



# the pioneer

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Over 3.57 Crore beneficiaries in just one year!!!



## Nenu Vinnanu.. Nenu Unnanu... THOLI YEDU .. JAGANANNA THODU... FIRST YEAR OF JAGANANNA GOVERNMENT

Over 3.57 Crore beneficiaries in just one year!!!

### Jagananna AmmaVodi..

#### Life-changing

- Extending financial assistance of **Rs. 15,000 per year** to poor and needy mothers of students pursuing education from class one to intermediate
- Over **43 crore mothers** to receive benefit to the tune of **Rs. 6500 crores** annually thereby benefiting **82-lakh children**
- Provision of infrastructure facilities to 15,715 Schools with an expenditure of **Rs. 3,600 crores**
- English to be medium of instruction in all government schools
- Provision of quality mid-day meal to 36,34,861 students with an expenditure of **Rs. 1105 crores**



### YSR RYTHU BHAROSA.. uplifting agriculture

- Disbursement of **Rs. 67,500** towards input subsidy in five years at the rate of **Rs. 13,500** per year. Disbursement to be done in three phases – at the time of sowing of seeds, at the time of harvesting the crops and at the time of Sankranti.
- Annually, **49-lakh farmers** to get **Rs. 6500 crore** towards input subsidy in their bank accounts
- Over **10,641 Rythu Bharosa Kendras** to be the backbone of agriculture
- Supply of quality seeds, fertilisers and pesticides, tendering of advice on agriculture from time to time, e-Cropping, registration for crop loans and farm insurance
- Price stabilisation fund of **Rs. 3000 crore** to ensure farmers get Minimum Remunerative Price for their produce



### Dr. YSR Aarogyasri.. provides medicare to the poor

- Over **95% of the population** covered under Aarogyasri as upper income limit is raised to **Rs. 5 lakh** per annum
- Measures to bring all procedures costing over and above **Rs. 1000** under the purview of Aarogyasri
- Extension of Aarogyasri Services to **Hyderabad, Chennai and Bangaluru**
- **Aarogya Asara** post-surgery recuperative allowance of **Rs. 225** per day and **Rs. 5000** per month for any number of days as per Doctors' advice
- Our government cleared previous government dues of **Rs. 680 crores** to network Hospitals.

### Grama/Ward Secretariats

#### All government services at people's doorstep

- Delivering **541 public services** to people within the stipulated time through **11,162 village secretariats** and **3,842 ward secretariats**
- One village secretariat for every population of **2,000**
- Creation of **10-12 permanent jobs** in each village.. Creation of **1.34 lakh permanent jobs**
- Delivering all government services at the people's doorsteps through **1,93,421 village volunteers** and **74,659 ward secretaries**
- Service delivery in a transparent manner without any discrimination or corruption
- Total **4 lakh jobs** created..



### Delivering Pensions.. on the 1<sup>st</sup> of every month at pensioners' doorstep

- Earlier government paid **Rs. 1000** as pension to aged, widows and single women, we are paying **Rs 2,250** per month
- Pension of **Rs. 3000** to differently abled
- Disbursement of **Rs 10,000** per month as pension to dialysis, thalassemia, sickle cell disease and haemophilia patients
- Disbursement of around **Rs 15,000 crore** among **58-lakh pensioners**



### Jagananna Vidya Deevena Bringing higher education within the reach of the poor students

- Benefits poor students of any course right from polytechnic to graduation, engineering to medicine, graduation to B. Pharmacy
- Complete tuition fees reimbursement ... to be credited in the accounts of mothers..
- Government has disbursed **Rs. 4,200 crores** benefiting **18.5 lakh students** under the tuition fee reimbursement scheme including arrears of **Rs. 1880 crores** of previous government



### Jagananna Vasati Deevena – supporting Higher Education

- Disbursement of **Rs 20,000** to mothers in two phases annually thereby benefiting poor students of any course right from engineering to medicine, graduation to B. Pharmacy... helping them meet expenses of boarding and lodging.. polytechnic students will also get **Rs. 15000** and ITI students too will get **Rs. 10,000** per year...
- Government has spent **Rs. 2,300 crores** this year benefiting **16 lakh students**...



### Liquor Control in phases to bring sheen in to lives of women

- Slashing the number of Liquor shops by **33 per cent**
- Removal of over **43,000** belt shops
- Winding up of **4,380** permit rooms
- Reduction in business hours of wine shops and shocking hike in prices of Liquor leads to reduction in sale of IMFL by **24%** and reduction of beer sales by **55%**
- As number of wine shops decrease by **33%** and with prohibitive increase in Liquor prices.. it is not an exaggeration to say that liquor consumption will come down much further...



## Sri Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy

Hon'ble Chief Minister, Government of Andhra Pradesh



### Distribution of house-sites among needy under "YSR-Jagananna Illa Pattalu" scheme

#### House-sites for the poor... smiles on their faces

- Distribution of house-sites to women after due registration in their names on the occasion of birth anniversary of Dr. Y.S Rajasekhara Reddy garu on **8<sup>th</sup> July**..

### "YSR Sunna Vaddi Scheme"...

- Government credits **Rs. 1400 crores** to banks in lieu of interest amount to be paid on SHG loans of women groups, pending between **1-4-2019** and **31-3-2020** on behalf of **91 lakh SHG Women**

### Disha Bill ..sent for approvala friend in need for women

- Stern punishment awarded under the Act to strike fear in the hearts of those who perpetrate atrocities
- AP Disha Act.. a protective ring around girl child and women
- **18 Disha police stations**, Appointment of woman police in villages too!
- Appointment of Special public prosecutors and Special courts.. sent for permission of court



Name of the Scheme	YSR VAHANA MITRA	YSR NETHANNA NESTHAM	YSR MATSYAKARA BHAROSA	YSR LAW NESTHAM	ASSISTANCE TO AGRIGOLD VICTIMS	ReSTART PACKAGE FOR MSMEs	ONE TIME FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO ARCHAKAS, IMAMS, MOUZAMS, PASTORS
Financial Assistance	Rs. 10,000/- per year	Rs. 24,000/- per year	Rs. 10,000/- per year	Rs. 5,000/- per month	Total Rs. 236.53 crores	Paid Rs. 450 crores in first phase Rs. 508 crores to be paid next month..	Total Rs. 37,71,00,000
Number of Beneficiaries	2,39,957	81,703 Families	1,09,231	2,012	3,34,160	5,251	77,290

Selection of Beneficiaries on the basis of social audit in a transparent manner without any scope of corruption or discrimination.. permanent display of list of beneficiaries and mode of availing benefits in Village/Ward Secretariats

JAGANANNA GOVERNMENT.. COMMITTED TO WELFARE OF PEOPLE...

# Nuzvid mangoes to tickle taste buds of foreigners

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Mango lovers will vouch for mouth-watering Banganapalli and it is tickling the taste buds of people not only from across the nation but also foreigners with fibre-free smooth pulp. As many as 12 tonnes of mouth-watering Banganapalli mango variety from Nuzvid will be exported to London from Visakhapatnam port on May 31. Sri Sada Siva Agri-Tech in association with the State Horticulture Department was exporting Banganapalli mangoes and the container carrying mangoes has already started from Nuzvid on May 29. The ship will start from Vizag port to London on May 31. Sea transport is highly challenging as the mangoes have to

So far 49 tonnes of mangoes have been exported to the Middle East, Europe, New Zealand and other destinations from Tirupati and Nuzvid during the current season



The Horticulture Department is promoting exports by registering the farmers in HortiNet website of Agriculture & Processed Food Products Export Development Authority (APEDA) of the Central government and providing support from production to marketing. So far 9,686 farmers have registered their names in the HortiNet website

be harvested at the right stage, packed appropriately besides maintaining the cold chain to ensure freshness of fruits for about 35-40 days in transit and for marketing.

Horticulture Commissioner Chiranjeevi Chowdary said, "This success will boost further exports from the State. The exporter started exports by ship this year on a pilot basis. If it is successful, he will export

huge quantities from next year because transport cost is less. It will take 29 days for the ship to reach London. After that it will take five to six days for marketing mangoes."

In spite of the lockdown, so far 49 tonnes of mangoes have been exported to the Middle East, Europe, New Zealand and other destinations from Tirupati and Nuzvid during the current season.

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# De-addiction centres to come up

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The government will launch Liquor and Drug De-addiction Centres across the State in order to bring back those who are addicted to alcohol and drugs. In this regard, Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy launched digital platform centres at the camp office here on Friday.



On the occasion, Kritika Shukla, Director, Women Development, Child Welfare and Senior Citizens Welfare Department, Differently abled, Senior Citizens Welfare Department Secretary Damayanthi, Special Chief Secretary Health and Family Welfare KS Jawahar Reddy and Health Director K Bhaskar were also present. The establishment and maintenance of these centres have become a priority in the wake of the CM's decision to

The establishment and maintenance of these centres have become a priority in the wake of the CM's decision to implement the liquor ban in a phased manner

Director, Women Development, Child Welfare and Senior Citizens Welfare Department Kritika Shukla said: "We will spend Rs 4.98 crore per year to manage De-addiction centres"

implement the liquor ban in a phased manner. Speaking on the occasion, Kritika Shukla said: "We are setting up Liquor and Drug De-addiction Centres

in 15 government hospitals and will spend Rs 4.98 crore per year to manage them".

The de-addiction centres will be set up at Government General Teaching Hospital - Srikakulam, District Hospital - Vizianagaram, King George Hospital - Visakhapatnam, District Hospital - Paderu, District Hospital - Rajahmundry, Government General Hospital - Kakinada, District Hospital - Eluru, Government General Hospital - Vijayawada, Government General Hospital - Guntur, Government General Hospital - Ongole, DSR Government General Hospital - Nellore, Government General Hospital - Kadapa, Government General Hospital - Kurnool, Government General Hospital - Anantapur, Government General Hospital - Tirupati.

# Expired ice cream found in shops

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Assistant food controller Poonnachandra Rao warned the shopkeepers of stern action if they sell expired food to consumers.

Officials of the Food Safety Authority inspected various ice cream shops in the city on Friday and found stale ice creams, which are being sold after the expiry date.

Food officers inspected Cream & Stone, Temptation ice creams parlours in the city and found the expired ice creams. The managements were told to throw away the stale ice creams. He warned the management of bakeries, sweet shops, shopping malls and ice cream shops of stern action if they sell the food after the expiry date.

# Dip in daily tally of new Corona cases in State

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

For the first time in almost two weeks, the State reported a significant dip in daily tally of new Coronavirus cases on Friday with 33 more patients in the last 24 hours. It is far lower than 54 new cases reported in the preceding 24-hour cycle.

In fact, the last time the State has reported a single-day tally lower than Friday's figure was 25 cases reported on May 17. The number of active cases has now fallen to 777. With death of one Coronavirus patient in Kurnool district, the death toll touched 60 on Friday morning.

Friday's tally included six persons that had travel history to the Koyambedu market in Chennai. While Chittoor district reported four new



cases, Nellore district reported two.

The Nodal Officer reported that the State's total now stands at 2,874 as of 10 am on Friday. Andhra Pradesh's tally of patients among foreign returnees remains unchanged at 111 since Wednesday.

As many as 79 patients were discharged from hospitals on Friday, taking the tally of cured patients to 2,037 in the State. The officer reported that 11,638 samples were tested during the past 24 hours as against 9,858 tested during the preceding cycle.

As per data available till Thursday, the State's average in terms of tests conducted per million population stands at 6,409, below Delhi's 9,454, and Jammu and Kashmir's 10,753. However, in terms of tests conducted, Andhra Pradesh with 34,22,236 tests till Thursday lags behind Rajasthan's 3,46,427 tests, Maharashtra's 4,05,020 tests, and Tamil Nadu's 4,42,320. A total of 33,62,136 tests have been conducted across India.

On Thursday, Andhra Pradesh's mortality rate of 1.82 per cent ranked 12th among all the states.

Meanwhile, coronavirus cases among returnees from other states climbed to 345 from 293. However, the tally of active cases fell to 156, as 22 persons were discharged on Friday.

# Jagan striving for women empowerment, says minister

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Women and Child welfare Taneti Vanitha sang paens to Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy for inducting three women into the Cabinet and giving a chance to a Dalit woman as the Home Minister and a Tribal woman as the Deputy Chief Minister.



Minister for Women and Child welfare Taneti Vanitha recalled that the TDP government had promised loan waiver to Dwcrs women and deceived them

Speaking on the occasion, she said that the Chief Minister has given nominated posts to women. To support the women, Disha Act was brought and liquor ban will be imposed in a phased manner, and in the first phase 20 per cent liquor shops were removed.

During the lockdown, zero-interest loans were provided to Dwcrs groups as per the promise given by the Chief Minister, she said and added that house sites for the poor will be distributed in the name of women.

She recalled that the TDP government had promised loan waiver to Dwcrs women and deceived them and also sent notices from the banks. While the YSRCP government was implementing welfare schemes to benefit the people, but the Opposition parties are criticising and spreading false information about the schemes and confusing people, she alleged.

The YSRCP government has fulfilled about 90 per cent promises in the first year only, she said and expressed her happiness to work under his governance. Schemes are implemented to benefit pregnant women, lactating mothers and children by providing nutritious food. She thanked the Chief Minister on behalf of women in the State on the occasion.

# Minister distributes vehicles

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Home Minister Mekathoti Sucharitha urged the beneficiaries to avail units given on concession to create self-employment and benefit. She distributed Innova and Etios Liva cars to the beneficiaries through SC Corporation at a programme at the Collectorate here on Friday.

Speaking on the occasion, she urged the beneficiaries to repay the loans within the stipulated time. "After YSRCP came to power, they are giving Rs 8.5-lakh worth cargo vehicle to the drivers." She urged the beneficiaries to avail the opportunity provided by the government.

Minister for Agriculture Marketing Mopidevi Venkata Ramana Rao said that the government is giving Innova, Etios vehicles on subsidy to let the drivers own vehicles. They distributed eight Innova, 15 Etios Liva vehicles to the beneficiaries.

# Robotic physiotherapy at TTD Hospital

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

Henceforth, denizens of Tirupati who are suffering from physical ailments can get physiotherapy massages and treatments done, not by humans but by Robots at the TTD-run Balaji Institute of Surgery, Research and Rehabilitation for the Disabled (BIRRD) hospital. It may sound different but true!



TTD Chairman YV Subba Reddy addresses a meeting in Tirupati on Friday

TTD is all set to introduce the first ever Robotherapy in its ortho care Hospital of BIRRD, which is indeed first of its kind in entire South Asia.

This hi-fi therapy is aimed at providing sophisticated treatment to patients by the 21st-century model robots in all TTD hospitals, initially to start with BIRRD Hospital.

The BIRRD trust committee meeting was held on Friday at the Sri Padmavati Rest House in Tirupati under the Chairmanship of TTD Board Chief YV Subba Reddy, which also approved the proposal to call for tenders and purchase a Robot-Assisted Gait Training Therapy Equipment costing Rs

5.5 crore. Apart from this unique therapy, other important decisions pertaining to BIRRD hospital were also taken. The TTD trust has also decided that the employees and pensioners could avail cashless services and also get medical reimbursements from the TTD as per their eligibility. The committee approved the purchase of 2D colour Doppler equipment to test the blood circulation in the body. It also advised officials to opt for donors who could provide those equipments.

The BIRRD trust meeting

approved a proposal to appoint auditors to look into Income Tax affairs of the institution. In yet another resolution, the trust also approved a proposal to utilise the free services of specialist doctors Dr Vidyasagar (Tirupati), Prof Krishna Reddy (Nellore), Dr Guruvu Reddy (Hyderabad) on a voluntary basis. BIRRD Committee members Dr M Nischita, Sri Shivasankaran, BIRRD director Madan Mohan participated via video conferencing while TTD EO Anil Kumar Singhal and JEO P Basanti Kumar attended the meeting.

# Dr Sudhakar's mother sees threat to his life

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Suspended government doctor Sudhakar Rao's mother Kaveri Bai on Friday alleged that there is a threat to his life in Government Hospital for Mental Health and demanded that he be shifted to another hospital.

Kaveri Bai, along with other family members, called on her son at the hospital, later told reporters that he has sound health but by admitting him to a mental hospital, the government is trying to show that he has lost mental balance.

They recorded an audio statement of Sudhakar and played it before the media. Stating that wrong medicines are being prescribed for him, he said he feared for his life in the hospital. She slammed Jaganmohan Reddy government for branding her son a Telugu Desam Party (TDP) man for raising the issue of PPEs and suspending him.

Sudhakar had filed a petition in the High Court on Thursday, seeking direction to the govern-



Kaveri Bai, mother of Dr Sudhakar, addresses the media in Vizag on Friday

ment to shift him to another hospital. He also alleged that wrong medicines were being administered to him leading to serious side-effects.

He said he was forced to take antipsychotic medications despite having no illness. He sought directions to shift him to private hospital and requested that he be treated under the supervision of the High Court.

The High Court on May 22 had ordered probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation

into Dr Sudhakar's arrest and alleged manhandling by police in Visakhapatnam on May 16. The court asked the CBI to probe and file the investigation report within eight weeks and book cases against Visakhapatnam police officers, who allegedly used excessive force while taking Dr Sudhakar into custody.

Earlier, on the direction of the High Court, Visakhapatnam sessions judge had personally visited the Government Hospital for Mental Health and recorded the doctor's statement.

Sudhakar Rao, civil assistant surgeon, Area Hospital, Narsipatnam, was suspended two months ago after he publicly criticised the government for failing to provide PPEs, N95 masks to the doctors treating Covid-19 patients.

He was arrested by the police in Visakhapatnam on May 16 for allegedly creating nuisance on the road at Akkayapalem.

The policemen allegedly manhandled the doctor, who was seen shirtless to the waist,

dragged him and bundled him into an auto-rickshaw. He was shifted to King George Hospital, where doctors found him in an inebriated condition. He was subsequently referred to Government Hospital for Mental Health, where he was under treatment for acute and transient psychosis.

The police booked the doctor under the Indian Penal Code Sections 353 (assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty) and 427 (mischief causing damage to the amount of Rs 50).

Police claimed that as the doctor could have endangered his own life, he was taken into custody and since he was in an inebriated condition, he was shifted to KGH for an alcohol test.

The video clips of police tying the doctor's hands behind him, dragging and manhandling him triggered outrage with the opposition parties, doctors' associations and Dalit groups condemning the police action.

# 34 DEPUTY COLLECTORS TRANSFERRED

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a major reshuffle, the government has transferred as many as 34 Deputy Collectors and given postings as per the GO RT No 904 issued by Praveen Prakash, Principal Secretary to govt

Operating Base, Visakhapatnam vice G Suryanarayana Reddy, Deputy Collector was transferred. On transfer, G Suryanarayana Reddy, SD, NAOB, Visakhapatnam, was posted as Special Deputy Collector (LA), PIPRMC Unit-II, Eluru.

