

ANALYSIS 7
OPENING DOORS
TO PROSPERITY

MONEY 8
OVER 1L IDS OF INDIANS
FOR SALE ON DARK WEB

SPORTS 11
'PLAY AROUND PITCH TO MAINTAIN
BALANCE B/W BAT & BALL'

VIJAYAWADA, THURSDAY JUNE 4, 2020; PAGES 12-13



the pioneer

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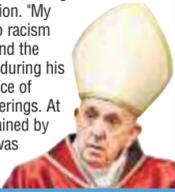


KRITI SANON:
MISS PERFORMING
ON STAGE

Page 12

WORLD CANNOT TURN 'A BLIND EYE TO RACISM', SAYS POPE

Pope Francis says he has "witnessed with great concern the disturbing social unrest" in the United States in reaction to the killing of George Floyd, and called for national reconciliation. "My friends, we cannot tolerate or turn a blind eye to racism and exclusion in any form and yet claim to defend the sacredness of every human life," the pope said during his weekly Wednesday audience, held in the presence of bishops due to coronavirus restrictions on gatherings. At the same time, the pontiff warned "nothing is gained by violence and so much is lost." Francis said he was praying "for the repose of George Floyd".



ONLY OBSERVATION, NO LION CENSUS IN GUJARAT SAY FOREST OFFICIALS

The Gujarat forest department on Wednesday clarified that it would just be conducting a lion observation activity on June 5 and 6 and not a lion census. The census of lions, which was to be carried out last month, had to be put off in view of the coronavirus-triggered lockdown, it said. The Junagadh forest department, under whose jurisdiction the Gir Wildlife sanctuary is located, clarified this amid reports that the state government would carry out the lion census on Friday and Saturday with only forest department staff. "On every full moon day, we ask the forest department personnel to observe lions in the areas assigned to the staff." Chief Conservator of Forests, D T Vasava said.



SCIENTISTS FIND 'PRISTINE' AIR OVER SOUTHERN OCEAN

The air over the Southern Ocean, which surrounds Antarctica, is free from particles, called aerosols, produced by human activity or transported from distant lands, according to a study. The study, published in the journal Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences, is the first to measure bioaerosol composition of the Southern Ocean. The researchers from Colorado State University in the US suspected the air directly over the remote Southern Ocean that encircles Antarctica would be least affected by humans and dust from continents.



MUMBAI EXHALES AS IT EMERGES UNSCATHED FROM CYCLONE NISARGA

Coronavirus-hit Mumbai has escaped the worst of the severe cyclonic storm Nisarga - the second to strike India in two weeks - with rain stopping and wind speeds reducing drastically. No damage has been reported from the financial capital where movement of people was restricted in public places like beaches, parks and promenades along the coastline till tomorrow afternoon. Flight operations, which were suspended at the city's Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj International Airport, have resumed. Cyclone Nisarga made landfall on the Maharashtra coast near Alibaug at around 1 pm.



SC orders AP to remove YSRCP colours from State, GP buildings

● Apex court warns Govt to repaint offices in 4 weeks or face contempt proceedings

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a rude shock to the YSRCP government, the Supreme Court on dismissed an appeal by the Andhra Pradesh government against the High Court order directing it to remove the colour of flags of political parties, including the ruling YSRCP, from government and 'panchayat' buildings and get them repainted within four weeks.

In a clear judgment, the apex court ordered the AP Government to remove the YSRCP party colours from government office buildings. The court also took serious objection to the AP Government's order pertaining to the fourth colour that was applied to these buildings.



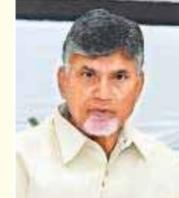
The Supreme Court gave a deadline of four weeks for removal of the colours. If the Government fails to do so, it would be seen as a contempt of court and necessary proceedings would be initiated, bench of Justices L Nageswara Rao, Krishan Murari and S Ravindra

Bhat said. The Supreme Court did not agree with the AP Government's contention that addition of fourth colour would make the buildings appear different to the YSRCP flag colours.

The High Court also held a similar opinion, saying that it was not enough to add a fourth colour.

Recover colours expenditure from YSRCP, officials: Naidu

Former Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Wednesday demanded the YSRCP Government to disclose how much public money it had wasted on applying its party colours to panchayat offices and government buildings in Andhra Pradesh till now. "The Supreme Court order is proof of the adamant attitude and flagrant violations of the Constitution and the rule of law by the Jagan Government," the Leader of the Opposition said, accusing the State Government of committing one violation after another in utter indifference to even orders of the courts' for the sake of seeing its party colours on public premises. "First, they applied three colours of the ruling party. When the High Court ordered changing of the colours, the Government approached the Supreme Court which upheld the High Court order. Again, the Government came back to the High Court and applied a fourth colour insignificantly at the bottom," Naidu pointed out. He said that the YCP Government dragged on the issue with its misinterpretations and untenable arguments in the courts. At one point, the High Court had taken a serious view and ordered the Government to remove all the four colours.



Sawhney's tenure as CS extended

● Centre agrees to CM's request

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Responding to two letters addressed to the Centre by Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy, the Centre has agreed to extend the term of Chief Secretary Nilam Sawhney by three months.

The Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT) issued an order to this effect on Wednesday. Sawhney who was to retire on June 30, will now continue as Chief Secretary till September 30.

The state government issued orders to this effect after obtaining the approval of the Central government for the extension of Sawhney's tenure.

Sawhney took charge as the Chief Secretary to the Andhra Pradesh Government

Modi accepts Jagan request, extends CS Sawhney tenure

Prime Minister Narendra Modi has accepted Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy's request seeking extension of Nilam Sawhney's tenure for at least three months.

The Pioneer was the first to report that Prime Minister Narendra Modi had accepted Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy's request seeking extension of Nilam Sawhney's tenure for at least three months.

on November 13, 2019.

Jagan had personally written to the Central government stating that her services were required in Andhra Pradesh for some more time in view of the Covid-19 pandemic.

An IAS officer of the 1984 batch of civil servants, Sawhney worked in Andhra Pradesh in various positions for a long time.

CBI slaps case on Dr Sudhakar on basis of police complaint

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a new twist to the case pertaining to alleged assault on Dr K Sudhakar Rao, who is on suspension, the Central Bureau of Investigation, which is probing the case on the orders of the AP High court, filed a FIR against the doctor late on Tuesday night. Based on the case registered against Dr Sudhakar by the IV Town police in Vizag city, the CBI filed the FIR against Dr Sudhakar, who is currently undergoing treatment at the Government Hospital for Mental Care (GHMC) in Vizag city, since being admitted there by the police.

The CBI officials said that the investigation in the case was



going on as per the AP High Court order and accordingly, they have spoken to the local police.

In the FIR copy, the CBI mentioned that they have registered case against Dr Sudhakar under Sections 353, 427 and 506

of IPC on charges of assault or criminal force to deter a public servant from discharging his duty. Mischief and Criminal Intimidation case was registered based on the complaint lodged by head constable S. Velagala Venkata Ramana.

The case took several turns from the time Dr Sudhakar was suspended when his statement on being denied N95 masks and shortage of PPE kits went viral in the first week of April. On May 16, the Vizag city police allegedly mistreated Dr Sudhakar for creating nuisance in public and abusing the state government in an inebriated condition at Akkayyapalem area in Vizag city.



Village volunteer tries to assault minor

PNS ■ ANANTAPUR

A village volunteer was booked on charges of attempted rape after he allegedly tried to sexually assault a girl taking advantage of her being alone in Chinnamatlagondi village of Singanamala mandal of Anantapur district on Wednesday.

AP crosses 4 lakh Covid-19 test mark

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh Government has created a record of sorts by reaching a new milestone in testing Coronavirus samples in the state. It emerged as one of the very few states in the country to have conducted over four lakh Covid-19 tests as of Wednesday.

As on Wednesday, a total of 4,03,747 samples were tested for the dreaded virus. During the last 24 hours, the state had conducted tests on 8,066 samples. Incidentally, only Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu and

Maharashtra State are ahead of Andhra Pradesh in the number of Coronavirus tests conducted.

However, considering the population of Andhra Pradesh which is much lower compared to these states, AP conducting over 4 lakh tests assumes greater significance.

Based on this parameter, AP emerges as the 'No. 1 state' in the country in Covid-19 testing. On an average, 7,419 persons are being medically screened and tested per million population in the state.

Biggest spike takes Covid infections in AP to 3,971

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a single largest spike, 180 new Covid-19 cases were added in Andhra Pradesh on Wednesday, taking the aggregate to 3,971. The toll too increased by four to 68 in the last 24 hours, the latest bulletin released by the Medical and Health Department said.

Of the fresh cases, 79 were state residents, seven foreign returnees and 94 from other states, it said. In Chittoor, two fresh Coronavirus deaths were reported while Krishna and Kurnool registered one each. The total number of active cases now stood at 1,447, the bulletin added.

NGT holds LG Polymers liable for gas leak

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

South Korean company LG Polymers India has absolute liability for the loss of life and public health in the gas leak incident at its plant in Visakhapatnam, the NGT has said, while directing that the interim penalty of Rs 50 crore would be spent on compensation to the victims and the



restoration of environment. The National Green Tribunal directed that a restoration plan be prepared by

a Committee comprising two representatives each of the Environment Ministry and Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) and three representatives of Andhra Pradesh government.

The NGT also junked the company's plea seeking review of its May 8 order slapping on it the Rs 50 crore interim penalty saying that it is justified

in taking suo motu cognisance of the matter.

A bench headed by NGT Chairperson Justice Adarsh Kumar Goel said that final calculation of compensation may be assessed by a committee comprising representatives of Ministry of Environment Ministry, CPCB and National Environmental Engineering Research Institute.

Essential Commodities Act amended

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union Cabinet on Wednesday approved amendments to the six-and-a-half-decade old Essential Commodities Act to deregulate food items, including cereals, pulses, and onion, a move aimed at transforming the farm sector

and raising farmers' income. The amendment provides for the regulation of food items only under exceptional circumstances like national calamities, famine with a surge in prices. Also, processors and value chain participants are exempted from the stock limit.



Meera Chopra threatened with rape by Jr NTR fans

DAVE BENNETT SILVERY ■ HYDERABAD

Film actress Meera Chopra on Wednesday received threats of rape and death by some miscreants claiming to be fans of Jr NTR following an interactive Twitter session in which she said that she did not know who the top film star in Telugu cinema was. Soon after, the National Commission for Women stepped in and a case was registered by Telangana Cyber Crime police.

The actress had asked netizens to use the hashtag #askMeera and tweet out to her asking questions as part of her interactive session on



social media platform, Twitter. It was smooth going for her till a Twitter user asked the actor about Tollywood star Jr NTR, to which she replied that she didn't know him and was not his fan.

Soon after, Twitter handles bearing pictures of the Tollywood actor, claiming to be his fans, began a hate-fueled campaign targeting the actress and threatened her with dire consequences, gang rape, coupled with sexually abusive comments, slut shaming and more. Some even

wished that her parents suffer death by Coronavirus. Meera Chopra then tweeted out to the Tollywood actor first: "@tarak99999 I didn't know that I'll be called a bitch, whore and a porn star, just because I like @urstrulyMahesh more than you. And your fans will send my parents such wishes. Do you feel successful with such a fan following? And I hope you don't ignore my tweet!!" (sic) she tweeted, tagging Jr NTR.

Tension in Raptadu after damage to epitaphs

PNS ■ ANANTAPUR

Tension prevailed at Peruru in Raptadu Assembly constituency of Anantapur district on Wednesday after some unidentified persons damaged epitaphs near Peruru dam containing names of former Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu and former TDP strongman of the area Paritala Ravi.

Soon after news spread, former minister Paritala Sunita and TDP leader Paritala Sriram reached the site where a large number of TDP activists had gathered by then. As a result, tension prevailed in the air.

Paritala Sunita and Sriram lashed out at the administration, accusing it of incompetence for the destruction of the epitaphs.



Atmanirbhar Abhiyan with a new perspective

2



Trees and poles fall as 'Nisarga' makes landfall near Alibaug

5



Decoding Rs 20 L cr push: Mammoth package, miniscule stimulus

8

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham: Jyeshtha & Shukla Paksha Panchangam

Tithi: Trayodashi: 06:05 am, Chaturdashi: 03:15 am (Next Day)

Nakshatram: Vishakha: 06:36 pm

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

Rahukalam: 01:52 pm - 03:29 pm

Yamagandam: 05:44 am - 07:22 am

Varjyam: 10:17 pm - 11:46 pm

Gulika: 08:59 am - 10:37 am

Good Time: (to start any important work)

Amritakalam: 10:35 am - 12:02 pm

Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:48 am - 12:40 pm

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Mostly cloudy

Temp: 38/28

Humidity: 48%

Sunrise: 05:40 am

Sunset: 06:48 pm

Current Weather Conditions Updated June 3, 2020 5:00 PM

Atmanirbhar Abhiyan with a new perspective

While announcing relief package of Rs 20 lakh-crore to cushion the impact of Covid-19, Prime Minister Narendra Modi stressed the need for self-reliance and the need to promote and buy local products to give a fillip to domestic manufacturing.

Appealing to people to be 'vocal about local' he put the concept of self-reliance in the broader perspective of Vasudhaiva Kutumbam and the global economy. Modi stressed upon economic, infrastructure, demographic dividend, technology-driven systems and demand as the five pillars of the concept of Atmanirbhar Abhiyan.

Emphasis on buying local strengthens the fifth pillar of Atmanirbhar Abhiyan — the demand for goods.

The concept of Atmanirbhar Abhiyan may not be the outcome of just the strategy to revive the economy post Covid but a culmination of series of events hap-

pening in the global arena in the last 5 to 6 years.

After establishment of the WTO in 1995, world trade has undergone a change. Rule-based trading system emerged establishing a global supply chain. China joining WTO in 2001 became a game-changer in terms of global trade.

China took full advantage of WTO processes and emerged as the manufacturing hub of the world.

With most of investment shifting to China for manufacturing, manufacturing jobs in USA took a big hit and this was a major campaign point for Donald Trump in 2017 Presidential election.

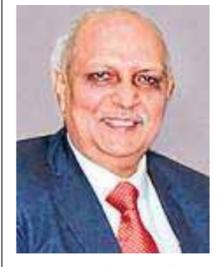
In the last four years, a series of measures taken by him like imposing tariffs on goods from China, India and other countries and a deliberate attempt to undermine the

The concept of Atmanirbhar Abhiyan may not be the outcome of just the strategy to revive the economy post Covid induced lockdown but a culmination of series of events happening in the global arena in the last 5 to 6 years.

WTO process by USA makes it clear that in the future, international trade is going to happen as per new rules.

The call for self-reliance given by the Prime Minister needs to be seen in this context rather than in a Covid specific one.

There was of course an attempt to draw a parallel between Atmanirbhar Abhiyan propounded now by Narendra Modi and the concept of self-reliance



IYR KRISHNA RAO,
Former Chief Secretary,
Government of AP

and self sufficiency as propounded by Jawaharlal Nehru soon after Independence.

However, there is a fundamental and qualitative difference between the two. Self-reliance as envisaged by Nehru rests on two principles of commanding heights for the public sector and a centralised plan for the country wherein what to produce and how much to produce would be decided by State itself, keeping in view the interest of the soci-

ety at large.

But as we have seen, both these concepts failed leaving the Indian economy in doldrums by the 1990s.

The commanding height that the Public Sector Undertakings held in the

Indian economy was successful as long as the conditions were monopolistic and the market captive. However, once the economy was opened up, and they had to face competition and the chinks in their armour got exposed.

Some of them like BHEL, which developed technical competence in certain fields, withstood competition for some time but could not survive competition from global giants and Chinese companies in the long run.

Over a period, governments, irrespective of the political party in power, found it wiser to disinvest rather than to support these enterprises with public money.

Denied entry into commanding heights of the capital industry, Indian private sector enterprise found it convenient to operate in a protect-

ed secure domestic market quality not being the main consideration.

Central planning system degenerated into a licence permit quota raj where the main job of India Inc became getting a licence which they sometimes traded or produced in a secure environment with hardly any competition.

Naturally, quality took a beating.

No wonder when government was contemplating opening up of the markets in 1990s, the Bombay club of the Indian businessmen stoutly opposed it.

It was during this time that countries like Japan, South Korea and Singapore concentrated on export markets and produced goods of quality and built enterprises which subsequently became global enterprises. It is this which distinguishes the new concept of Atmanirbhar Abhiyan from earlier concept of self-reliance of the Nehru era.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi emphasised both these points in his speech when he spoke of the need to maintain quality and the concept of Atmanirbhar Abhiyan in the broader context of global markets.

In a more truncated form global markets will still be relevant. We may see more and more free trade agreements, regional economic unions in place of WTO monitored global trade.

We should be prepared to take advantage of them and be part of these supply chains. The domestic market can serve as a strong base to produce quality material to capture these markets. The concept of Atmanirbhar Abhiyan can help India position itself in post-Covid world where the writ of WTO may be limited.



Arrangements for temple reopening reviewed

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Endowments Velampalli Srinivas on Wednesday directed officials of his department to complete all arrangements for the devotees to visit the temples and ensure all precautionary measures to contain the spread of Coronavirus.

Speaking to the officials at the Endowments Commissioners office here, Srinivas appreciated the services of officials and temple staff towards the devotees.

The minister said that as per the instructions of Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy, the temples across the state will be reopened soon for the devotees. Measures should be taken to ensure that the devotees are satisfied with the darshan of the deity. Strict lockdown relaxation guidelines should be implemented as prescribed by the Central government and the Chief Minister, he said.

As per the WHO guidelines, an action plan should be prepared said that minister and to safeguard the temple lands the government is putting sincere effort and the CM has already given a few instructions to this effect. To protect the temple lands everyone must follow the instructions from the office of the commission to resolve legal issues with respect to temple lands, he said.

Already, instructions have been given to start services in temples, online services and digital transactions, as suggested while special attention should be paid towards children and senior citizens who visit the temples. Miscellaneous expenses should be minimised, said the Minister.

Governor hails Red Cross' contribution in Covid fight

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan on Wednesday interacted with the district Collectors and presidents of district units of Indian Red Cross Society, AP Chapter, through the videoconference held from Raj Bhavan on Wednesday and reviewed the activities of IRCS and the steps taken to contain the spread of Coronavirus pandemic in the state. The Governor congratulated IRCS volunteers, staff, donors, Govt. officials and all those who took part in the noble Mission to contain Covid-19 pandemic, which has posed the biggest health and economic crisis in memory.



The Governor congratulated IRCS volunteers, staff, donors, officials and all those who took part in the noble Mission to contain Covid-19, which has posed the biggest health and economic crisis in memory.

The Governor said he was satisfied that the IRCS through its State branch and the 13 district branches has been actively involved in providing succour to the needy and for supporting and supplementing the government agencies in the war against Covid-19 pandemic.

Harichandan said the members of the Indian Red Cross Society AP State Chapter, have swiftly responded to the crisis well in advance and started awareness campaigns in schools, colleges and communities by spreading awareness among the target groups, through publication of posters, pamphlets etc. in a timely manner.

He said soon after the lockdown was imposed, the Red Cross volunteers of 13 district branches under the leadership of the district chairpersons and the overall guidance of the district Collectors took up massive activities to mitigate the suffering of the most vulnerable and the needy round the clock. The Governor commended that action taken by the district branches in the state have focused on relief to the destitute and homeless people by extensive distribution of food, dry rations, vegetables, handmade reusable masks, hand sanitizers, fruits, clothing, soaps and many such items required for the well being of these hapless groups by keeping in view their essential needs and requirements.

