



sunday pioneer

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FADNAVIS, BJP'S BIHAR POLL IN-CHARGE, TESTS COVID POSITIVE

BJP leader Devendra Fadnavis, who is in charge of the party's Bihar Assembly election campaign, has tested positive for coronavirus. In a tweet this afternoon, the ex-Maharashtra chief minister wrote: "God wants me to stop for a while and take a break!" Mr Fadnavis had been overseeing the poll campaign along with Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi, who also tested positive for Covid on Thursday. Mr Fadnavis today urged all those who have recently come in contact with him to get tested for coronavirus, which has affected over 78 lakh people in India. He had been holding at least three poll-related meetings everyday.



DEADLINE FOR FILING INCOME TAX RETURN EXTENDED TILL DEC 31

The Income Tax Department on Saturday extended the deadline for individual assessee to file their returns for financial year 2019-20 (assessment year 2020-21) by a month, in a relief to taxpayers on account of COVID-19. Taxpayers now have until December 31 to file their return of income earned between April 1, 2019 to March 31, 2020, instead of November 30. For individuals required to get their accounts audited, a new deadline of January 31 is applicable, instead of December 31. The last date for assessee required to furnish audit reports on international or specified domestic transactions has also been extended to January 31, from November 30.

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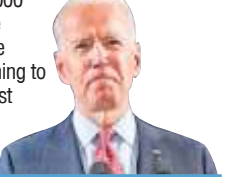
BJP TERMS MEHBOOBA MUFTI COMMENTS AS 'SEDITIONOUS'

Hours after Peoples' Democratic Party chief Mehbooba Mufti spoke at her first press conference since being released from 14 months of detention, the BJP on Friday accused her of making "seditious remarks". "We will raise the national flag only once our state flag is back. The national flag is here only because of this (the Jammu and Kashmir) flag and constitution. We are linked to the rest of the country because of this flag," Ms Mufti, former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister, said on Friday, prompting criticism from the BJP and the Congress. Hitting out at the PDP president over the comments, J&K BJP president Ravinder Raina told reporters: "I request Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha to take note of (the) seditious remarks of Mehbooba Mufti, book her for the seditious act and put her behind bars".



JOE BIDEN PROMISES FREE COVID VACCINE IF ELECTED

Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden has pledged that if elected as President in the November 3 election, he will ensure free Covid-19 vaccination for all Americans, laying out his pandemic response plan just days before the US presidential polls. In a major policy speech on the coronavirus in his home state of Delaware, Biden on Friday played US President Donald Trump for his policies to combat the coronavirus pandemic that has killed over 220,000 people and has had a devastating impact on the country's economy. "President Trump said we're rounding the corner, it's going away, we're learning to live with it. They are quotes. But as I told him last night, we're not learning to live with it. We're learning to die with it."



Centre's bid to set Polavaram cost at 20K-cr shocks Jagan

■ CM tells officials to inform Finance Ministry that just 2 components of project cost much more

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Expressing wonder at the Ministry of Finance approving the Revised Cost Estimate for the irrigation component of the Polavaram Project at Rs 20,398.61 crore, Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy pointed out that the expenditure incurred on land acquisition and resettlement and rehabilitation itself was around Rs 29,000 crore, as approved by the Polavaram Project Authority, the Central Water Commission and the Ministry of Jal Shakti.

"It's surprising that the



Finance Ministry can even imagine that a project of such a magnitude can be capped at Rs 20,398.61 crore. It is impossible to complete the project with that cost," the Chief

Minister said, at a review meeting on the project held on Saturday.

The Chief Minister reviewed the latest developments on the reimbursement

of balance expenditure incurred by State Government to the tune of Rs 4,013.65 crore, out of which Rs 2,234.288 crore was proposed for Extra Budget Release by the Finance Ministry to the Ministry of Jal Shakti in which it has been stated by the Finance Ministry that the cost of irrigation component in Revised Cost Estimate shall be construed as approved by Polavaram Project Authority at Rs 2,0398.61 crore as on April 1, 2014 which the Finance Ministry asked PPA to confirm.

2

AP Govt takes back 20 acres encroached land from GITAM

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In an early-morning crackdown on Saturday, police and revenue officials bulldozed the boundary walls of GITAM (Gandhi Institute of Technology and Management, a deemed to be university) and GITAM Institute of Medical Sciences and Research here, taking back 20 acres of encroached land from the institution.

The GITAM Group of Educational Institutions, founded by former TDP MP late MVVS Murthy, is being run by his grandson, M Sri Bharat.

The sea-facing university which earned a reputation over the years for ensuring a high percentage of placement has campuses at Hyderabad



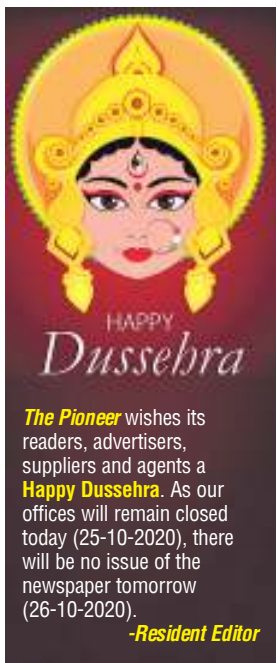
and Bengaluru.

GITAM deemed to be the university is said to be the largest private university in Andhra Pradesh has been facing massive land grabbing and encroachment charges for past few decades.

GITAM has been offering over 100 programmes at

undergraduate, postgraduate and Doctoral levels in Technology, Pharmacy, Science, Management, International Business, Architecture and Law but has been accused of violating the laws of the land as per State government officials.

2



Central team to visit AP, assess rain damage

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A seven-member central team will visit Andhra Pradesh for an on-the-spot assessment of the damage caused by the recent heavy rains and floods in the state.

Based on the study, the inter-ministerial team, headed by Rakesh Kumar Singh, Joint Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs, will also recommend whether the disaster in the state could be considered to be of a severe nature.

2

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:

Ashwin (Adhik) & Shukla Paksha
Panchangam

Tithi: Navami: 07:41 am

Nakshatram: Dhanishtha: 04:23 am
(Next Day)

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

Rahukalam: 04:18 pm - 05:44 pm

Yamagandam: 11:59 am - 01:26 pm

Varjyam: 06:55 am - 08:38 am

Gulika: 02:52 pm - 04:18 pm

Good Time: (to start any important work)

Amritakalam: 05:13 pm - 06:56 pm

Ahijit Muhurtham: 11:37 am - 12:22 pm

VUJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Partly cloudy

Temp: 33/24

Humidity: 72%

Sunrise: 06:12am

Sunset: 05:47pm

Current Weather Conditions

Updated October 24, 2020 5:00 PM

OBTUSE ANGLE



DASARA BONANZA

Govt releases pending DA, DR for employees

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government on Saturday released the Dearness Allowance (DA) and Dearness Relief (DR) for its employees and pensioners.

An official statement said that Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy, the duly considering the representations received from employees and employee associations, has agreed to release the pending Dearness Allowances (DAs) and Dearness Reliefs (DRs) to the State Government employees/pensioners and directed

the Finance Department to issue orders accordingly.

The decision will benefit 4,49,000 government employees and 3,57,000 pensioners.

The first pending DA/DR, due from July 2018, will be paid along with January 2021 salaries/pensions payable on February 1, 2021.

Accordingly, the DA/DR is revised from July 1, 2018.

The additional expenditure to be incurred by the Government for the revision is around Rs 86.41 crore per month and Rs 1,037 crore per annum.

2

SEC office, AP Govt face off, again

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Even before the controversy triggered by Minister Kodali Nani's remarks against SEC Nimmagadda Ramesh Kumar could die down, a fresh row has erupted between the office of the SEC and the State government.

Kodali Nani had observed that Ramesh Kumar would be able to continue in the post of the SEC only for some months and not too long. According to him, the SEC is supposed to consult the government on holding local body elections.

In this backdrop, a message was sent to the SEC's office by Chief Secretary Nilam Shawney, asking Ramesh Kumar to attend a meeting convened by the Principal Secretary in the CMO on Monday.

2

AP readies buses on TS border

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The APSRTC has arranged special services at all check posts on the State's border with Telangana for the convenience of people of Andhra origin willing to visit their native places for the Dasara festival, disclosed I&PR Minister Perni Venkataramaiah on Saturday. Speaking to the media here, he said people can reach the border check posts and take a bus to their native place.

Justifying the heavy penal-



ties being levied by the AP government on traffic violators, he said it was unfortunate that the TDP leaders and a sec-

tion of the media were crying hoarse against the move.

2

Anti-BJP, not anti-national, asserts Farooq Abdullah

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

National Conference (NC) president Farooq Abdullah on Saturday said the Peoples' Alliance for Gupkar Declaration (PAGD), which is fighting for restoration of special status to Jammu and Kashmir, is an anti-BJP platform but not an anti-national

amalgam.

"I want to tell you that this false propaganda by the BJP that the PAGD is anti-national. I want to tell them that this is not true. There is no doubt that it is anti-BJP but it is not anti-national," he told reporters here.

2

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FROM GRABBING LANDS TO ENCROACHING LAKES



The Telangana Rashtra Samiti's ultimate promise of creating 'Bangaru Telangana' was almost synonymous with transforming Hyderabad into a virtual paradise. This made sense because among the key planks on which the separate Statehood struggle was based, creation of jobs and wealth could be realised mainly in Hyderabad. Distressing images of suffering emerging from the flood-ravaged areas hardly give an impression that prosperity is round the corner. Hyderabad as a world-class city remains a Utopian concept because long-term urban planning is unap-

preciated or, at least, out of step with government policies. The neglect of basic infrastructure was attributed to Andhra rulers, either of Congress or of Telugu Desam stock. They were accused of feathering their own nests at the cost of Hyderabad's future. Besides, non-natives were allotted land at throwaway prices for building film industry infrastructure and private hospitals or they had purchased prime land for profiteering and, in at least one instance, an actor had even encroached on a lake. The pace of development witnessed since the mid-90s was unmatched by cities of equivalent size or population like Ahmedabad, Lucknow and Bhubaneswar. Bengaluru was the only comparable city that surpassed Hyderabad. Until then, the city rested on

The pace of development witnessed since the mid-90s was unmatched by cities of equivalent size or population like Ahmedabad, Lucknow and Bhubaneswar. Bengaluru was the only comparable city that surpassed Hyderabad. Until then, the city rested on its past glory

its past glory.

Post-Independence, the Congress remained unchallenged till N. T. Rama Rao emerged on the political firmament in 1982. Its leaders milked its mineral resources, its land and bagged mega-contracts. They paid scarce attention to the needs of the city's fast-growing population that was putting pressure on land, water, drainage, and roads leading to haphazard growth. An individual or institution

was scared of buying land in Hyderabad out of apprehensions about the genuineness of the registration papers or threat of encroachment. A Telugu film, "Ammo Okato Tareeku" has a comedy scene showing a conman selling away the Charminar to a gullible villager. In real life, Hyderabad has a historical baggage of land records that were never scrutinised or filtered until 1936. When TS Chief Minister K



S NAGESH KUMAR
Former Resident Editor,
The Hindu

Chandrasekhar Rao decided to give input subsidy of Rs. 4,000 to each farmer, he found to his dismay that the data of the Agriculture Department did not match with the revenue records. Besides, there were multiple categories of land.

Nizam's lands were known as Sarf-e-khas, while makhta and banjars were lands given away for services rendered to him. These lands were grabbed with the connivance of the high and mighty in the name of building huts for the poor. Ibrahim Khan, who came to be known as the 'king of land-grabbers', named then Chief Minister T. Anjaiah and former Ministers G. Venkataswamy and M. M. Hashim as his partners in 1982. This was the kind of nexus that the TRS was expected to break and usher in Bangaru Hyderabad. But, what really happened has turned out to be quite different. In these many years, land grabbing has been overshadowed by encroachment on lakes. A concerted effort has not been made to punish

encroachers, though their identity is well-known to the local communities. They enjoy political patronage of the parties in power, apart from wielding money and muscle power. Now is the time to hold the government accountable for trying to dilute GO 111, an executive order issued way back in March 1996 to protect the Osmansagar and Himayatsagar lakes. The order prohibits polluting industries, hotels, residential colonies and other establishments up to 10 kms of their full tank level. Farmers, realtors and big builders, some of whom are close to top TRS leaders, would like it scrapped as they have already encroached on the catchment areas. After six and a half years in power, the TRS cannot indulge in the luxury of laying the

blame for the city floods at its predecessors' doorsteps. Protecting lakes and maintenance of sluice gates is routine activity. The sluice gates of Fox Sagar lake in Secunderabad had not been opened for two decades and were so jammed that even engineers were unable to open them. It was left to a nearby automobile mechanic to open the gates, indicating official lethargy. The Telangana High Court observed that only 10 per cent of around 3,000 lakes in and around Hyderabad had been notified. The Court's views must be taken seriously and the audit of all lakes speedily completed. Special courts must be established for punishing those who had encroached on water bodies to prevent recurrence of tragedies of the kind we witnessed last fortnight.



SEC office, AP Govt face off, again

Continued from Page 1

Responding to the message, the SEC's assistant secretary contended that the SEC holds the rank of a High Court judge and hence issuing orders to him and sending messages was illegal. The assistant secretary said that the issue would be taken to the notice of the judicial officers.

Meanwhile, Ramesh Kumar asked his secretary not to attend any meetings without his knowledge. He conveyed to his secretary that he will be available in Vijayawada from October 26. The SEC is supposed to file an affidavit in the High Court before November 4 on the local body elections. To gather opinion of all political parties, he has convened an all-party meeting on October 28.

Political outfits, other than the ruling YSRCP, are likely to question the SEC on the irregularities that allegedly took place in the recent local body elections.

The Opposition parties have been insisting that the SEC cancel the notification issued earlier for the local body elections and issue a fresh one.

The state government promulgated another ordinance as the one promulgated with regard to sarpanch elections in February has lapsed. The Government moved a Bill in the last Assembly session giving the ordinance the shape of law.

The Assembly approved the Bill, but it failed to get the approval in the Upper House.

In this backdrop, the state government promulgated the ordinance again.

However, constitutional experts, citing a Supreme Court order, say that an ordinance should be promulgated only once and not twice.

Covid kills Dasara business

SUMIT ONKA
■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Covid-19 pandemic has largely affected Dasara business this year with consumers in Vizag skipping their shopping plans.

So much so, the prime markets in the city which used to be jam-packed in much healthier times are witnessing sparse crowds this season.

"We see that people are trying to avoid crowded places fearing the virus. Even, we are scared as many businessmen have succumbed to the virus," said M Krishna, a garment trader at Jagdamba junction.

With Dasara festival around the corner (October 25), the prices of sheep, goat, and country-chicken have gone through the roof. This is because sheep, goat and roosters are in high demand as they are sacrificed during the Ayudha puja on Dasara day.

The price of sheep and goat, each weighing between 10 to 12 kg, has already gone up to Rs 16,000 per head in the run-up to Dasara. Compare this to



the around Rs 10,000 during the normal days.

As the festival nears, the prices of these animals are expected to go up to Rs 18,000 to Rs 20,000 per heard, depending on the demand. Similarly, roosters are being sold at Rs 1,800 to Rs 2,000 and above.

Animal sacrifice is a routine affair during the Dasara festival. A majority of vehicle owners and people who run machinery units in North Andhra Pradesh, comprising Vizag, Vizianagaram and Srikulam districts ritualistically perform animal (rooster

or sheep) sacrifice and offer them to Goddess Durga on Dasara day as part of Ayudha puja hence the demand for the sheep or goat and rooster has increased said Rafi, a meat trader in Vizag city.

