

**OPINION 6**  
CHINA SITTING  
PRETTY

**ANALYSIS 7**  
A BOON  
OR BANE?

**SPORTS 12**  
SANJU, SMITH  
& SIXES

HYDERABAD, WEDNESDAY SEPTEMBER 23, 2020; PAGES 12 & 3



# the pioneer



SEPT 22 SAW MY  
BIRTH AS AN  
ACTOR: CHIRU

Page 11

www.dailypioneer.com

## APPLE CEO TIM COOK PREDICTS VAST CHANGES WTH REMOTE WORKING

Apple Inc. Chief Executive Officer Tim Cook said he's been impressed by employees' ability to operate remotely and predicted that some new work habits will remain after the pandemic. During an interview at The Atlantic Festival on Monday, Cook said Apple created products including new Apple Watches and iPads that are launching on time this year, despite the need for most employees to work away from the office due to Covid-19. Cook said he doesn't believe Apple will "return to the way we were because we've found that there are some things that actually work really well virtually." The comments contrast with the views of other executives, such as Netflix Inc.



## DEEPIKA PADUKONE'S MANAGER, TALENT AGENCY CEO SUMMONED

Actor Deepika Padukone's manager Karishma Prakash has been summoned for questioning by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) as the anti-drugs agency widens its probe into the alleged Bollywood-drug nexus in the Sushant Singh Rajput case. Dhurv Chitgopekar, CEO of KWAN talent management where Ms Prakash works, has also been summoned to the NCB office today. While Karishma Prakash has sought time from the agency, Mr Chitgopekar has joined the probe, officials said. Along with these two, Sushant Rajput's manager Shruti Modi and former talent manager Jaya Saha have also been summoned, officials added.



## TIKTOK REMOVED OVER 3.7 CR VIDEOS FROM INDIA FOR VIOLATING GUIDELINES

TikTok removed over 3.7 crore videos from India for violating its guidelines in the first half of 2020, the company owned by China's ByteDance claimed in its transparency report published on Tuesday. The report also underlined TikTok's initiatives to flag and eradicate misinformation on the platform. In late June the government banned TikTok in India along with 58 other apps that had a linkage with China. Apple App Store and Google Play both removed the app in the country and telcos disconnected user access to the platform shortly after the nationwide ban came into effect.



## US DEPT OF LABOR PROPOSES HIKE IN H-1B WAGES, TO HIT INDIAN IT FIRMS

In what could come as another blow to Indian IT firms, the US Department of Labour has submitted a proposal seeking to increase the minimum wages of H-1B visa holders and those who hold other work permits including employment-based Green Card holders. The proposal, which was submitted to the Office of Management and Budget in the White House could have a significant impact on the H-1B visa programme, thereby impacting Indians who are the largest recipients of this non-immigrant work visa.



With lesson on NTR, KCR eyes TDP founder's legacy

2

## Tollywood stars are 'clean' in drugs case?

DURGA PRASAD SUNKU  
HYDERABAD

Even as names of several Tollywood personalities, including that of superstar Mahesh Babu's wife, emerged on Tuesday in the ongoing investigations into the case booked by the Narcotics Control Board (NCB) against actress Rhea Chakraborty, comes a disturbing finding, following an RTI query, that only 12 cases have been registered and just eight charge-sheets filed so far in the 2017 Tollywood drugs scandal that saw a total of 62 people from the tinsel town being questioned. Apparently, most of the Tollywood stars in the dock are clean. For, students and little-known people have been named in the

charge-sheets that the investigating officers managed to file. Response to an RTI query revealed that the Prohibition and Excise Department officials investigating the infamous Tollywood drugs scandal succeeded in filing only eight charges-sheets in the last four years of their 'probe'. In the last one year, they filed 4 charge-sheets. In all, 62 people were questioned in the case. However, only 12 cases were registered and eight charge-sheets filed by officials in the last four years. Deploing the investigation process, Forum for Good Governance secretary M Padmanabha Reddy, said, "The investigation is moving at a snail's pace and has not been done properly. In the charge-sheet

filed, it was revealed that the drugs came from abroad like Germany and Great Britain. Although it is difficult to trace it, the investigation officer at least could have traced the drug supplier in India, but they haven't." Some of the celebrities who were questioned in the scandal include Actor Ravi Teja, Director Puri Jagannath, actress Charmi Kaur and others such as Tanish, Mumath Khan, Navdeep, Subbaraju, Tarun, cinematographer Shyam K Naidu. From many of them, hair and nail samples were taken. This being so, on Tuesday several

Tollywood names emerged in the case that NCB filed against Rhea. The list includes the name of Namrata Shirodkar, wife of Superstar Mahesh Babu. It is claimed that she was in contact with Sushant Singh's former talent manager Jaya Saha and their chats relating to drugs went to the notice of NCB. Director of Enforcement and Commissioner of Prohibition and Excise Akun Sabarwal had previously revealed the details of arrest of the alleged king-pin Calvin Maskarenhas, who was arrested along with Mohammed Abdul Wahed and Mohammed Abdul Quddus in the first week of July by excise officials.

The excise officials then claimed to have recovered 700 blots of LSD and 35g of MDMA from the trio. Investigations revealed that they were allegedly supplying drugs to people in the film industry and corporate schools. A Special Investigation Team (SIT) was subsequently formed, with G Srinivasa Rao, Prohibition and Excise Inspector as enquiry officer, and including S Srinivasa Rao, Superintendent Prohibition and Excise supervisor officer, to probe the drugs case. The SIT summoned a total of 62 persons, including some from Tollywood, and examined them under section 67 of the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (NDPS) Act and section 161 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.



PM: NEP will play key role in creating Atmanirbhar Bharat

5



## HC TO TS Why is KBR park still shut?

The Telangana High Court, responding to a petition filed before it seeking issuance of orders to immediately reopen the famous KBR National Park at Jubilee Hills in the city, on Tuesday questioned the state government as to why the park had not opened till date despite relaxation of the lockdown restrictions by the central government under its Unlock 4 guidelines. A single-judge bench of the High Court directed the counsel for the state government to get instructions from the authorities concerned on the issue. It later adjourned the matter to Monday for further hearing. The petition was filed by a 58-year-old resident of Banjara Hills Dr. M. Jayanth Reddy. In his petition,

## ONLINE BETTING SCAM ED takes Chinese national Yan Hao, 2 others into custody

The special Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) Court, Hyderabad on Tuesday granted eight-day custody of Chinese national Yan Hao and two others viz. Dhiraj Sarkar and Ankit Kapoor to the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in the money laundering case that was filed after the Hyderabad police busted an online gaming racket and arrested the trio. The three will be now held in custody until September 29. Yan Hao is the prime accused in Rs 1,000-crore fraud allegedly committed under the guise of online gambling colour-prediction games via apps linked to companies run by China-based Beijing T Power. The ED had filed a money-laundering case against him on August 18, 2020. The agency had slapped money-laundering charges on the accused, based on an FIR lodged by the Cyber Crime wing of the Hyderabad



Police against Dokypay Technology Private Limited, Linkyun Technology Private Limited and others. The Enforcement Directorate had initiated investigation under Telangana Gaming Act, Section 420 (cheating and dishonestly inducing delivery of property) and 120 (B) IPC (punishment of criminal conspiracy). On 29 August, ED conducted searches at 15 locations in Delhi, Gurgaon, Mumbai and Pune. During the searches, the enforcement agency chose to freeze Rs 46.96 crore held in four HSBC Bank Accounts. Investigators also seized incriminating evidence,

## WAKE-UP CALL TO TRS? Youth Congress receives 12.3 lakh applications, Nets Rs.6.15 cr as fee

K VENKATESHWARLU  
HYDERABAD

The TS Youth Congress, beating all other state units across the country, has received a whopping 12.3 lakh applications and netted Rs 6.15 crore in application fee. Kerala, which occupies the second position, received 6 lakh applications -- about half of what TS received! According to political observers, this new-found attraction for the YC and the windfall in its coffers should be a wake-up call for the ruling Telangana Rashtra Samiti, regardless of its presumptuous claims that there is no alternative to the pink party in India's newest state. What ought to raise eyebrows for some even in TRS is the fact that these new entrants, being active members with voting rights, have in turn enrolled at least four primary members each, taking the overall membership to more than 60 lakh in TS alone. However, only the 12.3 lakh active members have the right to cast their vote in the Youth Congress elections. On the whole, TS Congress has created a history of sorts at a time when the Grand Old Party has been almost written off in the state. In a statement, Pradesh Returning Officer for Telangana Youth Congress



elections Raju P. Nair said that the membership drive, which had been extended by a month, concluded at midnight on September 20, 2020 with all 12.3 lakh applications being registered for membership. He credited the achievement to tireless efforts of the YC workers right from the start of the membership drive. The membership drive was conducted online and via IYC app. In the next phase, the credentials of those who have applied for membership will be verified thoroughly. The memberships would be validated by recourse to 'One Time Password' allotted for applicant. The membership applications of those with duplicate mobile numbers and wrong OTP combination will be put on hold.



## TS seeks release of IGST dues immediately

Harish puts his foot down at IGST GoM meet At the Group of Ministers (GoM) meeting on IGST on Tuesday, the Telangana State government made a strong case for the release of IGST dues to States well ahead of the GST Council meeting scheduled for Oct 5.



'Geopolitical impact will be big risk for firms with global footprint'

8

## Anand wants KTR to solve water problem in Hyd

Industrialist Anand Mahindra took to Twitter to praise Hyderabad for being ranked as the "best city to live and work". He said, "Not surprising. More power to the city and all those who live there. We are especially delighted because the city is home to Mahindra University and we plan to grow and flourish and attract the best minds from around the world." Responding to this, a Twitter user posted, "Only problem is water. Bore water is main source. In some area they have bored up to 2000 ft." Tagging K T Rama Rao on this, Anand said, "if you can solve the water problem he's alluding to, you will have given us a city we can all love."



## India, China announce slew of decisions to cool tensions

Announcing a slew of decisions to bring down tensions in eastern Ladakh, the Indian and Chinese armies have decided to stop sending more troops to the frontline, refrain from unilaterally changing the situation on the ground, and avoid taking any actions that may further complicate the environment. The decisions were mentioned in a joint statement issued by the two armies late Tuesday, a day after the sixth round of Sino-India Corps commander-level talks that lasted for 14-hours.

## India to harvest record 144.52 MT of foodgrains

The government has pegged a record production of foodgrains at 144.52 million tonnes in the ongoing Kharif season, as per the first advance estimates of production of major Kharif crops for 2020-21 (July-June) released on Tuesday by the Department of Agriculture,

## Jagan-Shah meet raises political heat

Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy' trip to New Delhi has created a buzz in political circles not only in the Telugu States but also at the national level. This is because Delhi trip came at a time when the ruling YSRCP in Andhra Pradesh continues to extend open support to BJP-led NDA government at the Centre on all issues both inside and outside Parliament. Jagan's visit also came at a



passed in Parliament. This triggered political speculations that YSRCP might join NDA government in the place of Akali Dal. In this backdrop, Jagan meeting Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday assumed all the more significance. This is because Jagan was the first person to get Amit Shah's appointment after the Home Minister tested positive for Coronavirus, was hospitalised and recovered.

