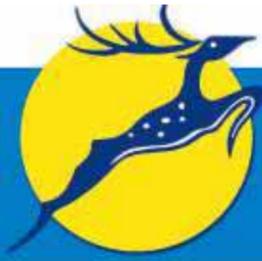


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THE AGE OF
JUDICIAL POPULISM

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CRICKET: ISHANT

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the pioneer



DEEPIKA IN
PRABHAS'
NEXT?
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PARTS OF TAJ MAHAL COMPLEX
SUFFER DAMAGE IN THUNDERSTORM

A deadly thunderstorm that rolled across northern parts of the country damaged sections of the Taj Mahal complex, including the main gate and a railing running below its five lofty domes, officials said Sunday.



SECURITY FORCES BUST MILITANT
HIDEOUT IN J-K'S KULGAM

Security forces busted a militant hideout in Jammu and Kashmir's SKulgam district and recovered a number of items including ammunition, police said here.



CURFEWS IN MAJOR US CITIES AS RACE
PROTESTS ESCALATE AFTER MAN DIES

Curfews were imposed on major US cities as clashes over police brutality erupted across America with demonstrators ignoring warnings from President Donald Trump that his government would stop the violent protests "cold."



RAUT BLAMES TRUMP'S GUJARAT
EVENT FOR VIRUS CRISIS IN MAHA

Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut on Sunday alleged that the event held in Ahmedabad to welcome US President Donald Trump in February was responsible for the spread of coronavirus in Gujarat and later in Mumbai and Delhi.



Beneficial agriculture through regulatory farming
2

Even a 'Bahubali PM' could not face corona pandemic: Kapil Sibal
5

PM to share his vision on 'Getting Growth Back' with India Inc
8

State govt in contempt of HC orders, says SEC

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

State Election Commissioner Nimmagadda Ramesh Kumar on Sunday said that the State Government was violating the orders of the High Court by objecting to his resuming duties and he would ask the HC to hold the Government in contempt.



Court order means automatic SEC reinstatement: Yanamala

The AP High Court judgment means automatic restoration of Nimmagadda Ramesh Kumar as the State Election Commissioner, said TDP senior leader and MLC Yanamala Ramakrishnu on Sunday.



He said that with the High Court on summer vacation, he was yet to decide whether to file a petition with the vacation bench or after the summer vacation.

TTD officials prepare to open Tirumala shrine for devotees

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

TTD chairman YV Subba Reddy on Sunday inspected Vyunkuntham queue complex atop Tirumala Hills as the temple prepares to welcome back devotees, most likely from June 8 onwards.

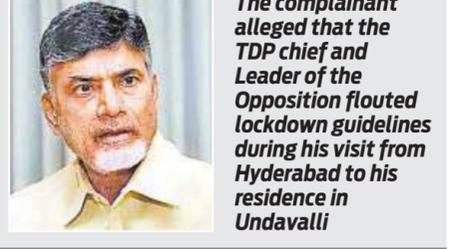


After an experimental study, residents of Chittoor district are likely to be allowed to have darshan. The darshan tickets would be allotted in the form of time slots.

Naidu booked on charges of violating lockdown rules

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Nandigama police of Krishna district on Sunday registered a case against Telugu Desam Party N Chandrababu Naidu on charges of flouting the lockdown norms in place to curb the spread of Coronavirus.



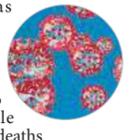
The complainant alleged that the TDP chief and Leader of the Opposition flouted lockdown guidelines during his visit from Hyderabad to his residence in Undavalli.

places where he had his party cadre welcome him without following any Covid-19 preventive measures. At all the places Naidu stopped, the TDP men were clearly seen crowding around the vehicle not wearing face masks and grossly ignoring social distancing.

No letup in Covid cases, 110 more infected

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Coronavirus cases saw a biggest spurt in a single day so far in Andhra Pradesh as 110 were added, taking the overall tally to 3,571 while two more deaths were reported, taking the toll to 62 on Sunday.



RACE RIOTS IN US



Justice needs to be served: Indian hotelier

PNS ■ WASHINGTON

Unfazed by the fire that burnt down his Indian restaurant amid raging protests over the cold-blooded murder of George Floyd, the owner of a popular Minneapolis eatery backs protesters, saying "let my building burn, justice needs to be served".

It was just doors away from the Third Precinct headquarters of the Minneapolis Police Department, which was set ablaze by protesters on Thursday night. Unperturbed by the loss, Ruhel Islam, a 42-year-old Bangladeshi owner of the Indian restaurant, voiced his support for the protests that closed his family's main source of income.

Group clash over land dispute leaves 1 dead

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

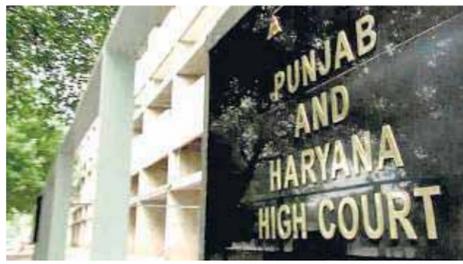
A clash between two groups of students, trying to 'settle' a property dispute, left one youth dead in Penamaluru Mandal in the district here on Saturday. Identifying the victim as Sandeep, DCP Harshavardhan said that the reason behind the clash was dispute over the ownership of an apartment.



Casteist remarks made in private not an offence: Court

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Punjab and Haryana High Court has ruled that the use of the casteist words during a phone call, away from public view, does not amount to an offence under the SC/ST Act.



rea (the intention or knowledge of wrongdoing that constitutes part of a crime) to humiliate the complainant who besides being Sarpanch, belongs to Scheduled Caste community.

capable of being taken cognizance under the SC and ST Act, 1989," said the judge. The counsel for the petitioners had argued that the allegations made against the petitioners do not fall within the provisions of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989 as the telephonic call is not in a public view.

Extensive rains likely in Rayalaseema, TS

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The low-pressure area formed between the south-eastern and east central Arabian Sea is likely to intensify into a deep depression within the next 24 hours, according to a weather bulletin monitored by the Met office here on Sunday.

Chhattisgarh to Lakshadweep islands encompassing the Telangana, Rayalaseema and south central Karnataka regions. Meanwhile, the Met office hinted at South Westerly monsoons entering Kerala on June 1. Under its influence intermittent rains are likely at various places in Telangana during the next 72 hours.

TODAY
ALMANAC
Month & Paksham: Jyesthitha & Shukla Paksha Panchangam
Tihti: Dashami: 02:56 pm
Nakshatram: Hastha: 01:03 am (Next Day)
Time to Avoid: (Bad time to start any important work)
Rahukalam: 07:22 am - 08:59 am
Yamagandam: 10:36 am - 12:14 pm
Varjyam: 10:43 pm - 12:12 pm
Gulika: 01:51 pm - 03:28 pm
Good Time: (to start any important work)
Amritakalam: 07:32 pm - 09:00 pm
Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:48 am - 12:40 pm
VIJAYAWADA WEATHER
Forecast: Partly cloudy
Temp: 39/28
Humidity: 56%
Sunrise: 06:47 am
Sunset: 05:41 pm
Current Weather Conditions
Updated May 31, 2020 5:00 PM

A survey conducted by the government seems to have arrived at a decision that a majority of farmers are in favour of regulatory farming in Telangana. This is a good augury. The government which has already announced its policy in favour of this, will obviously stand in support of farmers. Agriculture will be abundantly benefited through regulatory farming leading to creation of over Rs 1 lakh-crore of wealth and also a wealthy farmer. The existence of Telangana and its 65 lakh farmers is dependent on agriculture. This unorganised sector was totally neglected in undivided AP as a result of which farmers suffered tremendously. Agriculture faced a crisis. After Telangana state was formed, thanks to umpteen welfare measures taken by the government, the situation has improved. Traditionally, the farmer has always been at crossroads with regards to his product. If he wanted to sell, there were

Beneficial agriculture through regulatory farming

no buyers, and if needed buy, the price was beyond reach. The state government has made several attempts to bring in a much desirable change in the farm sector, and it is still working in this direction. The State government is solving problems faced by the agriculture sector one by one - major irrigation projects are being completed and water would be plentiful by next farming season. There is round the clock quality power supply. Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Rao has reiterated time and again that much more needs to be done to improve the lot of the farmers by making agriculture not only remunerative but highly profitable. This would ensure that Telangana is shaped into the Rice Bowl of India. It was with this goal that

Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Rao has reiterated time and again that much more need to be done to improve the lot of the farmers by making agriculture not only remunerative but highly profitable

KCR has envisaged the new Agriculture Policy. This presupposes, in the words of KCR, that the practice of every farmer preferring the same crop should be done away with. The main reason why farmers are not getting competitive price for their produce is that a majority cultivates the same crop. Henceforth, the department of agriculture will suggest the kind of crop to be grown in a particular field in a regulatory manner. The department will also identify the suitability of soil for a particular crop for a better yield in a given season. The food

needs and habits of the population, market demand, export opportunities etc. would be taken into consideration. The future of agriculture should be promising. Farmers should be able to earn profits by selling quality produce in the world market, wants the CM. Previous governments did not bother about the agriculture sector. Farmers used to cultivate crops according to their convenience. Since everyone cultivated the same crop, there was every likelihood of price drop. The scenario is such that even those who prefer sowing



VANAM JWALA NARASIMHA RAO
CPRO to Chief Minister

paddy opt for the coarse variety, as the cultivation period is less. However, a majority of the people prefer only the fine variety rice. Now that we have water facility for irrigation, farmers should opt for fine variety paddy. Telangana Sona rice is developed by scientists. This variety is good for diabetes patients and experts have rat-

ified it as sugar-free rice. The Glycemic Index percentage is low in Telangana Sona variety. American journals state that this rice is healthy. Hence it is desirable to go for it. There is demand for groundnut, red gram, oil palm in the market. We should identify other such crops and then decided the extent of land that can be used to grow these crops. There is a scarcity of fruits and vegetables in the State. It requires a deep study on what percentage these can be cultivated. There should be an attitudinal change among the farmers to cultivate crops that are in demand and which are in tune with eating habits of the people. During last monsoon, paddy was cultivated in about 40 lakh acres in the state. It's proposed that paddy should be cultivated in the same extent of land this year too.

Cotton should be increased to 70 lakh acres from the 53 lakh acres last year. Likewise, red gram should be cultivated in 15 lakh acres from the 7 lakh acres last year. Soya bean, turmeric, chilli, vegetables and other such crops would be cultivated in the same extent of land. Farmers producing variety of seeds should continue their efforts. It is felt that maize cultivation is not beneficial during the monsoon and hence should not be cultivated during the season, but during Rabi. Those cultivating maize during the monsoon should switch over to cotton and grams. It's desirable if the farmer is cautious about paddy and cultivate those varieties that have demand in the market like the Telangana Sona. Cluster-wise farmers' conferences to create awareness among farmer about the reg-

ulatory farming methods are being organised to explain the vision of government. Since it was decided that crops as identified by the government would be cultivated, seeds of the crops identified by the Seed Regulatory Authority set up by the government henceforth would be sold. Against this backdrop, there should be a change in the use of fertilisers and pesticides. Since farmers have no proper knowledge on the matter, they are trusting the traders and using fertilisers and pesticides. Farmers are to be educated and informed about the correct usage of fertilisers and pesticides in moderate quantities and their benefits. They should also be informed that crops which used more fertilisers will not have any demand in the international market.



Parcel, luggage booking from June 1

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Vijayawada Division has loaded record 3,000 tonnes of essential commodities through Special Parcel trains during the lockdown. To keep the supply chain intact, the Vijayawada Division has focused on the supply of essentials by transporting a large number of commodities through Special Parcel trains to different parts of the country. During the lockdown period, a total of 3,000 tonnes of essential commodities like lime, iced fish, eggs, ghee tins, mangoes, perishables and other essentials, including 60.133 tonnes of medicines, were transported to various destinations from Vijayawada, Rajahmundry, Eluru, Gudur, Nellore and Anakapalle stations of the Division till date. Fish/dry fish alone recorded the major share in parcel loading in the Division by 1,750 tonnes during the lockdown starting from April 2 to Howrah, Guwahati and other stations. During the month of May, the Division has loaded approximately 2,000 tonnes of consignments, which is many times higher than the average loading during normal course. P Bhaskar Reddy, Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, congratulated the

During the lockdown, lemons, iced fish, eggs, ghee tins, mangoes and other essentials, including medicines, were transported to various destinations from Vijayawada, Rajahmundry, Eluru, Gudur, Nellore and Anakapalle stations

Commercial and Operating team of the Division for registering record loading during the lockdown by meticulous planning, strict monitoring, maintaining punctuality and co-ordinating with cargo aggregators, merchants for registering the demands. He said that care was taken to ensure that the parcel vans are properly sanitised before commencement of loading and during the loading process, necessary precautionary measures were also taken in terms of proper social distancing by the staff deployed in loading of commodities into parcel vans. He also said that booking of parcel and luggage shall be permitted in the notified Special trains and AC Specials passing through the Division from June 1 as per the Railway Board's instructions.

Kanna all praise for Modi

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Prime Minister Narendra Modi was committed to all-round development of the country, said BJP State unit President Kanna Lakshminarayana. Normal life came to a standstill due to Covid-19 but Prime Minister Narendra Modi timely decisions contained the spread of the virus, he pointed out. When the developed countries had failed to curb the spread of the deadly virus, the Prime Minister has succeeded in minimising the fatalities, thanks to the lockdowns, he said. He further stated that the Prime Minister has been successful in curbing the spread of Covid-19 pandemic and over 1.60 lakh Covid samples were



tested per day with 650 testing labs across the country. People elected Modi as the Prime Minister for second term for taking courageous decisions on sensitive issues like Triple talak, Ayodhya, Kashmir and other issues. Unable to digest that Modi was winning accolades not only from across

Prime Minister Modi's timely decisions contained the spread of the virus, Kanna pointed out. When the developed countries had failed to curb the spread of the deadly virus, the Prime Minister has succeeded in minimising the fatalities, he said

the country, but also world, the Congress, other parties and a few other organisations are indulging in mud-slinging against the Prime Minister to defame him, he alleged. Modi's historic decisions are ideal for many in the world, he felt. While Modi's decisions on strengthening the economy during the lockdown period won appreciation. He reminded that Rs 75,000 crore was spent under Gharib Kalyan Yojana, while the Central gov-

ernment has distributed rice, pulses, wheat and other essentials to the people, but Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy boasting of as if the State government has done everything. The BJP government has enhanced the budget to Rs 1 lakh crore and as a second financial package, the Central government has announced Rs 20 lakh crore to support all the sectors in the country, he said.

Rains bring respite to people from heatwave in Telangana

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Heavy rains lashed Hyderabad and nearby areas as well as several other districts of Telangana on Sunday, inundating roads and low-lying areas and throwing traffic out of gear in the city. Strong gales that accompanied rain uprooted trees at a few places. South Hastinapur on the city outskirts received maximum rainfall of 61 mm. Several parts of the city received 20 to 50 mm rainfall. Traffic went haywire in busy areas like Banjara Hills, Masab Tank, Mehdiapatnam, Toli Chowki, Madhapur, Panjagutta, Ameerpet, Begumpet, Abids, Koti, Secunderabad, Uppal and LB Nagar as rain continued for two hours. Teams of Greater



Hyderabad Municipal Corporation swung into action to remove fallen trees and clear storm water channels. Several districts in Telangana also received the pre-monsoon rain, providing much needed relief to people reeling under heatwave conditions. According to Met office in Hyderabad, the

rain in the State was due to low pressure area over south-east and adjoining east-central Arabian Sea and Lakshadweep area. The trough from Chhattisgarh to Lakshadweep area across Telangana, Rayalaseema, south interior Karnataka and Kerala at 0.9 km above mean sea level persists, it said.

YSRCP leader distributes stationery to kids

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy was committed to the welfare of the people, said YSRCP leader K Rajini. She distributed books and stationery kits to 300 students here on Sunday to mark the YSRCP one year rule. Speaking on the occasion, she said that the Chief Minister has promised Navaratnalu to the people and implemented them through social engineering. The poor and needy were benefited across the State through various welfare programmes, she said. Drawing inspiration from the CM, city party in-charge Devineni Avinash and other leaders are taking measures to ensure all the welfare scheme reach the people.

Honey production doubles in a decade

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Amidst continuous bickering between the US on the one side and China on the other, the yellow metal remained buoyant during the week ended Saturday. Consequently, New York gold touched US\$ 1,726.30 (per oz) while silver also moved up in tandem and closed at \$ 17.84. Platinum and palladium closed at Rs.28,000 (per 10 gms) and Rs. 45,212 (per 10 gms) respectively. Other economic parameters remained upbeat vis-a-vis Rupee. Crude oil closed at Rs.2,574 (per barrel), while Brent Crude closed at Rs.37.61. Copper MCX was quoted at Rs.410.15 (per kg). Gold MCX stood at Rs.46,666 (per 10 gms) and Silver MCX at Rs.50,096 (per kg). Sensex and Nifty 50 closed at 32,424.10 and 9,580.30 points respectively. The foreign exchange market also remained firm during the week. The foreign exchange rates vis-a-vis Indian Rupee were: US\$ 75.62, Euro83.87, GBP93.22, SR 20.11, KD 244.81, UAED20.56, CAD 54.85, SGD 53.52, HKD 09.74, CHF 78.52, AUD 50.36 and JYen 0.70. At home, though the authorities have permitted the shops to remain open, due to COVID-19 fear there are no buyers. Added to this, the gold and silver prices have taken a quantum jump, thereby keeping potential customers at bay. Except the marriage season buyers, there

are no buyers in the jewellery market. Earlier, it was thought that due to high prices, many people would rush to sell their gold holdings, but that has not happened because of a more attractive option of investing in gold ETF. Standard gold (24 carats) appreciated by Rs.110 and closed at Rs.48,800 (per 10 gms). Ornamental gold too, moved up in tandem and was quoted in the range of Rs.44,630 - 44,730 on the closing day. Silver (0.999) recorded an appreciation of Rs.200 and closed at Rs.48,550 (per upbeat vis-a-vis kg). The sentiment in gold and silver jewellery market is likely to remain near future.

WEEKLY MARKET REVIEW

COMMODITIES

During the week, the sentiment in principal wholesale commodity markets in the twin cities was strong. Rythu Bazars and the markets located in Begum Bazar, Kishangunj, Mir Alam Mandi, Dilsukhnagar, Kukatpally, Bowenpally, General Bazar and Alwal witnessed good arrivals. Most of the commodities, including chillies, coriander, turmeric, tamarind, methi, mustard, rice, wheat, jowar, maize, ragi, garlic, ginger etc; either remained steady or moved within narrow margins. Common pulses such as tuar dal, moong dal, urad dal and masoor dal recorded a marginal appreciation in the range of 2 per cent to 3 per cent, while edible oils, sugar and vanaspathi remained unchanged.

