

**ANALYSIS 7**  
CHINA THE EMERGING  
RING MASTER OF NEPAL?

**MONEY 8**  
'HIGHER OFFTAKE BY FCI CAN BOOST  
PROCUREMENT AGENCIES LIQUIDITY'

**SPORTS 11**  
SLOW AND STEADY WINDIES  
BUILD THEIR LEAD

VIJAYAWADA, SATURDAY JULY 11, 2020; PAGES 12 & 3



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Page 12

**Coronavirus**  
cases in  
**INDIA**  
rise from 7 to  
8 lakh in 3 days

# 8,21,493

2,82,765  
active cases  
5,16,206  
recovered

22,144  
deaths in India

## Jagan's Arogyasri cover for Covid-19 puts KCR in a fix

L VENKAT RAM REDDY  
HYDERABAD

Inadvertently, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy has put his Telangana State counterpart K Chandrasekhara Reddy in quite a fix.

While Jagan's decision to extend Arogyasri cover to Covid-19 treatment in private hospitals has been welcomed across AP, it has brought pressure on KCR to follow suit.

Jagan's decision provided a big relief to the people from the economically backward sections, government employees and pensioners, who are part of the beneficiaries of the scheme. They can now avail cashless Covid treatment free of cost even in corporate hospitals. The entire expenditure will be reimbursed to the hospitals by the AP government.

Jagan's decision received wide appreciation from all quarters and fuelled similar demand in Telangana from employees, pensioners opposition parties and various civil society organisations. But implementing the scheme in Telangana is easier said than done — the State government already owes Rs 500 crore in Arogyasri dues to private hospitals. Naturally, private hospitals are refusing to extend any treatment covered by Arogyasri to any patient, let alone a Covid patient.



YS Jaganmohan Reddy

K Chandrasekhara Reddy

## Record 15 deaths, 1,608 new cases in AP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh reported a single day high of 1,608 coronavirus cases on Friday, taking the overall tally past 25,000 to 25,422.

The death count also witnessed a new single day high of 15, making it an overall 292 so far while 981 patients were discharged from hospitals in the last 24 hours, according to the latest government bulletin. According to government statistics, 11,15,635 samples were tested till date, resulting in 25,422 positive cases, with a positivity rate of 2.28 per cent.

In all 13,194 patients had recovered and been discharged from hospitals, leaving 11,936 active cases in the state.

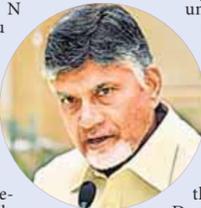
## State unable to even save doctors, alleges Naidu

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Leader of the Opposition N Chandrababu Naidu on Friday slammed the Jaganmohan Reddy Government, accusing it of pushing the state into a hopeless situation where it could not save the life of a doctor who fell victim to coronavirus in Tenali town in Guntur district.

he would be able to live to take care of his children and family members but, unfortunately, no timely help was provided.

In a statement, Naidu said that the sad state of affairs in the State was evident from how the Government Doctors' Association has written to the Chief Secretary, saying that they would not be able to work where there was no respect for their profession.



Naidu recalled that the doctor emotionally pleaded for better treatment so that

## Buggana in Delhi to get Centre release dues to AP

● Nirmala, Shekhawat and others asked to release funds

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A delegation led by AP Finance Minister Buggana Rajendranath Reddy on Friday met various Union Ministers and top bureaucrats in the Central Government and urged them to release grants pending to the State besides providing additional funds in wake of the Covid-19 pandemic.

The delegation met Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, MoS, Finance, Anurag Thakur, Minister of Jalshakti Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, MoS Home Affairs G Kishan Reddy, Niti Ayog CEO Amitabh Kant and Niti Ayog Advisor Avinash Mishra and discussed various pending projects and issues relating to Polavaram project.

Buggana requested the



AP Finance Minister Buggana Rajendranath Reddy presents a memento to Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, in New Delhi on Friday.

Union Finance Minister for early release of pending grants from the Centre. In particular, he pointed out that the local body grants, recommended

by the 14th Finance Commission, amounting to Rs 1,597.27 crore, were pending release to the state.

**Karnataka CM under home quarantine after staff test positive**



**Rahul Gandhi seeks cancellation of varsity exams**



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

**Bodies of Covid victims dumped into pit with earthmover**

**Villagers banish Covid-19 patient's family to cattle shed**

**Rebel MP Raju moves High Court against police cases**

**ESI SCAM Pithani under ACB lens, aide arrested**

**Realtor kidnapped for Rs 5cr ransom**

## Bodies of Covid victims dumped into pit with earthmover

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In yet another incident of inhuman disposal of bodies of Covid-19 victims in Andhra Pradesh, municipal authorities in Nellore dumped the bodies in a pit using an earthmover.

A video, which went viral over social media, shows municipal workers taking out dead bodies from an ambulance and throwing them on the front portion of a JCB. The bodies were then dumped into a pit in Penna river.

With the incident caught on camera leading to public outrage, Nellore district collector M.V. Sheshagiri Babu on Friday ordered a probe.

## Villagers banish Covid-19 patient's family to cattle shed

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Not caste or religion, but the Covid-19 pandemic has resulted in a new form of untouchability in rural pockets of Andhra Pradesh.

In the latest incident at Ethamanuvilasa village under Panchipenta Mandal in Vizianagaram district, a Covid-19 patient's family members and relatives were ostracised by the villagers.

The Covid patient's family members (15 people, including children and women) have been forced to take shelter in a cattle shed on the outskirts of the village after being socially boycotted by the villagers.

According to sources, N Rao, a migrant worker, came

**The Covid patient's family members (15 people, including children and women) have been forced to take shelter in a cattle shed on the outskirts of the village after being socially boycotted by the villagers**

to the village from Hyderabad. He stayed with his family members in the village.

Later, Rao tested positive for the virus a few days ago and he was shifted to Covid-19 care centre. However, the family members of the patients were

neither shifted to a quarantine facility nor to a hospital.

Suspecting that the family members of the Covid-19 patient may spread the virus, the villagers banished them from the village and they asked them to stay in the cattle shed located on the outskirts of the village.

"Only Covid-19 family members can understand the kind of social stigma we face these days. It's painful and depressing. We are not in a position to prepare food for ourselves as we have no ration. We have been staying in the cowshed for the past two days," the family members of Covid-19 patient told newsmen.

## Realtor kidnapped for Rs 5cr ransom

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Vizag city police on Friday arrested two of a six-member gang, who reportedly kidnapped Jami Suresh, a realtor and his advocate SLN Raju in a bid to extort money from him. The arrested were identified as Pallapu Prasad alias Karnata Prasad, resident of Guntur district and P Ramreddy alias Prathap Reddy, resident of Chinamushivada area in Vizag city.

Vizag City Police Commissioner Rajeev Kumar Meena said that the



two accused, habitual offenders, are kingpins in the case and committed the

crime with the help of four other members of the gang.

## Muslim sanitises temples, churches; charges just Rs 2

SUMIT ONKA  
VISAKHAPATNAM

When the world is in grip of distressing negative news since the outbreak of the Coronavirus pandemic, some people's selfless deeds for the society, endangering their lives brings positivity to all.

One such person is a Vizag-based young Muslim man who has sanitised over 450 places of worship of all faiths including temples and churches.

MGM Khan, (27), a lawyer by profession and mountaineer by passion, always actively participates in social works. He is



practicing law at the High Court and Vizag district court. The Coronavirus pandemic

has prompted him to indulge in a very noble work that is not only keeping the thousands of

devotees safe, but blurring religious boundaries as well.

"What about the safety of our neighbours and other places?" Khan's mother asked him when he sanitised his home one day to make it virus free. This one question drove him into the voluntary sanitisation work.

His journey into this noble act began with some of his neighbouring houses and mosques during Ramzan.

He says that it was then he thought to himself why only mosques and not other place of worship.

This thought was enough for

him to end up doing sanitisation of over 450 religious places, including 250 temples and other churches and a gurudwara till July 10.

Asked about fear of catching the virus, he said, "I am a mountaineer. So, I know the importance of safety gears. I do sanitisation, putting on PPE and other required things to keep myself safe. There could be lapses by humans. But, the Almighty has kept me safe so far."

Managements of many temples and churches are calling him to sanitise their premises.

## Endangered pangolin found in residential area

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Forest officials rescued a pangolin from the residential area of Gopalapatnam in Vizag city on Friday. The pangolin was spotted by locals at Sri Ramnagar Colony Block-1 of Gopalapatnam in Vizag city in the wee hours of Friday and they alerted the forest department.

Initially the locals at the Gopalapatnam area mistook it for a crocodile due to the exoskeleton. As word spread, people gathered to catch a glimpse of the pangolin, a high-



ly protected species under the Wild Life protection Act.

The forest officials said that the pangolin was found near a washroom of a house of the Sri Ramnagar Colony. Some residents in the area were scared after seeing the animal as they had no idea about it and assumed that it may harm humans.

**TODAY**

**ALMANAC**  
Month & Paksham: Ashadha & Krishna Paksha  
Panchangam  
Tithi : Shashthi: 01:32 pm  
Nakshatram: Uttara Bhadrpadra: Full Night  
Time to Avoid: (Bad time to start any important work)  
Rahukalam: 09:07 am - 10:44 am  
Yamagandam: 01:58 pm - 03:36 pm  
Varjyam: 04:15 pm - 06:02 pm  
Gulika: 05:52 am - 07:29 am  
Good Time: (to start any important work)  
Amritakalam: 02:56 am - 04:44 am  
Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:55 am - 12:47 pm

**VIJAYAWADA WEATHER**  
Forecast: Mostly cloudy  
Temp: 33/26  
Humidity: 63%  
Sunrise: 05:48 am  
Sunset: 06:54 pm  
Current Weather Conditions  
Updated July 10, 2020 5:00 PM

# State tops in EGS implementation

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a major achievement setting precedent for other States, Andhra Pradesh tops in the country in the implementation of the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS). The State contributes 14 per cent of country's achievement in terms of generation of person days' work, according to sources.

It is for this achievement that the Panchayat Raj and Rural Development department in the State requested the Centre for five crore more person days' work in addition to the 21 crore in the current fiscal. Commissioner (Panchayat Raj and Rural Development) Girija Shankar



said that due to Covid-19 induced lockdown, the workers are opting for MGNREGS works. He said that around 27 lakh people have attended MGNREGS works in the State on Thursday alone.