On promotion as the Deputy Collector, the services of A Chandra Mohan are placed at the disposal of Social Welfare Department for posting him as the Executive Director, SC Corporation, Nellore. On promotion as the Deputy Collector, the services of S Rama are placed at the disposal of Social Welfare (TW) Department for posting her as District Tribal Welfare Officer, Kurnool.

On promotion as the Deputy Collector, A Mahalakshmi Devi was posted as the

Assistant Secretary to the Government, Revenue Department, AP Secretariat vice G Vijaya Lakshmi, Deputy Collector was transferred. On transfer, the services of G Vijaya Lakshmi, Deputy Collector, are placed at the disposal of Industries & Commerce Department for posting her as the Zonal Manager, APIIC, Kurnool.

On promotion as the Deputy Collector, the services of C Hari Prasad are placed at the disposal of Skill Development Department for posting him as

the Chief Executive Officer, ANCEI, Anantapur. On promotion as the Deputy Collector, K Venkata Reddy was posted as the Special Deputy Collector (LA), TGP Unit-II, Kadapa.

On promotion as the Deputy Collector, K Anuradha is posted as PA to Special Collector, SSP, Kurnool. On promotion as Deputy Collector, P Bhavani is posted as Deputy Collector, Legal Cell, Tirupati. On promotion as Deputy Collector the services of U Rangaswamy are placed at the disposal of

Minorities Welfare Department for posting him as District Minorities Welfare Officer, Chittoor. On promotion as Deputy Collector the services of M Surendra are placed at the disposal of Revenue (Endowments) Department for posting him as Special Deputy Collector (Land Protection Cell), Endowments, Tirupati.

On promotion as the Deputy Collector, K Ravi Shankar was posted as the Special Deputy Collector, KRRC, Eluru. On promotion as the Deputy Collector, N Narasimha Murthy was posted as PA to Special Collector (LA), PIP, Rajahmahendravaram.

On promotion as the Deputy Collector, the services of V Murali Krishna are placed at the disposal of Industries & Commerce Department for

posting him as the Zonal Manager, APIIC, Krishna.

On promotion as the Deputy Collector, the services of K Sri Ramani are placed at the disposal of Municipal Administration & Urban Development Department for posting her as Project Director, MEPMA, East Godavari district. On promotion as the Deputy Collector, V Subba Rao was posted as the Special Deputy Collector & Competent Authority, Godavari Gas Private Limited, Rajahmahendravaram.

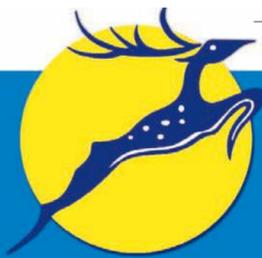
On promotion as the Deputy Collector, the services of T Rajagopal are placed at the disposal of BC Welfare Department for posting him as the Executive Director, BC Corporation, Nellore. A Nishanth Reddy, Deputy Collector, was posted as the Forest Settlement Officer, Anantapur.

# Amway, ITC launch B Natural beverages

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a unique partnership, ITC and Amway India have collaborated to launch the first of its kind B Natural beverages range for their consumers.

Commenting on this unique partnership, Hemant Malik, Divisional Chief Executive - Foods Division, ITC Limited, said: "We are committed to developing world class Indian products that address the needs of the Indian consumers. Given the current health crisis, immunity of the entire family has emerged as a key consumer priority and B Natural proactively spearheaded the endeavour of providing an effective fruit beverage range this summer."



# the pioneer



RASHMIKA IS 'CALM, HAPPY AND AT PEACE' STAYING AT HOME  
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## Jagan mulls new Ordinance as HC reinstates Ramesh Kumar

Legal options explored to keep Nimmagadda away

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad: The Andhra Pradesh Government is learnt to be looking at the possibility of re-issuing an Ordinance making an amendment to AP Panchayat Raj Act reducing the tenure of the State Election Commissioner from five to three years and appointing a high court official of the rank of judicial officer as SEC in place of bureaucrats.

The is believed to be a fall-out of the AP High Court striking down the Ordinance promulgated by the AP government last month to remove SEC Nimmagadda

Ramesh Kumar by reducing his tenure.

According to highly placed sources, Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy held consultations with legal experts on Friday to review the High Court judgment and decide on the future course of action.

It is reliably learnt that Jagan asked officials to explore the possibility of re-issuing the Ordinance by



addressing the loopholes in the one issued on April 10.

It was felt in the meeting that the issue of financial compensation was not addressed in the earlier Ordinance while reducing the tenure of SEC from five years to three years. In the new Ordinance to be issued a clause extending financial compensation to the SEC in lieu of loss of two-year tenure would be incorporated.

Legal experts felt that causing financial loss to people serving government or constitutional bodies by tweaking service rules in the middle of the tenure would land in legal tangles and it should be rectified in the new Ordinance.

## Shah discusses extension of lockdown with CM

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday interacted with Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy on the telephone in the wake of 'Lockdown 4.0' coming to an end on Sunday, May 31. The two are said to have discussed the issue of lockdown and its extension besides Covid-19 preventive measures.

The CM is said to have briefed Shah on the relentless initiatives being taken up by the state government for containing Covid-19 in AP.

## PG med rules a boon for reserved category

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The PG medical admission rules introduced in the form of a GO on Friday by the AP Government are being seen as a major boon for BC, SC and ST students. According to the new rules, in case meritorious reserved candidates, who got seat in PG medical course in the merit list, leaves the seat and takes up admission in another course or college, the seat vacated would be filled with the same reserved category instead of being allotted to the next rank holder.

Principal Secretary Medical and Health Dr KS Jawahar Reddy on Thursday issued a GO in this regard. The decision was taken in the light of the civil appeal No. 157 and 158 decided by the SC in 2018.

In case reserved category candidates who get seats in medical PG courses under open category desire to switch to another broad speciality, the seat vacated by the meritorious reserved candidate would be filled with the candidate of the same category.

## CM OF THE HAVE-NOTS!

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

For the YSRCP government, the first year of its five-year term has been nothing but a rollercoaster ride, with more ups than downs.

It literally swept to power, winning a massive margin and leaving the decades-old TDP reeling, on the back of its promise of Navaratnalu, or the nine gems. Once in power, he wasted no time in implementing the promises he made to the people during his marathon padayatra.

YSRCP leaders repeatedly claim that the party has fulfilled 90 per cent of the promises mentioned in its manifesto, and these claims may well be true.

However, it was the drive to keep the promises, something few politicians do, especially after they storm to power, that has earned Jagan massive goodwill.

Combined with this goodwill is the fact that he is being seen as someone who not only announces schemes but makes efforts to ensure that the benefits percolate to the intended beneficiaries.

This perception has some basis, according to YSRCP bigwigs. The village secretariat and village volunteer systems have not only ensured pensions reach the people on time, but also convey the

message to the beneficiaries that the administration is within their reach. This message is amplified by the Spandana programme.

While the Navaratnalu cover most of the populace, the relatively low crime rate in the state in the last one year — in stark contrast to the claims before the election that the YSRCP would bring 'faction politics' to all corners of the state — have also earned brownie points for Jagan.

Suffice to say, the Jagan government has been on the mark when it comes to law and order. The crowning glory for the government has been the Disha Act that has earned it appreciation from all quarters, and the Disha police stations. Also, it has remained untainted by allegations of a scam.

All things considered, the first one year can be described as a success on a number of counts, and the YSRCP government appears to be looking at the next four very positively.



WILL COVID DERAIL THE WELFARE AGENDA, AND THE NINE GEMS

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COMMON ENEMY, GOALS KEEP YSRCP-BJP BONHOMIE ALIVE  
 A CRIME-FREE YEAR

### Gems of Jagan



MSMEs second instalment of Rs 450 cr release

YSR Rythu Bharosa



Rs 10,000 allowance to barbers, tailors and dhobis who have shops



English Medium schools



YSR Vahana Mitra



Delivering more than what is promised in manifesto...

WITHIN ONE-YEAR OF GOVERNANCE... steps towards fulfilling around **90%** of manifesto promises...

**Sri Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy**  
 Hon'ble Chief Minister  
 Government of Andhra Pradesh

- Under Rythu Bharosa scheme, the state govt provided input subsidy of Rs. 13,500 which is more than the manifesto promise of Rs. 12,500 to each farmers' family... Eight months in advance and for 5 years instead of 4 years as promised in manifesto. With this, each farmer will stand to benefit (13500x5=) Rs. 65,500 in a span of five years.
- By introducing reverse tendering system, the Govt., saved Rs.2080 cr. Transparency brought in tendering process by referring works costing more than Rs. 100 crore to judicial preview commission.
- For the first time in the country, AP govt., enacted Disha Bill in 2019 for the safety of women and girl child. The new Act provides for punishment to culprits within 14 days in women related cases including atrocities.
- 50% reservation provided to women in nominated posts.
- New sand policy was introduced to supply sand at door step
- Lakhs of people benefited as the State Govt., increases the income limit for Ration, Arogyasri, Vidya deevana and several other schemes.
- Separate cards for each welfare scheme.
- Retirement age of APSRTC employees increased to 60 years. The state govt is incurring an additional financial burden of Rs.3,600 cr per year.
- English laboratories in govt., schools.
- Rs.460 cr additional allocation for improving the quality of mid-day meal scheme.
- Supply of Ration rice at door step by village / ward volunteers. At present the scheme is being implemented in Srikakulam district as pilot project and the same will be extended to all districts from September.
- 10,641 Rythu Bharosa centres to be set up in villages at a cost of Rs. 2,495 cr, to sell quality seeds, fertilizers, pesticides and other agriculture and allied inputs.
- Agricultural mission set up.
- Integrated Aqua labs were set up at 46 places, constituency wise at a cost of Rs.56.63 cr.
- The state govt., allocated Rs. 560 cr to YSR Kanti velugu scheme and purchased 1060 new 108/104 ambulances.
- 16 medical colleges to be set up in addition to existing 11 medical colleges.
- Minimum support price provided to chilli, turmeric, onion and pulses for the first time in the country.
- Banana research centre at Pulivendula.
- Out sourcing corporation to protect interests of out sourcing staff.
- Rs. 300 cr released to provide relief to Bengal gram farmers.
- Rs. 80 cr allotted to provide minimum support price for oil palm farmers. Over 1.10 lakh oil palm farmers benefited under the scheme.
- State govt., initiated purchase of crops at fields itself.
- 500 medicines of GMP standards made available in govt., hospitals.
- 24/7 Village clinics set up to provide medical facilities to villagers
- Motor cycles supplied with thermal boxes to supply medicines in villages.
- Rs. 5000 per month paid to those suffering from elephantiasis, paralysis and those met with accidents and confined to wheel chairs.
- Cancer related diseases brought under Arogya sri scheme
- Rs. 3000 per month for leprosy patients.
- Dr. YSR Tele medicine scheme launched with toll free number 14410.
- Jagnanna Amma Vodi extended up to Intermediate.
- Rs. 963 cr incentives, including Rs.825 cr arrears of previous govt. to support MSMEs and waiver of fixed power charge amounting to Rs. 188 cr.
- Compensation of Rs. 78.24 cr distributed to 16,559 fishermen who lost their livelihood due to GSPC (ONGC) exploration.
- Spandana grievance cell to redress the grievances of people pertaining to different departments. People can now get status of their grievance by calling toll free number 1902 (24x7).
- Toll free numbers set up for agriculture-1907, ACB 14400, Health 104 to receive complaints and suggestions.
- Revolutionary changes made in registrations department to curb corruption. Both the sellers and buyers can prepare documents without the help of document writers availing online facility.

**YSR Rythu Bharosa Centres ...**

to be inaugurated by  
**Sri Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy**  
 Hon'ble Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh  
 at 10 am today

- 10,641 Rythu Bharosa centres across the state to be operational from today
- Rythu Bharosa centres to supply certified quality seeds, fertilizers, Pesticides and other agriculture and allied sector inputs
- Rythu Bharosa centres to provide soil testing facilities, guidance and suggestions to farmers
- Details of agriculture prices, market details and weather forecasting...
- Crop loans and registration for crop insurance through e-crop.
- Assisting farmers in getting minimum remunerative price.

**Sri KURASALA KANNABABU**  
 Hon'ble Minister for Agriculture, Co-operation, Food Processing and Marketing

**Jagananna Government... committed to welfare of people...**

Issued by Commissioner I&PR Department, Government of AP

# Arogyasri now covers 1.42 crore people, says Jagan

CH PRADEEP KUMAR  
■ VIJAYAWADA

Reminding that anyone whose income is below Rs 5 lakh per annum can avail Arogyasri services, Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy on Friday said that 1.42 crore people have been brought under the purview of the scheme.

Jagan was addressing a brainstorming session on the medical and healthcare infrastructure in the state as part of 'Mana Paalana-Mee Suchana' (Our Governance-Your Suggestions) here where he said that the State government has gone the extra mile to bring quality medicare within the reach of poor and has built infrastructure from rural level upwards.

The Chief Minister said that the State has been doing exceptionally well in containing Covid-19 vis-à-vis national average.

He said that the services under Aarogyasri can also be availed at super specialty hospitals in Chennai, Bengaluru, and Hyderabad. "We have also included cancer and speech



therapy in the list of Arogyasri services," Jagan said.

The Chief Minister said grades had been given to network hospitals and all the B-graded network hospitals should improve their services within six months. "The pensions to the patients, who are suffering from nine chronic diseases, have been increased from Rs 3,000 to Rs 10,000. The number of types of medicines, which match the World Health Organisation (WHO) standards and sold at government hospitals, has been

increased from 230 to 500. As of now, we have conducted eye tests on 70 lakh students in the state and distributed spectacles to 1.29 lakh students. Also, eye tests will be conducted for the elderly people across the state in two phases under the 'YSR Kanti Velugu' scheme," Jagan said.

He said that under 'Nadu-Nedu' (Then and Now) programme, to boost health infrastructure in the state, 16 more teaching hospitals and seven super-specialty hospitals under ITDA will be set up across the

state in the next three years. "At the village level, YSR Village clinics will be set up across the state at one clinic for every 2,000 people. About 3,000 YSR village and ward clinics will be ready for operation by March 2021 and also works are under progress to improve facilities at 1,138 existing PHCs. This apart, 52 regional hospitals will also be set up. A total of Rs 14,000 crore will be expended under the 'Nadu Nedu' program. Also, 1,060 brand-new 104 and 108 ambulances will be flagged off on July 1," he added.

He also said that the notification for the recruitment of 9,712 doctors, nurses, and paramedical staff will be issued in a week.

As part of measures to contain the spread of coronavirus in the state, "We have set up 13 laboratories in the state in a period of 70 days. Andhra Pradesh stood first in the country in conducting Covid-19 tests. Tests were conducted on 6,627 samples per million and we have set up five Covid-19 hospitals in the state," the Chief Minister said.

## Highway tenders sent to Judicial Preview

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The State government has accorded administrative sanction for calling the tenders for the proposed development of the state highways and major district roads in the Phase-1 works to be undertaken in 12 districts throughout the State with an assistance of Rs 2,978.51 crore from the New Development Bank.

The invited tenders were sent for scrutiny to Judicial Preview by Justice Dr B Sivasankar Rao, Nayeemullah, chief engineer of the R&B, said in a statement here on Friday.

It may be recalled that the State government appointed Judicial Preview to scrutinise all the works that cost more than Rs 100 crore in an attempt to achieve transparency in the tender process.

The tenders were placed in the official website of the Judicial Preview www.judicialpreview.ap.gov.in seeking suggestions and objections from the contractors and the general public. The tenders would be on the website from May 28 to June 5 for the convenience of the public who may forward their suggestions on the website.

# HC scraps Ordinance, reinstates Ramesh Kumar as SEC

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA



The HC delivered the judgment on a batch of writ petitions, including the one by the aggrieved Ramesh Kumar, challenging the Ordinance and the appointment of a new SEC

In a blow to the YS Jaganmohan Reddy government, the Andhra Pradesh High Court on Friday struck down an Ordinance promulgated on April 10 curtailing the tenure of the State Election Commissioner from five to three years.

A division bench of the High Court comprising Chief Justice J.K. Maheshwari and Justice M Satyanarayana Murthy also quashed a Government Order appointing retired judge V Kanagaraj as the new State Election Commissioner and reinstated as SEC Nimmagadda Ramesh Kumar, who had come under attack from the Chief Minister after the bureaucrat postponed the local body elections citing Covid-19 pandemic.

Justice V Kanagaraj, a retired judge of the Madras High Court, had assumed charge as the SEC on April 11, replacing Ramesh Kumar, who was appointed during the previous TDP rule.

The High Court delivered the judgment on a batch of writ petitions, including the one by the aggrieved Ramesh Kumar, challenging the Ordinance and the appointment of a new SEC. Former Ministers Vadde

Sobhanadreeswar Rao and Kamineni Srinivas were among the 12 others who had also filed writ petitions against the curtailing the tenure of the SEC.

Pronouncing its verdict on 13 petitions challenging Ramesh Kumar's removal, the division bench ruled that the State government did not have the power to issue an ordinance under Section 213 of the Constitution.

"The court ruled that the state government did not have the authority to curtail the tenure of the SEC. It also set aside the appointment of the new SEC. The court considered all our arguments in this regard," senior advocate Jandhyala Ravi Shankar, who appeared on behalf of one of the petitioners, said.

The YSR Congress Party government on April 10 abruptly removed Ramesh Kumar from the post by promulgating the Ordinance, amending the AP Panchayat Raj Act, 1994, curtailing the tenure of the SEC to three years from five.

The developments came in the backdrop of a feud the Chief Minister picked up with the SEC after the latter postponed the elections to rural and urban local bodies on March 15 in view of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Jagan attacked Ramesh Kumar in the name of caste and complained against him to the Governor. The state government subsequently filed a petition in the Supreme Court challenging the SEC's decision but the apex court endorsed the deferment of polls.

# Debt-ridden barber in temple town ends life

PNS ■ SRIKALAHASTI

Venkataramana, a barber living in the Project Street of the temple town, committed suicide by hanging himself unable to find a way to wriggle himself out of the family debts, reports said on Friday. On account of the lockdown, his livelihood had been affected and he could not confine himself to his home. Therefore, he is said to have taken the extreme step.

Srikalahasti recorded the highest number of Coronavirus cases in Chittoor district and there was a spike in the number of cases because of the migrant workers who returned to the temple town from Koyambedu



market in Tamil Nadu. Many employees drafted for Corona prevention duty also tested positive for the virus.

The officials declared the temple town as containment zone as daily tens of cases are being reported. For the past 66 days, severe curbs have been placed on the temple town.

The possibility of shops getting reopened is very slim. Venkataramana managed till now by borrowing money from friends and relatives.