"Last year, we purchased a sheep for Rs 10,000 but this year we had shell out Rs 14,000 for a sheep and Rs 16,000 for one goat. The prices of the goat and sheep further shot up on Saturday and this has been a dampener," said N Deepak Kumar, owner of a couple of lorries in Vizag city.

With the demand for the goat and sheep increased in

Vizag region ahead of Dasara festival, the traders have been visiting neighbouring Odisha to purchase the animal to meet the demand in the region.

The meat businessmen have increased the prices of red-meat and country chicken much before the Dasara festival. The price of dressed country chicken (big in size) touched Rs 750 a kg on Wednesday from Rs 600 a kg in all the major markets in the city following the demand for the live country chicken has soared due to Dasara Celebrations. Similarly, the price of red-meat (sheep or goat) touched Rs 800 on Wednesday and it may further soar.

Dasara is a festival for foodies (non-vegetarian lovers) in Andhra region. But, the prices of the meat has gone up even before the Dasara and the meat businessmen are cutting their pockets citing that the demand and supply gap has doubled during the Dasara says K Prabhakar, a resident of MVP Colony in Vizag city.

Special buses for ...

Continued from Page 1

"The Centre had amended 31 Sections of the Motor Vehicles Act which gives some discretionary powers to the States, including penalties. Will the government ever penalise those following the rules?" he asked. Venkataramaiah added that it was unfortunate that a section of the media was trying to make an issue out of it and write against the government.

The Minister recalled how some people were making posts on Facebook to first fill the potholes on the roads and then think of penalising the traffic violators. "What do potholes on roads got to do with traffic violations?" he asked.

Centre bid to set Polavaram cost at 20K-cr shocks Jagan

Continued from Page 1

At the review meeting, the State Finance Minister, Minister for Water Resources Department and officials of these departments briefed Jagan about their discussions with the Union Finance Minister on the issue.

They informed the Chief Minister that the Union Finance Minister was requested to release the funds for reimbursing the expenditure incurred by the State Government at the earliest for speedy completion of the project.

The team from AP also told the Finance Minister that the entire cost of the project was estimated to be Rs 55,448.87 crore at the 2017-18 price

level and this was accepted by the CWC. The Revised Cost Committee (RCC) constituted by the Union government approved the cost of the project at Rs 47,725.74 crore which was accepted by the Ministry of Jal Shakti which subsequently recommended to the Ministry of Finance for completion.

The Chief Minister stressed that as the Polavaram project has been declared a National project, it is the responsibility of the Centre to complete the project as per the AP Reorganisation Act, 2014 that was also approved by the Union Cabinet.

Jagan reminded that the State Government is only the executing authority and the project is monitored by PPA

under Government of India.

It was also noted that land acquisition, rehabilitation and resettlement, and works are to be considered for payment at the rates, rules and provisions existing on the date of execution and also as recommended by PPA, CWC and MOJS.

The Chief Minister directed the officials to take up the issue immediately with the Centre in the interest of people of AP.

He said that it was surprising that the previous government had remained silent even after the Union Cabinet had approved the internal correspondence of September, 2016 which was being referred now for capping the expenditure of Polavaram project.

AP takes back 20 acres...

Continued from Page 1

A GITAM official said no notice was served to them before demolishing the walls.

An official clarification is yet to be issued. Before carrying out the meticulously planned 'Operation Demolition' the entire stretch of beach road leading to the educational Institutions was barricaded.

The hospital attached to the medical college houses several Covid patients.

Revenue Divisional Officer P Kishore and his team conducted an inquiry and confirmed that GITAM University encroached 40.51 acres of land at Rushikonda and Yendada of Vizag city.

The GITAM authorities constructed compound walls and some structures in these encroached are worth crores of rupees. Based on the RDO report, a Special Investigation Team (SIT) of the CID is also

probing into the matter.

The Revenue Department officials said that the previous government (TDP government) had biased transactions with GITAM management, but did not take the lands back since the university is very influential and having connections with the TDP leaders and top officials.

The RDO said that in 1981, GITAM management applied to the AP government for allotment of 71.15 acres of land at Rushikonda and Yendada in Vizag city for setting up of educational institutions.

Since the land was assigned for landless poor and in some legal dispute, the then government allotted the land to GITAM subject to certain conditions that it should purchase the lands as per the price prescribed by the government after settlement in the court.

But, GITAM violated the rules and encroached over

40.51 acres of land, the officials said.

"GITAM has encroached upon 40 acres of government land. So far we have retrieved 20 acres of that land," a revenue department official confirmed.

According to the official, there was resistance from the management of the college, but the revenue department officials convinced the GITAM officials that the land had been in encroachment for a long time.

"We convinced and took back our (government) land," he pointed out.

He said the revenue department first noticed that the land was in illegal occupation in 2014, though it may have been encroached earlier.

"Five months back we came here, surveyed and showed the management where they had encroached the land. We have also done clear cut marking. They know what is hap-

pening and we informed them earlier," observed the revenue official.

GITAM was set up in 1980 by MVVS Murthi, who perished in a road accident in 2018 in Alaska.

A senior TDP leader, Murthi was elected to the Lok Sabha twice (1991 and 1999).

GITAM group of institutions have expanded widely with large campuses in Visakhapatnam, Hyderabad and Bengaluru, starting from schools to post graduate courses.

Currently, GITAM is being run by Murthi's grandson M. Sri Bharat. Bharat is married to the youngest daughter of Hindupur TDP MLA and N Chandrababu Naidu's brother-in-law Nandamuri Balakrishna.

Bharat unsuccessfully contested the Visakhapatnam Lok Sabha seat in the 2019 General Elections.

7-member Central team to visit AP, assess rain damage

Continued from Page 1

An official memo issued by the Disaster Management Division of the Ministry on Saturday asked the team to visit the state immediately and assess the damage and also the relief operations undertaken.

The team will comprise officials from the Agriculture, Finance, Jal Shakti, Power, Road Transport and Highways and Rural Development ministries.

Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy last week wrote to Union Home Minister Amit Shah, requesting that the Centre immediately grant Rs 2,250 crore to the state that was battered by heavy rains and floods this month.

The Chief Minister said as per preliminary estimates, the state suffered damage to the tune of Rs 4,450 crore due to



the deluge from October 9 to 13 and the consequent flooding.

Roads and power installations suffered severe damage, while standing crops in thousands of acres were destroyed, the Chief Minister pointed out, adding that a total of 19 people were killed in rain-related incidents.

"We have suffered badly due

to rains/floods in August and September and the fresh spell caused further damage.

In this situation, the Centre should stand in support of the state.

We urgently need at least Rs 1,000 crore as advance to take up relief works on a war-footing and restore normalcy," the Chief Minister said in the October 17 letter.

Govt releases pending DA, DR for employees

Continued from Page 1

The second pending DA/DR, due from January 2019, will be paid with the July 2021 salaries / pensions payable on August 1, 2021. The additional expenditure to be incurred by the Government towards this release is around Rs 172.82 (86.41+86.41) crore per month and Rs 2,074 crore per annum.

The third pending DA/DR, due from July 2019, will be paid with January 2022 salaries / pensions payable on February 1, 2022. The additional expenditure to be incurred by the Government towards this release is around Rs 316.83 (86.41+86.41+144.01) crore per month and Rs. 3,802 crore per annum.

The arrears for the first DA/DR will be adjusted in three instalments from February 2021 onwards to the GPF Account of the OPS employees and will be paid in cash in three instalments to the CPS employees and Pensioners from February 2021 onwards.

The additional expenditure to be incurred by the Government towards this release is around Rs 2,592 crore

The arrears for the second DA/DR will be adjusted in three instalments from August



2021 onwards to the GPF Accounts of the OPS employees & will be paid in cash in three instalments to the CPS employees and pensioners from August 2021 onwards. The additional expenditure to be incurred by the Government towards this release is around Rs 2,592 crore

The arrears for the third DA/DR will be adjusted in five instalments from February 2022 onwards to the GPF of the OPS employees and will be paid in cash in five instalments to the CPS employees and pensioners from February 2022 onwards.

The additional expenditure to be incurred by the Government towards this release is around Rs 4,320 crore.

The total additional expenditure to be incurred by the Government towards the three DA/DR releases is around Rs 3,802 crore per annum in addition to the arrears payment of Rs 9,504 crore.

AP completes 75 lakh sample tests, reports 3,342 cases

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh on Saturday completed 75 lakh sample tests and so far detected a gross of 8,04,026 positives, including 3,342 in 24 hours, for coronavirus.

The overall infection positivity rate in the state touched 10.72 per cent, three per cent higher than the national aver-

age, the latest bulletin said.

In 24 hours ending 9 am on Saturday, 3,572 patients had got cured, taking the overall recoveries to 7,65,991, with the overall recovery rate being 95.3 per cent.

The state also reported 22 more Covid-19 fatalities, increasing the toll to 6,566, the bulletin said. The number of active cases dropped to 31,469.

West Godavari district continued to add the highest number of fresh cases in the state, 551, followed by East Godavari, 445, and Chittoor, 404.

Kurnool added just 60 new cases and SPS Nellore 98 in 24 hours. Chittoor, Guntur and Krishna reported four more Covid-19 deaths each, the bulletin added.

No stopping Harish in Dubbak

K VENKATESHWARLU
■ HYDERABAD

Finance Minister T Harish Rao is leading the party from the front in Dubbak by-elections. The Siddipet MLA, during the campaign, is taking no chances in targeting the Opposition parties - Congress and BJP. The TRS party in-charge for Dubbak by-elections, Harish Rao, has been appealing voters not to fall prey to the promises of the opposition parties.

The Siddipet MLA is reaching out to the voters with the slogan 'Motors and Meters'. Harish Rao alleged that that the Centre was trying to burden farmers by asking them to fix electricity meters for their bore wells and pump sets. In every road show or rally, Harish Rao is raising this issue. He alleged that the agriculture motors (pump sets) were burnt during Congress regime and the present BJP-led Central government is trying to burden the farmers by instalng meters for their bore wells. He stated



Siddipet MLA Harish Rao reaches out to Dubbak voters targeting Central Govt led BJP for allegedly trying to burden farmers by asking them to fix electricity meters for their borewells and pump sets

that Dubbak by-election is between 'motors and meters' and 'free power'.

This is not for the first time Harish Rao took the task of

leading the party from the front in elections.

In 2016, Harish Rao played a crucial role in ensuring the victory of TRS candidate M

Bhupal Reddy in Narayanakhede by-election. The TRS candidate defeated deceased sitting Congress MLA P Kishta Reddy's son P Sanjeeva Reddy with a huge majority. Narayanakhede constituency was known for Congress bastion as the Grand Old Party won the seat in 1999, 2004, 2009 and 2014 elections. During these elections, the TRS failed to get minimum votes. However, Harish Rao wrote a new history in Narayanakhede by ensuring the victory of TRS candidate.

This time too, the TRS chief and Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao gave responsibility of Dubbak by-elections to Harish Rao. On the other hand, the Congress and the BJP took by-election on a prestigious note. However, trouble shooter Harish Rao is leading from the front and is making all efforts to ensure the victory of TRS candidate.

Harish Rao is reaching out to the voters by highlighting TRS government schemes such as Rythu Bandhu, Rythu Bhima,

Kalyana Laxmi, 2BHK scheme, Mission Bhagiratha, Mission Kakathiya, KCR Kit and others. He is mainly targeting Central government's farm laws and New Electricity Amendment Bill-2020. He alleged that the BJP's Electricity Bill will trouble farmers. At the same time, Harish Rao is not sparing Congress party. He alleged that during Congress regime, motors at agricultural wells were burnt due to bad power supply.

Also, Harish Rao is not giving any chance for the Congress and BJP. He took up 'Operation Akarsh' immediately after launching his campaign and successfully inducted leaders from of Congress, TJS and Left parties. He also succeeded in inducting senior Congress leaders, who aspired for Congress party ticket from Dubbak. Recently, Harish Rao also threw a challenge at BJP Chief Bandi Sanjay Kumar to come to Dubbak for an open debate on the contribution of the Centre to pensions given by the state government.

FESTIVAL OF FLOWERS



Women playing Bathukamma in Kukatpally on Saturday — SV Chary

By-polls forced CM to buy maize at MSP, says Uttam

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) president N Uttam Kumar Reddy on Saturday said that the upcoming Dubbak Assembly by-elections have forced Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao to purchase maize at Minimum Support Price of Rs 1,850 per quintal. Similarly, the Chief Minister agreed to release one Dearness Allowance for government employees only due to the fear of defeat in Dubbak by-polls.

Uttam, in a media statement on Saturday, welcomed the decisions and described it as a moral victory of the people of Dubbak. He said that the Chief Minister had expressed anger over farmers who cultivated maize and claimed that it was being sold for Rs 1,200 per quintal. However, he was forced to announce the setting up of procurement centres in all villages to purchase the maize at the MSP of Rs 1,850



fearing backlash of people in the by-elections.

"If one by-election could bring the Chief Minister on his knees, people could imagine his reaction if TRS loses Dubbak seat. Therefore, people of Dubbak should defeat TRS in the by-elections if they want CM to fulfill all the electoral promises, especially those made with the farmers and employees," he said. The TPCC chief reminded that KCR had once compared the employees with a dog's tail by saying "Is

If one by-election could bring the Chief Minister on his knees, people could imagine his reaction if TRS loses Dubbak seat, said TPCC president Uttam

if the dog that wags the tail or the tail that wags the dog?" But the fear of defeat in Dubbak by-polls transformed him into a 'pro-employee' CM who cleared one of three pending DAs. Uttam said that the people of Telangana would remain indebted to Dubbak voters if they defeat TRS in the by-elections as it would force TRS government to honour all the promises made in the last seven years.

GHMC misled Central team, alleges Cong

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Congress leaders on Saturday alleged that the TRS government is giving Rs 10,000 ex-gratia only to the TRS activists but not to flood-affected people in GHMC. They also alleged that the Central team didn't conduct surveys scientifically in flood-hit areas. The party demanded the Centre to send another team to assess the loss incurred by the people and farmers due to heavy rains and floods.

Addressing the media on Saturday, former MPs Madhu Yashki, Anjan Kumar Yadav, AICC official spokesperson Dasoju Sravan and Youth Congress state president Anil



AICC official spokesperson Dasoju Sravan addressing the media on Saturday

Kumar Yadav slammed the Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao for not coming out from the Pragathi Bhavan. The farmers lost their crops and low level areas inundated in flood waters,

they alleged. Madhu Yashki Goud blamed the state government for the floods in Hyderabad. "Though the Weather Department gave prior information on rains, the state government failed to act

on time. The state government didn't conduct a scientific survey on how many people died and how loss incurred due to heavy rains. The state government is extending financial assistance keeping GHMC elections in view," he alleged.

Dasoju Sravan alleged that the Central team, which came to assess the impact of the floods, didn't act scientifically. "How come two days is enough to inspect the flood-hit areas?" he asked alleging that the Centre is deceiving the flood affected people. He alleged that the GHMC officials are enacting dramas giving misinformation to the Central government.



Bandi: Regulated farming confusing ryots

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana BJP Chief Bandi Sanjay Kumar on Saturday took potshots at Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Rao and alleged that the latter is behaving like a dictator.

"Like a dictator, KCR is imposing regulated cultivation on farmers without conducting soil tests. Agriculture, which is already in crisis, is facing more troubles because of regulated farming," he alleged. In a statement, Bandi Sanjay said that the state government is creating confusion among the farmers in regard to procurement of maize. Bandi Sanjay Kumar questioned the Chief Minister to reveal if speaking on behalf of farmers is considered as cheap politics.