Shankar explained that as workers came back from cities and left jobless during the lockdown period, they started taking part in MGNREGS works in their respective villages. The workers also

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Shankar explained that as workers came back from cities and left jobless during the lockdown period, they started taking part in MGNREGS works in their respective villages. The workers also included those working in hospitality services, which include hotels, restaurants among others. He said that the reverse migration also increased the demand for jobs and workers opted for MGNREGS works.

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He said that the reverse migration also increased the demand for jobs and workers

opted for MGNREGS works. "Apart from giving over 2.2 lakh job cards, officials also activated many job cards, which remained inactive for some time due to various reasons," he said.



Challa Rajendra Prasad, Executive Chairman of CCL Products, hands over a cheque for Rs 1.11 crore to Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy to fight against the Covid-19 pandemic at Tadepalli on Friday

## CCL Executive Chairman donates Rs 1.11 crore

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Challa Rajendra Prasad, Executive Chairman of CCL Products, donated Rs 1.11 crore to the Disaster Management Fund of Andhra Pradesh to fight against the Covid-19 pandemic.

Rajendra Prasad met Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy at his camp office in Tadepalli and handed over a

cheque for Rs 1.11 crore. The CCL Products is an export-oriented instant coffee manufacturing company located in Duggirala of Guntur district. It has another manufacturing unit near Sullurpet and also markets its products in the country under the brand name 'Continental Coffee'. The company also has its manufacturing units in Vietnam and Switzerland.

## Govt takes steps to improving amenities at Quarantine Centres

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In view of the increase in the Covid-19 positive cases across the State, measures have been taken to improve the facilities at Quarantine Centres, Covid Care Centres, along with District and State Covid Hospitals, disclosed MT Krishna Babu, State Coordinator for Covid Control.

Addressing the media at Covid Command Control Centre here on Friday, Krishna Babu said Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy conducted a detailed review over the Covid situation in the State and has given directions to improve the quality of food being supplied to the inmates and ensure proper sanitation by deploying sufficient number of sanitary workers.

Keeping the protein requirement of the patients, the diet was designed and the menu will be displayed in all centres. Towards this initiative, the State government is spending up to Rs 500 per person on a single day.

He further stated that a third party survey was conducted at all the Quarantine Centres and Covid Care Centres across the State taking feedback on sani-



tation arrangements, quality and quantity of food, payment of bills, availability of medical persons and in-charge officer.

Based on the feedback received, all the District Collectors and Joint Collectors have been asked to improve the facilities wherever the issues were identified. In fact, the feedback from the inmates is regularly being taken on a regular basis and all the agencies and contractors providing food and sanitation have been directed to maintain quality of services and warned of action against the defaulting agencies.

Krishna Babu said that the issue of pending bills has been

taken to the notice of the Chief Minister to which he has directed the Finance Department to clear all the pending bills relating to sanitation, food and equipment supply.

In addition to these, 76 Covid Care Centres across the State will house 45,240 beds, ensuring the availability of at least 3,000 beds in each district to take care of the asymptomatic cases and mild cases. Furthermore, each district is sanctioned with an amount of Rs 1 crore for improving medical infrastructure, which will be managed by medical teams with nursing and paramedical teams.

## Three hospitalised for snakebite

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The first snakebite incident was reported in Krishna district in the rainy season. As many as one farmer and two farm labourers were bitten by a viper in Movva mandal of Krishna district on Friday. As the sowing season has started, farmers are busy in tilling and sowing. G Chintiah (35), Mariyamma and one another were working in Chintiah's farmland when a viper bitten them.

Initially, they were provided home remedies for the snakebite as the situation worsened they were rushed to the government hospital in Movva. With the timely treatment of Dr S Sivarama Krishna, they reportedly recovered and were stated to be out of danger.

## Dube encounter draws parallels with Cyb encounter

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The killing of gangster Vikas Dubey and some of his henchmen in a series of alleged encounters in Uttar Pradesh is reminiscent of a similar incident here in which four people, accused of rape and murder of a veterinary doctor, had met a similar fate in December 2019. In the Cyberabad incident, all the four accused were killed at one go in an exchange of fire.

Police in both the cases claimed that the suspects 'snatched' their weapons and opened fire at them forcing them to retaliatory action 'in self-defence'. Dubey was shot dead on Friday by police, who claim he was trying to flee after the car carrying him from Ujjain overturned on the outskirts of Kanpur.

He was the sixth man to die in a police encounter after the ambush he allegedly masterminded in Kanpur's Bikru village past midnight on July 2, killing



eight policemen who had come to arrest him. Earlier, five members of Dubey gang were killed in separate encounters. Surprisingly in both the Kanpur and Cyberabad encounters, the accused were not handcuffed while they were being taken in vehicles before the alleged retaliatory firing took place resulting in their deaths.

The snatched weapons were in

'unlocked' position and the slain accused were not handcuffed when the firing took place, the Cyberabad Police Commissioner VC Sajjanar had earlier said when asked whether they were handcuffed. According to Cyberabad police on the night of November 27, 2019, the four accused kidnapped the woman veterinarian and killed her after sexually assaulting her, and then

shifted the body in a lorry to Chattanpalli near here where it was burnt under a culvert. They were arrested on November 29.

They were killed in police firing on December 6, 2019 at Chattanpalli when they were taken to the scene of crime near the culvert, under which the charred remains of the 25-year-old veterinarian were found on November 28, to recover her phone, wrist-watch and others pertaining to the case.

The Cyberabad police had claimed that its personnel resorted to 'retaliatory' firing after two of the accused opened fire after snatching their weapons besides attacking them with stones and sticks, resulting in injuries to two policemen. The Telangana government had set up a Special Investigation Team to probe the killings. In December last year, the Supreme Court appointed a three-member inquiry commission headed by former apex court judge V S Sirpurkar to probe the case.

## MURDER OF YSRCP LEADER MOKA BHASKAR RAO

# Police twisted facts to implicate Kollu, alleges TDP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Telugu Desam Party official spokesperson K Pattabhi Ram on Friday alleged that Krishna district police twisted facts and submitted a 'flawed remand report' to implicate TDP BC leader and former Minister Kollu Ravindra under pressure from YSRCP leaders.

Pattabhi Ram objected to the police claim that they arrested the main accused Chinta Chinni, Chinta Nancharaiiah and Chinta Kishore on July 2 when they had actually surrendered at the Pedana Police Station on June 29 evening itself. They surrendered within seven hours on the same day after YSRCP leader Moka Bhaskar Rao was murdered.

Addressing a press conference here on Friday, he demanded that Krishna District Superintendent of Police M Ravindranath Babu submit the CCTV footage of Pedana and Guduru Police Stations. It was a fact that the media reports, including pro-government, clearly gave visual details of how the three accused first surrendered at the Pedana police station on the day of murder, and how they were brought to Guduru Police Station later. But the remand report was full of glaring and deliberate errors.

He said the remand report narrated that after the YSRCP leader was murdered at 11.30



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am on June 29, the main accused ran away from the spot and then rode a bullet and went towards Pedana road. Then, at 11.40 am, they reportedly called one Rizwan, who gave the phone to Kollu Ravindra, who was stated to have congratulated them before giving further directions.

The police should explain how within 10 minutes between 11.30 am and 11.40 am, the accused could commit the murder and then go out of the Bandar town far away into the fields on Pedana road from where to speak to Kollu Ravindra. The remand report

narrative was undoubtedly full of fiction and not based on facts. It was all clearly aimed at implicating the TDP BC leader.

Pattabhi Ram asserted that when murder took place, Kollu Ravindra actually visited the offices of District Collector and the SP to complain against YSRCP irregularities in Village Secretariats. Between 11.40 am and 12.40 pm, Kollu Ravindra was at the SP office. Unfortunately, the remand report stated that Kollu Ravindra spoke to the murder accused from the SP chambers. From this, it was evident how much eager the police were to please their political bosses.

## Rajamouli posted as Special Officer for Covid

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

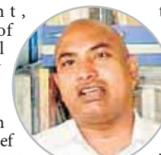
AV Rajamouli, IAS officer, who is waiting for posting, has been posted as the Special Officer, Hospital Preparedness & Extension Secretary to the government, Department of Health, Medical and Family Welfare (HM & FW).

Neelam Sawhney, the Chief Secretary to the government, has issued posting orders to Rajamouli to this effect here on Friday.

It may be recalled that Rajamouli was the Secretary in the Chief Minister Office when N Chandrababu Naidu was at the helm. After Jaganmohan Reddy became the Chief Minister, Rajamouli was kept

aside for almost a year and was given posting on Friday as a Special Officer for Covid. He is a native of Krishna district, a B Tech graduate from Andhra University with specialisation in Instrumentation. He was the topper in Civil Services-2003 examination and was first posted in Uttar Pradesh.

As the Special Officer, Rajamouli shall exclusively monitor the arrangements of all State and District Covid Hospitals. The government has undertaken several measures, including strengthening of surveillance for prevention, containment and control of Covid-19. As a part of containment, the government has set up Covid Care Centres and Quarantine Care Centres.



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## Scientists worry dengue may aggravate Covid-19

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

While the number of COVID-19 cases races towards the 8,00,000 mark with



7,93,802 cases on Friday and 21,604 fatalities, the incidence of dengue is also high.

Based on 2016-2019 data, virologist Shahid Jameel estimated that India gets about

100,000 to 200,000 confirmed cases of dengue each year.

According to the National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme (NVBDCP), 1,36,422 dengue cases were

diagnosed in 2019 and an estimated 132 people died.

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

Both COVID-19 and have symptoms such as high fever, headache and body pain.

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

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

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

Once the dengue season starts, added virologist Upasana Ray, the infection spreads aggressively due to high prevalence of its mosquito vector, aedes aegypti.

Each season, we experience heavy loads in the hospital wards due to dengue outbreak and those times it gets almost

unmanageable. So, have we thought about what will happen when we have two menaces to handle together? Both of them have overlapping symptoms. Are we geared to distinguish if a person has dengue or COVID-19? asked the senior scientist, CSIR-IICB, Kolkata.

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

Considering the current numbers of COVID-19 patients, will our hospitals have beds available for dengue patients? Or will only severe dengue cases be handled at hospitals? she asked.

## Fraudsters use Geetha Arts to trap models

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Cyber Crime Police of Hyderabad have registered a case against an unknown person, who claimed to be an employee of Telugu movie production company Geetha Arts, and tried to duping models and actors.