Harichandan said he was impressed to see that many district units of IRCS have organised community kitchens, relief centres for the destitute as

well as managing the quarantine centres, supplying medicines, transportation of patients, assisting the hospitals in maintaining hygiene etc. with the active participation by the president and chairperson of district branches and with the support of the district branch secretaries, staff and the Red Cross volunteers by locally mobilizing resources and support from local voluntary organizations, philanthropists and appreciated the donors for their liberal contributions.

The Governor said that it was for the first time in the history of any public health emergency and disaster that Red Cross has provided a platform to converge all humanitarian services and actions at the district and sub-district level and reach out to the most vulnerable and the distressed.

"I was particularly pained by

the plight of the migrant workers and labourers during the Covid-19 pandemic who have faced multiple hardships with thousands of them walking back home, with no means of transport due to the lockdown," said Harichandan.

The Governor added that all the district branches under the leadership of the concerned chairpersons all along the national highways, railway stations, bus stands and the interstate border check posts started relief camps providing food and shelter to the migrant labourers belonging to different States passing through Andhra Pradesh and he was touched by those scenes and he was greatly relieved when he saw the Red Cross volunteers swung into action by focusing on migrant workers walking on highways, providing them food, water, buttermilk, etc. at the toll gates.

Teacher-student ratio a priority as govt prepares to reopen schools

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Asking officials to ensure that all schools are spruced up before their reopening on August 3, Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy on Wednesday asked the authorities to maintain the student-teacher ratio and affect transfers accordingly.

During a review meeting on Wednesday, the officials placed data on the proposed relocation of teachers to match the teacher-student ratio before the Chief Minister. Jagan said that the transfers should be done online and should be oriented towards the benefit of the students.

Due to the method followed in 2017, single teachers were allotted to 7,991 schools and most of the schools have been closed down. The decisions at that time were taken only to demoralise government schools and to encourage private schools. The education in government sector has suffered a lot, the Chief Minister said, adding that uniform and books were not even given in October and November.

Now there should be a constant appraisal of the students from Class 6 to Class 10. The data on the performance of the students should be placed online which gives a detailed overview of the strengths and weaknesses of the student to take corrective measures.



The Jagananna Goru Mudda should have the same menu and quality in schools all over the State, and the Chief Minister said and insisted that there should be no delay in payment of bills

An app should be developed for Digital Learning where the doubts can be cleared through video call, the CM said.

Regarding Nadu Nedu, the Chief Minister said that the works should be completed by July-end as the schools will be reopening on August 3.

SOP should be prepared on maintaining the quality in revamping schools under Nadu Nedu and people should know about the high quality of work, he said adding that Nadu Nedu is close to his heart. Engineering assistants in village and ward secretariats should be involved in the exercise, he said.

The officials said that Rs 533 crore was available with the Parents' Committees. A major part of this amount is being spent in Guntur district and the work has speeded up after the lockdown was lifted last week. The works are being expedited with the appointment of JCs, the officials said.

The Jagananna Goru Mudda should have the same menu and quality in schools all over the State, the Chief Minister said and insisted that there should be no delay in payment of bills and constant monitoring should be done at ground level from district Collector and downwards.

CM takes stock of material for schools

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The meticulous nature of Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy and his personal interest in the facilities to be provided to the students under Nadu Nedu programme was evident when he personally examined the furniture, blackboard and other material to be used in schools after revamping that was brought to his camp office for inspection.

The Chief Minister examined the material for schools during the review meeting on Nadu Nedu held here on Wednesday.

In the first phase of Nadu Nedu, 15,715 schools would be revamped with the facilities, including, chalkboard, furniture, fans, toilets, running water, painting, compound wall and English Lab.

The State would go a centralised procurement and an estimated Rs 890 crore is required for the material. Tenders were finalised for all items other than that of sanitary ware and Rs 144.8 crore was saved through reverse tendering.

The purchases have begun on a large scale with 3 lakh benches for classes 1 to 6 and for classes 7 to 10, as many as 2.10 lakh benches were ordered.

State-run schools are on par with private ones, says panel

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh School Education Regulatory and Monitoring Commission (APSERMC), chairman Justice R Kantha Rao said that parents who face financial problems should admit their children in state-run schools to experience the difference from private schools.

Addressing the media persons here on Wednesday along with vice-chairman Dr Vijaya Sarada Reddy and secretary Aluru Sambasiva Reddy, Justice Kantha Rao said that the managements of private schools have been spreading canards against the commission for merely asking them to submit information regarding the fee they are collecting and the services they are providing.

He regretted that some of the private managements have even moved court when the commission issued notification demanding information from them. Justice Kantha Rao clarified that the commission was merely seeking information on the number of students, condition of the classrooms, qualification of teachers and other infrastructure details.



Recalling the High Court decision stopping introduction of English medium in primary education, he said that 97 per cent of parents are interested in English medium for their children. He said that it was not true as published in a section of media that the volunteers forced the parents in favour of English medium.

He suggested to the parents to admit their children studying lower classes in government schools for at least two years to know the difference between the government and private institutions. "There are qualified teachers, nutritional food, uniform, footwear, text-

books and notebooks among other facilities in the government schools," he pointed out.

Dr Vijaya Sarada Reddy said that the commission would place all the details of all schools and their standards online for verification by the parents. "This would facilitate the parents to choose the schools to get their children admitted," she said.

Secretary Sambasiva Reddy said that English medium plays an important role to study professional courses and higher education. He said that the AP is the only state in the country which is implementing Amma Vodi scheme.

Post-Covid, Kia Motors relaunches Seltos

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Kia Motors India, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Kia Motors Corporation, introduced the refreshed Seltos after the tremendous success of Kia's debut product in India, the company has launched the newer and advanced version of the Seltos with additional features to further strengthen its position as India's most popular mid-SUV.

Commenting on the introduction, Kookhyun Shim, MD & CEO, Kia Motors India said, "The Seltos marked the arrival of the Kia brand in India. It laid a strong foundation for Kia in the country and as a vehicle; it has been a true game changer in the Indian automobile industry. With the refreshed Seltos, Kia Motors India makes India's favourite SUV even more attractive with new features and options. The Seltos enabled us to address all the unmet needs of the segment, and with the next-gen technology in the refreshed Seltos, we are confident that we will deliver customer delight that is unparalleled. The refreshed Seltos is the result of a deep understanding of the Indian automotive market, and our customers' desires and requirements, and we are confident it will continue to win hearts for Kia in India."



TANA plans competitions for Environment Day

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Keeping in view the Environment Day on June 5, Telugu Association of North America (TANA), Jignasa and Jayaho Bharateeyam are jointly conducting the online Global Virtual competitions on June 5, 6 and 7. Sirisha Tunuguntla, president, ladies wing of TANA, said that the competitions would be conducted for 120 hours in 154 online slots.

Bhargav, head of Jignasa said

that so far 4,000 candidates registered their names in their website <https://bit.ly/worldenvironmentday2020>. Basing on the environment background the competitions will be conducted in the areas like songs, quiz, mock parliament, painting, selfie with nature, stories of Panchatantra and nature in mythology. The organisers requested the interested persons to click on the website for more details to participate in the competitions.

Amazon works to cut package generated waste

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Amazon India on Wednesday announced that it has achieved an integral milestone towards minimising packaging waste across its supply chain by expanding its India-first initiative, Packaging-Free Shipping (PFS), to over a 100 cities in the country.

PFS is a sustainable packaging solution in which customer orders are shipped in their original packaging without any additional packaging, or significantly reduced packaging. Amazon had first launched PFS in India in June 2019 in 9 cities and within a year, the company has been able to successfully expand this programme to more than 100 cities.



VIJAYAWADA BULLION RATES	
GOLD	
₹ 49,180 (10 gm)	
₹ 400	
SILVER	
₹ 48,900 (1kg)	
₹ 1250	
CHICKEN RATES ₹/kg	
Dressed/With Skin	₹231
Without Skin	₹262
Broiler at Farm	₹159
EGG RATES ₹/100	
HYDERABAD	340
VIJAYAWADA	332
VISAKHAPATNAM	350
RETAIL PRICE	₹3.32

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Ashok usurped MANSAS trust in midnight coup, alleges Sanchaita

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The family battle raging among the Vizianagaram royals intensified on Wednesday with Sanchaita Gajapati Raju levelling her uncle Ashok Gajapati Raju of mismanagement and telling TDP supremo N Chandrababu Naidu to keep off her family's affairs. The war of words began after Sanchaita was made the chairperson of MANSAS trust founded by her grandfather, PVG Raju.

On Wednesday, the eldest surviving royal heir, asked Naidu to refrain from the affairs of her family. This response came after the latter posted a video of her uncle Ashok Gajapati Raju claiming that she was never part of the royal family and visited Vizianagaram.

"Former CM Nara Chandrababu Naidu garu should know that the MANSAS Trust is headed by me, the eldest surviving legal heir of late Ananda Gajapati



Sanchaita asked Naidu to refrain from the affairs of her family after he posted a video of her uncle Ashok Gajapati Raju claiming that she was never part of the royal family

Raju. It was usurped by Pusapati Ashok Gajapati Raju in a midnight coup even when my father's ashes were still smouldering by a Govt Order you issued in his favour," she alleged.

She alleged that during the tenure of Ashok Gajapati Raju, there were questionable decisions that have impacted MANSAS finances. In February 2020, an ex parte decree was issued against MANSAS due to which the

trust suffered a loss of over Rs 13 crore as Ashok Gajapati Raju didn't think it fit to appoint a lawyer, Sanchaita alleged.

She attached the court order to her Facebook and Twitter posts as reference for Naidu.

The MANSAS Law campus was given to IL&S free of cost and students shifted to a shed. The IL&S is involved in a scam covered by the media nationally, Sanchaita alleged.



"So before you sing praises of your colleague please examine how much he has destroyed the legacy of MANSAS," she added.

Sanchaita requested Naidu to refrain from bringing politics to what is a Pusapati family affair. "You have mentored a person during whose tenure the 150-year-old Moti Mahal was bulldozed, Phoolbagh Palace razed to the ground and the historic fort left in shambles," she said.

Sanchaita Gajapati Raju is the daughter of former MP P Ananda Gajapati Raju, elder

brother of senior TDP leader and ex-Union minister P Ashok Gajapati Raju.

Ananda Gajapati Raju was the chairman of all family trusts, including MANSAS and after his death, Ashok became the chairman.

However, a few months ago, the YSR Congress Party government brought Sanchaita, a lawyer, NGO activist and BJP women's wing leader, into the picture and made her the chairperson of the Raju family trusts.

This has naturally upset Ashok Gajapati Raju, who thereafter moved court.

Derogatory posts on social media to invite strict action, warns DGP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Stern action will be initiated against anyone making derogatory social media posts or personal abuse, warned AP DGP Gautam D Sawang on Wednesday.

Speaking on the initiatives taken in the last one year in the State, the DGP said that a lot of innovations and transformative changes have been made in Andhra Pradesh Police in line with the mandate of the Government to ensure that all citizens, especially women and the marginalised are able to live safely and peacefully.

"Another thrust area has been improving quality of life and efficiency of our police personnel. Leveraging technology as a force multiplier has clearly emerged as a basic tenet of Andhra Pradesh Police. All these initiatives have been directed to make sure that police are more accessible to the citizens as a service," Sawang said.

He said that Spandana was a key focus of the government that took the administrative setup closer to the people



The DGP said Andhra Pradesh Disha Act 2019 and the new infrastructure that is being created under it will be historic in ushering in a new paradigm

making it more accessible and ensuring time-bound redressal of grievances. As many as 75,610 petitions were received by Police department, 99 per cent were disposed within 7 days and 52 per cent complainants were women showing the increased trust of women in police and confidence to approach police.

The DGP said Andhra Pradesh Disha Act 2019 and the new infrastructure that is being created under it will be historic in ushering in a new paradigm of speedy and accurate handling of cases of crime against women and children. "Five lakh people down-

loaded Disha App which was launched on February 8 this year by the CM. In all 42,799 calls have been received so far of which 336 were actionable calls and 82 FIRs have been registered in this regard," Sawang said.

"45 police personnel who were infected were immediately shifted to hospital and taken care of resulting in all of them getting discharged after recovery. Habeebullah, ASI, Anantapur who made supreme sacrifice in line of duty was given ex-gratia of Rs 50 lakh by State Government," Sawang said.

Tension in Raptadu as miscreants destroy epitaphs

Continued from Page 1

They said that the epitaphs were damaged by mischievous elements as the ruling party was unable to stomach the development achieved by the previous government. She suspected the hand of Gangula Sudhir Reddy, brother of slain Maddela Cheruvu Suri, behind the vandalism of the foundation stones. "There will be no use of complaining to the police since the cops would not act on the complaints," they charged.

Paritala Sunita said that she was making a note of the atrocities being perpetrated by the YSRCP activists. She described it as an attempt to drive a wedge between the people in Raptadu Assembly constituency. The former minister said that she would be the first person to appreciate if Raptadu constituency gets irrigation waters. Earlier, Rs 804 crore was allocated to Perurudam, she said.

Bose optimistic on Revenue activities in AP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Stating that land re-survey and verification of documents was stalled for the last two months, Deputy Chief Minister and Revenue Minister Pili Subhash Chandra Bose on Wednesday expressed confidence that the activity will pick up with the easing of restrictions.

Bose inspected the automation pilot project at Kankipadu Tahsildar office along with Minister for Transport Perni Venkatramiah and Penamaluru MLA K Parthasarathi.

The minister recalled that the state government had launched land resurvey and land records purification on a massive scale but was compelled to stall due to Covid-19. He said that the farmers would not face any problem once the purification of records was completed.

He was confident that the Revenue department would regain its past glory once the resurvey was completed.



The minister said that mutation was completed for 12,000 registrations in 12 mandals on pilot basis which means that the tahsildars were working actively.

Stamps and Registrations commissioner Siddhartha Jain, CCLA joint secretary Cherukuri Sridhar, CMRO project director Sunita, joint collector Dr K Madhavi Latha, sub-collector HM Dhayana Chandra, Kankipadu tahsildar Satish, Penamaluru Bhadri Nayak and others were present.

AP crosses 4 lakh Covid-19 test mark

Continued from Page 1

Already, the state is at the top of the list in the country when it comes to Covid-19 recovery rate. The rate of people recovering from the deadly disease in Andhra Pradesh is significantly higher than the national average. The Coronavirus recovery rate in the state is 64 per cent while the national average in this parameter is only 48.51.

Despite new cases being reported every day, the infection rate is also remarkably low in Andhra Pradesh. It is right now around 0.96 per cent as against the national average of 4.96 per cent. Seeing the proactive testing in the state, the Central government has even issued directives to all the states to employ TrueNat machines for the virus testing. Similarly, it issued an advisory to the other states to emulate Andhra Pradesh in keeping telemedicine services available extensively for the public.

Meera Chopra threatened...

Continued from Page 1

In another tweet, the actress wrote, "Well I didn't know not being somebody's fan was a crime. I want to say this aloud to all the girls that if you are not a fan of @tarak9999, you could be raped, murdered, gangraped, your parents could be killed as tweeted by his fans. They are totally spoiling the name of their idol!" (sic)

The actress then wrote to the police tagging their accounts and seeking action: @hydcitypolice @CyberCrimeshyd I would like to report all these accounts. They are talking abt gang banging, are abusive and death threatening. Unfortunately they are all @tarak9999 fanclubs. @Twitter I would request you to look into it and suspend these accounts." (sic)

She attached screenshots of the threats to her posts. Meera Chopra also tagged the National Commission for Women in tweet to which the commission replied that they took up the matter with the Telangana Police and a case was registered with the Cyber Crime

Police. Chairperson of the Commission, Rekha Sharma also told the actress that the issue was taken up with B Sumathi, the DIG of women's safety wing of the TS Police to send the Commission a status report on the issue.

The Tollywood actor's fans were using hashtags #attentionbitchmeera and #pornstarmeeera amongst other tags. Many Twitter users also questioned Jr NTR's silence on the issue. Despite the horrendous nature of the tweets, tweets were also seen defending the Tollywood actor. "If We Asks About @tarak9999 Anna You Can Says Ok Good Actor Or Anything Else What You Said I Don't Know Him What's The Bloody Answer Came From You @MeeraChopra And That Is Supported By Great @Chinmayi Garu What Is This Madam Foolishness And Attention Just They Got" tweeted a user with the handle @VRRamGopal1 with 'Die_Hard_Fan_Of_Tarak_Anya' written in his Twitter bio.

Jagan rule trumps Naidu in every sense: Ambati

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Drawing a contrast between TDP rule and YSRCP government, ruling party MLA Ambati Rambabu on Wednesday stated the Chandrababu Naidu government left Rs 15,000 crore debt towards the welfare schemes in his five-year rule while YS Jaganmohan Reddy took the responsibility in clearing all those arrears and successfully completed it in a span of one year.

Addressing a press conference here, Rambabu said that seeing the one-year good governance of Jagan, people are going to bring him back into power and TDP will be rejected forever.

"Neither Naidu nor Lokesh will ever form a government in the State," he said. Rambabu criticised Naidu for his "atrocious rule and exploiting the finances of the State in the past five years".

AP Cabinet meeting on June 11

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh Cabinet is scheduled to meet on June 11 at 11 am at the State Secretariat. A circular to this effect was issued by Chief Secretary Nilam Sawhney on Wednesday. The Cabinet is expected to discuss the prevalence of Covid-19 and implementation of the lockdown and its impact on the State's financial position.

Another significant matter likely to be deliberated is the legal battle over the Panchayat Raj (Second Amendment) Ordinance-2020 which resulted in the ouster of Nimmagadda Ramesh Kumar from the post of State Election Commissioner and the adverse judgement of the High Court. The other key issues on the agenda of the Council of Ministers would be the dispute with Telangana over Pothreddipadu project, and the holding of the Assembly session.

CBI slaps case on Dr Sudhakar on...

Continued from Page 1

The case took a new twist when the police shifted him to GHMC on May 16. The police then filed cases against Dr Sudhakar for violating lockdown norms, obstructing the police on duty and registered cases against him under Sections 188 and 357 of IPC.

As the incident went viral, the High Court took up a letter written to it as PIL and ordered a CBI investigation

against the Vizag police. The CBI swung into action and filed FIR against the unidentified police and public servants. The CBI also questioned Dr Sudhakar and his family members in connection with the case.

The CBI team also visited the scene of offence and the police station. It seized Dr Sudhakar's medical records and CCTV footage at KGH.

Meanwhile, the IV Town police handed over a 130-

page report and CDs in connection with the case to CBI. It has so far questioned 23 people in the case.

Velagala Venkata Ramana, working as police head constable, Road Safety Mobile-IV wing in Vizag city, in his complaint, mentioned that on May 16 he received a message from the Police Control Room to rush to Port Hospital area in Vizag city citing that one person beat up a police constable and was creating nuisance.

Sawhney's tenure as CS extended

Continued from Page 1

She was assistant collector of Krishna district and posted at Machilipatnam.

Later, she also worked as joint collector of Nalgonda and subsequently became collector of Nalgonda district.

She worked as Deputy Secretary in Municipal Administration Department and was project director in Child welfare department.

Essential Commodities Act amended

Continued from Page 1

Announcing the cabinet decision, Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar said: "Today is a historic day. Three important decisions have been taken that will go a long way in helping farmers while also transforming the agriculture sector."

The deregulation of commodities under the Essential Commodities (EC) Act is need of the hour and removes fears of private investors of excessive regulatory interference, he said.

With the amendment to the Essential Commodities (EC) Act, commodities like cereals,

pulses, oilseeds, edible oils, onion and potatoes will be removed from the list of essential commodities, the government said.

