and big-city opportunities in terms of growth and being a global force to reckon with.

WHAT DO YOU LIKE AND DISLIKE THE MOST ABOUT HYDERABAD?

I love the culture and people of the city and thoroughly enjoy them. I also love that the city is so accommodating to all cultures and people uniquely, it creates a global perception of its cuisines, cultures, cultural engagements, and social interactions. I also love the geographic location of the city because in my view it is the best place for a professional like me to be based. Hyderabad allows us to be placed right in the center of the country and the world making it so easily accessible and easy to travel to and from where required. With the technology advancements and the new normal of every-

thing being virtual, Hyderabad has the distinct advantage of being a city focussed on technology tools, making life so much simpler. What I think the city can do better on, are some areas around the infrastructure. With the rapid growth that Hyderabad is seeing, some challenges are being faced. We need to make sure that while the city grows, we don't lose our vision and continue to develop everything else around this growth. We also need to ensure that we keep the balance between growth and a serene environment, which we have is maintained so far as we grow, otherwise, we could potentially lose the reason why Hyderabad occupies such a unique space.

WHAT IS IT THAT YOUR RELATIVES OR FRIENDS WHO VISIT YOU HERE LIKE TO TAKE BACK AND WHERE DO THEY WANT TO VISIT WHEN THEY COME TO HYDERABAD?

The most striking thing that stands out to most visitors is the way the city has grown and created a place for itself as one of the best cities to live in the world and still retained the small city culture where people are still very warm, know each other well and are so socially connected. In addition to this, the entire cultural heritage and richness besides variety and depth of cuisines are things that people take back as memories after their visit to Hyderabad. The rich heritage the city enjoys also serves as a major attraction with the monuments preserving the culture and grain of Hyderabad from Nizam's time to modern-day.

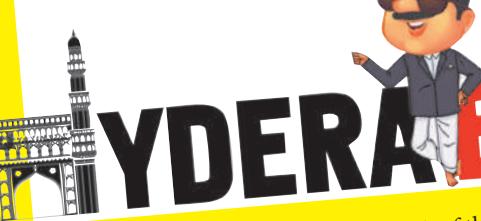
WHAT IS HYDERABAD TO YOU?

HOME where the Heart, Body, Mind, and Spirit lives and enjoys living.

“

The one thing that comes to my mind when I think of Hyderabad is the uniqueness it has held since time immemorial, as a place attracting and absorbing people from all over, the country so beautifully as one of its own. The other thing which is unique is the intersection of small city culture and big-city opportunities in terms of growth and being a global force to reckon with.

HYDERABAD BOND



Dared to make her dream a reality

SHIKHA DUGGAL

The preparation and consumption of Mithai is an age-old tradition in India. A business of savouries is always filled with immense taste and flavour. Poornima Mittal is one self-made entrepreneur who defied all odds to fulfil her aspirations and make a mark for herself in the city. She is the founder of Mirchi.com, a marketplace exclusive for sweets and snacks, empowers sellers, both big and small, to directly showcase their unique products under one roof.

But her life was not a bed of roses, it had always been a challenge from the very start. She moved back to Hyderabad from the US (where she was staying) and was managing her team here in India. In addition to that, working late nights along with being a

mommy, began to get the better of her. Apart from all of this, she had no experience with e-commerce, packaging, or shipping. But a simple yet ambitious woman found solace in her small venture and the brightening idea behind it.

"Women are full of spirited energies, and I am using my privilege to help other women out there who dream of becoming a change-maker but can't move forward due to financial constraints or family restrictions. We all must follow the motto 'Each for equal' to awaken the spirit of sisterhood," opines Poornima. At Mirchi.com, she attempts to bring the products of these talented individuals for all to enjoy.

"When I first ventured into this business, I was eager to learn and network with fellow homemakers. I researched a lot about my idea and figured

what holds a woman back to follow her dreams and so decided to create a new ecosystem for them. We are a team of 10 individuals now, who work collectively. At times it does get extremely difficult for me to manage both office and household chores but I eventually learnt to conquer these challenges," tells the founder.

Aimed at helping women during their entrepreneurial journey, the initiative hopes to bring up-scaled ventures for them where they can also distribute India's best sweets and savouries. Speaking about the impact of COVID-19 on her business she tells us that it has reduced their business's production capacity. "The business is now slowly gaining momentum amidst unlock 2.0 but the economic crisis spread has affected the power of purchasing as we," she informs. Having little expectations

from the upcoming festivals now, Mirchi.com is implementing new services such as a gifting section. Talking about her marketing strategy, she says, "We segregate a list of our clients and understand their choice of product mix they would like to have. We have a high brand recall; we are always at par with our competitors."