"The fraudster created an Instagram account claiming to be a costume designer at Geetha Arts. He approached models and actors, claiming that they were soon starting a Tamil film and to send him money if they wanted a role in it," said KVM Prasad, ACP, Cyber Crimes.

At least three persons approached the management and alerted them about the fraudster. Realising that the reputation of the company was at stake, Satya Gami, the executive producer of the company, lodged a complaint with the Cyber Crime Police. The Cybercrime police booked a case and are investigating.

# Ensure welfare schemes reach eligible, orders CM

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy instructed officials to ensure that no eligible person is left out from availing of any welfare scheme implemented by the government.

During a review meeting on the implementation of various welfare schemes held here on Friday, the Chief Minister said that one month grace period was given to the eligible persons for various schemes to avail the benefit. He directed officials to verify the application and see that all eligible persons get the benefits.

Following are the schemes, which were being implemented by the government-YSR Vahana Mitra (June 4), Jagananna Chedodu (June 10), YSR Nethanna Nestham (June 20), YSR Kapu Nestham (June 24)-YSR Vahana Mitra was advanced by four months and YSR Nethanna Nestham was given six months ahead due to the Corona pandemic.

YSR Nethanna Nestham was launched on December 24 under which every weaver, who owns a loom will be given financial assistance of Rs



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24,000. Due to Covid-19, the second round was given six months in advance. Any eligible person, who did not get the benefit, was asked to apply

within one month. The Chief Minister has asked officials to clear applications of all eligible candidates, who missed on June 20.

## Adivasis to get RoFR pattas on Aug 9: Jagan

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy directed officials to settle the claims of Adivasis on their rights of forest land and make arrangements to distribute the same to them on Adivasis Day on August 9. He was reviewing the implementation of the Recognition of Forest Rights (RoFR) and claims of Adivasis on the forest land at his camp office here on Friday. Deputy CM Pamula Pushpa Srivani and officials of the Revenue, Tribal Welfare departments attended the meeting. The Chief Minister instructed officials to provide cultivate rights to every Adivasi, who is eligible for it. "An action plan should be prepared to develop the cultivable land after the Adivasis were given pattas," he said adding that they should also be advised on the varieties of crops to be cultivated in those lands.

# Agriculture brings more profits than aqua culture

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

To mark the National Fish Farmers Day, a webinar was conducted by ICAR-Central Institute of Freshwater Aquaculture, Bhubaneswar, on Friday which was attended by MVS Nagi Reddy on behalf of Andhra Pradesh farmers.

The webinar was attended by Dr JK Jena, Deputy Director General, ICAR, New Delhi, Dr SD Tripathi, former Vice-Chancellor, CIFE, Mumbai, Dr N Sarangi, former Director, CIFA, Bhubaneswar, and Dr SK Swain, Director, CIFA, Bhubaneswar.

Speaking on the occasion, Nagi Reddy insisted that unless and otherwise economical success is there, farmers will not adopt the technology.

He stressed that there is no alternative to Indian Major Carps in aquaculture as regards sustainability. He urged the policymakers to implement the programmes that help in increasing fish consumption in the country. "Unlike shrimp, entire fish produced in the country must be sold in domestic market. Hence, there is no alternative than increasing domestic consumption. Due to the disruption of transport system during Covid-19 lockdown, it was not possible to sell



fish in other markets. Now fish is marketed at a rate of 25 to 30 per cent of normal market. As a result, farmers are incurring heavy losses. A huge amount of fish is retained in ponds being unable to harvest," he disclosed.

"On an average, carp farmers are losing Rs 10 per kg as against Pangas farmers, who are incurring loss of Rs 5 per kg. Present market crisis has resulted in spite of proactive and supportive roles paid by the Central and State governments. Increasing production levels in fish without putting efforts to increase fish consumption will lead to still worse situation as in some agriculture sectors," he said.

"Fish production is increasing in most of the States in the country. Production costs are increasing. Profitability reduced to minimum levels. This is making sustainability a big question mark. Farmers migrat-

**"Unlike shrimp, entire fish produced in the country must be sold in domestic market. Hence, there is no alternative than increasing domestic consumption. Due to the disruption of transport system during Covid-19 lockdown, it was not possible to sell fish in other markets. Now fish is marketed at a rate of 25 to 30 per cent of normal market. As a result, farmers are incurring heavy losses. A huge amount of fish is retained in ponds being unable to harvest," he disclosed**

ed to fish culture because of more profits than paddy culture. Now the situation has come that profits in aquaculture are at par with agriculture. We need not surprise it may be even less than paddy culture in future. Other farmers made mention about diversification of indigenous species, availability of quality seed, improvised vehicles for fish transport, cultivation of genetically improved fish," he said.

## Triage Centre to function from July 11

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

District Collector MD Intiaz informed that people infected with Covid-19 virus and wish for home quarantine will be tested at the Triage Centre and permission will be granted based on their condition. The Collector visited the Triage Centre set up at Bishop Azariah Girls High School here on Friday.

Speaking on the occasion, he said that the Triage Centre will start functioning from July 11 and people, who opt for home isolation, tests will be conducted from 1 pm to 5 pm with the advanced medical equipment. ECG, BP, fever, oxygen levels, chest X-Ray and blood tests will be conducted. Based on the report, they would assess if the infection is mild or severe. After the assessment, the patient will be given medicines for 10 days and the medical officer and ANMs will visit once in 10 days and examine the patient.

He said that home isolation is recommended to people below 50 years and as per the test report. If the infection is severe, they would be referred to the hospital. At the Triage Centre there would be two doctors, four nurses, four technicians and a data operator.

## Bodies of Covid victims dumped into pit...

Continued from Page 1

Nellore Revenue Divisional Officer (RDO) Hussain Saheb has been appointed as the special officer to conduct the inquiry.

A video of the burial of those who died of Covid-19 in Nellore district is going viral. The district collector has ordered an inquiry. As Nellore RDO and sub-divisional magistrate, I have been appointed as the investigation officer. I am conducting an inquiry and after completion of the same will submit my report to the collector," Hussain Saheb said.

Leader of opposition and former Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu tweeted on Friday that he was pained to see bodies of Covid-19 victims in Nellore being disrespectfully thrown into a single pit using an earthmover. "This is happening time and again. The Jaganmohan Reddy government must offer an apology to the grieving families who wished for a respectful departure for their loved ones," tweeted the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) chief.

This is the third such incident

in the state in two weeks. On July 6, municipal authorities in Tirupati used a JCB excavator to lift the body of a Covid victim from an ambulance and dump it into a pit.

Health workers pushed the body onto the excavator, which carried it to a pit and dumped the body in it. The municipal authorities defended the move saying the body weighed nearly 180 kgs. Tirupati Municipal Commissioner P.S. Girisha said they had to bury the body as the attempt by the municipal staff to cremate it had failed.

In a similar incident in Palasa town of Srikakulam district on June 26, body of a Covid victim was shifted from his house to the cremation ground on a JCB excavator. In another incident in the same district, Covid victim's body was transported in a tractor. Taking a serious note of the incidents, the government has suspended six officials.

Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy had expressed anguish for the inhuman act of transporting the mortal remains of Covid-19 patient through JCB excavator and ordered the immediate suspension of the officials.

## Buggana in Delhi to get dues to AP released

Continued from Page 1

He pointed out that the early release of these funds to the state will ensure uninterrupted delivery of essential services to the citizens, especially in view of the additional support that the local bodies require to battle the Covid-19 pandemic.

Buggana said that a total amount of Rs 3,832.89 crore was due to the state towards GST compensation.

With regard to Polavaram irrigation project reimbursement, he wanted the Centre to reimburse the balance amount of Rs 3,805.62 crore to the state government at the earliest. Buggana requested the Union Finance Minister to intervene for the early release of balance amount of Rs 700 crore for the development assistance to Backward Districts. Referring to revenue deficit grant, he requested the early release of the balance amount of Rs 18,830.87 crore, as claimed by the state government.

In his meeting with Minister of Jal Shakti Gajendra Singh Shekhawat, Buggana under-

lined the need to set up revolving fund and reimburse the funds spent by the state government on Polavaram project.

"We requested the Union Minister to reimburse the funds spent by the state government. In order to avoid delay, we suggested setting up a revolving fund that would make it easier to withdraw funds immediately after spending on Polavaram project. In the normal course, the Jal Shakti Ministry recommends to NABARD and then to Finance Ministry for payment which takes a longer time," he said.

"If the Polavaram Project Authority has a revolving fund, it would be easy to get the funds from it. We also discussed new projects, Uttarandhra Sujala Sravanthi, Rayalaseema irrigation projects, drinking water projects concerning districts of Goavadari, Prakasam, YSR district," Buggana Rajendranath explained.

"Streamlining the process of reimbursement by authorizing NABARD to provide a direct line of credit as a "Revolving Fund" with the

PPA," he pointed out.

In the interest of realisation of the benefits under the Polavaram project by the farmers, he requested the Union Minister to direct the concerned for early reimbursement of Rs 3,805.62 crore already incurred by the AP State government.

He also wanted the Union Minister to authorise NABARD for raising credit for Rs 15,000 crore, required for the project activities, in the current financial year.

In his meeting with Kishan Reddy, Buggana requested him to ensure that the provisions in the AP Reorganisation Act are implemented.

The State Finance Minister met Niti Ayog CEO Amitabh Kant and Advisor Avinash Mishra and requested them to recommend funds for various projects in the state.

The Finance Minister was accompanied by Principal Advisor to AP Government Ajeya Kallam, Special Chief Secretary (Water Resources) Adityanath Das, Principal Secretary, Finance Department S.S. Rawat.

## Muslim sanitises temples, churches; charges just Rs 2

Continued from Page 1

"I was advised not to do sanitisation of temples and churches by some of members of my community. But, my understanding of Quran and Hadith is doing good work for mankind can never be a sinful act. A few temples were also hesitant initially, but my work brought about a change in their hearts. So, I have continued my work spending about Rs 83,000 towards the sanitisation spray and PPEs. I have single-handedly sprayed about 2,900 litres of a mixture of sodium hydrochloride, ammonium chloride and camphor."

He has set an example for many youth inspiring some of them to carry sanitisation work. Many organisations have come forward to offer him monetary help recognising his work, but Khan has turned them down politely. Extending his services, he is sanitising the old age homes too, bringing smiles to the faces of elderly persons who appreciated the work being done by Khan saying how children are also least bothered about their parents.