The freedom to produce, hold, move, distribute and supply will lead to harnessing economies of scale and attract private sector/foreign direct investment into the agriculture sector. It will help drive up investment in cold storages and modernization of the food supply chain, it said.

The government further said that while liberalizing the regulatory environment has also ensured that the interest of consumers is safeguarded.

It has been provided in the Amendment, that in situations such as war, famine, extraordinary price rise and natural calamity, such agricultural foodstuff can be regulated.

However, the installed capacity of a value chain participant and the export demand of an exporter will remain exempted from such stock limit imposition so as to ensure that investments in agriculture are not discouraged, it said.

"The amendment announced will help both farmers and consumers while bringing in price stability. It will also prevent wastage of agri-pro-

duce that happens due to lack of storage facilities," it added.

The amendment to the EC Act is necessary, the government said it is because despite India has become surplus in most agri-commodities, farmers have been unable to get better prices due to lack of investment in cold storage, processing and export as the entrepreneurial spirit get dampened due to hanging sword of the EC Act.

Farmers suffer huge losses when there are bumper harvests of perishable commodities. With adequate processing facilities, much of this wastage can be reduced, it added.

SC orders AP to remove YSRCP colours from govt buildings

Continued from Page 1

The YSRCP Government had argued that white colour stood for dairy revolution, blue for aqua revolution and green for agricultural revolution. The fourth colour — terracotta — was added in view of allegations of YCP corals.

The state government was represented by GN Reddy who said the High Court order was against using the party colours on government buildings, and the addition of the fourth colour made the government buildings appear distinct. The AP government had tried to argue that the colours were no way related to the YSRCP flag. Earlier, a petition was filed in the AP High Court stating that the state government painted YSRCP colours on government office buildings. The High Court ordered the colours to be removed.

Following this order, the government issued GO 623 on April 23 to add an extra colour - terracotta -- to the green, blue and white shades. However, this move was again challenged in High Court and subsequently, GO 623 was scrapped.

Recover colours expenditure from YSRCP and officials it favours: Naidu

Continued from Page 1

"Even then, there was no compliance of the court order. The court even ordered for the appearance of the Chief Secretary, Secretary and the Commissioner. Now, the Supreme Court ordered removal of the four colours within four weeks. All this was because of the dull-witted and thoughtless policies of the ruling party that reached a peak now," the TDP supremo said.

Naidu deplored that crores of public money was being wastefully spent for implementation of useless programmes being taken up by the YSRCP.

"For arguing in the Amaravati Capital City case,

the Government paid Rs 5 crore in legal fees. It was not known how much they had spent for the colours' cases in different courts. It was evident that hundreds of crores public funds were spent for applying three colours and then adding one more colour. Now, additional expenditure would be there for removing these colours in accordance with the latest court orders," he said.

The TDP chief demanded that all the expenditure already made and to be made by the Government on colours should be recovered from the ruling YCP and those officers who were blindly carrying out its irrelevant orders. The people of AP should not be punished for the dumb mistakes that were

being made by the ruling party. It is pitiable that the Government and officials were facing contempt issues in both the High Court and the Supreme Court, he said.

Naidu wondered whether Jagan had taken 'one chance' from the voters in the 2019 election only to waste public money on programmes like YSRCP colours on public offices and to make the state bankrupt. The inexperience and inefficiency of YSRCP Government was evident from how it has been making countless mistakes in order to cover one wrong deed, Naidu said. "The ruling party's non-stop failures in all aspects were proving to be a big threat to the future of Andhra Pradesh," he said.

Biggest spike takes Covid infections in AP to 3,971

Continued from Page 1

During the last 24 hours, 8,066 samples were tested and 79 turned out to be Covid-19 positive as per the bulletin released by the state government here on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, 35 patients made a complete recovery from the deadly virus and were discharged from the

Covid designated hospitals in the state.

In all 3,279 Covid positive cases are reported from 13 districts from various clusters in the state. As many as 2,244 patients made a complete recovery from the virus and were discharged from the hospitals. However, 967 patients are still undergoing treatment for the deadly virus across the

state.

The cumulative positive cases from foreign returnees was 119 wherein 118 cases are active cases, while the cumulative positive cases of patients from other states was 573 with 362 active cases. Meanwhile, it may be noted that the state has conducted tests for more than 4 lakh samples for the virus.



Village volunteer tries to assault minor

Continued from Page 1

According to reports, the village volunteer, identified as Santosh, went to the house of the girl, on whom he had set his eyes, and enquired about her parents. When she told him that her parents were away on work, he barged inside the house and tried to sexually assault her. She raised an alarm attracting the attention of the neighbours. Sensing trouble, Santosh fled the place. Upon return to home, her parents approached the police and lodged a complaint against Santosh. The police registered a case under POCSO Act and other relevant Sections of the law.

ILP system: SC declines to stay order excluding Assam

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Wednesday sought response from the Centre on the pleas of two Assam students' unions challenging the Presidential order amending the Bengal Eastern Frontier Regulation (BEFR), 1873 to deny the state an inner-line permit (ILP) system to insulate it from the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA).

A bench of Chief Justice S A Bobde and Justices A S Bopanna and Hrishikesh Roy, conducting hearing through video conferencing, also refused to grant ex-parte stay on the operation of Presidential order.

The top court issued notice to the Centre and listed the matter for further hearing after two weeks.

To visit the ILP-regime states, outsiders, including people from other states of the country, need to take permission. There is also protection for the locals with regards to land, jobs and other facilities.



The Supreme Court Wednesday sought response from the Centre on the pleas of two Assam students' unions challenging the Presidential order

Senior advocate Vikas Singh, appearing for the Students Unions said that the issue is of Inner-line permit system and the court should grant interim stay on the Presidential order.

The bench said that it cannot grant any interim-stay on the order without hearing Centre on the issue.

The pleas of 'All Tai Ahom Students' Union' and 'Asom Jatiyatabadi Yuba Chatra Parishad' have challenged the presidential order of December 11, 2019 to amend the BEFR

calling it "unconstitutional".

The plea of 'All Tai Ahom Students' Union' filed through advocate Kaushik Choudhury, said the President passed the order for amendment under Article 372 (2) of the Constitution, although as per Article 372 (3), he has the power to do so for only three years from the date of enactment of the Constitution, that is till 1953.

Both the students' unions have sought inner-line system in the state to protect them

from the effect of CAA especially from those who have come from Bangladesh.

Many students' union in the state have been protesting against the CAA and wanted implementation of ILP in the state saying that under the BEFR, the inner line permit system was very much prevalent in some undivided districts of Assam.

On December 11, the President signed an order extending the inner line permit (ILP) regime to Manipur.

Centre initiates process for new science, tech and innovation policy

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government has initiated a consultation process for formulation of a new national Science, Technology and Innovation Policy (STIP 2020), a statement said.

The Office of the Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India (Office of PSA) and the Department of Science and Technology (DST) have jointly initiated a decentralised, bottom-up and inclusive process for the formulation of the new policy, it said.

The fifth S&T policy of the country is being formulated at a crucial juncture when India and the world are tackling the COVID-19 pandemic.

"As the crisis changes the world, the new policy with its decentralised manner of formation will reorient STI in terms of priorities, sectoral focus, the way research is done, and technologies are developed and deployed for larger socio-economic welfare," the statement issued on Tuesday said.

The formulation process for STIP 2020 is organised into



four highly interlinked tracks, according to the statement.

Track I involves an extensive public and expert consultation process through Science Policy Forum - a dedicated platform for soliciting inputs from larger public and expert pool during and after the policy drafting process.

Track II comprises experts-driven thematic consultations to feed evidence-informed recommendations into the policy drafting process. Twenty-one focused thematic groups have been constituted for the purpose.

Track III involves consultations with ministries and

states, while track IV constitutes apex level multi-stakeholder consultation.

For track III, nodal officers are being nominated in states and in ministries, departments and agencies of the Government of India for extensive intra-state and intra-department consultation.

For track IV, consultation with industry bodies, global partners and inter-ministerial and inter-state consultations represented at the highest levels are being carried out.

The consultation processes on different tracks have already started and are running in parallel.

SHORT READS



Guj: 40 workers hurt as boiler blast causes fire in factory

BHARUCH: At least 40 workers of a chemical factory were injured on Wednesday in a huge fire caused by a blast in the boiler at Dahej in Bharuch district of Gujarat, district collector said. "Around 35-40 workers sustained burn injuries after the boiler of an agro-chemical company exploded in afternoon. All the injured persons have been shifted to hospitals in Bharuch, and efforts are on to control the fire," said Bharuch collector MD Modia. The fire has still engulfed the unit, the collector said. He said residents of Lakhli and Luvara villages located near the factory are being evacuated as a precautionary measure because of the presence of plants of poisonous chemicals near the affected factory.

Rs 255 crore approved as Arunachal plans tap connections for households

PNS ■ ITANAGAR

The Centre has approved Rs 255 crore for Arunachal Pradesh under the Jal Jeevan Mission (JJM) in 2020-21 to provide tap connections to all the households in the state, official sources said on Wednesday.

The state proposes to provide tap connections to all households by March 2023, they said.

Of the 2.18 lakh rural households, the state is planning to provide 77,000 tap connections in 2020-21, the sources said.

It plans to immediately provide tap connections to all households belonging to the weaker sections of the society



on priority, they said.

In the wake of the COVID-19 outbreak, the Centre has advised the state that water supply work in the villages be taken up urgently to provide tap connections which would help people in maintaining social distancing, besides providing employment to the locals and boosting the rural economy, they said.

Focus to be on wellness as U'khand looks to reboot tourism sector

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

New schemes with an emphasis on wellness will be launched in the tourism sector in Uttarakhand to help it overcome the setback caused by the coronavirus pandemic, Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat said on Wednesday.

The schemes will be attractive for tourists besides generating employment for locals and migrant labourers, who have returned in large numbers from outside the state after the outbreak of the pandemic, he said in an interaction with the media here through Skype.

"We are considering a number of new schemes for the tourism sector to revive it. The emphasis is on the wellness sector," he said.

Rawat also mentioned the Mukhya Mantri Swarojgar



Yojana launched recently to provide self-employment opportunities to enterprising youths and migrants besides making agriculture a viable occupation for the rural populace. On the rising cases of COVID-19 in the state which have crossed the one thousand mark, Rawat said the state's preparedness to deal with the challenge has also grown.

"When the pandemic broke out some months back, we had no isolation facilities but today we have nearly 15,000 isolation beds," he said, adding testing facilities have also been ramped up considerably.

Rawat also said the existing facilities will be further upgraded as the situation demands as per the ICMR guidelines.

SC seeks reply from journalist Upendra Rai

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Wednesday sought reply from journalist Upendra Rai, accused in a money laundering case related to alleged extortion and dubious financial transactions, on a plea of Enforcement Directorate challenging grant of bail to him.

A bench of Chief Justice S A Bobde and Justices A S Bopanna and Hrishikesh Roy issued notice to Rai and sought his response.

The Enforcement Directorate has challenged the July 9, last year order of the Delhi High Court by which it had granted bail to Rai, who had spent 13 months in jail till then.

The high court had asked Rai as a bail condition that he would not leave the country



and would not try to influence any witness or tamper with the evidence of the prosecution.

Rai was arrested on June 8, 2018 by the ED under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), moments after he secured bail in a Central Bureau of Investigation case related to alleged extortion and dubious financial transactions.

Goa: 40 people from containment zone test Coronavirus positive

PANAJI: As many as 40 people from a COVID-19 containment zone in Goa tested positive for the disease on Wednesday, Chief Minister Pramod Sawant said. "Local transmission" of the virus has happened due to the fault of one family residing in the locality, he said. With this, the number of active COVID-19 cases in the state has reached 65, the chief minister said. The family members consulted a private medical practitioner after developing COVID-19 symptoms, he said. "They should have gone to a coronavirus testing centre, the chief minister said. The state government on Monday declared Mangor Hill area of Vasco town in South Goa district as a containment zone after six members of a family tested positive for coronavirus. On Tuesday, 200 samples were collected from the area and results of 40 of them came out positive on Wednesday, the chief minister said.

Pradhan urges Centre to bring back Odias stranded abroad

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Union minister Dharmendra Pradhan urged the Centre to make arrangements to operate direct flights to Bhubaneswar from the gulf countries, UK and Sri Lanka to bring back the people of Odisha stranded there due to the COVID-19 crisis.

The Union Petroleum and Steel Minister, in separate letters to External Affairs Minister S Jaishankar and Civil Aviation Minister Hardeep Singh Puri, sought the government's intervention for arranging flights from these countries to bring back the stranded Odias. Pradhan said the decision of the Centre to repatriate Indian nationals under the



Vande Bharat Mission has helped many migrant workers, students and professionals to fly back to their home states.

In this regard, Ministry of Civil Aviation has been doing commendable work by operating flight service for the passengers stranded abroad, he said in the letters that were

released to the press. Pradhan said that he received representations from Odia persons living abroad, requesting to be brought back to Bhubaneswar.

The Odia community representatives living in GCC countries, United Kingdom, and Sri Lanka have made specific requests to travel back from their respective capital cities to Bhubaneswar directly, Pradhan wrote. Since they are in good numbers in these countries, direct flights may be arranged from cities such as Dubai, Doha, Dammam, Muscat, Bahrain, Colombo and London to Bhubaneswar, which would also make commercial sense for the airlines, Pradhan said in his letters.

HC stays appointment of 69,000 UP govt teachers

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Allahabad High Court on Wednesday stayed the appointment of 69,000 assistant basic teachers in Uttar Pradesh.

A Lucknow bench of the high court fixed the next of hearing on July 12.

Justice Alok Mathur's order comes days after the Supreme Court sought the UP government's reply on pleas challenging the high court verdict, which had upheld the state's decision to keep higher cut-off marks for these appointments.

The top court had on May 21 asked the state government to explain the process adopted for the appointments through a chart.

A bench of Justices U U Lalit, M M Shantanagoudar and Vineet Saran had initially



declined to interfere with the high court verdict. But it later modified its order and issued notice to the state government, posting the matter for further hearing on July 6.

It asked the Uttar Pradesh government to explain why it changed the earlier criteria of 45 per cent cut-off marks for the general category and 40 per cent for the reserved category.

filed challenging the May 6 decision of the Lucknow bench of Allahabad High Court.

In its May 6 verdict, the high court had directed the state government to complete within the next three months the process for appointment of 69,000 assistant basic teachers in Uttar Pradesh.

The process was almost already complete on the strength of the interim directions of the division bench issued on May 29 last year and only the result was to be declared.

The division bench had earlier set aside the single bench order that had quashed the government order fixing 65 per cent qualifying marks for the general category candidates and 60 per cent for the reserved category candidates.

Goa govt defers reopening of schools amid COVID-19

PANAJI: The Goa government on Wednesday deferred its scheduled reopening of schools in the first week of June in keeping with the fresh guidelines issued by the Union Ministry of Home Affairs, an official said. In a circular issued on Wednesday, director of education Vandana Rao said the department had earlier informed schools about reopening for the academic year. As per the state government's previous circular on the matter, schools were supposed to reopen in the first week of June. However, due to the MHA's guidelines issued on May 30 in view of the COVID-19 pandemic, the scheduled reopening of schools will be deferred, she said.

No discrimination between ration, non-ration card holders in giving foodgrain: Delhi govt tells HC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The AAP government has informed the Delhi High Court that it was not indulging in any discrimination between ration and non-ration card holders in providing relief kits and foodgrain ensuring that no person remains hungry due to the COVID-19 lockdown.

A bench of Chief Justice D N Patel and Justice Prateek Jalan, conducting the hearing through video conferencing, noted that several steps have been taken by the Delhi government to provide foodgrain and cooked food to the public at large irrespective of the fact whether they have ration cards or not.

Holding that no further directions were required to be passed at this stage, the bench said: "We expect from the respondents (Delhi government) that the schemes floated by them shall be scrupulously followed for the welfare of the public at large and may continue even after the lock-



down period is over.

"In the event necessary, the respondents may also take steps to enhance the coverage or benefits of the schemes floated by them, to realise their objective that no person in Delhi should go hungry by reason of the present lockdown."

The court passed the order while disposing of a plea by NGO Nayee Soch Society seeking direction to the authorities to provide coronavirus relief kit, foodgrain and food relief of

the same level and status to ration card holders and Aadhaar Card and voter card holders from March 24 till the operation of Disaster Management Act due to COVID-19.

While the order was passed on Tuesday, it was made available on Wednesday.

The petitioner's grievance was that discrimination was being done by the authorities between the ration card holders and non-ration card holders in providing corona relief

"In the event necessary, the respondents may also take steps to enhance the coverage or benefits of the schemes floated by them, to realise their objective that no person in Delhi should go hungry by reason of the present lockdown."

Kits and food grains or rice.

The court, however, noted the submissions of Additional Solicitor General (ASG) Sanjay Jain and Delhi government additional standing counsel Anuj Aggarwal, representing the Delhi government, that there are hunger relief centers in which ration card holders as well as those who are not having ration cards can enter and get cooked food free of charge.

It also noted that a number of schemes have been floated by the central government and Delhi government and care has been taken by the authorities to provide food grains and cooked food whether that person is having a ration card or not.

"Similarly, under Mukhya Mantri Corona Sahayata Yojana, there is provision of emergency food relief coupons and the person in need can get the benefit, irrespective of the fact whether a person is a ration card holder or not. Thus, grievances ventilated by the petitioner about the discrimination between the ration card holders and others is not tenable," the bench said.

The court was informed by the ASG that as per a Cabinet decision, 400 designated distribution centres were set up across Delhi which provided 4 Kg wheat and 1 kg rice, free of cost, to 10 lakh non-PDS beneficiaries and it was then extended to 30 lakh people.



Officials told to run campaign to make new ration cards

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Wednesday asked officials to run a campaign to make new ration cards to provide foodgrains.

"A campaign should be run to prepare new ration cards to provide foodgrains to new applicants," he said during a meeting to review the measures taken to unlock the economy.

He said it should be ensured that there should be no anomalies in food grain distribution and a plan should be prepared within a week for it. At the meeting, the CM also directed police to ensure patrolling and ensure social distancing.

Bangladeshi cattle smuggler lynched



PNS ■ KARIMGANJ (ASSAM)

A suspected Bangladeshi cattle smuggler was lynched in Karimganj district of Assam, while his accomplice was arrested, police said on Wednesday.

Karimganj Superintendent of Police Kumar Sanjit Krishna said one of the persons involved in the mob lynching has been arrested and efforts are on to nab the others.

At least seven persons crossed over to the Indian side on Monday through an open fencing area, which is an elephant corridor between the two countries, and tried to

steal a cow from a house at Putni Tea Estate near the border, he said. "So on people gathered in the area and thrashed them. Police reached the spot immediately and rescued one person and arrested another, but the rest managed to flee," Krishna said. They were taken to a hospital and one of them was declared brought dead, he said.

The deceased has been identified as Ranjit Munda from Sonarupa Tea Estate in Moulvibazar district of Bangladesh. The arrested person is also from the same place, the officer said.

Trees and poles fall as 'Nisarga' makes landfall near Alibaug

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Cyclone 'Nisarga' has made landfall near Alibaug on Maharashtra coast with the wind speed of more than 110 kms per hour and heavy rainfall, leading to falling of many trees and electricity poles, a Raigad district official said.

The cyclone hit areas near Dive Agar in Shrivardhan, 87 kms away from Raigad, district collector Nidhi Choudhary said. "Due to the impact of the gusting winds, many trees and electric poles fell down in Shrivardhan as well as in Alibaug," the collector said.

She said 13,541 people have been shifted to safer places so far. "We have identified 62 villages in the radius of five kilometres near the coastline (in Raigad) and are taking extra precautions there," the collector said.