“

When I first ventured into this business, I was eager to learn and network with fellow homemakers. I researched a lot about my idea and figured what holds a woman back to follow her dreams and so decided to create a new ecosystem for them. We are a team of 10 individuals now, who work collectively. At times it does get extremely difficult for me to manage both office and household chores but I eventually learnt to conquer these challenges.

— POORNIMA



Vivek Anand Oberoi to play mysterious character in his next

Actor Vivek Anand Oberoi has been roped in to play a pivotal role in *Iti: Can You Solve Your Own Murder?*

"I'm playing a character named Prabhu Singh, who is one of the most pivotal characters in the film. It's a role that I've never played before. This film is a mystery thriller, so let's leave rest of my character also to some mystery," said Vivek.

The actor is also presenting and producing the whodunit thriller by writer-director Vishal

Mishra.

"When Vishal narrated the story to me and took me through the plot-line and the story arch, I just instinctively knew that I had to produce it. I've always wanted to back high concept ideas and Vishal had just the perfect concept for me," said Vivek.

Vishal said that casting

Vivek in *Iti: Can You Solve Your Own Murder?* was a no-brainer and the actor had been his first choice.

"Vivek Oberoi is an actor par excellence and has proved the same throughout his career through his acclaimed

performances in *Saathiya*, *Company*, *Shootout at Lokhandwala* and more. I needed an exceptional actor for Prabhu Singh because he is the most pivotal character in the film. Also, Vivek has never done a role like this before, so it would be very refreshing to see him in this character onscreen," said the director.

Actress Sushmita Sen's brother Rajeev Sen will make his Bollywood debut with *Iti: Can You Solve Your Own Murder?*

The movie is expected to go on floors by September-October 2020.



Bollywood celebs to reveal secrets on new show

Bollywood celebrities like Kareena Kapoor Khan, Sara Ali Khan, Ananya Panday, Taapsee Pannu and Jacqueline Fernandez will reveal interesting bits of their lives in a new interactive quiz show titled *Super Fan*.

"I think all of us celebrities are known by our fans, and I strongly believe that. I have always said that I am what I am because of my fans. I am

so happy that I have been able to connect with all my fans and it has been great that I got this opportunity to get to know each other better through this show. I hope many people are able to get the answers to all my questions right, and I also hope that there is not just one, but many Super Fans of Bebo," said Kareena.

The Flipkart Video show

also presents an opportunity for select fans to win a

chance to personally connect with their Bollywood idols.

Ananya hopes her fans have fun finding out more about her because "I have thoroughly enjoyed this experience. I want to thank them for all the love and affection I have received. To me they are all my Super Fans and I love them. Sending a big virtual hug to all my fans out there."



Mira Nair to direct Jungle Prince of Delhi series

Filmmaker Mira Nair will be adapting the 2020 Pulitzer Prize finalist New York Times story and podcast *The Jungle Prince of Delhi* as a drama series.

Written by Ellen Barry, the story delves into the history of the royal family of Oudh, who lived in a ruined palace in Delhi and claimed to be the heir to

the fallen kingdom.

Nair is attached to direct the project and will also executive produce. Amazon Studios has secured the rights to develop the drama series. *The Jungle Prince of Delhi* will narrate a personal story of a displaced family, set against the backdrop of the Partition of India.

"Barry's beautifully written tale of the Oudh family revealed deeper truths rooted in the violence and trauma of the

partition of India," said Caitlin Roper, head of scripted entertainment at *The New York Times*.

Nair has received a BAFTA, Academy Award, and Golden Globe nomination for her work previously. She is known for *Salaam Bombay!*, *Mississippi Masala*, *Monsoon Wedding*, *Vanity Fair*, *The Namesake*, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and *The Queen of Katwe*.