## PD Act invoked against ganja peddler

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In an effort to root out drug smuggling activities from the Rachakonda Commissionerate to create a sense of safety and security among the family system and to ensure that college going students and youth do not fall prey to the drug mafia, the Rachakonda Commissioner of Police invoked the PD Act against a gang member for illegal possession and transporting ganja from Andhra Pradesh to Hyderabad and Maharashtra.

The detained person, 22-year-old Varthiyavath Bhaskar and his associate, Kethavath Prakash, have been running travels business 'MY CAR RENTAL SERVICE' at Hayathnagar. They used to rent cars to customers at Rs 3,000 per day.

One of their customers, Ramavath Pandu, proposed to the duo, to form a gang to transport ganja from Visakhapatnam and sell it in Maharashtra and Hyderabad for higher prices. All the three accused invested equal



amounts in the business and also shared profits equally.

They were caught by the police in March 2020 and two cases were registered against them at police stations under the limits of Rachakonda Police Commissionerate. Police seized 100 kgs of ganja and Rs 30,000 cash and a car, which was used for transporting ganja from their possession.

With a view to preventing him from committing such illegal activities and to preserving public health, the preventive detention orders were invoked against him by Mahesh Bhagwat, Commissioner of Police, Rachakonda, on Friday, while he was detained at Central Prison, Cheralapally.

## Villagers banish Covid-19 patient's family to cattle shed

Continued from Page 1

"We do not go out to buy groceries or vegetables to avoid the questioning gaze of people. Even the traders do not want us to come there," they added. The family members of the Covid-19 patient are requesting the officials of the Medical and Health and Police departments to shift them to a quarantine centre immediately as they may die of hunger if they stay in the cattle-shed for some more days.

## Pithani under ACB lens, aide arrested

Continued from Page 1

The High Court reserved its orders on their petitions. Pending the outcome of their plea, Suresh has gone underground. The former minister, however, alleged that the ACB authorities were targeting his son in the ESI scam only as part of political vendetta against him. "They registered a case against my son by intimidating the other arrested so as to target me personally," Pithani said. Stating that making recommendations was part of politics, the former minister said his son had not indulged in any wrongdoing. "The cases are all part of political witch-hunt," he claimed.

## Towns go for self-imposed lockdown

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Following rise in number of Corona positive cases in the state, many towns are going for self-imposed lockdown. Imposing self lockdown curfew on the market, traders and vendors in the towns have decided to run their businesses between a scheduled time.

The measure was taken to curb the spread of Covid in densely packed areas. Already many villages across the state opted for self-imposed lockdown. Now Peddemul mandal in Vikarabad district joined the list by



going for self-imposed lockdown on Friday. Earlier, towns like Devarakonda declared self-imposed lockdown due to rise in number of Corona positive cases. In Vikarabad district, shop owners, hotels, dhabbas

and others in Peddemul mandal headquarters have decided to close their shops voluntarily for one week. The traders urged the public representatives to extend their support in this regard as the mandal headquarters registered three Corona positive cases.

Also, traders in Arvapalli, a mandal headquarter of Jajireddygudem have decided to close their shops for few days to keep Coronavirus at bay. Meanwhile, Devarakonda town police urged people not to venture out unnecessarily as Corona cases are increasing manifold in the state.

## Endangered pangolin rescued from residential area in Vizag

Continued from Page 1

Normally, pangolins stay in a forest area and due to the recent gas leakage incidents, this particular beast may strayed into the residential area in the city. Deputy Forest Range Officer K Ramu said that the pangolin was taken to a veterinarian at Indira Gandhi Zoological Park in Vizag. "If it is found to be in good health, we will release the animal into the forest," he said. Indian pangolin is an endangered species in India. It is also the world's most hunted as well as most trafficked animal, forest officials said.

# Jagan's Arogyasri decision puts KCR in a fix

Continued from Page 1

This is not the first time Jagan's decisions in AP have created pressure on KCR and fuelled similar demands in Telangana. When Jagan merged APSRTC into state government last year, it fuelled similar demand in Telangana which led to TSRTC employees going on strike for nearly three months last year.

KCR was the first CM in the country to announce salary and pension cuts for state government employees and retired staff in March this year citing financial crisis on account of corona. Jagan too followed suit.

However, Jagan restored full salaries from May in AP, leading to Telangana government employees and pensioners too demanding full salaries.

This forced KCR's hands, and he had little option but to restore full salaries and pen-

## State unable to even save doctors...

Continued from Page 1

"Many unsavoury incidents have taken place. The Prakasam District Medical and Health Officer was made to stand for coming late for the review meeting. Anantapur DMHO was personally humiliated. The DMHOs of Srikakulam and Nellore were being forced to go on leave," Naidu said in his statement.

The TDP chief said no ex gratia was given to the kin of the doctors who died in Vijayawada, Tenali and Nellore.

sions from June.

What is causing more embarrassment to KCR is that people are questioning him that when Jagan, who is heading a revenue-deficit

"Unfortunate things are taking place across the state. Doctors were forced to stage a dharna in Visakhapatnam for masks. Lab technicians protested in Ongole demanding personal protection kits. Just for asking for mask, Dalit doctor Sudhakar was beaten in the middle of the road with lathis and humiliated. Indecent videos were leaked on Dr Anitha Rani in Chittoor," Naidu said.

He deplored that instead of rescuing people by encouraging frontline warriors, the

YSRCP Government was busy indulging in irregularities and scams everywhere. "On one hand, Coronavirus cases are rapidly increasing in the State while on the other, scams and corrupt activities by the ruling party leaders were growing in all programmes and projects at a greater speed. At least now, the Government should leave its adamant attitude and start giving compensation to doctors and staff who died in the line of duty. PPE kits should be provided to all the frontline workers," Naidu said.

Several BC associations too have been requesting KCR to bring Covid-19 into the purview of Arogyasri like in AP.

revenue-surplus state like Telangana do the same. Though the Telangana government has fixed a cap on the treatment for Covid-19 in private hospitals, not one of

them is following this rule. If the Telangana government itself reimburses the treatment cost like in AP, there will be no trouble for people for poorer sections and employees, pensioners.

It's not just the ultimate beneficiaries who are demanding that KCR emulate Jagan — BJP leaders went a step ahead and demanded that the state government implement the Ayushman Bharat scheme of the Centre in Telangana.

"KCR has rejected the Central government scheme saying that the Arogyasri is better than Ayushman Bharat. Now, he is refusing to include Covid-19 in the Arogyasri scheme," said BJP state president Bandi Sanjay. Several BC associations too have been requesting KCR to bring Covid-19 into the purview of Arogyasri like in AP.

## Realtor kidnapped for...

Continued from Page 1

Vizag City Police Commissioner Rajeev Kumar Meena said that the two accused, habitual offenders, are kinglypins in the case and committed the crime with the help of four other members of the gang.

The commissioner said Prathap Reddy is known to the victim Jami Suresh. The accused Prathap and Prasad are friends for many years and involved in several criminal activities. The duo hatched a plan to kidnap to extort money from Suresh, he said.

The victim Jami Suresh was also involved in criminal activities in the past. They planned to kidnap Suresh and extort money from him, as they believed that he had made a lot of money illegally. They believed that he would not inform the police since he wouldn't be able to explain the source of his ill-gotten wealth," said the commissioner.

On June 25, Prasad came to the city along with his family and stayed in a lodge. According to him, after committing the crime, he would leave Vizag with his family to avoid suspicion.

Before the kidnapping, the duo conducted a dry run for some days and on July 5, they kidnapped Suresh near DRM office and took him to a place near Parawada in Vizag city.

They beat up Suresh badly and demanded Rs 5 crore in cash from.

The badly injured Suresh promised to pay them Rs 30 lakh, that too by selling gold ornaments.

But when they went to their home, his wife refused to part with the gold since he had sold gold many times. Meanwhile, Suresh's son, seeing the injury marks on his father, called up 100 (Police Control room). After noticing that call, the kidnappers fled from the spot.

The police traced and arrested the two accused.

## Rebel MP Raju moves HC against police cases

Continued from Page 1

The High Court admitted the petition and posted the case to a later date for hearing. Apparently, the MP feared that the police might arrest him in the criminal cases, so as to trouble him for revolting against the YSRC leadership. It may be mentioned that state housing minister Ch Srinanganath Raju had filed a case against Raju in Poduru police station and Bhimavaram MLA Granthi Srinivas in the local police station. Both of them accused the MP of abusing them in foul language and calling them "pigs". They also alleged that Raju had sought to create caste conflicts in the West Godavari district leading to law and order issues.

# Vikas Dubey's killing raises handcuffing issue vis-a-vis SC guidelines

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The alleged encounter killing of dreaded gangster Vikas Dubey on Friday has kicked up dust over his not being apparently handcuffed by the police, against the backdrop of the Supreme Court's disapproving the practice in various orders, calling it "inhuman, unreasonable, over harsh and arbitrary". The police, on the other hand, has all along been supporting handcuffing at various judicial forums on the ground that the practice has been quite helpful in ensuring that a dreaded accused or convict does not flee the custody.

The apex court has from time to time issued a slew of directives on the procedure to be followed while handcuffing an undertrial, maintaining that the insurance against escape does not compulsorily require handcuffing.

According to police, Dubey was killed after he tried to escape from the spot in Bhauli during



his transit from Ujjain to Kanpur and their car met with accident.

It said the gangster snatched a pistol from one of the policemen injured in the accident and was shot when he opened fire while trying to flee, an account being questioned by opposition parties in Uttar Pradesh. Six policemen, including two from the Special Task Force, were hurt in the accident and the exchange of fire around 6 am, an official said.

With this incident, the debate over handcuffing criminals while taking them from one place to another has ensued once again.

The apex court in 1995 held that minimal freedom of movement cannot be cut down by application of handcuffs or other hoops.

It had categorically stated that handcuffing of prisoners without judicial consent was illegal. "We clearly declare -- and it

**The apex court has from time to time issued a slew of directives on the procedure to be followed while handcuffing an undertrial, maintaining that the insurance against escape does not compulsorily require handcuffing**

shall be obeyed from the Inspector General of Police and Inspector General of Prisons of the escort constable and the jail-warden -- that the rule, regarding a prisoner in transit prison house and Court house, is freedom from handcuffs and the exception, under conditions of judicial supervision we have indicated earlier will be restraints with irons to be justified before or after," the apex court said.

