

ANALYSIS 7 IT'S NOT THAT ELEMENTARY

MONEY 8 INDIA'S TRADE DEFICIT WITH CHINA REDUCES TO \$ 48.66 BN IN FY20

SPORTS 11 HAMMERS BLOW

VIJAYAWADA, FRIDAY JULY 3, 2020; PAGES 12 ₹3



# the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com



PAWAN TAKES TO CHATURMASYA VRATA DEEKSHA

Page 12

## ALL MONUMENTS, INCLUDING TAJ MAHAL AND RED FORT, TO OPEN FROM JULY 6

All monuments, including the world-renowned Taj Mahal and Delhi's Red Fort, will be reopened to the public from Monday for the first time since the country went into lockdown in March to fight the spread of coronavirus. Over 3,400 monuments were shut down by the Archeological Survey of India (ASI) on March 17, days before Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the lockdown. Some 820 religious places under the ASI were reopened when the government announced a graded exit from the total shutdown under "Unlock1". The rest of the monuments can reopen, the government has said, but states are free to decide whether to keep them closed based on the coronavirus situation. Union Minister for Tourism and Culture, Pralhad Singh Patel, announced the decision on Twitter.

## CLASSIFY ONLY INDIANS OWNED ENTERPRISES AS MSMEs: RSS

RSS-affiliate Laghu Udyog Bharati (LUB) on Thursday opposed the criteria for classification of enterprises as micro, small and medium, saying it will promote trading of imported goods rather than promoting manufacturing in the country and demanded that only enterprises owned by Indians should be classified under this category. Opposing the notification on classification of enterprises issued by Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSME) Ministry on June 26, the LUB said it "defeats" the purpose of Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan and vision of Prime Minister Narendra Modi. "To become completely self-reliant, only those enterprises should be registered under the micro, small and medium enterprises category which are owned by Indians," LUB general secretary Govind Lele told.

## TAMIL NADU REPORTS 4,343 NEW COVID-19 CASES, 57 DEATHS

Coronavirus cases in Tamil Nadu touched a new high on Thursday as 4,343 people tested Covid-19 positive, said the State Health Department, here. The total number of cases in the state is 98,392. In the past 24 hours, 57 Covid-19 patients died, taking the toll to 1,321. On the positive side, 3,095 Covid-19 patients were discharged from various hospitals in the state. The number of cured persons has gone up to 56,021. The number of active cases stands at 41,047. The number of infected children in the state in the age group 0-12 went up to 4,836. The state capital Chennai continued to head the Covid-19 table with 2,027 people testing positive taking the tally to 62,598.

## TWO NONAGENARIANS BEAT CORONAVIRUS IN BENGAL

He has blurry vision and finds it difficult to walk without support, but 98-year-old Sripathi Nayabon in West Bengal's South 24 Parganas district has shown the world how to beat all odds with positivity, as he recovered from coronavirus and returned to normal life. Nayabon is probably the oldest man in the country to have recovered from the deadly disease. He returned home on Wednesday evening, with doctors saying that the "man had been able to pull through as he had no comorbidities". "Nayabon had been very positive about his recovery since the day he was brought here for treatment.

# YSRCP MPs to meet Speaker, seek disqualification of Raju

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP president and Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy is learnt to have decided to make all efforts to get his party MP from Narasapuram constituency Raghurama Krishnam Raju disqualified from his Lok Sabha membership for raising the banner of revolt against the party.

Party sources said Jagan has deputed a team of party MPs and senior leaders to New Delhi to meet Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla and submit to him all the evidence to prove the anti-party activities of Raghurama Krishnam Raju and seek his disqualification.

The delegation, accompanied by senior advocates, would leave for New Delhi from Vijayawada in a special aircraft on Friday morning. Apparently, the Lok Sabha Speaker too has given them an appointment for a meeting on Friday afternoon.



They would submit a memorandum along with evidence to the Speaker and ask for Raju's disqualification. Already, three MPs had met Om Birla and brought him abreast of the developments. Also, YSRC parliamentary party leader V Vijayasai Reddy served a notice on Raghurama Krishnam Raju asking why disciplinary action cannot be taken against him for his anti-party activities. Instead of giving him a straight reply, Raju challenged Vijayasai's authority. Raju also questioned as to who heads the internal disciplinary committee of the YSRC. Further, he sought to know if the internal disciplinary committee of the party is recognised by the Election Commission of India.

Most importantly, the Lok Sabha MP questioned the legal sanctity of the show-cause sent by Vijayasai Reddy. In his response, Raju stated that the show-cause notice lacked legal sanctity as it was served under the letter head of the YSR Congress Party instead of the party name 'Yuvajana Sramika Rythu Congress Party' which is the registered name in the Election Commission of India. Further, he sought to know in what capacity Vijayasai Reddy has sent the show cause notice to him. "I am surprised to see you designating yourself as national general secretary of our party which is Registered as State recognised party as per Para 6A of the Election Symbols Reservation and Allotment Order 1968."

He then wrote a separate letter to Jagan explaining his stand and defending his comments, but he did not sound apologetic for his anti-party statements.

# Courts giving directions in policy matters: AP Speaker

PTI ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Assembly Speaker Tammineni Sitaram on Thursday alleged courts were giving directions to the government in policy matters.

The outburst, in Tirupati, came in the backdrop of the YS Jaganmohan Reddy government suffering setbacks with the State High Court annulling several of its decisions in recent verdicts.

"If courts are dictating orders that you do this, you do that, you stop this, you do there... what for are people, elections, votes, MLAs, MPs? Why do we need a Legislative Assembly? Why elect a Chief Minister or a Speaker? Why all this?" Sitaram asked, addressing mediapersons.

He said intellectuals should debate over this. "We are going ahead with all respect to the Constitution. If our (governments) decisions are wrong, people will defeat us in the elections," he added.



The Speaker lashed out at the opposition Telugu Desam Party for not passing the Appropriation Bill in the Legislative Council.



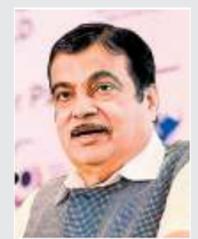
India put up for sale by Modi government

2



Banning Chinese apps a 'digital strike': Prasad

5



'Need Rs 50-60 lakh cr for foreign investments to bolster economy'

8

# Transparency, welfare is hallmark of our govt: Sajjala

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Despite having extreme fall in the State economy during the pandemic crisis, the State government spent over Rs 28,000 crores towards welfare schemes where the beneficiaries directly received the amount and Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy is being hailed by all sections of the public for his transparent governance. Addressing the media here on Thursday, Government Advisor (Public Affairs), Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy said that TDP supremo N Chandrababu Naidu is repeating the same lies to confuse the public, but people are neither going to believe him nor forget his atrocious rule.

"The senility of the leader will lead TDP to extinction. People witnessed the harassment he has done to Jaganmohan Reddy and the way he was treated as an opposition leader," Sajjala said.

He said that the mercantile nature of Naidu was witnessed by the State on various occasions and thus he was rejected. Today Naidu is alleging corruption charges against the government in the procurement of 108 & 104 ambulances. Naidu should know that our government stands for transparency and corruption-free. While the State government launched 1088 ambulances on par with international standards with the latest facilities, instead of showing appreciation, Naidu is 'seeing' Rs 300 crore corruption. "Naidu should be ashamed for making false claims as he introduced 1,800 ambulances during his rule. All that he left to the State is Rs 2.54 lakh-crore of debts and Rs 64,000 crore pending bills. While Naidu promised to clear all agricultural loans of Rs 85,000 crore, he managed to clear only a small portion of about Rs 15,000 crore in a five-year period.



ruption charges against the government in the procurement of 108 & 104 ambulances. Naidu should know that our government stands for transparency and corruption-free. While the State government launched 1088 ambulances on par with international standards with the latest facilities, instead of showing appreciation, Naidu is 'seeing' Rs 300 crore corruption. "Naidu should be ashamed for making false claims as he introduced 1,800 ambulances during his rule. All that he left to the State is Rs 2.54 lakh-crore of debts and Rs 64,000 crore pending bills. While Naidu promised to clear all agricultural loans of Rs 85,000 crore, he managed to clear only a small portion of about Rs 15,000 crore in a five-year period.

# Retd IAS officer appointed as RTI chief

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan on Thursday appointed retired IAS officer P Ramesh Kumar as the State Chief Information Commissioner.

The Governor also appointed Repala Srinivasa Rao as one of the Commissioners in the AP Information Commission under the Right to Information Act, 2005.

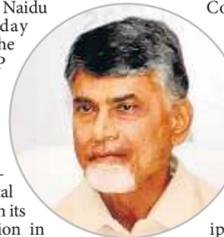
The selection committee, headed by Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy, last week finalised these two names and recommended them to the Governor for appointment. Leader of Opposition N Chandrababu Naidu, a member of the selection committee, abstained from the meeting.

# Naidu brings capital politics back in focus

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Stating that Amaravati was the only hope for a bright future for the State, Leader of the Opposition N Chandrababu Naidu on Thursday appealed to the Y S R C P Government to stop its vicious political game and begin new efforts to complete the Capital construction in its present location in the larger interests of all regions of the state.

Addressing a virtual press conference here, Naidu appealed to like-minded people of all sections across India and abroad to make the protest call given by the



Amaravati Joint Action Committee a big success on July 4.

The TDP would also take part in these protests while observing Coronavirus preventive guidelines like physical distancing, wearing face masks and also virtual protests. The Telugu diaspora in other countries were also participating in these protests.

Stating that he would take part in protests at Amaravati, Naidu said that the YSRC should stop its stubborn and perverse arguments on the Capital city issues.

# TDP man arrested for murder of minister's aide

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Machilipatnam police on Thursday arrested TDP leader Chintna Chinni, who is a close associate of former minister Kollu Ravindra, and two others in connection with the murder of YSRC leader and former Machilipatnam Market Yard chairman Moka Bhaskar Rao.

Police said that the accused confessed to the murder of Bhaskar Rao due to political rivalry. Police will also interrogate some others associated with the case. YSRC leader Bhaskar Rao was killed in broad daylight in Machilipatnam on Monday afternoon.

# 10 more AP Secretariat employees test positive

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Ten more staffers in the Andhra Pradesh Secretariat tested positive for coronavirus, taking the total number of those affected there to 25 on Thursday.

In the AP Legislature, situated on the same premises, two employees tested positive for the virus, officials said.

Secretariat employees in departments like Animal Husbandry and Water Resources were found infected

with coronavirus in the samples tested at the VRDL in Guntur. Following this, the Special Chief Secretaries and Secretaries of the departments concerned asked their staff to go home as a precautionary measure, the sources said.

Most of the blocks in the Secretariat wore a deserted look as the Covid-19 scare hit once again.

Previously, 15 staffers in the Secretariat and two in the assembly complex tested positive for coronavirus.

# Covid patient goes missing from GGH, Vijayawada

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A missing person case was registered by the family of a Covid positive patient in Vijayawada.

The patient, identified as Vasantha Rao, was admitted in the Covid designated hospital in Vijayawada a week back, but soon after that, there has been no information about his whereabouts, the family members said. They said that it was due to this they lodged a missing complaint. The police initiated a search operation to trace the missing person.



Vasantha Rao's wife Dhanalakshmi told reporters that on July 24, her husband was suffering from difficulty in breathing and he was taken to a private hospital. Suspecting Covid, the hospital staff asked them to take to New GGH.

She said that later police came to her house and took details. Even after a week her husband has not been traced and the officials say they are searching for her husband, Dhanalakshmi said.

Shankar Narayana, her relative said that Vasantha Rao was admitted on June 24 and since that night he was missing, the police came and took all the details of Vasantha Rao however till date he is not traced. The hospital staff are not responding, the district collector should do justice, he said.



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government on Thursday moved a special leave petition in the Supreme Court challenging the state High Court's recent order revoking the suspension of senior IPS officer and former intelligence chief A B Venkateshwar Rao.

The AP government requested that the Supreme Court stay the High Court order and continue the suspension of Venkateshwar Rao. The petition is expected to come up for hearing after July 6.

However, Venkateshwar Rao had already filed a caveat petition in the Supreme Court to preempt the latter from taking up the state government's SLP. He has prayed the court to see that his job is restored and he be posted in a suitable position.

Also, 281 patients were discharged from hospitals in the last 24 hours, the bulletin added.

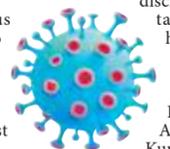
One patient each died in Srikakulam, Krishna, Guntur, Anantapur and Kurnool districts. The state now has 8,586 active cases after a total of 7,313 Covid-19 patients were discharged.

# 845 new cases take tally past 16,000 mark

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The coronavirus tally rose to 16,097 in Andhra Pradesh on Thursday as 845 fresh cases were added in the last 24 hours.

Five new Covid-19 deaths were reported in the state, taking the overall toll to 198, the latest bulletin said.



## TODAY

### ALMANAC

Month & Paksham: Ashadha & Shukla Paksha

Panchangam

Tithi: Trayodashi: 01:16 pm

Nakshatram: Jyeshtha: 12:08 am

(Next Day)

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

Rahukalam: 10:42 am - 12:20 pm

Yamagandam: 03:35 pm - 05:13 pm

Varjyam: 06:34 am - 08:06 am, 10:36 pm - 12:08 am

Gulika: 07:27 am - 09:05 am

Good Time: (to start any important work)

Amritkalam: 03:44 pm - 05:15 pm

Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:54 am - 12:46 pm

### VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Haze

Temp: 33/27

Humidity: 78%

Sunrise: 05:46 am

Sunset: 06:54 pm

Current Weather Conditions

Updated: July 02, 2020 5:00 PM

# India put up for sale by Modi government

The decision of the TRS affiliated TBGKS as well as several other unions of coal mine workers to go on strike against Government of India's decision to auction 41 coal blocks could be seen as a curtain-raiser to nationwide protests against a series of economic failures by Modi 2.0. The second term of Prime Minister Narendra Modi can be derived with one single line that he has put "India for Sale". The latest being coal mines more so over during a pandemic has shocked the nation particularly the workers who not only strongly condemn this unilateral decision but also vow to fight till those in the Lutyns realise it's a mistake and roll back their decision.

The country, which is facing acute financial crisis has been looking with hope towards the Government of India for relief than reforms. This crisis is not just due to the lockdown

because of the pandemic but began right from the economic slowdown which the Government has been systematically ignoring and has done nothing to mitigate the impact.

Several sectors including automobile and MSMEs have been affected by the slowdown; the aam janata got a jolt with the lockdowns and expected a direct support system through a relief announced in the Aatma Nirbhar Package but the 'Rs 20 lakh-crore package' just opened the doors of business with ISRO while the common man continues to suffer of poverty and hunger.

The disastrous decisions and plummeting of the economy is nothing new, but was only kept under wraps by an orchestrated display of management

**Congress remained a mute spectator when Air India, SAIL, BEML, Railways were kept for sale but with Singareni Collieries coal mine workers protesting, it is a direct confrontation between Telangana and Modi ji's economic fallacies.**

skills. It came to light when Food Corporation of India which procured grain from states failed to pay the state governments on time which in turn affected the state governments paying the farmers. Nevertheless, Governments of several States, including Telangana, managed to pay farmers raising through other sources.

FCI could pay the amount to States only after it borrowed from National Small Savings Fund.

NSSF was initiated in 1999 to create economic safeguard for aiding institutions that face a worse situation by providing a large interest of repayment.

It reveals that Modi government decisions created the worst economic conditions as this was not the only time Government put it hands into the NSSF. To control the fiscal deficit NSSF loans were used and Public Sector Units including Air India, Power Finance Corporation too have been funded. It is for this reason that



M KRISHANK  
TRS spokesperson

Air India has been put up for sale and now even with the Power Amendment Bill, corporates are being handed over the electricity in the country. Poor Air India staff may have not been strong enough to raise their voice against the

Modi Sarkar, but the workers of the coal mines are a tough nut to crack, it can also be a repeat of 1974 strike of workers which led to series of movements and then the Emergency in 1975 which remains a blot forever and ever on the Congress.

It comes as a shocking that Railways have not been spared by the Pakodanomics of Modi 2.0.

Inviting private participation in operation of passenger trains was least expected from this government.

The complete mismanagement and failures of the government has led to bankruptcy of many institutions and henceforth begs the corporates to take over these reputed public sector services.

At the other end, the state

governments are fuming at this unilateral decision which was not discussed with stakeholders in the august House of Parliament or institutions like Niti Aayog which have been constituted to build the dialogue of Team India.

But there has been only a monologue disappointing the expectations of Cooperative Federalism which remains only a namesake verbal ritual but nowhere in practise.

Telangana's coal mine workers, precisely those from the Singareni belt, are experienced revolutionaries. Their active participation in Telangana Statehood struggle cannot be overlooked, and they will not bow down or succumb to any pressure.

TBKGKS's involvement reflects the ruling party TRS's

support which indicates that the Telangana land will fight back to protect its resources. TRS's birth has been to protect the resources of this land, TBGKS along with other Unions revolting the auctioning will catch the eye of the Prime Minister of India.

It will be interesting to see how far will Modi go ahead with his plans of sale because till now the prime opposition Congress remained a mute spectator when Air India, SAIL, BEML, Railways were kept for sale but with Singareni collieries coal mine workers protesting, it is a direct confrontation between Telangana and Modi ji's economic fallacies. When it comes to agitations, the world knows the mettle and 'no compromise' spirit of people of Telangana who would fight it out till the last to protect the invaluable resources of the land.

## Man held for raping minor girl

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The local police arrested a 23-year-old jeep driver on charges of raping a minor girl at Janeru village in G Madugula mandal in the Agency area of Visakhapatnam on Thursday.

Deputy Superintendent of police of Paderu Dr VBK Raj Kamal, who led a team of personnel to nab the runaway driver, said on June 27, the minor girl was sleeping in her kitchen and there was none at home.

The accused jeep driver, Gorle Ramesh, barged into the kitchen under the spell of alcohol and allegedly raped her. When she raised an alarm, neighbours rushed to her house to rescue the girl. The accused Ramesh threatened them with an empty beer bottle and fled the spot. The police launched a man-hunt and nabbed him from a remote place in the mandal. Cases under various sections of Posco, SC, ST (prevention of atrocities Act) were filed against the accused driver. He was produced in the court and remanded in custody.

# CM runs State with 'Kitchen Cabinet', alleges Yanamala

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Senior TDP leader Yanamala Ramakrishnu on Thursday accused Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy of resorting to yet another constitutional violation by setting aside his Council of Ministers and running the administration with 'Kitchen Cabinet' of his own advisors and trusted lieutenants.

Ramakrishnu said the Chief Minister's intention is to keep an iron hand on the State with his 'Kitchen Cabinet' consisting of Vijayasai Reddy, Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy and YV Subba Reddy. With this, the actual Cabinet Ministers lost their identity and they were reduced to mere rubber stamps.