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



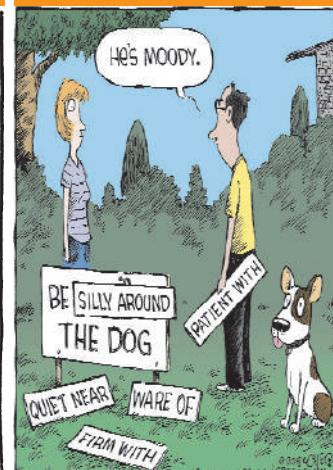
GARFIELD



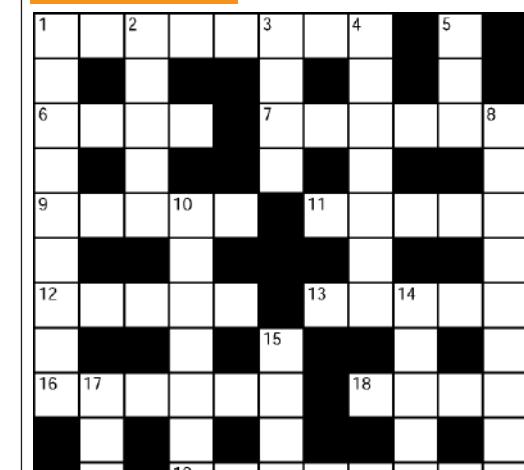
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

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.

2 A sung musical drama

3 One time

4 Make longer by pulling

5 A place to see animals

8 A frightening dream

knees

11 Hurt by a bee

14 A smell

15 Counts up

17 Unwell

SOLUTION

S	A	F	F	S
J	O	R	N	I
D	F	M	I	N
I	T	A	L	R
S	A	O	P	N
C	O	N	S	I
U	S	D	E	F
S	I	E	U	G
Z	E	X	A	T

GINGER MEGGS



SUDOKU

Yesterday's solution

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

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.

DOWNS

- 1 Do these to strengthen your muscles and keep fit

According to a source close to the production house, the project would've gone in front of the cameras by now if not for COVID-19 outbreak, finds NAGARAJ GOUD



Shine Screens to bring together the combination of CHAY-INDRAGANTI

The director-actor duo of Mohana Krishna Indraganti and Naga Chaitanya is set to team-up — more than three years after they first thought of joining forces. Pooling in resources for the project are Sahu Garapati and Harish Peddi under their Shine Screens. According to a source close to the pro-

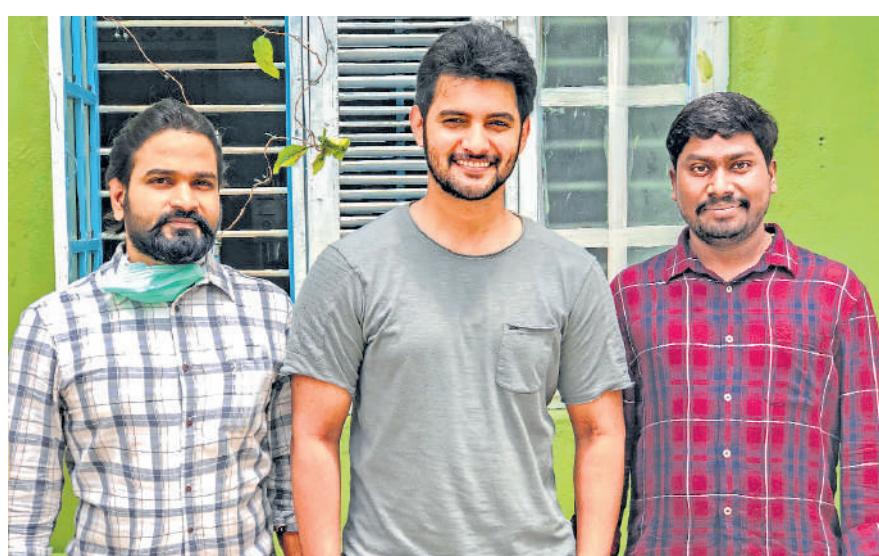
duction house, the project would've gone in front of the cameras by now if not for COVID-19 outbreak.

The source chips in, "Indraganti committed to do a film for Shine Screens long back. He proposed the name of Naga Chaitanya for the project. With the production house already enjoying a great relationship with the actor, having produced his super hit Majili

last year, the project was set in motion immediately. The fact that Chay is also an admirer of Indraganti's body of work was another reason. The untitled film will be a mature love story which traces the journey of couple post marriage. Like Indraganti's earlier films, it will be set in a believable space."

The source further adds, "The initial idea was to

begin this film straight after Indraganti completed V and Chay wrapped up Love Story but due to coronavirus, the plan had to be aborted. As of now, it's kept on hold. It will happen in the future though. Yes, Chay is committed to do a film with Vikram Kumar up next, but he'd also be honouring his word to Shine Screens."



