

ANALYSIS 7 GIVE BACK TO 'CITY MAKERS'

MONEY 8 SBI REPORTS FOUR-FOLD JUMP IN Q4 PROFIT

SPORTS 11 LIVERPOOL COULD WIN TITLE AT ANFIELD

VIJAYAWADA, SATURDAY JUNE 6, 2020; PAGES 12 ₹3



# the pioneer



VIJAY HELPS OVER 17K FAMILIES THROUGH HIS MIDDLE CLASS FUND Page 12

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## PARLIAMENT RESTRICTS ENTRY OF PERSONAL ASSISTANTS OF MPs

The Lok Sabha Secretariat on Friday restricted the entry of the personal or private assistants of the Members of Parliament during the upcoming monsoon session. The Lok Sabha Secretariat in a release said: "In view of prevailing pandemic situation due to Covid-19 and to ensure the safety and security of Members, the entry of PAs of Members needs to be restricted." It took the step as it felt that more than 800 PAs presence will make the situation vulnerable. "In compliance of the social distancing norms, it is decided to restrict the entry of PAs of Members inside the Parliament House till further orders," the release said.



## PRIVATE JET HIRED TO FLY PETS FROM DELHI TO MUMBAI

A private chartered jet is all set to fly six pets from Delhi to Mumbai in mid-June. The coronavirus-induced lockdown left a number of people stuck in different parts of the country. Several pets were also left stranded away from their owners due to travel restrictions imposed to curb the spread of the virus. According to Mumbai Mirror, entrepreneur and cyber security researcher Deepika Singh has now set in motion a plan to help some of these pets reunite with their owners. The 25-year-old from Mumbai said the idea of an 'all-pet' private jet came to her when she was arranging a jet to fly relatives from Delhi, but some of them refused to travel with pets.



## CIVIL SERVICES PRELIMS ON OCTOBER 4, ANNOUNCES UPSC

The civil services preliminary examination 2020, postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic, will be held on October 4, the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) announced on Friday. It also said the personality test of the candidates selected through the last year's civil services preliminary and mains will resume from July 20. This year's preliminary test was earlier scheduled to be held on May 31, but was deferred due to the nationwide lockdown to contain the spread of coronavirus. Personnel Minister Jitendra Singh told PTI that the announcement of fresh date for the civil services exam would allay apprehensions in some quarters of it being cancelled.



## NO NEW GOVT SCHEMES FOR A YEAR CENTRE CUTS BACK AMID COVID CRISIS

No new government schemes will start for a year, the Finance Ministry said today, in a move to tighten spending amid rising coronavirus cases. All ministries have been told to stop sending requests for new schemes to the finance ministry. Spending will only be allowed in the PM Garib Kalyan Package and the announcements made under the Atmanirbhar Bharat package recently. "It may be appreciated that in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic, there is an unprecedented demand on public financial resources and a need to use resources prudently," a finance ministry note said.



Keeping the environment clean after Coronavirus passes

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# India records 70,000 Covid-19 cases in 1 week to become sixth worst-hit

Poised to overtake Spain Too early to open up malls, religious places, feel experts

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

With a jump of 70,000 Covid-19 infections in the past one week, including the 9,000+ reported at the time of filing of this report, India became the worst-hit nation in terms of overall case count, after the US, Brazil, Russia, the UK and Spain, overtaking Italy.

Going by the number of cases reported over the last week, it is poised to overtake Spain on Saturday to move to the fifth position. While Italy has recorded 2,34,000+ cases so far, Spain has registered 2,41,000+ infections.

India has seen, Covid-19 cases rising exponentially with a jump of nearly 70,000+ cases in the past one week, and medical experts feel that if the situation spirals out of control, the lockdown may have to be re-imposed.

India saw a record single-day jump of 9,851 coronavirus cases and 273 deaths on Friday, pushing the nationwide infection tally to 2,26,770 (9,010 cases reported till 10.30 pm on Friday taking the total to 2,35,732 and 6,642 deaths), according to the Union health ministry. There has been a record spike in cases for three consecutive days now.

Most countries like Spain, Germany, Italy and the UK, lifted their respective lockdowns

and curbs when their Covid-19 graphs either flattened or dipped, according to statistics shared on Twitter by Congress leader Rahul Gandhi.

India's Covid-19 curve has been steadily rising throughout the lockdown period with a massive spike in cases in the fourth phase of the lockdown that ended on May 31 and afterwards.

The fourth phase of the coronavirus-triggered lockdown, which began on May 18, saw 85,974 Covid-19 cases till 8 am on Sunday, according to

health ministry data.

Lockdown-1, which was first clamped on March 25 and spanned for 21 days, had registered 10,877 cases, while the second phase of the curbs that began on April 15 and stretched for 19 days till May 3, saw 31,094 cases.

The third phase of the lockdown that was in effect for 14 days ending on May 17, recorded 53,636 cases till 8 am of May 18.

Last Friday, the number of Covid-19 cases stood at 1,65,799, while a week before that on May 22, there were 1,18,447 cases. Therefore, the spike in the last one week has been of 60,971 cases, while the increase in the number of infections in the week before that was 47,352.

"Whenever lockdown is opened in phases, there will be a spurt in cases. A lock-

down basically is used to prepare for the pandemic and halt the spread," said Dr Vikas Maurya, Director and Head, Department of Pulmonology and Sleep Disorders, Fortis Hospital, Shalimar Bagh.

"Increase in cases will be there when unlocking is done in phases, but what is important is to be mindful that the situation should not spiral out of control, as if it does, then lockdown will have to be re-imposed," Maurya told PTI.

Noted lung surgeon Dr Arvind Kumar said that it was important to ensure that people continue to have a "self-imposed" lockdown and follow the "four golden principles" -- don't go out unless necessary, always wear a mask, keep distance and keep washing hands.



Govt only manufacturing jumlas and slogans: Cong

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## India's forex reserves at USD 493.48 bn

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The country's foreign exchange reserves surged USD 3.43 billion to a fresh all-time high of USD 493.48 billion for the week ended May 29 on a handsome accretion of the core currency assets, the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) said on Friday.

The reserves, which are counted as a key strength as the country faces the economic impact of the COVID-19 pan-



dem, had risen by USD 3 billion to an all-time high of USD 490.044 billion in the previous week.

During the week ended May 29, foreign currency assets, a major component of the overall reserves, increased by USD 3.50 billion to USD 455.21 billion, data from the RBI showed.

Expressed in dollar terms, the foreign currency assets include the effect of appreciation or depreciation of non-US units like the euro, pound and yen held in the foreign exchange reserves. Total value of the gold

reserves continued to decline and were at 32.682 billion, lower by USD 97 million as compared with the previous week, the central bank said.

In the reporting week, the special drawing rights with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) were unchanged at USD 1.43 billion, while India's reserve position with the IMF also rose by USD 31 million to USD 4.16 billion during the reporting week, the data showed.

## FIR against Jr NTR fans in Meera case

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana IT and Industries Minister KT Rama Rao has responded to actress Meera Chopra's police complaint against fans of Junior NTR, who she alleged had abused her online besides threatening with gang rape and acid attacks.

In a tweet response to the actress on Friday, the minister said he had requested the Telangana DGP and the Hyderabad City Police Commissioner to take stern action as per law against those responsible, based on her complaint.

Later on Friday, Meera



Chopra had tweeted tagging KT Rama Rao and former Nizamabad MP K Kavitha as well, saying that the Hyderabad City Police had filed an FIR in the case and that she was hoping that this would be 'investigated thoroughly' for the sake of the safety of women.

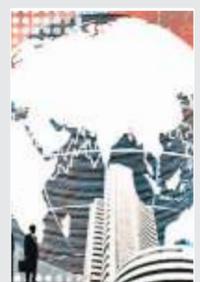
## Mild tremors rock Ongole, no damage

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Mild tremors were felt for two minutes in Ongole town of Prakasam district in Andhra Pradesh on Friday morning, leading to people running out of their homes in fear.

Fortunately, no loss of life or property was reported. Some locals said that they felt the tremors in Gaddalakunta, Devudi Cheruvu and even in Mamidipalem village of Prakasam district.

According to the National Centre for Seismology, a mild earthquake with a magnitude of 4.7 on the Richter Scale was felt in Ongole city of Prakasam district on Friday morning.



Sensex rallies 307 pts; SBI soars over 7pc post Q4 show

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## AP, TS to submit DPRs of Godavari projects by June 10

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

AP and Telangana states on Friday agreed to submit DPRs of the new projects taken up by them on Godavari River for appraisal by GRMB/CWC and for sanction by the Apex Council as stipulated in the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014 before June 10, 2020.

This was the outcome of the Godavari River Management Board (GRMB's) ninth meeting held at Jalasoudha in Hyderabad on Friday.

However, Telangana state irrigation department principal secretary Rajat Kumar



The Kaleshwaram project.

made it clear to the GRMB that the state didn't take up any new project on Godavari River and asked it not to con-

sider Kaleswaram and Pranahitha projects as new projects.

## Monsoon to reach State in 2-3 days

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The south-west monsoon is very likely to enter Ap in the next 2-3 days.

This year monsoon made an early onset over Kerala. However, cyclone Nisarga induced winds took away rain-bearing clouds from the southern peninsula.

According to latest prediction of the IMD, conditions are becoming favourable for further advancement of Southwest Monsoon into some more parts of Central Arabian Sea, Southwest and East-central Bay of Bengal.

## Dr Sudhakar can be released from mental hospital, say HC

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh High Court on Friday agreed to the discharge of Dr K Sudhakar Rao from the mental health care hospital in Vizag.

The decision came after the Court heard a habeas corpus petition filed by Kolaventi Kaveri Bai, mother of Dr Sudhakar Rao.

It may be recalled that anaesthetist Dr Sudhakar was suspended after he demanded protection gear for the doctors working on the frontline of the Coronavirus fight.

Later, the police allegedly manhandled the doctor before admitting him to the mental health care hospital.



## 138 new Covid cases in AP; tally at 4,250

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

As more and more people are coming into the state from various parts of the country and abroad, Andhra Pradesh is witnessing a spurt in Coronavirus cases with the total number of infections climbing to 4,250 on Friday with the addition of 138 new cases in the last 24 hours.

Of the fresh cases, 84 came from other states and four from abroad, the latest health department bulletin said.

Two more deaths were also reported in the state, taking the tally to 73 so far.

In the state, 4,23,564 Coronavirus tests have been conducted so far and the positivity rate turned out to be one per cent, the government said.

## Balaji temple to reopen for darshan from June 11

Only 6,000 devotees per day to be allowed entry as against the normal rush over 60,000

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

The famous hill shrine of Lord Venkateswara at nearby Tirumala will reopen for devotees from June 11 but with very limited number of visitors being allowed darshan per day, more than 80 days after public darshan was stopped due to Coronavirus pandemic, top temple officials said on Friday.

Only 6,000 devotees per day as against the normal rush over 60,000 would be allowed



Children aged below 10 years and elderly people above 65 would not be allowed into the shrine

entry and Covid-19 precautionary measures, including six feet distance between each other and wearing of face

mask, would be strictly followed, officials of the Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD), which administers the ancient

shrine, said.

The ban on entry of devotees, enforced on March 20, was being lifted from June 11 and less than 500 people per hour would be permitted entry for 13 hours from dawn to dusk every day, TTD Chairman YV Subba Reddy, Executive Officer Anil Kumar Singhal and Additional Executive Officer AV Dharna Reddy told a joint press conference at Tirumala.

Children aged below 10

years and elderly people above 65 would not be allowed into the shrine, thronged by devotees from across the country and overseas throughout the year, they said.

All TTD employees involved in regulating devotees would be wearing personal protection equipment (PPE) suits.

Before permitting devotees, TTD would study their travel history and randomly conduct Covid-19 screening.

### TODAY

#### ALMANAC

Month & Paksham: Jyeshtha & Shukla Paksha

Panchangam

Tithi : Pratipada: 10:32 pm

Nakshatram: Jyeshtha: 03:12 pm

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

Rahukalam: 08:59 am - 10:37 am

Yamagandam: 01:52 pm - 03:29 pm

Variyam: 10:51 pm - 12:23 am, 01:42 pm - 03:12 pm

Gulika: 05:44 am - 07:22 am

Good Time: (to start any important work)

Amritakalam: 06:57 am - 08:27 am

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

#### VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Mostly cloudy

Temp: 39/29

Humidity: 41%

Sunrise: 05:40

Sunset: 06:48

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

# Keeping the environment clean after Coronavirus passes

The COVID-19 pandemic has had unintended effects - clean Ganga and clean air in Delhi within 30 days!

This 'miracle' was the result of closure of all sources of pollution at the same time. Is it possible to mimic these effects, without cessation of all economic activity?

Typically, problems in policy-making are described as a mismatch between an existing situation and the state as it should be.

Resolving the problem starts with a search for the causes for the mismatch followed by interventions to bridge the gap between the existing and desired situation. Ordinarily, interventions directly act on a few causes to control them. Interventions also generate after-effects. Let us consider the unintended effects when road capacity is increased to reduce air pollution.

The reasoning is that a wider road (includes flyover) leads to smooth flow of traffic, which, in turn leads to less exhaust gas from automobiles and, thus, reduced air pollution. What is overlooked is the change in driving behaviour of car owners due to enhanced road capacity - wider roads induce people to start making certain trips that they would otherwise avoid during peak traffic times, or using alternative routes to get to work.

Less traffic on roads also attracts people, who were earlier using public transport, to start using their personal vehicles. In the medium-term, the improved road attracts builders to locate commercial activity on it and

## In the city of Christiansfeld, Denmark social zones were created by removing traffic signals and road markings

the increased construction activity adds to air pollution in the short-term. In the long-term, the new commercial activity leads to greater vehicular traffic.

We notice from the above example that the enhancement of road capacity and its counter-effects occur at different levels. Road widening is implemented at the local level (e.g. junction improvements) or at the city-level (e.g. flyovers); however, the induced effects (e.g. which route to take while going to work or market), is an individual or a household decision. Thus, interventions in

built environments at the local/city level have effects on individuals and households. The fact that interventions and their side effects occur at multiple levels (e.g. individual, household, local, city/district, state, national) is often ignored in conventional policy-making. The miracle of the lockdown was due to the simultaneous closure of polluting sources at multiple levels.

If pollution control has to be successful, then policies have to address causal factors operating at multiple levels. One way of doing this is to craft policies that are a blend



SAMEER SHARMA, IAS

of bottom-up and top-down initiatives. This is best accomplished by relying on the idea of subsidiarity. The idea of subsidiarity is founded on a process of 'reverse delegation'.

Reverse delegation starts with assigning all

projects/programmes to the lowest level (individual/household or locality/ward). Only those, which the lowest level is unable to satisfactorily perform are "delegated" to the next level (e.g. village, city). This process of upward delegation is repeated at the next level and so on. Thus, subsidiarity is a step-wise process of gradually moving up the levels. This approach is a mix of top-down and bottom-up approaches because policy is made at the top, but priority for implementing projects/programmes is given to the lower levels.

It would be interesting to see an example of a project being conceived and implemented at the lower levels. If pollution caused by vehicles has to be controlled and the starting point is the locality,

then the first step would be to divide the local streets into two types of zones -- traffic and social.

In traffic zones, vehicles will enjoy precedence. In social zones, pedestrian movements, children's play and social activities will come before vehicle movement. In the city of Christiansfeld, Denmark social zones were created by removing traffic signals and road markings.

Pedestrians, buses, cars and trucks used eye contact to negotiate the junctions (much like Indian towns). One of the results was reduction in traffic jams. The reduced precedence given to motor vehicles in social zones would reduce pollution as well be aligned to the local context.

The learning from COVID-19 is that it is possible

to tackle intractable issues connected to the environment. Ideally, this is achieved by closing all pollution generating activities. In reality, however, such a cessation of all activities at a single point of time is not possible. As the causative factors are distributed over several geographical levels, the idea of subsidiarity offers a tantalizing possibility to design and implement multi-level interventions starting from the smallest area (locality to ward to village/city, and so on).

In this way, it is possible to mimic the positive effects of COVID-19 on the environment.

(Author is a PhD from USA and a DLitt from Kanchi University. The article is based on his research and practice and views are personal)

# Amma Vodi, a boon for poor children

C PRADEEP  
VIJAYAWADA

Amma Vodi, which is being implemented by the government, turned out to be a boon to some children, who were forced to stay in Child Care Institutions (CCIs).

This came to light during the lockdown as the normal life came to a grinding halt and people staying in various places were sent to their native places, including children staying at CCIs.

As a Fundamental Right children have the right to grow in a family atmosphere, for this reason, Adoptions and Foster care policies stipulated in Juvenile Justice (care and protection of children) Act 2015 was brought into force. The main objective of adoptions and foster care is to provide a family to even an orphan or children of incapacitated parents and to allow the child to grow in a family atmosphere.

Meanwhile, the government



Most importantly, the incentive, the government is contributing to the education of children under Amma Vodi scheme, which the mother of every child that is being sent to government schools are paid Rs 15,000 annually, to discourage the parents from putting their children to work in order to supplement their family income and to stop school drop outs in the State

Krishna District Child Welfare Committee Chairman BVS Kumar speaking to The Pioneer said that there are 91 licensed CCIs in Krishna district with a total of 4,166 children

After enforcing lockdown, holidays were declared for schools, hostels and CCIs were advised to send the children to home to stay with their parents/guardians. As many as 586 children remained in CCIs while the rest went to their homes

has granted licences to thousands of CCIs in the country, these CCIs are supposed to house Children in Need of Care and Protection (CNCP) as per the orders of Child Welfare Committees, which are empowered to decide a child, whether the child comes under CNCP or not on interaction with the child and if

needed on a social investigation report about the child and his/her parents/guardians.

Krishna District Child Welfare Committee Chairman BVS Kumar speaking to The Pioneer said that there are 91 licensed CCIs in Krishna district with a total of 4,166 children. After enforcing lockdown, holidays were declared

for schools, hostels and CCIs were advised to send the children to home to stay with their parents/guardians. As many as 586 children remained in CCIs while the rest went to their homes.

He said that those who need real care and protection are 586 as they do not have anyone to take care of them during holidays while the remaining

3,580 children are having parents or guardians but were kept away from the family atmosphere in CCIs. But now, the scenario has changed as the government is upgrading the infrastructure, quality of education on par with corporate and private schools.

Most importantly, the incentive, the government is contributing to the education of children under Amma Vodi scheme, which the mother of every child that is being sent to government schools are paid Rs 15,000 annually, to discourage the parents from putting their children to work in order to supplement their family income and to stop school drop outs in the State.

He said most of the parents are claiming incentives under Amma Vodi and keeping their wards in CCIs. In such a congenial climate, children should stay back with their parents/guardians and enjoy their legitimate right to grow in a family atmosphere.

# Gadikota Srikanth terms TDP rule as 'barbaric'

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Chief Whip Gadikota Srikanth Reddy flayed TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu for terming the YSRCP governance as 'vicious' and stated that the TDP rule was barbaric where every single person in the State had witnessed that during the Naidu's tenure.

Speaking to the media here on Friday, Srikanth Reddy said that Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy is relentlessly working for weaker sections and spent over Rs 42,000 crore in a span of one year towards welfare activities. "Our Chief Minister brought many remarkable initiatives like Rythu Bharosa, Nadu-Nedu, Amma Vodi, Vidhya Devena and many more within one year of forming the government. While Naidu who had worked as the Chief Minister for 14 years, had failed to develop one such project or initiative that benefits the public. Instead, he always relied on showing graphics, diverting funds and corruption at all levels. While Jagan is being termed as one of the best Chief Ministers in the country,



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Srikanth Reddy said that Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy is relentlessly working for weaker sections and spent over Rs 42,000 crore in a span of one year towards welfare activities.

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Naidu is making cheap remarks against the government out of jealousy," he pointed out.

He challenged TDP chief to come for a discussion about the funds utilised for welfare schemes during both the governments. "Nearly four crore people were directly benefited with government schemes and are quite elated over the transparent and hassle-free govern-

ance. We are ready to discuss the facts with figures and challenging Naidu to come for discussion with us starting from his own constituency Kuppam. Naidu is making false allegations against the State government without knowing the ground reality. People are not going to fall for his words and they are certainly waiting to reject him in next elections yet again," he predicted.

