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KASI-YAZURVED  
TEAM UP FOR  
ROMANTIC-COMEDY

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## OXFORD VACCINE FACES MORE QUESTIONS AFTER ASTRAZENECA ADMITS ERROR

AstraZeneca Plc and the University of Oxford, among the front-runners in the quest to deliver a Covid-19 vaccine, face mounting questions about their trial results after acknowledging a manufacturing error. While an announcement Monday by Astra and Oxford showed their shot was 70% effective on average in a late-stage study, the scant details released by the UK partners have sparked worries about whether regulators would clear it. In a later statement, Oxford said a difference in manufacturing processes led to some participants being given a half dose instead of a full one. Astra and Oxford said their vaccine was 90% effective when a half-dose was given before a full-dose booster, and that two full doses showed an efficacy of 62%.



## BIHAR BJP MLA FILES CASE AGAINST LALU YADAV OVER "POACHING" ATTEMPT

A case was filed against Rashtriya Janata Dal's jailed president Lalu Yadav in Patna today by the BJP MLA who he had allegedly called while in custody and offered a ministerial berth in exchange for helping the opposition in defeating the NDAs candidate for assembly Speaker's post. Former Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi, who had flagged the alleged telephone call on his Twitter handle on Tuesday night, shared the information along with the contents of the FIR lodged by Lalan Kumar Paswan, on the social media. According to the information shared by Sushil Modi, the Pirpainti MLA has lodged his FIR at the vigilance police station under the Prevention of Corruption Act and relevant sections of the Indian Penal Code.



## DISNEY INCREASES PLANNED LAYOFFS TO 32K AS COVID HITS PARKS

Walt Disney Co said on Wednesday it would lay off about 32,000 workers, primarily at its theme parks, an increase from the 28,000 it announced in September, as the company struggles with limited customers due to the coronavirus pandemic. The layoffs will be in the first half of 2021, the company said in a filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission. A spokesman for Disney confirmed that the latest figures include the 28,000 layoffs announced earlier. Earlier this month, Disney said it was furloughing additional workers from its theme park in Southern California due to uncertainty over when the state would allow parks to reopen.



## AIR INDIA RESCHEDULING FOR PASSENGERS HELD UP BY FARMERS' PROTESTS

Air India has said passengers affected due to traffic disruption on Thursday amid closure of the borders of the national capital region (NCR) will be allowed to reschedule their flights for free. People coming to the national capital from Haryana and Uttar Pradesh faced traffic snarls at several border crossings as the Delhi Police intensified vehicle checking in view of the 'Delhi Chalo' march by farmers from Punjab against the Centre's farm laws. "In view of traffic disruption in NCR region due to closure of Delhi borders, we are allowing no-show waiver & one free reschedule to passengers who couldn't report for their flights," Air India said on Twitter. "Waiver will be valid for flights scheduled out of Delhi airport only for 26th November 2020," it added.



Capital account  
convertibility will  
continue: Das

8

# Free water, power, Metro ride for women: BJP manifesto has it all

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The BJP on Thursday promised financial assistance of Rs 25,000 for each family affected by the recent rains in the city, free electricity to families which consume less than 100 units and free travel for women in city buses and metro trains, among others, in its manifesto for the civic polls in Hyderabad.

The manifesto, released by former Maharashtra Chief Minister Devendra Fadnis, said COVID-19 vaccine would be provided to all as per the suggestions of the Centre. It said an effective plan



would be prepared to control the spread of the virus in the city which would enable every-

one to get tested for the virus free of cost.

2

Nadda to campaign today

## PM Modi coming to Hyd

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Prime Minister Narendra Modi is visiting Hyderabad, reflecting, at least for the safe-front party, the dictum "Ask and it shall be given to you".

Several leaders in poll-bound Hyderabad, especially those from the TRS and the AIMIM, have been taunting BJP, saying, if, for the sake of local elections, Delhi leaders are coming, 'Why not bring PM Modi to campaign in Hyderabad?'

This has sort of come true, as the PM is visiting India's top vaccine hubs in Pune and Hyderabad this weekend. On Saturday, PM Modi is expected to travel to Hyderabad and visit Bharat BioTech, which is working on Covaxin, pitched as India's first indigenous vaccine candidate.

2

# Mulling legal action against provocative speeches: DGP

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

TS Director-General of Police M. Mahendar Reddy said on Thursday that the department was exploring the possibility of taking legal action against those making provocative speeches during the GHMC election campaigns.

Addressing a press conference, Mahendar Reddy said some of the 'provocative speeches' made by politicians were under examination from a legal angle. The department had specific information that some individuals were planning to create communal tension in the city, he said.

Earlier, he reviewed security arrangements being made for the smooth conduct of the elections on December 1 with the Police Commissioners of Hyderabad, Cyberabad and



Rachakonda. He said round-the-clock surveillance was being arranged to ensure the conduct of elections in an incident-free manner. The DGP said a large number of Rohingyas had been arrested for illegally securing passports and Aadhaar cards during their stay in the city.

2

## A group trying to create communal trouble: Hyd CP

Hyderabad CP Anjani Kumar said that a small group is working to create communal trouble in the city during the ongoing elections for GHMC. He appealed to people not to believe the rumours and fake news being spread by the group on social media and help the police in exposing them. Hours after CM directed the police to deal with an iron hand those conspiring to create communal tensions and clashes, the CP made an appeal through social media.

2



PM pitches for  
'One Nation, One  
Election', says it's  
need of India

5



BJP envisions  
'Bhagyanagaram'  
with special  
package

4

## BJP MP booked for trespass on OU

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BJP MP from Karnataka and the party's youth wing president Tejasvi Surya allegedly trespassed on the Osmania University (OU) campus without permission and a case was registered against him and his supporters by the police.

He removed the barricades to enter the campus to pay respects to the martyrs of the Telangana movement.

The incident happened on Tuesday.

The case was registered under IPC section 447 (criminal trespass) and under relevant provisions of the Hyderabad City Police Act based on a complaint filed by OU authorities on Tuesday, a



police official told PTI on Thursday.

The OU Registrar, in the complaint, accused the BJP leader of trespassing on the campus without permission by removing the barricades and holding a meeting there, the official said.

The MP had alleged that he was stopped by the police.

2

## KCR to address GHMC election meeting on Nov 28

L VENKAT RAM REDDY  
■ HYDERABAD

In a strategic move aimed at taking the wind out of the sails of BJP's top guns who are expected to address GHMC election campaign meetings here over the next few days, Telangana Rashtra Samiti supremo and Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao will address a mammoth public meeting at LB Stadium on November 28, as part of the pink party's outreach to its candidates in the fray.

The meeting was initially planned for November 29 but was the idea dropped due to the surge in corona cases amid talk of the onset of a 'second wave' of the pandemic in certain other states.

However, with the BJP



TRS working president KT Rama Rao inspecting the arrangements for the party's public meeting to be addressed by CM KCR scheduled for Nov 28 at LB Stadium

deploying its central leaders for GHMC campaigning, including Union Home Minister Amit Shah, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi

Adityanath, BJP national president JP Nadda among other, the TRS leadership has changed its campaign schedule,

2

# BJP to KCR: Take action if you have info on clashes

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BJP's Telangana unit president Bandi Sanjay Kumar on Thursday asked Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao if he has information about some people conspiring to create communal clashes then he should not wait, but take action against them.

He alleged that by issuing a statement, the chief minister is trying to stall elections to Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) by creating a situation where people can't cast their votes in a free and fair manner.

Sanjay, who is also a member of Parliament from

The BJP leader  
claimed that MIM  
leader threatened to  
demolish samadhis as  
NTR used to wear  
saffron dress when he  
was CM while PV  
played an 'inspiring'  
role in Ayodhya issue

Karimnagar, said the chief minister was making such statements as the ruling Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) was afraid of losing the elections.

2

## HC pulls up TS Govt for low testing

■ Court had directed 50K tests per day

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana High Court on Thursday issued contempt notice against a senior state health official for not complying with order that 50,000 COVID diagnostic tests be conducted daily and one lakh tests once a week.

Hearing a batch of PILs on COVID pandemic, a division bench, headed by Chief Justice Raghuvendra Singh Chauhan, issued the notice to Director of Public Health Dr G Srinivasa Rao asking him to explain

The bench had on  
November 19  
directed the state  
government  
to conduct 50,000  
COVID tests  
every day

within two weeks why contempt proceedings should not be initiated against him for not complying with its orders.

The official submitted before

the court that testing was being done for the people coming to the testing centres and that they cannot compel a citizen to be screened for the virus.

The court said the tests were not conducted as per its directions and it was nothing but contempt as it asked him to explain.

It further directed the state government to increase the number of RT-PCR labs from existing 17 to 23 and also to increase the number of mobile testing vans and the area covered by them.

## Disqualify MIM, BJP: Uttam to EC

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee president & MP N. Uttam Kumar Reddy on Thursday demanded that the State Election Commission disqualify BJP and MIM parties from contesting the GHMC elections for "inciting communal hatred among people".



NAVEENA GHANATE  
■ HYDERABAD

When parties run out of original-sounding ideas, they don't mind copy-pasting the ones belonging to rival parties as long as the lifted ideas have proved to be successful, perceived or real, on the home turf or elsewhere.

It was the Telangana Rashtra

## Police break up farmers' march to Delhi

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Police on Thursday used water cannons and tear gas shells to disperse thousands of farmers marching towards New Delhi in a protest against legislation they fear would end price support for their produce, officials said. Prime Minister Narendra Modi's government has defended the bills enacted in September as a way to rid the vast agriculture sector of antiquated procurement procedures and to allow farmers to sell to institutional buyers and big international retailers. But farm groups in the northern

state of Punjab said the government was trying to end a decades-old policy of providing them with an assured minimum price for producing staples, such as wheat and rice, and turning India into a food surplus nation.

Dozens of farmers' leaders were detained and authorities from the states of Uttar Pradesh and Haryana, which are governed by Modi's ruling group, set up blockades on highways to stop farmers travelling on tractor-trolleys from reaching New Delhi, officials representing police and farmers' associations said in televised comments.



At the Punjab-Haryana border in Shambhu, Haryana police resorted to use of tear gas and water cannons to disperse agitating farmers, who toppled and dismantled barricades

## COPYCAT MANIFESTOS

# TRS, BJP, INC copied AAP schemes

Samiti, which first copied free electricity scheme from the AAP government. Now, BJP and Congress have copied free travel for women commuters, free water, and free electricity, to name a few.

Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao first announced waiver of water bills to citizens, including those living in apartments, using water

up to 20,000 litres a month from December, covering about 97 per cent of population.

The BJP in GHMC also promised free power to all houses using less than 100 units per month and taps to all houses and free drinking water supply. The AAP in Delhi provides free electricity, water, and bus rides for women. The Congress in GHMC manifesto

promised free water supply up to 30,000 litres, free local transportation for women, students, divyansans and senior citizens in Metro, MMTS and RTC buses.

In fact, BJP and Congress had slammed Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal for offering free travel for women commuters in Delhi and even the free water scheme.

Meanwhile, TRS working president K T Rama Rao said that BJP manifesto was copy-pasted from the TRS manifesto. He remarked that the BJP lacked ingenuity even in the use of images in its manifesto. KTR said, 'Glad that you chose pictures of the work done by TRS Govt in your GHMC manifesto.'

2

**TODAY**

**ALMANAC**

**Month & Paksham:**  
Kartik & Shukla Paksha  
Panchangam

**Tithi:** Dwadashi: Full Night

**Nakshatram:** Revati: 09:20 pm

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

**Rahukalam:** 01:26 pm - 02:49 pm

**Yamagandam:** 06:31 am - 07:54 am

**Varjyam:** 07:50 am - 09:38 am

**Gulika:** 09:17 am - 10:40 pm

**Good Time:** (to start any important work)

**Amritakalam:** 06:38 pm - 08:26 pm

**Abhijit Muhurtham:** 11:41 am - 12:25 pm

**HYDERABAD WEATHER**

**Forecast:** Scattered showers

**Temp:** 23/18

**Humidity:** 83%

**Sunrise:** 06:27am

**Sunset:** 05:39pm

Current Weather Conditions  
Updated November 25, 2020 5:00 PM



# Power grids face cyber threat

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Centre has warned all states of an imminent cyber attack on the power transmission systems (power grids) in the country. It has said that the hackers were likely to infect power transmission electronic devices and spare parts, imported from abroad, malicious software like malware or trojans, to destabilise the power transmission system in the country.

The Centre has made several suggestions to the states regarding power grids in the wake of recent border tensions with China.

India largely depends on China for electrical equipment and spare parts. This is due to the fact that the equipment required for maintaining smart grids is available in China at



very cheap rates. India imported electrical equipment and spare parts worth 1.44 lakh crore recently, while in 2018-19, our country had imported equipment worth Rs 1.84 lakh crore. The Centre has imposed restrictions on imports from China in the wake of recent tensions. As a result, there was

a shortage in the spare parts used in manufacturing transformers due to which the discoms are facing problems in supplying transformers to meet agricultural needs and newly built apartments.

The power grids are run using specialised software applications and electronic

## CENTRE'S SUGGESTIONS

■ The power transmission system in the railway stations should be monitored properly. All the devices imported from other countries should be examined to ensure they meet Indian standards.  
■ These tests should be conducted only in certified labs identified by the Union Ministry of Power.  
■ Centre's approval is mandatory for importing equipment and spare parts from countries like China and Pakistan.

■ If any equipment is imported from these countries with special permission, it should be tested in certified labs.  
■ If orders were placed before July 7 for the importing electrical equipment and spare parts from the countries specified by the Centre, the equipment should be inspected as soon as it arrives.  
■ The states should make sure that these devices do not pose any threat to power grids.

devices. There is a possibility for the hackers to infect these computers with malicious malware and virus and take control of the power generation and the power transmission

systems in the country.

Moreover, in case of an emergency situation in the country, these hackers could snap power supply to key national security organizations.

# Trade unions' strike evokes good response

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The nationwide general strike, which was called by Trade Unions against the anti-worker policies of Central government, have evoked a good response in Nalgonda district.

The buses remained at seven TSRTC bus depots as the members of the left parties CPI, CPI(M) and their affiliated Trade Unions including AITUC and CITU, staged a sit-in in front of the bus depot gate and not allowed the buses to come out. With this, TSRTC bus stops at Nalgonda, Suryapet, Bhongir, Miryalaguda and others were a deserted look.

The petrol bunks, banks and offices of public sector units were also shut down on the day. The majority of the shops and shopping complexes were seen open in Nalgonda.

The employees, who were working in the district Collectorate, staged a protest demonstration at their office during lunch break.

The members of Trade Unions took out a rally from the bus stand to cock tower centre where they held a meeting.

Addressing the meeting, CPI district secretary Nellikanti Satyam said that the Centre has taken up steps for privatisation of public sector units including Railways, LIC and BSNL, which were in the detrimental of interests of the common people as well its employees. He charged Prime Minister Narendra Modi with working at the behest of the corporate sector. He has also urged the centre to withdraw three acts brought on the agriculture sector at the cost of the interests of the farmers.

## CYCLONE WREAKS HAVOC



Heavy rains, triggered by Cyclone Nivar, continued to pound the Temple town, forcing people to stay indoors. Landslides were witnessed at a few spots, officials said. Many parts of Chittoor district were inundated. Water stagnated on roads in Tirupati town, Erpedu, Satyavedu Nagari and Srikalahasti, bringing traffic to a grinding halt



# Disqualify MIM, BJP, Uttam...

Continued from page 1

Uttam, along with former minister & ex-Leader of Opposition Mohammed Ali Shabbir, AICC secretary Madhu Yashki Goud and other leaders, addressed a press conference, after releasing two brochures and a pamphlet on the contribution of Congress governments to development of Hyderabad and the 'failures' of TRS regime.

The TPCC chief expressed his concern over Election Commission and the State Police not taking note of the "provocative statements" of BJP and MIM leaders during the GHMC campaign. "I'm surprised as to how the State Election Commission and State Government are not interfering to stop this provocative campaign," he said, while demanding that both the 'communal parties' should be barred from participating in the GHMC elections. The SEC appears to have become defunct as it did not even respond to our complaint of TRS misusing public

places for its publicity, he said.

Uttam reiterated that BJP and MIM were helping each other to polarise the voters. "MIM's West Bengal unit president Anwar Pasha has resigned from the party and gave a clear statement that MIM president Aasduddin Owaisi was helping the BJP win WB polls in the same way as it helped the saffron party come to power in Bihar. Delhi's Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal has also made a statement exposing that Owaisi brothers had a secret meeting with Union Home Minister Amit Shah. There are several instances to prove that both BJP and MIM are secret allies and partners," he said.

The TPCC chief condemned Telangana BJP president Bandi Sanjay for his 'surging strike' remarks. "I was born in the Old City of Hyderabad. Later, I joined the Air Force and fought for the country at borders. I belong to this city. In what way Bandi Sanjay is connected to Hyderabad or Old City. Even Union Minister Kishan Reddy

is not making such remarks as he is a Hyderabadi. While no Hyderabadi is talking in that tone, other BJP leaders are making provocative statements. In what way BJP leaders like Shah, JP Nadda, Yogi Adityanath, Smriti Irani, Prakash Javedkar, Bhupender Yadav, Ram Madhav, etc., are connected with Hyderabad. It's a shame that BJP leaders are making senseless statements to spread hatred, just to win a few seats in elections," he said.

Uttam also slammed MIM leader Akbaruddin Owaisi for his remarks on the memorials of former Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao and ex-Chief Minister N.T. Rama Rao. "What is the need for Akbaruddin Owaisi to speak about their memorials? They are not even in the Old City. PV Narasimha Rao, NTR, Dr. Y.S. Rajasekhara Reddy were great leaders, and they have served the country and the erstwhile undivided Andhra Pradesh State throughout their lives. Both BJP and MIM leaders are misusing their names to polarise the voters," he alleged.

