

ANALYSIS 7

**CUSTODIAL DEATHS:
FIX ACCOUNTABILITY**

MONEY 8

**NBFI RECOVERY UNLIKELY IN
NEAR-TERM: FITCH RATINGS**

SPORTS 12

**PSG WELCOME FANS
WITH 9-0 WIN**

HYDERABAD, TUESDAY JULY 14, 2020; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer



**KRACK IS NOT
GOING STRAIGHT
TO DIGITAL:
PRODUCER**

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**ELVIS PRESLEY'S GRANDSON
BENJAMIN KEOUGH DIES AT 27**

Elvis Presley's only grandson died Sunday, his mother Lisa Marie Presley's manager confirmed to AFP, with local media reporting the death as an apparent suicide. Benjamin Keough, 27, was found in Galabaras near Los Angeles from a self-inflicted gunshot wound, police sources told TMZ. Manager Roger Widjowski gave no details about the death, saying that Lisa Marie Presley - Elvis's only child from his marriage to actor Priscilla Presley - was "heartbroken, inconsolable and beyond devastated." "She adored that boy. He was the love of her life," Widjowski said, adding she was "trying to stay strong" for her daughters. Benjamin Keough seldom appeared in public but the few photos of him showed his strong resemblance to his grandfather.



**RS 75,000 CR FUND FOR INDIA'S
DIGITAL ECONOMY: GOOGLE**

Hours before Google declared setting up a Rs 75,000 crore fund to help accelerate India's digital economy, the Prime Minister's Office shared details of Narendra Modi's conversation with Google CEO Sundar Pichai on a wide range of subjects, especially use of technology to further education, agriculture and "re-skilling" the country's workforce. "I was delighted to know more about the efforts of @Google in several sectors, be it in education, learning, @DigitalIndia, furthering digital payments and more," the Prime Minister tweeted. "We discussed the challenges the global pandemic has brought to areas such as sports.



**AMID RAJASTHAN CRISIS, ED, I-T
RAIDS ON PEOPLE CLOSE TO GEHLOT**

The Rajasthan political crisis took a new turn on Monday when the Income Tax and Enforcement Directorate teams raided multiple premises connected to people from Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot's camp. According to IT department officials, searches were underway in offices of veteran state Congress leaders, including Rajeev Arora and Dharmendra Rathod, considered close to the Chief Minister. Unaccounted cash, jewellery, property papers and lockers were seized. The team also reached Bhillwara and Jhalawad to carry out searches, officials said.



**SC REFUSES TO ENTERTAIN PLEA
ON CANCELLING AMARNATH YATRA**

The Supreme Court on Monday said it cannot enter into the domain of the executive and district administration, as it declined to entertain a plea seeking a direction to the Centre, J&K administration and Shri Amarnath Shrine Board to cancel/restrict access of general public/devotees for the Amarnath Yatra this year in the backdrop of the coronavirus outbreak. The petitioner has alternatively sought live darshan of Lord Amarnath through internet & TV "so that crores across the country can have access". A bench headed by Justice D Y Chandrachud said "With due respect to principle of separation of powers...we leave it to the concerned authorities to take a decision on the matter.



While people reel under Corona, KCR cares for himself

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Bonalu oracle predicts 'hard days ahead'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

With the world in the grip of fear due to the Covid-19 pandemic that has spread to all corners of the globe, all eyes on Monday were fixed on what the Oracle Swarnalatha predicted for the future of the state. The prediction — hard days ahead — sent chills down the collective spines of all those present. As part of Bonalu festival of Goddess Mahankali of Secunderabad Ujjaini temple, the Rangan ritual was held with the oracle Swarnalatha, standing on an earthen pot in front of the Goddess Sri Mahankali. She invoked the Goddess and

Upon invoking the deity, Swarnalatha predicted that hard days are ahead for the people of the state and said, "She is warning people much in advance about future."

predicted the future during the Rangan ritual. Upon invoking the deity, Swarnalatha predicted that hard days are ahead for the people of the state and said, "She is warning people much in advance about future."

Why are schools taking online classes, asks HC

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana High Court on Monday once again questioned the state government on how private schools were being allowed to conduct online classes without the academic year even commencing. Hearing a petition filed by the Hyderabad Schools Parents' Association, a division bench comprising Chief Justice Raghavendra Singh Chauhan and Justice Vijaysen Reddy asked the state government on what action it had initiated against the management of private schools for holding online

High Court on Monday once again questioned the state government on how private schools were being allowed to conduct online classes without the academic year even commencing.

concerned to take action against managements of private schools for holding online classes and for collecting fees in violation of the GO issued on April 21, 2020.

Can we blame Modi for India's Corona status? asks KTR

PNS ■ MAHABUBNAGAR

Minister for IT KT Rama Rao has said that preventing the spread of Corona virus is not just limited to the state government and accused the Opposition of politicising the COVID-19 pandemic issue. He demanded the Opposition to state one example of a state that completely has driven the virus from its soil. India ranked number

three in terms of the number of Corona virus cases, he said sought to know from the Opposition should it be treated as failure of Modi. Speaking in connection with inauguration of new medical college here on Monday along with Health Minister Eatala Rajender and Excise Minister Srinivas Goud, he remarked that the whole world is in the grip of Corona virus.

Farooq, Omar move HC for release of 16 NC leaders detained

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88.78% clears CBSE Class XII

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) finally declared the Class XII result on Monday. This year, a total of 88.78 per cent of the students who took the exam cleared it. This is an increase of 5.38 per cent the pass percentage as compared to last year. Trivandrum has the highest pass percent of 97.67 per cent while the lowest was Patna at 74.57 per cent. Girls have outshone the boys once again with 92.15 pass percentage this year, while 86.19 per cent of the boys who took the exam successfully cleared it. In a message after the declaration of the Class XII board results, the CBSE chief congratulated students for their accomplishments. Referring to the Covid-19 outbreak, which hampered the exam schedule, he said that "each parent, student and teacher deserves appreciation for withstanding testing times." The board has also decided



In an earlier notice, CBSE has said in the case of students who have appeared for more than three subjects, the 'average of marks obtained in the best three performing subjects' will be awarded for subjects for which the exam was not held.

to not release a list of toppers due to exceptional conditions. In a one-time provision this year, CBSE won't mark students as "fail" on mark-sheets, but be referred as "essential repeat". For Class XII students who have appeared in exams in only three subjects, the average of marks obtained in 'best two performing subjects' will be given for papers for which the board has not conducted the exam. For a few students who appeared for only one or two subjects, the result was calculated based on performance in appeared subjects and performance in internal or practical or project-based assessment, as per the board.

GHMC data shows underreporting of Covid-19 cases

NAVEENA GHANATE ■ HYDERABAD

While the Telangana government has always claimed that the number of Covid-19 cases cannot be hidden, the GHMC data that was put up online states otherwise. According to the health department, there are 36,221 cases as on Monday. GHMC uploaded information pertaining to Covid-19 positive case details, including the patient's ID, ward, circle and zone particulars on its website on Monday. As per GHMC there are 21,268 patients in its jurisdiction. The first patient is P3

difference of 1,355 cases (for instance, the GHMC website mentions a patient with ID No P37,576. Even the GHMC data seems to be flawed as, the first case of coronavirus, P1 is not listed in the data uploaded on website). Earlier, the health department claimed that some of the private hospitals had a test positivity rate of nearly 71.7 per cent. As per the last media bulletin issued on June 15 related to foreign evacuees, there were 449 foreign evacuees who tested positive for the virus in TS.



Nzb hospital head resigns after 4 deaths

HYDERABAD: Nizamabad Government General Hospital superintendent M Nageshwar Rao on Monday resigned from his administrative post, citing distress over the incident of the body of a Covid-19 victim being taken to the graveyard in auto-rickshaw.

Sensex rises 99 points; RIL hits record high

8

BJP activists attack TRS chief whip office

PNS ■ WARANGAL

Tension prevailed in Warangal city on Monday after TRS and BJP activists attacked each other in the city. The skirmishes were triggered by Nizamabad MP Dharmapuri Aravind's remarks against the Chief Minister. The remarks attracted vociferous protests from the TRS workers who gheraoed the MP's convoy leading to police taking them into custody and sending them to Subedari police station.



Hospitals make a killing black-marketing Covid-19 drugs

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Black-marketing of Covid-19 drugs is going on unabated in the city. Remdesivir is selling in the black market for Rs 20,000, when its actual price is Rs 4,100. Sources say that hospital pharmacies are buying the drug at same cost and selling it in the black market for as high as Rs 20,000 to Rs 35,000. Even though there is no vaccine yet for coronavirus, Remdesivir has been said to reduce the duration of Covid-19 symptoms.



Black-marketing of Covid-19 drugs is going on unabated in the city. A dose of Remdesivir is selling in the black market for Rs 20,000, when its actual price is Rs 4,100.

Moreover, there is a gap in supply and demand. According to the Drug Controller General of India (DCGI), pharmaceutical companies can sell Remdesivir only to hospitals. The demand can be gauged

by the fact that several tweets are put up online by kin of Covid-19 victims as they are unable to find medicines. As the distress messages from people requesting for drugs used in Covid-19 treatment in Telangana increased, Drug Control Administration officials on Monday checked the availability and consumption of the drugs at corporate hospitals in Hyderabad. These checks were done to ensure people don't have to buy medicines in black market. The outcome of the check is awaited.

According to a senior official of the health department, "Government has already given instructions to DCGI. They already gave instructions for only private hospitals to use it. Even in Government hospitals, directly through the company only we will procure it." U Jagan, President of Telangana Private Hospitals Public Problem Solutions Association, said, "This is a new type of extortion in private hospitals. They state that six doses are needed and for each dose, Rs 5,000 is charged by Hetero."

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham: Ashadha & Krishna Paksha Panchangam

Tithi: Navami: 08:23 pm

Nakshatram: Ashwini: 02:07 pm

Time to Avoid: (Bad time to start any important work)

Rahukalam: 03:36 pm - 05:13 pm

Yamagantam: 09:07 am - 10:44 am

Varjyam: 09:38 am - 11:25 am, 12:45 am - 02:32 am

Gulika: 12:21 pm - 01:59 pm

Good Time: (to start any important work)

Amritkalam: 06:03 am - 07:50 am

Ahijit Muhurtham: 11:56 am - 12:47 pm

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Light drizzle

Temp: 28/23

Humidity: 86%

Sunrise: 05:49 am

Sunset: 06:54 pm

Current Weather Conditions Updated July 13, 2020 5:00 PM

There is a one-of-a-kind Chief Minister in the country.

He is not seen or heard for days together — he stays for two to three weeks at a stretch in a farmhouse away from the city, where nobody dares call him.

He relaxes in the farmhouse on the outskirts of capital, unmindful of files piling up and mounting work; the administration comes to a standstill, yet he remains inaccessible to the Governor, Ministers or MLAs.

He is none other than Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao.

During the past six years, KCR has never entered the Secretariat even once. He got his camp office built in Hyderabad and governs the state from there.

Now, he is busy building a grandiose secretariat building pulling down the existing one, at a time the state is reeling under Coronavirus impact. Many of the buildings of the

While people reel under Corona, KCR cares for himself

existing secretariat complex were built with all amenities four or five years ago spending crores of taxpayers money.

The CM wants to etch his name permanently on the annals of history by getting a structure built during his rule like the Nizams.

While pulling down the secretariat buildings, a temple and masjid were also demolished. Even though the historic Osmania Hospital is getting dilapidated, the CM won't see it. Banking on the sabotage of the people by the Congress and on the plank of Telangana self-respect, KCR captured power but never worked to uphold the self-respect of people of Telangana.

Borrowing funds to the tune of lakhs of crores, anarchic rule and his excessive talkativeness made Telangana a laughing stock on the national stage. Like the erstwhile doras of

Now, he is busy building a grandiose secretariat building pulling down the existing one, at a time the state is reeling under Coronavirus impact. Many of the buildings of the existing secretariat complex were built with all amenities four or five years ago spending crores of taxpayers money

the Nizam period, KCR rules from his fortress like a dictator, according to his whims and fancies. There is no meaning to words like democracy, transparency and accountability in his dictionary.

He conceptualised irrigation projects, designed them himself and got them executed according to his likes and dislikes and never bothered submitting accounts. Moreover, he did not submit the DPRs and siphoned off crores. The hallmarks of his administration are highhandedness, corruption and misuse of power.

The coronavirus crisis has brought the inefficient rule of KCR to light. He is repressing voices that question his authority, chase those who protest against him and encourages lumpen forces.

The number of corona positive cases in the country is 7.2 per cent, while it is 21 per cent in Telangana.

Even as Covid patients drop dead, the administration puts the number of cases to be 15,000 sweeping the facts under the carpet.

The Centre has to caution the State government as it



Y SATYA KUMAR
BJP National Secretary

failed to conduct even 2,000 cases per day.

KCR took shelter in his farmhouse as staff of the Pragati Bhavan contracted the virus. While the people are facing problems for want of medical amenities, KCR is both-ered about his own health.

When it comes to wielding

power, he joins hands with communal forces like Owaisi and maintains a tight upper lip even if communal forces resort to atrocities.

That is why the 'Eighth Nizam' KCR opposed the Citizenship Amendment Act, passed to give citizenship to non-Muslims who faced oppression in neighbouring countries. As long as PV Narasimha Rao, former PM, was alive, KCR ignored him and made several rounds to Sonia Gandhi's residence in Delhi. Now he has tightened his belt to safeguard Telangana self-respect in the name of PV Narasimha Rao.

The people of Telangana are not gullible to fall for his argument. KCR might have introduced some schemes for

the benefit of people, but he and his family members and those very close to him amassed several thousands of crores. The funds given by the Centre to the state have been siphoned off for their illegal activities and the State plunged into debts. The rulers are eating from golden plates hoodwinking the people by chanting Golden Telangana.

KCR is promoting the evil culture of dynastic rule, against which the BJP is fighting tooth and nail.

The Congress by virtue of its anarchic and corrupt administration practised politics of dynasty almost disappeared from many states, including Telangana.

The Ayarams and Gayarams remind us those who can stoop to any low just for the sake of power. That is

why the people rejected the Congress even if it was instrumental in awarding statehood to Telangana. Stepping into the shoes of Congress, what did KCR do? He promoted the same culture, same brand of dynastic rule and same kind of corrupt politics. The Change which the people of Telangana desired cannot be seen anywhere in Telangana society. That is why BJP emerged as an alternative to the Congress for the people of Telangana.

KCR has been resorting to repressive tactics as he noticed the fires of discontent being stoked among the people against his administration. He is engineering attacks on the elected people's representatives.

The BJP which captured four LS seats in Telangana is not far way to capture power in Telangana too on the lines of Tripura. The main reason for this is attributed to sincerity of Narendra Modi and his corruption-free and clean administration.



Inflows into Almatti raise hopes of water to Jurala

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Inflows into Jurala Project continued with huge discharge of Krishna river water from Narayanpur dam in Karnataka. The Karnataka government has lifted the crest gates of the dam on Monday to release floodwater into downstream projects. The water is flowing towards Jurala project and will reach it by Tuesday.

On account of heavy rains in Maharashtra and Karnataka, the rivers and streams are in spate. As a result, the flood level in Almatti dam has increased. The inflows into Almatti on Sunday were measured as 69,868 cusecs. The water-level in the project was measured as 98 TMC as against the FRL of 129 TMC. In fact, 78 TMC flowed into the project.

Though there is scope for storing another 31 TMC, inflows into the project are



Water being released from Narayanpur dam in Karnataka

likely to continue for another week. Therefore, the project authorities are releasing 36130 cusecs to downstream projects. Consequently, inflows into Narayanpur dam have increased.

The authorities lifted two gates of Narayanpur on Sunday to discharge 11,240 cusecs to downstream pro-

jects. The discharge has been increased to 26,000 cusecs by evening. The discharged water will reach Jurala project via Gugal and Girijapur barrages in Karnataka.

Jurala has been receiving 4,140 cusecs of inflows from local catchment areas. The water-level in Narayanpur is measured as 8.10 TMC as

against the storage capacity of 9.66 TMC.

In all, 1,445 cusecs are being pumped into Nettempadu and Bima from Jurala project. Since the inflows are likely to increase by Tuesday in the project the officials are making arrangements for the discharge from Jurala to Srisailem project.

Srisailem project has been receiving inflows of 2,557 cusecs. The water stored in the project was measured as 37.25 TMC against the storage capacity of 215 TMC. The Nagarjunasagar project receives inflows of 1,202 cusecs.

Against the storage capacity of 312 TMC, the water stored in it is measured as 168.35 TMC. Inflows into SRSP project in Godavari river basin are put at 11,102 cusecs. The water stored in the project is put at 33.60 TMC as against the total capacity of 90 TMC.

Rajasthan CLP backs Ashok Gehlot

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The Congress Legislature Party expresses full faith and confidence in the leadership of party president Sonia Gandhi and leader Rahul Gandhi. This meeting unanimously supports the Congress government led by Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, the resolution said.

It said the CLP condemns all undemocratic wrongful acts for weakening the Congress Party and the state government. If any of the Congress office-bearers or member of the CLP directly or indirectly performs acts against the government and party or is involved in such a conspiracy, then strong disciplinary action be taken against him, said the resolution.

GHMC data shows under-reporting of...

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Even if these are deleted, there is a difference of 906 cases. The director of public health, during a press meet about 10 days ago, said, "We suspect the test results could have been contaminated and that's why we held back those results, which will be studied in detail by an expert committee and released". The numbers on GHMC website reveal that either the corporation is uninformed about the private hospital test results, or there is erroneous reporting on part of Health department. On the other hand, GHMC in itself has created new zone name GHMC, new circle named GHMC and a new ward named GHMC. Among the six GHMC zones in the city, Khairatabad has the most number of infections, with 4,901 cases. It is closely followed by Secunderabad with 4,435 cases and Charminar with 4,170 cases. However, apart from six zones, there is one new zone — namely 'GHMC'. In this unlisted category there are as many as 5,019 cases. Likewise,

Nzb hospital head resigns after 4 deaths

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While continuing in his role as Professor, Nageshwar Rao sent his resignation letter to DME expressing his inability in continuing as superintendent. The DME on Saturday directed the superintendent to file criminal cases against the staff of mortuary for allowing the body to be taken away in the auto-rickshaw, pictures of which went viral later.

Amberpet is the most infected circle in the city with 1,550 cases.

Amberpet circle is followed by Karwan with 1,146 cases, Malakpet with 1,124 cases and Goshamahal with 1,112 cases. As per GHMC Commissioner DS Lokesh Kumar: "This data is updated daily. Residential and colony welfare associations are requested to access the information and cooperate in controlling the spread of Covid-19."

Why schools taking online classes...

Continued from Page 1

Parents have alleged that private schools were fleecing them by charging exorbitant fees despite the Telangana government issuing instructions to all private schools to refrain from holding online classes till July 31.

On its part, school managements contended that they are conducting online classes to save the academic year. The advocate-general informed the court that the state government had not given any permission to private schools to conduct online classes.

He said that some private schools were conducting online classes as per the norms stipulated by Centre and CBSE.

The A-G informed the court that the state government would come with its policy on online classes in a week.

The AG also told the court that the new academic year (2020-21) for schools will not begin till July 31.

Doctor drives tractor to ferry Covid victim's body

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

At a time when one comes across news reports and visuals of inhuman disposal of bodies of Covid-19 patients, a doctor in Peddapalli has set an example for others by driving a tractor to shift a Coronavirus victim's body for burial. Dr Sriram of government-run hospital in Peddapalli came forward to drive the tractor to shift the body from the hospital on Sunday since the driver of a Peddapalli Municipality's vehicle did not report for duty for some reason.