## Certified disinfectant formulation launched

PNS VIJAYAWADA

Tranquil specialty products, country's first and only certified disinfectant formulation, hits the retail market. Amid the pandemic scare and many no so effective disinfectants that have been flooding the market, Tranquil brings preventive solutions that are not only environmental friendly but also FDA approved.

Speaking during the launch, Rushang Shah-Founder/CEO Tranquil Products Private Limited, said, "We are living in uncertain times and it is imperative we take sufficient precaution to safeguard us, our environment, our families and our employees with the right solutions. It is time, which warrants us to stay in hygienic conditions. While it is also equally important to have such disinfectants that are non-toxic and eco-friendly."

# Govt to fill 3,795 Gram Revenue Officers posts

PNS VIJAYAWADA

The government, which has already recruited candidates for VRV (Grade-II) posts in village and ward secretariats, is now all set to start the recruitment process for 3,795 Gram Revenue Officers (VRO) Grade-II posts in the revenue department.

Earlier, the government has agreed to consider the appeals from all the Village Revenue Assistants (VRA) to promote them as VROs on a one-time basis. Now, the government has given permission to all the respective District Collectors to recruit 3,795 VROs with eligible VRAs, who have education qualification equivalent to Intermediate.

At the same time, various associations have been appeal-

Chief Secretary of the Revenue Dept has instructed the Chief Commissioner of Land Administration to announce the district-wise vacancies

ing for the eligibility to serve as Village Revenue Assistants (VRAs) for many years on a one-time basis. Even though the revenue department has earlier issued orders to this extent, the recruitment was delayed due to technical reasons.

Now, the revenue department has issued internal orders

to all Districts Collectors over the eligibility requirements for these posts. Accordingly, Chief Secretary of the Revenue Department V Usharani has instructed the Chief Commissioner of State Land Administration to announce the district-wise vacancies and select eligible VRAs on a seniority basis.

The eligibility criteria are that the candidates must have a minimum qualification of Intermediate or equivalent. VRAs must have completed five years of service by January 1, 2020. Those who have a degree and PG without studying Intermediate are also eligible. Previous orders pertaining to employees having to take prior permission if they wished to study any course will henceforth be not taken into consideration. On a one-time basis, the government will allow all the eligible VRAs to be selected as VROs.

## One dies after consuming stale meat

PNS VISAKHAPATNAM

A 45-year-old man died of suspected food poisoning, while over 25 others were admitted to hospitals after they consumed stale meat at Donkinivalasa village in Ganneruputtu panchayat under Hukumpeta police station limits in Vizag Agency. The deceased was identified as S Venkata Ramana. The body was shifted to a hospital for post-mortem. The remaining 25 people were admitted to the two government hospitals at Hukumpeta and Paderu.

Sub-Inspector of Hukumpeta police station, Appala Naidu said that a group of people had consumed the meat of a dead goat on Wednesday. They complained of vomiting and other complications on Thursday and one of them died on Thursday night, he added.

# Plant saplings to protect environment: TTD chief

PNS TIRUMALA

On the occasion of World Environment Day, TTD chairman YV Subba Reddy said that planting of saplings was a crucial part of environmental protection activities.

Speaking to the media after planting Mahogany saplings near Swarna Tirumala Rest House, he said Lord Venkateswara had chosen His abode in Seshachala ranges, which is home to enchanting flora and fauna. He said TTD has taken up sandalwood plantation in over 100 hectares in the Seshachala forests. TTD has also taken several, innovative steps for environmental protection and preserve the wildlife and biodiversity of the regions. TTD DFO



TTD chairman YV Subba Reddy watering a sapling after planting it in Tirumala to mark the World Environment Day on Friday

Phani Kumar Naidu, FRO Shiva Kumar and other forest officials participated.

# Malayappa Swamy dons 'Muttangi Kavacham'

PNS TIRUMALA

As a part of the ongoing annual three-day Jyestabhishekam in Tirumala temple, Sri Malayappa Swamy donned Muttangi Kavacham on Friday after 'Abhideyaka Abhishekam'.

Earlier during the day, Sri Malayappa flanked by Sridevi and Bhudevi was brought to Sampangi Prakaram at around 7.30 am. At 8 am, priests performed 'Mahashanti homam', followed by 'Abhideyaka Abhishekam' between 9 am and 11 am amidst the chanting of Vedic hymns.

Later, the Lord was decked with Muttangi (Armour made of pearls) kavacham. TTD Trust Board Chairman YV Subba Reddy, EO Anil Kumar Singhal, Additional EO AV Dharma Reddy and officials took part.



Sri Malayappa Swamy donned Muttangi Kavacham at Tirumala on Friday after 'Abhideyaka Abhishekam'

VIJAYAWADA BULLION RATES	
GOLD	₹ 48,830 (10 gm)
	₹ 350
SILVER	₹ 48,450 (1kg)
	₹ 450
CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG	
Dressed/With Skin	₹231
Without Skin	₹262
Broiler at Farm	₹159
EGG RATES ₹/100	
HYDERABAD	370
VIJAYAWADA	380
VISAKHAPATNAM	350
RETAIL PRICE	₹3.80

# L&T supports govts in fight against Covid

PNS VIJAYAWADA

L&T Holdings Director and Senior Executive Vice-President MV Satish said in a statement on Friday that they have the capacity to build a 300-bed hospital in a record three to four months time. He said that buildings and factories would be converted into health care Covid centres. He said marriage halls, schools and hotel rooms can be converted into isolation centres and medical infrastructure for Covid-19 related facilities.

He said that in Delhi, Bihar, West Bengal and many other places in the country, they have converted many structures into health care centres. L&T is accelerating its efforts

L&T is accelerating its efforts to support the govt in providing rapid relief to people

to support the government in providing rapid relief to people through the most critical health care infrastructure. L&T has contributed Rs 150 crore to the PM Cares Fund and provided cash and infrastructure to several States that have worked for the welfare of 1.60 lakh workers. In addition, L&T also provided PPE, N95 masks and diagnostic kits worth Rs 40 crore, he added.

# Women worship Corona as Goddess

PNS RANCHI

Coronavirus has now turned into a goddess among the superstitious women of Jharkhand. The number of Coronavirus cases is increasing in the State every day. Twenty two more cases have been detected taking the total number to 864 in Jharkhand by Friday. The virus has claimed nine lives in the State.

On Friday, women gathered in large numbers at Namkom and Tatisilve in Ranchi, Bagbera ground in Jamshedpur and at two places in Dhanbad and worshipped Goddess Coronavirus. Women gathered, along with puja material like sindoor, flowers, ladous and water in pots. They sat around a tree and worshipped the Coronavirus Goddess.

They also sang a song to



appease the Coronavirus Goddess. However, while praying, the women forgot about social distancing. "We have taken shelter under Goddess Coronavirus. She will be pacified with worship. The doctors have failed to treat patients and scientists have also failed to develop a vaccine to cure coronavirus. We

have worshipped Coronavirus Goddess so that our family members will remain safe from it" said Naina Devi, a resident of Namkom who was part of the group. Echoing her view Kabita Mahto said: "The country has witnessed two natural calamities in West Bengal and Maharashtra

in the form of cyclones due to Goddess Coronavirus. Nothing has been done to pacify the Goddess. She is taking a big shape. We have worshipped to calm down Goddess Coronavirus' anger."

Jharkhand reported its ninth Coronavirus death on Friday. The State has, however, put the death toll at seven. A government official, who died in Delhi and a labourer, who died in Bengal, have not been included in the list by the State government.

Coronavirus cases have surged with the return of migrant labourers. Now everyday Jharkhand is witnessing on an average 30 more cases. The Jharkhand government has issued fresh directives related to Unlock-1. All the religious places in the State will remain closed till further orders.

# Approaching PCB first will smoothen path for investors, advises Jagan

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy on Friday said that along with focus on industrial parks and clusters, the focus of the administration should be on facilitating industries to start on time.

During a review meeting on State Investment Board held here on Friday, the Chief Minister said that any new proposal for setting up of industry should be sent to State Pollution Control Board, which in turn will take the advice of the experts it has tied up with and send its recommendations accordingly.

Then the investors will have an interactive session with Investment Board officials who will spell out the Industrial pol-



**"Industries generate employment for future generations but at the same time they should be environment friendly," the Chief Minister said**

icy. After the appraisal by concerned Corporations and considering the Company's credentials, permission will be accorded by the State and single window system will come into play, he said.

By following this procedure, the risk factor to the industrialists will be reduced.

"Industries generate employment for future generations but at the same time they should be environment friendly," the Chief Minister said.

The State will focus on industrial parks and clusters and will suggest the location to avoid any issues in future. The new Industrial Policy, which is yet to

be unveiled, also came in for discussion during the review meeting.

"We will provide the Industries with land, water, power and manpower besides being proactive. These should be considered while drafting the new Industrial Policy," Jagan said.

# 13 arrested for murder of rowdy-sheeteer

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Police on Friday arrested 13 persons on charges of murdering Sandeep, a former rowdy-sheeteer who was brutally killed at Patamata in Vijayawada on Sunday.

The police also arrested 10 others belonging to Sandeep's gang for attacking KTM Pandu in the fight that led to Sandeep's death.

Speaking to the media persons here, Vijayawada Police Commissioner Ch Dwaraka Tirumala Rao said that all the 13 people arrested in connection with the murder of Sandeep belonged to the gang led by Manikanta alias KTM Pandu.

The arrested accused were identified as R Prashanth (19), A Ravi Teja (22), P Prem Kumar (22), P Prabhu Kumar (20), Banavat Srinu Naik (29), L Venkatesh (21), B Bhaskar Rao (20), Pratap Sai Praveen Kumar (24), P Sai (21), S Santhosh (22), Y Tirupathi Rao (22), O Durgaprasad (19) and O Ajay (20).

The Commissioner said that Pradeep Reddy and D Sridhar took up construction of group houses at Kanuru in 2018 and in 2019 the construction activity was completed. Pradeep Reddy invested about Rs 40



Pandu and his group manhandled Rajesh and Sagar who were there.

After coming to know about the attack, Sandeep called Pandu and on the same day evening 4.30 they met at the ground adjacent to Grace Church in Patamata. Both the groups were armed with knives, rods, sticks, stones. Both the groups started attacking indiscriminately on each other leaving Sandeep with stab injuries. Sandeep died while undergoing treatment on May 31. 5.50 pm, said the Commissioner.

The police recovered three bikes, variety of knives, rods, blades and snap cutters from the culprits. Police have booked cases under the people from Pandu gang under sections 143, 148, 302, 307, 324 of Indian Penal Code (IPC).

The commissioner told that stern action will be taken on the culprits and see that these kinds of group clashes will not repeat.

DCP Harshvardhan raj, central ACP P Nagaraja Reddy, Patamata Inspector R Suresh Reddy, Penamaluru Inspector S Satyanarayana, Machavaram Inspector Vinay Mohan led the teams to nab the culprits.

# Naidu calls upon people to agitate against YSRCP govt

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu on Friday gave a call to people to agitate against the YSRCP government's 'willful destruction' of the environment in the State in the last one year. Speaking on the occasion of World Environment Day celebrations here on Friday, Naidu said felling of mangrove forests in Kakinanda and indiscriminate sand mining were examples of government's destructive activities.

A large number of trees were destroyed in a radius of many kilometres around LG Polymers following the gas leak tragedy. He sought adequate steps that were needed to revive and protect the greenery there now.

The TDP chief deplored that even now, the victims were dying weeks after the poisonous gas leak at LG Polymers in Visakhapatnam. He alleged



that instead of taking strong measures to prevent pollution of the environment, the YSRCP regime was encouraging destruction of the environment in the surroundings of populated areas.

Naidu recalled how the previous TDP government had implemented Neeru-Chettu and urban forestry in a massive way. He claimed that farm ponds dug up all over to recharge the groundwater table and forests were developed

over 2,141 sq kms. He claimed that 'Wealth from Waste' recycling plants were opened and LED bulbs were used in a big way and these protective programmes helped the State to get national awards in environment protection programmes.

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over 2,141 sq kms. He claimed that 'Wealth from Waste' recycling plants were opened and LED bulbs were used in a big way and these protective programmes helped the State to get national awards in environment protection programmes.

# Keep sand stock in yards: Jagan

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy has instructed officials to pile enough stock in sand yards and said bulk orders should be monitored by the Joint Collector.

During a review meeting here on Friday, the Chief Minister said that the availability of sand at all depots should be ensured and bulk orders should be removed from the portal.

There is need to define bulk order and it should be monitored by the rank of Joint Collector, he said. There should be no complaints about bulk orders taking away the stock once the portal is opened.

If sand is needed for government works, engineers concerned and Joint Collector should sit and finalise, he suggested. Officials said that due to Corona all sand reaches



were closed but now the situation has improved and in 10 days three lakh tonnes of sand will be procured.

There should be a facility to book sand through village and ward secretariats as well and sand should be supplied only from depots and the booking time should be from 12 pm to 6 pm, he said.

For smaller needs, people can draw sand from local sources after registering with panchayat secretary and it should not be misused, he said.

# Maternal uncle impregnates 19-year-old

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

A 19-year-old girl was raped by her maternal uncle for months. The incident came into light after her parents found that she was pregnant. The incident took place at Marikavalasa area under PM Palem police station limits in Vizag city. The victim, along with her parents, lodged a complaint against the accused on Thursday.

Inspector of PM Palem police station A Ravi Kumar said that the girl is a native of Vijayawada city and had come to her maternal aunt's house in Vizag city in August 2019 and she stayed a few months in her house.

However, a few weeks ago, the girl was taken to the hospital after the victim complained of stomach pain. After examining the girl, doctors informed her parents that she was pregnant. On questioning, the victim narrated that her aunt's husband P Vasu (36) lured and raped her when she was alone in the house.

# Pawan launches 'Mana Nudi Mana Nadi' campaign

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Jana Sena Party basic theory is to protect the environment, said party founder Pawan Kalyan. He wished nature lovers on the occasion of World Environment Day on Friday. In a statement, he said that nature is the precious wealth that is invisible to the eyes.

Pawan said as a part of protecting the environment, the party has come up with a campaign 'Mana Nudi Mana Nadi', everyone can take a pledge to do something to protect the environment. The campaign will be taken forward in both the Telugu States, he said.

As part of the programme, plantation drive will be taken up on a large scale in order to protect the environment and will protest against the industries polluting the environment, he disclosed. He appealed to people to protect the environment.

"If we protect the forests, rivers and hills, they will indirectly protect us, the environ-



A part of protecting the environment, the party has come up with a campaign 'Mana Nudi Mana Nadi', everyone can take a pledge to do something to protect the environment. The campaign will be taken forward in both the Telugu States, he said.

ment is a treasure invisible to the eyes and this treasure should be carried forward to next generations," he said.

# 138 new Covid cases in AP, tally at 4,250

Continued from Page 1

Of the 4,250 positive cases, 700 were from other states and 123 foreign returnees.

In all, 2,556 patients recovered and got discharged, including 258 from other states and four foreign returnees, leaving 1,621 active cases. In Krishna district, two persons died of Covid-19 in the last 24 hours and took the state toll to 73, the bulletin said.

# Balaji temple to reopen for darshan from June 11

Continued from Page 1

Those found having symptoms such as fever would be immediately sent for quarantine, the officials said. A total of 3,000 special darshan tickets each priced at Rs 300 would be available online daily. The remaining 3,000 quota would be set apart for free darshan and

devotees opting for it can register themselves for the time slot at designated places here, including Alipiri at the foothills of Tirumala.

The online ticket sales would commence from June 8. TTD has already announced it would conduct a trial run with its own

staff, officials and some of the local public from June 8 to test the system ahead of the regular darshan.

It had on March 20 barred entry of devotees into the temple for a week in the wake of the Coronavirus scare and later extended it after Prime Minister Narendra Modi announced the nation-wide

lockdown four days later. The Centre in its recent "Unlock 1" guidelines has allowed opening of temples for public darshan among other relaxations.

A temple official told PTI that during the lockdown so far, the over 2000-year old shrine incurred a loss of about Rs 500 crore revenue.

# India records 70K Covid-19 cases in 1 week...

Continued from Page 1

"Right now the situation does not warrant a reimposition of the lockdown, but if the situation spirals out of control, then we would have to go back to a lockdown," he said.

Kumar, who works at the Sir Ganga Ram Hospital in Delhi, also asserted that it was too early to allow religious places and malls to open as there are not enough checks to ensure that people will not flout norms.

Dr Vivek Nangia, Director and Head Pulmonology, Fortis Hospital, Vasant Kunj, also said that the rapid rise in cases was worrying.

It is still early to open malls and religious places as if congregations start to happen, then things could spiral out of control, he said.

The Union Health Ministry on Thursday issued standard operating procedures to be followed by religious places, shopping malls, restaurants, hotels and offices to contain the spread of Covid-19 as India gears up to reopen the economy.

The preparations for reopening the economy, which has been severely hit by the coronavirus-triggered lockdown, from June 8 comes amid mounting cases and death toll in the country.

The nationwide curbs were first announced by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on March 24 for 21 days in a bid to contain the spread of the novel Coronavirus.

# FIR against Jr NTR fans in Meera case

Continued from Page 1

The actress also thanked KTR for his prompt response stating, "Thanks sir, it really means a lot. This is very important for women's safety. These people should not be left free to do crimes on women!" (sic).

Meera Chopra, a relative of actress Priyanka Chopra, has filed a complaint against the fans of Jr NTR for abusing and trolling her on social media. The trouble for the 'Vaana' fame actress started following her interactive session on Twitter on Tuesday.

To a question from a netizen about Jr NTR, the actress replied that she is not a fan of him and that she likes Mahesh Babu.

Enraged by her response, fans of Jr NTR reportedly targeted her on social media, trolling her to the hilt, prompting the actress to approach the Hyderabad police with an online complaint.

The Hyderabad cyber crime police have registered a case and also ensured the removal of abusive tweets against Meera Chopra. The police have already identified the twitter accounts of those who made objectionable comments and registered cases under section 67 of the Information Technology (IT) Act and section 509 of the Indian Penal Code (IPC).

Whoever shares abusive posts and tweets would face stringent action, the Cyber Crime Police asserted.

# Mild tremors rock Ongole, no damage

Continued from Page 1

The tremors were felt at Ambedkar Bhavan, NGO Colony, Sharma College, Sundaraiyah Bhavan road in Ongole city. According to the information by the locals, a low-intensity tremor is felt in the district once in a while due to widespread mining activity.

Around the same time, parts of Jharkhand and Karnataka felt the effects of the earthquake. The earthquake occurred at 6.55 am at Jamshedpur and Jharkhand with a magnitude of 4.7. No casualties were reported till now. On Thursday, June 4, Delhi was rocked by a low-magnitude earthquake.

# AP, TS to submit DPRs of Godavari projects by June 10

Continued from Page 1

AP special chief secretary Adithyanath Das and engineer-in-chief Narayana Reddy however refused to say much to the media, except stating that the version of the GRMB chairman was their version.

It may be recalled that there is no dispute in between TS and AP in regard to projects across the River Godavari. However, AP lodged a complaint with the GRMB alleging that Kaleswaram, Seetharama, Devadula Phase-III, Thupakulagudem, Mission Bhagiratha projects did not have permission after Telangana had moved the KRMBS against Pothreddipadu and Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation Scheme. AP also

lodged a complaint with the GRMB asking the latter to stop the Chanaka Korata, Rajpet, Pimparad barrages constructing on Penganga river, Pakala Diversion Scheme from Ramappa Lake.

GRMB chairman Chandrasekhar Iyer said after the meeting that it was held in a cordial atmosphere. "We asked both the states to submit agenda points for Apex Council meeting. We asked Telangana to respond on the objections raised by the Andhra Pradesh state," Iyer said.

Chandrasekhar Iyer, Rajat Kumar, Andhra Pradesh Irrigation Department Special Chief Secretary Adithyanath Das, and engineers-in-chief of the two states participated in the meeting.

After the meeting, Rajat Kumar said that the then Chief Minister N Kiran Kumar Reddy said in the Assembly that Telangana would get 967.14 tmc ft of water as per Bachawath Tribunal Award. Das and AP engineer-in-chief Narayana Reddy countered this claim by saying that Telangana's share in Godavari river is 967.14 tmc ft and not a drop more. They also asked the Telangana officials to show the special allocations made to Telangana by the Bachawath Tribunal.