Opposition hell-bent upon ending the spirit of federalism

HC UPADHYAY ■ HYDERABAD

Hailed as a masterpiece, our Constitution can rightly be called as the most ideal basic statute in the world, thanks to the visionary members of the Constituent Assembly, who, after painstaking efforts bestowed such a model piece of the expression of people's wish. It is a dynamic Constitution in the sense that it has been amended over 100 times during the past 70 years just to keep abreast of geo-political and socio-economic changes within the country. It has seen many ups and downs, and faced bravely all the challenges and grabbed the opportunities to keep it up to date. The Constitution basically envisages a scheme under which the provincial power is balanced with that of the power of the Union. The Provinces or States enjoy a good deal of independence and autonomy so as to make them healthier day by day, socially, culturally, economically and politically. On the other hand, the Union is vested with such powers which are considered essential for better co-ordination with the States and

between the States, besides to ensure safety and security of the country. In fact, the makers of the Constitution took it for granted, may be in good faith or due to sheer idealism, that cordial and harmonious relationship will exist between the States and the Union resulting into an all-round and balanced growth of all States. They also were under the impression that there would not be a time when a tug-of-war situation would arise between these two very important components of governance. Indeed, they were of the view that both the Union and the States will work in tandem that would serve the lofty purposes of unity and integrity. For the initial four decades, everything went on smoothly as the governments of different political parties honourably recognised 'the big brother's role' of the Union government and it did not do any harm. Consequently, there was an all-round development of different States making the Union government stronger day by day. However, in subsequent years fissures developed among the body politic and occasionally the voices of dissent erupt-

ed. Over the years, such voices have become louder and deafening. At times, the Union opposed the States' moves while at another time States opposed that of the Union. History is replete with examples which created bad blood between the two. Thus, a real serious threat to the principles of federalism enshrined in the Constitution persists. The antagonism between the Union and the States, of late, has been growing rapidly. Ever since the assumption of central power by the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) in the year 2014, the opposition-ruled States turned more hostile towards the Union government. In fact, they followed a policy of undeclared non-cooperation. Opposition to Triple Taluk legislation, levelling false and baseless charges of corruption in the purchase of Rafale military aircraft are just a tip of the iceberg when it comes to such pre-planned moves to hamper the spirit of federalism.

In a humanitarian gesture by the Telangana government, about 15 thousand advocates and advocates' clerks have been sanctioned financial assistance of Rs.10,000 and Rs 5,000 respectively

Even the military victory over Balakot air-strike and scrapping of Article 370 in Jammu & Kashmir did not find favour with the opposition-ruled States. The senseless opposition of Congress-Left and one/two Member of Parliament parties to the CAA-NPR-NRC is a testimony of mental bankruptcy of the opposition leaders. Otherwise, how could they justify the act of opposing duly passed CAA by Parliament and adopt a resolution in the Assemblies of their own States opposing the same? Similarly, the West Bengal government has openly shown disrespect to the State Governor appointed by none other than the President of India. The

TMC-led government also did not cooperate with the central government's high-level team of experts during COVID-19 pandemic. The Aam Admi Party chief has had the audacity to declare publicly that he was an "anarchist". The left-ruled Kerala government too has not left any opportunity to oppose the decisions of the Union government as could be seen during CAA agitation and COVID-19 pandemic. Last but not the least, comes in the reckoning the Maharashtra government, which has made a mountain out of a molehill with regard to providing train facility to migrant labours to return to their native places. The acrimony assumed such an alarming proportion that the Supreme Court of India had to intervene in the matter and unequivocally direct the States to bear the entire cost of

journey of migrant labours who wanted to go to their native places. Indeed, the country needs to be saved from a piquant situation and the politicians of all hues need to learn that they are there because the people have blessed them to be there and not the vice-versa. This is the long and short of Sab Ka Sath, Sab Ka Vikas and Sabka Vishwas'. **Selective approach by celebrity lawyers** The self-appointed Messiahs of stranded migrant labourers from different States who reportedly pleaded in a common letter with the Apex Court for the speedy and safe transportation of labourers to their native places could by no stretch of imagination be said to be truthful and honest in their manoeuvrings. Because had it been so, they would have not kept mum when innocent Sadhus were murdered by the politically motivated mob near Palghar. These 'champions' of freedom of expression were also mum when about 200 FIRs were filed in different parts of the country against an independent and upright journalist, Arnab

Goswami, who was also mentally tortured by the Mumbai police under the pretext of 'interrogating' him for over 12 hours at a stretch and another journalist of equally high status, Sudheer Choudhary, against whom the FIR by the grudging State authorities was slapped. There are umpteen examples of selective approach by these Messiahs who need to answer about their questionable behaviour to the people. **TS financial assistance to lawyers** In a humanitarian gesture by the Telangana government, about 15 thousand advocates and advocates' clerks have been sanctioned financial assistance of Rs.10,000 and Rs.5,000 respectively. Earlier, Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Rao had announced the grant of Rs.25 crore, of which Rs.15 crore has been released for the said purpose. Considering the present COVID-19 situation, this monetary assistance will provide succour to the needy lawyers' and their clerks' families. While the gesture is wel-

come, it would have been better if the State government would have also considered the vows of other voiceless professionals and self-employed persons such as pharmacists, architects, doctors, plumbers, electricians, washermen, barbers, masons etc. **Contempt cases against 49 persons by AP HC** In an epoch-making move, the Andhra Pradesh High Court on May 26 initiated contempt proceedings against 49 persons, including YSR Congress MP Nandigam Suresh and former MLA Amanchi Krishna Mohan, for attributing motives to and intimidating judges of the Supreme Court and the High Court in filthy language, besides lowering the dignity of the higher courts. A division bench comprising Chief Justice J.K. Maheshwari and Justice C. Praveen Kumar directed the government to issue notices to all the individuals concerned and observed, "all this shows that there is a larger conspiracy against the Judges.

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CM Jagan fulfilled poll promises, asserts Botsa

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy has fulfilled 90 per cent of the promises, which he had made to people during the polls, said Minister for Urban Development and Municipal Administration Botsa Satyanarayana.

Addressing a press conference here on Sunday, he slammed the TDP for its intervention in the State Election Commissioner's (SEC) issue. He said that Nimmagadda Ramesh Kumar lost his post in accordance to the government's policy decision. However, Nimmagadda can approach the court but why the TDP had intervened in that matter. Botsa said that the TDP is concerned about the person (Nimmagadda) rather than the system.

He said they have faith in the judiciary and Advocate General Sriram Subramanyam is a learned person, however, some people were misinterpreting the High Court's verdict. To clear the air, the Advocate General at a press meet on Saturday asked all those people to stop misinterpretations, said Botsa Satyanarayana.

"People did not like the policies of the TDP, hence, they rejected the party during the 2019 elections, if we do any such mistakes like it, people



will also reject us, too, and we are ready to face the people," he opined.

He said that the government was coming with various programmes to farmers and soon will go into the public and ask about the implementation of the manifesto.

It may be noted that Botsa addressed the media soon after the TDP Rajya Sabha MP Kanakamedala Raveendra Kumar interpretation on Advocate General Sriram pertaining to the High Court's order on the SEC as wrong and opined that Nimmagadda Ramesh can resume the office immediately.

Botsa took the TDP to task for pushing the state into financial crisis. He alleged that the TDP could not create assets for the State and it cheated the people with the

Minister for Urban Development and Municipal Administration Botsa Satyanarayana said that they have faith in the judiciary and Advocate General Sriram Subramanyam is a learned person, however, some people were misinterpreting the High Court's verdict

To clear the air, the Advocate General at a press meet on Saturday asked all those people to stop misinterpretations, Botsa Satyanarayana said

manifesto, but coming to power, they left the poor in the lurch.

Three die after consuming surgical spirit

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A pall of gloom descended on Govindarao Colony in Kasimkora town of Visakhapatnam on Sunday as three people died after they consumed surgical spirit. According to police, K Anand Rao of Govindarao Colony, along with his friends, consumed surgical spirit for more intoxication in a party. Among the six people, who participated in the party, four consumed spirit and fell seriously ill.

Among the four, who consumed surgical spirit, two persons died on the spot while one person died while undergoing treatment and the other person is battling for life. On receiving information, police rushed to the spot. Later, bodies were taken to Visakhapatnam Hospital for post-mortem. The deceased were identified as V Nukaraju, K Anand and P Apparao.

Brothers meet watery grave

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Selfie craze claimed the lives of two brothers at Mandapadu village in Gudavada town of Krishna district. The deceased were identified as K Harshavardhan, B Tech final year, and his younger brother Prem was pursuing Polytechnic final year. Parents were expecting both of them to support them after completing their education.

According to police, both the brothers on Sunday morning went to Pampula Cheruvu (lake) to capture selfies. After reaching the lake, in the process of taking a selfie, the elder brother Harshavardhan accidentally slipped and fell inside the lake, and to save his brother, the younger brother Prem jumped into the lake resulting in the death of both



the brothers. On receiving information, the fire and police personnel swung into action and fished out the bodies and shifted them to Gudivada hospital. Locals said that such incidents happened earlier near the Pampula Cheruvu lake, however, no precautionary measures were taken by the municipal authorities to prevent the people from going near the lake.

'Dive' to squeeze common people

The common man is facing a lot of troubles with autowallahs and cabbies who are having a field day in the absence of RTC buses on Hyderabad roads. Their inherent 'drive' to squeeze Covid-19-hit people is resented. Habituated to demanding 'extras' and doing kirikiri to extract more than what the meter shows (presuming they have it in working condition!), these autowallahs are beating their own records of sorts in determining fares. They no longer negotiate. Autowallahs have

the nerve to knock down upon those who urge them to be reasonable. They are collecting double or even triple the fares which they ought to be collecting going strictly by the meter. Their refrain is; "We were confined to our residences for the last two months. This is the time for us to earn money". They turn a deaf ear to commuters' pleas that they too were confined to homes with reduced pay packets.

Protest venues in corona times



Covid-19 has changed the way people register their protests, at least for the short term. It has given scope for newer methods of assembling and staging protests. Assembling these days is nothing but zoom conferencing. Protests have been opted

also through social media channels. Those pressing their demands are staging indoor demonstrations and posting pictures and videos on social media platforms. These newer forms of protests may continue as long as Covid-19 remains a clear and present danger.

Relief after more than two months

Notwithstanding the unavoidable rise in the number of new positive cases of Covid-19 due to easing of lockdown, the flip side to it is

quite reassuring for home-makers and career-oriented women.

The relaxations also mean domestic helps can be back to do the chores and demanding household jobs in many places where the authorities are trying to bring back normalcy after 65 days. That apart, days of door delivery of food ordered online are back. It is OK if RWAs insist on thermal screening of domestic help.

(Contributed by Kolishetty Venkateshwarlu, P V Kondal Rao and Ch Pradeep)

4 IPS officers transferred

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The State government has transferred four IPS officers as per the transfer orders issued by Chief Secretary Neelam Sawhney with immediate effect here on Sunday. The transferred IPS officers include S Satish Kumar (RR:2016), Assistant Superintendent of Police, Chintapalli, has been transferred and posted as Officer on Special Duty, Narsipatnam, Visakhapatnam district, in the existing vacancy.

Vasana Vidhya Sagar Naidu, (RR:2016), Assistant Superintendent of Police, Greyhounds, has been transferred and posted as Assistant Superintendent of Police, Chintapalli, Visakhapatnam district, vice S Satish Kumar, IPS, transferred.

Bindu Madhav Garikapati, (RR:2017), ASP, Greyhounds, has been transferred and posted as ASP, Rampachodavaram, East Godavari district, in the existing vacancy. Tuhin Sinha, (RR:2017), ASP, Greyhounds, has been transferred and posted as ASP, Narsipatnam, Visakhapatnam district, in the existing vacancy.

Provide financial aid to construction workers: Pawan

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Jana Sena Party (JSP) demanded that the State government provide financial assistance to workers in the construction sector and ensure proper work to them by arranging sufficient sand.

Jana Sena president Pawan Kalyan also demanded that government provide autonomy to the existing Andhra Pradesh Building & Other Construction Workers Welfare Board so as to allow the body to take independent decisions for the welfare and well being of the workers in the construction sector.

He criticised that officials and government have been misusing the funds available with the Board, and diverting the amount for other purposes.

He demanded that the money in the Board be utilised for the welfare of the construction workers only. At the same time, he criticised that as the State government had failed in controlling the sand mafia there was an artificial scarcity in the



Jana Sena president Pawan Kalyan criticised that officials and government have been misusing the funds available with the Board, and diverting the amount for other purposes

The money in the Board be utilised for the welfare of the construction workers only. At the same time, Pawan criticised that as the State government had failed in controlling the sand mafia there was an artificial scarcity in the market

market and that led to unemployment. At present the Board is functioning as a tripartite body consisting of representatives from workers,

employers and government officials. The Board has registered more than 20 lakhs construction workers as beneficiaries.

Passengers asked to reach Railway stations 90 minutes early

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Rail passengers intending to travel by Special train services are advised to take precautions, according to a release from the SCR, Vijayawada Division, on Sunday. Passengers should reach the railway station at least 90 minutes before the scheduled departure of the train, persons with authorised journey tickets shall only be permitted to enter the railway premises and board trains, unreserved tickets shall not be issued for these trains. Passengers with symptoms of Covid-19 shall not be allowed to travel, linen/ blankets will not be provided inside the trains, passengers are advised to travel with minimal luggage, which you are able to carry on your own. Persons with co-morbidities, pregnant women, children below 10 years of age and persons above 65 years of age are requested to avoid travel by trains, unless the journey is essential and passengers shall maintain personal hygiene as well as avoid littering railway premises and trains.

Casteist remarks made in private not an offence: Court

Continued from Page 1

The penal provisions are to be given a "strict construction" and if any of the ingredients are found lacking, it would not constitute an offence under the SC/ST Act, Justice Gill said in his order.

On the complaint of village head Rajinder Kumar, an FIR was registered in October 2017 under the provisions of the IPC and SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, in which the com-

plainant alleged that Sandeep Kumar and Pardeep, the petitioners, allegedly used casteist slurs against him during a conversation on mobile phone.

The complainant asked them not to use derogatory words and later handed over the phone to one Devi Dayal, who also told them to stop abusing, the FIR stated.

The complainant also alleged that the duo also threatened to kill him.

Later, a charge sheet against

the two accused was submitted after which a court in Kurukshetra ordered framing of charges against them a year ago.

The accused then moved the High Court here and submitted that as the telephone call was not in public view and therefore the allegations against them do not fall within the provisions of the SC/ST Act, which, however, was contested by the complainant.

The counsel for the petitioners had also alleged that

the case was a reprisal for the complaint filed by the father of one of the accused against the village head and Dayal, following which the panchayat had to return a grant of Rs 7 lakh for construction of a dharamshala.

The judge said, "There is a lot of material on record to indicate that Jasmer Singh father of Pardeep Kumar (one of the accused) had raised finger towards the working of respondent No. 2 (village head) as Sarpanch and also

against Devi Dayal and this cannot be ignored that on the application of said Jasmer Singh, grant of Rs 7 lakh had to be returned by the Gram Panchayat."

The judge clarified, "It is a settled law that if two views are possible and one gives rise to suspicion only, as distinguished from grave suspicion, the trial judge will be empowered to discharge the accused, and at that stage it is not to be seen whether the trial will end in conviction or acquittal".

Group clash over land dispute leaves 1 dead

Continued from Page 1

Tempers frayed, and members of the groups attacked each other with knives, sticks and stones. They pelted stones on each other, leaving one dead and many injured.

The injured were admitted to various hospitals for treatment. The DCP said

that there are no such incidents in the city for the past four years and this is the first case and stern action will be taken on the people involved in this clash. He said that six teams have been formed to nab all the culprits involved in the group clash and take stern action against them as per law. Meanwhile the police registered cases.

Court order means automatic SEC reinstatement: Yanamala

Continued from Page 1

Yanamala claimed that the A-G has resorted to contempt of court by openly objecting to reinstatement of Ramesh Kumar as SEC. Listing out anti-development initiatives, he said that thousands of crores were wastefully spent on YSRCP colours on government

buildings and Rs. 4,000 crore was being looted every year to pay YSRC activists who were given volunteers and Grama Secretariat jobs.

He alleged that with his inefficiency and incompetence, CM YS Jaganmohan Reddy has pushed AP into bankruptcy and forced the government to even sell public lands.

No let up in Covid cases, 110 more infected

Continued from Page 1

As many as 43 residents of the state and eight from other states recovered and got discharged from hospitals in all 2,332 patients had recovered so far. The gross number of active cases stood at 1,177 (845 AP residents, 111 foreign returnees and 221 other states). According to data released by the government, a total of 3,72,748 tests had been conducted in the state till date, with a positivity rate of 0.96 per cent and recovery rate of 65.30 per cent. The state claimed to have conducted 6,980 coronavirus tests per million population so far.

Justice needs to be served: Indian hotelier in riot hit US

Continued from Page 1

"As I am sitting next to my dad watching the news, I hear him say on the phone 'let my building burn, justice needs to be served, put those officers in jail'. Gandhi Mahal may have felt the flames, but our fiery drive to help protect and stand with our community will never die!" she said in the post that is winning hearts online. Gandhi Mahal opened in

2008, during the Great Recession. Although Islam believes in nonviolent protest he named his restaurant in honour of Mahatma Gandhi he empathises with the frustration of many Minneapolis residents.

"I am going to continuously promote peaceful ways and nonviolent movement, but our younger generation is angry, and there's reason to be angry," Ruhel told The New York Times.

His family is respected in the locality for their community service. The restaurant has been a hub for interfaith efforts against climate change, and supports farmers and budding artists.

"We were just trying to do what we could to help our community. Sure, we had our business. Sure, we were trying to keep our kitchen open. But more than anything, we were concerned for our people," said Hafsa.

IMD to release second monsoon forecast on June 1

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The India Meteorological Department is slated to issue the second stage Long Range Forecast (LRF) for South-West Monsoon Season rainfall on Monday. The Secretary, Ministry of Earth Sciences will brief the press through online video conferencing.

Each year, the weather bureau issues LRF in two stages -- the first stage forecast is issued in the month of April, while the second one is issued in June. In its first stage forecast, IMD had predicted normal monsoon this year.

"We will have a normal monsoon this year. Quantitatively the monsoon rainfall during the monsoon



season 2020 is expected to be 100 per cent of its long period average with an error of +5 or -5 per cent," Madhavan Rajeevan, Earth Sciences Secretary, had said on April 15. The IMD had predicted onset of monsoon in Kerala on June 1, in Chennai on June 4, in Hyderabad on June 8, in Pune June 10 and Mumbai on June 11 and Delhi June 27.

"We will have a normal monsoon this year. Quantitatively the monsoon rainfall during the monsoon season 2020 is expected to be 100 per cent of its long period average with an error of +5 or -5 per cent"

With 199 new cases, TS sees biggest ever jump

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In the biggest-ever spike, Telangana reported 199 coronavirus cases while five more people succumbed to the deadly virus, pushing the death toll to 82.

Health officials said 196 people in the local population of Telangana tested positive during 24 hours ending 5 p.m. on Sunday. Three migrants also found infected.

This is the highest single-day jump since the state reported first case on March 2. A day after health officials termed the rise in number of cases a natural phenomenon consequent to the easing of lockdown and warned of another surge, the state witnessed the massive surge.

The state's tally of cases mounted to 2,698, with 1,188 patients under treatment in hospitals. Officials said 122 people tested positive in Greater Hyderabad alone. This



is also the highest single-day number for the state capital, the worst affected among 33 districts. As many as 40 cases were reported from Ranga Reddy district and 10 from Medchal. Both the districts are adjacent to Greater Hyderabad.

Indicating the spread of Covid-19, the cases were reported from 12 districts. Two districts which had not

reported a single case since the outbreak of Covid-19 joined the list of affected districts. With this the state has lost all three districts in the category during last two days.