# PM Modi coming to Hyderabad

Continued from page 1

Cyberabad Police Commissioner VC Sajjanar said that Prime Minister was expected at 3:40 pm and after a visit to the facility between 4 pm and 5 pm, he would fly out at 5:40 pm.

Local BJP leaders are keen on using this trip of the PM and coax him to campaign for the GHMC elections, but sources said that the visit would not include any political activity.

On Thursday, TRS working president K T Rama Rao said, "Amit Shah is coming to Hyderabad tomorrow; I just got to know that Prime Minister is also coming the day after. I am not kidding, he is coming. For 'gully' election, leaders are coming from Delhi, Donald Trump also will come".

AIMIM chief Asaduddin Owaisi on Thursday challenged Prime Minister



Narendra Modi to campaign for the December 1 Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation elections and see how many seats BJP won. He said, "You bring Narendra Modi to the Old City and campaign here. We will see what happens. Organise his meeting here and we will see how many seats you will win here".

Prior to visiting Hyderabad, on Saturday PM will visit Pune-based Serum Institute of India, which has partnered with global pharma giant AstraZeneca and the Oxford University for a Covid-19 vaccine.

# Nivar brings down mercury

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Day temperatures in Hyderabad dropped by at least five degrees on Thursday, apparently under the influence of Cyclone Nivar.

According to officials of the India Meteorological Department (IMD), the average maximum temperature recorded at Begumpet on Thursday was 25.7 degrees Celsius, five degrees below normal.

Waking up to overcast skies, the city continued to witness a cloudy sky throughout the day with some parts registering slight drizzle as well. At the same time, the minimum temperature went up from 14.6 degrees Celsius on Wednesday to 19.5 degrees Celsius on Thursday morning.

In the wake of Cyclone Nivar, parts of Nalgonda, Suryapet, Nagarkurnool,



Khammam and Bhadrachalam received light rainfall. Rainfall activity was expected to be on a minimum with the intensity of the cyclonic storm to recede.

An IMD report said 'the very severe' cyclonic storm Nivar had weakened into a severe cyclonic storm on Thursday and would weaken further into a deep depression and later into a depression. "A fresh low-pressure area is

likely to form over central parts of south Bay of Bengal around November 29. It is likely to move westwards and become more marked," officials said.

During the last 24 hours, Arli in Adilabad registered the lowest temperature of 13.3 degrees Celsius, while in the city, Vanasthalipuram saw a minimum temperature of 19.2 degrees Celsius.

# TRS, BJP, INC copied AAP schemes

Continued from page 1

We will take this as a compliment to our work. But let me remind you what they say in Hyderabad. Nakal marne ko bhi akal chahie (even to copy you need brains)". In the manifesto, BJP used pictures of Jawahanagar dumping yard, SHE toilets and women police station.

It may be mentioned here that BJP first pointed out that TRS copy-pasted its manifesto from 2016. Union Minister of State for Home Affairs G Kishan Reddy had called it "useless" because it merely copy-pasted the unfulfilled promises from the 2016 manifesto.

# KCR to address GHMC election meeting on Nov 28

Continued from page 1

TRS working president KT Rama Rao on Thursday inspected the arrangements being made for KCR's public meeting. Accompanied by senior party leaders, KTR assessed various aspects, ranging from security to seating arrangements for the meeting.

The Chief Minister would be sharing his views on developmental works in Hyderabad, highlighting future plans, KTR said. Asserting that KCR was a pro-poor leader, as reflected by the TRS party manifesto released a few days ago, KTR

said appealed to people and party cadre to make the public meeting a grand success.

The TRS working president said a huge turnout was expected for the public meeting as many people were turning up in large numbers for the party's road shows and other programmes. KTR pointed out that the Chief Minister had already warned of stern action against those trying to create law and order problems. Irrespective of party and designations, serious action would be taken against those resorting to unlawful activities, he said.

# BJP to KCR: Take action if you have info on clashes

Continued from page 1

He was reacting to the chief minister's direction to the police to deal with an iron hand some anarchic forces conspiring to create communal tensions and clashes to draw political mileage in GHMC elections.

The BJP leader said CM's statement itself could create law and order problems. "He himself appears to be hatching a conspiracy as TRS is losing and BJP is winning GHMC polls."

He wondered why the chief minister failed to take action when he had definite information. "If you have definite information, will you tell this to media or take action," he asked and demanded that the government book cases and

arrest them irrespective of the party they belong to, so that the elections can be held in a peaceful atmosphere. Sanjay said a similar claim was made before by-elections to Dubbak Assembly seat but people gave a befitting reply to TRS. He claimed that there will be a similar outcome in GHMC polls.

The BJP leader was talking to media after a visit to ghats of former Prime Minister P.V. Narasimha Rao and former Andhra Pradesh chief minister N. T. Rama Rao on the banks of Hussain Sagar lake. His visit came a day after Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimen (MIM) leader Akbaruddin Owaisi challenged the government to demolish the samadhis of two leaders if it was sincere in removing encroach-

ments on lakes in the city.

Sanjay demanded that a criminal case be booked against Akbaruddin Owaisi and he be arrested for threatening to demolish samadhis of the two great personalities. Terming the MIM leader's comments as 'anti-national', he questioned the silence of the chief minister on the issue.

The MP said KCR's respect for Narasimha Rao is confined to lip sympathy and celebrating his birth anniversary. "He is not even opening his mouth to condemn the insult of NTR under whom he started his political career," Sanjay said. Stating that BJP will protect samadhis of the two leaders, he reiterated that if MIM demolishes them, his party workers will pull down MIM office 'Darussalam'.

# BJP MP booked for trespass on OU

Continued from page 1

However, the city police clarified that no such incident by the police or clash with police happened on the campus and said the MP along with his supporters, went into the campus and conducted a meeting peacefully.

The varsity was the epicentre of protests for the separate state of Telangana.

Surya was here as part of campaigning for the December 1 Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) polls.



# Mulling legal action against provocative speeches: DGP

Continued from page 1

On the controversial remark of 'surgical strike' made by BJP State president Bandi Sanjay, the DGP said all speeches, including that of AIMIM leader Akbaruddin Owaisi, were under examination. Stating that the police had information on some elements attempting to create unrest, he said individuals with criminal background were trying to take advantage of the situation and trigger communal hatred. "We are alert," he said, adding that social media

posts too were being monitored. The entire effort was to ensure that the election passes off peacefully with people being allowed to vote in a free and fair manner. The police had also bound over around 3,500 rowdy-sheeters and would ensure that no person can disturb the peaceful atmosphere in the city.

Earlier, the DGP said 62 cases were booked against Rohingyas for fraudulently procuring Indian identity cards, including Aadhaar cards, voter IDs and passports.

**GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA**  
**Roads & Buildings Department**  
**TENDER NOTICE**  
Tender Notice No.DBPA to EE/06/2020-21 Dt: 21.11.2020  
Sealed Tenders are invited for the following work. The Tenders are to be received in this Office of the Executive Engineer (R&B) Division, Bhongir from Registered contractors and class of the contractors and firms (Registered as per G.O. Ms.) No. of works: (001), Name of the works: (1) Repairs to Camp Office of District Collector, Yadadri Bhongir Dist. 2) Dismantling Existing Old Buildings in Court Complex at Bhongir in Yadadri Bhongir Dist in underranged. TOTAL. ECV. Rs. 1.48 Lakhs. Date for receipt of Application for Tender Schedule: 25.11.2020 to 01.12.2020. Date of Opening of Tenders: 01.12.2020 After 4.00 PM. Further details can be had obtained from the office. I.D. No.: 744-SPL-AGC/ENR/DT/11-2020-21 Sd/- Executive Engineer, District (R&B) Office, Yadadri Bhongir



# Political campaigns, rallies make commuting difficult for residents

NAMRATA SRIVASTAVA  
■ HYDERABAD

With all the parties rallying for the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) elections everyday across the city, traffic jams have become a common sight. On some occasions the citizens were stuck in traffic for hours, causing them severe inconvenience.

A senior citizen, who had stepped out with her granddaughter for a family function, Ranjana Devi, got stuck in traffic near Addagutta on Thursday, where BJP's G Kishan Reddy was campaigning, shares, "I was stuck for a good 40 minutes. While it might seem less, for a senior citizen with diabetes, it was a lot of time, and I didn't like that at all. It was very inconvenient."

The issue is not just limited to traffic jams. A resident from LB Nagar, says, "It not just the traffic, but also the loud noise. They produce so much noise pollution. Then they get down from their vehicles and start



An ambulance gets stuck in traffic due to poll campaign for GHMC elections. A citizen Raghav Kumar @CkingKumar tweeted the picture with caption, "Due To Public Rush Ambulance Strucked In Traffic @HYDTP"(sic)

meeting people. It doesn't just create congestion on the main roads, but also the lanes and by-lanes."

The issue is so grave that people are making their mind whether or not to vote for a candidate depending on how much they had to wait to get to their destination. Dr Abhinay, who had to take a 45 minutes

detour to reach to his destination, shares, "The irony is that the politicians say that they are doing the campaigning for people. But they don't consider the inconvenience they are causing us. If the elections are for us, I request each one of them to stop having road shows. The other day I was in a hurry and had to take a 45

minutes detour because of KTR's roadshow. I just decided then and there that my vote is not for TRS."

Several people are also venting their concerns on the social media. Sharing his issues, Prashanth @rufusdesigns, wrote, "Blocking Road for a roadshow. Causing inconvenience dont know who has

**People are making their mind whether to vote for a candidate or not depending on how much they had to wait to get to their destination**

come from where .... who is campaigning. ... all roads leading to #ECIL X ROADS ARE Jammed .... @HYDTP any alternatives (sic)."

Sadly even the cops don't have a solution for the issues. Shares, Dr Abhinay, "I had actually approached the traffic police managing the roads. He said they have the orders and can't do much. As I turned around to leave, he said I could ask about this to KTR on Twitter."

## TS logs 862 fresh Covid cases

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana reported 862 new COVID-19 cases on Thursday, pushing the state's tally to 2,66,904, health officials said.

Three more persons succumbed to the virus taking the death toll to 1,444.

The fatality rate remains at 0.54 per cent against the national average of 1.5 per cent. According to the director of public health and family welfare, 44.96 per cent of the deaths were due to Covid while the remaining 55.04 were on account of comorbidities.

During the last 24 hours the state saw 961 people recovering from the virus, taking the number of total recoveries to 2,54,676. The recovery rate improved further to 95.41 against the national average of 93.7 per cent.

The number of active cases declined to 10,784 including 8,507 individuals in home or institutional isolation.

Greater Hyderabad continues to report a daily count of less than 200 cases. The state capital logged 164 new cases during the last 24 hours. Medchal Malkajgiri district reported the second highest



number at 91 followed by Khammam (63), Rangareddy (57), Bhadradi Kothagudem (53), and Karimnagar (38).

According to the daily media bulletin released by the office of the director of public health and family welfare, 41,101 tests were conducted during the last 24 hours, taking the cumulative number of tests to 52,89,908.

Of the fresh tests conducted

during the last 24 hours, 38,088 samples were tested in government-run laboratories and 3,013 samples in private labs.

Eighteen government-run laboratories, 50 private laboratories and 1076 Rapid Antigen test centres are conducting the tests in the state.

Samples tested per million population rose further to 1,42,125.

### CITY LIGHTS

#### Acupressure walking track opens at Botanical Garden

Raghuvver, Principal Chief Conservator of Forests, Vice Chairman and Managing Director, Telangana State Forest Development Corporation Ltd., Hyderabad has inaugurated acupressure walking track and 8 shaped walking track in Botanical Garden, Kothaguda reserve forest for morning and evening walkers towards health conscious. The official also distributed uniform to the workers of botanical garden and pala pitta cycling Park (PPCP). In this programme General Manager A Ravinder Reddy, ADET Vijaya Bharathi, B Karunakar Rao, Ravi Kumar, Y Subhas Reddy, Dr PV Rao and staffers of Botanical Garden attended the programme.



#### Simply Fresh gets CMO Asia's 'TS Best Brand Award'

Simply Fresh, has been awarded the 'Telangana Best Brand' award by CMO Asia '2020. The award was presented at a virtual felicitation ceremony. The awards recognize, identify, and celebrate outstanding brand building & marketing initiatives by organisations, individuals, and teams for their innovation, uniqueness, consistency, and performance. Simply Fresh, an innovative agri-tech startup, using precision farming techniques, has commissioned India's largest 140-acre 'Plant Factory' in Telangana. The company uses plant profiling & nutrient management in climate-controlled greenhouses. The greenhouses have retractable roofs & walls, are equipped with growing systems (benches, gutters, pots) and supported by AI-driven fertigation and irrigation system.



#### UoH alumnus selected as research scholar at AIIMS

Sushma Nandyala, an alumnus of Masters in Optometry, School of Medical Sciences, University of Hyderabad has been selected as Research Scholar in the Nation's Prestigious Health Institute, AIIMS-All India Institute of Medical Sciences, New Delhi for Ph.D. She joined the Dr Rajendra Prasad Centre for Ophthalmic Sciences as a Research Scholar and working on various aspects of Eye ailments. She is the first student to get qualified from AIIMS from UoH. Sushma has completed her Masters in Optometry, School of Medical Sciences, UoH. She is the recipient of University Gold medal for being topped consecutively in the five academic years. She is the first woman Post Graduate in the village, Aregudem to pursue education at a Central University. In addition to her excellence in academia, she is also a great Biodiversity enthusiast, identified various Mushrooms at the UoH campus and published articles in newspapers.



#### COVA Network, UoH release documentary on Hyd floods

COVA Peace Network in collaboration with University of Hyderabad has produced a 30 minutes documentary on the recent floods in Hyderabad, to make encroachment an issue for the election. The objective is to show the process of illegal encroachment, legalisation of encroached lands, fraudulent sale of these lands of water bodies who end up paying the price — both in terms of flooding of their house and their demolition by authorities. UFERWAS (United Federation of RWAs) and other civil society organisations will organise programmes in different localities and use the documentary to make people fully understand the problem of encroachment that is flooding their homes, destroying property and taking away precious lives. The objective is to make citizens clearly understand the dangers of encroachment to their lives and thereby motivate them to take this as an election issue and make the contesting candidates commit to the policies and actions they will undertake to reclaim water bodies and prevent further encroachment.



### DOST 2020

#### TSCHE plans special drive for students

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

To make sure that no student is left behind, Telangana State Council of Higher Education, plans to start fresh registrations for DOST 2020, special drive. The drive will start from November 27 and go on till December 2.

The special drive is only for students who have either not yet registered for DOST, registered but could not secure a seat, allotted seats but did not confirm in the college or registered but did not exercise the web options. Seat allotment for the special drive will be on December 4, 2020.

According to TSCHE, 23,971 candidates registered in the special phase admissions and 35,479 gave web options for allocation of seats. The online self-reporting for students who got seats in the special phase can be done till November 5.

## City NGO campaigns to make residents aware of their issues

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

With GHMC elections just six days away, everyone is talking about their issues. Several activists, citizens and NGOs are also running campaign to increase public participation in the polls and making them aware of their issues.

One such campaign is being run by Apni Duniya Social Welfare Association, which has supported several people to get their ration card made, as well as is still running a programme for senior citizens, widows and handicapped people to get pension as per the Aasara scheme. Talking about the initiative, Md Shafi, the

president of the NGO, shares, "I have worked extensively in the slum areas around the city and have noticed that there is very little or no development in these areas. They are illiterate and hence politicians think that they can just ignore them. But, I want to make sure that is not the case this time at least. Even today in our state there are poor people who do not have ration card facilities. There are several schemes run by the government, but these people know nothing about that and hence can't benefit. I feel it is the corporator's responsibility to make sure that the people in his/her locality are benefitted."

Mohd Javeed, an auto driver who resides in the slum areas of Rajendra Nagar, shares, "We did not know about several benefits. But Shafi sir informed us. Now when politicians come to us for vote, we will be able to voice our issues and concerns, and also ask for our rights."

Adds Shafi, "I believe TRS and AIMIM leaders have done nothing for the poor. I have seen children begging on street even now. This responsibility is also of the corporator. These buggers are on the road, so I am sure that the corporators can't say that they aren't aware of the issues. It's just that they don't want to do anything."

## Kamareddy SI held in cricket betting case

PNS ■ KAMAREDDY

The sleuths of Anti-Corruption Bureau arrested Kamareddy Sub-Inspector Govind for his involvement in cricket betting on Thursday.

Earlier, ACB officials held Circle Inspector of the same station, I Jagadish, on similar charges. On Tuesday, officials found Rs 34,40,200 cash and 182.560 grams of gold ornaments in the bank locker of Jagadish.

The sleuths of ACB also grilled Kamareddy DSP Lakshminarayana in the following case and conducted searches at his house and office.

# Transport workers protest against fuel price hike

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The transport workers in the state held a protest on November 26 by organising a strike. The coordination committee stated that the abnormal hike of diesel prices, insurance premium rates, toll charges, and other charges have ruined the transport industry. The workers demand waiver of road tax, vehicle tax, border tax, toll permits etc for the year 2020.

The trucks, buses, autos, taxis and other vehicles will remained off the roads across Telangana, owing to the nationwide strike call given by the transport workers.

Manchireddy Rajender Reddy, the Working President of Telangana Lorry Owners' Association, shares, "We have approached all the leaders and officials. But no one wants to help us. Thus to make our voices heard, on Thursday over



5,00,000 transport workers went on a strike in the state."

Talking about the plight of lorry or truck drivers, he said that a large number of trucks were seized by the finance companies as their owner-drivers

were defaulting on their loan payments owing to financial distress. Not only that, the condition of auto and taxi drivers is not any better.