**TODAY**

**ALMANAC**

Month & Paksham: Ashwin (Adhik) & Shukla Paksha Panchangam

Tithi: Saptami 09:30 pm

Nakshatram: Jyeshtha: 06:25 pm

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

Rahukalam: 12:08 pm - 01:38 pm

Yamagandam: 07:38 am - 09:08 am

Varjyam: 02:20 am - 03:55 am, 04:52 pm - 06:25 pm

Gulika: 10:38 am - 12:08 pm

Good Time: (to start any important work)

Amritakalam: 09:56 am - 11:29 am

Abhijit Muhurtham: ---

**HYDERABAD WEATHER**

Forecast: Mostly cloudy

Temp: 28/22

Humidity: 83%

Sunrise: 06:05 am

Sunset: 06:11 pm

Current Weather Conditions Updated September 22, 2020 5:00 PM

Telangana Chief Minister K. Chandrababhan Rao's style of functioning is radically different from his peers, and his decisions often catch his rivals off guard.

Be it going for early Assembly polls to deprive the BJP the advantage of Narendra Modi's popularity or of distancing himself from 'eternal friend', the AIMIM, in view of forthcoming elections to the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation, KCR's strategic moves have also been a surprise to his rivals.

Now, KCR has sprung another surprise by announcing that the life of legendary film actor and former chief minister of undivided Andhra Pradesh would be included in the syllabus at school level.

It's a well-known fact that KCR gained prominence as a political leader with the patronage shown by NTR. He went on to honour his political guru by naming his son K Taraka Rama Rao after the TDP founder.

Despite acknowledging

# With lesson on NTR, KCR eyes TDP founder's legacy

NTR's importance in his life, KCR has no qualms when it comes to decimating the TDP as it poses a challenge to the TRS.

Lakhs of people of Andhra-origin are settled in Hyderabad and rural pockets of Telangana. Since these 'non-locals' naturally gravitate towards the TDP, KCR's desire to uproot it from Telangana is understandable. Many believe that KCR's decision to include NTR's life history in school syllabus is another step towards this end.

Whatever facet of NTR's life is included in the school syllabus, it would definitely make an impression in the young minds. KCR may as well be preparing a generation of TRS supporters by keeping these young and impressionable minds away from other writings, especially by non-Telangana writers.

**Whatever facet of NTR's life is included in the school syllabus, it would definitely make an impression in the young minds. KCR may as well be preparing a generation of TRS supporters by keeping these young and impressionable minds away from other writings, especially by non-Telangana writers**

Since NTR was very popular in both films and politics, the TRS government may take precautions on exclusion of NTR's efforts for the unity of Telugu people.

It's a different matter that the same NTR openly asked the Government of India for formation of a separate Andhra state in view of fierce and emotional agitation of the people of that region in 1973.

NTR may have done this to quell the unrest simmering fol-

lowing the Jai Andhra movement, but in later years, once the integration of Andhra state was assured by the Government of India, he advocated unity of the Telugu people and endeared himself in the minds of crores of Telugu people living around the globe.

Interestingly, KCR, who was moulded in politics by NTR — the symbol of Telugu unity — chose bifurcation of the state as his stepping stone to success.

Lakhs of non-local voters



M D RATNA KUMAR  
Senior Journalist

can make a difference for KCR in future elections. Since it's a laborious task for the ruling party to impress non-locals, why not endeavor himself to these sections by hailing the very founder of the TDP?

Also, the TRS chief is not so keen on the 'product of TDP' tag attached to him

(though he started his political career in the Congress, he got political recognition in TDP). What better way to remove this tag than ridding Telangana of the TDP altogether?

KCR's decision on inclusion of NTR's life history in the school syllabus received an overwhelming response. NTR's family too thanked KCR for his bold step and said that it would enhance Telugu pride as the TDP founder is still considered among the most beloved icons for Telugu people.

In fact, NTR was accepted across undivided Andhra Pradesh; he remains the only chief minister who had successfully contested from all three regions of the undivided state — Hindupur (Rayalaseema), Gudivada (Andhra) and Nalgonda (Telangana).

One might argue that a les-

son in the textbooks at the school level wouldn't bring much political benefit, but the fact remains that the move is all about sending positive signals to the electorate regarding the TRS.

Presently, the TRS doesn't face the threat of losing any election; but like any other party, it too will encounter anti-incumbency, sooner or later.

Showing respect to a legend like NTR may work in its favour in later elections.

Now, it will be interesting to see how NTR is portrayed in the textbooks.

If the TRS government projects NTR as an integrationist, this would be at cross-purposes with KCR's own life history and the government cannot risk comparisons between the master (NTR) and his disciple (KCR).

**WILL KCR ALLOW THIS?**  
NTR's son and actor

Balakrishna made a biopic on his father, but skipped the embarrassing events of 1995 when the former chief minister was dethroned for the second time, with the backing, some believe orchestration, by his children.

While there would be no problem for the TRS government to include only the policies of NTR in the textbooks, schoolchildren wouldn't get a clear picture about the legendary leader NTR without learning about political facts. KCR would find it difficult to conceal the bare truth that he too was part of second dethronement of NTR in 1995 and became a minister in the Chandrababhan Naidu Cabinet subsequently.

KCR's decision may bring it immediate political benefits, perhaps as early as the 2021 GHMC elections, but it remains to be seen how NTR is painted in the textbooks.

## India, China announce slew of decisions...

Continued from Page 1

The two armies also agreed to strengthen communication on the ground, avoid misunderstandings and misjudgments and earnestly implement the important consensus reached by the leaders of the two countries.

"The two sides had candid and in-depth exchange of views on stabilising the situation along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in the India-China border areas," said the statement released by the Indian Army.

It said the two sides also agreed to take practical measures to properly solve problems on the ground, and jointly safeguard peace and tranquillity in the border areas.

# Telangana's Raigir Railway Station is now Yadadri stn

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Indian Railways on Monday announced that the name of Raigir railway station in Telangana has been changed to Yadadri railway station.

The South Central Railway (SCR) said that the competent authority has approved the change in the name. Raigir railway station, located on Secunderabad-Kazipet section of Secunderabad Division, will henceforth be called Yadadri railway station, it said.

Yadadri is a popular temple located about 60 km from Hyderabad. The hill shrine called Yadadri Laxmi Narasimha Swamy temple is



being developed by the Telangana government as a mega pilgrimage and spiritual hub.

Earlier known as Yadgirigutta, the temple was renamed as Yadadri after for-

mation of Telangana State in 2014. Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) government has taken up development works of the hill temple at a total cost of Rs 1,800 crore. A separate district with the name Yadadri

Bhuvanagiri was also carved out of Nalgonda district.

Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrababhan Rao last week visited the temple complex and inspected the progress of the development works.

He desired that the temple complex should reflect and highlight the spirituality and pleasure. In 2016, the state government had requested the Railway Ministry for extending the rail network to Yadadri, as part of the phase-II works of Multi Modal Transportation System (MMTS).

The state government also offered to bear two-thirds of the estimated project worth Rs 330 crore.

## Delivery partners continue strike, firms say no disruption in service

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A section of delivery partners of Swiggy are on strike in the city, claiming that their base payment has been reduced by the aggregator, for the past few days and held a protest in Madhapur here on Tuesday.

The food delivery App firm, however, said a large number of its partners have understood the strong earning potential, as a result of which more 3,700 partners out of about 5,000 have logged on to Swiggy in the last three days.

The Swiggy partners, under the banner of Indian Federation of App-Based Transport Workers, alleged that in recent months the management has made frequent and numerous reduc-



tions in earnings structure of delivery executives.

The firm reduced minimum order earning from the earlier Rs.35 up to 4 km to Rs.15 for 2 km and late night delivery timing has been shifted from previously 11 PM to now midnight, they alleged.

The incentive amount has also been reduced, they said adding they have other demands. We demand the Rs.35 up to 4 km system should be in place. This is our main demand, Shaik Salauddin, National General Secretary told.

## Register all houses, flats online within 15 days: KCR

Continued from Page 1

Rythu Bandhu Samithi State president Palla Rajeshwar Reddy, CMO higher officials Narsing Rao, Smita Sabharwal, MAUD Principal Secretary Aravind Kumar, Panchayat Raj secretary Sandeep Kumar Sultana and Municipal Director Satyanarayana participated. The CM said that municipal officials, officials from districts, mandals, village panchayats should quickly complete the online registration of the properties. For expediting the process, he suggested a coordination meeting with DPAs and MPOs. KCR urged the officials to give total information to people so as to help them register their properties online. He wanted officials to be cautious while maintaining land records and called for cent percent transparency through the upcoming Dharani Portal. "This is precisely the aim for launching the Dharani Portal," he said.

## WAKE-UP CALL TO...

Continued from Page 1

The ID proof submitted along with the membership forms will also be verified by the IYC during this process. With the number of applications exceeding 12 lakhs, this process will take at least a month, Raju said.

As for the membership of those whose cases have been put on hold, he said the applicants will be given a few more days to update their documents after the verification process. This is to make sure that genuine members are not left out.

The results of this process of scrutiny of membership applications would be announced after the first week of November. The results for all committees will be announced only after this process, said

Raju. The top three contestants i.e. those who got the highest number of votes will be called for an interview by a panel consisting of Pradesh Returning Officer, Election Commissioner in-charge and the General Secretary in-charge of the organisation and the State President will be announced.

Approximately, 1,550 candidates contested in State, District and Assembly levels in the internal election. As for the Youth Congress online election process, there were many allegations with regard to enrollment as the contesting candidates had indulged in various irregularities.

The Youth Congress had taken up online election process in view of the coron-

avirus pandemic. According to Youth Congress sources, several leaders who worked as Youth Congress leaders and joined other political parties made their followers to contest the Youth Congress elections.

While speaking to The Pioneer, Raju P. Nair said that they would thoroughly scrutinize the identities of all the applicants so as to eliminate fake membership, if any.

"Yes, there are several allegations against the membership drive. However, we will do perfect scrutiny taking one month time or more," he said. Raju P. Nair said that the number of applications that the IYC received in Telangana was the highest across the nation. Kerala state occupied second place with 6 lakh membership, Raju said.

## Tollywood stars are 'clean...'

Continued from Page 1

In the charge-sheet filed against the accused like Anish Kumar Dundo and Rithul Agarwal, both friends, it is alleged that they used to order the drugs from dark web and pay using crypto currency and consume it along with friends including Rachit, Kush, and Rahul Agarwal.