Making it clear that Bachawath Tribunal allocations were standard allocations, the officials from AP argued that there was no special mention of allocation of waters to Telangana.

# Dr Sudhakar may be released from mental hospital, say HC

Continued from Page 1

Kaveri Bai filed a habeas corpus petition which stated that Dr Sudhakar Rao was not arrested by either the police or the CBI. "Then why he was confined in the hospital," she questioned.

Advising the doctor to cooperate with the investigation of the CBI, the High Court made it clear that he could be discharged whenever he wanted.

Meanwhile, the CBI sleuths continued the investigation and enquired with the municipal commissioner Krishnaveni at Narsipatnam. They even went to the hospital where Dr Sudhakar Rao worked and went through the attendance register.

# Monsoon to reach State in 2-3 days

Continued from Page 1

Entire South-east Bay of Bengal and some parts of West-central Bay of Bengal may cover during next two to three days. AP is off West-Central Bay of Bengal. The normal monsoon arrival date of monsoon over AP is June 4. A low pressure area is likely to develop over eastern parts of West-Central Bay of Bengal around June 8. Monsoon entered Karnataka bringing widespread rain in coastal and central regions of the southern state.

# Insolvency law amended via ordinance

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Friday promulgated an ordinance to amend the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) wherein fresh insolvency proceedings will not be initiated for defaults on account of the coronavirus pandemic.

Default on repayments from March 25, the day when the nationwide lockdown began to curb coronavirus infections, would not be considered for initiating insolvency proceedings for a certain period of time.

Insolvency proceedings would not be initiated for "any default arising on or after March 25, 2020 for a period of six months or such further period, not exceeding one year from such date, as may be notified in this behalf," the ordinance said. Under the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, an entity can seek insolvency proceedings against a company even if the default is only one day. This is subject to the minimum threshold of Rs 1 crore. Earlier, the threshold was Rs 1 lakh.

# Waste management goes digital in State

Continued from Page 1

The Chief Minister said a new legislation, the AP Environment Improvement Act, 2020, would soon be enacted for safeguarding the environment.

According to officials, this is the first such online exchange to handle industrial waste in the country.

Environment and Forests Minister Balineni Srinivasa Reddy, Chief Secretary Nilam Sawhney, Special Chief Secretary Neerabh Kumar Prasad, Pollution Control Board Chairman B S S Prasad, member-secretary Vivek Yadav and other officials were present.

# Govt aims to build 30 lakh houses in five years

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The government has targeted to completing the construction of 30 lakh houses for the poor across the State in five years but the opposition is levelling false allegations against the government over the acquisition of lands, lamented Minister of Finance Buggana Rajendranath Reddy.

Addressing a press conference here on Friday, the minister stated that the government went ahead with land acquisition for housing in a transparent manner as per the Land Acquisition Act. "The market value of the land is Rs 7 lakhs per acre and as per the guidelines of the Acquisition Act we are subjected to pay around Rs 43 lakh. Since we need a large piece of land at a single identified space for building colonies, we offered to pay Rs 45 lakh. But opposition leader N Chandrababu Naidu is stating that we can get land within Rs 10 lakh and we are ready to accept it for that price if he can provide the land," he said.

He further stated that TDP members are making false allegations against the government stating that we are selling the houses and indulging in corruption. "There is no scope for us to sell the houses as only 29 lakh people have applied for houses, while the government is on a mission to provide 30 lakh houses to the poor. During the TDP rule in five years, only 7.5 lakh houses, including those with Union government grants, have been constructed and handed over to the beneficiaries," he reminded.

# Fashionova designs world's 1st PPE kits suitable for sari

PNS ■ SURAT/GUJARAT

Surat-based Fashion Design Development Centre Fashionova has developed world's first personal protective equipment (PPE) kit 'Kovid Nari Kavach' that can be worn on a Sari. The kit has been approved by Sitra.

Speaking on this innovation Ankita Goyal, Director, Fashionova, said, "The PPE kits currently offered to our Corona warriors cannot be worn of Sari whereas many women health professional prefers to wear Sari. Recently Kerala Government made it mandatory for covid care staff to wear t-shirt or shirt which has created trouble for women staff.



Considering this situation, fashion designer at Fashionova Saurav Mandal decided to develop PPE kits that can be wore on Sari. Currently centre is producing

5,000 PPE kits daily." Twitter handle 'Mann Ki Baat Updates' posted an update on this innovation, which was retweeted by Smriti Irani.

Twitter handle Maan Ki Baat Update takes notice of innovation  
SITRA approves 'Kovid Nari Kavach' PPE kits

'Fashionova' is the first-of-its-kind Design Development Centre in the Textile City Surat. It provides its associates a strong platform to showcase their creativity and innovations. It is a budding start-up making all possible efforts to provide help in these tough times.

Earlier the Fashionova had provided garments to Surat's Civil Hospital for Corona patients. Surat COVID in-charge Dr Mahendra Patel, Civil Superintendent Preetiben Kapadia, Dean Brahambhata Sahab, Ketan Nayak and Ashok Goyal, Rajiv Omar, Subhash Rawal and Shalini Shethi from Seva Foundation were also present on this occasion.

# Central team visits cyclone-hit areas of Bengal, faces protests

PNS ■ KOLKATA

A central team visited several areas ravaged by Cyclone Amphan in South and North 24 Parganas districts of West Bengal on Friday to assess the damage caused by the extremely severe storm but faced protests by the affected in some areas.

The seven-member team, headed by Anuj Sharma, joint secretary (cyber and information security) in the Ministry of Home Affairs, divided into two groups and visited Patharpratima in South 24 Parganas and Sandeshkhali in North 24 Parganas, an official said.

The team arrived in Kolkata on Thursday evening on a three-day visit to a red carpet welcome by the state government. The team that visited



North 24 Parganas faced protestors standing on both sides of the roads in Minakha and Malancha blocks with placards which said they were not getting enough relief.

Shouting slogans against the state government, they demanded more relief and food materials and asked the members of the central team to take note of their problems.

"The relief provided to us is very less. We don't have proper drinking water. We request the central team to ensure we get relief as early as possible," said a Minakha block resident.

The teams were accompanied by the concerned districts' officials and toured several devastated villages and embankments of Patharpratima and Sandeshkhali blocks.

## SHORT READS



### Yuvraj apologises for casteist remark against Yuzvendra

**NEW DELHI:** Former India star Yuvraj Singh on Friday apologised for making a casteist remark against Yuzvendra Chahal during an Instagram chat, saying he "unintentionally" hurt public sentiments. It was during one of the Instagram live sessions with Indian vice-captain Rohit Sharma that Yuvraj made the offensive comment about Chahal while talking about his regular social media posts. In fact, an advocate from Hissar filed a police complaint against India's twin World Cup hero, who was forced to issue an apology on his twitter page. "I understand that while I was having a conversation with my friends, I was misunderstood, which was unwarranted. However, as a responsible Indian I want to say that if I have unintentionally hurt anybody's sentiments or feelings, I would like to express regret for the same," he wrote.

### Court dismisses interim bail plea of AAP MLA Jarwal

**NEW DELHI:** A Delhi Court Friday dismissed the interim bail plea of AAP legislator Prakash Jarwal, arrested in connection with a case of alleged suicide of a doctor in south Delhi in April, sought on account of the demise of his father-in-law who was suspected to be Covid-19 positive. Additional Sessions Judge Sanjeev Aggarwal said that the chances of the accused influencing the witnesses cannot be ruled out. The court said the body of Jarwal's father-in-law has already been handed over to the kin of the deceased for cremation on Friday.

### Woman fed liquor, gangraped; Five, including hubby held

**THIRUVANANTHAPURAM:** In a shocking incident, a 25-year-old woman was allegedly forced to drink liquor by her husband and gang-raped by four of his friends in front of their five-year-old child near here. All of them were taken into custody RPT taken into custody on Friday, a day after the incident, police said. The child is suspected to have been beaten up by the accused. The Kerala State Women's Commission has on its own registered a case into the rape. The woman told police that her husband had taken her and their two children to the beach at nearby Puthucerry on Thursday and later to a friend's house nearby, where she was forcefully fed alcohol and sexually assaulted in front of her elder son. "The woman was rescued by a young man who found her in an inebriated state along the road. He took her in his car to her home and then informed police about the incident," a police officer said.

# Cong in K'taka sets up panel to screen people aspiring to join it

PNS ■ BENGALURU

A 12-member committee has been formed by the Congress in Karnataka to screen leaders wanting to join or rejoin the party and give its recommendations.

Karnataka Congress President D K Shivakumar has constituted the committee headed by former state unit chief Allam Veerabhadrappa.

The panel would decide whether to allow leaders who had earlier quit the Congress and wanting to return and others wishing to join and submit a report to the KPCC, Shivakumar said in a release on Thursday night.

Senior party man and former legislator Hasanabba B A has been made the convenor

of the committee of which leaders like V Muniyappa, Ajaykumar Sarnaik, Abhayachandra Jain among others are members.

Shivakumar on Friday said several people who had quit Congress in the past and those from other parties have sent in applications for party membership and have met him.

"...as it is not right on my part to take unilateral decision, the committee has been constituted," he told reporters here.

The committee will process the application and seek opinion from district and block level units also and take them into confidence to avoid any "misfire" at the ground level later, because of someone joining the party.



# Prioritise in disaster risk reduction, climate change adaptation: NGO

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Child rights body Save the Children has called for prioritising and including children in disaster risk reduction and including child sensitivity to further strengthen programmes and policy frameworks.

In a statement, the child rights NGO underlined some of the focus areas that need to be prioritized as identified by children themselves. It called for ensuring that schools remain safe so that education is not interrupted, making child protection a priority before, during and after a disaster, making community infrastructure safe, and relief and reconstruction must help reduce future risk.

"Save the Children reiterates for a stronger commitment from governments, donors and agencies to provide appropriate platforms and meaningful engagement for children in programmes related to resilience and climate change adaptations. Further, to strengthen pro-



grammes and policy frameworks by bringing child sensitivity into them," it said.

With 68 per cent of India's land prone to drought, 60 per cent to earthquakes, 12 per cent to floods and 8 per cent to cyclones, India is one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world, affecting over 85 per cent of Indian land and more than 50 million people, according to the statement.

"We are witnessing an unprecedented time as a lived collective experience. Our resilience as

individuals, organisations, communities and most importantly of children are being challenged continuously demanding new solutions and creative thinking," Bidisha Pillai, the CEO of Save the Children, said.

"In the ongoing situation of extreme disaster, as we approach development, climate and disaster risk and preparedness, response and recovery and resilience as a continuum, it is important that we rethink what children think and want for a secure future," she said.

# Khattar urges people to take a pledge to conserve environment

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

On World Environment Day, Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar has urged the people of the state to take a pledge to conserve the environment and maintain ecological balance. "On World Environment Day, let's take a pledge to make our contribution towards conserving the environment," Khattar said in a tweet.

Stressing upon the need to maintain ecological balance, in another tweet, he said, "Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's needs, but not every man's greed."

Earlier in a message to mark World Environment Day, the chief minister laid emphasis on water conservation.

"Keeping this in mind, the Haryana Government has recently started the 'Mera Pani Meri Virasat' scheme so



that water can be saved for future generations," he said.

He said that climate change has become another global issue today. "Due to climate change, our seasons are changing, the temperature is increasing and the groundwater level is falling. Due to changes in the trend of monsoon, natural disasters like floods, droughts, earthquakes, tsunamis, and other cyclonic storms are becoming very frequent. Interference with nature will lead to shortage of clean water and air," he said in the message.

# MNM launches people's movement to cater to COVID-19 hotspot Chennai

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Actor and Makkal Needhi Maiam (MNM) President Kamal Haasan on Friday launched 'Naame Theervu' (We are the solution), a people's movement to help this city, one of the top COVID-19 hotspots in the country with over 18,000 cases.

The initiative would address people's health issues, especially when they would step out of their houses post lockdown and aims to transform Chennai into a COVID-19-free safe zone. The veteran actor, who enrolled himself as the first member of the programme, which seeks the participation of Chennaites, said the initiative would resurrect Chennai that nurtured the dreams of many people, including himself into a reality.

"With your participation



and people's contribution, we can seek a simple solution to every problem. This is putting into action the thought that has fuelled us through such tough times. We are creating an army of volunteers who will find solutions to people's problems," he said addressing reporters through a virtual press conference.

About 25 to 30 doctors have been roped in for the initiative and more would join, Haasan said and appealed to NGOs and all like-minded persons to join his movement.

Medical assistance, safety equipment, sanitisers, food and ration would be provided to those requiring them, he said.

# U'khand's COVID-19 tally rises to 1,199

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Uttarakhand's COVID-19 tally rose to 1,199 on Friday, with 46 more people testing positive for coronavirus.

The fresh cases were reported from Almora (5), Chamoli (2), Champawat (2) Dehradun (15), Haridwar (1), Pauri (1), Rudrapur (14) and Tehri (6), a state health department bulletin said.

Most of the new patients have a travel history to Mumbai, Delhi and Gurgaon, it said. A total of 309 people have recovered so far, while eleven have died. However, the cause of six deaths was other than COVID-19 as the patients were suffering from other diseases too. While the cause of one death could not be ascertained, the cause of four deaths is still awaited, the bulletin said.

# Ensure arrangement of sanitisers, at religious places, orders UP CM

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Friday directed officials to ensure that at a time only five persons are allowed at a religious place, which should also have arrangement of sanitisers, infrared thermometer and pulse oximeter.

Chairing a review meeting of 'unlock 1', he said before the religious places open for public, their managements should be told about all the necessary precautions that should be maintained at the venues.

"At all the religious places, there should be arrangement of sanitisers, infrared thermometer and pulse oximeter. It should be ensured that there should be only five persons at a time inside," a statement quoting the chief minister said.

"No one should touch statues, religious book inside the religious places and arrangements



should be made to keep footwear outside," he added.

At the meeting, the chief minister emphasised on breaking the COVID-19 chain and said precautions should be taken at all levels, social distancing norms should be maintained and police patrolling should be ensured.

He said skill mapping of migrant labourers should be done to provide them jobs. Adityanath asked officials to contact other states to bring

back those who are still stranded by arranging trains for them.

The chief minister said petty vendors should be trained about digital payments and digital banking for contact-less payments.

The Union Health Ministry released SOPs to contain COVID-19 spread at religious places on Thursday, saying places of worship inside containment zones shall remain closed for public and those outside will be allowed to open.

# Sugarcane farmer's suicide triggers protests

PNS ■ MUZZAFFARNAGAR (UP)

A farmer hanged himself from a tree here allegedly after failing to sell his sugarcane crop to a government mill amid the coronavirus lockdown, his suicide triggering protests.

Local farmers and family members blocked a road on Friday over Om Pal's Singh's suicide and refused to cremate his body for hours, demanding the registration of a case against sugar mill officials for their "failure" to procure sugarcane.

They called off the protest after district authorities announced financial assistance of Rs 10 lakh for Singh's family. The family conducted the last rites in his native Sisoli village.

Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra took to Twitter to criticise the state's BJP government, accusing it of not paying sugarcane dues to farmers.

Singh had left home for his fields on Thursday and his body was found hanging from



a tree later in the day.

His family told police he was depressed over his inability to sell his sugarcane crop because of the lockdown to combat coronavirus. Authorities, however, rejected the claim that he committed suicide due to this.

District Magistrate Selvakumari J said preliminary investigations revealed that the farmer killed himself due to a family dispute over land.

# Cong names Kharge as candidate for RS polls from Karnataka

PNS ■ BENGALURU

The Congress on Friday announced veteran party leader Mallikarjun Kharge as its candidate for the June 19 elections to the four Rajya Sabha seats from Karnataka.

"Congress President Sonia Gandhi has approved the candidature of Shri Mallikarjun Kharge as Congress candidate for the ensuing biennial elections to the Rajya Sabha from Karnataka," All India Congress Committee said in a release.

The four seats represented by Rajeev Gowda and B K Hariprasad of Congress, Prabhakar Kore of BJP and D Kupendra Reddy of JD(S) will fall vacant on June 25 with their retirement. June 9 is the last date for filing nominations.

The Congress, with 68 MLAs in the assembly, can win one of the four seats easily on its own, so Kharge's victory is said to be certain.

Kharge, who was popularly



known as "Solilada Saradara" (a leader without defeat) faced his first electoral loss in his political life spanning several decades against BJP's Umesh Jadhav in Gulbarga by a margin of 95,452 votes in the 2019 Lok Sabha polls.

A nine-time MLA and two-term Lok Sabha member, he had served as Congress' floor leader in the previous Lok Sabha, and also as Union Railway and Labour Minister in the UPA government.

**Kharge (77), had also been a minister in several Congress governments in the state in the past and had also served as KPCC President and Leader of the Opposition in the Karnataka Assembly**

Kharge (77), had also been a minister in several Congress governments in the state in the past and had also served as KPCC President and Leader of the Opposition in the Karnataka Assembly.

His son Priyank Kharge is currently MLA representing Chittapur constituency and had served as a Minister during the previous Congress and coalition governments.

Kharge thanked Congress' national President Sonia

Gandhi and Rahul Gandhi, also state party leaders for choosing him as the candidate for the Rajya Sabha polls.

"I will try to reach up to their (leadership) expectations...it's a good opportunity to work in Rajya Sabha," he said.

Asked about his entry to Rajya Sabha for the first time after having been elected directly by the people for long, he said, "for 47 years I worked as a representative directly elected by the people, but because of special efforts by central and state BJP leaders, I was defeated this time.

That's (LS defeat) a closed chapter. Rajya Sabha is a new chapter."

While ruling BJP with 117 members (including Speaker), can ensure victory in two seats, the JD(S), with just 34 seats in the assembly, is not in a position to win a Rajya Sabha seat on its own, as a minimum of 44 votes are required for a candidate to win.

# As cases spike in Delhi, recovery rate descends

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As coronavirus cases in the national capital have spiralled in the last 10 days, the recovery rate has dipped to 39.58 per cent as reported on June 4, according to official figures.

According to the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare data, Delhi also has the highest number of active cases — 14,456 cases — in the country after Maharashtra (41,402).

With regard to the death toll, Delhi stands third (650) after Maharashtra (2,710) and Gujarat (1,155) respectively.

This is the first time in the past two weeks that the recovery rate has fallen below 40 per cent.

Delhi recorded 1,359 fresh coronavirus cases on Thursday, taking the COVID-19 tally in the city to over 25,000, and the death toll due to the disease mounted to 650.

Barring June 1, when it saw



a spike of 990 cases, Delhi has been recording over 1,000 fresh cases every day from May 28-June 4, the highest being 1,513 on June 3.

As many as 9,898 patients have recovered, been discharged or migrated so far, while there are 14,456 active cases, the Delhi health department said in its bulletin a day earlier.

This pegs the recovery rate as reported on June 4 at 39.58 per cent. Prior to that the rate varied from 48.18 per cent on May 25 to 40.35 per cent on June 3, according to the figures shared by the Delhi health department in its bulletins.

SHORT READS



'Shramik Special' with 1,501 stranded migrants arrives in Dimapur

**DIMAPUR (NAGALAND):** A 'Shramik Special' train carrying 1,501 Nagaland residents stranded in Bengaluru due to the coronavirus lockdown arrived here on Friday, officials said. The train, which had departed from Bengaluru on June 2, reached the Dimapur railway station around 2 pm, they said. A total of 757 residents of Dimapur were transported to the Agri Expo site from where they will be sent to various quarantine centres following mandatory protocols, the officials said. The rest were screened by a medical team at the railway station and sent to their respective districts, they said. Food packets donated by Chief Minister Neiphiu Rio and his family were provided to all the returnees, the officials said.

PM's participation in Yoga programme in Leh doubtful: AYUSH

**NEW DELHI:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi was to take part in an International Yoga Day programme on June 21 in Leh, but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, his travel there is doubtful, the AYUSH ministry said on Friday. In March, ministry officials had said that Leh will be the venue for the main event for the International Yoga Day on June 21 and Prime Minister Modi will attend it. However, asked if the prime minister will participate in any Yoga Day event, AYUSH Secretary Vaidya Rajesh Kotecha said no public event will take place. "It is not yet decided, as to whether the prime minister will participate in a programme. Earlier, it was decided that he will go to Leh, but now due to the COVID-19 crisis, it is not yet decided whether he will go to Leh or not," the official said. The main event will be a big event, but it will be digital, he said.