She appealed to people to stay indoors until Thursday morning for their own safety. As per the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the landfall process started around 12.30 pm near Alibaug, 95 kms from Mumbai. "The right side of the wall



"We have identified 62 villages in the radius of five km near the coastline (in Raigad) and are taking extra precautions there," the collector said

cloud passes through coastal region of Maharashtra, mainly the Raigad district. It will gradually enter into Mumbai and Thane districts during the next three hours," the IMD said in a statement.

Meanwhile, the collector said the fallen trees and electricity

supply poles will be removed in the next few days and replaced with new poles.

"Not only the coastal areas in Raigad, but residents of towns like Roha, Tala, Sudhagad, Khalapur, Mangaon, Panvel and Poladpur will also have to remain alert," she said.

Cyclone Nisarga: 10 sailors rescued off Ratnagiri coast

At least 10 sailors were rescued from a ship, which was stranded off the coast of Ratnagiri in Maharashtra due to high tide and heavy rains in the wake of cyclonic storm Nisarga on Wednesday, an official said. The vessel with a crew of 10 was spotted from the Mirya Bunder area of Ratnagiri and efforts were made to bring it to the coast, the official said. However, the high tide coupled with heavy rains and rough winds pushed the ship towards the coast of Mirakwada, where the sailors were rescued safely, he said. Heavy rains pounded Ratnagiri as Cyclone Nisarga made its landfall on Wednesday. Roofs of several buildings in Ratnagiri, including a bank in Dapoli, were blown away by the rough winds, the official added.

Three Jaish militants killed in Pulwama encounter



PNS ■ SRINAGAR

Security forces on Wednesday killed terror outfit Jaish-e-Mohammad's (JeM) top IED expert Abdul Rehman alias 'Fauji Bhai', who was an Afghan war veteran, besides two local militants during an encounter in Pulwama district of South Kashmir, police said. "The killing of Abdul Rehman alias Fauji Bhai alias Fauji Baba, a Pakistani national, is a big success for security forces as he was a master in assembling improvised explosive devices for JeM," Inspector General of Police Vijay Kumar told reporters here.

Kumar said the slain Jaish terrorist was active in south Kashmir since 2017 and had taken part in armed action against the allied forces in violence-ridden Afghanistan in the past.

The IGP claimed that Fauji Baba had managed to escape when security forces intercepted the IED laden car in Pulwama on May 28.

"We had promised you that day we will get him soon. Today we did. Whether he was involved in 2019 car bombing attack on CRPF convoy, I cannot say for sure but he was active in Pulwama at that time," he said in response to a

"We have had major successes this year as we have eliminated top commanders of Hizbul Mujahideen Reyaz Naikoo and poster boy Junaid Sehrai, Lashkar chief Haider in Handwara and now Fauji Baba," the police said

question. Asked if Fauji Baba was the nephew of Jaish chief Masood Azhar, Kumar said, "There is no confirmation of that. You are only running it (on TV channels)."

He said there were at least two more IED experts among the Jaish ranks in Kashmir, Walid Bhai and Lambu Bhai, and the security forces were working to get them too.

"We have had major successes this year as we have eliminated top commanders of Hizbul Mujahideen Reyaz Naikoo and poster boy Junaid Sehrai, Lashkar chief Haider in Handwara and now Fauji Baba," he added.

First cyclone in 72 years makes landfall; trains rescheduled, thousands evacuated

Mumbai and neighbouring areas on Wednesday braced for Cyclone Nisarga as it slammed the coast with wind speeds of up to 120 kmph after tens of thousands of people in its path were evacuated, trains rescheduled, flights cancelled, fishermen ordered out of the seas and rescue workers put on standby.

Nisarga blew in from the Arabian Sea, making landfall at the coastal town Alibaug at around 12.30 pm and the process will finish by 4 pm, officials said. Already down on its knees from the raging COVID-19 pandemic, Mumbai will be hit by a cyclone for the first time in 72 years, Adam Soebel, a professor of atmospheric science at Columbia University in New York, tweeted.

Earlier, Soebel had said the last severe cyclone to hit Mumbai was 1891 but on Wednesday corrected to say the city was hit by a cyclone in 1948.

"It is likely to cross with an intensity of a severe cyclonic storm close to south of Alibaug," India Meteorological



Department (IMD) Mumbai's deputy director general of meteorology K S Hosalkar said.

"At that time, its speed is likely to be 100 kmph to 110 kmph, he added.

Steeped in colonial history, Alibaug is a quaint little town located about 110 km from Mumbai, and is dotted with sandy beaches, unpolluted air and several forts and temples. A speedboat from Mumbai to Mandwa jetty near Alibaug takes 20 minutes and is an easy option for those wishing to avoid the arduous road journey. It is also home to many Bollywood stars and

other rich people.

Nisarga, which is also expected to pummel the coastline of Gujarat besides Maharashtra, comes a week after Cyclone Amphan wreaked havoc in West Bengal.

Hosalkar said Mumbai, Thane, Raigad and Palghar will be hit with winds of up to 100 kmph to 110 kmph. The IMD said the storm may also gust to 120 kmph. The winds will be accompanied by heavy to very heavy rainfall in the coastal districts of the state.

The department has forecast the storm will have an impact on areas in North

Maharashtra, Pune, Ahmednagar.

The department has said kuccha houses, trees, electric poles may fall as they may not be able to withstand the speed of the storm.

Pune-based Sucheta Nadkarny, 81, who lived in Mumbai suburb Vile Parle in 1948 said, "I remember huge trees in our area were uprooted and plants in our garden destroyed.

"I was 10 years old then and remember this because my mother was heartbroken as the plants she had lovingly nurtured were destroyed," Nadkarny said.

The state government authorities have already asked people in vulnerable areas to shift to safer places.

Bracing for the impact of what is being billed as the most severe cyclone to hit Mumbai, the Central Railway (CR) rescheduled special trains and many airlines also cancelled their Mumbai operations.

The CR has rescheduled, diverted and regulated some trains on Wednesday, an official said.



K'taka CM directs shifting of some govt offices to Suvarna Vidhana Soudha

PNS ■ BENGALURU

Karnataka Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa on Wednesday directed authorities to identify state level government offices to be shifted from the city to Suvarna Vidhana Soudha in Belagavi within a month and execute it, with an aim to address regional imbalance.

He also "warned" that he would personally review functioning of offices from there before the next meeting, CMO said in a statement.

Yediyurappa held a meeting to review the functioning of Public Works, Ports and Inland Water Transport departments. Suvarna Vidhana Soudha, modelled on Vidhana Soudha, the state secretariat in Bengaluru, where legislature session is held once a year, was built as an assertion that Belagavi is an integral part of Karnataka.

Maharashtra claims Belagavi



should belong to it. Other than the session held once a year for about two weeks, the building remains mostly unutilised.

It has been long standing demand of the people of north Karnataka to shift some government offices to Suvarna Vidhana Soudha in Belagavi, aimed at addressing regional imbalance, and for the benefit of citizens of the regions, who otherwise have to travel to

Bengaluru.

In 2018, then Congress-JDS coalition government in the state had given in principle approval to shift some government departments, boards and commissions to the north Karnataka region to address the alleged discrimination.

At the meeting, the Chief Minister also directed officials to complete the work on roads and bridges that was damaged during the floods last year.

Flight with 153 Indians from Dubai lands at Chandigarh

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

A special Air India flight has brought back 153 stranded Indians from Dubai under the Centre's Vande Bharat Mission, Chandigarh international airport officials said on Wednesday.

The AI 1916 flight landed at the international airport on Tuesday night.

This was the third flight under the mission to land here. Earlier, 244 Indians were brought back through special flights from New York and Ukraine's capital Kiev.

Eighty of the passengers who landed on Tuesday here belonged to Punjab, the officials said.

Thirty-seven of them belonged to Himachal Pradesh; 13 from Haryana; 11 from Chandigarh; four each from Delhi and J-K; and two each from Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh.

HC asks Google to take down Saheb Biwi aur Gangster movie from YouTube

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has asked Google LLC to remove from Youtube the Hindi movie 'Saheb Biwi aur Gangster' which according to its co-producer has been uploaded illegally on the social media platform.

Justice Rajiv Shakdher in an interim order on Tuesday, directed Youtube to take down the movie within 48 hours, but its lawyer said that the platform has been taken over by US-based Google LLC which will comply with the direction.

The high court recorded the statement made by the lawyer appearing for Youtube and listed the matter for further hearing on July 9.

The order came on a lawsuit filed by the movie's co-producer, Rahul Mitra, who has claimed that Tigmanshu Dhulia, the other producer, has assigned to him all the rights



in the film.

In his plea, Mitra has contended that uploading of the subject movie on Youtube has degraded his rights.

He claimed that he was suffering a huge monetary loss as he is not in a position to sell rights in the movie to video streaming platforms like Amazon Prime Video and Netflix.

The high court issued notice to Youtube and Google LLC

seeking their response to the lawsuit. During the proceedings held via video conferencing, Youtube's lawyer told the court that it is only an intermediary and, therefore, cannot be held liable for uploading of the movie on its platform.

It also said that had the plaintiff specified the uniform resource locator or URL of the works in which he had rights, Youtube would have been in a position to take down the

The order came on a lawsuit filed by the movie's co-producer, Rahul Mitra, who has claimed that Tigmanshu Dhulia, the other producer, has assigned to him all the rights in the film

infringing material. Youtube said that the plaintiff ought to have impleaded in the suit the person or entity which uploaded the movie in question. The high court, thereafter, directed the plaintiff to make the movie uploader a defendant in the suit within five days. "Furthermore, having heard learned counsel for the parties, I am inclined to direct defendant No. 1 (Youtube) to take down the subject movie.



Lockdown helped Delhi, says Sisodia

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The complete lockdown has helped the Delhi government in strengthening the city's health infrastructure to effectively battle COVID-19, Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia said.

Addressing the "Cities Against COVID19 - Global Summit 2020" via video conference on Tuesday, he mentioned key measures adopted by the Delhi government to contain the spread of the dreaded virus. "As Delhi got its first COVID 19 positive case on March 2, it was very important to curb the spread of the disease. The total lockdown enabled us to spread awareness about the virus among the citizens and strengthen our health infrastructure to effectively battle the disease," he said.



UP Congress delegation meets gov

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

An Uttar Pradesh Congress delegation on Wednesday called upon Governor Anandiben Patel at the Raj Bhavan here to highlight the alleged inhuman way of the arrest and detention of the party's state unit chief Ajay Kumar Lallu.

Congress Legislative Party leader in UP Assembly Aradhana Mishra said, "A delegation of the UP Congress met the governor to highlight the arrest of state Congress chief Ajay Kumar Lallu, which was done because of the personal and political vendetta, and then a baseless case was registered against him." "He was arrested in an inhuman and non-respectable way, she added in her statement.

Trump's expansionism

US wants to expand G7 by including India and Russia, hoping to encircle China. How will the two hold their own?



At any other time, US President Donald Trump's call to expand the Group of Seven (G-7) would have been seen as reformatory considering it has gone past its sell-by date. Formed in the 1970s, its main objective was to ensure the supremacy of the Western democratic and liberal economic model in the Cold War era. But with emergent economies, China and Southeast Asian powers coalescing around G-20, it lost clout with only five of its members — the US, Germany, Japan, UK and France — figuring among the top seven global economies. Italy and Canada have been upstaged by China and India. So now Trump's move to invite India, Russia, South Korea and Australia into the club is not just about correcting geo-strategic realities of the contemporary world but to stifle China for the COVID-19 outbreak by encircling it with a comity of nations and diminishing its global dominance. And though he has been attempting this for quite some time, considering that both Russia and India didn't want to upset China too much given their market dependencies, the US President wants to make a show by postponing the summit to September, when hopefully the COVID-19 crisis abates. The intent is clear, capitalise on all reports emerging that China hid crucial information, play upon collective anxieties of affected nations and make them allies in the larger US design to isolate China. Already, he has gone ballistic with the World Health Organisation (WHO) for allowing itself to be taken in by China's versions of the truth, withdrawn the special status to Hong Kong in response to a new Chinese security law there and is limiting Chinese students above undergraduate level from enrolling in US institutions. It is also trying to cut off China from global supply chains, hoping to cripple it in the long run. In fact, soon after Trump's announcement, the UK Government said it wanted a group of 10 countries to develop its own 5G technology and reduce dependence on China's tech major Huawei.

For India, this is an opportunity to be a key player in the Western bloc. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has established a rapport with Trump and the recent 25-minute phone conversation between the two did dwell on Chinese incursion in Ladakh with the US administration being sympathetic to India's predicament along the Himalayan border. Modi also took up race riots, hoping that the US hypocrisy on the violence would blunt the stereotypical edge of its propaganda on India's rights situation. But India needs to walk the line carefully without appearing to be endorsing a polarising move that runs counter to its multilateral worldviews. It has, therefore, rightly refused the US offer to mediate in Ladakh and upheld bilateral mechanisms. It cannot afford to be played by both China, which is into heavy duty posturing to intimidate us against being party to any anti-China narrative, or the US, which dangles trade tariffs now and then to get things done its way. Besides, India still doesn't have the manufacturing edge to cut off China and is dependent on its factory floors for sourcing. But India can certainly negotiate better for a permanent seat on the UN Security Council, considering that it has surpassed France and the UK in terms of the GDP, both of which hold a permanent seat on the global panel. India has support from France, too, as its President Emanuel Macron had invited Modi to the G-7 Summit at Biarritz last August as a special invitee. The entry of Russia, though it has given an in-principle nod to the idea, is also going to be complicated considering that it has grown closer to Beijing ever since Trump's predecessor Barack Obama expelled it from the original grouping following its takeover of Crimea. But Putin and Trump have an equation going and preliminary reports indicate that Moscow has shown its interest in accepting the invitation to attend the G-7 meet but will confirm only when the agenda is decided. Besides, it stayed away from joining the global defence of human rights in Hong Kong. This is one of the reasons why existing G7 members, particularly Canada, have reservations. But Trump is pushing Russia, without which it would be difficult to isolate or even censure Beijing. Australia, for example, features high on Trump's scale of preferences simply because it called for an impartial investigation into the Wuhan outbreak. Trump may want an expanded G-11 in this new age cold war with China but its success will depend on how the new hopefuls leverage their power.

Elephantine problem

Laws make no sense if not enforced. And people will play with animals till we realise the right to co-existence



All of humanity needs to hang its head in shame for an inhuman deed that took place on May 27 in Malappuram, Kerala. A 15-year-old pregnant tusker, looking for food, strayed into a village where the trusting and unsuspecting creature was fed a pineapple stuffed with crackers. The fruit exploded in the elephant's mouth ripping off a part of its face and tongue. The poor pachyderm, despite being in intense pain, ran through the streets without harming a soul till it came to the river. It stood in the water for hours, defeating all attempts by the forest department to help it, before dying a slow and excruciating death, due to the injuries and asphyxia as water had gone into its lungs and trachea. Sadly, this is not the first incident of such unspeakable cruelty inflicted on animals in India. A similar incident had happened in Kollam with another elephant in April where the animal had eaten fruits laden with explosives and died a slow and painful death. So, the question is how is it that the perpetrators of such heinous crimes go unpunished when cruelty against animals is a cognisable offence under Section 428 and Section 429 of the Indian Penal Code and the country also has one of the strictest wildlife protection laws in the world? While some countries are now waking up to regulating trade in wildlife, India leads the prohibition on ivory trade. Some of the biggest triumphs for animal welfare here in the last decade saw the ban of dolphinariums in 2013, prohibition on animal testing for cosmetics in 2014, followed by a ban on the import of cosmetics tested on animals. India also prohibited the export of shark fins for use in soup and does not allow wild animals in circuses.

Yet we are confronted with heart-wrenching stories of depraved behaviour towards animals. For this to happen, we must make our law enforcement agencies aware about the rights of animals to be treated with kindness and dignity and about how grave an offence it is to subject an animal to cruelty. Punishment should be quick and stringent. Law enforcement agencies must not always wait for activist judges to lead the way in this regard. Plus, we, as a society must teach our children the basic truth that the world is meant to be shared by all God's creations and we must learn to live together with them. They have as much right to live on this planet as we do. In fact, animals form a vital part of the biodiversity and each creature has a role to play in the circle of life. If we disrupt that, we will have to bear the consequences of it.

Liberal agenda in America

Like the White rioters, the Democrats and their media supports are also exploiting the most disadvantaged among their fellow Americans with hopes of winning the November polls



DOMINIC GREEN

There was no rest for the wicked on the seventh day. The shooting of police officers on Monday night in St Louis, Missouri and Los Angeles opens a new phase in the disorder that began in Minneapolis on May 26. On Monday, Terrence Floyd, the brother of George Floyd, the Minneapolis man murdered on camera by a police officer, called for calm. So did US President Donald Trump, incongruously waving a Bible in front of Washington DC's St John's church, where every President since 1815 has prayed and which rioters set on fire on Sunday night. But on Monday night, America's tragedy moved closer to catastrophe.

It's not just that race is the American agony and that African American men are disproportionately likely to be targeted by the police. A particular chain of events turned the initial protests in Minneapolis into nationwide protests, which turned into violent riots. Some filmed evidence appears to suggest that the crucial second phase of these events, the phase in which protests in poor and majority-Black neighbourhoods turned into confrontation with the police and assaults on civic symbols, was inflamed and exploited by the far Left.

This is why the violence must stop. Not just because lives and property are being lost. Not because it takes decades for an inner-city neighborhood to recover from an assault by its own residents. Not because it shreds the tendrils of racial amity that have grown since the civil rights reforms of the 1960s. But because the course of events has at crucial moments been directed by affluent Whites. And they know that the butcher's bill will not be delivered to their suburban communities. The Americans have a name for this: White privilege. A few weeks ago, White men protested the COVID-19 shutdown by storming the Michigan statehouse in military fatigues and carrying assault weapons. The police allowed them to rampage around the Statehouse while White protesters shovelled the police lines on the statehouse steps and no one was injured. Pass a fake \$20 bill as George Floyd did, however, and you risk a rapid escalation, which may end in injury or death.

The same inequality of risk attaches to the White grad student who dons the black hoodie of Antifa and throws fireworks and bottles at the police and the Black women and children, who standing on the porch of their home in Minneapolis, were shot at by the national guard as one of the guardsmen shouted "Light 'em up!"

It is inaccurate to say that all of Black America is on the streets. Fifty years of deindustrialisation and drugs have created a Black underclass but 50 years of civil rights and affirmative action have accelerated the growth of the Black middle class. In Atlanta, Georgia, the capital of the Black



middle class, initial protests did not lead to open-ended rioting.

The Mayor, who is White, ventured onto the streets and talked to protestors as equals. In a further instance of the civic responsibility that has been lacking in most Democratic-run States and cities, the local rapper, Killer Mike, the son of a police officer, issued an emotional plea "not to burn your house down."

This kind of plea works best if you have a house to burn down. It doesn't work on people who have no property and no prospects as in the heavily Black neighborhoods of western Philadelphia, where helicopter footage showed the police abandoning their cars to entirely Black mobs.

Nor does this appeal work on people who have the luxury of burning down other people's homes and businesses — and those people, the White rioters, are the ones who commandeered the initial protests and forced them towards violent confrontation.

Nearly half of the population of Washington, DC is Black. Yet some footage appears to show hardly any non-White

NEARLY HALF OF THE POPULATION OF WASHINGTON, DC IS BLACK. YET, SOME FOOTAGE APPEARS TO SHOW HARDLY ANY NON-WHITE FACES AMONG THE MOB WHO ATTACKED POLICE OUTSIDE THE WHITE HOUSE AND SET FIRE TO ST JOHN'S CHURCH

faces among the mob who attacked police outside the White House and set fire to St John's church. Here in Boston, we saw an orderly march from a heavily Black neighbourhood to the city centre, led by church leaders. It was black-clad Whites who fought the police after the curfew. I observed teenagers from my suburban neighbourhood, students at Ivy League colleges and exclusive private schools, setting off in the black costume of Antifa.