Further, in the case booked against Piyush Auluck, an engineering graduate, it is stated that he used to procure the drug by ordering them through designated websites and consume them along with his friends. Some of the accused against whom chargesheet was filed include K.P Anirudh, a music instructor and Santhosh Deepak, a student, who were nabbed in

front of a restaurant at Kharakhana while they were in possession of the drugs.

Reddy said: "Not a single high-profile person questioned by the Excise officials has been named in the charge-sheets. Some small dealers were named in the charge-sheets. The officials should speed up the investigation process and trace out both the suppliers and consumers".

Leaving the transnational criminal who supplied drugs, the official should at least look into the accused who are in the country and nab them. The should investigate further into the activities of consumers who took these drugs and ascertain whether they are really consumers or suppliers and accordingly book them, Reddy added.

## ED takes Chinese national Yan...

Continued from Page 1

including those found on 17 hard disks, five laptops, mobiles and documents. The searches were conducted based on PMLA case of illegal online betting apps linked to websites hosted outside India.

It was on August 13 that the Hyderabad Cyber Crime police busted the transnational racket operating online gaming and illegal betting activities involving hundreds of crores of rupees. Subsequently, the police arrested Yan Hao, Head of

Operations for South East Asia and Authorized Signatory, and three others viz Dheeraj Sarkar, Ankit Kapoor and Neeraj Tuli. Initially, the investigators froze Rs 30 crore held in different bank accounts and detected Rs 110 crore in overseas accounts.

On Tuesday, the court granted ED custody of those arrested, except Neeraj Tuli. On Wednesday, three of the accused taken into custody by ED will be shifted from Chanchalguda jail to the Enforcement Directorate office.

## Jagan-Shah...

Continued from Page 1

Apparently, Shah has been not giving appointment to anyone, even his own party leaders, to meet him. Now Shah giving Jagan the appointment to meet him indicates the priority being given by BJP bosses to Jagan, open political observers.

Jagan reportedly discussed important issues such as his three-capitals idea, Special Category Status to Andhra Pradesh and pending Central funds for various projects, including Polavaram.

## TS seeks release of IGST ...

Continued from Page 1

Finance minister T Harish Rao took part in the videoconference of GoM on IGST held under the chairmanship of Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Kumar Modi.

Harish reiterated that the Centre owed Rs 2,641 crore towards IGST to Telangana. He urged IGST GoM convener Sushil Kumar Modi to make recommendations to the Centre "within a week" for payment of IGST dues to States. He urged Modi to make recommendations to

the Centre to release IGST dues before October 5. Harish said all the States had been reeling under corona-induced financial crisis since March. So, prompt release of IGST dues would help States tide over their crisis for the time being. He pointed out that if a decision on payment of IGST dues was not taken at the GST council meeting, then all the States would have to wait for three months additionally, which no State could afford. Hence, immediate decision on payment of IGST dues was imperative, he said.

## Erosion in IT firms' confidence to...

Continued from Page 1

The companies have reported increase in productivity of employees. Broadband, power cuts and working atmosphere at employee homes turned out to be the major obstacles to WFH.

About 80% of the companies have said employee productivity is >75%. Almost all large and very large companies have reported productivity >90%.

Bharani Kumar Aroll, President HYSEA, said, "The industry continues to work from home, with a higher percentage of large companies' workforce operating from homes, compared to small and mid-sized companies. But the critical factors that may encourage return to office are significant reduction in active cases and vaccine availability".

No unusual attrition, companies continue to hire fresh-

ers. Contrary to fear of massive layoffs, HYSEA pointed that there was no unusual attrition on account of the pandemic was reported by any company. The numbers are within regular industry average range.

As per the survey, nearly 70% of Large and Very Large companies hired freshers in the last six months (anywhere between 1 to 1000). Majority of the companies said they would

honour the offers already made to freshers. Many companies pointed out that the campus hiring will return to pre-pandemic levels in the year 2021-22.

Nearly 50% of large or very large companies said their campus hiring in 21-22 would return to pre-pandemic levels. Nearly 60% of large/very large companies said lateral hiring would go on during current fiscal year.

## Why is KBR Park...

Continued from Page 1

He urged the HC to declare the action of the state government to not reopen the park, which is also called "mini forest", without following the unlock-4 guidelines as "illegal, arbitrary and unconstitutional". He urged the HC to issue directions to the state government to forthwith open the park.

HYDERABAD BULLION RATES	
<b>GOLD</b>	₹ 53, 230 (10 gm)
<b>SILVER</b>	₹ 60, 600 (1kg)
<b>CHICKEN RATES</b>	
Dressed/With Skin	₹194
Without Skin	₹221
Broiler at Farm	₹134
<b>EGG RATES</b>	
HYDERABAD	505
VIJAYAWADA	507
VISAKHAPATNAM	515
RETAIL PRICE	₹5.05

Outsourced staff protest at Gandhi Hospital for salary hike

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The outsourcing, patient care, security and sanitation staff in Gandhi Hospital on Tuesday staged a protest demanding the implementation of the promised salary hike apart from the Covid allowances.

When the staff protested in July, Telangana government has hiked the salaries and Covid allowances to the staff of outsourcing, security, sanitation and among others.

However it was not implemented even after three months. Protesting against the non-implementation of hiked salary and Covid allowances, the staff held dharna in the hospital premises after boycotting their duties.



# Crooks create FB profiles in cops' names to extort money

DURGA PRASAD SUNKU  
■ HYDERABAD

Even in times of pandemic, cyber crooks are leaving no stone unturned to cheat people. In another novel way, the online fraudsters have created social media profiles in the name of police officers to extort money from their friends in Telangana.

Recently, a few cases of fake social media profiles in the name of cops were reported in the state. The cheats created these fake profiles and requested from their friends for financial help.

While cheating netizens by creating fictitious Facebook accounts is not a new cyber crime. Specifically targeting police officers using this modus operandi is surely a new pattern!

Some Telangana police officers of the rank of Inspector and Deputy Superintendents posted on their FB walls that unidentified persons were trying



ing to trick their FB friends.

Additional DGP (Women Safety Wing) Swati Lakra through her official social media account said, "Someone has created a fake Facebook account claiming to be me and sending friend requests. I request everyone not to accept any friend requests or respond to any request. In case you have

accepted kindly unfriend immediately. Will take action on the person who is trying to impersonate me."

"It is a general tendency that we rely on profile pictures to exchange any info on social media. The fraudsters are exploiting this and cheating public," said a police officer. Recently, a fraudster created

fake profile of Nalgonda Superintendent of Police A V Ranganath and contacted the officer's friends and demanded money.

Further, Inspector K Murali Krishna from traffic wing approached Hyderabad cyber crime police and lodged a complaint.

Murali Krishna stated in his complaint, "Some unidentified persons created a fake Facebook ID with my profile name and my photo as profile picture and are sending friend requests to my social media contacts. Believing it to be original, several people are accepting those friend requests. Further these fraudsters are asking money from my friends. They are giving digital wallet details and asking them to depositing the money."

Speaking to this newspaper, Cyber crime Assistant Commissioner of Police KVM Prasad requested the police officers to remove their profile picture with uniform.



# CDFD sees higher viral load in asymptomatic Corona patients

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Centre for DNA Fingerprinting And Diagnostics (CDFD) has identified that the virus load is more in asymptomatic Coronavirus patients.

In fact, 95 per cent of the asymptomatic patients have had 20 B clade strain of the virus. This became evident as the CDFD has analysed data of over 210 Covid-19 patients in May and June in the GHMC limits and in the outskirts.

An analyses of the data revealed that those who have

high immunity levels they remained asymptomatic in spite of carrying the virus. The virus spread to those who have low immunity levels. Therefore the asymptomatic persons are causing death of the people having low immunity levels by spreading the virus.

Under the GHMC limits, at least 57,000 persons tested positive for the virus. Of them, 70 per cent do not have any symptoms. Only 30 per cent of the patients exhibited symptoms like fever, cough and

cold. An analysis of genome sequencing data, the virus has undergone many mutations in the genome.

In fact, the CDFD has observed that 95 per cent of the patients had 20 B clade strain of the Coronavirus. In respect to five per cent of the patients, the other strains of the virus was present. Though two or three varieties of viruses have been confirmed, in May and June months the CDFD scientists have observed the presence of B Clade strain of the virus.

## IN BRIEF

### 'Intellectuals must unite to eradicate corruption'

Andhra Pradesh State School Advisor Akunuri Murali said that all the youth and intellectuals should unite to use the anti-corruption platform. He was speaking as the chief guest at the Youth for Anti-Corruption General Body meeting at Araku Aroma in Panjagutta on Tuesday. In your area, expose the corruption you know through social media. The youth for Anti-Corruption organisation has embarked on a good endeavor to recognise and honor those who work ethically and honestly, for which everyone must come forward. When they act honestly they need to know the sufferings, hardships, their experiences that they have suffered.



### Centre extends incumbent UoH VC's tenure by 1 year

The Union Ministry of Education has extended the tenure of incumbent Vice-Chancellor of the University of Hyderabad (UoH), Professor Appa Rao Podile, for a year. His tenure was to end on 22 September. "The President of India, in his capacity as a visitor of the University of Hyderabad, has been pleased to extend the tenure of Prof. Appa Rao Podile, the present Vice-Chancellor of the University of Hyderabad, beyond 22 September 2020, for a period of one year or till the time a new Vice-Chancellor is appointed, whichever is earlier," said S.K Biswas, the undersecretary of the government of India. Prof Appa Rao Podile was embroiled in a controversy following the death of Dalit PhD scholar Rohith Vemula who died by suicide in January 2016 after he was suspended from the hostel and was allegedly facing caste discrimination. The same year in March, the V-C lodge was allegedly ransacked by the protesting students. Twenty-five students and two faculty members of the university were arrested.

### TSCHE releases DOST phase-I seat allotment for UG courses

The Degree Online Services, Telangana (DOST) 2020 phase-I seat allotment for UG courses was released on Monday. As per the data shared by Telangana State Council of Higher Education, a total of 1,71,275 students had registered for Phase-I. Of their total students, 1,41,340 students were allotted the seats in various colleges on Monday. The council also shared that, 2,598 students were allotted seats in B.Sc.(Data Science), a newly introduced course in the academic year 2020-21, in Phase-I. The registrations and web options for the phase-II have already begun from Monday. This year, the TS DOST application process is being conducted in three phases. The TS DOST second phase result will be released on September 28. The phase III registration process will commence on September 28 to conclude on October 3.



### Hyderabad varsity prof bags Outstanding Volunteer Award

Prof Atul Negi, faculty at the School of Computer and Information Sciences, University of Hyderabad (UoH) has been selected for Outstanding Volunteer Award by Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers-IEEE Region 10 (R10). Prof. Negi was selected for the award in recognition of his contributions and services to IEEE Hyderabad Section and IEEE Region

10. The award was announced by Prof. Elmer Dadios, Chair of the R10 Awards and Recognition Committee (2019-2020) through an official communication from the IEEE Region 10. Prof. Negi is one amongst the three outstanding volunteers chosen from more than 90,000 professional members in R10. The Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers Inc. (New Jersey, US) also abbreviated as IEEE has 400,000 members all over the world distributed over the 10 regions. Region 10 or R10 is a geographical region designated by IEEE and has a total membership of about 1,30,000 members which includes student members.