Explaining that the transport workers are not only in grave

financial debt, but many of them are bankrupt, the committee member added, "The workers working in this sector are working round the clock even in the strict lockdown period. In spite of this risky and

**Large number of trucks were seized by the finance companies as their owner-drivers were defaulting on their loan payments owing to financial distress**

hard work, the transport workers who died due to Covid are not covered under the Insurance scheme announced by the Prime Minister for the Covid warriors. The unorganised transport workers are not covered under any labour laws. They do not have any social security."

## Worker killed as scaffolding collapses

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A worker died and another has sustained serious injuries when the scaffolding support collapsed while they were working on an overhead tank at Venkatraopet on Thursday.

The deceased was identified as Mallalah, 50, and the injured as Prabhakar. While the victims were working on the overhead tank, the scaffolding came off.

According to locals, Mallalah was working close to the under-construction tank while Prabhakar was working on the tank when the supporting centering system came off. The death was instant for him as he sustained grievous injuries.

Prabhakar has slipped off the tank and sustained multiple injuries.





AFTER 'SURGICAL STRIKE ON OLD CITY' ...

# BJP envisions 'Bhagyanagaram' with special package

■ RS 4 CR FOR EACH WARD, METRO IN OLD CITY, CHECK ON POWER THEFT ■ WILL TRANSFORM OLD CITY INTO TO BHAGYANAGAR

NAVEENA GHANATE  
■ HYDERABAD

Two days after warning of a 'surgical strike' on Old City to weed out illegally staying foreigners, the saffron party, in its manifesto released here on Thursday, announced a special package for the Old City. The manifesto states: "We will develop all the divisions equally without restricting the development to a single division, allocating funds not less than Rs. 4 crore to each division".

Stating that the Old City, despite its 400-year-long history, had remained "a slum", the BJP manifesto said: "In addition to preserving the historical heritage there, we will allocate a special package with a special fund for the development of the bastis".

The BJP also promised to implement the existing Development Authority (QSSUDA) efficiently and transform the Old City into a great modern city.

Additionally, BJP declared that the electricity theft in Old City area will be controlled. The manifesto reads, "Rs 600 crore worth of electricity is being stolen every year in old Hyderabad. The



current government frets to file cases in that area, which is very dangerous to the future of the state of Telangana". Pointing out that if there are 85% losses due to power feeders in Old City, it is only 12% losses in places like Secunderabad, the BJP promised to keep a check on power theft in old Hyderabad.

The Old City Metro, which was not mentioned in TRS manifesto, found place in the BJP manifesto. Telangana BJP President

Bandi Sanjay said, "To come to the Old City, even the Chief Minister has to take permission. CM and Owaisi meet regularly in morning, evening and night. If they are meeting so many times, why are IT companies not coming to the Old City? HI-TEC City, Kondapur are developing, why not Old City? Why don't they want to get a Metro line for the Old City? Keeping this in view, we want to change the Old City into Bhagyanagaram. In fact,

TRs and MIM are trying to convert Bhagyanagaram into an Old City". Musi riverfront development, construction of roads on both sides of the rivers as well as landscaping with parks also found mention in the manifesto. Devendra Fadnavis said, "With the help of Centre, Rs10,000 crore package will be created for Musi River, the encroachments on it will be relocated, and it will become a pure river. On par with Sabarmati Front, the Musi

**The BJP also promised to implement the existing Development Authority (QSSUDA) efficiently and transform the Old City into a great modern city**

River Front development will be taken up". It may be mentioned here that Sanjay said, "If BJP wins the Mayor post, we will do a surgical strike on your Old City and weed out Rohingyas and sons of Pakistans. We want elections in Hyderabad without interference from Rohingyas, Pakistanis and Afghanistan. It is possible only with BJP".

Kishan Reddy said, "There are Rohingyas in Hyderabad. State government has given it in writing to Centre with details. We are reviewing the details and will take decision at Centre and convey it to the state".

## SEC GUIDELINES TO PARTIES

- Political parties and candidates concerned should ensure that all Covid-19 related requirements and precautions are taken during campaigning
- During door-to-door campaign, not more than 5 followers including candidate, excluding security personnel, if any, are advised to participate
- They shall wear facemask, maintain social distance and sanitize their hands regularly
- During road shows and rallies, all the participants shall wear facemasks invariably
- During public meetings ensure that, all participants wear the facemask/ cover the nose & mouth with cloth/towel
- They shall sanitise their hands regularly and maintain social distancing during the meeting



## Pose nakko maro, KTR advises Shah

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

TRS working president KT Rama Rao on Thursday advised Union Home Minister Amit Shah not to pose but thank people of Telangana for contributing in the process of nation building.

Interacting with the business fraternity at the 'Transforming Hyderabad into a Global City' programme, he said, "Amit Shah will come tomorrow and say we gave Rs 1 lakh crore to Telangana. I am telling Telangana gave Rs 2.72 lakh crore, you gave Rs 1.40 lakh crore. Our money is going to your Varanasi, Patna, Gujarat in the form of roads and electricity. Maine apko diya- ye pose mat maro".

Terming that this is not separatist agenda, KTR said, "I know we have to run country's railways, defence, border security, North East, Kashmir. I am conscious Indian. To come and pose

that you have given me something out of ordinary. Ye pose nakko maro, Hyderabad mein nahi chalta (this doesn't work)".

Asking people to "Think before you ink", KTR said, "We are from Telangana. We live here and we will die here. We are not tourists coming from Delhi. Decide if you want Delhi boys (BJP) or Galli boys (TRS)". He said that the people coming from Delhi should thank people of Telangana for contributing in Nation building process.

KTR said, "I openly challenge the opposition leaders to come for a debate with us on policies, economy, jobs. I'm sure nobody will come. All they know is to create and flame communal differences". Speaking about Rohingyas, KTR said, "If there are infiltrators in the country, what is Raksha Manthri doing? It's a slap on BJP government's face".

## Congress calls KTR 'jhoota'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Former Minister Mohammed Ali Shabbir said that the Congress party has sincerely developed as a global city and spent over Rs 1 lakh crore from 2004-2014 to build world-class infrastructure.

Giving details of the brochures released at Gandhi Bhavan on Thursday, Shabbir Ali said that the first brochure presents a synopsis of major projects conceptualised and executed by the then Congress regime from 2004-2014. They include international airport at Shamshabad, Outer Ring Road, Metro Rail, PVR Expressway, Krishna and Godavari River water for Hyderabad, flyovers, development of IT corridors, etc., He said that the contribution of Congress party in development of Hyderabad was undisputable. However, he said



that Minister KT Rama Rao was wrongly trying to take credit for Congress achievements.

Calling KTR a 'Jhoota' (liar), Shabbir Ali said that the Minister did not respond to his challenge for an open debate on the issue of Hyderabad's development. "KTR has falsely claimed in 'Hyderabad Development Report' that TRS government had spent over Rs 17,000 crore on Hyderabad Metro Rail project. I was the District Incharge Minister when the foundation stone for Metro Rail was laid. The State Government's contribution in

HMRL is only land acquisition for Metro Stations and tracks and no financial contribution. Therefore, KTR has openly lied about this. He also lied about other projects. If he agrees for an open debate, I will expose that KTR's claim of TRS Govt spending Rs. 67,000 crore on city's development is a farce," he said.

Referring to KTR's statement wherein he asked why BJP's Union Ministers did not visit the flood affected areas of Hyderabad, Shabbir Ali said that the same question also applies to CM KCR.

## UP CM Yogi to campaign in Hyd tomorrow

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will campaign in Hyderabad on November 28 for the GHMC elections to 150 wards across 24 Assembly seats. The BJP is trying to make inroads and Yogi Adityanath is likely to launch his campaign from the Golconda area of the Old City.

Though corporation elections are usually a local affair, the BJP is pulling out all stops to win the polls by bringing in its star campaigners, including union Ministers Amit Shah, Smriti Irani and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath. Yogi Adityanath has emerged as one of the party's biggest crowd pullers in recent times and is much sought after in election campaigns, Bihar being the most recent example. An official in the Chief Minister's office confirmed that, "The Chief Minister will be participating in a road show on November 28. He will be campaigning for a day."



## Kavitha dares BJP to confer Bharat Ratna on PV

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Taking a dig at the State BJP leaders over their love for former Prime Minister late PV Narasimha Rao, MLC K Kavitha asked them to prove their integrity and commitment by conferring Bharat Ratna posthumously on the former Prime Minister. She wondered why the BJP leaders are silent and not celebrating the legacy of Narasimha Rao during his birth centenary year.

Speaking to mediapersons in the course of GHMC election campaign in Gandhinagar on Thursday, Kavitha took on BJP State president Bandi Sanjay for enacting a new political stunt revolving around Gnana Bhoomi, Narasimha Rao's memorial. "Despite the long-standing demand from Telugu people, the BJP government at the Centre has not conferred Bharat Ratna on Narasimha Rao and former Chief Minister N T Rama Rao. What stops them (BJP) from conferring the highest civilian award on these two Telugu giants?" she questioned.

The MLC also questioned



MLC K Kavitha interacts with a pan shop owner during her campaign in Gandhinagar in Hyderabad on Thursday

Kishan Reddy over the Centre not responding to the State's request for release of financial relief for flood victims. She said the Union Home Ministry released immediate financial assistance of Rs 4,700 crore to six flood-hit States even before they submitted their respective damage estimates, but ignored Telangana State.

Kavitha said the BJP never speaks on issues that contribute to the overall development of society like falling

GDP and others, but only uses the religion card to rake up emotions and gain political mileage. She urged the people of Greater Hyderabad not to fall prey to such political stunts of national parties and appealed to them to vote for development and TRS. She also met with representatives of RTC Union, advocates, Vaishya and Yadava community who extended their support to TRS in the December 1 GHMC elections.

## HRF writes to SEC on Covid protocols

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Pointing violation of Covid norms during the GHMC elections campaign by various political parties, Human Rights Forum (HRF) submitted a representation to the State Elections Commissioner (SEC) C Parthasarathi and appealed to direct the political parties to adhere to Covid-19 norms or disqualify the errant candidates.

The forum alleged that few prominent leaders have been holding public meetings and the organisers are failing to maintain Covid protocols. Further, the forum brought out the points like during house to house campaign, the political party leaders and the campaigners are not wearing masks and not maintaining social distance.

"Supporters of candidates are moving like a mob and, when a resident objects their entry into the vicinity of the house, they are behaving with the inmates in a rude manner. This kind of irresponsible behavior might lead to further spread of pandemic," said S Jeevan Kumar, Human Rights Forum, Coordination Committee member of AP and Telangana States.



### WHAT PANDEMIC?

In run up to GHMC elections, political parties are holding huge rallies, road shows and door-to-door campaigning. But what has taken a major beating is the Covid-19 appropriate behaviour.

The poll campaigns are witnessing full of people, including children, without any regard for physical distancing and masks. It looks like no one is afraid of Covid-19 despite Chief Minister K Chandrababoo Naidu warning of probable second wave of virus attack. None has clue about how many asymptomatic carriers of virus are on the roads and how many are in the middle of treatment. Even leaders are not instructing their cadre to wear masks. People have become carefree practically as the campaigning for the December 1 GHMC elections has intensified with the completion of withdrawals. The elections meetings have become free-for-all events with no social distancing and wearing of masks both by the political class and the electorate alike.



## TRS goes 'multi-lingual' on progress of Hyd

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad is a mini-India and the city reflects unity in diversity, a remarkable feature of our country. People from all States of the country had made Hyderabad their home for decades. This cosmopolitan nature of the city is one of the reasons why Hyderabad is the best city to live in India. Right after the formation of Telangana in 2014, Minister and present working president of Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) KT Rama Rao had said in a meeting, "Hyderabad, by its very nature, is a cosmopolitan city. It does not belong to any one region, religion, sect or caste. It can be best described



a mini-India."

Much to its motto of safeguarding that cosmopolitan culture of Hyderabad, the TRS has published an e-book on the

**The booklet, which illustrates the growth story of Hyderabad in last six years, is a perfect balance of beautiful pictures and required information**

progress of Hyderabad and radio ads to embrace the cosmopolitan culture of Hyderabad in all major Indian languages. The e-books and social media campaign will take the programmes initiated by the TRS government closer to the people speaking different languages. This is a step to reach out to everyone who made Hyderabad their home

and a message to Hyderabadis that TRS will ensure Hyderabad is for all. The brain behind these innovative initiatives is party working president and Minister KTR.

The booklet named - Hyderabad: The Rising Global City and radio ads are created in major Indian languages such as Hindi, Tamil, Malayalam, Kannada, Marathi, Gujarati

etc. The booklet, which illustrates the growth story of Hyderabad in last six years, is a perfect balance of beautiful pictures and required information. Several growth components of the city such as SRDP, Police Command and Control Centre, innovative waste management techniques, Basthi Dawakhanas, etc are included in this book.

It introduces one to the various development projects and welfare programs taken up by the TRS government since 2014 and all the steps taken by the government towards the making of a global city have been covered. The e-book can be found at ghmc2020.trspartyonline.org.



# PM pitches for ‘One Nation, One Election’, says it’s need of India

PNS ■ KEVADIA (GUJARAT)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday pitched for ‘One Nation, One Election’, saying it is the need of India as polls taking place every few months impact development works.

Addressing the concluding session of the 80th All India Presiding Officers Conference via video conference, Modi also paid homage to the victims of the 26/11 Mumbai attacks and asserted that India is fighting terrorism now with new policy and new process.

Noting that it was the biggest terror strike on India, Modi said India can never forget the 26/11 Mumbai terror attacks.

On November 26, 2008, ten Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorists from Pakistan arrived through sea and opened fire, killing 166 people, including 18 security personnel, and injuring many during the 60-hour siege in Mumbai.

Pitching strongly for ‘One Nation, One Election’, Modi said it is not just a matter of debate, this is the need of India. “Elections are held at different places every few months, the impact it has on development works is known to all. Therefore, it is a must to have deep study and deliberation on ‘One Nation, One Election,’” Modi said. The prime minister also suggested a single voters’ list for Lok Sabha, assembly



and panchayat polls, saying separate lists are a waste of resources.

Legislature, Executive and Judiciary should work with better coordination and national interest should be the basis for every decision, Modi said.

“We must remember that when politics take over people and nation-first policies, the nation has to pay adversely in such situations,” he said.

He also cited the example of delay in the completion of the Sardar Sarovar Dam, saying it kept lingering and was completed after years.

“This could have happened earlier if development was given precedence. Those who stalled it, have no repentance,” he said in a clear attack on the Congress. Underlining that

there is no place for politics of untouchability, Modi cited the example of the Statue of Unity built by his government for Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel despite him not being from the BJP or the Jana Sangh.

Constitution is our guiding light to take on challenges in the 21st century and national interest should be our basis for every decision, Modi said.

He called for raising awareness about the Constitution.

“Our Constitution has many features but one very special feature is the importance given to duties. Mahatma Gandhi was very keen about this. He saw a close link between rights and duties. He felt that once we perform our duties, rights will automatically be safeguarded,” Modi said.

## India fighting terror with new policy, process, says Modi

PNS ■ KEVADIA (GUJARAT)

Asserting that India can never forget the wounds of 26/11 Mumbai terror attack, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday said the country is fighting terrorism with a new policy and a new process.

In his valedictory address at the 80th All India Presiding Officers’ Conference, Modi remembered the 26/11 martyrs on the 12th anniversary of the Mumbai terror attack.

“Today’s date is associated with the biggest terror attack on the country. On this date in 2008, terrorists sent from Pakistan had attacked Mumbai, Modi said in his address via video-conference. “Many people died in that terror attack, and people of many nationalities were the victims. I pay my homage to

all. I bow down to the security personnel who lost their lives in the attack, Modi said.

“India cannot forget the wounds of the Mumbai terror attack, he said. “India is now fighting terrorism with a new policy and a new process,” Modi said.

He also lauded India’s security forces fighting terrorism by foiling terror plans. “I bow down to our security establishment involved in foiling big terror strikes like the 26/11 Mumbai attack. They are giving a befitting reply to terror and are involved in securing our borders, he said.

Twelve years ago, terrorists from Pakistan laid siege to India’s financial capital for three days, killing 166 people including 18 security personnel, and injuring hundreds more.

He also referred to the practice of KYC (know your customer) in the corporate world and said there should be a similar KYC drive in the form of Know Your Constitution to

popularise the Constitution and its different features.

The All India Presiding Officers Conference began in 1921, and the Gujarat event marks its centenary year.

## ‘Need strong police force to prevent terror attacks’

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Thursday paid tributes to the martyrs of the 26/11 Mumbai terror attack on its 12th anniversary, and said the police force needs to be so strong that terrorists do not dare to attack the state or its capital city.

Speaking at the Maharashtra Police headquarters here after paying floral tributes to the martyrs, Thackeray said though the state is facing a financial crisis, his government will take every step to strengthen the police force.

Earlier, Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari, Home Minister Anil Deshmukh and Environment Minister Aaditya Thackeray also paid respects to the martyrs, who died fighting terrorists during the attack on November 26, 2008, at the newly-built memorial at the police headquarters in south Mumbai.

Wives of some of the personnel killed in the 26/11 attack inaugurated the martyrs’ gallery at the state police headquarters here.

On the occasion, Thackeray released of coffee table book, titled ‘True Grit’ on the Maharashtra Police’s work during COVID-19 pandemic.

“We should make our force so strong that the idea of attack on Maharashtra and Mumbai does not come into the mind of terrorists, they should not dare to attack the



**Speaking at Maha Police headquarters after paying floral tributes to the martyrs, Thackeray said though the state is facing a financial crisis, his government will take every step to strengthen the police force**

state and Mumbai. If any terrorist comes forward, he should be killed on the spot,” he said. “We woke up about strengthening the police force after the 26/11 terror attack. As we made necessary arrangements for health facilities after COVID-19 outbreak, we can also work to strengthen our police force,” he said.

Thackeray remembered the day of the attack in 2008 when he was on a tour of Dhule and Nashik for poll rallies. “After getting information about the attack, I had called

police inspector Vijay Salaskar and he said he had just reached home and was again rushing to the spot,” he recalled.