Aadi Saikumar signs an investigative crime-thriller

Aadi Saikumar, who is reeling under continuous flops, has signed a pan-India movie, which will be followed up by sequels. To launch debutant S Balaveer as a director, the film is an investigative crime thriller

incorporated with fantasy elements. SVR is producing the film, which will be high on VFX. Aadi will play a role which has a comic touch to it. Having invested close to two years on the pre-production, the makers are planning to roll with Chapter One of the series pretty soon.

Aadi's next release will mostly be Sashi, a love story wherein he is playing a role with multiple shades. Srinivas Naidu makes his directorial debut with the flick. Sometime back, he also green-signalled debutant Sai Raj's new-age romantic comedy.



Anand croons Middle Class Melodies

Bhavya Creations chief V Ananda Prasad on Friday announced the title of his next with Anand Deverakonda and Varsha Bollama as *Middle Class Melodies*. He also indicated the film, which marks the directorial debut of Vinod Anantou, is wrapped up and the first copy is ready.

He said, "*Middle Class Melodies* is our effort to associate with content-rich cinema. The story unfolds in Guntur back-

drop, which is why it has been shot over there, in surrounding areas and in Kolakaluru. The characters speak the local dialect. We initially considered releasing it during the summer but due to the pandemic, we had to change our plans."

The film is a romantic comedy-drama with a lot of family emotions woven into the script. It centres on Anand's aim in life and how his dreams are pegged back due to familial and love reasons. Vinod promised

that the audiences will be able to identify with the characters he wrote. "Anand's role will be in complete contrast to what he essayed in Dorasani," he noted.

Featuring Chaitanya Garikapati, Divya Sripathi, Goparaju Ramana, Surabhi Prabhavathi, Prem Sagar and Prabhavathi Varma in supporting roles, the film, written by Janardhan Pasumarthi, is a Sweekar Agasthi (C/O Kancharapalem fame) musical.



RADHE SHYAM IT IS!

Pan-India star Prabhas' next with *Jil* fame Radha Krishna Kumar has been titled *Radhe Shyam*. On Friday, the title was unveiled with a fairy-tale-like first look wherein the lead pair of Prabhas and Pooja Hegde is seen in an embrace as a sea storm forms around them in a fiery landscape. The love-up dance pose against a dramatic backdrop of Italy's landmark historical monuments like the Colosseum and the Roman Forum sent Prabhas' fans into tizzy. Within minutes of the big reveal, the hashtag #PrabhasFirstLook took a top spot on Twitter trends nation-wide.

"This is for you, my fans! Hope you like it," Prabhas wrote in an Instagram post while Pooja Hegde labeled *Radhe Shyam* as "Our beautiful film has a beautiful name... here's our much awaited first look."

In a press release, the makers revealed that 70 per cent of the shoot has already been wrapped up and the new schedule will kick-start once the COVID-19 crisis ends.

A romantic drama set in

Europe, the film, set to release next year, is being shot in Telugu and Hindi simultaneously, while it will be dubbed into Tamil and Malayalam. The film will also mark veteran actor and Prabhas' uncle UV Krishnam Raju's daughter Praseeda making her debut as a producer. She is jointly producing it along with UV Creation Vamsi and Pramod. She is representing her dad's banner Gopi Krishna Movies, the production house of which is presenting the film.

Besides the already announced names of Bhagyashree, Priyadarshi, Sachin Khedekar, Murli Sharma, Kunal Roy Kapur, Sathyan (Tamil) and Sasha Chettri, the fresh names which made it to the supporting category list includes Beena Benarji and Riddhi Kumar. The music director's name though hasn't been announced. Meanwhile, Prabhas, Anushka Shetty and Rana Daggubati took a trip down memory lane to celebrate the five year anniversary of S S Rajamouli's *Baahubali*, which changed the landscape of Indian cinema with its success.

Prakash Raj and Sampath headline Exchange of Fire

The filming of *Oye!* helmer Anand Ranga's second project — a web series — has commenced in Hyderabad. Speaking to us, the soft-spoken director said the show *Exchange of Fire*, will be a nail-biting cop drama. "As of now I can confirm that Prakash Raj and Sampath Raj will be seen in pivotal roles, with the former playing a cop. The series will contain eight episodes, with each episode running into 45 minutes. The idea is to wrap it up by October-end. The shooting is progressing in adherence with the guidelines issued by the Telangana government," he said.