Unable to generate new loans and not able to pay interest on borrowings, Venkataramana found it difficult to sustain further and took the extreme step.

# Fee structure irks Pvt Medical Colleges Assn

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Expressing displeasure over the fee structure for medical and dental courses approved by the government, the Andhra Pradesh Private Medical and Dental Colleges Management's Association (APPMDCMA) on Friday decided to withdraw from Dr NTR University of Health Sciences counselling process for admission to PG Medical and Dental Courses and not to admit students to PG Courses for the academic year 2020-2021.

In a letter to the Special Chief Secretary (Health and Family Welfare Department) Andhra Pradesh, Secretary of APPMDCMA, Ganni Kasimbi, mentioned that the fee structure for post graduates students of Medical and Dental courses is

almost 40 per cent and 60 per cent respectively below the fee in vogue for the past four years.

Kasimbi mentioned that the government has also not taken into account, the expenditure incurred on various services provided to the students, depreciation values on equipment, infrastructure, horticulture and other maintenance cost of the institution.

He further said that the total annual fee per student does not amount to even 20 per cent of the stipend paid to the student in pre-clinical subjects and 40 per cent in para clinical subjects.

The private Unaided Non-Minority Medical and Dental Colleges in the State are going through a very difficult period due to COVID-19 pandemic. The hospitals of private institu-

tions are taken over by the government for providing services to the COVID-19 patients. The non-COVID-19 patients are not admitted and no revenue is getting generated from the hospitals, he added. The Andhra Pradesh government on Friday fixed the fee structure for PG Medical Courses of all specialties in private Unaided Non-Minority and Minority colleges for the block period 2020-21 to 2022-23.

FOR CLINICAL DEGREE, the fee is Rs 4.32 lakh (Category - A Convener Quota) while it is Rs 8.64 lakh (Category - B Management Quota) and Rs 50 lakh (Category - C NRI/Institutional Quota)

FOR PARA CLINICAL DEGREE AND DIPLOMA, the

fee is Rs 1.35 lakh (Category - A) while it is Rs 2.7 lakh (Category - B) and Rs 15 lakh (Category - C)

FOR PRE CLINICAL DEGREE, the fee is Rs 61, 200 (Category - A), Rs 1, 22, 400 (Category - B) and Rs 8 lakh (Category - C)

The Andhra Pradesh government is also fixed the fee structure for the PG Dental Courses in Private Unaided Non-Minority Colleges for the block period 2020-21 to 2022-23.

FOR CLINICAL DEGREE, the fee is Rs 2.97 lakh for Category - A while it is Rs 5.94 lakh for Category - B and Rs 12 lakh for Category - C

FOR PARA CLINICAL DEGREE, the fee is Rs 2.67 lakh for Category A while it is Rs 4.34 lakh for Category - B and Rs 7 lakh for Category - C.

## PG med rules a boon for...

Continued from Page 1

For example, when a BC candidate who got seat in general medicine opted for radiology course, the seat vacated by this candidate was used to be filled with next rank holder. As per the latest decision, the seat will be filled with another BC candidate. The government decision benefits the reserved category students most. Earlier, when BC candidates who got sets in open category sought to seek admission in another speciality, it went to the next rank holder, who may or may not be a BC candidate. The Government asked the NTR Health University to adopt the new rules in filling the PG medical seats to be held soon. The orders indicated that the rule of reservation should be adhered to strictly.

## Govt will approach SC, says Ambati

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSRCP MLA Ambati Rambabu said that the government will approach the Supreme Court on the High Court's order directing the government to reinstate Ramesh Kumar as the State Election Commissioner.

He said, "We will respect the court's orders and also appeal to the High Court, if there were any objections in the orders."

Speaking to media persons here on Friday, he said Justice Kanakaraj was appointed as the SEC in place of Nimmagadda Prasad through the ordinance of reducing the tenure of SEC from five years to three years. But in some cases, justice may not be served and there is a possibility of moving to the apex court and they have been consulting judicial experts in this regard, he said.

He also questioned that why should one resign if the court's verdicts are against the government. He reminded that the court had given verdicts against N Chandrababu Naidu when he was at the helm as the Chief Minister.

# TDP welcomes HC decision on SEC

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Terming the High Court verdict as a big blow to ruling YSRCP, the TDP stated that government should learn lessons from the court's judgments and stop crippling the independent institutions like Election Commission and others.

Revoking the government's ordinance of removing State Election Commissioner N Ramesh Kumar as a big victory for democracy, said Leader of Opposition in Legislative Council Yanamala Ramakrishnu, in a statement on Friday.

He asserted that Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy and his government should duly respect the court's order and allow Ramesh Kumar to discharge his duties without further hurdles. This order gave a big blow to the anti-people and anti-democratic policies of YSRCP, he said and added that Jagan rule has initiated undemocratic programmes like the forcible imposition of English medium in schools, cancellation of mother tongue, YSRCP flag colours to government buildings, non-payment of NREGS bills, intimidation of

solar power companies, unilateral suspension of officials and so on.

Salaries were not paid for months, assigned lands were forcibly snatched, social media activists were harassed and restrictions were placed on the media. TTD lands were proposed to be sold away.

He said that almost all victims of Jagan policies were approaching the courts, which were coming to their rescue finally. Former minister KS Jawahar suggested to the YSRCP that it should no longer drag on the legal issue by going to the Supreme Court and focus on correcting its mistakes in the best interests of the people.

Jagan should realise that he was insulting the Constitution and Ambedkar by trying to permanently remove a constitutionally appointed SEC.

TDP Politburo Member Varla Ramaiah suggested to the government advisors to advise the Chief Minister to step down following the court's disapproval of his action. He said that the High Court saved democracy in the State and renewed people's faith in the Constitution.

# 71 Shramik Special trains diverted between May 21-24: Chairman

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Facing criticism over diverting the Shramik Special trains through longer routes without intimating the passengers, Chairman Railway Board V.K. Yadav on Friday refuted the claims that the trains "lost" their ways and said that 71 trains were diverted out of the total 3,840 Shramik Specials run so far.

He said only four trains were delayed by over 72 hours to reach their destinations since railways started operating on May 1. Addressing a press conference here, Yadav also said that 90 per cent of these migrant trains ran with an average speed higher than regular mail express trains.

"From 20-24 May, 71 trains were diverted because of high demand for trains to UP, Bihar, where 90 per cent trains were going from across the country," Yadav said, adding that out of which only four were delayed more than 72 hours to reach their destination. He said that among the destination-states for which the trains were diverted were Bihar (51), Uttar Pradesh (16), Jharkhand (2), Assam and Manipur (1 each).

He said among the originating-states for which trains



were diverted included Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka, Rajasthan. The clarifications came amid criticism over delays that the migrant trains were getting "lost" before reaching their destinations and passengers taking to social media criticising the national transporter for delays in their journey.

The Chairman said that till May 28, 3,840 Shramik Specials have been operated that ferried a total of 52 lakh passengers. He further said that 1,524 Shramik trains operated in last one week and over 20 lakh passengers were ferried. "Railways has accommodated almost all requests received from the sending states and we are ready to meet all demand of Shramik move-

ments," he said, adding "as of now we have demand for around 492 trains".

When asked about the total number of deaths of passengers while travelling in the Shramik Special trains, he said that the national transporter was compiling a list of people who died on the trains as he urged everyone with pre-existing health conditions, pregnant women and the aged to avoid unnecessary travel.

The railways has faced criticism after a video of toddler trying to wake his dead mother at Bihar's Muzaffarpur railway station on May 25. The woman was travelling to Katihar from a Shramik Special train that has started its journey from Gujarat's Ahmedabad.

# Jagan mulls new Ordinance as HC reinstates Ramesh Kumar

Continued from Page 1

Legal experts have also pointed out some more "legal flaws" in the old Ordinance which will be rectified and a fresh Ordinance will be re-issued very soon.

It may be recalled that AP government on April 10 making an amendment to AP Panchayat Raj Act reducing the tenure of the SEC from five to three years and appointing a High Court official of judicial officer rank as SEC in place of bureaucrats.

Within a day of the issuance of the ordinance, the government appointed Madras High Court retired judge, Justice V Kanagaraj, as the SEC and he took charge immediately.

The position of Kanagaraj in the wake of the latest High Court judgment is not immediately known.

The High Court delivered the judgment after prolonged hearing of a batch of petitions, including those of Ramesh Kumar who challenged his removal and that of Telugu Desam Party leader Varla Ramaiah, BJP leader Kamineni Srinivas and former minister

The HC ruled that the state government had no powers to promulgate the Ordinance under Article 213 of the Constitution in the given circumstances

Vadde Sobhanadreeswar Rao. The High Court ruled that the state government had no powers to promulgate the Ordinance under Article 213 of the Constitution in the given circumstances.

The Jagan government chose to remove Kumar through ordinance route, after the official issued a notification on March 15 for the postponement of local body elections scheduled to be held in the last week of that month citing the Coronavirus pandemic as the reason.

Jagan accused Kumar of colluding with the Telugu Desam Party since the official belonged to the same caste as TDP president N Chandrababu Naidu.

# Shah discusses extension of lockdown with CM

Continued from Page 1

Jagan is also believed to have highlighted the state government's approach in conducting the Covid-19 tests on a massive scale in the state.

Amit Shah is said to have elicited the opinion of Jagan on the issue of extension of lockdown in view of many other Chief Ministers favouring the lockdown to be in place for another two

weeks. Later in the day, the Union Home Minister also held a crucial meeting with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on the issue and the two are said to have arrived at an in-principle decision on the way forward for tackling the dreaded virus in the country.

The two are said to have taken into consideration the varied opinions expressed by Chief Ministers of various states.

There is speculation that the Centre may opt for extension of the shutdown in the name of 'Lockdown 5.0, for two more weeks while announcing more relaxations to a few other sectors to keep the wheel of the economy turning.

According to sources, Modi is likely to announce Lockdown 5.0 in his Mann Ki Baat radio address on Sunday, the last day of Lockdown 4.0.

# Hyd sizzles at 43°C, no respite despite rains

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad sizzled with heat at 43 degrees Centigrade on Friday and same temperature will continue on Saturday. Even though there possibility of rain or thundershower the day temperature remain 41-43 degrees Centigrade over the next three days. In Telangana, Heat Wave like conditions have been observed at a few places over North Telangana Districts. Highest Maximum temperature of 46.0 degrees Centigrade recorded at Jannaram (Mancheril) on Friday.

# 'HC verdict on SEC lowered govt's image'

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

BJP Rajya Sabha Member Satyanarayana Chowdary on Friday said that the High Court judgment reinstating Nimmagadda Ramesh Kumar as the State Election Commissioner has lowered the image of the government in the eyes of the public.

A series of High Court verdicts that went against the government proved that there was no administration in the State, he said. Ignoring the verdicts, Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy was conducting like a dictator, he remarked.



He advised the CM to realise the fact there are some limitations imposed even for the CM in a democratic setup.

The Indian Constitution does

not allow the CM to conduct himself as he liked on the grounds that the ruling party has 151 MLAs, he said.

There is enough time for

Jagan to play politics, he said exhorting him to focus on development of the State, he said. The government decision on curtailing term of SEC abruptly was unilateral, he said adding that anyone should rule apolitically as per the tenets of the Indian Constitution.

It was high-time for Jaganmohan Reddy to stop politicking and set the derailed economy back on the rails, he suggested. Development of the State has been affected and industries are turning away from the State, he said advising the bureaucrats to think twice before endorsing important decisions.

SHORT READS



Recovery rate after COVID-19 highest in TN, says CM

**CHENNAI:** Availing that the rate of recovery after successful treatment for COVID-19 in Tamil Nadu stood at 54.4 per cent, the highest in India, Chief Minister K Palaniswami on Friday slammed opposition parties for faulting his government on containing the lethal virus. He said that ever since the first Coronavirus case was detected (in early March), his government swung into action and launched appropriate measures to contain the spread of the virus, besides taking up screening and treatment on a war footing. "It is wrong to say that our government has failed to contain the virus. From day one we stepped up our vigil and took prompt measures to minimise the loss of lives," Palaniswami said.

No govt approval needed for COVID-19 tests: Gujarat HC

**AHMEDABAD:** In a relief to private doctors and people, the Gujarat High Court on Friday said that there was no need to take approval of the government for carrying out coronavirus tests if doctors recommend it. The Ahmedabad Medical Association (AMA) had approached the high court against a Gujarat government order, which prohibits private doctors and hospitals from conducting COVID-19 tests without getting approval from designated health officials. In its plea, the AMA argued against this directive saying that doctors' opinion should be treated as final because any delay would adversely affect the health of both the patient and the doctor.

Lockdown: Jain monks seek easing of travel norms for Chaturmas

**THANE:** Jain monks, who have set out on foot for the annual Chaturmas festival, which is held in July, have approached Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray seeking easing of travel restrictions amid the COVID-19 lockdown. In a memorandum to the Chief Minister, general secretary of the state Congress Committee Suman Agarwal put forth the requirements of hundreds of sadhus and sadhvis who walk barefoot to different states for the annual festival, a release stated. In the release, Agarwal said she has sought proper arrangements for sadhus and sadhvis during their travel, which starts one month before the start of the Chaturmas fast. In fact, several of them had already started walking along on the highways in the state and would be covering the distance to Gujarat, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka, among other states on foot, she said.

# Millions of locusts invade, Delhi on high alert

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Farmers are being asked to make as much of a racket as possible, using drums, tin containers, utensils and even hiring mobile disc jockeys, in an attempt to scare away locust swarms that are attacking the country.

Millions of locusts are invading several states and there are concerns they might reach Delhi. Some farmers have been playing loud music through speakers fitted on vehicles in a bid to frighten the insects, said Rahul Srivastava, a superintendent of police in UP's Jhansi district, describing the mobile disc jockey systems normally used at weddings. Citizens have been keeping doors and windows closed to stop locusts entering into their homes.

"In the event of a locust attack, farmers are advised to collectively beat loud drums, tin containers, utensils and use loudspeakers to prevent locusts from



descending on farms and damaging crops," Suhas LY, district magistrate of Gautam Buddha Nagar district, said on Twitter. The government is planning to spray pesticides during the night when locusts rest on trees, he said.

Authorities have cleared locusts from about 50,468 hectares (1,24,709 acres) in several states, including Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat,

Punjab and Maharashtra, according to the Union Agriculture Ministry.

A massive locust attack on the country's farms adds another challenge for PM Narendra Modi's administration, which is trying to contain the spread of the coronavirus and limit its impact on the economy. It cannot risk food crops getting destroyed by the insects at a time when millions

**Authorities have cleared locusts from about 50,468 hectares in several states, including Rajasthan, MP, Gujarat, Punjab and Maharashtra, according to the Union Agriculture Ministry**

have been pushed into poverty after losing their livelihoods because of the world's most stringent stay-at-home rules.

Some summer pulses, early-sown cotton, vegetables and fruit plantations run the risk of destruction from the winged invaders. The silver lining is that the harvesting of winter crops is over and sowing for the monsoon season is yet to begin.

COVID-19 PATIENTS:

## Lack of communication b/w AIIMS, Delhi govt over hospitalisation: HC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court has said there appeared to be a lack of communication between the AAP government and AIIMS which led to several patients who tested positive for COVID-19 being shifted to other hospitals instead of the dedicated COVID-19 facility at AIIMS.

The high court noted that these were out-station patients who had come to AIIMS for treatment of non-COVID ailments and later tested positive for coronavirus while residing in the night shelter within the hospital campus.

A bench of Justices Vipin Sanghi and Rajnish Bhatnagar directed both All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) and Delhi government to appoint their respective nodal officers and any communication between the two related to COVID-19 patients be addressed to the nodal officer of the other party.



"It appears to us that there is lack of communication protocol between AIIMS and Delhi government," the bench said. The direction was issued after 20 patients, being treated at AIIMS for non-COVID ailments, were transferred to Delhi government hospitals after they tested positive for coronavirus.

On this aspect, Delhi government standing counsel Rahul Mehra alleged in the high court that AIIMS was not accessible for common man and that the hospital was turning away COVID-19 patients, unless they were well

connected and influential.

Delhi government, in its affidavit, said that the persons who were found COVID positive were admitted to its hospitals and not at AIIMS, for the reason that the decision to shift them to a hospital had been taken in the night, and at that hour, the authorities at AIIMS were not available. The contentions were disputed by AIIMS which said that it admits any person who reports at the emergency, and is found COVID positive and requires hospitalisation instead of home quarantine.

## Govt 'shrinking' savings, income of common man

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress has alleged that the economy is 'sinking' but the government is consistently 'shrinking' the savings and income of the common man by reducing the savings bank deposit and fixed deposit rates of public sector banks. Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala said in a statement that "The impact of interest rate cut decision on March 31 amounts to loss of Rs 19,000 crore income per year for the depositors".

Middle class and lower middle class is in 'economic grief'. The decision to reduce interest rates and discontinue RBI Bonds during lockdown is "brainless, heartless and shameless". Due to the already existing economic crisis worsened by COVID-19 the income of the people is down, added the Congress spokesperson. The interest rate cuts in PPF, KVP, NSC and other saving instruments further hit the already shrinking savings of approximately 30 crore deposi-



tors, who have deposited Rs 14 lakh crore in various savings schemes, he said.

The latest blow for middle class, farmers, pensioners and women is discontinuation of 7.75 per cent RBI bonds and further reduction of interest rates by SBI, said Surjewala. In the last two months, the total combined reduction in income of 30 crore depositors in saving schemes (PPF, NSC, KVP etc) and 44.51 crore account holders of State Bank of India (SBI) depositors is Rs 44,670 crore annually (from reduction in interest rates on savings scheme and reduction in SBI savings, fixed deposit interest rates), he claimed.

## Ajit Jogi: quintessential politician who never gave up

PNS ■ RAIPUR

Ajit Pramod Kumar Jogi, the first chief minister of Chhattisgarh, wasknown in the political circles as someone who never gave up despite defeats, controversies and debilitating health issues.

Jogi, 74, who died at a private hospital here on Friday, was the quintessential politician who enjoyed support among tribal and scheduled caste communities because of his easy accessibility.

Born into a family of modest means in Pendra Road area of the then Bilaspur district, Jogi earned his engineering degree with a gold medal from a university in Ujjain in 1964.

After that he qualified first for the Indian Police Service and then the Indian Administrative Service.

After serving as collector for 12 years in various districts including Indore and Raipur, Jogi resigned in 1986 and joined



the Congress. The party sent him to the Rajya Sabha for two terms — 1986-92 and 1992-98.

His rise in politics was meteoric, and he became chief minister of the newly formed Chhattisgarh state in November 2000, trumping rivals such as Congress stalwart Vidyacharan Shukla.

As chief minister, he was credited with setting up a state-of-the-art heart hospital in Raipur under the Public-Private-Partnership mode.