Three migrants also tested positive on Sunday, taking the total number of affected migrants to 192. The day did not see any positive case among deportees. As many as 212

deportees were tested positive till Saturday. They were among 458 deportees from Saudi Arabia.

The day also saw five more deaths due to Covid-19. Unlike the last two days when officials provided details of the deceased, the media bulletin had no mention of their age, gender and co-morbidities.

Institute of Nutrition (NIN) on Sunday completed a rapid survey in five containment zones in Hyderabad to understand the Covid-19 infection among the urban population.

Serum samples of 500 people were collected during the survey from Miyapur, Tappachabutra Adibatla, Chandangar and Balapur zones. Officials said 100 samples were collected from each zone.

TN can implement Kerala model against Corona: Min

PNS ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

The Kerala model in tackling the COVID-19 pandemic can be implemented in Tamil Nadu as it also has good public health care system, Health Minister K K Shailaja said on Sunday.

Participating in an online discussion with actor-turned-politician Kamal Haasan of Makkal Needhi Maiam, she highlighted various measures taken by Kerala, whose treatment and monitoring protocols have come in for praise from various quarters, to check the spread of the coronavirus. "Despite the financial constraints, we are able to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic with the people-centred policies. We also have good public health centre and dedicated health workers," the Minister said in the Facebook live discussion titled Maiaam Talks.



Tamil Nadu, which is among the states witnessing high number of in COVID-19 cases, too has a good public health-care system and can implement measures such as strict quarantine and treating symptomatic persons taken by Kerala, she said. Kerala, where the country's first three COVID-19 cases were reported since January 30, has seen fewer deaths (nine)

and the total infection count stood at 1,208 with 624 active cases as of Saturday. Shailaja detailed measures taken by the state ever since it came to know about the virus outbreak in Wuhan and said a rapid response team and control room were formed on January 24 itself, six days before the first COVID-19 case in the country was reported from Thrissur. The sympto-

Tamil Nadu, which is among the states witnessing high number of in COVID-19 cases, too has a good public health-care system and can implement measures such as strict quarantine and treating symptomatic persons taken by Kerala, she said

matic persons were shifted to hospitals from the airports itself and the rest of them were under strict home quarantine, she said adding Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, the state administration and the health workers were very supportive in taking all the precautionary measures.

Take steps to become self-reliant: Mayawati tells Centre, UP govt

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Bahujan Samaj Party chief Mayawati on Sunday advised the Centre and Uttar Pradesh government to take concrete steps towards becoming self-reliant instead of waiting for companies to move out of China and set up shop in India.

Making a strong case for creating Shenzhen-style special economic zones characterised by highly entrepreneur-friendly regime with respect to land and labour, the former Uttar Pradesh chief minister said such an initiative will make it easier for small and medium scale industries to become self-reliant. In 1980, Shenzhen was established as China's first special economic zone.

In a series of tweets, Mayawati said, "Instead of waiting for companies to leave China and come to India, the Centre and UP government should take steps to become self-reliant as unlike the Shenzhen Economic Zone, free of cost road infra-



structure, water, electricity and accommodation facilities for labourers near their workplace are not provided here." "If facilities which exist in Shenzhen Special Economic Zone are given to Indian industrialists, then the ravaged small and medium industries, the welfare of the affected migrant class and India becoming self-reliant will definitely become a bit easier," said. Attacking the Yogi Adityanath government in the state, the BSP chief in another tweet said, instead of helping the lakhs of

migrant labourers returning to the state due to the COVID-19-induced lockdown, a campaign to "fool" people through signing of Memorandum of Understanding and making announcements has been initiated in the state. This is extremely sad. Without concrete steps taken in the interest of people, the situation will deteriorate. Prior to signing of new MoUs and publishing photographs, the government should have informed about the status of similar MoUs signed in the last few years," she said.

SHORT READS



Lockdown: From June 1, Goa to get more trains, flights

PANAJI: Trains and flights are expected to arrive in Goa in large numbers from June 1 as the fifth phase of the coronavirus-induced lockdown brings with it a greater rolling back of restrictions, officials said on Sunday. Konkan Railway public relations officer Baban Ghatge said three trains originating from Delhi and Mumbai will halt at Madgaon station in south Goa from June 1, and so would Mangala Express (New Delhi to Ernakulam), Netravati Express (LTT-Mumbai to Thiruvananthapuram) and Duronto Express (Nizamuddin to Ernakulam). The state health department had set up facilities required to test passengers in view of the virus outbreak, he added. The New Delhi-Vasco Goa Express will also start its regular trip from June 1.

Issue performance report of 'corrupt' Goa govt: Cong to Guv

PNS ■ PANAJI

Goa Congress chief Girish Chodankar on Sunday claimed corruption in the coastal state was at an all-time high and urged Governor Satya Pal Malik to release a "performance report" of the Pramod Sawant government. His statement came in the backdrop of Goa Lokayukta Justice (retired) P K Misra expressing unhappiness over the state government failing to file an FIR against former chief minister Laxmikant Parsekar and two others in connection with a mining renewal case.

"The Lokayukta has given a certificate to the BJP government on corruption. We

request Governor Satya Pal Malik to order Chief Minister Pramod Sawant to release a performance report on corruption," Chodankar said.

"The governor should also ask the chief minister to release the details of total number of reports given by the Lokayukta demanding inquiry into various corruption issues and the action taken by the government on these till date," he added.

Chodankar also listed an array of what he claimed were scams in various sectors in the state, including Rs 123 crore given to promoters of a special economic zone cancelled by the previous Congress government.

Covid-19: India records highest single-day spike of 8,380 cases

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India registered its highest single-day spike of COVID-19 cases on Sunday with 8,380 new infections reported in the last 24 hours, taking the country's tally to 1,82,143, while the death toll rose to 5,164, according to the Union Health Ministry.

India is the ninth worst-hit nation by the COVID-19 pandemic. The number of active COVID-19 cases stood to 89,995, while 86,983 people have recovered and one patient has migrated, it said.

"Thus, around 47.76 per cent patients have recovered so far," a senior health ministry official said. In the last 24 hours, 4,614 patients were found cured, the ministry said.

Through a graded, pre-emptive and pro-active approach, the government is taking several steps along with the States/UTs



for prevention, containment and management of COVID-19, the ministry said, adding that these are being regularly reviewed and monitored at the highest level. The total confirmed cases includes foreigners.

The death toll has gone up by 193 since Saturday morning, of which 99 deaths were reported from Maharashtra, 27 from Gujarat, 18 from Delhi, nine each from Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, seven from West

Bengal, six each from Tamil Nadu and Telangana, five from Bihar, three from Uttar Pradesh, two from Punjab, and one each from Haryana and Kerala.

Of the total 5,164 fatalities, Maharashtra tops the tally with 2,197 deaths, followed by Gujarat (1,007), Delhi (416), Madhya Pradesh (343), West Bengal (309), Uttar Pradesh (201), Rajasthan (193), Tamil Nadu (160), Telangana (77) and Andhra Pradesh (60).

Railways to repaint isolation coach tops

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The non-air conditioned Covid care isolation coaches will soon get a solar-reflective coating, which would bring down the temperature inside by 5-6 degrees Celsius, if a trial being conducted by railways on 100 such coaches is successful.

The move comes amidst concerns raised by Niti Aayog on the heat inside these coaches during peak summers when temperatures soar to more than 40 degrees in parts of the country. According to a health ministry advisory on these coaches, around 5,200 of them have been earmarked for Covid care at 215 railway stations across the country.

The railways has now ordered a trial to paint the roofs of 100 of the converted coaches over Northern and North Central Railway as per standards pre-



scribed by The Research Designs & Standards Organisation (RDSO), a senior railway official said. "The trial is expected to be concluded by June this year and once we are able to reduce the temperature by at least 5-6 degrees Celsius only then we would scale it up. The thing is if we cannot bring down the temperature substantially, then there is no point in investing money and resources in this," said the official involved in the process.

Delhi Police loses 2 ASIs to COVID within 24 hours

NEW DELHI: Two Delhi Police Assistant Sub-Inspectors have died due to COVID-19 since Saturday evening, taking the overall coronavirus casualty figure in the force to three, officials said on Sunday. While a 52-year-old ASI died around 11.30 am Sunday during treatment at the Army Base Hospital here, another officer of the rank passed away at the same facility Saturday evening, they said. Officials said that the ASI who died Sunday morning was posted in the Sultampur Police Station of Outer District and was on highway patrol duty in the area since May 1. He was declared negative for the virus in two tests — conducted on May 11 and May 22, they said. However, he fell unwell on May 25 and went to the Sanjay Gandhi Memorial Hospital where the doctor advised him one week medical rest, the official said. Back at his residence in Kirari Suleman Nagar here, he started feeling difficulty in breathing early next morning, said Anil Mittal, Additional PRO (Delhi Police).

Man kills mother after quarrel over dinner in Kerala: Police

PNS ■ KOTTAYAM (KER)

A 27-year-old drunk man allegedly killed his mother following a quarrel over dinner in the district, in perhaps the first such liquor-related crime in Kerala after the government resumed sale of alcoholic beverages couple of days ago after a two month gap.

Nithin Babu, who was in a highly inebriated state, slit the throat of his 55-year old mother Kunjannamma with a kitchen knife after hitting her in the head with a hammer in their house at Thrikkodithanam village at around 10.30 pm on Saturday, police said.

Not only that he then telephoned his neighbours to inform them that he killed his mother, they said adding a quarrel over food prepared for dinner was the immediate provocation for the murder.

Woman arrested for selling illegal liquor to minors in Delhi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A 32-year-old woman was arrested for allegedly selling illicit liquor to minors in southeast Delhi's Kalindi Kunj area, police said on Sunday.

The woman is a resident of Basantpur village in Faridabad, Haryana, they said.

A total 90 quarters of liquor meant for sale in Haryana along with a scooter used for their transportation were seized from her possession, police said.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (southeast) R P Meena said the arrest was made on May 29, when a team of police patrolling the Kalindi Kunj area reached Toranto Chowk, Madanpur Khadar and noticed the woman selling liquor kept in a bag atop her scooter to minors in the area. The liquor was seized and a



case registered under relevant sections of Delhi Excise Act and Juvenile Justice Act, he added.

"During interrogation, the woman disclosed that she had purchased the illicit liquor from an unknown person in Faridabad and sold them at higher rates in Delhi," the DCP said. "She had purchased the scooter two months ago from one Richard but till date, the ownership of the vehicle has not been transferred," the DCP added.

COVID-19

India now seventh worst-hit country in world

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India has now become the world's seventh worst-hit country in terms of coronavirus cases with its tally of 1,82,143, according to the World Health Organization's coronavirus tracker.

According to the WHO tracker, a total of 59,34,936 cases have been recorded globally with 3,67,166 deaths as of 10:30 PM Sunday.

India registered its highest single-day spike of COVID-19 cases on Sunday with 8,380 new infections reported in the last 24 hours, taking the country's tally to 1,82,143, while the death toll rose to 5,164, according to the Union Health Ministry.

According to the WHO tracker, India is the seventh-most affected nation in terms of COVID-19 cases after US, Brazil, Russia, UK, Spain and Italy.

The US is the worst-affect-



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ed country in terms of cases with 17,16,078 infections, while India is at the seventh spot with 1,82,143 cases. Germany has 1,81,482 cases, Turkey has 1,63,103 cases and Iran has 1,48,950, according to the WHO tracker.

The number of active COVID-19 cases in India stands at 89,995, while 86,983 people have recovered and one patient has migrated to another country, according to the health ministry.

"Thus, around 47.76 per cent patients have recovered

so far," a senior health ministry official said.

There has been a sharp spike in coronavirus cases in the last few days in India. On Saturday, India had also registered a record single-day spike of 265 deaths due to the pandemic.

Arunachal villagers build huts to quarantine returnees

ITANAGAR: Residents of a remote village in Arunachal Pradesh's East Siang district have built huts to quarantine locals returning to the settlement from other parts of the country. Fourteen bamboo huts, with piped water and electricity facilities, have been set up for the purpose by residents of Debing village in Ruksin circle, a village committee member said on Sunday. The 'quarantine huts' have been established a kilometre away from the village as a precautionary measure, he said. The village, home to around 150 households, shares border with Jonai subdivision of Dhemajai district in Assam, where one COVID-19 case was recently reported.

Hack-for-hire firms targeting financial services, healthcare amid COVID-19 pandemic: Google

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Hack-for-hire firms, many of them based in India, are creating accounts spoofing the World Health Organization (WHO) and targeting business leaders in financial services, consulting, and healthcare corporations in the US, the UK and Bahrain among other countries amid the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a report by Google.

The tech giant noted that numerous coronavirus-themed attacks have been discovered and confirmed by its teams as the COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted people's lives and businesses across the world.

Citing an example of one such form of attack, Google said, "We have seen new activity from 'hack-for-hire' firms, many based in India, that have



Citing an example of one such form of attack, Google said, "We have seen new activity from 'hack-for-hire' firms, many based in India, that have been creating Gmail accounts spoofing the WHO"

been creating Gmail accounts spoofing the WHO".

"The accounts have largely targeted business leaders in financial services, consulting, and healthcare corporations within numerous countries including the US, Slovenia, Canada, India, Bahrain, Cyprus, and the UK," Google

said in a recent blogpost.

These e-mails encourage individuals to sign up for direct notifications from the WHO to stay informed of coronavirus-related announcements, and include a link to attacker-hosted websites that bear a strong resemblance to the official WHO website, the blog

explained. The sites typically feature fake login pages that prompt potential victims to give up their Google account credentials, and occasionally encourage individuals to give up other personal information, such as their phone numbers, it added.

Google said its Advanced Protection Program (APP) uses hardware security keys and provides the strongest protections available against phishing and account hijackings to help protect users against these kinds of tracks, and was specifically designed for high-risk accounts.

"Generally, 2020 has been dominated by COVID-19. The pandemic has taken centre stage in people's everyday lives, in the international news media, and in the world of government-backed hacking," the blog said. Microsoft had also recently highlighted a similar trend. It had stated that cybercrooks are using COVID-19 to make ransomware and phishing attacks, and over 9,000 coronavirus-themed attacks were noticed in India between February 2 and May 2.

PNS ■ WASHINGTON

When Atalanta coach Gian Piero Gasperini was struggling with the coronavirus in mid-March, the prospect of entering Bergamo's hospital - which was overflowing with COVID-19 patients at the time -- made him fear for his life.

"Every two minutes an ambulance passed by. ... It seemed like a war," Gasperini said. "At night, I would think, 'If go in there (the hospital), what will happen to me?'"

Fortunately for Gasperini, he quickly recovered and did not have to check into the Pope John XXIII hospital.

The coach only recently confirmed that he had the virus when the entire team was tested 10 days ago, he said in an interview with the Gazzetta dello Sport published on



Sunday. The 62-year-old Gasperini started feeling sick on March 9, a day before Atalanta played at Valencia in the second leg of the Champions League round of 16.

He said that when he returned to Bergamo, which was quickly becoming the epicenter of the pandemic, "I

didn't have a fever but I felt destroyed and as if I had a 40-degree (Celsius, or 104 Fahrenheit) fever."

Many experts have pointed to the first-leg game between Atalanta and Valencia on Feb. 19 in Milan as one of the biggest reasons why the virus was so deadly in Bergamo. The match has been dubbed "Game Zero" by the local media.

With the virus advancing rapidly across Europe, the second leg in Valencia was played without fans. Still, more than 35% of Valencia's team became infected.

More than 16,000 people have died from the virus in the Lombardy region containing Bergamo, which has been one of the hardest-hit cities. "It will take years to really understand what happened," Gasperini said.

SHORT READS



Connected by Indian Ocean, united by Indian samosa!

NEW DELHI: Ahead of his video meet with Narendra Modi on June 4, Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison on Sunday shared pictures of samosas, saying he would have liked to share the popular snack with the Indian leader. "Sunday ScoMosas with mango chutney, all made from scratch -- including the chutney! A pity my meeting with @narendramodi this week is by videolink. They're vegetarian, I would have liked to share them with him," Morrison tweeted. Prime Minister Modi replied that the two countries are 'Connected by the Indian Ocean, united by the Indian Samosa!' "Looks delicious, PM @ScottMorrisonMP. Once we achieve a decisive victory against COVID-19, we will enjoy the Samosas together. Looking forward to our video meet on the 4th," Modi said.

Uttarakhand minister's wife tests positive for COVID-19

DEHRADUN: Uttarakhand Tourism Minister Satpal Maharaj's wife and former minister Amrita Rawat has tested positive for COVID-19. Maharaj, who had attended a meeting of the state cabinet on Friday last, and the rest of the family have been home quarantined at their residence in the city. Rawat's swab sample report confirming that she is COVID-19 positive arrived from a private lab late on Saturday evening, the minister's OSD Abhishek Sharma said. She was admitted to the All India Institute of Medical Sciences in Rishikesh on Sunday and has been kept in isolation, hospital PRO, Harish Thapliyal, said. Amrita Rawat was a minister in the Harish Rawat government. The number of COVID-19 cases in Uttarakhand has risen to 749, with 33 more people testing positive.

Rajasthan extends electricity bill payment date till June 30

JAIPUR: The Rajasthan government has extended the date of payment of electricity bills for farmers, industries and domestic consumers till June 30. Earlier, the relaxations were given till May 31. The state government had on April 2 decided to defer the recovery of electricity bills of agriculture power connections. It had also decided to not recover bills for March and April from domestic consumers using upto 150 units per month. Instructions were given that no power connection will be disconnected till May 31 if electricity bills are not paid. The state government had also deferred the fixed charge in the bills of industrial establishments issued in April and May. "The chief minister has directed to extend the relaxations till June 30," according to a press release.

People have paid serious attention to Yoga: Modi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

From Hollywood to Haridwar, people have taken serious note of the benefits of yoga amid the coronavirus health crisis, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Sunday, noting that it is good for "community, immunity and unity".

In his monthly "Mann ki Baat" radio address, the prime minister also urged people to participate in an online yoga competition being organised by the Ayush Ministry.

He said during the ongoing health crisis, he spoke with many world leaders. "I would like to share a secret today- I've observed that during deliberations between world leaders, a lot of interest is evinced in yoga and Ayurveda. Many leaders asked me if yog and Ayurved could be of help in this calamitous period of coronavirus," he said.

Referring to the 'International Yoga Day' on June 21, he said as yoga is getting integrated with people's



Referring to the 'International Yoga Day' on June 21, he said as yoga is getting integrated with people's lives, the awareness about their health is also continuously on the rise.

lives, the awareness about their health is also continuously on the rise.

"During the present Covid-19 pandemic, it is being observed from Hollywood to Haridwar that, while staying at home, people are paying serious attention to yoga. People everywhere want to know more about yoga and along with it Ayurveda and adopt it as a way of life," he said.

Many people who had never practiced yoga, have either joined online yoga classes or are also learning it through

online videos, he said.

"Truly, yoga is good for community, immunity and unity," he said. He said during the present health crisis, yoga has become all the more important as the novel coronavirus affects respiratory system. Yoga has various "pranayams" that strengthen the respiratory system, he pointed out.

The Ayush Ministry has started its International Video Blog competition titled 'My Life, My Yoga' in which people from across the globe can par-

ticipate. To participate, people will have to make a three-minute video and upload it.

"In this video, you have to perform yoga or asana, that you usually do and also tell about the changes that have taken place in your life through yoga," he said.

The prime minister also referred to the World Environment Day being observed on June 5. The theme this year is Biodiversity.