The project marks megastar Chiranjeevi's daughter



Sushmita's maiden tryst with production under Gold Box Entertainment. On how it took shape with Sushmita, Ranga noted, "I've been trying to do this show since last

year. She was looking to make something on the web, so it just happened that I pitched her script. Things began to materialise soon."



year. She was looking to make something on the web, so it just happened that I pitched her script. Things began to materialise soon."

Most Read
NEWS


15th Century Chinese encyclopedia sells for \$9M

A pair of volumes from a 15th century Chinese encyclopedia sold for more than 1,000 times their estimated price when they fetched a high bid of more than \$9 million. Paris-based auction house Beausant Lefevre said the volumes from the Yongle Dadian, the encyclopedia commissioned by Yongle Emperor, the third ruler of the Ming Dynasty, sold for more than \$9 million in a Tuesday auction. The volumes had been expected to sell for up to \$9,000, the auction house said. The Yongle Dadian was compiled by more than 2,000 scholars working from 1404 and 1408, and the original was composed of 22,877 chapters, making it the largest encyclopedia known to history. The auction house said the two volumes auctioned Tuesday were copies commissioned by the Jiajing Emperor in 1562. Only 400 volumes from the encyclopedia are known to still exist — about 4 percent of the original encyclopedia — and 24 of them are housed at the British Library. Beausant Lefevre said one of the volumes sold in Tuesday's auction was about the lakes of China and the other holds descriptions of funeral rites.



'Screaming banned' on roller coasters!

Many people might find it tricky keeping quiet through an entire roller coaster ride, but one Japanese theme park wants you to do that — and more. Fuji-Q Highland near Tokyo re-opened last month after its virus shutdown. It asked riders to avoid screaming when they go on its rollercoasters, to minimise spreading droplets, and instead 'scream inside your heart'. And to encourage people to play along, it's getting riders to put on their most 'serious face' for the ride photo. They can share their photo online in the #KeepASeriousFace challenge, and those who do best will be given free day passes. But it's all part of measures being taken by theme parks to give customers the confidence to return after the shutdowns, and assure them their safety is being taken seriously. In response to suggestions that it was impossible not to scream on a rollercoaster, the park previously released a video of two executives riding in silence, to show it can be done. In the surreal video, both executives are seen formally clad and in masks — one of them is even wearing a full suit and tie. He slowly adjusts his hair after the roller coaster plunges down and looks almost bored by entire exercise.



Dancing robots replace fans

With their stadium devoid of fans due to coronavirus restrictions, Japanese baseball team Fukuoka SoftBank Hawks have come up with an imaginative replacement: dancing robots. Before their most recent Nippon Professional Baseball (NPB) game against Rakuten Eagles on Tuesday, over 20 robots danced to the team's fight song on a podium in the otherwise empty stand. Two different robots, including SoftBank's humanoid robot 'Pepper' and others on four legs like a dog, stamped and shimmied in a choreographed dance that is usually performed by the Hawks' fans before games in the 40,000 capacity Fukuoka Dome. Some of the robots wore Hawks caps and waved flags supporting the team. Several people also took to social media sites to share the videos of these unusual supporters of the team. Here's one such clip posted on Twitter. Since being shared, the post has gathered over 63,000 views — and the numbers are only increasing. From being horrified to impressed, people shared various comments to express themselves.



Notre Dame spire will be restored 'as it was'

The spire of Notre Dame cathedral in Paris, which was destroyed in a fire last April, will be restored according to the original Gothic design, the Elysee Palace announced on Friday. In a statement, the Palace said that French President Emmanuel Macron announced the decision, putting an end to speculation that the spire would be rebuilt in a modern style, the BBC reported. Macron had previously hinted he was in favour of a "contemporary gesture". But the Elysee said that the process of designing a modern spire, with an international competition for architects, could have caused unnecessary delays. "The President trusts the experts and approved the main outlines of the project presented by the chief architect which plans to reconstruct the spire identically," it added in the statement. The announcement followed a meeting of France's national heritage and architecture commission (CNPA). When the 13th century roof of the Paris cathedral caught fire during restoration works in April 2019, it sparked a vast outpouring of emotion, as well as donations from across the world.



