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BEWARE OF AN
INJURED XI

MONEY 8
TOP CEOS DISCUSS WAYS TO BOOST
INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITIES

SPORTS 12
ROOT RETURNS FOR
OLD TRAFFORD TEST

HYDERABAD, THURSDAY JULY 16, 2020; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer



NANI IS PROUD
OF HIT GOING TO
B'WOOD: DIRECTOR
R SAILESH
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AIR INDIA TO SEND STAFF ON COMPULSORY LEAVE WITHOUT PAY FOR UP TO 5 YEARS

In a move meant to reduce its number of employees, the board of Air India has allowed the airline's Chairman and Managing Director (CMD) to recommend that a non-performing staff member be compulsorily sent on leave without pay for a period of up to five years. Employees will be assessed by a board in the following categories: Suitability, efficiency, competence, quality of performance, health of the employee, instance of non-availability of the employee for duty in the past as a result of ill health or otherwise and redundancy. Air India CMD Rajiv Bansal can now send employees on leave without pay for six months or for a period of two years extendable upto five years," an official order said.



IIT-DELHI DEVELOPS WORLD'S CHEAPEST COVID DIAGNOSTIC KIT FOR RS 399

Claimed to be the world's most affordable diagnostic kit for coronavirus, a low-cost test kit developed by the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT) in New Delhi was launched on Wednesday. According to IIT officials, the base price of the RT-PCR assay developed by IIT Delhi is Rs 399. Even after adding the RNA isolation and laboratory charges, the cost per test will go upto Rs 650 and will be considerably cheaper compared to currently available kits in the market. It can deliver results within three hours. HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' launched the test kit named 'Corosure' which will now be available for use at authorised testing labs.



JIO GLASS MIXED REALITY HEADSET WITH WIRELESS AUDIO, 3D VIDEO CALLING ANNOUNCED

Jio Glass, a mixed reality headset, was announced at the annual Reliance AGM 2020 on Wednesday. The headset essentially pairs with your phone to let you conduct classes, make video calls, and host meetings in a 3D holographic environment. Jio Platforms' Tesseract subsidiary has designed the Jio Glass, and it is said to be compatible with 25 mixed reality apps already. The mixed reality headset has an ergonomic design for comfortable use and a camera up front. It has a slew of sensors built-in to allow users to engage in immersive content. The Jio Glass is lightweight and weighs only 75 grams.



IMD ISSUES YELLOW ALERT FOR HYDERABAD

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Wednesday issued a yellow alert with regard to weather, while warning of heavy rains in parts of Hyderabad and in some of the neighbouring districts. A 'yellow' alert signifies 'watch' and the authorities are advised to "be updated" on the situation. The IMD warning said that at times intense spells in one or two areas of the city will be witnessed. It has been raining profusely in the city since Wednesday afternoon in city areas, including Jubilee Hills, Banjara Hills, Madhapur, Kukatpally, Moosapet, JNTU, Pragati Nagar, Uppal, Nagole, ECL, Chikkadpally and Balanagar. Roads were inundated at various places due to heavy rains.



Skill development need of the hour, Guv tells youth

2

COVID-19 VACCINE IS COMING SOON

OXFORD PHASE III HUMAN TRIALS YIELD 'ENCOURAGING IMMUNE RESPONSE'

PNS ■ LONDON

Mark your calendar today as it could turn out to be a watershed moment in the fight against Covid-19. According to reports, "positive news" on initial trials of the University of Oxford's potential Covid-19 vaccine (licensed to AstraZeneca) could be announced on Thursday.

Across the globe, researchers are working round the clock to find a vaccine against SARS-CoV-2 -- the virus behind the pandemic. More than 155 vaccines are being developed against the coronavirus, of which 23 are in human trials. Vaccines typically require years of research and testing before it can be administered in the clinic. Given the urgency of a vaccine

US stocks rally after promising Covid vaccine results from Moderna

The Wall Street on Wednesday cheered the promising early results from US-based pharmaceutical major Moderna's experimental vaccine, mRNA-1273, and solid earnings from Goldman Sachs Group. The three main US stock indexes have recovered most of their losses from the coronavirus-led downturn. Earlier, Moderna's experimental vaccine, mRNA-1273 which is designed to protect against the Covid-19 virus was generally well tolerated and prompted neutralising antibody activity in healthy adults, say researchers. Moderna stocks surged 17.8 per cent to a record high after the news. mRNA-1273 vaccine is designed to induce neutralising antibodies directed at a portion of the coronavirus 'spike' protein, which the virus uses to bind to and enter human cells.

Against Covid-19, experts estimate that a fast-tracked vaccine development process could see a successful candidate in market in about 12-18 months. Amidst all this comes the

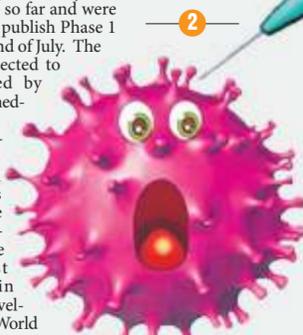
heartening news that Oxford's potential vaccine is already in large-scale Phase III human trials to assess whether it can protect against Covid-19, though its developers have yet to report

Phase I results, which would show whether it is safe and whether or not it induces an immune response.

The developers of the vaccine said this month they were "encouraged" by the immune response they had seen in trials so far and were expecting to publish Phase I data by the end of July. The data are expected to be published by The Lancet medical journal.

AstraZeneca's experimental vaccine is probably the world's leading candidate and most advanced in terms of development, the World

Health Organization's chief scientist said in June. The company has signed agreements with governments around the globe to supply the vaccine, should it be cleared for use.



ZYDUS BEGINS HUMAN TRIALS

NEW DELHI: Indian pharmaceutical company Zydus said on Wednesday it has started human studies for its potential COVID-19 vaccine, as coronavirus infections continue to surge in the world's third worst-hit nation. ZyCoV-D, its plasmid DNA vaccine, was found to be safe, immunogenic and well-tolerated in the pre-clinical toxicity studies, Zydus said here. In the human trials, Zydus will enrol over 1,000 subjects across multiple clinical study sites in India.

TN okays use of BCG vaccine for 60-95 aged patients

PNS ■ CHENNAI

The Tamil Nadu government has allowed a pilot project to study if the bacille Calmette-Guérin (BCG) vaccine will help reduce the mortality rate among elderly Covid-19 patients, according to said Health Minister C. Vijayabaskar, here on Wednesday.

The National Institute for Research in Tuberculosis will start the pilot programme. According to him, the BCG vaccine will be administered on a trial basis to people in the 60-95 age group. The programme was aimed at reducing the Covid-19 mortality rate among them, he said.

2

COVID-19 situation better in Delhi than June says Kejriwal

5

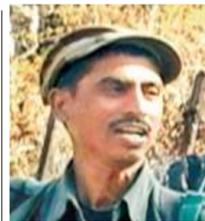
Dreaded ultra escapes, after Maoists ambush cops

PNS ■ WARANGAL

Wanted naxalite and outlawed CPI-Maoists state committee member Bhaskar escaped with injuries and some Greyhounds personnel were injured in two separate encounters that took place late on Tuesday and again on Wednesday.

Bhaskar has been underground for nearly 30 years. He carries a reward of Rs 25 lakh on his head.

In one of the encounters, which took place in the Mangi forest belt of Thiriyani mandal in Komuram Bheem Asifabad district, senior Maoist leader Adelaide alias Bhaskar sus-



In one of the encounters, which took place in the Mangi forest belt of Thiriyani mandal in Asifabad district, senior Maoist leader Adelaide alias Bhaskar sustained grievous injuries and was carried into the dense forests by armed naxalites, police said.

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In the other encounter, which took place in the Karakagudem-Allapalli forests

in Bhadradi Kothagudem District, some Greyhound forces sustained injuries and the forces operating in the region shifted the injured personnel to the district hospital.

2

Telangana Government won't lend credence to 'hidden treasury' theory

L VENKAT RAM REDDY ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana State government is not inclined to lend credence to the theory that a 'hidden treasure' lies beneath the G-Block of the old Secretariat complex, whose demolition began recently until the High Court stayed the process.

Hence, the state government has decided not to seek the help of either the Archaeological



Survey of India (ASI) or the National Mineral Development Corporation (NMDC) to resume excavation works to

The opposition parties had stalled the construction of the new Secretariat for over a year by filing cases in the HC

Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao discussed the sensitive subject with senior officials amid wild speculations in certain quarters that the state government, in the guise of demolition of the old Secretariat complex, was on a hunt of the hidden treasure under a cloak of questionable secrecy. Opposition parties too raised the issue of hidden treasure soon after the Secretariat demolition works commenced.

2

'Deal with Saudi Aramco not progressed as per timelines'

8

Virus-hit Gandhi Bhavan closed

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Gandhi Bhavan, the headquarters of the Congress in Telangana here, is being sanitised after some party leaders and activists tested positive for COVID-19.

The party state unit secretary, who was among those infected, died two days ago.

In view of the sanitisation, the Gandhi Bhavan would remain closed for a few days, Congress sources said on Wednesday.

"It's like a government office being sanitised when COVID-19 positive cases are found and a portion of the office remaining closed for two-three days," they said.



Some leaders of the NSUI (National Students' Union of India), the student wing of the Congress, had tested positive for the virus earlier. State Congress secretary Narendra Yadav succumbed to the infection on July 13 while undergoing treatment.

2

Health Secretary, Commissioner transferred

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In what looks like collateral damage suffered by babudom, the Telangana state government suddenly transferred several IAS officers late on Wednesday, including the key ones handling the fight against Covid-19 pandemic.

Telangana State Health Secretary A Santi Kumari and Health Commissioner Yogita Rana are among the administrative casualties.

2

GRID program will give a push to east Hyderabad, says KTR

NAVEENA GHANATE ■ HYDERABAD

IT and Industries Minister K T Rama Rao has underlined the significance of the state government's 'Growth in dispersion (GRID)' policy, saying it would work to give a push to the IT sector's growth in eastern parts of Hyderabad as well.

He was speaking at the Hyderabad GRID development programme in Uppal on Wednesday.

The IT Minister stated that the state government had come up with the GRID policy for dispersed growth of the IT sector across the city. "The east-



ern side of the city already has companies such as Infosys and Genpact, apart from a number of large, medium and small scale enterprises. With this

initiative, we will see more enterprises and investments coming towards this part of Hyderabad.

2

TS nears 40K cases, 603 patients in ICU

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana State is now nearing 40K in Covid-19 case-load. It reported 1,597 fresh coronavirus cases on Wednesday, taking the total to over 39,342. The total number of deaths from Covid-19 in the state has mounted to 386.

In all, 11 deaths due the virus were reported on Wednesday. The number of patients who have been discharged in the last 24 hours is 1,159, taking the tally of those who have recovered till date to 25,999. The number of active cases in the state is 12,958.

2

3-day-old infant travels 17 hrs, survives cardiac surgery

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A three-day-old infant born in Uttar Pradesh travelled 17 hours on ventilator in an ambulance to get admitted to Newborn Intensive Care Unit (NICU) in the national capital for a cardiac procedure.

Post-surgery, the miracle child showed immense improvement and was discharged within 10 days of neonatal intensive care.

The recent event came to light when the infant was referred to Indraprastha Apollo Hospital in Delhi, post-developing breathing trouble right after birth.



Surgeons said that the surgery was a high-risk procedure owing to the infant's low birth weight of around 1.5 kg -- the lowest weighing child to

have ever gone through such a complex cardiac procedure at this hospital. In view of need, Apollo arranged for the baby's travel to Delhi.

Surgeons said that the surgery was a high-risk procedure owing to the infant's low birth weight of around 1.5 kg -- the lowest weighing child to have ever gone through such a complex cardiac procedure at this hospital.

"The child travelled for 17 hours on a ventilator in an ambulance and was successfully operated at Apollo Hospital," the hospital told IANS.

Dr Muthu Jothi, Senior Consultant, Pediatric Cardiothoracic Surgery, Interventional Cardiology at Indraprastha Apollo Hospitals said that the case was specifically challenging as a lot of time

was lost in getting the baby here and beginning his treatment.

"The surgery was a high-risk procedure owing to the infant's low birth weight (1.5 kgs). This was the lowest weighing child at 1.5 kgs, to have ever gone through such a complex cardiac procedure at this hospital.

2

TS students shine in CBSE Class X results

NAMRATA SRIVASTAVA ■ HYDERABAD

In all, 99.21 per cent of Telangana students who took the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) Class X examination have passed, going by the results declared by CBSE on Wednesday.

Of the 28,362 students from Telangana who registered for the CBSE X board exam, 28,314 appeared and 28,090 passed, translating to pass percentage of 99.21. While 99.51 per cent of girls



passed, the pass percentage for boys is 98.97.

2

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham: Ashadha & Krishna Paksha Panchangam

Tithi : Ekadashi: 11:44 pm

Nakshatram: Kritika: 06:53 pm

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

Rahukalam: 01:59 pm - 03:36 pm

Yamagandam: 05:54 am - 07:31 am

Varjyam: NIL

Gulika: 09:08 am - 10:45 am

Good Time: (to start any important work)

Amritkalam: 04:16 pm - 06:00 pm

Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:56 am - 12:48 pm

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Heavy rain

Temp: 26/22

Humidity: 94%

Sunrise: 05:50 am

Sunset: 06:53 pm

Current Weather Conditions
Updated July 15, 2020 5:00 PM

COVID HOSPITALS IN ALL DISTRICTS, SAYS HARISH

PNS ■ SIDDIPEET

In tune with Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao's orders, a 100-bed hospital was inaugurated in Siddipet on Wednesday. Finance Minister T Harish Rao inaugurated the Covid-19 hospital.

Speaking in this connection, he said that the Chief Minister has been monitoring the situation daily and issuing necessary instructions to Health Minister Eatala Rajender and officials upon reviewing the situation. In addition to 100-bed hospital in Siddipet, a 20-bed ICU has been started in Siddipet. All beds in the hospital will have oxygen cylinder facility. The patients who require ventilator facility would be provided treatment here only.

Finance Minister said that Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao has decided to create 100-bed hospitals in all the district headquarters in the State to decentralise



Finance Minister said that Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao has decided to create 100-bed hospitals in all the district headquarters in the State to decentralise treatment for Covid-19 patients and for effective tackling of the pandemic.

The government has already

appointed 28 doctors and 150 nurses and support staff exclusively for the isolation block, the Minister said, adding that

people who test positive, but not having symptoms will be advised to stay in isolation in their own homes.

The Minister, however, clarified that people who do not have proper isolation facility at home will be shifted to the 100-bed isolation block where they would be given proper medication and food until they recover. Persons suffering from serious symptoms such as breathlessness will be shifted to Osmania or Gandhi Hospital in Hyderabad, the Minister said. Therefore, the people should not worry about the quality of treatment in the hospital, the Minister assured the people.

Later, the Minister went around the isolation ward and interacted with nurses and enquired about their well-being.

He called upon the people to extend moral support to the doctors, nurses, sanitation staff and others terming them as Covid-19 warriors.

Reporter, his brother attacked

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A reporter working with a vernacular newspaper and his brother were allegedly attacked and injured by a group of persons at Road No 10 in Banjara Hills on Wednesday. In a complaint to the Police, the victim, Arun Kumar said that he was going along with his brother on a motorcycle when the group stopped them at Nandinar on Banjara Hills Road No 10.

Four persons, who were in inebriated condition abused and attacked them. The victim said that they were threatened and beaten with a broken liquor bottle. Preliminary investigation revealed that of the four accused, a person identified as Akhil, commented on Kumar and his brother as they were passing by. Taking objection to this, the duo questioned them. Enraged over this, the group attacked Kumar and his brother with a broken whisky bottle, resulting in injuries to them. Based on Kumar's complaint, the police booked a case and have begun an investigation.

Deadline set for construction of Rythu Vedikas

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar on Wednesday held a video conference with the District Collectors on Pattana Pragathi and Rythu Vedika works with special focus on newly-merged villages in municipalities. This was in the context of posting of Additional Collectors (Local Bodies) in 17 districts after which 29 districts now have these officers.

On the occasion, Chief Secretary pointed out that Municipalities Act provides for importance to creation of critical infrastructure in newly merged villages. He directed Collectors to personally monitor these interventions closely. He also directed the Collectors to continue the momentum and focus on sanitation, spraying of disinfectant as well as anti-larval and vector control measures.

As regards Rythu Vedika, he directed that all remaining sanctions should be expedited and by 18th of this month all works should be physically grounded. It should be



ensured that Rythu Vedika works are allotted to senior officers for monitoring. Proper planning should be in place for procurement of materials so that there are no bottlenecks in implementation. All Rythu Vedika constructions should be completed by 10 October 2020, he added.

Chief Secretary also reviewed issues relating to Rythu Bandhu, construction of drying platforms, identification of lands for construction of godowns and special food processing zones. In addition MNRGS works

were also reviewed with emphasis on convergence with works of other departments such as irrigation, etc. He asked the Collectors to work in tune with the priorities of the government as per the vision of the Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao.

Arvind Kumar, Principal Secretary, MA&UD, Janardhan Reddy, Secretary, Agriculture, Sandeep Kumar Sultania, Secretary, PR&RD, Lokesh Kumar, Commissioner, GHMC, Raghunandan Rao, Commissioner, PR&RD also attended the conference.

Health secretary, commissioner...

Continued from Page 1

The transfer of these two top health officials has triggered speculations that the government is upset with them over their handling of the corona situation in the state. Santi Kumari has now been posted as special chief secretary, forests, while Yogita Rana has been posted as Commissioner, Scheduled Castes development -- considered to be insignificant over their present postings. Syed Ali Murtaza, presently OSD, Telangana Bhavan, New Delhi, has been posted as health secretary and V. Karuna has been posted as health commissioner. Jyoti Buddha Prakash has been post-

ed as additional chief electoral officer. I Rani Kumidini has been posted as special chief secretary, labour department, relieving Ahmad Nadeem from FAC (full additional charge) duties. Rajat Kumar, principal secretary, irrigation, will continue to hold FAC of the post of secretary, environment. Adhar Sinha has been posted as director-general, EPTRI, relieving Rajat Kumar from FAC. L. Sharman, additional secretary, MAUD, has been posted as collector, Nagarkurnool relieving Yasmeen Basha from FAC. A. Sridevasena, collector, Adilabad has been posted as director, school education, relieving Chitra Ramachandran from FAC.

Skill development need of the hour, students told

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan on Wednesday said that India has the potential to emerge as the largest supplier of the skilled force to the world. The Governor, while addressing the "Kamarajar Birthday, Education Development Day and World Youth Skill Development celebrations," jointly organised by the Madurai Kamaraj University and Desiya Chintana Kazhagam, Chennai, from the Raj Bhavan, here emphasised that, "The National Skill Development Mission launched by Prime Minister Shri Narendra Modi is aimed at creating a skilled force of around 40 crore people in the country. It is time that students and youth take advantage of the skill improvement schemes launched by the Centre to

hone their skills."

She pointed out that mere degrees were not of much use unless one possesses the right skills for the right job or to be an entrepreneur. Narrating an anecdote during the American visit of Swami Vivekananda, the Governor said that when some well-dressed shooters were unable to hit the target, Swami volunteered to hit the target with the gun. "Looking at the saffron-clad monk, they mocked at him saying how a monk would handle the gun and hit the target. The swami took the gun and hit the target accurately to the astonishment of the people around. They were shocked and asked him as to how he could hit the target perfectly for which Vivekananda replied that this was due to his mastery of focus which he attained through the meditation. The



Dhyana helps in concentration and focus that are essential to reach our goals," she said.

Tamilisai Soundararajan exhorted the students and youth to concentrate on improving their skills so as to excel in their chosen fields. Referring to the great contribution of Bharat Ratna

Kamarajar, the Governor said that he was a pioneer in educational reforms by establishing numerous schools and launching the free meal to the students in educational institutions. "The karmaveer's path-breaking initiatives in the irrigation development, setting up of industries, and corrup-

tion-free transparent administration, and his simplicity and austere living were of great examples to emulate," she added.

"Prime Minister Narendra Modi Ji said that had the great leaders like Lal Bahadur Shastri, Jaya Prakash Narayan, Ram Manohar Lohia, and Kamarajar were alive, they would have supported him in his endeavours in developing, and strengthening the country," Dr. Tamilisai Soundararajan said. The Governor called upon the youth to emulate the ideals and humble and simplistic life led by Kamarajar in the service of the nation. Madurai Kamaraj University Vice-Chancellor Prof M Krishnan, Registrar Dr VS Vasantha, Desiya Chintana Kazhagam organising secretary Ma Ko Chi Rajendran and others were part of the inaugural session.

TS nears 40K cases, 603 patients in ICU

Continued from Page 1

Hyderabad continues to be hotspot, with 796 cases being reported on Wednesday. Rangareddy reported 212 cases and Medchal reported 115 cases, while Karimnagar and Nalgonda reported 32 and 31 cases each. In all, 29 of the 33 districts in the state reported cases on Wednesday.

As on Wednesday, the bed occupancy is 10.8%, with 89.2% of the beds being vacant. Maximum beds in Gandhi Hospital are occupied by ICU patients and those on oxygen support. In all, 495 patients are in ICU in Gandhi. Overall, 603 patients in the state are in ICU. While 536 persons are in need of oxygen supply, 335 are in Gandhi hospital.

Director of Public Health, in the media bulletin, said, "It is informed that the Government has made elaborate arrangements for treating COVID-19 patients. Sufficient beds are available in Government hospitals. Based on the clinical requirements, beds will be provided and treatment will be given free of cost in Government hospitals. Sufficient quantities of personal protection equipment (PPE) and medicines are available in hospitals."