"It happens most often that a people, which has supported without complaint, as if they were not felt, the most oppressive laws, violently throws them off as soon as their weight is lightened," Alexis de Tocqueville wrote of the French Revolution.

The radicalism of the American Left is rarefied and spoilt: More troubled by student loans and an absence of exciting jobs than failed schools and police violence. Antifa's revolution, like that of 1968 and most other Western revolutions, is a "revolution of rising expectations." The concerns of the young White men and

women, who are attacking the police, are not those of the young Black men who will be killed in the nights to come.

Most of the media endorse the radical Left's political costume drama. So do prominent figures on the Democratic Party's Left, like Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez and Keith Ellison, the ex-Nation of Islam agitator who was second-in-charge of the Democratic National Committee and is now Minnesota's Attorney-General.

Like the White rioters, the Democrats and their media supports are also exploiting the most disadvantaged among their fellow Americans. They are exploiting the suffering of Black people in the hope of winning November's elections by painting Donald Trump as the second coming of George Wallace.

This strategy is unlikely to succeed. No candidate ever harmed his chances by running on a law and order ticket. Its greater failure is, however, moral.

(The writer is Life & Arts editor of The Spectator (US). (Courtesy: The Dawn)

SOUNDBITE

Some owners are looking to sell their franchises. I would be more than happy to provide financial and non-monetary support to keep the PSL alive and to thrive.



Former Pakistan pacer —Shoab Akhtar

Boredom is the most common disease that afflicts all people. It is the root of a lot of mental, emotional and physical disorder. So I learned: to be bored or not, is a choice.



Actor —Milind Soman

China and India have a full-fledged border related mechanism and communication channel. We have capability to resolve this issue through dialogue and negotiations.



Chinese spokesperson —Zhao Lijian

There is no need to panic looking at the increasing number of COVID-19 cases. The Centre and State Governments have done the planning. We have increased testing.



MoS for Health —Ashwini Kumar Choubey

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Unjust act

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Boots on the street" (June 3). The social media was flooded with images of protests in the US against the killing of George Floyd that has engulfed the country. Horrifying images of police using brutal force against peaceful protesters, looters and rioters causing wanton property damage and toxic insults being hurled with abandon emerged. Against this backdrop, one video from Houston, Texas, stood out. Instead of violence or hate, it showcased solidarity and understanding. The video was of a "prayer test" being held in Houston where parishioners of a local church gathered to join hands and pray to bring an end to the troubling events.

The gathering was held in Houston's 3rd Ward Cuney Homes where Floyd grew up, giving it an added significance. At one point during the "prayer test", the White attendees stood opposite to their Black counterparts and knelt down to ask forgiveness for "years and years of racism" from their brothers and sisters. The visuals were powerful, signalling a way out for a just future where stereotyping is replaced by compassion. The video quickly went viral, drawing praise from across the world for it showcased the better side of humanity. This does not mean that there were no doubters. Some saw the ges-

The better side of humanity

motivated — many White Americans still believe in racial supremacy. The US Government is often found to denounce instances of discrimination in other countries but its own response to Floyd's death has



ture at the "prayer test" as pandering and called it cringe-worthy for the way it depicted White people asking for forgiveness for crimes of their ancestors. However, those who chose to call out the video for perpetuating inequality, did not have all the information as shortly after the White parishioners took a knee, their Black counterparts joined them, going down on their knees as well and participated in joint prayer. Though its undeniable that the US has a problem with systemic racism, incidents like these light the way to a better and a more just future.

Jawadi Lakshmana Rao
Andhra Pradesh

been rather tepid. Is the US regressing into the dark days when African-Americans were enslaved? This is indeed an affront to Abraham Lincoln.

TK Nandan
Kochi

Flouting rules

Sir — As the country emerges from a two-month lockdown and with a gradual ease in movement, it has been seen that peo-

ple are not maintaining social distance at market and public places. The dangers of the spread of infection from Delhi to regions in the NCR have increased significantly. Strict guidelines as issued by the Delhi Government to seal the border need to be taken by other State Governments. The Government has relaxed some rules after lockdown 4.0 but this does not mean that people should flout rules. Bypassing the rules will be harmful to all.

Yugal Kishore Sharma
Faridabad

Knee-jerk reaction

Sir — There has been a growing rhetoric on social media to boycott Chinese goods and apps. But a groundswell of anti-China opinion may not be enough to take on China for it has a good hold on the Indian market. A sudden ban will badly affect several sectors. We must enhance economic competitiveness and build capacity for innovation to make the shift.

Shambhavi
Via email

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Chinese are the neo-imperialists

India should not do any appeasement of the Chinese as Chamberlain did towards Hitler but boldly confront them like Winston Churchill



MARKANDEY KATJU

The Chinese Army recently penetrated about four kilometres into Indian territory in the Galwan area of Ladakh. Many people in India may think that this incident was only due to some small misunderstanding about the border between the two countries but that is not so. The incident is part of a much larger imperialist design of the Chinese, so let me explain. In the 1930s-1940s, Nazi German imperialism was the real danger to the world and not British or French imperialism. This was because German imperialism was rising and expanding and hence was an aggressive imperialism while British and French imperialism were only defensive. While the latter two nations only wanted to hold on to their colonies, the Nazis wanted to conquer and enslave other countries. Hence the Nazis were the real danger to the world at that time. Similarly, today the real danger to the world is not from the US but from China, because the Chinese are on the road of aggressive expansionism in the world. With their massive industry seeking markets for its goods and with their huge \$3.2 trillion foreign exchange reserve hungrily seeking avenues for profitable investment, the Chinese are today aggressive imperialists and the greatest danger to the world. It is true that they are not expanding militarily like Nazi Germany at the moment but they are aggressively expanding economically by penetrating and undermining the economies of many countries of the world.

In the last decade, Chinese overseas investment has skyrocketed. Today the Chinese are almost everywhere, Asia, Africa, Latin America and of course the US and Europe. Their Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) is a network of roads, railways, oil pipelines, power grids, ports and other infrastructure projects connecting China with the world. It aims at improving infrastructure and connectivity between China and the rest of Eurasia in order to dominate it. China's focus is often on vital infrastructure like ports, for instance, Gwadar in Pakistan, Piraeus in Greece and Hambantota in Sri Lanka, the aim being to get a strategic foothold in these countries.

By selling goods at less than half the price at which the American or European manufacturer can afford to sell (in view of his higher labour cost), the Chinese have destroyed many American and European industries. Now the Chinese are seeking to capture the markets and raw materials in underdeveloped countries by dumping goods at very low prices so as to make the local products uncompetitive. Pakistan, for instance, is flooded with cheap Chinese goods.

While capturing foreign markets, the Chinese were carefully protecting their own industry by putting high tariffs. It has to be said to the credit of US President Donald Trump that he called the Chinese bluff and bluntly told the Chinese that this strategy won't do. You can't have 25 per cent tariff on import of automobiles into China when the US imposes a tariff of only 2.5 per cent for import of cars into its territory. Trump has imposed tariffs on several Chinese goods and has announced more in the future. To this, the Chinese announced retaliatory tariffs but that will hurt the Americans little. It is well-known that the Chinese have no business ethics and that is why many US and European companies are reluctant to hire Chinese from mainland China as they often commit espionage and steal industrial secrets.

Let us now look at China's economic relations with India. As is well-known, India was a British colony till 1947 and the British policy was broadly to keep India unindustrialised. However, after independence, a certain degree of industrialisation took place in India and we started manufacturing goods which we had to earlier import.

Now the Chinese have, to a certain extent, penetrated our market at the expense of our domestic industries. An article entitled *How Chinese companies are beating India in its own backyard*, published in *The Economic Times*, gives some interesting details. Indo-Chinese trade is heavily skewed in favour of the Chinese. Indian exports to China are to the tune of \$16 billion, mainly of raw materials. But its imports from China are worth \$68 billion, mainly of value added goods like mobile phones, plastics, electrical goods, machinery and its parts. This is typical of the relation between a colony and an imperialist country. Chinese companies use aggressive pricing, State subsidies, protectionist policies and cheap financing. In certain industries, Chinese companies dominate the Indian market, for instance the telecom sector, 51 per cent of which has been captured by the Chinese. Indian homes are full of Chinese goods like fittings, lampshades, tubelights and so on. The Indian Government and the citizens of the country must seriously start opposing Chinese imperialism. To ignore this danger will be behaving like an ostrich, just like Neville Chamberlain who kept thinking that Adolf Hitler was no danger until it was almost too late. Apart from opposing the aggressive Chinese moves at the border, the Indian Government should ban the entry of Chinese goods into the market and get rid of Chinese firms from the country. India should not do any appeasement of the Chinese as Chamberlain did towards Hitler but boldly confront them like Winston Churchill. Appeasement only whets the appetite of the aggressor.

(The writer is a former Judge, Supreme Court of India)

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

YOU WON'T FIND IT (ACCUSATION THAT INDIA LOST DELIBERATELY TO ENGLAND) BECAUSE I HAVE NEVER SAID IT. IT'S TWISTING OF WORDS OR CLICK BAIT.
 —ENGLAND ALL ROUNDER
 BEN STOKES



THEY DID IT. I SAID IT AT THAT TIME AND EVERYONE FELT THE SAME. A PLAYER WHO CAN HIT A SIX OR A FOUR IS DEFENDING THE BALL, YOU JUST KNOW.
 —FORMER PAKISTAN ALL ROUNDER
 ABDUL RAZZAQ

Opening doors to prosperity

The changes announced in the rules of agriculture marketing might provide women and vulnerable sections easier access to markets but we need a wider social security net and modernisation



ARIJIT DAS

Given the agrarian crisis that the country had been going through, which got exacerbated by the pandemic, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman announced 11 measures to boost the farm sector, ranging from the amendment to the Essential Commodities Act to a ₹1 lakh crore fund to boost agriculture infrastructure. The changes announced in the rules of agriculture marketing might provide women and vulnerable sections easier access to markets.

The existing Agricultural Produce Market Committee or APMC Act was planned to protect the interests of the British Government, which wanted to ensure the supply of pure cotton at reasonable prices to the textile mills of Manchester. The first regulated market (Karanja) under the 'Hyderabad Residency Order' was established in 1886 and the first legislation was the Berar Cotton and Grain Market Act of 1887, which empowered a British Resident to declare any place in the assigned district as a market, for the sale and purchase of agricultural produce and constitute a committee to supervise the regulated markets. In 1928, the Royal Commission on Agriculture proposed a regulation of marketing practices and the establishment of regulated markets. The Government of India prepared a 'Model Bill' in 1938 and circulated it to all the Indian States. It became the guiding force for our APMC Act. So, it is not difficult to infer why the spirit of the APMC Act favours buyers rather than farmers. Of course, some would argue that it allows States to protect the farmers, as procurement is done under the supervision and surveillance of the State. But many mechanisms are available to protect the interests of farmers rather than being discriminatory against them.

The APMC Act designates a few patches as formal procurement centres. Currently, there are only 6,746 pockets in a vast country like ours and this allows limited buyers to purchase from farmers. This is a classic case of a State-backed oligopsonistic market structure, in which the number of buyers is small while the number of sellers is large. This gives enough power to buyers to pay the minimum price to farmers. Ironically, the maximum distance between a farmer and the *mandi* is five kilometres (km) but our field information suggests a minimum of 30-40 km travel for a farmer out to sell his produce. This means the APMC Act not only gives oligopsonistic power to buyers but also creates a geographical monopoly for them.

Further, the small number of APMCs and traders poses a challenge for farmers to sell their produce as they have to wait for days for their turn. This makes some sense for big farmers but not for small producers. Field data from Maharashtra, Karnataka and Telangana shows a minimum of three to five man-day loss for small farmers.

How the proposed changes will help: An independent country should favour the marginalised and protect their interests. This proposed change in agri-marketing rules is a step in that direction. Hopefully, new rules will encourage big-aggregators and start-ups to use technology in a better way to procure directly from farmers. These channels may be existent in pockets but operate informally due to stringent market rules (procurement and cross-border trade). A big push is necessary to bring the changes on the ground.

“ MOST WOMEN, PARTICULARLY IN RURAL AREAS, ARE ENGAGED IN THE INFORMAL SECTOR AND DERIVE THEIR LIVELIHOOD FROM ACTIVITIES RELATING TO AGRICULTURE, HANDLOOMS AND ARTISANAL PRODUCTS. UNFORTUNATELY, THESE WOMEN REMAIN AT THE LOWEST END OF THE VALUE CHAIN, WITH THEIR SHARE IN EARNINGS BEING LOW OUT OF MARGINS WHICH ARE EVEN OTHERWISE VERY MINUSCULE. IN THIS CONTEXT, THERE IS SCOPE TO INCREASE THEIR INCOME BY CONTINUING IN THE EXISTING ACTIVITY AND BECOMING ORGANISED AS A COLLECTIVE, SO AS TO POOL THEIR OUTPUT



The pandemic is an opportunity to deregulate agri-marketing effectively to ensure social distancing. A perfect model of social distancing could be doorstep collection of agri-produce or at least at the village/cluster level. As an experiment, local collection centres were set up in parts of Vidarbha region of Maharashtra to procure agri-produce at the doorstep. These also acted as local storage and sorting facilities. All procurement activities were done by women farmers who were otherwise absent in post-harvest management. The process was iterated with *tur daal*. Calculations show that through this process small farmers save about ₹175 per 50 kg of tur or approximately 10 per cent of its price; which means a marginal farmer can gain up to 10 per cent from doorstep collection. A similar experiment was done in other parts of Maharashtra and other States like Telangana and Karnataka. The outcome in those areas was also on a similar line; of course with a little variation.

Farmers can also minimise wastage in the direct procurement system. For example, a year ago the India Development Foundation (IDF) studied a vegetable value chain in Siddipet in Telangana and found big savings when Big Basket and Reliance Fresh started procuring vegetables directly from the farmers for their shops in Hyderabad. Farmers used to get the order one-day in advance and usually pluck the exact amount and quality of vegetable demanded. These are some out-of-the-box experiments that reveal huge benefits for small and marginal farmers through local collection.

New marketing rules should encourage such initiatives which are resilient in the current context, efficient and pro-farmer.

Gender aspect: The rising participa-

tion of women in farm work in India — a phenomenon commonly referred to as the feminisation of agriculture — is a huge reality now. According to OXFAM 2018, the agriculture sector employs 80 per cent of all economically productive women in India. They comprise 33 per cent of the agricultural labour force and 48 per cent of self-employed farmers. Despite their large contribution, women continue to remain invisible in the rural economy of India. Our critical evaluation suggests that women are acting as non-paid workers in agriculture or any other traditional sector; be it handicraft or weaving. Men are in control when it comes to selling their products to *mandis*/APMCs or handicrafts to local traders.

A vast majority of women, particularly in rural areas, are engaged in the informal sector and derive their livelihood from activities relating to agriculture, handlooms and artisanal products. Unfortunately, these women remain at the lowest end of the value chain, with their share in earnings being low out of margins, which are even otherwise very minuscule. In this context, there is scope to increase their income by continuing in the existing activity and becoming organised as a collective, so as to pool their output.

Others can be helped by getting them involved in some productive activity that is or can be popularised in the locality, and then selling the output as a group of women producers.

Doorstep selling/localised procurement will be liberating for women farmers. It will open up an opportunity for women farmers to participate in the selling activity and directly deal with the buyers. Our experience shows that exposure to agri-marketing made women aware of the information inputs and

upgrades that could make their work more gainful. It made them receptive to new skills and knowledge on good agriculture practices and agri-markets. Communities witnessed that the traditionally-gendered division of agricultural work has changed. Women farmers are more confident, deciding on crop-related activities like the choice of crop, selection of fertiliser, taking loans or even children's education.

Putting Women Self-Help Groups at the forefront: SHGs are a great way of empowering women in villages. However, the sustainability of such groups is a challenge as limited contribution from women and frequent defaults make them fragile. SHGs are formed and get dissolved in a few years. Connecting these SHGs to value chains is a great way to sustain them in the long-run. With the changed law, the SHGs now can participate in selling activities effectively, directly contact end-buyers and get a five per cent hike in the value of their produce. This amount is enough to sustain them for most of the year. And more importantly, it will increase activities in SHGs, encouraging women to meet others regularly. It has been observed that once the SHGs are linked to value chains, beneficiaries actively participate in entrepreneurial activities and have a much better understanding of their profits and savings.

In the end, one must understand that changing marketing laws is not a panacea to all of our farm woes. Agriculture is a delicate area which needs continuous attention and care. Reforming a colonial-era marketing practice will definitely help the disadvantaged section of farmers but a wider social security and modernisation of agriculture is needed.

(The writer is Fellow, IDE. The views expressed are personal)

Trump must create an alternative to the WHO

The US must also ensure that Beijing does not start its 'Health Aid Diplomacy' to fill the leadership vacuum



GAURIE DWIVEDI

US President Donald Trump, who has been a vocal and strident critic of the World Health Organisation's (WHO) handling of the Coronavirus epidemic and the deferential treatment it meted out to Beijing, finally made good on his threat recently and exited the 72-year-old global body the US had co-founded. The US' withdrawal will severely impact the overall functioning of the WHO and there has been concern over the timing of the President's decision as well.

First, it comes at a time when countries continue to see a huge upsurge in cases. Second, global efforts to discover a vaccine have

never been as united as they are right now. The US' efforts to fight or find a cure/drug/vaccine for the Coronavirus, not just on its own soil but around the world, need to further intensify after it chose to exit the WHO. In failing to do so, it will create a leadership vacuum that Beijing will exploit to further cement its position not just as a global alternative to the US but as its possible replacement.

China did so at the time of the initial outbreak when it sent PPEs to Europe, Africa, America, Asia including India, as part of Beijing's "Mask Diplomacy" despite being accused of deliberately misleading the world. This public relations exercise was part of a larger design where even the pandemic was identified as an opportunity to score points for global supremacy, make big money by selling substandard medical equipment/PPE and cover up its failure to contain the outbreak.

Xi Jinping projected himself as the world's saviour by sending aid which was a complete eyewash dri-

ven by propaganda. In the first 35 days (March 1-April 5) of the outbreak in Europe, China exported medical equipment worth \$1.45 billion. These were commercial contracts that Chinese companies entered into with nations that were most severely hit by the virus.

Agencies like the USAID (United States Agency for International Development), which helped Africa fight the Ebola outbreak in 2016, are not around to help countries fight the Coronavirus this time. Caught up in a deep crisis itself, the US, for the first time since World War-II (WW-II), is not at the forefront of relief and aid measures.

Beijing's propaganda machinery — which aimed to position China as a benign global power, more so in poor CIS countries like Belarus — was helped by the US' virtual absence from the world stage during the pandemic. Beijing is aware that several countries may start viewing it as a friendly power, which would in turn reduce the resistance that Chinese corporations

like Huawei face and also provide fresh impetus to its ambitious Belt and Road Initiative initiative.

The US' exit from the WHO raises many questions. How significantly will the WHO's functioning be impacted due to reduced funds? Will the US' exit lead to a reform of the UN and its key agencies like the WHO? Is the announcement a precursor to setting up of an alternate organisation or will the US spearhead all its aid efforts independently? Will Beijing step in to fill the leadership gap left by the US?