Dr Sriram offered to drive the tractor since the shifting of the body was getting delayed, much to the relief of the victim's family. Wearing a Personal Protection Equipment kit, the doctor later ferried the body for disposal, earning praise from one and all. The



Dr Sriram driving the tractor to shift the body from the hospital

victim had died at the district hospital at Peddapalli on Sunday. Area people said the doctor was not only performing his duties diligently on the frontline despite all the risks involved but also going out of the way to help the patients and families.

"There is fear and lack of knowledge about the disease and its spread. I just wanted to set an example and show that there is nothing to fear. When handled with proper PPE, the virus spread can be arrested. The body was also disinfected before it was packed in the

body bag. I drove the body to the burial ground so that our staff will also take it up without fear if such a situation arises even in my absence," Dr Sriram said.

Finance Minister T. Harish Rao tweeted his praise: "Dr Sriram garu. Heartfelt wishes. You have proved the humanity is still alive. You also made us experience God in humans. You are an inspiration to all those who are fighting this battle against Corona."

In neighbouring Andhra Pradesh, at least three incidents in two weeks have been reported in which municipal authorities used earthmovers to shift and dump the bodies of COVID-19 victims into burial pits. The videos of inhuman handling of the bodies had triggered public outrage. In one incident, the government had suspended six officials.

HC extends stay on Secrat demolition

Continued from Page 1

The court directed him to submit the same in a sealed cover and asked the petitioners to submit objections, if any, to the government's counter affidavit on Tuesday.

The court on July 10 had temporarily stayed the demolition work till July 13. It passed the orders on the petition filed by Professor P.L. Vishweshwar Rao, Convener Telangana Democratic Forum and Vice President of Telangana Jana Samithi.

The court had asked the government to place before it all the requisite permissions taken from the authorities concerned for demolition work.

The petitioner complained that the demolition of 10 blocks of the Secretariat building occupying 10 lakh square feet was without following the procedure laid down under the Demolition and Construction Rules.

He said in the existing COVID-19 situation the demolition impacts and aggravates the respiratory problems of the people living in the surroundings of the building.

The government started demolition of existing buildings of old secretariat on July 7.

Can we blame Modi for India's Corona status? asks KTR

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Doctors have been treating patients risking their lives. He thanked the doctors for their valiant efforts.

The new state of Telangana is successful in achieving five medical colleges, about 1000 beds are available in the colleges.

The KCR kit promoted institutional deliveries in government hospitals and also brought down the mother and child mortality rate. Under Kanti Velugu scheme, crores of people were screened in villages for eye ailments.

The confidence among people in medicare available in government hospitals should be improved, he said.

The private hospitals are apprehensive to offer treatment to Corona patients, he said adding that the government

medical officers have been admitting Corona patients giving no room for any fear.

At a time even family members are apprehensive to go near the Corona virus patients, the doctors are risking their lives and offering treatment, he said.

He exhorted the journalists to not to blow minor lapses out of proportions to strike fear in hearts of people.

It is not proper on the part of people to treat Corona positive patients as outcasts. The virus does not discriminate between the rich and poor. Anybody can contract the virus, he said advising the people to take precautions and go ahead about their business.

He asked the Opposition to not to highlight the mere 2 per cent death rate due to the Corona virus to undermine the achievement of 98 per cent of

the recovery rate.

He said medicines manufactured in India are useful to whole world and asked the opposition against creating unnecessary apprehensions among people on pharma industry.

If Opposition tenders constructive advice to the government, the government would have no objection to receive them, he said cautioning the Opposition against hurting the morale of the medical officers with their unnecessary criticism.

Earlier Eatala Rajender said that efforts would be made to build 1000-bed hospital in Mahabubnagar under the leadership of KTR.

Earlier, for every minor treatment one has to go to Hyderabad for treatment. Now the treatment is available in district headquarters itself.

HYDERABAD BULLION RATES	
GOLD	
₹ 51,240 (10 gm)	
₹ 30	▲
SILVER	
₹ 52,210 (1kg)	
₹ 260	▲

CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG	
Dressed/With Skin	₹164
Without Skin	₹186
Broiler at Farm	₹113

EGG RATES ₹/100	
HYDERABAD	325
VIJAYAWADA	354
VISAKHAPATNAM	349
RETAIL PRICE (IN HYDERABAD)	₹3.40

TTD wants Centre to...

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The currency notes in Rs 500 and Rs 1,000 denominations were banned as part of demonetisation by the NDA government on December 8, 2016. "Despite the ban, several devotees continued to drop these old currency notes in the Hundi of the temple, which could not be exchanged with the banks subsequently," Subba Reddy said. He requested Sitaraman to take the initiative and exchange

Bonalu oracle predicts 'hard days'...

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Through the oracle, the deity asked the people to exercise more caution in the days to come.

The result of bad karma should be suffered by doers of the karma, she said.

"Even if she wants to protect the people from the bad karma, the people themselves are spoiling their chances," the deity said through the oracle.

However, the deity said that she is there to protect the people provided "saka" and jagery from each and every

house should reach her by way of offerings.

After offering "saka" for five weeks with devotion and dedication, the people were asked to perform yagna. She assured the people to protect them if they worship her with devotion. The deity said that she was not at all happy with this year's celebrations.

Swanalata said that the Goddess would protect all and fight the coronavirus. However, she reminded the people that days to come would be very hard.

She asked people to per-

form abhishekam to Goddess Ganga and offer bonams to the deity. When asked about when the ongoing crisis due to the pandemic, she replied that it could possibly come to an end. Gatam procession — a custom that has been adopted in the recent times — of caparisoned elephant, which would be brought from Nehru Zoological Park, was not organised this year.

When temple priest broke down requesting her to protect the people from the virus, she said she was not at all happy. When asked what

should be done to seeking the blessings of the Goddess to rescue the people from the virus, Swarna Latha said the people should perform puja for five weeks and offer 'saka' containing pure water in a bowl decorated with vermilion and turmeric with neem leaves.

To another question on irrigation projects constructed by Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao to meet the irrigation requirements of the people in the State, she asked to perform 'yagnas' for the Goddess 'Ganga Matha'.

CRIME CORNER

Jilted man gets 10-yr RI for attempting to murder 16-yr-old girl

HYDERABAD: A local court on Monday sentenced a 19-year-old man to 10-years rigorous imprisonment (RI) for attempting to murder a teenage girl student in February 2019 for spurning his advances. First Additional Metropolitan Sessions Judge Suneetha Kunchala, found the man, a Degree student, guilty under IPC section 307. The court further sentenced him to 5-years RI for the offence under relevant sections of Arms Act, Additional Public Prosecutor K Prapat Reddy said. The court also imposed a total fine of Rs 15,000. According to the prosecution, the 16-year-old girl's mother had complained to police in January 2019 that the man, who stays in their locality, had been harassing her daughter for over one year and when she ignored him, threatened he would kill her. Following the complaint, he was counselled by police but even after that he continued to observe the girl's movements. According to the prosecution on February 6, 2019, he attacked her with a knife, saying he would kill her since she was ignoring him. The girl with severe injuries on her head, neck and hands was rushed to a nearby hospital and the man was later arrested.

3 burglars including 2 juveniles arrested

HYDERABAD: The Humayun Nagar Police on Monday, arrested a 27-year-old man and two boy juveniles who are involved in burglary and automobile thefts and recovered stolen property worth Rs 2,00,000 from their possession. The arrested persons have been identified as Mohd Dastagir, 27, a labourer by profession residing at Atzal Sagar in Mallepally and two juvenile boys. According to the police, Dastagir, planned to target houses which were locked after non-local people left to their native places. He explained his plan to his friends who joined in and the three decided to steal. The three targeted individual houses which are locked and enter the houses by breaking the locks. They also steal automobiles which are parked outside during the night. Officials recovered an auto, two motorcycles and other tools used in the commission of the offence.

Two arrested for kidnapping toddler

HYDERABAD: The Saifabad Police on Monday, rescued a toddler from the kidnappers who kidnapped the girl while she was sleeping along with her mother in front of Vardhaman Bank at AC Guards in Saifabad on July 10. The arrested persons have been identified as Mohd Firdous, 32, and Syed Shareef, 35, both auto drivers by profession. Two others involved in this case, identified as Sameena and Rizwana, are absconding. According to the police, Firdous, Shareef, Sameena and Rizwana, used to meet to consume alcohol from the money that Sameena and Rizwana earned through begging. They hatched a plan to kidnap a baby girl, hoping that passersby will show some pity and give more alms. They noticed the mother along with the child, sleeping on the pavement in Saifabad and kidnapped the child on July 10. The Police registered a kidnap case. They verified CCTV footage and by utilising technical tools in investigation, reached Kishanbagh and rescued the kidnapped child from the house of Mohd Abdul Firdous. Firdous and his associate Syed Shareef were arrested.

Ganesh idol makers at wits end amid Corona outbreak

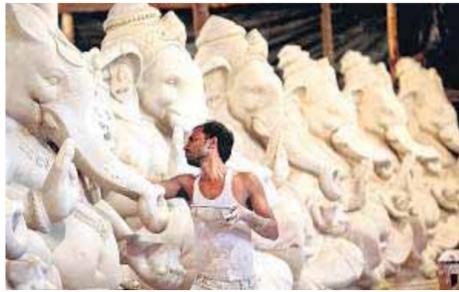
PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Coronavirus has cast its shadow on Ganesh Chaturthi celebrations. Though it is not clear on how many would celebrate the event in the current Covid-19 situation, the virus has affected the manufacturing of Ganesh idols business. By this time, the making of the idols should have been under way had there been no Coronavirus pandemic.

Under the prevailing situation, even makers of the idols are apprehensive whether the Ganesh pandals will be installed in all streets as was done last year. The demand for Ganesh idols will nose-dive this year due to the Coronavirus.

Artisans from far-flung states like Rajasthan, Maharashtra and Gujarat arrive here to make Ganesh idols. They begin making of idols from Holy itself. This year, the Ganesh Chaturthi falls on Aug 22. The makers did not embark on making of the idols yet.

Fearing that there would be no takers for the idols if made



An artist carves Ganesh idols for the Ganesh Chaturthi festival

on a large scale, they say they will make only 200 or 300 idols unlike last year when thousands of idols were made.

The artisans have set up their roadside campus in Miyapur, Bachupally, Hyderabad, Kukatpally, Pathancheru and Hayatnagar areas. Of the 300 families that migrated here, 250 families returned to their native states. The prices of idols, compared to prices in the last year would be slashed by 40 to 50 per cent.

Idols with heights between 1 and 3-feet are being sold for

prices between Rs 250 and Rs 1,000, while idols with height from 5-feet to 12-feet would cost between Rs 6,000 and Rs 12,000 each, they said.

Annually, they borrow funds, make idols and sell them and with the sales proceeds the loans are cleared. They support their families for the next one year with the surplus money left with them, say Rajasthan artisans.

Expressing apprehensions over borrowing funds to make idols, the makers say that the raw material transport from

other states has come down drastically.

The Rajasthani artisan families stationed at Khammam make the idols and send them to Mahabubabad, Suryapet and Krishna districts.

According to Motilal, an artisan from Rajasthan, the transport of raw material from other states to Hyderabad has been affected due to the virus. Therefore, the artisans are making idols of heights between 2 and 3 feet. Supporting their families has become very difficult under the existing situation. He said that they should pay a lease of Rs 3 lakh to tents to run workshops to make the idols.

An artisan Baburam Saras at Khammam said that he migrated to Khammam 20 years ago for livelihood. He said that they should pay a lease of Rs 40,000 per annum for the place they live. The annual turnover of business was put at Rs 10 lakh. After deducting all expenses and repayment of loan, he said that he used to have surplus left with him. He urged the government to come to their rescue.

Don't stigmatise Covid patients, says a survivor

NAVEENA GHANATE ■ HYDERABAD

People shouldn't stigmatise patients infected with Coronavirus, says Dr Sindhuja SB, who contracted the Coronavirus while attending patients.

The resident doctor said, "When I came to my own hostel after completing my isolation, people weren't even coming inside my room. I felt bad, though I crossed the infected period, I felt that people weren't being friendly to me. I wasn't confident enough to go and get food from the mess. Once a person has crossed their infective period, they are good enough to talk to others and behave like normal humans."

Hailing from Madurai, Tamil Nadu, Sindhuja who is pursuing her MS in ENT at MGM Warangal said, "My



parents were initially scared but they understood the situation as they are medical professionals. I should say that my parents and friends kept me company through phone. We should keep ourselves engaged as boredom is something that strikes in iso-

lation and it is difficult inside four walls for too long."

Sindhuja was symptomatic and says she could have been a spreader. "I was going to hospital initially, even though I had masks and everything, maybe I could have infected. My initial symptoms were body pains followed by fever and sore throat. I lost my sense of smell and taste. It is only after one week, my symptoms disappeared later."

Sindhuja during her isolation was taking antibiotics and antipyretics, apart from HCQ. She just completed her 21 days of isolation. She says, "You can read, watch and I had lot of time to research about things that I have been postponing from many days."



Seven nabbed for gambling, Rs 72k seized

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Chandrayangutta Police conducted a raid at Kumarwadi area and arrested seven persons for gambling on Monday.

The arrested persons have been identified as Hafeez Khan, 34, Mirza Akram Baig, 33, Matin Pasha, 31, Shaik Fareed, 42, Mohd Mujeeb, 30, Mohd Wajid, 32 and Shaik Ali, 32. Officials booked a case under the Gaming Act and seized Rs 72,000 cash from the accused persons. According to the police, based on a tip off, a raid was conducted at a residence in Kumarwadi area under Chandrayangutta Police station limits on Monday. The accused persons were found gambling and playing a card game.

Lecturers to be trained on digital platforms and tools

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Minister of Education of Telangana Sabitha Indra Reddy will be inaugurating a 15-day training programme, Digital Disha, for the lecturers of government junior college.

The Telangana State Board of Intermediate Education (TSBIE) planned to start the sessions on July 14, from 3 pm through online mode.

With the help of an NGO, Nirmaan, and in collaboration with Cognizant Technology Solution Ltd, and Adobe System India Private Limited the programme will help improve the lecturers' skills in developing and delivering high-quality online course material and classes using different software, graphic and animation tools. About 5,300



lecturers of Government colleges from the state, organised in 12 batches, will participate in the programme.

The programme will contain six hours of online training for two days. The teachers will learn how to teach and develop content using Adobe

Creative Cloud. The lecturers who are being trained will subsequently work on assignments and submit them on the 12th day of training. After the projects are reviewed by Cognizant, the Graduation day will be held on the 15th day.

Nilofer staff join Gandhi nurses strike

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

While the strike by outsourcing nurses at Gandhi Hospital entered into fourth day, on Monday, nurses at Nilofur Hospital also staged a protest demanding equal pay.

The representatives on Sunday met Health Minister Eatala Rajender who assured a salary hike, the nurses continued the protest as they were not convinced by the words of Health Minister. The nurses who were earning 15,000 were offered increment of Rs 25,000 and those in Covid-19 wards were assured Rs 300 incentive.

A nurse said, "They should count our experience and pay us Rs 34,000. We need job security as we are putting our lives at risk. We urged the government to make our jobs permanent."

While 220 nurses of Gandhi are protesting, 107 outsourcing staff at Nilofur Hospital, including 29 staff nurses, 18 paramedical staff, and 60 Class IV employees protested on Monday.

Senior doctors irked by delay in pay hike

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Senior doctors in Telangana threatened to stage a strike due to the inordinate delay in implementation of University Grants Commission (UGC) revised pay scales of 2016 that is pending for four years now.

Telangana Government Doctors' Association (TGDA) said that the agitation will start in Gandhi Hospital and then other hospitals in Telangana will join.

TGDA state president Dr Pallam Praveen said, "Our PRC is pending since 2016 and we have adopted UGC scales in 2009. Our PRC is set for every 10 years and last PRC was in 2006 and now it should be in 2016. Central government employees are getting it since 2018, UGC lecturers are getting it since 2019 June. But we are waiting for the state government to act. We

demand immediate implementation of UGC PRC with arrears from 2016 January."

The implementation of revised salaries will benefit around 6,000 senior doctors in Telangana.

He said, during such crisis situation, we don't want to agitate but the file reached CMO one month back.

He added, "If we don't get out legitimate right this week, we planned for an agitation. We are demanding to add our arrears in GFP in installments or one time. It's not a financial burden to government. We understand that CM is not against doctors, but we don't understand the reason for this delay."

Doctors point that what they draw as salaries was decided about 14 years ago. It may be mentioned here that pay revision of 2006 was implemented in 2009 by Late YS Rajashekar Reddy after doctors staged a 47-day protest.



Police officials disinfect their vehicles on Monday

Ensuring safety of frontline warriors

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Cyberabad Police vehicular disinfection drive inaugurated on Monday at Cyberabad CP Office by DCP Traffic SM Vijay Kumar, IPS. "With the instructions of Cyberabad Commissioner Of Police VC Sajjanar, the officials sanitised vehicles with the help of private agency, said DCP Traffic SM Vijay Kumar.

In this drive Cyberabad Police sanitised all kinds of police vehicles to arrest the

infection of Coronavirus. The police sanitised 611 vehicles and all other remaining 846 vehicles will be sanitised till July 17. Total 1,457 vehicles will be sanitised in Cyberabad.

ADCP Admin Lavanya NJP said with the rising cases of Covid-19, the need to keep citizens safe is of paramount importance. Alongside essential workers, the police force is one of the few groups that are both deployed on the front lines and at high risk for infection currently she added.

8 held with 340 kg of cannabis

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Officials of the West Zone team of the Commissioner's Task Force, apprehended eight persons in possession of 340 kilograms of marijuana and seized property worth Rs 17,00,000 on Monday.

The arrested persons have been identified as Gopi Singh, 29, Rajendra Babbruvan Pawar, 38, Daulath Singh, 38, Mahesh Malpani, 45, Bheem Singh, 30, D Ritesh Singh, 21, Nikhil Singh, 26 and Vasudev Singh, 26.

According to the police, Gopi Singh engaged Rajendra Babbruvan Pawar, an auto driver to go to bring stash to Hyderabad. On June 27, they brought the banned narcotic to Hyderabad and stored it in a godown.

On Monday, Gopi along with his friends came to Mallepally to discuss about selling ganja, when the Task Force team raided the place and apprehended them.

Samparc to aid in monitoring Corona patients in quarantine

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Defence equipment maker organisation DRDO and software professionals industry body Telangana Information Technology Association (TITA) have joined hands to implement an automated management of patient's software that the former has designed.

The pilot for the implementation will likely begin shortly in any district. Both the organisations have entered into an agreement on this online.

Accordingly, DRDO has devised Samparc - smart automated management of patients and risks for Covid-19, intelligent software for enforcement of quarantine or isolation.

While breaking the chain is a must to contain the spread, there have been some cases of those in quarantine or isolation moving out in public. This leads to additional workload for law enforcement and health



officials to continuously monitor these individuals who are in quarantine or isolation.

The Samparc created by DRDO is a software tool that can home be a handy tool for law enforcement and health officials. This would enable intelligent automated tracking of those in quarantine or isolation. It will also generate alerts if there are violations or willful suppression of movement details. This is expected to reduce the tracking work-

load of law enforcement or health officials.

This can be used for quarantine or isolation monitoring only and not for contact tracing. It relies on the information provided by the police and health officials. The rollout of the solution involves no cost to the patient and authority needs to position only a computer and the software is based on a combination of open source software and DRDO developed software.

Two held with 40 oxygen cylinders

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The sleuths of the Commissioner's Task Force, North Zone Team raided a stationery shop at Musheerabad and apprehended two persons who were illegally procuring and selling oxygen cylinders at high prices. Officials seized 40 oxygen cylinders from their possession.