# GHMC steps up measures to tackle street dog menace

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a bid to curb the street dog menace and prevent the spread of rabies disease, the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) is carrying out the Animal Birth Control/ Anti Rabies (ABC/AR) programme in accordance with the Animal Birth Control (Dogs) Rules, 2001, Bye-laws on Animal Birth Control (Dogs) in GHMC, 2009 and guidelines of Animal Welfare Board of India.

The GHMC has established five animal care centres with kennels and operation theatre at Fathullaguda, Chudibazar, Patelnagar, KPMB Colony and Mahadevapur for conducting ABC/AR and acquired customised dog catching vehicles for transportation of street dogs to animal care centres and releasing them after ABC/AR.

As most of the dog catching vehicles become old and not



roadworthy, the GHMC has proposed and acquired 16 more customised dog catching vehicles in order to ply one dog catching vehicle in each circle and also acquired one more cattle catching vehicle for Kukatpally Zone and four more enforcement vehicles for LB Nagar, Khairatabad, Serilingampally and Kukatpally Zones in order to ply one vehicle in each zone on hire basis.

Accordingly, three customised dog catching vehicles

acquired on hire basis in Khairatabad Zone, GHMC are flagged off by the Mayor Bonthu Rammohan on Tuesday. Further, the Mayor has also distributed protective gear items to the dog catchers of Khairatabad Zone, GHMC and also distributed IEC material on ABC/AR Programme in GHMC.

Zonal Commissioner Praveenya, chief veterinary officer Vakil and other senior veterinary officers were present.

# Bar owners want state to waive off licence fee

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Bar and restaurant owners have been sticking to their gun seeking exemption from payment of license fee for the six month period when the bars and restaurants remained closed in the excise year.

Even as they are mounting pressure to achieve their demand, the last date for payment of license fee is approaching.

About 1000 bars have to renew their license 15 days prior to the deadline.

As per the Centre's unlock 4.0 guidelines, the bars have been removed from the list of prohibited businesses. It was

expected that bars would resume work either in the first week of September or second week. But the state government did not permit the bars and remained silent on the issue.

The bar owners are uncertain when the bars would resume business, the owners are not coming forward to pay license fees. The state government did not say either yes or no on the bar owners demand for exemption of license fees.

The excise officials say that it is not feasible to exempt the bars from paying the license fees. Only Chief Minister alone can take a decision on the issue.

# GHMC begins groundwork for elections

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) officials have begun the ground work for the elections which will be held early next year.

Election Authority and GHMC Commissioner Lokesh Kumar appointed nodal officers to attend various pre-election and election activities. He reviewed the arrangements well in advance before issue of election notification by State Election Commission for smooth conduct of ordinary elections to the GHMC with the nodal officers at GHMC head office here on Tuesday.

The GHMC Commissioner instructed the officials to identify polling stations, facilities, to setup complaint cell, call



centre, media certificate, monitoring cell, to scrutinize paid advertisements and to take up SVEEP activities to create awareness on GHMC elections.

He reviewed with the nodal

officers on the preparation of electoral rolls, appointment of returning assistant, returning officers, master trainers to train polling staff, procurement of election material, IT related issues, web casting, enforce-

ment teams to implement code of conduct, polling staff, polling material distribution, reception, counting centers identification, basic amenities and micro observers.

Lokesh Kumar asked the officials to follow the instructions from the Election Commission and to set up a team to look after implementation of state election orders and to take precautionary measures in present prevailing situation during appointment of polling staff, training and others.

Additional Commissioners B Santosh, Priyanka Ala, PS Rahul Raj, Jaya Raj Kennedy, V Krishna, EVDN Director Vishwajit Kampathi, Chief Engineer Ziauddin and other senior officials attended the review meeting.

# 56K from TS repatriated during Covid

NAVEENA GHANATE  
■ HYDERABAD

As many as 56,678 people from Telangana who were stranded abroad due to Covid-19 restrictions have been repatriated so far under Vande Bharat mission till August 31.

Nearly 3.34 lakh Keralites returned to the country since the onset of Covid-19 pandemic, followed by repatriation of 1.8 lakh persons from Delhi, 1 lakh from Uttar Pradesh, 96,135 from Tamil Nadu, 80,098 belonging to Maharashtra.

As per the data provided by the Ministry of Civil Aviation in the Lok Sabha on Tuesday, more than 11 lakh Indians stranded in 95 countries have returned to India through the Vande-Bharat Mission.

The mission consists of special repatriation flights operated by Indian carriers and chartered flights operated by both Indian and foreign carriers. The maximum number of



Indians repatriated were from Middle East countries - almost 3.94 lakh returned from the United Arab Emirates, 1.34 lakh from Saudi Arabia, 95,652 from Qatar, 84,153 from Kuwait, 75,631 from Oman and 22,769 from Bahrain. As many as 66,692 Indians

returned from the United States, 32,645 from the United Kingdom, 20,195 from Singapore, 14,108 from Germany, 12,385 from France, 11,464 from Malaysia and 11,384 from Canada. Another 671 from Pakistan were repatriated.

The Ministry of Civil Aviation has said that it facilitated flights under the Lifeline Udan to ensure supply of essentials and as well as medical supplies and test kits to all parts of the country. While 19 Lifeline Udan flights were flown for TS, five were for Andhra Pradesh.

# Videocon to pay Rs 51k for failing to provide services

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The District Consumer Disputes Redressal Commission directed the Videocon Industries Limited to refund the cost of a television worth Rs 36,000 to a consumer for failing to attend a TV repair in time within the warranty period.

According to the petition, P Nageshwara Rao, a 63-year-old retired employee bought a Videocon led TV from Tirupati Electronics in November 2016 by paying Rs 36,490 with three years warranty.

In May, 2019 the TV suddenly stopped functioning. He registered a complaint. A company technician informed that the display unit of TV was damaged and it has to be replaced. He assured the complainant that he would replace the spare part after receiving it from the head office, but he never came. Following which the complainant approached Videocon through phone and

E-mail but there is no proper response from them. The part is neither replaced nor repaired. The commission observed that by promising to replace and not coming forward to do the same certainly amounts to deficiency of service by making such promise the opposite parties had not only been deficient but also restricted the complainant from approaching any other technician or service centre. Therefore, the opposite parties had been deficient in their services.

The redressal commission opined that the opposite parties are certainly liable to compensate the complainant for the inconvenience and hardship caused.

The consumer commission directed the Videocon Industries and Tirupati Electronics, to refund the sum of Rs 36,490 towards the costs of TV and to pay compensation of Rs 10,000 and another Rs 5,000 towards other costs.

# TS plans to amend Stamp Duty Act

## Plans to withdraw special powers granted to commissioners

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The state government has plans to amend the Stamp Duty Act of 1899 to take away the discretionary powers of the Stamps and the Registration Department granted under Section 47 (A) of the Act as the legal provision was misused while registering Miyapur lands, which led to loss of revenue to the state government.

The Section 47 (A) facilitates the purchase of property to dispute the sub-registrar's book value of the property and can raise objection stating that the market value of the said property is less than that of the book value.

Having raised the objection, he should deposit 50 per cent of the registration fees. He should deposit another 25 per cent with the authorities.



The document would not be registered and it would be sent to the commissioner of the stamps and registration department for his opinion.

After taking due consideration of the objections raised, as per the decision of the commissioner the document would be registered. Now the Section 47

(A) which vests the commissioner with discriminatory powers would be withdrawn. Prior to 2017, the district registrars were empowered

with the power to take decision on objections raised under Section 47 (A).

Following the Miyapur land scam coming to light, the government amended the Section 47 (A) of the Act and removed the powers to District Registrars and vested the same with commissioner of the stamps and registration department.

The government took the decision as it noticed the misuse of the legal provision by authorities to deny legitimate revenue to the government.

Now the purchaser gets the registered document after 24 hours of the registration. Arrangements are being made in the offices of the tahsildar, registrar and sub-registrar to scan the document immediately and give it to the purchaser instantly.

# 'Cong leaders enacting political drama eyeing GHMC elections'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Animal Husbandry Minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav on Tuesday dismissed the allegations of Congress Legislative Party leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka on construction of 1 lakh double bedroom houses in Hyderabad.

He said the Congress leaders were enacting political drama eyeing the GHMC elections by visiting wrong locations and then alleging that the State government was misleading people.

Speaking to mediapersons at the Media Point in the State Assembly on Tuesday, Talasani Srinivas said the Congress leaders have lost the way and visited wrong locations in their attempt to inspect the construction of double bedroom houses in Jubilee Hills and Nampally. "While the govern-



ment is constructing 210 houses in Kamalanagar and 16 houses in Saradhinagar of Jubilee Hills, the Congress leaders visited Mangodiya Basthi and Afzalnagar which were not even mentioned in the list. A responsible leader like Bhatti Vikramarka should first verify the locations before visiting them," he advised.

Talasani Srinivas found fault with the Congress leaders who demanded that Municipal Administration Minister KT Rama Rao should come out onto the field and explain the status of double bedroom houses.

He ridiculed them, stating that Rama Rao does not need a certificate from the Congress leaders as people were aware of his commitment towards work. He said he was only reacting to the Congress leaders as the Minister from Greater Hyderabad.

# Finance wing lauded for emerging as role model

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Finance Minister T Harish Rao has congratulated the State Audit and Finance departments for taking the top spot in the country and emerging as a role model for other States in adopting online audit application for gram panchayat accounts.

The Minister's appreciation comes in the wake of the Union government recommending that all the States adopt the Telangana model in implementing the online audit of gram panchayat accounts.

The Union Ministry of Panchayat Raj recognised Telangana as the Lead State in the country for implementation of online audit application which was adopted by the State to bring in more transparency in gram panchayat accounts. The Minister said this would go a long way in bringing more accountability in all the local bodies.

The online auditing of gram



panchayat funds began across 3,830 of total 12,769 gram panchayats in the State on August 3 and was successfully completed. Online auditing in at least 20 per cent of the gram panchayats in a State has been mandated by the Centre to release subsequent funds to the respective States as per the recommendations of the 15th Finance Commission. Telangana had already shared its experiences and trained the Panchayat Secretaries from other States through video conference held last month.

# BJP holds protest against TRS not providing 2BHK houses

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The BJP on Tuesday organised protests here and other places in Telangana in protest against the TRS government allegedly not providing houses to the poor despite the Centre sanctioning funds under the PM Awas Yojana and demanding abolition of charges in the Layout Regularisation Scheme (LRS).