"This theme is especially pertinent in the current circumstances.



Attention being paid to new inventions to counter locust attack: Modi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Attention is being paid to new inventions to counter the locust attack in various parts of the country, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Sunday and noted that it is a reminder that a small creature can inflict great damage.

"On the one side where eastern India is facing cyclonic calamity, on the other many parts of the country have been affected by locust attacks. These attacks again remind us of the great damage this small creature can inflict," he said in his 'Man ki Baat' radio address.

The locust attack lasts for several days and affects a large area, he noted.

Be it at the level of the central government, the state governments, agriculture department or the administration, all are involved using modern techniques to not only help the farmers but also lessen the loss accruing due to this crisis, he said.

"Attention is being paid to new inventions, and I am sure that together not only will we be able to battle out this crisis that is looming on our agricultural sector, but also manage to salvage our crops," he said.

MCA defers Apex Council meeting

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Apex Council meeting of the Mumbai Cricket Association, scheduled to be held online on Monday, has been deferred as the chances to organise a meet which officials can attend in person, have improved.

The central government has announced that several lockdown restrictions will be lifted on June 8.

The Apex Council meet was scheduled to form an ad-hoc Cricket Improvement Committee.

A Council member told PTI that meeting could be held after June 8 after the "unlock" guidelines come into effect.

Apart from forming ad-hoc Cricket Improvement Committee, the Apex Council was to decide on the AGM date and discuss about 2020-21 cricket season.

Cricketing activities in Mumbai have come to a grinding halt as it is one of the worst affected cities by the deadly COVID19 pandemic.

Army's response to CFV swift and hard, says Lt Gen Raju

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

All the terrorist camps and around 15 launch pads in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) "are full", according to top army commander Lt Gen B S Raju, who anticipates an increase in infiltration attempts from across the border this summer to replenish the diminishing terrorist cadres in Jammu and Kashmir.

In an interview to PTI, Lieutenant General Baggavalli Somashekar Raju asserted that the back of terrorism has been "virtually broken" and that Pakistan is unable to "digest" that Kashmiris are experiencing peace and an improved law and order situation.

Lt Gen Raju took over the reins of strategically located XV Corps in Srinagar on March 1.

"The back of terrorism is virtually broken. Because of the successes in eliminating terrorists operating in the hinterland, we expect cross-border infiltration to increase in the summer season to make up for the dead terrorists. I anticipate more and more attempts to replenish

Even a 'Bahubali PM' could not face corona pandemic: Sibal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A day after the Narendra Modi-led NDA government patted itself on the completion of first year of its rule in the second term, Congress leader Kapil Sibal on Sunday took a jibe at Modi, saying that even the 'Bahubali Prime Minister could not face the coronavirus pandemic and pushed the country into more distress'.

The senior Congress leader lashed out at the Centre for what he called "mishandling of a pandemic that forced people into a crisis". "During the lockdown crisis, people helped each other. After March 24, the government had to subsidise its divisive agenda; prior to the lockdown, the government agenda was only on polarisation," he said. Sibal cited National Population Register, Citizenship (Amendment) Act and misuse of Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act against activists and said while the Union Home Minister stated in Parliament that the amended UAPA will be used against terrorists only but just the opposite was happening.



During the lockdown crisis, people helped each other. After March 24, the government had to subsidise its divisive agenda; prior to the lockdown, the government agenda was only on polarisation — KAPIL SIBAL, Congress leader

Sibal said that people walking on the roads to their native states are a testimony of the government's "apathy" as many people have lost their lives due to starvation. The Congress leader alleged that the Prime Minister has not been able to handle the migrant crisis. "Nepal is looking in our eyes and there is the standoff with China -- why is the Prime

Minister not looking them in their eyes," asked Sibal.

He also asked the government to come clean on the standoff and tell the people about the real picture. Even Rahul Gandhi had earlier made the demand. He also lashed out at the Solicitor General over his 'cultures and prophets of dooms' comments during a SC hearing.

HC to hear NCLT member's plea challenging transfer orders

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court will hear on Monday a plea by an NCLT member (judicial) challenging the transfer orders issued by the National Company Law Tribunal acting president in April and May.

The plea, filed by Rajasekhar VK, member (judicial) seeking to set aside the order transferring him from NCLT Mumbai to Kolkata bench, is listed for hearing on June 1 before Justice V Kameswar Rao.

He has also challenged two other orders by which NCLT acting president BSV Prakash Kumar has transferred himself from NCLT Chennai to Mumbai bench and the transfer of eight other members, contending that the orders are



illegal. The acting president by April 30 and May 12 orders had shuffled the posting of the NCLT members.

The petition, filed through advocate Vandana Sehgal, also sought a direction to appoint an eligible member as the acting president, in place of Kumar.

Rajasekhar was appointed was NCLT member (judicial) on May 3, 2019 and was posted to the Mumbai bench.

The plea has sought a status quo in respect of postings of members of NCLT till the time a regular president is not appointed and that the president or acting president of the tribunal shall remain at the

principal seat, that is Delhi, in terms of the statutory provisions. The plea said Kumar has only worked as a district judge and as a member of Company Law Board before being a member of the NCLT and since he was not a high court judge, he was not eligible to be appointed as president, particularly, when Justice Rajesh Dayal Khare, a retired high court judge, was available and functioning as member (judicial) at NCLT, Allahabad bench. "As acting president, the second respondent (Kumar) cannot ask for a transfer, nor can he be transferred to any place, as he has to remain at the principal bench at New Delhi so long as he is acting as president of the tribunal," the petition contended.

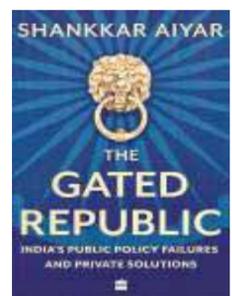
'The Gated Republic': Private solutions to public nightmare!

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A new book "The Gated Republic" presents an interrogative view of the history and future of private India at a time when the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for effective public policies to ensure the provision of basic, essential services to all citizens.

Political economy analyst Shankkar Aiyar says his book "The Gated Republic: India's Public Policy Failures and Private Solutions" is an enquiry into the history and politics of public policy and the anatomy of failure.

He says the "maxim about



and services". According to Aiyar, the country's ability in dealing with complexities and scale has not "resulted in creation of capacity for transformative change".

"Truth be told, our many governments - central, state and local - have flailed and failed in delivering basic governance," he writes.

The Kindle edition of the book is slated to be released on June 1 followed by the hardback release on June 20, publishers HarperCollins India said.

Aiyar says 72 years since it became a republic, India has come a long way.

Doctors to be hired for COVID-19 treatment in Mumbai: Deshmukh

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Maharashtra Medical Education Minister Amit Deshmukh on Sunday said that doctors and nurses will be hired on honorarium basis for COVID-19 treatment in Mumbai.

The decision has been taken to ensure that there is no shortage of medical staff for treatment of COVID-19 patients in the city, he said in a statement.

Mumbai has so far recorded the highest number of COVID-19 cases among all the cities in the country. Its tally of patients till Saturday night was 38,442, while the number of deaths was 1,227. Registered doctors below 45 years of age, who do not suffer from any medical ailments and have completed their internship, will be hired as per the



needs for treatment of patients. "They will be paid Rs 80,000 per month. Apart from doctors, physicians will also be hired on honorarium basis. Anaesthetists and intensivists will be paid Rs two lakh per month. Qualified nurses will be hired for Rs 30,000 per month." The honorarium will be paid by the Brihanmumbai Municipal

Corporation (BMC). Eligible doctors and nurses should apply for it online," he said.

Meanwhile, Deshmukh has also directed Vice Chancellor of Maharashtra University of Health Sciences (MUHS), Dilip Mhaikar, that students who have passed their MBBS examinations in February 2019 and completed their one year internship be provided temporary graduation certificates. He said that with the certificate, they can register themselves with the Maharashtra Medical Council.

If this happens, nearly 4,000 doctors can provide medical service in the present COVID-19 situation, he said. About 4,000 students have cleared the MBBS exam of November 2018 and the results were declared in February 2019.

Lockdown cut tobacco consumption: Experts

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As the world has changed following the coronavirus pandemic, so has the tobacco consumption behaviour. It is interesting to know, especially on World No-Tobacco Day on Sunday, that 37 per cent of people in India considered lockdown as an opportunity to quit smoking.

In a survey conducted by Indus Health Plus, a preventive healthcare company headquartered in Pune, it was found that 37 per cent of the respondents mentioned that lockdown is a good opportunity to quit smoking, while 42 per cent said that it helped them to reduce consumption.

It was a three-week consumer survey to understand the smoking behaviour and patterns of the people during the lockdown. Out of the total respondents, 39 per cent were



females and 61 per cent males between the age group of 30-45 years. The sample size of the survey was 837 and the time-frame was May 8 to May 29.

The respondents of the survey were from metros along with tier-II cities of Maharashtra, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh.

The survey revealed that 68 per cent of smokers reduced

consumption due to increased cost of cigarettes by the retailers and shopkeepers. Also, smokers found cigarettes unavailable. While 39 per cent of males and 25 per cent of females succeeded in reducing tobacco consumption in any form. However, the survey also revealed that 32 per cent of smokers increased smoking due to the stress of managing

work from home and household chores, social distancing, and for a few people, it was due to free time. Speaking to IANS, Dr Sanyam Gupta, Radiology Resident at Medanta hospital, said, "Lockdown is a boon in

disguise for smokers because it has given them an opportunity to quit smoking and switch to healthy habits to fight their cravings. Smoking has become a style statement among the youth. It has negative impact on respiratory, cardiac and overall health. I have observed that during lockdown, people have opted for other forms of stimulation, such as yoga and exercises."

Dr Gupta said: "Those who have been facing withdrawal symptoms, they are taking help of nicotine gums and other medically prescribed drugs. If a person quits smoking for more than a month, his/her chances of leaving it forever can increase significantly."

Dr Preeti Shinde, Cardiac Radiologist at Pune's Sahyadri Hospital, told IANS that tobacco consumption decreased during the lockdown.



One year of ills

The PM may be still popular in the afterglow of last year's verdict but he needs to take bold moves in managing a pandemic-hit nation



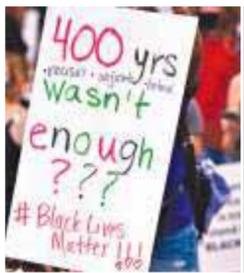
The best part about "forces of nature" is that they obfuscate human effort or even the lack of it. They are simply too tidal and overwhelming, swamping our reason, judgment and mind. They are an opportunity to prove ourselves and excuse our failings at the same time. Which is why the shroud of the Corona pandemic, which has left our nation distraught, has kept us busy grappling with the "before" and "after" scenario that could spare Prime Minister Narendra Damodardas Modi from a rigorous assessment of his first year in office. Perhaps, his familiarity in an upending, unfamiliar scenario is the reason why he continues to be the preferred leader in opinion polls of the moment. And

it is this familiarity which could be his biggest shield for what he could not deliver, saying he tried his best, despite the tokenism of empathising with the migrants and common people. Under the shadow of India's biggest health and economic crisis, he is still drawing on his "before" seen muscularity to retain popularity among the masses, which is desperately looking to clutch on to a reassuring and paternal figurehead in the "after" phase. And having won a monolithic verdict last May, he is playing up his perceived deliverer image by addressing the nation, writing letters to his citizens, relying on shared emotions and even praising and consulting Chief Ministers in a new-found spirit of cooperative federalism. Except such optics are not enough for a nation gasping for breath, squeezed by the pandemic on one side and a collapsing economy on the other. And the mammoth surge of a human tragedy unfolding, in the form of deaths due to disease, joblessness, starvation and migration, clearly needs superhuman action, not just humane reactions. Truth be told, India's pandemic is now a people's war, being waged by not just the Government but cumulatively by doctors, scientists, police, Samaritans, activists, citizens, NGOs and corporates. And it is this combined "let's save our nation" spirit unitedly and inclusively that has triumphed over the imposed idea of "One India" that thrives on eliminating and filtering all kinds of otherness. So yes, the memories of attacks on minorities, dissenters and students are off the board at the moment, excused even in the pandemic era as aberrations of a party that has to feed its core majoritarian voter base rather than being an assault on democracy. That's what the "after" scenario does, pushes back the "before."

But the after-effects of what is not done now could be disastrous. The nation will have to pay for the gross insensitivity of an ill-planned lockdown to contain the pandemic in the long-term. The Prime Minister may be commiserating with migrant woes but did not plan a concrete relief and rehabilitation package that could have stopped an urban exodus of people who depend on daily wages to just survive. Unannounced fallback during the lockdown has pushed them to penury. Had evacuations by trains and buses been planned even back then, when the infectivity curve hadn't shot up, we could have saved on passing the disease burden to the hinterland as is happening now. We could have easily avoided the deaths on roads and highways and even trains, which are now chronically under-served in terms of food and water provisions. The economy is whooshing down the sink hole with the RBI admitting our GDP could go into negative territory, the demand horribly low and joblessness at an all-time high. Then there is spiralling inflation. Frankly, the Modi Government's self-sufficient growth model, released with fanfare over days with credit-based offerings and structural changes in many sectors, is gestational and not responsive to the current calamity. It must increase spending and put money in people's hands. That alone would close the demand-supply gap across all sectors. Without this infusion now, any reformatory plan, no matter how well-intentioned, won't make sense at all, particularly to the 12 crore people who lost their jobs in April alone. More people have slid below the poverty line over the last two months and inequity is at its sharpest. The Government was anyway carrying the albatross of a slowing economy before the pandemic, the GDP at five per cent in 2019-20, lower than what it was in 2018-19. So if not now, then when? Not to forget that self-sufficiency or *atma nirbharata* has to begin with sound health and education, both of which need a lot of investment and reprioritising. And no matter how opportune a moment this is to woo the West to shift its bases from China to India, we still do not have enough ease of business. In fact, for all the "vocal for local" talk and even convincing international companies to "Make in India" and lend their expertise, China still has the manufacturing edge and we will need some time to catch up. Yes, we have done well with agriculture, with a good output and now enabling policies on agri-businesses but without feeding urban hubs and demand, there could be a problem of too much for whom. As for our engagement with the world, the abrogation of Article 370, the reorganisation of Kashmir and the religion-based citizenship law have not been accepted very well by our Western allies, including the US. And now we have an enraged China snapping at our heels. Perhaps in notching up too many firsts, the Government has been in a bit of a hurry that has cost us the battle of perception. Even now, when most conservative economies are loosening their purse strings, we are still holding back. And this saviour-like will cannot be ascribed to the "forces of nature" if legacy is what Modi wants.

Racist attack

The White supremacist police force in the US never seems to change. And it acts brutally because it has societal sanction



There's a sense of *déjà vu* about the Minneapolis protests that come on the back of the use of excessive force by a White policeman Derek Chauvin, resulting in the death of a peaceful, 46-year-old Black man George Floyd, who was not resisting arrest. Remember the 2014 death of unarmed Black teenager Michael Brown by the police in Ferguson, Missouri and the race riots that it sparked off? Nothing seems to have changed since then. White supremacists in the US police force continue to slaughter innocent law-abiding Black people with impunity. Floyd's death has also prompted action in other US cities like New York City, Denver, Columbus and particularly Louisville in

Kentucky, which witnessed the death of an innocent Black woman Breonna Taylor in March. Here the victim was shot in her own apartment by police officers for an investigation that she wasn't involved in. Relations between police and citizens of colour have been bad for years in the US, yet only one in every 100 citizen complaints leads to disciplinary action. So, the big question is when will America learn its lesson and reform the police force? Or practise diversity from the heart and not as a ritual? It is not enough that the video of Chauvin kneeling on the neck of a prostrate, handcuffed, dying Floyd, pressing his considerable weight down with a bland, almost bored look on his face has drawn condemnation from police departments across the US. What matters is the indifferent attitude of the officers standing next to the murdering cop with a past record of brutality and use of excess force against Blacks and their failure to stop the cold-blooded killing. What is even more chilling is the fact that his sadistic act was being recorded on a mobile phone by a bystander and it did not worry Chauvin one bit. He just assumed that he could get away with murder! This episode reeks of a systemic cultural rot, one that is being fanned by supremacist President Donald Trump who called the protesters "thugs." He even suggested that they'd be shot for looting. What is even more worrying is the fact that the Minnesota Department of Public Safety has said that State leaders have intelligence that White supremacist groups and drug cartels are possibly playing a big role in the anarchy. Maybe to turn a genuine outpouring of public anger over injustice into a more sinister "us" vs "them" confrontation. All this as a nation battles COVID-19, the management of which has robbed the sheen off Trump's presidential campaign. Little wonder then that he is aggressively playing to his own gallery.

Reset ties with Nepal

India-Nepal relations are too precious to be damaged by territorial nationalism. It's time for New Delhi to break the ice



ASHOK K MEHTA

Some back-channeling and rethinking between Nepal's ruling party and the Opposition (despite the Nepali Congress agreeing to support the amendments) has deferred the Constitutional Amendment Bill to sanctify the country's new map. This has created an opportunity for it to return to diplomacy. It's for the first time that Nepal has altered the geography of its map. Its Foreign Minister "summoned" the Indian Ambassador and its Prime Minister even used unkind words for us. New Delhi, too, was high-handed: It dragged its feet in giving a date for talks, announced a tarmac road to Lipulekh Pass while the Army Chief, who is the honorary General of the Nepal Army, made unwarranted comments on Nepal's internal affairs, too. This certainly is not the civilisational bonding that defined relations between India and Nepal. The Kalapani dispute has to be settled politically, too. Any further delay will only widen the trust deficit.

In my 60th and counting treks from Mahakali to Mechi since 1959, I have come across scintillating names of villages and places: Chisopani, Tatopani, Ratopani, Jumlepani, Pokhripani and also the contested Kalapani, not Kalopani. In India, Kalapani is a curse and is associated with banishment, jail or exile. Still, it has been the bone of contention between India and Nepal for many years and for Kathmandu, it denotes an area of 335 sq km, encompassing Limpiyadhura, Lipulekh Pass and Kalapani. For it, the source of the Mahakali river, which delineates its western boundary, is Limpiyadhura.

For India, Kalapani is the origin of the river near where military posts have existed since the mid-1960s and from where the Indo-Tibetan Border Police (ITBP) patrols regularly up to the Lipulekh Pass. When King Tribhuvan invited the Indian Military Mission in 1952 to Nepal, besides training the Royal Nepal Army (RNA), it had established, according to border expert on Nepal, BN Shrestha, 18 border check-posts on the Tibet border start-



ing from Tinker Pass in the west to Chhayangthap in the east. These posts were vacated in 1969 under pressure from the communist lobby in the palace. Conspicuously, Kalapani and Lipulekh Pass were not part of the border surveillance scheme and, therefore, there was no question of India vacating them. Trade between India and China across Lipulekh Pass started in 1954 and an agreement in 2015 ratified the border trade.

Kalapani has a spiritual and strategic value since it is the gateway to Kailash Mansarovar, dominates Lipulekh Pass and can monitor the People's Liberation Army (PLA) camp at Taklakot. It appears in Nepal's official and tourist maps and its adverse military possession is a highly emotive issue. Twenty-six years of field reconnaissance by a joint technical boundary committee and negotiations since 1997 have failed to find a mutually-acceptable solution. Protests in Nepal over Kalapani started in the mid-1990s when a communist Government was in power. It has since become a political football.