Jogi focused on improving health infrastructure in the tribal-dominated backward

state and also laid the foundation stone of the new capital city near Abhanpur area of Raipur.

His ambitious 'Jogi Dabri scheme' to develop small water sources won praise, but was later marred by corruption allegations.

He was accused for splitting the opposition BJP after 12 of its MLAs joined the ruling Congress in 2002.

Jogi succeeded in sidelining Vidyacharan Shukla, who was seeking to become Rajya Sabha MP in 2002. Shukla then joined Sharad Pawar's Nationalist Congress Party.

In January 2003, Jogi faced a major political setback when he and his son Amit were named as suspects in the murder of Ram Avtar Jaggi, then treasurer of the state NCP. Amit Jogi was also arrested but was later acquitted by the trial court.

The BJP cashed in on the issue during the Assembly elections held towards the end of 2003, in which the Congress suffered a humiliating defeat.

## CRPF men donate blood to Naxal injured in encounter in Jharkhand

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Two Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) personnel deployed in Jharkhand have donated blood to save the life of a Maoist, apprehended in an injured condition after an encounter with the force, on "humanitarian" grounds, officials said on Friday.

A team led by the paramilitary forces' 60th battalion and state police killed three Naxals and apprehended two on Thursday after a gunbattle in the forests of the Manmaru-Tebo area in Jharkhand's West Singhbhum district. No security forces personnel was injured.

CRPF constables Om Prakash Yadav and Sandeep Kumar volunteered to donate blood on Thursday evening to one of the injured Maoists, Manoj Hessa, after the doctors at a Tatanagar hospital informed their commanders that the injured person whom



they had got admitted had lost a lot of blood.

"I know they train guns at us...we also undertake combat missions against them...but above everything else is humanity. I just did my part as a human being," Yadav told PTI over the phone from Jharkhand.

The 36-year-old jawan, who joined the country's largest paramilitary force, which has about 3.25 lakh personnel in its ranks, in 2006, said he had donated blood in the past as well as he believes it is the most precious life-saving gift one can give to another person.

## Delhi, West Bengal not distributed May quota of PMGAY free foodgrains: Paswan

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Food Minister Ram Vilas Paswan on Friday said Delhi and West Bengal governments have not yet distributed the May month quota of 5 kg free foodgrains under the Pradhan Mantri Garib Anna Yojana (PMGAY) to ration card holders, while other states and Union territories have completed the distribution, fully or partially.

Many beneficiaries are still waiting for the May month quota in states such as Madhya Pradesh, Punjab, Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh, Gujarat, Kerala and Manipur where up to 80 per cent distribution has been done, according to the



official data.

On distribution of one kg free pulses per household under the PMGAY, Paswan said states have lifted 1.68 lakh tonnes of pulses and are yet to provide month-

wise distribution of the same. The progress report is awaited.

To ensure no poor goes hungry, the Centre has allocated 5 kg rice or wheat per beneficiary and 1 kg pulses per

family for free under the PMGAY for April-June as part of the Rs 20-lakh crore economic package announced to help those affected due to the lockdown imposed to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

"Delhi and West Bengal have distributed April month quota of foodgrains under the PMGAY. Delhi achieved 96 per cent distribution in April, while West Bengal 93 per cent. However in the month of May, the two states have achieved zero," Paswan said via digital press conference.

Barring Delhi and West Bengal, other states and union territories have distributed fully or partially the May month quota of free grains under the PMGAY, he said.

## SC to hear on June 2 plea seeking replacement of word India with 'Bharat'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court will hear on June 2 a plea which has sought a direction to the Centre to amend the Constitution and replace the word India with 'Bharat' or 'Hindustan', claiming it will "instill a sense of pride in our own nationality."

The plea has sought a direction to the government to take appropriate steps to bring amendment in Article 1 of the Constitution, which deals with name and territory of the Union, to the effect that "the same refers to the country as Bharat/Hindustan, to the exclusion of India".

The petition was listed for hearing on Friday before the



apex court but it got deleted from the list as Chief Justice of India (CJI) S A Bobde was not available.

As per a notice uploaded on the top court website, this matter would be listed for hearing on June 2 before a bench headed by the CJI. The plea, filed by a Delhi-

based man, has claimed that such an amendment will "ensure the citizens of this country to get over the colonial past".

"The removal of the English name though appears symbolic, will instill a sense of pride in our own nationality, especially for the future generations to come. Infact, the word India being replaced with Bharat would justify the hard fought freedom by our ancestors," the plea claimed.

Referring to the 1948 Constituent assembly debate on Article 1 of the then draft constitution, the plea said even at that time there was a "strong wave" in favour of naming the country as 'Bharat' or 'Hindustan'.

## CBI starts preliminary enquiry into foreign donations of TJ

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has registered a preliminary enquiry against the organisers of Tablighi Jamaat for alleged dubious cash transactions and hiding of foreign donations from authorities, officials said on Friday.

The agency has not named any specific individual in the enquiry, they added.

The enquiry is registered on a complaint that the organisers of the Jamaat are indulging in dubious cash transactions through illegal and unfair means, the officials said.

It is alleged that the organisers had not disclosed foreign donations to the authorities mandated under the Foreign Contributions (Regulations) Act for the purpose, they said.

With the registration of the enquiry, the agency has started a probe into the financial matters of the Tablighi Jamaat,



which had attracted headlines after its members who congregated at its Nizamuddin-based headquarters here in March, were found to be infected with the coronavirus.

A preliminary enquiry is the first step towards deciding whether there exists prima

facie material to proceed with a full-fledged investigation with an FIR, the officials said.

The agency has started collecting records of the Jamaat from various authorities, including the Delhi Police, and has dispatched letters regarding the same, they added.

## Chaos and jams at entry points after satellite cities seal borders with Delhi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The tightening of traffic restrictions put in place to contain the spread of the coronavirus by Gurgaon and Ghaziabad administrations on their borders with Delhi led to chaos and traffic congestion on Friday. This comes a day after the Haryana government issued fresh orders to seal the inter-state border to contain the spread of the coronavirus. Earlier this week, the Ghaziabad district administration too made the inter-city movement stricter after it reported a spike in coronavirus cases.

Although Ghaziabad, Nodia, Gurgaon fall under different states, a large number of people stay in these two cities, but work in Delhi or vice versa.

"There was a massive chaos this morning with traffic jams as the police were not allowing people to cross the border from



either sides, Ruchir Sharma, who stays in Uttam Nagar in west Delhi but works with a diagnostics laboratory in Gurgaon, said.

The new directive (of tightening the restrictions) came late night, so no one had clarity and instructions were not issued to the police. I am not sure if they are allowing essential services people or not but to get to the check post after clearing the whole queue was a long wait so

I decided to come back, Sharma added. Those travelling to and from Ghaziabad said the checking had become very strict.

Rajendra Singh Yadav, who works in a medical store in Ghaziabad and resides in Shahadra in east Delhi, said the checking by police in Ghaziabad led to traffic congestion on the border. Assistant Superintendent of Ghaziabad Police Keshav Kumar told PTI that they are

**"There was a massive chaos this morning with traffic jams as the police were not allowing people to cross the border from either sides, Ruchir Sharma, who stays in Uttam Nagar in west Delhi but works with a diagnostics laboratory in Gurgaon, said**

conducting checks on the border. Entry will be allowed for only those involved in essential services. He also acknowledged that there was heavy traffic on the borders due to checking by the police.

Haryana's Home Minister Anil Vij on Friday justified strictness on the state's borders with the national capital, saying if the state does not take such measures its coronavirus cases would be at par with Delhi. Citing a sharp increase in coronavirus cases during the past one week in the

Haryana districts adjoining Delhi, Vij had on Thursday issued fresh orders for sealing borders with the national capital.

I regularly monitor and keep a close watch on the situation. Here we are trying to save each life, if we do not maintain strictness on the borders and allow free movement of people, then I can say undoubtedly our cases would be at par with Delhi. I have to stop free movement of people, said Vij while justifying the strict measures, a day after he issued the fresh orders.

# Balancing act

India was quick to brush off US mediation on Ladakh. Besides, we can't afford to rub China the wrong way in the pandemic era



India finds itself in a peculiar situation, caught between the US and China over border tensions in Ladakh. While its strategic proximity to the first is a source of deep discontent for a hegemonic Asian power, the maverick support from US President Donald Trump, who offered to mediate in the crisis, has meant double trouble. Trump has made many mediation efforts on India's behalf at international fora before but the timing of this one in a post-pandemic world is different. More than India, it is a message to China. The US, which has made no bones about China fudging the scale and

potency of the Wuhan contagion and is in a punishing mood, threatening to boycott it economically, is building an international coalition of opinion against the Middle Kingdom. It is, therefore, drawing India to be a part of this anti-China narrative, knowing full well that we could end up being among the top worst-hit nations and would have much to be suspicious about our eastern neighbour. In that sense, the US is feeding off India's weakened position, courtesy its plunging economy and a soaring public health crisis, as much as China is. The heightened tension at Ladakh is China's way of reminding India that it could light up the Himalayan border easily if we fell into the US trap of building a global campaign against it or block trade and investment here. In fact, given that we cannot end our import dependence on China overnight considering its manufacturing edge over ours, particularly when the pandemic has paralysed our economy, we just have to engage with China one on one. India, therefore, has rightly distanced itself, maintaining that it would solve issues with its neighbours through dialogue and diplomatic mechanisms rather than external intervention. China, too, which is used to speaking in a forked tongue, has already indicated diplomacy as a way around the impasse. India is well familiar with this blow-hot-blow-cold intimidatory tactic though the escalation this time is in sync with Chinese depredations in the region against neighbours. Clearly, Xi Jinping wants to justify the need for his muscular leadership by positing the world as an enemy out to finish China as he faces a fall in GDP, about 25 per cent unemployment, a plunging economy and the suppressed rage of a people, who will never know the damage the virus has done to them.

So what should India do? As Doklam has taught us, standing down is not always the way. Indian troops are now favourably placed in many positions and border infrastructure has been fairly ramped up over the last decade. Improved road corridors mean that we can now service requirements and replenish supplies even better. This is what has been exacerbating the People's Liberation Army (PLA), which realises that its edge in the region is gradually being blunted and thinks that India might have ambitions in the Aksai Chin. So India should remain firm on legitimate positions. At the same time, it must step up diplomacy and keep at it rather than diverting itself to scaled up military conflicts as China is still a powerful neighbour. In fact, diplomacy, though requiring high-level intervention, may just work as the tussle this time is over areas that are not really disputed since 1962 and quite distant from the Line of Actual Control (LAC). Of course, this doesn't mean that China won't attempt transgressions and territorial intimidation to arm-twist us during crises. At the same time, if China rakes up the long Himalayan boundaries, we should also pose a counterweight by tying up with Southeast Asian nations and build a pressure against Chinese expansionism in the South China Sea. We should discuss shared threats in the Indian Ocean region with Vietnam, Philippines, Australia, Indonesia and Malaysia. Diplomatically, we could circle China by galvanising the threat perception from it in the region and strengthening a security alliance. One can do this with increased diplomatic engagement without appearing too aggressive and risking a Chinese hitback. In fact, we must be prepared for more hostilities as India builds self-sufficiencies. India has stalled it from ambushing our economy by amending its foreign direct investment (FDI) rules to mandate government approval for all investments from "border" countries and prevent hostile takeovers. We have already cancelled orders for Chinese test kits as they were faulty and have switched to South Korea and other nations. We are supporting a global impartial probe into the Wuhan contagion and though "vocal for local" may not have any scale now, China will not sit easy with the discomfort over 5G trials and a future shrinkage of its market in India.

# Hell before healing

The dismal conditions at quarantine centres across the country are more killing than the disease itself



The word "quarantine centre" has become the colonial equivalent of "kaala paani" or confinement in the dreaded prison on the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, where our freedom fighters were condemned to die in pitiable conditions. Now we are condemning COVID-19 patients as untouchables and leaving them to their fate if the horror stories of conditions at isolation zones are anything to go by. According to the Government's guidelines, each quarantine centre must have rooms/dormitories separated from one another with water, food, telephone, laundry and

sanitation services. But the reality is so different that the Allahabad High Court actually took suo motu cognisance of the unhygienic and inhuman conditions at various quarantine centres in Uttar Pradesh after an engineer succumbed to the infection there but not before apprising his wife of his plight. More lives could have been saved had the conditions enabled recovery than worsening the health of patients. This is not an isolated case. There are reports coming in from across the country of unhygienic conditions, soiled sheets, a few dirty toilets for scores of people, no social distancing, no privacy, shortage of food leading to people fighting over it, flies, mosquitoes, snakebites, staff behaving in a rude manner, treating people like untouchables and throwing food packets at them, lack of medicines for those who have diseases like diabetes and heart ailments and disinterested doctors ignoring their duty. No wonder then that there have been reports of people trying to flee quarantine centres, not reporting their conditions and committing suicide. Even doctors have been up in arms about the sorry state of affairs. With the Government exiting the lockdown in a graded manner and the country seeing a surge in cases coupled with increasing testing, the pressure on these centres is bound to increase. How then will it deal with the situation?

The Government should increasingly consider home quarantining people as the public healthcare infrastructure is obviously overwhelmed. Plus, it can also think of roping in the private sector healthcare providers or hotels, which can be turned into quarantine centres for those who can afford to pay. There can be different budgets to suit different pockets. This will free up Government facilities and money for the millions who cannot afford to pay. Desperate times call for desperate measures and it is time we began looking for out-of-the-box solutions to deal with this unprecedented situation. Corporates can be asked to foot some of the bills of the centres and make it part of their CSR. The Government should have created the infrastructure during the lockdown period. The fact that it could not reflects poorly on it.

# Hysteria in a time of virus

The Corona pandemic has been killing far fewer people compared to road accidents and other causes. It has indeed brought out the best and the worst in humanity



HIRANMAY KARLEKAR

Watching the public's and the Union and State Governments' response to the COVID-19 pandemic and the devastating progress of the cyclone Amphan, I was reminded of Charles Dickens' famous sentence in *A Tale of Two Cities*, "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of Light, it was the season of Darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair, we had everything before us, we had nothing before us, we were all going direct to Heaven, we were all going direct the other way — in short, the period was so far like the present period, that some of its noisiest authorities insisted on its being received, for good or for evil, in the superlative degree of comparison only."

There are parts of the sentence that are generally relevant to the times we live in India but not to the specific context we are talking about. Some parts do apply. For example, it is "the best of times" in terms of the courage, compassion and generosity shown by a number of people to help migrant workers, rendered unemployed by the lockdown. One of them is Pappan Singh Gehlot, a mushroom farmer in Delhi's Tigrpur village, who has bought air tickets worth ₹68,000 to enable his migrant workers to return to their village in Bihar. He has also given each of them a cash advance of ₹3,000 so that they do not face any hardship on return, besides getting them medical certificates needed to fly. According to reports, Gehlot, who has been taking care of their food and accommodation since the lockdown began on March 25, did not want them to walk home given the risks, including those of accidents, involved. Interestingly, one of the reports has quoted him as saying that he had made several attempts to send them back to their home States by a Shramik Special train but could not manage to do so.

Another shining example is that of Akshay Kothawale, a 30-year-old auto driver in Pune, who is spending the ₹200,000 he had saved for his wedding to feed migrant workers and those in distress in the streets. With the help of his friends who have chipped in, he is feeding 400 people every day besides ferrying senior citizens and pregnant women to clinics.

Another example is that of the alumni association of the Bengaluru-based National Law School raising funds to charter an Air Asia Boeing A-320 aircraft to send 169 migrant workers and five children home from Mumbai to Ranchi in Jharkhand. According to Sheyl Trehan, one of those involved in the



venture, it was carried out in cooperation with Priya Sharma of the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences of IIT, Mumbai.

There are many other examples of individuals and NGOs going out of their ways to help migrant labourers and urban poor. They, however, constitute a small slice of the population. The overwhelming majority could not care less or are hostile. The indifference is manifest even in the case of the havoc wrought by the super-cyclone Amphan, which has devastated huge tracts in West Bengal and parts of Odisha. West Bengal bore the brunt of it. There were not more than 86 deaths thanks to the State Government's excellent work in evacuating people. The physical damage has been crippling. The Sunderbans, the world's largest mangrove forest and a wildlife sanctuary, has virtually been destroyed. Hundreds and thousands of people have been rendered homeless. Crops over thousands of square kilometres have been lost. According to the Kolkata Municipal Corporation, over 5,000 trees have been uprooted in the city — the figure may have been as high as 10,000 if the adjacent areas are included. Hundreds of lamp posts have been destroyed. Yet, having satisfied their voyeuristic instincts

in front of television sets, the overwhelming majority outside West Bengal and Odisha is now obsessed with COVID-19 and the threat the pandemic poses to them.

And this despite the fact that COVID-19, the first case of which was reported in India on January 30, 2020, has been killing far fewer people compared to road accidents and other causes. Thus, according to the latest figures, there have been over 166,000 cases, 71,196 cures and 4,706 deaths. This means, on a rough average, over 36 deaths per day since January 30. In sharp contrast, there are on an average 1,214 traffic accidents and 377 deaths from such mishaps, every day. There were 5.45 crore cases of, and 28 lakh cases of deaths from cardiovascular diseases in India in 2016.

It is this hysteria worked up over the COVID-19 pandemic which is one of the main reasons making this "the worst of times" in terms of the cruelty arising therefrom, and also the hypocrisy laid bare by the mismatch between official expressions of concern for migrant workers and their inhuman treatment on the ground. It is not just the fiasco of the efforts to take them home by special trains earmarked exclusively for them. It is also the widely

manifested attitude of not being sympathetic to the terrible suffering of migrant workers on highways, roads, airports, railway stations and inter-State borders — and regarding them as untouchables to be consigned to the peripheries of their villages or neighbourhood by locals fearing them spreading infection. And this despite wide dissemination through media of the fact that COVID-19 infects one only through close personal contact and home quarantine is good enough. Even single women and children are not spared!

The basic reason is fear and, in its fundamental substratum, that of death. This is understandable. There is neither cure nor as yet a vaccine for COVID-19. Exaggerated fear, in the teeth of the availability of information, which shows its lack of basis, is, however, irrational and unwarranted. Like all fears, it should have been countered by an application of will. This has not happened. Instead, the majority of people in this country has been enveloped by a wild terror that has had to better of their humane instincts and rationality.

This leads to two other segments of Dickens' observation, "It was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, and" it was the spring of hope, it was the

winter of despair." It is the age of wisdom in the sense that the people are beginning to realise that what many had taken for granted — that humans are the masters of the universe — is not true and that rationality is a fragile attribute. It is the age of foolishness in that the majority cannot still apply reason in a time of crisis. The hope lies in the shining conduct of a minority and the compassion and courage shown by even people from the most disprivileged sections, the despair from the selfishness and worse of the majority and the attitude of the Union and most of the State Governments to the plight of migrant workers.