## Justice killed in UP CM's 'encounter raj': TMC

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Senior TMC leader and MP Mahua Moitra came down heavily on the UP government on Friday over the killing of gangster Vikas Dubey, asserting that justice is the "only thing killed" in CM Yogi Adityanath's "encounter raj". Dubey was killed in an encounter earlier in the day, after a police vehicle carrying him from Ujjain in Madhya Pradesh to Kanpur in Uttar Pradesh met with an accident in the Bhauli area of Kanpur district and he tried to flee. "It is the job of the courts to deliver justice. Shocking that India under @BJP has confused the two," Moitra said in a tweet.

## Cong demands judicial probe by sitting SC judge

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Friday demanded a judicial probe by a sitting Supreme Court judge into the entire episode involving gangster Vikas Dubey to bring out the truth about those who had granted protection to him and the alleged political-criminal nexus in Uttar Pradesh.

Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said at a press conference that the killing of the gangster in an encounter raises several questions and sought answers on who were the people sitting in echelons of power who were granting protection to criminals like him. Dubey was shot dead Friday by police, who claim he was trying to flee after the car carrying him from Ujjain overturned on the outskirts of the city.

"Congress demands that the unholy nexus between organised crime and the ilk of Vikas Dubey with those sitting in the echelons of power be probed by a sitting Supreme Court judge," Surjewala said at a press conference. Congress general secretary



Priyanka Gandhi Vadra also demanded a judicial probe by a sitting SC judge into the entire Kanpur episode in which eight policemen were killed by Dubey. "The Congress demands a judicial inquiry by a sitting Supreme Court judge that should conduct a probe into the entire Kanpur incident and bring out its truth before people. "The truth about those who nurtured and protected criminals like Vikas Dubey should come out. Till the time this truth and the nexus between politicians and criminals does not come out, justice will not be done to those eight policemen who were killed by him," Gandhi said.

### SHORT READS



#### Karnataka CM under home quarantine after staff test positive

**BENGALURU:** Karnataka Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa has been home quarantined and his office-cum-residence here sealed after some of the staff there tested positive for coronavirus. According to a close aide of the CM, his office-cum-residence 'Krishna' has been sealed for five days for sanitisation after some staff tested positive for the virus. This is the second time the office has been shut. About a month ago, the building was closed for disinfection after a relative of a police constable posted there was infected by the virus. In a statement on Friday, 77-year-old Yediyurappa said, "I am going to discharge my duties from home from today for the next few days in view of some of the staff in the office-cum-residence Krishna testing positive for Covid-19."

## Four Maoists killed in Bihar close to the Indo-Nepal border

PNS ■ PATNA

Four alleged Maoists were killed early on Friday by security personnel in Bihar's West Champaran district, close to the India-Nepal border, in an operation that also led to the recovery of sophisticated weapons from a hideout, a top official of the Sashastra Seema Bal (SSB) said here. According to Sanjay Kumar, IG, SSB, Patna, the gun battle took place at around 4.45 am and one security personnel was injured by a bullet.

"We had received specific information about a group of Maoists hiding at the forest surrounding the Valmiki Tiger Reserve. Accordingly, an operation was planned taking in the loop the police station con-



cerned, Lokeria in Bagaha," the official told PTI over phone.

Kumar said the Maoist group was led by Ram Babu Sahni alias Rajan, who fled the scene, though his deputy Bipul besides three others were killed in the encounter. A search operation was underway to nab Sahni, the SSB official stated.

"The recoveries include an

AK-56 rifle, three SLRs and a .303 rifle. Gunshots were fired by the Maoists and one of these hit the forearm of SSB jawan Rituraj, though he is out of danger," Kumar added. Meanwhile, in Munger district, which is several hundred kilometres away, naxals struck at a village where they killed two persons by slitting their throats, a police officer said.

## NGT seeks report on dumping of solid municipal waste in J-K

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

The National Green Tribunal has directed the authorities in Jammu and Kashmir to file an action taken report on alleged dumping of solid municipal waste in the Wullar Lake. Hearing a petition filed by social activist Raja Muzaffar Bhat, the NGT directed the collector of Baramulla district and the PCB of Jammu and Kashmir to file a factual report and an action taken report by the next date of hearing on October 15. "In view of the allegation and photographs annexed, we find it necessary to require a factual and action taken report from the member secretary of state Wetland Authority," the tribunal said.

## 4 of family buried alive in landslide as Arunachal grapples with incessant rains

PNS ■ ITANAGAR

Four members of a family, including an eight-month-old baby, were buried alive as a massive landslide hit their house in Arunachal Pradesh's Papum Pare district in the early hours of Friday, even as the state grappled with a series of earthfalls due to incessant rains, officials said.

The landslide that occurred around 2.30 am in Tigdo village buried the house with all the occupants sleeping, Papum Pare Deputy Commissioner (DC) Pige Ligu said.

The bodies were retrieved from the debris by police and NDRF personnel with the help of locals, he said.

The house belonged to Tana Neka and the deceased were his two sons, daughter-in-law and



grandchild, Ligu said. However, Neka and his wife are safe as they live in another house, he added.

Those killed were identified as Tana Martin (22), his wife Yabung Lindum, daughter Tana Yasum (eight months) and brother Tana John.

With this, the death toll due

to monsoon-related incidents in the state has climbed to 11. Chief Minister Pema Khandu expressed grief over the deaths of the four persons. He announced an ex-gratia amount of Rs 4 lakh each to the next of kin of the deceased, which will be released immediately.

## Woman wanted in gold smuggling case booked under UAPA: NIA

PNS ■ KOCHI

A former woman employee of the UAE consulate, key suspect in the gold smuggling bid through diplomatic baggage, has been booked under the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, the NIA informed the Kerala High Court.

Making the submission while opposing the anticipatory bail application of Swapna Suresh, who is on the run, the counsel for the Centre and the National Investigation Agency (NIA) said she had criminal antecedents and that she was 'involved' in arranging diplomatic papers for the smuggling of the gold seized by the Customs recently.

Custodial interrogation of the woman was required to ascertain her role, the counsel



for the NIA, which has been asked by the Centre on Thursday to probe the smuggling bid through Thiruvananthapuram international airport, said.

After hearing the submissions, Justice Ashok Menon adjourned till next Tuesday the plea of Suresh.

The judge declined the prayer of the petitioner seeking interim protection against arrest.

## HC refuses to entertain plea against law final yr online exams

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court Friday refused to entertain a petition challenging the Bar Council of India's (BCI) notification directing the universities across the country to conduct final year law examinations through online mode.

The petition filed by two law students claimed that since the law colleges were not able to complete the syllabus and conduct classes due to the COVID-19 pandemic, they could not be permitted hold examinations.

A bench of Justices Hima Kohli and Subramonium Prasad, which was conducting the hearing through video conferencing, said the concerns raised by the petitioners refer to the issues that are pan-India and it cannot go into it as one of the petitioner student is not studying in a university



over which the Delhi High Court has jurisdiction.

When the court expressed its view that it was not inclined to entertain the petition in its present form, the petitioners' counsel sought permission to withdraw the plea.

The high court allowed the students to withdraw the petition and granted liberty to approach the Supreme Court.



The petition was filed by two law students, a final year student in the Delhi University's Campus Law Centre-I and a third year law student in Karnataka University's five-year LLB course. Besides the BCI's notification, the plea also challenged the Delhi University's June 27 notification on conducting online examinations for final year students.

## CISCE declares class 10, 12 results; no merit list

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Council for Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE) on Friday announced results for class 10 and 12 exams even as it decided against bringing out a merit list this year in view of "exceptional circumstances".

The board had to cancel its pending exams in view of the spike in COVID-19 cases and the result has been calculated on the basis of an alternative assessment scheme decided by it.

As per the results announced, a total of 2,06,525 candidates have cleared the class 10 exams, known as the Indian Certificate of Secondary Education (ICSE), while 1,377 candidates have been unsuccessful. The class 12 exams, called the Indian School Certificate (ISC) exam, have been cleared by 85,611 candidates while 2,798 students have been unsuccessful.

"Given the exceptional cir-



cumstances, this year CISCE will not be publishing a merit list for either the ICSE or ISC year 2020 Examinations," CISCE Chief Executive and Secretary Gerry Arathoon said. "This year has been an exceptionally difficult year for everyone due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the multiple national and states' lockdowns, coupled with many other related problems," he added.

The board had last week announced an alternate assessment scheme for the two classes after the pending exams were cancelled in view of a spike in COVID-19 cases.

#### 26 more BSF personnel test positive in Meghalaya

**SHILLONG:** Twenty-six more personnel of the BSF have tested positive for COVID-19 in Meghalaya, taking the number of infections in the border-guarding force in the state to 91, Chief Minister Conrad K Sangma said on Friday. They are all posted at the Border Security Force (BSF) frontier headquarters in Umpling, which has been declared a containment zone. A senior health official said more tests will be conducted among the BSF personnel. Around 300 personnel and their families reside within the campus, while nearly 50 personnel along with their families live outside the compound, a BSF official said. The state now has 121 active COVID-19 cases, the chief minister said. So far, 45 patients have recovered from the disease.

## Scientific, medical journals adopt new processes to review, publish studies faster: Experts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Under pressure from the flood of studies submitted to them during the COVID-19 pandemic, medical and scientific journals are adopting new processes, including seeking help of volunteer rapid reviewers, to scrutinise the research articles and expedite the process by which they are reviewed, experts say.

Citing an example of the current burden on journals, Howard Bauchner, Editor-in-Chief of the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA), noted that from January to June, 2020 over 11,000 manuscripts were submitted to the publication, compared to about 4,000 submitted during the same period in 2019. When a study manuscript is submitted to an academic journal, as part of the peer-review process, experts in the field are asked to evaluate its scientific validity, offer insight into its impact, and provide opinion of its worthiness for publication.



"The substantive evaluation of, and opinions from reviewers with subject matter knowledge and with methodological and statistical expertise are invaluable in assessing the scientific rigor and plausibility of study findings," Bauchner and his colleagues noted in an editorial published in JAMA last month.

However, experts, including Ritu Dhand, Vice President, Editorial, Nature Journals, said the pandemic has made the

process even more challenging. "This volume and the speed with which research is being produced is certainly challenging for all parties involved in the assessment and publication of research," Dhand told PTI in an email.

Jennifer Zeis, Director, Communications at the New England Journal of Medicine (NEJM) noted that the peer-review duration has shrunk.