“I then made two-three calls to him. When he picked up the call, Salaskar said he was in front of the Taj Mahal Hotel and that the police force will enter it after a survey,” the chief minister said. Salaskar was later killed while fighting with the terrorists. “Later, I made various calls to Salakar, and till this day, he hasn’t picked up the call,” the CM said on an emotional note.

## INDIA CORNER

### Militant attack in J-K, two security personnel killed

Two security force personnel were killed in a militant attack on a quick reaction team (QRT) at Parimpora on the outskirts of the city on Thursday, police said. The ultras opened fire on the security forces at Khushipora in Parimpora area, a police official said. Security forces have cordoned off the area and launched a search operation to track down the assailants, he said.



### Tarun Gogoi cremated with full state honours

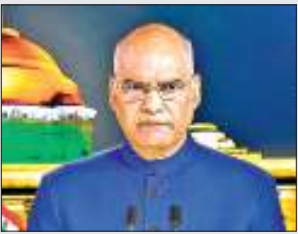


Assam bade an emotional farewell to its beloved former chief minister Tarun Gogoi on Thursday, as his final rites were performed with full state honours at the Nabagraha Cremation ground here. Amid the chanting of hymns, preceded by a gun salute and band played by the Assam Police, the state’s longest

serving chief minister’s mortal remains were consigned to flames by his son Gaurav Gogoi. Gaurav, a Lok Sabha MP, wearing the traditional ‘challeng sador’ (a shawl) and dhoti along with a face mask, lit the pyre after performing the rituals. Gogoi’s wife Dolly, daughter Chandrima, daughter-in-law Elizabeth and other family members placed sandalwood on the pyre before it was lit by Gaurav. The 84-year old three-time chief minister, twice Union minister and six-time Lok Sabha MP, died on Monday following a nearly four-month battle with COVID-19 and related complications.

### President Kovind leads nation in community reading of preamble

President Ram Nath Kovind on Thursday led the nation in community reading of the preamble to the Constitution on the occasion of the Constitution Day. “The President read the preamble from Rashtrapati Bhavan which was live telecast by Doordarshan and joined by the people across the nation,” an official statement said. It was screened live at Kevadia in Gujarat too which is hosting the 80th All India Presiding Officers’ Conference. The participants also read out the preamble along with the President, the statement said. “The community reading of the Preamble, organised by the Union Ministry of Social Justice and Empowerment, is the part of various activities such as webinars, exhibitions, essay competition, poster competition, quiz competition and slogan competition aimed at highlighting and reiterating the values and principles enshrined in the Constitution,” said the statement.



### No holy dip in Ganga on Kartik Purnima due to Covid

People will not be allowed to take a holy dip in the Ganga river here on the occasion of Kartik Purnima on November 30 in view of the COVID-19 pandemic, the district administration said on Thursday. Lakhs of devotees from different parts of the country including Delhi, Haryana, Punjab and Himachal Pradesh converge on the banks of the Ganga here for a ritual bath in the river on the occasion every year. However, in compliance with the Centre’s guidelines in view of COVID-19, it has been decided to stop people from taking a bath in the river on Kartik Purnima this year as it will lead to crowding on the ghats which may cause spread of the virus, Haridwar District Magistrate C Ravishankar said. Those who violate the orders will be punished under the Epidemic Act 1897 and the Disaster Management Act 2005, he said.

## WB Minister volunteers for Covid-19 vaccine trial

PNS ■ KOLKATA

West Bengal Urban Development Minister Firhad Hakim has expressed his wish to be a volunteer for the Covaxin Phase III trial scheduled to be held at the city-based National Institute of Cholera and Enteric Diseases (NICED).

The 62-year-old minister of the Mamata Banerjee government has also spoken to the NICED officials and expressed his wish to be part of the programme.

“I want to help people. If my contribution helps in the treatment of people then I will be more than happy. I am keen to be part of the programme (Covaxin Phase III trial),” Hakim told PTI when contacted on Thursday. Hakim, who is also the chairperson of the BoA in the KMC, said that he has spoken to the NICED authorities about his



wish and they will be conducting a health check-up on him to find out whether he is “fit” to be part of the Covaxin Phase III trial at the institute.

“I have told them (authorities of the NICED) about my wish. They will conduct a health-check up on me to find out whether I am fit enough to be part of the trial or not. I am 62-

year-old and they want to check whether my health will permit this or not,” he said. It was learnt that the NICED authorities have welcomed Hakim’s willingness to join the trial and also invited Atin Ghosh, another member of Board of Administrators of KMC, in-charge of the Health wing of the civic body to be part of the trial.

### Plea seeking CBI probe into Salian’s death dismissed

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court on Thursday dismissed a petition seeking a court-monitored CBI probe into the death of Disha Salian, former manager of late actor Sushant Singh Rajput, and said if any person has information in the case, he/she is free to approach police. A division bench of Chief Justice Dipankar Datta and Justice G S Kulkarni observed that the petitioner, Delhi-based advocate Puneet Dhandha, had no locus standi (capacity) to file such a plea. In his petition, Dhandha had sought that the case of Disha Salian’s death be transferred to the CBI and be monitored by the HC.

## Delhi records over 2K Covid deaths

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The national capital has witnessed 2,364 deaths due to coronavirus since October 28, when the daily rise in infections breached the mark of 5,000 cases for the first time, according to official data.

Amid a surge in COVID-19 cases and deaths, 99 more fatalities on Wednesday pushed the city’s total death toll due to the disease to 8,720. It was after five days that Delhi recorded single-day deaths below 100.

The city reported 98 deaths on November 19, 118 on November 20, 111 on November 21, 121 each on November 22 and 23, and 109 fatalities on November 24, according to official data.

While 131 COVID-related deaths were recorded on November 18, the highest till date, Delhi registered its highest single-day spike of 8,593 cases on November 11.

On Thursday, Delhi had recorded 7,546 cases, followed by 6,608 on Friday, 5,879 on Saturday, 6,746 on Sunday, 4,454 on Monday, 6,224 on Tuesday and 5,246 on Wednesday, according to the government data.

Late hospital admissions leading to COVID-19 cases turning critical, shortage of ICU beds, unfavourable weather and rising pollution are among the factors experts attribute to the spike in COVID-19 deaths in Delhi, health experts have said.

## ‘Awareness must to conserve monuments’

PNS ■ AURANGABAD

Conservation work at forts of Marathwada should be carried out without wiping out historical remains at the sites, experts said during a webinar organised by the Maharashtra state archaeology department, an official said on Thursday.

The webinar was organised on Wednesday to mark the World Heritage Week, which was observed from November 19 to 25, the official said.

Professors of history Dr Satish Kadam and Dr Madhavi Mahake spoke about conserva-



tion of monuments and social responsibility, and temples in Marathwada region. “Although conservation of

monuments is the government’s responsibility, educators need to stress on the importance of these structures to stu-

dents,” Dr Kadam said, highlighting the importance of social responsibility in preserving historical sites.

Noting that the Marathwada region is rich in historical sites, Dr Mahake said there are temples in region, which were constructed in 4-5 Century AD till the Mughal Maratha period.

Meanwhile, fort expert Sanket Kulkarni spoke about the conservation work of forts in Kandhar (Nanded), Ausa (Latur), Paranda (Osmanabad), Antur (Aurangabad), Dharur (Beed).

## BJP activists clash with police in WB

PNS ■ KOLKATA

BJP workers clashed with the police on Thursday after they were stopped short of the under-construction Majerhat Bridge in the southwestern part of Kolkata.

The police erected barricades at Taratala More to prevent the saffron party cadre from marching towards the construction site, following which they staged a protest against the delay in complet-

ing the bridge. BJP activists pelted the law enforcers with stones, following which they resorted to mild lathi-charge to disperse the crowd, a police officer said, adding several members of the saffron party were detained.

BJP national general secretary Kailash Vijayvargiya was scheduled to attend the protest rally but the police dispersed the crowd before he could arrive at the spot, party sources said.



## NCB probe: Kshitij Prasad, drug peddler get bail

PNS ■ MUMBAI

A Mumbai court on Thursday granted bail to Kshitij Ravi Prasad, a former Dharmatic Entertainment executive producer, and a suspected drug peddler arrested by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) in connection with its probe into the alleged use of drugs in Bollywood.

However, Prasad will not come out of jail today as he has also been implicated in another case, the bail plea of which will be heard on December 3, his lawyer Satish Maneshinde said.

Prasad was arrested on September 26 under provisions of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances



evidence or investigation into the case.

Prasad earlier alleged that he was implicated in the case by the NCB after he refused to give false statements against Bollywood celebrities like director Karan Johar and others.

However, the probe agency had denied his allegations.

The NCB had submitted that Prasad gave the statement voluntarily and no false claims were inserted in it.

It alleged that Prasad, along with other accused, was part of a drug procurement and distribution racket.

Prasad was briefly associated with Dharmatic Entertainment, a sister concern of Johar’s Dharma Productions.

## Vigil stepped up in Delhi’s border areas

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Police personnel have been deployed in large numbers in the border areas of the national capital on Thursday and all incoming vehicles were being checked in view of the ‘Delhi Chalo’ march by Punjab farmers against the Centre’s farm laws. Five sand-laden trucks have been stationed at Singhu border to stop tractors being driven by the protesters. Also,

drones have been deployed for security purposes, police said.

While clarifying that the borders have not been sealed, officials said all pickets have been made active, while all vehicles entering the national capital were being checked.

According to officials, it was decided that Delhi Metro trains connecting the neighbouring cities in the NCR would not cross the national capital border till 2 pm on Thursday.



## Farmers' protest

Had the Government chosen consensus-building over confrontation with regard to the farm Acts, things wouldn't have come to such a pass



The big question is could the farmers' march, as it manifested through the dramatic visuals of a surge of protesters fighting teargas, demolishing barricades and facing water cannons, have been avoided in COVID-stressed times? Would they have been driven to such desperation if the Government had given them a decent listen and the Agriculture Minister had not absent-ed himself from a conciliatory meeting on the recent farm Acts? And at a time when stubble burning is compound-ing the pollution and pandemic crisis across Delhi-NCR, should not that have been the point of discussion first? Honestly, the Government could have managed this bet-

ter, considering that it was well aware of the farmers' grievances and should have attempt-ed to reassure them. Instead, in its stubbornness to show it can push necessary reforms, it refused to engage with them and gifted the Opposition an agenda to beat it with. It may want to show the farmers and the Opposition in a poor light but beyond political point-scoring, who gained what, except for being exposed to a large super spreader risk? For the Government may claim that these laws will help farmers get better prices for their crops and allow them access to wider markets but the latter are wary of the corporatisation implic-it in these Acts and argue that they could be cheated out of a fair price. Yes, structurally, the laws may seem to streamline agricultural processes but the farmers are not willing to give up their right to exist on their terms. Worse, they fear that these could ultimately reduce the current system of open-ended FCI procurement by the State. Besides, they feel that entering into contracts with corporations would willy-nilly give the latter negotiating rights and greater control. And that although the older system would continue, as a weakened parallel mechanism, it would ultimately crumble before emerging monopolies. They cite how contract farming failed in the sugarcane sector with farmers chasing dues that are owed to them in crores. Of course, there's the case of PepsiCo suing farmers in Gujarat that showed the latter's vulnerability in the face of big corporations. State Governments like Punjab are obviously upset that access to another market would dry up their own revenue from their Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee (APMC) *mandis* and are see-ing this as an affront to federal controls. The fear that market yards would be abolished is largely unfounded though, considering the eNAM platform connects thousands of them across 18 states and three Union Territories (UTs). But then the Government has also not tried to be educative but is confrontational. It is the devil in the detail that has our farming community up in arms. For example, a licence won't be required to trade in farm produce and anyone with a PAN card can now buy directly from the farmers "outside" their geo-graphical area. Farmers want clarity on what "outside" means and contrary to perception that they want the middlemen out, they actually have a trusted bond with their existing commission agents as the latter's licence is proof enough of credibility and delivery abil-ities, and they would not want to experiment with an untested model. Besides, they want direct payment and not through banks, which could deduct amounts as loan recovery.

The opposition to farm laws could have been avoided had the Government preferred a Standing Committee scrutiny over pushing the law unceremoniously with a voice vote in the Upper House. A GST-like consensus involving Centre and States would have helped. But there was no attempt at consensus-building, no dialogue with the farmers' unions, State Governments or the Opposition parties. Since agriculture-related issues come under the State List in Schedule VII of the Constitution, the Centre should have consulted federal governments. One just had to look at the playbook of the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Government on the contentious issue of contract farming, which was envisaged in the National Agriculture Policy, 2000. Instead of bringing a Central law, it circulated a Model Agricultural Produce Marketing (Regulation) Act to the States for adoption in 2003. The ensuing UPA-I govern-ment continued the policy. Contract farming was included as an option in the National Farmers' Policy, 2007. By August the same year, 15 States had brought amendments in the APMC (Regulation) Acts based on the model legislation. The intransigence on the farm Acts is in contrast with the Government's handling of the recently enacted labour codes. Although these had some controversial provisions too, since they reduced 29 existing labour laws into four legislations, there was not much hue and cry as they were vetted by the depart-ment-related Standing Committee of the Lok Sabha. Yes, there is a need to reform agri-cultural marketing in the time of food surplus. But care should be taken to ensure that the farmers are legally protected in what is still an unequal deal. If only the Acts came with the caveat that no trade transactions would take place below the notified MSP, the farm-ers could have been easily pacified. Many experts would argue that it is easy enough to push reforms in a sector that anyway makes a very small portion of our GDP. But farmers make up 60 per cent of the country's population, a voter base that no political party can ignore. Certainly not States like Punjab and Haryana, which are heavily dependent on procurement at MSP.

## In the hands of God

Diego Maradona, one of the greatest to ever kick a football on the pitch, is no longer with us. The legend lives on



The British-Indian filmmaker, Asif Kapadia, rose to fame after his superb documentary on Brazilian motorsports legend Ayrton Senna, which he fol-lowed with an equally brilliant film on British singer Amy Winehouse. But his magnum opus (so far, at least) was the movie he made on Argentine footballer Diego Armando Maradona, simply titled *Maradona*. It was the first of his documentaries where the subject was still alive to give his version of events but Kapadia's brilliance was that he pulled no punches. The documentary, which looked at Maradona's time in the southern Italian city of Naples, where he played for the local football team

Napoli, shows him warts and all. He was a genius on the field and many of us in India might remember him for his spectacular performances for *La Albiceleste*, as the Argentine football team is known, not least for that match against England during the 1986 World Cup in Mexico where he produced not one, but two of the most memorable goals in foot-ball history — the first the notorious "Hand Of God" and the second where he literally ran rings around the entire English team.

Maradona was a superstar in Argentina but it was in Naples where he was a God. The city, sitting in the shadow of Vesuvius, was downtrodden and felt crushed by the eco-nomic and social success of northern Italian towns such as Milan and Turin, also home to Italy's most successful football clubs, AC Milan, Internazionale and Juventus. Into all this came Maradona from Barcelona, where he almost single-handedly lifted the football team and the city into a different sphere. The documentary explores how Maradona's suc-cess also saw his downfall. He fathered an illegitimate son and quickly found himself court-ed by the local mafia who got him hooked onto drugs. But it took a football match dur-ing the 1990 World Cup, where Maradona's Argentina beat the home team Italy in Naples, for the city to fall out of love with him despite all the success he brought. Maradona's post-football life was also extremely colourful. A visit he made to the eastern metropol-is of Kolkata, where he unveiled a statue of himself in 2010, and a tour of the southern state of Kerala, where he inaugurated a jewellery shop, have gone into popular legend in these football-mad states. Maradona's goal beating the English, whom Indians dislike almost as much as the Argentinians, will be considered a goal scored for the "little guy," which he was. He was not perfect, far from it, but because he never pretended to be perfect, he will always be considered a legend. He will be missed.



# opinion

## Faulty message

The official COVID awareness campaign is not targetted at real life situations that have arisen post lockdown. This has undermined preventive measures

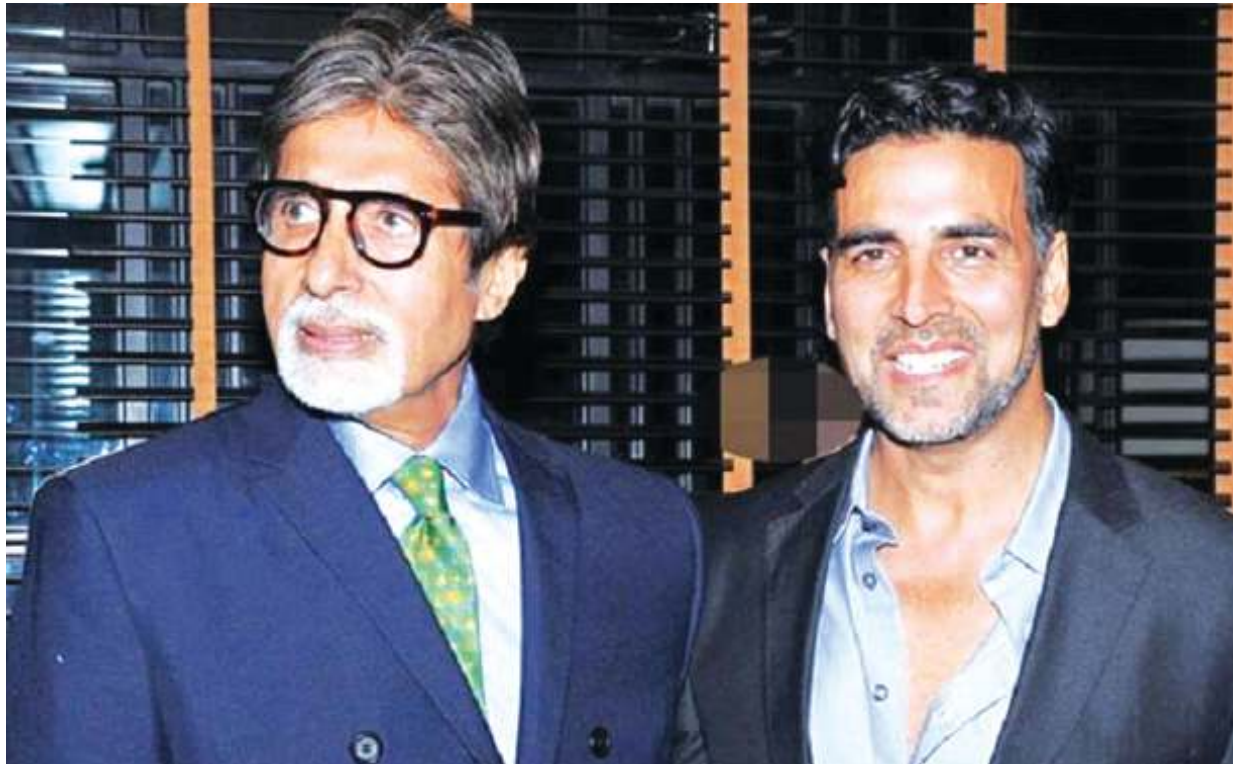


PRIYADARSHI DUTTA

Supreme Court Bench recently reprimanded the Government on its COVID-19 containment measures and asked the Centre as well as the worst-affected States to file status reports. What's still going wrong when the national recovery rate is at an all-time high of 93 per cent plus and the number of new infections has dipped to below 40,000 per day, down from 80,000 during September? However, when the Supreme Court notes that the scenario is grim, it implies that win-ter could undermine the gains made so far, with the COVID-19 awareness campaign in the unlock period being one of the weakest links in the chain.