It is a remarkable commentary on the state of affairs that the Supreme Court, on Thursday, had to forbid the railways and the State Governments from extracting train or bus fares from stranded migrant waiting to return home. The railways had to provide them with food and water during train journeys, while the States from which they were boarding would have to take care of their meals and water during bus journeys. One only wishes the order came earlier.

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

## SOUNDBITE

The Government's silence about the border situation with China is fueling massive speculation and uncertainty at a time of crisis. It must come clean and tell India exactly what's happening.



Congress leader —Rahul Gandhi

This pandemic has reminded us that not everyone has the luxury to stay at home, and we have to be mindful and try helping in whatever way possible.



Actor —Huma S Qureshi

Have a big conflict... India and China. Two countries with 1.4 billion people (each). Two nations with very powerful militaries. India is not happy and probably China is not happy.



US President —Donald Trump

At this stage, we cannot say that there is community spread of COVID-19 in Kerala. But, we are on the brink of community spread as cases have gone up.



Kerala CM —Pinarayi Vijayan

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Reforms in PDS

Sir — This refers to the article, "Pandemic and PDS" (May 28) by Santosh Biswal and Uttam Chakraborty. It needs to be clarified that the exercise of State-wise coverage within the overall national coverage of the National Food Security Act (NFSA) was done by the erstwhile Planning Commission using 68th round of NSSO Household Consumption Expenditure Survey (2011-12).

The estimation took into account the monthly per capita expenditure of States and the inter-State price differentials to arrive at the consumption cut-offs for rural and urban areas for each State/UT. This was thereafter used to arrive at the percentage of persons falling below that cut-off level of expenditure separately for rural and urban areas. These percentages were then applied on the 2011 population Census to arrive at the number of persons in each State/UT both in rural and urban areas. This yielded the eligible population in the rural and urban areas in each State/UT.

The Planning Commission methodology is such that the coverage under NFSA is higher for those States/UTs, where the size of

### Private hospitals must share the burden

This refers to the editorial, "The cost of care" (May 29). The Supreme Court has rightly questioned private hospitals for not giving free COVID treatment to affected patients. It is a fact that the growing number of cases has crippled Government hospitals. There is a need for private hospitals to coordinate with the Government to tide over the crisis. The Bench, headed by Chief Justice SA Bobde, has asked the Government to identify and prepare a list of hospitals where COVID patients can be treated free of cost.

At least the private hospitals can waive consultation, laboratory and ward charges for patients. The cost of medicines can be borne by them, too. In Government hospitals, too, at least 25 per cent of the cost of treatment and medicines should be borne by the patients. Then people will be careful enough to stay away from infected people. Since the Government has been bearing the treatment cost, some people are not following



the guidelines. In many places, COVID warriors have also been attacked. Also, it is unfair to expect private hospitals to attend only to COVID patients. Those suffering from other diseases should not be neglected. As things stand now, other patients have been badly neglected with some fatalities as well.

KV Seetharamaiah  
Hassan

the population below the cut-off level of expenditure is relatively large in proportion to their total population vis-à-vis those States where the proportion was smaller. Thus, while the all-India coverage is up to 75 per cent of the rural and up to 50 per cent of the urban population, this percentage is much higher for the less developed States/UTs. For instance, in Assam 84.17 per cent of the rural population and 60.35 per cent of the urban population is covered under

NFSA. Further, as per Section 10 of the Act, most States have evolved their own exclusion/inclusion criterion under targeted Public Distribution System (PDS).

The authors are seemingly attempting to highlight the problems in PDS but not noticing the technology-driven reforms and solutions already implemented by the Centre in collaboration with all State/UT Governments. They surprisingly miss out on the following facts regarding PDS reform:

■ Coverage of 67 per cent beneficiaries under NFSA is not a distant dream. Around 81 crore people are already covered under the Act to receive subsidised food-grains through PDS on a monthly basis.

■ Ration cards/beneficiaries data in all States/UTs have been completely digitised and available on respective State/UT portals. Foodgrains are also being distributed through electronic Point of Sale devices in most of the States/UTs.

■ "One nation, one ration card" is already enabled in 17 States/UTs.

■ So far, 146 LMT foodgrains have been delivered to NFSA beneficiaries during April and May 2020 under regular NFSA and Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Anna Yojana (PM-GKAY). Further, distribution is also under progress.

■ Also, the "Atma Nirbhar Bharat Abhiyan" is being implemented to reach out to all such people who may not have NFSA or State ration cardS, including migrants/stranded migrants but are in need for temporary ration.

A proper review of the above initiatives on a factual basis should have been done before naming some States as "doubly disadvantaged." This is a lack of proper understanding of facts and ongoing reforms, which often leads to unsubstantiated criticism of the PDS of having imaginary in-built inequity. The Government always welcomes further improvement in the system and is open to any constructive criticism as it helps in improvement of the system for the benefit of the poor.

Ministry of Consumer Affairs, Food and Public Distribution

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

**FIRST COLUMN**

## Build cyber resilience

As cyber attacks soar, a data recovery plan must be fully integrated within the business and align with its cloud strategy



RIPU BAJWA

During these extraordinary times, when the world is fighting against the deadly COVID-19 pandemic, other threats like the danger of catastrophic cyber attacks have fast mushroomed alongside. As business leaders come face to face with rising cases across the world and in India, the need to be prepared with better data security solutions arises. The World Economic Forum's *Global Risks Report, 2020* ranks cyber attacks as the second risk of greatest concern to businesses in the coming decade. As the tools of the Darknet become more sophisticated and accessible, cyber attacks are becoming increasingly borderless — taking advantage of jurisdictional constraints of regional authorities.

According to an industry research by Frost & Sullivan, 46 per cent of Indian organisations that are in the process of digital transformation have encountered a security incident in 2019. In fact, as per another industry report released recently, India witnessed a two to three-fold increase in the number of cyber attack incidents during the ongoing lockdown that began on March 25.

As it is, cybercrime constitutes a serious problem for India even outside of crisis periods. India was among the top five most targeted countries in the world by cyber criminals in recent years, reflecting the significant amount of work still outstanding in strengthening the nation's cyber defences. Though it is a positive development that more than 550 million Indians have connected to the Internet in recent years, fuelled by rural growth, this comes with its own set of problems. The rapid proliferation of Internet users and of the Internet of Things (IoT) has also left the country's public and private sectors vulnerable. We are seeing more and more large-scale data loss and the rise of ransomware attacks — so business resilience planning is key to survival.

**Why medium-sized businesses must act now:** Reacting in real time to a cyber attack is already too late. Managing the risk requires agility, meticulous alignment across the business and testing to maintain awareness. It is all about being proactive rather than reactive. Cyber resilience is more important than ever as medium-sized businesses assess their risk of being attacked, whether at the hands of criminals or as collateral damage in cyber warfare. Any data loss can put the nails in the coffin for unprepared businesses. While today's business leaders may hope to evade the hit-list, it is a matter of "when" not "if" an attack happens.

**Defending against catastrophic data loss:** Defending a medium-sized business from the worst-case scenario and mission-critical data loss requires cyber security expertise and a holistic approach to resilience. Awareness needs to be built across the business — this is not just a technical problem. Synergy between technology and business processes is where true resilience is attained. Leaning on cyber experts when it comes to planning and implementation will help businesses identify key applications, recovery times and objectives.

Every arm of the business needs to understand where its most sensitive data and services are parked and the level of risk around them. To understand the level of risk, an agile approach is needed because risk changes along with the business landscape. For this reason, regular scans and analysis of the internal landscape are essential to understand these changes and the impact.

Protecting a huge portfolio of assets is not easy, especially as it expands. But every business must understand what its DNA is — that's the critical 10-15 per cent of data that must be protected at all costs. This is the lifeblood of an organisation and, in the event of a cyber-attack, is the difference between its life and death. It is business-critical and must be decided upon with a holistic view. For some organisations, this can often lead to analysis paralysis — the desire to save it all. In the same way that we would only carry our most essential belongings from a burning home, businesses must decide upon their most prized data so that it can be protected and used to recover the business in the aftermath.

**There is a cure:** The good news is this process can be simplified by data protection and cyber-security services that enable organisations to establish policy-driven automated workflows to move business-critical data into an isolated environment and lock it down in less than five steps. This is called a cyber-vault, the ultimate protection for a business' DNA.

In the event of an attack, this data will help businesses to recover. When responding to cyber incidents and working to bring critical systems and data back online, accuracy and simplicity matter. A cyber recovery plan must be fully integrated within the business and align with its cloud strategy.

Businesses are increasingly aware of the dangers of a cyber attack but they need to truly invest in cyber resilience in order to shore up the gaps in the ever-changing work environment. And cyber security expertise is vital. The clock is ticking, it's not a matter of "if" but "when" and businesses need to be prepared.

(The writer is Director and General Manager, Data Protection Solutions, Dell Technologies)

**POINTCOUNTERPOINT**

WE CAN'T ALLOW SOME PLATFORMS TO HAND-PICK THE SPEECH THAT AMERICANS MAY ACCESS. THIS WILL BE A BIG DAY FOR SOCIAL MEDIA AND FAIRNESS.  
 —US PRESIDENT DONALD TRUMP



THE PRESIDENT IS TRAMPLING THE FIRST AMENDMENT BY THREATENING THE FUNDAMENTAL FREE SPEECH RIGHTS OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS.  
 —PRESIDENT OF NETCHOICE STEVE DELBIANCO

# The perfect blend

Blended finance combines public sector and philanthropic monies as catalytic capital to raise multiples of private sector monies, which help scale up the flow of funding to sustainable projects



SOURAJIT AIYER

SANDEEP BHATTACHARYA

As sustainability becomes mainstream, it is becoming a well-acknowledged fact that the planet just does not possess the resources required for us to maintain our current consumption patterns and emulate the aspirational lifestyles of the West. The estimated growth in global population to 10 billion in the not too distant future is an added headwind. This situation has meant that driving efficiencies in resource usage is fast coming into public discourse to reduce the carbon footprint. This is translating into necessary assets that would need funding. Such examples abound, like fuel-efficient cars, migration of public transport to e-vehicles, high-speed rail in place of airlines, urban Mass Rapid Transit trains substituting fuel-run vehicles, micro grids for far-flung communities instead of diesel generators and so on.

While these assets, which are typically part of large-scale transformational projects, are funded either by the Government or by concessional loans from development financial institutions, public capital is not going to fulfil the need for the trillions of dollars of investment the planet requires to scale up projects that would usher in the desired sustainability goals.

However, the biggest challenge to bringing private capital at scale is the fact that most projects do not offer commercially-viable returns, owing to high upfront costs, long payback, remote location of some projects, nascent technologies and in certain cases, political uncertainties, weak institutional frameworks and so on.

This is where blended finance has come up as a solution in this context. It combines public sector and philanthropic monies as catalytic capital to raise multiples of private sector monies, which help scale up the flow of funding to sustainable projects, while yielding substantial economic benefits to all stakeholders.

The blended finance structure addresses the projects' perceived risks, thereby helping increase the size and number of funding opportunities. It comprises funding, which may or may not be concessional, supported with one or more elements like guarantees, political risk insurance, performance insurance, outcome-based funding, interest subvention, concessional or off-market local currency hedging, project preparation grants and so on.

This combination makes the projects' terms viable for private sector capital and for the project developer, who otherwise may not have met the criteria without the assistance these supporting mechanisms bring in.

Among the emerging markets, India is leading the way by developing successful blended finance models. These are worth emulating in other markets that have a similar development profile as India in order to bring blended finance to a global scale.

In India, the Government's Viability Gap Funding (VGF) model is one such success-story. Launched in 2004, it supports projects under the Public Private Partnership (PPP) mechanism. VGF grants were made essentially for infrastructure projects where private sector sponsors were selected via competitive bidding. The grant was disbursed at the construction stage after the private sector developer made an equity contribution towards the project. This grant is typically 20 per cent of the project's capital cost and is allocated from the Government's budget.

The Government then went a step ahead by defining the norms of how VGF would apply to utility-scale renewable energy projects, specifying

“IN THE END, COMPULSIONS LIKE CLIMATE CHANGE, GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS, SUBSTITUTING THE IMPORT COST OF FOSSIL FUELS AND DRIVING ECONOMIC GROWTH THROUGH 'GREEN SECTORS' WILL NECESSITATE AN URGENT SCALE-UP IN SUSTAINABILITY PROJECTS. TO ACHIEVE THIS, INNOVATIVE MECHANISMS TO RAISE DEDICATED GREEN CAPITAL WILL HOLD THE KEY, ESPECIALLY AS INDIAN BANKS CANNOT ALWAYS FUND THE LONG MATURITIES THAT SUSTAINABILITY PROJECTS ENTAIL. WHILE BLENDED FINANCE CANNOT SOLVE ALL THE ISSUES, IT CAN CERTAINLY ADDRESS SOME OF THE BARRIERS

the role of the Solar Energy Corporation of India in terms of evaluation, disbursement and monitoring.

Another example is that of cKers Finance and Rockefeller Foundation. Inked in 2018, their partnership involves an investment by Rockefeller in the Delhi-based sustainable energy Non-Banking Financial Company (NBFC) to build a \$50 million asset financing portfolio for scaling up India's decentralised renewable energy segment (DRE).

The Rockefeller investment would help cKers provide funding access at reasonable rates and terms to build the sustainable energy portfolio about 10 per cent of which would be in mini-grids. While the national grid has reached almost all places in India, the quality of supply remains erratic and thus DRE solutions like micro and mini-grids hold value.

Then there is the US-India Clean Energy Finance (USICEF) programme, which supports distributed solar power projects through grants specifically for early-stage project preparation support. Managed by the Climate Policy Initiative, it is a partnership between India's renewable energy ministry, the US' Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC) and others. Developers apply to the USICEF, which maintains an empanelled list of service providers (legal and professional services consultancies and so on) and engages them with the grant.

The project preparation support makes these developers investment-ready to raise funding from OPIC and other like-minded firms. The average grant is only about \$0.1 million or so but this is a significant challenge for the developers given their small scale and the limitations they face in resources and talent acquisition.

This programme, with a total \$3.5 million grant committed so far, has supported several rooftop solar, small ground-mounted and solar home system projects across more than a dozen Indian States. Last is the "pay for success" outcome funder model. Grameen Impact Investment, a Mumbai-based impact NBFC, launched social impact bonds addressing women's livelihood and

empowerment, youths' skill-development and clean energy. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) spending by organisations in India has risen exponentially in recent years, mostly towards health and education. However, India's Human Development Index score, which includes mostly health and education indicators, has hardly improved.

While CSR is only one component of India's social sector spending, this does give some indication that actual achievement of outcomes is perhaps what is wanted at times. The outcome funder model attempts to close this gap. The predefined outcome metrics are independently verified by third-party evaluators for on-ground achievement, only upon which the outcome funder (a philanthropy or CSR fund) would meet the enterprise's interest and/or principle obligations — thus "pay for success."

This ensures that the philanthropic resources are leveraged in a manner that will help achieve outcomes far more than what direct spending could possibly do.

Other blended models abound globally, each of which can potentially be replicated in India. The US-India Catalytic Solar Finance Facility used catalytic, first-loss capital to create risk-mitigation facilities. The Grid Solar Fund, which funds off-grid solar companies, raised \$10 million in political risk insurance from OPIC to attract investments from the private sector.

Climate Investor One Fund raised blended capital at about 1.7 times multiple with a tiered-structure, which bifurcates capital into first-loss, subordinated equity and debt with credit guarantee to make lenders comfortable. Denmark's Climate Investment Fund raised blended capital at over 1.7 times multiple, by using a preferential model where losses are shared equally by public and private investors but the latter enjoy a preferential return and a catch-up option.

At the same time, a preferential model based on share classes was less effective. The Global Energy Efficiency and Renewable Energy Fund, which paid principal and interest in batches between its A and B share classes, could raise

blended capital only at about 0.8 times multiple.

Models apart, another merit of blended finance is that it can cover areas traditionally unserved by conventional funding, like US' Prime Coalition, which invests in early-stage clean energy technologies, the Africa Clean Energy Facility, which focusses on project preparation and expects to raise a multiple of about 20 times its grants and IFC-GEF's China Utility Energy Efficiency Programme, which helped local banks lend for energy efficiency.

Blended finance can also mobilise commercial bank participation as seen in Dutch bank FMO's Guarantco that grants partial credit guarantees to local banks, Indonesia's Sarulla geothermal project that used a political risk guarantee from Japan's JBIC and a guarantee letter from the Indonesian Government to bring in commercial bank funding, German KfW and ResponsAbility's Global Climate Partnership Fund that refines green lending schemes of local banks or Africa Development Bank's Facility for Energy Inclusion that combines commercial capital for small-scale energy access projects.

In the end, compulsions like climate change, greenhouse gas emissions, substituting the import cost of fossil fuels and driving economic growth through "green sectors" will necessitate an urgent scale-up in sustainability projects. To achieve this, innovative mechanisms to raise dedicated green capital will hold the key, especially as Indian banks cannot always fund the long maturities that sustainability projects entail. While blended finance cannot solve all the issues, it can certainly address some of the barriers. The models discussed in this article have already shown demonstrable value which makes them worth emulating. Most of them can be potentially replicated and scaled up further to fund India's multitude sustainability challenges. Emerging markets with similar challenges to India should also take note.

(Aiyer is Consultant, South Asia Fast Track Sustainability Communications and Bhattacharya is India Projects Manager, Climate Bonds Initiative)

# Climate change lessons from the Corona crisis

We clearly need to speed up research and testing of the various potential techniques for geo-engineering now



GWYNNE DYER

Human beings respond well to a familiar crisis, especially if it is also imminent. They don't do nearly as well when the threat is unfamiliar and still apparently quite distant. Consider our response to the current Coronavirus threat. Countries in East Asia with recent experience of similar viruses like SARS and so on immediately responded with "test, track and isolate" drills, plus instant lockdowns if the virus had already

gained a foothold in the population. Other countries, just as rich and well-educated, had the same information but they waited several months before taking emergency measures that upset the comfortable routine of their lives. So the US, UK and France all ended up with death rates per million more than 50 times higher than China, Korea and Japan.

The same applies to global heating, except that in this case we are all Americans. None of us has prior experience of a genuine climate crisis and although we have known enough about what's going to happen to justify urgent action for 30 years now, we have done nothing decisive about it. We have lots of "clean" technology but total demand for energy has grown so fast that we are still getting a steady 80 per cent of our energy from fossil fuels. Realistically, this is not going to change much. We are who we are,

shaped by millions of years of evolution and our ancestors didn't do long-term planning; they had to concentrate on acute short-term problems. A truly serious response to the climate threat will, therefore, come only when it is starting to hurt. Unfortunately, by then it will probably be too late.