"The process has not changed

**"This volume and the speed with which research is being produced is certainly challenging for all parties involved in the assessment and publication of research," Dhand said**

for COVID-19, other than review deadlines are expedited," she said in an email.

Many experts say this need for speed amidst the pandemic is leading to faulty research getting published.

For instance, two COVID-19 studies were retracted from the high profile journals The Lancet and NEJM in May, after more than 100 scientists questioned their validity.

Commenting on the retrac-

tions, Elisabeth Bik, a microbiologist and leading expert in the analysis of images used in published studies, said these could be the result of hastened reviewing of research manuscripts.

"Normally peer-review takes months, and now it takes in some cases a day or a week," Bik, who is based in the US, said.

Editors at JAMA, including Bauchner, mentioned a similar shrinking of timelines for editorial evaluation and peer-review from what used to take months.

With the willingness of external peer reviewers to provide rigorous analysis within two to three days, they said the journal on select occasions could publish studies within 10 to 12 days of submission by the authors.

"Rapid publication can only be done if authors, scientific editors, and manuscript editors are available to review and revise the manuscript every day during that period," the JAMA editors noted.

### COVID-19 EFFECT:

## Rajasthan govt planning to cut short school syllabus for this year

PNS ■ JAIPUR

Taking a cue from the CBSE, the Rajasthan government is planning to cut short the syllabus for the current academic session on the basis of number of working days of schools.

The state government has directed the Rajasthan Board of Secondary Education (RBSE) and the Rajasthan State Council of Educational Research and Training (RSCERT) to form a committee and review the syllabus.

"Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the number of working days of schools has reduced so the Directorate of Secondary Education, Bikaner has directed the Board of Secondary Education Ajmer and RSCERT, Udaipur in this regard to take a decision to cut the syllabus in education and students' interest. Soon, a final decision will be taken," School Education Minister Govind Singh Dotsara



said. He said the Directorate of School Education releases a working days calendar every year but it is yet to be released for this academic session.

Instructions have been given to the Rajasthan board for reviewing the syllabus of classes 9 to 12 and the RSCERT to review the syllabus for classes 1 to 8. They will form a committee and review the course, he said. According to the School

Education Department, the number of working days from July 2019 to March 2020 was 207, including 27 workdays in July. If the schools remain closed after July, then workdays will further reduce. The Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has rationalised the syllabus for classes 9 to 12 for the academic year 2020-21 by up to 30 per cent to make up for academic loss caused due to COVID-19.

SHORT READS



**Pak shells border areas in Rajouri, Army personnel killed**

**JAMMU:** A 36-year old Army personnel was killed in a ceasefire violation by the Pakistan Army along the Line of Control (LoC) in Rajouri district of Jammu and Kashmir on Friday, officials said. Pakistani troops opened fire and shelled forward posts along the LoC in Nowshera sector in the early hours. Havildar Sambur Gurung was injured in the firing and rushed to a hospital where he succumbed to injuries. Indian troops guarding the borderline retaliated, resulting in exchanges, they said. A defence spokesman said, "Havildar Sambur Gurung was a brave, highly motivated and a sincere soldier. The nation will always remain indebted to him for his supreme sacrifice and devotion to duty".

**Prohibitory order on fake social media posts not extended: Govt**

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

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

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

**SC refuses to entertain plea for moratorium on school fees**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

Advocates Balaji Srinivasan



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Rahul Gandhi seeks cancellation of varsity exams**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Defence PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

Gandhi participated in the 'SpeakUpforStudents' campaign by the Congress party



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

and posted a short video message on Twitter.

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

"The UGC must hear the voice of students and academics. Exams should be cancelled and students promoted on the basis of past performance," he also tweeted.

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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



Vijay Vineet, a reporter, and Subhash Rai, Editor-in-Chief of Jansandesh Times, for reporting on issues that concern the plights of people during the lockdown period, the PCI said. Since the matters concern free functioning of the press, the PCI Chairman has viewed it with concern and called for comments from the government of UP.

**8.8 cr footfall recorded at health centres under Ayushman Bharat**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

Despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic,



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

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

In her complaint filed on Tuesday, the woman said that she was sacked from the job the same day, and alleged sexual harassment by the lounge's general manager and the duty manager, police said.



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

**KERALA ELEPHANT TRAGEDY: SC seeks reply of Centre, 13 States on plea against barbaric practices**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Friday sought response from Centre, Kerala and 13 other states on a plea challenging the barbaric practices to ward off wild animals terming them as illegal and unconstitutional and violating Article 14 and 21 of the Constitution.

The plea filed by an advocate has also sought issuance of guidelines for creation of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) to tackle such incidents and filling up of vacancies in forest forces across the country.

A bench of Chief Justice S A Bobde and Justices R Subhash Reddy and A S Bopanna issued notice to Centre and 13 states



including Kerala and sought their responses.

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

Constitution.

Petitioner Subham Awasthi in his plea has referred to an incident of Kerala, where a pregnant elephant recently died after eating a pineapple stuffed with firecrackers, offered to her allegedly by some locals.

**HC suggests VC facility for prisoners, families**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

**TABLIGHI JAMAAT: Delhi court grants bail to 82 B'desh nationals**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

The police had in June filed 59 charge sheets, including supplementaries, against 956 foreigners belonging to 36 different



countries in the case. The accused who were granted bail Friday will file their plea bargaining applications on Saturday, said advocates Ashima Mandla, Mandakini Singh and Fahim Khan, appearing for them.

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

The total number of confirmed cases included foreigners. Of the 475 new deaths reported, 219 are from Maharashtra, 65



from Tamil Nadu, 45 from Delhi, 27 from West Bengal, 17 from Uttar Pradesh, 16 from Karnataka, 15 from Gujarat, 13 from Andhra Pradesh, 9 from Rajasthan, eight from Bihar, seven from Telangana, six from Assam, five each from Haryana, Madhya Pradesh, Jammu and Kashmir and Punjab, four from Odisha and one from Chhattisgarh, Goa, Jharkhand and Meghalaya.

Of the total 21,604 deaths reported so far, Maharashtra

tops the tally with 9,667 fatalities followed by Delhi with 3,258 deaths, Gujarat with 2,008, Tamil Nadu with 1,765, Uttar Pradesh with 862, West Bengal with 854, Madhya Pradesh with 634, Rajasthan with 491 and Karnataka with 486.

The COVID-19 death toll reached 331 in Telangana, 287 in Haryana, 277 in Andhra Pradesh, 183 in Punjab, 154 in Jammu and Kashmir, 115 in Bihar, 52 in Odisha, 46 in Uttarakhand and 27 in Kerala.

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

"We can say the curve seems to be flattening, though this virus is novel and can spring a



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

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

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

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

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

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

Health Ministry on Friday. However, 82,226 cases have recovered and 21,567 cases are still active. The number of active figures is the lowest in 28 days.

The peak came on June 23 when the city recorded 3,947 fresh cases. For three days after that, there were 3,000 cases a day. But then the figures dipped.

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

2,494 compared to 3,446 cases the previous week. The trend has continued -- July 4 (2,505), July 5 (2,244), July 6 (1,379), July 7 (2,008), July 8 (2,033) and July 9 (2,187). The positivity rate in Delhi has been consistently going down as well - from 31 per cent in the June 8-14 week to 11 per cent in June 29-July 5 week, according to official figures.

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

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

## Encounter the truth

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



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

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

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

## New film locales

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



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

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

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

# Passivity and its causes

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



HIRANMAY KARLEKAR

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

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

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



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

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

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

advertising a reach and impact it never had before, has become the principal vehicle of the consumer culture. The consumer culture, which determines the content of television, including advertising, spawns passivity because it undermines an individual's autonomy. Advertising plays a critical role. In many cases, one would not even have known of a product's existence but for it being advertised. Nor would one have bought a product if advertising had not promoted it in glowing terms. The act of buying it is thus an externally-induced passive exercise.

It is not just one act of buying. Advertising not only projects commodities as irresistible objects themselves but also their possession as an indication of one's worth and status — for example by projecting that only a person of a certain class can own a certain brand of suit or a stratospherically-priced car. Given the ubiquity and the audio-visual appeal of advertisements, other criteria of status and worth such as scholarship and superior creativity in the arts, for example, writing and painting, get relegated. An increasing ability to buy things and enjoy services becomes the principal goal of a progressively large mass of people and, as a consequence, the defining quest of the consumer culture.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## SOUNDBITE

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



Tibetan spiritual leader —Dalai Lama

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



Actor —Divya Dutta

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



WHO chief —Tedros A Ghebreyesus

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



Senior TMC leader —Mahua Moitra

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Rough ride

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

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

### A new education paradigm is needed

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

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

private players, do not have to discard railway travel altogether. The Government of a "welfare state" like India should always remember that providing service at an affordable rate to the weaker section of the populace must be its priority. This cannot be compromised.

Kajal Chatterjee  
Kolkata



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

G David Milton  
Maruthancode

### Overhaul education

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

Partition and citizenship among other subjects.

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

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

Bhavik Jain  
Via email

### The race is on

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

Juhi Singh  
Via email

Send your feedback to:  
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

## EIA 2020 needs more teeth

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



KOTA SRIRAJ

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

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

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

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

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

(The writer is an environmental journalist)

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

IT'S THE JOB OF COURTS TO DELIVER JUSTICE. IT'S THE JOB OF THE POLICE TO DELIVER THE ACCUSED. INDIA UNDER THE BJP HAS CONFUSED THE TWO.  
 —TMC MP MAHUA MOITRA



THERE IS NO NEED TO SHED TEARS OVER THE KILLING OF DUBEY IN AN ENCOUNTER. WHY IS THE POLICE ACTION BEING QUESTIONED?  
 —SHIV SENA MP SANJAY RAUT

# Stop population explosion

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



BALWANT MEHTA SIMI MEHTA ARJUN KUMAR

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Family planning is an effective tool to ensure a stable rise in the population, which in turn is crucial for the achievement of some of these SDGs. The Government at all levels — Union, State and local, citizens, civil societies as well as businesses — must take the responsibility to promote awareness and advocate the sexual and reproductive rights of women and encourage the use of contraception. This would go a long way in ensuring that every child who is born would prove to be an asset for the country, as all the research shows that investing in family planning and well-being measures have significant benefits over per Rupee spent *vis-à-vis* other investments.