On October 7, Information and Broadcasting Minister Prakash Javadekar announced that posters, banners and stickers about COVID prevention would come up at pub-lic places, metros, auto rickshaws and public transport soon. Though this writer's world has shrunk dur-ing the last eight months, being con-fined mostly to home, still he has not noticed any such outdoor publicity material being put up in his mod-est South Delhi locality. The aware-ness campaign, since the beginning of the outbreak, is confined mostly to electronic media. Print media advertising lost its reach after many readers unsubscribed newspapers, fearing they might be Corona-infected. The other medium is mobile phone, where the COVID caller tune is frankly about force-feeding. Existing campaigns were perhaps helpful until May 31, when the total lockdown was in force. As the Unlock 1 phase began on June 1, new interactive situations began to multiply. The rate of infections got accelerated on expected lines. The awareness campaign, however, remained dated by refusing to take new situations into consideration. It, therefore, came to resemble a ser-mon and sounded preachy.

Amitabh Bachchan is the face of the Government's COVID aware-ness campaign like he had been for Swachh Bharat Abhiyan. It happens only in India that a Padma Vibhushan awardee can appear in an ad campaign for gold loans and pulse polio drops with equal zeal. Ideally, he should have been removed from the campaign after he himself contracted COVID in July. Alternatively, he should have been re-launched with a new ad script, depicting him as a COVID survivor.



However, that did not happen.

Another TV spot featuring Akshay Kumar for Doordarshan (on precautions in the Unlock era) is more appalling. It shows the actor encouraging a senior citizen to go to work by wearing a mask. This clearly militates against the Government's advisory for senior citizens to avoid venturing outdoors. Akshay further states that the Government had made sufficient arrangements for people even if they had con-tracted COVID. This affirmation is completely out of sync with reality in most States. The cam-paign ambassador perhaps implied only the Modi Government. However, the sub-ject of public health and sanita-tion, hospitals and dispensaries is covered by the State List under the Seventh Schedule (Article 246). It is also covered under the Panchayat List under Article 243G. Broadcasting, being part of communications, is placed on the Union List under Seventh Schedule. Thus Doordarshan failed abjectly to develop a State-specific COVID awareness cam-paign reflecting local realities. While the publicity drive seems to be run by Mandi House man-darins, by employing Mumbai denizens like Amitabh Bachchan, Akshay Kumar and Sachin Tendulkar, they forgot that the brunt of healthcare is left to the States.

As Unlock phases progressed from June 1, it was expected that the awareness campaign would become more localised. An end-to-end information campaign could have helped reduce the case load. While many COVID sur-vivors volunteered to donate

A TV SPOT FEATURING AKSHAY KUMAR FOR DD (ON PRECAUTIONS IN THE UNLOCK ERA) IS APPALLING. IT SHOWS THE ACTOR ENCOURAGING A SENIOR CITIZEN TO GO TO WORK BY WEARING A MASK. THIS CLEARLY MILITATES AGAINST THE GOVT'S ADVISORY FOR SENIOR CITIZENS TO AVOID VENTURING OUTDOORS



plasma to save the lives of other patients, they could have helped more by sharing the lessons learnt. It would have helped if we could have produced an informa-tion bank, albeit maintaining strict confidentiality, about how possibly those patients contract-ed COVID. For instance, what percentage of newly-infected people observed protocols or were negligent about them. How many think they got it by using public transport, venturing out in a market place or eating out in the company of strangers at resta-urants and so on.

The Government was admittedly in a cliff stick situa-tion. It had to decide between containing rising cases and reviv-ing the economy. Emphasising one could hurt the prospect of the other. The cold season knocked earlier than usual this year and the NCT of Delhi is one of the worst-affected regions with pollution picking up. The fall-winter is also the season for festivities and weddings when the business picks up post-mon-soon. In order to replenish their depleted revenue coffers, the Centre as well as the Delhi Government chose to look the other way on a containment drill such conditions warranted. The result was the quadrupling of infections in Delhi. When Governments wrestle against their conscience, they usually win. An example of conflict between commercial and public health interests could be seen in the Delhi Government's decision to reverse its order within 24 hours on closure of Punjabi Basti market and Janata market in the Nangloi area for flouting

pandemic norms. With all large markets in Delhi open for busi-ness, the disease protocol is hardly being followed anywhere.

By November 24, India had conducted a total of 13.3 crore (13,36,82,275) tests in its 2,134 laboratories. The number, though large, represents only 10 per cent of India's estimated population. There is a strong chance that a significant segment of the untested population acts as asymptomatic carriers. A majority of people tend to feel that seemingly healthy people – whether they are colleagues, neighbours or relatives – are dis-ease-free. They tend to socialise with them even without mini-mally protective face masks. At fast food eating joints, many don't hesitate to eat (naturally without masks) alongside com-plete strangers. It hardly occurs to them that the other person could either be an asymptomatic carrier if not passing through the incubation period. The Government ad campaigns have failed to educate them upon this aspect. They have even failed to educate people on immunity-boosting methods as prescribed by the AYUSH Ministry. Taking up real-life situations in cam-paigns could have helped in stalling this surge. One could eas-ily have used animation or clay-mation if actual shooting involv-ing human beings was problem-atic. Till we drill the risk factors graphically in the common man's mind, a Bollywood star cannot do much.

(The writer is an author and independent researcher based in New Delhi. Views expressed are personal)

## SOUNDBITE

It's a sad irony that on Constitution Day, the constitutional right of farmers is being oppressed in this manner. Let them pass Haryana. Manohar Lal Khattar. Let them take their voice to Delhi peacefully.



Punjab Chief Minister  
—Captain Amarinder Singh

Love jihad is a hoax. It is part of a majoritarian agenda. Interfaith marriages are allowed under the Indian law, it is even encouraged by some governments.



Former Home Minister  
—P Chidambaram

I believed that India wanted to bring out and talk about societal issues openly. I'm fortunate that the audience loved my brand of cinema and engaged with my beliefs.



Actor  
—Ayushmann Khurrana

I think staying away from our families for nearly four months now is going to be worthwhile in the future because we are sacrificing a lot to do well in the Olympic Games.



Indian hockey midfielder  
—Hardik Singh

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Dangerous idea

Sir — One is amused by the oxymoronic ring of the phrase, "love jihad", which has recently been popularised by certain Right-wing groups. It is designed to denote a communal conspiracy in which Muslim men marry women from a different community after "entrap-ting them" in love affairs. As if the women are flying blind. There is nothing wrong with other inter-faith marriages, so they aren't subjected to scruti-ny. But Right-wing groups with vested interests project any incident of a Muslim man mar-rying a non-Muslim woman as part of a larger conspiracy aimed at converting our women to Islam. This leads to dramat-ic polarisation in the country, which some Hindutva groups take advantage of.

In the process, the Government is trying to inter-fere in the personal freedoms of individuals that have been guar-anteed in the Constitution of India. It is trying to solve a con-ceived problem with bad legis-lation for political gains of appealing to its voter base. In reality, the love jihad law, once passed, will give societal vigilan-

tism a right to interfere in other people's personal affairs, with State sanction. Nothing can be more dangerous and polarising as that. One feels sad for the message we're sending out.

Jubel D'Cruz  
Mumbai

### Rest in Peace Argentina's 'golden boy'

Football fans have suffered a big loss in the untim-ely death of Diego Maradona at the age of 60. Undoubtedly the best football player ever, whose wild swings in fortune came to personify the flux of his home nation Argentina, he died too early. Maradona suffered a heart attack in Tigre, Buenos Aires, after undergoing surgery to remove a blood clot from his brain earlier this month. He led Argentina to the 1986 World Cup and won league championships in Italy and at home, granting him the sort of iconic status normally reserved for war heroes.

After retiring from football, Maradona developed heart problems caused by cocaine addiction, and he endured wild weight and fitness swings that seemed to reflect his do-or-die attitude to both, the game and life. Argentina's "golden boy" is best remembered for the two goals that threw England out of the 1986 World Cup. The quarter-final in Mexico City was eagerly ant-icipated, coming as it did just four years after the Falklands War between the UK and Argentina. Maradona made sure it was a game few would forget. Six minutes into the second half, England's Steve Hodge miscued a clear-ance, sending the ball high into his own penalty area. Maradona, at five foot five inches, leaped above the six



foot high England goalkeeper Peter Shilton as he tried to punch the ball clear. Replays showed that Maradona fisted, rather than headed, the ball into the net, a foul the referee missed. The Argentine No. 10 dedicated the goal to the "hand of God." While that goal has become one of the most infamous in football history, Maradona's second in the game was voted the best of the 20th cen-tury in a 2002 vote held by FIFA, the sport's ruling body. Argentina won 2-1 and Maradona, its captain, went on to lift the World Cup after a 3-2 victory over West Germany in the final. May his soul rest in peace.

Bhagwan Thadani  
Mumbai

### Courts must be pithy

Sir — Courts of the country give very lengthy judgments, which at times run into hun-dreds or thousands of pages. For instance, the 2019 verdict in the Ram Jannabhoomi case was so lengthy that there is a major

possibility that it was not read by the litigants themselves. It was surely beyond the under-standing of the common man.

Such interminable court orders are for libraries and are read only by researchers and select lawyers. There is a dire need for short and precise ver-

dicts so that citizens and liti-gants do not have to depend on lawyers to know their salient features. Things will improve a lot if India also adopts the practice followed in many coun-tries, where there is a limit on the number of pages in a judg-ment, the limits being different for the Supreme Court, High Courts and trial courts. Or else every lengthy verdict exceeding 50 pages should be compulso-rily accompanied by a summa-ry of the order, with a limit of say 50 pages, to be issued and posted on the court website on the date of the judgment itself.

Madhu Agrawal  
Delhi

### Big loss for football

Maradona's scoring prowess and skill in slaloming past opponents vaulted him into the hall of fame. But the player struggled to cope with the adu-lation and his battles with addiction became regular glob-al news. Sad that the football great left this world so early.

Ashmit Aaron  
Noida

Send your feedback to:  
letterstopioneer@gmail.com





FIRST COLUMN

Read the RCEP  
fine print

It leaves the regulatory door ajar for each country to force hard, localisation rules for data without being subject to scrutiny at the multilateral platform



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

The world has seen a major economic negotiating bloc getting “next to a done deal” in the last fortnight, in the form of the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), a free trade agreement (FTA) between 10 ASEAN countries and China, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand. This pact, when ratified, will come to represent 30 per cent of the world’s GDP, impacting almost half of the global population. Most significantly, it is a multilateral trade agreement where China is a leading party. The RCEP has been at the negotiating table since 2012 before it went stagnant in recent years as India resisted opening its industrial and agricultural sectors to increased international competition. Subsequently, given the rise of an “abrasively ambitious and technology-aided” China, India had also pressed for localising data of each country’s citizens, unless the participating nation granted its outbound transfer. India formally withdrew from the RCEP in 2019 due to domestic demands. However, despite the November 15 agreement on the trade deal, New Delhi still has the option to join RCEP.

A post-pandemic world economy gasping to revive, a new regime in the US soon with a strong possibility of rejoining multilateral platforms for trade and strategic cooperation and the vision of a new India are some of the paradigms to be kept in mind before passing any judgment on what works best in our favour at this juncture. New Delhi not joining the RCEP has been received with mixed responses domestically, with those opposing the Government’s stance stating that an isolated India in South East Asia and our sensitivity to China’s imports may be more out of geopolitics than economic realisation. A study found that between 2007-2008 and 2015-16, India’s import of Chinese semi-finished goods and heavy machinery has had a positive impact on our industries, creating jobs and increasing competitiveness. Those who support the Government’s moves of withdrawal have equally strong positions on how importing these goods from China leads to job losses for the unskilled. In the post-pandemic economy, a huge chunk of jobs has to be created for this unskilled category.

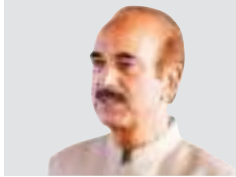
The broad tenets of the RCEP agreement aim to achieve zero tariffs on over 90 per cent traded goods between partner countries in 15 years. The economic impact may be dulled by the knowledge that most of these trading partners already have bilateral FTAs in place. However, the geopolitical impact, given a heavy Chinese presence and an ambition to create a counter bloc to the US-led Comprehensive and Progressive Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), can’t be overlooked. It is often said that China has a huge knack for reverse mastering/engineering the skill sets developed in any successful economy and, therefore, without any significant costs of indigenous development, it can scale up and produce similar goods and services at half the rates offered by original creators. The wordings of the RCEP, in terms of borrowed texts from the CPTPP chapters and approach, seem like a similar exercise. It is here that key emerging technology policy topics like e-commerce, data localisation, as envisaged in the RCEP agreement, have to be studied carefully before India makes any decision.

Electronic commerce, an evolving area of friction on bilateral and multilateral platforms, has found a chapter in the RCEP agreement document. It borrows heavily from the CPTPP. However, on execution, it has bleaker chances as the clauses (at least in their wordings) are less enforceable, ambiguous and too tight-jacketed. The dispute resolution mechanism in case of conflict must be referred to the RCEP joint committee if all other channels of negotiations fail. The contentious issues of source code disclosure requirements, data flows across trading partners and location of data centres and computing facilities have been left for future consultations and agreements. India and the rest of the world economies, including Europe, would be watching this space closely to get cues, before trying to make any overtures. The global policy space is currently staring at tonnes of ideas being floated to control the flow of data beyond sovereign boundaries, thereby acknowledging and equating data as a physical commodity to be traded as a chip on the high tables of multilateral agreements. It would take tonnes of space to argue and potentially arrive at a middle path between different approaches to data regulation globally, except, suffice it to say, this year has been the beginning of national data colonisation policies.

Staying on with data regulations, the text for cross-border data flows and location of computation facilities in the RCEP document leave ample room for subjective and aggressive interpretations. The bloc leaves the regulatory door ajar for each country to force hard, localisation rules for data without being subject to scrutiny at the multilateral platform. This clause may seem to be played to the galleries domestically for each partner but has its own repercussions on global cooperation. India for the time-being has chosen to call for an adjournment on the multidimensional chessboard of multi-lateral trade/strategic pacts, which is a wise move. It is always better to sleep over the problem and come back with a fresh perspective before going for Sicilian defence or the Queen’s gambit.

(The writer is a policy analyst)

OUR PARTY’S STRUCTURE HAS COLLAPSED. WE NEED TO REBUILD IT AND THEN IF ANY LEADER IS ELECTED IN THAT STRUCTURE, IT WILL WORK.  
—CONGRESS LEADER  
GHULAM NABI AZAD



MR AZAD IS A CWC-NOMINATED MEMBER WHO CAN JUST PICK UP THE PHONE AND CALL ANYBODY IN THE PARTY INSTEAD OF SPEAKING PUBLICLY.  
—CONGRESS SPOKESPERSON  
PAWAN KHERA

# Dynamic rulebook

While criticising the Constitution for the failure of those who are responsible for maintaining its sanctity, we are doing injustice to both, the founders and the text



ANURAG TIWARY

November has by and large been an important month in history. On November 26, 1940, Nazi Germany began walling off the Jewish ghetto in Warsaw. In November 1941, the Japanese 1st Air Fleet, also known as the *Kido Butai*, in a surprise military move, left the Kuril Islands to strike Pearl Harbour during World War II. In November 1944, a German rocket hit a Woolworth’s shop in London, killing 168 people. Simultaneously, on the same day, Himmler, a leading Nazi soldier, ordered the destruction of the Auschwitz-Birkenau crematoria. World politics was in a state of turmoil. Populist leaders, who were born from democracy, and their obsession with expansionism were being severely criticised and held accountable globally.

Back in India, the Hindu-Muslim tension and the differences between the Indian National Congress (INC) and the Muslim League (ML) were growing at an alarming rate. After a failed attempt at the Shimla Conference to mediate between the INC and the ML, the Cabinet Mission Plan was released by a three-member committee set up to decide the fate of an independent India by the Labour Party heading the Government in the UK. Since the Cabinet mission had rejected the demands made by the ML, the league was miffed and had declared the infamous “Direct Action Day”, which had led to widespread violence all across the country.