The arrested persons have been identified as Nisar Ahmed, 42, the owner of 'Zuzu Kids Zone and Stationery supplier' at Musheerabad and Nulu Venkata Subba Rao, 51, a supervisor in Srinidhi Air products, Jeedimetla.

Subba Rao purchased empty cylinders from agents, filled it with oxygen and supplied it to Ahmed to sell it at his shop. Based on a tip off, officials conducted a raid on the shop and apprehended the two accused persons.

UoH researchers identify cause for platelet reduction in dengue

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Researchers from the University of Hyderabad (UoH) have identified a possible cause for platelet reduction in Dengue patients.

According to researchers, the ~11 kb size gnome (RNA) genome of the dengue virus encodes three structural and seven non-structural (NS) proteins along with two un-translated regions, one each on both ends. Amongst them, dengue protease (NS3), a non-structural protein, plays a pivotal role in polyprotein processing and virus multiplication. Using in-silico analysis, a



Researchers from the University of Hyderabad

group of researchers from the UoH led by Dr. M. Venkata Ramana and Prof. Naresh Babu Sepuri showed that Non-Structural protein-3 (NS3)

enters the host mitochondrial matrix and cleaves an important matrix protein (GrpEL1) essential for major functions of the mitochondria.

Cops crack down on sand mafia, 19 held

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Officials of the Special Operations Team (SOT) Malkajgiri zone along with the Jawaharnagar Police conducted raids on Sunday at Thimmaipally village and apprehended 19 persons illegally excavating gravel/red soil in government land and transporting to the traders and earning money illegally in the limits of Jawaharnagar police station of Rachakonda Commissionerate.

According to the police, Tirupathi Yadav, a resident of Thimmaipally village under Keesara police station limits is the main organiser of the red soil mafia gang operating in Keesara and Jawaharnagar. He



Officials of the SOT arrest 19 persons illegally excavating red soil in government land

along with tipper lorry owners and drivers of Jawaharnagar and Keesara area formed into a mafia gang of red soil and are trespassing in the late night hours into the government lands in the outskirts of Jawaharnagar, Keesara and

commit theft of red soil from the government lands. They were selling the same to traders at higher price at a rate of one ton for Rs 1,000 and one lorry load (approximately 20 tons) for Rs 20,000. They complete the work before 5 AM and

leave the area.

Thirupathi Yadav along with his associates are indulging in this illegal red soil trading business since more than six months. They are carrying out this illegal activity mostly on Sundays and public holidays.

Based on a tip off, the SOT Malkajgiri team ambushed them on Sunday when tipper lorries and excavators came and began digging the sand gravel and red soil. Thirupathi Yadav along with 18 lorry owners and drivers were apprehended. 13 tipper lorries and one Hitachi excavator were seized from the scene and handed over to Jawaharnagar police station along with the seized vehicles for taking further necessary action.

The Jawaharnagar police registered a case and arrested all the 19 members and seized 13 tipper lorries and one Hitachi excavator, mobile phones and are being produced before the court for judicial remand.

Political atmosphere heats up in state

K VENKATESHWARLU
HYDERABAD

In the ongoing political war over the testing modalities in Telangana, the BJP is leaving no stone unturned and is firing salvos against the TRS government. Since the past few days, the ruling TRS has been facing flak from the BJP over the tests being conducted and the information that is being released about the status of COVID-19 in the state.

Especially Karimnagar MP and BJP state unit president Bandi Sanjay Kumar is making most of the opportunity since he took charge as the chief of the party in the state. Since taking charge, the Karimnagar MP launched a scathing attack on the ruling TRS. His aggressive criticism against Chief Minister

K Chandrasekhar Rao attracted even BJP national general secretary Ram Madhav. In recent meeting, Ram Madhav showered praises on Bandi Sanjay for leading the party from the front.

Besides Bandi Sanjay, Nizamabad MP D Arvind and Adilabad MP Soyam Bapurao are also leaving no stone unturned in criticising the ruling party. Recently, BJP MP from Secunderabad and Union Minister of State for Home Affairs G Kishan Reddy also took pot-shots at the TRS gov-

TRS has been facing flak from the BJP over the tests being conducted and the information that is being released about the status of COVID-19 in the state



ernment over the help extended by the Centre to the state.

On the other hand, Soyam Bapurao is waging fight in two folds -- one for the sake of his own community people Adivasis and the other against the TRS government. Bapurao's fight for Adivasis is yielding positive results in North Telangana, especially in erstwhile Adilabad district. Meanwhile, Nizamabad MP Arvind is

ject itself as an alternative party in the state. Even Telangana BJP chief had raised the Pothireddy issue by addressing a letter to the Centre.

BJP is severely criticising the government for not conducting adequate tests in the state. On Sunday, Union Minister of State for Home Affairs G Kishan Reddy surprised his opponents by visiting Gandhi Hospital. "As coronavirus cases in Hyderabad city are increasing, I have been visiting different COVID-19 centers across the city, meeting doctors there, patients, and paramedical staff. I am trying to build confidence among them. I request the Telangana government to increase the number of coronavirus centers in the city," he said during his visit to the hospital.

Vegetable prices on the rise in city due to low imports

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

At a time when the Coronavirus is ruling the roost in the state, the prices of vegetables are on the rise. In fact, the prices were held under check during the lockdown period. As vegetable imports to the city from the rest of the state and other states diminished, the prices of vegetables are escalating. As majority of the farmers practice regulated agriculture, the area under vegetable crops reduced in many districts. The traders say that the imports of vegetables to the city have come down by half.

Vegetables such as tomatoes, beans, cluster beans, lady finger, green chillies and brinjal became dearer in the market. Tomatoes, which were sold at Rs 10 a kg during lockdown, now is being sold at Rs 60 a kg. Capsicum is being sold



between Rs 60 and 80 a kg because of reduced imports from Karnataka. Beans are being sold between Rs 50 and 60 a kg, while cluster beans is being sold at Rs 50 a kg.

Brinjals are being sold between Rs 30 and Rs 40 a kg, while green chillies are being sold at Rs 60 a kg, priced Rs 20 more per kg than the price it

was sold three weeks ago. The traders say that the prices will rule in this fashion for the next two months. As Telangana state receives vegetables from other places, slowing down of supply of vegetables has led to an increase in prices. However, some link the soaring prices of vegetables to fear of re-imposition of lockdown.

Police backing TRS leaders, alleges Bandi

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana BJP chief Bandi Sanjay Kumar on Monday alleged that the TRS leaders are passing time under the guard of police. The TRS leaders will not roam among the people as the BJP will intensify the movement, he said alleging that the police extended help to TRS leaders to attack BJP office and MP Arvind and other BJP leaders.



G Narendra Yadav

He demanded that action would be initiated against the police officials who failed to provide security to BJP office and MP Arvind. He asked the police, who provided security to TRS MLAs and Ministers with the support of people. It may be recalled that the BJP had taken up protest programmes on Monday against attacks on MP Arvind and on Warangal BJP office.

One more Congress leader dies of Covid-19 in Hyd

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Yet another leader of the opposition Congress party in Telangana died of Coronavirus on Monday. Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) secretary G Narendra Yadav succumbed to the virus at a private hospital in Hyderabad, where he was admitted a few days ago. Yadav had recently participated in various programmes to distribute aid among poor hit hard by the lockdown.

Yadav's family members were tested for Covid-19. As the leader had participated in the party programmes held at party headquarters Gandhi Bhavan in recent days, efforts were on to trace those who had come in contact with him. "It is shocking and saddening that one of our active senior leaders Narendra Yadav died



G Narendra Yadav

due to Covid-19. May his soul rest in peace and condolences to his family and friends... His death is a great loss to the party," tweeted party spokesman Dr Sravan Dasoju.

Yadav is the second party leader to die of Covid-19 in a week. Earlier, former chairman of minority cell of party in undivided Andhra Pradesh,

Mohammed Sirajuddin succumbed to the virus. He died while undergoing treatment for Covid-19 at a private hospital in Hyderabad on July 6. His wife and brother had also tested positive for the virus. Covid-19 had earlier claimed the life of a leader of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP). Bhasker Mudiraj, party president of Mettuguda division in Hyderabad, succumbed to the infection at government-run Fever hospital.

His family had alleged that he was taken to many private hospitals but they refused to admit him as his test reports were awaited. Home Minister Mohammed Mahmood Ali, Deputy Speaker of Telangana Assembly Padma Rao and three other legislators of ruling TRS had recently tested positive for Covid-19. All of them have recovered.

VH demands President's Rule in state

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Congress senior leader V Hanumantha Rao on Monday demanded the Centre to impose President's rule in Telangana as the state government. He alleged that the state government has totally failed to contain the spread of Coronavirus. "With each passing day, deaths due to Corona are increasing in the state. The government failed to provide ventilators and oxygen to Corona patients. The TRS government left the public health to the wind," he alleged. KCR is trying to sidetrack Corona problem and deaths in the name of Haritha Haram, he said.

Will expose TRS leaders, says Arvind

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BJP MP from Nizamabad D Arvind made it clear that he will stick to his remarks made against Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao and other TRS leaders. "I will expose the TRS leaders who encroached lands in Warangal. I will soon make the details public. The people would give befitting reply to the TRS MLAs and party in Warangal in the coming days," he said.



D Arvind

Arvind alleged that KCR is behaving against the beliefs of Hindus. Reacting to the question raised by the TRS leaders that what work Nizamabad

MP had in Warangal, Arvind said that he will roam anywhere across the country.

He made it clear that he will visit Warangal once again and see as to what TRS leaders will do. Arvind alleged that the Municipal Minister KT Rama Rao was speaking lies on prevailed Corona situation in the state. He said that the state government totally failed in containing the spread of virus. On the other hand, Arvind addressed a letter to Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar urging the latter to provide quarantine facility to 422 Telangana people coming from Dubai on July 15 or 16.

'Take up plantation along Mumbai-Hyd highway'

PNS ■ SANGAREDDY

The state government is giving utmost priority to improve green cover in the State, said Siddipet MLA and Finance Minister T Harish Rao. He was speaking at a review meeting with the officials National Highway Authorities of India (NHAI). On the occasion, the Minister reviewed the progress of various works undertaken on NH-65 and NH-44.



road median. He suggested that the Forest officials, NHAI officials and the contractor work in coordination to take up the plantation and protect the saplings.

Asking the officials to fast-track the construction of drains at Malkapur and Peddapur

Minister Harish Rao asked the officials to ensure spending one per cent of project budget on taking up plantation along National Highways

near Sangareddy, the Minister has said that the water is getting stagnated at Malkapur whenever the area witnesses rain causing a great inconvenience to road users. He asked them to build an underpass at Nizampur Crossroad near Sadhasivpet. Following the complaint of Andole MLA,

Chanti Kranthi Kiran, Harish Rao instructed the concessionaire to permit the Kamkole villagers, where the toll gate was there on NH-65, to allow the villagers travel without any toll.

The MLA complained that the toll staff were creating lot of issues to villagers of Kamkole though they were eligible for free travel. The Minister said that the concessionaire must issue passes to the people living in a 20-km radius to toll gate to collect just 50 per cent of toll by following the guidelines. He also asked them charge only 50 per cent of toll from all the vehicles, bearing Sangareddy district registration number excluding vehicles with National permit.

TechM brings back 210 stranded staff from US

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Tech Mahindra has facilitated return of over 210 of its employees and their dependents stranded in the United States due to COVID-19 induced lockdown, the IT giant said on Monday.

A special chartered flight carrying them took off on Monday from Dallas/Fort Worth International Airport and will land here on Tuesday, it said in a release. Ensuring the well-being and safety of our entire employee, customer and partner ecosystem is critical in the collective fight against this global pandemic. "Bringing our US-



based associates and their dependents back home conveys our commitment towards our core values of ensuring employees safety first, and reiterates Tech Mahindras ability to be

adaptable and agile in keeping mission-critical systems on for global clients from anywhere in the world, even during times of crisis," Tech Mahindra MD&CEO CP Gurnani said.

BJP demands action against CM, CS

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana State BJP on Monday demanded a criminal case against Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao and state Chief Secretary holding the duo responsible for demolishing Nalla Pochamma temple inside Secretariat.

MLC A Ramachander Rao, accompanied by state party official spokesperson N V Subhash and city party general secretary Aluri Ramakrishna lodged a complaint with Saifabad Police demanding action against the Chief Minister and Chief Secretary for hurting sentiments of majority people by demolishing the religious structure.

It was unfortunate to say on the part of Chief Minister that temple was damaged when debris fell down on the structure during demolition work, BJP MLC said adding that Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao expressed concern on seeing public outrage who opposed demolition of Hindu temple. The Chief Minister should have taken precautions to protect the sentiments of people when demolition work was going on near the temple premises. But he never bothered about sentiments of people and ordered dismantling of buildings in mid-night itself, he said.



BHEL WOMAN OFFICER SUICIDE

SC notice to TS govt on plea for CBI probe

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday asked Telangana government and others to respond to a plea seeking transfer of probe from the state police to the CBI in a case of alleged suicide by a woman officer of BHEL due to purported harassment at her workplace. A bench of Justices AM Khanwilkar and Sanjiv Khanna issued notices to the state, Telangana Police and others seeking their replies on the petition filed by the mother of the 33-year-old victim.

tured' by a superior officer and some other office colleagues.

It claimed that state police has not yet arrested the accused and no charge sheet has been filed despite lapse of over eight months. It has sought the top court's direction to BHEL to "immediately initiate appropriate enquiry under applicable departmental rules and also under the provisions of the Sexual Harassment of Women at Workplace (Prevention, Prohibition and Redressal) Act, 2013" against the accused persons regarding the victim's death in a time bound manner and under the court's supervision.

"There is another shocking attempt of Telangana Police to blame the unfortunate suicide of deceased to her alleged mental illness despite the fact that her employer BHEL has categorically deposed that no sign of any mental illness was shown by her at her workplace," the plea alleged.

Cong dares HM to visit demolition site in Secretariat

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Congress party on Monday strongly condemned the statement of Home Minister Mahmood Ali where in he targeted opposition parties over their protest against demolition of two mosques and a temple in the Secretariat complex.

Hyderabad Congress Minorities Department chairman Sameer Waliullah, TPCC spokesperson Syed Nizamuddin and TPCC General Secretary SK Afzaluddin issued a joint statement on Monday ridiculing the assurance being given by the

Home Minister that the State Government would construct a new mosque and temple along with the new Secretariat. "Everyone in Telangana knows that Mahmood Ali is a toothless tiger. He is a dummy minister and a rubber stamp who has no powers even to appoint or suspend a Home Guard. He has no entry in the Pragathi Bhavan and is not allowed to sit along with Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao during his press conferences. Therefore, he should not give assurances on behalf of Chief Minister as he has no such powers," the Congress leaders said in their statement.



The Congress leaders said that the Home Minister had no powers to enter the Secretariat where two mosques and a temple were demolished. "If Mahmood Ali has genuine powers, then let him visit the Secretariat and give assurance

of re-construction by standing in front of the demolished mosque site. They should also show to the people the extent of damage caused to the mosque and temple due to demolition of other structures. Mahmood Ali's assurance is totally vague and dummy and he is only trying to draw CM KCR's attention by targeting opposition parties," they said.

They said that the Home Minister was habitual of giving false assurances. They asked Mahmood Ali to first explain as to why the 200-year-old Ek Khana Masjid at Amberpet, which was demolished by the GHMC for road expansion,

was not re-constructed even after one year.

The Congress leaders also condemned Mahmood Ali for targeting Congress senior leader and former minister Mohammed Ali Shabbir on the issue. They pointed out that one of the mosques which was demolished by TRS government was constructed when Shabbir Ali was the Minister. They asked Mahmood Ali to check the foundation stone from debris in the Secretariat to verify whether or not it was Shabbir Ali who laid the foundation stone and inaugurated the mosque.

Four TS girls get new wings to realise their dreams

NAMRATA SRIVASTAVA
HYDERABAD

Hailing from remote parts of Telangana and belonging to economically backward families, they have never even visited other states or cities in the country, but now they will be leaving for a foreign land all on their own. The four girl students from the Telangana Social Welfare Residential Educational Institutions Society (TSWREIS) will be flying to Australia as they have found wings to their dreams. These young students, who passed the intermediate (Class 12) examinations with good percentages, have been selected to pursue under-graduate

courses Down Under.

G Chandana, G Manogna, K Sankeerthana and S Krishnaveni have received scholarships to study Bachelor of Business, either at the University of Wollongong or the University of Newcastle in Australia. A native of Warangal, G. Chandana was always interested to study commerce. "I believe commerce runs the world," says the 18-year-old, who scored 961 marks in her Intermediate examinations from a total of 1000 marks.

Chandana's father is gym coach and also works as a bounce for events. Talking about her family and aspirations, Chandana adds, "My elder brother is physically



The four girl students have received scholarships to study Bachelor of Business, either at the University of Wollongong or the University of Newcastle in Australia

handicapped and I come from a middle-class family. Once I finish my under-graduation in Australia, I want to come back

and pursue CA. After that, I want to set up my own business." Manogna hails from remote

Mancherla district. Her father is a reporter in a vernacular daily while mother is an Anganwadi teacher. "I have worked very hard towards my studies. And now that I have this opportunity, I don't want to waste it. Once I am done with my UG, I will also pursue my PG there, while working part time. I don't have everything chalked out, but I will do my best to come back home after achieving much," shares Manogna. Sankeerthana of Karimnagar district is daughter of a farmer while Krishnaveni, a resident of Hyderabad is the daughter of a van driver. While three girls are from the scheduled castes, fourth one belongs to a back-

ward class family. A Sharada, their college principal is proud of their achievements. "We treat our students like our own children. They put in lot of effort and this is evident from the results. In fact, this is the first time in the 36-year-long history of the TSWREIS that the girls passing out of its institution will be flying abroad for under-graduate studies. They are working very hard for crack IELTS to clear the last hurdle."

Each student requires Rs 55 lakh to complete the three-year course. As the state government provides scholarships for only post-graduate studies, the society is looking for sponsors for the education of these girls.

SHORT READS



Raj crisis: Rahul's envy causing Cong's destruction, says Uma

SEHORE (MP): Amid the crisis in the Congress government in neighbouring Rajasthan, senior BJP leader and former Madhya Pradesh chief minister Uma Bharti on Monday accused Rahul Gandhi of not allowing young leaders to flourish in his party due to envy. She said Gandhi creates rifts between Congress leaders and then blames the BJP when he is unable to control the resultant internal strife. "The envy of Rahul Gandhi is causing the destruction of the Congress. Rahul Gandhi does not allow young leaders to flourish. He creates an environment which creates rifts among party leaders, which he is then unable to control. And then he blames us for the crisis," Bharti said. "Rahul Gandhi feels he will be left behind if young and qualified leaders like Jyotiraditya Scindia and Sachin Pilot (who has revolted against CM Ashok Gehlot in Rajasthan) get important posts," she claimed.

Abandoned drone sends police into tizzy in Jammu

JAMMU: The police in Jammu went into a tizzy on Monday after a drone was found abandoned in a village on the outskirts of the city, officials said. The drone was initially believed to have come from Pakistan through the International Border (IB), but a subsequent investigation revealed that it was owned by the Indian Army and got grounded after its battery drained out during a routine exercise, they said. A police party recovered the drone from village Boothai Chak in the jurisdiction of police post Phallin Mandar after getting information from the locals at around 11.30 am. Senior officers rushed to the scene on getting the information as it was believed that the drone had come from Pakistan which is making repeated attempts to smuggle weapons and drugs by such flying objects, officials said.

Kerala's first plasma bank set up at Manjeri

MALAPPURAM (KER): Kerala's first Plasma Bank has been set up at the Government Medical College Hospital at nearby Manjeri, where two critically-ill COVID-19 patients have recovered after undergoing plasma therapy. Two more people, who undertook the therapy, are now out of danger and would be discharged soon. "The bank as of today has a storage of 25 plasma donated by volunteers and 200 are in the list who would donate as and when required," said Dr Shinaz Babu, COVID-19 District Coordinator, Malappuram.