He said that the backward and weaker sections were not given place even the CM's 'Kitchen Cabinet' and in indifference to Dr Ambedkar's socialist ideals of equality for all. Apparently, Jagan's goal is to



install 'Reddy Rajyam' in the State. He criticised the manner in which Jagan has given administrative control for Vijayasai Reddy in three districts, Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy in five districts and YV Subba Reddy in five districts. He claimed that the trio was given total control over the volunteers' network is a big blow to the identities of local bod-

ies turning the Cabinet Ministers into puppets. He claimed that the elected representatives of local bodies would further see greater erosion of their rights because of these undemocratic activities, which was a violation of the 73, 74 amendments to the Constitution. Ramakrishnu said that in the previous TDP government,

Senior TDP leader Yanamala Ramakrishnu criticised the manner in which Jagan has given administrative control for Vijayasai Reddy in three districts, Sajjala Ramakrishna Reddy in five districts and YV Subba Reddy in five districts

Yanamala claimed that the trio was given total control over the volunteers' network is a big blow to the identities of local Cabinet Ministers into puppets

nominated posts like Chairman of TTD and Chairman of AP Industrial and Infrastructure Corporation was given to the backward classes. He alleged that now Jaganmohan Reddy has put only his own caste persons in these posts, which were evident how the Chief Minister, was openly demeaning the backward classes.

## Parents told not to pay fees

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Vizag District Education Officer Lingeswar Reddy made it clear on Thursday that parents no need to pay the fees for their children even if the private schools demanded.

He announced that no school was given permission to either reopen or start the online classes for the academic year 2020-21. Due to Covid-19 there is no official announcement regarding the dates of reopening the schools.

"If any private school reopens against the government decision, action will be taken on management of such schools," he said.

He asked the parents to lodge a complaint with the District Education Office if any school demands fee. A separate section has been set up to receive the complaint.

However, school management said the fees are not waived off but the parents can pay it whenever they can at a later date. "We explain to each of the parents that the fees have not been waived and only the deadlines have been relaxed. How would we pay salary to the teachers if the fees are not



- "If any private school reopens against the government decision, action will be taken on management of such schools," he Vizag District Education Officer (DEO) Lingeswar Reddy
- Parents told to lodge a complaint with the District Education Office if any school demands fee. A separate section has been set up to receive the complaints

responsibilities of salaries, housekeeping, security, sanitation, tank cleaning, hardware, software, buses, networking, WiFi, CCTV, upgradation of equipment, building repairs, sports equipment, estate maintenance and pest control," he added.

Most of the parents are against opening of schools as they are worried about the safety of their wards, with many not sure about whether precautionary measures such as face masks, hand sanitisers and physical distancing will be ensured and whether these will be enough to keep their children safe from the Coronavirus.

collected? We have other maintenance too," said a principal of a CBSE school. "The school continues to meet its commitments and

## Prof VS Rao new VC of SRM Varsity

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Prof VS Rao took charge as the new Vice-Chancellor of SRM University-AP. Rao is an eminent academician, who has been the vanguard of leading excellence in higher technical education in the country. An alumnus of BITS, Pilani, and the University of Bielefeld, Germany, Prof VS Rao previously served as the President of NIIT University and Acting Vice-Chancellor and Director at BITS, Pilani.

Prof D Narayana Rao, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor of the university, said: "Prof VS Rao, an institution builder, has developed BITS, Hyderabad, as a highly reputed institution in a short time. With his rich and vast experience at BITS - Pilani and also as the Director, BITS, Hyderabad, I am sure that he will take SRM University-AP to greater heights."

HYDERABAD BULLION RATES	
GOLD	₹ 50,960 (10 gm)
	₹ 470 ↑
SILVER	₹ 48,600 (1kg)
	₹ 40 ↑

CHICKEN RATES ₹/kg	
Dressed/With Skin	₹173
Without Skin	₹196
Broiler at Farm	₹119

EGG RATES ₹/100	
HYDERABAD	346
VIJAYAWADA	364
VISAKHAPATNAM	349
RETAIL PRICE	₹3.60

## INS Jalashwa enters Tuticorin with 687 Indians

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM



INS Jalashwa, deployed by the Indian Navy for 'Operation Samudra Setu', entered Tuticorin harbour with 687 Indian nationals embarked from Bandar Abbas, Iran. Till now, Indian Navy ships have brought back 920 Indian citizens from Iran.

The embarkation of Indian nationals was facilitated by the Indian Mission in Iran. Personnel were embarked onboard after carrying out requisite medical screening. Covid-19 related safety protocols were also strictly adhered to during the sea-passage. The evacuees were received by local authorities at Tuticorin and arrangements were in place for speedy disembarkation, health screening, immigration and transportation of the evacuees.

With this evacuation, the Indian Navy has now repatriated 3,992 Indian nationals from Maldives, Sri Lanka and Iran during the ongoing pandemic.



## CM to handover appointment letters to outsourcing staff

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy will be handing over 47,000 appointment letters on July 3 to the outsourcing staff selected through Andhra Pradesh Corporation for Outsourced Services (APCOS). It may be recalled that the Chief Minister had announced in the Assembly that the Andhra Pradesh Corporation for Outsourced Services would be set up to recruit outsourcing staff in a transparent manner.

The main objective behind the initiative is to keep transparency in the recruitments and payments, and giving no room for middlemen or corruption. In addition to this, the State government will ensure to carry government policy of reservations in the recruitments where 50 per cent reservations will be given to SCs,



STs, BCs and minorities in the outsourcing jobs. Fifteen per cent reservation for SCs, six per cent for STs, 29 per cent for BCs and minorities will be provided. Similarly, 50 per cent of outsourcing jobs will be reserved for women.

Through APCOS, all the outsourcing placements right from the housekeeping staff to security personnel, the entire workforce from district to Secretariat-level will be recruited.

## Janata Bazaars to come up in State

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Rythu Bharosa Kendras would be a game-changer for the agriculture sector in the State, said Minister for Agriculture Kurasala Kanna Babu while addressing joint collectors and officials of agriculture and related sectors through a video conference from the Collector's camp office here on Thursday.

The minister said that Rythu Bharosa Kendras have become a hot topic across the country and it was discussed in a national seminar recently. Other states are also



enquiring about the Kendras, he said. Kanna Babu said that Janata Bazaars would be set up in the State for the benefit of consumers, along with helping the farmers to get remunerative price.

# Industrial policy to focus on jobs, environment

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Industrial Policy 2020-23 will focus on removing regional disparities, environmental issues, pollution control and employment generation among others. During a review meeting on the new Industrial Policy here on Thursday, Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy said that the focus is also being laid on attracting foreign investment and to reduce the time span in establishing the unit.



**If Industrial Parks are set up as per sectors, pollution control would be easy, the Chief Minister said and told officials to ensure that all industries follow the guidelines in pollution control**

er sections socially and economically.

He said that special interest should be taken on MSMEs and reminded that the Re Start package was given for their revival. Care should be taken

to check the polluting industries as controlling pollution is equally important to incentives they give to the industries.

If Industrial Parks are set up as per sectors, pollution control would be easy, the Chief

Minister said and told officials to ensure that all industries follow the guidelines in pollution control. Skill Development Centres should also be taken into consideration and they should go forward in developing the high-end IT Skill University coming up at Visakhapatnam, which will open a new chapter in IT industry. With regard to the curriculum, experts in the field should be consulted, he said.

Industries and IT Minister M Goutham Reddy, Industries Department Special Chief Secretary K Valavan, Chief Advisor to Chief Minister Ajeya Kallam and other officials attended the meeting.

## Naidu brings capital ...

Continued from page 1

Amaravati would be the only hope for the future generations of Andhra Pradesh. The Assembly, Secretariat, Courts complexes, townships and other buildings should be developed here itself. There has been no legal dispute also in this huge project till now.

Naidu said if the planned roads were completed in the existing city in the past one year, Amaravati would have by now come into active use by different sections. The land values would also have gone up in a big way so that the Capital City project would have got potential to generate internal resources to fund its further implementation. Naidu told the ruling party leaders that even their party sympathisers in the Capital city area have voluntarily given their lands. But now, the YSRCP was behaving in a maniacal way to shift Capital without any respect for their own supporters and locals.

## Transparency, welfare...

Continued from page 1

Unlike Naidu, Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy spent Rs 10,200 crore only on Rythu Bharosa in a span of one year and cleared all the pending bills for services like Aarogyasri, MSMEs and fee reimbursement," Sajjala said.

Countering the allegations on utilising Rs 1300 crore for painting village and ward secretariats, Sajjala said that Naidu got used to inflating the actual cost during his rule for his corruption. "The actual cost will not be more than Rs 13 lakh, but the

opposition leader has inflated the amount and shown the public how he has done corruption. Though Naidu used his party colour for Anna canteens, electric poles, and even toilets, he is pointing at us for using three pleasant colours to paint village secretariats."

He said that instead of providing suggestions with good intentions to the State government during this pandemic, Naidu was unleashing a venomous tirade against the government only to boost his political mileage and to create confusion among the people.

## Courts giving directions...

Continued from page 1

"Will you stall a Money Bill? You have nothing to do, so you are doing such nasty things," he charged.

The government could not pay salaries to its staff for June

due to non-passage of the Appropriation Bill that clears the states annual budget, but has said the process would be completed this week.

"You have a responsibility to the people," the Speaker reminded the TDP.

## YSRCP MPs to meet Speaker...

Continued from page 1

Meanwhile, Raju on Thursday dashed off a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Earlier, Raju had also written to Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla expressing fear of threat to his life from his party's leaders in his native district West Godavari district. In his letter written to the Speaker on June 18, Raju had requested that he be provided security and police protection in the wake of increased threats from YSRCP leaders.

Even earlier, Raju met the officials of the Election Commission of India, Defence minister Rajnath Singh and Minister of Home for State Kishan Reddy. Reacting sharply to the show-cause notice issued by Vijayasai Reddy, Raju sought to know if YSRCP has an internal committee to deal with inter-party disciplinary issues.

## TDP allegations on vehicles purchase refuted

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP MLA Kolusu Parthasarathi refuted the allegations levelled by the TDP leaders that there was a scam in the purchase of 104 and 108 ambulances.

He said that transparency was maintained in inviting lowest quoted tenders by following reverse tendering. He said an unprecedented milestone has been achieved in the history of the State on July 1 with the launch of 1,088

ambulances by Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy.

Speaking to the media here on Thursday, the MLA said these vehicles have been introduced as the government believes in protecting the lives of patients during the difficult times of the Covid-19 pandemic. He ridiculed opposition leader N Chandrababu Naidu's claim that Rs 300 crore scam took place in the purchase of vehi-

cles and said only Rs 200 crore was spent to purchase the vehicles.

He said one vehicle for each district equipped with the latest technology and there is a provision to ensure that doctors conduct 29 kinds of tests in emergency cases.

Earlier there was a scope for conducting only sugar and BP tests, now even electronic health record of the patient

can be prepared in the vehicle. Moreover, two neo-natal ambulances each have been allocated for each district to take care of children, he added.

With reference to Naidu's allegations that the ambulances contract was entrusted to Aurobindo Pharma as it belonged to the kin of YSRCP MP Vijay Sai Reddy, the MLA said Aurobindo Pharma has established its roots in nearly 100 countries and it does not need anybody's favour.

## Container lorry crushes car on NH-16, four occupants dead

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a ghastly road accident, four persons were killed when a container lorry hit the car they were travelling in, at Timmapuram village in Guntur district late on Wednesday night.

The dead were identified as Athuluri Balaram (25), Feroz Ahmed (35), Vinjamuri Harikrishna and Medasani Venkata Sri Chandu (25). They

were travelling to Vijayawada from Narsaraopet when the tragedy struck.

According to police, the driver of the container lorry lost control and rammed it into their car on NH-16 at Timmapuram village under the Yadlapadu Mandal of Guntur district. While two of the victims died on the spot, the other two succumbed to injuries at the GGH Guntur where they were admitted for emergency treatment.

After being informed, police rushed to the spot and registered a case. Investigation is on.

Traffic on the busy NH16 came to a halt for several hours as a result of the ghastly mishap. It resumed after police cleared the highway by removing the severely mangled car and the container lorry from the accident site.

After preliminary investigation, police suspect that rash driving by the lorry driver has caused the accident.

## TDP man arrested for...

Continued from page 1

He suffered severe injuries on his chest and died while undergoing treatment in a hospital. Bhaskar Rao was a close associate of Transport Minister Perni Venkataramaiah (Nani).

Police said at least four assailants had attacked Rao. Police registered a case based on a complaint by family members of Bhaskar Rao in which they pointed the finger at Kollu Ravindra, his associate Chinta Chinni and others.

## Plea in HC for shifting Atchannaaidu to hospital

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A petition was filed in the High Court on Thursday to shift former Minister for Labour and TDP Deputy Floor Leader in the Assembly Kinjarapu Atchannaaidu from Vijayawada sub-jail to the Guntur General Hospital.

The petitioner, P Venkatesh, argued that the YSRCP government in an act of political vendetta has exerted pressure on the Guntur General Hospital management in discharging Atchannaaidu from

the hospital and shifted him to Vijayawada sub-jail.

The petitioner also contended Atchannaaidu was discharged from the hospital though he did not completely recover from the second surgery he had undergone in the Guntur General Hospital.

Considering Atchannaaidu's medical condition, the petitioner appealed to the court to direct the government to admit him in a hospital for further treatment. The High Court is likely to hear the case on Friday.

## Retd IAS officer...

Continued from page 1

These are the first appointments the Jagan government made in the AP Information Commission under the RTI Act. The Commission currently has four Information Commissioners, all appointed by the previous Telugu Desam regime. With the new appointments, its strength increases to six. The Chief Information Commissioner and the new Commissioner have been appointed for a tenure of three years or till they attain the age of 65 years (whichever is earlier), an order issued by Chief Secretary Nilam Sawhney said.

## AP Govt moves SC...

Continued from page 1

On May 22, the state High Court has set aside the suspension of Venkateswara Rao and directed the state government to reinstate him to regular service. The court also directed the government to pay his salary for the period of his suspension setting aside the directions given by the CAT to file a case against the senior IPS officer.

# AP CORPORATION FOR OUTSOURCED SERVICES (APCOS)

A DREAM COME TRUE FOR OUTSOURCED EMPLOYEES..

No need to pay bribes to get employed..! No need to grease palms for monthly salary..! No Middle men..

No private agency involvement in outsourced jobs.. Placements to be done through government run APCOS

Outsourced placements to be done without any bias of caste, religion or region..! No Scope for bribes..

Overall 50% placements reserved for women..! SC, ST, BC, Minorities to get 50% reservations..!

**Sri Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy**  
Hon'ble Chief Minister, Government of Andhra Pradesh  
**TO FORMALLY INAUGURATE "APCOS" ON 3rd JULY 2020..**

Salaries to be paid regularly on a fixed day, every month..!

Outsourced employees to get proper ESI, EPF benefits...!

Over **47,000** outsourced employees already benefitted..!

**NO PLACE FOR BRIBES or BIAS - IN JAGANANNA GOVERNMENT**

Bribes

Commissions

Middle men

Bias on the basis of caste, religion or region

Full & timely payment of salary every month

Proper implementation of ESI & EPF policies

Overall 50% jobs for women

Overall 50% jobs for SC, ST, BC & Minorities

Issued by: Information & Public Relations Department, Andhra Pradesh

SHORT READS



**Maha: Demonetised currency seized from hotel in Aurangabad**  
**AURANGABAD:** The Aurangabad police's crime branch seized over Rs 98 lakh in demonetised currency notes during a raid at a hotel in the city, an official said on Thursday. Acting on a tip-off, the crime branch raided a hotel in Sindh colony on Wednesday and recovered over Rs 98 lakh in old notes of Rs 1,000 and Rs 500 denominations, the official said. Four persons who were at the scene could not give any satisfactory explanation for the possession and source of the currency, he said. An offence was registered under the Specified Bank Notes (Cessation of Liabilities) Act 2017 and notices have been served to the four persons, crime branch spokesperson Anil Gaikwad said.

**HC vacates stay on bail to school owner in Delhi violence case**

**NEW DELHI:** The Delhi High Court Thursday vacated its interim stay on the bail granted to a private school owner in a north-east Delhi riots case as the counsels for the Centre and the AAP government could not agree on who was representing the police. Justice Suresh Kait said this controversy over who will represent Delhi Police in the matter has been going on since June 22, the first day of hearing, and was likely to continue and if the stay remained in force, it will prejudice the accused. With the observation the court vacated its interim order of June 22 which had directed not to release the school owner Faisal Farooq. The court also directed all the counsels to give their written arguments on the issue of who will represent Delhi Police in the matter and listed it for hearing on July 22.

**UP CM asks officials to check COVID spread in state's NCR districts**

**LUCKNOW:** Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Thursday asked officials to stay alert on the movement of people in NCR districts of the state to check the spread of COVID-19. "By remaining alert in NCR districts (of UP), the spread of COVID-19 can be checked. There should be alertness on movement in these districts," a statement quoted the CM as telling senior officials during a meeting with them. He also asked officials to ensure intensive screening of people for possible infection during a 10-day surveillance campaign launched in 10 districts of the Meerut region from Thursday.

**Delhi govt to launch 17-day plantation campaign from July 10**

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**  
 Delhi Environment Minister Gopal Rai on Thursday said the city government will launch a 17-day plantation campaign from July 10 to reduce pollution in the national capital. Thirty-one lakh plants, trees, and shrubs will be planted under the campaign "Plant Trees, Save Environment" which will be launched from National Highway 20 near ITO. The plantation drive is expected to increase the city's green cover from 325 square

**HC asks jails to follow ICMR rules**

**PNS ■ MUMBAI**

The Bombay High Court on Thursday directed Maharashtra prison authorities to follow all guidelines of the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) to contain the spread of COVID-19 in jails across the state and to ensure safety of all inmates currently lodged there.

A bench led by Chief Justice Dipankar Datta disposed of a bunch of petitions seeking medical safeguards for jail inmates after the state submitted a list of its draft guidelines on their safety and on implementing norms of the state and ICMR on COVID-19 testing, treatment, and other safeguards in prisons across Maharashtra. The bench accepted the state government's assurances.

It, however, directed the government to conduct immediate test of any inmate who showed symptoms for COVID-19.

The bench also directed the state to conduct random testing and screening of inmates for coronavirus.

The court asked the state to



upload on the latter's website regular updates on the number of inmates who test positive for coronavirus, details of its quarantine centres, COVID care centres and temporary prisons that it has requisitioned for inmates. It also asked the state to decongest jail to ensure social distancing.

The court's judgement came on a bunch of Public Interest Litigations filed by the Peoples Union for Civil Liberties (PUC), and other individual petitioners. The pleas, filed through

senior counsel Mihir Desai and some others, sought that the state be directed to ensure safety of all prisoners currently lodged in the Arthur Road Jail, and also prisons across Maharashtra, in the wake of news that several inmates and jail staff had tested positive for coronavirus.

Last month, during a previous hearing, the state government submitted that it was unable to conduct adequate testing and ensure quarantining and social distancing in prisons due to overcrowding.



**Govt to purchase fighter jets, missile weapons worth Rs 38,900 cr**

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

In the midst of India's tense border standoff with China, the defence ministry on Thursday approved procurement of a number of frontline fighter jets, missile systems and other platforms at a cost of Rs 38,900 crore to bolster the combat capability of the armed forces, officials said.

They said 21 MiG-29 fighter jets are being bought from Russia while 12 Su-30 MKI aircraft will be procured from Russia. The ministry has also approved a separate proposal to upgrade existing 59 MiG-29 aircraft.