Among all this chaos, on November 26, 1949, the Constituent Assembly of India formally adopted a Constitution for an independent and democratic country. After hours of debates, discussions and discourses that were held for close to three long years by more than 350 men and women of astute credibility and a proven track record, the Constitution was adopted.

This was not an ordinary moment in India’s socio-political and constitutional history. For a majority of Indians, this was a “break from the past” moment. However, for the founding fathers, the task of framing a Constitution was far more sensitive. They had a dual role. On one hand, they had to justify to the world and future generations reading the text that India was the better of the two nations (the other being Pakistan) that were formed as a result of the Partition and on the other, they had to draft a Constitution that reflected the struggle of the founders. This second role, as Abhinav Chandrachud points out in his book, *Republic of Rhetoric*, had two competing goals — one was to transform India and the other was to keep things the same. Continuity and change were the two important aspects that rationalised the Constitution-making mandate of the Assembly. Granville Austin points out that the Constitution sought to bring about a “social revolution” while at the same time “trying to preserve national unity and stability.”

The founders were fairly optimistic Indians. They framed a Constitution that wasn’t just ahead of its time but was also a positive and radical intervention in the Indian political scene. For instance, it abolished untouchability, made it unconstitutional for anyone to be granted titles and made a provision for affirmative action for those who had been historically marginalised by society. It granted universal adult suffrage to everyone, irrespective of their religion, caste, creed, gender or race and ensured a fundamental right to equality to every citizen of this country.

All this at a time when the world was still not ready to accept these changes. For example, in the US, despite it being one of the oldest constitutional Republics around the world, it was only in 1954

“THE INDIAN CONSTITUTION IS A LIVING DOCUMENT AND IT IS GOING TO SURVIVE AND WILL CONTINUE TO STAND FOR THOSE WHO ARE VULNERABLE, DOWNTRODDEN AND HAVE BEEN HISTORICALLY SIDELINED BY A CACOPHONIC PARLIAMENT. LET’S PROMISE TO SHAPE A NATION THAT AIMS TO BUILD ON FROM WHERE THE FOUNDERS LEFT OFF”



in the Brown vs Board of Education case, when the “separate but equal” clause was held to be unconstitutional by the Supreme Court. Black women were allowed to vote only in 1965 under the Voting Rights Act and Affirmative Action for Blacks and Browns was held to be constitutional very recently in 2003 in the Grutter vs Bollinger case. The US Supreme Court made inter-racial marriage constitutionally permissible in 1967 and gave students the right to free speech in 1969 in the Tinker vs Des Moines case.

Even as a proud India celebrated Samvidhaan Diwas yesterday, little do we know that the Assembly that framed the most egalitarian and forward-looking Constitution of its times was also criticised by several quarters. There were two kinds of criticisms that were levelled against the founders — moral and legal. The moral criticism was that the Assembly was anti-Gandhian and wasn’t a democratic one. Mahatma Gandhi had espoused the concept of village republics and had stated that power should be vested in the hands of the panchayat whereas the Constitution had followed a highly centralised top-bottom approach to governance.

The Assembly was also stated to be non-representative because a majority of its members were Hindus and members of the INC, too. It was also argued that a colonial mindset prevailed in the Assembly whereby it followed a cut-copy-paste model of framing the Constitution. The legal shortcomings rest on the argument that the Assembly’s functioning was against the State paper and the Indian Independence Act of 1947. Many also felt that the Assembly laid the foundations for a non-secular India. However, there is no doubt that these criticisms had little to no bearing on the sanctity of the document. One-half of the Constitutions across the

world don’t even get to see their 20th year. At the least, these criticisms show that dissent was very much a part of the Constitution-making process and virtually every leader in the Assembly had at one point of time or the other registered his/her concerns on issues that they felt strongly about. The Constitution was indeed adopted based on popular support and sovereignty that the Assembly enjoyed from every strata of the society. Today, the document enjoys the status of a holy book for all those who believe in its dreams for this great country.

This is not to say that we have been equally successful in curbing the menace of discrimination, inequality and religious intolerance in India. Arguably so, we might have failed, and the founders would not be very happy with the state of affairs that exist today. Gender inequality, caste-based discrimination, religious fundamentalism, lack of quality public education, criminalisation of politics, corruption, increased blue and white collar crimes, hunger, poverty, population, unemployment, climate change, stifling of dissent and increased populism in politics are concerns that continue to haunt us and our Constitutional framework even today.

But before we hold the Constitution responsible for all that pervades in our socio-political landscape today, let’s take a step back and understand the role that this text is and was supposed to be playing in democracies like the one that exists in our country. Constitutions are inherently symbolic documents and all that they do is reflect the minds and hearts of the people. This is not to say that they include all that is not morally permissible. Constitutional texts assert and reiterate the dreams that a nation saw for itself.

Seventy one years ago, our founders

dreamt of a nation that would be free from all kinds of prejudice, hate and stigmatisation. We haven’t achieved this goal. But while criticising the text for its supposed failure we forget that our anger is misplaced. This is precisely because the Indian Constitution places an extremely huge amount of trust on whom it applies, in this case the citizens of this country. While holding the Constitution accountable for the failure of the people, we are doing injustice to the text that works best only when “We, The People” act with complete honesty and uphold principles of Constitutional idealism.

The reason why Samvidhaan Diwas is important is fairly simple, it tells you a story. The story of the rising sun in the history of India’s Constitutional journey. It tells you that the Constitution was drafted by appreciating dissent and favouring intellectual discourse. It tells you that the document was framed at a time when the dynamics of global politics was being reconsidered. It tells you that even in the face of criticism, the Assembly was successful in framing a document that was forward-looking, optimistic and has until now survived the wrath of several populist governments and authoritative leaders. It tells you, most importantly, that the criticism of the Constitution is misplaced and that the failure of those who are responsible to ensure its sanctity does not necessarily mean the failure of the text itself.

The Indian Constitution is a living document and it is going to survive and will continue to stand for those who are vulnerable, downtrodden and have been historically sidelined by a cacophonous Parliament. Let’s promise to shape a nation that aims to build on from where the founders left off.

(The writer is from the National Law University, Visakhapatnam)

# Love jihad is an excuse for inefficiency

Amid issues of national importance, a false narrative has been created that women are deceived and forcibly converted to Islam for marriage



MARKANDEEY KATJU

There is a lot of talk of “love jihad” these days in the country. The Uttar Pradesh (UP) Government has approved an Ordinance against it, providing for long jail sentences as well as heavy fines, and a Bill called the UP Prohibition of Unlawful Conversions Bill, 2020 is proposed to be introduced in the UP Legislature shortly. The hilly States of Himachal Pradesh and Uttarakhand already have such laws and the Madhya Pradesh Government, too, has said that marriages to enable “forcible religious conversions” would invite an imprison-

ment of up to 10 years, extending the proposed period of maximum punishment for the alleged offence from the five years announced earlier. There is also a requirement to take the District Magistrate’s permission for converting to marry in UP. The Haryana Government, too, is proposing to bring a law against it.

The expressions “love jihad” and “forced conversion” are vague and liable to any number of interpretations. India is largely a conservative country, and most parents want their children (particularly women) to marry within their own religion. So, when the latter fall in love with someone who belongs to another religion, the parents often file a police report, alleging that their daughter was beguiled and abducted.

Whatever the term “love jihad” may mean, my experience as a lawyer for 20 years and a judge for another 20 is that in most cases, there is no such thing as a “forced conversion.” In many of the cases which came before me as a Supreme Court judge, the FIR

was usually filed by the family or the father of the woman alleging that the woman/daughter had been duped and hoodwinked, and/or abducted and forced to marry by a man from a different religion. But when I summoned the woman (and I was satisfied that she was above 18 years of age) she invariably told me that she had married the young man of her own free will and there was no coercion.

It is alleged by Right wing elements that “love jihad” is different from love marriage. According to them, a love marriage takes place because the couple genuinely love each other, whereas “love jihad” is not motivated by love but is a conversion conspiracy by Muslims. It is alleged that Muslim men often conceal their names and other particulars and beguile and dupe girls from different religions, particularly Hindus, into marriage with false allurements. To my mind, this is a bogus claim and never in my judicial experience have I found any basis for it.

I submit that “love jihad” is only

a gimmick, intended to divert public attention from the steep decline in India’s economy, appalling rise in child malnourishment, steep rise in prices of foodstuff and fuel, continuing farmers’ distress, rapes, acid attacks, rise in other crimes, corruption, pollution, major issues on the country’s borders vis-a-vis the stand-off with China and frequent skirmishes with Pakistan. Amid all these pressing issues of national importance, a false narrative and hue and cry has been created that young women are deceived, enticed and forcibly converted to Islam for marriage. There may be a few such stray instances (though not to my knowledge), but my belief, on the basis of my long judicial experience, is that almost all inter-religious marriages are voluntary love marriages. Also, no data is given of Muslim women marrying Hindu men, which is of course regarded as “ghar wapasi” (a homecoming). I need not go into the legal validity of such “love jihad” marriages though the Supreme Court in the

Shakti Vahini vs. Union of India case (2018), the Arumugam Servai vs. State of Tamil Nadu case (2011), Lata Singh vs. State of UP case (2006), and in the recent Division Bench decision of the Allahabad High Court, held inter-religious marriages valid.

But the big question is how many of such marriages take place in the country? In India’s population of 138 crore people, one can count them on one’s fingertips. So it is not that hordes of Hindu girls or women from other communities are clamouring to tie the knot with Muslim men. It is not as if such marriages are threatening to change India’s demography and make it a Muslim-majority country, as is portrayed by some people.

The real issues before the country right now are widespread poverty, starvation deaths, the raging pandemic, almost total lack of proper healthcare and good education for the masses, record, rising unemployment, lack of opportunities and so on. Since the Government has no idea how to resolve these, it does what all

other populist governments have done in the past. It seeks to divert public attention and create a bogeyman, resorting to gimmicks and stunts. “Love jihad” is the latest one (the earlier ones being abrogation of Article 370, the Citizenship Amendment Act and so on.)

This bogey has the advantage of further polarising society on religious lines, which admirably serves some vested interests and also translates into votes for others. It gives a handle to vigilante groups to harass and attack couples. “Honour killings”, which are already a menace, will become more common as the days go by.

The Roman emperors used to say, “If you cannot give the people bread, give them circuses”, and Queen Marie Antoinette of France reportedly said, “If the people do not have bread, let them eat cake.” Our own emperors say, “Since we cannot give the people bread or employment, we must give them the apparition of ‘love jihad’.”

(The writer is a former judge of the Supreme Court of India)

## FOREIGN EYE



### IT IS BETTER TO BE SAFE THAN SORRY

China sees the testing and disinfection of imported products as necessary to keep the virus at bay. While that will inevitably cause delays in custom clearance, such measures are necessary under the current circumstances, especially when Corona is still wreaking havoc around the world, causing thousands of deaths each day. (China Daily editorial)



# Nationwide shutdown hits normal life; 25 cr workers join agitation

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Kerala, Puducherry, Odisha, Assam and Telangana witnessed complete shut down on Thursday and normal life was partially affected in many other states as more than 25 crore workers participated in the nationwide strike, according to central trade unions.

The day-long countrywide strike has been called by a joint platform of ten central trade unions to protest against the central government's new farm and labour laws, among other workers-related issues, as well as to raise various demands.

Various independent federations and associations are also part of the joint platform.

"The states of Kerala, Puducherry, Odisha, Assam and Telangana have reported complete shut down. Tamil Nadu reported complete shut down in 13 districts, while the industrial strike continues in the rest of the districts. Punjab and Haryana have reported that the state road transport buses have not left their depots in the morning," a joint state-



ment issued by the trade unions said.

Jharkhand and Chhattisgarh reported 100 per cent strike, including at BALCO, the state-

ment said. Normal life was affected in West Bengal and Tripura, and sporadic incidents of clashes were reported in West Bengal, according to reports.

Indian National Trade Union Congress (INTUC), All

India Trade Union Congress (AITUC), Hind Mazdoor Sabha (HMS), Centre of Indian Trade Unions (CITU), All India United Trade Union Centre (AIUTUC), Trade Union Co-ordination Centre (TUCC) and Self-Employed Women's Association (SEWA) are part of the joint platform.

Others are All India Central Council of Trade Unions (AIC-CTU), Labour Progressive

Federation (LPF) and United Trade Union Congress (UTUC).

BJP-aligned Bharatiya Mazdoor Sangh (BMS) is not participating in the strike.

Hind Mazdoor Sabha (HMS) General Secretary Harbhajan Singh Sidhu told PTI that the number of workers who joined the nationwide agitation on Thursday exceeded the expected number of 25 crore.

He also said that coal mine workers along with those from defence, railways and other public sectors are also supported the strike.

Scheme workers, electricity employees, domestic workers, construction workers, beedi workers, hawkers, vendors, agricultural workers, self employed in rural and urban India are holding demonstrations at various places, even defying police restrictions, the statement said.

At many places, the auto and taxi drivers have remained off the roads. Railway and defence employees have held demonstrations in support of the

strike at their respective places of work.

As per the statement, operations of financial institutions such as banks and insurance companies have also been affected.

Besides state government and central government employees, those from the Income Tax Department and other PSU workers are participating in the strike in a big way, the unions claimed.

"Reports of successful strike in coal and copper mines, including other mineral resource mines, have been received. The employees of postal, telecom and steel sector were also in action and gramindak sevaks observed 100 per cent strike," the statement said.

In several places, oil sector unions also observed strike. Workers also resorted to picketing in some parts of the country.

Further, the statement said that total number of workers who have joined the strike at over 25 crore exceeds the number of those participated in a similar strike on January 8.

## Jubilant Life Sciences raises Rs 90 cr through commercial papers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Drug firm Jubilant Life Sciences on Thursday said it has issued commercial papers worth Rs 90 crore.

Tenure of the instrument is 53 days and date of maturity is January 18, 2021, Jubilant Life Sciences said in a regulatory filing.

Commercial paper is an unsecured money market instrument issued in the form of a promissory note. It was introduced in India in 1990 to enable highly rated corporate borrowers to diversify their sources of short-term borrowings and to provide an additional instrument to investors.

Shares of Jubilant Life Sciences closed at Rs 719 per scrip on BSE, up 1.38 per cent from its previous close.



## MONEY MATTERS

### Adani Gas to change name to Adani Total Gas

Adani Gas Ltd, the city gas distribution firm of billionaire Gautam Adani's group, will change its name to Adani Total Gas to reflect French energy giant Total's stake in the firm. Adani Gas has through a postal ballot sought shareholders' nod to change the name as well as alter its memorandum and articles of association, according to the firm's filing to stock exchanges. After the French giant buying stake, Adani Gas is now "a joint venture company of Adani Group and TOTAL Group, France with 37.40 per cent stake by each promoter and remaining 25.20 per cent with public shareholders," it said. "In order to reflect the names of both promoter groups, it is proposed to change the name of the company from 'Adani Gas Limited' to 'Adani Total Gas Limited' to reflect the holding structure," the filing said. The Board of the firm, which retails CNG to automobiles and piped natural gas to household kitchens and industries in 15 geographical areas, had on November 3 approved the name change.



### Apollo Tyres aims to launch Vredestein brand early next year



Apollo Tyres is planning to introduce its European tyre brand Vredestein in India early next year as it looks to cater to premium cars in the replacement market, according to a top company official. The home-grown tyre major had acquired the Netherlands based Vredestein Banden BV (VBBV)

for an undisclosed sum in 2009 from Russia's bankrupt largest tyre manufacturer Amtel-Vredestein NV. The Vredestein tyres are currently sold in Europe, the US, the Middle East, Africa and a few Asian countries. Apollo Tyres had introduced Vredestein tyres briefly in the Indian market in 2013 as a pilot project. However, after gauging the response at that time the company postponed the launch plans. With growth in high-end car sales and restriction on imported tyres in place, the tyre maker is now looking to manufacture the tyres locally in the country. We have seen the opportunity of launching our Vredestein brand in India. We did try it four, five years ago and we basically made our own mistakes over there.

### HMD Global looking at leveraging India for exports

HMD Global, which sells Nokia brand of mobile phones, on Thursday said India is "at the heart and centre" of its business and the company is exploring if this market can be leveraged for exports as well.



HMD Global - which launched its latest Nokia 2.4 in India for Rs 10,399 - is working with various ODM (original design manufacturer) and EMS (electronic manufacturing solution) partners to meet the domestic demand for feature phones and smartphones. "We have different ODM and EMS partners who we work with in India... all of our devices as of now what we are selling are 100 per cent manufactured in India. While they are designed in Finland, all the smartphones and feature phones for India are manufactured in India," HMD Global Vice President Sanmeet Singh Kochhar told PTI. He added that the company has managed supply chain well, both in terms of components and devices. Handset vendors faced constraints in supply after the lockdown, and many players had to import devices to meet the heightened demand that was driven by trends like 'work from home' and 'study from home'. "We are evaluating how India can be at the heart and centre of our sourcing and if we can look at catering not only to the domestic demand but leverage India for exports as well," Kochhar said.

### Gold, silver rise marginally

Gold prices rose marginally by Rs 17 to Rs 48,257 per 10 gram in the national capital on Thursday, according to HDFC Securities. In the previous trade, the precious metal had closed at Rs 48,240 per 10 gram. Silver prices also gained Rs 28 to Rs 59,513 per kilogram from Rs 59,485 per kilogram in the previous trade. "Spot gold prices for 24 carat in Delhi were marginally up by Rs 17 limiting upside on rupee appreciation," HDFC Securities Senior Analyst (Commodities) Tapan Patel said. In the international market, gold was trading with gains at USD 1,815 per ounce, while silver was quoting flat at USD 23.42 per ounce. "Gold prices witnessed some short recovery on holiday shortened week as US markets are closed today on Thanksgiving as investors turned cautious over vaccine progress and stimulus hopes," Patel added.