VAR dominates Premier League results

Man Utd continues winning run after Bruno opens scoring from controversial penalty decision; Kane denied again in goalless draw for Spurs

AFP ■ BIRMINGHAM

Manchester United were given a controversial helping hand by VAR in their 3-0 win at Aston Villa, while Tottenham suffered fresh frustration at the hands of the review system in their 0-0 draw at Bournemouth on Thursday.

United were far too strong for lowly Villa, but their opening goal came from a dubious penalty that left the hosts fuming.

In the 27th minute, United midfielder Bruno Fernandes spun into Ezri Konsa before tumbling in the area despite little evidence of a foul by the Villa defender. The penalty stood after a VAR review and Fernandes slotted home his eighth goal since joining from Sporting Lisbon in January.

United doubled their lead in first half stoppage-time when 18-year-old Mason Greenwood scored his fourth goal in three games with a fierce finish. Paul Pogba got the third in the 58th minute, the France midfielder bagging his first goal of an injury-hit season with a low curler from 18 yards.

Fifth placed United move to within one point of fourth placed Leicester in the race to qualify for the Champions League.

United, unbeaten in their last 17 games in all competitions, are the first team in Premier League history to win four consecutive matches by a margin of three or more goals. Second bottom Villa are four points from safety and haven't won in six games since the restart.

There was more VAR controversy at Dean Court, with Tottenham left in danger of



Henderson season is over: Klopp

Liverpool: Liverpool captain Jordan Henderson has been ruled out of the rest of the Premier League champions' campaign after the midfielder sustained a knee injury in their midweek win at Brighton, manager Juergen Klopp said on Friday.

Klopp was forced to withdraw Henderson 10 minutes from fulltime after a collision with Yves Bissouma but the German said the 30-year-old does not require surgery.

"It is the best possible of the bad news. He does not

miss out on European competition for the first time since the 2009-10 season.

Jose Mourinho's side were off-key for long periods, but could feel hard done by after



Josh King's push on Harry Kane in the penalty area went unpunished despite a VAR review in the first half. Just a week after Tottenham were the victims of a harsh VAR decision in their

I'm pretty positive he will be with us for the new season, he is a quick healer.

"We all felt for him, awful moment. We knew immediately. Hendo is an animal he fights for everything. He deals well with pain but in this moment, he knew something had happened. It was a complete mood killer."

"The boys were happy with the result but then the boys realised Hendo was hurt. No surgery needed is the good news. He will lift the trophy, he deserves to lift trophy." AP

loss at Sheffield United, Mourinho felt they were the victims of another bad mistake by the replay official.

"The same referee who did the VAR decision against

Sheffield United, Michael Oliver. Opinions matter, it's not only mine. Everybody knows that's a penalty and when I say everybody, I mean everybody," Mourinho said.

BRUNO EMULATES RONALDO'S FEAT

New Delhi: Manchester United playmaker Bruno Fernandes on Friday was rewarded for his fine run in the English top-flight as he was named the Premier League's player of the month for the second time in a row.

Fernandes had earlier won the prize for June as well. In doing so Fernandes emulated compatriot Cristiano Ronaldo, who had achieved the same feat in 2006 during his trophy-laden stay at Old Trafford. PNS

Sheffield United, Michael Oliver. Opinions matter, it's not only mine. Everybody knows that's a penalty and when I say everybody, I mean everybody," Mourinho said.

The semi-finals are scheduled for August 18 and 19, with the final on August 23 at the Estadio da Luz. AFP

Slow and steady Windies build their lead

AFP ■ SOUTHAMPTON

The West Indies are building a handy lead over England on the third afternoon of the first *raisethebat* Test, moving 5-31 in hand at the Ageas Bowl. Responding to 204 all out they were 5-235 at tea on Friday, with Roston Chase and Shane Dowrich sitting on an unbroken stand of 49. Spinner Dom Bess took two of the four wickets to fall on the day, carrying more than his share in the most batsman-friendly conditions of the match to date.

The West Indies began on 1-57, 147 short of England's mark, with Kraigg Brathwaite and Shai Hope chipping another 42 off the deficit in the first hour of play.

Hope earned a reprieve just before the drinks break, a Jofra Archer lbw chalked off after the paceman overstepped for a no-ball.

England were not made to pay for that error, with Hope aiming a big drive at Bess just a few deliveries later and sending a sharp slip catch in Stokes' direction.

The arrival of Shammar Brooks lifted the run-rate, with the new batsman helping himself as Archer and Bess offered some loose fare.