The decisions were taken at a meeting of the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.

The procurement of 21 MiG-29 and upgrading of the existing fleet of MiG-29 are estimated to cost the government Rs 7,418 crore while purchase of 12 new Su-30 MKI from the Hindustan Aeronautics Ltd will be made at a cost of Rs 10,730 crore, the officials said. The DAC also approved

**The decisions were taken at a meeting of the Defence Acquisition Council (DAC) chaired by Defence Minister Rajnath Singh.**

procurement of long range land attack cruise missile systems with a range of 1,000 KM and Astra Missiles for Navy and Air Force.

The officials said cost of these design and development proposals is in the range of Rs 20,400 crore.

"While acquisition of Pinaka missile systems will enable raising additional regiments over and above the ones already inducted, addition of long range land attack missile systems having a firing range of 1000 KM to the existing arsenal will bolster the attack capabilities of the Navy and the Air Force," said a defence ministry official.

**HRD, S&T launch 'Drug Discovery Hackathon'**

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

Science and Technology Minister Harsh Vardhan and HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' on Thursday launched a 'Drug Discovery Hackathon' project and invited students and researchers to participate in the exercise, aimed at developing an anti-COVID drug.

The initiative is being jointly carried out by the Ministry of Human Resources Development and the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR). The CSIR has been undertaking a series of steps in the battle against COVID-19. It has been repurposing drugs to help patients recover from coronavirus.

"#LiveNow Union Minister for Health & Family Welfare, S&T and Earth Sciences Dr Harsh Vardhan launching 'Drug Discovery Hackathon' along with Union Minister for HRD Dr Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank. @HRDMinistry @IndiaDST @DrPNishank @ P M O I N D I A @ O f f i c e O f S D h o t r e , " Vardhan's office tweeted.

**Providing food, clothing, education, financial assistance to orphans: AAP govt to HC**

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

The AAP government on Thursday told the Delhi High Court it was providing food, clothing, medical care, education and financial assistance under various schemes to orphans in the national capital.

The Delhi government said it was also providing the orphans career guidance, ensured job placements, created Aadhaar cards, opened bank accounts for them and also provide Rs 30,000 as financial assistance to the orphan girls, their guardians or foster parents for their marriage.

The submissions were made before a bench of Chief Justice D N Patel and Justice Prateek Jalan during hearing of a PIL seeking a detailed scheme for the education, living and other prospects of life for orphans, who are suffering due to lack of governmental policies for them in the COVID 19 pandemic.



dem. Taking note of the submissions, the bench directed the Delhi government to provide district-wise data, including names of the children, of the number of recipients of the various welfare measures and schemes highlighted by the government.

The high court said the data would help it to verify whether

what the Delhi government has claimed to have done has been implemented at the ground level and whether benefits of the various schemes were percolating down to those it was meant for. With the direction, the bench listed the matter for hearing on July 17.

During the hearing, the Centre said it was providing assistance to the states under its

**Taking note of the submissions, the bench directed the Delhi government to provide district-wise data, including names of the children, of the number of recipients of the various welfare measures**

child welfare scheme. It said it will give the details before the next date of hearing. The petition filed by Harpal Singh Rana has said he sought the information through Right to Information (RTI) Act for the welfare schemes introduced by the government for the welfare, education, living arrangement of the orphan children.

**ED files chargesheet against Raj firm for violation of environment laws**

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has filed a chargesheet under PMLA against a Rajasthan-based concentrated ethanol and spirit making company and its promoters for alleged violation of environment rules and law, the agency said on Thursday.

The central agency filed a prosecution complaint (chargesheet) before a special PMLA (Prevention of Money Laundering Act) court in Jaipur and named three entities—Agriotech Industries Ltd located at Ajeetgarh in Sikar district of the state and its managing directors Girdhar Gopal Bajoria and Ashutosh Bajoria.

The ED said it took up probe in the case on the basis of two criminal complaints filed by the Rajasthan State Pollution Control Board

**Investigation found that the company "had permission for production of 45,000 litres extra natural alcohol (ENA) and rectified spirit (RS) per day but was producing more than 65,000 litres," the agency claimed.**

against the accused for contravention of the Water (Prevention and Control of Pollution) Act of 1974 and the Environment (Protection) Act of 1986.

Investigation found that the company "had permission for production of 45,000 litres extra natural alcohol (ENA) and rectified spirit (RS) per day but was producing more than 65,000 litres," the agency claimed.

"This was illegal excess pro-

duction of 1,38,08,304 litres during the period between December, 2007 and July, 2012. The company generated illegitimate profit of Rs 8.3 crore over this period," the ED alleged.

Probe also found, it said in a statement, that the company was not maintaining ETP (effluent treatment plant) mechanism as envisaged under the guidelines of the pollution control board that resulted in an illegitimate gain of Rs 8.20 lakh to the firm.

**4th legislator tested positive for Covid in Bihar**

**PNS ■ ARARIA**

RJD MLA Shah Nawaz Alam has tested positive for COVID-19, the fourth legislator in Bihar to have contracted the disease.

The legislator from the Jokihat constituency in Araria district said he was asymptomatic.

Alam has been shifted to an

isolation centre in the district, civil surgeon Dr MMP Singh said.

His sample was taken for testing to the Sadar Hospital on Tuesday and the report came on Wednesday evening.

Earlier, state minister Vinod Kumar Singh and his wife, BJP MLA Jibesh Kumar Mishra and Congress legislator Anand Shankar Singh had tested positive for novel coronavirus.

Vinod Kumar Singh, who is the backward and extremely backward class welfare minister, was diagnosed with the disease on June 28 and sent to an isolation ward set up at a city hotel in Katihar district.

Mishra, who represents the Jale constituency of Darbhanga district, tested positive for the infection on June 22. He was

admitted to AIIMS, Patna for treatment.

Anand Shankar Singh, a Congress MLA who represents Aurangabad constituency, had tested positive to virus on Tuesday.

Earlier, veteran RJD leader and former Union minister Raghubansh Prasad Singh had also tested positive and admitted to AIIMS, Patna.

**India's trade deficit with China reduces to USD 48.66 bn in FY20**

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

India's trade deficit with China fell to USD 48.66 billion in 2019-20 on account of decline in imports from the neighbouring country, according to government data.

Exports to China in the last financial year stood at USD 65.26 billion, while imports aggregated at USD 16.6 billion, the data showed.

The trade deficit between the countries was at USD 53.56 billion in 2018-19 and USD 63 billion in 2017-18.

The main imports from China include clocks and watches, musical instruments, toys, sports goods, furniture, mattresses, plastics, electrical



machinery, electronic equipment, chemicals, iron and steel items, fertilisers, mineral fuel and metals.

New Delhi has time and again raised concerns over widening trade deficit with China.

goods which are being dumped in the domestic market at below the average prices from China with a view to guard domestic players from cheap imports.

As many as 371 products have been identified for technical regulations. Out of these, technical regulations have been formulated for 150 products worth about USD USD 47 billion of imports.

Over 50 quality control orders (QCOs) and other technical regulations have been notified in the past one year including on electronic goods, toys, air conditioners, bicycle parts, chemicals, safety glass, pressure cooker, items of steel, electrical items such as cables.

**MCOCA slapped on 10 accused in armed dacoity case**

**PNS ■ PALGHAR**

The police have charged 10 accused in an armed dacoity case under the stringent Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act in Palghar district, an official said on Thursday.

The accused had allegedly broken into the office of a gold finance company at Nalla Sopara in September 2019 and decamped with valuables worth over Rs 1.7 crore.



Following investigation, the police had managed to nab seven out of 10 accused, who are all history-sheeters involved in several cases of armed dacoity and robberies, district super-

intendent of police Dattatraya Shinde said.

Since the accused were involved in organised crime, they have now been charged under the MCOCA, he said.

The police are also investigating the crimes the accused may have been involved in at Gujarat, Palghar, Mumbai, Thane and Navi Mumbai.

The police were also working on the arrest some more accused in this case and other related crimes, he said.

**Multiplexes urge govt to allow cinema houses**

**PNS ■ MUMBAI**

The Multiplex Association of India (MAI) on Thursday urged the central government to allow operation of cinema houses in non-containment zones in the country.

The country went into lockdown from March 25 to contain the spread of coronavirus pandemic.

The government has started unlocking in phase-wise manner from June with opening up of domestic travel, offices, markets, shopping complexes, etc in containment zones.

Amid rising COVID-19 cases in the country under the government's Unlock 2.0



guidelines, cinema chains have not been given permission to operate.

Addressing the same, the MAI said they feel dismayed

that cinemas and multiplexes continue to remain in the list of prohibited activities.

The association said they find the move demotivating

**Amid rising COVID-19 cases in the country under the government's Unlock 2.0 guidelines, cinema chains have not been given permission to operate.**

manner. "As compared to the unorganised retail and shops that have been opened up, multiplexes and cinema are part of the organised sector, playing hosts to 'revenue paying' customers only and hence, in a better position to limit crowds unlike marketplaces and deploy all the mechanisms and guidelines for crowd control and social distancing," MAI said in a statement.

According to the association, the multiplex industry in India employs over 2,00,000 people who are the backbone of the Indian film industry as they account nearly 60 per cent of revenues of film business.

SHORT READS



**Enough funds given to Pune based SARTHI: Maha minister**

**PUNE:** Maharashtra Minister for Disaster Management Vijay Wadetiwar on Thursday said enough funds have been given to Pune-based training institute SARTHI and it will not be closed down. The Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj Research Training and Human Development Institute (SARTHI) is a non-profit government body for research, policy advocacy and training for socio-economic and education development of Maratha and Kunbi-Maratha communities. Speaking to reporters, the minister said some social organisations had claimed that the institute did not have enough funds to function and these claims were baseless. "Although the state government's revenue has been hit due to the coronavirus-induced lockdown, we have given required funds to SARTHI and the institute will continue to function in the future," he said.

**Maha dept's land to be given to construct govt medical college**

**MUMBAI:** A decision was taken on Thursday to hand over 64-acre land of the Maharashtra Water Resources Department for the construction of a government medical college in Satara, an official statement said. The decision was taken during a meeting attended by state Legislative Council chairman Ramraje Naik-Nimbalkar, Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar, Water Resources Minister Jayant Patil, Satara Guardian Minister Balasaheb Patil and others. Pawar assured that there will be no shortage of funds for the construction of the college, which he added, should be operational from the next academic year. According to the statement, Pawar insisted that the construction of the college should be of good quality and it be built keeping in mind the requirements in the next 100 years.

**U'khand govt to send Ganga water to states**

**DEHRADUN:** The Uttarakhand government will send the holy Ganga water in brass urns from Har ki Pauri in Haridwar to all states and Union territories for Shiva devotees as the annual Kanwar yatra is not being held this year in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Chief ministers of all states have expressed their inability to conduct Kanwar yatra in the traditional way owing to coronavirus. So it has been decided to dispatch brass urns filled with the holy Ganga water from Haridwar to these states, Uttarakhand Cabinet Minister and state government's spokesman Madan Kaushik told reporters. Large brass urns filled with the holy Ganga water at Har ki Pauri will be loaded into trucks and sent to the chief ministers, Lt governors and ministers of the states and Union territories for distribution among Shiva devotees, he said. "CMs of Uttar Pradesh, Haryana, Rajasthan, Punjab, Delhi, Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand have agreed that traditional Kanwar yatra is not possible this year.

# Banning Chinese apps a 'digital strike': Prasad

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Calling the ban on Chinese apps a "digital strike", Union Communication and Information Technology Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad on Thursday said India wants peace but if someone casts an evil eye the country is capable of giving a befitting reply.

Hailing the "strong" leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, he asserted, if India lost 20 soldiers in the Galwan Valley border clash, the toll is double on the Chinese side. "Now you can hear about only two 'Cs' Coronavirus and China. We believe in peace and solve problems through discussion, but if somebody casts an evil eye on India, we will give a befitting reply. When people from China tried to create pressure on LAC, our soldiers gave them a befitting reply...if our 20 jawans have sacrificed their lives, the toll is double on the Chinese side.

"You all must have noticed that they have not come out with any figure," Prasad, also the Union law and justice minister, told a virtual rally for the



"When our PM is saying that the sacrifice of our jawans won't go in vain, it has a meaning in terms of national security. Our government has the will to deliver. All of us are aware of the courage of our PM."

**RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD**  
Information Technology Minister

people of West Bengal.

He said people will remember the retaliatory assault mounted by India after terrorist strikes in Uri and Pulwama.

"When our PM is saying that the sacrifice of our jawans won't go in vain, it has a meaning in terms of national security. Our government has

the will to deliver. All of us are aware of the courage of our PM."

Prasad said the India of 2020 will neither "stop nor bow its head" before anyone. "It's not the India of 1962," he said, referring to the India-China war in which the country was defeated because of the supe-

**59 banned apps go off Google Play, Apple App Store**

**NEW DELHI:** The 59 Chinese apps banned by the government have been taken down from Google Play Store and Apple App Store in India, blocking their access to mobile phone users in the country. The government had on Monday banned 59 Chinese applications saying they were prejudicial to sovereignty, integrity, and security of the country. A day later popular short video app TikTok was taken down from Google Play Store and Apple App Store. The other 58 Chinese apps have now been removed. Google said that it has temporarily blocked access to the banned apps on its India Play Store. "While we continue to review the interim orders from the Government of India, we have notified the affected developers and have temporarily blocked access to the apps that remained available on the Play Store in India," a Google spokesperson said.

**Bribery case: Rana Kapoor gets interim relief**

PNS ■ MUMBAI

A special court here on Thursday granted interim protection from arrest till July 11 to Yes Bank founder Rana Kapoor in a case registered against him by the CBI for allegedly obtaining illegal gratification from a realty firm. He was booked by the central investigating agency in March this year for allegedly obtaining Rs 307 crore bribe in the purchase of a Lutyen's zone bungalow in New Delhi from Avantha Group to go easy on around Rs 1,900 crore bank loans to the seller's group companies. Kapoor had moved an anticipatory bail application before a special CBI court here.

## CB-CID arrests three more cops in father-son duo death case

PNS ■ TUTICORIN

The Crime Branch CID sleuths on Thursday arrested three more police personnel including an inspector in a case of alleged torture by police leading to the deaths of a father-son duo at Sathankulam in southern Tamil Nadu.

With this, four police personnel have been arrested in the case.

Following preliminary investigations, inspector Sridhar, head constable Murugan, and sub-inspector Balakrishnan have been arrested, senior police officials said. The fresh arrests come following the arrest of sub-inspector Raghu Ganesh last night.

"All important police personnel involved in the incident



have been arrested... the investigation continues," a senior CB-CID official said.

Inspector General of Police (South Zone), S Murugan confirmed the four arrests and asserted that "custodial deaths" must not be allowed to happen and all arrests should be carried out in accordance with law

and as per the directions of the Supreme Court.

Within hours of taking over the probe on the directions of the Madras High Court, the CB-CID on Wednesday altered the FIR to include offences that led to the death of the father-son duo following alleged police torture.

**5 die, 12 injured in thunderbolt strike**

PNS ■ BALLIA (UP)

Five people, including two women, were killed and 12 others injured in incidents of lightning strikes in the district, police said on Thursday.

The incidents of fatal thunderbolt strikes occurred in Dokati, Sikandarpur and Bimpura areas of the district, they said.

The dead included a 70-year-old retired Army man, Babul Singh, and villager Nirmal Verma, 43, who were struck by lightning on Thursday while working in their fields in Babu Ka Shivpur village of Dokati area, police said.

Ten others were injured in thunderbolt strike on Wednesday while working in a field in Mahthapar village of the district.

## CM Kejriwal inaugurates plasma bank, asks people to donate plasma

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A plasma bank to treat novel coronavirus started functioning in Delhi on Thursday, with Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal saying that COVID-19 patients can donate their plasma 14 days after recovery.

Addressing an online media briefing, Kejriwal said the eligibility for being a plasma donor is "very strict", and hoped that with this bank the number of COVID-19 deaths will decrease in the national capital. Later, he inaugurated the 'plasma bank' and urged those who have recovered from the disease to donate plasma to other patients.

The government has set up the plasma bank at the state-run Institute of Liver and Biliary Sciences (ILBS).

"Today, we have started the



'plasma bank' and some people have also donated. As we all know there is no vaccine for novel coronavirus yet, but plasma therapy seems to be quite helpful for COVID patients," he told reporters after visiting the plasma bank at ILBS.

It (plasma donation) has

happening in a scattered way, so the idea was to bring it at one place in an organised manner, he said.

"There are strict guidelines for eligible donors. I would urge those people who have recovered from COVID-19 to come forward and donate plasma to other patients," he said.

## Bodies of suspected cases be handed over to kin

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Health Ministry has asked all states and UTs to hand over bodies of suspected COVID-19 cases to their relatives without waiting for laboratory confirmation of the infection but said the mortal remains should be disposed of as per government guidelines. A letter on the matter was sent to all states and UTs on Wednesday in the wake of issues raised regarding death of suspected COVID-19 patients and bodies not being handed over to relatives pending confirmation of test report by hospitals.

"I would like to clarify that the dead bodies of such suspected COVID cases should be handed over to their relatives immediately and laboratory confirmation of COVID-19 should not be awaited," the letter written by Director General of Health Services (DGHS), Health Ministry, Dr Rajiv Garg said.

These bodies can as a matter of abundant precaution be disposed as per the 'Guidelines on 'Dead Body Management' available on the website of Union Health Ministry which directs that handlers in PPE accompany the body for final rites, the letter stated.



The leaders took note of the effective measures undertaken by the two countries to address the negative consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and agreed on the importance of closer India-Russia ties for jointly addressing the challenges of the post-COVID world, an official statement said.

During their telephonic conversation, they agreed to maintain the momentum of bilateral contacts and consultations, leading to the annual bilateral summit to be held in India later this year.

## Modi, Putin discuss bilateral ties

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Russian President Vladimir Putin on Thursday discussed various bilateral issues and the post-COVID world.

The leaders took note of the effective measures undertaken by the two countries to address the negative consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic and agreed on the importance of closer India-Russia ties for jointly addressing the challenges of the post-COVID world, an official statement said.

During their telephonic conversation, they agreed to maintain the momentum of bilateral contacts and consultations, leading to the annual bilateral summit to be held in India later this year.

## India crosses nine million COVID-19 tests

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India has crossed the nine-million mark in conducting COVID-19 tests, with 90,56,173 samples having been examined till July 1, officials said on Thursday.

The officials of Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) also said there are now 1,065 testing labs in the country -- 768 in the public sector and 297 in private.

The daily testing capacity is



also growing fast, they said, adding it was around 1.5 lakh per day on May 25 and is more than three lakh per day now.

As many as 2,29,588 samples were tested on Wednesday, which took the cumulative

number to 90,56,173, the country's apex health research body said.

Starting with just one laboratory, the National Institute of Virology (NIV) in Pune, and having 100 in the beginning of the lockdown, the ICMR on June 23 validated 1000th testing lab, it said.

The Union Health Ministry, meanwhile, said the total number of people being tested for COVID-19 in the country will soon touch one crore.