## Power sector employees protest against privatization of discoms

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Power sector employees on Thursday held nationwide protests against the government's decision to privatize discoms, the All India Power Engineers Federation (AIPEF) said.

They also demanded withdrawal of Electricity (Amendment) Bill 2020 and scrapping of the standard bidding document (SBD).

"Lakhs of power sector employees including engineers, today held nationwide protests seeking the withdrawal of Electricity (Amendment) Bill 2020, scrapping of SBD and opposed the privatization of power distribution companies (discoms) in states and union territories," AIPEF spokesperson V K Gupta said in a statement.

Gupta said protest meetings were held in all the states and union territories, including Uttar Pradesh, Punjab, Haryana, Jammu & Kashmir, Maharashtra, Telangana, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal, Gujarat,



Madhya Pradesh, Assam, among others.

He noted that the power engineers did not join Thursday's strike called by ten central trade unions and just staged a simple protest to highlight their issues.

Gupta claimed that the government is hell-bent on creating private monopolies in the power sector with the sole motive of helping corporate houses.

The SBD document pro-

poses that discoms in all the states and union territories undertake privatization.

The state government will provide subsidised bulk power for the successor entity for making it an independently financially viable entity. The assets of discoms will be leased on a token payment.

The federation opposes the proposed transfer of public assets to the private sector as this will result in a high tariff for the consumers, he said.

## '5G holds huge promise for India'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The advent of 5G along with futuristic technologies like AI and IoT hold tremendous promise for India, and a collaborative approach, identification of suitable market-specific use cases and attention to data security and privacy aspects would be key to unleashing its full potential, a senior TRAI official said on Thursday.

The explosion of disruptive technologies has transformed the way people interact, socialise and businesses operate, SK Gupta, Secretary, Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (TRAI) said while addressing a virtual event organised by PHDCCI.

"Future of 5G is important. Collaborative development has to be done. We all should come on one platform, encourage trials for use cases, particularly for India, and that will be the key to success," SK Gupta said at a webinar on 5G Technology.

## Sensex rallies 432 pts on F&O expiry

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark Sensex rallied 432 points on Thursday, tracking gains in banking and financial stocks as the November series derivatives expired amid largely positive cues from global markets.

After a volatile session, the 30-share BSE index ended 431.64 points or 0.98 per cent higher at 44,259.74.

Similarly, the broader NSE Nifty surged 128.60 points or 1 per cent to 12,987.

Tata Steel was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, rising around 5 per cent, followed by Bajaj Finance, Bajaj Auto, HDFC, HCL Tech and Titan. On the other hand, Maruti, ONGC, IndusInd Bank and Tech Mahindra were among the laggards.

Domestic equities witnessed sharp recovery led by sharp rebound in banking, financial services and insurance (BFSI) stocks and metals.

BFSIs continued to be a key driving force for the market, said Binod Modi, Head-



Strategy at Reliance Securities.

"Improved prospects of earnings recovery in the backdrop of improvement in collection efficiencies, better outlook for credit costs and possibility of reversal of provisions due to resolution of select large accounts along with better valuations attracted investors in BFSIs," he noted.

Heavy buying sentiment was also seen as November derivative contracts expired, traders said.

Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Shanghai, Tokyo, Hong Kong and Seoul ended with significant gains.

Stock exchanges in Europe, however, began of a tepid note.

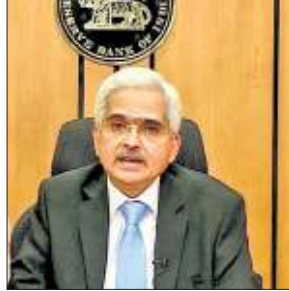
## Capital account convertibility will continue: Das

PNS ■ MUMBAI

India will continue to approach capital account convertibility as "a process rather an event," Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das said on Thursday.

The central bank chief said the capital account is convertible to a "great extent" at present and enumerated the specifics on both inward and outward flows which are allowed.

It can be noted that capital account convertibility is a very sensitive subject as it deals with liberalisation of capital transactions into and out of a country. India, which started opening up on this front with the



reforms of the early 1990s, is partially convertible right now with caps and other restrictions.

"Capital account convertibility will continue to be approached as a process rather than an event, taking cognisance of prevalent macroeco-

nom conditions," Das said, speaking at an event organised by the Foreign Exchange Dealers' Association of India (FEDAI).

He added that a long-term vision with short- and medium-term goals is the way ahead on this.

Das said foreign portfolio investment (FPI) in Indian debt markets has been expanded within calibrated macroprudential norms and added that limits under the medium-term framework for investment by FPIs have been gradually increased and procedures rationalised.

At present, inward foreign direct investment (FDI) is allowed in most sectors and

outbound FDI by Indian incorporated entities is allowed as a multiple of their net worth, he said, pointing out that there has been a liberalisation in the external commercial borrowing framework as well to include expanding eligible borrowers.

"Internationalisation of financial markets can lower transaction costs with efficiency gains," he said.

"Over the last three decades, India has undergone a transformation from being a virtually closed economy to one that is globally connected and open to a much larger volume of international transactions and capital flows than before," he added.

## India sees highest drop in work, social travels

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid the global wave of COVID-19 in the past nine months, India saw the highest drop in work, social and household travels among nine countries, including China and the US, reflecting the disruptive changes brought about by the pandemic in the patterns of mobility across the world, according to survey consultancy firm EY.

The changing mobility pattern has further raised pertinent questions about the nature and shape of cities and transport networks.

"Amid this health crisis, the consumer is heavily conflicted over mobility; not having to commute to work has given many a new sense of autonomy as well as a few hours of their time back every day," EY said in a statement.

As far as India is concerned,



the survey found that the country "witnessed the highest drop in work travel of nearly 69 per cent, followed almost parallelly by social travel that declined by 59 per cent and household travel that fell by 58 per cent".

"The drops are substantial, as India which is the world's

biggest democracy with a population of 138 crore, parallels the levels of work-related decline of 70 per cent in a small country of Sweden with a population of only a crore," it added.

EY said the decline can be attributed to the strict lock-

down measures in India to control the pandemic, resulting in steep declines across travel segments.

"The survey results also indicate an overall reduction in average weekly travel time by 40 per cent from 6 hours to 3.7 hours per person," it added.

EY India Partner and Automotive Sector Leader Vinay Raghunath said, "The change in mobility industry dynamics and consumer behavior will push sector stakeholders to think through new operating models that leverage digital platforms and help ride the next wave of mobility growth."

EY had conducted a survey, as part of the Mobility Consumer Index, this month with 3,300 consumers across nine countries, including India, China, the US and the UK, to explore the impact of COVID-19 on consumer attitudes and

behavior towards mobility. Five hundred respondents from India participated in the survey.

Of the nine countries surveyed, EY said India and Singapore have witnessed the maximum decline in average weekly commute time.

"India felt the steepest decline of more than 5 hours, from 81 per cent to just 27 per cent, while in Singapore, it fell from 61 per cent to 19 per cent," it said.

EY added that a long-term decline in commuting time could mean a lower peak demand and less strain on public transport systems and road networks. It also said, "This profuse reduction in use of public transport and road networks brings forth a challenging situation for the trains, buses and subway operators that find it difficult to generate enough revenue to meet their operational costs."

## 'Asia needs to leverage regional coop to boost Corona recovery'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Stronger regional cooperation strategies — including in health, trade, finance, and disaster risk — can help governments in Asia and the Pacific accelerate economic growth and a robust recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic, according to a new book released by the Asian Development Bank (ADB).

"Regional cooperation and integration has been an effective driver for strong economic growth and a sharp reduction in poverty," ADB vice-president for knowledge management and sustainable development Bambang Susantono said in a statement.

Further, "the COVID-19 pandemic is a wake-up call to

all of us that our usual assumptions and approaches to regional cooperation and integration have to change in ways that promote resilience and sustainability," it noted.

Susantono highlighted the need for Asia and the Pacific to reassess its regional cooperation and integration strategies and pathways.

This new book, Future of Regional Cooperation in Asia and the Pacific, provides insights and a foundation for deeper and more effective regional cooperation for a world reshaped by the pandemic.

recover and rebuild from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Moreover, the book examines approaches to strengthen regional trade and investment; improve intraregional infrastructure and connectivity; reduce financial risk; coordinate health systems and approaches; and enhance coordination on cross-border issues such as climate change and ocean health.

Enhanced regional cooperation can, for example, help expand trade and investment by opening avenues and opportunities for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to participate more actively in local and global supply chains through better transportation and connectivity, it said.





**T**here is a universal right to health, including for those who, for whatever reason, continue to engage in risky behaviour. Harm reduction refers to a range of

pragmatic policies, regulations and actions, which either reduce health risks by providing safer forms of products or substances or encourage less risky behaviours. Harm reduction does not focus primarily on the eradication of products or behaviours. The humane response, instead, is to reduce the risks, thereby enabling people to survive and live better — in this case through access to safer nicotine products aimed at encouraging people to switch away from cigarettes, is one of the most dangerous ways of consuming nicotine. The global smoking problem continues unabated but there are glimmers of hope too. “I’m not a smoker, I’m not a vaper but I’m an expert on harm reduction. I’m a public health social scientist who helped invent drugs harm reduction. When I first heard about e-cigarettes, I realised that here was

a golden opportunity for tobacco harm reduction. Over the last five years I have become an ardent advocate for e-cigarettes. I set up the Global Forum on Nicotine with Paddy Costall to help take forward discussion on e-cigarettes and other lower risk nicotine products,” shares Gerry Stimson, the director of Knowledge Action Change. Product innovation continues to offer a wide choice to adult consumers looking to avoid smoking. The origins of vaping lay outside the orbit of tobacco multinationals and the creative disruption caused was underlined by the success of JUUL which rapidly overtook its rivals. Some of its early marketing to the young adult end of the smoking market, clearly caused controversy but the product delivered a nicotine experience that was sought by many in the wider market of adult consumers. “There has been no help from Public Health experts, to the contrary, many of the so-called experts have been hostile to vaping and vapers. There are now new questions for science, for policy, and product standards. And when you can deliver nicotine without smoking tobacco, it begins to change our view of it. So, we wanted to create an event where people could discuss these issues,” he states further. Vaping devices, already discreet and easy to use, are becoming technologically more sophisticated, making the term e-cigarette increasingly redundant. More companies are involved in developing heated tobacco products while new non-tobacco nicotine products are also coming onto the market.

There is no such thing as absolute safety but the newer and safer nicotine product have been in wide circulation for more than a decade now with accumulated evidence that they are much less risky than combustibles. “After decades of tobacco research which failed to demonstrate adverse effects of nicotine on the developing brain, recent claims to this effect about vaping are not credible. Failing to demonstrate a gateway effect from vaping to smoking, anti-campaigners majored on nicotine addiction. However, given the lack of evidence about the physical and psychological harms of nicotine, concerns about addiction belong more to the realm of moral objections than public health. Finally and without any evidence, it has been claimed that vaping puts users more at risk from ‘COVID-19,’ adds the director who is mapping the global development of tobacco harm reduction. What’s the way forward from here? For the first time there is now a wide range of positive inducements for people to switch from smoking rather than just disincentives. Through the new Safer Nicotine Product that offers an unprecedented exit strategy that has been shown to be acceptable to smokers and at minimal cost to governments. Aspirations aside, the reality is that tobacco control could only ever help to reduce harm so the case for harm reduction has always been inherent in the mission statement for tobacco except now there is a real-world opportunity to add enormous heft to beneficial public health outcomes.

## HOPE FOR QUITTERS!

Smokers have time and again heard and are irked by statements asking them to quit smoking. If you are someone who is planning to quit smoking, here is some good news. Read on to know more



## TINA BHATIA on playing Stockholm syndrome victim



**IN WELCOME HOME, THE ACTRESS WILL BE SEEN IN A PIVOTAL ROLE ALONG WITH HER REAL LIFE HUSBAND BOLORAM**

place where they discover more enthralling and thrilling instances. Along with Tina, her real life husband Boloram Das is also playing an impactful role of a terrifying man who promises to perform horrible deeds and goes right ahead with it. “Initially, I was not a part of the film but because of an accident of the former actor who was finalised, I got on board with the team. Tina is not only my wife but my batchmate too, since NSD. So we are very familiar with each other’s work. An interesting part is that this is the first film that we are doing together and just shared only one frame together. We analyse each other’s work and at the same time help each other out. So it was a great opportunity together,” shares Tina’s real and reel life husband!

**A**ctress Tina Bhatia, best known for playing Choti Ammi in *Gully Boy* and acclaimed for her role of Dulhin in *Gulabo Sitabo* is currently seen in *Welcome Home* streaming on SonyLiv. She is playing a pivotal role along with her real life husband in the film. While sharing her experience on playing a Stockholm’s syndrome victim she says, “I’m essaying a character named Prerna. I chose this character because it holds a prominent role in the climax and is the turning point of the film. After saying yes to the film, I came to know about Stockholm syndrome. Then I took references from the director and

did a lot of research about it since it is found to be very rare in India. It was a very challenging role for me when I got to know more peculiarities about this syndrome. Taking references and getting into the skin of the character, altogether is a new experience that I learnt. As people are suffering from this syndrome and are not fully normal, I had to maintain that throughout, as my character was a victim but not mentally retarded.” Two professors ring the wrong doorbell where the character Prerna, who is pregnant, opens the door. Her child-like manner and bruises on her body make them suspicious, due to which, they go back to the

## Dating will feel different now



**2**020 has upended our lives in unexpected ways - redefining dating rules, navigating virtual and socially distanced dating etiquettes and different approaches to relationships and mental wellbeing in this new environment. Bumble’s recent research found that one in two claims they are ready to go on a date in real life. However, 64% of the Bumble community claim that their dating life has significantly changed post the pandemic and 70% of single Indians say they are not comfortable navigating dating in 2020. Bumble, the women-first social networking app, launched its new integrated campaign aimed at empowering and supporting its community to navigate the new rules of dating. Bumble’s new integrated campaign encourages mil-

lennials and Gen Z in India to make the first move, and aims to support the Bumble community to navigate the new rules of dating in these challenging times. The campaign spans across various touch points including five unique digital films conceptualised by *The Script Room*, which capture different stories of virtual and socially-distanced dating. Bumble kicked off the campaign with the first film, ‘For your eyes only’ last week which will be followed by others slated to

release throughout this month. Additionally, Bumble has partnered with a robust set of influencers across India to support its community to make the first move and forge meaningful connections as well as out of home branding in shopping malls in Mumbai, Delhi, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Kolkata and Pune. Speaking about the campaign, Samarпита Samaddar, Bumble India PR Director said, “Even though 2020 turned our lives upside

down, what didn’t change was the need to seek and build meaningful connections. We’ve learnt from our recent study that one in two people in India are ready to go on an in-person date now. Single Indians are navigating this new world of dating and redefining the rule book as India unlocks. With our new campaign, we want to support our Bumble community in navigating the new rules of dating and encourage them to make the first move because falling in love is still an exciting possibility in 2020! Even though your dating journey might be a little bumpy, Bumble’s got your back!”

Bumble recently also launched three new dating badges in India to help people communicate how and what kind of dates they would like to go on: virtual, socially-distanced or socially distanced with masks.

**BUMBLE’S NEW INTEGRATED CAMPAIGN ENCOURAGES MILLENNIALS AND GEN Z IN INDIA TO MAKE THE FIRST MOVE, AND AIMS TO SUPPORT THE COMMUNITY TO NAVIGATE THE NEW RULES OF DATING IN THESE CHALLENGING TIMES.**



## SHOPPER'S HAVEN

One of the most loved fashion and designer labels, Sutraa, presented its Luxury Edit from November 24-25 at Taj Banjara, Hyderabad. Shoppers had a gala time checking out various collections and many picked up appealing pieces.



● Kavita Mahathto



● Adiba



● Khushboo



● Ritu



● Mariyam



● Sonal

PARTY

Photos by SV Chary



● Eesha Rebba



● Habeeb



● Neha

### JACKPOT!

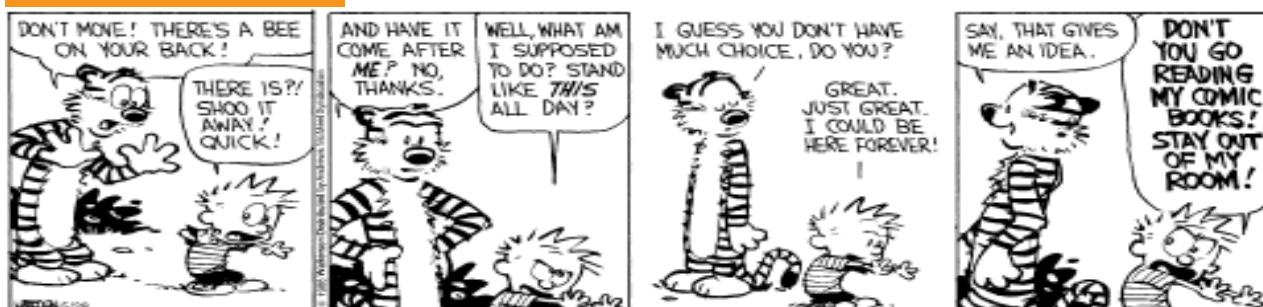
Tollywood actress Eesha Rebba of *Life is Beautiful* and *Awe* fame, after weeks of keeping customers waiting, finally picked up the name of the Bajaj Electronics' Lucky Bumper Draw winner. The winner walked home with a cash prize of Rs.30 lakh at Bajaj Electronics office at Punjagutta, Hyderabad. The actress presented the cheque and congratulated the winner.