The Earth system — the biosphere, atmosphere, the oceans, the rocks, all the components that govern the climate — plays by its own rules. It will absorb new inputs like warming for a long time while changing as little as possible: It is a "homeostatic" system. We are still benefiting from this feature now: A full degree Celsius of warming already and not much to show for it except hotter summers, shorter winters and bigger storms. But when the pressure on the climate system gets too great — reaches a tipping point — it is liable to charge off in

unpredictable directions at high speed. "Non-linear change", they call it and we won't like it a bit. Hundreds of millions, maybe billions, will start to die. Then we will be ready to make great changes to save ourselves but it will be too late. Human systems will be collapsing under the impact of famines, wars and endless waves of refugees. And besides, once the climate hits non-linear change, it is almost impossible to bring it back. We're stuck with wherever it ends up, whether that new state will support a large human civilisation or not.

How far ahead is this calamity? We probably have at least a decade or two. Will we end all our greenhouse gas emissions in that time? Probably not. Cutting our emissions isn't enough. We have to stop all of our emissions before we push the climate system over the edge and we don't even know precisely where the edge

is. Every bit of emissions we can cut now gives us a little more time before we reach the edge, but the global population will still be going up and people in the poorer countries will still be increasing their energy use. (It's their turn and you can't deny them that.)

So, the crisis almost certainly will arrive and then we will finally be willing to make radical changes. What we will desperately need at that point is more time. That's why we will need geo-engineering. This is not a cure; it is a way of temporarily counteracting the warming caused by our emissions of greenhouse gases by reflecting a small part of the incoming sunlight in one way or another. In fact, you could say that it is "positive" geo-engineering, as opposed to the large-scale "negative" geo-engineering we have been doing for the last two centuries by dumping huge amounts of warming gases into the atmosphere.

When we are finally ready to act decisively on global warming, we will need a window of time to make the changes that are required to preserve this global civilisation and the biosphere it now dominates. Only geo-engineering can create that window. We don't need to start geo-engineering now. It would be wonderful if we never have to do it but that would take a miracle. We cannot know how long we would have to go on doing it, either: Long enough to get the carbon dioxide in the atmosphere back down to a safe level, certainly, which would be at least a matter of decades. But even without knowing the answers to these questions, we clearly need to speed up research and testing of the various potential techniques for geo-engineering now.

(Gwynne Dyer's new book is 'Growing Pains: The Future of Democracy and Work')



## LOW SPIRITS ON THE HIGH STREET

Shops shutting, jobs lost, massive commercial landlords wiped out. The future of our community hubs looks bleak. Building a replacement will require more public intervention and tax breaks for firms which employ and procure supplies locally. It won't be easy but it is an opportunity. (The Guardian editorial)

CAPSULE



**NABARD sanctions Rs 1,050 crore credit support to WB**

**Kolkata:** The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) has sanctioned credit of Rs 1,050 crore in the current fiscal so far to West Bengal for benefit of farmers and poor people in rural areas, an official said on Friday. The credit support under special liquidity facility (SLF) will be extended to state cooperative banks, regional rural banks and micro-finance institutions (MFIs), he said. The NABARD has already disbursed an amount of Rs 720 crore to state cooperative and regional rural banks, he said, adding that disbursements to MFIs will commence shortly. The lender has sanctioned Rs 300 crore for MFIs, Rs 700 crore for state cooperative banks and Rs 50 crore for regional rural banks. The development bank said the credit flow to the rural sector of the state is extreme important to sustain agricultural operations as the economy has been hit by COVID-19 outbreak. The credit flow will provide relief to the farmers in the upcoming kharif season, he said.



**Voda keeps evaluating opportunities, no proposal before board now: VIL**

**New Delhi:** Amid reports of Google eyeing a 5 per cent stake in the company, Vodafone Idea on Friday said it constantly evaluates various opportunities but there is no proposal before the board of the firm as yet. The clarification to the BSE by Vodafone Idea comes a day after reports that Alphabet Inc's Google is eyeing about 5 per cent stake in the telecom company. "As part of corporate strategy, the company constantly evaluates various opportunities for enhancing the stakeholders' value. As and when such proposals are considered by the board of directors of the company warranting disclosures, the company shall comply with the disclosure obligations," Vodafone Idea said on Friday. Currently, there is "no proposal" as reported that is being considered at the board, it added. "We wish to reiterate and clarify that the company will comply with Sebi Listing Regulations and duly keep the stock exchanges informed of all the price-sensitive information," it said.

**'Madras HC issues notices to Franklin Templeton MF, Sebi'**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Notices have been issued to crisis-hit Franklin Templeton Mutual Fund and Sebi by the Madras High Court after a petition was filed by an investors group to safeguard nearly Rs 28,000 crore of investors' money stuck in six schemes shut down by the fund house, according to a statement.

The investors' group, Chennai Financial Markets and Accountability (CFMA), also said it is separately launching an online petition to bring together all affected investors and the same would be forwarded to the Prime Minister's Office as well as the US parent of the fund house and the US markets regulator SEC. It further said mutual funds and fund managers should be made to answer questions on their choice of investment, and compliance with regulatory and prudential norms, among others.

Last month, Franklin Templeton had closed six debt funds, citing redemption pressures and lack of liquidity in the bond markets. Since then, capital market regulator Sebi has asked the fund house on multiple occasions to focus on



**Franklin Templeton MF in their own admission has stated that the recovery of money across six schemes will be in the range of 5-81 per cent over a period of over 5 years**

repaying the investors at the earliest. According to CFMA, the Madras High Court on issued notices on May 26 to Sebi, Franklin Templeton Asset Management India Pvt Ltd (FTAMCI), trustees of the mutu-

al fund, its President Sanjay Sapre, fixed income CIO Santosh Kamath and other key management personnel after a Public Interest Litigation was filed by it. The high court took cog-

nizance of the seriousness of the matter wherein the money of the common public, amounting to about Rs 28,000 crore, is at risk of getting wiped off and has asked Sebi to file a reply along with a status report on the actions taken by it, CFMA said in its statement. As per the investors group, Franklin Templeton MF in their own admission has stated that the recovery of money across six schemes will be in the range of 5-81 per cent over a period of over 5 years.

**UP govt inks MOUs with industry bodies for 11 lakh jobs to migrants**

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government on Friday signed initial agreements with various industry bodies to help in providing 11 lakh jobs to migrant labourers who have returned to the state in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) and Indian Industries Association (IIA) accounted for three lakh jobs each, while NARDECO and Laghu Udyog Bharati accounted for 2.5 lakh jobs each, UP MSME minister Sidharth Nath Singh told PTI.

He said memoranda of understanding (MoUs) were signed in the presence of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath, whose promise to provide jobs to migrants returning to the state was fulfilled by the MSME department of the UP



**Singh said his department has set up a control room for migrant labourers and has so far ensured payment of Rs 1,700 crore dues to workers in 75,000 units**

government. "To those who had raised questions as to how the state government will carry out the gigantic task of providing 11 lakh jobs to skilled and semi-skilled labourers, the MSME department has given the answer," Singh asserted. The minister pointed out

that certain states had considered UP labourers as liability, "but, Adityanath converted them into assets". Singh said his department has set up a control room for migrant labourers and has so far ensured payment of Rs 1,700 crore dues to workers in 75,000 units.

**Sundaram-Clayton posts 23.43% rise in fourth quarter**

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Sundaram-Clayton Ltd, a leading supplier of aluminium die-cast products has clocked a 23.43 per cent rise in its stand-alone profits for the January-March 2020 period at Rs 62.05 crore. The city-based TVS Group company had registered net profits at Rs 50.27 crore during corresponding quarter previous year. For the full year ending March 31, 2020, net profits stood at Rs 68.70 crore, the company said in a BSE filing. The net profits registered in the corresponding period last year stood at Rs 119.66 crore.

Total income for the quarter under review was at Rs 394.77 crore as against Rs 455.65 crore registered in the same period last fiscal. For the full year ending March 31, 2020 stand-alone total income slipped to Rs 1,424.14 crore from Rs 1,932.94 crore registered in the corresponding period last fiscal.

**PFC clears Dhillon's appointment as CMD**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-run Power Finance Corporation (PFC) on Friday announced the appointment of Ravinder Singh Dhillon as Chairman and Managing Director from June 1 following superannuation of Rajeev Sharma this month.

The board of PFC in its meeting held on Friday approved the appointment of Dhillon as CMD of the company in pursuance of an order of the Power Ministry issued in this regard on April 7, 2020, the



power sector financier said in a statement. Dhillon's appointment as

Chairman and Managing Director will be with effect from the date of assumption of

charge of the post on or after June 2020, it said. He would hold the post till the date of his superannuation (May 31, 2023) or until further orders, the company said. Incumbent CMD Rajeev Sharma is attaining superannuation on May 31, 2020, after a glorious career spanning close to four decades, the company said. He has been instrumental in PFC's transformation as one of India's largest financial and lending institutions in the power sector and the fourth largest profit-making CPSE on a consolidated basis.

**Sensex surges 224 pts; Nifty tops 9,550-mark**

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Extending its rising streak to the third session, equity benchmark Sensex jumped 224 points on Friday, driven by gains in HDFC, ITC and HUL despite weak cues from global markets.

After gyrating 656.72 points during the day, the 30-share BSE index rebounded from the day's low to settle 223.51 points or 0.69 per cent higher at 32,424.10. It hit an intra-day high of 32,480.52 and a low of 31,823.80.

The NSE Nifty advanced 90.20 points or 0.95 per cent to 9,580.30. During the day, it touched a high of 9,598.85 and a low of 9,376.90.

ONGC was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, jumping over 5 per cent, followed by Bajaj Auto, ITC, Sun Pharma, Nestle India, L&T, Maruti, UltraTech Cement and HUL.

On the other hand, Infosys, Axis Bank, Bharti Airtel, TCS and Titan were among the laggards.

Besides stock-specific action, heavy foreign fund inflows lent buying confidence to domestic investors, analysts said.

On a net basis, foreign portfolio investors bought equities worth Rs 2,354.14 crore on Thursday, provisional exchange data showed.

Further, markets witnessed volatility as India registered its biggest single-day spike of 7,466 coronavirus cases.

The number of COVID-19 cases in India crossed 1.65 lakh and the death toll climbed to 4,706, as per health ministry data.

Globally, the number of cases linked to the disease has



crossed 58.10 lakh, with the death toll at around 3.60 lakh. Meanwhile, bourses in Hong Kong and Tokyo closed on a negative note, while Shanghai and Seoul finished with gains.

Stock exchanges in Europe were trading in the red in early deals. International oil benchmark Brent crude futures slipped 2.33 per cent to USD 35.19 per barrel.

**Rupee spurts by 14 paise to 75.62 foreign fund inflows, weak dollar**

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The rupee appreciated by 14 paise to close at 75.62 against the US dollar on Friday as foreign fund inflows and weak American currency boosted investor confidence. Forex traders said investors are awaiting the country's gross domestic product data for the January-March quarter, due later in the day, for further cues.

The rupee opened higher at 75.71 at the inter-bank forex market and later touched a high of 75.48 in day trade. The local unit finally settled at 75.62 to the US dollar, showing a gain of 14 paise over the last close of 75.76. Indian stocks rose for a third straight session on

Friday on the back of buying by foreign funds.

The 30-share BSE index rebounded from the lows to settle 223.51 points or 0.69 per cent higher at 32,424.10. NSE Nifty advanced 90.20 points or 0.95 per cent to 9,580.30.

Foreign institutional investors were net buyers in the capital market, as they bought equity shares worth Rs 2,354.14 crore on Thursday, according to provisional exchange data.

The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, fell by 0.08 per cent to 98.30.

On a weekly basis, the domestic unit has appreciated by 33 paise. It had settled at 75.95 on May 22.

**Sebi bars two former promoters of SSL from capital mkts for 4 years**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Regulator Sebi has barred two ex-promoters of Shrivallis Securities Ltd (SSL) -- Subrat Kumar Routray and Snigdha Biswal -- from the capital markets for four years in an illegal fund raising case.

In October 2018, Sebi had passed an interim order against Shrivallis Securities and its directors and promoters for illegally raising a sum of Rs 4.4 crore, through a redeemable preference shares issue to at least 421 investors during 2011-12 and 2012-13.

The regulator had barred the company's promoters and directors from the capital markets, as per the interim order.

Sebi noted that Routray and Biswal were the promoters of SSL when money was raised through the issue of redeemable preference shares.

Routray and Biswal contended that they were not aware of the redeemable preference shares issue and they transferred their shares in SSL to the managing director



when they came to know about the said fund raising.

But they failed to prove that they had given a reasonable public notice that the redeemable preference shares were issued without their knowledge or consent.

Thus, both of them failed to make out a case for why they should not be held liable for violation of the public issue norms, Sebi said in an order on Thursday.

Consequently, the regulator has restrained Routray and Biswal from buying, selling or otherwise dealing in securities in any manner whatsoever, directly or indirectly, for a period of four years or till the completion of refund to the investors of SSL, whichever is late.

**CIL's coal allocation under e-auction**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned Coal India's fuel allocation under the exclusive e-auction scheme for the non-power sector rose over three-folds to 3.91 million tonnes (MT) in April.

Coal India Ltd (CIL) had allocated 1.20 MT of dry fuel to the sector under the scheme in April 2019, as per latest government data.

This growth comes amid CIL looking to tap the non-power sector to consume its coal in the wake of a slump in demand for the dry fuel.

For the entire fiscal (2019-20), the PSU's coal allocation under the scheme dropped to 8.03 MT from 11.36 MT in the previous year.

No dry fuel was allocated in March 2020, whereas in the same month of 2019, 1.93 MT of coal was booked under the scheme, data showed.

The scheme was launched in 2015-16 to make coal available to non-power consumers, including captive power plants.

**Singapore top source of FDI in FY20 with investments worth USD 14.67 bn**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Singapore was the top source of foreign direct investment into India for the second consecutive financial year, accounting for about 30 per cent of FDI inflows in 2019-20.

In the past two financial years, FDI from Singapore has surpassed that from Mauritius. In the last financial year, India attracted USD 14.67 billion in FDI from Singapore, whereas it was USD 8.24 billion from Mauritius, according to the data of the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT).

In 2018-19, Singapore's FDI aggregated at USD 16.22 billion, while that from Mauritius it was USD 8.08 billion. According to experts, Singapore has been able to outpace Mauritius with its ease of doing business policies, simplified tax regime and a large number of private investors.

"Mauritius was once seen as a tax haven making it the



most favoured nation for routing investments in India. April 2017 brought key amendments to the bilateral treaties with Mauritius and Singapore which neutralized the tax benefits available in Mauritius.

"Singapore with its ease of business policies, simplified tax regime and large number of private investors has been able to outrun Mauritius," Sandeep Jhunjhunwala, Partner, Nangia Andersen LLP said.

He said attractive corporate tax rates, swift response in

combating the COVID-19 pandemic, impressive mobile and internet penetration, and technology uptake are making India a primary destination to invest.

"While countries are battling the COVID-19 pandemic and the world economy is headed into recession, India received a mammoth investment from stake sale of Jio Platforms. Economists and investors are now closely watching India as it is headed towards becoming a digital giant," Jhunjhunwala added.

**World shares fall as HK, US-China tensions weigh**

PNS ■ BANGKOK

Shares fell Friday in Europe and Asia as investors awaited a news conference about China by President Donald Trump later in the day.

Benchmarks slipped in Paris, Frankfurt and Tokyo but rose in Shanghai. U.S. and Chinese officials have been trading harsh rhetoric recently on everything from Hong Kong to the response to the coronavirus outbreak. One fear is that further friction could lead to another punishing round of escalating tariffs between the two countries that would hit the global economy when it's already in a severe recession due to the coronavirus pandemic. "The world awaits Trump's news conference tonight and the market is reacting, although there is absolutely no panic at all and it's about pre-positioning," Chris Weston of Pepperstone said in a commentary.

China's National People's Congress on Thursday approved a national security law aimed at suppressing seces-



sionist and subversive activity in Hong Kong, overriding any potential opposition by local lawmakers. U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo has said the law means Washington may no longer treat the former British colony, already reeling from anti-government protests and the pandemic, as autonomous from Beijing. That could undermine the city's status as a major center for trade and finance.

Germany's DAX lost 1.4% to 11,616.15 and the CAC 40 in France slipped 1.2% to 4,712.27. Britain's FTSE 100 gave up 1.1% to 6,149.44. U.S. markets were poised for losses, with the future contract for the S&P 500 0.6% lower and the future for the Dow industrials down 0.7%.

Weak economic data from Japan also cast a pall, as the government reported that industrial production fell more

than 9% in April from the month before, while retail sales dropped nearly 10%, month-on-month. That was the biggest fall since a sales tax hike in 1997. Hong Kong's Hang Seng index dropped 0.7% to 22,961.47, while Japan's Nikkei 225 index fell 0.2% to 21,877.89. Australia's S&P/ASX 200 skidded 1.6% to 5,755.70.

The Kospi in South Korea added 0.1% to 2,029.60, while the Shanghai edged 0.2% high-

**Overnight, the S&P 500 ended the day 0.2% lower at 3,029.73. The Dow Jones Industrial Average lost 0.6% to 25,400.64 and the Nasdaq composite fell 0.5%, to 9,368.99.**

er to 2,852.35. Overnight, the S&P 500 ended the day 0.2% lower at 3,029.73. The Dow Jones Industrial Average lost 0.6% to 25,400.64 and the Nasdaq composite fell 0.5%, to 9,368.99.

Even with Thursday's loss, the S&P 500 is still on pace for its third weekly gain of at least 2.5% in the last four weeks. Following their breathtaking drop of nearly 34% in February and much of March, stocks began recovering after the Federal Reserve and Capitol Hill pledged unprecedented amounts of aid for the economy.

# A NEW LEARNING

AYUSHI SHARMA talks to the experts to find out the way forward for schools and education as social distancing changes the method of instruction



Students without seat partners, attending school in shifts while wearing masks, and carrying sanitisers along with books, combining online education with physical and a focus on keeping safe... Is this what schools in the recent future, whenever they reopen, look like? Since the world is all set to change with new normal in every industry be it fashion, travel or education, the question is — what is the way forward? Educationists share that COVID-19 is likely to change the face of education in the forthcoming years and it will pave the way for new learning trends.

Some of the suggestions that have come forth from educationists include frequent health checks, temperature screenings, staggered arrivals and limiting visitors on campus.