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

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

# China the emerging ring master of Nepal?

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



RISHI GUPTA

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

On the other hand, Nepal's ruling

Communist Party (NCP) has intensified its demand for Oli's resignation for failing to contain COVID-19, derailed the economy, endangering the right to freedom, including that of the Press, and accusing India of conspiring against him politically. Amid all this, Oli can be seen misusing his power to influence the office of the President in unilaterally issuing ordinances to ease the process of splitting a party to protect his position as Prime Minister in case his party splits.

Although the Standing Committee of the NCP has lashed out at Oli for misusing his power and accusing India, Oli has turned a deaf ear to such calls and is openly entertaining Chinese assertiveness in the domestic and foreign affairs of Nepal. If reports in the Nepalese media are to be believed, it is Oli's arrogance that has driven his pro-China campaign, at the cost of destroying friendly ties with India. While Oli's new-found love for China is a challenge to India, a proactive and meddling Beijing is a bigger concern for Nepal itself.

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

not paying heed since recent moves by the Chinese Ambassador in Nepal are aimed to protect his interests.

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

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

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

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

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

The frequent meetings between

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CAPSULE



**Sensex sheds 143 pts on weak global cues**

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

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

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



**Tata Motors reports decline in group global wholesales**

**MUMBAI:** Tata Motors on Friday reported a 64 per cent decline in group global wholesales, including that of Jaguar Land Rover (JLR) to 91,594 in June quarter of the current financial year over year-ago. Global wholesales of all Tata Motors' commercial vehicles and Tata Daewoo range in Q1FY21 were at 11,598 units, lower by 89 per cent over Q1FY20. Tata Motors said in a regulatory filing. Global wholesales of all passenger vehicles in June quarter of the current fiscal dropped 49 per cent to 79,996 units over the same quarter of the previous fiscal, it said. Global sales of JLR stood at 65,425 vehicles in the June quarter, it said adding that Jaguar wholesales units during the period were 17,971 vehicles, while Land Rover wholesales for the quarter were 47,454 vehicles.

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

He added to further fuel the growth of hardware and IoT

startups in India, T-Hub has partnered with MeitY to take the ecosystem to the next level so that innovative startups can scale-up strategically.

"T-Hub brings its matured acceleration programme with access to customers, investors and specialised mentors," he said. The batch of startups will go through regular interventions through bootcamps and dedicated mentoring organised by T-Hub.

During the program, startups will get exposure to design/enhance their hardware, the statement said.

In addition, they will receive mentorship in areas such as pricing, go-to-market strategies and fund raising, amongst others. As part of the program, the shortlisted startups will also receive equity-free grants, it added.

**'Higher offtake by FCI can boost procurement agencies liquidity'**

PNS ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

Under the PM Garib Kalyan Ann Yojana, free distribution



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

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

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

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

**Maha Hotels assets declared fraud**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ LONDON

Britain and India will be the "energetic champions" of free trade to boost small businesses, UK Foreign Secretary Dominic Raab said on Friday as he pitched the two nations as leaders in tackling challenges posed by the coronavirus pandemic.

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

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



Dominic Raab

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

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

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

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

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



**Engineering firms' Q1 revenue to take a hit**

PNS ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

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

**Unichem Labs gets nod for spasticity relief tablets**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Drug firm Unichem Laboratories on Friday said it has received approval from the US health regulator to market its Baclofen tablets indicated for alleviation of spasticity resulting from multiple sclerosis.

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

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ REWA

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

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

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

The Rewa solar power plant



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

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

Modi said self-reliance in electricity is integral for

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

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

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

but are complementary to each other, the PM said.

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

Mercedes-Benz India said it witnessed positive momen-



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

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

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

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Top five private sector banks may see their slippages double to 5 per cent this fiscal due to the poor loan offtake and the moratorium-driven contraction in net interest margins, warns a report. These five banks--HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank, Axis Bank, Kotak Mahindra Bank, IndusInd Bank and Yes Bank--collectively control a quarter of the system and three-fourths of the private banking space, according to a report by India Ratings on Friday.



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

contraction in their net interest margin," says the report. As loan demand remains tepid, banks are parking their excess liquidity in low yielding alternatives such as government bonds and top-rated corporate securities due to their

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

On the other hand, growth in deposits for these top five private banks in FY20 was 18.8 per cent which was 18.5 per cent in FY19, while loan growth declined to 15 per cent from 19.1 per cent during this period. Additionally, the Reserve Bank has injected Rs 1.7 lakh crore of liquidity into the system over the last six months through open market operations and secondary market purchases.

**NSE to accept gold bars produced locally**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Leading stock exchange NSE on Friday said it will accept gold bars produced by the domestic refiners for settlement of the gold futures contracts traded on its platform.

For this, the exchange launched NSE Refiner Standards (NRS) for BIS - Standard Gold - which will be effective from Friday, July 10.

"The NSE Refiner Standards for BIS - Standard Gold would enable the acceptance of gold



bars produced by the domestic refiners in India, for settlement of the gold futures contracts traded on the NSE platform," the exchange said in a statement.

Until Thursday, NSE accepted serially numbered gold bars produced by London Bullion

Market Association (LBMA) approved refiners for settlement of the gold contracts traded on the commodity derivatives segment of the exchange.

The introduction of NRS for BIS - Standard Gold will facilitate greater participation from the domestic market players in the exchange traded deliverable bullion commodity derivatives by widening the scope of acceptable bullion commodity for delivery on the platform, the National Stock Exchange (NSE) said.

**US bans PIA ops over dubious licences issue**

PNS ■ ISLAMABAD

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

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

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



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

The Express Tribune reported quoting sources that the US

**Decision has been taken after 262 Pak pilots were grounded, whose licences were termed as 'dubious'**

been revoked.

The US officials said that the ban had been imposed because of the recent issue of suspected pilots' licences in PIA.

PIA was allowed to operate 12 direct special flights to the United States of which the air-

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

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

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

## Time for some **SELF-LOVE**

With so much uncertainty around and people losing jobs, it's hard finding a new one. Here are some ways to effectively stay motivated and reaffirm what you already know

**L**osing a job is one of the most stressful experiences. Whether you've been laid off, downsized or forced to take an early retirement, not only does it affect your pocket and other finances but it may also take a toll on your mental and emotional health.

We don't do a job merely to make a living. For many, it is so much more. It's not only a medium to complete our career goals but it also shapes our perspective towards people, changes how we see and interpret the world and influences our decisions to a great extent. It helps us explore ourselves, our interests and potential. Suddenly, finding oneself out of work can be hurtful or depressing. One

might even start questioning one's own identity and potential, even losing self-belief and confidence at times.

Given such testing times like today with a pandemic at hand, when the market is starved of funds and adequate resources, it has become even harder for millennials to plan their way ahead. And due to so much uncertainty, while many are facing pay cuts, many have already lost their jobs.

Talking about my personal experience, I really miss the feeling of seeing my account getting credited at a particular time each month. I understand the pain and distress people are feeling upon losing jobs at the moment. The prospect of not knowing when your next paycheck will come is a daunting one.

Well, it's never the best feeling if you lose a job. However, that doesn't mean you give up. In fact, it means that now is the time to work harder than ever and look for that silver lining. Here are some ways to effectively stay motivated when you're unable to find a new job.

### DON'T GIVE UP

It's time to dust yourself off, get your act together and get back in the game. Give yourself some recovery time to get over the shock, but then, get serious. Give yourself some love and reaffirm what you already know. Think about it: is this your opportunity to change your career (and life)?

### FOCUS ON YOUR FUTURE

Experts suggest that creating a plan for your future is a good way to start. Think of the things you can do and how you're going to get your next job. Focussing on the future will help you get a new job much faster than concentrating on the past and any mistakes you may have made.

### ASK FOR SUPPORT FROM YOUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY

Unemployment doesn't just affect you, it affects your entire family as well. Instead of keeping the problem to yourself, ask for support from your friends and family members. Your support group will help you get through this awful part of your career and propel you forward.

### STAY HEALTHY

Mental and physical health are interlinked. It is highly recommended not to host a pity party for yourself, daytime TV and junk food. Being physically

fit as well as mentally strong will help you remain focussed on the challenge at hand. Now is a good time to indulge in some online workouts or healthy cooking experiments. Doing something other than job-hunting will serve you well.

### STAY POSITIVE

I know it is not easy but it is possible. Getting into a negative cycle will probably be the most counter-intuitive thing to do at the moment. Instead of allowing yourself to feel negatively about your job loss, you can list everything you did well at your recent job and use it to keep yourself positive while looking for a new job or opportunity.

### LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES

Every challenge brings its own set of opportunities. You might not be able to see them at the moment but keep looking irrespective. Some of the world's biggest businesses started during some sort of crisis. The Great Depression, Subprime and others.

### EXPLORE A HOBBY

While you are at home, finding work, dig in what you really like and develop the hobby as you have the time to do it, which you never had or had limitations for. This will help you explore a new reason to keep yourself occupied and happy. Hobbies related to art also help you be at peace and have a stable mind.

### TAKE A SHORT TRIP

Well, during a lockdown it is suggested to take a trip only if safe, otherwise it's good to space out between two jobs, as it gives an individual a clarity of thought and helps to be

more productive at the same time. The job you will be applying for might come your way when you are not waiting for it but approaching it.

### READ MORE

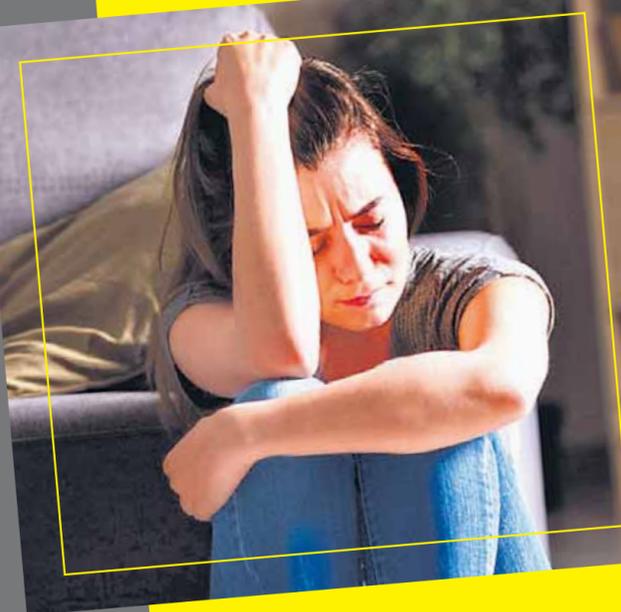
While I know, it sounds cliché, reading e-books, blogs and books definitely help your mind to declutter and create space for you to perform. Read motivational stories and books like *The Secret*, *F@ckKnows*, and other such.