## FUN

### ARCHIE



### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### GARFIELD



### NANCY



### GINGER MEGGS



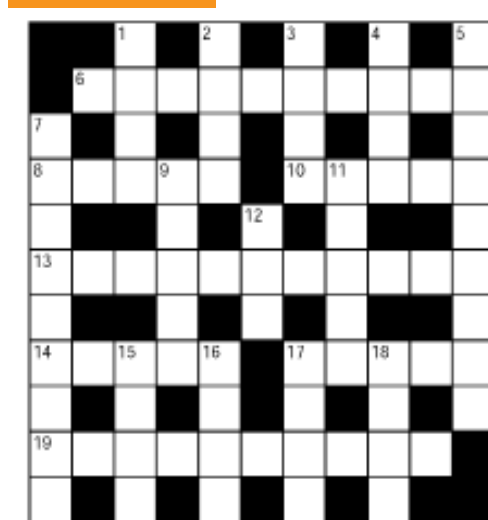
### REALITY CHECK



### SPEED BUMP



### CROSSWORD



#### ACROSS

- A traffic circle where roads cross
- A pointy thing that indicates direction
- Snapshot
- A greeting (4,7)
- Salty water from the eyes
- Rubber covers on wheels
- Getting better after illness

#### DOWN

- Bitter-tasting
- Cold winter crystals
- Moist
- A song for one singer
- The most powerful
- Female children

- A command
- Bees make this
- A fishing pole
- A curved support under a bridge
- Rescue
- Grow weary
- Wear this on a finger

SOLUTION

A	L	M	O	S	T	G	R	I	N
P	E	T	S	Y	E	L	L	O	
S	H	A	D	E					
C	E	N	T	U	R	Y			
J	R	O	E	T					
S	E	C	O	N	D	S			
G	A	M	M	I					
S	I	G	N	E	R				
A	R	O							
W	I	N	E						
Y	E	A	R						
E	A	R							

### SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution								
6	1	8	4	9	3	7	2	5
4	2	9	7	5	1	8	6	3
3	7	5	6	8	2	9	4	1
9	5	6	1	7	8	2	3	4
7	4	3	2	6	9	5	1	8
2	8	1	5	3	4	6	9	7
5	3	2	9	1	7	4	8	6
1	6	4	8	2	5	3	7	9
8	9	7	3	4	6	1	5	2

#### Rules

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



Sukumar's former assistant, *Raja Vaaru...* fame

## KASI-YAZURVED TEAM UP FOR ROMANTIC-COMEDY



To roll in Amalapuram next month, the film will also mark the Telugu debut of *Love Mocktail* girl Rachana Inder. She will be seen as a live-wire who doesn't see eye-to-eye with Yazurved's part, finds **NAGARAJ GOUD**

One-film-old Yazurved Gurram, who played the endearing Naidu in last year's delectable romance *Raja Vaaru Rani Gaaru*, is now going solo with a road movie peppered with romance and comedy. The yet-to-be-titled film was launched in a low-key manner in Hyderabad earlier this week. Kasi Viswanath, who came close to directing Naga Shaurya last year, is making his directorial debut with the project. He assisted Sukumar from *Arya 2* and *1: Nenokkadine* and shares proximity with Allu Arjun as well. Kannada box-office smash *Love Mocktail* girl Rachana Inder is making her Telugu debut with the project, which also sees Satya and Rajkumar Kasireddy in supporting roles. Varun, a native of Kakinada, is pooling in resources.

Talking to us, Yazurved shares that after *Raja Vaaru Rani Gaaru*, he was

approached to spearhead four-five films but as they were messy in nature he had to turn them down politely. "In fact, I never dreamt of becoming a hero but out of the blue, Kasi garu pitched me the road movie and I felt the need to take it up. The story has come out really well. Post this project, I want to strike a balance between doing main leads and supporting roles," he says, admitting that it feels nice to front a project but at the same time, he feels a great sense of responsibility. He goes on to mention that Kasi liked his body language, slang and dialogue delivery from *Raja Vaaru Rani Gaaru* and the lead character in the road movie demanded a similar characterisation. "And so, I was offered the film. He was unyielding on my casting and lost three producers in

the process. I will be speaking in Godavari slang for the project and the prep has already begun. We will roll in Amalapuram on December 7 with a week's schedule, followed by outings in and around Vizag. We will also be filming in Bengaluru for a couple of days. The idea is to wrap up the film in 26 days flat," the actor notes. As far as his character goes, he states that he will be seen as a simple villager, while Rachana is playing a live-wire who doesn't

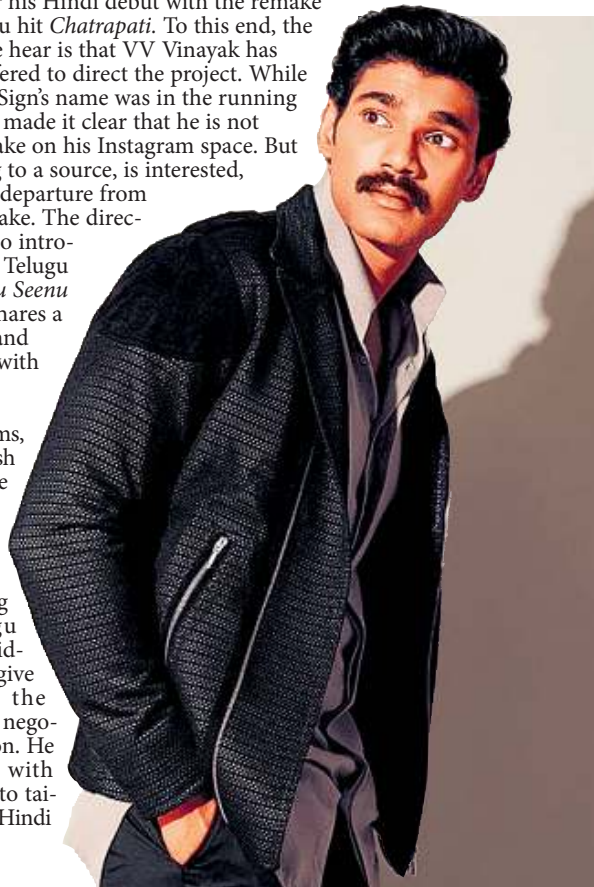
meet eye-to-eye with him. Vishwanath Reddy, who shot Manu, has been signed on the cameraman, while Partha Saradhi, who assisted Mani Sharma in the past, will deliver the musical accompaniment.



## Vinayak likely to introduce Bellamkonda in Hindi

By now, its established Bellamkonda Sai Sreenivas is set for his Hindi debut with the remake of Telugu hit *Chatrapati*. To this end, the latest we hear is that VV Vinayak has been offered to direct the project. While Sujeeth Sign's name was in the running sometime back, he made it clear that he is not taking up any remake on his Instagram space. But Vinayak, according to a source, is interested, especially after his departure from *Lucifer* Telugu remake. The director was the one who introduced Sreenivas in Telugu cinema with *Alludu Seenu* six years ago and shares a great professional and personal equation with the actor's father Suresh.

The source informs, "In fact, it was Suresh who proposed the name of Vinayak to Hindi producers soon after it was clear that the director was not helming *Lucifer* Telugu remake. Vinayak didn't think twice to give his consent for the remake but his fee negotiations are going on. He will be working with Vijayendra Prasad to tailor the script to suit Hindi audiences."



## Clap inching towards completion

The filming of Aadhi Pinisetty's Telugu-Tamil sports drama *Clap* with debutant director Prithvi Adithya has resumed in Chennai earlier this week-eight months after the shoot was stopped due to the pandemic. Right now, it is in the last leg of shooting and the latest is that Prakash Raj has

joined the sets on Wednesday for the first time. Besides the national award winner, Aadhi and other principal cast are partaking in the shoot, the makers said.

Speaking about the film earlier, Aadhi, who will be seen as a 400-metres athlete, had said, "Usually after listening to a story, I speak about my dates and remuneration to

the film's makers but with *Clap*, I simply said I'd do it. That's how much the story got my attention. It's a heart-touching script and though many sports films have been made in the past, this one's going to be different."

A joint venture between IB Karthikeyan and M Raja Shekar Reddy, *Clap* sees Aakanksha

Singh and Krishna Kurup as the leading ladies, while supporting cast is stacked up with the likes of Nassar, Krishna Kurup, Ramdoss and Brahmaji. It is a maestro Ilaiyaraaja musical.

Meanwhile, Prakash Raj is the latest addition to Vishal and Arya-starrer film *Enemy*, directed by Anand Shankar.

## Sandy signs a romantic entertainer

After playing real-life personalities like *Vangaveeti Ranga* and *George Reddy*, the usually choosy Sandeep Madhav aka Sandy will be essaying a fictional character in debutant director JV Madhu Kiran's film. Madhu worked as a writer with KS Ravindra aka Bobby in the past. The untitled film is a romantic entertainer with commercial bells and whistles. Noted cinematographer Arunkumar Surapaneni is debuting as a producer with the project, to be made under Halcyon Movies banner. While more details are awaited, according to a release, a popular actor will be seen in a crucial role in the film.



## In the footsteps of his brother

Anand Deverakonda, who is basking in the glory of *Middle Class Melodies*, has decided to follow in the footsteps of his brother Vijay on the business front as well. Having received his first paycheck for his sophomore project, Anand decided to spend it on investment. Along with his best buddies, he opened a café, Good Vibes Only, at Khajaguda, Hyderabad. "My first paycheck goes into bringing you great food off screen and supporting my gang - we grew up dreaming together of good things and great times," he wrote on Twitter.

Vijay too is pumped up about *Middle Class Melodies* winning the appreciation of the audience and his brother opening up a café. On his part, he decided to offer a deal to all those who visit the café this weekend. "I am in good mood — #MiddleClassMelodies. My friends opening a café and you know I celebrate everything with you. So everybody is welcome, have a good time, sagam bill naadhi, big hugs and kisses meeku (sic)," he posted on Twitter addressing his followers. Anand will be next seen in *Pushpaka Vimanam* (working title), a comedy thriller, with debutant Damodar Attada.







# Will overconfidence blight TRS chances?

- Party appoints in-charges and observers for each division; makes them responsible for victory
- Ministers, MLAs, MLCs, chairmen of corporations deployed for campaigning
- Responsibilities given to senior leaders in highly competitive divisions

RAJESH JAIN NIDARKAR  
■ HYDERABAD

TRS candidates for GHMC polls are banking on the welfare schemes being implemented by the state government and firmly believe that people would vote for them. The overconfidence of the candidates is clearly visible in many divisions. However, this approach is likely to prove counterproductive for them given the internal consequences.

TRS president and Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, for whom winning GHMC is a prestige issue, has deployed ministers, MLAs, MLCs and chairmen of corporations for campaigning, in addition to party cadre.

For every division, one leader has been appointed as in-charge, while another leader continues to be an observer. Leaders, who have been appointed as in-charges, have been working tirelessly for party's victory for the past few days.

Candidates and leaders, who are desperate for victory, are stooping low to turn voters to their side. They could be seen doing a haircut in barber shops and working as labourers along with construction workers in various divisions. However, political analysts predict that such conditions could hamper the chances of TRS candidates in some divisions.

TRS is spending heavily on campaigning which both the

BJP and Congress have been watching carefully. With just two more days to go for electioneering, the ruling and opposition parties have stepped up attack on each other. The government is acting more cautiously as the BJP is roping in none other than the Prime Minister Narendra Modi, along with several other national leaders for campaigning.

Against this backdrop, huge arrangements are being made for the public meeting of TRS supreme KCR. Both the leaders of TRS and BJP are planning to hold public meetings in the city on November 28. Ministers KT Rama Rao, Talasani Srinivas Yadav, party leaders Palla Rajeshwar Reddy and Karne Prabhakar are looking after the arrangements for the KCR's public meeting. Union Minister Kishan Reddy, party leaders Indrasena Reddy, DK Aruna, Dr K Laxman and state president Bandi Sanjay are monitoring the arrangements for Modi's public meeting.

BJP for 'Change Hyderabad'

The BJP is trying to gain foothold in the civic polls with a focus on the next Assembly elections. The party is roping in national leaders for campaigning to improve its base in the state.

Union Minister Prakash Javadekar, along with another Union Minister Kishan Reddy, has released a charge sheet against TRS government's six-year rule. State



president Bandi Sanjay, Nizamabad MP Dharmapuri Arvind kumar, national vice president DK Aruna, Dubbaka MLA Raghunandan Rao and other leaders are visiting every division in the city.

Bangalore South MP and BJYM national president Tejaswi Surya gave the slogan 'Change Hyderabad'. MP and cricketer Gautam Gambhir and prominent actress

Khushboo have added glamour to the election campaign.

Settlers may decide outcome in 40 divisions

It is estimated that around 20 lakh voters, belonging to other states, are residing in Hyderabad. These voters, who came to the city in search of employment and livelihood, could influence the poll result in about 40 divisions.

Since these voters could

influence the result, all the major parties are trying to woo them. Minister KT Rama Rao is regularly speaking to the leaders of various unions to appease them. Similarly, BJP is also trying to appease the settlers from the northern states by bringing national leaders for campaigning.

Rebel trouble haunts both parties

The official candidates of

both the TRS and the BJP are facing stiff opposition from rebel candidates in many divisions. The parties have pacified the rebels in some of the divisions. In other divisions, rebels have entered fray as independent candidates as the attempts of party leaders to pacify them proved futile. TRS and BJP candidates are worried about rebels as they could split the votes in several divisions.

## Karimnagar winds blow over elections

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Leaders from the erstwhile Karimnagar district are playing a decisive role in the GHMC elections.

Interestingly, the reins of major political parties - TRS, BJP, TTDP and CPI - in the state, are held by the leaders from Karimnagar.

Key leaders of all parties including TRS working president K T Rama Rao, BJP state president Bandi Sanjay, TPCC working president Ponnamm Prabhakar and CPI state secretary Chada Venkat Reddy are related to Karimnagar.

These elections have become a matter of pride for KTR who is spearheading the TRS in campaigning. He is the star campaigner for the party and represents Siricilla Assembly constituency in the erstwhile Karimnagar district. It may be recalled that he played a

key role in winning 99 divisions in the previous GHMC polls. He is keen on continuing the trend by winning majority of the divisions in the coming elections too.

Little was known about Bandi Sanjay before he won the Karimnagar Lok Sabha seat. Later, he took over the reins of the BJP in the state. Though the BJP could not make a significant impact under his leadership in Karimnagar civic polls, he shot to fame after the party won Dubbak byelection recently. All of a sudden, Sanjay became aggressive during campaigning and is striving hard to win majority of the seats in GHMC.

TPCC working president Ponnamm Prabhakar also belongs to Karimnagar district. Prabhakar, along with former minister Jeevan Reddy, is working for party victory.



## Musi beautification takes centre-stage

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Drinking water problem and Musi beautification works have become key issues in the poll campaign. Parties are finding fault with each other for the failure in addressing drinking water problems in the city. Citing TRS government's failure in controlling pollution, encroaching water bodies and restoration of tanks as the main reasons for the recent floods, the BJP and the Congress parties held TRS leaders responsible for encroaching water bodies and canals. They blamed the ruling TRS for its failure to

clean-up the Musi river. On the other hand, the TRS claims to have taken all the necessary measures to address the drinking water problem which the Hyderabad people have been facing for the past sixty years. The opposition parties contend that the ruling party could only purify only 800 mld water while the industries operating along the 250-km stretch of Musi river release over 1,400 MLD froth into it through various drains. Around 490 industries are operating along the Musi river from Osmansagar to Wadapally.

On the other hand, CM K

Chandrasekhar Rao has vowed that they would clean-up the Musi river by fencing the river and setting up 59 sewerage treatment plants (STPs) along the river. He said that they would link Musi with Godavari river. Similarly, KT Rama Rao had also promised that they would frame tough rules in the GHMC Act to avoid encroachments.

Congress working president Revanth Reddy has stepped up attack on the Chief Minister for failing to supply drinking water to every household in the state through Mission Bhagiratha.

## Food business picks up pace, thanks to GHMC polls

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The GHMC election has not just escalated the political atmosphere in the Greater Hyderabad region, but also has given a boost to the hotels and restaurants business in the city. With the campaigning for the election going on in full swing, leaders of various political parties, along with their supporters have come to the city from districts to take part in the campaign for their respective candidates. The parties have arranged lodging facility in the hotels across the city, which in turn is driving hotel's occupancy rate manifold. The eateries are also making brisk business as activists are having their

lunch/dinners at the restaurants.

According to hotel industry sources, currently, the number of people coming to hotels and restaurants is steadily increasing as the number of Corona cases in Hyderabad is declining. "As of August, 79 per cent of restaurants in the city were closed. Although 21 per cent of the restaurants opened later, the customers preferred home deliveries. Of these, 17 per cent ran at low efficiency. The situation improved in October and November. Around 52 per cent of the closed restaurants have reopened," a recent survey on city restaurants and hotels mentioned. With the recent



GHMC election, the number of customers visiting the city hotels has doubled.

At present, 80 per cent of

the hotels in the city are open and the number of customers coming to dine has increased by 75 per cent. E-commerce

platforms, on the other hand, say that the number of bulk food orders placed by political parties for their workers is on the rise, while home deliveries are also on the rise.

It may be recalled that, the hotel business was hit hard by the lockdown. Many hoteliers had to close shop because they were unable to pay their rents in absence of customers. Though the Central government allowed the hotels to reopen in the second week of June, the customers, afraid of Coronavirus, did not visit the restaurants and hotels, in spite of the hotels taking Covid precautions such as maintain social distance and sanitizing the premises.

However, that's not the scenario now. At least 5,000 activists from across all political parties are now staying in the city hotels, driving up their rate of occupancy. A hotel owner in Gachibowli said that with the GHMC elections, the number of customers has increased and the seating capacity has also increased from 50 to 75 per cent. Another restaurant owner in Kukatpally said there were two to three bulk orders on weekdays. He said that in August and September, the menu of various varieties of dishes was reduced as there was sluggish demand, but now all the varieties were being served as the demand was increasing.



In full swing

TPCC working president and Malkajgiri MP Revanth Reddy during an election rally in Hyderabad on Thursday