India's new map in November last year, after the nullification of Article 370 in Jammu & Kashmir, showed Kalapani in Uttarakhnad without any change in the boundary with Nepal. It was very much similar to the old map. But this triggered countrywide protests and exchange of diplo-

matic notes. India announcing the black-topping of the road to Lipulekh Pass in May reignited protests at a time when the power struggle in the ruling Nepal Communist Party (NCP) peaked.

It was only with Chinese intervention that Prime Minister KP Oli was able to retain his seat. Adept at using ultra-nationalism for India-bashing and reviving his political stock, Oli published a new map of Nepal, incorporating claimed areas. He wants a national consensus on the legitimacy of the new map through a Constitutional amendment. The Bill should pass muster as the Government needs just nine lawmakers to secure a two-third majority but that will damage irreparably India-Nepal relations, which have been on the mend since 2015 following the economic blockade.

Nepal has deployed its armed police force on the western border near Kalapani with the Nepal Army building a new road to Tinker Pass. These developments, coupled with a parliamentary resolution to reclaim all land and the Constitutional Amendment Bill are likely to escalate tension. The beneficiary from this diplomatic stand-off will only be a third country with whom troubles along the India along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) are mounting. Nepal's political class must realise that the move to unilaterally alter, validate and internationalise

the new map, especially at the height of a pandemic, is unwise. Both sides need to cool off.

Any adverse and escalatory steps will also undermine the long-standing and embedded Army-to-Army relations, which were initiated by King Tribhuvan and his son, King Mahendra, for modernising the RNA. The Chiefs of the two Armies are honorary Generals in each other's armies, an unprecedented exchange of military honour started by the legendary Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw in 1969. Gorkha soldiers from Nepal have served the Indian Army with valour during all the wars post-independence, winning high gallantry awards. More than 40,000 Gorkha soldiers serve the Indian Army and another 1,50,000 ex-servicemen are privileged by unique welfare services in Nepal that are not available to other soldiers in India. These are 22 district soldier boards, two pension paying offices along with the Ex-servicemen Contributory Health Scheme (ECHS), Kendriya Vidyalayas and numerous other assistance and grants projects. Gorkha remittances are upwards of ₹15,000 crore (NC), almost one-third of Nepal's total remittances of \$8 billion.

India-Nepal relations are at a tipping point due to map-making and the political row it has generated is at the height of a pandemic. Nepal's new map has broken the agreement

between the two countries to maintain status quo till negotiations help resolve the border dispute. India had initially said it would resume Foreign Secretary-level dialogue mechanism after the COVID-19 emergency. After Nepal issued its new map and Oli's imperate reference to India in Parliament, New Delhi has urged Kathmandu to create a positive atmosphere for dialogue. After deferment of the Bill, New Delhi says it is open to engaging to solve border row.

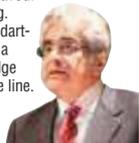
The media on both sides should call a truce. On Wednesday afternoon, Nepali TV channels were playing patriotic music centred on Kalapani and showing clips of its legendary military prowess that extended the Himalayan Kingdom from the rivers Chenab to Teesta, inducing fears of "Greater Nepal." Nepal's decision to put on hold the second Constitutional Amendment Bill is a prudent step welcomed by India that has averted a showdown. Already, strained India-Nepal relations are too precious to be damaged by territorial nationalism. Foreign Secretary Harsh Vardhan Shringla must call up his counterpart Shankar Das Bairagi and break the ice.

(The writer, a retired Major General, was Commander IPKF South, Sri Lanka and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff.)

SOUNDBITE

To say judgement is to favour a political party is wrong. Supreme Court is not a dart-board. You can criticise a judgment saying the judge has taken a conservative line.

Jurist — Harish Salve



Social distancing is necessary to beat Coronavirus, not social boycotting. It's not a crime if someone tests positive for COVID-19.

Actor — Kiran Kumar



We're talking about doing a lot of things and we're very, very saddened by what happened to our relationship with China. They should have never allowed this to happen.

US President — Donald Trump



India's policy has been clear that we should have good relations with all neighbours. But sometimes, circumstances arise with China and things like this happen.

Union Minister — Rajnath Singh



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

No end to woes

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Labour woes" (May 29). It was surprising to note that over 91 lakh migrants have been sent back to their home States since May 1. Arranging basic screening facilities for the safety of passengers in trains has been a Herculean task. Besides, the migrants need not just protection from the pandemic but jobs, too.

By the Government's own admission, we simply do not have data on the migrant workers. This reason is often cited by officials for their failure to provide generous cash relief in the economic package to the migrant workers. It is welcome that several States are setting up migrant commissions. This will not only capture data on the number of workers but also generate employment for workers. State Governments must ensure that they provide adequate wages, a safe work environment, a sound skill development ecosystem and universal social safety coverage. Sravana Ramachandran Chennai

Mounting problems amid pandemic

It has been a worrying time for us all. First came the Coronavirus pandemic, then cyclone Amphan and now the plague of locusts that has spread into five States across the country. Crisis after crisis has been blighting the country, causing immeasurable suffering to the people, especially the poor. The invasion of swarms of desert locusts in western and central India in the midst of the Coronavirus pandemic is the latest challenge for us to contend with. The damage to the crops caused by burgeoning swarms of locusts is inestimable. Still, there is some comfort due to the fact that the standing crops are now not very abundant for them to feast on. The eastward flight of the locusts will be barricaded by the east-to-west blowing winds. At the same time, rains could result in their proliferation and "dampen" the attempts made to stamp them out.

The Coronavirus lockdown restrictions have hampered efforts made for the control of the "migratory pests." Drones are being used to spray pesticides over the infestation zones, otherwise inac-



cessible to tractors and trucks. We cannot afford to be complacent because of overflowing granaries. All efforts need to be made to eliminate the plague of locusts lest we run out of food supplies or even face a famine. Meanwhile, scientists are probing the possible link between the outbreak of locusts and the rise in temperature.

G David Milton Maruthancode

Open colleges

Sir — With the easing down of lockdown norms, life is limping back to the new normal. But schools and colleges remain closed. Online education system has become the norm. The side effects of long exposure to

screens on children are known. Besides, the poor have been left out of the ambit of online learning due to the digital divide. A classroom environment provides equal learning opportunities. Schools and colleges must reopen with caution.

Sritoma Via email

Look back at home

Sir — New Delhi was right to reject US President Donald Trump's offer to mediate between India and China. Instead, Trump must focus on putting his own house in order first with regard to China.

Besides, he has the pandemic to tackle, too. While the number of new cases is declining in parts of the US, several models indicate the death toll will continue rising in the next weeks.

The Indian Government must be complimented for making it clear to China that it would not settle for anything less than the withdrawal of its troops from the LAC. New Delhi must stand firm.

SC Agrawal Delhi

Border matters

Sir — India has done well to not pay heed to US President Donald Trump's offer to mediate between India and China to end border standoff. It is always wiser to settle burning issues with China amicably and individually without bringing in an outsider or introducing irritants. It is better for India to strengthen ties with China with sobriety of mind.

Prakash Saini Via email

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Making hay during a crisis

Venture capitalists are seeking stronger deal terms as the leverage has shifted back to investors during the pandemic



SONAM CHANDWANI

The countrywide lockdown has dealt a severe blow to the economy of the country. The consequent fall in stocks, which in turn has affected the private equity (PE) market, has resulted in conspicuous devaluation of companies. Start-ups are currently in a strong presence of leverage on the side of investors as the weakness in the market has led to a fall in fund-raising by 78.6 per cent as compared to last year. In such a scenario, it is smart to conserve energy otherwise expended in fund-raising to manage liquidity and the current cash flow. As monetisation of assets through exit activities will see a consequential hold before their prices recover and economic activity returns to normal, investors will want to protect their assets through insertion of restrictive covenants. Owing to the pandemic, venture capitalists are seeking stronger deal terms as the leverage has shifted back to investors.

For the purpose of hedging the risk that presents itself during this time, it is important that both the investors and the start-ups cooperate to maximise efficiency and solve the liquidity crisis that has hit the market currently. The contractual clauses so drafted depend upon the factual matrix of each start-up, made up of the bargaining power of either side. Often, it is a tussle between either side to include clauses that are more favourable either to the start-up or the investor. Such bargaining power resides in the potential of the assets that the start-up creates. There is an inverse relation between the strength of the company and the bargaining power of the investors to introduce such clauses that hedge the risk faced by the lender at the cost of the company. For those companies that are doing well amid the Coronavirus pandemic, these investor-friendly terms come up less. The strongest companies don't see those tough provisions.

Such methods that hedge the risk by cannibalising the control of the start-up and inserting provisions that dilute the risk for the investor are detrimental to the relations between the two parties. Mostly, the survival of the firm shall be determined by various factors. Among them is the low burn rate through liquidity, adaptability and the basic strength of the start-up and its baseline health before the pandemic hit the world.

However, unique times require unique solutions and the same is reciprocated by legal measures so sought to reflect the mood of the start-ups and the venture capitalists. Conservative measures are on the rise across various industries to either protect the existing values/assets or to drive the economic activity up once the lockdown ends. Therefore, the conservative protective clauses that were prevalent during the dotcom phenomenon are rising again.

Full ratchet anti-dilution protection: This prevents the dilution of the shareholding of the investor in different scenarios. It is a form of protection against the dilutive events that the companies might face, as it completely protects the value for the investors by new stock issues at a price that is lower than the investor's original investment. It changes and updates the price of conversion in order to maintain the investor at the same level of ownership stake in terms of the percentage owned.

Liquidation preferences: This gives one class of shareholders the right to be paid back first in the event of an exit. Though investors exiting during this time period will be exceptionally harmful but the fact remains that many firms will not survive this pandemic. Then in the case of exit by the investors such a provision would be an area of conflict, especially in this scenario.

Pay-to-play provisions: This enables a firm to penalise investors that don't invest in later rounds. It is done to assure an investor that his/her firm isn't the only investor in future rounds.

Pull-up provisions, discounts on bridge loans: Similar to the pay-to-play provisions, these are designed to provide a strong incentive for existing investors to participate in future financing. Heightened rewards are only affirmative of the unequal bargaining power of the investor against the start-up.

Blocking rights on exits: This gives investors more control of a company so that they can block an acquisition of a firm. This can be used if an investor thinks his/her firm isn't making enough money in an exit.

At this stage of the Coronavirus pandemic and its resultant impact on the economy of the country, it is imperative for the investors and the firms to amicably cooperate in order to effectively guide the firm out of troubled waters. The devastating effect that the pandemic has had on the bottomlines of firms, especially start-ups is not something that can be wished away overnight.

It will take a concerted effort, on the side of the investors, the start-ups and all stakeholders to steer companies out of the current storm. More measures aimed at reinforcing the moral fabric of the company by providing the right treatment to the employees should be adopted and the firm should not be seen as a lamb being fattened up only to be slaughtered at the apt time.

(The writer is the Managing Partner at KS Legal and Associates)

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

EITHER THE VERY WEAK MAYOR GET HIS ACT TOGETHER AND BRING THE CITY UNDER CONTROL OR I WILL SEND IN THE NATIONAL GUARD AND GET THE JOB DONE RIGHT.

—US PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP



TRUMP KNOWS NOTHING ABOUT THE STRENGTH OF MINNEAPOLIS. WE ARE STRONG AS HELL. THIS IS A DIFFICULT TIME BUT WE WILL GET THROUGH THIS.

—MINNEAPOLIS'S MAYOR JACOB FREY

Make (in) India great

Self-reliance in defence could have the best advantages for us as, besides the economic benefits that will accrue, it will also result in strategic independence, which is a key ingredient of national security



ANIRUDDHA CHAKRAVARTY

Every war brings death and destruction in its wake. It also opens windows of opportunities for those who seek it. Though the global war on the COVID-19 is by no means over it has brought a host of opportunities with it. So, do we Indians continue to remain in the abyss of poverty or do we take a plunge into the new world that is opening up? It needs to be remembered that in the past, India was a leader in manufacturing. As per William Dalrymple's book *The Anarchy*, in 1608, India "was producing about a quarter of global manufacturing; indeed in many ways it was the world's industrial powerhouse and world's leader in manufactured textiles." Whatever happened thereafter is history and during the British rule, India lost the leadership role in manufacturing. We missed the Industrial Revolution and it had a telling effect on impoverishing India.

Thankfully, we did catch the train of Digital Revolution but the gains were not inclusive enough to pull us out of poverty. The opportunity that the COVID revolution is presenting needs to be grabbed with everything that we have. As Prime Minister Narendra Modi put across to the country, his vision of "Atma nirbhar (self-reliant)" India and rolled out financial packages to support the vision, many opportunities could open up, particularly in defence production.

India is one of the biggest arms importers in the world. In 2013-2017, India topped the list as it accounted for 12 per cent of the world's arms imports. The US was the highest arms exporter amounting to 34 per cent of the global share. Even Netherlands, which is 79 times smaller in size than India, was the tenth-largest exporter of arms, accounting for 2.1 per cent of the global arms exports. Surely, a renewed Make in India will provide the country with unparalleled benefits. Self-reliance in defence could have the best advantages for India, as, besides the economic benefits that will accrue, it will also result in strategic independence, which is a key ingredient of national security.

Threat perception is mostly what drives force structuring and weaponisation. With the break-up of the USSR, the threat perception reduced significantly and it was possible for some European nations to scale down their armed forces. However, in the Indian context, the perceived threat from the Northern and Western neighbours does not appear to be reducing in the foreseeable future. While the spectrum and type of conflict that may manifest can be debated, what is of importance is that the preparedness has to be long-term in the interest of overall national security.

Though there has been indigenisation in the field of defence production for the last decade, its output has obviously not been as desired. Also, in terms of quality, there have been instances of the product not being suitable for combat conditions. One can take the case of the INSAS rifle with problems of moving parts and magazines. Time taken for developing a product is also important — as in the case of MBT Arjun.

Indigenisation for defence is simply not "Made in India" or "Manufactured in India." To be successful, "Make in India" has to include the entire process and this includes: Identification of the weapon or equipment or platform to be manufactured; technology; design; patent/IPR and related issues; manufacturing ecosystem and operational maintenance and logistics.



THROUGH 'MAKE IN INDIA,' WE CAN ACHIEVE TO GET WHAT WE NEED FOR OUR OPERATIONAL CONDITIONS AND NOT WHAT SOME OTHER COUNTRY WANTS TO SELL, WHICH COULD BE QUITE UNRELATED TO OUR REQUIREMENTS. NO OTHER COUNTRY WOULD BE FIGHTING WARS IN THE VARIED TERRAIN AND OTHER CONDITIONS THAT PREVAIL ALONG OUR BORDERS



Identification of the weapon/equipment/platform: Based on the threat perception and a long-term integrated plan, each weapon/equipment/platform is to be decided. This is an important process, needing strategic perception and long-term capability development and would be in the realms of the armed forces, with inputs from sources as desired by them. The process also includes formulation of General Service Qualitative Requirements (GSQR), which need to be realistic while meeting the operational requirements of the armed forces.

I am reminded of the days when I was serving in the Siachen glacier, in one of the most challenging posts, in 1992. Since our post was on an ice-wall and was partially under enemy observation, the helipad was located some distance away. Due to the restriction of the valley width as also very limited availability of landing ground, only the smallest helicopter, the Cheetah (French Alouette engine) could fly there. In its first sortie, with full fuel load, all that it could carry was either one man without his equipment or his equipment or a jerrican (20 litres) of kerosene oil.

I wondered at that time as a young Major, that, whereas a sizeable portion of our army is deployed in high altitude and super high altitude areas, why is it that we don't have an Indian helicopter to meet our operational requirements?

Through "Make in India," we can achieve to get what we need for our operational conditions and not what some other country wants to sell, which could be quite unrelated to our requirements. No other country would be fighting wars in the varied terrain and other conditions that prevail along our borders.

Technology and Design: For the success of "Make in India," the process of technology and design would probably be the

most significant one. This applies equally to both, i.e. platforms made by large industries or smaller sub-systems manufactured by MSMEs. Technology must drive the equipment to be unfailingly combat-effective, be it a platform like the aircraft carrier, an aircraft, main battle tank; or a small part like the magazine of a rifle; each needs combat-worthy technology.

Fortunately, India has enough technology experts in this field but their expertise needs to be harnessed in a highly organised manner.

A conducive ecosystem needs to be created, wherein they can contribute to national security as a matter of pride, while their individual aspirations are also taken care of. There is also a need to harness Indian technology experts who may have moved to the US/Europe or other countries, giving them the option of repatriating, including those who may have lost their jobs in the current situation. Alternatively, they could work on a project basis in India. An opportunity can thus be created for them to "give back" to their country which, in a large number of cases, would have given them basic education to achieve success.

There are, of course, products utilising very high-end technology, which may not be readily available. There is a need to acquire such technology leveraging India's other strengths. For the long-term success of "Make in India," such borrowed/acquired technology cannot be an answer. Dedicated investment must be made on R&D of short and long-term defence equipment requirements, taking advantage of the technology experts of the entire country, on a project basis. Such research projects and their byproducts could also be utilised for civilian purposes, in the long-term.

Patent/IPR: All existing patent/IPR rules/regulations must be fully implement-

ed. Excellence/innovation needs to be honoured and rewarded. Even individual interests of scientists, where applicable, in relation to patents must be respected. Clauses of national security, where desirable can be enunciated.

Manufacturing Ecosystem: With the "Make in India" friendly packages announced by the Government, including items that cannot be imported, both large industrial houses and MSMEs have an unprecedented opportunity. However, to compete, their standards have to be real-world-class. For long-term success, the manufacturing capabilities need to be upgraded where required, to supply fail-proof combat equipment. Promising manufacturing units, including start-ups, could be provided appropriate efficiency and output-based support.

Operational Maintenance and Logistics: In the varied terrain conditions that Indian Armed Forces operate in, including a major portion in high altitude and super-high altitude areas, operational maintenance and logistics would play a significant role. In situations where feasible, the original equipment manufacturer could take on the responsibility of logistics and sustenance. The design of the weapon/equipment must take into consideration the requirements of field maintenance in extremely challenging situations and terrain.

The 21st century has presented India with an unique opportunity, which could fulfil the requirements of inclusive growth as well as meet many other existing challenges. Through "Make in India," the country gains strategic independence, the industry makes progress, jobs are created and most importantly the soldier gets indigenously-manufactured equipment meeting world standards.

(The writer is former Director-General of the National Cadet Corps)

The age of judicial populism

How did judicial activism evolve into populism? And does the judiciary really represent the people's will and interests more than the elected politicians?



NADEEM PARACHA

Judges rule on the basis of law, not public opinion." This take on the role of judges by the former Chief Justice of the US, Warren Burger, was taken as a maxim across the world. However, in the last decade or so, things in this context seem to have gone the other way. Now, one often hears terms such as "judicial populism" and "judicial activism" used in commentaries and political rhetoric. In none of the two books by Justice Burger that I read did he even mention any of the two aforementioned terms. There is thus enough evidence to suggest that "judicial populism" is a current coinage. However,

the term "judicial activism" is much older but it was not used as frequently as it is being now.

The American attorney Keenan Kmiec writes that the first time the term "judicial activism" was used was by the US historian Arthur Schlesinger Junior in 1947. But since he was a staunch liberal and supporter of the Democratic Party, one can conclude he was vaguely criticising the Supreme Court judges who had initially overturned the many unprecedented economic policies outlined by President Franklin Roosevelt to address the economic depression in the US in the 1930s.