Virus-hit Gandhi Bhavan closed

Continued from Page 1

State Congress secretary Narender Yadav succumbed to the infection on July 13 while undergoing treatment.

Yadav had participated in the birth anniversary function of former Chief Minister of undivided Andhra Pradesh Y S Rajasekhara Reddy at the Gandhi Bhavan on July 8, the sources said. Senior Congress leader and former MP V Hanumantha Rao and Guduru Narayana Reddy, who were also infected, have recovered.

TN Okays use of...

Continued from Page 1

Vijayabaskar said the BCG vaccine was found to boost innate immunity, which could lower morbidity and mortality rates. The BCG vaccine could reduce the severity of Covid-19, avoid hospitalisation and mortality rate, he added.

GRID program will...

Continued from Page 1

Hyderabad is a city that has no geographical hurdles and has the scope to develop in all the corners," he observed.

KTR noted that under the visionary leadership of Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, the Telangana government was building infrastructure keeping in mind lakhs of people moving to the city.

During the programme, KTR handed over conversion letters to those who had applied for IT Park conversion from their existing industrial parks. With this, the five companies that received conversion letters would set up their firms in about 25 lakh sqft, creating employment opportunities to about 30,000 employees.

Conversion letters were handed over to Hyderabad Distilleries and Wineries Limited, IDA-Uppal - 12.40 acres; Minacto Chem, IDA-Uppal - 2.66 acres; Swamy Soaps and Oils Pvt. Limited, IDA-Uppal - 2.00 Acres; M/s. Gokuldas Exports Limited, Mini Textile Park, Nacharam - 8.93 Acres; and Bakelite Hylam Limited, IDA, Nacharam - 8 acres. An estimated 30,000 people would get direct jobs in the IT/ITES Sector through these five companies. This is in addition to about 25,000 employees working in the NSI, IT Park and Genpact in the Uppal area in the IT sector.

The Minister stated that the government would provide complete assistance to the companies setting up their units on the eastern side of the city. The government had been building infrastructure in this region. The eastern part already had Metro services. Shilparamam too was developing fast with the infrastructure created by the government. The government was strengthening the road network by constructing a skyway from Uppal to Narapally and a flyover from Amberpet to Ramanthapur, he said.

TS students shine in CBSE...

Continued from Page 1

"I am very happy with the results," says Seetha Murthy, the principal of Silver Oaks International School, adding, "We have 100% X results and most of our students have scored more than 90%. I congratulate all the students and teachers for this achievement." Overall, a total of 91.46% of students have passed the examination. This year too, girls have outscored the boys, with a pass percentage of 93.31, while the pass percentage for boys is 90.14%. A total of 2.23% of students, or 41,804, have scored more than 95% marks in CBSE 10th exam this year.

Trivandrum region has again topped, with 99.28 pass percentage, followed by Chennai (98.95%) and Bengaluru (98.23%). The last among regions is Guwahati (79.12%).

Dreaded ultra escapes...

Continued from Page 1

According to reports, there was an ambush by the ultras when the police were conducting combing operations in Mangi, Gundala, Pankidi Madara forests on a tip-off that naxalites were camping in the belt. Later, the SP said any person giving information about the Maoists or any suspicious persons in their area will be rewarded and their identity kept a secret.

The police personnel were attacked on Wednesday by a 13-member group of ultras who opened fire and fled into a forest area of Bhadradi-Kothagudem district. This followed exchange of gunfire in Kumram Bheem Asifabad district late on Tuesday night in which there were no casualties, top police officials said.

It was not clear if some others on the Maoists side were also injured in the incident on

Wednesday morning, police said. Extensive combing operations were under way at both the places and in some of the neighbouring regions. Police said they initially came across five ultras, led by Telangana 'State Committee' member of the CPI (Maoist) Bhaskar, who was armed with AK-47 gun, at around 10.30 pm on Tuesday in Thokkuguda village in Asifabad District during ongoing searches.

"The Maoists opened fire at the police party which retaliated, following which they escaped, Bhaskar, who hails from Adilabad district of Telangana, is allegedly involved in multiple offences and has been underground for nearly 30 years. He carries a reward of Rs 25 lakh on his head announced by the state government. His wife was also a Maoist," Asifabad Superintendent of Police (In-charge) Vishnu S Warrior said.

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Covid-19 vaccine coming soon

Continued from Page 1

Although there was no immediate comment from the company on reports about the positive news due Thursday, a spokeswoman for Oxford University indicated in a blog post on Tuesday: "I am hearing there will be positive news soon (perhaps tomorrow) on initial trials of the Oxford COVID-19 vaccine that is backed by Astra-Zeneca."

Telangana Government won't lend credence to 'hidden treasury' theory

Continued from Page 1

The Chief Minister took note of the fact that ASI and NMDC excavations undertaken in 2012 at Vidyanarya School in front of the Secretariat yielded nothing, though rumours were rife even then about the hidden treasure. So, excavations could not be done merely on the basis of rumours, the Chief Minister stated.

The Chief Minister reportedly felt that the opposition parties had raked up the 'hidden treasury theory' in an effort to once again obstruct the construction of the new Secretariat. The opposition parties had stalled the construction of the new Secretariat for over a year by filing cases

in the High Court, he reasoned, according to sources.

Last week, the state government initiated the process of demolition of the old Secretariat complex to pave way for the construction of what it says would be a new world-class integrated Secretariat complex in its place. There are 11 blocks in the old Secretariat complex, some of which were partially demolished over five days until the High Court halted the demolition works recently. The case is now pending in the High Court.

MORE TO IT THAN MEETS THE EYE
Aside from the queries relating to supposed hidden treasure raised by opposition parties, the unusual secrecy under

which the state government commenced the demolition work in the old Secretariat complex gave room for speculation that there is more to it than meets the eye.

Particularly the manner in which the state government began the Secretariat demolition works inter alia by deploying heavy police force during the midnight of

July 7 keeping everyone in the dark, closing all roads leading to the Secretariat, shutting CCTV cameras in and around the Secretariat premises, imposing ban on media and carrying of mobile phones by officials or workers inside the Secretariat complex where demolition works were in

progress and suspending two police constables who had taken pictures of the demolition fuelled speculations that the ruling party leaders were actually on a 'treasure hunt' beneath the G-Block in the name of Secretariat demolition; and, hence, to conceal this from public and media, the rulers have imposed unprecedented restrictions around the Secretariat. The 'hidden treasury' theory gained currency originally following the demolition of the G-Block, known as 'Saifabad Palace' during the Nizam's era, whose premises once extended up to the present Mint Compound and functioned as the Treasury during the Nizam's rule.

3-day-old infant ...

Continued from Page 1

The timely treatment of the kid saved him," Dr Jothi, the lead surgeon for the procedure said.

Amidst COVID-19 fear and imposed restrictions on travel, the hospital says emergency services were the worst hit and health conditions that need immediate medical attention have taken a toll.

It has been observed that people are delaying their surgeries owing to the fear of visiting a hospital and contracting the infection, the hospital said, adding there is no health condition irrespective of age group that can be ignored or the treatment for which can be put on hold.

HYDERABAD BULLION RATES	
GOLD	
₹ 51,180 (10 gm)	
₹ 10	↑
SILVER	
₹ 53,000 (1kg)	
₹ 900	↑
CHICKEN RATES ₹/kg	
Dressed/With Skin	₹170
Without Skin	₹193
Broiler at Farm	₹117
EGG RATES ₹/100	
HYDERABAD	335
VIJAYAWADA	358
VISAKHAPATNAM	351
RETAIL PRICE	₹3.50

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
PATANCHERU & RAMACHANDRAPURAM CIRCLE-222, SERILINGAMPALLY ZONE

NIT No.: Engg-11/GHMC/PTC-C-22/2020/21. Date: 15-07-2020

Name of Work: 2 Nos. works Supply Delivery and installation of (30) no's Pre-fabricated Modular Male and Female Toilet. Estimate Amount / ECV: Rs. 89.00 Lakhs. Download Start Date: 15-07-2020, 03.00 P.M., Last Date and Time for Receipt of Bids: 16-07-2020, 3.00 P.M., Name & Address of E.E.: Executive Engineer, Patancheru Circle - 22, Phone No.: 9849906750. Further Details can be seen at e-procurement@ppcils.advtv1/2020-21

R.O. No.: 3191-PP/CL/ADVT/1/2020-21 EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, PATANCHERU, CIRCLE-22, S.P. ZONE, GHMC

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
Office of the Executive Engineer, Division 17, K.Z. GHMC, Marathahalli, Hyderabad

CORRIGENDUM TO THE SEALED TENDER NOTIFICATION
Tender Notice No: 03/EE/DIV-17/KZ/GHMC/2020-21 Date: 14/07/2020

Sl. No.	As per Tender Notification	May be read as
1	Receipts of Applications for Tender Schedules from 15.07.2020 to 18.07.2020 up to 3 PM	Receipts of Applications for Tender Schedules from 16.07.2020 up to 5 PM
2	Sale of Tender Schedules from 21.07.2020 upto 5 p.m.	Sale of Tender Schedules from 17.07.2020 upto 5 p.m.
3	lastdate for Receipt of Sealed Tenders: 22.07.2020 to upto 3 PM	lastdate for Receipt of Sealed Tenders: 18.07.2020 to upto 12 PM
4	Date of opening of Sealed Tenders: 22.07.2020 from 05.00 PM onwards	Date of opening of Sealed Tenders: 18.07.2020 from 02.00 PM onwards

R.O. No.: 3209-PP/CL/ADVT/1/2020-21 EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, DIVISION NO. 17 (K.Z.), GHMC

Uttarakhand Co-Operative Dairy Federation Ltd.
Mangal Parao, Haldwani - 263139 (Nainital)

☎: 546-50 / ☎: 546-50 / ✉: 15 July, 2020

Tender Ref. No.: 23(1-5)UCDF/2020-21, Date-15.07.2020

E-tenders are invited by the undersigned, from only experienced, reputed and financially sound Authorized Manufacturers/Dealers/civil contractors for the following items so as to reach this office on or before 30.07.2020 up to 5.00 PM. The tenders will be opened on 31.07.2020 at 11.00 AM.

S.No.	Name of work	Details
23(1)	Construction of Milk Chilling Center Building at Kodwar.	Tender fee, EMD and other related details can be seen on E-tender portal
23(2-5)	SIT&C of milk pouch filling machine, Bulk milk pouch filling machine, Cream separator, crate washer, water softener, Transformer, Milk poly film, Aluminum Lids, milk/Dahi crates, DIPMCU, FTIR based milk analyzer, Digital B.R. meter, B.O.D. incubator, digital Ph meter	

Tender documents may be downloaded/uploaded from E-tender portal <http://www.uktenders.gov.in> Managing Director

CRIME CORNER

Two pseudo cops dupe woman of gold ornaments

HYDERABAD: Two pseudo policemen conned a woman and took away her gold ornaments at Habeebnagar on Tuesday. According to police, the victim had gone to a temple at Aghapura and was returning home when two men stopped her near Friends Café in Seetharambagh. "The duo introduced themselves as policemen and asked her not to wear gold ornaments since a woman was recently murdered in the area," said the police. One of the offenders convinced the victim to remove her bangle and gold chain. The other man took it from her and pretended to wrap the ornaments in a paper and kept it in her bag, asking her to go home safely. "She later checked the bag and found that the paper had nothing but a stone in it," added the official.

Man arrested for selling oxygen cylinders illegally

HYDERABAD: Officials of the Central Zone Team of the Commissioner's Task Force apprehended a man who was illegally procuring and selling oxygen cylinders to customers at high prices without any valid license on Wednesday. The arrested person has been identified as Shaker Hussain, 62, from Musheerabad. According to the Police, Hussain runs a business 'Raas Agencies' at Bakaram. Taking advantage of the Covid-19 situation, the accused hatched a plan to sell oxygen cylinders at a higher price to customers. He purchased the cylinders without any valid license and illegally sold them from his shop. The Task Force officials apprehended him and seized 87 oxygen cylinders from his possession.

Man held for rape, murder

HYDERABAD: A driver who allegedly raped and murdered a woman at Kulsumpura a week ago was arrested by the police here on Tuesday. The accused, identified as G Ravi, 28, of Attapur had raped and murdered a woman on July 7 at a house where he was invited for a party. "The victim was a resident of Jaguda. She had also attended the party where the accused was present. Upon finding her alone on the first floor of the house, the man took advantage and allegedly raped her. He then murdered her to avoid police complaint from her and fled the scene," said police. Ravi was traced and nabbed by the police teams on Tuesday night.



Heavy flooding inside the Osmania General Hospital

Rain brings to fore dilapidated condition of Osmania Hospital

NAVEENA GHANATE
HYDERABAD

Rain and drainage water entered into state-run Osmania General Hospital in Hyderabad on Wednesday, turning the oldest and one of the biggest healthcare facilities in Telangana into a cesspool. It was a flood-like situation in the over a century old hospital with the employees struggling to prevent the water from entering the building. Videos and images of water flowing into the hospital and washing away various articles and patients on bed which went viral on social media, shows the pathetic condition of Osmania Hospital, which has now become only hospital for non-Covid-19 patients. The flood which was confined to corridors on Tuesday, water entered into the in-patient and out-patient wards on Wednesday. Patients and their attendants were sitting atop beds with ankle-deep

water flooding the ward. Videos from the hospital that emerged on Wednesday, shows water flowing into the hospital and washing away various articles and hospital staff trying to stem the flow went viral. The sanitation staff who are already overburdened catering to patients, now have additional task to do. While the state government has been asking people to remove stagnant water from homes, the condition of Osmania Hospital may lead to cross infection, especially with drainage water being mixed with the flood water. A doctor said, "Since few days this has been case and we gave representations to Ministers, but the status quo remains. This is not domestic drainage but hospital drainage, so patients might get new diseases." "This is the state of Osmania Govt Hospital now!! Corona Pandemic sweeping the city and look at waterlogging in one

It was a flood-like situation in the over a century old hospital with the employees struggling to prevent the water from entering the building

of the most well-known government hospitals in the heart of Hyderabad!! Reflecting the abysmal standards of KCR Administration," tweeted Telangana Congress chief Uttam Kumar Reddy with a picture of a flooded ward. "This is the state of affairs in Osmania Hospital, Hyderabad & our CM KCR is busy demolishing a functional secretariat

and building a Nizam era palace. What an irony," tweeted BJP leader Krishna Sagar Rao. While GHMC was informed, corporation officials pointed that the drainage network within the hospital premises had been looked into by the Roads and Buildings department. It was in 2015 that the TRS government had proposed to demolish the building on the ground that it is structurally weak and unfit to run a regular hospital. It wanted to build two towers, of 24 floors each. However, strong opposition from historians, heritage activists and prominent citizens forced the government to drop its plans to demolish the building. Spread over 26.5 acres, the hospital has 11 major blocks. The inpatient block alone was over an area of 2.37 acres with a total bed capacity of 1,168 beds including 363 in super-speciality wards.

Being infected with Corona is not a crime, says writer Swarna

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

With two persons from a family infected with Coronavirus, Swarna Kilari, a writer and homemaker says that we can conquer Coronavirus with proper care and optimism. Swarna said, "Being infected with Coronavirus is neither a crime nor something to be feared about. From the moment I actually got the suspicion, until the second report came negative, not a single day was I scared. There is no need to keep it a secret." Swarna initially had fever and soon her niece Darahasa who stayed along also started showing symptoms. She said, "We gave our samples in King Koti hospital. By the time our reports came, fever had subsided, but we were feeling very lethargic, coughing, slight breathing problems, lost sense of taste and smell apart from headache." They couldn't conclude how they



COVID WINNER SPEAKS...

contacted the infection. While both of them were initially scared, soon they decided to home isolate themselves. After speaking to doctors, the duo were isolating in the same room. She said "Because I had my niece along, boredom didn't strike us and we were there for each

other. I have completed writing pending articles, watched movies online. We used to do some Yoga and walk in the room itself." She points out that the government call center called them to check about their health. Swarna said, "My husband Dileep Konatham was boosting our morale, keeping us engaged by telling us the details of those who conquered the infectious disease. My sister Indira helped us through the 14 days of isolation by taking care of our family." She added that courage and nutritious food are important to fight the infection. Swarna said, "Courage is especially important. We took healthy food including kada, boiled egg, soaked almonds, sprouts, fruits, juices, turmeric milk. We also had chicken in the meal once in two days."



Police academy director injured in road accident

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana State Police Recruitment Board Chairman and in charge director of the State Police Academy, VV Srinivasa Rao, was injured in an accident at Manchirevula on Wednesday night. Srinivasa Rao, who suffered injuries after his SUV overturned, was admitted to a corporate hospital in Gachibowli, where his condition was stated

to be stable. "The cause of mishap is being ascertained. We rushed him to Hospital for medical attention as per protocols, further questioning is due," officials said. He was recently given the additional charge of the State Police Academy after the previous director VK Singh was transferred. Srinivasa Rao had earlier worked as the Hyderabad City Police Commissioner.

TS rolls out rapid tests at 65 centres

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The District Medical and Health Officer Venkat on Wednesday said that the number of tests to diagnose Coronavirus have been increased in twin cities and advised people to undergo antigen tests to get immediate result. Arrangements are being made to conduct the antigen tests in all primary health centres soon. Currently, the tests are being conducted in 65 centres in twin cities. Those who have no facility to undergo home isolation can avail isolation in government facilities, he said. Beds are available in nature cure, ayurveda hospitals. Home isolation will be prescribed only on the basis of self-declaration. He put the total number of patients receiving treatment under home isolation condition at 11,705. So far, 16,660 have recovered from the virus receiving treatment under home isolation.

Cops raid snooker parlour, arrest 14

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Hyderabad Commissioner's East Zone Task Force team raided a snooker parlour at Chaderghat on late Tuesday night. The officials caught 14 persons who were playing the game by violating lockdown rules. The management opened the snooker parlour in violation of lockdown orders and invited customers to play," Task Force officials said, adding that all the 14 were taken into custody for questioning and seized the snooker parlour.

Students urge TSCHE to cancel impending exams

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The representatives of Students Federation of India (SFI) approached Telangana State Council for Higher Education (TSCHE) Secretary Srinivasa Rao, to request cancellation of the vocational, undergraduate and postgraduate examinations pending in the state. Noting that the state Universities are going to hold examinations as per the new

UGC guidelines, SFI asked the authorities to cancel all exams in view of the current pandemic. "There are 1 lakh regular degree final year students in the state of Telangana and 40,000 supplementary students. A total of 45,000 final year students in all vocational courses are expected to take the exams in the wake of the corona outbreak. Along with them, PG students are also

scheduled to appear for the exams. The exams have already been canceled in states like West Bengal, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Delhi," read the petition. It added, "In TS, along with the city of Hyderabad and many other districts, corona has been asked to postpone exams and promote students in these conditions. We request TSCHE Secretary Srinivasa Rao to look into the issue."

Man held for Tinder forex fraud

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Cyber Crime Police of Cyberabad on Wednesday arrested a fraudster for cheating the complainant in the name of Forex Trade after trapping the victim through the Tinder app. The arrested person has been identified as K Rajesh Kumar, a resident of Kondapur. Two other accused in the case, Mike from China and Mina from Hong Kong, are absconding. Rajesh Kumar, is a B.Tech Graduate and works as a freelancer. He came into contact with Mike when he visited China in 2018. He collaborated with Mike and provided



three bank accounts of his friends for transferring funds from victims. The victim met Mina on Tinder and was convinced about Forex trade. After talking to Mike, he paid an amount of Rs 2,30,000 into the account held by Irfan. He was shown profits in his Forex Trade account initially. Believing the same to be true, he paid an amount of Rs 15,20,000 in the

bank account of Irfan. However, when he tried to withdraw money, he was unable to do so. Learning that he was cheated, he approached the Cyber Crime police. Officials are investigating and trying to identify the other victims, who were also cheated by Mina with Mike's and Kumar's help. The accused Rajesh Kumar, who shared the bank account details of his friend Mohd Irfan for remitting the amounts by victims and transferred the amounts in the form of Bitcoin to the accused Mike, was arrested and produced before the court for judicial custody on Tuesday. Health Department officials

Free Corona treatment at TS medical colleges

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The state government is going to provide free Covid-19 treatment at 20 medical colleges both government and private ones. While Malla Reddy, Kamineni and Mamatha Medical colleges have been picked initially, the other colleges will be facilitating the treatment shortly. A help desk would be established there to guide patients and suspects. Health Department officials

said that a WhatsApp number to lodge grievances related to Covid-19 price capping violations will be released shortly. Official said victim could complain to that number and government would look into them and take action. It was clarified that in the coming days the state will monitor the treatment being done by private hospitals. Meanwhile, the state government has released a WhatsApp number - 9154170960 to report violations by private hospitals in the state.

BIE may allot internal marks in Inter

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In the wake of Covid-19 pandemic, the Telangana State Board of Intermediate Education (TSBIE) is planning on various ways to ensure the students are not stressed with the syllabus. As part of the assessment, the TSBIE now plans to introduce the concept of internal marks for the intermediate students. If this proposal gets approved then each subject will have 20 marks for internal assessments. Which mean, of the 100 marks that the students will be marked on each subject, 80 marks will be for both theory and practicals, while 20 will be internal assessment marks. Apart from this, the Board has also proposed to reduce the syllabus by at least 30 per

cent. Sharing some details, about the new Intermediate session, Syed Omer Jaleel, IAS, Secretary of Telangana Board of Intermediate Education says, "We understand that the students are tensed due to the current situation, so we want to do everything to ease their difficulties. We are in discussion to reduce nearly 30 per cent portion from both first and second year Inter students. This will be done across all streams. We are also planning to teach the students in a blended way, that is online as well as offline in a class, whenever the situation permits. The video content for digital classes will be made available through the BIE's YouTube channel besides being telecast through T-SAT



and Doordarshan Yadagiri channels. The lessons taught online will not be repeated in the classes taken in institutions. While the proposals have been made to the government, a decision is yet to be reached.