BJP leaders and activists, who gathered at district Collectorate as part of the protest, raised slogans against the TRS government.

State BJP president and MP Bandi Sanjay Kumar alleged in a statement that though the TRS government sought to suppress the protest using police, BJP workers reached district Collectorate.

Several BJP leaders and workers were taken into custody by police since Monday night, he claimed.

BJP spokesperson Anugula Rakesh Reddy alleged that the TRS government diverted



funds provided by Centre under the PM Awas Yojana (PMAY) housing scheme and took up poor peoples housing only for namesake.

The charges collected under LRS have become a burden on the poor and middle classes and the LRS should be withdrawn, he said in a release.

The TRS had promised double bedroom houses to the poor before elections and the state government should take

up construction of double bedroom houses to all eligible poor, Rakesh Reddy said.

The state government had earlier this month announced rules for regularization of unapproved and illegal layouts in the state in order to bring the unplanned/unapproved/ unauthorized/illegal layouts into the fold of planned sustainable development and to provide basic facilities in those areas.

# Cantt Board VP faces no-trust motion

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a shock to the Cantonment Board vice-president Ramakrishna on Tuesday, the board members moved no-confidence motion against Ramakrishna. The Board has succeeded in ensuring the victory of no-confidence motion against Ramakrishna. As a result, he lost the position of vice-chairman.

It may be recalled here that on Sunday, Ramakrishna tendered his resignation to the TRS party citing various reasons. He sent the resignation letter to the TRS working president KT Rama Rao.

However, he didn't tender his resignation to the Board vice-chairman position. The act of Ramakrishna embarrassed the TRS. In this context, the TRS acted tough against Ramakrishna. The Board members from TRS party moved no-confidence motion and succeeded in it resulting in Ramakrishna to lose his position on Tuesday.

# Forest officials put on high alert

PNS ■ PEDDAPALLI

Chief Conservator of Forests MJ Akbar instructed forest officials to be alert in the wake of the movement of a tiger in the district during the last few weeks.

The CCF conducted a landscape coordination meeting with forest range officers of Karimnagar, Warangal at NTPC millennium hall on Tuesday.

Speaking on the occasion, Akbar said protection of the tiger as well as people and their property was the responsibility of officials. He asked the officials to detain the big cat by tracking its movements.

Pointing out that killing tigers was a crime, he said people should not harm them. In this regard, officials should educate people. After the pug marks of tiger were found at Hanumanthipeta of Peddapalli mandal, he informed and asked the people of surrounding villages to be on alert.

**Conservator of Forests instructed forest officials to be alert in the wake of the movement of a tiger in the district during the last few weeks**

Forest officials including Vinod Kumar (Nirmal), Pradeep Kumar (Mulugu), Shivani Durga (Mancherial), B Lavanya (Bellampalli), Purushotham (Bhupalpally), Rajarao (Chennur), Vinay Kumar (Mancherial), Ravi Prasad and others participated in the meeting.

# TS DCC chiefs vow to bring Congress to power in 2023

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The District Congress Committee (DCC) Presidents of Telangana Congress on Tuesday expressed their resolve to work hard to bring the Congress party back to power in next Assembly elections in 2023.

All the DCC Presidents assured new AICC Incharge Manickam Tagore that they would strive hard to retain the lost glory of Congress party in Telangana under the leadership of TPCC President N Uttam Kumar Reddy.

Speaking on the occasion, Uttam Kumar Reddy praised the great work done by all DCC Presidents during the lockdown period due to Covid-19. He said Telangana unit has been rated top among all PCCs in providing required help and assistance to migrant workers during the lockdown. He said the DCCs have displayed huge commitment in following the directions of Congress leadership to help the



migrant workers in every possible manner. He said almost all DCC Presidents were doing their best to implement the AICC directions in carrying out nationwide agitation programmes. "They are facing harassment by the local police and administration. Many of them were also implicated in false cases by the TRS regime. But they are promptly organising all the programmes by mobilising funds and other resources on their own," he said.

Uttam Kumar Reddy said that the TRS was exploiting the beneficiaries of various



schemes like Aasra Pension, Kalyana Laxmi or Rythu Bandu of the state government and treating them as its vote bank.

He said that the TRS government was covering up its major failures by giving hype to a few programmes which were already in implementation before TRS came to power in 2014.

Further, he alleged that the TRS leaders were using their ill-gotten money to lure the voters in every election. Citing an instance, he alleged that nearly Rs. 100 crore were spent by TRS to win Huzurnagar by-elections.

# Foundation for Pharma City likely on Dasara

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The state government has been making all arrangements to lay the foundation stone for the prestigious Pharma City project on Dasara and issued oral orders to all the government departments in this regard.

The government has invited logo designs of the Pharma City to unveil it prior to the foundation stone laying ceremony.

The project was set up on a sprawling 16,000 acre between Ranga Reddy and Mahabubnagar districts with a total investment of over Rs 64000 crore. The employment potential of the project is over 5.60 lakh. The Centre accorded National Investments and Manufacturing Zone status to it.

In all, 9,000 acres have been acquired for the project in Rangareddy district. The process is acquire the rest of the lands is under way. It has become customary for Chief



Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao to take up one project or the other for Dasara. A high level meeting is going to be convened by the CM shortly to review arrangements for the foundation-stone laying ceremony. The Telangana State Industrial Infrastructural amenities development corporation announced a cash prize of Rs 1 lakh to the best design of the logo for the pharma city.

It invited the logo designs for the competition on Monday. The logos should be sent on pml-hpc-icc@telangana.gov.in.

The TS Industrial Infrastructural Development Corporation said that the winner of the best logo design competition would be announced on October 5.

# IN SUPPORT



Farmers of all the villages in the 5 zones of Sirisilla constituency organised a rally on bullock carts and tractors in support of the New Revenue Law brought by the TRS government.

# Coronavirus recovery rate in state crosses 82% mark

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana's recovery rate of Covid-19 cases has crossed the 82 per cent mark as the state continues to see over 2,000 recoveries every day, health officials said on Tuesday.

A total of 2,143 people recovered from the virus during last 24 hours ending Monday 8 pm. With this the cumulative recoveries in the state mounted to 1,44,073. The recovery rate has gone up to 82.43 per cent against the average of 80.82 per cent.

The state's Covid tally jumped to 1,74,774 with 2,166 new cases registered during the last 24 hours, officials said.

10 more people succumbed to the virus during the period, pushing the death toll in the state to 1,052. The case fatality rate in the state stands 0.60 per cent against the national average of 1.60 per cent.

GHMC reported 309 new cases Rangareddy district recorded 166 new cases while the count in Medchal



Malkajgiri went up by 147.

The number of cases in Karimnagar rose by 127 and in Nalgonda by 113. Warangal Urban recorded 95 new cases, Nizamabad and Mahabubabad 90 each, Siddipet 88 and Khammam 87.

According to a media bulletin released from the office of the director of public health and family welfare, 53,690 tests were conducted during the last 24 hours.

With this the state has so far tested 25,73,005 samples. Samples tested per million

population improved further to 69,304. A total of 17 government-run laboratories, 43 private laboratories and 1076 rapid antigen test centres are conducting the tests.

The number of active cases in the state stands at 29,649 including 22,620 A in home/institutional isolation.

As many as 65.23 per cent of those tested positive were in the age group of 21-50 years while 21.82 were above 51 years of age. The positive cases include 12.95 per cent who were below 20 years.

# CRPF step up combing in Dandakaranya

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The CRPF, Cobra and Grey Hounds security forces have been combing the Dandakaranya region intensively to keep the Maoists at bay.

If the Maoists infiltrate into Telangana, they will create mayhem. Therefore, the security forces are denying the Maoists an opportunity to enter the state. The security forces want the Maoists confine to Injaram in Sukuma district of neighbouring Chhattisgarh, which is 50 km away from Telangana.

The CRPF, Cobra and Grey Hounds security forces have maintained a strict vigil on the streams, rivers and plain areas with the help of powerful drones, which can even identify an ant on the ground from thousands of metres of height.



On September 13, over 300 Maoists were seen crossing a stream under Kistaram police station limits with a view to attack a CRPF camp in the area. They managed to reach Injaram village in Sukuma district. Footage captured by drones became viral on social

media. They are trying to enter the Telangana through Dummugudem, Charla, Venkatapuram, Wajedu. The security forces were successful acting strategically forcing them to go back. The security forces have

been combing the forest areas to chase them away to Dandakaranya region.

The security along the border with Chhattisgarh has been fortified to rule out any scope for the Maoists to enter the state by hoodwinking the security forces.

# TS BJP appoints presidents for 12 district units

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

State BJP general secretary Gujjula Premender Reddy declared appointment of presidents to 12 district units here on Tuesday.

They include Vikram Reddy for Medchal Rural, Aruna Thara for Kamareddy, Sama Ranga Reddy for Ranga Reddy, P Satyanarayana Rao for Jagtival, P Harish Reddy for Medchal Urban, V Pandu Yadav for Golkonda-Goshamahala, S Surender Reddy for Malakpet, Galla Satyanarayana for Khammam, B Bhagya Reddy for Suryapet, B Shyam-sunder for Mahankali, Sad-ananda Reddy for Vikarabad and N Goutham Rao for Barkatpura-Amberpet.

SHORT READS



**Sharad Pawar gets Income Tax notice over poll affidavits**

**Mumbai:** NCP chief Sharad Pawar on Tuesday said the Income Tax department has served him a notice in connection with his poll affidavits submitted to the Election Commission. Talking to reporters here, Pawar said the IT department has sought his "clarification and explanation" on some poll affidavits furnished by him. "I got the notice yesterday... We are happy that they love us from among all the members... The notice was served by Income Tax after the Election Commission asked (it) to... We will reply to the notice," he said. He was responding to a query on reports that his daughter and Lok Sabha member Supriya Sule, Maharashtra CM Uddhav Thackeray and Environment Minister Aaditya Thackeray had received similar notices from the IT department.



**Herd of elephants on rampage in Bengal's Jhargram**

**Jhargram:** A herd of 40 wild elephants went on a rampage in several villages in West Bengal's Jhargram district, damaging paddy and vegetables, a forest official said on Tuesday. The herd, including tuskers and calves, is at the Kalakunda forest area since Sunday, and have been straying into nearby villages, the official said. The jumbos have destroyed paddy and vegetables grown over hundreds of acres of land at Beliabera, Bhandar-bila, Amtalia, the official said. There have been several incidents of elephant depredation into localities in Jhargram and Bankura districts, and the administration was sensitising the locals and taking steps to avert man-animal conflict, the official said.