## Shivakumar officially takes charge as Karnataka Cong chief

PNS ■ BENGALURU

D K Shivakumar on Thursday officially took charge as president of Karnataka Pradesh Congress Committee after over three months since he was appointed to the post.

Called "Pratijna Dina", the function to mark the official take-over of Shivakumar as president, along with Eshwar Khandre, Salim Ahmed and Satish Jarkiholi as working presidents of KPCC, is said to have been digitally witnessed by lakhs of people from over 15,000 places.

Following the restrictions in place to control the spread of coronavirus, the ceremony was organised at the party's new office building.

Aimed at mobilising the party leaders and cadre, arrangements were made at panchayat and ward-level across the state to see to that they are part of the function



through live telecast on TV channels, Zoom, YouTube and social media. The official take-over saw immediate past president Dinesh Gundu Rao handing over the Congress flag to Shivakumar, and this was followed by party workers across locations, who were digitally watching the function, taking oath and reading the preamble of the Constitution.

The ceremony was held on Thursday after it was postponed thrice due to COVID-19 related restrictions in place. The Congress high command had on March 11 appointed Shivakumar, a six-time MLA, known to be the Congress's chief troubleshooter in crisis situations, replacing Dinesh Gundu Rao as the KPCC chief. Rao had quit the post in December after the party's dismal show of winning only two of the 15 seats in the bypolls.

through live telecast on TV channels, Zoom, YouTube and social media. The official take-over saw immediate past president Dinesh Gundu Rao handing over the Congress flag to Shivakumar, and this was followed by party workers across locations, who were digitally watching the function, taking oath and reading the preamble of the Constitution.

The ceremony was held on Thursday after it was postponed thrice due to COVID-19 related restrictions in place. The Congress high command had on March 11 appointed Shivakumar, a six-time MLA, known to be the Congress's chief troubleshooter in crisis situations, replacing Dinesh Gundu Rao as the KPCC chief. Rao had quit the post in December after the party's dismal show of winning only two of the 15 seats in the bypolls.

**'CORONIL' CONTROVERSY**

## Plea seeks FIR against Ramdev for false claims

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Days after yoga guru Ramdev launched 'Coronil', claiming that it can cure coronavirus, a plea has been filed in a Delhi court seeking direction to the police to register an FIR against him, Patanjali Ayurved Ltd, Acharya Balkrishna and others for making money by taking advantage of people's miseries.

A plea, moved by advocate Tushar Anand, stated that the accused hatched a conspiracy to cause wrongful loss to the public by making misrepresentations with an intention to cause wrongful gain to themselves. The matter will come up for

hearing on Friday.

"The accused have shown their mala fide intentions which is likely to spread infection of disease dangerous to life by misrepresenting and alluring innocent consumers to buy the medicine with a belief of getting cured from the deadly Covid-19," it stated. The applicant sought a direction from the court to the Station House Officer (SHO) of Vasant Vihar Police Station to register FIR against Ramdev and the others under the Indian Penal Code for offences such as cheating, malignant act likely to spread infection of disease dangerous to life and criminal conspiracy.

## Migrant workers' crisis: 'Need for Central registry, templates for coordination'

PNS ■ CHENNAI

The exodus of migrant workers across the country, triggered by COVID-19 induced lockdown, has brought into focus the need for a central registry and templates for coordination among states and the Centre.

Also required are measures to protect adolescent girls and pregnant women from exploitation.

At a recent webinar on "Stakeholder Consultation on Inter-State Migration Policy", various speakers called for effective communication between source and destination



states to ensure timely and safe movement of migrants.

As part of an effort to mitigate the problems of migrant

workers, states should enter into Memorandum of Understanding with each other to facilitate migration, said

Ravi Srivastava, Director Center for Employment Studies, Institute for Human Development, New Delhi.

As per Seventh Schedule of Indian Constitution (Article 246), under entry 81 of the Union List, inter-State migration and inter-State quarantine are subjects to be governed by the Union Government.

"There is a need for advocacy with central government to play an instrumental role in implementing this policy without Centre's coordination, we will not be able to set up a central registry nor be able to have effective templates for coordination," he said. The informal

economy contributed to 52.4 percent of the Gross Value Added (GVA) in India in 2017-18. However, informal migrant workers were one of the hardest hit groups in the biggest reverse migration India has seen in recent times. Most of them were not paid their wages during the lockdown.

They had no access to ration shops or social welfare schemes because food was being given only to those having ration cards of the destination states.

Many did not have bank accounts and also faced discrimination from locals because they spoke a different language.

Transportation woes of commuters in West Bengal were mitigated to a considerable extent on Thursday with large fleets of both government and private buses hitting the streets in the city and its adjoining areas, state Transport Minister Suwendu Adhikary said here.

Around 1,800 government buses and 3,800 private buses are plying the Kolkata Metropolitan Area (KMA), comprising the city and its neighbouring districts, he said.

"Bus availability is absolutely normal today," the minister asserted.

Several commuters heaved a sigh of relief after normal services resumed on Thursday, with buses found waiting for passengers at many places, a departure from what has been the norm since early June as scores of people ran helter-skelter to find a vehicle to reach their destinations.



## US H-1B visa suspension should be revoked: Rahul Gandhi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi has demanded that suspension of the H-1B visas should be revoked as it will impact millions of Indians. He also said that America has benefited from India's talent. Rahul Gandhi in a tweet said, "America has benefited enormously by embracing India's vast talent pool through its H-1B program." Its suspension will impact millions of Indians and US firms. It should be revoked," added Rahul. The former Congress president was

reacting to US Democratic Presidential candidate Joe Biden, who said that he will lift the temporary suspension of the H-1B visas if he wins in the November Presidential elections. The Trump administration suspended the H-1B visas along with other types of foreign work visas until the end of 2020 to protect American workers in a crucial election year. "He (Donald Trump) just ended H-1B visas the rest of this year. That will not be in my administration," said Joe Biden, who was responding to a question in a town hall meet.

## Now, a telecom war

There are alternative vendors but costs would go up. We must encourage equipment manufacture with innovation and now



Yes, the economic realities of China dominating much of our product supply chains, from electronics to drugs, weigh heavy on us. Yes, we are deeply aware of sudden disruptions, litigation and fair trade violations if we take a dramatic step of boycotting China overnight. And while building self-sufficiencies is a long-term and sustained effort, there is no reason why we cannot begin taking *atma nirbharta* seriously while we can. For the latest Chinese ambush at Ladakh has cost us 20 soldiers and over-tested our patience and our strategic responsibility in the region. China

continues to eat into our territory as it always has. It won't settle as long as it doesn't get what it wants and this presumed supremacy has finally got the Government thinking about reducing our dependencies on it. For the summit diplomacy, which has yielded nothing on the ground except encouraging more hostilities, has been a colossal waste of time that smartly sidestepped contentious border issues and helped China deepen its market access as part of trade deals. So Union Minister for Road Transport and MSMEs Nitin Gadkari has said that no Chinese company will be allowed to participate in any highway or MSME project either directly or indirectly, the latter implying outsourcing consultancies by the bidder company. He even suggested alternative technologies that would help us compete on cost effectiveness and gave the example of PPEs, something which we thought would have to come in bulk from Chinese factories and something which we are exporting now. The shrinkage of trade volume to India won't impact China much, which can only be upset about being denied entry to a future vibrant market, and it is not that current commitments are not being honoured. It is just that manufacturing our own is a sovereign decision and COVID-19 and the Galwan attack have just been accelerators. Similarly, the Department of Telecommunications cancelled the much anticipated 4G upgradation tender of Bharat Sanchar Nigam Limited (BSNL) to avoid participation by Chinese companies like Huawei and ZTE. Local operators such as Airtel, Vodafone and Jio have been asked to reduce dependence on Chinese companies. Meanwhile, the Indian Railways has already cancelled a ₹471 crore contract with the Beijing National Railway for a project on the Eastern Dedicated Freight Corridor. Of course, the US, too, has been red flagging concerns about Huawei and ZTE being a "national security risk" because of their data mining and surveillance operations while working their telecom grids. It is even exerting pressure on its allies, India now getting top billing, to comply by banning them.

But that's not the reason why India is going for a drastic decision on telecom. It is choosing sectors where either an alternative supply chain exists or where it is possible to magnify home-grown capacities. Compared to the mobile handset industry, where replacing Chinese supply chain and products is almost impossible, in the telecom equipment market that is very much possible. There are European nations, too, in the business though supplies from here would come at a cost. The size of the telecom equipment market in India is around Rs 12,000 crore and the share of Chinese products is currently around 25 per cent, simply because their prices are attractive to operators. That's why the 4G network of big players like Airtel and Vodafone have been built by Huawei and ZTE. Huawei alone has aggressively made inroads into nearly 25 per cent of the total telecom equipment market in India. While Bharti Airtel uses up to 30 per cent Chinese telecom equipment, including Huawei, for its networks, Vodafone Idea uses as much as 40 per cent. Reliance Jio is the only operator functioning without a Chinese vendor as its network is fuelled by South Korea's Samsung. But replacement, be it from South Korea, Taiwan or any other Southeast Asian nation, can only work in the short-term if self sufficiency is our ultimate goal. Remember that despite the "Make in India" launch in 2015, there has been no impetus for localised equipment production. The ban comes at a time when India is seeking to raise \$84 billion from a sale of airwaves, particularly for new technology, which would revolutionise connectivity. So we need to immediately ramp up existing electronic manufacturing facilities and divert them towards 5G equipment manufacturing if we are to exclude Chinese firms from 5G trials. Indian innovation has always risen to the top during crisis and we could leverage our home-grown talent to re-engineer receivers and emitters in discarded mobile devices to make 5G equipment in a cost-effective manner. We should be as enthusiastic about announcing innovations and encouraging R&D than just announcing a ban that spooks markets.

## Size does matter

In the Indian car market, the smaller you are, the better your sales. Last month has been much better for the auto sector



The past quarter has been traumatic for the Indian car and bike industry. However, after April, when companies registered zero sales, things have improved much. On the whole, for most automobile manufacturers, sales in June were around half of what they were last year, same month. While we must remember that 2019, too, had seen a decline in automobile sales, the one positive this year has been that firms have been able to recover. Sales for almost every manufacturer doubled from May to June as unlocking began. In the two-wheeler market, the largest manufacturer, Hero Motocorp, sold 450,744 units in the past month, almost three-quarters of the number it sold in June. Bajaj Auto, too, saw an increase in sales, although the manufacturer had a tough time controlling the unfortunate spread of the Chinese virus at its Waluj plant. This came just a few weeks after its boss, Rajiv Bajaj, attacked the Government for the lockdown. Most manufacturers, dealers and workshops across the country are mostly open now, other than those inside a containment zone. Yet, there are some interesting trends that are emerging from last month's sales. The first is that rural demand has contributed much towards a sharp recovery. This is evident due to the fact that Mahindra Tractors, the largest player in the agricultural vehicle market, has seen a rapid climb in its sales figures. This is indicative of a positive monsoon so far. Similarly, for two-wheeler companies, there is a seeming rural bias, evident in greater sales of commuter motorcycles and a decline in urban-focused scooters and 150cc plus motorcycles. For cars as well, firms such as Maruti, Hyundai and Tata, who have a larger small car portfolio, are seeing sales for small cars pick up. Larger and higher specification vehicles are seeing a commensurate decline in their aggregate demand. However, manufacturers were quick to warn against picking up too many future trends based on last month's sales as the process of unlocking continues with a bit of confusion still reigning in major cities, such as Chennai and Mumbai, the former being a major automobile production hub.

At the same time, manufacturing remains impacted. Larger-scale manufacturers have not been able to move to three-shift operations and smaller suppliers are dealing with not only a smaller labour pool but also the current Sino-India brouhaha. Several intermediate components, as well as manufacturing tools and dyes, come from across the border. Manufacturing might not stabilise before 2021 and not every manufacturer, component supplier, transporter or dealer might be able to deal with the crisis that far. Some Government support will be of great help though.

# The enemies within

For the sake of better governance, police reforms are a must. But more than anything else, our forces need an attitudinal change. The police-public relationship needs an overhaul



AJOY KUMAR

Sir Robert Mark, a legendary police officer in the UK, who cleaned the Metropolitan police of corruption and who was subsequently knighted for his efforts, narrated an episode that stayed with him throughout his career as an officer. As part of his job, he was required to serve an internment order on an Italian waiter, who had lived in Manchester for over 30 years. Sir Robert Mark met the waiter and reported that he was harmless. The waiter was nonetheless deported as an "enemy alien." Eventually, he died on a transport ship that was torpedoed by a U-boat. "That experience taught me there was neglect, carelessness and worse in the police system," he wrote later. "It was a lesson I never forgot."

Coming to the Indian police system, the one thing that I can say with some certainty is that there is no shortage of such experiences that can serve as a wakeup call for its officers. To Mark's words, I would like to add that there is not only "neglect" and "carelessness" in the Indian police system but a heavy dose of "malice," too. A recent horrific and brutal crime in Tamil Nadu brought this aspect to the fore. As per reports, on June 19, a trader, Jayaraj and his son, Bennix, who ran a mobile show-room, were at their shop when the Sattankulam police picked up the former and started assaulting him. When Bennix intervened, the police beat both of them mercilessly after taking them to the police station. The officers brutalised Bennix by allegedly inserting a baton into his anus. This triggered uncontrolled bleeding, which led to his death. His 60-year-old father was not spared either and was declared dead 10 hours later. The story is a brutal one but hardly unique in its brutality or display of violence by the police. A report published by the National Campaign Against Torture (NCAT) noted that a total of 1,731 people died in custody in 2019. This works out to roughly five people a day.

This is indeed a shocking number only if one is unfamiliar with the long, painful history of police brutality in India. But for anyone, who pays even little attention to the news, given the trend of police brutalities, hardly a day passes without a report of atrocity or impropriety. They may not always be as brutal as the Tamil Nadu incident but there are thousands of instances of police malice that are not even registered or those that do not show up on our radar until it culminates into a brutal killing and perversity. Take the example of an incident in Uttar Pradesh, where a station house officer (SHO) of Bhatnoli police station was suspended for masturbating in front of a woman who sought to register a complaint. Thankfully, the Uttar Pradesh police registered an FIR in this case.



However, there are innumerable such cases where perpetrators of horrific crimes are policemen themselves and no FIRs are registered. In terms of action, the numbers back up the view that the police do not take crimes committed by themselves seriously. According to the National Human Rights Commission (NHRC), 3,146 people died in police and judicial custody in 2017-18. There have hardly been any convictions for these deaths though. This isn't surprising and even in the case of Bennix and Jayaraj, reports state that police officers have shown reluctance in coming forward to the station where the horrific incident occurred. This kind of behaviour must change.

So how do we bring about behavioural change? How do we stem the rot that seems to be entrenched among our officers? How do we fix the system, where powerful officials abuse their position and take the form of the very criminals they are supposed to apprehend?

The role of the judiciary in ensuring that justice is done and that investigation into custodial deaths is not compromised in such cases is crucial. One would also welcome anti-torture legislation. To this extent, the legislature can also contribute. However, in my humble opinion, the lack of a specific law is not the reason for an unabated rise in crime and criminals in an institution that I was proud to serve for many years. The Supreme Court's string of judgments

between 1986 and 2015 in *DK Basu vs State of West Bengal*, "created a valuable and seamless web of legal principles and techniques to reduce custodial death and torture," as was explained by distinguished lawyer Abhishek Manu Singhvi, who was *amicus curiae* in the matter.

The judgments *inter alia* detail procedural safeguards that must be followed, including the carrying of name tags by police officers, the preparation of an arrest memo which is to be attested by a family member or a respectable member of the locality among others. There are also directions to set up State Human Rights Commissions where there were none; to fill up vacancies that may already exist; and to set up human rights courts under the NHRC Act. I have merely tried to sum up the position and there are a lot more guidelines and directions in the judgments mentioned above. Therefore, the lack of a law on the subject is not the issue at hand. In fact, our immediate response to heinous crimes is often straight to an amendment of an old law or induction of a new one. This has happened with reactions calling for the death penalty in cases of rape as well. While I support the sternest action against rapists, we tend to ignore the fact that more than 90 per cent of the cases involving sexual abuse is perpetrated by the family members themselves or people known to the victim. By imposing strict penalties, rarely has the benefactor been the victim or society but the per-

petrator himself since victims are more hesitant to report crimes with such strict penalties.

In the case of custodial deaths, too, our immediate reaction should be proper implementation of the current law rather than implementing a new one and then forgetting about it. We would make a heavy dent in arresting criminal behaviour if we: (i) Manage to ensure that FIRs are registered by the police against their own personnel. This is a Herculean task because getting an FIR registered against a criminal outside the police force is hard enough. (ii) Place CCTV cameras in police stations. (iii) Reward police personnel, like the DGP of Orissa who dismissed and initiated a Crime Branch inquiry against an inspector who was accused of raping a 13-year-old girl.

This accountability, however, is not limited to the police. Often, the reason why police officers are allowed to get away with murder is because custodial deaths are categorised as deaths due to suicide or due to natural causes by the doctors who conduct the autopsy. This is an abject failure on the part of the medical professionals who conduct the autopsy of victims and issue such reports, presumably under duress or for bribes. Such doctors allow these crimes to go unacknowledged and unregistered. The strictest possible action must be taken against such people who should be treated as accomplices to these crimes. There is a certain segment

in the force who will argue that the Indian police suffers because of the lack of attention. With all of these safeguards, catching criminals will be near impossible. This suggestion can only be scoffed at. On the first point of providing support to the police, I have written in the past as well, that the police suffers from a lack of funding, a lack of training, non-implementation of reforms etc. But here, too, police officers need to demand change from their political masters instead of cushy or powerful posts. Furthermore, political parties should be questioned why they have not implemented police reforms if indeed they are serious about tackling police violence and corruption.

On the second point of how the above-detailed safeguards prevent the police from doing their job, the fact is that these checks and balances only prevent actions that are violently criminal in nature. They are in place precisely so that actual criminals are apprehended on the basis of evidence and good police work, rather than due to a signed confession by a suspect beaten to a pulp. We must remember that in order to truly tackle the problem, we need to change the mindset and confront the criminals within and, therefore, harbour the same ambition that Sir Robert Mark had for the Metropolitan police. "To arrest more criminals than we employ."

(The writer is a former IPS officer, a former MP and currently a member of the AAP)

## SOUNDBITE

Shashank/ji must be having mixed feelings from what could have been done for the promotion of cricket at the international level and what was done to the game during his tenure.

Former BCCI secretary  
—Niranjan Shah



Nepotism, favoritism and camps are different subjects. Even I have been a victim of nepotism but nobody speaks of that. I'm happy to see people from film institutes come to the forefront.

Actor  
—Saif Ali Khan



He (US President Donald Trump) just ended H-1B visas the rest of this year. That will not be in my administration

Democratic presidential candidate  
—Joe Biden



Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Kolkata and Bengaluru have reached their saturation. You (companies) can go to tier-II/tier-III cities where skilled manpower is already available.