Brathwaite was looking resolute at the other end, converting his overnight 20 into the first-half century of the match from 113 balls.

It was also his first Test 50 since July 2018 but his hopes of progressing towards three figures ended when Stokes pushed him on the back foot and rapped him high on the knee roll. He was given out for 65 by Richard Kettleborough and when he called for the review the dismissal was upheld on two counts of 'umpire's call.'



"I found out about 6pm the night before the game. Stokes told me just that they're going with extra pace in these conditions," Broad said on Sky Sports Player Zone.

"I've been frustrated, angry and gutted — because it's quite a hard decision to understand. I've probably bowled the best I've ever bowled in the last couple of years. I felt like it was my shirt having been in the team through the Ashes and going to South Africa and winning there," he added.

Red Bull dash Vettel's hopes of a return

Spielberg: Red Bull have given "a definite no" to four-times F1 world champion Sebastian Vettel's hopes of returning to them next year, team boss Christian Horner said on Friday.

The German, who is out of contract with Ferrari at the end of the season and facing an uncertain future, had said on Thursday he would say yes to a Red Bull drive if one was offered.

Vettel won his titles with Red Bull from 2010-13 and remains on good terms with the Austrian energy drink brand's senior management. "We had a brilliant time with Seb," Horner told Sky F1 tele-

vision during practice for the Styrian Grand Prix at Austria's Red Bull Ring. "He will forever be a part of our history."

"We didn't expect him to be on the market this year and our commitment is to our existing drivers. We think we've got a great pairing in Max (Verstappen) and in Alex (Albon). We think that has great potential for the future as well."

"So unfortunately it's not something we are going to be able to accommodate. That is a definite no, I'm afraid. Sebastian I think is aware of that."

Agencies

Spinners are being taught new methods to shine ball: Mushtaq

IANS ■ WORCESTER

Former Pakistan tweaker and team's current spin bowling coach Mushtaq Ahmed on Friday stated that players have responded well to the new regulations put forward by International Cricket Council (ICC) in the wake of coronavirus pandemic.

The Pakistan cricket team is currently in England, acclimatising themselves ahead of their much-anticipated series which includes three Tests and as many T20Is starting August.

The visitors are currently under a 14-day quarantine period, following which they will travel to Derbyshire on July 13.

They had started their preparations for the series with a two-day inter-squad scenario-based practice match played on July 5-6 at Worcester.

"Despite the Covid-19 relat-

Verona snatch late 2-2 draw vs Inter

Verona: Inter Milan allowed yet another game to slip from their grasp as Verona snatched a late equaliser to hold them to a 2-2 draw on Thursday.

Antonio Conte's side appeared to have done the difficult part when they came from behind to lead 2-1 early in the second half only for Miguel Veloso to level for Verona with five minutes left.

That means Inter stay fourth with 65 points, having been overtaken by Atalanta after their 2-0 win over Sampdoria on Wednesday, and are 10 adrift of leaders Juventus with seven games to play. Verona are ninth with 43.

"It's disappointing because we deserved to win the match and instead we



have lost more important points," said Conte.

"The fact that we have lost 20 points from leading positions must give us pause for thought. We've lost so many points in a stupid way — if we hadn't, the table would look very different."

Since the Serie A restart, Inter have been held 3-3 at home by Sassuolo after conceding twice in the last 10 minutes and on Sunday they lost 2-1 to visitors Bologna after leading 1-0 and missing a penalty — a performance which left Conte fuming.

According to a reliable source, PCB has decided to sign a one-year contract with Transmedia, a company which has been buying various sponsorship and media rights for the last few years.

Transmedia has offered 600 million rupees for a three-year deal for the main logo on Pakistan team's jerseys and kits. The Board after facing disappointment on several fronts has now decided to sign a one-year deal for ₹200m on a pro-rata basis," the source said.

PCB forced to sell logo rights for lower price

Karachi (PTI): The Pakistan Cricket Board has managed to rope in a sponsor for the national team ahead of its England tour but it had to settle for a far less amount than what it envisaged.

According to a reliable source, PCB has decided to sign a one-year contract with Transmedia, a company which has been buying various sponsorship and media rights for the last few years.

"Transmedia has offered 600 million rupees for a three-year deal for the main logo on Pakistan team's jerseys and kits. The Board after facing disappointment on several fronts has now decided to sign a one-year deal for ₹200m on a pro-rata basis," the source said.