**Lok Sabha adjourned for an hour after Oppn protests**

**New Delhi:** Lok Sabha was adjourned for an hour on Tuesday following protests by opposition members who claimed that the government has done too little for the welfare of farmers. Congress leader Adhir Ranjan Chowdhury said Monday's announcement by Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar of increasing minimum support price (MSP) of six Rabi crops was too little for the benefits of farmers, who have been agitating against two farm bills, which were passed by Parliament on Sunday. Chowdhury was supported by DMK leader T R Baalu and TMC's Kalyan Banerjee. Soon, opposition members shouted slogans and came near the well of the House to register their protests in support of farmers, who are agitating in Punjab, Haryana and some other places. At this, Speaker Om Birla adjourned the House for an hour, after about 15 minutes of business. "I want all of you to be safe. I want all of you to go back to your constituency healthy so that you can serve the people. By keeping in mind your well being, I adjourn the House for an hour," Birla said.

**PM: NEP will play key role in creating Atmanirbhar Bharat**

PNS ■ GUWAHATI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Tuesday the New Education Policy (NEP) announced by his government will play a key role in creating a self-reliant India and open up the education sector for facilitating greater global exposure for Indian students.

Modi said holistic knowledge, of which science is an integral part, is the answer to all problems.

The NEP, he asserted, will establish India as a global education destination. "Students, I firmly believe that the future of a nation is what its youth is today. Your dreams are going to shape the reality of India. That's why this is the time to be future-ready and future-fit," he said addressing the 22nd convocation of IIT (Guwahati) through a video conference from the national capital.

Modi spoke about the importance of education as a key component for creating an "Atmanirbhar Bharat" (self-reliant India) and said the NEP is for the youths of the 21st century who will lead the world and make India the global leader in science and technology.

The NEP, which is designed



to ease the burden of classroom teaching and examination on students, will play an important role in the country's march forward, he said.

"We all know that knowledge has no boundaries. The NEP will open up the country's education sector. The intention is to open campuses of foreign universities in India and our students get global exposure here.

"Likewise, research collaboration and student exchange programmes between Indian and foreign universities will be promoted. The credit acquired by our students will be counted in Indian institutions. The NEP will establish India as a global education destination," the prime minister said. The "high performance

institutes" of India will also be encouraged to set up campuses abroad, he added.

Noting that the policy has all those things which were on the top of youths' wish list, Modi said, "The NEP has been made multi-disciplinary with flexibility given for (choosing) subjects. Multiple entry and exit options have been offered.

"And most importantly, the NEP will link education with technology, and will make technology an integral part of students' thought process. That means students will learn about technology and will learn through technology."

The NEP has also opened up paths for the use of artificial intelligence and expansion of online learning, he added. The prime minister infor-

med the virtual gathering that a National Education Technology Forum will be set up to promote the use of technology in the learning process, and the IITs have "infinite possibilities" in that.

"To enrich the research culture in the country, a National Research Foundation (NRF) has also been proposed in the NEP. The NRF will coordinate with all funding agencies and provide funds for research in all disciplines including science and humanities.

"The potential research works with practical applicability will be recognised and implemented. For that, coordination and a close linkage will be established between government agencies and industries," he added.

Modi lauded the efforts of IIT Guwahati in adopting new technologies, especially for inventing new equipment during the COVID-19 pandemic, and appreciated the introduction of a two-year research programme on e-mobility.

"I am also happy to know that IIT Guwahati is leading in the integration of science and technology in BTech courses.

I am fully confident that inter-disciplinary programmes will make our education all round and futuristic," he said.

**Govt working for development of crony capitalists: Rahul**

PNS ■ GUWAHATI

The Congress on Tuesday stepped up its attack on the government over the farm bills issue, with Rahul Gandhi accusing the Modi government of working for the development of crony capitalists at the cost of farmers.

The Congress and some other opposition parties have been protesting against the farm bills, alleging these would harm the interest of farmers and benefit corporates, a claim denied by the government.

The Centre has asserted that the bills would be beneficial for farmers and increase their income.

"2014- Modi ji's election promise of Swaminathan commission MSP (minimum support price) for farmers. 2015- Modi government said in court that this will not be possible. 2020- Black agriculture laws," Gandhi tweeted in Hindi.

Then, in a four-line verse in Hindi, the former Congress president sarcastically said, "Modi ji's intention is 'clear' with his new 'anti-agriculture' attempt. Development of crony capitalist 'friends' at the cost of farmers, he said, according to a rough translation of his Hindi tweet.

Senior Congress leader and former Union finance minister P Chidambaram also attacked the government over



the farm bills issue.

"Government has released advertisements defending the farm bills. One line in the advertisement says that 'One Nation One Market' will give freedom to the farmers," he said in a series of tweets.

"Eight-five per cent of farmers are small farmers with little surplus to sell.

If they have to sell the few bags of paddy or wheat, they need 'Many Thousand Markets' all over the country, not 'One Market'," Chidambaram asserted.

"What do the Bills do to create thousands of farmers' markets in large villages and small towns?" he asked.

Asserting that thousands of farmers will give freedom to farmers, he asked if the government's intention is to guarantee MSP, why is there no clause in the bills that stipulate that

the "price shall not be less than the MSP" for that produce.

The Congress on Monday announced a massive people's movement which would include protest marches, agitations and collecting two crore farmers' signatures for a memorandum against the legislations to be submitted to President Ram Nath Kovind.

This was decided at a meeting of Congress general secretaries and state in-charges, the first physical meeting held by the party at its 24 Akbar Road headquarters here since the outbreak of the coronavirus.

A resolution hitting out at the three farm bills -- the Farmer's Produce Trade and Commerce Bill, 2020, the Farmers Agreement of Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020 and the Essential Commodities Bill, 2020, -- was also passed at the meeting.

**Oppn parties likely to boycott LS**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

TMC MP Derek O'Brien on Tuesday indicated that Opposition parties are going to boycott the Lok Sabha session in protest against the suspension of eight MPs.

Members of the opposition had walked out of the Rajya Sabha earlier in the day.

"There is no Opposition in Rajya Sabha and I am given to understand that the Opposition leaders are going to boycott Lok Sabha as well. So, if that actually happens, there will be absolutely no Opposition in Parliament," O'Brien said during a media briefing.

**'BJP taking credit for SP's film city project'**

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party president and former Uttar Pradesh chief minister Akhilesh Yadav Tuesday alleged the Yogi Adityanath government was trying to take credit for the film city project initiated by his regime.

"The BJP government of the state is now ready to be taken off, because there is an advance booking for those who build the 'real picture' of the state."

Two Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) were signed in 2015, when the Samajwadi Party was in power, for setting up as many film cities in the state.



elections, Yadav added in his tweet. "Their flop film is about to be taken off, because there is an advance booking for those who build the 'real picture' of the state."

Two Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) were signed in 2015, when the Samajwadi Party was in power, for setting up as many film cities in the state.

**Covid: Session for freshers from Nov 1**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The delayed academic session for freshers in universities and colleges will begin from November 1, and the winter break this year, the summer vacation in 2021 and other holidays would be curtailed to compensate for the time lost, according to the University Grants Commission.

The guidelines by an expert committee, set up for revising the academic calendar in view of Covid, have been accepted by the UGC and accordingly universities have been recommended a six-day teaching learning schedule every week.

"In view of the Covid, the Commission has accepted the Report of the Committee and approved the UGC Guidelines

on Academic Calendar for the First Year of Under-Graduate and Post-Graduate Students of the Universities for the Session 2020-21," Union Education Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' tweeted.

The UGC had in April released an alternative academic calendar for colleges to reopen, with guidelines on exams, mode of study and the schedule.

At that time, the plan was to reopen colleges from September, but it could not materialise due to a continuing surge in coronavirus cases.

As per the revised calendar, the admission process for first year students needs to be completed by October 31 and classes for the first semester should commence by November 1.



In order to compensate for the loss of academic time, the UGC has asked colleges to teach six days a week and shorten the winter break this year and the summer break next year.

"The universities are requested to compensate the delay in the start of academic session in the subsequent years by curtailing the breaks/vacations so that this batch of students would get their final results for award of degree timely," the guidelines said.

"The start of first year of academic session 2020-2021 is delayed due to the circumstances beyond control but efforts be made to compensate the loss of this period by curtailing the breaks. This would ensure that these students would timely complete their 3 year UG/ PG programme," the UGC guidelines said.

"All the universities may follow a 6-day week pattern for the academic session 2020-21 and 2021-2022 to compensate the loss for this batch of students," it added. Universities and schools across the country have been closed since March 16 when the Centre announced a countrywide classroom shutdown as part of measures to contain the spread of the novel coronavirus.

**MP announces Rs 4,000 cash transfer to farmers**

PNS ■ BHOPAL

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan on Tuesday announced that his government will transfer Rs 4,000 into the bank accounts of farmers in the state in two equal instalments in a financial year.

The benefit would be given to those who are enrolled under the Pradhan Mantri Kisan Samman Nidhi (PM-KISAN) scheme.

"With a view of overall development of farmers, we have decided that schemes being run in their interest, such as relief under RCB6(4), PM Kisan Samman Nidhi, loan at zero percent interest and Prime Minister Crop Insurance, we will implement all the schemes as a package," Chouhan said in a series of tweets. In the first phase of this series, the CM Farmers Welfare Scheme is being started in the state, he said. "Under this scheme, all eli-



gible beneficiary farmer families covered under the PM Samman Nidhi will be paid a total of Rs 4,000 in two instalments in a financial year. Welfare of farmers is the goal of my life," Chouhan tweeted. The chief minister said his government will help farmers double their income by 2022.

"We re-implemented the loan scheme at zero interest rate. Complete benefits of Kisan Samman Nidhi and Bima Yojana were given. More than Rs 27,000 crore were paid to farmers for food grains purchase. We will leave no stone unturned to double farmers' income by 2022," he said in another tweet.

**Suspended RS MPs end dramatic sit-in**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With the opposition deciding to boycott the remaining session of the Rajya Sabha, the eight suspended MPs on Tuesday ended their overnight sit-in inside the Parliament House complex and said they would take their fight against the farm bills to the street.

The suspended Rajya Sabha parliamentarians, who spent the night in the lawns near Mahatma Gandhi's statue in what several old-timers said was the first such overnight protest in the complex, got a surprise visitor in the morning -- Rajya Sabha Deputy Chairman Harivansh who came with tea and snacks.

Till late night, the protesting MPs raised slogans and sang songs while a host of Opposition leaders such as National Conference's Farooq Abdullah, Samajwadi Party's Jaya Bachchan and Congress' Ahmed Patel, Digvijaya Singh and Shashi Tharoor visited them to express their support.

But their morning visitor did not receive the same enthusiastic response, said some of the



protesting MPs. Prime Minister Narendra Modi said Harivansh's gesture was proof of his greatness, adding that his 'inspiring' and 'statesmanlike' conduct will make every democracy lover proud.

"To personally serve tea to those who attacked and insulted him a few days ago as well as those sitting on Dharna shows that Shri Harivansh Ji has been blessed with a humble mind and a big heart. It shows his greatness. I join the people of India in congratulating Harivansh Ji," he tweeted.