Farmer's suicide in Muzaffarnagar triggers protest

**MUZAFFARNAGAR (UP):** A farmer committed suicide by hanging himself from a tree in Muzaffarnagar district of Uttar Pradesh allegedly due to non-procurement of his sugarcane produce amid the coronavirus-induced lockdown, according to his family. The suicide triggered a protest by farmers on Friday who demanded that a case be registered against sugar mill officials for their failure to procure sugarcane from farmers. The angry farmers staged a road blockade and refused to cremate the body till their demands were met. Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra took up the matter and criticised the BJP government. "Seeing his sugarcane crop drying in the field and not getting the slip, a sugarcane farmer from Muzaffarnagar committed suicide...Imagine the plight of these sugarcane farmers' families not getting their dues during this financial crisis," she said and questioned the government's silence.

Why not consider Nalini's plea?: HC

PNS ■ CHENNAI

The Madras High Court on Friday asked the Tamil Nadu government whether it can consider on humanitarian grounds the request of life convicts in the Rajiv Gandhi assassination case to make video calls to their kin.



Nalini Sriharan and her husband Murugan, the convicts, wanted to make the calls to his mother and sister in Sri Lanka and London, but the state government was firm in refusing them to make such communication.

"Leave alone law, we would like to know from the government whether they (Nalini and Murugan) can be permitted to make the calls on humanitarian ground," a division bench of Justice N Kirubakaran and Justice R Hemalatha said and asked the state public prosecutor A Natarajan to get instructions from the government.

The issue pertains to a plea moved by S Padma, mother of Nalini, seeking direction to the prison authorities to permit her daughter and her husband Murugan to make video call to his mother and sister.

Murugan's father died in Sri Lanka in April last. Therefore, the couple wanted the authorities to permit them to make

video calls for at least 10 minutes daily. When the plea came up for hearing on Friday, the prosecutor reiterated the stand of the state that the duo cannot be permitted to make calls to a foreign country.

Natarajan further suggested the court on its own implead the Union home ministry as it would be the appropriate authority to take a decision.

Oposing the same, petitioners counsel A Radhakrishnan submitted that prisons are subject matter of the state government concerned and the Union home ministry has nothing to suggest in the issue.

Recording the submissions, the bench adjourned the hearing to June 12. Besides Nalini and her husband, the others convicted in the case are A G Perarivalan, Santhan, Jayakumar, Ravichandran and Robert Pyas.

RAHUL SAYS THIS IS 'FAILED LOCKDOWN'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Questioning the government's lockdown strategy to counter COVID-19, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi compared India's disease graph to other countries to say this is "what a failed lockdown looks like". Gandhi, who had earlier said that India is the only country to have relaxed the lockdown when COVID-19 cases are rising, also shared graphs of Spain, Germany, Italy and the UK, which had shown a decline in cases after the lockdowns.



"This is what a failed lockdown looks like," he said on Twitter, while taking a swipe at the government. The former Congress president had earlier too termed the lockdown in India as "failed" which has not helped see a decline in cases

"This is what a failed lockdown looks like," he said on Twitter, while taking a swipe at the government. The former Congress president had earlier too termed the lockdown in India as "failed" which has not helped see a decline in cases.

India has seen a steady rise in the number of cases ever since the lockdown has been relaxed since June 1.

India saw a record single-day jump of 9,851 coronavirus cases and 273 deaths on Friday, pushing the nationwide infection tally to 2,26,770 and the death toll to 6,348, according to the Union

health ministry. India stood seventh among the nations worst hit by the COVID-19 pandemic after the US, Brazil, Russia, the UK, Spain and Italy.

Gandhi had earlier said that if the government functions haphazardly and takes ad-hoc measures during the non-lockdown period, the country will face a second

wave of coronavirus which will be "extremely devastating". "We want to ask the government, what is their strategy as far as India's opening up is concerned and what precautions they are going to take, how are they thinking and how they are going to support the migrants and our states?" he had asked earlier.



Remote Arunachal district near China border cut-off

PNS ■ ITANAGAR

Road connectivity to the remote Shi-Yomi district in Arunachal Pradesh snapped after a bridge was washed away in the floods triggered by incessant rains over the last couple of days, officials said on Friday.

Shi-Yomi district, bordering China, was cut-off from the rest of the country after the RCC bridge (reinforced cement concrete) near Yapik village on the Aalo-Mechuka Road was washed away on Wednesday night, they said.

Transportation of people and essential commodities to the remote district would be badly affected as it is likely to take days to restore the bridge, the officials said, adding that

people travelling between Mechuka and Aalo were also left stranded.

Expressing serious concern over the incident, state Assembly Speaker Pasang D Sonu, who represents the district, has urged the Border Roads Organization (BRO) to restore the bridge on war footing.

In a letter to the chief engineer of Project Brahman of the BRO based at Pasighat in East Siang district, the speaker said the Aalo-Mechuka Road "is the key and strategic road for movement of people, transportation of essential commodities, life-saving drugs, construction material, and movement of defence personnel in the entire Shi-Yomi district".

Govt only manufacturing jumlas and slogans: Cong

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Friday dubbed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "vocal for local" call and the economic stimulus package to make the country self-reliant as yet another jumla to divert the attention of the people from "real issues".

Addressing a virtual press conference, senior Congress leader Kapil Sibal asked how can India become self-reliant till it creates innovation and intellectual property in its universities.

"This is an act of self-deception. This is another 'jumla' (rhetoric) that you sell to the people of the country," he said. "We are only manufacturing



'jumlas', statements and slogans. That is the only thing we make in India and we are masters at that under this government," he said, taking a swipe at the BJP-led government.

Sibal said while the prime minister calls for 'Atmanirbhar Abhiyaan', his government has failed to help make the poor, the farmers, the migrant workers, the industry or the states to become self-reliant.

Similarly, his exhortation to industry to push 'Made in India, Made for the World', to expand globally, not be dependent on another country in the strategic sector, did not have a clear roadmap as to how this goal should be achieved, the former union minister said.

The Rs 20 lakh crore 'Atmanirbhar' package does not lead to expansion of government expenditure, as it includes measures already announced by RBI and the budget and amounts to less than 1 per cent of GDP, as against 10 per cent claimed by the government, he noted.

"The reality is that Modi's 'Atmanirbhar' idea is merely a slogan like innumerable others," Sibal said.

Govt staff must report to work once a week or face pay cut

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Maharashtra government on Friday said it was mandatory for government employees to be present in office once a week during the COVID-19 lockdown, failing which they will have to face salary cut.

As per a notification issued by additional chief secretary (finance) Manoj Saunik, all government departments have been asked to prepare a roster of officers and employees affiliated to them.

"All employees, except those on sanctioned leave or medical



leave, will need to be in office for one day in a week compulsorily," the order read.

Disciplinary action will be taken by department heads against those who leave the office without permission during the lockdown, it stated.

If an employee remains absent during the assigned day, he/she will lose pay for an entire week, it warned. However, in case an employee has to be present in the office for more than a day every week, his salary would be cut only on the days he remained absent, the notification said.

The order will come into effect from June 8. The coronavirus-triggered lockdown is in force till June 30. The notification was issued after it came to light that employees were not reporting to work during the lockdown and some had even left for their hometowns.

HC declines to interfere with Centre's order on air fare limits

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has declined to interfere with a central government order fixing minimum and maximum airfares of various sectors for three months till August 24, saying it was a policy decision and a "stop gap arrangement" during the Covid-19 crisis.

A bench of Chief Justice D N Patel and Justice Prateek Jalan further said that the May 21 order of the Ministry of Civil Aviation for a period of three months clearly stated that a minimum fare was fixed to restrict travel only to the performance of essential journeys.

"It ought to be kept in mind that, in the present circumstances when various restrictions have been placed on the airline operations, and maximum limit for air fare is given by the government, the minimum fare is also prescribed so as to strike a balance between the passengers as well as the



airlines agency," the bench said in its order delivered on Thursday.

The bench said that in the present situation of the COVID-19 pandemic, the exercise of this power by the government "cannot be said to be arbitrary or unreasonable".

It further said that it has to be kept in mind that problems being faced during the pandemic are unique and requires experimental solutions.

"There cannot be any mathematical solution for a problem like this. Government has to be given a degree of free move-

ment in joints. We are, therefore, not going into the merits of this case," it said.

The observations of the bench came while disposing of a plea challenging the May 21 order of the ministry by Veer Vikrant Chauhan, who was aggrieved by the minimum cap on the air fare.

Chauhan, represented by advocate Vishal Gohri, had contended that there should be no minimum limit on airfare so that there would be competition between airlines and a much lesser ticket price would be available.

Woman IPS officers targeted with abusive, obscene content on Twitter; FIR lodged

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Some woman police officers posted at a premier training institute for bureaucrats in Mussoorie have been targeted with abusive and obscene content on Twitter prompting the authorities to approach the local police, officials said on Friday.

An FIR was lodged by the police based on a complaint by the administration of Lal Bahadur Shastri National Academy of Administration (LBSNAA) and the investigation is underway, they said.

"Today some lady IPS officers have been targeted with abusive, derogatory and obscene content by certain twitter accounts. The academy strongly condemns this malicious and derogatory tweet and has lodged an FIR with Uttarakhand Police in this regard," the LBSNAA had said in a tweet on Thursday.

The news has evoked sharp reactions from the associations of Indian Police Service (IPS), Indian Administrative Service (IAS) and Indian Forest Service



"We all CAPFs officers condemn abusive posts and comments against lady IPS officer & demand strong legal action be taken against such perverted minds. Shame on such person," they said on twitter

(IFS) officers, demanding expeditious investigation into it to bring the culprits to book.

Besides them, all cadre officers of the central armed police forces (CAPFs) have also demanded strict action against such "perverted minds".

"We all CAPFs officers condemn abusive posts and comments against lady IPS officer & demand strong legal action be taken against such perverted minds. Shame on such person," they said on twitter.

"We strongly condemn the abusive & derogatory remarks on Twitter regarding lady IPS officers. We believe the con-

cerned police agencies will do thorough investigation to expeditiously bring culprits to book. We solemnly resolve to protect the dignity of lady officers," the IPS (central) association tweeted. The IAS (central) association has asked Twitter to remove such posts and handles from its platform.

"We agree and condemn abusive posts and comments against #IPS officers and demand strong action be taken against such perverted minds. We have reported such handles and request @TwitterIndia to remove such posts and handles," it tweeted. The IFS officers association

also strongly condemned the abusive and derogatory remarks on social media against woman IPS officers. "Strong action must be taken against these cowards," it said.

Some senior IPS officers have also come in support of their colleagues in the matter.

"Each and every human deserves respect. Women especially because they are still considered second class citizens. We lady officers are on target because we stand for a cause and they can't digest it. Thanks for support. Smiling face with smiling eyes we will be more strong now," tweeted IPS officer Aslam Khan.

Good rainfall activity expected next week: IMD

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Rainfall activity in central and south India is likely to pick up pace from next week due to a cyclonic circulation which is likely to form over the Bay of Bengal and aid in the progress of the monsoon, the India Meteorological Department said on Friday.

IMD director general Mrutunjay Mohapatra said a low pressure area is likely to form over the Bay of Bengal and move towards Odisha next week.

A low pressure is a cyclonic circulation and the first stage of any cyclone. However, it is not necessary that every low pressure intensifies into a cyclone.

"This will help advance monsoon and bring good rain-



fall during the next week," Mohapatra said.

Monsoon had hit Kerala on June 1 on its normal onset date. The IMD had earlier predicted that the monsoon would be delayed by four days, but Cyclone Nisarga helped push the monsoon to reach Kerala

on its normal onset date.

"Conditions are becoming favourable for further advancement of Southwest Monsoon into some more parts of central Arabian Sea, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal, southwest and east central Bay of Bengal, entire

"Conditions are becoming favourable for further advancement of Southwest Monsoon into some more parts of central Arabian Sea, Karnataka, Tamil Nadu, Puducherry and Karaikal, southwest and east central Bay of Bengal, entire southeast Bay of Bengal and some parts of west central Bay of Bengal during next 2 days," the IMD said.

According to the IMD, the country as a whole has received 9 per cent more rainfall than the normal since June 1. The north Indian plains will also witness rainfall due to a western disturbance, the IMD said.

A western disturbance is a cyclonic circulation that originates in the Mediterranean Sea. It crosses central Asia and brings in rains to hills and north Indian plains after it comes in contact with the Himalayas.

East Uttar Pradesh and east Rajasthan are also likely to witness rainfall, the IMD added.

BJP leader slaps official for indecent remarks against her; video goes viral

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

A video showing Tik Tok star and BJP leader Sonali Phogat slapping a Market Committee official from Hisar and later beating him with a slipper for reportedly making derogatory remarks against her, went viral on social media on Friday.

In the video, the BJP leader from Adampur in Hisar is seen slapping the official and later hitting him with her slipper in full public view. Phogat and others present with her are not seen wearing masks in the video, even as the Haryana government has made it mandatory to wear masks in public in the wake of coronavirus pandemic.

Sharing the video on his



Twitter handle, Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Singh Surjewala said, Exploits of the leaders of the Khattar government. The BJP leader from Adampur in Hisar is beating the Market Committee official like animals.

Is doing government job a crime? Will (Chief Minister)

Khattar take action? Will the media still remain silent? he tweeted.

The BJP leader, however, told media persons in Hisar that she had gone to meet the officials of the district Market Committee on Friday pertaining to some grievance of farmers.

She said an official was showing her the place in the Balsamand area of Hisar district where a shed could come up for the convenience of farmers when he started passing indecent and derogatory remarks against her.

Phogat claimed the official also made some comments against another woman official of the Market Committee and a woman minister in the Manohar Lal Khattar-led cabinet.

PAPER WITH PASSION

## Delhi reeling

Witnessing a surge in COVID cases, the Delhi Government has put in place new triage rules but this may not be enough



**I**ncreasing instances of potential Coronavirus patients lying for hours outside the hospital before admission or even dying before they see a doctor in Delhi are being shared on social media. This has grabbed media attention, too. Unfortunately, some are using such instances to score political points about Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's handling of the pandemic. But the fact remains that despite the national capital boasting about having the best urban healthcare infrastructure in the country, it is getting thoroughly overwhelmed. It would have been so no matter who or which party had been in power. With more than 25,000 cases, Delhi, like Mumbai, is seeing a surge given its dense population as a result of India's uneven development over the past seven decades. While the virus has started a conversation around public health and the lack of it all across the country, it will not take away the fact that despite Indian doctors and nurses being at the forefront of treatment across the world, Indian healthcare itself is all but a flaky shell.

As such, India should have begun large-scale testing weeks ago when more testing kits were made available. While testing numbers have gradually increased now, given the country's population, it remains woefully inadequate. Those who want to be tested are denied one. Even those patients who need to go to a hospital for other emergency procedures are not being tested, either at admission or when discharged. The Delhi Government's decision to "triage" all those patients who show signs of COVID-19 symptoms will not be effective until more tests are done. This will also help it understand the future course of action. Should school yards and stadia be turned into treatment centres or not? To what extent should the lockdown be eased? Where should non-critical patients be sent? And if there is a substantial number of asymptomatic carriers, can Delhi or any other city consider opening up of malls and restaurants and add to a bursting bulge? There is a prevailing anxiety as doctors and virologists warn that public engagement should be minimal in the viral storm months of June and July. The fact of the matter is that in India and in other countries across the world, the response by Governments to the pandemic has been woeful. Of course, hindsight is 20-20 (ironically) but many things should have been done and could have been done differently. One thing that can still be done differently and that should be done is to test, test and test to establish a pattern. At the same time data must be used to calibrate further actions. There will be many more cases in the next few days of people dying from the virus and many more tragic stories will be written about. The question that Kejriwal and, in fact, every other Chief Minister in India needs to ask is: When will these stories end? By July or by 2021?

## Cong crisis in Gujarat

Party loses more MLAs before Rajya Sabha polls, a steady slide since it won 81 Assembly seats in 2017



**T**he Congress, for all its attempts to appear as a responsible Opposition, is not quite being able to hold on to its own members and convince them of its leadership or its political capital. Just as the party was recovering from the exit of Gandhi loyalist and aspirant leader Jyotiraditya Scindia over a Rajya Sabha ticket, its MLAs in Gujarat have resigned in quick succession days before the Rajya Sabha polls. Two legislators, Akshay Patel and Jitu Chaudhary, resigned on Wednesday. And yesterday, it was Brijesh Merja, the MLA from Morbi constituency. The latter even gave up primary membership of the Congress. With

this, a total of eight Congress MLAs have resigned since March. Before the polls were announced, the Congress had 73 MLAs in the Gujarat Assembly and was looking to win two of the four seats. Now that looks remote. The ruling BJP, which has 103 MLAs in the Assembly, is now eyeing a third seat. What is sad is the Congress had put up a determined show against an ascendant BJP, winning 81 seats in the 2017 Assembly elections, notching up its best performance in the State in years. Although the BJP had won, the Congress did deliver a psychological blow back then. It was expected to consolidate after this booster shot but since then the party has only seen a steady stream of exits, losing 16 MLAs. It is all too easy to blame the BJP for poaching MLAs but then the ruling party has made no bones about Operation Lotus or its attempt to avenge and wrest the psychological edge the Congress had in 2017. Knowing this full well, the Congress should have been vigilant and proactive, considering it wanted to make Gujarat, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's home State, a prestige issue. Instead it rested easy on the verdict without realising that the BJP's mammoth Lok Sabha showing and its near decimation would require more groundwork in State units and at least holding on to them. The rural vote did work for the Gujarat Congress then but it didn't build on it by breaking into Thakor voters for instance or work on the aspirations of its MLAs.

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi may be crafting an image change in the middle of a pandemic, appearing to contribute to the national revival effort by holding conversations and dialogues with eminent men friendly to him, but it's not reaping results on the ground. Particularly at a time when capable leaders of the Congress have proved their mettle as Chief Ministers in the battle against the disease spiral, be it Rajasthan's Ashok Gehlot or Punjab's Amarinder Singh. It would have worked had he focussed on COVID-19 management in Gujarat, one of the worst-hit States, and done more on-the-grounds, like he did with migrants. Even his think tank-like advisories seem too tutored and self-serving than well-meaning. He may want to rebrand himself as a serious ideologue but webinars and conversations with public intellectuals will not help him if he wants to stay relevant in electoral politics. It is not that Gandhi hasn't tried to strip down his dynastic entitlements but he needs to be seen as a leader who has a grasp on issues. More importantly, he must make himself available to local units. Both the Scindia and Gujarat fiascos have shown that he needs to keep the party herd immune from political inducements. What Rahul and his strategists must do is to diminish the trust deficit in him as a deliverable leader, build on his natural strengths like when he did padayatras and entered people's homes and localise his appeal. The Congress is not short of advisors, he needs to show that he can be a leader of the masses, not of the podium.

# Learning in times of crisis

The COVID pandemic has impacted education the most, compelling nations to embrace e-learning. India needs to invest in infrastructure and put right policies in place



MJ WARSI

**N**ations across the world have taken different yet significant measures to limit the spread of COVID-19. The most immediate one taken by almost all countries was to cancel physical face-to-face teaching in schools and higher education institutions. All kinds of social and religious gatherings and public events, too, were banned. With a sudden shift from the classroom to e-learning, many wondered whether the adoption of online education would continue to persist post-pandemic and how such a shift would impact the education market.

Indeed, in India, too, physical classrooms have replaced online classes. The transition has mostly been smooth in private universities though public institutions are yet to adapt to the changes. This has led to widespread debates on the future course of classes — whether they should be conducted online or not. Realising the long-term impact of COVID-19, faculty members, too, are finding it hard to conduct online classes with ease. On the other hand, students have been left clinging on to their mobile phones, laptops and computer screens. What, however, is certain is that a post-COVID world must gear itself to adapt to some changes. Being physically present in a classroom may not be the only learning option anymore — not with the rise of the internet and new technologies, at least. As long as there is access to a computer with a robust internet connection, students can attend live sessions or watch pre-recorded classes. Does this mean that online education will soon replace classroom education? It should be kept in mind that even though there have been huge technological advancements, they aren't flawless. E-learning comes with its own set of challenges.