As inflows rise, NSP gates lifted



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In view of continuing inflows, authorities lifted 12 crest gates of Nagarjuna Sagar Project (NSP) by 10 feet on Saturday to release water downstream. According to the figures obtained from NSP officials, inflows to the project was 3, 40,761 cusecs and outflow was reported as 2,19,277 cusecs. The water level in the project reached 589.60 feet as against Full Reservoir Level of 590 feet. The present storage of water in the project is 312.04 TMCs

as against gross storage capacity of 310.84 TMCs.

Also, 8 crest gates of Pulichintala Project were also lifted to release water to Prakasham Barrage. The water level in Pulichintala Project touched 174.01 feet as against 175.89 feet. With the lifting of NSP gates, inflow to Pulichintala Project was increased to 1,88,1010 cusecs and outflow is 1,74,480 cusecs. The present water storage in the project was 44.23 TMCs as against gross storage capacity of 45.77 TMCs.



Govt giving aid only to TRS activists: BJP

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BJP MLA Raja Singh on Saturday alleged that the ruling TRS party leaders are cashing in on the situation when the people of Hyderabad are suffering due to floods. "The GHMC officials are distributing Rs 10,000 financial assistance only to TRS activists instead of people who were affected due to floods," he alleged.

Covid is a 'syndemic' for patients with chronic diseases

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Scientists have assessed the synergistic impact of Covid-19 on people with non-communicable diseases (NCDs) like diabetes in low and middle-income countries such as India, and found that there has never been a more dangerous time for them than the ongoing pandemic.

According to the study, published in the journal Frontiers in Public Health, people with NCDs are more vulnerable to catching and dying from Covid-19, while their exposure to NCD risk factors — such as substance abuse, social isolation and unhealthy diets — has increased during the pandemic.

The researchers, including Shradha S Parsekar from the Manipal Academy of Higher Education in Karnataka, also found that Covid-19 disrupted essential public health services which people with NCDs rely on to manage their conditions.

In the study, the scientists reviewed almost 50 studies on the synergistic impact of Covid-19 on people with NCDs in low and middle-income countries such as Brazil, India, Bangladesh, Nepal, Pakistan and Nigeria.

According to the study lead author Uday Yadav from the University of New South Wales (UNSW) in Australia, the interaction between NCDs and Covid-19 was important to

study because global data showed Covid-19-related deaths were disproportionately high among people with NCDs.

"This illustrates the negative effect of the Covid-19 'syndemic' — also known as a 'synergistic epidemic' — a term coined by medical anthropologist Merrill Singer in the 1990s to describe the relationship between HIV/AIDS, substance abuse and violence," Yadav said.

"People are familiar with Covid-19 as a pandemic, but we analysed it through a syndemic lens in order to determine the impact of both Covid-19 and future pandemics on people with NCDs," he added.

Donations pour in for CMRF

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Several organisations and individuals contributed to the CMRF towards supporting the State government in its endeavours towards relief and rehabilitation of the flood victims in Hyderabad and other Urban Local Bodies in the

State. The donations are being received following a clarion call given by Chief Minister to all, to contribute their might for supporting the flood affected families.

Pharma company Divi's Laboratories contributed Rs 5 crore to the CMRF and handed over a cheque to Municipal

Administration Minister KT Rama Rao at Pragathi Bhavan here on Friday. GMR Hyderabad International Airport too contributed Rs 2.5 crore to the CMRF, while Rs 1 crore each was donated by Telangana Poultry Breeders Association, Telangana Poultry Federation, Sneha

Foundation of Sneha Poultry Farms, and Srichaitanya Students Facility Management Private Limited. The Poultry Breeders Association president and MP G Ranjith Reddy as well as the Poultry Federation president Errabelli Pradeep Rao among others handed over cheques to KTR.

Kavitha extends Bathukamma greetings

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Nizamabad MLC and Telangana Jagruthi founder president K Kavitha on Saturday extended greetings to people of Telangana State on the festive occasion of Bathukamma. She expressed happiness over the pride and excitement with which Bathukamma was being celebrated with friends and family despite the Covid pandemic. She urged people to the State to remain cautious during the celebrations in the wake of the pandemic.

In a video message, Kavitha said the recent floods in the State have left many people in distress even as the Coronavirus threat has been looming large posing challenges to people during these times of crisis. She lauded the spirit of humanity in the State and urged all to stand by each other during these difficult times. TRS leader and MLC Kavitha thanked Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao for releasing Rs 550 crore to ensure immediate relief to those affected by the floods.

As we commemorate the 75th anniversary, we ought to be grateful to many unsung heroes for their collective efforts and commitment to multilateralism in the creation of the United Nations.

Until the 18th century, the Dutch, French, Portuguese and British were engaged in expanding their empire. The 19th century shook the world with the outbreak of pandemics such as smallpox, influenza, plague, and poliovirus.

The Industrial Revolution brought economic growth but the world was not prepared for environmental disasters.

At the dawn of the 20th century, World War I destabilised most of the world. While the world was recovering from the Great Depression, Hitler, Mussolini, and Hirohito laid the groundwork for World War II.

"The League of Nations",

THE FUTURE WE WANT, THE UN WE NEED

which came into existence as an international peacekeeping organisation at the end of the World War I proved ineffective in preventing the World War II.

In 1942, the heads and delegates of 26 allied nations resolved to create a neutral organisation that would help build peace for a better world. President Franklin D Roosevelt not only rallied for the creation but also coined the name "United Nations".

On June 26, 1945, the founding nations signed the agenda, objectives and goals of the foundational treaty of the United Nations known as 'United Nations Charter'. The UN eventually led to the birth of the United Nations Organisation on October 24, 1945. The intergovernmental

On June 26, 1945, the founding nations signed the agenda, objectives and goals of the foundational treaty of the United Nations known as 'United Nations Charter'. The UNC eventually led to the birth of the United Nations Organisation on October 24, 1945.

organisation has ever since changed the world as we know it. Unlike its predecessor, the UN succeeded in accomplishing its objectives and goals.

The building of the United Nations Headquarters in New York, which is considered international territory, was designed by the architect trio, Wallace K. Harrison, Le Corbusier, and Oscar Niemeyer.

Oliver Lincoln Lundquist, the legendary architect, created the United Nations logo. On October 24, 1945, acclaimed British actor Sir Laurence Olivier read the Preamble to the Charter of the United Nations in the UN Assembly. Business tycoon John D. Rockefeller Jr donated \$8.5 million used to acquire 17 acres for the UN Headquarters in New York.

The United Nations took birth with the principal aim of bringing countries together, preserving peace and security to help build a better world. This includes, inter alia, sending peacekeeping forces to deal with wars, conflicts, acts of terrorism, monitoring ceasefires, and assisting the refugees. The UN's role is commendable in promotion and enhancing human rights.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 brought human rights into the purview of international law. Efforts in prevention and control of pandemics, eradication of poverty and hunger, reduction of inequalities, promotion of primary education, prevention of female genital mutilation and child marriages, encouraging gender

equality and various initiatives for the empowerment of women by the United Nations would not go amiss.

The United Nations Foundation, through its 'Shot@Life' campaign, is not only fighting dreaded diseases but is also bankrolling the cause of expanding access to lifesaving vaccines for children in developing countries.

To arrest hunger, UN's World Food Programme caters to 138 million famished. Additionally, the UN, through its Population Fund, helps millions of women overcome pregnancy complications every year. The vital role of UN agencies in providing vaccination to half of the children in the world deserves an honourable mention. The UN also comes to the rescue of refugees

and forcibly displaced people.

Since the UN's first mission in Arab-Israeli War in 1948, more than 70 peacekeeping operations have been deployed. Thousands of peacekeeping personnel have lost their lives to acts of violence, accidents or disease. Peace building involves action by a wide array of organisations of the UN system, diplomats, conflict resolution experts, civil society groups and countless others.

In 1989, another important step forward was made by the UN to provide civil, cultural, economic, and social rights to children with adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

In 1995 the UN adopted a transdisciplinary project, 'Towards a Culture of Peace.'

Besides the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons and United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the UN is committed to the 2030 Agenda, that is "17 Sustainable Development Goals" and "Leave No One Behind", the transformative promise.

Since the emergence of the UN, the threat of global nuclear war has been removed to a greater extent.

Intriguingly, the UN drew flak for being edentulous and becoming a 'Cold War' battleground as the US and USSR held vetoes limiting the Security Council's powers. No two ways about it - the UN is the only legitimate international organisation, yet it has to earn the unprejudiced and unbiased tag.

Pratyush Vishnu Dhavala (The author is founder of The Environholics)



Farm sector changes in line with changing times, says Modi

PNS ■ AHMEDABAD

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday said his government is taking initiatives to strengthen the agriculture sector in the country so that farmers do not have to face any trouble.

His statement comes amid opposition to the new farm laws by farmers' groups and political parties.

Modi was speaking after inaugurating three projects in Gujarat- one each related to agriculture, healthcare and tourism development- via video conference from New Delhi.

"In order to double the farmers' income and to reduce the production cost and their troubles, we will have to increase our efforts with the changing times," he said.

"Whether granting freedom to farmers to sell their produce anywhere in the country or creating thousands of farmer producer organisations, whether completing stalled irrigation projects or improving crop insurance scheme or 100 per cent neem-coating of urea or soil health card...the aim is to strengthen the agriculture sector so that farmers do not have trouble in farming. Initiatives like these are being taken continuously for it," he said.

He launched the state government's Kisan Suryoday Yojana (KSY) aimed at providing day-time electricity to the farmers in the state for irrigation and farming purposes.

The PM also inaugurated Paediatric Heart Hospital at the

In order to double the farmers' income and to reduce the production cost and their troubles, we will have to increase our efforts with the changing times, said Prime Minister Narendra Modi



U N Mehta Institute of Cardiology and Research Centre in Ahmedabad, developed at a cost of Rs 470 crore by the state's health and family welfare department.

Besides, he launched the recently-completed ropeway project on Mount Girnar, a major tourist and pilgrim site near Junagadh city in the state. The 2.3-km long ropeway is being touted as the longest temple ropeway in Asia.

Modi held the opposition responsible for the delay in completion of the Girnar ropeway project.

The project was proposed in 1983, and was delayed due to various reasons, most importantly due to the environmental concerns, before the UPA government granted it conditional approval in 2011.

"Had they not created hurdles in the Girnar ropeway project, it would not have got stalled for so many years.

People and tourists should have got its benefit a long back," he said.

"As a nation, we all should think of the loss caused to the people and the country when such projects (Girnar ropeway) of public importance are stalled for a long time," he said, adding that the new project will facilitate the pilgrims and tourists, and create job opportunities for the locals.

"More people will visit (a place) only when modern facilities are provided to tourists. Tourists want ease of living, ease of travelling," he said.

Modi said the world's tallest Statue of Unity attracted more than 45 lakh tourists before the pandemic.

"Look at the Statue of Unity dedicated to Sardar Sahab (Vallabhbhai Patel). The world's tallest statue is becoming a huge tourist attraction. Before the coronavirus outbreak, over 45 lakh people

had visited it. It is a big achievement in such a short time. It has been reopened (recently), and the number (of tourists) is increasing fast," he said.

The Statue of Unity was inaugurated in October 2018. Lauding the state government over the Kisan Suryoday Yojana (KSY), Modi said India has become a leading country in both solar production and consumption.

"Gujarat was the first state in the country that framed a detailed policy for solar energy a decade ago. In 2010, when a solar power plant was inaugurated in Patan, nobody had imagined that one day India will show the way to the world for 'One Sun, One World, One Grid'," he said.

"Today, India is a leading country in both solar production and its use. In the last six years, the country has become the fifth-ranking nation in the world in solar energy produc-

tion," the PM added.

He said the KSY will change the lives of lakhs of farmers in a few years by providing them electricity for irrigation from dawn to 9.30 pm.

He also talked about 'Kusum Yojana' that aims to help farmers, cooperatives and panchayats in setting up small solar plants on barren lands, and link solar pumps to the grid, he said.

Modi lauded the state's initiative in taking water to households under the 'Nal Se Jal' scheme.

Urging the farmers to save water, he said, "As the KSY has been launched, all have to repeat the mantra- 'Per drop, more crop'."

"As farmers will get electricity during the day, they should also focus in saving more water," he said, adding that day-time power supply will make things easier for farmers to set up micro-irrigation.

Changing lifestyle is increasing heart complications, Modi said, adding that the heart hospital will provide facilities to the people of Gujarat and others.

In his address, Chief Minister Rupani targeted the "anti-Gujarat people" for stalling the Girnar ropeway and the Sardar Sarovar project.

"We all know that in the past, anti-Gujarat people tried to create hurdles in many project-like Narmada and Girnar ropeway so that Gujarat, Modi and BJP do not get the credit. But luckily for us, when Modi became the PM, both the projects were realised," he said.

BJP questions 'silence' of Congress over girl's 'rape'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP hit out at Congress leaders Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Saturday for their "selective outrage" in cases of atrocities against women as it questioned their "silence" over the alleged rape and killing of a six-year-old girl in Punjab.

Noting that the young girl belonged to a Dalit migrant family from Bihar, Finance Minister and senior BJP leader Nirmala Sitharaman also took a swipe at Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) leader Tejashwi Yadav, questioning if he had asked Rahul Gandhi about the issue while holding a joint poll campaign with him in the state.

Attacking Yadav, she referred to a news report of 2008 to talk about the 'allegations of eve-teasing and misbehaviour with women against the RJD brothers', a reference to him and his elder brother Tej Pratap. "It (the Punjab incident) may not hurt the RJD because that is how things were when they were in power," Sitharaman told reporters while flaying Lalu Prasad Yadav's party for the "jungle raj" during its rule in Bihar during 1990-2005.

Hitting out at the Congress, she said, "The pretentious Congress has not said a word. The tweet-friendly Rahul



Attacking Yadav, Nirmala Sitharaman referred to a news report of 2008 to talk about the "allegations of eve-teasing and misbehaviour with women against the RJD brothers", a reference to him and his elder brother Tej Pratap

Gandhi has not tweeted on the Hoshiarpur incident. There has been no outrage. And no picnic either."

Her "picnic" jibe was in reference to Rahul Gandhi and his sister Priyanka Gandhi's visit to Hathras in BJP-ruled Uttar Pradesh following the alleged gangrape of a Dalit girl, who died in a Delhi hospital subsequently.

The BJP had accused Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi of practising "political tourism". The Congress party

should stand up and answer. Does this kind of selective outrage suit the stature of their party? "Why is the brother-sister pair not going and voicing horror in Hoshiarpur? Why not in Rajasthan? The selective cry of outrage that the Congress wants to show when it is elsewhere but not in states governed by it is completely exposed," Sitharaman said.

Stating that crimes like rape should not be politicised, she said certain political parties are selective in voicing horror.

INDIA CORNER

DRG jawan killed, another hurt in face-off with Naxals

A District Reserve Guard (DRG) jawan was killed and another injured in a gunfight with Naxals in Chhattisgarh's Narayanpur district on Saturday, police said. The skirmish took place around 10 am near Tadar village under Orchha police station limits, where a team from the DRG was out on a counter-insurgency operation, Narayanpur superintendent of police Mohit Garg said. A group of ultras ambushed the patrolling team when it was on its way back after the operation, which led to the gun-battle between the two sides, he said. As the security personnel started zeroing on them, the ultras escaped from the scene, he said.

"DRG personnel Santu Vadde was killed in the gunfight, while constable Bajju Ram Kachlam sustained minor injuries," Garg said.

The deceased jawan and the injured personnel were evacuated to Narayanpur and shifted to a hospital there, he said.

"Blood stains at the spot indicate that some Naxals were also injured in the face-off," the SP said, adding that search operation was still underway in the area.