The Rajya Sabha deputy chairman, the protesters said, came early with a posse of news cameras and was told by

to protest against the anti-farmer Bills," he added.

A motion for the suspension of the eight leaders -- Rajeev Satav, Syed Naseer Hussain and Ripun Bora (Congress), Dola Sen and Derek O'Brien (TMC), KK Ragesh and Elamaram Kareem and Sanjay Singh was moved by the government on Monday and approved by a voice vote in the House. They were suspended for the remaining part of the current session over their "misbehaviour" with the deputy chairman during the passage of the farm bills on Sunday.

With the opposition parties boycotting the rest of the session, there was no point in continuing with the dharna, which started on Monday afternoon and ended 24 hours later on Tuesday, said Congress MP.

"All the opposition parties have boycotted the rest of the session, nobody is attending the session. They appealed to us to withdraw the dharna and since nobody is attending the session till the suspension is revoked, there is no point in continuing with the dharna," he said.

**Court extends Rhea's judicial remand**

PNS ■ MUMBAI

A special court here on Tuesday extended till October 6 the judicial custody of actress Rhea Chakraborty, who was arrested by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) probing the drug angle in connection with actor Sushant Singh Rajput's death case. Chakraborty was produced before special judge G B Guroa who extended her judicial custody, said special public prosecutor Atul Sarpande.

Other accused arrested in the case will be produced in court on Wednesday, he said. The special court on September 11 rejected bail pleas of Chakraborty, her brother Showik, and others in the case, noting that there was no "reasonable ground" at present for not connecting the accused with the crime.

Sushant Singh Rajput was found hanging in his residence in suburban Bandra on June 14.

**Sexual content: NCRP lodged 13,244 complaints**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A total of 13,244 complaints regarding content related to child pornography, rape and gang rape were lodged by the National Cybercrime Reporting Portal (NCRP) from 01.03.2020 to 18.09.2020 is 13,244," Irani said.

The Childline India Foundation (CIF) received 3,941 calls regarding child sexual abuse cases from March 1 till September 15, she said. In a written reply to another question, Irani shared the National Commission for Women's (NCW) data on crimes against women. According to the data, the NCW received 4,350 com-

"As reported by National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), the total number of child pornography/rape and gang rape complaints lodged in the National Cybercrime Reporting Portal (NCRP) from 01.03.2020 to 18.09.2020 is 13,244," Irani said.

The Childline India Foundation (CIF) received 3,941 calls regarding child sexual abuse cases from March 1 till September 15, she said.

In a written reply to another question, Irani shared the National Commission for Women's (NCW) data on crimes against women.

According to the data, the NCW received 4,350 com-



plaints of domestic violence between March 1 and September 20, while the total number of complaints of crime against women stood at 13,410. In March, 298 complaints of

domestic violence and a total of 1,347 complaints were received. In April, the commission received 315 complaints of domestic violence and a total of 800 complaints.

In May, 393 complaints of domestic violence and a total of 1,500 complaints were received, while in June, the commission received 461 complaints of domestic violence and a total of 2,043 complaints.

In July, 660 complaints of domestic violence and a total of 2,914 complaints were received. Till September 20, the commission received 243 complaints of domestic violence and a total of 1,235 complaints. In addition, the NCW has also launched a WhatsApp number, 7217735372, in April for reporting domestic violence cases. It has received 1,443 complaints till now, Irani said.

**CIC's post vacant, process of appointment going on: Govt**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The process of appointment of a new Chief Information Commissioner (CIC) and Information Commissioners (ICs) in the Central Information Commission is going on, Union Minister Jitendra Singh said on Tuesday.

In a written reply to the Rajya Sabha, he said the CIC completed his tenure on August 26.

"The process of appointment of new CIC and ICs is going on," said Singh, the minister of state for personnel.



The Central Information Commission can have a CIC and ten ICs.

"One Information Commissioner is completing his tenure on 25.09.2020. The government had initiated the process to fill up the vacancy in a time-

ly manner by way of issuing the advertisements to fill up the post of Chief Information Commissioner and up to 6 posts of Information Commissioners in the Central Information Commission on 09.07.2020," he said. Singh said a high level search committee follows a method of obtaining relevant information about various candidates while scrutinizing applications and shortlists candidates for the post of Chief Information Commissioner and Information Commissioners.

## Lack of confidence

India's rising COVID-19 numbers and a second wave in the West mean that economic revival is a long way off



China has enjoyed showing its thumb to the world and in a brazen display of insensitivity, it recently allowed a mass beach party to take place in the city of Wuhan, the epicentre of the contagion that is ravaging the lungs of people across the world as well as the global economy. Stock markets worldwide are in a tumble once again as renewed curbs across Europe, following a resurgence of the pandemic, cast a shadow on economic activity that was picking up pace. The cascading impact hit D Street, too, as foreign portfolio investors and domestic institutions dumped shares, plunging graphs southwards. And although our market

has recovered by about 50 per cent from the lows of March, it is still patchy and any decelerator sends it crashing too. Large countries like the UK as well as several cities and states across the US are being forced into another round of lockdown to prevent a devastating "second wave," which means shuttering businesses that had opened. In India, while numbers have stabilised, albeit with lower testing numbers as well as evidence that district and city level officials are restricting testing deliberately, the pandemic appears to have become a fact of life with most cities whirling back. In Kerala, the State Government is allowing asymptomatic workers to return to their jobs in a secluded work zone. Yet, full steam ahead is quite a way off. While the impending festive season and the action in the Indian Premier League (IPL) will bring a spending boost, the levels will be nowhere close to those of past years. The problem is while businesses aren't completely dysfunctional, allowed as they are to operate freely in non-restricted areas, they are inter-connected to supply and distribution chains across States. Stalling of operations in one hub in a badly-hit State is bound to affect others as the cascading effect slows down the sector a particular business is into, and thereby grunts the overall economy. With attendance and production capacity affected by restrictions, some sectors cannot even take off optimally. Bengaluru is a prime example. With most IT workers having left the city through a series of lockdowns, they returned in waves, thereby, slowing down the desired momentum for recovery. All such micro-blocks are threatening to disrupt the little gains made in reviving the economy. A slew of economic relief measures, too, has failed to inspire confidence among businesses as corporate finances remain squeezed, sales have not regained momentum and demand remains low. Even the amount allocated for bailing out MSMEs remains largely undistributed.

As some have described it, 2020 is a lost year, a year spent bleeding and that can only stop next year. Anyway the process of full recovery will not start before 2022. That said, others are still quite hopeful of a rebound economy and while expecting numbers to be lower than before, they feel they would be fairly decent. Many of these people are seen in the stock exchanges betting big. The rise in the price of many major stocks despite the lost first and insipid second quarters of the year was a sign that some would hold out long-term. As long as COVID-19 is around, there will be a continuing drop in demand and supply chain inconsistencies. Besides, there are sectoral spurts while the economy as a whole needs to stabilise. Given the Government's long-range structural reforms, stimulus and relief by RBI, many investors are still using the volatility to their advantage by focussing on long-term prospects and asset allocation and choosing to build a solid portfolio. While many Indians do not have a choice but to live with the virus, some nations might prioritise differently. That said, it appears that the virus will keep on coming back. If we are to learn anything from the 1919-1920 Spanish flu epidemic, it is that it just took time to eliminate it. Vaccines did not exist then. But a price of asking for time will be that the economic bleeding might last longer and many worry that a body without any blood is not worth saving. So, will 2021 also be frightening year? It is a question worth asking now. Global ratings agency Fitch has already estimated that the Indian economy is expected to contract by 10.5 per cent in 2020-21. And while industry federations are hopeful that growth can be expedited through continued government support and hand-holding of businesses during this crisis, they are still cautiously optimistic about full capacity utilisation. This is going to be a long road to recovery.

## Women in combat

Woman pilot to fly Rafale, two others to fly choppers from Navy warships. Finally, the glass ceiling has been broken



Women in India have something to be extremely proud of as Avani Chaturvedi, a young fighter pilot of the Indian Air Force (IAF), will soon be part of the crew flying the newly-inducted Rafale fleet. She is now undergoing training to fly India's latest acquisition and is part of a three-member women team commissioned as flying officers in July 2016, less than a year after the Government decided to open the fighter stream for women. The first Indian woman to fly a fighter aircraft solo, she has been flying MiG-21s for a while now. However, India has been a bit late in entrusting the nation's safety to its daughters. Because this small and

elite league of extraordinary women is led by Turkish aviator Sabiha Gökçen, who in 1937 flew fighter airplanes into war zones and dropped bombs on rebel camps. This was a time when women weren't even allowed to become air force pilots, forget flying fighters. At the young age of 24, Gökçen became the world's first-ever woman to participate in a national military operation. That a woman from a predominantly Western Asian country, with a small part straddling south Europe, was the first to do so says much about the region's leadership at that time as even in the "free world", namely the US, women were not allowed to serve as jet pilots until about 50 years later in 1976. And it took a few more years for women in the US to do what Gökçen could as Jeannie Leavitt became the first woman fighter pilot in 1993. It's a sad statement on gender parity in the Indian security forces that it took over six decades for them to send a woman into combat. It was in 1999 during the Kargil War that India allowed Gunjan Saxena to fly into a war zone on a chopper. Too late and too little, the IAF has 10 women fighter pilots and 18 women navigators and the total strength of women officers serving in the IAF is 1,875 as the force continues to induct and deploy them as per strategic needs and operational requirements. Now, the Golden Arrows squadron that was raised on October 1, 1951, will have its first woman fighter pilot. Two women will also fly Navy choppers in frontline positions on Navy warships. A rather slow start. This is in a country that has had a woman Prime Minister, a woman President and many women Chief Ministers and Governors, leaving behind a so-called developed country like the US, which is yet to have its first woman President. So while the much-maligned world of politics has been more inclusive, the gallant security forces have not been as welcoming of the other half.

Thanks to the Supreme Court, women officers in the Army can now get command positions on par with male officers and break the glass ceiling in the forces. However, the sad part is that they had to fight for it legally rather than being naturalised in the just order of things, considering that they were inducted in the Army way back in 1992, a long 28 years ago. The court also underlined the need for a mindset change in the evolutionary flow of changing times, not just in the Army but everywhere. It had said, "Physiological features of women have no link to their rights. Women work shoulder to shoulder with men." Women officers in the forces, like their male counterparts, give up on all familial commitments to be part of the Army. They, too, undergo the same rigorous selection and training procedures as their male peers. If women have made it through all kinds of selection criteria, then they should at least be given a chance to prove their mettle. Not benched.