The WHO — for all its noble causes, including eradication of polio and other diseases — has an overall budget of \$5.62 billion (2018-2019). Of this, 80 per cent comes from voluntary sources and only 17 per cent comes from assessed sources, with others accounting for the remaining three per cent. In 2019, the US' contribution was \$419 million, which includes \$119 million in assessed and \$300 million in voluntary contributions. The other top donors to the WHO are

the UK, Germany, Japan and the EU. China comes in at number 15.

The WHO reports that the US contribution of \$450 million represented nearly 16 per cent of its total revenue in the 2018-2019 biennium and almost a fifth of its programme budget. Compare this to the nearly \$12 billion annual budget of the Centre for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) — the US' leading federal agency for national public health that is working to save American lives. The CDC has over twice the budget of the WHO which has a charter to save all mankind from disease. Clearly, the WHO's role and scope, in spite of its exalted image as the world's leading health agency, is practically limited due to its existing funding constraints.

The US' withdrawal from the agency will impact its functioning to some extent but a part of the gap will be filled by other resources.

While the WHO may be further hamstrung in running its programmes across least developed

countries (LDCs) and the developing world, it can be expected to sustain itself, albeit with some interim constraints. This move by the Trump Government appears to be more of political posturing, since the President is set to face an election in five months. For the domestic audience, it is an unequivocal expression of displeasure by the US Government indicating that Trump will focus on policies that protect American interests.

The message to the UN is also clear that the US will not watch from the sidelines if its interests are either compromised or not fully addressed by multilateral agencies like the WHO. Reform and course correction is long due for the UN and its agencies and the US' exit from the WHO could be the trigger to undertake those tough reforms, including accountability and transparency from the organisation and its top bosses.

To ensure that the US, as the world's richest country, does not abdicate its responsibility towards

low income and poor countries, Trump should immediately announce substantial increase in resources of the USAID from the present \$2.7 billion to at least \$4 billion. Additional funds should be directed to LDCs in Africa that will be most significantly impacted due to any budget cuts in WHO projects. It will also ensure that the US will focus on providing aid directly to vulnerable and smaller nations and regain some of the leadership vacuum created since February. It will also ensure Beijing does not start its "Health Aid Diplomacy."

Another major fallout of Trump's announcement will be the urgent need for most countries to beef up their health infrastructure and create more capacity. It will be the first time since WW-II that low-income countries will have to almost exclusively rely on their internal strengths to tackle healthcare issues due to greater uncertainty around the WHO's future prospects.

(The writer is a senior journalist)

CAPSULE



Steel Strips Wheels gets order for 8k wheels in US, EU markets

New Delhi: Steel Strips Wheels Ltd on Wednesday said it has received orders worth 3.35 lakh euros for supply of over 8,000 wheels in the EU and US markets. The orders will be executed in June and July from its Chennai truck wheel plant, the company said in a regulatory filing. "This marks the beginning of orders for new semester for this year indicating re-start of operations in EU and US post-COVID lockdown," it added. Additional orders for larger quantities are expected in coming weeks from several other regular customers, the company said. This order will support gradual production ramp-up at Chennai facility, it added.



Bharti Infratel appoints Pooja Jain as CFO

New Delhi: Telecom infrastructure firm Bharti Infratel on Wednesday named Pooja Jain as chief financial officer of the company. The appointment is with effect from June 4, 2020, the company said in a regulatory filing. "...on the recommendation of HR, Nomination and Remuneration Committee and approval of Audit and Risk Management Committee, the board of directors of the company, in its meeting held today...has appointed Pooja Jain as Chief Financial Officer (CFO) and key managerial personnel of the company with effect from June 4, 2020," it said.



Pact for merger of Embassy Group's realty units with IBREL

New Delhi: Indiabulls Real Estate Ltd (IBREL) on Wednesday said the agreement for proposed merger of Embassy Group's certain realty projects with itself is expected to be signed before July 15. In January, Mumbai-based IBREL announced its proposal of the merger of certain ongoing, completed and planned residential and commercial projects of Bengaluru-based Embassy Property Developments Pvt Ltd with Indiabulls Real Estate Ltd. "Lockdown restrictions imposed due to global spread of coronavirus (COVID-19) had impacted the progress of the merger process.

Over 1L IDs of Indians for sale on dark web

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Over 1 lakh scanned copies of Indians' national IDs, including Aadhaar, PAN card and passport, have been put on dark web for sale, cyber intelligence firm Cyble said on Wednesday.

The leaked data seems to have originated from a third party and not from the government system, according to a report by Cyble.

"We came across a non-reputed actor who is currently selling over 1 lakh Indian National IDs on the dark net. With such a low reputation, ideally, we would have skipped this; however, the samples shared by the actor intrigued our interest -- and also the volume. The actor is alleged to have access to over 1 lakh IDs from different places in India," Cyble said.

The personal data leaked by cyber criminals leads to various nefarious activities such as identity thefts, scams, and corporate espionage. Many criminals use the personal details in the IDs to win trust of the people over a phone call for fraudulent activities. The Cyble researchers acquired around 1,000 IDs from the seller and confirmed that the scanned IDs belong to Indians.

"Preliminary analysis suggests that the data originated from a third party, and no indication or artefact is indicating



The leaked data seems to have originated from a third party and not from the government system, according to a report by Cyble

that it came from a government system. At this point, Cyble researchers are still investigating this further -- we are hoping to share an update soon," Cyble said.

The scanned ID documents indicate that the data may have been leaked from a company's data base in the segment where they have to comply with 'Know Your Customer' (KYC) norms.

"Cyble researchers have also learned about a surge in KYC and banking scams -- leaks such as this are often used by scammers to target individuals, especially elderly," Cyble said.

The cyber intelligence firm has recommended people to refrain from sharing personal

information especially financial information over phone, e-mail or SMS.

"Regularly monitor your financial transaction, if you notice any suspicious transaction, contact your bank immediately," the company said.

In May, Cyble showed two instances where personal data of 7.65 crore Indians have been put on sale in the dark web. In one instance, the seller claimed to have sourced data of 4.75 crore Indians from online directory Truecaller and in other, the seller claimed to have sourced from job websites.

Truecaller, however, had denied the claim of breach in its database.



Coal output falls 11% to 41 MT in May

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned Coal India Ltd (CIL) reported 11.2 per cent decline in production at 41.43 million tonne in May.

The company had produced 46.69 million tonne of coal in May 2019. In a statement the PSU said "CIL as whole produced 41.43 million tonne (MT) of coal in May 2020." It further said amid a crimped demand for coal, in what would be an encouraging sign for CIL, coal offtake was up at 39.95 MT in May compared to 39.06 MT in April. Coal sales have expanded by 0.9 MT in May, it said. Overburden removal (OBR) growth for May 2020 "was 21 per cent at 124.59 M.Cu.M OBR removal, compared to year-ago month, as CIL laid aside an additional quantity of 21.52 M.Cu.M extraneous matter during the referred period," it said.

This bodes well for the state-owned coal mining behemoth as OBR is an

The company had produced 46.69 million tonne of coal in May 2019. Coal sales have expanded by 0.9 MT in May, said State-owned Coal India Ltd

important performance parameter that removes top soil and lays bare the coal seams for future mining in open cast mines, it said.

"This is a positive sign and secures options for our future coal output at short notice, once demands picks up," said an official of the company adding "all our coal producing subsidiaries have posted growth in OBR removal during May'20 compared to the same month last year."

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

EPFO updates KYC details of 52 L members in Apr-May

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Retirement fund body EPFO has updated KYC details of its 52.62 lakh subscribers during the April-May period, according to a labour ministry statement. This update includes Aadhaar seeding for 39.97 lakh subscribers, mobile seeding (UAN activation) for 9.87 lakh subscribers and bank account seeding for 11.11 lakh subscribers.

The KYC (Know your customer) is a one-time process which helps in identity verification of subscribers through linking of Universal Account Number (UAN) with KYC details. To extend the availability and reach of online services, which have become crucial in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Employees' Provident Fund Organisation (EPFO) updated KYC data for its 52.62 lakh subscribers in the month of April and May 2020, the statement said.

Further, to enable KYC seeding on such large scale, the EPFO has also undertaken massive exercise of rectifying the details of the subscribers even during the lockdown.



Sensex jumps 284 pts; Nifty tops 10,000-mark

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Extending its winning streak to the sixth session, equity benchmark Sensex surged 284 points on Wednesday, led by gains in HDFC twins, ICICI Bank and Kotak Mahindra Bank amid positive cues from global markets.

After hitting a peak of 34,488.69, the 30-share index ended 284.01 points or 0.84 per cent higher at 34,109.54. Similarly, the NSE Nifty jumped 82.45 points or 0.83 per cent to 10,061.55.

M&M was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, rising around 5 per cent, followed by Kotak Bank, Bajaj Finance, Nestle India, SBI, ICICI Bank, HDFC Bank and ONGC.

On the other hand, NTPC, IndusInd Bank, Bharti Airtel and Maruti were among the laggards. The bulls maintained their grip on the market as stocks surged led by massive foreign

fund inflows and positive global cues, analysts said. On a net basis, foreign portfolio investors bought equities worth Rs 7,498.29 crore on Tuesday, provisional exchange data

showed. Further, gradual reopening of economies the world over has fuelled bullish trend in global markets, they said.

Bourses in Shanghai, Hong Kong, Tokyo and Seoul closed up to 2 per cent higher. Exchanges in Europe were also trading on a positive note in early deals.

International oil benchmark Brent crude futures climbed 1.04 per cent to USD 39.98 per barrel. On the currency front, the rupee surrendered all intra-day gains to provisionally settle 11 paise lower at 75.47 against the US dollar.



Amara Raja Group announces pay cut

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Amara Raja Group a leading business conglomerates with interests spanning varied verticals on Wednesday announced pay deferrals to its employees at the junior and senior management level due to the impact of COVID-19 in the upcoming months.

Taking note of the extraordinary circumstances and the uncertainty in the business environment, Amara Raja Group Promoters holding the office of Managing Director in various businesses have voluntarily agreed for up to 50 per cent reduction in their total remuneration for the current fiscal, a press release from the group said.

The groups flagship company Amara Raja batteries Limited had 7,541 employees as on March 31, 2019 including employees hired on a temporary basis and the company spent Rs 345.23 crore towards salaries and other benefits, according to the company's annual report last year.

A few employees test positive for COVID, confirms SAIL

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Steel major SAIL on Wednesday said a few of its employees working at the company's corporate office in the national capital have tested positive for COVID-19.

There are five employees whose coronavirus test results have come positive, a source said.

"In the wake of rising COVID-19 infections in the country, a few employees at Corporate Office at Lodi Road, New Delhi have been tested Corona positive. This is the first case of confirmation at the company HQ since the outbreak of the pandemic," Steel Authority of India Limited (SAIL) said in a statement.

In a video message to all

employees across offices and plant sites, SAIL Chairman A K Chaudhary asked them to adhere to all safety measures and follow government advisories.

The infected employees, SAIL said, have been asked to home quarantine themselves.

"A government-appointed agency has been engaged to do fumigation at SAIL's headquarters at Lodi Road, which is being carried out extensively for two days. The office has been closed for June 3 and 4 and the employees have been asked to work from home," the statement said. The company has also tied up with two private hospitals namely Max and Apollo in Delhi to facilitate testing of employees who require the same.



Virendra Nath Datt given addl charge as NFL CMD

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned fertiliser firm NFL said Virendra Nath Datt has been given additional charge as chairman and managing director (CMD) of the company. Datt has been director (marketing) of the firm since October 2018. "Virendra Nath Datt, Director (Marketing), NFL has taken over the additional charge of Chairman & Managing Director of the Company," NFL said in the statement. An MBA from Maharshi Dayanand University, Datt has over 35 years' experience with premier public sector enterprises such as GAIL and ONGC, besides the fertiliser industry. Prior to joining NFL, he was executive director in GAIL (India) where he handled all-India marketing operations of the company, in addition to corporate strategy, planning and advocacy.

He was also a director on the Board of Mahanagar Gas Ltd, Mumbai. Datt also had a 10-year stint with ONGC before joining GAIL in 1995. As director (marketing), NFL, Datt is credited with sustained growth in fertiliser sales of the company from 43 lakh tonnes in 2017-18 to 57 lakh tonnes in 2019-20, the statement said.

Virus has been 'devastating' for African airlines

PNS ■ KAMPALA

A "new baby" was born with the revival of Uganda Airlines, the country's president announced last year.

But now its four new jets sit idle, business suspended indefinitely because of coronavirus-related travel restrictions.

Questions are swirling in Africa and elsewhere over the financial wisdom of sustaining prestige carriers that often have a tiny share of an aviation market that sees no recovery in sight. African airlines had been piling on debt long before the pandemic but government bailouts allowed them to limp on for years.

Now, as sub-Saharan Africa faces its first recession in a quarter-century, some airlines will find it harder to survive.



That's despite growing global interest in the continent of 1.3 billion people. In some cases, local airlines are so important for pan-African business on a vast continent with historically poor infrastructure that their collapse would cripple speedy travel. In other cases, however, airlines have been seen as vanity projects for states that can

hardly afford to support them. Nowel Ngala, commercial director of Asky Airlines — a carrier launched in 2010 by a group of regional banks hoping to solve transport difficulties in central and West Africa — said the pandemic has been "very devastating" to the company, whose nine aircraft are grounded. Revenue losses are substan-

tial and there have been "serious impacts in terms of maintaining" the planes for whenever business resumes.

The International Air Transport Association in April warned that African airlines could lose \$6 billion in passenger revenue compared to last year, and half of the region's 6 million jobs in aviation and related industries could be lost.

Air traffic this year is expected to fall by half, it said.

"These estimates are based on a scenario of severe travel restrictions lasting for three months, with a gradual lifting of restrictions in domestic markets, followed by regional and intercontinental," the IATA said. That three-month period is already nearing an end, with no return to normal air travel in sight.

Decoding Rs 20 L cr push: Mammoth package, miniscule stimulus

The Coronavirus outbreak, first reported in Wuhan, China on 31 December, 2019, has severely impacted the Indian economy. The Covid-19 pandemic spread in India at a time when its economy was already dented by the downturn, reduced household spending, truncated private investment, and credit crunch. The International Monetary Fund has predicted that India's economic growth would slow to 1.9% in fiscal year 2020-21 -- the slowest pace in three decades. In April 2020, Moody's Investors Service forecast zero growth for India in the year, down from an estimated 4.8% in 2019-20.

On May 12, Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced a special economic stimulus package worth Rs 20 lakh crore to help revive the economy. This stimulus is part of PM Modi's vision of a self-reliant India in the wake of the

economic bloodbath caused by Covid-19. The overall package of Rs 20,97,053 crore includes previously announced measures like the Rs. 1.7 lakh crore Pradhan Matri Garib Kalyan Package and the Rs 8.01 lakh crore liquidity injections by the Reserve Bank of India in February, March and April this year. Although PM Modi's package is the fifth largest among those of G-20 economies in terms of spending as a percentage of GDP, it would tie with that of Hong Kong at the 19th place, as per data compiled by economist Ceyhun Elgin in the Covid-19 Economic Stimulus Index (CESI). Japan leads the list with its spending pegged at 21.1 per cent of GDP, followed by the United States (13.3 per cent), and Australia (10.8 per cent). Barclay's Chief India Economist Rahul Bajoria estimates the actual fiscal impact of Rs 20-lakh-crore stimulus package to be Rs 1.50 lakh

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crore or only 0.75 per cent of the GDP. According to Fitch Solutions, the package, worth about 10 per cent of India's GDP, in terms of spending as share of GDP, fails to address immediate concerns of the economy. The actual fiscal impact of the additional stimulus is only about 1 per cent of GDP as opposed to the claim of 10 per cent. Of all the new stimulus measures, only pension fund support, temporary tax cuts, farm infrastructure upgrades, free food provision for migrant workers, funds to safeguard rural employment and an emergency fund for post-harvest activities can be truly quantified as a fiscal stimulus. Many of the other measures such as regulatory changes and vague reform plans only target medium-term supply-side issues but fail to address immediate demand-side issues. The government can argue that the term loans will be given and working capital loans will be provided by banks through the package so that companies can use these to pay wages, buy raw material, and spur institutional demand. The government needs to understand that measures to infuse liquid-



DHANANJAY SINGH

ity acts on the supply side. What is the use of stimulating demand on the supply side when the need is to spur demand? Rural and urban consumption has fallen, according to every survey and every review. Rather than putting money in the hands of people and stimulating demand, the government is focussed on packaging its economic stimulus as a differen-

tiated policy to induce multiplier effect and empowering people.

Global securities research firm Sanford Bernstein has termed the economic revival package as a "lost opportunity". The Bernstein report calls the package aimless and is critical of the several generic announcements that should ideally have been part of a normal economic agenda. Industry leaders have recommended income support. Chairman of Wipro Limited Azim Premji has asked for Rs 7,000 to be paid to the poor for three months, while Chairman TVS Group Venu Srinivasan has suggested monthly assistance of at least Rs 5,000. They have also suggested release of minimum wages for 25 days per month to all poor urban residents for the period of the lockdown and at least for two months month following the end of the lockdown. Noble Laureate Abhijit Banerjee has

suggested direct cash transfer to the bottom 60 per cent population to help revive demand. Former finance minister P.Chidambaram, citing research by the University of Chicago and University of British Columbia, states that 89% people had zero weekly income during the lockdown. He has also asked for extend 'income support' to 13 crore poorest households by transferring Rs 7,500 or Rs 5,000 to each of the 13 crore households.

Keynesian macroeconomics argues that the solution to a recession is expansionary fiscal policy that shifts the aggregate demand curve to the right. Expansionary fiscal policy consists of tax cuts or increases in government spending designed to stimulate aggregate demand and move the economy out of recession. Modi's stimulus package is contrary to the Keynesian macroeconomics solution of

fiscal expansion that can spur consumption and demand. India is fighting Covid-19 on the health front and our farmers, migrant labourers, shopkeepers, salaried classes and small & medium industries are fighting it out on the economic front. The country is facing unprecedented economic crisis. Modi's stimulus package reflects long-term reforms economic agenda, but it fails to provide immediate fiscal relief and does not address immediate consumption and demand concerns.

The government needs to balance its long-term economic reforms agenda with immediate cash relief to help revive demand. The government is duty bound to serve and support its people now; else, it shall become a case of 'mammoth package and minuscule stimulus'.

(The author is Assistant Professor, IMT Hyderabad)



COVID-19 and social distancing do not mean that you have to disappear and your career takes a backseat. Social media can play a great role in ensuring you are noticed, says DR JATIN CHADHA

BE A RUNWAY SUCCESS

Social media is a very vibrant and visual medium. It is considered as the new norm that can be optimised to your advantage to source good projects and to get noticed especially during the COVID-19 lockdown and social distancing. You want to make sure you present yourself such that you come across as a seasoned professional would in order. Here are some pointers:

Enhance visibility quotient: As a designer in any discipline, be it graphic, interior, communication, product, web, or fashion your online portfolio is the summary of your capabilities and offers the prospective client a window into your mind, your imagination and your worldview. Make sure they get to see it from the best possible angle. How can you do that? Ensure that you have your portfolio on a good platform like Deviant Art, Behance, Adobe Creative Space and Issuu. Showcase your creativity by using hashtags and labelling your work under several category heads to enhance visibility.

Focus on displaying versatility: Your portfolio should be a curation of

your best work, but you also need to showcase the breadth and range of your versatility as a designer. You may have done a brilliant piece of designing for a smaller brand name. Go right ahead and include such projects that display your versatility and breadth as a designer.