### TAKE AN APTITUDE TEST

When on a break, or no job mode, it's better to go back and explore the reason why you ended up where you are.

### UNLEARN AND LEARN

Unlearn the negative aspects of yourself and learn a new course on writing, digital management, website making, profile building. There are over 1000s of different digital courses available on Google. Get certified while you are looking for a new job. As you have something to look forward to your day which is time bound! (The author is Devashree Sharma Tiwari, co-founder, *The Glutton and The Owl*.)



## Dared to make her dream a reality

### SHIKHA DUGGAL

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Keeping the spotlight on an inclusive environment for sellers, *Mirchi.com* seems to be an impressive start-up ensuring women entrepreneurs have equal access to the investment business. To keep her going, apart from this, Poornima Mittal practices aerobics at home to continue to focus on her life.

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

— POORNIMA



## Vivek Anand Oberoi to play mysterious character in his next

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

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

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

Mishra.

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Bollywood celebs to reveal secrets on new show

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

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

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

The Flipkart Video show also presents an opportunity for select fans to win a

chance to personally connect with their Bollywood idols.

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



## Mira Nair to direct Jungle Prince of Delhi series

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

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

the fallen kingdom.

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

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

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

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

### FUN

#### ARCHIE

#### CALVIN AND HOBBS

#### GARFIELD

#### REALITY CHECK

#### SPEED BUMP

#### CROSSWORD

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

#### NANCY

#### SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

**ACROSS**

- Gigantic
- The organs of sight
- Cardboard box
- Move on hands and knees
- Hurt by a bee
- Twelve times twenty
- Yell
- Gave out a long deep breath to show sadness or happiness
- A sheet-like garment worn in ancient Rome
- Think differently to someone else

**DOWN**

- Do these to strengthen your muscles and keep fit
- A sung musical drama
- One time
- Make longer by pulling
- A place to see animals
- A frightening dream
- Observed
- A small
- Counts up
- Unwell

**SOLUTION**

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



Most Read NEWS

15th Century Chinese encyclopedia sells for \$9M

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



'Screaming banned' on roller coasters!

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



Dancing robots replace fans

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



Notre Dame spire will be restored 'as it was'

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



VAR dominates Premier League results

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Manchester United's Paul Pogba, centre, celebrates with teammates after scoring his team's third goal against Aston Villa

"In the world, everybody knows that is a penalty. And I say everybody, I mean everybody."

— JOSE MOURINHO (SPURS MANAGER)

"Anybody who has played the game knows what (Bruno) Fernandes is trying to do. He does the turn and he gets it wrong. He puts his stud on Konsa's shin. It changed the game."

— DEAN SMITH (ASTON VILLA BOSS)

"The performance of the referee was like my team, not so good."

— CARLO ANCELOTTI (EVERTON MANAGER)

Real-Juve, Barca-Bayern clashes in the offing

Barcelona and Bayern Munich will meet in the quarter-finals of the Champions League should both sides make it through, Friday's draw for the final eight confirmed.

Both teams still need to complete their last-16 ties, with Bayern almost there having won 3-0 away to Chelsea in the first leg, while Barcelona are due to host Napoli after a 1-1 draw in Italy.

Meanwhile, if Man City can finish the job in their last-16 tie against Real Madrid, Pep's team will go on to a quarter-final against either Juventus or Lyon. City won 2-1 in Madrid in the first leg in March, while Juventus must overturn a 1-0 deficit from the first leg of their last-16 tie against Lyon.

Postponed in March as the coronavirus pandemic took over, all remaining last 16 second legs are due to be played on August 7 and 8. The winners will advance to the Final Eight, which will be held as a unique straight knockout tournament in Lisbon due to the difficulties caused by the coronavirus.

The draw threw up the possibility of a Clasico semi-final, with Barcelona and Madrid on collision course to meet in the last four should both make it that far.

The other side of the draw is clearer. First-time quarter-finalists RB Leipzig will meet Atletico Madrid, runners-up to city rivals Real the last time the Champions League final was played in Lisbon in 2014.

The winners of the Leipzig vs Atletico quarter-final will face either Paris Saint-Germain or Atalanta in the last four.

The quarter-finals will be played between August 12 and 15 in the Portuguese capital, with matches shared between Benfica's Estadio da Luz and Sporting's Estadio Jose Alvalade.

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



English, German clubs on opposite ends of UEL draw

Manchester United could find themselves facing English rivals Wolverhampton Wanderers in the semi-finals of the Europa League in Germany in August, after Friday's draw for the latter stages of the tournament put the teams on a collision course.

While the Champions League is to be completed with a straight knockout mini-tournament in Lisbon, the Europa League will be played to a conclusion with an identical format in Germany.

The Europa League final will be played in Cologne on August 21. The quarter-finals and semi-finals will be played as one-off ties with Cologne, Duisburg, Duesseldorf and Gelsenkirchen all hosting games.

Before that, all last-16 ties must be completed. Ole Gunnar Solskjaer's United, who have been in fine form since the Premier League season resumed last month, are effectively already through to the last eight having won 5-0 away to Austrian side LASK in the first leg.

Assuming they progress, the 2017 Europa League winners will take on either Istanbul Basaksehir or FC Copenhagen in the quarter-finals on August 10 or 11. The Turkish side beat Copenhagen 1-0 at home in the first leg in March.

Meanwhile, Wolves drew 1-1 away to Olympiakos in the first leg of their last-16 tie. They are due to host the recently-crowned Greek champions in the return and would then need to beat Sevilla — who have won the Europa League and its precursor, the UEFA Cup, a record five times — or Roma in the quarter-finals.

There are three German teams left in the Europa League, including Bayer Leverkusen. They won 3-1 away to Rangers in the first leg of their last-16 tie and will be confident of advancing to the last eight.

Leverkusen is barely 40 kilometres from Cologne, where the final will be played. They would play either Inter Milan or Getafe in the quarter-finals.

Only six of the eight last 16 first-leg matches were played in March. The other two ties — Inter vs Getafe and Sevilla vs Roma — will be decided as one-off matches on neutral ground.

Henderson season is over: Klopp

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

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

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



need surgery," Klopp said. "He will not play again this season."

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

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

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

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

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

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

"The same referee who did the VAR decision against

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

BRUNO EMULATES RONALDO'S FEAT

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

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

Slow and steady Windies build their lead

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Broad 'frustrated, angry, gutted' at being dropped

SOUTHAMPTON: Seasoned England pacer Stuart Broad on Friday said he felt "frustrated, angry and gutted" after being dropped from the opening Test, adding that he sought clarifications over his future in the team.

The hosts opted to go for James Anderson, Mark Wood and Jofra Archer alongside stand-in captain Ben Stokes and spinner Dom Bess, leaving out Broad from the first Test which started at Ageas Bowl on Wednesday.

Broad, who is England's second highest wicket-taker of all time with 485 scalps, last missed a home Test eight years ago when he was rested against West Indies in 2012.

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

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



Red Bull dash Vettel's hopes of a return

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

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

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

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

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

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

Agencies

Verona snatch late 2-2 draw vs Inter

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

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

That means Inter stay fourth with 65 points, having been overtaken by Atalanta after their 2-0 win over Sampdoria on Wednesday, and are 10 adrift of leaders



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have lost more important points," said Conte.

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

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

Spinners are being taught new methods to shine ball: Mushtaq

IANS ■ WORCESTER

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

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

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



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

ing with the new regulations with regards to shining the ball as well.

"Historically, spinners have used saliva to shine the ball now they are being taught new methods in lieu of the revised ICC rules and regulations.

"What makes me really happy is that the players and support staff are working together on team goals and objectives and I am sure in due course the players will be fully aware and ready for the new challenges as we prepare for what is expected to be a tough series against a strong English team in their own backyard.

"I am confident we have the players that can not only compete but also win the series."

PCB forced to sell logo rights for lower price

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

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

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

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



# Shine Screens to bring together the combination of CHAY-INDRAGANTI

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

duction house, the project would've gone in front of the cameras by now if not for COVID-19 outbreak. The source chips in, "Indraganti committed to do a film for Shine Screens long back. He proposed the name of Naga Chaitanya for the project. With the production house already enjoying a great relationship with the actor, having produced his super hit Majili

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

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



## Aadi Saikumar signs an investigative crime-thriller

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

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

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



## Anand croons Middle Class Melodies

Bhavya Creations chief V Ananda Prasad on Friday announced the title of his next with Anand Deverakonda and Varsha Bollama as *Middle Class Melodies*. He also indicated the film, which marks the directorial debut of Vinod Anantoju, is wrapped up and the first copy is ready. He said, "Middle Class Melodies is our effort to associate with content-rich cinema. The story unfolds in Guntur back-

drop, which is why it has been shot over there, in surrounding areas and in Kolakaluru. The characters speak the local dialect. We initially considered releasing it during the summer but due to the pandemic, we had to change our plans." The film is a romantic comedy-drama with a lot of family emotions woven into the script. It centres on Anand's aim in life and how his dreams are pegged back due to familial and love reasons. Vinod promised

that the audiences will be able to identify with the characters he wrote. "Anand's role will be in complete contrast to what he essayed in Dorasani," he noted. Featuring Chaitanya Garikapati, Divya Sripada, Goparaju Ramana, Surabhi Prabhavathi, Prem Sagar and Prabhavathi Varma in supporting roles, the film, written by Janardhan Pasumarthi, is a Sweekar Agasthi (C/O *Kancharapalem* fame) musical.



**RADHE SHYAM IT IS!**

Pan-India star Prabhas' next with Jil fame Radha Krishna Kumar has been titled *Radhe Shyam*. On Friday, the title was unveiled with a fairy-tale-like first look wherein the lead pair of Prabhas and Pooja Hegde is seen in an embrace as a sea storm forms around them in a fiery landscape. The love-up dance pose against a dramatic backdrop of Italy's landmark historical monuments like the Colosseum and the Roman Forum sent Prabhas' fans into tizzy. Within minutes of the big reveal, the hashtag #Prabhas-20FirstLook took a top spot on Twitter trends nation-wide. "This is for you, my fans! Hope you like it," Prabhas wrote in an Instagram post while Pooja Hegde labeled Radhe Shyam as "Our beautiful film has a beautiful name... here's our much awaited first look."

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

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

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

## Prakash Raj and Sampath headline Exchange of Fire

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



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

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