Gangsters Act invoked against 30 aides of Vikas Dubey

More than three months since the Bikru village ambush, in which eight policemen including a deputy SP were killed, the Kanpur police has invoked the Gangsters Act against 30 of slain gangster Vikas Dubey's aides arrested in connection with the case. Kanpur's Deputy Inspector General (DIG) of Police



Preetinder Singh said on Saturday that the Gangsters Act has been slapped against the 30 accused. A separate FIR under the relevant sections of the Gangsters Act has been lodged against the jailed accused, the DIG added. The investigation has been handed over to Station House Officer (Billhaur) PN Bajpai, who has been asked to probe the case properly. Earlier this month, a chargesheet in the Bikru ambush case was submitted in the court concerned. Eight policemen, including DSP Devendra Mishra, were ambushed in Bikru when they were going to arrest Dubey, a dreaded gangster, and fell to bullets fired from rooftops shortly after midnight on July 3.

Caught on camera: UP BJP chief showers flower petals on Bairia MLA

Uttar Pradesh BJP chief Swatantra Dev Singh has been caught on camera showering flower petals on the party's Bairia MLA Surendra Singh, days after serving him a notice for his statements supporting the main accused in the firing incident at Durjanpur village here. The video which went viral on Saturday shows Swatantra Dev Singh participating in a 'bhumi puja' programme of a Krishna temple at Kathaunda village in Sikanderpur area. Both the leaders are seen sitting side by side in the footage. The state BJP chief is seen showering flower petals on Surendra Singh, who acknowledges it with folded hands. On being asked about the video, BJP's Salempur MP Ravindra Kushwaha, who was also present at the event on Friday, told reporters that only Swatantra Dev Singh can elaborate on his actions. Earlier this week, the state unit of the BJP had issued a show cause notice to MLA Surendra Singh for issuing statements in support of Dhirendra Pratap Singh, a local party leader who has been arrested for allegedly killing a man. The legislator was given a week's time to respond to the notice. Surendra Singh had come out in open support of Dhirendra Pratap Singh, who allegedly shot dead a 46-year-old man in Ballia's Durjanpur village following a quarrel over the allotment of ration shops on October 15. The Bairia MLA had defended the accused, saying that the latter "opened fire in self-defence" as "it was a do-or-die situation for him". He had also accused the administration of bias and demanded that action be taken against the other side.

Bihar polls: RJD promises 10 lakh jobs, farm loan waiver

PNS ■ PATNA

Rashtriya Janata Dal, which heads the opposition Grand Alliance coalition in the Bihar elections, released poll manifesto Saturday reiterating its promise of 10 lakh jobs and loan waiver for the farmers.

The manifesto was released by Tejashwi Yadav at a press conference in the party office here.

The cover page of the manifesto displays photographs of Mahatma Gandhi, Dalit icon B R Ambedkar, freedom fighter Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, socialist veterans-Ram Manohar Lohia and Karpoori Thakur- Loknayak Jayprakash Narayan among others, but it does not have photo of the party's founder and its charismatic leader Lalu Prasad.

Tejshwi Yadav's photo finds a prominent space on the cover page. There is a message from Prasad in the document in which he highlighted how



his party government in the past fought the battle to ensure social justice for the downtrodden and brought Bihar back on the path of development.

Prasad, who is in jail in Ranchi after his conviction in four cases of multi-crore rupees fodder scam, also made a scathing attack on rival NDA government in the state, saying "there is no jobs, atrocities against women have increased and happiness is missing from the face of farmers".

While, emphasising on its future plans for the state if voted to power, the RJD vision document also hit out at the Bharatiya Janata Party for trying to "fool people" by announcing 19 lakh jobs in the state.

"Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has been raising doubts on our promise of providing 10 lakh jobs, so how his future government will fulfill ally BJP's declaration of 19 lakh jobs?" Tejashwi asked.

BSY: Rs 25k aid for every flood-hit family

PNS ■ BENGALURU

Karnataka Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa on Saturday announced a compensation of Rs 25,000 for every family affected by flooding caused due to torrential rains in several parts of the city.

The Chief Minister also assured a permanent solution to ensure that such incidents don't repeat as he announced that all encroachments along the storm water drains in the city will be cleared mercilessly. "To all those who have faced

destruction to their food grains, cloths and other things because of water entering houses due to flooding and rain, we have decided to give a compensation of Rs 25,000 per family through cheque... we are taking all the precautionary measures if there are rains today or in coming days," Yediyurappa said.

Speaking to reporters after visiting affected Hosakerehalli and near by areas, he said from this evening itself cheque will be distributed to every affected house.

States, UTs told to ensure there is no wastage of groundwater

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Central Ground Water Board (CGWB) has asked the state agencies dealing with water supply to ensure that there is no wastage or misuse of potable underground water and evolve compliance with coercive action.

An order dated October 8 was issued to the states and Union territories following a directive from the National Green Tribunal, an official from the CGWB said.

Another CGWB official said the action is to be taken



under the Environment (Protection) Act, 1986.

"...the concerned civic bodies dealing with water supply network in the states/union territories, Water Works Department, Municipal Corporation, Municipal

Council, Development Authority, Panchayat or by any other name, shall ensure that there is no wastage or misuse of potable water tapped from underground and evolve compliance mechanism with coercive measures for violation," the CGWB order said.

The CGWB also mentioned the NGT directive issued in October 2019 which said that in order to control wastage of water, there has to be specific time-bound action plan and monitoring which should include coercive measures for enforcement.

Covid: 31% adolescents battled extreme anxiety

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

About 31 per cent surveyed adolescents battled extreme anxiety in the past few months worrying about the impact of coronavirus pandemic on their family's financial status, according to a survey of over 7,300 adolescents from four states of Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, Bihar and Odisha. The survey on 'What do the Adolescents have to say? COVID-19 and its Impact' by NGO Centre for Catalysing Change was conducted in two rounds in the months of April, July and August.

Out of the 7,324 adoles-



cents surveyed, 31 per cent admitted to battling extreme anxiety worrying about the pandemic's impact on their

family's financial status. The survey also found that adolescent girls faced significant gender discrimination in

these months due to the pandemic. "Only 12 per cent of surveyed adolescent girls had access to their own mobile phones to be able to attend online classes, while 35 per cent boys had access to their own mobile phones," the survey found. "Further, 51 per cent of the adolescent girls surveyed lacked access to essential textbooks in comparison to boys, highlighting how the pandemic had jeopardized girls' access to education," it said.

About 39 per cent of the girls were found to be contributing to housework as opposed to the number of boys at 35 per cent, it said. Under the survey, the

adolescent girls also stated how their mobility has been curbed, with only 39 per cent girls saying they were allowed to go out alone in comparison to 62 per cent boys of the same age who were allowed to go out alone. "At the same time, only 36 per cent adolescents knew the correct helpline numbers, while awareness about the use of the helplines was even lower. Only 18 per cent was aware that the helplines could be used in reporting domestic violence and only 22-23 per cent knew that it could be used in reporting child labour and child trafficking cases," it added.

Uphill task for EC to enforce Covid guidelines, feel former CECs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Election Commission has the requisite powers to take strict measures like banning rallies and countermanding polls for violation of COVID-19 guidelines during campaigning, but it will be an uphill task to ensure compliance, according to former chief election commissioners.

Campaigning is on for Bihar assembly polls as well as for by-elections in other states, and the EC has already cautioned parties that penal provisions can be invoked against them by district authorities for violations.

While most of the former CECs said implementing health guidelines during campaigning is not easy given the number of candidates, parties and voters involved, two of them said the EC could take "demonstrative action" such as postponing polls in a few constituencies and banning rallies to show that it means business.

The Election Commission has taken a serious view of "utter violation" of social distancing norms during poll campaigning and leaders addressing public meetings without wearing masks in complete disregard of its guidelines.

MONEY MATTERS

Sebi grants exemption to NTPC for buy-back programme

Capital markets regulator Sebi on Friday granted exemption to state-run NTPC from certain buyback norms for the proposed merger of wholly-owned subsidiaries with the parent company. In October, NTPC had filed an application with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) to seek exemption from the strict enforcement of the buyback norms. The application had been necessitated on account of a scheme of amalgamation providing for the merger of NTPC's wholly-owned subsidiaries with itself, a Sebi order said. In November 2019, NTPC's board of directors had approved a scheme of amalgamation entailing the merger of Nabinagar Power Generating Company Ltd and Kanti Bijlee Utpadan Nigam Ltd with NTPC. The provision of buy-back norms, for which exemption is sought "prohibits the Company from making any public announcement of buy-back during the pendency of any scheme of amalgamation pursuant to the provisions of the Companies Act, 2013," Sebi noted.



ICICI Lombard Q2 net profit jumps 35 pc to Rs 416 crore

ICICI Lombard General Insurance on Friday reported a 35 per cent growth in September quarter net profit at Rs 415.74 crore, despite the losses due to natural calamities and mounting claims from the COVID-19 pandemic. Total income rose to Rs 2,883.40 crore during the quarter from Rs 2,739.67 crore a year ago, the company said. Net premium earned during the quarter grew to Rs 2,462.52 crore from Rs 2,356.92 crore, while gross direct premium income rose 8 per cent to Rs 3,189 crore, the company said. Addressing the media during a conference call, ICICI Lombard MD and CEO Bhargav Dasgupta said profitability rose due to better underwriting and prudential cost management. "We had losses to the tune of Rs 77 crore in the first half of the year due to massive floods in many parts of the county as well as the cyclone. In the same period last fiscal, our loss from the same head was only Rs 61 crore."



Nestle India clocks double-digit sales growth in Q3

FMCG major Nestle India on Friday announced its plans to invest Rs 2,600 crore over the next three to four years to augment its manufacturing capacity in the country, terming the move as "vindication of confidence and trust" the company has in its India journey. The company, which saw a robust 10.23 per cent growth in its domestic sales in the July-September quarter, said its production units have returned to "normal output" post lockdown. As per Nestle's plan, the new investments are aimed at expansion activities of the existing units and towards the construction of its new upcoming unit in Sanand, Gujarat. Meanwhile, the FMCG major -- which follows January-December financial year -- posted a marginal 1.37 per cent drop in its net profit at Rs 587.09 crore in the third quarter ended September 30, 2020. Its net sales, however, were up 10.19 per cent at Rs 3,525.41 crore during the period under review, the company said. Domestic sales in July-September moved up 10.23 per cent to Rs 3,350.10 crore as against Rs 3,039.09 crore in the year-ago period. Nestle, which presently operates eight production units in India, said its factories have returned to normal output and witnessed growth driven by an improved supply situation. Total sales and domestic sales both increased by 10.2 per cent driven by volume and mix," Nestle India said in a post earnings statement.



Punjab and Sind Bank reports IFIN as fraud account to RBI

Punjab and Sind Bank on Friday said it has reported to the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) the account of IL&FS Financial Services (IFIN) as fraud with outstanding dues of over Rs 561 crore. The NPA account, IL&FS Financial Services, with outstanding dues of Rs 561.13 crore has been declared as fraud and reported to the RBI as per the regulatory requirement, the bank said in a regulatory filing. "Further, the bank has already made 100 per cent provisioning as per the prescribed prudential norms and the account is technically written off," it added. The scam at the IL&FS group came to light in September 2018 after several group entities defaulted on repayments due to severe liquidity problems. Later, the government superseded the board of directors to revive the ailing group. IFIN, which has been found to be funding its own revenues for several years, was the main source of funds for the IL&FS group entities.



Second wave of Covid could hamper nascent recovery: RBI

PNS ■ MUMBAI

RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das has said the risk of a second wave of COVID-19 could put sand in the wheels of the nascent recovery while his deputy M.D. Patra opined that it might take years to regain the output lost on account of the pandemic.

These views were expressed by them during the meeting of the newly constituted Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) held from October 7 to 9. The newly appointed independent member of the rate-setting panel Shashanka Bhide said uncertainties relating to COVID-19 pandemic will impact growth and inflation scenarios in the next two to three quarters. Das also said the decision to cut benchmark repo rate would depend upon the evolving situation with regard to inflation which is currently above the tolerance level of the central bank, according to the minutes of the meeting released by RBI on Friday. "I recognise that there exists space for future rate cuts if the inflation evolves in line with our expectations. This space needs to be used judiciously to support recovery in growth," Das said.



As per the central bank's assessment, headline inflation would moderate in the second half of the current financial year and further in the first quarter of the next fiscal. Inflation remained above the upper tolerance threshold of 6 per cent since June, with

signs of aggravation of price pressures. The government has asked RBI to keep inflation at 4 per cent (+, - 2 per cent). Speaking about the risks to growth, Das said there are downside uncertainties that could put sand in the wheels of this nascent recovery. "Primary among them is the risk of a second wave of COVID-19. Private investment activity is likely to be subdued, even as domestic financial conditions have eased significantly," he noted. In the first quarter of

this fiscal, India's GDP contracted 23.9 per cent. Deputy Governor Patra said that India has entered a technical recession in the first half of the year for the first time in its history. "GDP is an aggregative indicator of economic activity and hides the extent of human misery and the loss of social and human capital caused by the health crisis. "Nonetheless, if the projections hold, the level of GDP would have fallen approximately 6 per cent below its pre-COVID level by the end of 2020-21 and it may take years to regain this lost output," he said. While voting for keeping the interest rate unchanged, RBI Executive Director Mridul K. Sagar expressed concern that if current real negative interest rates fall further, it may generate significant distortions that could adversely affect aggregate savings, current account and medium-term growth in the economy.

Kharif onion output likely to drop 14%

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The country's kharif onion production is estimated to decline by 14 per cent to 37 lakh tonnes this year on likely damage to the crop due to recent heavy rainfall in key growing states, Food Secretary Sudhanshu Pandey said on Friday. "This year due to rains in Maharashtra, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh, onion production which was initially estimated at 43 lakh tonnes is likely to be 37 lakh tonnes, a short of about 6 lakh tonnes," Pandey said at a press conference on onion. The central government is in touch with states and closely watching the supply, demand and price situation, he said, adding that accordingly taking measures. Pandey is chairman of the inter-ministerial committee on food and consumer affairs that has recommended various measures to check prices of onion from ban on export to imposition of stock limits on



traders. The government has taken several steps to increase domestic availability and keep prices under control till arrival of fresh kharif crop from the second fortnight of November. Onion is grown in both rabi (winter) and kharif (summer) seasons. Onion grown in the rabi season has a long shelf life and therefore stored for use in lean periods. Retail onion prices are ruling over Rs 75 per kg in some places at present. In some cities, rates have gone up as high as Rs 100 per kg, as per the government data.

Yes Bank posts Rs 129 cr net profit in Q2 on reduction in op expenses

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Yes Bank on Friday reported a net profit of Rs 129.37 crore, helped by a decrease in operational expenses and widening of margins on a much lower loan book. The private sector lender had posted a net loss of Rs 600 crore in the corresponding quarter of previous fiscal. The bank's core net interest income declined 10 per cent to Rs 1,973 crore, majorly because the loan book was 28 per cent lower, but was helped by a 0.34 per cent expansion in net interest margin at 3.1 per cent. The non-interest income declined by a fourth to Rs 707 crore, but the management of the bank, which was bailed out by SBI earlier this year, said the performance on the front was better than the year-ago period on excluding a one-time sale. Its managing director and chief executive Prashant Kumar, who joined the bank from SBI, attributed the 21 per cent decrease in operational expenses at Rs 1,320 crore to



branch and ATM rationalization, and re-negotiating with vendors and landlords for rents. Non-performing assets (NPAs), a surge in which had led the bank to report record losses a few quarters ago, improved marginally, but were still high at 16.90 per cent on a gross basis. The overall quantum of NPAs came down during the quarter. Kumar said Rs 2,391 crore of advances, which would have slipped to NPAs, were helped by the Supreme Court dispensation on asset recognition. Apart from this, the bank said total exposure overdue for

'Left with 25k tonnes buffer stock onion'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI



The government is left with about 25,000 tonnes of onion stock in its buffer that will get exhausted in the first week of November, cooperative Nafed Managing Director Sanjeev Kumar Chadha said on Friday. Currently, Nafed is offloading onion buffer stock in the market to boost domestic availability and check onion prices which surpassed Rs 75 per kg in some parts of the country in the last few weeks. This buffer stock of onion is created and maintained by Nafed on behalf of the government to be used for interventions in times of onion crisis. For the current year, the cooperative purchased about 1 lakh tonnes of onion for the buffer and the same is being offloaded now. "So far, 43,000 tonnes of onion has been disposed of from the buffer stock. After some wastage, about 25,000 tonnes onion is left which will be available till the first week of November," Chadha said in a press conference where the government announced stock limits on

Nafed is offloading onion buffer stock in the market to boost domestic availability and check onion prices

onion traders to check price rise. Presently, Nafed is offloading onion from the buffer stock in both wholesale and retail markets across the country. It is also offering states at Rs 26 per kg plus transportation charges for retail intervention, he said. Chadha said the cooperative is maintaining the onion buffer stock in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat. The government has taken a series of measures to check rising prices of onion.