YOUR PORTFOLIO MUST REFLECT YOUR PERSONALITY, WORLDVIEW, THOUGHT PROCESS, EXPERIMENTATIONS, INTERPRETATIONS AND INNOVATIONS. IT MUST BE KEPT UPDATED ALWAYS. YOU NEVER KNOW WHEN AN OPPORTUNITY WILL COME YOUR WAY

Also, do walk the viewer through the process of creation with the work in progress (WIP) pictures. A good portfolio is a visual treat and must take the viewer through all the different aspects of your repertoire. They would love to know how the idea germinated in your mind, what worked for your project, what didn't work and how you finally fixed it. Designers are known to be problem solvers and an innovative way of addressing the situation is always

an eye catcher.

Follow favourite brands and be updated with the latest trends: Keep abreast with the latest developments and trends and incorporate them in your designing elements. Follow your favourite brands and designers to know what are the current trends and lat-

from different parts of the world are ideating and creating. It will influence the individualistic interpretation of your work. Pitch for originality. Unconventional ideas are the buzzword in the current design landscape and community.

Learn new skills and get feedback from experts in the area: Solicit feedback from veterans and established designers in your discipline of designing. You can use the challenges set out by the many design firms on Facebook and LinkedIn to compete and start making a name for yourselves. You can also pick up projects online and gain work experience which you can then display in your portfolio. Inject life-blood into your online website by introducing a blog. The ongoing pandemic has placed time in your hands.

The lockdown period can be channelised wonderfully by enrolling in online sessions as per your own schedule. You have the flexibility of attending as many or as few classes as you can assimilate from the comfort of your home. There is a plethora of possibilities for a design student if only he chooses to focus on possibilities and inculcates a 'can do' attitude.

Your portfolio is your calling card: Your portfolio must reflect your personality, your worldview, your thought process, experimentations, interpretations and innovations. One look at your portfolio and the viewer starts to subconsciously conceptualise the kind of work he/she can expect from you. You need to be able to visually convey the value adds that you will bring to the project. An in-depth portfolio with a range of different projects, creatively depicted, will go a long way to make you stand out as a designer. Your portfolio must be kept updated always. You never know when an opportunity will come your way.

You need to focus on not only the content of the portfolio but also on the manner in which you are going to exhibit your portfolio on social media. Social media has completely replaced traditional forms of marketing and it is the place where business is being done and promoted. Make sure you leverage this medium to the utmost to connect with key clients to either source projects or procure an employment opportunity.

The writer Director, Indian Institute of Art and Design

'An E-MBA can accelerate career'

One impact of COVID-19 lockdown is that many managers have taken the opportunity to re-assess their career plans to go for further studies. An executive MBA can be the way forward, says DR GARY STOCKPORT

What is an Executive MBA (E-MBA)? It is a generalist management qualification

which has the goal to develop strong all-round managerial capability. Its purpose is to provide a platform of knowledge, skills and competencies to help craft future leaders. Intertwined with all this is both career acceleration and career adaption. Typically, an E-MBA is for mid-career working professionals with at least three-five years management experience. However, many bring 10-plus year experience into the classroom. An E-MBA provides a huge and rich learning opportunity for sharing and learning with like-minded working professionals. Also, the networking impact might prove to be enormously beneficial.

The course offered by us is a structured sequence of courses organised in stages. This includes: Basics (the essentials) of management like Management Accounting, Corporate Finance and Marketing Management; Cross-functional management including courses such as Strategic Innovation and Business Strategy; Electives including the opportunity to specialise in areas like Finance, Marketing and Operations and doing an Applied Business Project, typically towards the end. This structure enables a student to wear many hats.

The E-MBA courses have increasingly realised that building soft skills are critically important for effective managers and future leaders. Softer skills includes everything from listening more attentively, emotional intelligence, building resilience and grit, to making an effective sales presentation. Soft skills are built into an E-MBA through a course like Personal Effectiveness or



DR GARY STOCKPORT, Dean E-MBA & Professor Strategy, SP Jain School of Global Management

increasingly and more efficiently been brought into a person's home or workspace. **Who are the people/sectors that can benefit from this course?**

The batch is usually very diverse in terms of the people attending including work experience. An E-MBA appeals to persons who have an engineering background and want to move to a more generalist position.

The goal of doing an E-MBA is to help both career acceleration and career adaption. This includes the ability to speed up a manager's career trajectory as well as seize transforming career opportunities as they come along.

Over a longer period of time, persons armed with an E-MBA have reached CEO positions. It has also been noted that doing an E-MBA gives confidence to people start their own venture and subsequently growing them into a substantial size through building a scalable business model. Therefore, it has been concluded that calculating the return on investment on the initial fee and time spent studying could well prove to be infinite! It's not the cost that is important but the return.

through offering specialist workshops.

What is the duration? It usually takes 18-24 months to complete and can cost approximately '15-16 lakh per annum. It is a part-time working full-time. It is offered in a face-to-face mode within a traditional classroom learning environment, via online and or a combination of the two in some sort of a mixed blended learning format. As technology continues to improve a virtual classroom has

A lockdown humanity hero

The number of Coronavirus positive cases have been rising steadily, despite the lockdown. During times such as these, several individuals have been doing their best to help the poor and needy, restoring people's faith in humanity.

Financial consultant Kandamur Janaki Ram Sarma of Hyderabad, a professional whose clientele include Allu Entertainment LLP and Geetha Arts of Allu Aravind, Maxivision Eye Hospital of Dr. Kasu Prasad Reddy, Cinematica Digitals Pvt. Ltd., Karvy Data Management Services Ltd., and many other corporates and HNI's, is one of those Good Samaritans who was moved to see migrant workers, beggars, and others wake up and sleep with hunger during the initial phase of the nationwide lockdown. Many poor were sleeping without food for dinner and waking up hungry during the initial phase of the lockdown.

The service-minded, 61-year-old resident of the Armed Forces Officer's Cooperative Housing Society (AFOCHS) in Sainikpuri, couldn't venture out on his own as he was forced to stay indoors due to some health precautions. "I suffered a heart attack some time ago. And I didn't want to risk my



health during the outbreak. So I chose to support financially," he shares.

The very thought of imagining people going to sleep hungry disturbed him. "I know the pain of hunger

myself," he added. When he got to know about Project Bun, an initiative of Freemasons of Telangana, to provide 'Bun and Banana' for breakfast to all those who're living in the streets, he vol-

unteered to contribute. He urged the NGO to add Biscuit to their plan of 'Bun and Banana' so it could become a wholesome breakfast.

Janaki Ram, a service-

minded person from his early childhood, has contributed Rs. 1,71,000 to the 'Project Bun' at different intervals between April 17 to May 20, besides many other charities like hosting Iftar for over 400 students of a Madrasa during this Ramadan.

"Charity for me is spreading love through selfless service. I can't bear the sufferings of people. I don't mind sacrificing my comforts. Even if I have to take a loan to support a good cause, I don't mind. It gives me immense satisfaction," Janaki Ram Sarma explains. "Doing social service gives me the strength of a lion. It gives me a feel-good factor. I have total support from my family-spouse Shailaja, mother, son, and daughter," he informs.

This is not Janaki Ram's first service to society. He had once provided a bus to a school of Imam-E-Zamana Mission, funded a bright student from the lower rungs of the society who wanted to pursue his overseas education, built a house for a poor family, etc. Being a financial consultant for over 30 years, he shares some of his financial wisdom. "The secret to personal money management is learning to be content. Spend less than you earn and you will be happy," he says.



RAFTAAR & KRNSA SURPRISE FANS WITH 'CHAUKANNA'

Bollywood's cult singer and rapper Dilin Nair, aka Raftaar, has made the most of the lockdown period along with Krishna Kaul, better known by his stage name Krsna. The popular singer's new release titled *Chaukanna* featuring television heartthrob Karan Wahi for Rinku Rajgaru's latest *Hundred*, is topping the charts. With the entire nation under lockdown, these artists have been making use of virtual media in unimaginable ways.

The song is inspired by the leading women of the show. It's a peppy number that

perfectly navigates between the two contrasting personalities of Saumya (Lara Dutta) narrated by Raftaar and Netra (Rinku Rajguru) rapped by Krsna who, bring alive the perspective of character Mad-E (Karan Wahi) from the show. The rapping sensation Raftaar shared the first look on his social media handle. Talking about his new song, Raftaar says, "The inspiration for the song came from the dysfunctional jodi of Hundred. So, when a chance to create something *hatke* popped up, we got pretty pumped. *Chaukanna* is a peppy number with an effortless hummable tune. We hope it brings some

sunshine in these gloomy times. Working with Krsna and Karan was effortless, and I can't believe we managed to pull this off virtually."

Speaking more about the launch, Krsna adds, "Both Raftaar and I, wanted to champion a character from the show and create a song that everyone would enjoy. Actor Karan Wahi, who was last seen as the leading man in the blockbuster movie *Hate Story 4*, is excited about featuring in the song. "When people listen to this song, we want them to get into the vibe of it and dance their hearts out — that's where the real fun lies," he says.

AVOID THE URGE OF YOUR EARLY MORNING SMOKE

Smoking is injurious to health. This is what we know and is written in every cigarette packet. Cigarette smoking is the leading preventable cause of death in most countries across the world. Cigarette smoking damages nearly every organ in the body which includes lungs, heart, blood vessels, reproductive system, mouth, skin, eyes, and bones. The risk of developing lung cancer and head and neck cancer in those who smoke early in the morning is greater than those who smoke late in the day. Studies show that smoking within 30 min increases the cancer risk by 1.79 times which is more than one who smokes 60 mins after getting up from bed. So, now the question arises how to quit smoking as there are possibilities of physical and psychological cravings.

Physical cravings are your body's reaction towards nicotine withdrawal.

Psychological cravings are triggered by events in your life by lighting up cigarette when you got to washroom, driving, socialising etc.

These cravings last for few minutes say 5-10 minutes these cravings come off strongly and the rule of thumb is to deal with these cravings as they come one by one. Simply shift gears and do different at the moment. By doing this, you can divert your thought process and prevent physical and

psychological dependence

Dr Jayanta Thakuria, Sr. Consultant-Internal Medicine, Fortis Escorts Hospital, Faridabad shares few tips to divert your thoughts:

- Go for early morning walk in the park or walk in a balcony or corridor if you are at home for at-least 5-10 min. You can also practice deep breathing exercises and do meditation to get rid of all the cravings
- Call a Friend: Once you wake up early in the morning, call a friend and talk to him/her

- for say 10-15 mins. This will help to divert your thoughts or urge to smoke.
- Avoid smoking triggers: Throw away lighters and ash trays or any fancy things related to smoking.
- Drink plenty of water. Spend time with non-smoking friends.
- Think about your morning routine when and where you smoke, then change your morning schedule and avoid those triggers like reading newspapers, gardening etc.
- Change your driving route: If driving is related to your smoking, change the route. If you see someone smoking at the traffic signal, then switch on the music system and try to sing. Try to distract yourself as much as possible.
- Change your meal routine: If your smoking habits are kind of related to some certain foods or snacks, change your meal routine. Always try to have a healthy meal and drink plenty of water to wash out toxins from your body.
- Get an in-line support: If you are finding difficulty to quit smoking in your early days of quitting, get an online support group. Reading other people's stories about quitting smoking may motivate you to get rid of nicotine dependency.
- Remain focussed on your goal: Make it a point to quit smoking and reaffirm your reasons of quitting. Stick to your goal and celebrate your victory over cessation of smoking
- Last but not the least, take support from your family or your friends. Share your thoughts of quitting smoking and take their help to create a better version of yourself.



Now, WEDDING solutions at your door

How does Unlock phase 1 work when we talk about weddings? Thousands of couples who have had to delay their nuptials due to the nationwide lockdown since March, are eagerly awaiting to tie the knot.

Seeking to help these couples BharatMatrimony recently launched a platform "HomeWeddings", helps to organise weddings at customers' homes for 50 guests, while following all lockdown rules and regulations laid down by the central and respective state governments.

The platform on MatrimonyBazaar, provides the entire range of Covid-Safe wedding services right from catering to makeup including purohits at your doorstep. The service can be availed by not just BharatMatrimony members but also non members.

Elaborating on the "HomeWeddings" concept, Venkataramani Suresh — Chief Business Officer — Marriage Services at Matrimony.com, explained, "The idea emerged from numerous discussions we had with couples who have finalised a match but are not able to get married due to the lockdown. We are offering our expert help to identify COVID 19-ready service providers free of cost. This is also an opportunity for service providers to connect with customers during these hard times. Through this we are also helping many MSMEs and SMEs in this industry who have been affected by the pandemic. Based on customer feedback, over 100 weddings per month will be organised through "Matrimony Bazaar's HomeWeddings".

- HIGHLIGHTS OF THE SERVICE INCLUDE:**
- Service for Wedding at Your Home**
The company's wedding experts will assist customers in finding the best caterers, makeup artists, decorators, purohits and more! Customers don't have to step out. They can just stay in the comfort of their home and plan the entire wedding.
 - COVID-safe hygiene protocols**
The service providers on the platform are on the AarogyaSetu App. They follow COVID-safe measures like using alcohol-based sanitizers, face masks, shields, and gloves. Mandatory temperature checks are done by service providers for all the staff before every wedding event.
 - Free Service**
The service is free of cost!

It only serves as the bridge between customers and the service providers. The users will only pay the service providers for services availed.

Help from Wedding Experts
The company's wedding planning experts will understand customer requirements and help them find the service providers, including Pandits, Caterers, Decorators, Makeup artists and Photographers so that the wedding is arranged with adherence to the government regulations. Based on their preferences, customers will get quotes from the best COVID-safe wedding service providers near their location. Customers can finalise and book the wedding service providers that fit the budget and requirements. Stay home, stay safe and organise a wedding with family and friends!

FUN

ARCHIE

THAT CHAIR DIDN'T TURN OUT SO WELL!
DEPENDS ON HOW YOU LOOK AT IT!

I GOT AN "F" IN WOOD SHOP!
BUT I GOT ME AN "A" IN ART CLASS!

CALVIN AND HOBBS

EITHER WE'VE GOT TO GET A CATCHER, OR YOU'VE GOT TO IMPROVE YOUR PITCHING.

GARFIELD

I'M THINKING OF MOVING THE TV
WHAT?!

MAYBE ACROSS THE ROOM
LET'S SEE...

THAT SHOULD SHORTEN MY COMMUTE FROM THE KITCHEN BY ABOUT SIX STEPS. APPROVED!

REALITY CHECK

SPEED BUMP

THE KIDS ARE SO ACTIVE WE HARDLY EAT TOGETHER ANYMORE.

CROSSWORD

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

NANCY

AUNT FRITZI DONATED A LOT OF HER OLD OUTFITS TO DECLUTTER HER LIFE
IS SHE HAPPIER?
NOT EXACTLY...

...ALL SHE HAS LEFT ARE EXERCISE CLOTHES

SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

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

- An eight-legged creature
- Opposite of succeed
- Small mark
- Well-mannered
- Spectacles
- Largest
- A stringed instrument
- Floppy
- Uncommon
- An imaginary fire-breathing monster
- One tenth of two hundred
- From another country
- A drug used for treating headaches
- A precious metal
- Enquiring
- Bitter-tasting
- Twirl

DOWN

- Not in danger
- A frozen drip
- Twosome

SOLUTION

U	N	C	E	R	T	A	I	N
V	I	N	E	S	R	E	A	C
S	A	I	S	E	L	E	C	T
T	I	C	K	E	T	W	I	T
H	E	A	D	N	E	R	I	E
D	R	I	E	N	D	E	D	
N	C	A	I					
C	A	T	H	E	D	R	A	L



3 WI players refuse to tour Eng

Hetmyer, Keemo and Darren Bravo will not participate in three-match Test series as Caribbean squad also include 11 reserves



Windies batsman Shimron Hetmyer and all-rounder Keemo Paul

PTI ■ ST JOHN'S

Three West Indies players – Darren Bravo, Shimron Hetmyer and Keemo Paul – on Wednesday refused to tour England for next month's proposed three-match Test series, which will be conducted in a bio-secure environment to combat Covid-19 threat. Cricket West Indies (CWI) announced a 14-man squad for the

series, which is expected to mark resumption of international cricket if it gets the final approval from the UK Government. "Darren Bravo, Shimron Hetmyer and Keemo Paul all declined the invitation to travel to England for the tour and CWI fully respects their decision to choose to do so," Cricket West Indies said in a statement. "As previously stated, CWI will

not hold this decision against these players when considering future selection," it added.

The specific reasons for their withdrawal were not given by CWI. The West Indies squad will live, train and play in a "bio-secure" environment during the seven weeks of the tour, as part of the "comprehensive" medical and operations plans to ensure player and staff safety. "The bio-secure protocols will restrict movement in and out of the venues, so the selection panel has also named a list of reserve players who will travel to train and help prepare the Test squad and ensure replacements are available in case of any injury," said CWI.

The touring party, which will be tested for Covid-19 this week, is scheduled to fly to England on a chartered flight on June 8.

The two newcomers to the Test squad are middle-order batsman Nkrumah Bonner and fast bowler Chemar Holder.

The 22-year-old Holder, who is not related to West Indies captain Jason Holder, was the leading fast bowler in the national championship with 36 wickets in eight matches at 18.91 each, and was part of the ICC Under-19 World Cup winning side in 2016.

Bonner, 31, is in line to make his Test debut after being one of the leading batsmen in the 2020 West Indies Championship with 523 runs in seven matches at an average of 58.11.

"The new cricketing environment will take some getting used to.

However, being in England and working together for four weeks before the first Test will give the squad the opportunity to get acclimatized and hopefully, mentally and technically adjusted to the demands of the new environment," said lead selector Roger Harper.

"Playing in July could be a blessing as the weather is likely to be warmer which will allow the squad more of an opportunity to play its best cricket."

THE SQUAD

Jason Holder, K Brathwaite, Shai Hope, Shane Dowrich, Roston Chase, Shemar Brooks, Rakheem Cornwall, Nkrumah Bonner, Alzarri Joseph, Chemar Holder, John Campbell, Raymon Reifer, Kemar Roach, J Blackwood.

Reserves: Sunil Ambris, Joshua Da Silva, S Gabriel, Keon Harding, Kyle Mayers, Preston McSween, M Mindley, Shane Moseley, Anderson Phillip, O Thomas, Jemal Warrican.

Root backs Stokes for interim captaincy

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

England skipper Joe Root might have to skip the opening Test against West Indies if it coincides with the impending birth of his second child with vice-captain Ben Stokes taking over the mantle.

In fact, Root has backed Stokes, whom he believes will be a "fantastic captain".

"I think if Ben was captain he would be fantastic. One of his great qualities as vice-captain and as a leader is that he sets the example, the way he goes about his training, how he wants to bowl in difficult circumstances, the way he stands up in different scenarios with the bat," Root said.

"He drags people with him and gets the best out of the players around him. I think that's a great quality to have as a leader and something he can take into captaincy if he was to get the opportunity. I could see him doing a very good job."

Root said Stokes can be a huge success not only in short term but even if he is given the job for long term.

"People will always look up to him and want to play for him, whether captain or not. But especially as captain he'll have people wanting to play for him and short-term he'd be a huge success. Until you get the opportunity to do it longer, you just never know, it might be a huge success. I wouldn't put it past him," he said.

Know my importance in white-ball formats: Pandya

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Flamboyant Indian all-rounder Hardik Pandya is wary of risking his injury-ravaged back for Test cricket right now and says it's because he understands his "importance" in the white-ball formats.

Pandya hasn't played a Test since September 2018, appearing in a total of 11 five-day matches, but has cemented his place as a big-hitting all-rounder in the limited overs formats. He is currently on road to recovery from the back injury which needed a surgery last year.

"I see myself as a back-up seamer for sure. After my back surgery, I don't know, playing Test cricket right now will be a challenge," the 26-year-old told *Cricbuzz in Conversation*.