Union Minister  
—Nitin Gadkari



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Damp squib

Sir — Given the kind of hype that was created by some television news channels, it seemed that Prime Minister Narendra Modi was about to make some big announcements during his television address to the nation but it all ended as a damp squib. His decision to extend the free food grain scheme until November is a welcome step though. The move will help reassure the poor, who are unable to earn a livelihood as a result of the COVID-induced lockdown and the economic crisis that ensued. What is unfortunate is that the Prime Minister related this move to Hindu festivals. AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi was quick to react, reminding him about Bakrid this month.

By mentioning only Hindu festivals, the Prime Minister seems to have sent a message that only poor Hindus go hungry. Hunger has no religion. For the poor, god can only appear in the form of bread. Such announcements should not be treated as election pitches for the Bihar and West Bengal polls.

N Nagarajan  
Secunderabad

### Changing the rules of engagement

This refers to the editorial, "Ban on China apps" (July 1). By banning 59 video and file sharing Chinese apps, the Government has fired a warning shot to China that if there is no peace on the borders, there can be none in the cyberspace either. That the Government is using the internet as a retaliatory tool is a decisive break from the past, signifying that engagement rules with China are being rewritten once for all. The banning eroded these companies' valuations overnight. China's border aggressions and violation of privacy and security concerns by various agencies forced the Government's hand on this issue. Since all Chinese technology companies are the totalitarian state's extension, their apps and equipment are globally suspected to be breaching the host countries' data. More countries shall follow India's footsteps. Just a day after India's action, the US declared telecom gear from Huawei and ZTE as "national security threats." India has already asked BSNL not to use them to upgrade its network. Keeping in view prevalent sentiments, private operators, too, are likely to boycott them.

However, a ban on apps may not be enough as it only signals the Government's intent to retaliate. More needs to be done both in the short and long term.

SK Prabhakar  
Gurugram



Multidimensional retaliatory strategies — involving diplomacy and manufacturing reforms — are needed. According to a recent study, Chinese imports can be immediately reduced by up to 25 per cent by leveraging on the existing manufacturing base. Therefore, India must rationalise existing imports to not only bridge the trade deficit but also to warn the Middle Kingdom of the consequences and costs that shall follow its rampant expansionism.

### Further action needed

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Ban on China apps" (July 1). The axing of Chinese apps by the Indian Government has undoubtedly hurt the dragon's ego because, within hours of the

action, it showed displeasure. Taking a jibe, the editor of *Global Times*, the Chinese Communist Party's mouthpiece, said, "Even if Chinese people want to boycott Indian products, they can't really find many Indian goods." This reveals their imperialistic trade mentality and an arrogant

assumption that without China, there is no global business or trade. As China gives first priority to trade, it has to be assumed that anything against its products and business will hurt it emotionally and economically.

Now, the Modi Government will have to execute the aat-

*manirbhar* Bharat scheme on a war footing. With the support of our huge population, it will have to make the dream of self-reliant India come true. With a large market, skilled labour pool and abundant resources — a big percentage of which is yet untapped — we can achieve that goal.

M Pradyu  
Kannur

### Mumbai sets example

Sir — I welcome the timely decision of Mumbai's Lalbaughcha Raja Ganeshotsav Mandal to cancel the Ganesh Chaturthi festival in view of the Corona pandemic. A huge crowd of devotees gathers at Lalbagh and King circle to witness the unveiling of the most popular Sarvajanik Ganapati idol every year. However, this time, Mumbai being a COVID-19 hotspot, could witness a massive scaling down of celebrations. All Ganesh mandals must desist from keeping idols this year.

Bhagwan Thadani  
Mumbai

Send your feedback to: [letterstopioneer@gmail.com](mailto:letterstopioneer@gmail.com)

**FIRST COLUMN**

## An eco-friendly innovation

Bhoovastra serves the purpose of retaining the Earth's moisture, protecting plant roots and preventing soil erosion during a heavy downpour



KOTA SRIRAJ

As the monsoon season slowly envelopes Kerala, the myriad canals in the State are undergoing a quiet but innovative makeover, with an eco-friendly cloth draped over their banks that is designed to stop erosion during the rains. This eco-friendly cloth called coir Bhoovastra is a natural cover made from coconut fibre that can be spread over the walls of canals, streams, farms and ponds. Bhoovastra serves the amazing purpose of retaining the Earth's moisture, protecting the roots of the plants while at the same time preventing the soil from eroding during a heavy downpour. The fabric has a life of five-six years, post which it automatically disintegrates and biodegrades, thereby providing rich compost to the soil, which in turn promotes lush vegetation growth. Kerala is one of the foremost States that has introduced Bhoovastra in a major way on scores of its canals and streams. God's own country, replete with its backwaters, idyllic ponds and other water-bodies is benefitting immensely from this innovative coir product. It has not only provided a fillip to the coir industry in the State, it has given employment to nearly two lakh families who are dependent on coir-making for their livelihood. Hence, Bhoovastra is an ideal combination of an eco-friendly initiative that protects the environment and also provides the benefit of a stable employment.

Bhoovastra is a geotextile product that has immense potential given its wide-ranging customisable applications and numerous benefits. The high tensile strength of the coir fabric is perfectly suitable for consolidating topsoil in steep embankments where heavy water flows and debris movement are common. Besides this, coir has excellent water absorbency capacity which helps in it acting as mulch on the surface and as a wick in the soil mantle.

With benefits such as these, it is quite surprising that the embankments and slopes adjoining water-bodies across the country are yet to see Bhoovastra as a common feature, despite the fact that we are battling with the problem of soil degradation. Soil erosion is a major problem for the farmers of the country as it reduces soil fertility, which in turn negatively hits crop yields and forces growers to use more fertilisers, further harming the environment. Erosion of soil also sends soil-laden water downstream, which can create heavy layers of sediments that prevent streams and rivers from flowing smoothly and can eventually lead to flooding.

As soil erosion degrades land, it supports fewer plants that absorb climate-warming carbon dioxide. According to experts, soil could insulate enough greenhouse gases in a year to equal about five per cent of all yearly emissions. Better land management through the use of innovative products like the Bhoovastra can help keep soil intact so that it can grow more carbon-absorbing vegetation.

So, this lack of interest in using Bhoovastra to save precious soil, despite the fact that the green movement and demand for natural products is rising by the day across the world and in India, is puzzling. How come, when we have such a simple and eco-friendly solution to the huge problem of soil erosion, we are not talking about it or embracing it the way we should?

Given an opportunity, geotextiles such as Bhoovastra can play a stellar role in turning the clock back on degraded and eroded lands and help restore riparian and terrestrial habitats. The relatively high monetary and ecological cost of gravel, cement and other non-environment friendly building materials makes geotextiles the obvious choice for public work projects, especially when they involve rivers and other water bodies. Developed nations have already been leveraging the benefits of geotextiles, especially coir nets such as Bhoovastra for the last three decades. India, in fact, has been one of the largest exporters of coir geotextile products, with nearly 60 per cent of its coir production being exported to about 80 countries through a network of nearly 200 exporters.

Sadly, the domestic utilisation of geotextiles stays uninspiring. India produces a whopping 12,500 million coconuts and coir production is about 3,69,400 metric tonnes. However, husk utilisation is dismal at only 36 per cent, with the rest being used as polluting fuel or just being wasted. It is a mystery as to why the Government has not extracted the full potential of the coir industry in India. As it is, State-run entities such as the Coir Board are not able to hit a high gear either in marketing, sales or product branding and innovation due to bureaucratic hurdles or lethargy. On top of this, the handloom nature of the sector intuitively inhibits mass production, which in turn stunts growth possibilities. Given the brilliant product potential and abundance of raw material, it is time for the coir industry to become one of the most profitable industries of the country. For this to happen, the Government must work on mindsets and create awareness as well. For instance, the civil engineering profession currently focusses less on eco-friendly approaches for construction and more on the usage of brick and mortar. This needs to change. The use of organic and eco-friendly products like the Bhoovastra must be comprehensively implemented. This initiative can not only change the manner in which we conserve our water bodies and surrounding soil but more importantly can alter the way we perceive coir while providing jobs in a difficult economy.

(The writer is an environmental journalist)

**POINTCOUNTERPOINT**

**IF ANYONE DREAMS OF UNSEATING THE PRIME MINISTER (OF NEPAL) FOR PUBLISHING THE MAP AND INCLUDING IT IN THE CONSTITUTION, DON'T EVEN THINK OF IT.**  
 —NEPALESE PRIME MINISTER  
**KP SHARMA OLI**



**NOT INDIA, IT IS ME WHO IS DEMANDING YOUR RESIGNATION. YOU MUST FURNISH PROOF OF SUCH IRRESPONSIBLE REMARKS.**  
 —CHAIRMAN OF THE NEPAL COMMUNIST PARTY  
**PUSHPA KAMAL DAHAL 'PRACHANDA'**

# It's not that elementary

Not being able to establish the source of a disease is not surprising, especially in a country where people are divided by gender norms and socio-economic classes



INDRANIL DE

The recent revelation made through a research paper published by William Joe in the *Journal of Global Health Science* raises alerts about the deficiencies of tracing Coronavirus victims in a divided society. The paper states that as of May, COVID-19 cases in men were at 66 per cent in India as compared to 34 per cent in women. However, the COVID-19 Case Fatality Rate (CFR) is 2.9 per cent for men and 3.9 per cent for women in the country. Interestingly, this is completely different from the worldwide scenario. According to UK Research and Innovation, a quasi-autonomous NGO, data from 18 countries evince that both men and women have an equal share of COVID-19 cases, except for Pakistan. Furthermore, men diagnosed with COVID-19 are more likely to die than women. These comparisons raise questions whether we are tracing and testing all social groups adequately. Women generally have a stronger immune system than men. However, there could be different social factors which impact women both favourably and adversely. Since, in a patriarchal social system women don't venture out of the home as much as men, they are also less likely to get infected. This may be the reason why in India and Pakistan more men are found to be infected than women. On the other hand, as patriarchal norms consider the male as the primary agent for productive activity, women are often ignored at home and society at large. This deprivation may reduce their access to healthcare as compared to men. They would not be given medical care unless seriously ill. This could increase their fatality rate as compared to men in India. Nevertheless, there could be another reason for the higher CFR in women. Maybe the actual number of women infected is much higher than what is being reported. If the number of infected women would have been higher, then the death rate of women due to COVID-19 would have decreased because they would have been treated. There is a major possibility that identification of infected women may not be happening due to inefficient functioning of the contact tracing mechanism.

Contact tracing is the process in public health through which the people who may have come into contact with an infected person are identified. Through the contact tracing process, the first set of people that the patient came into contact with are identified as the primary contact. Similarly, the first set of people that the primary contacts come into contact with are identified as secondary contacts. Through tracing of the primary and secondary contacts of suspected and confirmed cases, it is possible to track the spread and source of infection. According to the US-based Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the symptoms of Coronavirus infection may be as simple as fatigue, diarrhoea and nausea. It is important to start contact tracing without waiting for the test results.

Researchers at Johns Hopkins found that the chances of getting false negative results are higher in the early stages of the infection. Hence, a negative test does not guarantee that the person is not infected. And they are still able to spread the virus. Improper contact tracing may be the reason that in India there were many cases where it was not possible to find the source of the infection.

The Health Ministry is emphasising on the need for aggressive contact testing. According to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR), there is a wide variation among the States with regard to the number of contacts traced. It ranges from less than 25 to more than 75 per infected COVID-19 case. The infected patients are in gen-

“ ONLY INCREASING THE NUMBER OF CONTACTS TRACED PER INFECTED OR SUSPECTED INDIVIDUAL IS NOT THE SOLUTION. IT MUST BE DONE OVER A FEW WAVES AND MUST ADEQUATELY COVER ALL CATEGORIES OF PEOPLE. IF NOT DONE PROPERLY, THE OUTBREAK OF THE DISEASE WOULD BE LURKING IN SOME OTHER CORNER OF SOCIETY, ONLY TO TAKE US BY SURPRISE LATER ”



eral reluctant to reveal their contacts or the authorities are not nudging them enough to provide their contacts. Even a State like Karnataka, which has been canvassed as a successful State for contact tracing, is increasingly finding infections from unknown sources. This is increasing the spread of the infection due to delayed detection.

To be honest, not being able to establish the source of a disease is not surprising, especially in a country where people are divided by gender norms and socio-economic classes. These deficiencies are akin to the problems of the respondent-driven sampling (RDS) method of data collection. RDS is applied when the population is "hidden." A hidden population may include people at the risk of contracting HIV or a group of injected drug users. The population may remain hidden due to privacy concerns and is rarely found among the general population. This is very similar to suspected Coronavirus infected persons. People may not be willing to get identified in public due to privacy concerns and the fear of adverse social repercussions. The number of COVID-19 infected until now is minuscule as compared to the population of the country. RDS assumes that the best way to access the hidden population is through their own peers. The initial sample individual is asked about the contact of their peers and thus contact tracing leads to revelation of the hidden population.

Three major deficiencies in this method of sampling are pertinent in the context of detection of Coronavirus infected persons. They are the problems of non-cooperative referrals, masking and inbreeding. The infected individual may not get the exact contacts of the people they have interacted with. The infected individual may attempt to mask the contacts as there are privacy concerns. They may avoid mentioning their close relative or loved ones with whom they have come in close contact. Furthermore, in a society divided by gender norms and

socio-economic classes, people may select contacts primarily from the same gender and socio-economic class. A street vendor or bus conductor, if infected, may not be able to provide contacts of customers as they would refuse to share their contacts. A security guard would not be able to provide contacts of the people s/he interacted with. Moreover, all of them would be extremely uncomfortable in sharing contacts of people they are dependent on for their livelihood. They may only share contacts of people belonging to a similar socio-economic class as theirs and that, too, of the same gender. The men would hesitate to share the contacts of female family members or co-workers and vice versa.

In the RDS system of data collection the problem of masking is resolved through providing incentives to divulge the contacts of peers. In the fight against the Coronavirus, offering incentives to unmask the hidden population may be financially challenging. There could be two mechanisms through which it can be tackled. People should be made aware of the benefits of disclosing their contacts through public campaigns. As a result, those infected would be comfortable in revealing their contacts and the contacted individuals themselves would not be upset over being identified. It would rather come out as an incentive for those infected to get their near and dear ones examined and also an incentive for the contacts to get tested on time. Thus, the problem of non-cooperation of the referrals may also be resolved to a large extent. Maintaining the contact details of people in close contact may be made mandatory by local authorities in shopping complexes and other public spaces. Contact verification may become necessary if individuals provide wrong information. Deliberate sharing of wrong contacts may be penalised as well.

The problem of inbreeding may be resolved through conducting the contact tracing exercise over several rounds. For example, if an infected woman provides

the contact of one man along with five women contacts, then to overcome the inbreeding problem, the man's contacts may be traced further assiduously. This is very similar to tracing the secondary and tertiary contacts but with an emphasis on tracing the odd ones in the whole contact list. Similarly, tracing people from a different socio-economic background as compared to the majority of the contact list should be given adequate attention. At present, the disaggregated data on primary and secondary contact tracing is not available in most of the States. Douglas Heckathorn, a social scientist from Cornell University who perfected the RDS methodology, suggested three to five waves of contact tracing to get rid of the problem of inbreeding.

Contact tracing is a more efficient methodology than random testing given the rarity of the infection in the population till date. Contact tracing, on the one hand, economises testing facilities and on the other hand, identifies the hidden population infected with the virus. The more the delay in reaching suspected individuals, the higher is the future burden of economic and social cost. Hence, non-cooperation of referrals should be dealt with through public campaigns. The danger of the contact tracing mechanism is that if masking and inbreeding are not dealt with adequately, then we would end up tracing and testing only one kind of a population. The initial sample would determine the prospective samples, unless infected ones are sensitised about the importance of unmasking the contacts and contact tracing is done for few rounds down the line of contact trail.

Only increasing the number of contacts traced per infected or suspected individual is not the solution. It must be done over a few waves and must adequately cover all categories of people. If not done properly, the outbreak of the disease would be lurking in some other corner of society, only to take us by surprise later.

(The writer is Associate Professor, Institute of Rural Management, Anand)

# Put the migrant workers front and centre

Since the workers are the foundation of our economy which cannot grow without their toil, there is a need to implement the existing laws seriously to protect their rights



ONKAR NATH

While announcing the nationwide lockdown on March 24, the Prime Minister (PM) had exhorted all Indians to fight against the spread of the Coronavirus. Various State Governments had also come forward in support of the PM's appeal and people were assured that their needs would be taken care of during the pandemic. The Centre and many States repeatedly touted how the lockdown would help in containing the spread of COVID-19 and how it was good for all the citizens.

However, amid all this clamour, the nation forgot the migrant workers who had laid the foundation of the

Indian economy with their toil, blood and sweat. While tall claims about the good work being done by the Government were being made on various television channels, these workers started marching to their native places. The heart-wrenching images of migrant workers along with their women and children walking on foot, some hundreds of kilometres away, began to surface in the media.

Some of them lost their lives due to hunger and thirst on the way, while some became victims of road accidents and a few were overrun by trains. All these incidents have exposed not only the hollowness of our system but our societal values which, quite often, are trumpeted in great measure.

The sequence of events indicated that cogent planning was not in place from the word go. The migrant labourers did not start their journeys back home suddenly. Thrown out of work by unscrupulous business and factory owners, they patiently waited for help and stood for long hours in queues to

get some food. They waited for things to get better but that did not happen. They were harassed by landlords for rent, despite the fact that they did not have adequate money even for their day-to-day survival.

The Government brought back well-heeled Indians for free from foreign countries under the Vande Bharat Mission. It brought back stranded students from Kota in Rajasthan, including people from various parts of the country in special buses. Similarly, the Centre helped many Indians to fly to countries like England, US, Canada and Australia. All this was not possible without proper prioritisation, efforts and coordination with State Governments. But there was no such planning and urgency to help the poor migrant workers. Since there is no dearth of trains at the disposal of the Centre, free services should have been provided to take migrant workers to their home States without wasting much time. The tug of war between the Railway Ministry and State

Governments for many days over the issue of payment of 15 per cent of the fare by the latter was avoidable. While most of the State Governments were found fighting among themselves over the issue of migrant workers, the Centre remained a mute spectator, confined to issuing paper guidelines rather than handling the crisis decisively by ensuring camaraderie among them.

As it is India is fighting a two-front battle. One against the virus and the other against poverty, which we could not eradicate even after 70 years of Independence. India's fight on these two fronts contradicts its claims of being a world leader (*vishava guru*) thinking of the welfare of the world (*vishav kalyan*) as also its recent rhetoric of making India a \$5 trillion economy. Often, such rhetoric does not reflect ground realities. In this backdrop, asking for donations for the PM CARES Fund during COVID-19 is certainly a matter of contradiction in terms.

The Centre's decision to impose a

lockdown was not based on sudden developments. Actually, India had received clear signals about COVID-19 during January-February from the World Health Organisation (WHO) and from other countries, especially China. But much like the decision to announce demonetisation in 2016 with just a four-hour notice, the nationwide lockdown was also announced just as suddenly. Instead of a four-hour notice, at least four days were needed to enable all stakeholders viz; the Centre, State Governments, all establishments, the industry, supply chains and the common people to make appropriate arrangements to avoid panic, major inconvenience and save precious lives.