Ever since the 1950s, there have been at least seven well-known cases in the US which experts have described as being influenced by judicial activism. But even though some of these judgments have been hailed as bold and timely, the idea of judicial activism has largely been criticised by law experts and many sitting governments. The Black's Law Dictionary, one of the most used law dictionaries in the US, explains judicial activism as a deci-

sion-making process whereby judges allow their personal views about public policy to guide their decisions. Other critics have claimed that it intrudes in the workings of the executive and legislative branches of the Government and disturbs democratic order.

But there are also those, such as the US professor of law Brian Tamanaha, who says that an absolute objective interpretation of law is impossible and, therefore, a judge's personality and/or views are bound to influence his/her judgments.

The debate around the idea and act of judicial activism is now decades old. But many commentators are of the view that, instead of aiding the judiciary to come to a middle-ground, judicial activism has broken away and sprinted towards populism. Eight years ago, the Pakistani academic and author Mohammad Waseem more-than-hinted that judicial activism in Pakistan was transforming into "judicial populism" in his essay for the 2012 edition of the *Journal of Contemporary South Asia*.

Dr Waseem was writing when Chaudhry Iftikhar was the country's Chief Justice (CJP), brought back to this position by a "lawyers' movement" against the Pervez Musharraf regime that had ousted him on charges of corruption.

On the former CJP's style of judging, Dr Waseem says: "Confrontation between the executive and judiciary under him led to speculation about the imminent collapse of the democratic system. The use of judicial review by him was widely criticised as an attempt to encroach on the territory of the legislature. The court's pursuit of public interest litigations through frequent *suo motu* actions taken in a populist mode led to brinkmanship on the part of the judiciary. However, the court's pursuit of judicial reform relating to speedy justice and accountability of the higher judiciary remained far from satisfactory."

In order to explain what a "populist" judge is, SOAS University of London's Yasser Kureshi in an essay for *Dawn* writes: "The populist judge embraces a more aggressive form of

judicial activism, prioritising not only policy over precedent but also outcomes over processes. The populist judge is unbound by precedent and procedure, interpreting away any constitutional limitations on what the judge can and cannot do."

Indeed, a lot has been written on judicial populism in Pakistan since the return of Chaudhry Iftikhar. Saqib Nisar, who was CJP from December 2016 till January 2019, was also described by many as a populist judge. Only recently, when the current CJP, Justice Gulzar Ahmad, ordered the Sindh Government to allow the opening of shopping malls in Karachi — when the number of COVID-19 infections were on the rise — critics of the decision explained it as populist and even ill-informed.

But is judicial populism squarely a Pakistani phenomenon? Not quite. A similar decision was delivered by the Supreme Court of the US State of Wisconsin. The US has the highest number of COVID-19 cases and deaths. So it was understandable that this decision was roundly criticised.

The Supreme Courts of Israel and Brazil are also seen as dealing in judicial populism, even though they haven't yet said much on the COVID-19 pandemic. The Brazilian professor of law, Diego Werneck, published an insightful essay, exploring why judicial activism mutates and becomes judicial populism. According to Werneck, courts have traditionally been targets of populists who criticise them for being elitist and bureaucratic. To counter this, especially in an era of rampant populism and unabashed populists heading governments in various countries, Werneck writes that courts have begun to preserve their authority by adjusting their decisions to trends in public opinion. Werneck then adds: "By adopting the populist vocabulary, the courts claim to represent and vindicate current majority sentiment against what are perceived as corrupt politicians."

Werneck writes that this can be triggered by general discontent or a protest movement. He gave the example of the mass 2015 protests in Brazil, during which its Supreme Court

judges and some trial judges did not hold back in castigating "corrupt politicians" in the media and gained significant popularity. This encouraged their populist style.

This scenario is remarkably similar to how the higher judiciary evolved in Pakistan after the 2007 lawyers' movement and then again, after the 2014 protests held by Imran Khan's PTI. But Dr Waseem adds another dimension to this. He writes that when elected representatives clash in developing countries, non-elected State institutions are invited by both to mediate. In the past, the military used to be that sole mediator, despite the fact that it often ended up getting rid of both the bickering parties. Waseem then adds that, ever since the time of Iftikhar, the judiciary, too, has been approached by politicians to settle scores against opponents. But, the more this happens, the more space the executive and the legislative lose, because the judiciary now believes it represents the people's will and interests more than the politicians. (Courtesy: Dawn)

CAPSULE



CBDT notifies I-T returns forms for 2019-20

New Delhi: The income tax department has notified forms for filing income tax returns for the financial year 2019-20. The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has notified Sahaj (ITR-1), Form ITR-2, Form ITR-3, Form Sugam (ITR-4), Form ITR-5, Form ITR-6, Form ITR-7 and Form ITR-V for the assessment year 2020-21. The department has revised the I-T return forms for the financial year 2019-20 to allow assesses to avail benefits of various timeline extension granted by the government following the COVID-19 outbreak. The government has extended various timelines under the Income Tax Act, 1961, through the Taxation and Other Laws (Relaxation of Certain Provisions) Ordinance, 2020. Accordingly, the time for making investment or payments for claiming deduction under Chapter-VIA-B of IT Act that include Section 80C (LIC, PPF, NSC etc.), 80D (Mediclaime) and 80G (Donations) for the financial year 2019-20 had been extended to June 30, 2020. Taxpayers must assess their tax liability for FY 2019-20.



Empowered Committee of Secretaries to discuss auction methodology

New Delhi: The Centre has set up an Empowered Committee of Secretaries (ECoS) to deliberate on issues with regard to auction methodology and operationalisation of coal blocks allocated for commercial mining. The development comes soon after the government stated that it may launch the process of auction of coal blocks for commercial mining on June 11. "It has been decided with the approval of competent authority to set up an Empowered Committee of Secretaries to deliberate and decide/recommend on the certain matters pertaining to auction methodology and associated matters, issues in operationalisation of blocks allocated for sale of coal," according to an official memorandum of the coal ministry. The four-member panel will have secretaries from departments of economic affairs and legal affairs, as well as ministries of coal, and petroleum and natural gas. The empowered committee will also review the two-stage bidding process for successive rounds of auction.

SpaceX propels two NASA astronauts into orbit

PNS ■ WASHINGTON

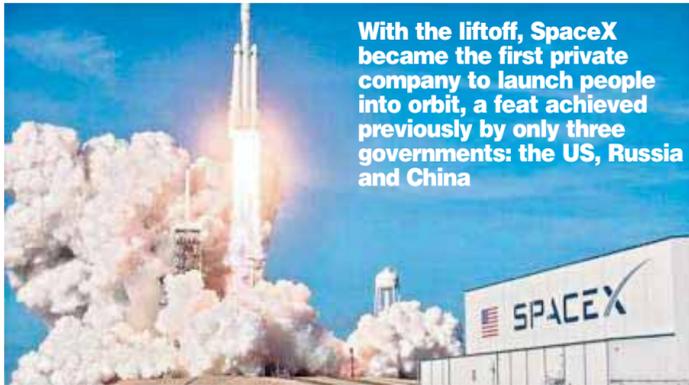
A rocket ship built by Elon Musk's SpaceX company on Saturday successfully blasted off with two NASA astronauts into orbit from the US state of Florida on their way to the International Space Station, marking the dawn of a new age in commercial space travel.

The blastoff from Kennedy Space Center in Florida also assumes significance as it marks the launch of humans into orbit from US soil for the first time in nearly a decade.

The SpaceX Crew Dragon spacecraft, carrying NASA astronauts Bob Behnken (49) and Doug Hurley (53), lifted off at 3:22 pm EDT Saturday atop the company's Falcon 9 rocket from Launch Complex 39A at NASA's Kennedy Space Center.

With the liftoff, SpaceX became the first private company to launch people into orbit, a feat achieved previously by only three governments: the US, Russia and China.

The reusable, gumdrop-shaped capsule called Crew Dragon, would now take the two American astronauts to a 19-hour journey to the International Space Station (ISS). The spacecraft is scheduled to dock with the ISS at



With the liftoff, SpaceX became the first private company to launch people into orbit, a feat achieved previously by only three governments: the US, Russia and China

10:29 am EDT on Sunday.

The successful launch, which was postponed early this week due to inclement weather, gave Americans something to cheer about as in the last three months they have lost over 100,000 of their countrymen due to the coronavirus that has brought the country's economy to its knees. More than 40 million people have lost their job and the pandemic has pushed the economy into a recession.

Top US leadership including President Donald Trump, First Lady Melania Trump,

and thousands of curious Americans had gathered to watch the launch live on a bright Sunday afternoon.

Congratulating Musk, NASA and the astronauts, Trump described the launch day as a great day for the country.

"I'm so proud of the people, of NASA, public and private. When you see a sight like that, it's incredible. When you hear that sound — the roar — you can imagine how dangerous it is," he told reporters soon thereafter.

"I think this is such a great

inspiration for our country. Our country is doing well... We suffered something that was terrible. It should have never happened — it should have never come out of China... That's one of the reasons why I wanted to be here today and I think any one of you would say that was an inspiration to see what we just saw," Trump said.

The President said he spoke with Musk, whom he called one of the "great brains." He also spoke with the two NASA astronauts prior to takeoff.



Reliance on track to achieve zero net debt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Riding on the Rs 1.3 lakh crore in aggregate fund raising in the last few weeks, Reliance Industries is expected to repay its entire reported net debt even if the Saudi Aramco deal is delayed, a brokerage report said.

The company, controlled by billionaire Mukesh Ambani, has sold minority stakes in its digital arm to Facebook and private equity firms such as Silver Lake, Vista Equity, KKR and General Atlantic to raise a cumulative Rs 78,562 crore. Also, the company is raising Rs 53,125 crore through a rights issue.

"We analysed RIL's balance sheet following the recent deal-making. Having raised, on aggregate, Rs 1.3 lakh crore in equity over the past month, we expect the company to repay its entire reported net debt of Rs 1.6 lakh crore in 2020-21, even if the Aramco deal is delayed," Edelweiss said in a research report on the company.

Not recommended 11 digit mobile numbering plan: Trai

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Telecom regulator Trai on Sunday said it has not recommended 11 digit mobile numbers but only suggested prefixing '0' when mobile numbers are called from landlines.

The recommendation on prefixing '0' for calls from fixed line to mobile numbers will generate 2,544 million additional numbering resources for mobile services to cater to the future requirements, it added. The regulator on Friday had said that migration to a unified or single numbering scheme for fixed line and mobile services is not required for now and that sufficient numbering space can be created by various methods, including prefixing '0' for all fixed to mobile calls.

"Trai has not recommended 11-digit numbering scheme for mobile

services," the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) said in a statement.

Trai has recommended a dialling prefix '0' while making a call from a fixed line number to mobile number, the statement said, adding that introduction of a dialling prefix for a particular type of

call "is not akin to increasing the number of digits in the telephone number".

"This change in dialling pattern will generate 2,544 million additional numbering resources for mobile services to cater to the future requirements," it added.

The regulator on Friday had said that migration to a unified or single numbering scheme for fixed line and mobile services is not required for now and that sufficient numbering space can be created by various methods, including prefixing '0' for all fixed to mobile calls.

We only suggested prefixing '0' when mobile numbers are called from landlines, said Trai



LIC listing, IDBI Bank stake sale may be delayed

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Listing of Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) and sale of government's stake in IDBI Bank may be delayed beyond March 2021, due to depressed valuation amid COVID-19 pandemic. The government aims to garner Rs 90,000 crore from the listing of LIC and stake dilution in IDBI Bank out of total the disinvestment target of Rs 2.10 lakh crore during the current fiscal.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman while presenting the Budget 2020-21 had announced stake sale in LIC through an initial public offer in the current financial year.

Given the prevailing market situation, it seems to be difficult to do the LIC stake sale in the current fiscal as the situation is not conducive, sources said. Besides, they said, there will not be a matching appetite for the mega issue of LIC in the present market condition.

Due to COVID situation, the government recently for the second time extended the deadline for bidding for privatisation of India's second-biggest oil marketing company Bharat Petroleum Corp

The government aims to garner Rs 90,000 crore from the listing of LIC and stake dilution in IDBI Bank

Ltd (BPCL) by over a month to July 31. The government currently owns 100 per cent in LIC, while it holds around a 46.5 per cent stake in IDBI Bank. The sources said, the government will have to cut down its expected realisation from stake dilution of both LIC and IDBI Bank even if the market condition improves.

So, selling them at low valuation would be an imprudent decision, they added.

Besides valuation, the sources said, listing of LIC involves a lot of regulatory clearances and more importantly amendment to the LIC Act itself. Market participants had already termed the listing of insurance behemoth LIC as IPO of the decade akin to the Saudi Aramco listing.

Trump calls for delay in G-7 meeting, seeks expansion

PNS ■ WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump said Saturday he will postpone a meeting of Group of 7 nations until fall and called for an expansion of the group's membership because he considers it an outdated group that doesn't properly represent what's taking place in the world.

The G7 members are Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States. Trump singled out Russia, Australia, South Korea and India as possible additions.

The leaders of the world's major economies were slated to meet in the US this year, but the coronavirus outbreak has hobbled those plans.

PM to share his vision on 'Getting Growth Back' with India Inc

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will share his vision on 'Getting Growth Back' with India Inc during an address at the annual session of industry body CII on Tuesday, sources said. The address comes at a time when companies are resuming operations following relaxations and gradual easing of the nationwide lockdown, which was imposed on March 25 to curb spreading of coronavirus infections. The Prime Minister will deliver the inaugural address at the Annual Session of the Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) to mark 125 years since its inception in 1895, sources in the industry chamber told PTL.

The day-long virtual event on the theme 'Getting Growth Back' will also witness participation from top corporate honchos like Piramal Group Chairman Ajay Piramal, ITC Ltd CMD Sanjiv Puri, Biocon



Various rating agencies and economists have projected a sharp fall in GDP growth for India this fiscal

CMD Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw, SBI Chairman Rajnish Kumar, Kotak Mahindra Bank CEO and CII President-Designate Uday Kotak and CII President Vikram Kirloskar.

Various rating agencies and economists have projected a sharp fall in GDP growth for India this fiscal due to the COVID-19 crisis and the subsequent lockdown.

FPIs net sellers for 3rd straight month in May

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Overseas investors remained net sellers for the third consecutive month in May, pulling out Rs 7,366 crore from the Indian capital markets as they stayed risk averse amid the COVID-19 crisis.

As per depositaries data, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) infused a net Rs 14,569 crore into equities but pulled out a net Rs 21,935 crore from the debt segment between May 1-29. This translates into a cumulative net outflow of Rs 7,366 crore in May.

This could be attributed to the attractive valuation of the Indian equities after the sharp correction this year and significant depreciation of Indian rupee against USD, which provided FPIs a rather good entry point, he added.

Industrial consumers in Bengal drag power utilities to court

PNS ■ KOLKATA

A section of industrial power consumers has taken a legal recourse against the utilities in West Bengal after their plea for relief on the fixed charges among other demands in the lockdown was rejected, an official said. The West Bengal Electricity Regulatory Commission had also paid no heed to their demands, when they approached the regulator, the high-tension power consumers claimed. According to them, Union Minister of State for Finance and Corporate Affairs Anurag Thakur has come in support of the industries during a recent interaction with the consumers.

The minister suggested that the West Bengal government should allow deferment of payments for at least six months as the Centre has already provided Rs 90,000 crore to the state-owned power distribution companies,



Power consumers take legal recourse against utilities after their plea for relief on the fixed charges was rejected

so that a temporary relief can be extended.

The state governments such as Maharashtra, Punjab, Gujarat and Uttar Pradesh have offered some benefits to their industrial consumers and announced rebates on load-factor in electricity bills, Steel

Re-Rolling Mills' Association of India chairman Vivek Adukia said.

The fixed charges are an amount that consumers pay monthly to stay connected to grid, while the variable charges are calculated on the basis of units consumed.

ICAI to develop audit quality indicators

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In efforts to strengthen quality of auditing activities, chartered accountants' apex body ICAI will develop a framework for audit quality indicators that will also help Indian audit firms and auditors to compete globally. ICAI President Atul Kumar Gupta said that currently quality of audit is not being benchmarked, and the focus is to have customised audit quality indicators. The ICAI has also decided to open a Centre for Audit Quality at Jaipur. The plans assume significance against the backdrop of the government proposing changes in the existing regulations to enhance audit independence and accountability.

'Many want to buy goods from kiranas'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Majority of the consumers in India want to buy from locally sourced items going forward that reflects the trust built by kiranas during the lockdown, according to a survey.

Consumers in the country are also not rushing to stock grocery in their homes, according to the survey titled 'Deloitte Global State of the Consumer Tracker'. It said that spending pattern of the consumers has changed over the past six weeks with 55 per cent respondents, of the 1,000 participated, are willing to spend a lot more on less discretionary items like groceries, and 52 per cent on everyday household goods.

"Seventy-two per cent consumers want to buy from locally sourced items going forward which goes on to show the trust built by Kiranas during lockdown," it said.



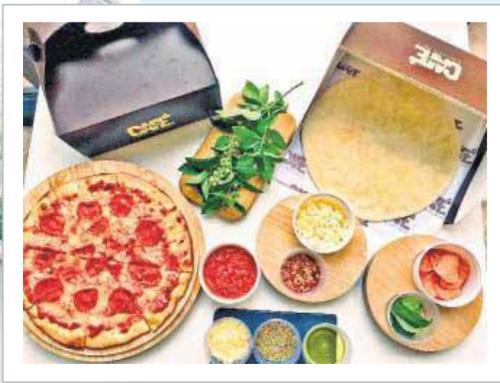
64 % of consumers in India stated that they will buy from brands that have responded well to crisis

Further, 64 per cent of consumers in India stated that they will buy from brands that have responded well to crisis.

On mobility, it said majority consumers want to limit the use of public transit and 70 per cent wants to avoid ride-hailing options altogether.

Similarly, 79 per cent consumers in the country have an intention to own a new vehicle, the report said. Commenting on the survey highlights, Anil Taleja, partner and consumer industry leader, Deloitte India, said it gives a pulse of the consumer behaviour and trend during these challenging times. "It gives a reflection of the heightened consumer appre-

hension, which are at the core of their decision-making. This, in turn, will also steer consumer product companies to build their new strategies around sales and marketing," he said. For the survey, consumers over 18 years were invited to complete the questionnaire via e-mail. It is fielded in 13 countries (targeting 1,000 individual responses per country/wave). The countries include India, Australia, Canada, China, and France. The time period of the survey was between April 19 and May 16.



F&B SECTOR TO LIMP BACK TO PAST GLORY

After the implementation of lockdown to curb the spread of novel Coronavirus, many industries have been feeling the heat. One of the most affected sectors is Food and Beverages services. While some say, it might take years for the industry to recover, some say the sector will gain its lost glory within weeks of resuming services. However, it is to be seen how the industry is going to fare once life resumes to normalcy in the country. Meanwhile, K RAMYA SREE speaks to Kerrie Hannaford, Vice President Commercial of Accor India & South Asia that represents a luxurious chain of hotels like Novotel, Mercure, and Ibis in Hyderabad to find out more about the future of the F&B services

This sector is going through an industry-wide catastrophe of proportions we have arguably never seen before. What are you seeing out there?

The ongoing pandemic has not left any sector untouched and has impacted several lives. Having said that, we are hopeful and positive about the future. Take the example of China, they are almost two months ahead of us in terms of recovery and their domestic market has already started

to pick up. There is always light at the end of the tunnel and our F&B teams are all prepped to welcome guests back.