**Challenges and possibilities:** In the case of traditional classrooms, lack of engagement is problematic for teachers and students alike. Unlike online education, here, they cannot pause or rewind the classes in case they miss out certain chapters. On the other hand, online education is not as easy as speaking into the microphone at the one end and connecting a laptop or phone and listening on the other. There are other challenges with this form of education that have to be faced by both — faculty as well as students. While the former will have to put in extra labour to generate lectures, it will be difficult for the latter to make sense of it online. Then, how will this form of education compensate for the academic loss suffered by students? Practically speaking, there is no alternative to classroom activities.

Most important of all, even after so much digitisation, rural India will face unprecedented challenges due to poor connectivity and frequent power cuts that would affect the productivity of the classroom. Talking about access to electricity, according to Mission Antyodaya, a nation-



wide survey of villages conducted by the Ministry of Rural Development in 2017-18, 16 per cent of India's households received one to eight hours of electricity daily, 33 per cent received 9-12 hours and only 47 per cent received more than 12 hours a day. Further, according to data collected by the National Sample Survey as part of the Survey on Education (2014), only 27 per cent of households in India have some member with access to internet. Access to internet does not necessarily mean that a household actually has internet at home.

While increasing ethernet connectivity should be the larger goal, in the short term, data on mobile phones must be subsidised. Device ownership, too, is a problem and for this, the Government must provide for cheap smartphones for students to get on with the business of teaching. Organisations such as the National Institute of Open Schooling (NIOS), National Council for Promotion of Urdu Language (NCPUL), IGNOU and other such bodies offering distance education as well as the Government must assess current and future infrastructure requirements for digital age and bridge the gap.

But what if e-learning becomes the way of life for education? What would be the major issues and areas that

require introspection? And what does this mean for the students going forward?

Most universities are now offering web-based file-sharing services to their faculty members and research communities. However, there are several other ways to make multimedia resources accessible over the internet. Certainly, the most familiar one is YouTube, which though ubiquitous and easy-to-use, does present challenges to classroom use that must not be ignored. The most glaring one is the comments section. The instructor can take it for granted that some comments will not be suitable for projection on a classroom screen.

Similarly, advertisements found lining the video could be a problem, too. Regardless of the product being promoted, the classroom need not be turned to a search service in order to access multimedia resources. To avoid this, a number of web browser extensions are available that provide for an unfiltered viewing experience, hiding comments, menu side bus and advertisements from the view. A number of cloud-based tools, too, are available that allow files to be stored and shared across a remote host, which at the very least offer the instructor the flexibility to adapt. Foremost among these are Dropbox, which is a file hosting service that offers free

data storage across several operating platforms. Amazon cloud drive offers 5 GB of free storage and provides a straight forward web-based interface for uploading and retrieval of files. Similarly, Google Docs allows for the uploading of entire folders to the cloud, making remote storage of a set of organised files quite easy.

**Make the digital transition:** Technological prospects for classrooms have evolved in remarkable ways since the COVID-19 pandemic. We have witnessed the successful introduction of smartphones that are capable of running audio-visual clips and interactive language drills; tablets are now replacing the laptop as an essential classroom gear; and there has been a rich array of online dictionaries. Further, news media and unicode blogs are now searchable in original scripts; a sea of websites are dedicated towards the study and dissemination of literature. The worldwide popularity of Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Google classroom, Zoom, Cisco Webex and the user-centred design of web has addressed concerns of language use. Even mini tablets are now equipped with built-in digital camera. In fact, they allow students to use audio and video editing software immediately upon recording. All of these advancements offer promising

ways for the students to do their homework, going far beyond just a paper and pen.

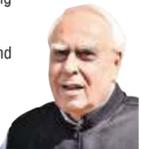
The time has come for us to adapt to new and innovative teaching methods. So, what next? Most experts and researchers across academic institutions agree that there is a need to create standardised online education platforms. Besides students and teachers must be trained to get accustomed to using digital technologies. Others highlight the necessity to introspect on the nature of these platforms and how students must be taught using different online tools and methods while keeping accessibility and the challenges in mind.

To look for possibilities, there is lack of clarity among teachers and researchers about the plan of action, especially with respect to teaching, examination, results, internships and placements. Challenges are many that need to be overcome. Some students without reliable internet access and technology struggle to participate in digital learning. This gap is seen across countries. Education is going to be digital in the foreseeable future. We will be better prepared to handle it only with the right kind of infrastructure and policies in place. The Government must pay heed.

(The writer is a linguist, author and columnist)

## SOUNDBITE

We are only manufacturing jumbas, statements and slogans. That is the only thing we make in India and we are masters at that under this Government.



**Congress leader**  
—Kapil Sibal

People have had the time to introspect and understand that there is no planet B. This is the only world we have and it's our only chance at survival.



**Actor**  
—Bhumi Pednekar

Issues of human dignity will not abide standing on the sidelines. To the Black community — we see you. You matter and your lives matter.



**Apple CEO**  
—Tim Cook

In the context of China, they (the Congress) started finding fault without realising that China is a baggage left by Rahul Gandhi's great grandfather Jawaharlal Nehru.



**Union Minister**  
—Jitendra Singh

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Cowardly act

**Sir** — This refers to the editorial, "Elephantine problem" (June 4). It was heart-wrenching to know about the horrific death of a pregnant elephant in Kerala's Palakkad district after she ate a pineapple filled with firecrackers that was allegedly left by some locals. Amid the Corona crisis, one had expected that this would be the time for nature to reclaim its lost space. The death of a wild elephant in Kerala serves as a reminder that we humans have long forgotten what humanity is.

In Kerala, which boasts a literacy rate of 93.91 per cent, it is a practice for locals to use explosive-laced traps to get rid of wild animals, especially boars. And this wasn't the first time that such traps have claimed the life of an elephant here.

Though one arrest has been made in the present case, it is a travesty of justice that the maximum punishment for the murderers would be just seven years in jail. There's an urgent need to strengthen animal and wildlife protection laws, too.

**Tushar Anand Patna**

### A turning point for America

**G**eorge Floyd, an Afro-American, had been living in Minneapolis for several years after moving there from his native Houston, Texas. Handcuffed at gunpoint, he was pinned to the ground as the police officer, Derek Chauvin, kept his knee pressed hard on his neck for eight minutes and 46 seconds. "I can't breathe," he cried repeatedly but his cries fell on deaf ears. About six minutes into that period, Floyd fell silent. Why did Chauvin do the unthinkable? Years ago, Rohith Vemula, a Dalit PhD candidate at the University of Hyderabad, found himself ousted from the hostel and was forced to live in a tent. A distraught Vemula committed suicide. In the searing note he left behind, he said, his "birth was his fatal accident." Floyd was Black, born to parents of African origin in a racially divided America. His birth, too, "was his fatal accident."

Martin Luther King Jr, the redoubtable civil rights leader, reached Memphis, Tennessee on April 3, 1968, to support the striking African-American city sanitation workers, who were facing crass racial discrimination there. He was shot when standing in the hotel balcony the next day. Addressing an angry crowd, Senator Robert F Kennedy said, "For those of you who are Black and are tempted to be filled with hatred and mistrust of the injustice of such an act, against all White people, I would only say that I can also feel in my own heart the same kind



of feeling. I had a member of my family killed but he was killed by a White man." He was referring to his slain brother John F Kennedy. It calmed the crowd, albeit temporarily. Floyd was no Martin Luther King Jr. Yet, the killing in cold blood highlighted the deep-rooted prejudices persisting in American society. And for US President Donald Trump, Floyd's death "on the streets of Minneapolis" was just "a grave tragedy." His open threat to deploy the US military reservists of the National Guard against the angry anti-racism protesters to "dominate" the streets, was, by no means, a healer's touch. Perhaps, this may well be a defining moment for America's racial politics.

**Haridasan Rajan Kozhikode**

### Reconnect with nature

**Sir** — Coronavirus has elicited varying degrees of response from nation-states. Weeks after the

spread of the virus, it was more than evident that even countries with the best medical and public health infrastructure could find no match to this biological invad-

er. Containment through isolation was seen to be the lone weapon.

By virtue of the progress made in science, we may find a

cure for COVID-19 but like every other microbial onslaught till date, we have to pay a heavy price. When will mankind learn the universal tenet of simple living and high thinking as advocated by our *rishis* of yore?

**R Narayanan Navi Mumbai**

### Mired in confusion

**Sir** — This refers to the editorial, "Trump's expansionism" (June 4). US President Donald Trump's call to transform G-7 into G-11 lacks clarity. He has failed to convince nations on the need to upgrade the grouping. He has only said that it has become outdated. Besides, an analysis needs to be done on the failures of G-7. Given that the US would be going to polls in November, it remains unclear how this would shape up. India has taken the right step by showing willingness to attend the G-7 summit but it must be impartial as it has till now on international affairs.

**Manisha Via email**

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

**FIRST COLUMN**

## Firms need a new perspective

Business processes will change due to the pandemic and so should the way valuations of companies are done



HIMA BINDU KOTA

Coronavirus cases are rising exponentially in India even as the country is in the midst of unlocking the economy. With the Government allowing almost all sectors to restart, companies are faced with the new challenge of valuing their businesses as a consequence of the pandemic. Nothing is the same now. The financial markets, the economy, real estate and almost all sectors have seen major turbulence and the uncertainty will not end anytime soon. According to the 2020, *Brand Finance India 100* report, during the pandemic, the combined valuation of India's top 100 brands dropped by \$25 billion as compared to the start of this year. The uncertainty in future cash flows is now a hard reality. Organisations have to renew ways of measuring risks associated with the cash flow of their businesses as the categories of risk may have increased in the light of COVID-19.

The elements which are a part of the discount rates used in valuations, including the risk-free rate and unsystematic risks, may have changed, altering the way businesses approached valuations before the crisis. All business valuations are done on projections. However, in these unprecedented times, there is every chance that these projections might change. It has become difficult to quantify the short-term and long-term financial projections and the shape of economic recovery is also uncertain. It may be 'V' shaped, 'U' shaped or even 'W' shaped. Moreover, some industries may bounce back faster than the others. Even though governments across the world are providing economic stimulus, the fact remains that consumer demand may still be slow and may possibly see a paradigm shift in the long-term.

So, during these times, selecting a valuation model relevant to one's own business is imperative. All three valuation methods — income, market and asset — are available to business managers and analysts. However, in the present situation, some methods may be more appropriate as compared to others. For example, of the two income-based approaches that are used to value a company, one may be more appropriate than the other now. The first method, the Capitalisation of Cash Flow (CCF) method is used by mature firms, which are relatively stable in their growth expectation and cash flows. Under this method, the valuator assumes a steady growth rate, picks a single income stream and predicts future income based on historical numbers.

On the other hand, the Discounted Cash Flow (DCF) method is more flexible and allows for more variations in the future cash flows based on varying growth rates, changes in the interest rates of debt repayments and any other factors that may change in future and could affect cash flows. Given this rising economic uncertainty and market disruption, DCF, with its flexibility to allow modelling of performance of future years of a business individually, with varying growth rates and cash flows till businesses stabilise, may be a more useful method. This method will not be devoid of challenges as valuator may still have to consider multiple scenario analysis to capture the growing uncertainty in the next 18 to 24 months.

Organisations can value their business using other methods as well. However, additional considerations need to be applied in doing so. For example, if a company was using the market approach of valuation earlier, it needs to make relevant adjustments in the financial parameters now. It may not just use an average of the previous three or five-year period, as it may not be applicable in these uncertain times. So usage of previous years' financial metrics during these times needs more analysis and adjustments.

Cash flows and the ability of a business to continue its operations and generate cash flows are important for business valuation. In addition, cash balance and the rate at which money is being used by an organisation also determine its survival and ability to continue doing business. So any changes that help a firm to preserve capital and cash flows, now and in the near future, will help in the valuations as it can give a good idea of how long a company can survive in these turbulent times.

The longer-term prospects of any organisation are also important in assessing its value. However, every dark cloud has a silver lining and tough times help some companies to thrive or re-engineer themselves, like grocery and food delivery, manufacturers of PPE and digital businesses. These and similar other businesses by virtue of their relevance in these times, or because of timely reinvention, are actually booming during the outbreak. With world economies going through disruptions and maybe permanent changes in consumer behaviour, some companies would take advantage of the situation and do better than pre-pandemic times. Going forward, due to the unpredictability of the business environment and future cash flows, valuations cannot be done by just numbers. Stories of survival, tales of flexibility and the ability to either scale up or scale down at a short notice should be definitely part of valuations. Many things may not remain the same in the aftermath of the outbreak. Business processes will change and so should the way valuations of companies are done. (The writer is Associate Professor, Amity University, Noida)

**DELHI GOVERNMENT RE-TESTED 30 SAMPLES FROM RML HOSPITAL WHICH WERE DECLARED COVID-19 POSITIVE. THE RESULTS OF 12 SAMPLES WERE NEGATIVE. —AAP SPOKESPERSON RAGHAV CHADHA**

**POINTCOUNTERPOINT**



**IT IS NOT RIGHT TO DO POLITICS OVER THE COVID-19 SITUATION IN DELHI AS IT WEAKENS THE FIGHT AGAINST THE DISEASE. —UNION HEALTH MINISTER HARSH VARDHAN**

# Give back to 'city makers'

The absorption of jobless migrant workers in newer fiscal activities with dignity would significantly depend on the nature and type of Government policies put in place to jumpstart economies of cities



ARJUN KUMAR

Symmetric to global trends, COVID-19 has had multi-dimensional impacts on the Indian economy and society. Amid rising concerns over the lives and livelihoods of the poorer sections of the population due to the nationwide lockdown, the Government announced seemingly bold economic packages. However, with a few exceptions, lack of coordination in the official sphere at the ground level has had appalling consequences, especially on the millions of "city makers", the urban informal workers, who represent a significant share of the workforce and contribute in multiple ways to the economy.

Employed mostly in the unorganised sector and living in informal settlements in cities, they have borne the major brunt of the lockdown. They have no job contracts, no regular work, are often employed casually and are without any social safety nets to support them and their families during exigencies. Moreover, their livelihood opportunities are constrained by multiple barriers that include deplorable housing conditions, inadequacies of urban services, in-built socio-economic disparities relating to caste and gender and also the policies and practices of governments.

**The challenges during the lockdown:** An IMPRI survey to understand the impact of the lockdown on the lives of migrant workers revealed that almost three-fourth of the 3,121 respondents from over 50 cities of India were engaged in informal employment, i.e. daily wage work, petty trades/business and as temporary workers without any social security benefits. It was found that six out of 10 workers had lost their jobs during the lockdown, with unemployment being highest among the casual labourers and self-employed respondents. A whopping 74 per cent of the casual labourers lost their jobs while 67 per cent of the self-employed workers could not pursue their economic activities due to the lockdown.

The workers, who had no other option but to remain confined within their houses without any work, could neither realistically practise social distancing, nor could they afford it. The inability to earn during the shutdown translated into 54 per cent of the people being unable to pay rent for their accommodation.

The loss of jobs had a spillover impact on the education of children, too, as most city-makers send their offspring to Government schools. In the prevailing new normal of online teaching methods and reliance on digital modes of learning, education has become a distant dream for the children of migrant labourers because they have no smartphones for accessing such education, forget about computers.

With 88 per cent of the city makers depending on household income, savings, financial help from relatives and friends and so on, for meeting their health-related expenditure, this temporary job loss has added to their anxieties that any kind of health emergency, including COVID-19, would exacerbate.

**What they want:** Quite understandably, most people want to return to work and almost three-fourth of the respondents said that they would join the same job in which they were engaged prior to the lockdown, if possible. In other words, this loss of jobs or livelihood options was considered as a temporary phenomenon.

However, the absorption of jobless migrant workers in newer fiscal activities with dignity would significantly depend on the nature and type of Government policies put in place to jump-

**“ IN THE US, A SUM OF \$300-\$400 IS BEING GIVEN WEEKLY TO THE UNEMPLOYED AS AN ALLOWANCE. THEREFORE, TO ENSURE A DIGNIFIED ASSISTANCE TO THE POOR, THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA CAN AFFORD TO GIVE \$1 (ABOUT ₹75) A DAY TO EACH POOR PERSON. IF WE GIVE ₹2,000 PER MONTH ASSISTANCE TO 12 CRORE PEOPLE (THE BOTTOM QUARTILE POPULATION IN THE URBAN ECONOMIC LADDER), IT WILL TRANSLATE TO ₹24,000 CRORE A MONTH AND ₹72,000 CRORE FOR THREE MONTHS. THIS IS CERTAINLY DOABLE**



start economies of cities. This can mostly be done by providing boosts to local businesses and small and micro-enterprises.

**The challenges:** A defining challenge for devising appropriate mitigating policies for the city makers is the lack of data about them both prior to and during any kind of emergency. So, preparedness and early action by the communities are essential. To benefit from any Central and State Government relief measures — both cash and non-cash — people must possess Government documents (ration card, Aadhaar card), bank account and be enrolled in different Government welfare schemes and so on.

The survey revealed that coverage of and eligibility for Government support programmes was a major concern, as evident from the possession status of various important documents by the respondents.

About 23 per cent of the respondents did not have ration cards, 32 per cent did not have zero-balance Jan Dhan bank accounts and on an average only one out of 10 respondents were covered under the Government of India's flagship public health as well as life insurance schemes — Ayushman Bharat, PM Jeevan Jyoti Bima and PM Suraksha Bima Yojna.

About 65 per cent of the surveyed respondents were aware of the AarogyaSetu App and among them 62 per cent reported use of the app. Only 38 per cent respondents were aware of State WhatsApp helplines. For other apps and e-initiatives, the awareness levels of the respondents were very poor. Roughly about 20-30 per cent of the respondents were aware of State e-coupons for rations, State e-pass or other different State apps and use of these apps among them turned out to be even more pathetic.

Lack of access to smartphones and unstable internet connectivity were the major impediments in using the apps and portals.

Regarding their awareness on eligibility for Government support programmes, only 37 per cent of the respondents thought that they were eligible for benefits under the Pradhan Mantri Gareeb Kalyan Yojana (having an outlay of ₹20 lakh crore for the COVID-19 response). However, only 34 per cent of the respondents could avail benefits like cash transfers and free ration under this scheme.

**The solutions:** In the light of the above evidence, it becomes extremely important to think of precise policy improvements to tide over the crisis. To start with, the stringent Aadhaar-requirements for accessing different schemes must be relaxed for at least the next six months. Another option could be a job assurance programme that would give needy households livelihood security during health crises.

Essentially, the COVID-19 crisis requires extremely localised and coordinated responses. So, city governments and their elected representatives should decide on vigorous delivery of basic urban services that might be the most effective in their contexts. Financially-empowered city governments with clear functional domain and adequate institutional capacity can respond rapidly and contain the outbreak of COVID-19.

It is equally important to improve and expand the coverage of the Public Distribution System (PDS). Bridging the awareness gap regarding available Government support programmes, especially the PDS, through timely and reliable information and expanding the coverage of such programmes to the needy but non-registered segments via certain temporary forms of authentication as alternatives, can be very useful.

The last Economic Survey (2019-20) spoke of "Thalinoomics", which says that a good vegetarian and non-vegetarian platter costs a minimum of ₹25 minimum and ₹40, respectively. Therefore, in order to ensure that the

poorest sections of the population are able to fulfil their dietary requirements, each identified needy person must be provided with a dollar a day (around ₹2,000 per month).

Further, for everyone to be vigilant about the spread of COVID-19, digital literacy for children belonging to poor families, and smooth transfer of digital payment of welfare schemes, poor households should be provided an Android phone either for free or at a subsidised rate through PDS shops. In addition, the private sector (under the CSR component) should come forward and provide free SIM and data coupons to Below Poverty Line households. It is the most opportune time to ensure digital literacy among the people.

In the US, \$300-\$400 are being given weekly to the unemployed as an allowance. Therefore, to ensure a dignified assistance to the poor, the Government of India can afford to give \$1 (about ₹75) a day to each poor person. If we give ₹2,000 per month assistance to 12 crore people (the bottom quartile population in the urban economic ladder), it will translate to ₹24,000 crore a month and ₹72,000 crore for three months. This is certainly doable.