It is imperative here to ponder over the role of the Supreme Court, which can issue directions to the Government to take appropriate action on an urgent basis in any serious matter of public concern. The apex court, however, did not show any such concern on the issue of migrant workers for the first two

months despite Public Interest Litigations being filed. But after a few persons approached the court citing the deteriorating condition of migrants, the Supreme Court swung into action by directing the Centre and State Governments to provide food, shelter and transportation free of cost to the migrants. Timely, proactive action by the apex court could have helped in addressing the problem before it reached such massive proportions.

Most of the States for whose development the migrant workers had made huge contributions did not come to their rescue at the time of need. Their home States, too, were hesitant to accept them as they feared the spread of the virus. This is despite the fact that they, too, had benefited from the remittances sent home by the workers. Clearly, there were no takers for the hapless migrants, though no State is capable of running its economic activities without them.

The Parliament has passed many Acts such as the Inter-State Migrant

Workers Act and Building and Other Construction Workers (Regulation of Employment and Conditions of Service) Act, 1996, to take care of the welfare of these workers. Had these legislations been implemented seriously, there would not have been much difficulty in taking care of the migrant workers.

Moreover, money available under the Workers' Welfare Fund and PM CARES Fund could have been utilised to send these workers home in a dignified manner without putting them through such hardship and exposing them further to the pandemic.

Since the workers are the foundation of our economy and it cannot grow without their toil and sweat, there is a need to implement the existing laws seriously to protect their rights and address their problems. This will enable them to lead a better life with a sense of dignity. It is the least we can do for them.

(The writer is a former Additional Deputy CAG)

CAPSULE



**Sensex rallies 429 pts; Nifty tops 10,550 level**

**MUMBAI:** Equity benchmark BSE Sensex rallied 429 points on Thursday on widespread buying amid a broad upmove in global markets following encouraging COVID-19 vaccine trials. After soaring 600 points during the session, the 30-share index settled 429.25 points, or 1.21 per cent, higher at 35,843.70. The NSE Nifty surged 121.65 points, or 1.17 per cent, to close at 10,551.70. M&M was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, jumping around 6 per cent, followed by Titan, HCL Tech, Tata Steel, Infosys and TCS. On the other hand, Axis Bank, HUL, Kotak Bank and Bharti Airtel were among the laggards. Bourses in Shanghai, Hong Kong, Tokyo and Seoul ended with significant gains.



**Sonalika Tractors sales grow 47.8% to 15,200 units**

**NEW DELHI:** Sonalika Tractors on Thursday reported 47.8 per cent increase in its total tractor sales at 15,200 units in June. The company had sold 10,286 units in the same month last year, Sonalika Tractors said in a statement. Domestic sales were at 13,691 units as against 8,827 units in June last year, a growth of 55.1 per cent, it said. Exports during the month stood at 1,509 units as compared to 1,459 units, up 3.4 per cent, the company said. Commenting on the sales performance, Sonalika Group Executive Director Raman Mittal said the company's investment in the vertical integrated manufacturing unit helped it to ramp up production within a very short span of lockdown relaxation. "We had already reached 80 per cent utilisation in May itself and in June we continued to operate at optimum level," he said.



**JSP steel output grows 4 pc to 2 MT in Q1**

**NEW DELHI:** Jindal Steel and Power Ltd on Thursday said its consolidated crude steel output rose 4 per cent to 2.03 MT during the quarter ended on June 30, 2020. The company had produced 1.96 MT of crude steel in the year-ago quarter, JSP said. Sales for the quarter under consideration stood at 2.07 MT, up 8 per cent from 1.92 MT in the same quarter a year ago. "In the last 100 days JSP exported more than one million tonnes, this was possible with the consistent support of Indian Railways, port authorities and a slew of pro-industry measures taken by the Ministry of Steel to reboot the economy" JSP MD VR Sharma said.

**'Need Rs 50-60 lakh cr foreign investments to bolster economy'**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India needs foreign direct investments worth Rs 50 to 60 lakh crore and the money can be tapped mainly through infrastructure projects as well as MSME sector to accelerate the wheels of coronavirus-hit economy, according to Union minister Nitin Gadkari.

Emphasising that at this juncture Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) is the need of the hour, the senior minister said such funds would benefit the country as there is a need for pumping in liquidity into the market.

Economic activities have been significantly disrupted in the wake of the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns that were in place to curb spreading of infections.

"Country at this juncture needs liquidity. Without liquidity our economy's wheel will not accelerate... Rs 50-60 lakh crore foreign investment is needed in the country under present circumstances to boost the economy," the Road Transport, Highways and



MSME Minister said.

Infrastructure sector including highways, airports, inland waterways, railways, logistic parks, broad gauge and metro, apart from Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) can attract large scale foreign investment, he noted.

"FDI in MSME, Non-Banking Financial Companies (NBFCs) and banks are needed... in the highways sector, we are trying to bring foreign investment," he said. Gadkari further said that talks are on with investors from Dubai and

the US for various sectors, including MSMEs.

"Some MSMEs are already listed on the BSE. I have talked to investors in Dubai and the US to come and invest in such MSMEs based on their three-year turnover, GST track record, IT record and good rating. Investing in these can result in rich dividends as these do exports also," he said.

"We need to boost our technology for increasing growth and need to focus on enhancing exports. The Prime Minister's thrust is also on

reducing dependence on imports and boosting exports. In this infrastructure can play a crucial role," he said.

While noting that the present situation is very serious as the entire world is facing problems, Gadkari stressed on the need to work on a war-footing basis on infrastructure front.

Further, the minister noted that public private partnerships can help harness huge funds and would have a cascading impact by generating more employment and boosting the economy.

Besides, the minister said that 22 green highways were being built, including the Rs 1 lakh crore Delhi-Mumbai Expressway on a new alignment. Citing the example of Delhi-Mumbai Expressway, he said talks were on with the Maharashtra government to shift about 1.5 lakh leather workers to Thane in a proposed leather cluster along the highway which will have the most modern facilities including schools and hospitals besides affordable housing under Pradhan Mantri Awas Yojana.

**Warehousing demand down; may further moderate in FY'21**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Warehousing demand fell 11 per cent during the last fiscal year at 41.3 million sq ft across eight major cities due to economic slowdown, according to property consultant Knight Frank.

The demand for warehousing, which also includes industrial space for light manufacturing, stood at 46.4 million sq ft in 2018-19 fiscal across 8 cities -- National Capital Region, Mumbai, Ahmedabad, Pune, Bengaluru, Kolkata, Chennai and Hyderabad, the consultant said in its latest report 'India Warehousing Market Report - 2020'.

Despite fall in demand, the rentals increased by 4-7 per cent in Grade-A warehousing projects across these eight cities.

Post GST, the asset class has received institutional investment commitments of USD 6.5 billion.

Knight Frank India has pegged the existing warehousing stock across eight cities at 307 million sq ft.

The existing land committed to warehousing across the top eight cities of India has the



potential to add 193 million square feet of new warehousing supply, it added.

According to the data, warehousing demand fell 32 per cent in the national capital region (NCR) to 8.6 million sq ft last fiscal.

Mumbai saw 8 per cent growth in demand at 7.5 million sq ft, while Ahmedabad witnessed a 5 per cent rise in demand at 5.1 million sq ft.

Warehousing demand in Pune went up 42 per cent to 4.9 million sq ft but declined in Bengaluru 23 per cent to 4.3 million sq ft.

Kolkata witnessed 14 per cent fall to 3.9 million sq ft,

while Chennai saw a 19 per cent decline to 3.4 million sq ft.

The demand in Hyderabad dipped 14 per cent to 3.4 million sq ft. "The demand for warehousing has moderated last fiscal due to economic slowdown," Knight Frank India CMD Shishir Bajjal told reporters. He said the demand is expected to fall during the current fiscal year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, Bajjal said the warehousing market has remained largely resilient recording growth of 44 per cent CAGR in the last three years.

**Applications invited for chief economist post**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Government think tank Niti Aayog has invited application for the post of chief economist who will be responsible for examining all matters relating to the Ministry of Finance, and financial institutions, including the Reserve Bank of India. According to an advertisement posted on Niti Aayog's twitter handle, the post could be either filled through a contract or deputation and the chief economist will receive an affixed pay of Rs 3,30,000.

"NITI Aayog is looking for an experienced, talented, innovative, and dynamic professional who desires to be a part of the team that is scripting the exciting transformation story which is unfolding in India today," it said.

"He/she will also be responsible for examining all matters relating to Ministry of Finance (including all attached departments/divisions), RBI, IMF, WB, ADB and other multilateral financial institutions, SEBI, IRDA and PFRDA etc," it added.

**India's trade deficit with China reduces to \$ 48.66 bn in FY20**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's trade deficit with China fell to USD 48.66 billion in 2019-20 on account of decline in imports from the neighbouring country, according to government data.

Exports to China in the last financial year stood at USD 65.26 billion, while imports aggregated at USD 16.6 billion, the data showed.

The trade deficit between the countries was at USD 53.56 billion in 2018-19 and USD 63 billion in 2017-18.

The main imports from China include clocks and watches, musical instruments, toys, sports goods, furniture, mattresses, plastics, electrical machinery, electronic equipment, chemicals, iron and steel items, fertilisers, mineral fuel and metals.

New Delhi has time and again raised concerns over widening trade deficit with China.

The government is taking steps such as framing technical regulations and quality norms for several products to cut dependence on China for



imports.

It has also imposed anti-dumping duties on several goods which are being dumped in the domestic market at below the average prices from China with a view to guard domestic players from cheap imports. As many as 371 products have been identified for technical regulations. Out of these, technical regulations have been formulated for 150 products worth about USD 47 billion of imports.

Over 50 quality control orders (QCOs) and other technical regulations have been

notified in the past one year including on electronic goods, toys, air conditioners, bicycle parts, chemicals, safety glass, pressure cooker, items of steel, electrical items such as cables.

China accounts for about 14 per cent of India's imports and is a major supplier for sectors like mobile phones, telecom, power, plastic toys, and critical pharma ingredients.

Similarly, foreign direct investment (FDI) from China into India too has dipped to USD 163.78 million in 2019-20 from USD 229 million in the previous fiscal.

**Ban on Chinese apps provides opportunities to US, Indian starts-ups**

PNS ■ MUMBAI

A US-India business advocacy group has welcomed India's ban on Chinese apps, including TikTok, saying the move will provide opportunities to American and Indian start-ups.

Amidst escalating tensions with China in eastern Ladakh, the Indian government on Monday banned 59 mobile phone applications, mostly having Chinese links, citing threats to national security.

Mukesh Agni, president of US-India Strategic and Partnership Forum, said on Wednesday that this is India's internal security matter.

"India felt that a lot of these apps were accessing and transferring data. We feel that the steps taken by India is to protect its own

internal security, and we support that. "It (banning of apps) does provide the opportunity for US companies. But I think it provides more opportunities for Indian companies to step up and build domestic apps. Because that's one area in India that has tremendous strength," he said. Noting that there are quite a few world class apps coming out of India, Agni said that there is a tremendous revolution taking place in India in this area itself. "The current geopolitical shift does provide India to get its legitimate right to be in the leadership arena," he said, adding that China's move to intrude into the Indian territory and try to humiliate India is the objective to deny that rightful role for India.



**Tata Power to raise Rs 2,600 cr from promoter**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Tata Power on Thursday said its board has approved a proposal to raise Rs 2,600 crore through issuance of preference shares to its promoter Tata Sons.

"The board of directors of the company approved issuance of equity shares through a preferential issue to the promoter, Tata Sons, at a price of Rs 53 per equity share for an aggregate sum of Rs 2,600 crore, subject to shareholder approvals," a regulatory filing said.

The board also gave in-principle approval for setting up of InvIT (Infrastructure Investment Trust) for the company's renewable business on terms and conditions to be discussed with potential investors.

Tata Power will issue 49,05,66,037 equity shares on a preferential basis to Tata Sons Private Limited ("Tata Sons") for an aggregate consideration of Rs 2,600 crore.

**Coal India trade unions begin 3-day strike**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Coal India trade unions on Thursday began their three-day strike mainly to protest against the government's decision to allow commercial mining of coal, with a representative saying the strike could hit around 4 million tonnes of coal output.

On Wednesday, talks between Coal India trade unions and the government over the issue of commercial coal mining failed.

Nathul Pandey, President of HMS-affiliated Hind Khadan Mazdoor Federation, said the strike was started by the workers on the first shift, which begins at 6 am.

He claimed that in the Jhanjra area (West Bengal) of Eastern Coalfields, five leaders of the unions, three from HMS,



one each from AITUC and CITU were arrested but were released after few hours.

Workers employed in the BCCL, a Coal India arm, have not gone to work and as a result emergency services such as hospitals in the mines has been paralysed, he said.

According to Pandey, on an

average Coal India produces 1.3 MT of coal every day, so it is estimated that the production loss due to the three-days strike would be around 4 MT.

Besides, the general manager of the Sohagpur area (Madhya Pradesh) of SECL, a Coal India arm, has called outsiders to work in the mine

which is an "extraordinary situation" and this has never happened to Coal India, Pandey said.

Coal India accounts for over 80 per cent of domestic coal output.

The central trade unions operating in Coal India are HMS, BMS, AITUC, INTUC and CITU.

According to Pandey, in Jhanjra area - production and dispatch are totally closed.

Pandey further said that in South Eastern Coalfields Ltd (SECL), Western Coalfields Ltd (WCL), Bharat Coking Coal Ltd (BCL) and Central Coalfields Ltd (CCL) the strike is successful.

A virtual meeting was held between Coal Minister Pralhad Joshi and representatives of trade unions on Wednesday.

**India's GDP may contract by 6.4% in FY21: Care Ratings**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Care Ratings on Thursday revised India's GDP growth forecast for the current financial year to (-) 6.4 per cent as economic activity continues to be under restriction due to the lockdown on account of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The rating agency, in May, had projected a decline in GDP growth of 1.5-1.6 per cent in FY21.

It said given that the nation is into a lockdown for July too with several restrictions on resumption of services in particular as well as movement of people, the cutoff date for normalcy will spread into the latter part of the third quarter and more likely to the fourth quarter.



**In FY20, the country's economy grew at an estimated 4.2 per cent, almost a decade low. It, however, said the positive growth will come from only agriculture and the government sector**

number of the central government which will be in the region of 8 per cent for FY21, it said.

In FY20, the country's economy grew at an estimated 4.2 per cent, almost a decade low.

It, however, said the positive growth will come from only agriculture and the government sector.

The agency's May estimate for a decline in GDP growth of 1.5-1.6 per cent was based on

the assumption that the lockdown would be ending by the month-end and that the recovery process will be gradual and be calibrated across sectors with the second half being closer to normal.

GDP forecasts for FY21 are unique as they would be varying depending on the evolving situation and the assumptions being made on the recovery process in the country, the report said. The agency said its

assumption now is that two-third of the economic sectors would broadly be operating at 50-70 per cent capacity by the end of third quarter and the balance may not even reach this state this year.

Services like hospitality, tourism, entertainment, travel would take a much longer time pan India to resume anywhere close to normal with interstate restrictions being the norm for the next quarter or so, the report said.

"The restriction on movement of people translates into fall in demand for goods and services and further exacerbates the low-consumption growth syndrome that pervaded for three years now," it said.

**'JSW to boycott \$ 400 mn imports from China'**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

JSW Cement Managing Director Parth Jindal on Thursday said its family-owned group will bring down USD 400 million worth of imports from China to zero in the next 24 months. Referring to the recent clash between Indian and Chinese troops in the Galwan Valley, he said the "action" is a result of what the latter did on Indian soil.

The USD 14-billion JSW Group, owned by Parth's father Sajjan Jindal, has presence in

core sectors of steel, energy, cement and infrastructure.

The group will boycott goods worth USD 400 million, which it imports from China annually, Parth said in a tweet.

"The unprovoked attack by the Chinese on our brave jawaans has been a huge wake up call and a clarion call for action - we @TheJSWGroup have a net import of USD 400

mn from China annually and we pledge to bring this down to zero in the next 24 months #BoycottChina," he said.



In an unvarnished conversation with SHIKHA DUGGAL, actress Salony Luthra talks about her upcoming web film *Bhanumathi and Ramakrishna* with Naveen Chandra

# ‘Delight in, and valuing, relationships are KEY TO HAPPINESS’



## Y our experience of filming the Telugu web movie *Bhanumathi Ramakrishna*

My web film is a very realistic approach to the life of unmarried women. We are usually on the radar of our shallow thinking society over, ‘Oh! She’s in her thirties and not married yet, I wonder why.’ So we are trying to touch a topic that people just don’t want to talk about openly with unbigoted perspectives. Our aim is to show a light-hearted love story with a strong social message attached to it, to make the society believe that an unmarried woman can also be happy in her space. Bhanumathi has a bucket list to fulfil which leaves her with a void about the present times and then Ramakrishna (Naveen Chandra) enters her life to show that life is to be lived in the present. It’s a brew of sensitivity and embracing the imperfections of my character in the film, with wanting to break the prejudice devoted to the stigma that only married women deserve the best life!

### Your preparation for the movie

I got *Bhanumathi and Ramakrishna* when I was filming for another movie in New York City. My director and co-star Naveen had come to pick me up at the airport and they were quite amused to see me since I was looking “extremely thin”. When we began shooting for my current project, my director wanted me to look relatable to the character of

Bhanumathi for which I was asked to put on some weight. Being a foodie especially in the town known for Biryani, I had to let go of my guilty pleasures and managed to gain approximately eight kilos of weight! My producer put



me on an amazing diet, it came out quite well on the screen too, so I was content with it.

### Your reason to do this film

Yes, I had a handpicked reason to do this film purely for its subject. When I heard the story, it felt empowering and I was surprised to see how my director had deep nuance into female emotions hence it attracted me more towards the script. Also, I love breaking stereotypes, I am a public figure who holds the power to send a strong message of social happiness to my fandom so why not do it! I so wish that society judges the girls out there a

little less and families encourage them to break the norms of patriarchy. Don’t push them to do something which may not have the best outcome later on and then you regret doing that. To be honest, this film has also changed me as a person because my outlook towards life has changed completely. Delight in, and valuing, relationships are key to happiness.

### Chemistry with your co-actor

I will symbolise my chemistry with Naveen as a pure and an honest professional relationship on the sets. We can never fake chemistry on screen, your audience tends to catch you immediately. You can just camouflage it to a certain extent, that’s about it. We have added true human emotions as a pair in this film and it was a success. I get along too well with Naveen and that’s what let me delivers honest chemistry on-screen with him. He’s a very dear friend to me, I come from a theatre background and Naveen was the one who showed immense confidence in me while teaching me the go-to tricks to render an outstanding performance in front of the camera! ‘Never let an actor cut your light’, that’s what he said to me being a co-actor, which was quite overwhelming for me. When I was in NYC, I got a call from him saying “Hey, I’m your Ramakrishna”, and it filled me with a sense of excitement that I’d be doing my next cinema with somebody who I get along with and it was going to be my home ground.

### An interesting anecdote from the sets of *Bhanumathi Ramakrishna*

It was an office set up in FilmCity on a tight schedule, so we got a short break for a while. I have a tendency of not knowing how to keep hold of things, I dropped soup on my filming outfit. Everybody had a good laugh at that point because I was trying to be that pious and serious actress who knows it all and on the other hand, I had butterfingers! I made a complete blooper that day. Since then I was being handled like a young toddler, haha! My costume was washed immediately by my producer, it was he who ironed it too. He actually saved the day.