Record spike of 28,701 cases takes India's tally to 8,78,254

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India saw yet another record single-day jump of 28,701 COVID-19 cases, pushing its tally to 8,78,254 on Monday, while the death toll climbed to 23,174 with 500 people succumbing to the infection, according to the Union Health Ministry data.

The number of recoveries stands at 5,53,470, while there are 3,01,609 active cases of coronavirus infection presently in the country and one person has migrated, the updated data at 8 am showed. "Thus, around 63.01 per cent of patients have recovered so far," an official said.

The total number of confirmed cases includes foreigners. This was the fourth consecutive day that COVID-19 cases in the country have increased by more than 26,000.

According to the ICMR, 1,18,06,256 samples had been tested for COVID-19 till July



12, of these 2,19,103 samples were tested on Sunday.

Of the 500 new deaths reported, 173 are from Maharashtra, 71 from Karnataka, 68 from Tamil Nadu, 37 from Delhi, 26 from West Bengal, 21 from Uttar Pradesh, 19 from Andhra Pradesh, 13 from Gujarat, 12 from Bihar, 10 from Jammu and Kashmir, nine from Madhya Pradesh, eight from Telangana, seven each from

Rajasthan and Jharkhand, four each from Haryana and Punjab, three from Odisha, two each from Kerala, Goa and Chhattisgarh, and one each from Uttarakhand and Chandigarh.

Of the total 23,174 deaths reported so far, Maharashtra accounted for the highest 10,289 fatalities followed by Delhi with 3,371, Gujarat 2,045, Tamil Nadu 1,966, Uttar Pradesh 934, West Bengal 932,

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Madhya Pradesh 653, Karnataka 684 and Rajasthan 510.

So far, 356 people have died of COVID-19 in Telangana, 328 in Andhra Pradesh, 301 in Haryana, 199 in Punjab, 179 in Jammu and Kashmir, 143 in Bihar, 64 in Odisha, 47 in Uttarakhand, 35 in Assam and 31 in Kerala.

Modi, Google's Pichai discuss how tech can transform lives

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday spoke with Google CEO Sundar Pichai and discussed issues such as leveraging the power of technology to transform the lives of India's farmers and youths and the importance of data security.

During the interaction, they also spoke about the new work culture that is emerging in the times of COVID-19.

"We discussed the challenges the global pandemic has brought to areas such as sports. We also talked about the importance of data security and cyber safety," the prime minister said in a series of tweets.

Modi also shared pictures of the virtual interaction.

"This morning, had an extremely fruitful interaction with Sundar Pichai. We spoke on a wide range of subjects, particularly leveraging the power of technology to transform the lives of India's farmers, youngsters and



entrepreneurs," the prime minister said.

Pichai is the chief executive officer of Alphabet Inc and its subsidiary Google LLC.

Modi said he was delighted to know more about the efforts of Google in several sectors, "be it in education, learning, Digital India, furthering digital payments and more".

Pichai and IT Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad are participating in the sixth annual edition of "Google for India" on Monday.

"This morning, had an extremely fruitful interaction with Sundar Pichai. We spoke on a wide range of subjects, particularly leveraging the power of technology to transform the lives of India's farmers, youngsters and entrepreneurs," the prime minister said

Shah reviews Covid-19 situation in his constituency

PNS ■ AHMEDABAD

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday held a meeting to review the COVID-19 situation in his Lok Sabha constituency Gandhinagar in Gujarat. The meeting, held via video conference, was attended by Gandhinagar Collector Kuldeep Arya, District Development Officer (DDO) Shalini Duhan and Gandhinagar Municipal Commissioner Ratan Kanwar Gadhvi.

After the meeting, Arya said Shah mainly enquired about the latest coronavirus situation. He sought information about its spread and steps taken by the Gandhinagar administration to contain it.

"He asked us to contact him if we need any logistic support or injections, testing kits or new health care facilities to combat the pandemic. He also asked us to go for rapid testing



of suspected persons identified during surveillance exercise," the collector said.

During the meet, Shah also took stock of the ongoing developmental works in his constituency.

"The Union minister stressed on timely and effective implementation of various government schemes in his constituency and told us he will review the progress at regular intervals," Arya added.

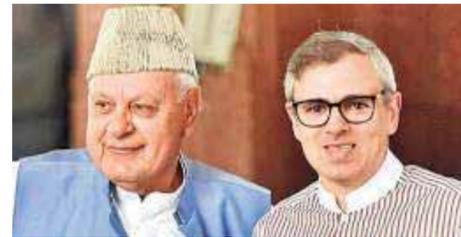
Farooq, Omar move HC for release of 16 NC leaders detained

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

The National Conference on Monday moved the Jammu and Kashmir High Court seeking early release of 16 party members who have been detained at their houses "illegally" since August 5 last year, the day the Centre announced withdrawal of the erstwhile state's special status.

NC president and Lok Sabha member Farooq Abdullah and NC vice president Omar Abdullah filed the habeas corpus petitions, challenging "the unconstitutional and illegal house detention" of senior leaders and functionaries, according to a party statement.

According to the statement, Farooq Abdullah, a former chief minister, has filed the petition for the release of Ali Mohammad Sagar, Abdul Rahim Rather, Nasir Aslam



Wani, Aga Syed Mehmood, Mohammad Khalil Bandh, Irfan Shah, and Sahmeema Firdous.

His son Omar Abdullah, who is also a former chief minister, is challenging the detention of Mohammad Shafi Uri, Aga Syed Ruhullah Mehdi, Chaudhary Mohammad Ramzaan, Mubarak Gul, Dr Bashir Veeri, Abdul Majeed Larmi, Basharat Bukhari, Saifudin Bhat Shtrru, and

Mohammad Shafi. The petitions were filed on behalf of the two leaders by senior lawyer Shariq Reyaz.

Party spokesperson Imran Nabi Dar said the decision to move the high court was taken so as to provide relief to party members who have continuously been under house arrest or were kept under house detention after being released from custody under the stringent Public Safety Act.

No one understood UP gov't's logic of weekend lockdown 'baby pack': Priyanka

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Monday attacked the Yogi Adityanath government over the rising coronavirus cases in Uttar Pradesh, saying no one has understood the logic of the weekend lockdown "baby pack" and efforts are on to hide failures.

Her attack came after the Uttar Pradesh government decided to impose a stricter lockdown across the state on weekends to stop the coronavirus spread.

"UP: Coronavirus cases in the last three days — July 10 — 1,347, July 11 — 1,403 and July 12 — 1,388," Priyanka Gandhi said in a tweet in Hindi. "No one has understood the logic of the weekend



lockdown 'baby pack' till now," she said.

Efforts are on to hide failures, the Congress secretary in-charge of UP East said, adding a couplet "Marz badhta gaya, jyon jyon dawa ki" (the disease kept on growing as medicine was taken).

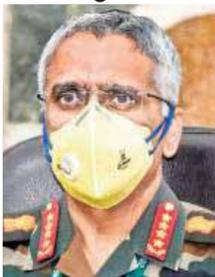
Army chief visits forward areas along IB in Pathankot-Jammu region, reviews situation

PNS ■ JAMMU

Army Chief Gen M M Naravane on Monday visited forward areas along the International Border (IB) and reviewed the security situation and operational readiness of the troops deployed on ground in the Jammu-Pathankot region, a defence spokesperson said.

He visited areas falling under the operational command of the Rising Star Corps, including Kathua, Samba, Jammu and Pathankot, to review the security situation.

The Chief of Army Staff was received here by Lt Gen R P Singh, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Western



Command, Lt Gen Upendra Dwivedi, GOC Rising Star Corps, Maj Gen V B Nair, GOC Tiger Division and Air Commodore A S Pathania, Air

Officer Commanding (AOC), Air Force station Jammu, the spokesperson said.

Gen Naravane was briefed by Lt Gen Dwivedi on the operational preparedness, upgradation of security infrastructure and the internal security matters.

The Army chief, accompanied by GOC Tiger Division, reviewed operational preparedness in the forward areas, the spokesperson said.

He interacted with the field formation commanders and troops on ground during the visit. Gen Naravane also visited the forward areas of Gurj Division and was briefed by Maj Gen Y P Khanduri, GOC Gurj Division, he added.

CA's May examination cancelled, to be merged with Nov cycle: ICAI tells SC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Institute of Chartered Accountants of India (ICAI) Monday informed the Supreme Court that the May cycle of CA examination, scheduled between July 29 and August 16, has been cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The counsel appearing for ICAI told a bench headed by Justice A M Khanwilkar that now the May cycle examination will be merged with the November 2020 cycle of the CA exam.

The apex court was hearing through video-conferencing a plea which had challenged the 'opt out' option provided by

ICAI alleging that it "arbitrarily" discriminate between the aspirants in May cycle of CA examination.

The plea had also sought more exam centres across the country.

The bench, after hearing the submissions advanced by ICAI's counsel, disposed of the matter.

Advocate Alakh Alok Srivastava, appearing for the petitioner, pointed out to certain aspects related to the CA examinations.

The top court told the advo-

cate to make a representation before the ICAI in this regard.

On June 29, the apex court had said that ICAI should be flexible in conducting exams amid the pandemic and take care of concern of candidates.

It had suggested that option for change in examination centre should be made available to the aspirants till the last week before the scheduled exams.

It had observed that situation is not static and continuously changing and the ICAI should be

flexible on the issues of 'opt out' and change of examination centre.

The ICAI's counsel had earlier told the court that out of around 3,46,000 registered aspirants, nearly 53,000 have taken the 'opt out' option.

The plea filed in the apex court had alleged that ICAI had made an important announcement on June 15 by which it "arbitrarily decided to discriminate" between the aspirants by providing an option of 'opt out'.

The ICAI's counsel had told the court that it has ensured that no prejudice is caused to anybody by notification issued regarding the examination.



14-yr-old girl found hanging at Noida school, parents allege rape, murder

PNS ■ NOIDA (UP)

A 14-year-old girl was found hanging at a boarding school in UP's Noida, with her family alleging the she was raped, killed and the body cremated without their consent by the institute management, police said on Monday.

The incident allegedly took place on July 3 at the school in Sector 115 here and came to light on Sunday after an uproar on social media, demanding justice for the girl's family, police said.

No case has been registered as there has been no formal complaint yet at the local Sector 49 police station, even as senior officials assured investigation into the incident if the family approached them with any evidence of foul play.

However, the family, based in Mahendragarh district of Haryana, has written to their Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar, seeking legal action against senior officials of the Noida school. The Class 10 student's mother has urged people



to support them to get "justice," citing weak financial condition of the family.

"Police got to know about the case from social media. The family has alleged that the girl was murdered and raped. The matter was taken up immediately. Police contacted the school management and gathered information from the spot," Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police Ranvijay Singh said.

"It came to light that the girl killed herself on July 3 and left behind a suicide note. She clearly wrote in it that nobody, including the school, is responsible for her suicide. She also wrote about her family and some problems they faced," Singh said.

ILS takes step towards helping in drug formulations

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

In a major development capable of helping in drug formulations for COVID-19, the Institute of Life Sciences here has successfully established in vitro cultures of the novel coronavirus from the patient samples using vero cells, a top ILS official said on Monday.

In vitro culture refers to studies of biological properties in test tubes instead of humans or animals.

They are often contrasted to in vivo (in life) studies done inside organisms. Seventeen virus cultures have been established from swab samples originating from different locations of the country with varying virus loads by the ILS, an autonomous institute of the Department of Biotechnology, officials said. The vero cell culture technology is used worldwide to develop inactivated whole cell-based vaccines. The vero cell line is the most widely accepted continuous cell line (CCL) by regulatory authorities and has been used for over 30 years for the production of polio and rabies viruses.

First time in JK's history, Martyrs' Day observed sans official events

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

For the first time in the history of Jammu and Kashmir, no official function was held to commemorate Martyrs' Day observed on July 13 every year in memory of those killed in firing by soldiers of Dogra ruler Maharaja Hari Singh in 1931.

In a break from past, there was no function at the Martyrs' graveyard here after the government dropped July 13 from the list of gazetted holidays last year, officials said. The holidays on July 13 as well as on December 5 - the birth anniversary of National Conference founder Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah - were dropped after the abrogation of Article 370 by the Centre on August 5 last year.

Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, the then prime minister of Jammu and Kashmir, had declared July 13 as a holiday in 1948. Apart from the official function at the Martyrs' graveyard, mainstream political leaders also used to visit it to pay homage to the 22 Kashmiris who were killed in Dogra army's firing while protesting the autocrat-



Apart from the official function at the Martyrs' graveyard, mainstream political leaders also used to visit it to pay homage to the 22 Kashmiris who were killed in Dogra army's firing while protesting the autocratic rule of Maharaja Hari Singh

ic rule of Maharaja Hari Singh. The officials said no mainstream political leader visited the graveyard on Monday in view of the strict restrictions imposed in most parts of Kashmir to contain the spread of coronavirus infection.

Separatist Hurriyat Conference led by Mirwaiz Umar Farooq had on Saturday called for a strike on Monday.

A National Conference (NC) leader, however, said the party had applied for permission to visit the Martyrs' graveyard, but there was no response from the district administration.

Meanwhile, both NC and

Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) - the two regional forces in Jammu and Kashmir - paid glowing tributes to the martyrs on this day.

In a statement, the NC said the day marked "the inauguration of struggle of Jammu and Kashmir against oppression and discrimination".

"The day has an emblematic importance for the people of Jammu and Kashmir as it marked the launch of widespread people's agitation for the restoration of their due human rights..."

"Every year we invoke,

remember the supreme sacrifice of the martyrs of 13 July 1931, the idea behind remembering them is not merely an act of reminiscing past, memorializing, there is more to it, on this day we galvanize our lives with their mission as was done by (NC founder) Sher-e-Kashmir (Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah) all through his life," NC president Farooq Abdullah said.

Farooq Abdullah, the Member of Parliament from Srinagar Lok Sabha constituency, said it is the day of assertion of Jammu and Kashmir's identity and rights of its people.

Khattar accords approval to set up three new medical colleges in Haryana

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar has accorded approval to set up three new medical colleges in the state, an official spokesperson said here on Monday. In a major push to the health infrastructure of Haryana, Khattar has also approved the opening of a new primary health centre and a sub-health centre and the upgrading of a sub-divisional civil hospital, a community health centre, a primary health centre and a sub-health centre, he said. The CM also accorded approval to start a DM Cardiology course at the Pt B D Sharma Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences, Rohtak, he added. The new medical colleges will come up in Sirsa, Kaithal and Yamuna nagar districts, the official said. In Sirsa, the institution will be set up on the land of the Haryana Agricultural University. In Kaithal, it will be established in Sarpankheri village and in Yamunanagar, the college will come up on panchayat land, the spokesperson added.

Piloting a revolt

Gehlot has numbers but Sachin Pilot has the perception and goodwill. Congress will suffer a body blow if he leaves



That ego wars have killed the Congress is old news. What's new is that it considers its factionalism as a championship round in an arena between suitable claimants to leadership and revels in the challengers it produces as an asset rather than a weakness. Challengers mean a second rung is ready and the top leadership can be held in check. And both can be used against each other. To the point that even when it is on the brink of disaster, now beginning to lose its State Governments despite a verdict in its favour, it refuses to acknowledge chal-

lengers who become the new winners and turns them into rebels. This is exactly what has happened in Madhya Pradesh and now in Rajasthan. This feudalistic pursuit, of course, flows from its dynastic leadership that wants to be feted as the only hope of a party of warring chieftains. The old warriors, who have unquestioningly accepted the primacy of Gandhis in deciding what's good for the party, humoured them even, have sought satrap status to rule over their home turfs on their terms in return for delivering election results. This mutual prosperity flourished till the political landscape itself changed to reward a more ground-up, fresh-faced and performance-driven parties and leaders. The Congress didn't even bother to broaden its own structure by way of holding organisational polls, leave aside transforming itself. Even when Rahul Gandhi assumed leadership with his peers like Jyotiraditya Scindia and Sachin Pilot to usher in a new wave, it was merely cosmetic. Scindia and Pilot though chose to live down their dynastic entitlements and in their mid-40s, desperately wanted to create their own political legacy. To that extent, both gave up their comfort zones in Delhi and worked the ground in their States, resurrecting Congress fortunes in the process. But both were never given what they wanted, the chief ministership of their States despite delivering a winning verdict. The Gandhis were more scared of a senior revolt that would be difficult to quell than handling disappointed Young Turks, who being Rahul's friends and confidants, could, they thought, be won over. The Gandhi scion ultimately kowtowed to his mother Sonia Gandhi's propensity to go with old loyalists rather than risk them holding the party hostage by threatening breakaway units and worse, undercutting it. Rahul would never rebel because even the old hawks would endorse him so long as they continued their free run and left him to face the critique and responsibility of Congress fortunes. So there's no fight left for Rahul, who by the way has a soft corner for Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot, too. The likes of Pilot, Scindia and Milind Deora resented being castaways who would have to wait perennially for their time to come as the old guard maintained status quo. And invested in politics as a career, they are now leaving the grand old party, one that has left thinking seniors like Kapil Sibal and Shashi Tharoor wondering if the party stables would be empty after "the horses had bolted."

Sachin Pilot has been deeply invested in Rajasthan, getting the verdict for the Assembly polls in 2018, when even Gehlot wasn't good enough to manage the scoreline, and ensuring favourable returns in the panchayat polls that came soon after the mammoth May 2019 verdict for Modi. Yet Gehlot got the chief ministership, partly because of his history with Indira Gandhi who always trusted his organisational skills and partly because of his hold on a sizeable number of party cadres with whom he could break away. This ability to rustle numbers is also the reason why he was able to parade about 100-odd MLAs in a show of strength compared to Pilot's claim of having about 30 MLAs, enough to dislodge the Government. Pilot's strength, the high command thought, has been incremental and he was, therefore, convinced to be his deputy. But Gehlot has never been one to share power or yield some degree of autonomy, hemming in Pilot's administrative powers by appointing crony bureaucrats in his ministries. Still Pilot held on, while disenchanting his own supporters who had bargained for some stake in the new dispensation. Matters came to a head when despite the Congress win in the Rajya Sabha elections, Gehlot accused him of toppling the Government and sent police summons to him for conspiracy. Pilot is a reluctant leaver and the Congress cannot afford to lose him so soon after Scindia flocked to the BJP. In fact, given the testimonials, the public perception and emotion are with Pilot even though he may not parade numbers. What will Pilot do? Joining the BJP won't help much, considering he won't be made Chief Minister either with aspirant Vasundhara Raje not expected to lie low. He could float a regional outfit but would still have to make a hard choice of supporting the BJP, which is keeping a hawk's eye on proceedings. Negotiating within the Congress is unlikely to give him much of legroom. But yes, by quitting, he could give the Congress a body blow and become a trigger for younger leaders like him to make copycat moves. The Congress needs him more. Censuring him won't stop the drift in the party.

Book a cycle

Like cab aggregators, micro-mobility apps have mushroomed in a post-pandemic world



As the country limps back to normal from a post-COVID lockdown, there has been a major change in consumer behaviour with apps and e-commerce ruling the roost. Doorstep deliveries are the new normal, from essential items like food and groceries to electronics and lifestyle goods. But one could not have expected even the future of our mobility, namely bicycles, to land at out doorstep. Micro-mobility service providers like Yulu and Smart Bikes are shifting their existing battery-operated two-wheeler network from non-functional zones, such as metro stations, to residential complexes where people are using them to run errands or do the short commute rather than take the auto or cab. With public transport systems yet not fully functional and given the sense of insecurity among the people to use them in these testing times, e-vehicles have emerged as a reliable, safe, cheap and personal mode of travel, especially for those who feel vulnerable. Besides, there are health benefits; you can foster an active lifestyle. And you can ride towards a fossil fuel-free future, notching up green miles.