BIE to start YouTube channel

The Telangana State Board of Intermediate Education (TSBIE) will soon launch its online classes channel on YouTube soon similar to that of coaching institutes training students for competitive examinations. The board is recording the lessons with the help of the expert teachers for the benefit of students pursuing Intermediate in private and government colleges. So far, 30 per cent of the recording of lessons is through. The title of the channel is stated to be Department of Inter Education e-learning. The advantage of the online lessons channel is the student can listen to the lessons any number of times and can record them to listen as and

when he required. An official in Intermediate Education Board who wished to remain anonymous said that soon Collegiate Education Department, Technical Education Department and universities are likely to start their online lessons channels soon. About 10 days ago, an online classes channel titled Model Schools Telangana was started by model schools here. The channel is useful to teach Inter second year classes online. In about a week, Intermediate first year online classes will be started. Subsequently, online lessons for SSC will be started. The channel has over 5,500 subscribers so far. Webinars are being conducted in the channel.

Couple ends life as parents reject their proposal

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A couple committed suicide by consuming pesticide in a hotel at Medipally on Tuesday night after their parents rejected their love proposal. The victims were identified as Ajay, 23 and Sravani, 21, both working as private employees. Ajay and Sravani went to a hotel at Medipally on Tuesday. The couple is said to have consumed a poisonous substance to end their lives. The hotel staff noticed the couple lying unconscious in the room and alerted the police.



Hyd Zoo's chimp Suzi celebrates 34th b'day

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chimpanzee 'Suzi' at the Nehru Zoological Park in Hyderabad on Wednesday celebrated 34th birthday. The zoo management organised the celebration with the animal keeper and veterinary staff at Suzi's enclosure duly following Covid-19 protocol. According to Zoo Curator N Kshitija, a fruit cake with fruits and bread was prepared for Suzi at the Zoo kitchen. The entire enclosure was arranged with different types of fruits and vegetables of Suzi's choice. Kshitija, Deputy Curator A. Nagamani, Assistant

Curator Satish Babu, and Deputy Range Officer Anitha were present on the occasion. The celebration brought some cheers to the Zoo, which is closed for visitors for more than three months due to Covid-19 induced lockdown. Early this month the Zoo lost a Royal Bengal tiger, which died of heart failure. This came close on the heels of the death of a white tiger due to neoplastic tumour. Spread over 300 acres, the Zoo is home to nearly 181 indigenous and exotic species, including 1,716 animals, birds, and reptiles. Known as one of the best zoos in Asia, it attracts around 30 lakh visitors annually.

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, SECUNDERABAD ZONE

Tender Corrigendum:
On Administrative grounds for all the works in Tender Notice No. 4/SE/Sec/bad Zone/GHMC/2020-21/300, Dated: 13-07-2020, the bid submission closing date & time is changed to 17-07-2020 at 1.30 PM, Winco: Zonal Commissioner, SBZ, GHMC, Name of the Work: 6 Civil Work, Estimated Amount: (Rs in lakhs): 477.42

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Corona takes a toll on bank staff

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
Coronavirus has been affecting the banking operations especially in the Old City of Hyderabad with one branch or the other getting closed as its employees are testing positive for the virus. If any bank employee tests positive for the virus, the branch is being closed for three days. The branches are getting reopened only after fully sanitising it. After easing the lockdown, the number of customers visiting the banks registered an increase. In Old City, one branch or the other is getting closed as some of the staff members getting tested positive for the virus. One of the bank officers wishing to remain anonymous expressed concern over the bank employees con-



During lockdown period, only part of the bank staff attended duty. Currently, all bank staff members are reporting for work. In some branches, there is no scope for observing social distance.

tracting the virus in spite of banks taking all precautions. During lockdown period, only part of the bank employees attended duty. Currently, all bank staff members are reporting for work. In some branches, there is no scope for observ-

ing social distance. Customers are visiting the bank branches on one pretext or the other in spite of the banks advising them against visiting the branches unless it is so essential. The customers have been advised to use digital banking

services, yet they are visiting the bank branches. A public sector bank in Hyderabad has to shut some branches to sanitise them since 30 employees working in some of the branches contracted the virus. A public sector bank in

Secunderabad was closed for three days as a senior officer of the bank tested positive for the virus. In Moti Nagar too, a senior bank official tested positive for the virus leading to its closure for few days. A private bank in SR Nagar had to be closed for three days as two of the staff members tested positive for the virus. The employees working in branches, particularly rural branches, complain that they were not provided adequate facilities though they were asked to work in containment zones also. "There are no thermal scanners in our branch nor a security guard to control the visitors. Due to lack of space, it is very difficult to maintain physical distance," laments a bank employee, who did not want to be quoted.

Telangana gets 7 new Ekalavya schools

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
Bringing cheers to students belonging to Scheduled Tribe community, the Central government has sanctioned seven new Ekalavya Model Residential Schools to Telangana State, that would provide admission to about 840 students from the tribal community. They are in addition to the existing 16 EMRS functioning in the State, which have a total tribal students' strength of about 5,250. The State government is spending Rs 1.09 lakh on each student to provide education.



The total expenditure on providing residential education to ST students is put at Rs 9.15 crore. Currently, there are 16 Ekalavya Model Residential Schools in the state with a total strength of 5,250 students. The state government incurs Rs 5,72,250 lakh annually for edu-

cation of the students. The total number of such schools will increase to 23 with the Centre sanctioning seven more. Of the seven schools, two will be set up in Mahbubabad, one in Adilabad district, three in Kothagudem-Bhadradi district and one in Khammam district. The Minister said Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao has been striving for development of the State which was created after decades of struggle and stated that due to his intervention, the Central government sanctioned the new residential schools.

Dubai hospital waives Rs1 cr bill for TS Covid-19 patient

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
A 42-year-old man from Jagtial district, who was admitted to Dubai Hospital in Dubai, UAE due to Coronavirus was waived off the bill of Rs 1.52 crore after 80 days of treatment on humanitarian grounds. He was also given a free ticket and Rs 10,000 cash and landed in Hyderabad on Tuesday. Odnala Rajesh (42) of Venugumatla village in Gollapalli mandal of Jagtial district was admitted to 'Dubai Hospital' in Dubai, UAE on April 23 due to illness and was tested positive for Coronavirus. Rajesh who recovered after 80 days of treatment, was discharged by the hospital and handed over a bill of 7,62,555 Dirhams (Rs 1 crore 52 lakh) to him. Gundelli Narasimha, president of the Gulf Workers



Protection Society in Dubai, who took the worker to the hospital from the beginning and visited him regularly, brought the matter to the attention of Sumanth Reddy an Indian Consulate volunteer in Dubai. Ashok Kotecha of BAPS Swaminarayan Trust requested Harjeet Singh, Consul

(Labour) of Indian Consulate in Dubai to help the poor worker. Consulate Officer Harjeet Singh wrote a letter to Dubai Hospital management asking them to waive the bill on humanitarian grounds and they responded positively and waived the bill and discharged the patient. Ashok Kotecha provided free flight tickets to the patient Odnala Rajesh and his escort Dyavara Kankaiiah and paid Rs10,000 for pocket expenses. Patient and escort was sent by Air India flight from Dubai to Hyderabad on Tuesday. After reaching the Hyderabad airport at night, Telangana NRI officer E Chittibabu granted permission to a 14-day home quarantine and handed over the patient to his family members and sent him back to his native village.

'Political pressure' irks doctors

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
As if serving in Covid-19 ward wasn't enough, the demands by the admitted patients have been causing additional pain to doctors. A doctor posted in Covid-19 ward on condition of anonymity said, "We treat all patients equally and give them required attention. But off late there are too many calls from politicians and some officials demanding us to give more attention to the patient. We can't sit with the patient all throughout the day. Some seem to be disrespectful and rude as well". Some patients say they know some TRS leader or BJP leader, others say MIM, and some say they are kin of officials in the Police Department. A doctor said, "One of the patients said that he is Owaisi's man, knows

some TRS leader and was demanding continuously. As doctors posted in Covid-19 ward, we don't have to just treat patients, but have to do lot of reporting and accountability work. We already have to deal with physical and mental stress, due to PPE and anxiety, now this recommendation stress is piling up on us". Referring such patients to other government hospitals is not working out as they are already short staffed. The doctor added, "Someone should brief the politicians about patient care. We don't have a magic wand to reduce the infective period of a person. Some take 14 days, some take 28 days and some many take less to be cured of the infection". Doctors are too busy to worry on how these recommendations are going to impact them.

Srisaillam gets heavy inflows

PNS ■ SUNNIPENTA
On account of heavy rains in upper reaches of Srisaillam project, the project is receiving heavy inflows. On Wednesday morning, the project received 49,895 cusecs of inflows. In addition, the project is receiving 1,100 cusecs inflows from Handri-Neeva project. Against the full reservoir level of the project of 885 feet, water-level in the project was measured at 815.50 feet. Against the water storage capacity of 215 tmc of the project, the water level measured



in the project as 37.6570 tmc. Similarly, Jurala project is also receiving inflows of 60,000 cusecs of flood water on account of heavy rains in the upper reaches of the project. Water level in Jurala Project is measured as 318.440 meters as against the full-reservoir level of 318.515 meters.

Illegal transportation of goods costs govt dearly

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
The loss of tax revenue to the state government is put between Rs 400 and Rs 500 crore a month as many unscrupulous traders resorted to zero business taking advantage of commercial tax officials minimised the inspection of vehicles at check-posts because of the Covid-19 situation. The tax authorities say that the electronic goods are being

smuggled into the state from New Delhi on a large scale. To transport goods worth Rs 50,000 and more way-bills are necessary. The officials should procure electronic way bills to transport their goods. The way bill contains all particulars like the quantity of goods and origin and destination of the goods. On the basis of the bill, the GST is levied. If the goods are transported without these bills, it is impossible to detect

the transportation of goods. Because of the Covid-19 situation, the Centre extended the last date for filing IT returns and remittances of GST. Taking advantage of it, the traders have been resorted to illegal transportation of goods. The traders are taking advantage of increased sale of electronic goods during the lockdown period. Besides the electronic goods, the construction material is being transported illegally.

ON DUTY



Braving heavy rains, Adilabad Circle chief conservator of forests CP Vinod Kumar, FDO Asifabad Vinay Kumar Sahoo, Range Officer Purnima inspecting the saplings planted as part of Haritha Haram at Rebbana Range on Wednesday

TPCC's PVNR centenary celebrations from July 24

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
TPCC president N Uttam Kumar Reddy and TPCC PV Narasimha Rao Centenary Celebrations Committee chairman Dr J Geetha Reddy on Wednesday informed that it has been decided to launch the centenary celebrations of former Prime Minister Narasimha Rao from July 24. They informed that the TPCC's Committee vice-chairman D Sridhar Babu, Convener Mahesh Kumar Goud and member K Venugopal recently met the family members of PV

Narasimha Rao to discuss about the centenary celebrations. They had interaction with PV Prabhakar Rao, PV Manohar Rao and Vani Devi. Narasimha Rao's brother PV Manohar Rao has agreed to be the chief patron of TPCC's Committee for centenary celebrations. Uttam informed that PV Narasimha Rao's association with the Congress party, his political ideology, economic reforms, foreign affairs and other aspects of his life would be brought to the notice of the people through various programmes as part of centenary celebrations.

HC again extends stay on Secretariat demolition

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
The Telangana High Court on Wednesday extended the stay on the demolition of existing Secretariat buildings by another day. The court asked the Central government to spell out its stand if demolition work requires environmental clearance from the Ministry of Environment. A division bench of Chief Justice Raghavendra Singh Chauhan and Justice B. Vijayasen Reddy, on Wednesday resumed the hearing on the petition challenging the demolition work. Advocate General BS Prasad

submitted to the court a copy of the resolution passed by the cabinet to demolish the existing buildings of the Secretariat to build a new complex. The petitioner's counsel argued that environmental clearance was not taken for the demolition work. The government, however, contended that there is no need for environmental clearance, and that the permission was taken from the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC). The bench asked the Central government to inform it on Thursday whether demolition work requires environmental clearance.

Cong blames govt for Covid-19 deaths

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
Former Minister Mohammed Ali Shabbir has alleged that TRS government was indulging in criminal negligence in protecting the lives of common people from deadly Coronavirus in the State. Shabbir Ali said that Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao and Health Minister Eatala Rajender were not serious in saving the lives of poor people who were affected by Covid-19. He said all tall claims made by Chief Minister, Minister KT Rama Rao and Health Minister Rajender on medical facilities for Covid-19 patients in districts were proved to be hollow and fake. He said people living in rural areas have no facilities, whatsoever to get themselves treat-



ed from the Coronavirus. He pointed out that a 32-year-old woman of Kamareddy, who was nine month pregnant, got infected with Covid-19 along with seven members of her family. On Tuesday, she developed labour pains and was rushed to Kamareddy Government Hospital. However, the hospital authorities refused to admit her on the grounds that they don't have facilities to perform delivery of a Covid-19 patient. "When the issue was brought to my knowledge, I spoke to the hospital authorities in Kamareddy. They expressed their helplessness in attending to the pregnant woman and advised that she be rushed to Nizamabad Government Hospital. On their advice, she was sent to Nizamabad. There too, the hospital authorities expressed their inability to admit her due to lack of Covid-19 beds and advised that the woman be taken to Gandhi Hospital in Hyderabad. Left with no choice, she was immediately rushed to Hyderabad. Unfortunately, she died on the way to Hyderabad," he informed.

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA													
DISTRICT COLLECTOR, WARANGAL [RURAL]													
FORM-C													
NOTIFICATION													
(Under Section 11 of the Act, where 10A Exemption is given) [See rule 6/12]													
Warangal [Rural] District					Dated: 13-07-2020								
Gazettee No. 32/WGL [R]2020, Collector, Warangal [Rural].					Proc. No. G/1654/2017, Dated: 13-07-2020								
Where as it appears to the Government of Telangana / Collector, Warangal [Rural] that a total extent of [10.16] acres, Patta land is required in the Gundluphad village of Nallabelli Mandal of Warangal [Rural] District for public purpose. The Executive Engineer, I&CDDO JCR DUS Division 2, KC Colony Chintmagattu Warangal has filed the requisition for Acquisition of land to an extent of [10.16] acres for Excavation of 5L-Distributary of Right Main Canal from K.M.0.000 to 2.102 [T.E.] of Rangash and Eralah Cheruvu to create irrigation potential.													
Therefore it is notified that for the above said project in Gundluphad village of Nallabelli Mandal Warangal [Rural] District for public purpose namely for excavation of 5L-Distributary of Right Main Canal of Package-V from K.M.0.000 to 2.102 [T.E.] of Rangash and Eralah Cheruvu.													
Therefore it is notified that for the above said project in the village of Gundluphad village of Nallabelli Mandal Warangal [Rural] District land measuring, more or less [10.16] acres of standard measurements, whose details description is as following is proposed for acquisition.													
Schedule													
Village: Gundluphad					Mandal: Nallabelli								
District: Warangal [Rural]													
(K.M.0.000 to 2.102 [T.E])													
Sl. No.	Sy. No.	Type of Title	Type of land	Area/Extent in Acres	Name of the Pottadar and Occupant	Detail of Tax Surcharges etc. if any	7	8	9				
1	25/11	Dry	Patta	0.11	Pottadar & Occupant Chitappa Anand Reddy S/o Laxma Reddy	Nil	50	25/11	Dry	Patta	0.07	Pottadar & Occupant Rangai Mishra S/o Rangaling	Nil
2	25/11	Dry	Patta	0.10	Pottadar & Occupant Lakshmi Thimma S/o Hanumanth	Nil	51	25/11	Dry	Patta	0.08	Pottadar & Occupant Thimma S/o Hanumanth	Nil
3	25	Dry	Patta	0.14	Pottadar & Occupant Janki Narain, S/o. Chandu	Nil	52	25/11	Dry	Patta	0.07	Pottadar & Occupant Anvesha Raja W/o. Jangiah	Nil
4	25	Dry	Patta	0.05	Pottadar & Occupant Ponka Kotha, W/o. Raja	Nil	53	25/11	Dry	Patta	0.01	Pottadar & Occupant Anvesha Raja W/o. Jangiah	Nil
5	25	Dry	Patta	0.03	Pottadar & Occupant Janki Narain, S/o. Chandu	Nil	54	25/11	Dry	Patta	0.13	Pottadar & Occupant Padma Ramana Rao S/o. Ramana Rao	Nil
6	24	Dry	Patta	0.08	Pottadar & Occupant Janki Raja S/o. Ramaling	Nil	55	25/11	Dry	Patta	0.04	Pottadar & Occupant Padma Ramana Rao S/o. Ramana Rao	Nil
7	23	Dry	Patta	0.19	Pottadar & Occupant Janki Raja S/o. Ramaling	Nil	56	25/11	Dry	Patta	0.01	Pottadar & Occupant Anvesha Raja W/o. Jangiah	Nil
8	23	Dry	Patta	0.16	Pottadar & Occupant Narayana Kotha S/o. Rama	Nil	57	25/11	Dry	Patta	0.01	Pottadar & Occupant Anvesha Raja W/o. Jangiah	Nil
9	22	Dry	Patta	0.04	Pottadar & Occupant Narayana Kotha S/o. Rama	Nil	58	25/11	Dry	Patta	0.06	Pottadar & Occupant Anvesha Raja W/o. Jangiah	Nil
10	22	Dry	Patta	0.11	Pottadar & Occupant Narayana Kotha S/o. Rama	Nil	59	25/11	Dry	Patta	0.01	Pottadar & Occupant Anvesha Raja W/o. Jangiah	Nil
11	22/1	Dry	Patta	0.10	Pottadar & Occupant Anvesha Rama S/o. Deepa	Nil	60	25/11	Dry	Patta	0.03	Pottadar & Occupant Anvesha Raja W/o. Jangiah	Nil
12	22	-	-	0.02	Road	Nil	61	25/11	Dry	Patta	0.01	Pottadar & Occupant Anvesha Raja W/o. Jangiah	Nil
13	22/1/3	Dry	Patta	0.06	Pottadar & Occupant Anvesha Rama S/o. Deepa	Nil	62	25/11	Dry	Patta	0.01	Pottadar & Occupant Anvesha Raja W/o. Jangiah	Nil
14	22	Dry	Patta	0.02	Pottadar & Occupant Anvesha Rama S/o. Deepa	Nil	63	25/11	Dry	Patta	0.01	Pottadar & Occupant Anvesha Raja W/o. Jangiah	Nil
15	22/1	Dry	Patta	0.08	Pottadar & Occupant Anvesha Rama S/o. Deepa	Nil	64	25/11	Dry	Patta	0.01	Pottadar & Occupant Anvesha Raja W/o. Jangiah	Nil
16	18/E	Dry	Patta	0.02	Pottadar & Occupant Anvesha Rama S/o. Deepa	Nil	65	25/11	Dry	Patta	0.03	Pottadar & Occupant Anvesha Raja W/o. Jangiah	Nil
17	18/101	Dry	Patta	0.05	Pottadar & Occupant Anvesha Rama S/o. Deepa	Nil	66	25/11	Dry	Patta	0.15	Pottadar & Occupant Anvesha Raja W/o. Jangiah	Nil
18	18/14	Dry	Patta	0.14	Pottadar & Occupant Lavanya Nanda S/o. Manoj	Nil	67	25/11	Dry	Patta	0.01	Pottadar & Occupant Anvesha Raja W/o. Jangiah	Nil
19	18/18	Dry	Patta	0.15	Pottadar & Occupant Janki Reddy S/o. Laxman	Nil	TOTAL			10.16			
20	247	-	-	0.02	Road	Nil							
21	24/1/2	Dry	Patta	0.07	Pottadar & Occupant Anvesha Rama S/o. Deepa	Nil							
22	24/1/6	Dry	Patta	0.12	Pottadar & Occupant Anvesha Rama S/o. Deepa	Nil							
23	24/1/4	Dry	Patta	0.08	Pottadar & Occupant Anvesha Rama S/o. Deepa	Nil							
24	247	Dry	Patta	0.03	Pottadar & Occupant Anvesha Rama S/o. Deepa	Nil							
25	248/3	Dry	Patta	0.12	Pottadar & Occupant Anvesha Rama S/o. Deepa	Nil							
26	38A/1	Dry	Patta	0.02	Pottadar & Occupant Anvesha Rama S/o. Deepa	Nil							
27	39/1/1	Dry	Patta	0.06	Pottadar & Occupant Anvesha Rama S/o. Deepa	Nil							
28	39/1/2	Dry	Patta	0.15	Pottadar & Occupant Anvesha Rama S/o. Deepa	Nil							
29	249	Dry	Patta	0.02	Pottadar & Occupant Anvesha Rama S/o. Deepa	Nil							
30	251/1	Dry	Patta	0.06	Pottadar & Occupant Anvesha Rama S/o. Deepa	Nil							
31	252/1	Dry	Patta	0.05	Pottadar & Occupant Anvesha Rama S/o. Deepa	Nil							
32	258	Dry	Patta	0.01	Pottadar & Occupant Anvesha Rama S/o. Deepa	Nil							
33	259	Dry	Patta	0.09	Pottadar & Occupant Anvesha Rama S/o. Deepa	Nil							

This Notification is made under the provisions of Section -11(1) of Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act,2013 [Central Act.No.30/2013], as amended by the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition Rehabilitation and Resettlement (Telangana Amendment) Act,2016 [Act.No.21 of 2017] to all whom it may concern.