### Cinema v/s OTT

I am going to choose OTT, the lockdown has changed my opinion towards it. It was a boon for me to get so much time to spend time with my family and we watched several web shows and movies on diverse streaming platforms. OTT brought us as a family together despite my parents being workaholics, we enjoyed watching it. It’s always buzzing with some activity, be it with family content or chick flicks. Make your own popcorn and relish this new normal!

**Bhanumathi and Ramakrishna is going to take you back to old school romance time today, so hold your horses and be ready to witness an urban love story with a social message!**



I had a handpicked reason to do this film purely for its subject. When I heard the story, it felt empowering and I was surprised to see how my director had deep nuance into female emotions hence it attracted me more towards the script. Also, I love breaking stereotypes, I am a public figure who holds the power to send a strong message of social happiness to my fandom so why not do it! I so wish that society judges the girls out there a little less and families encourage them to break the norms of patriarchy.

# Male infertility as common as female infertility, but curable

IN CONTRAST TO THE OLD BELIEF THAT AGE AFFECTS ONLY FEMALES, RESEARCH HAS SHOWN THAT OLDER MEN ALSO HAVE A HIGH AMOUNT OF ABNORMAL SPERM. ACCORDING TO WHO, OF ALL INFERTILITY CASES IN INDIA, 50% IS DUE TO MALE FACTOR INFERTILITY



There is a staggering lack of awareness in India about male infertility. Male infertility refers to a condition where a man is unable to cause pregnancy in a fertile woman. Women in India often bear the blame for not bearing a child and male fertility issues are ignored. According to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, over 12-18 million couples in India are diagnosed with infertility every year. WHO in its report has stated that of all infertility cases in India, 50% is due to male factor infertility.

Both men and women can experience infertility and have equal chances of facing conception issues due to infertility. In all the couples experiencing infertility almost one third is due to male factors. Fertility issues are rampant in cities where people are leading stressful lives. Inadequate nutrition coupled with consumption of alcohol in excess,

smoking, low fitness can all lead to a decrease in the fertility level in men.

Speaking about the issue Dr. Chandana Lakkireddi, Fertility Consultant, Nova IVF Fertility Hyderabad, said “Unfortunately in India, there is a serious stigma associated with male infertility and this leads to men shying away from sharing these issues as there is lack of awareness and acceptance. So, when faced with the issues of infertility, people tend to think it must be the woman who is having a problem. But Male infertility is a major factor in most cases that we come across. We encourage couples who are trying to get pregnant but are facing issues to seek proper treatment. They should make every effort to find the right help for both the partners. We especially want to encourage the men to seek treatment and consult with an andrologist. Fertility issues can be draining, frustrating, and can take an emotional toll. But with proper guidance, we want

to help as many couples as we can to experience the happiness of parenthood.”

A couple was trying to conceive for the last six years. They were unable to conceive even after multiple treatments and tests for the wife, whereas the husband went through only regular semen analysis around three years back at a diagnostic centre, where test results were normal. However, post recent sperm analysis, the test results showed a high percentage of abnormality in the sperms. As per Dr Lakkireddi’s suggestions, the couple went through ICSI and successfully conceived through frozen embryo transfer in their first attempt. This shows that due to social stigma, people often end up considering women to be the centre of a problem for unable to conceive a baby, however, it is high time to understand that men are also at the similar front, which needs to be identified and corrected at the right time.

Male infertility cannot be attributed to a single factor. But around 15-20 per cent of male fertility issues are due to a condition called ‘Azoospermia’ i.e. the absence of viable sperms in the semen. Sperm quantity, quality, and motility are major factors that determine the ability to conceive a child. Low sperm count is a sign of infertility and does not help in conception for a couple. Male infertility can

also be caused due to diseases like mumps, TB, prostatitis, cancer, etc. As we all know lifestyle factors like age, nutrition, delayed marriages, smoking, work stress, obesity, exposure to pollutants can also play a role in causing the condition. In contrast to the old belief that age affects only females, research has shown that older men also have a high amount of abnormal sperm.

A thorough examination of medical and urologic history, plus a proper diagnosis is needed to determine the cause. Dr Lakkireddi further said that Male Infertility can be treated. Speaking about the treatments, she said, “It is mandatory to check both the partners. Male infertility tests start with a thorough evaluation of the medical history. Detailed semen analysis is conducted to check the count, motility, morphology of the sperm in an IVF Laboratory. If the results are abnormal, we conduct further processes like Hormone profile, DNA Fragmentation, and Scrotal Scan with Doppler. After getting the results, we put the patient on treatment. It is important to remember that male infertility can be treated with timely medical assistance. It is also beneficial to maintain a healthy lifestyle. With proper help from the appropriate fertility clinic, men will be able to experience the joys of fatherhood.”



## Salim-Sulaiman launch their fashion merchandise

**M**usic composer duo Salim Merchant and Sulaiman Merchant are launching their own fashion merchandise label, inspired by their iconic songs, hobbies and personal interests. The musicians have collaborated with Styched — a production-on-demand fast fashion company — to produce their first collection that consists of a line of t-shirts based on the duo's iconic songs. The collection aims at recapturing the nostalgia of

their musical brilliance. Chart-buster hits like *Kurbaan Hua*, *Shukranallah*, *Chak De India* and *Yeh Hausla Kaise Jhuke* are part of the first roll-out batch. Speaking about his new venture, Salim said, "We are super excited! My style is not about big brands and labels hence it is important that our fans and followers relate to our fashion line and we feel proud to wear it ourselves and not just have it as a brand for sale. I am excited to wear each and every piece as I step out." Sulaiman added, "Our

apparel line with Styched is an expression of ourselves and we want fans to be as comfortable as possible in these. Exciting times!" "This is a significant partnership for us at Styched. We aim to translate celebrity's persona into relatable apparel and establish connect with fans and enthusiasts and Salim-Sulaiman would resonate so highly with the audience," Durga Dash, COO of Styched shared. The collection is available for shipping worldwide, especially for fans in USA, Canada and the UK.

## Relive the nostalgia of books

**C**ollege Street in the heart of the City of Joy is ubiquitous to the city. Located in the bustling neighbourhood of Central Calcutta, it is a source of nostalgia to every one who has lived or worked in the city. Famously known as Boipara (the book colony), College Street has been a cradle to the city's intelligentsia and has not lost its old-world charm even in the age of notebooks, Kindles and iPads. To give a fresh lease of hope to slump in sales through the COVID-19 and Cyclone Amphan crisis, 93.5 RED FM has collaborated with College Street Union and *boiChoi.com* for an on-air and digital book exhibition called 'Book Kar'. Recently, due to cyclone Amphan, Kolkata's iconic street or colony was severely affected with large scale inventories perishing. To help the book sellers revive their lost business and bridge the gap between them and the readers and consumers, the two-week virtual book exhibition will

aim at digitally bring College Street to the people. The collaboration will provide remaining books on *BoiChoi.com*, a book delivery site with a dedicated section to promote these reads. The radio jockey's will be encouraging and requesting its listeners to support this cause through their on-air and digital shows. Some of the renowned celebrities like music director-singer Anupam Roy and actress Ritabhari Chakraborty have pledged to support this campaign via digital book reading sessions and have shared their 'boipara' memories. Speaking on the occasion, Nisha Narayanan, Director & COO, RED FM and Magic FM, said, "Due the recent cyclone Amphan, book sellers at Kolkata's Boipara were one of the worst impacted, affecting livelihoods of more than a lakh people. In an endeavor to help revive this heritage of the city, our team decided to take this issue through an on-air and digital book exhibition called 'BookKar'. It is a step towards bringing some hope to these book sellers."

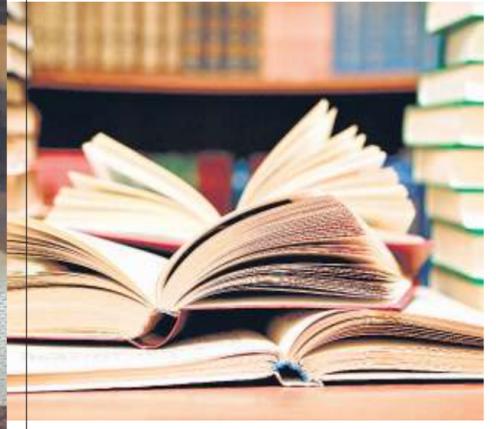


## Trishala Dutt speaks about her mental health post boyfriend's death

**B**ollywood star Sanjay Dutt's daughter Trishala Dutt has penned an emotional note to mark one year of her boyfriend's death on Thursday. She opened up about going for therapy and quitting her job post his demise. Trishala took to Instagram, where she shared a picture of herself along with her late boyfriend. "Today marks 1 year since the ground beneath me seemed to crumble and my life changed. I've done a lot of grief work — from talk therapy, to joining specific support groups and being more intentional with how and who I spend my time with." "I've also been somewhat absent from social media over the past year. Losing my mom at the age of eight and working through that for over two decades, surprisingly, did not prepare me for losing this beautiful soul," she wrote. "It's not just the passage of time, you don't get over it or move on just because a year or twenty go by. You have to face the darkest moments and ride out the rollercoaster of emotions for the rest of your life. I knew grief wasn't only sadness, howev-

er, I'd forgotten it creeps up in the sneakiest of ways." Trishala shared that in the past year she cried to a point where she ran out of tears. "I had to quit my job because how could I take care of someone's mental health if my own was a disaster?" she wrote. She shared that she had several "public breakdowns where strangers have come up to me and asked if I needed any assistance." Trishala added that she ate "everything in sight and gained 30 lbs (13 kilos)." "But it's fine. It happens. Its the process, and it's nothing I can't fix once I'm in the right mind-set (and I'm happy to share my mental health and physique has gotten so much better!)" "Also, I'm not ashamed to admit it's because of an amazing therapist, support groups, and 3 beautiful friends." She shared that she still has things that reminds her of him. "I have text messages and handwritten notes. I still have his toothbrush, listen to some of his favorite songs/artists, and have his T-shirt that smells just like him. I'm beyond grateful for the time we had together. He lived

his life boldly, out loud, and took advantage of each and every day authentically. He was the utmost gentleman who always made me feel safe." "He made me laugh and loved to joke around. He was kind, gentle, thoughtful, and always chose to put me first. He was helpful, supportive, and a great listener. He trusted me, took good care of me, and took great care of my heart." Trishala shared that her boyfriend respected her, never judged her and welcomed her into his family. "He never left my side, never EVER let me go to bed upset, or left me wondering where I stood in his life. He made sure to let me and everyone else know that I was his entire heart every second of every day." To Trishala he was magic. "It was a joy to be a part of his life. He will always be apart of my journey, and my story. My memories are all I have left of him, and I will never ever forget him. I'm half a heart without him, but even with that, I still and will always be and feel like the luckiest girl in the entire world to have been his...as he was mine. October 07, 1986 - July 02, 2019."



### FUN

#### ARCHIE

SVENSON, I'M GOING TO MAKE YOUR JOB EASIER! I GOT YOU A NEW AND IMPROVED SCRUBBER!

ALSO A NEW, IMPROVED WAXER!

I'LL TELL YOU WHAT WOULD REALLY MAKE MY JOB EASIER!

NEW AND IMPROVED STUDENTS!

oops!

#### CALVIN AND HOBBS

I READ THAT THE AVERAGE HOUSEHOLD WATCHES 7 1/2 HOURS OF TV EVERY DAY.

MOM SAYS SHE DOESN'T WATCH TV AT ALL WHILE I'M AT SCHOOL...

SO IF I GET HOME AT 3:00, I SHOULD BE ABLE TO WATCH IT STRAIGHT TILL 10:30, RIGHT?

WRONG. DO YOU WANT US TO BE SUB-AVERAGE?!

#### GARFIELD

THREE... TWO...

ONE...

FRIDAY FACE!

#### REALITY CHECK

I'M GOING TO HAVE TO CONFISCATE THESE KNICK-KNACKS—OH, AND THESE MAGAZINES, TOO.

SINCE WHEN ARE THOSE ILLEGAL?

WARDER AGENT

#### SPEED BUMP

THAT'S THE BEST AND WORST POLE VAULT I'VE EVER SEEN.

#### CROSSWORD

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

#### NANCY

I WAS LONELY IN HOLLYWOOD—I REALLY MISSED MY FRIENDS BACK HOME IN THE EAST

NANCY—HAVE YOU BEEN MAKING A LOT OF LONG-DISTANCE CALLS?

OH—NO—ONLY ONE A DAY—

HOLLYWOOD TELEPHONE COMPANY BILL TO FRITZ RITZ LONG-DISTANCE CALL CHARGE \$127.70

OKAY, JANIE—WHAT'S YOUR NEXT MOVE?

#### SUDOKU

Yesterday's solution

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

- Pepper might make you do this
- Use needles and wool to make something
- Quick
- Spread this on bread
- Rich
- Injured
- Repaired
- Factual
- Utters
- A weight to stop a boat drifting

#### DOWN

- Not in danger
- Less difficult

SOLUTION

N	E	I	G	H	O	R		
M	I	R	N					
W	H	A	R	F	A	C	T	O
A	T	T	E					
T	I	L	L	J	E	W	E	L
C	H	E	L	M	E	T		
H	E	L	M	E	T	P	L	U
E	I	T	E	B	E	N		
D	U	V	E	T	L	A	M	B
E	E	L	A	O				
A	R	G	E	N	T	I	N	I



Most Read NEWS

Jeff Bezos's wealth at record \$171.6 billion

Jeff Bezos's net worth has smashed through its previous peak. Even after he relinquished a quarter of his stake in Amazon.com Inc. as part of a divorce settlement last year. Shares of the Seattle-based retailer surged 4.4% to a record \$2,878.70 Wednesday, boosting the founder's world-leading fortune to \$171.6 billion. That tops his previous high of \$167.7 billion, set on Sept. 4, 2018, according to the Bloomberg Billionaires Index. His gains -- \$56.7 billion this year alone -- underscore a widening wealth gap in the U.S. during the worst economic downturn since the Great Depression. Initial public offerings and buoyant equity markets have bolstered mega-fortunes, even as tens of millions of people have lost their jobs. This week, after receiving complaints about ending pandemic hazard pay, Amazon said it would spend about \$500 million to give one-time \$500 bonuses to most front-line workers. The company declined to comment on its founder's wealth. Amazon has been on a tear, with the pandemic accelerating the consumer shift to e-commerce from brick-and-mortar retail. Bezos owns 11% of the stock, which comprises the bulk of his fortune.



Bridesmaid sacked for having 'huge' boobs

A bridesmaid was demoted from her role at her sister's wedding after being told she "looked too good in her dress". The 14-year-old explained that her sister asked her to be one of her bridesmaids at her wedding in a few months time. As she had never been to a wedding before she was thrilled to be a part of it. When it came to bridesmaid dress shopping, the bride picked out a gorgeous pinky red colour with ruffles on the top for her bridesmaid dress. After trying it on she couldn't wait to show her sister how pretty it looked. But when she stepped out of the changing room with the other bridesmaids she was horrified at her sister's reaction. The bridesmaid explained: "My sister looks at me and her face just freezes." And that's when it all went wrong. She added: "I asked her if she didn't like it, but she just didn't respond. She asked if she could talk to me in the other room and I say sure. 'We walk into her bathroom and she just kinda looks at me and sighs. Then goes 'your boobs look huge,' which stunned me for a moment." Apparently, the bride through her curves would take the attention off of her and her fiancé on their big day.



Sopore girl first to get J&K domicile certificate

Aliya Tariq, 10, from Sopore in North Kashmir became the first person to receive the domicile certificate on June 22 under the new law that has been introduced after the scrapping of Article 370 and splitting of the erstwhile state of Jammu and Kashmir into two union territories. Tariq Ahmed Longoo, Aliya Tariq's father told IANS that he applied for the domicile for all his family members including Aliya because he felt that it is an important document just like the Aadhaar card. "Everybody has to apply for the domicile certificate eventually. I was helped by my friends in the revenue department to apply for the certificates, my children were asked by their school to get the domicile certificate," Langoo said. Three days after Aliya became the first person to receive the domicile, Navin K. Choudhary was granted a domicile certificate. Choudhary, an IAS officer of the J&K cadre, 1994 batch, belongs to Bihar. Official records reveal that the government has received 33,157 applications for domicile certificates in J&K and over 25,000 of them have been accepted. The government has received nearly 32,000 applications in 10 districts of Jammu Division while Kashmir has received only 720 applications.



Lamborghini unveils £2.7million luxury yacht

Italian car giant Lamborghini has unveiled a £2.7million yacht that looks like one of its supercars. The seafaring machine can hit a top speed of 69mph using two V12 engines strapped to the back. Inspired by the Lamborghini Sián FKP 37 hypercar, the boat is a joint project between Lamborghini and yacht company The Italian Sea Group. It's dubbed the Tecnomar for Lamborghini 63 and only a few dozen will be made, according to an official press release. "If I had to imagine a Lamborghini on water, this would be my vision," Lamborghini boss Stefano Domenicali said. Named after the car-maker's founding year, the Tecnomar for Lamborghini 63 boasts a carbon fibre shell. That design means it weighs just 24 tons. That's about 15 times more than a Lamborghini supercar, but it's very light for a yacht. The craft's twin-V12 engines generate 4,000 horsepower, according to Lamborghini, which can accelerate the craft to 60 knots, or roughly 69mph. That's pretty good for a 63ft boat, but it's a long way off the 200mph+ top speed of Lamborghini's fastest road vehicles. Tecnomar for Lamborghini 63 is a limited-edition boat that the Italian car-maker says will ship in 2021.



CORONAVIRUS AUTOPSIES

A story of 38 brains, 87 lungs and 42 hearts

When pathologist Amy Rapkiewicz began the grim process of opening up the coronavirus dead to learn how their bodies went awry, she found damage to the lungs, kidneys and liver consistent with what doctors had reported for months. But something was off. Rapkiewicz, who directs autopsies at NYU Langone Health, noticed that some organs had far too many of a special type of cell rarely found in those places. She had never seen that before, yet it seemed vaguely familiar. She raced to her history books and - in a eureka moment - found a reference to a 1960's report on a patient with dengue fever.