Cycling for everyday transport has not been a part of the Indian scheme of things unlike say, New York, which introduced 40 miles of new NMT lanes for cyclists in the wake of the pandemic or Italy, which got 22 new miles of cycling lanes. The transition towards a non-motorised form of transport has been long overdue in our country. A survey by the Institute for Transportation and Development Policy had estimated that the use of bicycles in major cities around the world would increase by 50-60 per cent. While the current plan is being run on a pilot basis in Delhi at a select few residential complexes, to achieve the long-term goal, we need to expand our infrastructure and develop more cycling tracks and sidewalks. To ensure that people, too, inculcate behavioural changes and make the shift to safer modes of transport, schemes such as car-free days and cycle-to-work programmes can be launched. What better time to start than now? The pandemic also has a big lesson for urban planning.

New normal with China

Now that India has sent a strong message to China and the rest of the world that it will not put up with any kind of bullying, we must Galwanise ourselves to deal with a hostile neighbour



A SURYA PRAKASH

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's strong message to Beijing from Ladakh some days ago and the global support he has garnered for calling out China's belligerence marks a much-awaited change in India's approach to the coercive tactics of this troublesome neighbour. China's attempt to redraw the boundaries in the Galwan Valley last month is only the latest in a long list of such incursions it has resorted to. While the brave soldiers of the Indian Army challenged the People's Liberation Army (PLA) men at the site, one has not seen similar assertiveness among Indian politicians, especially in the past.

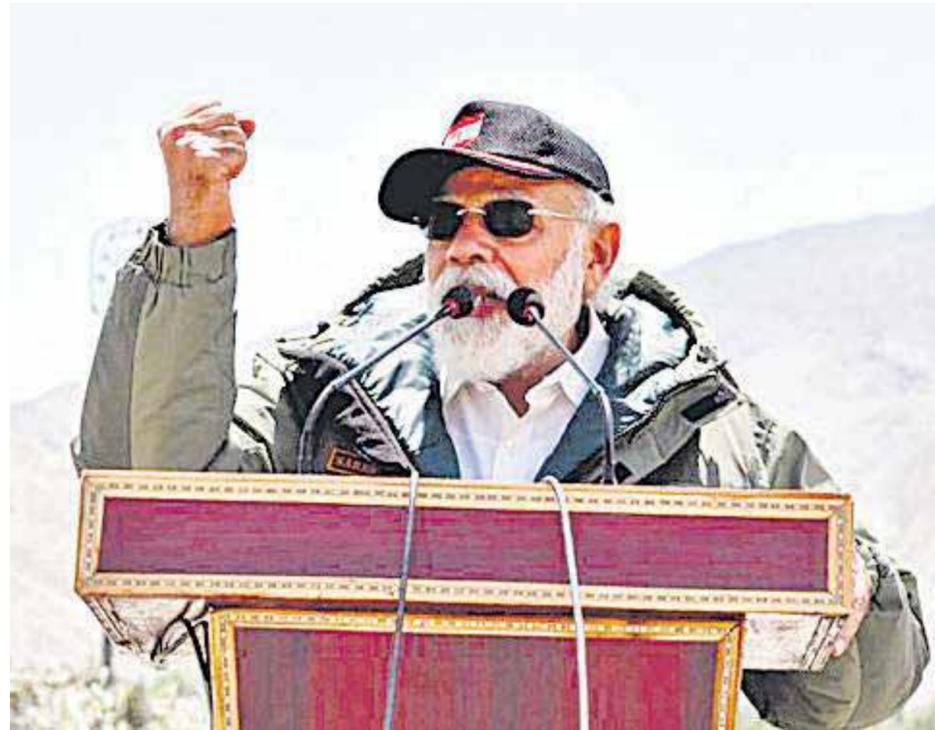
This is something that is going on from the days of former Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru, who seemed to have some totally impractical and unrealistic notions of friendship with China. Strangely, he believed that ties with our neighbour would improve with the passage of time and, therefore, he went out of the way to build bridges with that nation. This included his eagerness to see China as a member of the United Nations Security Council.

However, China has never really reciprocated. It has shown no inclination to resolve border-related issues so that there be any finality to the demarcation of territories. It has preferred a Line of Actual Control (LAC) to a regular border as the vagueness of the description of a line separating the two nations enables it to nibble away at land on our side. It has kept the pot boiling for over seven decades. Apart from this, China has, over the years, befriended Pakistan, supplied it with arms and aided its nuclear weapons programme. It has also turned a blind eye to the terror factories that are run by Pakistan to wage a proxy war against India.

What does all this amount to? The truth is that China is an enemy nation and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) is an enemy organisation, as noted lawyer Mahesh Jethmalani has opined recently.

Prime Minister Modi's ringing message from Ladakh, his Government's firm resolve to ban Chinese apps and scrap many big projects, which were being awarded to Chinese companies, must have come as a shocker for our eastern neighbour. Never before had an Indian leader spoken and acted with such sternness. Modi's declaration that "the era of expansionism is over" is a sharp message to China that it must change its ways. It is also a message to the rest of the world that India will not put up with this kind of bullying any more.

The Prime Minister reminded China and the world that expansionist policies tend to destroy humanity and pose a grave threat to world peace. History has also shown us that such powers, which believed in or attempted hegemonic policies, have been destroyed or forced to mend their ways. Modi's reference to "expansionism"



and its deleterious effects on world peace brought back the dreadful memories of World War II. Modi was telling the world, without naming China, that that country, too, was behaving in a crazy way, with confrontationalist policies towards many nations.

Hitler's expansionist policy made the Germans believe that they were invincible; that they could gobble up all the neighbouring nations; and destroy the UK, Russia and the allies led by America. Hitler began his hegemonic misadventure with the invasion of Austria, Poland and Czechoslovakia. Then came Norway, Denmark and Belgium, Yugoslavia and Greece followed by Luxembourg and the Netherlands. When he invaded France and later, Russia, he had bitten more than he could chew.

Looking back, one can say that was an act of extreme arrogance by a nation which was convinced about its invincibility. China's attempt to provoke India along the LAC comes alongside its attempts to challenge the maritime and sovereign rights of Japan, Australia, Vietnam, South Korea, Singapore and many other nations. The latest count says China has disputes with 23 nations, apart from going back on the promises made *vis-a-vis*

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THE CHINESE ARMY GOT A SHOCK WHEN INDIAN SOLDIERS STOOD UP TO THEIR BULLYING TACTICS AT GALWAN AND GAVE THEM A BLOODY NOSE. TILL TODAY, CHINA HAS NOT HAD THE COURAGE TO TELL THE WORLD THE NUMBER OF CASUALTIES IT SUFFERED AT GALWAN. THIS SPEAKS A LOT ABOUT THE INNER STRENGTH OF THAT NATION
 ”

Hong Kong and Taiwan. This is a reminder to the world of the reckless and irresponsible behaviour of the Nazis 80 years ago. Many nations, including the US, Australia, Japan, France and several members of the ASEAN, have been highly critical of China after India blew the whistle.

The Prime Minister also sent across two other very important messages from Ladakh — that only strength begets peace and that India has stepped up and will continue to step up development of infrastructure along the LAC. These are very significant messages indeed and are meant for the domestic audience, which has been made to believe that neighbours will reciprocate decency and cordiality for decades. This myth needs to be busted once and for all.

China's response to the Prime Minister's speech is laughable. After having set itself on a confrontation course for many months, the Chinese Foreign Ministry issued a statement, saying this was not the time to ratchet up tensions along the border. It said India should avoid a "strategic miscalculation" with regard to China. This is strange because the way the dice has rolled out, it is China which has made "a strategic miscalculation" on India.

The Chinese Army got a shock when Indian soldiers stood up to their bullying tactics at Galwan and gave them a bloody nose. Till today, China has not had the courage to tell the world the number of casualties it suffered at Galwan. This speaks a lot about the inner strength of that nation.

There comes a time in the life of every nation when it must say "enough is enough." India must now get "Galwanised" to deal with a hostile China. It is going to be a long haul but what is a decade or two in the life of a nation? We are a nation of 1,350 million and in a couple of decades, we will be the most populous nation in the world. The time has come for the world at large and the Chinese in particular to absorb this fact. As the sociologists say "demography is destiny."

While the talks are on to disengage at the border and the Chinese Ambassador has issued a placatory statement appealing to Indians not to view China as a "war-like" country, we should not lower our guard. As the Prime Minister has said more than once, we need not put up with those who cast an evil eye on us. Also, pusillanimity does not bring peace. Strength does.

(The writer is an author specialising in democracy studies. Views expressed are personal.)

SOUNDBITE

The present pandemic demonstrates that the marginalised need to be assured of a minimum form of social security and effective disbursement of public entitlements.



Supreme Court judge —DY Chandrachud

Maybe break isn't a good word but you're allowed to bend instead of standing, trying so hard to brave everything you're feeling. Give yourself time.



Actor —Ileana D'Cruz

I believe that our country needs a genuinely liberal party headed by centrist professionals committed to inclusive politics and respect for India's pluralism.



Congress leader —Shashi Tharoor

Rahul Gandhi's jealousy is the reason behind decay in Congress. He doesn't allow young leaders to grow. He is not able to control his party and then he blames us.



Union Minister —Uma Bharti

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Worldwide impact

Sir — It is ironic that the US, the nation with the highest COVID-19 tally, has decided to withdraw from the WHO. US President Donald Trump has alleged that the world body has been functioning at the behest of China, the country which he believes is responsible for the spread of the virus. China promptly defied the WHO with vehement criticism of the US stand.

As it is, the US has a tradition of withdrawing from groups and contracts. Ever since Trump assumed office, this has become the new norm. There is no denying the fact that the WHO's association with China in the wake of the calamity has not been above suspicion. The WHO has avoided direct criticism of China. And the latter has only good words to describe the world health body and it has, thus, often reciprocated China's goodwill.

Nevertheless, the US' move to withdraw from the WHO is a perfect example of the country pursuing unilateralism. The move also illustrates the foreign policy followed by Trump. At a time when nations are fighting a health

Replicate the Dharavi model pan-India

This refers to the editorial, "The Dharavi project" (July 13). With a population density of 2.27 lakh people per square km against the national average of 382, Dharavi had the lethality to pose an existential threat to the rest of Mumbai. That public-private partnership, spruced up with community participation, chased away the COVID-19 in Dharavi is a classic example of team effort. People shutting down their small enterprises and daily wagers quitting their jobs helped the agencies achieve the impossible. That Dharavi constitutes just 2.6 per cent of Mumbai's cases with recovery at 83 per cent against Mumbai's 63 per cent is a glorious testimony of team spirit. An area where there is just one toilet per 500 people, maintaining hygiene and sanitation was a challenge. But the municipal corporation of Greater Mumbai did a fabulous job. Door-to-door screening, containment and mitigation strategies were rigorously implemented by the State Government and private health professionals. Private hospitals, fever centres, well-equipped quarantine centres, community kitchens together constituted Dharavi's best-in-class health infrastructure. There was no dearth of either critical medicines or medical gear like PPE kits, thermal scanners and pulse oximeters. Masks, gloves and sanitisers were



liberally donated by Bollywood. Private sponsorship of free food was also in abundance.

Since the World Health Organisation (WHO) has also complimented it, Dharavi may well emerge as the global benchmark on how to rein in the Coronavirus. Now when Dharavi has become a treasure-trove of knowledge, the Maharashtra Government must tap into it and replicate its best practices across the State to repeat the success. In fact, these practices should be replicated pan-India.

SK Prabhakar
Gurugram

crisis, its pullout will impact the way the world fights the pandemic. The worst-hit will be the developing countries and the ones having high infection cases.

Venu GS
Kollam

Change the system

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Encounter the truth" (July 11). Without any doubt, gangster Vikas Dubey deserved severe

punishment — death penalty or life sentence — but this should have been done after all judicial processes were observed. Police brutality is unwarranted. That the police took the law into its own hands to deliver instant justice is

not only barbaric but also unconstitutional. It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that the police-criminal-politician nexus works to settle personal scores. Such encounters are used routinely by the police to eliminate the criminals on the whims and fancies of those in power. This needs to change. The judiciary must intervene.

Rati Singh
Via email

Face the truth

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Encounter the truth" (July 11). With the death of the dreaded gangster, Vikas Dubey, many questions will remain unanswered and unexplained. Nobody has any sympathy for the gangster but the incident gives a sad message where the police has acted as prosecutor, judge and executioner. No civil society can digest such a scenario. We need to focus on the politico-criminal nexus. Time for a change now.

AF Nadwi
Mumbai

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Why let criminals rule the roost?

If no action is taken by the rulers of the country, this disease will grip the whole nation and India will lose its charm as the world's biggest democracy



VK **BAHUGUNA**

The recent events in Kanpur, Uttar Pradesh (UP), in which eight police personnel were ambushed by the notorious gangster Vikas Dubey, have exposed deep chinks in our democratic governance and rule of law. The brazen and inhuman manner in which the eight police personnel were killed by Dubey and his accomplices shows that hardened criminals have seeped deep into our administrative and law and order machinery. Circle Officer Mishra, who wrote about the nexus between the gangster and the in-charge of the Chaubepur Police Station to his superiors, was shot in the head and his legs were cut off. The criminals had also stored kerosene to burn the bodies of the cops and dispose the remains in a well in order to bury all evidence of the massacre. However, they were forced to flee before they could execute their sinister plan. It is another matter that the UP Police liquidated the don soon after he was handed over to them by the Madhya Pradesh Police. After Dubey's encounter, there was a hue and cry over the killing but no one is discussing the true nature of this disease engulfing the country.

The daring attack on policemen in Kanpur has clearly shown that the "don of Shivli" had deep links with the police and political parties of all hues. He was a land-grabber and a strongman who was instrumental in mustering votes for politicians. Despite numerous murder cases against him, he was roaming about like a respectable citizen, attending meetings with big politicians and was very cosy with police personnel. Even then, how did he think that he would get away with the murder of eight policemen? The answer is easy to find. He was a criminal against whom 60 cases were lodged with the police. He reportedly killed many people in cold blood.

In one daring attempt he killed a Minister-rank politician inside the police station in 2001 and 19 police personnel were witness to this killing. But none of the police personnel deposed before the court despite the fact that two cops, too, were killed in that incident. As people say, justice is blind and in the end Dubey was acquitted of the crime. After this he became the uncrowned ruler of his area of influence, subjugating all Government officials and controlling and bulldozing all who opposed him.

This incident raises many questions. First, why did the UP Government not take any action against those 19 police personnel whose deliberate action was responsible for Dubey's acquittal? Why did the police not appeal to higher courts and assess why the prosecution did not make a foolproof case as the murder was committed inside the police station? This is a big shame for the police, politicians and the Government. It also brings out the chinks in the judiciary which decided such cases in a clerical style. Why did the court not ask the prosecution about the attitude of the 19 police personnel? This reflects badly on the tottering criminal justice delivery system. The Indian judiciary needs to change its Victorian mindset in order to meet the challenges of modern society.

Though the general public has welcomed the elimination of this notorious criminal, it has been ruing the fact that the encounter ends all possibility of exposing the growing criminal-police-political nexus which is turning our country into a banana republic. This clearly shows that governance has been gradually slipping out of the hands of lawfully-empowered officials and into the hands of local mafia and politicians in the hinterland. This abdication has been accepted by the whole apparatus of legally-elected governments.

The second question is why this happens and allows small-time goons to become Frankenstein's monster? The answer lies in the fact that rural areas are still divided on caste or some other lines and most of the fights are related to land grabbing and developmental issues. Gram Pradhans control lot of funds and create their own groups. The local administration virtually becomes extinct and allows these gangsters to take over the reins and slowly a monopoly of criminals and their supporters comes into shape. All in the ugly chain become rich and powerful and rule the masses. Those who oppose are punished heavily or eliminated.

For instance, the principal of Dubey's school who taught him when he was a youngster, was killed for opposing the grabbing of his school land by the don, in a most inhuman way, while the village and revenue officials looked the other way. The culmination of such an environment is complete when politicians take the help of criminals during the elections. It is no wonder then that out of 403 MLAs in UP Assembly, 143 have a criminal background, says a report of the Association for Democratic Reforms. Dubey, too, was toying with the idea of joining the BJP. Democracy is thus gasping for air in the country.

The Dubey saga must prick the conscience of our politicians and also of the citizens who elect them and, of course, of the civil servants and police who are actually responsible for governing the nation. If no action is taken by the rulers of the country this disease will grip the whole nation soon and India will lose its charm and beauty as the biggest democracy of the world.

(The writer is a former civil servant)

IT WOULD BE BETTER IF THE PARTY CONVINCES SACHIN PILOT TO STOP. THOUGH THE PARTY DOES NOT END WITH THE DEPARTURE OF ANY ONE LEADER.
 —CONGRESS LEADER
SANJAY NIRUPAM

POINTCOUNTERPOINT



I WILL MAKE MY INTENT CLEAR SOON. I HAVE THE SUPPORT. YOU CANNOT KEEP MLAs AGAINST THEIR WILL FOR A LONG TIME. IT'S A LONG HAUL.
 —RAJASTHAN DEPUTY CM
SACHIN PILOT

Fix accountability

The only way to prevent and eliminate custodial deaths is to make the senior police officers directly accountable whenever such incidents occur in police stations under their jurisdiction



GOVIND **BHATTACHARJEE**

On June 26, three days after the father-son duo, P Jayaraj and Bennix, died after being brutally tortured in police custody in Sathankulam in Tamil Nadu (TN), a non-governmental organisation (NGO), the National Campaign Against Torture (NCAT), brought out its annual report for 2019. It revealed that a total of 1,731 people had died in custody in India during 2019, which is a whopping five deaths every day. A majority of these deaths, 1,606, happened in judicial custody and 125 in police custody, like the present ones.

The methods of torture used, like driving nails in the body or rods through the private parts, burning or other atrocious methods of torment would put even the medieval Inquisition to shame. It also highlighted that 75 per cent of the victims belonged to poor and marginalised communities or minorities, who have practically no access to legal remedies.

Investigations into these cases almost always lead to closure without any culpability being established and instances when someone is actually punished for the deaths are extremely rare. The deaths are attributed to either "natural causes" like prior illnesses and "injuries sustained prior to police custody" or "unnatural causes" like suicides. As per the statistics provided in the National Crime Records Bureau's (NCRB's) latest report on *Crimes in India, 2018*, in cases of 70 deaths in police custody, not even a single arrest was made, let alone conviction.

As per the Constitution of the country, policemen are public servants and a police station is considered a public property. Therefore, the duty and the behaviour of a policeman must conform to the country's law, respect basic human freedom and obey as well as maintain law and order. However, the ground reality is far from this and time and again, policemen are involved in custodial violence and deaths.

To prevent custodial violence, elaborate guidelines to be followed in all cases of arrest or detention were prescribed by the Supreme Court in its 1996 verdict in the DK Basu vs State of West Bengal case, and subsequent judgments made in 2001 and 2015. These guidelines are observed only in their breach. Any inquiry by a human rights group through the Right to Information (RTI) Act or otherwise almost always draws a blank, with the information sought being "unavailable."

In 2015, Section 176 (1) of the Criminal Procedure Code (CrPC) was amended by replacing the earlier provision of inquiry by an Executive Magistrate with that by a Judicial Magistrate. This also is rarely conducted or conducted mechanically, only to satisfy the formalities. Only after the nationwide outrage after the Sathankulam incident, the Madurai Bench of the Madras High Court ordered a Judicial Magistrate's inquiry into the incident and the five policemen were arrested in the case and transferred to the Madurai Central Jail from Tuticorin. Now, the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is probing the case.