A plan of the land may be inspected in the office, of the District Collector, Warangal [Rural] and Land Acquisition Officer/Revenue Divisional Officer, Narsampet on any working day during the working hours. The Government of Telangana / Collector-cum- Appropriate Government is pleased to authorize Revenue Divisional Officer, Narsampet and his staff / workmen to enter on and Survey land, take levels of any land dig or bore in to the sub soil and do all other acts required for the proper execution of their work as provided and specified in Section -12 of the said Act.

Under Section 11(4) of the Act, no person shall make any transaction or cause any transaction of land i.e. sale/purchase etc. or create any encumbrances on such land from the date of publication of such notification without prior approval of the Collector, Warangal [Rural].

Objections to the acquisition, if any, and claims from all the persons interested / affected for settlement by negotiation of the compensation, may be filed by the person interested in the land with in 60 (sixty days) from the date of publication of this notification as provided under section 15 of the Act, before District Collector, Warangal [Rural] or Land Acquisition Officer & Revenue Divisional Officer, Narsampet.

Land Acquisition Officers Revenue Divisional Officer, Narsampet. Additional Collector, Warangal [Rural]. District Collector, Warangal [Rural].

DIPR R.O. No.: 376/LAPP/Advt/Pub/2020-21

SHORT READS



NSTI extension centre to come up in Ladakh: LG Mathur

LEH: Ladakh Lt Governor R K Mathur on Wednesday said a National Skill Training Institute extension centre is set to come up here. Making the announcement on World Youth Skills Day, Mathur said the NSTI extension centre would impart quality training to the youths of Ladakh, thus empowering and equipping them with industry relevant skills to earn their livelihood. An initiative of the Directorate General of Training, Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship, the extension centre aims at capacity-building of the polytechnics and industrial training institutes by providing training to the trainers, an official spokesperson said. The NSTI centre would also introduce programmes such as refresher training, re-skilling or up skilling courses, craftsmen training schemes, instructor training schemes, apprenticeship training schemes and national skills qualification frameworks, he said.

Bengal MLA's death: Mamata tells prez it's suicide not murder

KOLKATA: A day after a BJP delegation met President Ram Nath Kovind seeking dismissal of the Mamata Banerjee government over the "political murder" of a party MLA, the West Bengal chief minister wrote a letter to him claiming the saffron party might have presented "distorted facts". She said the case has been handed over to the CID for proper investigation. A Trinamool Congress delegation led by Rajya Sabha MP Derek O'Brien also called on the president at Rashtrapati Bhavan and apprised him of the details of the case. In the letter, Banerjee cited the preliminary probe by the state police and the postmortem report to claim Debendra Nath Roy's death "is a case of suspected suicide and does not appear to be a political case as being projected by the BJP".

All Punjab ministers to undergo Covid-19 test

CHANDIGARH: Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh has advised his cabinet colleagues to undergo test for coronavirus after one of the ministers tested positive for the infection. "All the cabinet ministers will give their samples for testing (coronavirus) today. Their results will come by today evening or tomorrow," Health Minister Balbir Singh Sidhu told reporters here on Wednesday. Officials said the chief minister has advised his ministers to get themselves tested as a precautionary measure. Punjab Rural Development and Panchayats Minister Tript Rajinder Singh Bajwa on Tuesday had tested positive for the novel coronavirus. He is the first minister in the state to contract the infection.

INDIA'S CLEAR MESSAGE TO CHINA

Follow all agreed protocols for border management

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian military conveyed a "very clear" message to the Chinese army during a nearly 15-hour-long talks that status quo ante must be restored in eastern Ladakh and it will have to follow all mutually agreed protocols for border management to bring back peace and tranquillity along the Line of Actual Control, government sources said on Wednesday. During the course of the intense and complex negotiations between senior commanders of the two armies that ended at 2 am on Wednesday, the Indian delegation also apprised the Chinese PLA about the "red lines" and conveyed that the onus was largely on China to improve the overall situation in the region, the sources said.

The two sides agreed on certain modalities for rolling out the next phase of disengagement and are expected to get in touch with each other after discussing agreed points with the higher authorities of both sides, the sources said.



The fourth round of Lt General-level talks began around 11 AM on Tuesday at a designated meeting point in Chushul on the Indian side of the LAC, they said. There was no official word on the outcome of the talks.

The Indian delegation was led by Lt Gen Harinder Singh, the Commander of the Leh-based 14 Corps, while the Chinese side was headed by Major General Liu Lin, Commander of the South Xinjiang military region.

Army Chief Gen MM Naravane was apprised about the details of the negotiations following which he held discussions with senior military officers. He is scheduled to hold another meeting with a number of senior military officers later in the day.

Tuesday's discussions were the longest negotiations between the two armies after the tense standoff that began on May 5. The third round of Lt General-level talks on June 30 lasted 12 hours. During this round, both

The two sides agreed on certain modalities for rolling out the next phase of disengagement and are expected to get in touch with each other after discussing agreed points with the higher authorities of both sides, the sources said

sides agreed on an "expeditious, phased and step wise" de-escalation as a "priority" to end the standoff. The sources said the main focus of the latest round was on finalising a framework for a "time-bound and verifiable" disengagement process from all the friction points like Pangong Tso and Depsang and pulling back large numbers of troops and weapons from rear bases along the LAC as part of modalities for further de-escalation.

RAJASTHAN POLITICAL CRISIS

Sachin Pilot says not joining BJP

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

"I am not joining the BJP," Congress leader Sachin Pilot said on Wednesday, asserting that the speculation about his switching sides was being fuelled by certain leaders in Rajasthan to tarnish his image.

Pilot's remarks come a day after the Congress sacked him as Rajasthan's deputy chief minister and the party's state unit president. Two loyalists of Pilot were also dropped from the state Cabinet.

"I have worked very hard to bring the Congress party back in the government and defeat the BJP," he said.

In an apparent reference to Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot's camp, Pilot said some leaders in Rajasthan were trying to fuel speculation that he is joining the BJP and that he would like to categorically state that he was not doing so.

"Such a speculation is being fuelled to tarnish my image," he said. After being sacked, Pilot had tweeted in Hindi on Tuesday, "Truth can be rattled, not defeated."

Gehlot has accused his former deputy of playing into the hands



"I have worked very hard to bring the Congress party back in the government and defeat the BJP," he said

of the BJP Pilot had kept away from two CLP meetings held on Monday and Tuesday after which the action against him was taken.

Pilot has been upset since the Congress picked Gehlot as the chief minister after the 2018 assembly polls, while his own supporters insisted that he deserved credit for the party's victory as its state unit president.

The current crisis erupted last Friday when the Rajasthan

Police sent a notice to Pilot, asking him to record his statement over the alleged bid to bring down the government.

The same notice was sent to the chief minister and some other MLAs, but Pilot's supporters claimed that it was only meant to humiliate him.

The Special Operation Group (SOG) had sent out the notices after tapping a phone conversation between two men, who were allegedly discussing the fall of the Gehlot government.



PM reviews development work at Kedarnath Dham

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday reviewed the ongoing development work at Kedarnath Dham in Uttarakhand with a focus on facilities for travellers, his office said.

Last month also the prime minister had reviewed the progress of the development work at the shrine.

The discussions centred around furthering the divini-

ty of Kedarnath temple and Jagadguru Adi Shankaracharya's 'samadhi sthal', maintaining cleanliness and ensuring extensive development, the Prime Minister's Office said in a statement.

The review also focussed on ensuring that travellers get all facilities on the Gaurikund-Kedarnath route and arrangements be made to showcase the historical and cultural significance of the pilgrimage using technology, it added.

COVID-19 situation better in Delhi than June says Kejriwal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Wednesday said the current COVID-19 situation in the national capital is better than what it was in June, but the war against the disease has not been won yet. He said had the Delhi government fought the virus alone, it would have "failed" and therefore his dispensation sought cooperation from the BJP-led Centre, NGOs, and other organisations. "Our first principle was that this fight cannot be won alone," Kejriwal said.

The chief minister said the AAP government will continue its preparations to deal with any spike in COVID-19 cases.

Addressing an online media briefing, the chief minister said according to the Centre's formu-



"There may be a spike again in COVID-19 cases. We don't have to be complacent. We will not sit idle. We will have to be fully prepared," Kejriwal said

la, Delhi was expected to have 2.25 lakh cases by July 15, but at present, there are only 1.15 lakh cases. As the COVID-19 cases had started rising in the first week of June, it was expected that there would be 1.34 lakh active cases by July 15, but till date, there are only 18,600 active cases in the city.

"We are in better situation today, as compared to June, but it does not mean we have won the war (against COVID-19). We have yet to go a long way. There may be a spike again in COVID-19 cases. We don't have to be complacent. We will not sit idle. We will have to be fully prepared," Kejriwal said.

Pilot involved in horse trading, says Gehlot

PNS ■ JAIPUR

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Wednesday accused rebel Congress leader Sachin Pilot of involvement in horse trading with the BJP.

Pilot was removed from the posts of the Rajasthan deputy chief minister and the state Congress president on Tuesday amid a power tussle with Gehlot.

In an interaction with reporters here, the chief minister, however, did not mention Pilot by his name but said the "former Pradesh Congress Committee president" was himself "doing the deal".

Gehlot said he has the proof that horse trading was being committed to topple his government.



"Those who are giving clarifications were themselves involved in horse trading," Gehlot told reporters.

The CM said he (Pilot) would have performed quite good had he "struggled in his youth". Gehlot also hit out at the national media saying it is supporting those who are "involved in murdering democracy".

CYCLONE AID SCAM

TMC expels party leaders; BJP, CPM talk tough

PNS ■ KOLKATA

As protests continued in parts of West Bengal over alleged misappropriation of monetary compensation to the people affected by cyclone 'Amphan', the ruling TMC cracked a whip against corruption and expelled several party leaders and workers, while the BJP and CPI(M) said that they won't stand by those who have been proven guilty.

Although Trinamool Congress (TMC), which controls nearly 80 per cent of the state's panchayats, has been at the receiving end of the public ire, the opposition BJP and the CPI(M) have also faced protests in some areas over allegations of fraud related to the 'Amphan' aid delivery.

The protests have been taking place in various parts of East Midnapore, South and



North 24 Parganas, the worst-affected districts by the cyclone 'Amphan' which hit West Bengal on May 20, killing 96 people and leaving behind a trail of destruction.

"Whenever any complaint was received, we took action against the accused leaders and party workers. We have either suspended or asked them to return money. We have zero-tolerance towards corruption," a senior TMC

leader said. Several local level TMC leaders were recently expelled from the party for their alleged involvement in corruption and nepotism, he said.

West Bengal Chief Minister and TMC president Mamata Banerjee recently said that her government was rectifying the "lapses" which might have occurred in its effort to pay the compensation to the cyclone-hit victims quickly.

GoM recommends hike in sugar MSP to Rs 33/kg

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A group of ministers, headed by Home Minister Amit Shah, on Wednesday recommended increasing the minimum selling price (MSP) of sugar by Rs 2 to 33 per kg to ensure mills clear the pending cane arrears of around Rs 20,000 crore at the earliest, sources said. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Food Minister Ram Vilas Paswan, Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar and Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal were present in the meeting. Sources said the GoM took stock of the pending sugarcane dues to be paid by sugar mills which stand at around Rs 20,000 crore so far in the current 2019-20 season (October-September) and ways to ensure mills clear this at the earliest.

Dehing-Patkai national park should include Amazon of the East: activists

PNS ■ GUWAHATI

The Assam government's decision to upgrade the Dehing Patkai Wildlife Sanctuary into a national park has enthused environmental conservationists and activists but with this long-standing demand to encompass the entire 500 sq km of the contiguous rainforests, known as Amazon of the East, within its ambit has gathered momentum. Conservationists have been demanding that the government include the adjoining reserved forests connected with the existing wildlife sanctuary like Joypore reserved forests, Upper Dehing East Block and the Upper Dehing West Block to the proposed national park.

Prominent personalities of the state like actor Adil Hussain, singer Papon, musician Joi Barua, former Axom Xahitya



Xabha chief Parmananda Rajbongshi, author and journalist Anuradha Sarma Pujari and artist Dadul Chaliha have also been appealing to the government to include the reserve forests within the proposed park. Ethnic communities of the villages surrounding the reserve forests has also extended their unstinted support to this entire movement.

Last week, Assam Chief

Minister Sarbananda Sonowal issued a directive to upgrade the sanctuary into a national park.

The sanctuary encompasses only 111.11 sq km but the stretch of rainforests include 500 sq km of the Joypur, Upper Dehing and Dirok reserved forests, spread over the two districts of Tinsukia and Dibrugarh, said Soumyadeep Dutta, director of environmental organisation Nature's Beckon.

Cong to move HC against Speaker's ruling rejecting to disqualify two MLAs

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Congress will move Allahabad High Court to challenge Uttar Pradesh assembly Speaker Hriday Narayan Dikshit's decision rejecting its plea to disqualify the party's two "rebel" MLAs, Aditi Singh and Rakesh Singh.

"The legal cell of the party in Delhi is preparing the petition for moving the high court," Congress Legislature Party leader Aradhana Misra told PTI on Wednesday.

On Speaker's ruling that the Congress' plea seeking disqualification of its two MLAs "lacked substance and sufficient evidence", Misra said, "There is sufficient ground for the disqualification of these two MLAs and the party had presented it before the Speaker."

"The acts and conduct of these two MLAs show that they want to willingly give up the membership of the House. Their actions are tantamount



to voluntarily giving up their membership (of the Assembly) under the 10th Schedule of the Constitution," Misra said, adding they have been continuously indulging in anti-party activities.

Giving an example, she said Aditi Singh participated in the special Vidhan Sabha session on October 2 last year defying the party whip against it.

"She said she did not get the whip. Even so, when she reached the Vidhan Sabha she

was fully aware that the entire opposition had boycotted the session. She did not just take part in the proceedings for four hours but also spoke in the house praising the government," Misra said.

Aditi Singh later tweeted remarks which amounted to criticising the party, the CLP leader said.

About Harchandpur MLA Rakesh Singh, the CLP leader said he publically criticised the party on several occasions.

Record number of samples tested for Covid-19: ICMR officials

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

More than 3.2 lakh samples were tested for COVID-19 on Tuesday, the highest so far on a day, taking the cumulative number of tests conducted in the country till July 14 to 1,24,12,664, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) officials said.

According to the Union Health Ministry, the testing per million for India is consistently rising and has touched 8994.7 on Wednesday.

"A cumulative total of 1,24,12,664 samples have been tested up to July 14. A total of 3,20,161 samples were tested on Tuesday, the highest so far conducted in a day," Scientist and media coordinator at the ICMR, Dr Lokesh Sharma, said.

The per day testing capacity, which was around 1.5 lakh on May 25, is nearly four lakh per day now, Sharma informed.

India registered a record sin-



gle day jump of 29,429 COVID-19 cases pushing its tally to 9,36,181 on Wednesday, while the death toll climbed to 24,309 with 582 new fatalities, according to Health Ministry data.

The WHO in its Guidance Note on "Public Health Criteria to Adjust Public Health and Social Measures in the Context of COVID-19" has advised comprehensive surveillance and testing for suspected cases.

While explaining the concept

of comprehensive surveillance and testing of suspect cases, the WHO advised that a country needs to conduct 140 tests per day per million population, the ministry said.

As many as 22 states are doing more than 140 COVID-19 tests per day per million in line with comprehensive testing guidance note by the WHO, said the Health Ministry, while advising the remaining states and UTs to increase testing to match the

India registered a record single day jump of 29,429 Covid-19 cases pushing its tally to 9,36,181 on Wednesday, while the death toll climbed to 24,309 with 582 new fatalities, according to Health Ministry data

WHO advised levels, the ministry said. One of the factors strongly aiding the increasing numbers of COVID-19 tests in the country is the steadily growing network of labs for testing of COVID-19. With 865 labs in the government sector and 358 private labs, the total number of testing labs is 1223, as on date.

In addition to the gold standard for test, RT PCR, TrueNat and CBNAAT are also used to augment this facility, it said.

Complaint in court against Ekta Kapoor over web show

PNS ■ MUMBAI

A criminal complaint has been filed against film and television producer Ekta Kapoor before a magistrate's court here for allegedly disrespecting Indian Army's uniform in one of her web series. The complaint was filed by former 'Bigg Boss' contestant Vikas Pathak, also known as Hindustani Bhai, before a magistrate's court in suburban Bandra on Tuesday.

The matter has been posted for hearing on August 24, Pathak's advocate Kashif Khan said. "My client had filed a complaint against Ekta Kapoor and others at a local police station, but no action has been taken till date, hence we moved a criminal complaint before the court," Khan said.

Besides Ekta Kapoor, the complaint also names her OTT platform ALT Balaji, Shobha Kapoor and Jeetendra Kapoor, he said.

PAPER WITH PASSION

Digital reliance

Raising funds in the midst of a pandemic is no joke. Mukesh Ambani should be applauded but is his nervousness justified?



On the day Reliance Industries held its first virtual annual general meeting, India's largest and most valuable private enterprise announced that search giant Google has invested \$4.5 billion into Reliance's Jio platforms, the conglomerate's digital arm. This raises the amount that India's richest man, Mukesh Ambani, has raised for Reliance Jio to close to \$20 billion, an impressive feat in the best of times. But given that the world is suffering a healthcare meltdown, thanks to the Coronavirus pandemic, this is an extraordinary feat. In all, Google plans to pump \$10 billion over the next five to seven years in the Indian market to help accelerate the adoption of digital technologies. A flurry of deals made in recent times has given the much-needed financial backing to Ambani's ambition to morph Reliance from an energy company to an e-commerce giant. Almost all the funds have been raised by American technology firms and financial institutions. Both Google and Facebook are part of the firm, much like its parent Reliance Industries. Jio is trying to become completely vertically integrated. It is doing it all — from creating 5G infrastructure at home to manufacturing smartphones for users, the creation of software services like Jio Meet as well as expanding Reliance's huge media play by owning a host of entertainment and news channels. The biggest single positive here is that Mukesh Ambani, like his father Dhirubhai Ambani before him, is a believer in India and the capabilities of this nation. He plans to build capacity within the country rather than import it. This was something made vitally important to every single Indian after the fire-breathing Chinese Dragon singed us last month. We can argue *ad nauseam* about how China might have lost the Indian market for a couple of generations but nothing speaks like action. While he might not look like it, Mukesh Ambani is a man of action. And for all this, he must be applauded.

However, and there's always a however, the way Reliance has garnered its funds and the fact that it is on the verge of becoming a monopolistic venture in telecommunications and technology services with only a couple of rivals — one of which is almost bankrupt — it does raise some concern. It remains to be seen how Ambani will deploy the funds raised in the Indian market. Will he buy out rivals in the e-commerce and groceries space? Or will every Indian have to move from one Reliance store to the next, albeit in the guise of other brands, thanks to Reliance retail owning the rights of several multinational brands in India? Or is there another way of looking at it? Should India nurture and raise national champions like Reliance Industries? The old guard of Indian companies could not scale enough or be scaled in different areas. As for Reliance, the pivot towards Jio and telecom has been a long time coming. The family feud meant that Mukesh Ambani had to wait for a decade and for his brother to mess up to get back into this space. He is not wasting any time now and his ambitions have scaled up from the time he launched Reliance Infocomm. With a clear roadmap for the future, his execution capabilities and striking a string of deals, Mukesh Ambani has proved just how an extremely competitive industry like telecom can yield striking returns. He is also securing the future for the Ambani clan for another half a century and possibly doing more to secure India's digital future away from the Chinese than any other individual.

Trouble in Chabahar

Iran drops India from Chabahar port rail project as China seals a new economic and security deal worth \$400 billion



India's traditional relationship with Iran is finally being stretched by our strategic closeness to the US and is pushing that nation directly into the arms of China. And this might cost us a project that we had heavily invested in, the Chabahar port. For now, the Iranian Government has decided to drop India as a partner for the construction of a rail line from Chabahar port to Zahedan, along the border with Afghanistan, and go on its own. It will use its own engineers and not consult Indian expertise either. This, it claims, is because of India's tardy initiative and not moving any funds although an agreement was signed four years ago. India has been stalling under the shadow of US sanctions, which seek to penalise countries doing business with Iran. According to reports, Iran, which wants to complete the line by March 2022, will use \$400 million from the Iranian National Development Fund. And despite a pandemic-hit economy, it is going in for massive spends simply because China has signed a 25-year economic and security partnership with it worth \$400 billion. This entails Chinese entry in banking, telecommunications, ports, railways and other infrastructure projects. It fulfils China's neo-imperialist desires, colonising another economy in the process, and keeps its domestic industries running with cheaper Iranian oil for the next 25 years. India, by comparison, has stopped importing Iranian crude oil under US pressure. The agreement also proposes military cooperation, which could make China a key player in regional geopolitics and counter the US.