But there is also the emotional aspect to be looked after. The bond that children make in school, while being away from their parents, family or any kind of intervention, make them understand different aspects of life while making them emotionally strong. So social need is one domain which every school caters as it plays a very important role in shaping a child's character, believes Shivani Gupta, a primary teacher of Gems Modern Academy, Gurgaon. She says, "Multi-sensory experiences for a child are a very strong force. S/he learns best not in a class, but over time with real life experiences. I feel the focus still remains the same, just the strategies have changed because of what is happening in the world. Now these values are being taught using technology."

Children are being prepared to deal with the new normal. Short videos, PPTs and online discussions are being conducted to make them aware of the current situation. Their inputs are asked on topics like: What do they think can be done to stay safe? How important is it to maintain social distancing? Is there any need to change the way we think? What should be changed — our thinking or our actions? "Such topics ignite their critical thinking and give them a chance to introspect their views. Once they believe in what they do, it becomes their habit," Shivani tells us.

Group learning, which was widely adopted before this pandemic, should now be replaced with a more engaging approach, shares Beas Dev Ralhan, co-founder and CEO of Next Education India

Pvt Ltd. "Schools should introduce individual activities and project-based learning so that students can explore their interests and learn at their own pace. Further, to make bonding among students and teachers, online discussions, debates and extempores should be conducted so that they can interact, present their views and stay connected. This, in turn, will ensure that learning and holistic development doesn't stop no matter what," says he.

What is a crisis worth if you don't learn something from it? Well, Anju Wal, principal of Shiv Nadar School, Faridabad, shares that schools are re-imagining the teaching-learning process. At this moment, it is more important to do empathetic teaching



CHILDREN ARE BEING PREPARED TO DEAL WITH THE NEW NORMAL. SHORT VIDEOS, PPTS AND ONLINE DISCUSSIONS ARE BEING CONDUCTED TO MAKE THEM AWARE OF THE CURRENT SITUATION. WITH E-LEARNING, SCHOOLS HAVE LEARNED NOT TO PUT DISPROPORTIONATE FOCUS ON FACTS, FIGURES AND BOOKISH LEARNING.

than transact lessons online. She says, "An expression of love and care is paramount to the digital learning format in these unprecedented times. No one in the education sector was certain how to go about the new norm of teaching digitally, but have evolved considerably and bettered the online experience for our children with regular improvements made through feedback, dialogue, and analysis."

One thing is certain that education institutions have made the most of the situation. With e-learning, schools have learned not to put disproportionate focus on facts, figures and bookish learning. What Meenal Arora, founder-director of Shemford Group of Futuristic Schools, feels is that this chaotic time is teaching us that a curriculum must

be grounded in students' realities and cultivate empathy, creative and flexible thinking in students. "Teachers are trying to help children think about their relationship with the world around them through various activities. Parents have important roles to play and their active participation is indispensable," says she.

Educational needs of children are changing at a very high pace. Subjecting them to mathematical tables, mugging up poems and memorising the names of colours is not going to help anymore. They need to be exposed to 'experiences' no matter how trivial. But with the current scenario and online education becoming the trend, this isn't an option. So how can one focus

psychology suggests that children learn and imitate behaviours by watching and listening, which means they can learn character traits such as resilience, determination and perseverance from mother," shares she.

Anju tells us that even in these lockdown days, when they are digitally connecting with the children, they are looking at the home as the laboratory of learning and the parents as their co-partners in the journey of teaching and learning. Even agrees with Shivani and says, "There has been no option but to deepen connects with our parents and orient them seamlessly and consistently to own our pedagogy. We partner with them and use homegrown resources to bring real-time

ties that integrate online interactions with physical movement like going on a scavenger hunt, group stories, singing or music. Provide children with a choice of activities so that they can be empowered in making decisions over the week, while ensuring a balance of activities across curriculum learning areas. For instance, using a rubric to self-monitor progress, apply techniques of the flipped classroom. It's where children engage in learning experiences by collecting information, items, experimenting and then share through online format."

Once the schools reopen, a few precautionary measures will be taken and we can still be on the path of learning. So how can the children be taught about social distancing in schools and no-touch culture? Rohan Parikh, director of The Green Acres Academy, explains that children are naturally curious and are always looking to explore and interact with their environment. "The more practical solutions will be to create a shift system so we have less children in the building at one time. Keep separate groups to contain any spread. There will be a huge burden on schools to manage and keep to these measures. Teachers will have to look for ways to create experiences within classrooms that are meaningful and impart knowledge. Such creativity and working with limited resources have been the way of teachers for many years. I trust we will find the solution," says he.

Undoubtedly, the process has its own challenges but "a lot of training sessions and workshops for everyone — teachers, students and even parents, can help a bit," shares Meenal. "Using fun interactive activities, children can be taught to maintain social distance. With constant counselling, we will be able to achieve a no-touch culture at school. It can be done by instilling discipline and making children understand how they have to conduct themselves in the 'new normal' world. This may impact learning through real life experiences a bit but we must remember — difficult times don't last forever. This, too, shall pass soon," she adds.

The future of education is all set to change. And it's true that nothing can replace the physical touch and its impact on one's memory. But as they say, the only constant in life is change. The ones who do not want to change will succumb and the ones who maintain their sanity, stay calm and are willing to adapt this change will survive this pandemic.



## Menstruation matters!

As the Menstrual Hygiene week aims to break the silence around menstruation and challenge the stigma surrounding this natural cycle, SHIKHA DUGGAL speaks to Dr Shehla Jamal, a doctor, better known to have started the Period Cups movement in India, on how it's still a taboo in 2020, why it is important to overcome this, and more

Menstruation matters, and it's high time we all, irrespective of our gender, understand this. Menstruation is a natural process and mustn't add to any more taboos. This Menstrual Hygiene week, an awarder who began the movement of using menstrual cups in India, Dr Shehla Jamal, pledges to change mindsets and help spread awareness through the 'Youth for Seva' platform. There are several health risks associated with poor menstrual hygiene, she says.

Poverty: Rural women resort to using mud, old rags, cow dung cakes and ash to contain menstrual blood. They tend to cause a lot of inconvenience and hinder a woman's day-to-day activities too.

Negative menstrual beliefs: The saga around not allowing women to dry their menstrual clothing in the sun act as a breeding ground for germs and can cause infection.

Lack of awareness: Not knowing the importance of menstrual hygiene continues to lead women to use traditional methods exposing themselves to

more risks. Mental health hazards: Bloating, mood swings, and headaches are symptoms of the pre-menstrual syndrome.

"Nobody wants to talk about PMSing. The word is used very frequently and most times, flippantly used, yet I doubt how many even know what's Pre-Menstrual Syndrome. It can sometimes cause women a lot of discomfort and break the state of their mental health. If mental health isn't addressed, it leads to shorter menstrual cycles or irregular periods," informs Dr Shehla.

### How to maintain menstrual hygiene?

The gynaecologist suggests some tips every woman must follow to maintain menstrual hygiene.

- Change your pads every few hours
- Keep your vaginal area clean
- Wear a clean underwear
- Don't use "hygiene products" from the market as they all are just gimmicks
- Stick to one method of sanitation

### Myth and facts about menstrual bleeding

Dr Shehla then continues to de-bunk some of the misconceptions surrounding menstruation.

- **Myth:** Is menstrual blood just blood?
- **Reality:** Menstrual blood consists of blood as well as extra tissue from the uterus lining

- **Myth:** Can women's period cycle happen in sync?
- **Reality:** Women's bodies react to the hormones of other women around them, and it causes a synchronization of menstruation. Women who live together sometimes do get their periods at the same time, but it may just be a coincidence.

- **Myth:** Should You exercise while menstruating?
- **Reality:** Unless you have severe cramping or excessive blood flow that interferes with your ability to participate in physical activities, there's no reason to refrain from exercise when you have your period. Exercise during menstruation can relieve you from period cramping.

### Socio-cultural aspects of menstruation

She enlightens us on how society must view menstruation. From adopting villages, conducting camps, spreading awareness in colleges and schools, promoting menstrual hygiene is her only motto. She appreciates the countless women who came forward to speak about menstrual shame and stigma through their social media handles. "Raise awareness about menstrual products like tampons and menstrual cups. The government must provide free sanitary pads and consider compulsory period education at a particular age," she tells us.

So this Menstrual Hygiene week, remember to embrace and celebrate your biological cycle.



Nobody wants to talk about PMSing. The word is used very frequently and most times, flippantly used, yet I doubt how many even know what's Pre-Menstrual Syndrome. It can sometimes cause women a lot of discomfort and break the state of their mental health. If mental health isn't addressed, it leads to shorter menstrual cycles or irregular periods

—DR SHEHLA

# Nushrat steps into horror genre



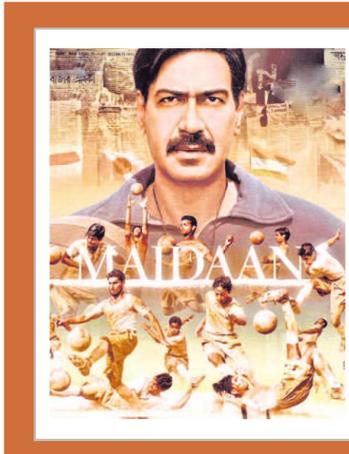
**N**ushrat Bharucha, fresh from the success of *Dream Girl*, is all set to play the lead in the Hindi remake of the hit Marathi horror film, *Lapachhapi*. Titled *Chhori*, the film is helmed by Vishal Furia, who directed the original as well.

*Lapachhapi* revolved around age-old societal beliefs and practices that give rise to tales of pure terror. The work on the script is currently underway and Vishal Kapoor, who also wrote the original, is writing the remake.

Talking about her new project, Nushrat says, "I am extremely excited to be a part of *Chhori*. This genre excites me and the fact that the story is anchored in practices of our society, makes it relatable and impactful. I have wanted to work with Vishal Furia and I am so glad we've finally collaborated on *Chhori*, which is so close to his heart."

Director Vishal Furia added, "Getting a chance to revisit the film has been an amazing experience. I want to take the remake a few steps further and make a much more impactful, scary and thrilling film — more so because I am grateful for all the love I still receive for *Lapachhapi*. Partnering with Vikram and his team along with Jack Davis has been a wonderful process and I am confident that all of us can take this film to even bigger heights. Nushrat is a very strong and promising actor who I believe is well equipped to essay a strong role all by herself. I have wanted to collaborate with her for a while now and I am glad that we finally have a film together."

In a recent interview with *Pinkvilla*, Nushrat's mother had said the actor would get married very soon. She said, "She is going to get married very soon, we are going to push her now. We have given her enough time and now she has to listen to us." Besides *Chhori*, she will also be seen opposite Rajkumar Rao in *Chhalaang* and in Sunny Kaushal-starrer *Hurdang*.



## 16-acre set of Ajay Devgn-starrer MAIDAAN dismantled

**A** 16-acre, high-maintenance set that was built for the Ajay Devgn-starrer *Maidaan* has been dismantled owing to the ongoing COVID-19 lockdown and the upcoming monsoon season.

"We built a massive outdoor set covering a 16-acre plot around Mumbai, with all the production infrastructure. Just as the shoot was getting underway, the pandemic hit the world," said the film's producer

Boney Kapoor, adding, "The set has now been dismantled as rains are due to arrive in Mumbai. The rebuild will take at least two months, which will start in September at the earliest, so shooting can commence only in November."

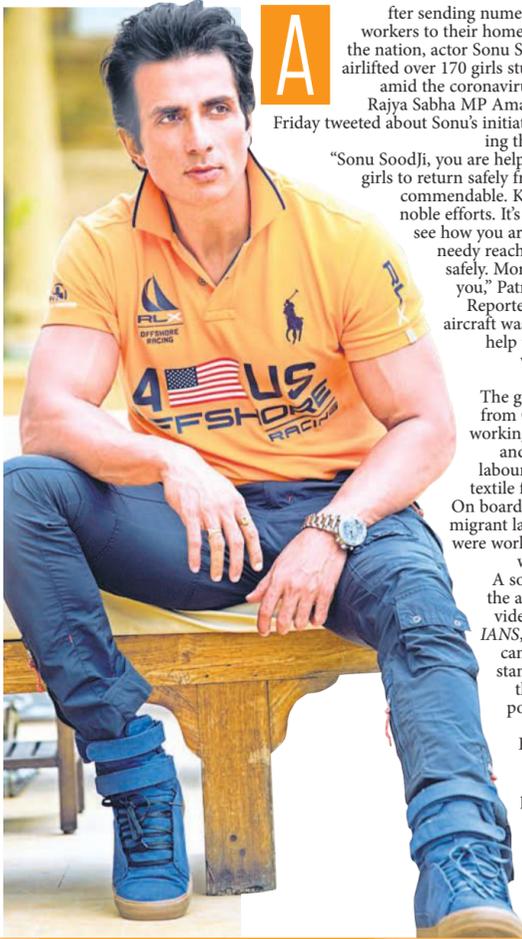
Kapoor added this meant a massive loss for us. "Thankfully all the indoor and some outdoor, training portions were shot in Lucknow and Kolkata, so are already in the can," he informed.

Directed by *Badhaai Ho*

maker Amit Sharma, *Maidaan* is a football drama based on the life of former player, the late Syed Abdul Rahim, who is also regarded as one of the greatest coaches in the sport that India has seen. He managed the Indian national team from 1950 until his death in 1963, and is widely known as the architect of modern Indian football.

Reportedly, sets of the Akshay Kumar-starrer historical drama, *Prithviraj*, will also be dismantled due to high maintenance cost.

## SONU SOOD airlifts 177 Odia girls from Kerala



**A**fter sending numerous migrant workers to their hometowns across the nation, actor Sonu Sood has now airlifted over 170 girls stuck in Kerala amid the coronavirus lockdown.

Rajya Sabha MP Amar Patnaik on Friday tweeted about Sonu's initiative of airlifting the Odia girls.

"Sonu Soodji, you are helping the Odia girls to return safely from Kerala is commendable. Kudos to your noble efforts. It's incredible to see how you are helping the needy reach their homes safely. More strength to you," Patnaik tweeted.

Reportedly, a special aircraft was arranged to help the girls who were stuck in Ernakulam.

The girls, who hail from Odisha, were working as stitching and embroidery labourers at a local textile factory there. On board also were 10 migrant labourers who were working in a plywood factory.

A source close to the actor has provided pictures to IANS, in which we can see the girls standing outside the Kochi airport. And after landing at Bhubaneswar airport, the girls happily posed for the camera, holding Sonu's pictures in their hands.

## Arjun Kapoor joins Dua Lipa, Jason Derulo to raise COVID-19 funds

**A**ctor Arjun Kapoor will be part of a global effort to raise funds for those affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. The effort also involves international stars like Jason Derulo, Dua Lipa, Maluma, Nicky Jam, Becky G among others.

The live fundraising event is called OHM Live. It is a multi-platform charity initiative and will take place on Friday.

"As conscious citizens, every one of us have to do our bit to help as many people in need due to the Coronavirus crisis. The pandemic has affected everyone globally. The loss of lives and human suffering is unbearable and devastating. Every one of us living in every corner of the world has understood that we are deeply connected to one another," Arjun said.

The actor added, "It is an honour for me to be a part of this esteemed platform that has so many luminaries, from so many countries, who are joining hands to raise funds to support as many people as possible. With so many lives affected worldwide, this charity initiative is essentially one that sees humanity stand up to protect humanity," he said.

Proceeds raised through OHM Live will go to various beneficiaries who are supporting front-line workers fighting against the COVID-19 pandemic.



### FUN

#### ARCHIE



#### CALVIN AND HOBBS



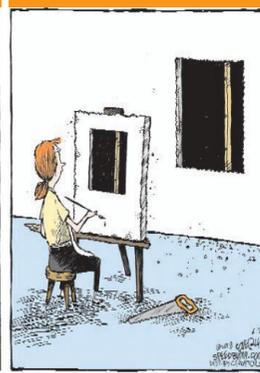
#### GARFIELD



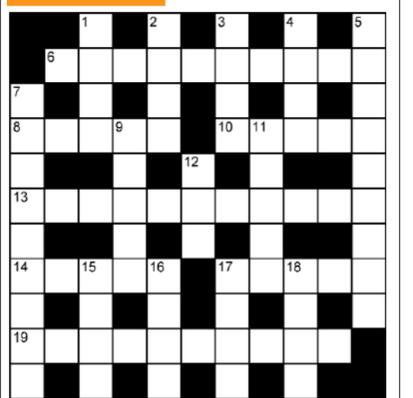
#### REALITY CHECK



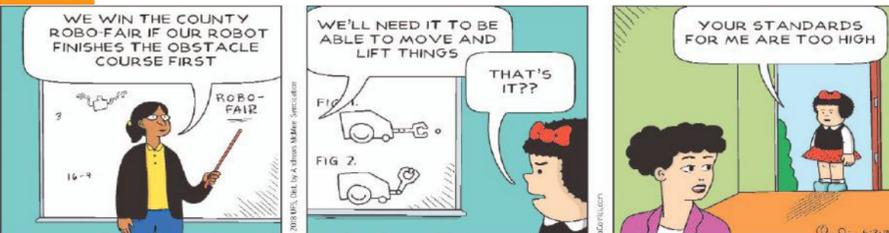
#### SPEED BUMP



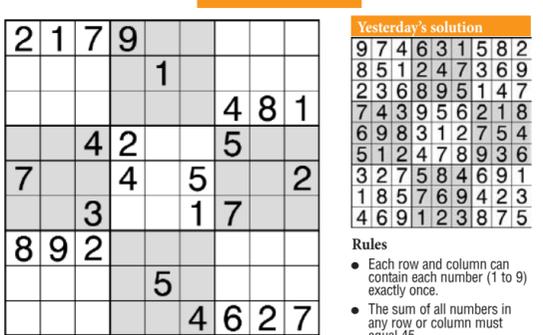
#### CROSSWORD



#### NANCY



#### SUDOKU



#### ACROSS

- 6 Something chewed but usually not swallowed (7,3)
- 8 With lots of sunshine
- 10 A stand for an artist's painting
- 13 Straight away
- 14 Tossed
- 17 Put words on paper
- 19 Daily publications

#### DOWN

- 1 Part of your face
- 2 Absent
- 3 One time
- 4 Hens lay these
- 5 People who work for a business
- 7 Helper
- 9 A female relation
- 11 Change
- 12 Baby goat
- 15 Uses oars
- 16 Cried
- 17 Rub with a cloth
- 18 Yours and mine



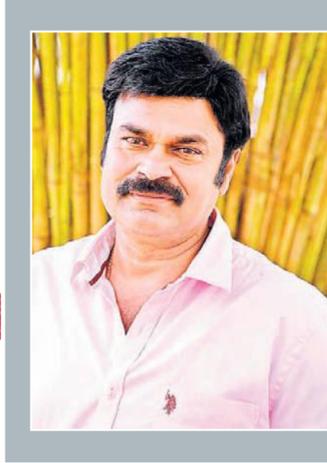
#### GINGER MEGGS



## Sam is forced to 'try intermittent fasting'

**P**articipating in a #AskSam session after a long while on Friday, actress Samantha said that she is trying intermittent fasting to stay fit during the quarantine. "I am trying 'Intermittent fasting' ... also coz I am forced too.. coz I eat biryani for lunch every other day and love spicy food .. I have finished 3 bottles of pickle already .. so I assume fasting will make me a good girl again (sic)," she replied to a fan who asked what has she been up to on the fitness front of late.