Price monitoring and resource unit set up in Goa: Govt

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A price monitoring and resource unit has been set up in Goa under the aegis of the National Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority (NPPA), the government said on Saturday. The price monitoring and resource unit (PMRU) will function at the state level under the direct supervision of the state drug controller for increasing outreach of the NPPA, the Ministry of Chemicals and Fertilizers said in a statement. The NPPA, under its Consumer Awareness, Publicity and Price Monitoring (CAPPMP) scheme, has already set up PMRUs in 15 states/UTs, it added. The national pharmaceutical pricing regulator plans to set up PMRUs in all the 36 states/UTs in the country. The expenses of PMRUs, both recurring and non-recurring, are borne by the NPPA under the scheme.

IL&FS misses debt resolution target by Rs 7,300 cr in Sep qtr

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Debt-laden Infrastructure Leasing and Financial Services (IL&FS) Group, which had earlier estimated to address debt of around Rs 8,800 crore in the second quarter of FY21, on Saturday said it has been able to address debt of just around Rs 1,460 crore during the period due to COVID-19 related delays. The group said the Rs 7,300-crore shortfall in the September target has been rolled over for achievement in subsequent quarters. The cash-strapped group has, however, maintained its earlier estimates of addressing more than 50 per cent of the

overall debt of over Rs 99,000 crore as of October 2018. "As compared to the previous update, the Rs 7,300-crore shortfall in target for debt addressed by September 2020 is being rolled over for achievement in subsequent quarters," the group said in a release. "The delay has been mainly caused on account of significant impact of COVID-19, which has added time and logistical complexities in the process of completing discussions with stakeholders and in obtaining approvals from lenders, regulators and judicial authorities," it said. Of the Rs 7,300 crore of shortfall in the target of Q2

FY21, around Rs 4,200 crore of debt will be addressed in Q3 FY21 and Rs 3,100 crore in Q4 FY21, the group said. In July, the group had estimated to address close to Rs 50,500 crore of its debt by March 2021 and an additional debt of Rs 6,500 crore beyond FY21. The Uday Kotak-led board had also shared a quarterly estimates of addressing additional debt of Rs 8,800 crore by Q2 FY21; Rs 18,000 crore by Q3 FY21 and over Rs 6,000 crore by the end of Q4 FY21 - aggregating to Rs 50,500 crore by the end of FY2021. As of June 30, 2020, it had addressed debt of Rs 17,640 crore.

Sify Q2 net profit up 35 pc to Rs 26 crore

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

IT company Sify on Friday posted a 35 per cent increase in net profit at Rs 25.7 crore in the second quarter ended September 30, 2020. The company, in a statement, said it had posted a net profit of Rs 19.1 crore in the same period a year ago. "During the quarter, we have witnessed the urgency among clients to adopt IT infrastructure models which would provide them the agility and flexibility to run their businesses remotely during the crisis," Sify CEO Kamal Nath said in the statement.

Tech Mahindra to acquire Tenzing

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

IT company Tech Mahindra on Friday said it will acquire complete stake in New Zealand-based Tenzing Group and Australian IT firm Momenton for a cumulative amount of around Rs 293 crore. The company will acquire Auckland-headquartered consulting firm Tenzing Group for about Rs 218 crore and Melbourne-based cloud and engineering services firm Momenton for about Rs 75 crore. "The acquisition of Momenton and Tenzing is in line with our strategy to strengthen our digital capabilities, and offer our clients



end-to-end transformation services," Vivek Agarwal, head (corporate development) and global head (healthcare and financial services) at Tech Mahindra, told PTI. He added that the entire team of both the companies will join Tech Mahindra. Tenzing Group will bring in around 145 employees to Tech Mahindra and Momenton Pty Ltd, 55 employees.

FB: India's data protection law has potential to propel digital economy

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Social media giant Facebook on Friday said that the data protection law in progress has potential to propel the country's digital economy and global digital trade. The company's comment came following a hearing by a Joint Committee of Parliament on Data Protection Bill, 2019, chaired by BJP MP Meenakshi Lekhi. "We deeply appreciate the opportunity to discuss data regulation issues with the Hon'ble Members of Joint Committee on the Personal Data Protection Bill. We believe that India's data protection law has the potential to propel the country's digital economy and global digital trade, and we wholeheartedly support this effort," a Facebook company spokesperson said.



The parliamentary panel on Friday quizzed social media giant Facebook about the quantum of their revenue, profit and tax payouts in India and asked what portion of their earnings were being used for data security in the country, sources said. Facebook India's policy head Ankhi Das appeared before the Joint Committee of Parliament. "That is why we deeply appreciate to be a part of this discussion and will continue to work alongside governments and regulators to find the right solutions which not only protect users' privacy but are also interoperable with other major global privacy regulations" the

company spokesperson said. Das was questioned for two hours and asked some tough and searching questions by the panel members from across the political spectrum, sources said. During the meeting, a member suggested that the social media platform should not draw inferences from the data of its users for commercial benefits of its advertisers or for electoral purposes, they said. The MPs also sought to know the revenue Facebook generates from India and what percentage of the revenue is spent on safeguards for data protection, according to sources.

The government on Saturday extended the deadline for furnishing GST annual returns for FY 2018-19 by two months till December 31. The government had last month extended the last date for filing GST annual return and audit report for the 2018-19 fiscal by a month till October 31, 2020. In a statement, the Central Board of Indirect Taxes and Customs (CBIC) said the government has been receiving a number of representations regarding need to extend due date for filing Annual Return (Form GSTR-9) and Reconciliation Statement (Form GSTR-9C) for FY 2018-19.

Deadline for filing FY19 GST annual returns extended till Dec 31

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The representations have been made on the grounds that due to the COVID-19 pandemic related lockdown and restrictions, normal business operations have still not been possible in several parts of the country, it said. The statement said it has been requested that the due dates for the same be extended beyond October 31, 2020 to enable the businesses and auditors to comply in this regard. "In view of the same, on the recommendations of the GST Council, it has been decided to extend the due date for filing Annual Return (Form GSTR-9) and Reconciliation Statement (Form GSTR-9C) for FY 2018-19 from October 31, 2020 to December 31, 2020," the CBIC said. GSTR 9 is an annual return to be filed yearly by taxpayers registered under the Goods and Services Tax (GST). It consists of details regarding the outward and inward supplies made or received under different tax heads. Furnishing of the annual return is mandatory only for taxpayers with aggregate annual turnover of above Rs 2 crore while reconciliation statement is to be furnished only by the registered persons having aggregate turnover above Rs 5 crore.

Reconciliation Statement (FORM GSTR-9C) for Financial Year 2018-19 from October 31, 2020 to December 31, 2020," the CBIC said. GSTR 9 is an annual return to be filed yearly by taxpayers registered under the Goods and Services Tax (GST). It consists of details regarding the outward and inward supplies made or received under different tax heads. Furnishing of the annual return is mandatory only for taxpayers with aggregate annual turnover of above Rs 2 crore while reconciliation statement is to be furnished only by the registered persons having aggregate turnover above Rs 5 crore.

Income tax return filing deadline for FY20 extended till Dec 31

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The deadline for filing returns by individual taxpayers for FY 2019-20 has been extended by a month till December 31, the finance ministry said on Saturday. For those taxpayers whose accounts need to be audited, the Income-Tax Return filing deadline has been extended by two months till January 31, 2021. The government had in May extended the date for filing ITR for FY2019-20 from July 31 to November 30, to give compliance relief to taxpayers.



DAUNTLESS PICKS

There are many workers who risk their lives just so that we can keep going. They are mostly never noticed. Women waste pickers are among one of them. The Body Shop and Plastic For Change have launched Project NARI which aims at making a difference in their lives. MUSBA HASHMI speaks to these frontline workers to bring you a report

At 23. She has seen the worst

Monsoons laden one danger

Plastic is merely a matter of waste for us, but to them it is as precious as it can be. Meet a 23-year-old Mangalore-based woman waste picker, Roopa who has been collecting waste from a landfill in Pachanady for about a year now.

A mother to a young daughter and having a big family to take care of, Roopa had no option but to join her mother in the profession after her husband met with an accident, that left him bed-ridden.

“Collecting waste at the landfill is very much a part of my family’s history — my grandparents used to do it, then my parents and finally I got into it as well,” she says.

Fortunately, Roopa doesn’t have to go through a lot of indifferent behaviour from the society and doesn’t hold any grudges against anyone, but there are a few incidents that did bother her at some point.

“I didn’t face any real issue from my community, but when I would visit my grandparents — during the time I used to collect waste from the landfill — their neighbours used to insult me. They called me names. They asked me if I didn’t have a better job to do. Some even behaved like we were untouchables. But I stood strong and doesn’t let their taunts make much difference in my life. I bravely stood my ground and told them that what we were doing was honest labour and that there is nothing to feel ashamed about. What kept me going all this while was the belief that no job is big or small and every occupation deserves equal respect,” Roopa tells you.

Spending atleast seven hours at the landfills, surrounded by every kind of waste, under the scorching sun, earned Roopa, not more than ₹500 a day. Only if we would be able to imagine the ordeal she had to go through.

“All what we could do with this money was to eat food and cover ourselves,” she says.

During COVID, she says, the prices of the material we would collect from landfills and sell to scrap shops plummeted and so our income reduced dramatically. We didn’t even have proper rations at home.

Though there were a lot of apprehensions in Roopa’s mind when she took up the job, she never had any fear of catching infections. “Before COVID-19, it didn’t hit our mind that we could fall sick. It was only when the pandemic hit that we realised about the danger that lies ahead of us,” she explains.

Not that she never felt like quitting. There were a dozen times when she thought of giving up the job and do something else.



Roopa, a 23-year-old waste picker, who is now working as a Quality Engineer with Plastic For Change

I DID NOT FACE ANY REAL ISSUE FROM MY COMMUNITY, BUT WHEN I WOULD VISIT MY GRANDPARENTS, THEIR NEIGHBOURS USED TO INSULT ME. THEY CALLED ME NAMES. I STOOD STRONG AND DID NOT LET THEIR TAUNTS BOTHER ME — ROOPA

“Since I had completed my PUC, I had initially refused to go to the landfill because I wanted to get a better job, but because of our family’s financial circumstances I was forced to help support my mother and start collecting waste along with her. I did it with a heavy heart. There were quite a few times in between when I wanted to give up this job, but then I was laid back each and every time because of these financial issues,” she tells you.

However, not all is lost in Roopa’s story. Her life changed when Plastic for Change identified her and extended a helping hand to her and family. “Plastic

For Change reached out to me and offered me a job role as a Quality Engineer at their factory. Ever since I have started working with them, all the insults that I had received in my life, stopped right then and there. I love my new job and I couldn’t have asked for more. It gives me a feeling of pride that I am able to do something different in life now and can make way for a bright future of my children,” she tells you with a smile.

She adds that the initiative by The Body Shop and Plastic For Change has helped her in many ways. “Whether it was the new jobs we were offered or the PPE kits we received and the installation of the water supply — the intervention of these brands is making a difference in our community,” she tells you.

Having seen all the hardships in her lives at an early age, Roopa feels that everyone should be treated equally, regardless of their background. “I hope that my children doesn’t have to go through all that I had to endure while growing up. It is disturbing. It tears our confidence into shreds. I wish my children get best of the education and grow up to do a job that they like. I just want them to make and earn a better life for themselves with all the respect from the society and passion towards their work,” she says.

She has a request to make to the Government. “It’d be great if the Government recognise our work and could provide some support in helping me build a house for my family,” she says.



Manjula, a 30-year-old Mangalore-based waste picker, is happy that her life has changed for the better

Roopa is not an exception here. A 30-year-old Mangalore-based Manjula too has to go through the same situation in life. But unlike Roopa, she has been into this profession for more than three years now.

“It was when our family was going through financial crisis that I started collecting waste from the landfill. A few of my neighbours used to go there to earn a living and that’s how I began as well, since I thought it’d be a good source of income,” Manjula, who lives with her husband and a 14-year-old daughter, tells you.

Since most of her community is involved in the same kind of work, Manjula haven’t faced any real indifference in the society. “However, while I used to collect waste from the landfill many would show sympathy towards me and questioned why I hadn’t tried out some other profession, since I was educated till PUC,” she says.

Like Roopa, her life changed and for the better when Jayanthi, a member of Plastics For Change reached out to offered a job to her. “I am extremely grateful to Jayanthi

ma’am who gave me the opportunity to work as a Quality Engineer. The job not only solved my financial worries but also saved me from working long hours at the landfill,” she tells you.

Getting a role as a Quality Engineer has definitely caused a major positive difference in her life.

“The tuition classes and the nutritional food that they provide to my daughter is another major help for my family. I’m also grateful to see the number of other social schemes that Plastics For Change and The Body Shop is bringing to my community,” she adds.

Only if one could imagine the ordeal of these women waste pickers who spend more than half of their day at the landfill collecting all types of waste and then return home only to cook for their family.

“There is no chance that anyone could like this work. But it was not as if we have an option. It makes us feel like puking. The smell sometimes become unbearable, especially during the monsoon. If I would go on to describe the scenario, one would be left disgusted,” she explains and tells you that she used to spend

nothing less than five to six hours daily at the landfill while collecting waste.

It goes without saying that many a times, Manjula thought of quitting this work, but it was not easy. “Like I said, I have a family to take care of. There were times when I made up my mind that I would leave this work, but then I realised that I couldn’t afford to. The rainy season is the most hazardous for us, not only because it is an uncomfortable time to work, but also because there are so many other risks involved. One can also meet with an accident. Even when I recall that time, a tear or two won’t stop from falling down my eyes,” Manjula, who earned ₹4000 a week, tells you.

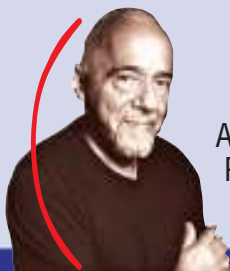
She says that she was well aware about all the risks involved at the landfill and hence, she took all the necessary precautions while working. “I was aware of the risks that collecting waste involved, and so I would be very cautious and ensure I wore boots and gloves. I’d also take a bath and wash my clothes as soon as I returned from the landfill,” she tells you.

To be able to live a dignified life, she says, is the everyone’s right and women waste pickers should be no exception. “Everyone should be able to live a dignified life. I hope that those who are still working in landfills would be able to gain better livelihood for themselves and respect in the society,” she says.