"If I was a Test player and didn't have the game in white-ball cricket, I could go now and risk my back in Tests but I know my importance in white ball cricket. "It has happened that I played Tests and then didn't do well in ODIs and T20s because my plus point is my energy," he explained.

Pandya first picked up the back injury in 2018 when he was stretched off the field during an Asia Cup match against Pakistan.

Recalling the day, Pandya said he thought his career was over.

"I genuinely thought that my career is over because I'd never seen anyone being stretched off. I was knocked out for 10 minutes, after that the pain never went down.

"What happens to me is that my body goes into recovery mode straight away... Asia Cup was anyway going to be my last series before being rested but then the injury happened," he remembered. Pandya said he owes it to his IPL team Mumbai Indians' coach Ricky Ponting for being there for him during the tough phase.

"In 2015, someone who looked after me the best was Ricky Ponting. He



looked after me as a child. I felt like he was a father figure for me. Learnt so much," he said.

"Ricky taught me situations, mind-sets. He used to sit with me before I went into bat. I would sit near boundary rope and call Ricky. He would sit with me and tell me what's happening. So I grasped and learnt quickly," he revealed.

Speaking of support, national skipper Virat Kohli, coach Ravi Shastri and NCA Director Rahul Dravid are also among those, Pandya feels grateful to. "Virat, Rohit (Sharma) or Ravi sir don't come and teach you the game. They have given me that freedom," he said.

"The security that they gave me backing with all their heart helped big time. That was the reason I started taking decisions on my own," he added.

As for Dravid, Pandya said he is thankful to the former captain for never judging him.

"...He accepted the way I am. He never judged me. Always respected me as a cricketer. He enjoyed my work ethic," Pandya said.



Learnt about handling difficult situations from Kohli: Kuldeep

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

He is Virat Kohli's go-to-man in limited-overs cricket when the team needs a wicket. While the modern era has seen batsmen take spinners to the cleaners in the shorter formats of the game, left-arm spinner Kuldeep Yadav rarely fails to answer his skippers call. Interestingly, Kuldeep says he has learnt a lot about handling pressure situations from the skipper.

Speaking about how does he handle the role of a wicket-taker when batsmen are known to take on the spinners and runs are bound to be leaked? The 25-year old Kuldeep says that the confidence the skipper shows in him is vital and also that he takes a leaf or two out of Kohli's book when it comes to handling pressure.

"If your captain believes in you, giving your best on the field becomes easy. From Virat, we learn a lot of things like how to manage difficult situations. He never fails to motivate young players. I remember when I was new in the team he backed me a lot. In fact, now also, he is always there for me. He always appreciates your skills and we have a great tuning together. The best quality of Virat is that he also understands the team and its player's well which makes our job easy on field," he pointed.

Teams need to be careful about injury management: Pathan

MUMBAI: Former pacer Irfan Pathan believes the Indian team management will have to focus on the bowlers and be "extremely careful" with regard to injury management once the players hit the ground after the coronavirus-forced hiatus.

Players in India haven't been able to practise since March 25 due to the country-wide lockdown. It was pacer Shardul Thakur who became the first Indian team member to resume training after he bowled in the nets in

Palghar last month. Pathan feels that any team, including an IPL one, will have to be careful with the bowlers, who would be more prone to injury having been out of action for more than two months.

"Injury management is the most important thing. We will have to focus on all the bowlers," Pathan, who has played 29 Tests and 120 ODIs for India, said on *Star Sports show Cricket Connected*.

The ICC also recently came up with specific

guidelines for bowlers, suggesting that teams would need to exercise caution over bowlers' workloads to avoid a serious injury like stress fracture of the spine as players get ready to resume training.

"In a squad of 15, every team has 4 to 6 bowlers. Be it an IPL team, Indian team or any international or domestic team, we will have to be extremely careful about injury management as our boys have been out of action for a while," he said. **PTI**

'Play around pitch to maintain balance b/w bat & ball'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Spin great and ICC Cricket Committee chairman Anil Kumble on Wednesday reiterated the panel's reluctance to allow use of artificial substances on the ball despite the saliva ban, saying the balance between bat and ball can be maintained by "playing around" with the pitches.

"So in cricket you have the surface that you can play around with and bring about a balance between the bat and ball," said Kumble at a *FICCI* webinar.

The bowlers will miss using saliva the most in Test cricket as it aids them in generating both conventional and reverse swing. "...You can still probably leave grass on the surface or even have two spinners, let's get spinners back in the game in a Test, because one day game or a T20 you are not really worried about shining the ball. It's Test match that we are talking about," said the former India captain.



"And in a Test match why not get two spinners to play in Australia, two in England, which doesn't happen often."

Like he had said right after recommending saliva ban as an interim measure, Kumble reiterated that allowing use of artificial substances would have taken the creativity out of the game.

"We've been very strict about substances that have been used on the ball. That was

something that we felt, the creativity was something that we should not (tinker with)," he said.

Kumble, however, admitted that it would be hard for players to adjust to not using saliva. "Although it is second nature in cricket, and that's something that players will find it hard to manage. And that's why I believe that at training, they'd like to start slowly because

it's not just about coming back and playing cricket in a match," he said. "It's also about coming back from two and a half months of being locked up... And especially if you're a bowler, you need to have those bowling overs under your belt before you start competing."

"So, it's important that you slowly and gradually come back into sort of normalcy that you can and the advantage that cricket has over other sports is that there's an element of adjustable variance in the pitch, which not many sport have," he added. Kumble said the committee's recommendations focused on resumption of cricket at the earliest. "...I know there's been a lot of debate about shining the ball but the idea was to kickstart cricket, play the sport, and then I'm sure things will fall in place. Yes, there will be some challenges. You have to go one game at a time."

PRANNOY HS @PRANNOYHSPIRI

If you ever want your name in the Awards list, make sure you have people who will get your name to the list. Performance is least considered in our country. Sad state of our country but can't help it. Let go and just play until you can. #arjunaawards

6:12 pm · 17 Aug 19

#arjunaawards Same old story. Guy who has Medals in Cwg and Asian Championships not even recommended by Association. And guy who was not there on any of these major events recommended #waah #thiscountryisajoke

9:28 pm · 02 Jun 20

Livid at not being nominated for the Arjuna award for the second consecutive year, Indian shuttler H S Prannoy took to Twitter to express his displeasure over Badminton Association of India decision

Afghanistan training camp likely in Kabul

KABUL: Afghanistan Cricket Board (ACB) on Wednesday held discussions with skipper Asghar Afghan and head coach Lance Klusener to discuss the possible resumption of cricket in the country.

The ACB is looking to host a training camp later this month in Kabul and stated they will be following all necessary Government and World Health Organisation protocols.

"ACB leadership held a video conference with Head Coach Lance Klusener, Chief Selector Andy Moles, Skipper Asghar Afghan and some ACB officials as they discussed the training camp in June which shall be held in Kabul as per guidelines by WHO and Ministry of Public Health," the Board tweeted.

Son enjoyed 'tough' military service

LONDON: Tottenham forward

Son Heung-min says he enjoyed the "tough" challenge of his three-week spell doing military service in South Korea.

Son completed his mandatory training last month while Spurs waited for the Premier League season to resume. "It was a good experience," he told *Spurs TV*. "I couldn't say I was enjoying that

I've done but I really enjoyed it. The three weeks were tough but I tried to enjoy it."

He added: "The first day, we don't know each other so it's a bit weird but soon we got to know each other. We spent every day together in one room, 10 people. We were very close, working

together, we helped each other so the time was fantastic."

Son was out injured for the final weeks before the League was suspended and cannot wait to get going when the season restarts.

"I'm physically fine, I'm working really, really hard to be at my maximum level and it's nearly there," he said.

"Everyone is back, everyone is in good shape. Everyone wants to play again and everyone is motivated," he added. **AFP**



Germany won't punish players for Floyd protests

FRANKFURT: The German football federation will not punish players who protest against the killing of George Floyd and racism.

Several players in Germany have made statements with gestures or messages on their clothing since Floyd died on May 25 after a white Minneapolis police officer pressed his knee for several minutes on his neck.

The federation, known as the DFB, on Wednesday said it opposed punishing any players because it believes their anti-racism messages match the federation's own principles.

"The DFB has made a strong stand against any form of racism, discrimination or violence and stands for tolerance, openness and diversity, values which are also anchored in the DFB's statutes," federation president Fritz Keller said in a statement.

"Therefore the players' actions have our respect and our understanding."

The statement named four players who protested during last weekend's games – Achraf Hakimi, Jadon Sancho, Weston McKennie and Marcus Thuram – but made clear the same approach would apply to any future protests.

Germany's approach has the backing of FIFA. The governing body of world football said on Tuesday that such demonstrations "deserve an applause and not a punishment." **AFP**

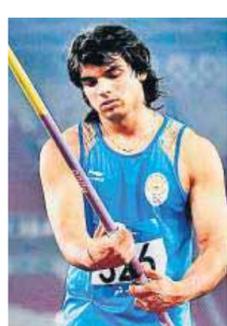
Fitness level has dipped a bit: Neeraj

NEW DELHI: There is a stark difference between what ace javelin thrower Neeraj Chopra is used to while training and what he is doing now.

However, he is just happy to be back outside even though for now it is without a javelin, an equipment that he has gained mastery over in his career but one that he could not do much with during the last two months.

"It was certainly a matter of great happiness," Neeraj said when asked about how he felt when he got the news of the resumption of outdoor training. "This is the reason why we are here at the camp, to train. So when that was not an option there was not much to do. For now we are looking to get back to the way we used to train before all this."

"It's not good for an athlete to be away from training for



too long. For the past two months I was doing some exercise to maintain core fitness but couldn't really do anything holding a javelin. Now hopefully we can slowly get back to our routine."

The 22-year-old is one of several elite athletes who were holed up in the hostels of the

National Institute of Sport (NIS) in Patiala throughout the time that the lockdown had been imposed.

Outdoor training for athletes at NIS started on Monday but they are yet to be allowed to use their equipment. Neeraj however is not too bothered by that as he has to rebuild strength before going full steam.

"(Training) starts around 6.30am and for now we are not spending more than two hours. Slowly we will increase the intensity," he said.

"My fitness levels have dipped a bit in these last two months. I have to get my elbow and shoulders back to full strength again and then only will I get back to the heavy training I used to do before."

"The coaches haven't really taken a measure of exactly how much difference has come

in the body. Maybe there could be a fitness test taken some time in the future but I don't really know when. My weight has not really changed much it's just a few crucial muscles that need strengthening."

AFI had said last month that it is looking to resume the domestic calendar in September and Prez Adille Sumariwalla has made it clear that no foreign training camps will be held for any athlete this year. Neeraj said that with no competitions in the horizons, there is no rush to get back to training with full intensity.

"The thing is there are no competitions happening in the near future so we don't need to rush with anything. This year at least until November there won't be anything. There is no scope of going outside of course, for any training or competitions," he said. **IANS**

Advantage for Real, Barca when La Liga restarts

NEW DELHI: Former England star Steve McManaman feels that big clubs like Real Madrid and Barcelona, which feature top players and have big squads, will do better than others when the La Liga restarts next week behind closed doors amid the Covid-19 pandemic.

Lionel Messi's Barcelona and Real Madrid are at first and second position respectively in the 20-team standings after 27 matches each with two points separating them.

"The schedule is tight with just 5-6 weeks and so the teams with quality players and big squads, which have better player back-ups, will do better. Barcelona and Real Madrid have these and it is a very close race between the two at the top," McManaman said during virtual press conference.



McManaman also said that the three months break due to the Covid-19 pandemic has also given time to some top players in Barcelona and Real Madrid to recover from their injuries.

"Those injured (in Barcelona and Real Madrid) are back. Everyone seemed to be fit and so they will benefit from the three months of break. I hope Real Madrid win the La Liga," said the former

England midfielder, who won 37 international caps between 1994 and 2001.

While former Spain and Barcelona midfielder Luis Garcia, said the players should avoid getting injured in the initial matches.

"The players had three months without playing and so they should not get injured in the first couple of matches. But the most important thing is their safety," he said. **PTI**

“Salman sir designed a small bit of a portion of mine and directed appropriate mannerisms to Prabhudheva sir,” says the Telugu actor Srinu in conversation with NAGARAJ GOUD

‘SALMAN SIR IS AN EXTREMELY COOL AND CHILLED OUT ACTOR’



Although he has filmed only for six days for Bollywood superstar Salman Khan-starrer *Radhe: Your Most Wanted Bhai*, directed by Prabhudheva, noted Telugu actor Narra Srinu admits to have had a whale of time shooting for it. “I play a role called Pakya who travels with one of the gangsters in the film. My path crosses with that of Salman sir who is on a mission. Most of my scenes in the film are with him. I even shot with Jackie Shroff sir for a small bit. The experience so far has been wonderful to say the least,” Srinu gushes speaking to *The Pioneer*.

Recalling his first day experience with Salman, he shares, “It was for the first

time I was seeing Salman sir on the sets. I was given a big scene and as I was new to the slang of Mumbai, he helped me with it while doing rehearsals. I could perform my sequence in the first take itself. Later, impressed with my skills, Salman sir designed a small bit of a portion of mine and directed appropriate mannerisms to Prabhudheva sir.”

For Srinu, who is making his Hindi debut with *Radhe*, Salman is “an extremely cool and chilled out actor.” “Recently, we’ve shot for an action sequence where he chases me on a bicycle. It was filmed from morning to evening, with Prabhudheva sir taking a good number of shots. After the shoot, Salman sir came to me and said ‘*Aur ek karengye kya?*’ (Shall we give

another take?) To that I was like, ‘*Nakko sir*’. I will be required for another three days of shooting and I was told that Prabhudheva sir is including me in a song as well,” the actor points out.

In Telugu, he will be next seen in *Red*, starring Ram. Wrapped up long back, the film was supposed to release in April but Covid-19 outbreak derailed the producer’s plans. “I play a constable who is slightly deaf but he behaves as if he hears everything. The laughter evokes out of it,” he notes, adding that his new assignments include Pawan Kalyan’s next two films — *Vakeel Saab* and an untitled film with Krish.

“I’ve landed an important role in *Krish garu*’s film. I need to sport a distinct look for it,” he concluded.

KRITI SANON: Miss performing on stage

Amid lockdown, Bollywood actress Kriti Sanon says she misses the energy of performing on stage.

Kriti shared a video of herself performing on stage. In the video, she is seen dressed in a black choli paired with a hot-pink lehenga.

Kriti is seen dancing on Aishwarya Rai Bachchan’s popular dance numbers “*Kajra re*” from the film “*Bunty Aur Babli*”, which

released in 2005. The song was picturised on Aishwarya, Amitabh Bachchan, and Abhishek Bachchan.

“Miss performing on stage.. the energy, the music, the adrenaline, the coordination and the in-between hooting by the super energetic dancers that instantly pumps you up,” Kriti captioned the video.

She confessed her love for dancing as she used hashtags like “#dancingtherapeutic” and “#danceyour-heartout”.

Amid lockdown, Kriti is trying new skills like cooking and baking.

Kriti, who was last seen on-screen playing Parvati Bai in “*Panipat*”, will next be seen in “*Mimi*”, a film revolving around the concept of surrogacy.

The film tells the tale of an aspiring actress who is a dancer in Mandawa and how she ends up being a surrogate for a couple. The film is directed by Laxman Utekar.



Director Sujeeth to get engaged



After the lackluster *Saaho*, things seem to be moving great for director Sujeeth both on the professional and personal front. More than a month after bagging an elusive opportunity to direct Megastar Chiranjeevi for *Lucifer* Telugu remake, we have now learnt that he is soon going to enter marital bliss. The girl Pravallika is said to be a dentist by profession. Besides exploring film writing, she is also a famous name on TikTok platform, according to reports.

It is understood that Sujeeth and Pravallika know each other for a long time and decided to take their relationship to the next level with their parents consent. They considered getting engaged early this month but with the government extending lockdown to this month-end, they’ve decided to have formal engagement ceremony on June 10, following Covid-19 guidelines and keeping the guest count under 50.

Sujeeth, who has gone incommunicado with media after *Saaho*, failed to respond to our requests for a comment.

Sonali Bendre: I am not my child’s friend

Actress Sonali Bendre prefers to be a friendly parent than being a friend to her 14-year-old son.

“I am not my child’s friend and don’t think I need to be. I am his parent and why can’t I be a friendly parent and have a great time together. There are certain things he will speak with his father, with his aunts, with his friends, with his grandparents, there needs to be an outlet for healthy relationships,” she said.

“I tell my kid ‘you know technology more than I do, but however grown-up you might be, your brain is not fully formed and might not be able to process the emotional part of it’, and that’s where parents come in. It’s an investment in communication and it always pays off,” she added.

Further talking about her relationship with her son, Sonali said, “I have never lied to my kid, I might dress up the truth

but have never lied. If I expect my child to be truthful, I need to be true to him. Only reason why you don’t want to be completely truthful is

SHE SAYS, “I’VE NEVER LIED TO MY KID, I MIGHT DRESS UP THE TRUTH BUT HAVE NEVER LIED. IF I EXPECT MY CHILD TO BE TRUTHFUL, I NEED TO BE TRUE TO HIM.”

because when they are young they will analyse it and comprehend it in a manner and you don’t want it to be ‘so big’ that the child will be scarred. So to make it a bit lighter you give them a version of truth.”

She opened up about her son during an episode of the JioSaavn podcast *Raising Parents*.

Nani is hopeful about June

Telugu star Nani in a new post on social media seems hopeful about June.

Nani took to Instagram, where he shared a selfie. In the image, he cuts a smiling, dapper frame in a white T-shirt and jacket paired with a baseball cap.

He wrote: “June” with finger crossed emoji.

Nani had recently shared a throwback photograph on Instagram, taken from an old camera and said that nothing matches the old world charm.

The black and white picture was taken from an old Minolta SRT 101.

Nani made his debut in 2008 with the hit film *Ashta Chamma*. He was then seen in films like *Ride*, *Bheemili Kabaddi Jattu*, *Ala Modalaindi*, *Pilla Zamindar*, *Eega*, *Yeto Vellipoyindhi Manasu*, *Yevade Subramanyam*, *Bhale Bhale Magadivoy*, *Middle Class Abbayi* and *Jersey*.

Eega became an all-India hit when it was released in Hindi as *Makkhi*.

In 2018, Nani hosted *Bigg Boss Telugu 2*. He currently awaits the release of his next V, an action thriller film directed by Mohan Krishna Indraganti.

The film also stars Sudheer Babu, Nivetha Thomas, and Aditi Rao Hydari.



LOSER DIRECTOR IS ON CLOUD NINE

Director Abhilash Reddy is elated with the response his second show, *Loser*, fronted by Priyadarshi Pulikonda, has garnered and is continuing to do so. General viewers’ aside, industry too has showered praise on it. The likes of Indraganti Mohana Krishna, Maruthi, Adivi Sesh, Kalyani Malik and Raghu Kunche spoke about it highly on their

social media pages. “*Vamshi Paidipally garu* too had good words to say about it to Shashank (who played first bowler Wilson in the show). I will be meeting the director next week,” Reddy informs, adding the show has also helped *Zee5* app to add two lakh more subscribers within 10 days of it dropping on the streaming app.

Reddy is firm in his resolve to make his next as a feature film. “I’m in talks with multiple producers

but nothing is finalized. I have actors but I need a good production house to back it up. Also, I believe in a strong story and the success of *Loser* has only helped me to understand its importance further. As far as shows are concerned, I want to associate with the writing part so that some other youngster or my friends can direct them. I write regularly, so it shouldn’t be a problem to generate new content,” he states. — NG