India has been completely caught off guard by this deal even as it tried various rounds of negotiations with the US to spare it from sanctions for conducting certain businesses with Iran. Though India got exemption for the Chabahar port and the rail link, equipment suppliers feared a hitback and slowed down progress. Besides, Iran was upset by India's decision to completely stop energy imports, quite a big basket of its earnings. Now China has assured it of its oil market, picking up supplies for 25 long years, taking away Iran's worries. Bilateral ties with Iran nosedived further with the naked display of majoritarian politics during the Delhi riots in February with its Foreign Minister Javad Zarif strongly condemning them. Now there is talk of a greater Chinese stake, the deal merely an access card to Chabahar's duty free zone, an oil refinery and the port itself. In fact, though Iran has denied it, there is speculation that it could lease out the entire port to its new benefactor. That would be a big blow to India, which had hoped to build an alternate trade route from Chabahar to Afghanistan and Central Asia, bypassing Pakistan. But now with the Chinese reclaiming the vacuum, it will strengthen the China-Pakistan axis around the coast. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and the Gwadar port will strengthen that conduit. Iran says it has not abandoned India, but clearly it has decided to go with the biggest Asian power and the US' arch enemy on a need-based formula. We may think that we forced China's hand by retaliating in Galwan but all it did was ensure strategic calm when world opinion would have isolated it further had it escalated its aggression. As the only country whose growth projections are not negative post-pandemic, it can afford to buy out vulnerable nations. It has already invested in banks in Brazil. India may be its economic bulwark but China is quickly encircling it by winning over our old allies and neighbours. It is no less beligerent, just that it has now launched an economic warfare with India.

Save the common spirit

The Gurkhas cannot and should not be sacrificed at the altar of partisan politics or the smallness of spirit that besets present times because of Indo-Nepalese differences



BHOPINDER SINGH

Prime Minister Narendra Modi had invoked a "special relationship", based on shared culture, language and religion, with Nepal during his first official visit to Kathmandu in 2014. He had said, "This is the land of Sita and Janak; Nepal-India relations are as old as the Himalayas and the Ganga." Given his proclivity for abbreviations, Modi had coined HIT (Highways, I-Ways and Transways) as the transformational formula to strengthen age-old ties between the two nations. Much water has flown down the rivers Kosi, Gandaki and Karnali (the three big rivers that flow from Nepal to India) and Nepal has instead vested its trust in the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) to usher in the much-needed transformation.

Nepalese Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli's speech in New Delhi in 2018 was less flowery and presciently loaded. Repeatedly, he stressed on a "balanced outlook" in external relations, an unmistakable euphemism to "correct" the pro-India tilt. Nepal had just emerged from the perceived wounds of India's braggadocio during the 2015 earthquake relief operations and the supposed interferences in the framing of a new Constitution. Agitation over this issue had led to a crippling "blockade." In an age of social media, the hurt felt by a proud nation, which has never been ruled by outsiders, was palpable. Murmurs of India's "big brotherly" attitude being unacceptable gained credence in the streets of Nepal.

Oli had alluded to that overarching trust deficit and sinking sentiment. "Good neighbourliness demands harmonious co-existence forever. And trust is the key cementing factor. It derives its strength from the observance of such fundamental principles as equality, justice, mutual respect and benefit as well as non-interference," said Oli. He added that for impact, "it is natural to expect similar assurance from India." Clearly, the healing process never kicked off and today, ties between India and Nepal have reached an unprecedented low due to border violence, cartographical disputes and trust eroding measures like Nepal's decision to ban the Indian media.

Undoubtedly, there are layered complexities of missteps that were taken by both sides in equal measure. Both nations were driven by their own domestic political considerations, short-termism and geo-political churns that widened the faultlines, which always existed but never flared up to this extent. The crests and troughs of bilateral relations were always handled politically, without any unnecessary attribution to the societal-ethnicity of the people involved. Today, that venerated "Gurkha" stands to be dangerously demonised as collateral damage. The delinking of "politics" and "people" has not been the strength of the current dispensation. Deliberate contextualisation and binarisation of circumstances



may still yield electoral gratification but this will come at the cost of alienating almost all neighbouring countries, well beyond Pakistan and China.

The intermingling and intermeshing of the Indo-Nepalese people are not just historical, cultural, spiritual, religious or even transactional; it is unparalleled in terms of the faith, trust and reverence that is afforded on the "Gurkha" in the Indian consciousness. Nearly 40 dedicated Gurkha Regiment battalions with approximately 40,000 Indian and Nepali Gurkha soldiers defend India's sovereignty. Another one lakh veterans reside in Nepal and the annals of Indian Army's valour testify to the raw gallantry of the likes of Lt Col Dhan Singh Thapa, Param Vir Chakra (PVC), among others, who ironically fought the Chinese in the same area around the Pangong Lake.

His citation read, "Major Thapa got out of his trench and killed several enemies in hand-to-hand fighting before he was finally overpowered by Chinese soldiers." The proud Gurkha had stared death in the eye and returned. Indeed, he was born in Dharamshala as many other Gurkhas in the region of Darjeeling Hills or Dehradun but he was as synonymously a Gurkha and an Indian as Mahavir Chakra (MVC) awardees like Tika Bahadur

“THE NATIONAL LEADERSHIP HAS TO MAKE A CONCERTED EFFORT TO ENSURE THAT NO UNTOWARD OR OVER-EXCITABLE TAIN IS IMPLIED ON THE LOYALTY, FIDELITY AND CHARACTER OF THE PEOPLE OF NEPAL. GOVERNMENTAL OR IDEOLOGICAL DIFFERENCES HAVE TO BE HANDLED SEPARATELY”

Thapa, Pati Ram Gurung or a Prem Bahadur Gurung.

This unparalleled tradition and saga of sacrifice for India is reciprocated in a similar spirit by all those who chose to identify themselves as Gurkhas. In a deeply moving sight, a 11-year-old girl shouted the Gurkha war-cry on her father's cremation "Tiger 9 GR Ko! Ho Ki Hoina?" (Col MN Rai, the Tiger of 9 Gurkha Regiment, he was or wasn't he?) and it was responded by a resounding "Ho Ho Ho" (he was, he was, he was). The daughter and the nation mourned his loss and yet another name got etched to the list of the illustrious Gurkha glories. The inexplicable bond of the Indo-Nepalese reality underwrote that sacred spirit.

The "Gurkha" cannot and should not be sacrificed at the altar of partisan politics or the smallness of spirit that besets the times that be. Sadly, the oversimplistic narrative of the day can easily affix the slant of "anti-national" on anyone owing to their ethnicities or religion as the basest instincts are easily aroused, tolerated and stoked by the powers-that-be.

Equally, the Nepalese dispensation cannot forget history and independent India's contributions or the essential implications that are imminent in choosing a China over India as its "bargaining tool." The people-to-people connect with

some other neighbouring countries has already been ruptured and irreversibly damaged with the context of politico-religiosity. This has done an extreme disservice to some of our own, who axiomatically got associated as "anti-nationals" owing to their co-religiosity. Ironically, such an ethnic pejoration onto the identity of the "Gurkha" would be a unique failure. This despite the supposed commonalities of the two realms.

Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw identified himself as a proud Gurkha as does the current Chief of Defence Staff or the Chief of Indian Army Staff prior to him. In a reciprocal dignity, the chiefs of both armies also bestow Honorary "Generalship" of their Armies, mutually. The national leadership has to make a concerted effort to ensure that no untoward or over-excitability is implied on the loyalty, fidelity and character of the people of Nepal. Governmental or ideological differences have to be handled separately without galvanising societal emotions as it did with other neighbouring countries. India must always protect its sovereign interests firmly. It must also recognise the dignity of the "other", especially one who has bled for India unflinchingly.

(The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands)

SOUNDBITE

India's global strategy is in tatters. We are losing power and respect everywhere and the Government of India has no idea what to do.



Congress leader —Rahul Gandhi

Covid is not going away anytime soon, so it's imperative that we adjust our expectations of what's considered 'normal' to include these basic but crucial precautions.



Actor —Anil Kapoor

I'm not interested right now in talking to China. We made a great trade deal. But as soon as the deal was done, the ink wasn't even dry and they hit us with the plague.



US President —Donald Trump

My favourite batting partner is Mahi bhai (MS Dhoni) but it's rare that I get a chance to bat with him. If he's (Dhoni) out there batting with you, things remain sorted.



Cricketer —Rishabh Pant

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Rediscover agri economy

Sir — It should not have taken a pandemic for this nation to rediscover that we are essentially an agrarian economy. Decades of *ad hoc* and knee-jerk policies on agro production, storage capacity, distribution and exports were translating into excess grain reserves since 1995. The pity of it all, grains were wasted in shoddy warehouse facilities. Further, an unimaginative distribution and pricing set-up denied their reach to the deserving poor.

On April 1, 2020, stocks in the central pool stood at 73.85 MT, the highest ever, against a reserve requirement of just 21.04 MT. This should help feed the common man for months now. Pulled up by COVID-19, we are sure to sustain a new-found respect for this foundational sector of our economy. Reserve levels will be scaled up. More modern and efficient storage capacities and attendant infrastructure and employment-centric initiatives will be on the cards. Significantly, procurement during this harvest season was prompt and harvesting was imaginatively done by States despite the non-availability of labour. Bureaucracy

Pilot's revolt should pave way for Congress 2.0

This refers to the editorial, "Pilot sacked" (July 15). The revolt of Sachin Pilot, who was dismissed from every office he held in Rajasthan, is a golden opportunity for the rejuvenation of a secular front against the ruling BJP. This should include immediate holding of long overdue internal elections for a new Congress president outside the Gandhi fold, followed by a radical overhaul of the party. Alternatively, he could float a regional party, which along with other breakaway factions of the Congress, namely, the Trinamool Congress, the Nationalist Congress Party and YRS Congress could merge into a Congress 2.0. This grouping, covering a third of the country's electorate, would embolden more capable Congressmen to join the ranks and render the Gandhi-led Congress 1.0 version obsolete.

Thankfully, Pilot has chosen not to follow the footsteps of Jyotiraditya Scindia to join the BJP. Had this been the case, it would have earned Congress leader Rahul Gandhi more sympathy and would have come to boost his image as a champion of the secular ideology



that he certainly does not deserve. Moreover, even from Pilot's personal standpoint, the grass is not greener on the other side. Rajasthan is a BJP bastion and he must have realised that there are a host of well-entrenched leaders already ahead of him in the queue.

SB Bhalerao Mumbai

must ensure that this singular efficiency in decision-making and in owning up to a problem becomes the new norm to give a fillip to rural stakeholders.

Once the thrust reverts to the agro sector, the economy must shift to the rural epicentre, buttressed by auxiliary industries such as food processing. Post the pandemic, reverse migration of a

huge number of non-resident Indians is imminent and an expanded rural economy alone can accommodate the surge. The pandemic has given us a sharp cue for the dispersal of wealth and consumption into rural heartlands as an enduring policy of inclusive development.

R Narayanan Navi Mumbai

Absurd claim

Sir — Nepal Prime Minister KP Oli has thrown yet another bouncer by claiming that "real Aayodhya" is in Nepal and not in India. He also claimed that India had created a "fake Aayodhya."

Of late, Oli has been in the news for all the wrong reasons.

He issued a "new" map of Nepal, claiming Kalapani, Lipulekh and Limpiadhura as its territory. Oli's communist Government in Nepal is also playing into the hands of China, which has reportedly taken away 33 hectares of land from it. But all of this has not bothered Oli, who is also facing growing discontent back home for "junking India" and "joining China." One just hopes that temporary developments and flash-points do not hamper the unique relations both nations share.

KV Seetharamaiah Hassan

Mutual benefit

Sir — The Google initiative to pump ₹75,000 crore for digital India initiative will benefit India in the long-term. For Google, too, this is an effort to tap the huge opportunity in a country whose mass market has only just begun to go online. This step will also fill the void created by the banning of Chinese applications.

Sudhir Via email

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Balance ecology and economy

The rapid clearances of projects in order to promote industries are proving to be a death knell for the environment



KOTA SRIRAJ

The Coronavirus pandemic has not only killed lakhs of people worldwide, it has sickened the global economy, too, as nations have been forced to shut down their industries and businesses in order to stem the spread of the contagion. India, with its 9,39,192 Coronavirus cases and 24,327 casualties is no exception to this need to hunker down. And the country, which had begun to open up in a phased manner after an extended, hard lockdown, is being forced to impose brief shutdowns again. Naturally, this COVID-19 chokehold over the economy has put developmental projects, industry, trade and business in a coma and impacted thousands of lives and livelihoods.

The worst affected of the lot have been the migrant workers of the nation, who are rightly considered the silent contributors to development. The labour community, who at the best of times is neither appreciated enough nor remunerated fairly, continued to suffer even more badly during the COVID-19 lockdown. This was tragically epitomised by the horrid accident in Aurangabad where unemployed, exhausted and broke labourers walking back home were mowed down by a train after they went off to sleep on the tracks. The incident had sparked off a nationwide outrage and sense of grief for the sufferings of the workers in the informal economy.

Now, with the country slowly opening up, despite the Coronavirus cases skyrocketing, the very same labourers are being coaxed to come back from their villages and get the wheels of the economy moving again. That brings us to the fact that no matter what happens, even during a pandemic, an economy cannot be stopped in its tracks, it has to keep ticking. The economy is given precedence over everything, and this includes the environment, which is the proverbial poor cousin.

But in this bid to restart the economy, India is probably committing the same mistake all over again by making trade, business and industry a priority and putting the environment and ecological concerns on the back-burner. Unfortunately, this lopsided agenda of promoting economic development at the cost of the environment has heightened the risk of more pandemics such as the COVID-19 occurring frequently in future. In a stark but positive contrast, this aspect has been understood by the western world whose nations are quickly scrambling to cover their ecological deficiencies and environmental weak spots by ensuring that their economic development projects have a robust environmental compassion built in.

So, given these circumstances, it is natural to expect the Ministry of Environment, Forests and Climate Change (MoEFCC) to get into an overdrive and release a slew of measures that would herald the safeguarding of the environment in the current, COVID-19-stressed conditions. But this is not the case. Curiously, the Minister in charge for MoEFCC also happens to be in charge of the portfolio for Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises. In any other environmentally-conscious nation, this would have been perceived as a conflict of interest. But not in India. This anomaly notwithstanding, the MoEFCC recently went on a project clearance spree in 11 States.

These rapid clearances of projects in order to promote industries are proving to be a death knell for the environment. The MoEFCC, for instance, cleared a railway line in Telangana that cuts through 168 hectares of a prime forest, which also happens to be a tiger reserve. In this case, the Government could have considered an elevated track to spare the trees but was obviously not done. The Etah Hydroproject in Arunachal Pradesh's Dibang Valley is yet another example of sheer indifference towards the environment. The project entails the diversion of 1,150 hectares of forest land that will cause the felling of a whopping 2,70,000 trees.

This kind of ruin of nature cannot be justified at all, no matter what the gains are. Numerous representations from environmental activists and scientists have been able to stall the final approval of the project, but it is surprising how the project was conceived in the first place, given the scale of environmental destruction. In the midst of baffling examples such as these is yet another instance of environmental neglect. This is the proposed hydel project in Uttarakhand that involves compromising 768 acres of forest land.

The Government must realise that the environment cannot be pawned off for industrial gains. Repeated announcements of projects that threaten the environment will keep inviting representations from the environmental and scientific community to roll back these projects. Parallely, the nation will slowly but surely understand the apathy of the Government towards the environment and this will be the end of the trust people have in the Government. This kind of knee-jerk conception and approval of projects with utter disregard for the environment is detrimental to national interests and cannot be allowed to proliferate.

As a first step to stem this, the Government must ensure that the environment and heavy industries ministries are not represented by the same person. This will ensure that there is no conflict of interest and decisions taken in one Ministry will not result in collateral damage for the other. The current trying times are a great opportunity for India to reaffirm its commitment towards the environment and this must be shown through actions rather than words. This can be done only by effectively balancing the ecology with the economy.

(The writer is an environmental journalist)

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

TILL NOW WE HAVE REMAINED UNDER THE BELIEF THAT RAM, THE MAN SITA MARRIED, WAS AN INDIAN... HE WAS NOT, HE WAS A NEPALI.
 —NEPAL PRIME MINISTER
 KP SHARMA OLI



EVEN IN INDIA LEFT PARTIES PLAYED WITH PEOPLE'S FAITH. THE COMMUNISTS IN NEPAL WILL BE REJECTED BY THE MASSES LIKE THEY HAVE BEEN HERE.
 —BJP NATIONAL SPOKESPERSON
 BIZAY SONKAR SHASTRI

Beware of an injured Xi

If Jinping is able to overcome the domestic challenges he faces now, he would emerge a dictator. India, therefore, has to be prepared for a probability of re-occurrence of aggression on its borders



ANIL GUPTA

President Xi Jinping's ambition to make China an undisputed global superpower has changed the entire geo-political dynamics. The phenomenal rise of Xi has made China more aggressive. He has emerged as the most powerful leader of China after Mao Zedong. Born in a politically-influential family in 1953, he witnessed the Mao era closely and saw the ruthless face of Zedong when his father was purged and jailed during the 1966-76 Cultural Revolution. Though his father was rehabilitated after the death of Mao, these events left a long-lasting impression on his mind which got further hardened during Xi's initial struggle within the Communist Party which he joined in 1974. He spent decades working his way up the party and Government ranks but his consolidation of power since becoming General Secretary, the head of the party, in 2012 has been unprecedented. In 2013, he also became the President of the Peoples' Republic of China (PRC), thus assuming charge of all the three most-coveted posts in the party and Government. He represents the new generation of Chinese because he is the first General Secretary born after the establishment of the PRC. Xi today is the President of PRC without term limits. Incidentally, he now has 12 posts that give him control and oversight over most areas of Government, the economy and military. Xi, therefore, is the most authoritarian world leader today, who is ruthless with any form of opposition to him at home and visualises himself as a potential supreme leader of the world.

It goes to the credit of Xi that during his tenure China has grown economically and militarily. China surpassed Japan to become the second-largest economy in the world and global manufacturing hub. He effected a large-scale purge in the military brass to end corruption in the People's Liberation Army (PLA). This was followed by structural reforms to make PLA a lean and modern fighting force with emphasis on mastering the three domains of cyber world, space and information.

Xi proved to be a leader who can rise to challenges. But his bitter experience during the Cultural Revolution has made him an authoritarian man who does not trust anyone. He abhors challenge to his authority or to his "Chinese Dream" of national rejuvenation. Thus, he has crushed dissent in Hong Kong, Xinjiang and Tibet. In pursuance of his Middle Kingdom ambition, he has refused to accept international laws and treaties and persisted with expansionist designs in the South China Sea (SCS), East China Sea (ECS) while continuing with salami-slicing in the neighbourhood to include India, Nepal and Bhutan. His ambition to be a global leader has led to a no holds barred conflict with the sole superpower, the US. Xi is convinced that the main rival of China is the US and all others are mere pushovers and that has determined his behaviour and actions as far as the disputes in the SCS, the Sino-India border and disputes with South Korea, Japan and Taiwan are concerned.

All was going well for Xi till the outbreak of the Coronavirus. The ongoing trade war with the US was also tilted in his favour till the pandemic spread across the world with its roots in China. All of a sudden Xi was being attacked globally as well as domestically. The strong Chinese economy began to show signs of crumbling. The demand for closing factories in China and relocating them grew louder by the day. India was being considered a probable alternative. The US seized the opportunity and led the global offensive against China, accusing Xi of deliberately delaying the information regarding the outbreak. The global economy was in the doldrums with nations resorting to prolonged lockdowns and most countries blaming China for the contagion.

Xi's dream of the 21st century belonging to China began to crumble gradually. His plan of end-

“ ECONOMIC STRANGULATION OF CHINA SHOULD CONTINUE WHILE AT THE SAME TIME ENCOURAGING FRIENDLY NATIONS TO DO THE SAME. ON THE DIPLOMATIC FRONT, APART FROM CONSOLIDATING CHINESE ISOLATION DUE TO THE PANDEMIC, INDIA SHOULD ALSO CONSIDER DENOUNCING BEIJING'S ONE NATION POLICY AND LEVERAGE NUMEROUS FAULT LINES IN CHINA BY EXPOSING ITS HIGH-HANDEDNESS IN GRABBING THE TERRITORIES IN ITS PERIPHERY. FREE TIBET MOVEMENT SHOULD BE GIVEN AN IMPETUS IN INDIA. THE DEMOCRATIC MOVEMENTS IN HONG KONG AND TAIWAN NEED STRONGER INDIAN SUPPORT ”



ing poverty in China by 2020 suffered the biggest setback and it emerged as his toughest year. Xi's unchallenged status at home came under threat and in order to divert attention he began to pursue an aggressive policy to portray Chinese supremacy. He let loose his "wolf warrior" diplomats to counter the global diplomatic and political onslaught. Simultaneously, he began to flex muscles in the SCS and ECS. He started the process of gaining complete control over Hong Kong, denouncing the "One Nation Two Systems" promise. The regime change in Taiwan, too, annoyed Xi. He began to behave like a medieval king eager to extend frontiers and win glory.

Challenging India in the trans-Himalayan icy battlefield was meant to teach New Delhi a lesson for challenging the Chinese ownership of Aksai Chin. China was convinced that New Delhi would not challenge its occupation of Aksai Chin till the Indian Home Minister roared in the Parliament that his reference to Ladakh included Gilgit-Baltistan and Aksai Chin. It rattled Beijing more than Pakistan because it could afford to lose neither of the two.

Despite China's denial, the world community noted with concern the sinking of Vietnamese fishing boats in the SCS, the unilateral decision to name new Chinese districts in the area, sanctions against Australia, browbeating of Japan in the ECS, unilateral actions in Hong Kong, Ladakh incursions, manipulation of Nepal, claims on the Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary in Eastern Bhutan and on the Siberian town of Vladivostok.