While having a home to live, clean water to drink and electricity are nothing but our daily needs, for these waste pickers it is nothing less than a luxury that they have to ask from the Government. “I hope the Government can provide some support in helping me build a house for my family. And for my community it’d be great if the Government could set up public washrooms and toilets, since there aren’t any, as well as a stable power supply,” she tells you.

It shows how one of the most important part of our society are struggling hard to live a normal life, which is obviously not so normal for them.

THERE WERE TIMES WHEN I MADE UP MY MIND THAT I WOULD LEAVE THIS WORK BUT THEN I REALISED THAT I COULDN’T AFFORD TO. THE RAINY SEASON IS MOST HAZARDOUS FOR US, NOT JUST BECAUSE IT IS AN UNCOMFORTABLE TIME TO WORK OUTSIDE BUT ALSO BECAUSE THERE ARE SO MANY OTHER RISKS INVOLVED — MANJULA



WHEN YOU ARE ENTHUSIASTIC
ABOUT WHAT YOU DO, YOU FEEL THIS
POSITIVE ENERGY. IT'S VERY SIMPLE
— PAULO COELHO

VIJAYAWADA, October 25, 2020

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**YOUR
WEEK
AHEAD**

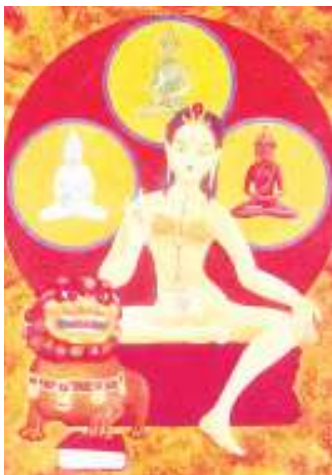
MADHU KOTIYA



ARIES March 21-April 19

Some negative forces are at play and you must fight with them this week. Seasonal ailments might make you inactive and dull. Proper diet, exercise and rest is the *mantra* of a healthy life. If you compromise on these basics for longer, you may face the repercussion of it. The working environment is not favourable and may frustrate you at times. Don't waste your time and precious energy plotting revenge. Just get on with the next phase of your life. If you are looking for work, a potential position that you'd pinned your hopes on may not come through. On the relationship front, this week you can be the master and a mentor in your relations. You are attracted to people who are very creative and maybe more than usually focused on your career now.

Lucky number 13
Lucky colour Yellow
Lucky day Thursday



LEO July 23-Aug 22

You need to be cautious regarding your health. You are likely to be under stress from a combination of factors, so it is particularly important to be gentle with yourself. If you are angry, vent it out. Release your anxiety rather than turning your anger and sorrow upon yourself. Professionally, things are not in your favour. You might face some false allegations, interference from higher authorities, and interrogations this week. You may need some assistance to find a better approach to work. Don't hesitate to ask. If you are looking for work, this too may show a need to look in a different way or a different field than the one you have been pursuing. Love and marital affairs occupy your mind but you are unable to find a smooth going.

Lucky number 12
Lucky colour Maroon
Lucky day Wednesday



SAGITTARIUS Nov 22-Dec 21

Your health will require your attention as you are prone to illness. A family member's health needs your attention too, do not neglect it. You need to let go of old wrongs and wounds to move forward. Help your loved ones to see the truth. Learn to express yourself; don't suppress your feelings and requirements. This is a good week career-wise. Businesspersons will see financial stability and gains in financial ventures. People will respect you more and your popularity will increase. Your social status shall enhance. Those who are in a job, favour from the boss is likely, your works and endeavours are taken into consideration and appreciated. You may sense some restlessness in your relationship. Make sincere efforts to make your partner happy.

Lucky number 11
Lucky colour Silver
Lucky day Monday



TAURUS April 20-May 20

This week confusion will prevail. Several issues of concern might appear with regard to health this week. You may have some hidden matters to deal with. ENT problem may surface too, that will make you run to the doctor and might occupy most of your time. You need to learn to prioritise things. On the career front, you share a good bonding with your colleagues and the people at work. This is the right time to participate in conferences and negotiations. Your compromising attitude will gain you a good opportunity. This is a good week for relationships. You will learn a whole lot about how you can take your relationship further. You will be able to make room for new people and new experiences. Make the most of this period.

Lucky number 20
Lucky colour White
Lucky day Friday



VIRGO Aug 23-Sep 22

Your physical well-being depends on your mental well-being. This is a time when you need to be very conscious of your intuitive urges and reactions and bring them into balance with the greater good and meaning in life. This is not a time to act out in rage or hatred but instead to look at the situation from a place of love and compassion. Career-wise, pay more attention to what people around you are doing. Be cautious of politics at the workplace. Some negative forces are at play at your workplace to put you down. Avoid making important decisions now. You will have delays and overdue/pending problems in all your works. And this will affect your relationships as well. Be practical and try to bring balance in life. That must be your priority.

Lucky number 21
Lucky colour Pink
Lucky day Wednesday



CAPRICORN Dec 22-Jan 19

Health is likely to suffer this week. Consider a second diagnosis. Get another health professional's opinion before you take any final decision. Be open to spiritual healing. Those who are struggling with a serious illness, know that a cure is not always linked with healing. You may require some therapy or surgery. On the career front, businesspersons will make a considerable stand. Hold your head up high and know that you have a lot that you are bringing to the table. Financially too, you may do better than you had ever dreamt of. You need to be trustworthy and reliable otherwise a rise in mental distress and misunderstanding with the family is indicated during this time. You have to be extra careful and avoid arguments.

Lucky number 19
Lucky colour Purple
Lucky day Tuesday



GEMINI May 21-June 20

This week you will feel renewed energy and charm in your life. The care and attention you have been providing to your body will leave you in high spirits. You experience the cheerful and happy state of mind. It is also the time to rely on divine faith. New direction and protection infuse trust in you that the divine spirit is working in your best interest. Professionally, you feel a new spark, a new sense of creativity within yourself. You are more confident and aggressive in your approach and decision making now. Recognition, praise from friends and authorities, promotion are likely to take place. On the personal front, limited conditions from the past might have made you detached from the world. You feel cheated and deceived in a relationship.

Lucky number 15
Lucky colour Grey
Lucky day Tuesday



LIBRA Sep 23-Oct 22

You are working hard day and night to meet the challenges of life. Slow down the speed and look after your health, which is prime of importance at this time. Your enormous efforts give you what you want in life. Overall, your vitality factor is strongly reflected at this point in time and you may be on the move. This is an excellent time to begin or increase a fitness plan. At work, you are bold and courageous in your undertakings and actions. Your creative energies are high, and you have a good sense of direction in life. You may head a meeting, conference, or just lead a project which requires group activities and handle it with command. Things are not so good on the love front. You may face disappointments and depression. Research before you get into personal relationships.

Lucky number 25
Lucky colour Brown
Lucky day Sunday



AQUARIUS Jan 20-Feb 18

You are mentally strong this week. Your open-mindedness and straightforwardness will help you grow more if you add generosity and pinch of kindness in your attitude. Showing your authority is important as is gentleness. On the professional front, you are giving more in terms of time and energy to the organisation you are working for. A powerful person is likely to support you. Overall, your career is looking up. On the personal front, you may be a little detached. This week romance and close personal relationships are not the brightest for you. Listen to what your inner voice tells you. Stress levels need to be taken into consideration. This is a temporary phase, you will be on the right track soon.

Lucky number 18
Lucky colour Black
Lucky day Saturday



CANCER June 21-July 22

This week you will feel fresh, rejuvenated, and inspired to move ahead. The health remains good, and you are in the process of making it even better. A good diet, nutrition, exercise, and living life natural are a part of your resolution. Spiritually and emotionally you will feel fulfilled. Your enthusiasm and charm is increasing by the day, making others envious of you. On the career front, you may find that the situations are not favourable for you at the workplace and you may make up your mind for a change. You may be holding yourself back because you fear to move into the future. Seek new opportunities, for a better future. On the personal front, you should be flexible and go with the flow right now. Stick to your principles and at the same time honour others' intelligence as well.

Lucky number 28
Lucky colour Sky Blue
Lucky day Saturday



SCORPIO Oct 23-Nov 21

This week you grow even stronger and are ready to face any obstacle in your life. Even when facing serious health challenges, a positive attitude can work wonders. Your firm stand and taking care of your health will work in your favour. On the professional front, a good news is on the cards. Your connections with people will grow. You are an expert in fitting things together in new or unusual ways and that makes the work a lot smoother. If you are looking for a job, you are about to find the right fit. You are very balanced and organised workwise than you think. On the relationship front, co-operation and harmony will be your major concern this week. Be a good listener, trust your instincts, and connect with your innermost desires.

Lucky number 10
Lucky colour Mustard
Lucky day Tuesday



PISCES Feb 19-March 20

This week you are focussed on being disciplined and know the needs of your body, mind, and spirit. You have a clear vision with regard to your values. Your concentration during this time is commendable. Your creativity will make you move constantly. You should use your positive energy in creative works, as an inner sense of satisfaction will give you more confidence. On the career front, other people may not understand or support your new ideas or proposals, but if you know that you are right, go ahead, and try to make them understand what your point of view is. Love relation is under question. It is important to give your partner time and space. You need to share your feelings with the one who you trust and find out the possible solution.

Lucky number 30
Lucky colour Peach
Lucky day Saturday

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ASTROTURF
BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

Season of empowerment

At the outset, I greet the valuable readers on the solemn occasion of *Shardeya Navaratri*, which ends today, following a nine days of intense prayer regime. The beauty of this particular festivity is that after spiritedly pursuing prayers, it ends in a celebratory mode on *Vijaya Dashami* — the day marked with Lord Shri Ram's victory over demonic Ravana and freeing Sita from his captivity. The question now is: Is it just remembrance of that singular auspicious event, or that it is supposed to offer something relevant in today's terms? If it has some lessons for us in immediate terms, then it is time to assess, what we have gained during the process.

Symbolically speaking, what does Sita being freed from captivity mean for us in contemporary terms? It needs to be remembered that potentially we are born with immense powers — in fact, divine. That however, doesn't involuntarily play out, and mostly remains hidden within. We need to explore, identify, acknowledge, hone and then bring them out of captivity of ignorance.

The process as such is not easy. The challenges are many. Remember, Mother Goddess Durga is visualised having 10

hands. In eight, she carries armouries made available by different *Devas*, so as to combat evil forces coming from as many directions. Only two hands carry accessories marked with creative potential — Conch shell in one and Lotus flower in the other. Conch shell when blown gets tu need to cosmic forces. Lotus flower marked with its beauty and splendour is symbolic of creativity. But what are those evil forces expectedly coming from eight different directions? Are they negative forces thrust by external factors, or are they within us? Of course, we shall have to combat challenges thrown by external factors. But they can be spotted and countered, if we pool in all resources in hand and efficiently use them.

More challenging, however, are the evil forces playing from within — our preconditioned mind marked by our unending cravings and temptations of life, negative thought trends, lack of alertness necessary for timely initiatives and responses, and habit tendencies. All the more because they stand in way of positives within coming out in full play. Caught up in the usual flow of life, we seldom care to identify, acknowledge and address them within time. That makes it



incumbent upon us to first address the evil forces playing from within.

Nine days of prayer regime is stipulated with the above end in view. In the process, the primary focus is on Mother Goddess Durga, the epitome of *Shakti*. For, all aspects of our dynamic existence are primarily driven by nature driven energy-orchestra (*Shakti*). And energy remains a double edged weapon. When judiciously used for productive ends, it is rewarding and fulfilling. If, however, knowingly or unknowingly it gets misdirected — put to unbecoming acts — it can prove self-defeating. How we apply our energies in real terms, depends on our unique character — positively or negatively oriented. We need to be on full alert to consciously use our power towards well-meaning purposes. The irony, however, is that ordinarily, our flirtatious mind remains caught up in the tempting influences of the glare and glitters of the seeming world. We keep passionately chasing what lies at the surface level, randomly jumping from one desire trend to the other. In the process, we seldom remain alert enough to use our power base in a reasoned way, and with obvious consequences.

From the fourth day, we simultane-

ously pay attention to Mother Goddess Laxmi marked with our creative aspirations. This reminds us to remain focused to our need based requirements. Nothing, however, would come through, if we don't use our resources intelligently. So, during the last three days, Mother Goddess Saraswati, the epitome of knowledge and wisdom is pursued. All through the process, our indwelling negatives will keep playing from within, which we could identify and acknowledge. We are supposed to make offerings of such unseemly tendencies at the altar of Mother trinity, so as to purify our mind. Following which, we gain access to full landscape of mind to come out with our best. We then look at the issues in hand, the aspirational urges, and challenges coming our way in right perspective due. That paves the way to negotiate with the callings of life as an informed and wide awake person with ease and comfort, which may lead us to a better tomorrow.

Navaratri, thus, provides us with an occasion to get periodically geared up to take on life ahead in all strength.

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the pioneer agenda

FROM THE INSIDE

Dussehra at Kulasekaranpatinam
A sleepy coastal village deep in the heart of South India (Tamil Nadu) gives Dussehra its own twist

10



11

Mirzapur 2 as good or bad as 1

Your regrets aren't what you did, but what you didn't do. So I take every opportunity
— Cameron Diaz



As the world battles a pandemic this year, the smog situation in Delhi can wreak havoc on public health, writes SONAL SHUKLA, as she details the factors and challenges before the concerned governments in handling the perennial hazard

THE RETURN OF DELHI SMOG

A blanket of haze has been shrouding the National Capital for some days now: the smog season is back. The AQI has crossed 300, pushing air quality to 'very poor' level, which was last witnessed in February. NASA images show clusters of fire in Punjab and Haryana, as the post-harvest paddy stubble burning has started in the farms.

Last year towards October end, the Delhi Government had to declare a 'public health emergency' for nine days, as Delhi experienced its longest period of hazardous air pollution. This year, as the world battles a pandemic, the smog situation can wreak a havoc on the public health. The health experts warn that smog can increase the time the virus can stay in the environment, increasing the infection rate. The increased number of Covid cases in Delhi and Mumbai are already being linked to the higher pollution level of these cities. Pollution also affects immunity and lungs, thus placing the Delhi residents at higher Corona susceptibility and fatality risk.

WHAT'S BEHIND THE DELHI SMOG?

The trough like topography of North India and meteorological conditions set by winter season makes the pollution linger over it, creating the condition for Delhi smog. With the onset of the winter season, weather condition becomes conducive to pollution, as cold settles air closer to the surface (inversion), wind speed drops and moisture goes up — so the pollution is not dispersed. Diwali firecrackers and stubble burning which also occur in the months of October-November, become contributory factors to the smog, as they add on to Delhi's pre-existing air pollution. As around this time the wind direction also changes to north-westerly, the stubble burning pollution is carried towards Delhi from its neighbouring states.

CONTRIBUTION OF STUBBLE BURNING TO DELHI SMOG

As the Government of Delhi, Punjab and at Centre, squabble over the contribution of stubble burning to Delhi's smog — while the Punjab CM cited the findings of IISER, to state that stubble burning is not responsible for most of the Delhi's pollution — a look at other studies on the matter is merited.

A recent study undertaken by IIT Kanpur and Delhi Pollution Control Board links contribution of PM 2.5 as 38% to road dust, 20% to vehicular emission, 11% to industries etc; with stubble burning merely adding on to the current load. Council of Energy, Environment and Water, a Delhi based think tank, which also arrives at similar figures, agrees that local sources and unfavourable meteorological conditions are the main factors behind Delhi's air pollution woes; with transportation and road dusts as the biggest culprits. Massive Earth Foundation, another think tank, also undertook a research to find the impact of stubble burning, thermal power plants, Diwali crackers and broken transportation of the air pollution; and found vehicular traffic as the biggest culprit, which has shifted base line of air pollution in India from a desirable 60 AQI to unhealthy 200.