Moreover, if we can give an Android phone in a graded manner to around five crore people (prioritising the elderly, women and children going to Government schools) in the cities, it would amount to around ₹30,000 crore (cost per handset around ₹6,000). Overall, this would amount to ₹100,000 crore and would be crucial as India moves into the "unlock" phase. Such provisioning is certainly doable and would just need a reorientation of the Budget 2020-21. And to this, the ₹35 lakh crore worth of forex reserves could be rightly utilised to pay for the war against COVID-19, as it would help distribute the pain similar to the Keynesian tenets during World War-II and create a better society. (The writer is Director, IMPRI)

# Enlarge role of local govts in handling crisis

The lockdown exit plan will gradually give way to decentralised responsibilities to panchayats and municipalities. The sooner this shift takes place the better it will be



VN ALOK

Given the seriousness of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Government imposed a nationwide lockdown by invoking provisions of the National Disaster Management Act, 2005 (DM Act). The law was enacted by invoking entry number 23, namely, "Social Security and Social Insurance; Employment and Unemployment" in the Concurrent List of the Constitution. Hence, it empowers Union and State Governments to frame rules and issue

executive orders. In fact, the subject "disaster management" is not specifically mentioned in all the three lists of the Seventh Schedule of the Constitution. Therefore, the Parliament exercised its power to enact a law on the subject.

Other entries like "Public Order" and "Public Health" were included in the State List when the Constitution was framed. Further, consequent upon the 73rd and 74th Amendments to the Constitution in 1993, "Public Health" found place in the 11th and 12th Schedules. As a result, panchayats and municipalities have been assigned civic powers to render "public health" to citizens in their respective jurisdictions.

Rightly so, as democratic and cooperative organisations at the local level are arguably the best to render preventive and prophylactic measures like inoculation and vaccination. The

main function of these local self-governments is to make the people understand what change or innovation benefits them, why it does so and how it can be introduced. It is for the community to participate in all the activities which lead to such change or innovation.

Panchayats and municipalities were brought into the statute book to promote better living for the community with the active participation of the community. Here, the word "community" means a local society in a geographical rural or urban area, cutting across caste, religious and economic differences.

Ironically, these key institutions have not found their rightful place in the DM Act. A passing reference is made to "local authorities" under Section 41 of the DM Act. As per the section, these panchayats, municipalities and cantonment boards are

mandated to carry out "relief, rehabilitation and reconstruction activities" only under the "directions of the District Authority." The DM Act stipulates, under Section 25, the setting up of a "District Disaster Management Authority" under the stewardship of a District Collector/Magistrate, who is assisted by the chairperson of the district council in the capacity of co-chairperson of the district authority.

Further, Section 31 of the DM Act provides for a "plan" by the district authority in consultation with local authorities subject to approval by the State. The provision is akin to Article 243 ZD, a mandatory constitutional provision, which envisages a district planning committee (DPC) for spatial planning, infrastructure development and environmental conservation.

States have given the provision of DPC in their respective Acts but seem to be reluctant to make them

operational. As a result, the process of decentralised planning is hampered and associated capacity-development is completely denied.

On the other hand, the DM Act is unambiguous in assigning powers to Union and State Governments. Section 62 of the Act stipulates extraordinary powers to the Centre by which any authority in Union Ministries, statutory bodies and State Governments is bound to take directions from the nodal Central Ministry. In addition, a national plan is drawn up under Section 11.

At the State level, under Section 14, a State Disaster Management Authority is required under the chairmanship of the Chief Minister of the State. This authority is assisted by a State Executive Committee headed by the Chief Secretary of the State. The committee prepares the State Disaster Management Plan after following the

guidelines of the National Authority and a select consultation with the district and local authorities.

Penal provisions in Chapter 10 of the DM Act pave the way for security personnel to take coercive measures against offenders. However, medical professionals are not covered under this provision. Recent incidents of stone pelting and misbehaviour with doctors and nurses compelled the Government to introduce penal provisions protecting healthcare personnel and their property against violence. For the purpose, an Ordinance was promulgated on April 22 to amend the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897 in the light of the current pandemic. This could be a permanent provision to maintain the morale of the healthcare professional and discipline miscreants.

It may be observed that the pandemic till date is being controlled through centralised institutional

arrangements with remarkable cooperation of all State Governments and public servants and security forces have been enforcing the lockdown effectively. The lockdown exit plan will gradually give way to decentralised responsibilities to panchayats and municipalities. The sooner this shift takes place the better it will be.

The Government has prominently pronounced the role of local self-governments to combat COVID-19, which can only be prevented by changing human attitudes and behaviours. Local governments and the community are best placed to bring this change and inculcate social distancing on a sustainable basis. Hence, the role of local governments must be prominent, at least, in the DM Act.

(The writer is faculty, Indian Institute of Public Administration, New Delhi. The views expressed are personal)

CAPSULE



**Sun Pharma initiates clinical trials for COVID-19 treatment drug**

**New Delhi:** Drug major Sun Pharmaceutical Industries on Friday said it has commenced phase-2 clinical trials on AQCH, a plant-derived drug, for potential treatment of COVID-19. The company received approval from the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) for conducting the trials of the phytopharmaceutical drug in April this year, Sun Pharma said in a statement. "The clinical trials will be conducted across 12 centres in India on 210 patients. The treatment duration for patients will be 10 days. The results of the clinical trials are expected by October 2020," it added. Human safety study of AQCH has already been completed and the drug has been found safe at the recommended dose for phase-2 study, Sun Pharma said. "This is the first phytopharmaceutical drug approved for clinical trials by the DCGI as a potential treatment for COVID-19. AQCH has shown anti-SARS-CoV-2 effects in in-vitro studies conducted in collaboration with ICGEB, Italy," Sun Pharma MD Dilip Shangkhi said.

**Mahindra Finance**

**Mahindra Finance to raise up to Rs 86 cr via NCDs**

**New Delhi:** Mahindra & Mahindra Financial Services Ltd (Mahindra Finance) on Friday said it will raise up to Rs 86 crore through issuance of debt securities. "A meeting of the duly authorised committee was held today, i.e. on 5th June, 2020, approving the allotment of 860 secured redeemable principal protected non-convertible market linked debentures (NCDs) aggregating to Rs 86 crore," the company said in a BSE filing. Face value of the NCDs will be Rs 10,00,000 each, aggregating to Rs 86 crore. The maturity tenure of the securities is 731 days from the deemed date of allotment, it added. Mahindra Finance stock traded at Rs 153.75 on the BSE, up 3.33 per cent over previous close.



**Kiran Shaw named EY World Entrepreneur**

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**  
Biocon Executive Chairperson Kiran Mazumdar-Shaw has been named EY World Entrepreneur of the Year 2020 at a virtual award ceremony, the company said in a statement. She was selected from among 46 Entrepreneur of the Year country award winners from 41 countries and territories, it added. "I am truly honoured to receive the prestigious EY World Entrepreneur of the Year Award 2020. At its core, entrepreneurship is about solving problems. The greatest opportunities often arise at the toughest times, and that's been my experience throughout my entrepreneurial journey," Mazumdar-Shaw said.

**SBI reports four-fold jump in Q4 profit**

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

The country's largest lender SBI on Friday reported over four-fold jump in standalone net profit at Rs 3,580.81 crore for March quarter 2019-20. State Bank of India (SBI) had registered a profit of Rs 838.4 crore during January-March period of 2018-19, the lender said in a regulatory filing. Income of the bank during March quarter of the last financial year rose to Rs 76,027.51 crore from Rs 75,670.5 crore in the same period of 2018-19, SBI said. On the asset front, gross non performing assets (NPAs) of the bank improved at 6.15 per cent of gross advances as on March 31, 2020 as against 7.53 per cent by the same period of 2019. Net NPA or bad loans stood at 2.23 per cent as on March



**State Bank of India (SBI) had registered a profit of Rs 838.4 crore during January-March period of 2018-19**

31, 2020 as compared to 3.01 per cent by the year-ago same period. SBI stock was trading at Rs 178.70 on the BSE, up 2.67 per cent from the previous close.

**Govt clear about privatisation of PSUs: Sanyal**

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

The government is clear and unapologetic about privatisation of public sector enterprises as part of reforms, Principal Economic Advisor Sanjeev Sanyal said on Friday. Last month, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had announced that there will be a maximum of four public sector companies in strategic sectors while state-owned firms in other segments will eventually be privatised. This will be part of a new coherent Public Sector Enterprises Policy to be formulated to push reforms in central public sector enterprises (CPSEs), she had said while announcing the fifth and last tranche of over Rs 20 lakh crore 'Amtmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan' package.



**Sensex rallies 307 pts; SBI soars over 7 pc post Q4 show**

**PNS ■ MUMBAI**

Equity benchmark Sensex rallied 307 points on Friday, propelled by gains in index-heavyweights HDFC Bank, ICICI Bank and SBI. After hitting a high of 34,405.43, the 30-share index settled 306.54 points or 0.90 per cent higher at 34,287.24. Similarly, the NSE Nifty rose 113.05 points or 1.13 per cent to 10,142.15.

**After hitting a high of 34,405.43, the 30-share index settled 306.54 points or 0.90 per cent higher at 34,287.24**

State Bank of India (SBI) was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, surging around 8 per cent, after the country's largest lender reported an over four-fold jump in standalone net profit at Rs 3,580.81 crore for the March quarter. Tata Steel, Bajaj Finance, HDFC Bank, NTPC, Axis Bank and ICICI Bank also ended with firm gains. On the other hand, TCS, HUL, Bajaj Auto and Infosys were among the laggards. Reliance Industries (RIL) succumbed to profit-booking, ending flat after touching its

one-year high in intra-day trade. The company announced sale of 1.85 per cent stake in its digital unit Jio Platforms to Abu Dhabi-based sovereign investor Mubadala for Rs 9,093.60 crore. According to traders, besides stock-specific action, persistent foreign fund inflows and positive cues from global markets led to bullish sentiment here. "The current week has been a good one for the global markets as major frontline markets posted a strong rally," said Sanjeev Zarbade, VP PCG Research, Kotak Securities.

**IMF asks Pak to freeze govt employees' salaries**

**PNS ■ ISLAMABAD**

The IMF has asked cash-strapped Pakistan to freeze salaries of government employees and adhere to the fiscal consolidation path by showing a nominal primary deficit in the new budget due to the unsustainable public debt that is set to hit 90 per cent of the total value of the national economy. Pakistan is finding it hard to concede to the two demands but the IMF is insisting that the country should continue to follow the fiscal consolidation path due to the high and unsustainable public debt, the Express Tribune reported on Friday. Owing to the prevailing tight fiscal situation, growing public debt and Pakistan's decision to seek debt relief from G-20 countries, the International Monetary Fund has asked Islamabad to freeze salaries of government employees, the daily reported, citing sources in the Ministry of Finance.

**Centre to pick 5 new blocks with all clearances for auction**

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

The Centre has asked each state having mineral resources to identify at least five new mining projects for auction with pre-embedded clearance on a pilot basis with a view to expediting the sale process as well as operationalisation of the blocks. The Mines Ministry has released guidelines for the auction of mineral blocks with pre-embedded clearances as it explores ways to address the key issue of delay in mining production due to lack of various approvals such as forest and environment permissions. The identified blocks would be auctioned along with other blocks without pre-embedded clearances.



**The identified blocks would be auctioned along with other blocks without pre-embedded clearances**

Under the guidelines, the Centre has asked states to set up a project monitoring unit (PMU) to complete the preparatory work for obtaining requisite clearances, approvals and related work. The unit would obtain all the clearances for starting a mining project. Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman last month had announced various structural reforms in the mining sector as part of the over Rs 20 lakh crore stimulus package to boost growth and job creation. She had announced the auction of 500 blocks and introduction of a seamless composite exploration-cum-mining-cum-production regime. In the guidelines on the auction of mining blocks,

the mines ministry said, "It has been decided that states should implement this mechanism on pilot basis in respect of identified mineral blocks, which could be auctioned with pre-embedded clearances... Each state should identify at least five mineral blocks for auction with pre-embedded clearance."

**Alkem Laboratories Q4 net profit up 12 pc at Rs 191.54 cr**

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

Drug firm Alkem Laboratories on Friday reported a 12.34 per cent rise in consolidated net profit to Rs 191.54 crore for the quarter ended on March 31, 2020. The company had posted a net profit of Rs 170.50 crore for the corresponding period of previous fiscal, Alkem Laboratories said in a BSE filing.



Revenue from operations also rose to Rs 2,048.99 crore for the quarter under consid-

eration as against Rs 1,853.03 crore for the same period year ago, it added. Net profit for the fiscal ended March 2020 stood at Rs 1,149.31 crore as against Rs 773.64 crore for 2018-19, Alkem Labs said. The company posted Rs 8,344.36 crore as revenue from operations for 2019-20. It was Rs 7,357.19 crore for the year ago fiscal, it added.

**Rupee settles on a flat note, slips 1p to 75.58 against dollar**

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

The rupee surrendered all intra-day gains to provisionally close on a flat note at 75.58 against the US dollar on Friday as investors looked for cues to move forward and take positions. Forex traders said positive domestic equities, sustained foreign fund flows, revival of business activities and weak US dollar supported the local unit, but there were still a slew of risks, including US-China trade tiff, that weighed on the currency. At the interbank forex market, the rupee opened strong

at 75.38, but later pared gains and finally settled at 75.58 against the US dollar, down 1 paisa over its last close of 75.57. "The USD/INR spot has been trading in a very tight range 75-75.65 as investors await catalyst to move forward and take positions," said Rahul Gupta, Head of Research- Currency, Emkay Global Financial Services. Currently, the spot is in indecisive market and going forward the focus will be on Jio-Mubadala deal related dollar flows, US-China trade spat and whether there is a second wave of infection.

**MSMEs facing difficulties in accessing relief packages: SSI**

**PNS ■ BENGALURU**

MSMEs are seriously concerned about the implementation of the emergency COVID-19-related packages meant as relief for industry as they face innumerable difficulties in accessing benefits at the level of banks, according to Karnataka Small Scale Industries Association (KASSIA). For one, guidelines issued under the Emergency Credit Link Guarantee Scheme (ECLGS) are not uniform and different banks have framed their own guidelines leading to confusion and hardship in making use of the schemes at a time when industries are in dire straits, KASSIA President R Raju said in a statement. The same confusion exists with regard to moratorium on



the repayment of installments and interest as well as other compliances. While some banks may be transparent and forthcoming, a number of others are unsure and place hurdles in the way of the MSME customers in accessing these benefits, he said. KASSIA has received a number of complaints and representations from its members about the difficulties in

accessing the schemes. "We, therefore, would like to seriously urge the government to immediately ensure that uniform guidelines are issued and followed by all the Banks and other institutions as otherwise a large number of MSMEs, accounting for approximately 30-35 per cent of the units, may have no option but to shut down for want of succour, Raju added.

**Calls for moratorium on import of natural rubber**

**PNS ■ COIMBATORE**

The United Planters Association of Southern India (UPASI) on Friday sought an immediate moratorium on natural rubber (NR) import for a minimum period of two years. The NR sector has been in a crisis due to the fall in prices over the last eight years. The prices have been far below production cost, the reason being unrestricted surge in cheap imports into the country from South-East Asian regions, UPASI president AL RM Nagappan said in a letter to the Union Commerce and Industry and Railways Minister Piyush Goyal. The spread of COVID-19 pandemic and the consequent



lockdown turned out to be a double whammy as NR production came to a grinding halt and the present situation is threatening the existence of the sector, he claimed. The opening stock of NR in the country, estimated at 3.4 lakh tonnes [as on April 1, 2020], roughly translates to six months of production, which further reiterates the need to declare a moratorium on import, he said.

**Atlas Cycles shuts ops at last unit**

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

Atlas Cycles - a name that became a synonym for bicycles in India - has shut its last manufacturing unit in Sahibabad, just outside the national capital, citing lack of funds to run the factory. Its CEO N P Singh Rana, however, insists the shutdown is only temporary, and the company will resume operations once it is able to raise around Rs 50 crore by selling surplus land. The company shut the factory on June 3, which ironically was also happened to be the World Bicycle Day. It laid off 431 remaining employees, though Rana insists they continue to be on the roll of the company and will be paid "lay-off wages" upon marking atten-



dance daily. While he did not elaborate on the payment to employees, "lay-off wages" typically equal to 50 per cent of basic salary and dearness allowance. The plant, the biggest in the country, started in 1989. It was

the last operational plant of the Atlas cycle with a monthly production of over two lakh bicycles. Employees claimed the unit was shut without notice. On Wednesday, a notice was pasted on the factory

**CEO N P Singh Rana, however, insists the shutdown is only temporary, and will resume ops**

gates that read: "... the company had been passing through a financial crisis for several years and had exhausted all its funds to keep the factory afloat. But now, there are no funds left. We are facing difficulty in arranging funds for our day-to-day operations. We are also unable to buy raw materials. In these conditions, the management is not in a position to operate the factory."

**PIO pharma boss banned for price-fixing in UK**

**PNS ■ LONDON**

An Indian-origin pharmaceutical industry chief has signed undertakings that ban him from holding a director role at any UK company for the next five years, in connection with his role in companies that were allegedly involved in illegal arrangements such as price-fixing of drugs. Amit Patel, a former director at the pharmaceutical companies Auden McKenzie and Amilco, was the subject of a UK Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) investigation, which concluded with the ban on Thursday. "Company directors have a responsibility to make sure their companies comply with

competition law. And the CMA is determined to protect the public from directors who fail to do so," said Michael Grenfell, the CMA's Executive Director of Enforcement. "Today's action should act as a warning to those in management positions - the CMA will not stand by when your firms break the law and take advantage of customers," he said. From September 2014 to May 2015, when Patel was director at Auden McKenzie, the CMA investigation found that Auden McKenzie and King Pharmaceuticals Ltd had shared out between them the supply of the drug nortriptyline to a large pharmaceutical wholesaler.

**Making workplaces healthier, greener**

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

State-run EESL in partnership with US Agency for International Development's MAITREE program launched an initiative that will pioneer ways to make workplaces healthier and greener. Market Integration and Transformation Program for Energy Efficiency is aimed at accelerating the adoption of cost-effective energy efficiency measures as a standard practice within buildings, and specifically focuses on cooling. MAITREE is a part of the US-India bilateral Partnership between the Ministry of Power and USAID.

## A NEW LEASE OF LIFE?

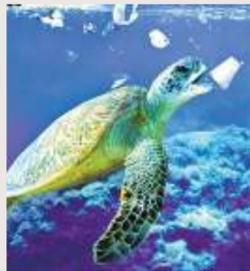
**C**hild: "Tell me the one about the virus again. Then, I'll go to bed. That one's my favourite."

Adult male: "Okay! Snuggle down my boy, though I know that you know full well..."

"It was a world of waste and wonder, poverty and plenty. Back before we understood why hindsight's 2020. You see, the people came up with companies to trade across all lands but they swelled and got much bigger than we ever could have planned. We'd always had our wants but now, it got so quick, you could have anything you dreamed of in a day and with a click. We noticed families had stopped talking. That's not to say they never spoke but the meaning must have melted and the work-life balance broke. The children's eyes grew squarer and every toddler had a phone. They filtered out the imperfections but amid the noise, they felt alone. Every day the skies grew thicker till you couldn't see the stars. So we flew in planes to find them, while down below, we filled our cars. We'd drive around all day in circles. We'd forgotten how to run. We swapped the grass for tarmac, shrunk the parks till there was none. We filled the sea with plastic because our waste was never capped. Until, each day, when you went fishing you'd pull them out already wrapped. While we drank, smoked and gambled, our leaders taught us why it's best to not upset the lobbies, more convenient to die."

"But then, in 2020, a new virus came our way. The governments reacted and told us all to hide away. But while we all were hidden, amidst the fear, people dusted off their instincts. They remembered how to

On this World Environment Day, let's pledge to use this crisis to do things differently and build back a better world that is more sustainable, resilient and inclusive, says Sakshi Sharma



the nefarious normal are in huge numbers."

Delhi-based environmental activist and entrepreneur, Jai Dhar Gupta agrees and says, "Human memory is very short. They won't remember after a while what disaster they have caused to the environment. The basic human nature is to be selfish. We will only be concerned about our economic survival which is at stake now. We will use the fossil fuels at the same rate and will bounce back to the old ways because people don't change that easily." He adds that the subset of people, who are environmentalists, is very small. Their hopes or aspirations don't even matter.