In 2006, the apex court also directed that every State should have a Police Complaints Authority where anyone can lodge a complaint against policemen. Only a few States such as Kerala, Jharkhand, Haryana, Punjab and Maharashtra have set up the authority. But that has not prevented custodial deaths — Punjab,

“ INVESTIGATIONS INTO THESE CASES ALMOST ALWAYS LEAD TO CLOSURE WITHOUT ANY CULPABILITY BEING ESTABLISHED AND INSTANCES WHEN SOMEONE IS ACTUALLY PUNISHED FOR THE DEATHS ARE EXTREMELY RARE. THE DEATHS ARE ATTRIBUTED TO EITHER 'NATURAL CAUSES' LIKE PRIOR ILLNESSES AND 'INJURIES SUSTAINED PRIOR TO POLICE CUSTODY' OR 'UNNATURAL CAUSES' LIKE SUICIDES. AS PER THE STATISTICS PROVIDED IN THE NATIONAL CRIME RECORDS BUREAU'S LATEST REPORT ON *CRIMES IN INDIA, 2018*, IN CASES OF 70 DEATHS IN POLICE CUSTODY, NOT EVEN A SINGLE ARREST WAS MADE, LET ALONE CONVICTION ”



along with Uttar Pradesh (UP) and TN, recorded the highest number of deaths in police custody in 2019.

In 1994, in its 152nd report, the Law Commission had remarked that despite all legal and constitutional safeguards, "The growing incidence of custodial torture and deaths has become a disturbing factor in society and the gory tales of dehumanising torture, assault and deaths in the custody of police are being reported almost in every morning newspaper." It observed that inquiries are conducted as a mere formality. Even more than 25 years later, things have not changed one bit on the ground. At best a monetary compensation is offered by the State. In the TN case, the State Government announced a compensation of ₹20 lakh and the DMK's Thoothukudi MP Kanimozhi declared a compensation of ₹25 lakh for the bereaved family. However, this is not enough to make up for the loss of the main bread-winners of the family, which is not backing off and is seeking justice for the two men.

But in other cases, money usually silences the victims' families, who mostly come from poor and marginalised backgrounds. In a rarest of the rare instances of its kind, for torturing a man to death in custody in 2006, a Delhi Sessions Court sentenced five UP policemen to 10 years of rigorous imprisonment in 2019. They had manipulated records to erase all evidence of custodial death before closing the case as a suicide.

The judge very aptly remarked on that occasion, "One of the reasons for custodial death is that the police feel that they have the power to manipulate evidence as the investigation is their prerogative. And with such manipulated evidence, they can bury the truth. They are confident that they will not be held accountable even if the victim dies in custody and even if the truth is

revealed." The fact remains that the inter-departmental solidarity will always tend to shield the perpetrators and give them protection in such cases. This gives them a sense of invincibility and gives them a licence to kill with impunity. The failure of the judicial system to bring the culprits to book follows as a natural corollary to the failure to fix accountability.

Indeed custodial torture should have no place in a civilised society but in our criminal justice system, it has been institutionalised. Torture and extra-judicial killings deem even to have acquired some legitimacy in the eyes of the public, as shown in the Hyderabad killing of four gang-rapists accused by the policemen last December.

Whitewashing and covering up are the norms. After the Sathankulam incident, the top police brass was busy trying to cover up the case, citing esoteric procedures. The Judicial Magistrate inquiring into the murders was intimidated by three police officers, the crucial CCTV footage in the police station was erased and the woman constable, who courageously deposed against her colleagues and whose testimony finally nailed the murderers, was under constant threats and intimidation.

It was only the widespread public anger that forced the TN Government to arrest the five culprits, transfer the probe to the CBI and take the extraordinary step of transferring the Sathankulam Superintendent of Police to keep him under "compulsory wait" at the DGP office, probably the first ever. This, however, is no punishment, and once the public anger subsides, it will be business as usual.

In the US, the 46-year-old George Floyd had struggled for nine minutes under the knee of the white Minneapolis police officer, Derek Chauvin, beseeching and begging for his life — "I can't breathe." Actually the chokehold has

been suffocating the US justice delivery system for the Blacks for a long time but the incident triggered the pent-up anger and resentment, leading to protests and violence that spread like wildfire across the globe.

The 'Black Lives Matter' movement upset many Indians, too, who voiced their anger on the social media. But no protests against police atrocities have erupted across our cities after the deaths of P Jayaraj and Bennix. Either we are too scared or we just don't care if cops go on a rampage. In the US, it has led to calls for police reforms and defunding the police. Use of chokeholds has been banned and it has also forced US President Donald Trump to issue an executive order for establishing a database to track police officers with a history of "excessive use-of-force complaints" in their records. Derek Chauvin had a history of using excessive force; such persons in future would carry it in their service records. This will likely serve as an effective deterrent.

The 18th Century French political philosopher Montesquieu wrote in his magnum opus, *The Spirit of Laws*, "There is no greater tyranny than that which is perpetrated under the shield of the law and in the name of justice."

If we aspire to have some semblance of a civilised society, we must eradicate such tyranny. The only way to prevent and eliminate custodial deaths is to make the senior police officers directly accountable whenever such incidents occur in police stations under their jurisdictions. A death should be reflected in their service records and should carry a negative weightage in their promotions and postings. Senior police officers alone can prevent this, and only when they are made directly accountable will this scourge stop.

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

China cannot be sued for Coronavirus

The Govt is protected by ambient sovereign immunity and misconduct, even if proved, will not be able to cater to sufficient grounds for its waiver



SONAM **CHANDWANI**

The wilful, negligent and unmindful attitude of the Chinese authorities has led to the catastrophe of COVID-19. While some consider the inaction and lackadaisical behaviour of China coupled with suppression of information as "treason against humanity", the possibility of maintaining a successful lawsuit against our neighbour has to be explored rigorously.

There have been a couple of instant suits filed against China, seeking compensation for the political opacity and lack of response by the Chinese authorities, which have caused humongous damage to human life and

economies across the globe. There have been charges alleging creation and release, accidental or otherwise, of the Novel Coronavirus and of unleashing biological warfare. In all probability, positive outcomes of such legal challenges are highly sceptical.

Undeniably, the Chinese authorities have deliberately chosen denial, have behaved irresponsibly throughout the saga and deserve the condemnation of the entire world. The regime of transferring patently false information all this while has made things unnecessarily worse as we stand today. Legal liability, however, is a disparate phenomenon. Here we need to realise, that the Government of China is protected by the ambient sovereign immunity, and misconduct, even if proved, will not be able to cater to sufficient grounds for a waiver of that indemnity.

Sovereign immunity is not just a judicial favour for foreign regimes. International treaties of shared under-

standing and reciprocity not allowing people to sue the country primarily guide it. The difficulty at this stage arises as the act of China, despite being in the nature of criminal negligence, fails to fall in the bracket of exception laid down by the international law to the immunity enjoyed by the States. Rather, there is a specific bar upon the exercise or performance or the failure to exercise discretionary powers regardless of whether the discretion is being abused. Possibly, the reckless behaviour of the Chinese Government is baked into the very idea of sovereign immunity.

The next leg of the argument revolves around the proposition that China did very little to stop the spread of the virus. Unfortunately, the thrust of the argument on legal principles is tremendously weak. Sovereign immunity does not work on benevolence but reciprocity. China has been rejecting all such allegations and is certain to junk every summons it receives, ulti-

mately making the entire exercise a futile thing. The World Health Organisation's (WHO's) International Health Regulations, 2005 is being referred to in order to assert that China violated its international obligations. Articles six and seven of the WHO regulations make timely notification and information-sharing obligatory on the country where an outbreak takes place. Consequently, China has been denying all such allegations, which in turn nullifies the violation as the legal liability could only be fixed if the country consents to it. There is a very minor and primarily a technical gateway to drag China to the International Court of Justice (ICJ) over the Coronavirus pandemic provided in the WHO's Constitution. This provision does not require the consent of the defendant country. A member country will have to establish or create a doubt that China deliberately withheld information from the WHO and the international community at large. Article 63

of the WHO's Constitution provides the legal basis for this route.

Tort law generally rests on the proposition that people will take reasonable care if they know there is an inherent danger that could cause harm to others. Under sovereign immunity, the costs of misbehaviour of the Government tend to lie where they fall. The concept of international terror and henceforth laws to tackle it were conceptualised a few years back. However, the absence of robust legislations possibly will not entail any punishment for another country's recklessness and the motive is opposite to be political.

Nevertheless, for the massive economic fallout, China cannot be allowed to go scot-free. Perhaps, world leaders have to work in mutiny to diplomatically pressurise China for causing the pandemic and the present situation. On the contrary, China has called the allegations xenophobic, which invalidates all possible actions undertaken

as of now. Further, the most difficult part of the regime is to prove the deliberate intention of China in causing all the trouble the world is in at present.

In a nutshell, China has a strong position to rescind all legal allegations brought against it by world players, including India. It is a very bleak proposition to contemplate that China will eventually compensate for the major fallout and global recession caused by its laxity and disregard for the state of affairs. However, the legal remedy of filing lawsuits seems to be futile and superfluous without much possibility of any fruitful upshot and conclusion. Nevertheless, how good the sequel stands will be eventually proven, as and when the lawsuits already instituted, are heard by the judiciary, while the wise option would be to avoid any bulging aspiration to be accrued from the judicial reaction to the legal battle.

(The writer is Managing Partner at KS Legal)



FOREIGN EYE



COVID-19 ON THE MARCH GLOBALLY

Poorer nations will need support to deal with both the pandemic and its broader impact. Hunger and poverty are surging and could kill more people than COVID-19. Leadership can't come from the US, as it withdraws from the WHO and finding agreement within the EU is proving hard. But for everyone's sake, we must recognise and honour our ties. (The Guardian editorial)

CAPSULE



Hector Plus starting price at Rs 13.49 lakh

NEW DELHI: MG Motor India on Monday launched Hector Plus, a six-seater version of Hector, in the price range of Rs 13.49-18.54 lakh (ex-showroom Delhi). The 1.5 litre petrol variants of the model are priced between Rs 13.49-18.21 lakh while the 2 litre diesel trims are tagged in the range of Rs 14.44-18.54 lakh. "Hector Plus is a perfect family car for four adults and two kids," MG Motor India President and CEO Rajeev Chhaba said. The model comes with four seats for adults and two seats for children with some design changes as compared with Hector which has five seats. Hector Plus petrol variants come with six speed manual and seven speed automatic transmissions while the diesel trims feature only manual.



Snapdeal's Kunal Bahl to lead CII's e-commerce committee

NEW DELHI: Confederation of Indian Industry on Monday said Snapdeal's Co-founder & CEO Kunal Bahl has taken over as the Chairman of its e-commerce committee for the year 2020-21. The upcoming e-commerce policy, the consumer protection rules and a consistent interpretation of the intermediary status of e-commerce platforms figure high on the immediate agenda of the committee, a CII release said. "While as a nation we are living through unprecedented times, it is precisely in times like this that we need to come together and work for the larger good," Bahl said. He further noted that "accelerated digitalization in everyday lives had started to blur the demarcation between those who like to transact online and those who prefer the experience of dealing through physical channels."



Suzuki Motorcycle India rolls out 50th lakh product

NEW DELHI: Suzuki Motorcycle India Pvt Ltd (SMIPL) on Monday said it has rolled out its 50th lakh vehicle from its manufacturing facility at Kherki Dhaula, Gurugram. A unit of the recently launched BS-VI compliant Suzuki GIXXER SF 250 became the vehicle to reach the milestone, SMIPL said in a statement. "This year, Suzuki Motor Corporation celebrates 100-year anniversary. We are thrilled to add another feather to our success story in India by rolling out the 5 millionth Suzuki two-wheeler product. This milestone is a testimony to the immense love and trust reposed by our customers on Suzuki products," SMIPL Managing Director Koichiro Hirao said.

NBFI recovery unlikely in near-term: Fitch Ratings

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Fitch Ratings on Monday said recovery of non-banking financial institutions (NBFIs) in near-term is not probable as the sector continues to wrestle with the fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic.

"We believe the significant economic disruption and prevailing uncertainty caused by the pandemic will impede a return to a more normal operating environment for NBFIs, with consequences for new loan disbursements, asset quality and provisioning, sector profitability, and funding conditions," Fitch said in a statement. It said uncertainty would stem from depressed consumer demand and a sustained high level of coronavirus infections, notwithstanding a gradual economic reopening that has improved collections and funding availability since June 2020.

A near-term recovery for India's non-bank financial



institutions (NBFI) is not probable, as the sector continues to wrestle with the fallout from the coronavirus pandemic," Fitch Ratings said.

An investor poll at the annual Fitch on India event, held in early July 2020, revealed that more than 75 per cent participants believed Indian NBFIs would take more than one

year to show a convincing recovery in light of the effects of the pandemic. The poll results are in line with Fitch's expectations. The sector is nearly two years into its crisis, which was triggered by the default of Infrastructure Leasing & Financial Services Limited, and nearly 40 per cent of investors polled still expect

it to take another two years before a recovery is evident.

"This is longer than Fitch's base-case assumption, but a downside scenario - where the economy continues to struggle to recover in the aftermath of the pandemic - could prolong the sector downturn beyond the two-year horizon and cause irreversible damage to parts of the NBFI industry, with mid-to small-sized franchisees at greatest risk of branch closures and staff redundancies to trim costs. In this scenario, more firms could exit from underperforming business segments," Fitch said.

It said construction finance could witness downsizing amid delayed construction activity and lower unit sales.

Other segments that may also witness consolidation, should the downturn persist, include infrastructure finance, low-yielding corporate loans as well as loans against property in urban areas.

CIL dues from state power gencos mount to Rs 22k cr amid tepid demand

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Coal India's dues from state-owned power generation companies have risen to Rs 22,000 crore amid muted demand and high production, sources said on Monday.

The mining behemoth is also not in a position to regulate supplies to the power companies as demand has remained subdued over the last few months, they said.

"Dues are now at Rs 22,000 crore. We are not sure when the situation will improve, and are yet to see the flow of government funds as assistance to gencos," a company source said. The outstanding amount was around Rs



12,000 crore in January. "Majority of the dues are from state gencos and rationalisation of supply to put pressure on them is also not feasible," he said. The government had recently announced Rs 90,000 crore

worth of loans to state power distribution companies.

Net cash flow from operating activities for Coal India slumped sharply to Rs 4,146 crore in the last fiscal from Rs 16,355 crore in 2018-19.

Govt permits exports of non woven fabrics

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Monday said exports of non-woven fabrics other than 25-70 GSM (grams per square metre) are allowed for outbound shipments.

However, exports of non-woven fabric of 25-70 GSM and melt blown fabric of any GSM is still prohibited.

All other non-woven fabrics with GSM (grams per square metre) other than 25-70 GSM are freely allowed for exports," the Director General of Foreign Trade (DGFT) said in a notification.

Sensex rises 99 pts; RIL hits record high

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark Sensex ended 99 points higher on Monday, led by gains in index-heavyweight Reliance Industries, amid positive global cues.

After rallying 430 points during the session, the 30-share BSE Sensex gave up most of its gains to settle 99.36 points, or 0.27 per cent, higher at 36,693.69.

While, the NSE Nifty closed 34.65 points, or 1.15 per cent, up at 10,802.70.

Reliance Industries was among the top gainers in the Sensex pack, jumping over 3 per cent to hit its record closing high, after the company said it has secured Rs 730 crore from wireless technology leader Qualcomm by selling a small stake in Jio Platforms.

Adding to a slew of investments since April that has



crossed Rs 1.18 lakh crore, Qualcomm Ventures' investment will translate into 0.15 per cent equity stake in Jio Platforms on a fully diluted basis.

Tech Mahindra, HCL Tech, Bharti Airtel, Infosys, HUL and ITC were also among the prominent gainers.

However, the gains on the index were capped as index majors HDFC twins slumped up to 2 per cent, after a report stating HDFC Bank has conducted an investigation into allegations of improper lending practices and conflict of interest at its vehicle financing arm.

Rupee settles flat at 75.19 against US dollar

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The rupee settled on a flat note at 75.19 (provisional) against the US dollar on Monday amid high volatility in the domestic equity market.

The rupee, which opened at 75.20 against the US dollar, closed at 75.19 against the US dollar, up by just 1 paise over its previous close.

It had settled at 75.20 against the greenback on Friday.

During the four-hour trading session, the domestic unit witnessed an intra-day high of 75.08 and a low of 75.21 against the US dollar.

Forex traders said the rupee traded in a range-bound man-

ner tracking high volatility in domestic equities. Moreover, investors awaited cues from Consumer Price Index (CPI) data expected to be released later in the day. While weak US currency supported the local unit, foreign fund

outflows and concerns over rising COVID-19 cases weighed on investor sentiment, traders said.

Meanwhile, the dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, fell 0.03 per cent to 96.62.

The 30-share BSE benchmark Sensex was trading 34.01 points higher at 36,628.34 and broader NSE Nifty was up 13.30 points to 10,781.35.

Sebi to rope in independent agency

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Capital market regulator Sebi plans to rope in an independent agency to provide contract staff, including receptionist and supervisor, for its office.

In addition, the regulator is also planning to hire an agency that will provide security guards.

In two separate notices, inviting expressions of interest (Eoi) from interested parties, Sebi said the services would be required at the regulator's office in Chandigarh.

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) said the agency would be responsible for providing the services of the outsourced staff such as receptionist, data entry operator, office assistant and house keeper.

Pak says it will restore Afghanistan's exports

PNS ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan said on Monday that it will restore Afghanistan's exports through the Wagah border with India from Wednesday at the special request of Kabul and to facilitate Afghan Transit Trade.

Pakistan closed the Wagah border with India in mid-March in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.

"At the special request of the Government of Afghanistan and with a view to facilitating Afghanistan's transit trade,



Pakistan has decided to resume Afghan exports through Wagah border crossing from 15 July 2020, after implementing COVID-19 related proto-

cols," the Foreign Office said in a statement.

The FO stated that with this step, Pakistan has fulfilled its commitments under Pakistan-

Afghanistan Transit Trade Agreement (APTTA).

It also said that Pakistan remains "fully committed" to improving bilateral relations with Afghanistan in all areas including trade, and to facilitate Afghanistan's transit trade under the agreement.

Mohammad Sadiq, the Pakistan Prime Minister's Special Representative for Afghanistan, said that his country has already restored bilateral trade and Afghan transit trade at all border crossings.

Subramanian inducted as Ex Director on L&T Board

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Engineering and construction conglomerate Larsen & Toubro (L&T) on Monday said its Board has decided to induct Subramanian Sarma as an Executive Director.

Sarma, a Non-Executive Director on the Board, is CEO and MD of wholly-owned subsidiary L&T Hydrocarbon Engineering.

Besides, L&T has decided to elevate S V Desai and T Madhava Das to the Board.

"The slew of Board level appointments reflect L&T's resolve to chart an aggres-

sive future in its businesses," L&T said in a statement.

In his new role, Sarma will be designated as Whole-Time Director & Senior Executive Vice President (Energy).

Effective August 19, he will hold Board-level responsibility for L&T's power business, in addition to his current responsibility in the hydrocarbon business.

The statement said Desai and Das are both members of the company's apex-level Executive Management Committee and have been elevated to the Board with immediate effect.

Beauty salons, nail bars reopen in next post-lockdown wave in UK

PNS ■ LONDON

Businesses, including beauty salons and nail bars, began reopening across England on Monday as part of the next phase in the easing of the coronavirus lockdown imposed in the UK on March 23.