Buoied by the passive response of other nations, Xi ventured to provoke India at Galwan Heights expecting meek submission. But the brawl at those icy heights on the night of June 15 not only took the Chinese by surprise but also put the fear of God in its soldiers about the fighting prowess of Indian soldiers. The Chinese plan to teach India a lesson not only backfired but the Galwan face-off proved to be a turning point, which may well turn out to be a reason for renewed vengeance. The global community acknowledged India standing up to the bully and paying him back in the same coin. India followed it up with an econom-

ic offensive as well. The changed scenario had a ripple effect. China's victims realised that the dragon could be held off.

ASEAN nations for the first time spoke in unison, asking China to follow international laws on maritime boundaries. Japan reacted offensively by deploying near the disputed islands, Bhutan vehemently asserted its claim over Sakteng Wildlife Sanctuary and refused to be cowed down, Russia agreed to fast track arms supplies to India, the US moved three aircraft carriers in the SCS, Australia refused to take Chinese students and broke trade ties with it.

The Chinese economy, too, suffered a big blow, putting greater pressure on Xi. Following the Indian ban of 59 Chinese apps, cancellation of contracts signed with Chinese companies in the telecom, construction and MSME sectors and the growing demand for boycott of Chinese goods, other nations, too, began to ban Chinese technology firms. Chinese giant Huawei has been the biggest sufferer. Similarly, the dream project of Xi, the Belt Road Initiative (BRI), has come under severe strain with many countries either abandoning various projects or demanding a review of their loan agreements.

The list of Xi's woes is growing by the day. China had become an economic superpower by the time Xi took power but his critics now blame him for leading the country to ruin due to his aggressive, expansionist policies and ambition.

After aggressive posturing following the Galwan face-off, China has now agreed to a negotiated settlement on the border so that he doesn't lose the war against the international community as well. India and China agreed that differences should not become disputes after a telephonic discussion between the Indian National Security Advisor and the Chinese Foreign Minister.

Though China has agreed to a phased disengagement and de-escalation, there is a big trust deficit between the two armies now. The overwhelming opinion in India is that disengagement is not enough in order to end tensions on the Line of Actual Control (LAC). They advocate no de-escalation until full return of status quo. While Xi would fight his own battle for survival, we have to ensure that it is not yet another

Chinese trap.

History tells us that China is untrustworthy. Be it 1962, Sumdorong Chu, Depsang or Doklam. This time, too, we are not yet sure if the Chinese move is a tactical retreat in order to achieve its bigger strategic aim. Hence, India should not be lulled into complacency. History tells us that our political leadership has failed to understand the insurance provided to a nation's growth economically and diplomatically by strong security forces. Hence, payment of annual premium to ensure that the insurance does not lapse is mandatory. The nation has to be prepared to ward off physical threats to its borders and also those in the cyber world, space and the information highways.

India must not let its guard down on the borders along the Line of Control (LoC) and the LAC. At the same time all actions taken to supplement the armoury of the three services should not be halted but put on fast track to ensure that if the dragon dares to threaten us again, it is taught a lesson forever. If needed, we should be prepared to stay put even during the harsh winters, for which logistics and catering preparations have to begin forthwith.

Economic strangulation of China should continue while at the same time encouraging friendly nations to do the same. On the diplomatic front, apart from consolidating Chinese isolation due to the pandemic, India should also consider denouncing Beijing's One Nation Policy and leverage numerous fault lines in China by exposing its high-handedness in grabbing the territories in its periphery. Free Tibet movement should be given an impetus in India. The democratic movements in Hong Kong and Taiwan need stronger Indian support.

If Xi is able to overcome the domestic challenges he faces now, he would emerge a dictator. India, therefore, has to be prepared for a probability of reoccurrence of Chinese aggression on its borders. We have to emerge as China's equal. Beijing will try its level best to lull us into complacency, it would be suicidal if we fall into China's trap again.

(The author is a Jammu-based veteran, political commentator and security analyst)

Minimally invasive surgery best in Corona era

Such procedures improve short-term outcomes in heart patients and are associated with a faster recovery in comparison with the traditional approach



KM CHERIAN

The nation has been in lockdown mode for more than four months now and has only just started opening up. Hospitals, research and development (R&D) institutions are trying their best to bring out a vaccine for the Coronavirus. In fact, human trials for the vaccine have begun in India. We have seen many reports that have said that there has been a decline in the number of people opting for surgeries, especially low

and medium-risk patients. A lot of patients, who had surgeries scheduled, have postponed them and are avoiding hospital visits for routine checkups as they fear being exposed to the Coronavirus. There have been reports of people losing their lives due to a heart attack or stroke. Even though they had prior symptoms of heart disease, they did not venture out due to the fear of COVID-19.

It is extremely important for cardiac patients and people with heart conditions to take care of their health in such testing times, especially as there are a lot of restrictions on access to various facilities.

Exercising, maintaining a proper diet and taking the prescribed cardiac medication or anti-diabetes medicine are all very important for

patients, since these are the co-morbid conditions which make the COVID-19 infection serious as the cardiac/diabetes patients are already immuno-compromised. With that said, it is also impossible for high-risk patients with severe heart conditions to not opt for surgeries. When it is absolutely essential depending on the conditions, patients might have to undergo surgery.

The need to safeguard themselves and their patients has prompted most surgeons to develop their own protocols to tide over the pandemic situation. The decision for surgical care should be based on the doctor's own surgical and clinical judgment and assessment of resource availability. Patients should get the surgical care based on practice of evidence-based medicine. A non-operative line of

management is advised when it is clinically appropriate for patients, specially looking at risk and benefits of surgery.

Heart surgeries are arduous and long procedures that take a toll on patients physically and mentally. Open-heart surgeries are back-breaking expensive and procedures last for days. Since the surgical team has to be careful not to get infection, all the precautionary measures that are being practised are also the most rigorous for the surgical team. Apart from that, in the COVID-19 era, there is a dire need for minimum contact which is only possible through minimally-invasive surgical techniques.

Minimally invasive surgery improves short-term outcomes in patients and it is associated with a faster recovery in comparison with the traditional

approach. If a patient needs valve replacement, then a trans catheter aortic valve replacement is an alternative, but the long-lasting results of these valves are still questionable. There is a certain amount of industry drive to make these procedures popular without really knowing the long-term results. I am sure that there are cardiologists who will object to this contention. But this remark is only because of the fact that I am one of the few surgeons in this country who has been replacing valves (single, double or triple since 1975) and hence I have experienced the long-term results of conventional valve replacement.

Currently these valves are highly expensive in India, going up to ₹22.5 lakh, owing to which this technology is not available for common Indians. Even the cost of conven-

al valve replacement, that is between ₹2.5 to ₹3 lakh, is not affordable for the common man. The solution for this dilemma is indigenisation. Some hospitals in the country have been in the forefront of bringing about indigenisation in Transcatheter Aortic Valve Implantation (TAVI) along with the National Aeronautical Laboratory and Council of Scientific and Industrial Research, using Nitinol stents. The valve material used is bovine jugular veins which is after all a waste. This could be a classic example of "waste to wealth, but unfortunately, there has been no support from any Central Government agencies such as the Department of Biotechnology, the Department of Science and Technology or any regulatory bodies.

Children with congenital heart disease or structural heart disease undergo multiple heart surgeries in their lifetime. Of course, closing a hole in the heart through the Transcatheter route is available. Most of these patients who have these "corrections" can go home within 24 hours. This reduces their risk of catching infection, which is vital in the COVID-19 era. This also means more beds will be available for elective patients who need such therapy, which does not need long-term hospitalisation. It is not the technology alone but the logistics, the patient's comfort and affordability of the procedure that are also important.

(The writer is a Padma Sri awardee and cardiothoracic surgeon credited with India's first bypass. He is Chairman and CEO of Frontier Lifeline Hospital)

CAPSULE



Bandhan profit falls 31.6 pc to Rs 550cr in April-June

KOLKATA: Bandhan Bank on Wednesday reported a 31.6-per cent on-year decline in net profit to Rs 550 crore during the April-June quarter. The lender's bottomline in the corresponding period a year ago was Rs 804 crore. A Bandhan Bank statement said it has taken accelerated additional provision on standard assets amounting to Rs 750 crore, due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Operating profit during the quarter grew by 16.8 per cent to Rs 1,584 crore as against Rs 1,356 crore a year ago. The lender's deposits grew by 6.18 per cent quarter-on-quarter, the statement added.

Rupee jumps 27 paise to close at 75.15 against USD

MUMBAI: The rupee appreciated 27 paise to settle at 75.15 (provisional) against the US dollar on Wednesday tracking weakness in the greenback and gains in the domestic equity market. Forex traders said investor sentiment strengthened after the human clinical trials for COVID-19 vaccine were initiated in India. The rupee opened at 75.35 against the US dollar, then gained further ground and finally settled at 75.15 against the US dollar, up 27 paise over its previous close. It had settled at 75.42 against the greenback on Tuesday. During the four-hour trading session, the domestic unit witnessed an intra-day high of 75.14 and a low of 75.36 against the US dollar.

Arisaig Fund trims stake in Future Consumer by 2 pc

NEW DELHI: Arisaig India Fund Ltd has cut its stake in Future Consumer by 2 per cent by selling 3.84 crore shares in the open market. According to a BSE filing, Arisaig India Fund offloaded 3.84 crore shares, or 2 per cent stake, on July 13. Based on the weighted average price of the stock at Rs 11.63 per scrip on July 13, Arisaig India Fund's stake sale would be for an estimated value of Rs 44.65 crore. Arisaig India Fund decreased its shareholding in the company from 5.16 per cent to 3.16 per cent. Last week, Future Consumer Ltd reported a consolidated net loss of Rs 175.46 crore for the quarter ended March 2020.



Titan expects businesses to be hit 'very substantially'

NEW DELHI: Watch and jewellery maker Titan Company is expecting its businesses to be hit 'very substantially' in the current financial year due to disruptions caused by COVID-19 pandemic. The company said its focus during 2020-21 will be on cash flows and optimising spends to ensure liquidity. The lockdown necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic is expected to hit the company's businesses very substantially in the financial year 2020-21.

'Deal with Saudi Aramco not progressed as per timelines'

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Asia's richest man Mukesh Ambani on Wednesday said his group's planned stake sale in oil-to-chemical business to Saudi Aramco for an asking of USD 15 billion has not progressed as per original timelines due to COVID-19.

"We value our two-decade relationship with Aramco and are committed to a long-term partnership," Ambani said at Reliance Industries' annual general meeting. He, however, did not say if the deal was on track or give a new timeline for its completion.

"Deal with Saudi Aramco hasn't progressed per original timeline due to unforeseen situation in the energy market and COVID-19 situation," he said.

Reliance will be spinning off the oil-to-chemical (O2C) business into a separate subsidiary "to facilitate multiple partnership opportunities," he said.

"We expect to complete this process by early 2021," he said.

Ambani in August last year had announced talks for sale of 20 per cent stake in the O2C business, which comprises of RIL's twin oil refineries at Jamnagar in Gujarat and petrochemical assets, to the world's largest oil exporter, Saudi Aramco.

"Reliance is working to complete the contours of a strategic partnership with Saudi Aramco," Ambani said.

The partnership with Aramco would give Jamnagar refineries "access to a wide portfolio of value-accretive crude grades and enhanced feedstock security for higher oil-to-chemicals conversion," he had said in the annual report. With a stake, Aramco would not just have a share in one of the world's best refineries and the largest integrated petrochemical complex but also access to one of the fastest-growing markets — a ready-made market for 5 lakh barrels per day of its Arabian crude and offering a potentially bigger downstream role in future.



Jio developing homegrown 5G telecom solution

Richest Indian Mukesh Ambani on Wednesday announced his group's digital arm Jio developing a homegrown 5G telecom solution.

"Jio has designed and developed a complete 5G solution from scratch. It will be ready for trials as soon as 5G spectrum is available and can be ready for field deployment next year," Ambani said at Reliance Industries' annual general meeting.

Jio's global-scale 4G and fibre network is powered by several core software technologies and components. "It is this capability and know-how that positions Jio on the cutting edge of another exciting frontier — 5G," he said.

Jio Platforms, with over 20 startup partners, has built world-class capabilities in technologies such as 4G, 5G, Cloud computing, Devices and OS, Big Data, AI, AR/VR, Blockchain, he said.

"Using these technologies, we can create compelling solutions across multiple industry verticals like media, financial services, new commerce, education, healthcare, agri, smart cities & smart mobility," he said, adding Jio Platforms is conceived with vision of developing original, captive intellectual property, using which we can demonstrate transformative power of technology across multiple ecosystems — first in India, and then rest of world.

JioMeet sees 5 million downloads

Richest Indian Mukesh Ambani on Wednesday said India's first cloud-based video conferencing app JioMeet has seen 5 million downloads within days of its launch.

Reliance Industries earlier this week launched JioMeet video conferencing app with unlimited free calling, which is being seen as rate war on rival Zoom. JioMeet video conferencing app is available across



Android, iOS, Windows, macOS and web.

Addressing the company's 43rd annual general meeting, Ambani said JioMeet has seen 5 million downloads by users

'Group received strong interest from strategic investors'

Richest Indian Mukesh Ambani on Wednesday said his group's retail venture has received strong interest from strategic and financial investors.

"We will induct global partners and investors in Reliance Retail in the next few quarters," he said at Reliance Industries annual general meeting.

Reliance Retail has already started pilots of its e-commerce venture. "We have successfully piloted JioMart grocery model with kirana partners. The beta version of JioMart grocery platform is being piloted in 200 cities. Daily orders have crossed 2.5 lakh, and the number is growing each day," Ambani said.

Connecting farmers and delivering their fresh produce directly to homes is a key part of the firm's grocery strategy. "This will significantly improve farmer income and incentivise higher productivity," he said.

More than two-thirds of Reliance Retail's nearly 12,000 stores are operated in Tier II, Tier III and Tier IV towns. "It sources over 80 per cent of fruits and vegetable directly from farmers," he said.

IDBI Bank plans to raise Rs 11,000 cr equity capital

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Private lender IDBI Bank will raise up to Rs 11,000 crore equity capital through various modes, including a qualified institutional placement (QIP), in about a year to strengthen its capital base, the bank said on Wednesday.

The lender will seek approval from shareholders for the proposal in the upcoming annual general meeting (AGM) on August 17, 2020, the bank said in a regulatory filing.

IDBI Bank is required to maintain its Tier I capital in accordance with the relevant regulatory guidelines issued from time to time. In view of ongoing implementation of Basel III norms and consequential capital charge, there is a need to increase the capital to further strengthen the Capital Adequacy Ratio, it said.

IDBI Bank said it will seek consent of shareholders in the AGM to offer, issue and allot such number of equity shares of the face value of Rs 10 each and aggregating up to Rs 11,000 crore, in one or more tranches.

IDBI strives to come out of RBI PCA framework: MD

IDBI Bank would endeavour to come out of the RBI's restrictive Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework as early as possible during the current fiscal by improving its financial health, a top bank official has said.

The Reserve Bank in May 2017 had placed the IDBI Bank in the PCA framework because of the deterioration in the financial health of the bank.

The PCA framework imposes various operational restrictions on a bank to

ensure that the lender remains solvent.

One of the thrust areas of the bank's strategic endeavours has been to expeditiously exit the Prompt Corrective Action (PCA) framework, imposed on it since May 2017, by dint of its performance, IDBI Bank managing director and CEO Rakesh Sharma said in a letter to the shareholders.

"Your Bank is cautiously optimistic of an early exit from the PCA framework in FY2020-21 as it builds on the gains made in FY2019-20 so that your Bank can optimise stakeholder value by undertaking the entire gamut of banking activities," he said in the letter, as per the bank's annual report.

The issuance of shares will be including but not limited to one or more of the existing shareholders/members, employees of the bank, QIBs by way of public issue, rights

issue or private placement, it added.

The AGM will be held through audio/video means in view of the pandemic, the bank said.

Honda drives in all new City in India priced at Rs 10.9 lakh

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Japanese auto major Honda on Wednesday launched the new version of its mid-sized sedan City in India priced between Rs 10.9 lakh-Rs 14.65 lakh (ex-showroom).

The fifth generation version of the popular model, which in its current form is longer and wider than the fourth generation City, comes with BS-VI compliant petrol and diesel powertrains.

The 1.5-litre petrol versions with manual transmission are priced at Rs 10.9 lakh, Rs 12.26 lakh, and Rs 13.15 lakh, while the 1.5-litre diesel trims are tagged at Rs 12.40, Rs 13.76 lakh, and Rs 14.65 lakh. The 1.5-litre petrol automatic trims on the other hand are priced at Rs 12.20 lakh, Rs 13.56 lakh and, Rs 14.45 lakh.

The model, which will compete with the likes of Hyundai Verna, Maruti Suzuki Ciaz and Skoda Rapid, now features



smart devices ecosystem including Alexa remote capability and 32 connected features as standard feature across all variants with a five-year free subscription.

The company said it will also continue to sell the BS-VI compliant fourth generation City along with the new version. "City is synonymous with Honda brand in India. It is the most important model for us," Honda Motor India Ltd (HCIL) President and CEO Gaku Nakanishi said.

NID students can apply for work permits in Germany now

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Students of National Institutes of Design (NID) will be able to apply easily for work permits in Germany now as its centres have been included in the European country's Anabin database, the commerce and industry ministry said on Wednesday.

It said Germany has opened a Central Office for Foreign Education. As part of their service, they maintain a database called Anabin that lists foreign degrees and higher education qualifications in relation to German diplomas and degrees.

Recognition of foreign university-level qualifications in Germany is often an essential prerequisite for securing a German Work Visa, Job Seekers Visa or German Blue Card. It said often the success of visa application is dependent on the proof that the university-level qualification acquired outside Germany is considered on par with equivalent German qualification.

Google picks 7.7 pc stake in Jio for Rs 33,373 cr

Google has agreed to invest Rs 33,373 crore to buy a 7.7 per cent stake in Reliance Industries' technology venture, adding to a slew of investments since April that has crossed Rs 1.52 lakh crore.

California-based Alphabet Inc joins Facebook Inc, which opened the investment cycle in Jio Platforms by picking 9.99

per cent stake for Rs 43,573.62 crore, as well as chipmaker Intel Corp and Qualcomm Inc.

"We are delighted to welcome Google as a strategic investor in Jio Platforms. We have signed a binding partnership

and an investment agreement under which Google will invest Rs 33,373 crores for a 7.7 per cent stake in Jio Platforms," RIL Chairman Mukesh Ambani said at the company's annual general meeting.

With Google coming on

board, Reliance has completed its target of capital raising for Jio Platforms, he said.

With this deal, Reliance has sold 32.84 per cent stake in Jio Platforms Ltd - the unit that houses India's youngest but largest telecom firm Jio Infocomm and apps. In total, Jio has raised Rs 1,52,055.45 crore.

GoM recommends hike in sugar MSP to Rs 33 per kg

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A group of ministers, headed by Home Minister Amit Shah, on Wednesday recommended increasing the minimum selling price (MSP) of sugar by Rs 2 to 33 per kg to ensure mills clear the pending cane arrears of around Rs 20,000 crore at the earliest, sources said.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, Food Minister Ram Vilas Paswan, Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar and Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal were present in the meeting.

Sources said the GoM took stock of the pending sugarcane dues to be paid by sugar mills



which stand at around Rs 20,000 crore so far in the current 2019-20 season (October-September) and ways to ensure mills clear this at the earliest.

One of the proposals discussed was to increase the minimum selling price (MSP) of sugar.

The GoM directed the Food Ministry to move a Cabinet note with a proposal to hike the MSP of sugar as recommended by the Niti Aayog, the

sources said. The government will consider other options if an increase in MSP of sugar does not help in reducing substantial cane arrears to farmers, the sources added.

A task force constituted by Niti Aayog on sugarcane and sugar industry had also recommended a one-time increase of Rs 2 per kg in MSP of sugar.

Last year, the government had increased the price at which mills sell sugar to bulk buyers by Rs 2/kg to Rs 31/kg.

The minimum selling price of sugar is fixed taking into account the components of FRP and minimum conversion cost of the most efficient mills.

ADB appoints EC Ashok Lavasa as new vice-president

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Multilateral funding agency Asian Development Bank (ADB) on Wednesday said it has appointed Election Commissioner Ashok Lavasa as vice-president for private sector operations and public-private partnerships.

"He is currently one of the Election Commissioners of India and previously served in a range of senior posts including as Union Finance Secretary of India; Union Secretary for the Ministry of Environment, Forests, and Climate Change; and Union Secretary for the Ministry of Civil Aviation," ADB said in a statement. Lavasa will succeed Diwakar Gupta, whose term will end on August 31.

HyperVerge enters V-KYC with SBI Card as marquee customer

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Bangalore, July 15, 2020: HyperVerge announces the adoption of its AI assisted Video-KYC system by the country's only listed pure play credit card company - SBI Card. Customers can apply for an SBI Credit Card from their homes using their mobile phone or laptop and complete the KYC process via an end to end encrypted secure video call.

Earlier this year, RBI permitted regulated entities (RE) - banks, credit card companies, NBFCs and wallets - to use Video-KYC as a replacement for in-person-verification. The per-KYC cost comes down for the financial institution, and the experience for the customer is much better than earlier.



Further, the COVID-19 situation has made social distancing the norm. Customers are hesitant for both agent driven in-person-verification and branch-based verification. In this context, Video-KYC is now critical to continue business momentum in a 100% safe contact-less, presence-less, paper-less way. During the HyperVerge

Video KYC process, the SBI Card agent captures the customer's location, asks for a random verification code and takes a picture of the customer's PAN and customer's face. The process is so simple that it can take as less as 2 minutes and an agent can complete upto 200 video KYCs.