We saw a lot of examples that made it evident that nature was balancing itself as humans were locked indoors — clear water in the Venice canals, pigeon flocked the streets of Connaught Place in Delhi, flamingoes were sighted by hundreds in Mumbai, Gangetic Dolphins were spotted near Kolkata ghats after almost 30 years while resident of Jalandhar, Punjab and its surrounding areas were thrilled with the clear views of Himalayan peaks which weren't visible for decades.

All these incidents have made us reflect on our actions and earth's sustainability. Now that the lockdown is relaxed and later when life gets back on track, will pollution and other man-made disasters resume or is there a sense of realisation among the people? Manu says: "Let's not imagine that this will, in anyway, remain the case, once the lockdown is lifted. We have turned ourselves into reactive zombies, who will again resume the rat race and individualism without giving any conscious thought to these learnings. People who have come to this realisation and will act upon it are a minuscule minority, whereas the ones itching to get back to

our planet," says he.

The question of meeting our current needs without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs is sustainable development. But this is something that we do not pause and think about. Jai Dhar says that of course the right approach is to find a more sustainable way. He adds: "But before looking for solutions let us see what those mistakes are? One of the big problem is that 60 per cent people light their chulha using bio fuel — wood or dried cow dung, which is the largest source of air pollution. How is that going to go away? The people using them are either too poor or live in remote areas and neither the people at large, nor the government seem to try hard to change that. I don't think even our Environment Minister knows what the word 'sustainable' actually means, it is blind leading the blind. Our forest minister has done everything possible to destroy the environment to promote growth. We are compromising on health and government. We have been doing it for years."

Talking about sustainability in the current times, he further asks, "What is it that people are buying in large numbers numbers?" and then answers, "it is the masks and PPE kits. Does anyone of us know how to use and throw plastic masks and PPE kits? How will they decompose? Is their any authority that will regulate the waste that will be produced? Well, these are the questions we

need to ask the government

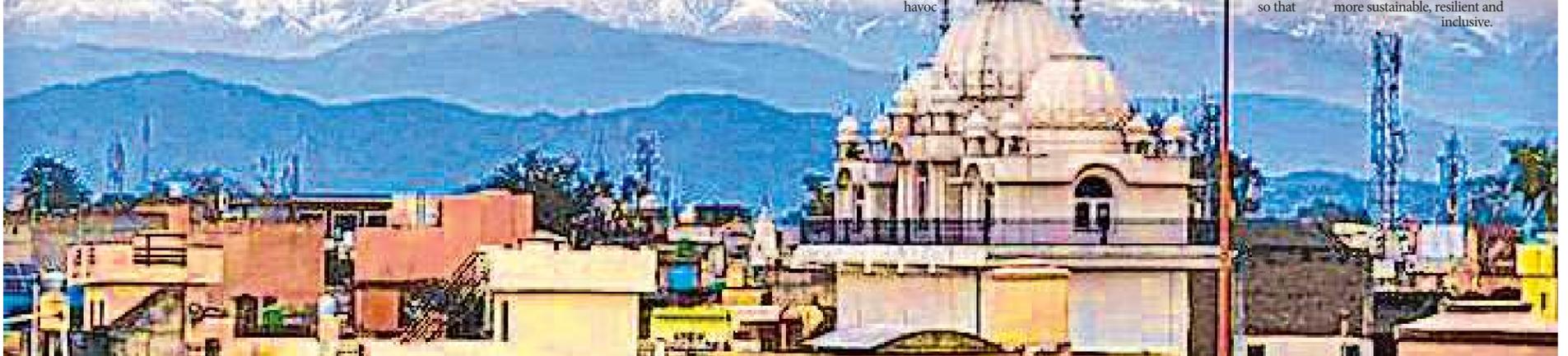
so that

our safety doesn't act as a burden for the environment."

We can make sustainability possible now through a paradigm shift in our concept of development from a greed-based model to a need-based one. We need to revisit what Gandhiji had exhorted — the planet has enough for every man's need but not enough for every man's greed. Manu says, "This concept of development must migrate away from its current anthropocentric viewpoint and encapsulate all life forms and forces that support them. Our model of economics shouldn't be an impediment in the path of ecology, but should protect it. Nations must join forces to promote cleaner forms of energies, reduce the population, destruction of rainforests and dumping of contaminants into our ecosystem."

We can use this crisis to do things differently and understand the power and change that one person can bring about. While Jai Dhar's only ray of hope is today's youth, Manu says that this predicament is born out of our current lifestyles and we must radically and consciously alter it. He adds, "During this crisis, we have witnessed first hand how vehicular and industrial emissions affect our natural systems and what horrors are unleashed by the diabolic animal flesh trade. Thus, we can pledge and join forces to make the necessary lifestyle changes to mitigate the disastrous effects of these industries at least. Finally, I'll quote Gandhiji again, 'Be the change you want to see in the world.'"

Post self-realisation, we need to actively engage other people and transform this into a continuous movement, ensuring that our elections are fought over it so that we build back a better world that is more sustainable, resilient and inclusive.

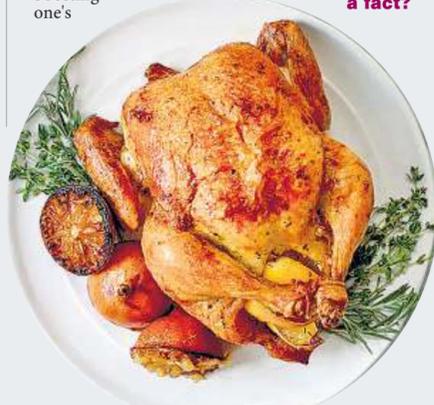


The Coronavirus pandemic has shaken everyone across the world. While doctors, medicare staff, and the police are working hard to fight the pandemic, it is very important for the public to take care of themselves too. That can begin by consuming healthy food for a stronger immune system. Kids below 10 years and the elderly have to be more cautious and maintain a healthy diet to fight the virus. Chicken is something many say, will provide the body with required proteins and help maintain a better immune system. *The Pioneer's* K RAMYA SREE speaks to Anushka Baidur, Senior Dietician, Fortis Hospital, to find out ways to build a stronger immune system by eating chicken, other diets to follow, and more...

## Chicken to boost our immunity

**1) How can we build our immunity by eating chicken? What are the elements that chicken consists that helps boost the immunity of people across all age groups?**

Anushka Baidur: Our immune system has several components like antibodies and immune cells that depend on protein. Hence, protein is a quintessential requirement for our immune system. Chicken being a source of high-quality protein can, therefore, help in boosting one's



immunity. Apart from protein, chicken is also a good source of various other nutrients, like Retinol (an active form of Vitamin A) Vitamin B B3, Vitamin B9, Zinc, etc. that also have some or the other role to play in immune functioning.

**2) Is it advisable to consume chicken during summer since many feel chicken increases the amount of heat production in our body not knowing whether its a myth or a fact?**

Anushka Baidur: There is no scientific evidence stating that chicken intake should be avoided in the summer. Although one needs to take care that it is cooked well to eliminate any chances of stomach infection which can be more prevalent in the summer season.

**3) How much quantity of chicken is advisable to consume in a week and in what form?**

Anushka Baidur: The quantity and frequency of consumption in a week depends on a person's requirement and also activity level. An athlete or a person doing high-intensity workouts can take it more often than a sedentary person. Also as protein intake corresponds to a person's body weight, intake can vary from one person to another. Also, use healthier methods like boiling and grilling rather than deep fat frying.

**4) What are the benefits of having chicken?**

Anushka Baidur: Chicken is a source of high biological value pro-

tein. Adding chicken in the diet can help meet daily protein needs. It helps in faster wound healing due to its high protein and zinc content. Being a good source of niacin it boosts brain function, protects the skin from sun damage, and can ease symptoms of osteoarthritis. Moreover, a bowl of warm chicken soup is comforting and can alleviate cold symptoms as it may contain substances that have anti-inflammatory properties.

**5) If not chicken, what is the substitute food one can consume for their vegetarian diet?**

Anushka Baidur: Chicken is a good source of high biological value, which means it has all the essential amino acids present in it. Vegetarian foods do not have any such source, but a combination of cereal and pulse, e.g. rice and dal together will have all the essential amino acids, making it a complete protein. There are numerous protein sources even in the vegetarian diet like all dals, whole pulses like channa, rajma, green



moong, soya milk, and milk products like paneer, nuts, tofu, etc. It is imperative for a vegetarian to include these sources in their daily diets.

**6) What is the best dish that goes along with chicken?**

Anushka Baidur: Chicken can be paired with wheat/ millet rotis, rice, or even with just a bowl of vegetable salad.

**7) Can you share the diet chart to be followed by**

**kids for a healthier immune system?**

Anushka Baidur: A diet chart is always individualized and can vary from person to person. Hence, there is no 'one size fits all' diet chart even for kids. But for a healthier immunity include protein foods like eggs, chicken, fish, paneer, dal, and pulses, nuts, etc. in their daily diet. Kids can be given a concoction or kadha or kashaya made by boiling onions, tulsi leaves, ginger, and spices like pepper, cumin, coriander, turmeric with some added honey. Ensure adequate vegetable intake in forms acceptable by kids like a palak, methi or drumstick leaves paratha, mixed vegetable and protein cutlets, pasta or noodles made in a healthy way with plenty of added veggies. Nuts and dried fruits like almonds, pistachios, raisins, dates, etc. can be eaten as such or made into milkshakes, chikkis, ladoos, etc. Include 2-3 servings of fruits daily. Maintain good hydration using water, buttermilk, coconut water, traditional beverages like kokum, and bael ka sharbat.

# what's brewing?

## AN ODE TO THE UNSEEN HEROES

**A** heartfelt campaign, aptly titled #HEARTWORK is an emotional ode to people who work behind the scenes.

One of India's favourite potato chip brand, Lay's launched the campaign to share gratitude towards its 'unsung heroes' who have brought joy to millions. The campaign is an ode to each hero in the brand's supply chain who work relentlessly against all odds to ensure the brand brings joy to millions across the country.

The campaign film signifies that each pack of crisps is a celebration of the #HEARTWORK of unseen heroes: Farmers, Factory Workers, Truck Drivers, Distributors, Sales Force, Retailers, and Delivery Executives, whom we don't always get a chance to thank in person. Through this film the brand extends its sincere appreciation and gratitude to them on behalf of the company and every consumer who enjoys the product.

From applauding the Indian farmer who puts in utmost care and love in growing the best quality potatoes to the factory workers, who work day and night to ensure its production. It recognises the efforts of the truck drivers who often drive long miles across the country, to deliver the shipments. And, last but not the least, the film expresses gratitude to the retailers and delivery executives who ensure that the snack reaches the consumer.

Explaining the idea behind the special ode, Dilen Gandhi, Senior Director and Category Head — Foods, PepsiCo India said, "Every step of the journey from farm to finger is filled with countless stories of people who face tough challenges but overcome them with dedicated efforts and with a smile on their face. They might be working behind the scenes, but they are the real heroes of the story. With the #HEARTWORK campaign, we want to extend our sincere gratitude & appreciation to each one of them."

It is thanks to their efforts that LAY'S is able to bring joy to millions of consumers in India.

Ritu Nakra, WPP India Lead — PepsiCo Foods said "#Heartwork is our latest endeavour acknowledging the tireless spirit of all the people who are behind the scenes who have ensured the uninterrupted supply of LAY'S to the consumers." She added, "This community spirit inspired Team WPP to create a warm and touching story of deep gratitude. LAY'S helps build and celebrate connections and with this film we expand the narrative of heartfelt connections to the unsung heroes."

The brand works with over 24,000 farmers, 4,300 distributors, 2,400 retailers, and 5,000 sales staff in India.



## Home barista: The fourth wave of coffee culture

**F**rom the beginning of global trade to our cozy coffee houses, a cup of coffee has never just been only a "cup of coffee". The history behind that one-cup-of-humble brew is as rich as the beverage itself.

Today coffee culture has evolved; the pandemic has altered the everyday routine. Does this mean that there has been a change in the beverage that we drink every morning and after every meeting? Indeed the fourth wave of the coffee culture has come, believe Samayesh Khanna and Rahul Jain, co-founders of Beany Coffee.

"A coffee experience, which will be uncompromised, which will be available in an instant and an experience which will go where ever, you go. Home barista is what will be the fourth wave of coffee, where sitting at the comfort of your home without any equipment you can enjoy a freshly brewed coffee," says Khanna.

The urgency of curating things on your own to be



safe has led to this change across cultures. Why would someone risk going to a cafe and drinking at a spot where he/she is not comfortable sitting, why would someone order a latte with a risk of the glass being touched by several people. Being this paranoid for that one cup can easily trigger mental wellness, he adds.

"It's an exciting time for coffee in India, it's growing and lively, and it brings opportunity for a country to evolve in a more cultured way. Brewing a coffee at your house and making your kids learn the same and passing it on to generations will be an evolution,"

feels Jain. Adding, "Enjoying and brewing your delicious coffee is not difficult; it is almost therapeutic; with innovation, you can now begin each day with a cup of freshly brewed coffee."

A lot of coffee drinkers have their equipment at home; they either use a pour-over Chemex or a French press for their perfect cup of coffee or these days you can get involved with pour-over or dip coffee in the single-serve avatar and can become your home barista.

How easy the world be if you can soak, stir and squeeze your freshly

brewed single serve coffee or just tear, anchor and brew the perfect anchor coffee into your mug.

"Today the knowledge and the eagerness to learn have progressed intensely, and people are keen to learn new techniques or follow new ways of working on things. People have increasingly noticed the rise in the coffee culture, and they all have been intrigued to know how can they do it on their own," states Jain.

Coffee shops/cafes have turned into a social hub today in most of the city life, where people gather to share ideas and stories. They have become part of daily routine, and people feel the importance of social interaction and exchange in such places as viable.

"The beverage offers a space for dialogue, art, culture, promotion, business deal, relationship and much more. Bringing that culture to your homes will only give rise to an open culture of trusting your instincts while you sit at home and sip your favourite coffee," concludes Khanna.



### FUN

#### ARCHIE



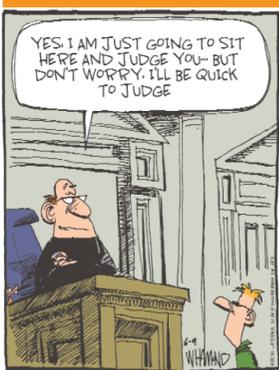
#### CALVIN AND HOBBS



#### GARFIELD



#### REALITY CHECK



#### SPEED BUMP



#### CROSSWORD



#### NANCY



#### SUDOKU

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6								1
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**Yesterday's solution**

4	6	5	8	2	9	1	3	7
2	7	1	6	4	3	5	9	8
3	9	8	5	7	1	2	4	6
5	2	9	4	6	8	7	1	3
7	3	6	1	9	5	8	2	4
1	8	4	2	3	7	6	5	9
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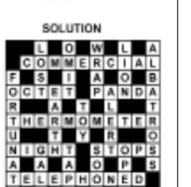
- Rules**
- Each row and column can contain each number (1 to 9) exactly once.
  - The sum of all numbers in any row or column must equal 45.

#### ACROSS

- Air-holes in your nose
- Become larger
- A spider's trap
- Speaks
- The body's pump
- Uncles' wives
- Took away illegally
- Hot coals left from a fire
- Meat from a cow
- Unexpectedly, without warning

#### DOWN

- A frightening dream
- Small seat without a back
- A feeling that makes you want to scratch
- Topic
- A chopping tool
- An insect that flutters by
- Baby cats
- Sea
- Second-hand
- A month



AFP ■ LIVERPOOL

Premier League leaders Liverpool could claim a first title for 30 years at Anfield after the initial batch of fixtures of the restart was announced on Friday.

Jürgen Klopp's men, with a commanding 25-point lead at the top of the table, were just two wins away from clinching the title before coronavirus forced the suspension of football in March.

Liverpool's first match back is against Everton on June 21. The Merseyside derby is due to take place at Goodison Park, less than a mile from Anfield, but a venue has not been confirmed by the Premier League.

Crystal Palace will then visit Anfield three days later.

Wins in both of those matches would guarantee Liverpool's first English top-flight title since 1990.

But if Manchester City lose at home to Arsenal on June 17, the Reds would be champions if they beat Everton.

Liverpool City Council's safety advisory group will meet next week to make a decision on whether the game can go ahead at Goodison or should be moved to a neutral venue.

All remaining 92 Premier League games this season will be played behind closed doors, but there are fears that hosting the game in Liverpool could encourage supporters to congregate around stadiums.

Palace's trip to Anfield will kick off at 2015 local time (1915 GMT).



## LIVERPOOL COULD WIN TITLE AT ANFIELD

Premier League announce schedule for first three match days

The only other match that could be moved to a neutral venue from the first three rounds of fixtures is Liverpool's visit to City on July 2.

The mayor of Liverpool, Joe Anderson, voiced fears that "there would be many thousands of people who would

turn up outside Anfield" on the day Liverpool's long wait for a league title was ended.

That has been disputed by the club, who said they have engaged with supporters' groups to make sure social-distancing guidelines are followed. Aston Villa will host

Sheffield United in the first match of *Project Restart*, followed by Arsenal's trip to City on June 17.

Manchester United's visit to Tottenham will spearhead the first full round of matches spread over four days from June 19 to 22.

Premier League chief executive Richard Masters said: "We know it won't be the same without our loyal supporters in stadiums but, together with our broadcast partners, we are able to ensure fans can watch or listen to each match live from home."

"I am delighted we are able to take another positive step towards the season returning in just under two weeks' time," he added.

## Werner close to Chelsea move



AFP ■ LONDON

Chelsea are closing in on a deal to sign striker Timo Werner from RB Leipzig, British media reported on Thursday.

The 24-year-old had been thought to be attracting interest from Premier League champions-elect Liverpool but it appears Chelsea have in fact met the German's reported release clause of some £53 million (\$67 million).

Were Chelsea to bring Werner to Stamford Bridge it would be a major feather in the cap of the west London club.

For the past year there has been speculation linking Werner with a move to Anfield but time appears to be running out for the Reds, with the forward's release clause expiring on June 15 — two days before the Premier League is set to restart.

The Germany international has scored 31 goals for Leipzig in all competitions.

Chelsea have already agreed a deal to sign Ajax winger Hakim Ziyech.

## Barca confident Messi can face Mallorca

AFP ■ BARCELONA

Lionel Messi has sustained a "minor" thigh injury, but Barcelona remain confident he will be fit for the team's first game back against Mallorca on June 13, the club said on Friday.

Messi has not trained with the rest of the squad since Tuesday after working separately in the gym on both Wednesday and Friday, while on Thursday all the players were given the day off.

Barcelona said Messi should return to training "in a few days' time", but his absence raises doubts over his fitness ahead of the trip to Mallorca.

Like all La Liga teams, Barca will have had only 10 days to train together when competitive matches resume on June 11, following the



three-month break due to the coronavirus pandemic.

"Leo Messi has a minor right quadriceps injury and trained in isolation, doing specific exercises to avoid unne-

cessary risks with just eight days remaining before Barca finally get back to playing matches," a club statement read.

"He should be able to rejoin his team-mates in a few days' time."

Messi has endured an injury-interrupted season. The 32-year-old was out for six weeks between August and September with a calf injury and then at the end of September missed another week with a problem in his left thigh.

Barca added the team will train on the pitch at Camp Nou on Saturday as coach Quique Setien "works to get his players ready for the return to football, but with games being played behind closed doors".

## Barty wary of US Open return

SYDNEY

World number one Ashleigh Barty voiced caution on Friday about resuming tennis too soon, saying she needed more information before committing to the US Open in August. The Australian, who surged to the top of the rankings last year and has stayed there since, said it was not just her but her entire team she must consider in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic. "It's exciting that tennis is being talked about again and things are moving in the right direction for us to start competing," she told the *Sydney Morning Herald*. "But I'd need to understand all of the information and advice from the WTA and the USTA before making a decision on the US events." Barty said she is concerned about travel exemptions for her support staff. While players could be exempt from a 14-day quarantine period, it remains unclear whether that also applies to their teams. "It's not just me, it's my team I have to consider," she said.