Other venues requiring close physical contact, including tattoo and massage studios, physical therapy businesses and spas, are also among those able to welcome back customers under so-called COVID-secure guidance issued by the UK government. "Thousands more businesses which offer



close contact services like nail and beauty salons will be able to welcome customers back in a way that is safe for both workers and the public. Enabling these often small, indepen-

dent businesses to reopen is yet another step in our plan to kickstart the economy to support jobs and incomes across the country," the Indian-origin Cabinet minister said.

'PNB to focus on self-service, automation'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Punjab National Bank proposes to accelerate self-service and focus on automation with a view to optimise processes, employees and workplace and thus deal with the challenges following the outbreak of coronavirus, the lender said in a message to shareholders.

"The current crisis will steer the banking industry to remote working which is likely to shape the cost structure in the days ahead," PNB's MD and CEO SS Mallikarjuna Rao said in a letter to shareholders.

He noted that MSME, agriculture, agro-based industries,

healthcare, among others, present ample opportunities for growth and lending.

"The bank will accelerate self-service and automation initiatives through greater focus on technology to foster optimisation of processes, employee and workplace," he said.

Rao said 2019-20 started with an overarching goal towards 'Year of Profitability and Creating Value', leaving the adversities of the previous financial year behind.

In the last financial year, PNB's operating profit increased year-on-year by 13.4 per cent to Rs 14,739 crore.

Yes Bank says Rs 15k cr capital from FPO to suffice for 2 years

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Private sector lender Yes Bank on Monday said the Rs 15,000 crore capital raising through FPO, the largest ever by any entity, will suffice the growth requirements for two years by taking capital buffers to over 5 percentage points over the regulatory obligation.

It is also looking at manpower rationalisation to save costs, and feels up to 1 percentage point of capital may be required to provision the possible reverses due to the COVID-19 situation, its chief



executive and managing director Prashant Kumar told reporters here.

The bank, which had to be bailed out by SBI in March, is aiming to raise the money by selling its shares at Rs 12-13 per piece - which is a discount of nearly 50 per cent to Friday's

close - to raise the capital. SBI, which holds 49 per cent of the bank at present, has committed to invest up to Rs 1,750 crore. Kumar explained the bank chose the FPO route because it was the only one offering the flexibility to offer shares at a reduced price.

Kumar said the corporate governance issues and the legacy bad assets have been identified and provided for in the last two quarters by the new management, but conceded that COVID-19 can eat up up to 1 percentage point of capital through provisioning.

Impact investing touches \$11 billion

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Impact investing has come a long way over the last 10 years in the country, making measurable contributions to the development sector - touching over 490 million lives with a cumulative investment of USD 11 billion, according to a study.

These contributions have been made possible by 600 impact enterprises, the study by Impact Investors Council and Asha Impact said.

As per the study, impact investing has seen strong growth with USD 10.8 billion of equity capital flowing into the sector over the past decade, clipping 26 per cent in each of



Impact investing has seen strong growth with USD 10.8 billion of equity capital flowing into the sector over the past decade

the first eight years and rapid growth over the past two years - helping as much as 490 million lead better lives.

Though the idea existed as a sector since early 2000s, it picked up pace only after 2005, when financial inclusion became a key word in the

from financials heavy to non-financials.

"Financial services used to account for 76 per cent of investments in 2010, but has since come down to 43 per cent in 2019, and just 30 per cent of total deal volume over the decade.

"During this period impact inflows into healthcare, education, agriculture, energy and development technologies increased their shares and within financial services, there has been a dramatic shift away from microfinance to housing, SMEs, education, healthcare finance, and new fintech models," the report said.

Global shares gain on hopes for recovery

PNS ■ TOKYO

Global shares rose Monday, cheered by upbeat projections for a global economic rebound that were tempered by worries over expanding coronavirus outbreaks. France's CAC 40 rose 0.6 per cent in early trading to 5,000.05. Germany's DAX added 0.9 per cent to 12,742.34, while Britain's FTSE 100 climbed 0.7 per cent to 6,139.18. U.S. shares were set to drift higher, with Dow futures gaining 0.3 per cent to 26,005.0.

SOCIAL MEDIA TURNING EPICENTRE OF HATE?



example, in the case of late actor Sushant Singh Rajput's suicide — until and unless the word 'murder' or 'conspiracy' wasn't attached to it, it wouldn't have extended for too long. Trolls probably have low levels of empathy, guilt, and responsibilities. Maybe that's why they act like this behind a disguised identity," Mohsin explains. He adds that it can cause devastating mental health issues like sleep disruption and depression.

Is trolling cyberbullying? Rupesh tells us that there sure are similarities as it's a deliberate move and causes repetitive harm. Although, generally it's not a punishable offence, harassing behaviour is illegal. "We at Cyber Jagriti spread awareness on not responding to any trolls by conducting diverse workshops across the city of Hyderabad and also provide legal help. Also, we are very active in responding to cyber threats and request netizens to be aware of online trolling. We regularly receive many complaints about online safety. Our team first analyses the type of online crime it's and then deals with it."

How do stars deal with trolling and all the negativity on social media platforms? Are women more prone to it? Actress from the recent blockbuster hit *Bhanumathi and Ramakrishna*, Salony Luthra, tells us that apart from all the love and appreciation they receive, celebrities are also more susceptible to criticism. While some have the ability to ignore them, for few others it takes a toll on them and sometimes they hit out at their trolls too. "Twitter is becoming a not-so-friendly platform these days and women are the easy targets there. Can netizens be more responsible and sensitive? We are humans like anybody else. People posting horrible comments can really affect us leading to social anxiety and suicidal thoughts. As good digital citizens, we need to clamp down on this system because our mental health as important as our physical health matters," adds the actress.

To make women and children of the city feel safer online and to empower them about cybersecurity laws, the women safety wing of the Telangana police has come together for a unique initiative called 'Cybher' supported by tremendous organisations like UNICEF, Cyber Peace Foundation, etc.

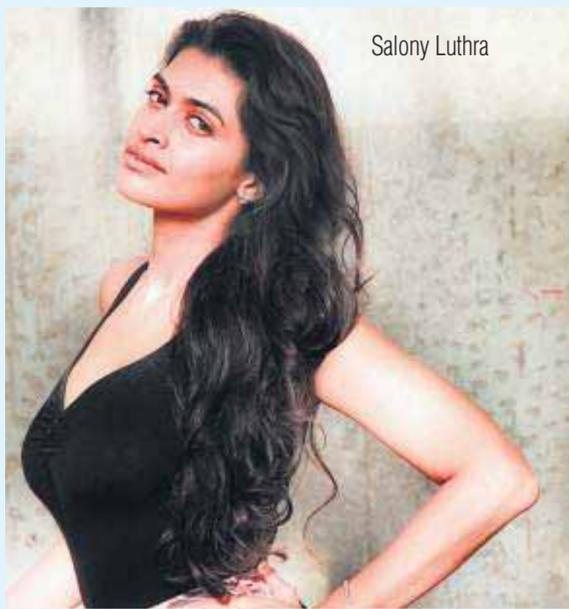
Remember the episode of the chat show *Koffee with Karan*, where Alia Bhatt said Prithviraj Chauhan was the President of India? Her answer flooded social media with countless memes and jokes. Know of actress Swara Bhasker? If there is anybody that tops the list of most trolled celebrities list, it is undoubtedly Swara Bhasker. But now the

internet is hitting an all-time low by asking VJ Benafsha Soonawala to commit suicide! Trolls have been getting on to celebs' nerves, they are vicious, inhumane, and cowards in disguise. Who is going to build a fine line between free speech and hate speech? We talk to the founder of Cyber Jagriti and Safety Foundation, a student of psychology and a Tollywood actress, to know more about social media becoming a platform of promoting hate speech across the world.

Rupesh Mittal, a cybercrime consultant, founder of the Cyber Jagriti and Safety Foundation and a Karmaveerchakra awardee tells us an internet troll is an individual who posts offensive messages on an online platform. It's their sadistic pleasure to be on the pathway of hurting somebody's sentiments in order to get provocative responses from the individuals. "There can be several reasons why trolling occurs. They probably can't stomach somebody succeeding or want to get attention or cause trouble in their lives," says Rupesh.

It might seem like there are no consequences due to the anonymity that the internet can provide, but there are consequences for the person you are targeting. A post-graduate student of psychology from the Osmania University of Hyderabad, Muddasir Mohsin, who also runs an online mental health service, tells us it can cause heightened levels of anxiety and lower self-esteem for the victim. It can also force them to question aspects of their appearance or highlight their insecurities. "Tweet by tweet, IT cells spread their propaganda these days. There are paid pages and websites hired by PRs to harass somebody online. All they want to do is manipulate public opinion, for

With people finding more free time during this lockdown, the number of cyber trolls has been going up with each passing day. But how much is too much and where do we draw the line between free speech and hate speech? *The Pioneer's* SHIKHA DUGGAL talks to a Tollywood celeb along with the founder of Cyber Jagriti and Safety Foundation, on how to deal with trolls and more...



Salony Luthra



Rupesh Mittal

HOW TO DEAL WITH TROLLS:

- ❑ Never forward a message attacking somebody else.
- ❑ Block the user.
- ❑ Keep a record of your inappropriate messages in a folder and track the details of the sender.
- ❑ Respond with facts or diffuse with humour.
- ❑ Don't delete your post.
- ❑ Build a friendly community.



Monsoon calls for precautions to avert serious ailments

The monsoon sure brought with it cool breeze, the beautiful smell of the rains, and so much more. But what it also can bring, are serious ailments. But with good care and precautions, it is possible to keep them at bay.

As the monsoons start, there is a sudden change in temperature — from hot summers to the cool and humid rainy season. Such climate is conducive for a rise in viral infections, which later can transform into a bacterial infection. Apart from the ongoing COVID 19, there is the danger of other common viral infections and dengue, malaria fevers too. Children and the elderly are more vulnerable during these conditions.

While the rainfall will make the conditions better for the parthenium grass to grow in open plots, and people who are allergic to

the spores of this grass will face problems like sneezing, headaches, and colds. If proper care is not taken in the initial stages, this can lead to more dangerous infections of the sinuses and pneumonia.

Thanks to the awareness raised due to the COVID attack, the common precautions like wearing a mask, sanitisation, and social distancing already being practised. Apart from this, taking a healthy diet, more vegan, and lots of warm fluids with lemon and honey, will also improve one's immunity.

Those who are already allergic to climate change and the parthenium spores should be careful while venturing out and take immediate medication if they catch a cold or cough in the initial phase.

Daily nasal douching with warm saline or Jalneti will help reduce viral load in the nose. Brahmari Pranayam and Simha Kriya would also help to improve the sinuses

and lung strength.

Apart from the above precautionary measures, if cold or cough persists, it is important to consult an ENT or a general physician and get treated accordingly. Infants need to be taken care of, as colds can cause immediate nose blocks and thereby lead to mouth breathing which in turn causes disturbed sleep and growth issues over a period of time.

ENT problems that are common during this season are allergic rhinitis and sinusitis, which lead to running nose, headaches, on occasion fevers, fungal infections of the ear and nose, sore throat, etc.

Some precautions to be taken to prevent such conditions are:

- ❑ Avoid proximity with people who are already infected with a cold and sore throat, keep the ears dry to avoid fungal and bacterial infections,

avoid wearing damp clothes, wet walls at home can breed fungus which can lead to health issues, get the walls treated to avoid such unpleasant conditions.

- ❑ Drink plenty of warm fluids, including immunity-boosting foods like fresh vegetables and fruits, yogurt, etc. get out into sunlight whenever possible, avoid smoking and alcohol.
- ❑ Sinusitis, ear discharge, sore throat should be attended to promptly with medication under ENT specialist supervision, as they are easy to cure with minimal medication in the initial stages.

'Prevention is better than cure' is the best precaution in the present scenario.

(The writer, Dr. D Vidyasagar, is a Consultant ENT surgeon, Shenoy Hospitals, East Marredpally, and Apollo Hospitals, Secunderabad.)

Daily nasal douching with warm saline or Jalneti will help reduce viral load in the nose. Brahmari Pranayam and Simha Kriya would also help to improve the sinuses and lung strength. ENT problems that are common during this season are allergic rhinitis and sinusitis, which lead to running nose, headaches, on occasion fevers, fungal infections of the ear and nose, sore throat, etc.

— DR. D VIDYASAGAR,



The monsoons brings with it a cravings for 'chai and samonsa', 'vada pav', deep fried Punugulu or South Indian favourite Murukku depending on which region you're in. There's nothing quite like Indian fast food to hit the spot. However with COVID-19 safety and hygiene standards, many of us our resigned to helping ourselves to not half as tasty, made-at-home variants. Tata Sky Cooking Expert, Chef Harpal Singh is set to change all that with a modern twist to street food treats; you don't miss the fun and at the same time surprise your taste buds

MONSOON TREATS

PIZZA SEV PURI

WHAT YOU NEED:

- Tomato sauce: 1 cup
- Onion chopped: 1/2 cup
- Assorted bell pepper: 1 tbsp each
- Red chilly flakes: 1 tsp
- Mixed herbs: 1 tsp
- Coriander leaves chopped: 1 tbsp
- Butter: 4 tbsp
- Cocktail pizza base: 12 no
- Cheese grated: 1 cup
- Green Chutney: 1/2 cup
- Sev: 1 cup
- Coriander Sprig for garnishing
- Salt to taste

HOW TO MAKE:

- In a bowl add tomato sauce, chopped onion, assorted bell peppers, chilly flakes and herbs, Mix it well.
- Add chopped coriander leaves and salt. Keep it aside.
- Heat a non-stick pan, add butter and lightly saute pizza bases press them gently, cook until light brown.
- Remove pizza base in plate spread salsa sauce on top, add chilly flakes, mixed herbs and cheese.
- Heat butter on same pan and place base on it. Cover with lid and cook on low flame till the cheese melts.
- Take out in serving plates add green chutney and sev on top of it.
- Garnish with sprig of coriander leaves, sprinkle some chilly flakes and serve.



CHEESY GRILLED BHUTTA

WHAT YOU NEED

- Fresh corn: 1
- Oil: 1 tbsp
- Tomato ketchup
- Crushed black pepper: 1 tsp
- Lemon juice
- Cheese slice: 4
- Butter (room temp.): 2 tbsp
- Mix herbs: 2 tsp
- Chilli flakes: 1 tsp

HOW TO MAKE:

- Cut the corn into equal size and cut each roundel into half.
- Heat oil in grill pan and place the corn over the pan and grilled them.
- When corn is grilled well add salt, brush tomato ketchup, sprinkle black pepper crush, 1 tsp of mix herbs, lemon juice. Cut cheese slice into half and place over the corn.
- Brush butter then sprinkle remaining mix herbs and chilli flakes.
- Remove in serving plates and serve hot.

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



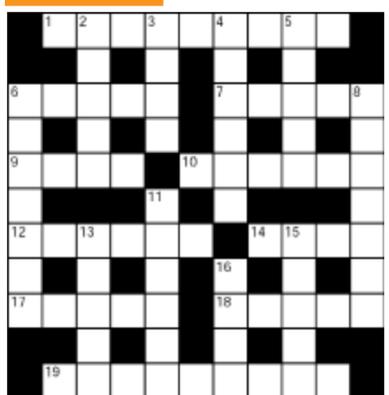
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

ACROSS

- 1 Got better after illness
- 6 A money-holder
- 7 The parts along the end or sides of something
- 9 A group of people in a court who decide if someone is guilty or not
- 10 Film theatre
- 12 Going to live elsewhere
- 14 Trip over
- 17 A tube used for drinking
- 18 Approximately
- 19 Extremely frightened

DOWN

- 4 This covers an eye
- 5 A large bird of prey
- 6 Clothes worn in bed
- 8 A bright red colour
- 11 Reply
- 13 Part of a song or poem
- 15 By yourself
- 16 Fifty percent

SOLUTION

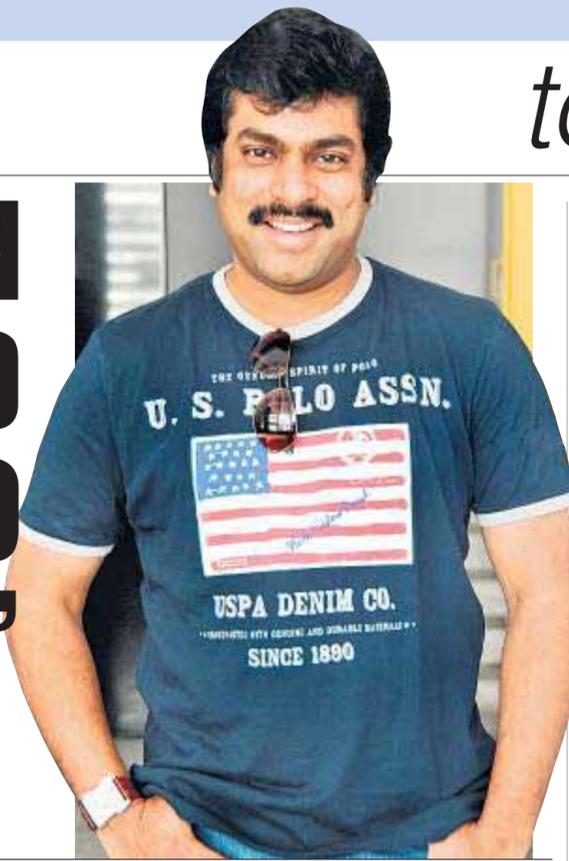


GINGER MEGGS



'EVERY 30 MIN PRASANTH WOULD CAUTION UNIT TO REMAIN ALERT'

With major production houses and top stars refusing to shoot at this juncture, Harsha's decision to report to work came as a surprise, reports NAGARAJ GOUD



One of the prominent actors to have resumed his work with COVID-19 threat still looming large was Harsha Vardhan. He recently shot for portions of Prasanth Varma's still-untitled next on coronavirus in Hyderabad. With major production houses and top stars refusing to shoot at this juncture, Harsha's decision to report to work came as a surprise. He admits it was quite scary but also reminds us of the fact that people who are cooped at their homes are also getting infected with coronavirus. "Somewhere we have to move on. I believe the vac-

cine will take another year or 18 months to hit the market. Asymptomatic cases are on the rise, so are people who are recovering. I was just taking a chance because the fatality rate is not high. A month before joining the shoot, I've started improving my immunity levels. I've been drinking a lot of fluids with jeera, ginger, and turmeric. Plus, I've been doing cardio and breathing exercises every day for the past 20 days," the actor tells us.

The makers of Harsha's film recently released a video wherein the limited crew has gone about their job in adherence with the guide-

lines listed out by the Telangana government. "As someone who saw other productions, the care that Prasanth Varma took was unbelievable. From purchasing high-end PPE kits to the crew to ensuring the disinfection of sets before we entered the sets, he made sure that the location was safe for filming. Then there were sanitizers, gloves, face shields and masks at one corner. Every half an hour, he would caution the entire unit to remain alert through his microphone. Until the team gets acquainted with the way presently shooting is going on, such check measures are mandatory," the actor opines,

adding: "The pandemic is a first of a kind problem. You might plan something but once you enter the field of action, the situation will be different. There is a semi-risk involved but Prasanth has been ensuring everyone's safety though."

After his shot gets the approval of the director, Harsha is retiring to his sanitised car. "I'm using the caravan only to change my attire, that's it. Otherwise, I'm mostly relaxing in the car when I'm not required for a shot. I'm carrying home food to the sets. Not just me, after every shot, I see actors immediately putting on their masks," he points out, adding

that with an eye on trying to remain vigilant and other on reeling out the required emotions of the scene, the experience has been challenging for him as an actor. "There's a sense of feeling that I'm not free as an actor like before, which is natural I guess. But I'm sure over time I'll get used to it."