How do you think this pandemic has changed the mindset of consumers coming back into the market?

Consumers will be extra cautious in terms of deciding where to go and what to eat. They will be dining at places that are cleaner and hygienic. They would want to eat homegrown and local produce and would definitely be more inquisitive about the whole process of preparing a dish. Local and authentic food will see more takers and transparent kitchens will be appreciated. More importantly, they would want to see the efforts in terms of cleanliness of the kitchen and dining areas.

What according to you is the future of F&B services post lockdown era?

F&B is a big-ticket item in our revenue segments and has evidently, taken a step back. In view of the evolving situation related to COVID-19 and its impact on hotel operations, it is imperative that we prepare ourselves for the new way of working and adapt and have evolved operating procedures in place.

Pre-COVID days, everyone enjoyed lavish buffets service, however, the new normal calls for a few changes. New buffet protocols will be followed and overcrowding during peak restaurant hours will be



avoided. Restaurant sitting will have fewer tables to occupy, and in-room contactless services will be promoted without any extra cost involved. The hustle-bustle of the reception area will be reduced and we all will always notice social distancing being maintained in public spaces. We foresee social distancing being followed in restaurants and cafes as well. The tables at our restaurants will be placed at a distance and we will ensure a safe distance of at least one metre between tables and between seats. The limit of the number of guests in the area will be based on the maximum allowed.

At Accor, an exhaustive checklist is being prepared for the Restaurant Operations in F&B Service across the board for Luxury, midscale, and the economy hotels.

How long do you feel it would take for the industry to gain its past glory?

We are confident that the

NEW BUFFET PROTOCOLS WILL BE FOLLOWED AND OVERCROWDING DURING PEAK RESTAURANT HOURS WILL BE AVOIDED. RESTAURANT SITTING WILL HAVE FEWER TABLES TO OCCUPY, AND IN-ROOM CONTACTLESS SERVICES WILL BE PROMOTED WITHOUT ANY EXTRA COST

industry will soon rebound like it always does after any crisis. The ongoing spread of COVID-19 has taken the world by storm, however, on the upside, a gradual recovery in the travel business prospects may be anticipated ahead of July-August. Food deliveries and take-a-ways had already begun a few weeks ago, and we are hopeful our guests will be willing to come back as soon as the lockdown eases.

What are the precautions you are going to follow in the hospitality once everything resumes to normalcy?

The world will continue to practice social distancing until the pandemic is con-



to declare their state of health; whether they have come into contact with any person suspected of the COVID-19; and their past travel patterns the last 14 days. We will be encouraging e-check-ins and an e-card will be sent on the guest's email requesting an instant acknowledgment of the same over email. No physical cards will be taken or used for pre-authorisation to avoid contact.

In the initial phase, we anticipate that guests may opt for in-room dining and restrict the use of an elevator to avoid human contact as much as possible.

Lobby furniture will be reduced so that the number of guests in any waiting area does not exceed the permitted limit and social distancing will be emphasised. Every elevator entrance at every floor will have a toothpick dispenser or 'use your elbow' signage to press the buttons.

What according to you are the precautions a visitor must follow?

As this pandemic has

brought about behavioural changes in people, this is likely to change the way people travel in general. Needless to say, health, safety, and hygiene will take priority over everything else. While our hotels will ensure the guests a completely safe environment, it is imperative for us as individuals, to be mindful of personal hygiene. Washing hands regularly, not stepping out without masks and gloves, minimum contact of hands on the face are a few measures we must ensure as citizens to combat these difficult times. With guidelines laid out by expert bodies as well as detailed guidelines from Accor, visitors must ensure they adhere to these.

What are the factors that will challenge the growth of the F&B sector?

Like any other industry, the F&B sector has also been hit by the ongoing pandemic. Having said that, many restaurants and hotels started home delivery and take-away services which were appreciated and accepted by the customers. This is testimony to the fact that guests trust their favourite diner in terms of providing hygienic food. Moreover, guests are waiting to go back to restaurants to enjoy meals while, of course keeping in mind social distancing norms. The only challenge we foresee is the standards of cleanliness and hygiene a restaurant will provide. The F&B sector will have to instill the confidence amongst guests that stringent cleaning protocols are being followed and the safety of customers is a priority. If the guests have trusted us with the food being delivered at their doorstep, we are sure they will come back as and when we're open.

Have you seen any interesting or colorful approaches to dealing with social distancing requirements?

As mentioned, some of our restaurants had initiated food delivery and take-away services. One of the interesting elements we added was the DIY food kits. To replicate the restaurant charm, we provide every element which goes into a dish, and guests have to just put the ingredients together and enjoy the meal. We also share the directions to follow to create the final dish as well as the time frame for consumption.

Pullman & Novotel, New Delhi Aerocity, and KooX at Novotel Chennai Chammiers Road are offering very interesting DIY Kit options.

Additionally, our guests will see all our employees including the restaurant staff members sporting branded trendy masks, once the lockdown is lifted.

Webinar with Samantha!

SHIKHA DUGGAL

She's an actress, businesswoman, a philanthropist, dutiful wife, responsible daughter-in-law, and what not! The southern superstar is currently confined to her home with husband Naga Chaitanya amid the lockdown and that's when she decided to make the most of this time. The Jaanu actress was part of a webinar hosted by Annapurna College of Film & Media over her journey of films she has been a part of. "This is my first ever webinar and I am glad to wear flip-flops to it," she laughs heartily. Winner of Nandi and Filmfare awards, the Tollywood industry has been a huge part of her life, where she has given many genuine and authentic performances. Alongside her acting career, she had also begun a charitable trust called Pratyusha Support to deliver medical support to

women and children.

How much is a movie star worth?

Samantha believes an actor is the one who fully represents the character they are playing, with immense conviction to engage their audiences. The industry seems very glamorous from the outside world but it's too good to be true, she says. The actress began her career from a contractual job of modeling and ended up being one of the most sought-after actresses down South. "Usually when I am on the sets, by the third day, my director and I tend to create a relationship of profundity without any prerequisites of acting or performances," adds Sam.

How important is an actor's relationship with his/her crew?

"I remember when I was shooting for

Rangasthalam in extreme conditions amid hot summers, only my director had the energy to vibrate with the actors so he could bring out the best in us. Yet, while a film is being shot it's beyond 'must trust the vision of director only', as our cinematographer was one of the few technicians who didn't just come to the sets saying 'what's the scene', but mastered everything else on his own," tells the actress. Citing Rangasthalam as a great example over the importance of technicians to not just an actor but the whole film, she explains from background scores, art direction, cinematography, etc. how the whole lot

gained and that it's an achievement.

How does Samantha choose her scripts?

Each time going by the roles which she has played previously, she chooses something different challenging herself to be a role model for budding actresses across the country. She continues to say, "A well-written, multi-dimensional, and a demanding script is what I tend to look for. Ultimately, I don't want my theatre audience to be bored with the same look or perform-

ances." She feels finding a good script is like looking in a minefield, every scene should just move forward with some drama for an explosive audience.

How difficult is it to play a negative role?

Samantha says her next role in an upcoming project is a negative one and the most difficult one yet. She watched a lot of real footage yet had a hard time portraying a negative role on screen. While Samantha is making headlines for playing a negative role, her fans seem equally excited.

OTT or cinema, what will Samantha prefer?

The superstar's nearing debut on the OTT platform with Family Man Season 2 makes her feel both mediums hold their own exclusivity with their own formats attached to it. Content is the king, and now Over The Top platform is providing opportunities for wider distribution.

Apart from original shows and films, there is live entertainment too. "Certainly video streaming platforms have made it convenient for binge-watchers, but going out of our homes to socialise in a theatre will continue to remain a social fabric in India. I don't think it's the death knell for a theatrical experience this soon," she believes.

“A well-written, multi-dimensional, and a demanding script is what I tend to look for. Ultimately, I don't want my theatre audience to be bored with the same look or performances.”



Unlock Phase 1: The future of malls and movie theatres

The COVID-19 pandemic has brought us all together at an unique never seen before juncture. With the "new normal" being social distancing and unprecedented hygiene protocols, the way we watch movies and spend our time at the shopping malls, is set to change forever.

Among the most affected sectors of the economy in the times of the pandemic have been the movie theatres and shopping malls. With zero footfall, paucity of cashflow, the industry looks at the multiplex and dine-in restaurants and cafes will further help in driving footfalls and trading, maintains Manoj K. Agarwal, Chief Executive Officer, Viviana Mall, Thane.

"The COVID pandemic has left a massive impact on the cinema exhibition industry, not just in our country, but across the globe. Operations are shut, movie releases are getting deferred, and therefore inflow of cash has entirely stopped. The industry has faced various crises in its history, but what it is going through currently could not be envisaged at any point, but at the same time, we are certain that the cinema exhibition sector would script a remarkable turnaround, as we know that we are backed by the unshakable passion of the Indian cinema lovers," says Alok Tandon, CEO — INOX Leisure Ltd.

every instance, have emerged smarter and stronger. We are looking at the post COVID-19 phase as another evolution with new processes and protocols, and we are sure that we will take it into our stride. We have used the lockdown phase to determine various scenarios and work out robust plans for ensuring hygiene as well as distancing," states Tandon.

Adding, "We will remain completely respectful towards the concerns of our guests, and also understand that their faith and confidence in our preparedness on preventive measures will play a key role towards the same. We are looking at the "new normal" soon going back to the "old normal" which resembles gangs of friends and families turning up in huge numbers, heavy hustle and bustle in the lobbies, and the loud cheers in the auditoriums."

"First of all, we want everyone to understand that this is not a Multiplex Vs OTT scenario. All we expect the content creators to do is to release their content in theatres, followed by digital platforms, like it has been happening so far in line with the globally prevalent windowing pattern. Every phase in the cinema value chain has its own significance, and with the theatrical/ cinema hall phase being the most value-generating phase, we expect the windowing pattern to be followed. Towards this, the Multiplex Association Of India had come out with an appeal to the content creators. We had also urged the producers and studios to wait for the theatres to resume

operations and follow the globally prevalent cinematic windowing pattern as it has done wonders in terms of revenues for the content creators and other stakeholders, as it offers the creators an opportunity to extract the best from all available mediums," opines Alok Tandon.

With a few big-ticket releases already opting for premieres on the OTT platforms, what challenges are movie theatres facing in the current scenario?

"Cinemas, since inception, have been the biggest contributors to the 'experience economy' for the past 100 years, and will continue to do so forever. There is no doubt that COVID-19 has challenged the passion for cinema which is prevalent in our country. Cinema-lovers have remained under-served on entertainment for this period, and we know that they are yearning to step out, socialise and get entertained via their



strong relationships with our retail partners and we are assessing the situation in real time and responding to the requests that we have received by engaging with them individually. We will work with them to come to an appropriate solution which is of mutual interest and sustainable in the long term. What matters most now is to reflect on these new changes and plan ahead — so that we all can make a successful comeback."

Adding, "Our focus will now be on consumer safety and providing them the best experience of shopping in the mall. We have been working closely with our retail partners and the industry at large and have drafted SOPs which include every minute details for sanitisation such as door handles, wheelchairs, benches, carts etc. along with placement of sanitiser stations across all our malls. We are also embracing in technology for providing real time foot traffic, real time notifications on safety and cleanliness, booking of time slots, golden hours to visit our malls which our consumers can experience very soon on DLF Malls 'Lukout' APP."

"What we foresee, fashion and F&B will open in a limited way. Movie halls and children entertainment will open later. We are initially looking at re-opening the mall between 12:00 pm - 9 pm so that consumers feel safe to come in during that time. Our consumer research tells us that consumers now will come to the malls with the purpose and decision to shop or eat. We will attract serious shoppers to the malls. And hence, our efforts will be to win our consumers' confidence and bring them back to our malls," suggests Pushpa Bector.

SOME OF THE KEY MEASURES TO BE ADOPTED ARE AS FOLLOWS:

- Hygiene-related measures.
- Encourage paperless transactions for ticket booking and food ordering.
- Check temperature of all employees, service partners and guests with non-invasive Thermo-Guns as they enter our premises.
- Sanitizers stations at all the key locations and common areas.
- Following rigorous cleaning and disinfecting procedures.
- Areas with higher public exposure would be sanitized on an hourly basis.
- Auditoriums would be sanitized after every show.
- All surfaces in and around the food service areas will be disinfected regularly.
- Deep cleaning of auditoriums would be carried out every day.
- The teams would be

asked to wear gloves and masks and will be asked to wash hands regularly.

- Use of single use disposable packaging for F&B services.
- PPE kits available for purchases, which would include a mask, a pair of gloves and a bottle of sanitiser.

SOCIAL DISTANCING MEASURES

- Following distancing between the guests at the entrance using demarcations.
- Ensuring physical distancing, we will allot seats in a way that adjacent seats are left vacant for a group or a family.
- Online booking modes will be programmed to allocate seats in that order.
- Movie shows will be scheduled in such a manner, that entry, intermissions and exits to two shows do not occur simultaneously, and we avoid crowding of lobbies and restrooms.

ue to delight our patrons across the country," Tandon rounds up.

The Tale of the Retail: Winning the confidence from the shoppers

"To mitigate the disruption caused by this crisis, retailers will need to devise strategies for the "now", "next" and "beyond". While they need to manage their costs through operational improvement and by evaluating the store portfolio, they also invest in service, experience, and omnichannel to serve the new consumer. As retailers react to fluidity of the "now" they also need to build resilience for the "next" when demand starts getting restored and think "beyond". They should map a strategic journey to financial resilience at the same time plan for longer-term implications on their operating model owing to shift in external environment. Speed and agility will be key levers of success and retailers will need to adopt a FASTER approach both to navigate the crisis 'now' and to plan for the 'next' and 'beyond,'" says a report by I

Bector states, "We have

FUN

ARCHIE



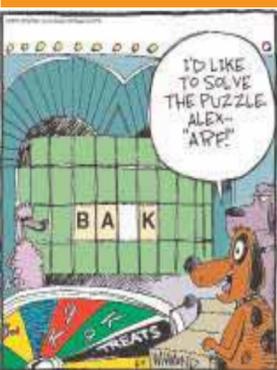
CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



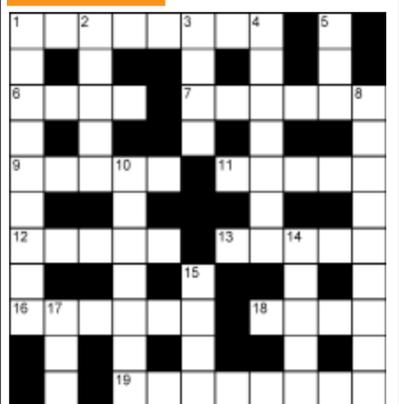
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

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

ACROSS

- 1 Nice, enjoyable
- 6 Decays
- 7 An animal with a shell
- 9 Causes pain to
- 11 A witch's power
- 12 Footwear
- 13 A hot drink
- 16 A medical professional
- 18 Lengthy
- 19 Inspected closely
- 4 A violent storm with twisting winds
- 5 Unwell
- 8 Swapped
- 10 Go to see shows here
- 14 A king or queen wears this
- 15 Length x width =
- 17 Not at home

DOWN

- 1 Bought
- 2 Go in
- 3 Takes part in a play

SOLUTION



AFP ■ MOENCHENGLADBACH

NO FANS, NO PROBLEM

Thuram's brace helps M'gladbach spoil Union outing in front of cut-out supporters

Borussia Moenchengladbach routed Union Berlin 4-1 on Sunday to go third in the Bundesliga with French striker Marcus Thuram scoring twice and taking a knee in protest at the death of an unarmed black man in the United States.

"Marcus has made the point. He has set an example against racism that we all support," Gladbach coach Marco Rose said of Thuram's protest.

First-half goals by midfielder Florian Neuhaus, who bagged Gladbach's 3,000th goal in the Bundesliga, and Thuram put Gladbach 2-0 up at the break when he headed home unmarked at the far post.

The 22-year-old French striker then took a knee on the Borussia Park turf, imitating NFL star Colin Kaepernick.

"No explanation needed," wrote Borussia Moenchengladbach on the club's official Twitter account.

It was the latest show of Bundesliga solidarity with the current protests sweeping the United States.

Schalke's US midfielder Weston McKennie wore an armband in Saturday's defeat to Werder Bremen bearing the words "Justice for George".



Moenchengladbach players celebrate in front of the cardboards with photos of Moenchengladbach fans displayed on the stands at the end of the Bundesliga match

George Floyd, 46, died in Minneapolis during an arrest by a police officer who pinned him to the ground for several minutes by kneeling on his neck.

Just after the break in Gladbach, Union's Swedish striker Sebastian Andersson pulled one back after being left unmarked.

Gladbach pulled away when Thuram added his second after pressing the Union defence.

Alassane Plea then grabbed a goal of his own for Gladbach, having set up Thuram's first, when he fired home off his left foot to make

it 4-1 on 81 minutes when he beat Union goalkeeper Rafal Gikiewicz.

After the final whistle, the Gladbach squad celebrated in front of terraces filled with cardboard figures of fans.

There were 15,000 cut-outs on the terraces at Borussia Park with home supporters paying 19 euros (\$21) each to have their image at the game as fans remain shut out to prevent the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

After a 3-1 defeat to Leverkusen last weekend, and a goalless draw with relegation-threatened Werder Bremen on Tuesday, this was an important win for Gladbach.

It lifted them to third in the table, but RB Leipzig can take their place if they win at Cologne on Monday.

On Saturday, reigning champions Bayern Munich opened a 10-point lead with a 5-0 thrashing of Fortuna Dusseldorf with the league's top-scorer Robert Lewandowski netting twice.

Later Sunday, second-placed Borussia Dortmund can trim Bayern's lead if they win at bottom side Paderborn.

Five subs 'awful' idea: Gasperini

AFP ■ BERGAMO

Atalanta coach Gian Piero Gasperini on Sunday slammed as 'awful' the new rule which now allows teams to make five substitutions in a match instead of three.

"Five subs? Terrible. The game is distorted," Gasperini told *Gazzetta Dello Sport*.

"We become basketball. There may be ten new players on the pitch at the end."

FIFA has made the temporary change to ease the physical strain on players, who are returning to a congested period of games after a lengthy break due to the coronavirus pandemic. But it could favour the bigger clubs, such as Juventus, who have deeper squads and better players ready to come off the bench.

"Who's the genius who claims that injuries can be avoided?" continued the former Inter Milan coach.

"On that basis? Better to change your engine halfway through the Grand Prix. It takes away from the show."

How can you be allowed to change your engine halfway through the Grand Prix. It takes away from the show."

Serie A returns on June 20 with Gasperini's side in fourth, and battling for the final



Champions League berth in Italy. "I don't like football without fans either, but it's the only way to start again," he continued.

"During the first day of the Bundesliga I zapped, I could not follow, Borussia-Bayern, on the other hand, was a good game.

"I saw many technical errors even from important players — in an empty stadium it is more difficult to stay focused."

Sampdoria coach Claudio Ranieri, however, hailed five substitutions "a great thing" as his side battle relegation.

"The heat and matches close together carry a risk for players," said the former Leicester City manager.

"When there are three games a week the stress will be considerable."