According to Government's analysis of Delhi

smog during 2019, the contribution of stubble burning was variable, only peaking at 44% once.

However, it will be pertinent to quote Supreme Court mandated agency, Environment Pollution (Prevention and Control) Authority (EPCA) on the issue, "even if it is not the only cause of pollution in the region, there is no doubt that the transportation of pollutants from burning fields is the tipping point that makes winter's already unhealthy air quality into a public health emergency."

CASE OF STUBBLE BURNING

The whole issue of stubble burning is based in structural fault in the Indian agriculture system, which promotes wheat and rice crops through assured MSP — even though India is the second largest producer of rice and wheat in the world, and a foodgrain surplus state. This is creating many ecological problems for Delhi's neighbours — the erstwhile Green Revolution states, Punjab, Haryana and Western UP — like alarming rate of ground water depletion due to excessive water intensive crop of paddy and stubble burning. The use of combined harvesters for paddy which is common in these states, leaves behind a nine-inch stubble in the farm. Moved by the Government assured economic returns, farmers in these states sow wheat after paddy harvesting — the time duration between the two is a month or less; not enough for the stubble to decompose naturally, thus stubble burning, the cheapest option, is resorted to.

Not just is the stubble burning polluting, it is equally harmful for the soil itself, which loses most essential nutrients like organic carbon, nitrogen, phosphorus, potassium, sulphur with the burning of the stubble. The heat destroys the beneficial microflora and fauna from the soil and hardens it; thus affecting physical, chemical and biological attributes of soil making it less fertile and vulnerable to weed and drought.

The long term solution to the problem lies in crop diversification: a move towards less water intensive crops like soyabbeans, pulses, corn — which are harvested by hand or can be harvesting mechanically earlier on, providing sufficient window for the residue to decompose before the next sowing. For the time being, the in-situ and ex-situ sustainable management techniques for crop residue are an alternative.

SUPREME COURT IN ACTION

The Supreme Court (SC) has been quite proactive on the issue of air pollution in Delhi; closely monitoring the situation since last year, when it criticised Punjab, Haryana and UP Governments for failing to control stubble burning. In February, SC directed Central and Delhi Government to take strong measure for stopping stubble burning; and approved an action plan on the matter, based on the affidavit of Ministry of Agriculture — which included steps like setting up smog towers, smog guns in Delhi, and implementing other in-situ and ex-situ stubble management techniques which will be funded by Central Government and implemented by the State Governments of Punjab, Haryana, UP and Delhi. In September, the SC had rebuked the Delhi and Central Government for delay in setting up of the Smog Towers in Delhi. A few days back SC



THE LONG TERM SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM LIES IN CROP DIVERSIFICATION: A MOVE TOWARDS LESS WATER INTENSIVE CROPS LIKE SOYABEANS, PULSES, CORN — WHICH ARE HARVESTED BY HAND OR CAN BE HARVESTING MECHANICALLY EARLIER ON, PROVIDING SUFFICIENT WINDOW FOR THE RESIDUE TO DECOMPOSE BEFORE THE NEXT SOWING. FOR THE TIME BEING, THE IN-SITU AND EX-SITU SUSTAINABLE MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES FOR CROP RESIDUE ARE AN ALTERNATIVE



appointed former judge, Justice Lokur as one man committee to monitor stubble burning in Delhi, and its neighbourhood, and report to SC directly in 15 days.

ACTION BY EPCA, CENTRAL GOVERNMENT AND NEIGHBOURING STATES

EPCA is monitoring the implementation of the SC approved Action Plan, by the Centre and the States. It also suggests other measures to the States like setting up control room, obtaining undertakings from big construction projects and red and orange category industries on pollution. Central Government is experimenting with PUSA decomposer in farms in Delhi, Punjab, Haryana and UP. It is also funding Smog Towers, in-situ stubble management machines, farmer awareness campaigns and has set off 50 teams of Central Pollution Control Board for monitoring the situation in Delhi and its neighbourhood.

The steps taken by Punjab, Haryana and UP as reported to EPCA, mentioned in its last month's report are: making in-situ stubble management machines available to farmers at highly subsidised rates through purchase by farmer directly, or on rental through village panchayats and Farmer Producer Organisations by setting up Custom Hire Centres. A mobile app is also being launched for creating awareness in the farmers about the scheme. Ex-Situ management steps are also being taken for converting stubble into bio-energy and power plants are being set up for the purpose.

Despite of these steps by the Central Government and the States, farmers especially of Punjab and Haryana are complaining about not receiving any help from the Governments, thus being forced to burn the stubble. Hence, the implementation of these schemes seems to be rather thin on the ground, also its being reported that the action against stubble fires has not been as widespread this year, as before.

TOWARDS A SMOG FREE DELHI

Delhi needs 65% reduction in PM 2.5 to meet the desirable national standard. The strategy for that has to be comprehensive and multi-pronged. First, adopting crop diversification, proper implementation of in-situ and ex-situ residue management policies by States, creating a market for crop residue, setting up crop residue collection system based on municipal solid waste collection system — thus giving alternative options to farmers to opt out of stubble burning.

Second, to fix Delhi's broken public transport infrastructure. There has been four-fold increase in vehicles in Delhi between 2000-2018. The pandemic has further aggravated this trend, pushing up the purchase and plying of private vehicles on the road. Number of public buses in Delhi need to be ramped up, while creating smooth connectivity with the metro. Emission testing, which is only 25%, must be pushed up. More incentives on e-vehicles like waiver of road fee and low interest loans must be provided. Third, controlling the road dust by intensive roadside plantation of big crown trees, planting grass on the sidewalks and improved solid waste management.

The writer is a public policy analyst, and a lawyer, an alumnus of National Law University, Jodhpur

STEPS TAKEN BY DELHI GOVERNMENT

- Campaign called 'Yuddh Pradhushan ke Viruddh'
- Green War Room for monitoring, enforcement compliance, complaint redressal
- Green Mobile app for launching complaints
- Spraying PUSA decomposer for free in fields for composting of stubble
- Smog towers to come up in Connaught Place and Anand Vihar in few months
- Strict anti-dust policy for construction and demolition sites
- Smog guns for hotspots
- Transplantation policy for projects
- Campaign 'Red light on, Gaddi off'
- E-vehicle policy — by 2024, 25% new vehicles be electric



WHAT'S GRAP (GRADED RESPONSE ACTION PLAN)

- Comes into effect in Delhi and its neighbouring towns based on the severity of pollution
- Put in effect from October 15, by EPCA as AQI turned 'very poor'
- Banning of electricity generators apart from essential and emergency services, was ordered under it
- Other measures include increasing bus and metro services and raising the parking fee
- Steps when situation turns 'severe': closure of brick kilns, water sprinkling, frequent mechanised cleaning of roads, maximisation of power from natural gas
- 'Emergency situation' measures: odd/even scheme, banning construction activity and entry of trucks in Delhi



IT'S NOT THAT GOOD
DOESN'T TRIUMPH OVER
EVIL, IT'S THAT THE POINT
SPREAD IS TOO SMALL
— BOB THAVES



Devotees carry fire in earthenware pots and bowls, as fire is considered holy in Hindu mythology and is used during the festival to signify purity and the new beginnings that it brings

DUSSEHRA

OF KULASEKARANPATINAM, TUTICORIN



Signifying the triumph of good over evil, Dussehra is celebrated with much gusto and fanfare and in several forms and almost all parts of India. The most interesting place to observe this epic festival is at Kulasekaranpatinam, near Madurai. A sleepy coastal village deep in the heart of South India-Kulasekaranpatinam, near Madurai, in Tamil Nadu, gives it its own twist. Devotees converge in Kulasekaranpatinam from all parts of Tamil Nadu as they take to the streets in the village dressed as Goddess Kali and various other mythological characters.

The 12-day celebrations begin on the starting of the lunar cycle, and culminate on the day Dussehra is celebrated. The events take place in and around the 300-year-old Mutharamman Temple in the village, which is an important part of the town's history. The beginnings of the festival was much more humble, but over the years the participation of many more villages and towns have given it a deeper significance and fervor. The vast stretch of seashore along the area plays a gentle host during the occasion and a general air of gaiety, excitement and festivity hangs in the air...

Excerpted with permission from Abhishek Hajela's India: East Meets West. A recipient of International Nikon Award, Hajela is a passionate travel photographer, who loves to capture people in their environment and likes to tell life stories through visual imagery



A number of villages and towns in Tamil Nadu field participants during the festival who divide themselves into groups of 6-10 people. These people dress up as mythological characters, saints and Goddess Kali. An accompanying orchestra team that loudly announces their arrival and presence further enhances this procession



Once a person wears the Kali outfit, they go into a state of trance and start dancing almost maniacally. It is said that the Goddess Kali possesses whoever wears the Kali outfit and those people become manifestations of her divine form



The trident represents the three supreme beings of Hindu Mythology, which are Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. It is also said to represent the past, present and the future, the seven *chakras* and the three energy channels of *Ida*, *Pingala* and *Sushmana*

HOME THEATRE

Mirzapur 2 as good or bad as 1



MIRZAPUR 2
Amazon Prime Video
***ing:** Pankaj Tripathi, Divyenndu Sharma, Ali Fazal, Shweta Tripathi, Harshita Gaur, Rasika Dugal, Rajesh Tailang, Sheeba Chadha, Anjum Sharma, Vijay Varma and others
Rated: 6/10

First things first. *Mirzapur* has not reformed itself from being perhaps one of the most violent, sleazy, abusive and yet unashamedly luring. Season 2 is even more so, at least in the first three mentioned traits. The disclaimer at the beginning attempts to assuage your alarm by saying totally fictitious and the like. However, the knowledge of this sort of a scenario being a reality in the cow belt of the nation, the unabated goondaism, the police criminal nexus, the impunity and violence with which criminals conduct their business keeps you on the hook all through the 10 episodes of Season 2, which, by the way, has set itself up for a third season. Personally, I eschew and cringe at pronounced screen violence and in this one the bloodbaths are what makes for the story. *Mirzapur* is India's *Game of*

Thrones with just a tad less history to it. The man who will be King of Mirzapur has to be powerful, with no chinks of vulnerability in his demeanour. He should be able to kill at will even if it is his favourite and loyal servant for decades or his own father! Corruption of the system matches up with the corruption of the mind, boy and soul of all its main characters who have, come to think of it, done a pretty good job if you hate them all in equal measure. Will not be able to call *Mirzapur* riveting but yes it draws your blood to your temples, makes you curdle in fear and cringe in disgust with such pointed venom and force that it automatically qualifies for a binge watch. The end is predictable and similar to the first season, the characters have matured and the violence here prevails only to push the story into a state of no repair and the climax sets up the window for the next season with the polish of a veteran. *Mirzapur* will be watched in the third season too. How watch-worthy is such content can be a topic for debate on another platform. Meanwhile waiting avidly for the sequel of *The Family Man*.

Short & sweet

LAGHUSHANKA
SonyLiv
Short film, 14 minutes
***ing:** Sanjay Mishra, Raghav Juyal, Abhishek Chauhan
Rated: 8/10

The thing about short films is that they are fully loaded second to second to tell a story. In this format the story has to be short but have the potential of leaving a long term impact. Stunning climax, an ending you may not have fathomed, and every frame meant to tell the story, or should one say race to finish the story because the director has just 14 minutes to leave a mark on you. *Laghushanka* is of that

potent, telling and interesting category. It deals with the issue of bedwetting by an adult girl who has a marriage staring down her face, a hysterical family and the prospect of it coming out in the open in her *sasural*. The film has been treated with a lot of acumen, tender loving care and slick production which keeps you hooked from the beginning to the end. It also delivers a powerful message on human weakness and ailments that are often treated with insensitivity and indifference. This head turner film is neither insensitive nor indifferent to the issue it has at and must watch.



Worth a watch

A SUITABLE BOY
Netflix
***ing:** Tabu, Ishaan Khatter, Tanya Maniktala, Rasika Dugal, Ram Kapoor, Mikhail Sen, Namit Das
Rated: 6/10

Many of us over the last 27 years would have tried to reach out to a copy of *A Suitable Boy* only to balk at the sheer size of the novel — 1349 pages. This alone was a good enough for a large number of people to stay away from one of the longest novels published in a single volume. But thanks to Mira Nair, one can now find out why the book had created quite a stir when the book was out in 1993. The subject was enough to make it the talk of the town — a mother's quest to look for a suitable boy for her youngest daughter. Even though there are a few misrepresentations of how women behaved back then and what they wore, one can give them a miss and instead concentrate on how Nair has brought the 1951s era alive once again on the screen. The six-episode limited series takes one on a journey on what it was like to live in a post-Independent India. A few clippings give us a sneak peek of what it was like when people voted for the very first time. But the mini-series and the book is not about post-Independent India but the lives of people in that time and how a mother

goes about choosing a husband for her daughter and rejecting many because they are — of course — not suitable. A mother knows best the adage which comes across loud and clear. Despite the fact that Tanya Maniktala's character keeps smiling even though there is an internal turmoil, she does a great job as the daughter who has to do the choosing. Tabu, Ishaan Khatter and Ram Kapoor



do a brilliant job in supporting roles. In fact, they are the backbone of this mini-series. While many may not agree with the whole concept with a mother looking for a suitable boy given that we are living in the 21st Century. But the truth remains that arranged marriages and a parent choosing husband/wife is not such an alien concept even today. Overall, the mini-series is entertaining and keeps you glued wanting to know what comes next and who is finally the suitable one. — Shalini Sakesna

Of magic and life lessons

OVER THE MOON
Netflix
***ing:** Cathy Ang, John Cho, Ruthie Ann Miles, Sandra Oh, Phillipa Soo, Robert G Chiu
Rated: 6.5/10

There is something so sweet and cute about watching animation especially if it is a fairy tale. There is a reason why even adults love watching them.

The whole idea of seeing a kid believe in fairy tales and living it, makes us relive the same and take us back to times when we were kids and believed in Santa Claus and the idea of an old lady who lives on the Moon and keeps herself busy by spinning. But as adults, we do know that the dark patches on this natural satellite are actually deep craters on its surface.