## Paes wants to complete 100 Slam appearances

NEW DELHI (PTI)

Leander Paes is just three shy of completing a century of Grand Slam appearances but is now unsure whether uncertainty caused by Covid-19 pandemic will allow him to complete the coveted milestone or for that matter compete at the next year's Tokyo Olympics.

Paes had announced that 2020 would be his last season as a professional player but his plan to bid adieu on a high with a record eight appearance at the Olympics, was stalled by the pandemic, which has wrecked the sporting calendar.

"Olympics is still far away. As of now, I find it difficult to believe that sports will start by July or August. Would it start October or November, who knows. But my team and I are very well prepared that when the lockdown opens up, we will reevaluate then and look at *One Last Roar* as season whether we should look at 2021 or not," Paes told table tennis player Mudit Dani on his chat show *Sportlight*.



Further talking about his plans, Paes said there one piece of statistics he would like to get.

"I have played 97 Grand Slams so far and if I play 3 more, it will be 100 so that moves me. Also getting to the eighth Olympics to make sure India is forever on the top as the most number of Olympics played by a tennis player. That is the benchmark I would like to push. But even if I don't get there, still I'm happy with what I've done and the career I have," he said.

## India to host 2022 AFC Women's Asian Cup

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Asian Football Confederation has awarded the hosting rights of the 2022 Women's Asian Cup to India for the first time since 1979.

In a letter to the All India Football Federation, Dato Windsor John, General Secretary, AFC wrote: "The Committee awarded the hosting rights of the AFC Women's Asian Cup 2022 Finals to the All India Football Federation."

The tournament will likely be held in the second half of the year. In the 1979 edition, India had finished as runners-up.

"I need to thank the Asian Football Confederation for finding us suitable to host the AFC Women's Asian Cup in 2022," AIFF President, Praful Patel said. "The tournament will galvanise the aspiring women players and bring in a holistic social revolution as far as women's football in the country is concerned," he added.

## AIFF invites bids for new I-League clubs

NEW DELHI: The All India Football Federation (AIFF) on Friday invited bids for new clubs who would take part in the Hero I-League from 2020-21.

The bids have been invited from non-Hero I-League cities and includes names of several cities like New Delhi, Ranchi, Jaipur, Jodhpur, Bhopal, Lucknow and Ahmedabad, amongst others, according to an AIFF media release.

Prospective owners will be

able to purchase the invitation to tender from the Football House in Delhi between June 10 and June 20 upon payment of ₹4 lakh.

The previous season of the I-League saw 11 clubs, including AIFF's developmental outfit Indian Arrows, take part in the competition.

However, champions Mohun Bagan are set to merge with ATK and will play in the Indian Super League (ISL) next season.

## Coppa Italia semis on June 12-13

MILAN: Italian football will resume with the second legs of the Italian Cup semifinals on June 12 and 13.

Sports Minister Vincenzo Spadafora announced on Thursday that the competition can resume one day earlier than previously scheduled.

While league officials had

not yet officially released the schedule, Juventus is expected to host AC Milan on June 12 followed by Napoli vs Inter Milan a day later.

Juventus and Milan drew 1-1 in the first leg while Napoli beat Inter 1-0. The final is scheduled for June 17.



## ICC should wait for a 'suitable time' to host T20 WC: Akram

PTI ■ KARACHI

Pakistan pace legend Wasim Akram cannot visualise a T20 World Cup happening behind closed doors and believes the ICC should wait for a "suitable time" to host the big-ticket event after the Covid-19 pandemic subsides.

"Personally, I don't think it's a good idea. I mean, how could you have a cricket World Cup without spectators," Akram told *The News* on Thursday.

"A World Cup is all about big crowds, spectators coming from all parts of the globe to support their teams. It's all about atmosphere and you cannot get it behind closed doors," he said.

"So I believe that they (ICC) should wait for a more suitable time and once this pandemic subsides and restrictions are eased then we can have a proper World Cup," he said.

## PCB to seek Govt clearance for prep camp

PTI ■ KARACHI

The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) will seek Government clearance before setting up a training camp for its players to prepare for the tour of England in July amid the rising threat of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Top PCB officials are busy formulating a plan to make the training camp possible at a time when the cases and deaths from Covid-19 are on the rise in Pakistan.

"Different plans are being looked at but the most important thing is that the board will have to get the final nod from the Government before it goes ahead with the tour to England or even the training camp," an official in the board said.

The High Performance Centre in Lahore where the board is planning to keep the players and officials does not have the capacity to house 20 players at one time and this is causing a big



problem for the officials. "Head coach and chief selector, Misbah-ul-Haq understandably wants at least 25 players in the training camp

and a list is being finalised but before it is announced the board wants to create a proper bio-secure environment at the high performance centre so that everyone is safe from Covid-19," the official said.

The players and officials, once they move into the high performance centre, will not be allowed to go out or meet anyone including their family members because of the bio-security measures.

A reliable source in the board said some players had told Misbah that they would prefer to have a short training camp in Lahore.

"Some players are reluctant to stay away for a three-week period in Lahore and then again for more than two months in the UK," the source said. The board has said that it has left it on the players to decide whether they want to tour England or not and if anyone makes himself unavailable, there will not be any disciplinary action.

## SA 'not far away' from a WC win: Phehlukwayo

PIANS ■ JOHANNESBURG

South Africa cricketer Andile Phehlukwayo believes Proteas aren't too far away from ending their World Cup drought despite their woeful performance in the showpiece event in England and Wales last year.

South Africa managed to win just three matches out of nine and crashed out in the league stage itself with just seven points.

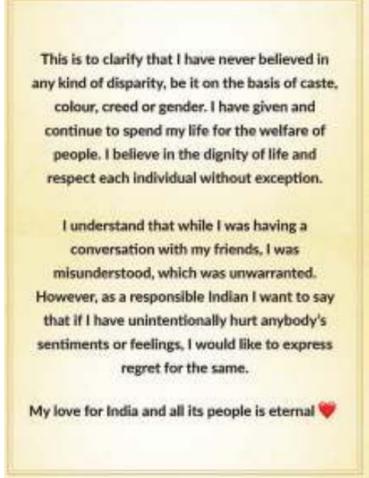
Phehlukwayo, who was part of the South Africa World Cup squad in 2019, feels the younger generation is hungry to perform on the biggest stage and that might turn their fortunes around at the multi-national ICC events in the future.

"I really believe it will happen. Maybe it didn't look like it at the 2019 World Cup, where we really didn't look after situations that on normal occasions we would take care of, but if you look at the current generation, it's a lot of new players who are really hungry to perform," Phehlukwayo was quoted as saying by *ESPNcricinfo*.

"Even in our current rebuilding phase, we have managed to beat strong teams who already have their formula set. It's all about the mindset. Our brand is work in progress but we all know where we want to be. We are fully committed."

The 24-year-old considers himself to be an all-rounder, despite him doing better with the ball in recent times. In 58 ODIs, he has managed to score just 563 runs while he has scalped 69 wickets. In 27 T20Is, he has scored just 92 runs but picked 35 wickets.

"I believe I'm a genuine all-rounder because I can win games with bat or ball, but I understand that those arguments about the kind of player someone is would look at the statistics," Phehlukwayo said.



Former India star Yuvraj Singh on Friday apologised for making a casteist remark against Yuzvendra Chahal during an *Instagram* chat, saying he "unintentionally" hurt public sentiments. It was during one of the *Instagram Live* sessions with Indian vice-captain Rohit Sharma that Yuvraj made the offensive comment about Chahal while talking about his regular social media posts. In fact, an advocate from Hisar filed a police complaint against India's twin World Cup hero, who was forced to issue an apology on his *Twitter* page. The veteran of 304 ODIs, 58 T20Is and 40 Tests also clarified that he has "never believed" in any kind of discrimination.

## Burns expecting 'stiff test' against WI

LONDON: England is bracing up for a "stiff test" in the three-match series against the West Indies next month, according to opener Rory Burns who is wary of the visiting team's potent pace attack.

"They've got a lot of good cricketers there and it's going to be a stiff test no matter who comes," Burns said on the *Sky Sports* podcast *The Cricket Show*. West Indies



had handed Joe Root's men a 2-1 defeat when England travelled to the Caribbean last year. "The last time we played each other, they won, so they're no slouches certainly," Burns said. "Their bowling attack caused us a lot of problems. They're very skilful; they've got some pace. I remember walking around on the pitch of the first Test and seeing their bowlers going and thought, 'this is going to be quite tasty!'"

## Mortaza hurt by 'rush to push' him out



DHAKA: Former Bangladesh captain Mashrafe Mortaza has accused the country's cricket board of trying to push him into retirement after a couple of underwhelming series, claiming that he was even offered a farewell match. Mortaza said he has been left hurt by the "lack of respect" towards his achievements. "Honestly speaking, it seemed that there was a rush to bid me farewell and it was certainly hurting," Mortaza told *Cricbuzz*. "Firstly, they had to arrange a match to bid me farewell and it was not a normal match — a normal bilateral series is something and arranging a special match in a hurry is something else," he said without divulging when exactly

the game was offered to him. "Secondly, they were prepared to spend BDT (Bangladesh Taka) 2 crore for that match. From an ethical point of view it is not right considering our first-class cricket players are not getting paid enough," he added.

The 36-year-old, one of the most popular captains in Bangladesh cricket history, had a horrible 2019 World Cup where he got only one wicket in the entire tournament.

Recently coach Russell Domingo had said that Mortaza is not in his plans going forward. "All of a sudden there was this rush to push me (out). All I know is that I have given my life to cricket even though I was torn apart and bleeding inside," Mortaza said.

"I have played cricket by giving my life and maybe I could not become such a great player. But at least I expect some kind of respect."

He didn't want to divulge the details but Mortaza admitted that he thought of hanging up his boots after Bangladesh's last World Cup game against Pakistan at the Lords.

"I wanted to retire after the last game in the World Cup but it did not happen. I don't want to go into the details of why I didn't do it there but I had put forward my intention (of retiring) in England."



## Tokyo to skip one-year Olympic countdown

TOKYO: Tokyo will scrap events marking a year to go until the postponed 2020 Olympic Games, organisers said on Friday, citing the "current economic situation" caused by the coronavirus pandemic.

The Games have been pushed back until July 23, 2021 because of the disease outbreak, though it remains unclear whether even that delay will be sufficient.

Last year, the city and organisers held a series of events to mark the one-year countdown, including unveiling the newly designed medals.

But given the global crisis, organisers ruled out a similar celebration. "In view of the current economic situation, Tokyo 2020 will not be holding any events to mark the new one year to go milestone for the Games," the organisers said.

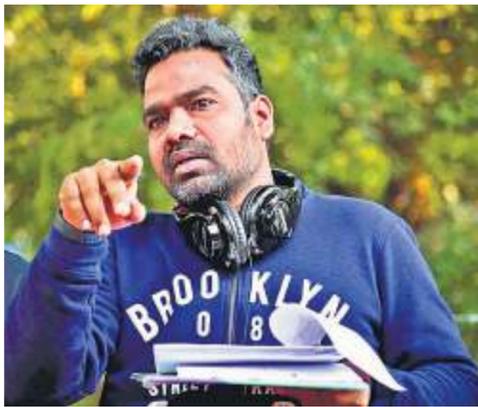
"But we will consider what we can do to show our solidarity with the people."

The confirmation came after reports in the Japanese media that organisers would scrap the event, fearing it was inappropriate given the global pandemic and the ongoing risk of infection inside Japan.



## Exploring the traits of

# TRUE LOVE



Debutant filmmaker Jonathan Edwards speaks to NAGARAJ GOUD about his journey to filmmaking, debut film *Amaram Akhilam Prema* backed by Sukumar, support from the industry and more

With pleasant visuals and a catchy number, the teaser of *Amaram Akhilam Prema* managed to strike a chord with everyone upon its release five months ago. The fact that it is backed by Sukumar means that there will be a general inquisitiveness around it as and when it opens. Debutant filmmaker Jonathan Edwards is pleased as punch with the response, saying that the film would've been released by now if not for the lockdown. Starting his career as a graphic designer, the director has set his sights on filmmaking goals when he was 13. He was heavily drawn towards the films of Martin Scorsese, Krzysztof Kielowski, Joel Coen, Mani Ratnam and Ram Gopal Varma. "After moving to Hyderabad from Bengaluru in 2006, I made my first short film by taking a loan from bank. I didn't know the basics of filmmaking back then but I had certain visuals in mind and I wanted to capture them. Sukumar sir happened to watch the film while he was travelling to Chennai. The actor who featured in it was a cabin crew member of Air India. Sir rang me sometime later and lauded the film, before asking to meet him personally. That's how my journey with him began," Jonathan, who is originally from Nellore, tells us fondly.

Jonathan followed his first short with more short films. In 2009, he toyed with the idea of shooting an indie film, *Prayanikudu*, a dark crime drama, with Canon 7D cameras. In fact, he was the first director to have shot a test video with those cameras — much before filmmaker Ram Gopal Varma embarked on making a feature film *Dongala Mutha* with them. *Prayanikudu* premiere was attended by Sukumar and P Rammohan, the latter of who produced content-rich cinema like *Astha Chemma*, *Golconda High School* and *Uyyala Jampala* among others. "Impressed with the short film, Rammohan garu offered me to direct *Tanu Nenu* and *Soggade Chinni Nayana*," the director reminisces.

After Sukumar, it was superstar Nagarajuna who changed Jonathan's life for good. "Post the screening of *Prayanikudu*, Nag garu spoke to me for 45 minutes and it was another turning point in my life. He said the film is a bit slow but liked the way it was shot. He felt that I have an artistic side to me but emphasised the need to think on commercial lines because of market factors. Till then I was more influenced by the cinema of foreign. His words had a deep impact on me. Later, I started exploring Telugu cinema more, particularly commercial cinema. Over time, I developed a pulse of com-

mercial cinema," he exults.

Despite being busy as a filmmaker, Sukumar always remembered Jonathan, ringing him occasionally and even helping him with finances at times. "On Dec 31, 2015, sir rang me and said he has a producer and if I like the hero, I can go ahead with a film with my own story. I was in desperate need to do something at that point of time. And when I saw the hero Vijay Ram, I felt he was apt for the story idea I had and decided to take up the project," he shares, adding that later he would narrate story developments to Sukumar frequently to get his stamp of approval. "He didn't like the first narration of *Amaram Akhilam Prema*. He was disappointed so much so that he felt like giving a story of his own to me. I was almost in tears that day but asked him to give me a week's time to rework on it. He liked the second narration, but wanted me to change the second half of the story in a particular way. As we were struggling to crack his proposed change, we sat with him for 45 minutes one day and everything was set. From those 45 minutes, I learnt the art of screenplay from him. He wasn't teaching me per se but I was able to grasp it."

While the film, shot in Hyderabad and Kakinada, took its own sweet time to be wrapped up due to some

financial woes, he mentions that that it talks about true love and its characteristics. "It's about a girl (played by Shivshakti Sachdev) who is trying to mend her relationship with her father (Srikanth Iyengar) after she commits a blunder during her teenage, post which he stops speaking to her. The blunder makes her realize there is nothing called as love between a boy and a girl and that only parent's love towards their children is permanent. She later decides to pursue civils to fulfill her father's wish. Into his scenario, enters a male character (Vijay Ram) who falls for her and tries to woo her," he explains.

The film has been produced by the VEVKDS Prasad who is one of Sukumar's closest friends. Prasad passed away in early April due to what is believed to be a heart stroke. Remembering his producer, Jonathan shares, "If things didn't go accordingly on sets, I would vent my frustration on Prasad *anna*. He would, however, never lose his cool and would say, 'I respect you and I know you well as a person. So I wouldn't get mad at you'. For his age, he was a bundle of energy, extremely passionate and would put in the hard yards. I've always told him, 'Anna if you've landed a good film years ago, you would've been a producer like Dil Raju,' he concludes.

## Vijay Deverakonda helps over 17,000 families through his Middle Class Fund



**T**elugu superstar Vijay Deverakonda has reached out with essentials to over 17,000 middle class families amid the lockdown.

Vijay took to Instagram and shared the "final report" of the work done in the past one month by his non-profitable organisation, The Deverakonda Foundation, which marked its origin in April 2019.

The foundation, up till now, has successfully aided 17,723 middle-class families with their groceries and basic essentials, spending Rs 17,121,103, with the help of his

when I am 60 and you are 30, 40, 50, 60, 70, 80, 90, oops. This corona will also be a memory, it'll be a strange inci-

**WITH HIM ARE 8,515, WHOM HE CALLS HIS "MIDDLE CLASS FAMILY", AND "535 VOLUNTEERS", WHOM HE CALLS "ROWDIES"**

dent that scared us, shut us down, stopped us from shaking each other hands, hugging, where the sound of a cough seemed like an explosion..

"It'll be memory of something we as a world shared together, how many such memories do we have? Some will laugh thinking about it, some will become emotional thinking about how hard it was, most will do both.."

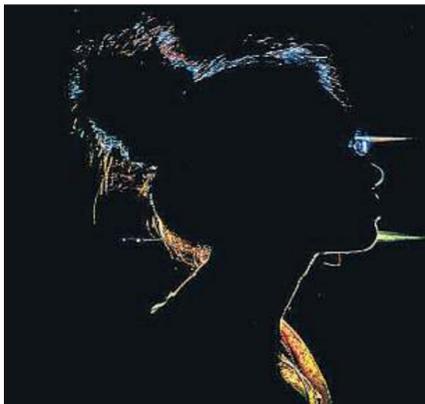
"And then, we will also remember how many, who were strangers, came together to help us like we were their own."

With him are 8,515, whom he calls his "middle class family", and "535 volunteers", whom he calls "rowdies".

Right now, Vijay shared, what with the onset of Lockdown 5.0, which comes with several relaxations.

"Today we put the MCF into Rest mode. As families get back into work, as the cities come back to life, as we spent all the funds we were given responsibility of."

"Vijay in his letter added, "I say rest mode because the MCF is a support system that we have created for a lifetime, it will be activated, up and running if ever a situation calls for its need."



## MARUTHI is a proud father

**F**ilmmaker Maruthi is ecstatic and the reason for his happiness is attributed to his daughter Hiya's feat. A passionate photographer, Hiya's recent work-a picture captured with only cell phone light was liked by none other than *Shape of Water* and *John Wick 2* cinematographer Dan Laustse on Instagram. "My

daughter @Hiya2576 is super happy & says John wick DOP dan laustsen liked her photography on insta She captured the photo with cell phone light. Proud of my child," the director, whose son is a drummer, posted on Twitter on Friday along with the concerned photo.



## THALAIVI gets Rs 55 crore from streaming rights

**W**ith so many films going direct to OTT, bypassing traditional theatrical release, there was a buzz in sections of the media that Kanganana Ranauts much-anticipated film, *Thalaivi* might also take the same route. However, going by what the actress has to say about the issue in a pinkvilla.com report, it is clear that the film is cut out for a big-screen release.

Asked about her opinion on the direct-to-OTT trend, and if she is okay with the idea, Kanganana said, "It depends. For example, a film like *Thalaivi* just can't release on digital because it is such a massive scale film, neither a movie like *Manikarnika* is a digital space film. But yes, films like *Panga*, *Judgemental Hai Kya* caters to that

audience. The way the film is made, it is very digital-friendly. They have recovered huge costs through digital itself. So, it depends. The *Pinkvilla* report also quoted her as saying, "For *Thalaivi*, it is a bilingual film. As a matter of fact, the film is sold to both Netflix and Amazon in both Hindi and Tamil for around Rs 55 crore. They also have satellite rights to sell for both languages and also distribution rights."

## Seerat Kapoor reveals positives of staying in

**A**ctress Seerat Kapoor is looking at the bright side of the lockdown. "A change or two is very minuscule for the magnitude of this revolution. In disguise, the lockdown is gradually revealing to me my potential as a human being, in entirety," she said. "Well, on a personal front I am replenished with internal strength, derived from the quality of time that I have spent with my family. The diverse conversations at home have been enriching and its outlook will be carried into everything I do, moving forward," she added. Seerat is best known for working with superstar Nagarjuna in Telugu film *Raju Gari Gadhi 2* and Allu Sirish in *Okka Kshanam*. She will be next seen in the upcoming film, *Krishna and His Leela*.