Mahi always emotional about cricket: Sakshi

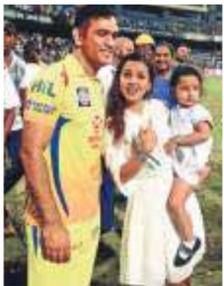
IANS ■ CHENNAI

The common perception might be that Mahendra Singh Dhoni does not show a lot of emotion on the field and is *Captain Cool*. But on Sunday, the iconic former India captain's wife Sakshi said that Dhoni is always emotional about the game as it is his love.

While talking about Dhoni getting emotional after leading Chennai Super Kings to their third Indian Premier League title in 2018, Sakshi said during an *Instagram Live* chat on CSK's official handle: "Mahi (Dhoni's pet name) is always emotional about cricket. It's his love."

Rajasthan Royals (RR) along with CSK were making a comeback to the IPL after a two-year ban. Sakshi also revealed how the avid gamer in Dhoni helps the veteran wicketkeeper-batsman relax.

"Video games are a stress buster for him. He has a thinking brain which doesn't rest. So video games help him and he is



now too much into *Call Of Duty* and *PlayerUnknown's Battlegrounds* (PUBG)."

Sakshi also joked that only she can pick up a fight with ice-cool Dhoni who last turned out for India during their loss to New Zealand in the 2019 World Cup semi-final.

"Nobody picks up a fight with him. I am the only one," she smiled. Sakshi also revealed that Dhoni has always kept his door open during tours and players could walk in any time

Don't know where these come from: Sakshi on MS retirement rumours

CHENNAI: Mahendra Singh Dhoni's wife Sakshi on Sunday said the iconic former India captain has had virtually no presence on social media during the Covid-19 induced lockdown and therefore the sudden trends about him hanging up his boots baffles her.

A hashtag, namely #DhoniRetires, recently started trending on social media but soon, it became apparent that it was just another false rumour.

"He has had zero presence on social media during this

lockdown, I don't know where these things come from. I just don't know," Sakshi said.

Sakshi had previously rubbished rumours of the veteran wicketkeeper-batsman's retirement from international cricket following the *Twitter* trends. "It's only rumours! I understand Lockdown has made people mentally unstable! #DhoniRetires... Get a life! (sic)," Sakshi had written on *Twitter*.

However, just a few minutes after posting the tweet, she deleted it.

they wanted.

"Mahi has always kept his door open. It has been like that since 2010 (when we got married). People come... we chat sometimes till 3-4 in the morning. When they come to talk to

Mahi about cricket, I go away,"

Sakshi also said CSK has always been a family to them. "It is nice to be part of the family. They take the sport as sport and there are no hard feelings."

Marcelo can't wait to start playing matches

MADRID: Real Madrid left-back Marcelo said that the players 'can't wait' to get back to playing regular football.

"We had never gone so long without being able to train out on the pitch and our desire to play football has been growing ever since we stopped. Now we're close to getting going again and we can't wait," Marcelo told Real Madrid's official website.

"It's been different to what we're used to. We have to take the positives from it and now we're used to the routine; it's not like it used to be but everything's good. We're all healthy, the training sessions have been fantastic in recovering our rhythm. "Having not touched a ball for so long, when you go back out on the pitch you've lost your touch a bit, but now we just can't wait to start playing games," he added.



IANS

Icardi signs PSG deal



AFP ■ PARIS

Paris Saint-Germain international Mauro Icardi from Inter Milan on a four-year deal after taking up the option to

buy the on-loan forward, the two clubs announced on Sunday.

Icardi joined PSG this season and impressed with 20 goals in 31 games, before the Ligue 1 campaign was stopped and his club crowned champions because of the coronavirus pandemic.

"Paris Saint-Germain are delighted to announce the signing of Mauro Icardi on a permanent deal, following the striker's loan from Inter Milan during the 2019-2020 season," the French club said in a statement.

Icardi, who has eight caps for Argentina, but also holds an Italian passport, has signed a four-year deal until June 30, 2024.

Given the current economic situation the French champions succeeded in reducing the fee "to under" 60 million euros (\$66 million), as opposed to the 70 million euros initially requested, according to the French and Italian sports press.

Inter Milan thanked Icardi "for the six seasons he spent with us and wish him the best for his future professional career."

SL cricketers to resume training

COLOMBO: A group of 13 Sri Lankan cricketers, comprising mainly bowlers, will resume training on Monday following the coronavirus hiatus, the country's cricket board said on Sunday.

Sri Lanka Cricket (SLC) said in a statement that a "selected squad of 13 members will undergo a 12-day Residential Training Camp at the Colombo Cricket Club".

"The players taking part in the camp represents a general squad chosen from across all formats, and primarily consist of bowlers, as they need more time for 'conditioning' before going into active competition," the statement said.

The coaching and support staff overseeing the training of the players will consist of a four-member unit. All the players will strictly adhere to the health regulations imposed by the Government.

The SLC said it has "taken all required measures in consultation with the Ministry of Sports and the Ministry of Health to



ensure the safety of every individual involved in this exercise, and has formulated a set of procedures to adhere, during the camp period and before."

The governing body said "members taking part in the camp, will not be allowed to leave the hotel premises or the practice venue to attend personal matters during the training period".

The South African Government has also allowed non-contact sports, including cricket, to return to play, a decision hailed by Cricket South Africa (CSA) acting CEO Jacques Faul as a "big boost".

He said the Covid Steering Committee will meet on Monday to draw up a protocol covering the return to training and playing. "At this stage these regulations apply only to professional cricket and our next step will be to draw up a protocol covering the return to training and playing and submit it to SRS for approval.

"Both our national teams and our franchises will in due time be given the green light to return to training."

Faul, however, said no one will be forced to resume training.

I am enjoying my cricket: Ishant



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

He has been phenomenal in the last few years and India pacer Ishant Sharma simply believes that it has to do with him "enjoying his cricket".

The 31-year-old, who is India's senior-most cricketer in the current set-up with 97 Tests, said that he wouldn't probably like to sledge Steve Smith during the next tour of Australia, unlike the 2017 home series game in Bengaluru where his facial expression became a meme.

"I am in that phase of my career where I am enjoying my cricket and more I enjoy, better it is. I will take more wick-

ets and win matches for the team unless you guys want to provoke me and get me banned," Ishant, known for his dry sense of humour, said. He was speaking to teammate Mayank Agarwal during a podcast, *Open Nets with Mayank*, and aired by *bcci.Tv*.

When Agarwal asked about his now-famous facial gesture to the former Australian captain, the senior speedster said that the sole aim was to upset Smith's rhythm.

"I was trying to upset Steve Smith's rhythm. We knew if we could get that wicket, we would have a better chance of winning. Virat doesn't mind aggression. He is an aggressive captain and only thing he will tell is 'just get me the wicket but make sure you don't get banned'."

Ishant, who was a part of the pace quartet during the 2018-19 historic series win in Australia, still cherishes the feat.

"I have been on for tours to Australia (since 2007-08) and I know how tough it is. Having heard all these years that we don't win in Australia, you have that eagerness and urge to win."



Misbah backs Babar to succeed as captain

PTI ■ KARACHI

Pakistan's head coach-cum-chief selector Misbah-ul-Haq has backed Babar Azam to succeed as the national team's ODI and T20 captain despite former batting coach Grant Flower expressing concerns over his ability to handle the pressure that comes with the job.

Misbah said the 25-year-old Azam has shown he is capable of dealing with the expectations.

"Making Babar captain of the T20 team last year was a tester really. We wanted to see how he will respond to the challenge and how it will affect his batting," Misbah said in an interview.

"But all of us agreed that he handled the pressure well and if anything the responsibility of being captain only made him show more responsibility as a batsman," he added.

Azam was given leadership of Pakistan's ODI team earlier this month.

Flower, who worked with the Pakistan team as batting coach from 2014 till after last year's World Cup, expressed concerns about Azam's capability to captain in two formats and be the team's best batsman as well.

"He's got a good cricketing brain but there's a lot of politics in Pakistan cricket and a lot of pressure from the public," Flower was quoted as saying by *Stats Perform News*.

"If you start losing, it's one thing being the best batsman but that will put pressure on your batting skills and it can all come tumbling down pretty quickly."

"We've seen with great players in the past the pressures that captaincy can bring, but some players get better and if he gets better than the world is his oyster. Time will tell," he added.

However, former Pakistan captain Misbah said Azam's batting has already scaled a different level during the tour of Australia last year.

"That is why we decided to also give him the responsibility of leading the ODI team. I think he is ready for the challenge and he should thrive as the team's top batsman as well."

Misbah didn't agree with Flower's assertion of politics in Pakistan cricket and pressure from the public. "The way I look at it, being a top batsman he is best suited to lead the team by example and this would make it easier for him to also take strong decisions and for the team to follow him," Misbah said.

US Open plan in work



AP ■ NEW YORK

Charter flights to ferry US Open tennis players and limited entourages from Europe, South America and the Middle East to New York.

Negative Covid-19 tests before travelling. Centralized housing. Daily temperature checks.

No spectators. Fewer on-court officials. No locker-room access on practice days.

All are among the scenarios being considered for the 2020 US Open —

if it is held at all amid the coronavirus pandemic — and described to *The Associated Press* by a high-ranking official at the Grand Slam tournament.

"All of this is still fluid," Stacey Allaster, the US Tennis Association's chief executive for professional tennis, said in a telephone interview on Saturday. "We have made no decisions at all."

With that caveat, Allaster added that if the USTA board does decide to go forward with the Open, she expects it to be held at its usual site and in its usual spot on the calendar. The main draw is scheduled to start August 31.

"We continue to be, I would say, 150% focused on staging a safe environment for conducting a US Open at the Billie Jean King National Tennis Center in New York on our dates. It's all I wake up — our team wakes up — thinking about," Allaster said.

"The idea of an alternative venue, an alternative date ... We've got a responsibility to explore it, but it doesn't have a lot of momentum."

An announcement should come from "mid-June to end of June," Allaster said.

WFI to nominate Vinesh for Khel Ratna

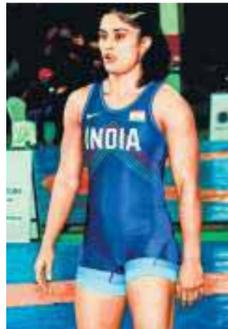
PTI ■ NEW DELHI

World Championship Bronze medallist Vinesh Phogat is set to be nominated for Khel Ratna for the second year in a row while Rio Olympic Bronze winner Sakshi Malik wants to be in contention for the Arjuna award, although she is already a recipient of country's highest sporting honour.

Vinesh, who is the lone woman wrestler to have qualified for the now-postponed Tokyo Olympics, had missed out on the honour last year with fellow grappler Bajrang Punia getting the prestigious award.

She has been consistent in the last three years, winning Asian Games Gold in Jakarta. She qualified for the Tokyo Games by winning a Bronze at the World Championship in Nur Sultan in 2019.

Early this year, she won a Bronze at the Asian Championship, held in New



Delhi.

"We will send Vinesh's application on Monday for Khel Ratna. She will be a strong contender. But we have not yet decided on Arjuna award application because we have received many applications. The WFI President will have a look and decide whose application is to be forwarded to the ministry,"

WFI Assistant Secretary Vinod Tomar said.

"We still have time till June 3. But most likely the names will be sent tomorrow (Monday)," he added.

A WFI source said Sakshi, who has been struggling badly of late, has sent her application for the Arjuna. She had got Khel Ratna in 2016 along with gymnast Dipa Karmakar and shooter Jitu Rai.

Recently she lost twice to young grappler Sonam Malik, who stopped the elite athlete from making the cut even for the Asian Olympic Qualifiers.

It will be interesting to see if WFI sends her name since 2019 World Championship Silver medallist Deepak Punia (86kg) and very-talented Rahul Aware (61kg, non-olympic category) have also sent their applications for the Arjuna.

"She had no achievement before the Rio Games, so her name was not sent for Arjuna. Since she won a Bronze in Rio,

she (directly) got the Khel Ratna that time. Now she wants the Arjuna award as well," the source said.

If WFI goes by performance, it will not send Sakshi's name because better performers like Deepak Punia and Rahul Aware stand a better chance to get the award as they will compete with brilliant athletes from other disciplines.

Also sending his application to WFI for the Arjuna is Sandeep Tomar, who was a strong candidate in the 57kg before the rise of Ravi Dahiya, the 2019 World Championship Bronze medallist.

While application have to be filled by the athletes, it is the national federation which has to recommend names for the sports awards to the ministry.

The athletes can still send their applications if their form is endorsed by their state unit or a former national awardee — Arjuna, Khel Ratna, Dhyana Chand or or Dronacharya.

It's a dream come true: PARASURAM on directing Mahesh

The first look poster of *Sarkaru Vaari Paata* unveiled on superstar Krishna's 77th birthday caught the attention of his fans, besides Mahesh's brand new hairdo, a ring to his ear and a Rs 1 coin tattooed on his neck fancied his fans, finds NAGARAJ GOUD



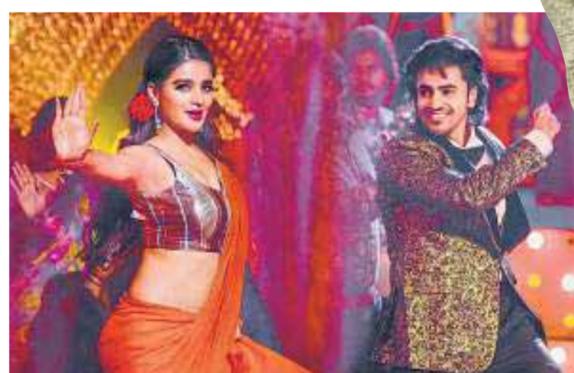
For the past several years, it has been a ritual for Mahesh Babu to unveil the first look of his films, teasers or start new ventures on his father superstar Krishna's birthday on May 31. On Sunday, as his father turned 77, the actor took to his social media pages to officially announce the title and first look of his next with Parasuram. "Here it is!!! #SarkaruVaariPaata Blockbuster start for another hatrick @ParasuramPetla @MythriOfficial @14ReelsPlus @MusicThaman (sic)," the superstar posted on Twitter along with a first look poster. Fans immediately took a fancy to the poster and title. What immediately got their attention besides Mahesh's brand new hairdo and a ring to ear and a Re 1 coin tattooed on his neck. Industry-

wallahs like Devi Sri Prasad, Puri Jagannadh, Harish Shankar, Anil Sunkara, Sampath Nandi and Maruthi too went gaga over the first look poster. *Sarkaru Vaari Paata* marks Mahesh teaming up with Parasuram for the first time. The project got the actor's nod last year and it was to roll after he wraps up with Vamshi Paidipally's project. However, he was unhappy with the script of Paidipally, later advancing Parasuram's film. "My long wait to direct Superstar Mahesh Babu garu has just ended!!! Overjoyed and eagerly waiting to be on the sets... It's a dream come true! (Sic)," an excited Parasuram posted on Twitter. This is the director's first biggie with a star of Mahesh's repute. While story details regarding the film are under wraps, we've learnt that the director drew inspiration from bank

defaulters in the last five-six years and penned a fictional social drama laced with action. "Obviously, the signature Parasuram humour will be in abundance. He's also presenting Mahesh in a romantic *avatar*," the source adds.

On the technical front though, there's a major change. Gopi Sundar was initially attached to the project as a tunesmith but he made way for SS Thaman (guess it has

something to do with the latter's red-hot streak of late). The last time *Ala Vaikunthapuramlo* music director composed music for a Mahesh-starrer was way back in 2014 for *Aagadu*. PS Vinod will be the director of cinematography.



'Ashok was really excited to dance to Jumbare Jujumbare'



Ashok Galla, who is making his debut with Sriram Aditya's next, has grooved for his grandfather Krishna's iconic number *Jumbare Jujumbare* *Jumbarahi* from *Yamaleela*, glimpse of which was unveiled as a tribute to the legend on his birthday Sunday. Unlike the current tradition, the song hasn't been remixed but the original number, composed by SV Krishna Reddy, was used. The rights were officially acquired by film's production house Amara Raja Media & Entertainment. Explaining the reason behind recreating the old song, Aditya tells us, "*Jumbare Jujumbare* was my childhood favourite song of Krishna garu. I

remember dancing to it during annual functions in my school and college. With Ashok being grandson of Krishna garu, we thought for his maiden film it will be a nice song. What we put out is just a small peek. There is more exciting stuff lined up in the film," the director tells in his trademark josh.

Aditya adds that Ashok was up to the task. "He was really excited to groove for the song. He recreated Krishna garu's expressions and mannerisms to a tee. Prem Rakshith has choreographed it. There's one more song...", he points out, before stopping himself to divulge more, as the film is only 50 per cent through. So, what did Krishna made of the

song? "We haven't met him personally due to the prevailing conditions but I was told the song reached him and he appreciated it. I'm waiting to hear it from him personally as the song is one of his most popular ones," he notes.

The as-yet-untitled film, which tells the story of a young man's journey towards his goal, co-stars Nidhi Agerwal, Naresh, Jagapathi Babu, Satya and Archana Soundarya.

— NG



CHIRU escapes bee attack

Megastar Chiranjeevi and his daughter-in-law Upasana escaped an attack by a swarm of honey bees at Domakonda, Kamareddy district on Sunday. Going into the details, the actor's family was in Domakonda to participate in the final rites of Upasana's paternal grandfather and former IAS officer Umapathy Rao Kamineni, who passed away four days ago due to age-related complications, when a storm of bees surfaced out of nowhere.

While the other attendees scurried for cover, Chirujeevi's security personnel kept the bees at bay by frantically waving hands. He was rushed to safety later. The bees reportedly left the place 15 minutes after they first interrupted the funeral proceedings.

Chirujeevi's PR team issued a statement, saying that it's a minor issue and that the megastar and Ram Charan are safe and unharmed.

SKETCHING IS THERAPEUTIC, SAYS SONAL

While discovering new activities during lockdown, actress Sonal Chauhan decided to try her hand at sketching. She had posted her first sketch, titled *Maa*, on Mother's Day, dedicating it to all the mothers in the world. Then she decided to sketch something close to her heart: Lord Shiva.

"This is actually the first time I tried my hand at sketching and I never really believed that I had it in me to be able to sketch. I used to see other people's sketches and always wonder how talented they were and how they did what they did," Sonal said.

"However, in the last one year many a times when I looked at people or objects, and if I saw shadow on them or some kind of reflection I'd wonder that if I were to paint or sketch them, what could I do to differentiate the shadow from the other part, with the use of pencil shading or use of different colours. Or how I could highlight facial features," she added.

"I'm very happy that I discovered this about myself, it gives me immense happiness and satisfaction to make something from scratch and it's extremely therapeutic," she stated.



Deepika in Prabhas' next?

A couple of weeks after Vyjayanthi Movies announced a film with Prabhas earlier this February, buzz that Deepika Padukone would be playing the female lead has swirled around, only for it to die over time. Adding fuel to fire now is the Bollywood beauty's latest Instagram story. Uploading a poster of Ashwin's acclaimed work *Mahanati*, she asked her fans to 'watch it now'. She also tagged the director in the post, which he acknowledged by calling it 'a cool notification to wake up to'. Knowing the way film industries operate, Deepika's post is a certainly a give-away that she is considering Prabhas' film if not already signing it, industry insiders believe. An official confirmation though is awaited from the production house.

The untitled film, a pan-India affair, is a sci-fi drama and will roll in the first half of next year. Right now, Prabhas needs to complete his on-sets film with Radha Krishna.

Close to 45 per cent of the still-untitled film's shoot has been wrapped up, with 90 days of shoot left including the songs.