In the film, he plays father to the male lead and while his screen time is limited, the role has its own importance, he maintains. "The film is a hilarious comedy entertainer and one of the best scripts I've heard in the recent past. Prasanth has incorporated a lot of day-to-day life incidents into the screenplay," he

shares. Harsha foresees the "present chaos to end by August-end after which people will proceed with their lives, while taking the necessary precautions." "As of now, I don't see anyone without masks on roads. The fear factor has driven people to take proper measures to stay away from the outbreak. It is good for a healthy society," he concludes, signing off.

KRACK is not going straight to digital: Producer

Buzz that the makers of Ravi Teja-starrer *Krack* are in talks with a leading streaming giant to release the film — bypassing cinema halls — has done the rounds for a major part on Monday. When *The Pioneer* reached out to the film's producer Tagore Madhu, who is shepherding it under Saraswathi Films Division, he refuted the reports as fake. "We don't know when shootings resume and *Krack* still needs around 15 days to be wrapped up. So the question of negotiating a deal with an OTT player is completely ruled out. We are keen on a theatrical release for sure though we don't know what the future holds for us," he said.



He further said that producers who have releases lined-up are under stress and such fake news only dis-

turbs them further. "There are other people like financiers, distributors and actors and we have to balance all of them before taking any major decision," he reminded.

An intense action thriller shot realistically, *Krack* sees Ravi Teja in the role of a cop, while Shruti Haasan is cast opposite him. Rounding off the supporting roles are Samuthirakani, Varalakshmi Sarath Kumar, Devi Prasad, Pujita Ponnada and Chirag Jani.

— NG

RAKUL PREET Singh is 'waiting for the world to be normal'

Bollywood actress Rakul Preet Singh has described what "waiting for the world to be normal" is like for her, through her expressive snapshot on Instagram. In the image, Rakul Preet is seen resting her head on the table with a faraway gaze. She describes the look with the words: "Waiting for the world to be normal be like..." The image currently has 778K likes.

Rakul Preet recently shared a glimpse from her outdoor session with her father. She posted a clip in which she can be seen playing badminton with her father in her residential society premises.

The actress arrived in Delhi from Mumbai last month. She even shared her experience of travelling amid the Covid pandemic, sharing a picture of her arrival at the airport. In the image, she is seen wearing a PPE suit, face shield, gloves and a mask.

Coming up for Rakul Preet is a rom-com co-starring Arjun Kapoor. She will also be seen in Kamal Haasan's ambitious upcoming film *Indian 2*, which co-stars Kajal Aggarwal and Siddharth.

Wedding bells for writer Prasanna



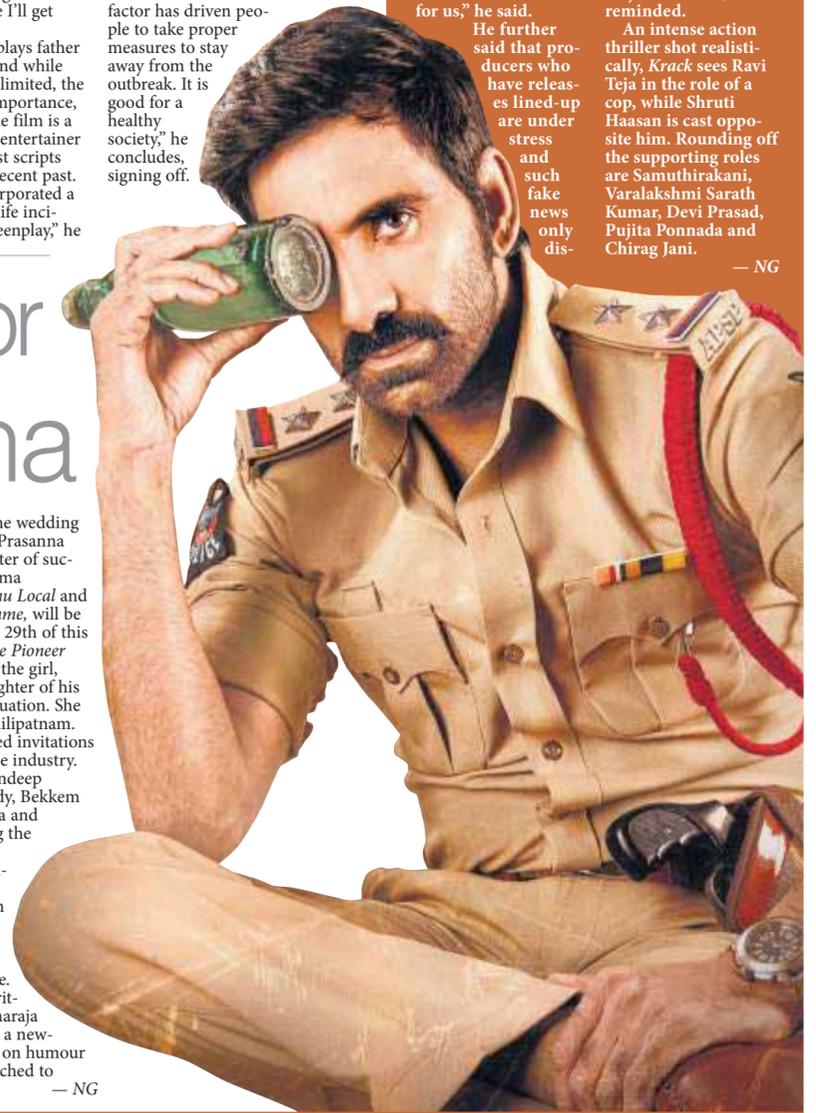
In continuation with the wedding season in Tollywood, Prasanna Kumar Bezwada, writer of successful films like *Cinema Choopista Maava*, *Nenu Local* and *Hello Guru Premakosame*, will be entering into marital bliss on the 29th of this month at Dwaraka Tirumala. *The Pioneer* has learnt. An arranged alliance, the girl, Mounika, happens to be the daughter of his relatives and has completed graduation. She hails from his native place, Machilipatnam.

The writer has already extended invitations to some noted personalities of the industry. We hear the likes of Dil Raju, Sundeeep Kishan, Raj Tarun, Nandini Reddy, Bekkum Venugopal, Trinadh Rao Nakkina and *Jabardusth* gang will be attending the wedding.

The writer confirmed the development when we spoke to him, saying that he is in his home town right now, while his family is overseeing the preparations. "Mounika is a simple, sweet and innocent girl," he said with a smile.

On the work front, his next writing assignment is with mass Maharaja Raviteja. The film is touted to be a new-age commercial entertainer high on humour and emotions, with Nakkina attached to direct.

— NG



Sharwaa adopts a GHMC park

Actor Sharwanand, on Monday, took up the Green India challenge and planted a sapling in a park near his residence in Banjara Hills.

The actor was accompanied by Rajya Sabha member J Santosh Kumar, GHMC Mayor Bonthu Rammohan, Khairatabad MLA Danam Nagender, among others. On the occasion, Sharwanand announced to adopt the GHMC park and see to it that all plants are safe. He also announced to contribute funds for the development of the park and build a walking track there.

Most Read NEWS

UP cops come up with unique punishment

Dare to walk out in Uttar Pradesh without covering the face with a mask? Be prepared to write 'mask Lagana hain' not one, two, ten or a hundred times, but 500 times, as punishment. According to reports, the ingenious way to punish violators for not wearing masks has been designed by the police, district admin, and doctors. Once a person will be caught without donning a mask, he or she will be dragged to sit in what they're calling a 'mask ki class.' In the 'mask ki class,' the Firozabad district administration along with the Uttar Pradesh state police will hunt them and make them write the phrase 'mask must be worn' five hundred times in Hindi. The whole ordeal for the violator will be overseen by police, a district admin, and a doctor. "In this class, lessons will be imparted to those people who are found moving out without a mask," Senior Superintendent of Police Sachindra Patel said. "These people will not face any police action but will be made to sit in the class for 3-4 hours," he said about the campaign that will begin from Tilak Inter College under the supervision of Superintendent of Police and City Magistrate. People, in the class, will be shown footage educating them about the benefits of wearing face masks in public, the SSP added.



Sex workers demand to reopen brothels

Sex workers in Germany are demanding the right to get back to work as the country's brothels remain closed due to the coronavirus pandemic. Approximately 400 prostitutes and brothel operators from across Germany demonstrated in the red light district of Hamburg, Germany news agency Deutsche Welle reported. Prostitution is legal and regulated in Germany but the country's brothels have been closed for almost four months due to the outbreak. Now, sex workers say they are being treated unfairly and are demanding the right to return to work, especially as other businesses where close contact is permitted, such as hair salons and tattoo parlors, have reopened. The protest was organized by the Association of Sex Workers with the group warning that the closure of licensed venues had forced some prostitutes onto the streets, putting them in danger both in terms of their health and personal safety. Ahead of the protest on Herberstrasse, a street in the district of St. Pauli in Hamburg and the only street in the city's "red light district" where sex workers occupy windows, similar to Amsterdam's red light district.



India's only golden tiger spotted in Assam

A picture of a Golden tiger spotted in Kaziranga, Assam, has left netizens amazed after it went viral on social media. It is the only golden tiger currently known to be alive in India. Shared by Indian Forest Officer Parveen Kaswan, the pictures of the Golden tiger, also known as 'Tabby tiger' or 'Strawberry tiger', were clicked by wildlife photographer Mayuresh Hendre. "Do you know in #India we have a Golden Tiger also. The only documentation of such big cat in 21st century on the planet," Kaswan tweeted while posting the viral pic. He further tweeted that the animal is very rare and the golden colour is due to a "recessive gene", which gets expressed due to extensive inbreeding. Unlike the Royal Bengal tiger, it has red and brown stripes and has a pale golden colour. Since being shared online, the picture of the golden tiger has gone viral on social media, leaving netizens awestruck.



Couple wears spacesuits to beach amid Covid-19

In a full-proof effort to beat the deadly COVID-19 pandemic, a couple in Brazil visited a beach in full astronaut suits. The duo -- Tercio Galdino and Aliceia Lima -- were spotted while they were strolling on the beach in Rio De Janeiro alongside Copacabana's famed stretch of sands. According to reports, 66-year old accountant Galdino bought the spacesuits and after that made the helmets for himself and his wife. The couple reportedly put smiles on people's faces during their 'Spacewalk'. There have been several similar incidents where people had dressed up as dinosaurs or other cartoon characters or animals in order to get out of their houses during the lockdown. Brazil's total coronavirus death toll stands at 72,100, while the total number of cases is at 1,864,681. It has the second-highest coronavirus death toll, it is surpassed only by the United States, which has registered over 135,000 COVID-19 fatalities. Brazil and the United States are also the top two countries in terms of the total number of registered coronavirus cases. Meanwhile, Michelle Bolsonaro -- the wife of Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro who is sick with the new coronavirus -- said last week that she and her two daughters had tested negative for the virus.



Man City free to play Champions League

CAS lifts club's two-year ban from European competition, cuts fine to \$16m

AFP ■ LONDON

Manchester City's two-year UEFA ban from European football has been overturned by the Court of Arbitration of Sport (CAS), the Lausanne-based court said on Monday. The CAS ruled that the English Premier League runners-up did not breach financial fair play (FFP) rules by disguising equity funding as sponsorship, and also imposed a lower €10 million (\$15.7 million) fine for failing to co-operate with the continental football governing body. "The club welcomes the implications of today's ruling as a validation of the club's position and the body of evidence that it was able to present," City said in a statement. The decision means Pep Guardiola's team will compete in next season's Champions League, for which they have qualified by finishing second to Liverpool in the Premier League. They also lead Real Madrid 2-1 in this season's round of 16 after the away leg. City were accused of deliberately inflating the value of income from sponsors with links to the Abu Dhabi United Group, also owned by City owner Sheikh Mansour, to avoid falling foul of FFP regulations between 2012 and 2016. The case against City was reopened when German magazine Der Spiegel published a series of leaked e-mails in 2018. "Most of the alleged breaches reported by the (UEFA) adjudicatory chamber of the club financial control body were either not established or time-barred," CAS said in a statement. UEFA had ruled in February that



TOP-4 RACE INTENSIFIES

LONDON: Manchester City's success in overturning its Champions League ban on Monday has huge ramifications on the Premier League and the remaining two teams that will qualify for Europe's top club competition. Chelsea, Manchester United and Leicester — and maybe Wolverhampton Wanderers and Sheffield United, too — are now fighting for two qualifying spots instead of three with two weeks of the season remaining. The fight for a top-five finish has reverted back to needing to be in the top four to join champion Liverpool and City, already secured in second place, in earning tens of millions of dollars in UEFA prize money next season. The most concerned team is likely to be Leicester. In the top four since September — and, in December, even looking like the most realistic title challenger to Liverpool — Leicester has imploded, collecting only two wins from its last 11 league games stretching back to the end of January. After losing to relegation-threatened Bournemouth 4-1 on Sunday, Leicester will find itself in fifth place if Man United beats Southampton on Monday. United appears much more likely to secure a top-four finish and return to the Champions League after a season's absence. With four straight wins ahead of the Southampton game, United is the form team in the league and also has the most benign remaining schedule with upcoming matches against Crystal Palace and West Ham before what could be a winner-takes-all game at Leicester on the final weekend of the season. Making it all the more intriguing is the fact that another final-day match is between Chelsea and Wolves. Chelsea is currently in third place, one point ahead of Leicester, but will drop into fourth if United beats Southampton. AP



Foxes collapse at Vitality

AP ■ BOURNEMOUTH

Dominic Solanke scored twice as Bournemouth's bid for Premier League survival was boosted by a 4-1 victory over Champions League-chasing Leicester, which was reduced to 10 men. They were the striker's first goals since joining from Liverpool in January 2019 after failing to score in his 38 previous league appearances. At Dean Court, Leicester scored after 23 minutes as Jamie Vardy bagged his 23rd league goal of the season to extend his lead in the Golden Boot race. But Bournemouth turned the game on Sunday in its favor during a two-minute spell which saw Leicester lose a player. In the 66th minute, Leicester keeper Kasper Schmeichel boot-ed a goal-kick into Wilfred Ndidi's back, forcing his teammate to trip Callum Wilson. Junior Stanislas stepped up to score the resulting penalty and 101 seconds later Dominic Solanke's weak shot trickled under Schmeichel's woeful attempt to save. Leicester defender Caglar Soyuncu sent off for kicking Wilson as he attempted to retrieve the ball from the net after Solanke's goal. Bournemouth's luck was in and Stanislas's strike went in off Leicester's Jonny Evans for an 83rd-minute own goal before Solanke's composed finish made it four in the 87th minute. Bournemouth's first win in 10 games, a drought stretching back to February 1, moved them to within three points of 17th placed Watford, with three games left for all the teams in the relegation fight. Fourth-placed Leicester will drop to fifth if Manchester United beat Southampton on Monday, leaving their hopes of Champions League qualification in danger. "I didn't see that coming but we are not good enough to get too comfortable. We will finish where we deserve to," Leicester manager Brendan Rodgers said.



PSG welcome fans with 9-0 win

AFP ■ PARIS

Italy and Spain, France abandoned its league season in the face of the coronavirus pandemic, but when the other four countries resumed their leagues, they did so behind closed doors. Although social distancing rules were in place, fans took a few liberties once they were in the 25,000-capacity Stade Ocean on Sunday. On the field, Neymar and Mauro Icardi each scored twice and Kylian Mbappe once before PSG made 10 changes leading 5-0 at half time. Pablo Sarabia, with two, Idrissa Gueye and Arnaud Kalimuendo scored in the first 15 minutes of the second half to complete the rout as PSG started to warm up for a busy few weeks in late July and early August. PSG are due to play Saint-Etienne in the French Cup final on July 24 and Lyon in the French League Cup Final on July 31 before resuming their Champions League campaign away to Atalanta on August 12. Both French finals will be at the 80,000-seat Stade de France in Paris.

Sevilla almost book top 4 spot

AFP ■ SEVILLE

Sevilla all-but secured Champions League qualification by beating relegation battlers Real Mallorca 2-0 on Sunday in La Liga. Lucas Ocampos scored a first-half penalty before Youssef En-Nesyri added a second late on to move Sevilla nine points clear of fifth-placed Villarreal. With three games left and the superior head-to-head, Villarreal are not mathematically out of contention but they would have to take maximum points and see Sevilla lose both of their remaining matches. "Champions League qualification was our objective," said Sevilla's Fernando Reges. "We are very close and now we just have some small steps left to make it." Finishing in the top four would be an impressive achievement for Sevilla and their coach Julen Lopetegui, who took over last year following his nightmares in charge of Spain and Real Madrid. They could even yet finish third, given they sit level on points with Atletico Madrid. Defeat damages Real Mallorca's fading hopes of avoiding relegation. They remain three points behind Alaves, who have a superior record head-to-head and a game in hand against Getafe on Monday.



Milan keep European hopes alive

NAPLES: AC Milan kept their hopes of European football alive on Sunday with a 2-2 draw at Napoli that leaves them with a strong chance of reaching the Europa League.

Frank Kessie's penalty 17 minutes from time gave Milan a battling point in Naples after Giovanni Di Lorenzo and Dries Mertens had put the hosts deservedly ahead with an hour gone. The draw leaves Napoli in sixth place and the final Europa League spot, but as Gennaro Gattuso's side have already qualified for the competition's group stage by



winning the Italian Cup, seventh place currently offers a place into the qualifying rounds. Milan, who are two points and one place behind Napoli, are favourites to take the third spot in the Europa.

"When you get results and put in strong performances against this kind of opponent, it really boosts your confidence," said Milan coach Stefano Pioli. Theo Hernandez gave the away side the lead against the run of play with 19 minutes gone when he met Ante Rebic's brilliant cross with a thumping volley, but Napoli responded brilliantly to going behind. They were deservedly level 14 minutes later thanks to a fizzing free-kick delivery from Lorenzo Insigne which Gianluigi Donnarumma pat-

Pellegrini wants Betis fighting in Europe

MADRID: Manuel Pellegrini's main goal in his new coaching job with Real Betis is to make the Spanish club a regular in European competitions.

Pellegrini was officially introduced as Betis' new coach on Monday after signing a three-year deal that will begin next season. "This is a team that has to be fighting for European competitions," the Chilean coach said. "It needs it as an institution and it will be my main objective to help the club take that leap and achieve better results on the field." Pellegrini helped Villarreal thrive in Europe more than a decade ago, making it to the Champions League semifinals in 2006 and quarterfinals in 2009. He also led the club to a runner-up finish in the Spanish league in 2008. "If they told me before arriving at Villarreal that we would play in the semifinals and quarterfinals of the Champions League, or that we would finish second in La Liga,



people would have said that that was crazy," the 66-year-old Pellegrini said. Betis last played in the Champions League in 2005-06. It made it to the Europa League in 2013-14 and 2018-19. Pellegrini said he hoped to achieve with Betis the same success he had with his previous clubs in Spain. "I'm convinced that Betis has a squad with a lot of quality and that can achieve great things," Pellegrini said. "I will try to help with my experience to try to get the most out of the team." AP

U-17 WWC will be held behind closed doors in worst-case scenario: AIFF

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup will be held behind closed doors only in the worst-case scenario, All India Football Federation general secretary Kunal Das said on Monday amid a continued rise in the country's Covid-19 case count. Already postponed once, the tourney is to be held from February 17 to March 7 next year as per the revised schedule. "In the worst case scenario, we will have to do it behind closed doors and that will be a pity (especially after the grand success of the

I-LEAGUE MUST GO ON

NEW DELHI: The All India Football Federation plans to go ahead with the 2020-21 I-League season even if the clubs' star foreign recruits are unable to make it due to the coronavirus-forced travel restrictions. International flights remain suspended since March

owing to the Covid-19 pandemic. "The league must go on even if without foreigners. But there are other people including the league committee chairman, Mr Subrata Dutta (who will also be need to be on same page)," AIFF general secretary Kunal Das said on Monday. PTI