HyperVerge AI, which is the X-factor in HyperVerge Video KYC solution, does many intelligent steps in real-time to assist the company officer performing the Video KYC. It digitises the data on the PAN card on the go and verifies it with PAN data from NSDL.

Then, it matches the face of the customer to the face on the PAN Card and Aadhaar provided by the customer to the system.

Top CEOs discuss ways to boost investment opportunities

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Top CEOs of India and the US on Tuesday discussed ways to boost bilateral investments in sectors such as healthcare, aerospace, defence, infrastructure, ICT, and financial services, according to a commerce ministry statement.

The discussion took place during the India-US CEO Forum through a telephonic conference. The forum was co-chaired by Tata Sons Chairman N Chandrasekaran and James Taiclet, President and Chief Executive Officer,



Lockheed Martin. Chandrasekaran highlighted

the need for a 'free trade agreement' as a natural progression

Last month, US Prez issued a proclamation to block the entry of foreign workers for the rest of the year on H-1B visas for skilled employees, and L visas for managers and specialized workers being transferred within a company

and urged the US government to recognize the contribution of India's human capital to the US economy, and the need for unhindered cross-border mobility of such talent, it said on Wednesday.

Last month, US President Donald Trump issued a presi-

dential proclamation to block the entry of foreign workers for the rest of the year on H-1B visas for skilled employees, and L visas for managers and specialized workers being transferred within a company.

On the other hand, Taiclet highlighted the areas of unre-

stricted foreign ownership in certain sectors, policy stability, predictability, timely dispute resolution, protection of intellectual property and continuing investment in infrastructure as some of the key focus areas. He also hoped that the cooperation between the two countries during the COVID-19 pandemic would continue in areas of building infrastructure, increasing bilateral investments, and generating jobs.

This is the fifth time the forum has been convened since its reconstitution in December 2014 by India and the US.

JLR unveils MY 21 Range Rover, Sport models

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Tata Motors' luxury car subsidiary Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) on Wednesday said it has unveiled its MY (Model Year) 21 Range Rover and Range Rover Sport models, including cars with new mild hybrid electric vehicle engine.

The 2021 MY offering also includes 50th-anniversary special editions and India-specific cars. For India, MY 21 Range Rover will be available

in standard wheel base (SWB), long wheel base (LWB) and special editions; and will be offered with a choice of either a 3-litre MHEV petrol or 3-litre new mild hybrid electric vehicle (MHEV) diesel engine, the company said in a release.

The MY 21 Range Rover Sport will be available in six derivatives and will be offered with 2-litre petrol and 5-litre supercharged petrol as well as 3-litre diesel engine options, it said.

MUSICIANS TOUCHING LIVES BEYOND SOUL

While we're at a stage in the history where mankind has realised it's only them that's there for each other, we have people from the Music community joining hands to promote donations, raise awareness on various issues, and more. *The Pioneer's* RACHEL DAMMALA talks to people from the community to learn more

With uncertainty wreaking havoc in the lives of several people across the globe, medical and monetary needs have become tough to meet. Several organisations, people, and volunteers have come forward to commit themselves to whoever they can be of any help. One such group of people happen to be musicians and singers who have come together to hold online concerts to raise awareness about organ donations. It takes lives to save lives, they say. Timely help with organ donations can save millions of lives every year. Brought together on one platform by MOHAN Foundation (Multi Organ Harvesting Aid Network), talented and popular singers and musicians will be lending their hands towards the cause of creating awareness and mobilising aid for organ donation. MOHAN works to create an ecosystem to enable an increase in organ donations. 'Mission to Reach Millions,' their new initiative, aims to create awareness about the importance of donating organs by reach millions of people with the cause of organ donation.



held on July 18 by Aishwarya Srinivas, where the songstress will deliver a tribute to the doyennes of Carnatic music — M.S.Subbulakshmi, DK Pattammal, and ML Vasanthakumari.

"The concerts aim to bring joy into people's lives in these difficult COVID times while encouraging them to think about organ donation. This resonates with our cause as every organ donation brings joy into the lives of those awaiting life-saving transplants and their families. Organ Donors and their families turn their sorrow into someone's joy and their

"Organ donation truly is a celebration of life — a celebration for those who are waiting for a second chance at life through transplantation but most importantly, a celebration of the spirit of giving. Our campaign is an initiative to celebrate this very spirit of giving," says Lalitha Raghuram, Country Director, MOHAN Foundation.

They've already hosted three online concerts — 'Singing for Hope' with S. Aishwarya and S. Soundarya, 'Singing for Joy' with popular yesteryear playback singer Usha Uthup, and 'Baithak to Bollywood' by the faculty of Shankar Mahadevan Academy (SMA) in the months of May and June. Their next live concert 'Singing for Positivity', will be

despair into someone's hope by giving the greatest gift of all — the gift of life," Lalitha Raghuram tells us. Apart from online concerts, MOHAN Foundation is also crowdfunding using an online



campaign with Milaap.org to raise funds and awareness regarding organ donation, where they have already mobilised Rs 7.8 lakh with the help of over 400 donors from around the world.

While MOHAN aims at raising awareness about organ donations, another group of musicians from the city came together to stand shoulder to shoulder with those who have been struggling to make ends meet due to the COVID crisis. "Music doesn't pay much, and conditions are worse for budding musicians who lost out on gigs due to the lockdown. That's when my friend-bandmate Pranati Khanna, and I decided to help such artistes who found it hard to pay for their essential needs, rent, bills, etc.," informs Edward Jonathan, guitarist with the Hyderabad-based rock band Spell Check.

The duo sent out messages to other musicians across the country, their friends and family via social media platforms like Instagram and Facebook, and ended up helping musicians in not just Hyderabad but also Bangalore, Chennai, and Kolkata.

"We told people if they're a budding musician who needs help, are living alone and have no source of income or know of anybody who is, they could contact us. We then put out information about these people and asked for donations and raised funds. Each of them needed help for over the months of May and June, of over 6,000-8,000 rupees, to cover expenses. After a while, most beneficiaries found a way to sustain themselves after June, as situations have improved since May," explains Jonathan.

Music sure does more than just bring joy to the soul as these musicians have proved to be able to go beyond touching souls by touched lives too.

EDWARD JONATHAN, GUITARIST

Music doesn't pay much, and conditions are worse for budding musicians who lost out on gigs due to the lockdown. That's when my friend-bandmate Pranati Khanna, and I decided to help such artistes who found it hard to pay for their essential needs, rent, bills, etc.,



The Coronavirus is rapidly spreading across the globe and researchers and scientists are looking for more and more ways to fight the pandemic. Earlier vaccine for COVID-19 seemed like the only escape. Doctors have now explored something called "plasma therapy" as a preventive measure and deemed it helpful. So COVID-19 patients can now donate their plasma 14 days after their recovery that has the potential to save another life. Wondering what it is and how it works? Here's Dr. Bhaskar Rao from the Telangana Super Speciality Hospitals (TSHA) speaking to *The Pioneer's* SHIKHA DUGGAL on various questions related to plasma donation and its benefits

All you need to know about plasma therapy

Recovery in this therapy is more rapid than any drug or ventilator. I would request patients who've conquered COVID-19 to come forward and donate their plasmas for the needy. Since vital drugs like Remdesivir and Tocilizum aren't available in the market, this therapy, if given in time, brings effective results, informs Dr Bhaskar Rao, TSHA.

SO WHAT IS PLASMA THERAPY?

The therapy aims at using antibodies from the blood of a recovered COVID-19 patient to treat those critically infected by the virus. Plasma is a blood component that contains virus-fighting antibodies. It is like blood donation but the same plasma gets separated from the blood and the remaining blood will be transferred back to your body resulting in zero blood loss. The procedure is completely harmless and the donor does not experience any pain. A newly explored therapy will not cost you more than 20,000rs in comparison to COVID medicines that cost one approximately Rs 2 lakh.

WHEN WAS PLASMA THERAPY FIRST INDUCED?

Dr Sarath Chandra Mouli, Rheumatologist from KIMS states that this therapy has been used since the 1800s. The first trial was done in 1892 for treating Diphtheria. In the 1920s, it



was used to treat Scarlet fever. During the Spanish influenza pandemic of 1918, plasma donation was used as a potential therapy with mixed results.

WHAT IS THE IMPORTANCE OF PLASMA DONATION?

It contributes to saving the lives of those depending on life-saving therapies derived from human plasma to treat the virus. It's a new and an experimental therapy but it's proving to be a powerful weapon in preventing the virus' attack. When a patient recovers from the coronavirus infection, antibodies help another patient fight the Corona infection when infused into their body. Plasma can be donated only by a patient who has recovered from COVID-19. For patients whose swab test for COVID-19 is not

WHAT ARE THE ADVANTAGES OF CONVALESCENT PLASMA THERAPY?

Uses your own blood, works with natural healing, and no required downtime.

WHO IS ELIGIBLE TO DONATE PLASMA?

People who have fully recovered from COVID-19 for at least two weeks are encouraged to consider donating plasma. Individuals must have had a prior diagnosis of COVID-19 documented by a laboratory test and meet other donor criteria.

HOW CAN I DONATE PLASMA?

Paramedics are sent home to test whether you are an eligible donor or not. A technician will prepare your arm with antiseptic, insert the needle, and begin the donation process. Blood

will be drawn, the plasma will be separated from your blood, and red blood cells will be returned to your body through a process called plasmapheresis. Your first donation will take approximately 2 hours.

HOW TERRIBLE CAN THE CORONAVIRUS GET?

Coronavirus cases in India appear to be low now but India's population density increases the risk of local transmission. Selective testing and reports of patients escaping medical facilities are causes for concern. The Telangana government is taking appropriate steps to encourage social distancing by shutting down schools, theatres, and by preventing mass gatherings. The GHMC recently distributed home isolation kits to people who are in the home-quarantine process. Nearly 180 patients from KIMS hospital

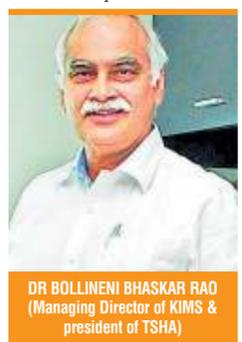
have recovered from home quarantine. Individuals above 60 years with comorbid conditions need to maintain extra precaution.

WHAT ARE THE MAIN PRECAUTIONS TO MAINTAIN TO KEEP THE VIRUS AT BAY?

Clean your hands often, maintain a safe distance, wear a mask, don't touch your face, and stay home if you feel unwell.

SHOULD YOU BUY A COVID-9 HEALTH PLAN?

The rising cost of Coronavirus treatment in private hospitals is becoming exorbitant. IRDA released new guidelines that allow both life and health insurers to offer short-term special plans for COVID-19 coverage. This health plan is expected to provide you with much-needed support. These policies address the high cost of PPEs because PPE kits and other consumables are not covered under most health insurance products. These are short-term plans with terms ranging from three months to 11 months which will not offer renewability. There are two types of COVID-19 special plans, one is based on indemnity that pays the actual amount spent on the diagnosis of COVID-19 and subsequent requirement of hospitalisation.



DR BOLLINENI BHASKAR RAO (Managing Director of KIMS & president of TSHA)



DR SARATH CHANDRA MOULI, Rheumatologist, KIMS

what's brewing?

Raveena shoots at home amid Covid-19 pandemic

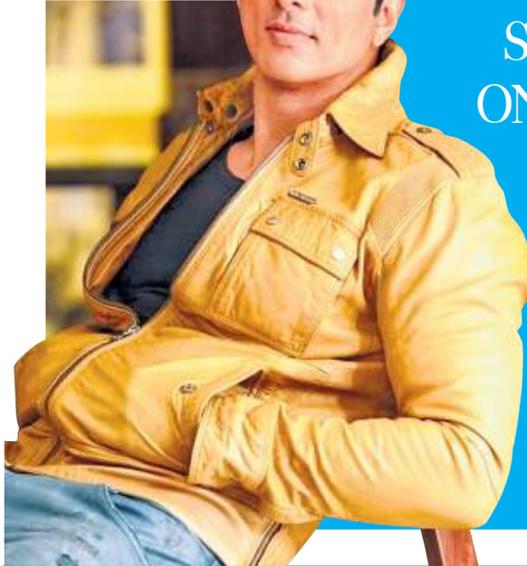
Actress Raveena Tandon recently did some work from home. She shot for an advertisement at her residence here.

The shoot happened with all the necessary precautions and minimum crew members. There were just two crew members present at her house amid the ongoing Covid pandemic.

"The working scenario has changed but as we say, change is the only constant. With the new normal and limited crew members, it took us lesser time to complete. Only two members were allowed in the house, one being the cameraman and the other was the sound recordist. They wore PPE kits and all their equipment was disinfected before they entered the house. I followed the social distancing norm with the crew members and I feel after this shoot, I am ready for the new normal."

Raveena shared her experience of shooting post lockdown.

On the big screen, Raveena will be soon seen in *KGF: Chapter 2*. The movie is a follow-up of the Kannada blockbuster *KGF: Chapter 1*, starring Kannada superstar Yash.



SONU SOOD TO WRITE BOOK ON EXPERIENCE OF HELPING MIGRANT WORKERS

Actor Sonu Sood is now all set to come up with a book recounting his experience of helping migrant workers reach their hometowns during the Covid lockdown.

"The past three and a half months have been a kind of a life-changing experience for me, living with the migrants for 16 to 18 hours a day and sharing their pain. When I go to see them off as they begin their

journey back home, my heart is filled with joy and relief. Seeing the smiles on their faces, the tears of happiness in their eyes has been the most special experience of my life, and I pledged that I'll keep on working to send them back to their homes until the last migrant reaches his village, to his loved ones," Sonu declared.

"I believe I came to this city for this — it was my purpose. I want to thank god for making me a cata-

lyst in helping the migrants. While my heart beats in Mumbai, after this movement I feel a part of me lives in the villages of UP, Bihar, Jharkhand, Assam, Uttarakhand and various other states, where I have now found new friends and made deep connections. I have decided to put these experiences, stories that are embedded in my soul forever, in a book," her said, about the book that is to be published by Penguin Random House India.

'Hanna' creator David Farr: Women bring difference to politics of the set

British writer-producer David Farr is narrating the story of *Hanna* through a female gaze, and says women leading the show behind the camera not just influences the narrative, but bring a big difference to the politics of the set as well.

The web series *Hanna* spins a new world from the story of Joe Wright's acclaimed 2011 film of the same name. Farr, who co-wrote the original feature film, is driving the narrative of the show.

"Although the film was about Hanna, and she was the central character, that (male perspective) was still a very strong thing. It does feel like a male view, and the film was directed by a man," Farr told IANS when asked about embracing the female grace.

He continued, "We have made a big choice all through the seasons to have female directors for large numbers of the episodes. It's definitely more than half and I think it makes a big difference. It makes a big difference to the politics of the set. And it was the single easiest and clearest decision we made. We didn't choose people just because

they were women but we made a conscious choice that they are really good, amazing talents. It does bring a different eye and a different voice. It just becomes a creative thing and fun. It's not that you don't have to be earnest about it, it's just that you release different voices. And that's my simple thing that you just got to release voices of diverse kinds at a high-level. Because if you do that, everything changes. And I think we are a part of that process, which I'm proud of."

Farr, also known for adding his creative vision to series *The Night Manager*, noted that working with talented women has been an eye-opening and learning experience for him.

"In the first season (of *Hanna*), I wrote almost every episode myself except one. In the second season, I gave over half the episodes to four other writers and three of them were women. And they sketched out the story about Hanna, and this extraordinary group of young women that she meets who are all destined to become assassins. What they brought was such a kind of more personal take on, you know, what it is to be a woman in the world," said the writer.

"I can't feel that. I've got two



daughters, who are now 20 and 18. So I guess I've experienced that secondhand through that. But they felt it in a visceral sense. The way choices are somehow made for you, the way conversations are somehow taken over by men but bluntly, or power struc-

tures. And so that was something that they brought to it in a way that was very specific. And I felt I learned a great deal from them as writers. So, they're bringing a lot to the table and I felt there was a lot to learn from them."

With a cast led by Esme,

Mireille Enos, and Joel Kinnaman, the first season of Amazon Prime Video show *Hanna* narrated the story of a young girl named Hanna, who has lived in a forest and has gained extraordinary physical abilities. It is about her experience with modern reality. It explored the dynamics of a father-daughter bond, emotional issues of a family while highlighting the dilemma of how teenagers grow in the modern world and do they ever fit in. The eight-episode second season follows the journey of Hanna as she evades the pursuit of a "sinister government agency," and embarks on a journey of self-discovery.

Reflecting back on the thought behind creating the show, Farr said: "The reason I first came up with *Hanna* idea was I had two daughters, who were very young when I was writing the film. And all they were allowed to watch was *Mary Poppins* and *Sound of Music*. And meanwhile, if you're a boy, you seem to be able to watch westerns and you could watch gangsters. You could see boys doing everything. And you could see it didn't seem it was available to young women.

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



REALITY CHECK



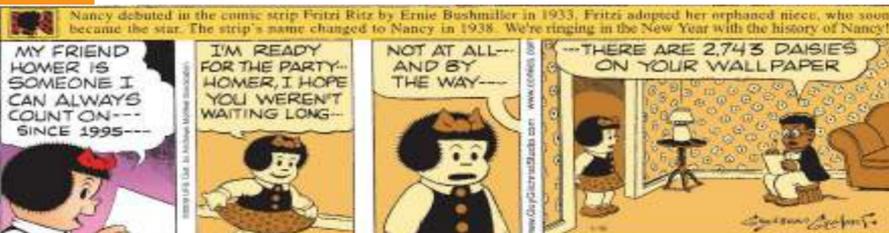
SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU

Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

ACROSS

- A tower that warns ships of danger
- Carrying a weapon
- A black and white animal that lives in China
- A green jumping insect
- A long gun held against the shoulder
- Start
- Below

DOWN

- Use this in a camera
- A garden building for tools
- Large boat
- Destroy with fire
- Mending
- Likely to kill or harm you

ACROSS

- A support for an artist's painting
- A type of fruit
- Bashful
- Lose colour
- Rest your glasses on these
- Meat from a cow
- A kind of door in a fence

DOWN

- Use this in a camera
- A garden building for tools
- Large boat
- Destroy with fire
- Mending
- Likely to kill or harm you



Nani is proud of *HIT* going to B'wood: Director Sailesh

As a storyteller I couldn't have asked for a better actor than Rajkumar Rao to spearhead this film, the director tells NAGARAJ GOUD

The Pioneer has already informed you (May 26) that producer Dil Raju, who distributed *HIT* in Telugu, was planning to remake it in Hindi. The project was made official on Wednesday, with versatile Hindi actor Rajkumar Rao attached to star and original director Dr Sailesh Kolanu sitting in the director's saddle. Raju will be producing it along with Kuldeep Rathore. It will flag-off next year. Excited to have joined the project, Rajkumar Rao said, "When I saw *HIT*, I instantly connected to it. It's an engaging story, relevant in today's environment. As an actor I am always on the lookout to play characters I haven't explored and role in *HIT* gives me a chance to do that. I'm looking forward to taking



this journey with Sailesh and Mr Dil Raju." Speaking to *The Pioneer*

exclusively, Sailesh said Rajkumar Rao was a unanimous choice for the lead role. "After I was signed on for the remake, Raju sir and I were discussing who would be the best bet to spearhead it. One of the first names that came for discussion was Rao because of his previous rich body of work. Raju sir later asked Rao to watch the film, which he did. The actor rang me subsequently and there were questions about perceptions and what he liked the most. He also learned how I would be taking it forward as a franchise," the director said.

He noted that he is glad to have an actor of Rajkumar's pedigree on board. "I really love his acting and I've been following his work since

Shaitan. As a storyteller I couldn't have asked for a better actor than him. The biggest greed for any storyteller is not money but getting to work with amazing actors and seeing their work reach a large number of people. That is precisely why I signed up for the remake," he stated.

The remake will tell the story of a cop who — while battling with his own traumatic past — is to solve a missing case. According to Sailesh, the Hindi script work has commenced. "As we will be reaching a wider audience with the remake, I'm tweaking the script here and there. I will write the preliminary version and then take it to a dialogue writer. I haven't decided on where to set the

story because of the existing conditions due to COVID-19 outbreak. I have time because I first need to wrap up *HIT 2* in Telugu before I embark on remaking *HIT* in Hindi. I will travel to north India next year and decide on the setting," he pointed out and smilingly added that as he has roamed across the streets of Ameerpet, SR Nagar and Old City during college, Hindi isn't much of a problem.

HIT was produced by Nani and Prashanti Tipirneni in Telugu. Talking about Nani's reaction to the remake, Sailesh shared, "He always wanted good things to happen to me. The film is his product at the end of the day and he is proud of it going to Hindi."

OTT have started a healthy trend in terms of content and cinema: NITHYA MENON

South-Hindi actress Nithya Menon, who made her digital debut with the web series *Breathe: Into The Shadows*, believes that OTT platforms will not replace theatrical experience. "I don't think anything can replace the whole experience of going to a theatre and seeing a movie on a big

screen. That is a different experience. But the OTT platforms that are opening up now have started a healthy trend in terms of content and cinema."

"Sometimes, there is a certain stagnancy, everybody walks on the same path, and a lot of things become cliches. OTT is opening up new opportunities for everybody. As an actor, I am very hopeful."

(It is a medium) Even for writers and directors who want to explore diverse content."

She feels that everyone should make niche content so that there is something for everybody to watch.