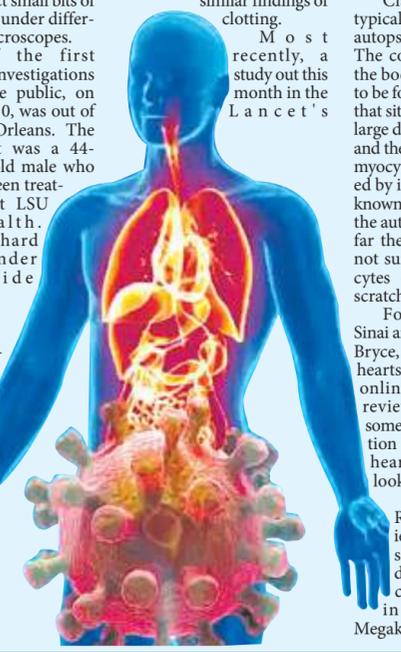
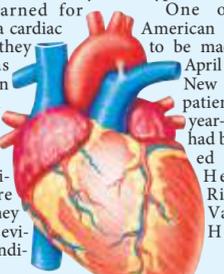
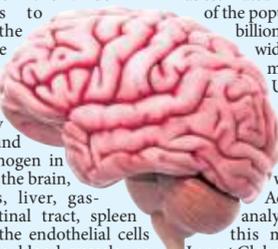
Among the most important findings, consistent across several studies, is confirmation the virus appears to attack the lungs the most ferociously. They also found the pathogen in parts of the brain, kidneys, liver, gastrointestinal tract, spleen and in the endothelial cells that line blood vessels, as some had previously suspected. Researchers also found widespread clotting in many organs. But the brain and heart yielded surprises. "It's about what we are not seeing," said Mary Fowkes, an associate professor of pathology who is part of a team at Mount Sinai Health that has performed autopsies on 67 covid-19 patients. Given widespread reports about neurological symptoms related to the coronavirus, Fowkes said, she expected to find virus or inflammation - or both - in the brain. But there was very little. When it comes to the heart, many physicians warned for months about a cardiac complication they suspected was myocarditis, an inflammation or hardening of the heart muscle walls - but autopsy investigators were stunned that they could find no evidence of the condition.

Another unexpected finding, pathologists said, is that oxygen deprivation of the brain and the formation of blood clots may start early in the disease process. That could have major implications for how people with covid-19 are treated at home, even if they never need to be hospitalized. The early findings come as new U.S. infections have overtaken even the catastrophic days of April, amid what some critics say is a premature easing of social distancing restrictions in some states mainly in the South and West. A new modeling study has estimated that about 22% of the population - or 1.7 billion people worldwide, including 72 million in the United States - may be vulnerable to severe illness if infected with covid-19. According to the analysis published this month in the Lancet Global Health, about 349 million, or 4% of those people would require hospitalization - underscoring the stakes as autopsy investigators continue their hunt for clues. At their best, autopsies can reconstruct the natural course of the disease but the process for a new and highly infectious-disease is tedious and requires meticulous work. To protect pathologists and avoid sending virus into the air, they must use special tools to harvest organs and then dunk them in a disinfecting solution for several weeks before they are studied. They must then section each organ and collect small bits of tissue for study under different types of microscopes. One of the first American investigations to be made public, on April 10, was out of New Orleans. The patient was a 44-year-old male who had been treated at LSU Health. Richard Vander Heide

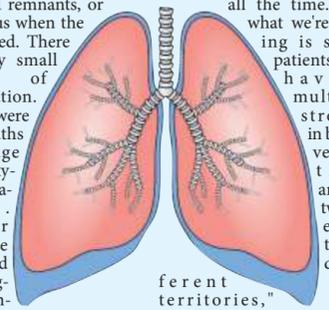
sands of microclots. "I will never forget the day," recalled Vander Heide, who has been performing autopsies since 1994. "I said to the resident, 'This is very unusual.' I had never seen something like this." But as he moved onto the next patient and the next, Vander Heide saw the same pattern. He was so alarmed, he said, that he shared the paper online before submitting it to a journal so the information could be used immediately by doctors. The findings caused a stir at many hospitals and influenced some doctors to start giving blood thinners to all covid-19 patients. It is now common practice. The final, peer-reviewed version involving 10 patients was subsequently published in the Lancet in May. Other lung autopsies - including those described in papers from Italy of 38 patients, a Mount Sinai Health study on 25 patients, a collaboration between Harvard Medical School and German researchers on seven and an NYU Langone Health on seven - have reported similar findings of clotting. Most recently, a study out this month in the Lancet's

clinical medicine, found abnormal clotting in the heart, kidney, liver, as well as the lungs of seven patients, leading the authors to suggest this may be a major cause of the multiple-organ failure in covid-19 patients. The next organ studied up close was the heart. One of the most frightening early reports about the coronavirus from China was that a significant percent of hospitalized patients - up to 20% to 30% - appeared to have a heart issue known as myocarditis that could lead to sudden death. It involves the thickening of the muscle of the heart so that it can no longer pump efficiently. Classic myocarditis is typically easy to identify in autopsies, pathologists say. The condition occurs when the body perceives the tissue to be foreign and attacks it. In that situation, there would be large dead zones in the heart, and the muscle cells known as myocytes would be surrounded by infection-fighting cells known as lymphocytes. But in the autopsy samples taken so far the dead myocytes were not surrounded by lymphocytes - leaving researchers scratching their heads. Fowkes from Mount Sinai and her colleague, Clare Bryce, whose work on 25 hearts has been published online but not yet peer reviewed, said they saw some "very mild" inflammation of the surface of the heart but nothing that looked like myocarditis. NYU Langone's Rapkiewicz, who studied seven hearts, was struck by the abundance of a rare cell called megakaryocytes in the heart. Megakaryocytes, which produce platelets that control clotting, typically exist only in the bone marrow and lungs. When she went back to the lung samples from the coronavirus patients, she discovered those cells were too plentiful there, too. "I could not remember a case before where we saw that," she said. "It was remarkable they were in the heart." Vander Heide from LSU, who reported preliminary findings on 10 patients in April and has a more in-depth paper with more case studies on the topic under review at a journal, explained that "when you look at a covid heart, you don't see what you'd expect." He said a couple of patients he performed autopsies on had gone into cardiac arrest in the hospital, but when he examined them, the primary damage was in the lungs - not the heart. Of all the novel coronavirus's manifestations, its impact on the brain has been among the most vexing. Patients have reported a host of neurological impairments including reduced ability to smell or taste, altered mental status, stroke, seizures - even delirium. An early study from China, published in the BMJ, formerly the British Medical Journal, in March, found 22% of the 113 patients had experienced neurological issues ranging from excessive sleepiness to coma - conditions typically grouped together as disorders of consciousness. In June, researchers in France reported that 84% of patients in intensive care had neurological issues, and a third were confused or disoriented at discharge. Also this month, those in the United Kingdom found that 57 of 125 coronavirus patients with a new neurological or psychiatric diagnosis had had a stroke due to a blood clot in the brain, and 39 had an altered mental state. Based on such data and anecdotal reports, Isaac Solomon, a neuropathologist at Brigham and Women's Hospital in Boston, set out to systematically investigate where the virus might be embedding itself in the brain. He conducted autopsies of 18 consecutive deaths, taking slices of key areas: the cerebral cortex (the gray matter responsible for information processing), thalamus (modulates sensory inputs), basal ganglia (responsible for motor control) and others. Each was divided into a three-dimensional grid. Ten sections were taken from each and studied. He found snippets of virus in only some areas, and it was unclear whether they were dead remnants, or active virus when the patient died. There were only small pockets of inflammation. But there were large swaths of damage due to oxygen deprivation. Whether these were long-time intensive care patients, or people who died suddenly, Solomon said, the pattern was eerily similar. "We were very surprised," he said. When the brain does not get enough oxygen, individual neurons die and that death is permanent. To a certain extent, people's brains can compensate but at some point, the damage is so extensive that different functions start to degrade. On a practical level, Solomon said that if the virus is not getting into the brain in large amounts, that helps with drug development because treatment becomes trickier when it is pervasive, for instance, in some patients with West Nile or HIV.

Another takeaway is that the findings underscore the importance of getting people on supplementary oxygen quickly to prevent irreversible damage. Solomon, whose work was published as a June 12 letter in the New England Journal of Medicine, said the findings suggest the damage had been happening over a longer period of time, which make him wonder about the virus's effect on people who are less ill. "The big lingering question is what happens to people who survive covid," he said. "Is there a lingering effect on the brain?" The team from Mount Sinai Health, which took tissue findings from 20 brains, was also perplexed not to find a lot of virus or inflammation. However, the group noted in a paper that the widespread presence of tiny clots was "striking." "If you have one blood clot in the brain, we see that all the time. But what we're seeing is some patients are having multiple strokes in blood vessels that are in two or even three different territories," Fowkes said. Rapkiewicz said it is too early to know whether the newest batch of autopsy findings can be translated into treatment changes, but the information has opened new avenues to explore. One of her first calls after noticing the unusual platelet-producing cells was to Jeffrey Berger, a cardiac specialist at NYU who runs a National Institutes of Health-funded lab that focuses on platelets. Berger said the autopsies suggest anti-platelet medications, in addition to blood thinners, may be helpful to stem the effects of covid-19. He has pivoted a major clinical trial looking at optimal doses of anticoagulants to look at that question as well.



He found snippets of virus in only some areas, and it was unclear whether they were dead remnants, or active virus when the patient died. There were only small pockets of inflammation. But there were large swaths of damage due to oxygen deprivation. Whether these were long-time intensive care patients, or people who died suddenly, Solomon said, the pattern was eerily similar. "We were very surprised," he said. When the brain does not get enough oxygen, individual neurons die and that death is permanent. To a certain extent, people's brains can compensate but at some point, the damage is so extensive that different functions start to degrade. On a practical level, Solomon said that if the virus is not getting into the brain in large amounts, that helps with drug development because treatment becomes trickier when it is pervasive, for instance, in some patients with West Nile or HIV.



HAMMERS BLOW

West Ham rocked Chelsea's top-four hopes and boosted their survival bid with a dramatic 3-2 win, while Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang struck twice as Arsenal climbed back into European contention with a 4-0 thrashing of Norwich on Wednesday. Chelsea were hoping to take advantage of third-placed Leicester's 2-1 defeat at Everton earlier in the day, but instead the Blues were beaten for the first time since the Premier League restart. West Ham were denied the opening goal at the London Stadium when VAR ruled Michail Antonio was offside as he lay on the ground while



Andriy Yarmolenko, center celebrates with West Ham teammates after scoring his side's third goal

Tomas Soucek slotted home. Willian fired Chelsea ahead from the penalty spot five minutes before half-time after Issa Diop trounced Christian Pulisic. Soucek headed home in first-half stoppage time as West Ham finally scored their first goal since the restart. Antonio put West Ham in front in the 51st minute when he slid in to convert Jarrod Bowen's cross. Willian's superb 70th-minute free-kick drew Chelsea level, but it was West Ham who broke away to win it in the 89th minute when substitute Andriy Yarmolenko finished a brilliant counter attack. Chelsea are one point behind Leicester and only two ahead of Manchester United and Wolves as the race to qualify for the Champions League heats up with six games left. "It's the story of our season. It's been a good season but

there have been so many of these moments," Chelsea boss Frank Lampard said. "I'm not happy with any of the goals. There were details in the game which we knew but we lost because we didn't get them right. It's why we are fighting for the top four and not first or second. We don't get things right as much as the big boys do." West Ham's crucial first win since the restart moved them three points clear of the relegation zone. **51% COUNTING** At the Emirates Stadium, Aubameyang moved alongside Jamie Vardy as the Premier League's top scorer on 19 goals on a night of contrasting fortunes for the Golden Boot contenders.

Villarreal maintain CL push

Gerard Moreno took his season's La Liga goal tally to 15 with a double strike as Villarreal stayed on course for the Champions League with a 2-0 win at Real Betis on Wednesday. Villarreal are in fifth place in the table, three points behind Sevilla who occupy the fourth and final qualifying spot for next season's Champions League. Moreno opened the scoring after just seven minutes from the penalty spot and added a fine individual goal on the half-hour mark. vMoreno's 15 goals are just two back from Real Madrid's Karim Benzema with Barcelona's Lionel Messi leading the way with 22.

Villarreal maintain CL push

Inter hits 6

Christian Eriksen bagged his first Serie A goal since his January move from Tottenham, forcing in from point-blank range after an excellent Jesse Joronen save denied Romelu Lukaku. Antonio Candreva completed the romp two minutes from time with a crisp low drive into the corner as Inter clawed back to within eight points of leaders Juventus with nine games still to play. "We kept our foot on the gas and the fact that we didn't concede is a big positive," Inter coach Antonio Conte told broadcaster DAZN. Sanchez, who made just his fourth league start this term, had his loan deal from Manchester United extended earlier in the day until the end of the Italian season.

Inter hits 6

Novak & wife test corona -ve

BELGRADE: Novak Djokovic and his wife have tested negative for the coronavirus, his media team said on Thursday, 10 days after announcing they had contracted the virus. The top-ranked player tested positive for the virus after playing in an exhibition series he organized in Serbia and Croatia amid the pandemic. "Novak Djokovic and his wife Jelena are negative for Covid-19. That was shown by the results of the PCR tests that both had in Belgrade," his media team said in a statement. Both Djokovic and his wife had no symptoms and were in self-isolation in the Serbian capital since testing positive. The news comes amid a new spike of cases in Serbia and the reintroduction of some restrictive measures, such as wearing of masks and social distancing. AP

Novak & wife test corona -ve

Christian Eriksen bagged his first Serie A goal since his January move from Tottenham, forcing in from point-blank range after an excellent Jesse Joronen save denied Romelu Lukaku. Antonio Candreva completed the romp two minutes from time with a crisp low drive into the corner as Inter clawed back to within eight points of leaders Juventus with nine games still to play. "We kept our foot on the gas and the fact that we didn't concede is a big positive," Inter coach Antonio Conte told broadcaster DAZN. Sanchez, who made just his fourth league start this term, had his loan deal from Manchester United extended earlier in the day until the end of the Italian season.

# PAWAN TAKES TO CHATURMASYA VRATA DEEKSHA



**F**or the well-being of the Indian people, especially Telugus, actor-leader Pawan Kalyan has taken to the sacred Chaturmasya vrata deeksha on the auspicious day of Toli Ekadashi on Wednesday. The vrata is the four-month auspicious period starting from Ashada Shukla Dashmi to Karthik Shukla Purnima (mid November). The actor has been committed to

the deeksha, whose practice is believed to attain inexhaustible spiritual and health benefits for its followers, for the past two decades, adhering to its rules strictly with utmost devotion. His food intake in the evening will consist of milk and fruits. A tiny fraction of sattvic diet, which is based on foods in ayurvedic and yogic literature, also dots the menu. The food regulation, according to Hindu mythology, is aimed at getting control over the senses and thereby purifying body and soul.

Pawan said that many small-time businessmen, teachers, weaving community, photogra-

phers, hawkers, farmers and private employees have lost their livelihoods and are facing hardships due to the coronavirus pandemic. He said he is praying to God that such people will emerge out of the prevailing situations stronger and return back to their normal lives sooner.

On the work front, Pawan will be next seen in his comeback film, Vakeel Saab whose filming is 70-75 per cent over. He will rejoin the sets as and when the situation is convenient for film shootings. He also shot for a small part of Krish's untitled period drama.



## New Zealand being mooted for *Rang De*

With *Avatar* sequels, James Cameron's sci-fi spectacle, getting the permission of Kiwi government to restart shooting last month, Sithara is hoping for a similar response, finds NAGARAJ GOUD

**P**roduction house Sithara Entertainments is toying with the idea of resuming work on *Rang De*, headlined by Nithiin and Keerthy Suresh, in New Zealand. The romantic drama, directed by Venky Atluri, needs a foreign shore for some portions.

With *Avatar* sequels, James Cameron's sci-fi spectacle, getting the permission of Kiwi government to restart shooting last month after the nation positioned itself as a Covid-free haven; Sithara is hoping for a similar response. "The makers are looking at the possibility of shooting in the South Pacific nation but nothing is finalized as of now," confirmed a source close to the unit.

Initially, the makers considered shooting abroad portions in Spain, with the director even undertaking an extensive recce last year with his celebrated cinematographer PC Sreeram but with the whole of Europe getting affected with

coronavirus and the countries too restricting air travel from other countries since the outbreak from February, the film's unit had to search for greener pastures. Rang De's shooting had to be put on pause mode since March.

**If Sithara gets the nod, the cast and crew of the film needs to adhere to the 14-day government supervised self-isolation, before beginning to shoot.**

In New Zealand, a seven-week nationwide lockdown smothered the outbreak and early last month, it lifted all restrictions except border controls. If Sithara indeed gets the nod from down under, the cast and crew of the film needs to adhere to the 14-day government supervised self-isolation, before beginning to shoot. The film, featuring Nareesh, Rohini, Kousalya, Brahmaji, Vennela Kishore, Satyam Rajesh, Abhinav Gomatam and Suhas in supporting roles, is nearly 70 per cent completed.

## Warangal Srinivas bags Nizam rights of biggies

**W**ith theatres reopening staring at an indefinite delay, Adepu Srinivas aka Warangal Srinivas surprised one and all on Thursday when he informed the media that he snatched the Nizam rights of anticipated films *Krack*, *Virata Parvam*, *Seeti Marr* and *Sreekaram* for the Nizam region. With business activity at an all-time low owing to the pandemic, Srinu's acquisitions have come as a bit of positive news from the industry which is otherwise reeling under losses since March.

All the four films that Srinu has acquired are in the final stages of production. If not for Coronavirus outbreak, except *Virata Parvam*, the remaining films would've hit the cinemas by now. The Karthikeya Exhibitors chief is also believed to be in talks with producers of some other star films for their Nizam rights.

Having distributed successful films like *Hushaaru*, *iSmart Shankar* and *Gaddalakonda Ganeshi* in the Nizam territory, Srinu is also turning producer with G Nageswara Reddy's next, which is half-way through with its filming. While casting details are under a tight lock and key, the makers are hoping to shoot the remaining half abroad. He is lining up a couple of other production ventures as well.



## AN ADDITION TO THE TITLE



**I**n a new development, we've learnt that Naveen Chandra and Salony Luthra-starrer *Bhanumathi Ramakrishna* will now be referred to as *Bhanumathi and Ramakrishna*. The change comes into effect after late legendary actor Bhanumathi Ramakrishna's son Bharani took an offence to the film's title and shot of a letter to aha management sometime back, alleging that the makers were cashing in the popularity of her mother's reputation and that they have used her name without his consent. While team aha initially planned to win the argument as the film has no connection to the yes-year actress, who was awarded the Padma Bhushan in 2003 for her contribution in Indian cinema, whatsoever, they had to compromise as the film's premiere was planned for Tuesday. On Monday, legal staff representing Bharani and team aha met in Chennai and agreed to add 'and' between Bhanumathi Ramakrishna. Publicity material bearing the old title is being replaced across both the Telugu states.

A slice-of-life drama, the film narrates the story of titular characters both of who are in their 30s yet single for different reasons. It marks the debut of Srikanth Nagothi as a director and Yashwanth Mulukutla as a producer. Kshanam fame Ravikanth Perepu has edited it.

## I'm human, I get zits: ILEANA

**T**elugu-Hindi actress Ileana Dcruz replied to a social media user who commented on her pimple, saying she is human and does get zits.

Ileana took to Instagram, where she treated her fans and followers to a question-answer session. A netizen wrote: "You have a pimple on your left cheek?"

The actress replied: "Yes, I'm human, I'm pmsing, I get zits. What else would you like to know?"

Another user asked her about Ileana's reaction when *Barfi!* was named for the Oscars. She replied: "I thought it was a joke! I thought the team was playing a prank on me and I couldn't believe it. So, Googled it lol. Honestly it was one of the most surreal moments of my life," she wrote. On the work front, Ileana will next be seen alongside Abhishek Bachchan in Ajay Devgn's production *The Big Bull*, a film reportedly based on India's biggest securities scam of 1992.