Admitting that she has tried her hands at cooking during the quarantine, she revealed that she recently whipped up Shakshouka. On one thing that she learnt during the last 70 odd days, she noted, "That you don't have to run after a dream .. the dream can be at home also ... with family (sic)." To a question on what she thinks of her haters, she stated, "Unfortunately for you .. you don't realise that you inspire me compliments make me lazy results propel me to give my best work .. so Thankyou (sic)."



# SHAURYA, ANISH KRISHNA TEAM-UP FOR A FAMILY ENTERTAINER

Anish pitched a romantic family drama interspersed with a lot of humour to Shaurya a couple of months ago. The actor evinced interest in it pronto. Besides the story the actor liked his character, finds **NAGARAJ GOUD**



**N**aga Shaurya seems to be a man on a mission these days. Having already green-lit projects with Sithara Entertainment, Northstar Entertainment and East Coast Productions, the actor, last seen in the average grosser *Aswathama*, has now agreed to feature in *Ala Ela* director Anish Krishna's next, *The Pioneer* has learnt. A well-placed source close to the development tells us, "Anish pitched a romantic family drama interspersed with a lot of humour to Shaurya a couple of months ago. The actor evinced interest in it pronto. Besides the story, he liked his character — it's something which he hither-

to played thus far. The fact that the role will induce humour was an added bonus, as he hasn't attempted comic roles in the recent past. With the script work too more or less completed, Shaurya is looking to start the film in three-four months time. Majority of the film will be shot in Hyderabad while a small schedule requires the unit to travel to a green setting." The source further adds Shaurya and the director will sit down to decide on the producer. "A meeting, in which the technical composition of the film too will be discussed, is around the corner between both the parties. One name that is confirmed on the technical front as of now is that of much-in demand cinematographer Sai Sriram," the source concludes.



## Balakrishna garu should apologise: NAGA BABU

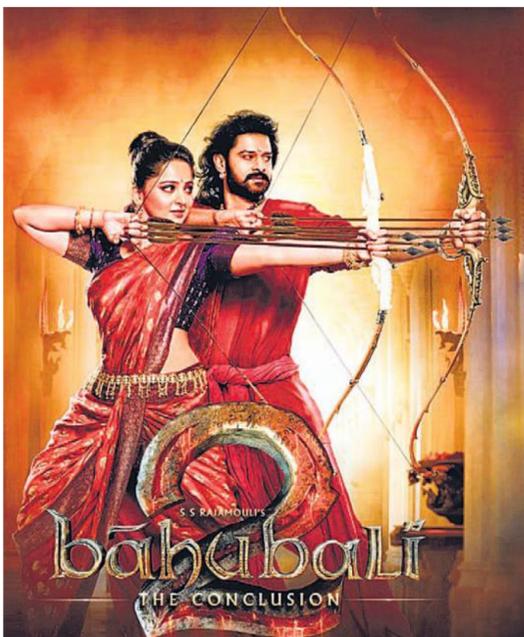
**A**ctor Naga Babu has come down heavily on Balakrishna for his remarks on not being invited to meetings of noted personalities of the industry with Cinematography minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav over the past two weeks. "Balakrishna garu should ask the concerned person who organised the meetings on why he wasn't invited in the first place. I believe it is wrong on the organiser's part to have not

invited him. However, his comment — on actors trying to grab lands and distribute among themselves — left me disappointed. He can't run his mouth; he should choose words carefully. The meetings were organised for the industry to get back on its feet. Even I wasn't invited to them. With his loose talk, Balakrishna garu has not just insulted the industry but also the Telangana government. He should apologise," Naga Babu said on his YouTube channel.

On Thursday, when a reporter from a Telugu news channel quizzed about his absence from industry's recent meetings with Talasani Srinivas Yadav, Balayya had said, "Nobody has invited me to the meetings. They (the actors) are doing real estate business sitting with Srinivas Yadav. I need not fear anyone because it's the truth." Speaking on the issue on Friday, filmmaker Thammareddy Bharadwaj said the whole episode has been blown out of proportion as there is no controversy in it in the first place. "Inviting someone to a meet depends on the matter at hand. If we come across a situation which needs Balakrishna garu's attention, we will speak to him 100 per cent," he said, refuting rumours about a divide in the story.



## Dubbed version of Baahubali 2 is a hit on Russian TV



**T**he Russian Embassy on its verified Twitter account has confirmed that the 2017 blockbuster *Baahubali 2*:

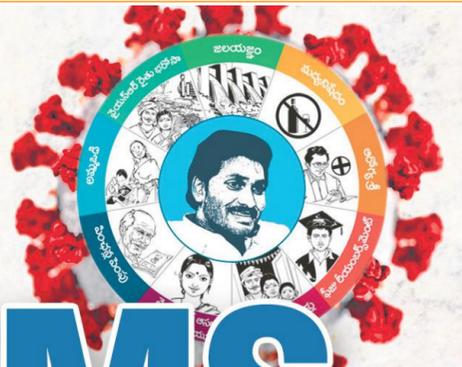
*The Conclusion* has found favour among TV viewers in Russia. The film has been dubbed in Russian language and telecast

on a channel in that country. "Indian cinema gains popularity in Russia. Look what Russian TV is broadcasting right now: the *Baahubali* with Russian voiceover!" tweeted @RusEmbIndia, the official Twitter account of the Embassy of the Russian Federation in the Republic of India, along with a dubbed clip of the film. Fans in India were overjoyed with the news, and the dubbed Russian clip of the film has gone viral. Fans in India are thanking Russia and Russians for receiving the blockbuster mythological action drama with such warmth. "Thank you from Telugu film industry and from Telugu speaking people.. Another addition to the list along with Pasivadi Pranam (1987) got dubbed into Russian language," tweeted a fan. A fan, commenting on the Russian Embassy's tweet, quipped: "I wonder how song will be sung in Russian.. please upload that video having song or background song." To this, the embassy replied: "They just put subtitles." Many Prabhas fans tweeted pictures of their star, who played the central father-son characters of Amarendra Bahubali and Mahendra Bahubali, as a thank-you note.

## Rashmika is 'calm, happy and at peace' staying at home

**R**ashmika Mandanna, who is one of the busiest actors around, has been confined to home for the past two months and she says that she is at peace staying at home. Taking to her Instagram page, she noted that all that matters to her family is taking care of her. "During this lockdown I have spent more than 2 months at home which is super long and the best part is we don't talk much about work and all they care about is me. They give me the strength to deal with everything and this is my happy space... I never thought I would feel this calm, happy and at peace staying home but trust me, family is home and you are lucky if you come back home after a long day of work and feel soo at peace!" (Sic), the actress wrote, adding: "I remember the days my mom stayed up with me through the nights on sets during shoots, my dad making ends meet to spend some quality time with family and my lil sis trying to cope up with everything happening around her (sic)." She further noted that her life has been a marathon since she was 18 and just when she thought it was over, the race would begin again. "I'm not complaining, this is what I always wanted," she posted. Last seen opposite Nithiin in *Bheeshma*, the actress will be shooting for *Pushpa*, starring Allu Arjun, up next.

# Will Covid derail the welfare agenda, and THE NINE GEMS



SUMIT ONKA  
■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The world is seemingly split in two different eras— Before Corona and After Corona— and the challenges of the After Corona era will be the same for the AP government as for the rest of the world. With the state losing about 14.90 per cent of its GSDP due to Covid — a mammoth Rs 1.49 lakh-crore — continuing with the implementation of welfare schemes the YSRCP government launched in the first year of its term would be a daunting task indeed. If one factors in the fact that revenue generation has also taken a downward curve, the task at hand appears even more tough. A report by SBI Research team (SBI Ecowrap), published in this newspaper earlier, also analysed the share of GSDP loss from different zones in AP due to the Coronavirus — 49.4 per cent in red zone, 45.4 per cent from Orange zone and 2.1 per cent from green zone. The biggest contributing fac-

tor for this loss has been the stifling lockdown. When it came to power in May 2019, the YSRCP government made it clear that the state's coffers were almost empty. However, that did not stop the Jaganmohan Reddy government preferring welfare over wealth creation in its first year. We may never know if the government had a plan for wealth generation for the second year of this term, but we do know that any such plans have gone haywire as the Covid pandemic devastated the financial health of the world economy and would surely impact the state government as well. The Chief Minister has rightly said that 90 per cent of his poll promised — especially the ones regarding welfare schemes — have been fulfilled in the first year of YSRCP rule. The government had allocated a lion's share to the welfare scheme in its maiden budget. Everything on the ground suggests that the government is determined to continue its welfare schemes,

but the question is whether the financial situation may not allow Jaganmohan Reddy to float any new welfare scheme with a big outlay. The AP state debt burden had soared to Rs 2,58,928 crore by the end of the 2019 fiscal. The Finance Minister, while presenting the 2019-20 Budget, had said: "The YSRCP government inherited probably one of the worst financial positions ever inherited in the history of our country." He reeled off data to support his words — in the 2019-20 budget, the revenue deficit was Rs 1,778.52 crore and the fiscal deficit figured at Rs 35,260.58 crore. It may be mentioned here that AP is the only state that is demanding SCS for reasons beyond its control, as bifurcation has severely deteriorated the finances of the state, and this was reiterated by the Finance Minister. This apart, the industries and real estate sectors have also fallen sick and that would hit the revenue sources of the government

down the years. Excise and Commercial Taxes minister, K Narayana Swamy has estimated that the state lost a revenue of Rs 6,000 crore due to the lockdown as the liquor shops were closed due to Covid. Fuel and liquor are major revenue sources for the state government. The state revenue comes mainly from state taxes and duties, share of Central Taxes, other non-tax revenue (including grants-in-aid) and interests. AP's GSDP is mainly driven by its agriculture sector besides industry and services sector. Agriculture accounts for around 34 per cent, industry 24 per cent and other services at 43 per cent. The estimated GDP of the state for 2019-20 was Rs 10.81 lakh-crore and has been registering a growth of close to 15 per cent in the last five years going by the GSDP data of states. Considering all these financial difficulties, implementing the welfare schemes appears to be a Herculean task for the government in the next four years.

## A crime-free year

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Before the 2019 general elections, messages flew fast and this on social media that if the YSR Congress Party came to power in the State, law and order in Andhra Pradesh would go for a toss. Those messages may have been politically driven, or spread by vested interests, or any other reason could have been behind them, but they were picked up by the mainstream press that is still against the YSRCP. A year after the YSRCP stormed to power, crime rate in the state is by and large under control. Notably, there have been no reported instances of any organised crime. Naturally, the ruling party leaders claim that this is because of the initiatives like Spandana online complaint registration platform and AP Disha Act that drew wide appreciation from across the country. Overall, the State

Government has managed to keep a clean image so far. Interestingly, political observers are of the opinion that Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy might have warned the elected representatives to toe the line. "If the party in power is determined to curb crime, it is easy for the police administration to take action against the perpetrators. The CM had also directed the officials not to spare anyone found involved in corruption. We haven't got to see any news regarding any misdemeanours by a MLA or MP in the first year of YSRCP rule. CM has managed to keep his MLAs and MPs and party cadres in check so far," remarked a political observer. Days after the rape and murder of a 26-year-old veterinarian in Hyderabad, which sparked off a national outrage, Andhra Pradesh became the first State to enact a law—AP Disha Act—aimed at awarding capital punishment to those who are guilty in specified offences

against women and to expedite trial in such cases within 21 days of committing the crime. And top of it, Disha police stations were also opened to solely deal with cases of harassment of women. Recently, a Special Enforcement Bureau was established, absorbing staff from Excise and Prohibition department. Also, supporters of the ruling party were arrested during enforcement drives. In an exclusive chat with The Pioneer, DGP Goutam Sawang threw light on how the Spandana programme has not only checked crimes but also helped in redressal of the public grievances in all together. "It is very unique programme that ensures accessibility to all. A common man can walk up

and meet the official, commissioner of police and also SP. The process is transparent, accountable and time-bound. Moreover, the officials concerned need to ensure quick redressal in an accountable manner," Sawang said. He highlighted that more than 50 per cent of complains are from women and it speaks volumes about the result of the programme. "Women generally don't come forward as the ecosystem is not conducive and woman-friendly. But the Spandana programme has addressed this issue," the DGP added.

## Common enemy, goals keep YSRCP-BJP bonhomie alive



PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The saying 'an enemy's enemy is a friend' holds true in politics. The bonhomie between YSRCP and BJP-led government at the Centre justifies the saying if one looks at the 'enemy's enemy' here — the TDP. It's no secret that both the BJP and YSRCP, especially the latter, want to weaken the TDP in the state. This desire may eventually work in the favour of the BJP. From the first interview of YSRCP supremo Jaganmohan Reddy to a national TV channel post the election victory, it was

clear that he would go soft on the BJP. "I was literally praying for a hung Parliament so that whoever forms a government at the Centre would need the support of the regional parties," he had said. "BJP scored a huge majority and would need not require support from any party. It would be a nice gesture from the PM if in his magnanimity keeps to the words given in the Parliament to accord Special Category Status to Andhra Pradesh," Jagan had said. The past year of the YSRCP government has

given enough hints to show that it is warming up to the Modi government hoping that Centre would change its mind on the Special Category Status demand. to cite one example, YSRCP voted in the favour of the Citizenship Amendment Bill in the Parliament. It's another matter altogether that Jagan did a U-turn after wide-spread resentment, so clearly expressed by Deputy Chief Minister Amjad Basha and the minority community against the Bill. The AP government yielded, and announced that it

would not allow NRC in the state and oppose in the House. It is also seen that YSRCP has not been overly critical of the BJP on any issue in the past year. On its part, the state unit of the BJP too is not mounting any significant opposition against YSRCP government.



YSR RYTHU BHAROSA

The YSRCP promises to offer Rs 50,000 financial assistance to farmers. Starting second year, each farmer family would be given Rs 12,500 per year, in addition to zero-interest loans and free borewells. Cold storages and food processing units in every constituency are among a list of benefits promised to the farmers.

FEE REIMBURSEMENT

The party, if elected to power, plans to provide a comprehensive fee reimbursement scheme, in line with late Chief Minister Dr YS Rajasekhara Reddy's vision. In addition to complete fee reimbursement, an allowance of Rs 20,000 would be given to every student.

JALAYAGNAM

Under this scheme, lakhs of families would be benefited by the irrigation projects. Completion of Polavaram project on a war footing is promised.

AMMA VODI

With a view to encourage the families with school-going children, the YSRCP promises to provide Rs 15,000 towards assistance to all the mothers who send their children to school.

YSR ASARA

All loans pertaining to the women's co-operative societies would be waived. In addition, zero-interest loans would be issued. YSR Cheyootha Through YSR Cheyootha, the YSRCP intends to support all women from SC, ST, BC and minority communities, who are aged above 45.

9 NAVARATNA WELFARE SCHEMES

The eligibility age criteria of 65 years for the pensions would be reduced to 60 years. Senior citizens aged above 60 would be given Rs 2,000 while the physically challenged would be given a pension of Rs 3,000.

PAYDALANDARIKI ILLU

In five years, the YSRCP promises to build 25 lakh homes for the poor.

## A NEW CHAPTER IN INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT

The Andhra Pradesh government, headed by YS Jaganmohan Reddy, has unleashed a new chapter in inclusive development during its first year in office with the state government leaving no stone unturned in taking public service delivery to the doorsteps of the people apart from empowering the poor and the marginalised through a slew of developmental and welfare initiatives. The state government's initiatives over the past one year reflect on the need to focus on long-term developmental goals while meeting the immediate needs of the people to end their poverty and deprivation.

The flagship programme of the government Navaratnalu has been introduced to foster inclusive development of all sections. The village secretariat system together with the volunteer system helped in taking the governance to the doorsteps of the people besides strengthening the local administration. The effectiveness of these systems became evident during the ongoing Covid-19 crisis when they functioned as 'eyes' and 'ears' of the government in curbing the spread of the essential services.

Empowering the 'unempowered'

Empowerment without giving agency to the people is meaningless and may not

The Navaratnalu (nine schemes) are expected to bring a difference in the lives of the people, especially that of the poor and the marginalised

give voice to the voiceless. In an effort to make the BC, SC, ST and minorities partners in governance, the Chief Minister has allocated five Deputy Chief Minister posts and more than half of the Cabinet berths to the people belonging to these sections. Besides, the government has decided to give 50 per cent reservation to them in all the nominated posts, government nominated contracts, state corporations, trusts, societies, boards and agricultural markets. Further, the state govern-

ment has done a commendable job in empowering the 'other half'. Be it the passage of the Disha Act, prohibition of liquor in a phased manner, registering house sites in the name of women or transferring money in their accounts as part of Amma Vodi scheme, welfare of women has been placed at the centre of the reform process. Investing in the future The government's plan to revamp the education and health sectors through 'Nadu-Nedu' scheme would



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bring transformational changes in the lives of people through the elimination of poverty and facilitation of social mobility. The various measures taken in the education sector include the plan to introduce

of English medium in government schools, Amma Vodi scheme, setting up regulatory commissions for school and higher education among others. In the health sector, it is planning to invest over Rs 16,000 crore to revamp hospitals and medical colleges besides setting up about 10,000 YSR clinics at the village level. Transparency as touchstone A zero tolerance approach towards corruption has been adopted by the state government. Besides launching an anti-corruption helpline (14400) government has set up Special Enforcement Bureau (SEB) to curb sale of illicit liquor and arrest illegal sand mining. A judicial review committee headed by a retired High

Court judge has been set up to ensure transparency in awarding contracts worth Rs 100 crore and above. Going forward The investments being made by the state government in public education and public health is commendable and set the stage for inclusive and prosperous Andhra Pradesh. The government should carry this momentum forward. The state should take effective steps for timely completion of planned irrigation projects including Polavaram, Uttarandhra Sujala Sravanthi and Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation Scheme. Further, a new industrial policy should be brought with a renewed focus on

agro-based, pharmaceutical, biotech and IT industries where the state has inherent strength. Building on the success of Sri City and AP Medtech Zone the state should develop similar clusters to attract investment and provide employment. Above all, MSMEs should be given a renewed push as they employ about 10 lakh people in the state. An announcement of over Rs 900 crore package to MSMEs is a welcome step. Going forward, the government should win the perception battle as it is important for the government to not just deliver but also seem to be delivering. For this, it should strengthen its communication channels and publicise its welfare schemes widely.