"There should be something for everyone, so that is what OTT is doing. I feel that's a very healthy environment," she said.

She has a huge plan that involves writing a script, too. "I had always wanted to sit and write a script. Otherwise I don't get the energy to do it. I gave it a start, but I didn't put any deadline, so it was like if I felt like writing, I would write, if I didn't, I wouldn't. I didn't finish the whole thing. I think I have a few more months," she said.



SANTOSH SOBHAN AND SANJAY RAO IN MERLAPAKA GANDHI'S STORY



Production house UV Creations, which strikes a fine balance between big and small-budgeted cinema, has roped in Santosh Sobhan and Sanjay Rao, Brahmaji's son, for a new film. Their in-house director Merlapaka Gandhi has penned the film's script, while one of his long-time associates will be making his directorial debut with it. With the film being an adult comedy, we hear UV will cease from taking the production credits. It is believed they've already booked a beach-side resort in the outskirts of Visakhapatnam to shoot it. Being made as a web film, it will most likely drop on aha, as UV and Geetha Arts have collaborated for multiple production ventures in the past.



COVID-19 related appeals by Rajamouli and Koratala Siva

Filmmaker SS Rajamouli on Tuesday appealed to the cured COVID-19 patients to step forward and donate their plasma to treat those infected with the coronavirus.

"If you have recovered from #COVID_19, come forward to help someone in need! There is no shame in getting #COVID. Please don't let social stigma prevent you from saving lives! You can register as a donor here: <http://givered.in> ((sic));" the Baahubali filmmaker tweeted along with a link.

Plasma therapy is considered effective for people struggling to cope with coronavirus. It involves injection of blood-component plasma extracted from a cured patient to a positive coronavirus case. The plasma extracted from a cured patient is considered to be having virus fighting antibodies. It strengthens the immunity of the person getting the plasma.

Likewise, Rajamouli's colleague Koratala Siva has requested coronavirus positive patients to be responsible in cautioning their closed ones. "It's my earnest request to all

those infected, let's act responsible and inform our close ones and all those who've met recently so they can get tested too. Need of the hour. Time to be more civilised. More than the virus, it's the fact that a few infected individuals are keeping it a secret that makes this an even more scarier experience (sic)," the director posted in a series of tweets.



Sarath Kumar to make his OTT debut for aha

Prominent Tamil actor Sarath Kumar is the latest big name from South to have taken the OTT plunge. On his birthday Tuesday, his wife Radikaa Sarath Kumar took to Twitter to announce his digital debut. He will feature in the upcoming screen adaptation of Archana Sarat's novel *Birds of Prey — The Hunt Begins*. "Sarath Kumar sir was not only kind

and humble enough to launch the book of a debut author but he has also taken it to the screen," Archana posted following the announcement. While we still don't whether it is being made as a series or a film, we did learn from multiple sources that Telugu streamer aha will be producing it and it will be shot in Telugu. Goutham Vasudev Menon's former associate Pradeep Nayyar will

direct it. The project will be a psychological crime thriller that deals with the theme of child abuse and how it affects the children, with Sarath playing a powerful role.

Sarath, who is a big name in Tamil, also acted a good number of films in Telugu. Prominent of which include *Bunny*, *Jaya Janaki Nayaka* and *Naa Peru Surya-Naa Illu India*.

Most Read NEWS

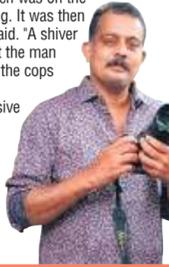
Railways creates post-Covid coach

The railways is preparing to provide better hygiene and sanitation standards in train coaches as it plans to install foot-operated soap dispensers, copper-coated handrails, fixtures with titanium dioxide (TiO2) coating that kills viruses and plasma air equipment inside air conditioning (AC) ducts to sterilise and make the interiors particulate matter-resistant. The national carrier's production unit, Rail Coach Factory in Kapurthala, has built the first prototype. The railways plans to retrofit all its existing coaches with these amenities, officials aware of the matter said. "Post Covid Coach will have hands-free amenities like foot operated water tap and soap dispenser, foot operated lavatory door (outside), foot operated flush valve, foot operated latches in lavatory door, outside washbasin with foot operated water tap and soap dispenser and forearm operated handle on compartment doors," the railway ministry said in its design note for the coaches. The first two coaches built at the unit have fixtures coated with TiO2 and the provision for plasma air equipment in AC ducts to sterilise interiors using ionised air. "This plasma air equipment will sterilise the air and surfaces inside the AC coach using ionised air to make the coach Covid-19 and particulate matter resistant."



Photographer saves man presumed dead

In a bizarre incident, a Kerala photographer ended up saving a man's life who was presumed to be dead, when he went to click the pictures of the corpse's body. The incident happened on Sunday when Tomy Thomas, an Ernakulam-based photographer, was called by cops to click images of a deceased person as part of preparing the inquest report. Also Read - Kashmir Photographer Masrat Zahra Wins IWFM's 'Courage In Photojournalism Award'. However, something strange happened when Tomy was about to take photographs. He heard a low sound emanating from the body and realised that he is not dead after all. Shocked and startled, he instantly informed the police who inspected the body. "Since the light in the room was not adequate to click photos, I leaned over the man to turn on the light switch which was on the wall right next to where he was lying. It was then that I heard a feeble voice," Tomy said. "A shiver ran down my spine as it hit me that the man was actually alive," he added. Once the cops found that the man is alive and breathing, he was sent to the intensive care unit of a hospital where he is currently receiving treatment. Notably, the man named Sivadasan had hit his head and fallen to the floor, following which onlookers found him in an unconscious state and thought that he is dead.



Odisha migrant worker turns rapper

Duleshwar Tandi aka Rapper Dule Rocker is making waves on social media with searing lockdown raps. The lyrics talk about the plight of migrant workers during Covid-19 crisis. The 27-year-old is a Dalit migrant worker from Odisha's Kalahandi district. He became a rapper to narrate the ordeal of migrants walking home during the lockdown. With no musical instrument, no background score or any decorated stage behind him, Duleshwar sings in his muddy hut and records it on his mobile phone. His rap songs are creating a huge impact. The lines depict the bitter truth of lockdown times. Duleshwar had shifted to Raipur in 2013 as a migrant worker after completing his BSc degree (Chemistry) from a government college in Kalahandi. He also worked as a waiter in Raipur Hotel. On some occasions, he washed plates and cleaned tables. Duleshwar returned to his village, Borda, on March 23, one day before the national lockdown. The next day, Odisha government announced lockdown across 70 per cent of the state. "As I saw news reports of the novel coronavirus cases growing in China, US and European countries, I sensed, situation may get worse here. After the state government announced the lockdown in major districts, I made up my mind and decided to come back," he told India Today over phone.



Andean condor can fly for 100 miles without flapping

A study sheds light on just how efficiently the world's largest soaring bird rides air currents to stay aloft for hours without flapping its wings. The Andean condor has a 3-metre (10ft) wingspan and weighs up to 15kg (33lbs), making it the world's heaviest soaring bird. For the first time, a team of scientists strapped recording equipment they called "daily diaries" to eight condors in Patagonia to record each wingbeat over more than 250 hours of flight time. Incredibly, the birds spent just 1% of their time aloft flapping their wings, mostly during takeoff. One bird flew more than five hours, covering more than 100 miles (160km), without flapping its wings. "Condors are expert pilots but we just had not expected they would be quite so expert," said Prof Emily Shepard, a study co-author and biologist at Swansea University in Wales. "The finding that they basically almost never beat their wings and just soar is mind-blowing," said David Lentink, an expert in bird flight at Stanford University, who was not involved in the research. To birds, the sky is not empty but a landscape of invisible features: wind gusts, currents of warm rising air and streams of air pushed upward by ground features such as mountains.



ADVANTAGE CHELSEA

Giroud helps Frank's side edge out Norwich & inch closer to top-four finish



Chelsea's Olivier Giroud celebrates after scoring goal

Frank Lampard admitted Chelsea are struggling with nerves as they chase a place in the Champions League next season after Olivier Giroud scored the only goal in a 1-0 win over already relegated Norwich at Stamford Bridge on Tuesday. Victory opens up a four-point lead for third-placed Chelsea over Leicester and Manchester United, who both have a game in hand later this week. But Lampard knows there is still plenty of work to do with a trip to champions Liverpool and sixth-placed Wolves visiting Stamford Bridge on the last day of the season to come in Chelsea's final two league games of the season.

"I want more but that can wait. Where we are at as a team and our position in the table, three points is everything," said Lampard. "If we want to really move on then it can be better. It's not easy, there is a nervy feeling there for understandable reasons." Lampard made five changes from the battering at Bramall Lane with Giroud among those restored to the starting line-up. Chelsea have already significantly bolstered their frontline

"The game was OK but results are critical. We could have won by more, we could have been a bit better with our quality" — FRANK LAMPARD

for next season with the signings of Timo Werner and Hakim Ziyech. But Giroud has more than justified the decision to also extend his contract by a year during football's shutdown as Chelsea's most potent striker since the restart. "He's a big character for us and scoring important goals," added Lampard. Giroud saw a number of chances come and go in the first half as an attempted lob over Tim Krul fell gently into the Dutch 'keeper's arms before he sliced well over the bar when unmarked inside the area. Christian Pulisic forced Krul into his best save of the first-half with a powerful drive that was just too close to the former Newcastle stopper. Just as Norwich looked set to hold out until the break Giroud shrugged off Timm Klose to connect with Pulisic's cross for his fifth goal in eight games. "I missed some I don't miss usually," said Giroud. "I lost a bit of confidence but my desire to score was bigger, so I just tried

PL transfer window to run for 10 weeks

LONDON: Premier League clubs have agreed a 10-week summer transfer window, which will open on July 27. Subject to the approval of football's world governing body FIFA, the window will open the day after the 2019/20 league season finishes and end on October 5, the date UEFA had recommended for the closure of registration periods across Europe. The Premier League said that following consultation with the English Football League, a domestic-only window will also be added from October 5 and close on October 16. Transfers between Premier League clubs will not be able to occur during this period, but top-flight sides can trade with EFL clubs and loan or sign players permanently. The EFL confirmed its window would open on the same day as the Premier League's but clubs would have an extra two weeks for domestic-only business. AFP



Atalanta's Mario Pasalic celebrates after scoring a goal against Brescia

Great entertainers Pasalic nets hat-trick as free-scoring Atalanta thump Brescia to go second

Mario Pasalic scored a hat-trick as Atalanta brushed aside struggling local rivals Brescia 6-2 to move second in Serie A on Tuesday. Gian Piero Gasperini's side extended their unbeaten league run to 13 games to move six points behind leaders Juventus who visit eighth-placed Sassuolo on Wednesday. Inter Milan and Lazio are two points behind Atalanta before they play against SPAL and Udinese respectively later this week. Gasperini's side have scored 93 league goals so far this season — 26 more than eight-time reigning champions Juventus. "We don't do it to humiliate the opponent, but we try to play our game," said Gasperini. "Already last year we were the best attack in the league, this year we have surpassed ourselves, scoring many goals with many different players."

Madrid get chance to clinch league title

The Spanish league trophy will be sitting by the field at the Alfredo Di Stefano Stadium on Thursday, with Real Madrid a win away from lifting it for the first time in three years. Madrid will have its first chance to clinch the title when it hosts Villarreal at home following a long season that was in jeopardy because of the coronavirus pandemic. It enters the second-to-last round with a four-point lead over Barcelona, which faces Osasuna at the Camp Nou at the same time. Madrid needs two points from its last two matches to secure its 34th league title — and first since 2017. It can also lift the trophy with a loss if Barcelona fails to defeat Osasuna. It would be Madrid's first league title since Cristiano Ronaldo left to join Juventus two seasons ago, and the first since coach Zinedine Zidane returned from a short break. Barcelona won the last two league titles and was at the top this season when the coronavirus pandemic struck, but

Madrid has been perfect since the break, winning nine straight. "When we returned from the confinement after being stuck at home for almost three months, I could see that the players wanted to achieve something big," Zidane said on Wednesday. "I could see it during the training sessions, I could see it in how they were practising." Madrid had lost three of its last four matches before the league was halted in March. Barcelona seemed in control but endured an up-and-down run after the break, drawing three matches and losing its advantage at the top. Coach Quique Setien, under pressure because of the team's results and lackluster performances, knows his club faces a tough task trying to overcome Madrid's advantage. Barcelona has won eight of the last 11 league titles, with Madrid lifting the trophy in 2017 and 2012. Madrid will face a Villarreal team that is sitting fifth in the standings and fighting for a Europa League berth.



India's home series vs Eng set to be postponed

NEW DELHI: The Indian cricket team's six-match limited-overs home series against England scheduled in September is all set to be postponed along with New Zealand's visit of the country next month due to the Covid-19 pandemic. The BCCI is yet to make any formal announcement in this regard but it is expected that it will happen soon. "England were supposed to play six games (three ODIs and three T20Is) during late September. Obviously in the current circumstances England won't be travelling to India," a senior BCCI official said. India's Future Tours and Program (FTP) calendar will be among the main topics of discussion during the BCCI Apex Council meeting on Friday. "But I guess a formal announcement will happen once the FTP issue is discussed as it's part of the agenda during Friday's Apex Council meeting. New Zealand A had a tour of India scheduled in August and even that's also unlikely to go ahead," the official said. According to reports in the British media, the white ball tour may now happen in September, next year. PTI

No July 19 resumption of hockey camps as Bengaluru goes into lockdown

PTI NEW DELHI: The national camps for Indian men's and women's hockey teams will not resume as planned on July 19 at Bengaluru SAI Centre with the rising Covid-19 case count forcing the city into a complete seven-day lockdown. The grave situation in the southern metropolis has left the Sports Authority of India (SAI) with no choice but to defer its plans. Enjoying a break at their respective native places after being confined to their rooms at the SAI Centre for two months due to the nationwide lockdown, the players had been expected to return to base by July 19. A SAI source in Bengaluru, however, confirmed to PTI that there is no way the national camps can resume on the earlier earmarked date under the current circumstances. "We didn't get any such instruction till now about resumption of hockey camps. On June 18, we were just being asked to allow the players to leave for their homes but no intimation has been given to us on resumption of camps," the source said. "Frankly speaking, it is impossible to resume camps now because Bengaluru is under complete lockdown till July 22. The cases are increasing everyday and there is a possibility that the lockdown would be extended till the end of this month." Although the SAI headquarters here is yet to take a formal decision on the matter, Hockey India's de-recognition by the Sports Ministry, along with 53 other National Sports Federations (NSFs), as per the Delhi High Court's order, has made the situation complex. "We can't make any comment on national camps or anything as we are de-recognised by the ministry now," a HI official said.

Big Bash to start amid India tour

MELBOURNE: The 10th season of the Big Bash League (BBL) will coincide with the much-anticipated India's tour of Australia, the host board announced on Wednesday unveiling a 61-match schedule for the country's premier T20 event. According to the schedule released by Cricket Australia (CA), the BBL will begin on December 3 with a clash between Strikers and Renegades at the Adelaide Oval, shortly after the end of day one of the opening Test between India and Australia in Brisbane. The final has



will be set for February 6 next year. The 59-game Women's BBL will be played from October 17 until November 29.

"While the Covid-19 pandemic may yet force alterations to the summer of cricket, today's announcement confirms the commitment to a full 61-game schedule, including the return of the five-team finals format," the CA said. As per the schedule, the BBL will run for eight nights before taking a five-day break for Australia's day-night Test with India to be held from Dec 11-15 at Adelaide Oval. PTI

Root returns for Old Trafford Test

AP MANCHESTER: Fresh from becoming a father of two, Joe Root will be reinstated as England captain on Thursday with his team in very familiar territory. With Root absent so he could be with his wife for the birth of their second child, England lost the first Test against the West Indies last week in what was the first international cricket match since the sport's shutdown. With the series against the West Indies being only three Tests, England has to bounce back immediately and Root's return is clearly a positive. The captain will take the place of Joe Denly, who made 18 and 29 in his two innings at the Rose Bowl and was fighting

with Zak Crawley to keep his spot for the second Test at Old Trafford. Crawley had England's highest single score with 76 in the second innings. There is likely to be a change in the bowling attack, too, with Stuart Broad pushing for a recall after being dropped for the first Test — and then speaking publicly about his disappointment during the match. Root said any decision would be taken after he took a look at the Old Trafford pitch again later Wednesday. There has been rain in Manchester and Root

described the wicket as having a "nice brownish colour." Continuity has been key for England when it comes to selection in recent years, which may prove a blessing for Jos Buttler. The wicketkeeper-batsman — a limited-overs specialist — has a Test average of 23.22 since the start of 2019, and only one century in 75 innings, but is set to keep his place. The West Indies are holders of the Wisden Trophy after beating England in a home series last year, so will retain it with a draw in the first of back-to-back Tests in Manchester. And they are looking to seal a first Test series victory in England in 32 years. Not since 1992-93 — when the likes of Brian Lara, Courtney Walsh and Curtly Ambrose were in their pomp — have the Windies won an overseas Test series consisting of more than two matches against major opposition. "I haven't mentioned anything about history to the guys," West Indies captain Jason Holder said. "It's hard for us to get caught up in the peripheral stuff. "Winning the first Test match is just one piece of the puzzle. We've got two other games to play and we don't get ahead of ourselves."



Extended preparations played key part in win: Simmons

MANCHESTER: Windies coach Phil Simmons believes that the extended preparations after early arrival due to Covid-19 protocols have actually played a key part in his side's four-wicket win in the first Test. West Indies, who arrived in England on June 9 and trained in a bio-secure environment after that, beat the home side by four wickets on the final day of the first Test. "I think that has been the biggest influence on the performance. The fact that we've been here for that period of time, we've had quality bowling in the nets because we've had nearly 11 seamers here, you can't put a price on that," he said on the eve of the second Test. "I don't like to go back into my (playing) days, but we would come to England and play something like three or four proper warm-up games before the first Test, and we would also have

three-day or four-day games in between the Test matches. So I think that period of training goes a long way to how we performed in that first Test." While praising the resolve of his players in the first Test, he warned the West Indies cricketers to guard against complacency. "For me it was a great win because I think that it signified a lot of hard work being done by the players over the last four or five weeks. It was a top-class Test match, with good cricket played by both teams, and even coming down to the last hour, it could have gone either way. "But you guard against complacency by just trying to do the same things you did before the first Test. Right now that Test match is history. We've got to be thinking about what we do from Thursday to Monday," the 57-year-old former all-rounder said. PTI

SINGLES

BENFICA KEEP SLIM TITLE HOPES ALIVE LISBON: Benfica kept their slim hopes of winning the Portuguese title alive as a first-half goal from midfielder Chiquinho and a late second from Haris Seferovic gave them a hard-fought 2-0 home win over Vitoria de Guimaraes. The victory leaves Benfica on 71 points after 32 games, five behind leaders Porto. Having beaten Benfica twice this season, Porto will secure 29th league title if they can manage at least a draw with Sporting.

MORTAZA RECOVERS FROM COVID-19 DHAKA: Former Bangladesh skipper Mashrafe Mortaza has recovered from Covid-19 after treatment at home for the dreaded virus since June 20. Mortaza announced the negative result of his test on his Facebook page. His wife Sumona Haque is yet to recover from the disease. Two other players — Nafees Iqbal and Nazmul Islam — have also recovered after undergoing treatment at home.

TAMIM, MAHMUDULLAH TURN DOWN CPL OFFERS DHAKA: Bangladesh ODI captain Tamim Iqbal and T20I skipper Mahmudullah Riyad on Wednesday confirmed they have opted against taking part in this year's CPL. Citing concerns related to coronavirus pandemic, Mahmudullah turned down the offer to feature in the league. While Tamim declined the offer to remain available for Dhaka Premier League, in case it resumes in August.

AKINFENWA INVITED TO LIVERPOOL TITLE PARADE LIVERPOOL: Liverpool manager Jurgen Klopp said he has invited Adebayo Akinfenwa to their Premier League title parade shortly after sending the forward a congratulatory message for sealing promotion to the Championship. After Wanderers beat Oxford United in the League One playoff final to secure their place in the English second-tier for the first time, Akinfenwa had joked that Klopp could "hit me up on WhatsApp". The German manager had responded with a video message and said that Akinfenwa would also be part of their title celebration when it happens.

DAKAR YOUTH OLYMPICS POSTPONED TO 2026 LAUSANNE: The International Olympic Committee has postponed the 2022 Dakar Youth Olympics for four years due to the coronavirus pandemic. IOC President Thomas Bach said the delay was discussed two days ago in a telephone conversation with Senegal President Macky Sall. The Youth Summer Games would be the first Olympics organized in Africa.

6 PEOPLE RETURNED COVID-19 POSITIVE: CSA JOHANNESBURG: Cricket South Africa (CSA) on Wednesday said six people have returned positive for the dreaded coronavirus but none of them are cricketers following approximately 50 tests conducted ahead of the 3TeamCricket match on Saturday. CSA however did not reveal who were the six positive people from among those tested for the dreaded disease.

PCB LOOK TO START DOMESTIC SEASON IN OCT KARACHI: The Pakistan Cricket Board is planning to start its delayed domestic cricket season from early October at select venues across the country. "The idea is to have a reduced domestic season at less venues to limit the travel and moving about off players, coaches and officials," a source said. He said a final decision on the domestic cricket schedule would be taken in early September so there is time for preparations.

HUMPY, HARIKA ADVANCE TO LAST EIGHT CHENNAI: India's Koneru Humpy and D Harika advanced to the quarterfinals of the fourth and final leg of Women Speed Chess Championships on Wednesday. Agencies