Over The Moon, is one such sweet fairy tale even though it does borrow a lot from Disney — a castle, a princess, a side kick and neon colours that covers the entire canvas. But then Disney is the benchmark when it comes to animation and it is no wonder that the makers would want to be as close as they can get to perfection. This lunar adventure has

magical locations, fantastic animation, good music and sweet characters. The stark contrast when the protagonist lands on Moon, makes one feel a bit disconcerting but the vibrancy and positive life lesson — family is what matters the most — makes this a must watch especially if one has kids. — Shalini Sakesna

Retelling a classical tale

REBECCA
Netflix
***ing:** Lily James, Armie Hammer, Kristin Scott Thomas, Sam Riley
Rated: 5.5/10

Many of us have either seen or read *Rebecca* by Daphne du Maurier. Hence, there are no surprises when it comes to the climax or what is to come next. What is different here than the 1940 psychological thriller directed by Alfred Hitchcock is of course the way the two films have dealt with the same story. Then there is the whole black and white as opposed to colour. The chilliness and the cold reserve that played out so brilliantly in the Hitchcock version is totally missing here. There is Laurence Olivier and Joan Fontaine as opposed to Lily James and Armie Hammer. This *Rebecca* leaves you cold, unmoved and somewhat disconnected. Though it is never right nor fair to compare two movies with the same story as a viewer it is difficult to look at this film without doing the unforgivable. However, for those who have not seen the Hitchcock version, it will be a treat to watch the book come alive. While there is no way one can even compare Laurence Olivier and Joan Fontaine characters to Lily James and Armie Hammer's, the latter manage to hold their ground well. James, who has done movies like *Mama Mia*, *Here We Go Again!* and *Cinderella*, plays Mrs de Winter well. But instead of coming off as somebody who is naïve and innocent, she comes across as a person who is more curious and we know where that leads. Still one can't ignore her performance here which is delivered well. One however, finds it difficult to understand what her motive is especially when she realises that her husband did kill albeit an accident and covered it up — is it because she realises that she is the only woman her husband loved or it is something entirely different? This *Rebecca* leaves the viewer to interpret the last look of the second Mrs de Winter. A movie to watch if not seen Hitchcock's version. — Shalini Sakesna

TELE TALE

KULFI TURNS HOST

Popular child artist Aakriti Sharma aka Kulfi is all set to co-host Star Plus' upcoming singing reality show *Taare Zameen Par* alongside ace comedian Sugandha Mishra. The talented duo will enthrall viewers with various performances on stage, enabling a fun-viewing experience. Premiering on Monday, November 2, the show will highlight the musical journey of 20 children who will be nurtured, supported and encouraged by 3 celebrated mentors Shankar Mahadevan, Tony Kakkar and Jonita Gandhi. Little Kulfi aka Aakriti Sharma has won many hearts with her innocence in her earlier show *Kulfi Kumarr Bajewala* and she is a pro at portraying emotions with much ease and perfection. *Kulfi Kumar Bajewala* fame Aakriti Sharma embarks on a new journey and she says: "I am happy and excited to host/anchor my first show on television. The entire team has been kind and helpful



especially Sugandha *didi*, she has been the best partner to me. I get to learn so many things while shooting for this show since singing is my favorite hobby. In the coming days, I wish to learn the music from Shankar Sir who is the mentor on our show." Gear up to watch a unique show which explores the talent, personality and goofiness of young singing wonders. **THE UNBREAKABLE JODI** Sony SAB's widely acclaimed historical fiction show, *Tenali Rama*, continues to win viewers' hearts by reviving the ancient tales and anecdotes of the legendary scholar and poet Tenali Rama and taking them right into the heart of Raja Krishnadevaraya's Vijayanagar. The show continues to gain immense love and support for its engaging and values driven storyline that offers entertainment across all ages in a family. Talking about the glorious success on television and sharing their experience so far, Krishna Bharadwaj — everyone's beloved Pandit Rama Krishna and Tarun Khanna —



the celebrated king Krishnadevaraya, get candid about their journey so far as artistes and a lot more. Krishna Bharadwaj, better known as Pandit Rama Krishna since past three and a half years shared key highlights of the journey so far: "I have lived this character for so long that I do not even remember my life before Tenali Rama. Pandit Rama Krishna is a part of me, and I am so glad that I have had the opportunity to adopt all the noteworthy qualities of Rama. This show has given me immense love and support from the fans, and it is indeed a heartwarming feeling when a character succeeds in creating a positive change in someone's life. A lot of fans reach out to me talking about how the show made them smile or helped them cope with difficult times. As an actor, it is really fulfilling." Tarun, while sharing his views on the reasons behind the success of this show, said: "Since my childhood till now, I have never come across a show that is a total family entertainer and at the same time high on values. Tenali Rama is a show that familiarizes the audience with our Indian culture. In my family my six-year-old son and my 75-year-old father-in-law watch this show together. There are hardly any shows that can bring such distinct age groups together. The characters have been so beautifully and cleverly designed that even a character like Amma who has no dialogues in the show has been loved. The characters are so well rounded and unique that makes him stand out in any situation. This is immense hard work and dedication that has determined the success of this show. Sharing about their experience of working with one another, Krishna said: "I feel Rama and Krishnadevaraya's character are like Lord Krishna and Sudama. Rama practically worships Krishnadevaraya and would do anything for him. So, the chemistry between these two characters are really important for the show. After Tarun's arrival on the show, we never lacked the chemistry. It was there since day one." Adding further, Tarun said, "I was thrilled to be a part of this show as it is fulfilled my childhood dream of being a part of the world of Tenali Rama. Before joining the show, I had not watched any of the episodes and I got the glimpse of Krishna's talent on my first day of the shoot. I have rarely seen artists who have such a stronghold on their

language and Krishna is certainly one of those few actors."

BEATING THE BLUES AWAY

Given the tough past six months that we have spent during the lockdown, the current festive season is giving a whole lot of positive energy to everyone! Last year during this time, we all were excited and in a festive mood spreading cheer all around. In the same way, Sayantani Ghosh who is currently seen as Rasiya in Colors' *Barrister Babu* & will also be seen in Colors Shandaar *Ravivaar*, misses being in Kolkata for Dura Puja. The actress says she feels nostalgic about being away from all the festivities in Kolkata. However, the popular show *Barrister Babu* and the upcoming two-hour long special segment Shandaar *Ravivaar* are helping the actress cope up! Sayantani will be seen celebrating Durga Pooja and doing



the traditional dance in both the shows. Commenting about the same Sayantani Ghosh said: "The ambience during Durga Puja in Kolkata is totally different. The festival fever is unmatched and everyone is gripped by the festive fervour. I miss the noise of the dhak (drums) and wearing new clothes. These were yearly rituals for me wherein there used to be one pandal in every single lane in Kolkata! This year, I am feeling a bit sad as I will not be able to go due to COVID-19. Although the flights are open now, I do not want to risk travelling especially because of the current situation as my parents are senior citizens and I do not want to risk their health. In our show the current track is around Durga puja and so is my performance in Shandaar *Ravivaar* and the atmosphere around is really making me feel more nostalgic. Hopefully next year, by the blessings of Maa Durga, I'll be able to go there!"

‘Interesting to play traditional father’

RAJENDRA CHAWLA, who plays Pratap Ratan Bansal in *Tera Yaar Hoon Main* on Sony SAB, speaks with SHALINI SAKSENA about how tough it was to shoot under the new normal, how this role is different and upcoming projects

■ What is your role in the show?

The show represents three generations — grandfather, father and son. I play Pratap Ratan Bansal who is the eldest in the family. He lives his life according to what he thinks is right. He doesn't belong to the era where the father is not a friend but someone who needed to be heard when he spoke without being questioned. According to him each relationship is defined and need not be merged.

■ What is the best thing about your character?

It is his quirkiness that is interesting. It is not as if he is in a foul mood all the time. However, the other person may think otherwise. He is a fun person to be with. He has fun with this grandson. But he has a grudge. He wanted his grandson to be a cricketer but he could be one. So, Bansal keeps taunting him about this. But he loves his family. **■ Was it tough to go back to shooting after the lockdown opened?**

Yes, definitely. Before the show started its shoot, we had a virtual meeting with a doctor. He told us that while on the sets, we must always think that the person in front of us is asymptomatic. He told us that despite all the precautions the production house takes, we must not let our guard down. But doing this was so tough and scary. When we reached the set, the normal was to hug and greet each other. But on the first day, nobody exchanged more than two lines. Each one of us was scared that more conversation will mean a hand on the shoulder and we had to maintain distance. We avoided talking to each other. It will take time to get things back to normal.

■ You have played the role of a father a few times, how is this different?

The first thing is that I have never played a father who is from the 40s and the 50s. Till now, I had played the role of a progressive father. Here I play a traditional father which is interesting. Also, the way I deliver the dialogues is different, language here is different. The character is Marwari. I don't know anything about the accent or how they behave.

■ You have been in the industry for over two decades now. How have things changed?

Back then there were fewer people in the industry but we managed to get things done. Now, there are a lot more people and jobs are defined. Earlier, a



Before the shoot started, we had a virtual meeting with a doctor. He told us that while on the sets, we must always think that the person in front of us is asymptomatic

verbal agreement was enough. Now everything has to be done via emails — it has become a corporate set-up now. This could be because there is far more work involved.

■ Does this mean that competition has increased?

Yes, there is competition. But it also means that there is much more work in the industry. Many youngsters now don't have to struggle for work. There is theatre, there is TV, there is web and films that offer all kinds of diverse work. There is no dearth of work today. This means one gets to do varied work. Even cinema has changed. This is because the younger generation has access to more information.

■ You have done TV shows and films. How are the two different when it comes to acting?

There is no difference. For each platform, be it theatre, TV or films, I have always done my work honestly. The only difference is that in cinema, one gets more time to prepare for the character. The director has time to pay attention to how the character needs to go forward. In TV, this is not possible since the director has little time. So here, I have to be prepared 90 per cent before I reach the set.

■ How did your acting career begin?

It began with Marathi theatre. I met Satish Kaushik and ended up doing more theatre. In time, I ended up with a Marathi serial. Since I didn't have any Godfather my previous work propelled me further. Wherever I am today, is due to the people I met in my work and I am grateful to them for it.

■ What are your future plans?

I am working on two shows. One, of course, *Tera Yaar Hoon Main* and the other is *Mere Dad Ki Dulhan* on Sony Entertainment Television. In between, if I get a film, I will do that as well. Also, I love to work with new-age directors. Working on web series doesn't involve too much time since they are finite.

BREAKING THE GLASS CEILING

Best possible anchors

I was born to two very amazing people. My father, Anil Kamineni, is one of the calmest people that one can meet. Whenever I faced a crisis in my life, my father was the first person I would go to. I remember even when I was a kid; he would be my go-to person, whenever I faced any challenge. He listens carefully to the issue at hand and always gives very precise answers.

My mother, on the other hand, is fiercely protective of me and my sister. She is always looking out for us, making sure that we are fine.

First-hand experience

I remember that I was still in school when the Apollo, Delhi, was being built. That meant that we had to move across the country quite a bit. I feel really blessed that it happened because I got to learn so much from this. I studied for a while in Jaipur, and though I couldn't keep in touch with my friends from there back then, the experience taught me immensely about dealing with people and understanding them.

Family kept me grounded

I come from an elite background, but my family always kept me grounded. When I was a child, I remember my grandfather teaching me and my sister how important it is to value money and understand how it impacts people's lives.

He taught me many things, but the one thing that he said that remains with me always is: "Upasana, you were born in this family for a reason. And that reason is not to enjoy the luxuries of life alone. You should work hard to be able to give back to society. Do something that will help people always". I made his words my mantra.

Money-wise

Not many know that while growing up, I was kept on a monthly budget. People assume that since I was from a well-to-do family, I was given everything. But that is not the case. Yes, both of us - I and my sister - were pampered. But we were far from being spoiled. In fact, till I was in school I wasn't given any pocket money. My mother would pack lunch for me. My father owns Prime Time, a gaming parlour. So, when we wanted to, he would take us there. But, we never got any pocket money till the time we were in college.

And frankly, even when I went abroad to study, my father kept me on a strict monthly budget and there was no extra money if I wanted to buy something expensive.

My father once told me that money remains with people who value it. The impact of it is that even today, I think twice before splurging, because the wealth might be mine, but the resources are not.

Always been very ambitious

To be honest, I wasn't very good at studies. In fact, I could never understand why we were asked to mug up the answers. I would only write what I believed in. In school, when teachers would ask me questions, my answers wouldn't be bookish as I would say what I saw and understand from what's happening around us. Many didn't like that. But I guess I was always a person of my own mind and learnt quickly from what's happening around me, rather than from books.

However, I was very ambitious. In fact, I started working even before I finished my education. But my dad wanted me to give importance to my education first.

I remember, when I was studying abroad, I just wanted to finish my courses as soon as possible so that I could come back home and start working here.



From left to right: Shobana Kamineni, Preetha Reddy, Upasana Kamineni, Dr Prathap Reddy, Sindoori Reddy, Suneeta Reddy and Sangita Reddy



Upasana with her parents Shobana Kamineni and Anil Kamineni



With her grandparents



Chiranjeevi, Surekha Konidala, Upasana and Ram Charan

Special connection with London

After I finished my schooling from Hyderabad Public School and Mayo College Girls' School, Jaipur I came back to Hyderabad and completed my Intermediate at the Villa Marie College.

I then moved to the USA, where I pursued my Bachelor of Arts from the University of Pennsylvania. But that was a tough phase for me. I had grown up in a city and to be in a town was something of a challenge. I didn't like being there at all.

So, I pursued my Master's in Global Marketing and Management from Regent's University, London. I just fell in love with London. It is one of the most beautiful places in the world, and to my good fortune, I even stayed at this amazing place in Central London.

But, what truly makes London special for me is that it was the starting point of my transformative journey. I started being more fitness conscious and living a healthier life. When I started exercising and outdoor activities, I could have hired any top fitness trainer as I came from a well-to-do family. But, like I mentioned, since childhood I was kept on a strict monthly budget.

Even when I was in London, I had a set amount of money each month that I could spend the way I wanted to live. So, making sure that I never overspent, I didn't hire an expensive trainer. That was a learning experience, to live a good life on a budget. And London helped me under-

stand how in practicality I can make the best out of the resources available to me.

Social media impact

My work and life are really fun, so I don't as such have any hobbies. But of late, I think I have made social media my hobby. It's all about following the right people. I have been following some really interesting people and that helps me improve the kind of lifestyle that I have and stay positive.

For example, some time back, while I was on Instagram, I got inspired how to dispose of the trash I generate in a correct way so it doesn't harm the environment. There are many who are talking about eating healthy, so that's another thing that I have started following.

In fact, some time back I was editing an article for Samantha and that inspired me to reduce my meat intake. That had a huge impact on my food budget for the month, and also my health.

Charming Charan

I and Charan have been friends for a long time. When I came back to Hyderabad after studying at so many places across the globe, it was refreshing to meet someone who was so forward thinking. He was very respectful and dignified, and I liked that the most.

I am a very private person, and don't reveal much about my personal life. But I would like to share that what I really adore about Charan is the fact that he pays attention to the smaller details and leaves a big impact. He is very sensitive about everything.

A big foodie

I am in a beautiful relation with food now, not just a foodie. My weight fluctuation shows how much I love food. In fact, I was earlier in an abusive relation with food, where I would eat whenever I was upset. But I have made peace with it. So, I eat in moderation. I am not so much into heavy dishes like biryani any more, since I am very keen on my fitness. However I love to eat healthy.

For me cooking is a stress buster; I cook every day. I keep trying newer, healthier recipes. Like I make burgers at home, but instead of breads, I use lettuce leaves.

Charan has a very different relationship with food. He loves to eat predominantly Indian food; it's only when he is shooting that he eats a local grown salad or something. He cooks as well, but his focus is all about how the food is presented. He eats with all his senses so for him the food has to taste, smell, look, feel and touch amazing.

RAPID FIRE

Favourite colour: Presently, white!
Comfort food: I love nachos
Favourite actor: Mindy Kaley. I really love her, she is absolutely amazing. I actually enjoy watching Trump on TV too. I can't vote or do anything, but I enjoy his talks.
Favourite movie: I like a lot of movies. But since the pandemic, I have started watching a lot of these web series. Currently I am

hooked to Ramanand Sagar's Ramayan, which brings back a lot of childhood memories.
Favourite holiday destination: Of course I love England, so vacation there anytime is fun. But one place that I haven't visited and would want to go is Araku Valley.
One mantra for a successful business: If you are sure about your ideas, go ahead. Be confident and prepared for any eventuality.



Young Upasana with her aunt



Upasana with her grandfather

Upasana Kamineni Konidela is not someone who would rest on her laurels, nor on the fact that she was born with the proverbial silver spoon. Being the daughter of well-known businessman Anil Kamineni and wife of superstar Ram Charan is

only one facet of Upasana's life; she is one of the most successful businesswomen of India today.

Having had the opportunity to look at life from a perspective different from that of the average Indian, by virtue of studying at different places, Upasana believes that if one is born in a privileged family, it is important that one gives back to society. In a candid chat with *The Pioneer*, Upasana talks to Namrata Srivastava

about her upbringing, education, family, Ram Charan and much more...



Upasana during a vacation



Ram Charan and Upasana