# China sitting pretty

One scenario is PLA withdrawing to original positions from most friction points except Depsang with Indian forces vacating Chushul heights as quid pro quo



ASHOK K MEHTA

After a hiatus of seven weeks, the India-China disengagement and de-escalation process (DDP) resumed on Monday in a revised military-diplomatic format. To recap, in April-May, the People's Liberation Army (PLA) presented India with a fait accompli through multiple intrusions across LAC, annexing 1,000 sq km of territory following intelligence and operational lapses of Himalayan heights. China built up 40,000 troops with matching deployment by India and preliminary conversations on a DDP culminated in the Galwan clash, which led to further mobilisation of troops. The China-dictated DDP disadvantaged Indian forces, locking them in buffer zones and blocking their patrolling in Galwan, Hot Springs-Goghra, Depsang and Pangong Lake areas. An Indian riposte came south and north of Pangong Lake on Kailash ridge centred around Mukhpari through a pre-emptive operation by the Special Frontier Force, comprising exiled Tibetans, and local action in the Fingers area. This unnerved PLA, which created a friction point near Mukhpari prior to the anodyne five-point Moscow agreement between Chinese and Indian Foreign Ministers. Few days earlier, the two Defence Ministers had conversed at the same platform. Two thresholds — unarmed combat resulting in casualties and prophylactic firing — on the escalation ladder have been crossed for the first time in 45 years.

Speaking in both Houses of Parliament on the situation along the LAC, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh skipped specifying statistics of PLA ingress. In fact, he was less than economical with the truth by suggesting that coordinated intelligence and border troops' action thwarted aggression which he referred to as transgression when it was clearly a case of intrusion. In fact, the Ministry of Defence had put out the details of intrusions on its website but mysteriously removed them.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi's epic statement on June 19 that no Chinese troops intruded or were on Indian soil was the original sin which became the Holy Grail for Beijing. Singh replied rhetorically to Indian troops in lockdown being prevented from



patrolling by PLA. What was also missing from his statement was any reference to restoration of status quo ante (RSQA) and Depsang, the deepest and strategically most unbalancing of all intrusions. It was Singh who first spilled the beans on intrusions and later admitted he could not guarantee a favourable outcome from military commanders' talks. He was spot on as DDP had virtually collapsed by August 2, the last date of talks.

India's negotiating strategy has serious lacunae. Further, in the statements issued by each side, China has never mentioned RSQA but restoring peace and tranquility in border areas. The word LAC has also never been used. Curiously, the Indian side has also not used RSQA in formal statements but called for full and complete disengagement. Mention of Depsang has become taboo. China has violated all border protocols, especially the 1993 and 1996 agreements, and changed the concept of LAC since it is neither delimited nor delineated. It has made LAC irrelevant, turning it into the line it can occupy and control. Instead, it has promulgated the November 1959 claim line shifting LAC westwards. As the stronger power, it has exploited the undefined LAC for exercising coercive diplomacy. China's *Global Times* has repeatedly said that India must

“ CHINA HAS NEVER MENTIONED RESTORATION OF STATUS QUO ANTE BUT WANTS PEACE AND TRANQUILITY IN BORDER AREAS. THE WORD LAC HAS ALSO NEVER BEEN USED. CURIOUSLY, THE INDIAN SIDE HAS ALSO NOT MENTIONED IT BUT CALLED FOR FULL AND COMPLETE DISENGAGEMENT. MENTION OF DEPSANG HAS BECOME TABOO ”

accept the 1959 claim line or else face war.

Before the Foreign Ministers' Moscow meeting, the PLA attempted to unhinge India's seizure of Chushul heights, including several nodal points on the 30-km Kailash ridge line dominating PLA Moldo garrison and Spanggur Gap. These dominating heights are on the Indian side of LAC and not a trespass as alleged by China. PLA manufactured a friction point on a plateau roughly 300 m away and 200 m lower, near Mukhpari, one of the highest points on the ridge. It is surprising why the Special Frontier Force (SFF) did not occupy this plateau. During the ongoing talks, Mukhpari has already become the new bone of contention in DDP.

Even with the dust not settling on the plateaus of east Ladakh for over five months now, it is possible to decipher more rationally the Chinese motivation for its well-planned military occupation of Indian territory. It is now flatly refusing to disengage and abandon military gains like it did after past intrusions — Sumdorong Chu (1986), Depsang (2013), Chumar (2014) and Doklam (2017). India is still relying on China eventually withdrawing and returning to barracks.

It seems China was incensed when Indian troops trespassed border at Doklam (disputed between China and Bhutan)

and blocked PLA from building a road towards the disputed India-Bhutan-China trijunction in Chumbi Valley. China compared Indian belligerence to "if you go to steal chicken, you may lose the rice bowl" and took Indian audacity as daring China. The Chinese media had then noted that Beijing was looking for an opportunity to humiliate India.

Two other compulsions can be added to the Doklam-dare — Home Minister Amit Shah's parliamentary pledge to liberate Aksai Chin and President Xi Jinping's realisation of the China Dream.

India must frustrate Xi's dream of reviving the mythical India-China border of the Ming dynasty and strive for a fair and mutually acceptable border settlement. This appears to be problematic due to asymmetries in gross national power. China has already imposed costs by forcing the Indian Army to deploy three additional divisions ahead of its high altitude defences in Ladakh along LAC.

It seems prepared to press on its claims and deployments in a game of blink. It has mobilised four out of its five Theatre Commands to grapple with inimical fronts in East China Sea, South China Sea, Taiwan and the Xinjiang and Tibet borders facing India. It will be unwise to underestimate the staying power of PLA — either its capacity to fight in high mountains or the need for it to employ troops in the ratio of 6:1 to dislodge Indian soldiers occupying heights.

But China has no intention of starting a conflict. It is the satisfied power, having already made territorial gains. India has said it will respond to aggression in self-defence, despite Chief of Defence Staff (CDS) General Bipin Rawat's threat of the military option if diplomacy fails. One scenario from the DDP is PLA agreeing to withdraw to original positions from most friction points except Depsang with Indian forces vacating their commanding Chushul heights as quid pro quo. A full RSQA, still unlikely, could result only from a possible third Xi-Modi summit on the sidelines of the G20 at Riyadh in November. Otherwise, the standoff could go the long Sumdorong Chu way of eight winters unless Xi is persuaded to temper his Ladakh dream.

(The writer, a retired Major General, was Commander IPKF South, Sri Lanka and founder member of the Defence Planning Staff, currently the Integrated Defence Staff.)

## SOUNDBITE

There is a tangible threat of further escalation as India might conduct another false flag operation to justify renewed aggression against Pakistan, posing a serious threat to regional peace and security.

Pakistan Foreign Minister —Shah Mahmood Qureshi



The proposed Mekedatu reservoir under the guise of drinking water purpose would irreparably and irreversibly affect the flow of water.

DMK president —MK Stalin



We remain committed to using our tools to do what we can to ensure that the recovery will be as strong as possible, and to limit lasting damage to the economy.

Federal Reserve Chairman —Jerome Powell



For the past month we have been training here, Virat Bhaya (Kohli) has talked to me and I have learnt a lot from him.

Cricketer —Devdutt Padikkal



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Ruckus in Parliament

Sir — The Government did not have a majority in the Rajya Sabha to get its farm Bills passed. Thus, to bend the House to its wishes, even as the Opposition protested and demanded further discussion on the same, the ruling dispensation intentionally had the Bills passed through a voice vote. The sheer display of arrogance by the Government will cost it dear as the farmers continue to protest against the "historic farm reforms".

R Narayanan  
Mumbai

### Hollow promises?

Sir — With the Bihar Assembly elections round the corner, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has announced a special package of ₹1.25 lakh crore for the State. This is not the first time a Government has announced a special package just before elections, so, only time will tell how much of this package will actually help the people of Bihar. As of now, Bihar remains one of the most backward States in the country. And many promises

made before are yet to see the light of day.

Bhagwan Thadani  
Mumbai

### Gender equality

Sir — In a first, the Indian Air Force's Rafale squadron in Ambala is getting its first woman fighter pilot. Currently, the total strength of women officers serv-

ing in the IAF is 1,875, including 10 women fighter pilots and 18 women navigators. There is still a long way to go before we achieve gender equality in all spheres of life.

Yashi Bairagi  
Ujjain

### Disgraceful conduct

Sir — Rajya Sabha Deputy

### A call for people's vaccine

The decision to stop funding WHO and opt out of COVAX, the COVID-19 Global Access Facility, by the US were major setbacks in the fight against the virus. Also, orders by countries like US, UK and Australia for large supplies of potential COVID-19 vaccines will deplete the limited stock and deny or delay vaccination in the developing countries. Speaking at the United Nations' 75th anniversary commemoration, Secretary General Antonio Guterres called for global collaboration and cooperation to combat the COVID-19 pandemic. The UN should indeed facilitate an agreement for a fair and equitable distribution of vaccines when they become available.

While the race for the COVID-19 vaccines is understandable, the cut-throat competition for developing them is avoidable and unnecessary. However, this isn't the time to seek national glory or commercial benefit but to push the idea of "people's vaccine" forward. This will make the vaccines available to all at affordable prices and the pharmaceutical companies won't be able to



manipulate the prices.

The UN will have served its purpose if it sends out the message that creating vaccinated pockets won't be beneficial for any country. The leaders need to come together and work towards a sustainable future for all mankind.

David Milton  
Maruthancode

This presents a grim picture of the state of democracy in India under the present regime. However, the Opposition's reaction didn't help the case either as they went on a rampage disrupting the proceedings of the House and the farmers' interest was lost in the din.

Yash Pal Raihan  
Jalandhar

### Bank reforms

Sir — Former RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan suggested that the Government should privatise select public sector banks as reforms are necessary to ensure growth of banking activity without the periodic boom-bust cycles. However, before initiating such a step, the Government should complete the process of consolidating Government banks by merging the remaining five nationalised banks. Once this is done, there will be about seven or eight big public sector banks out of which a select three or four may be considered for privatisation.

MR Anand  
Vrindavan

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

**FIRST COLUMN**

# Time to take stock of the UN

Overall the UN is a mixed bag and it is for the members to make it effective. At this juncture, it is crucial to improve the UN rather than destroy it



**KALYANI SHANKAR**

The United Nations (UN) will be 75 next month. It is a relatively young organisation but a significant birthday like this one means it is time for stock-taking. It came into being after its structure was finalised at an international conference in San Francisco in October 1945, in which 50 countries, including India participated. Since then it has grown and today the UN has 193 members. Moreover, the UN of today is hugely different from the UN of 75 years ago. The big question is whether the world body has played its role properly or has it become irrelevant? It was the late UN Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld who said famously that the UN was created "not to lead mankind to heaven but to save humanity from hell."

Interestingly, those who support the UN believe that the world body has served its purpose by and large. The very fact that it has survived, despite the ups and downs, shows success. They point out that most of all, there has been no nuclear war in the last 75 years. Others praise the peace-keeping missions of the UN. They also praise its sustainable development programmes. But the UN is also criticised for not being effective for various reasons. On the UN's watch, several authoritarian rulers have used conventional weapons against innocent citizens. The UN resolutions are non-binding. The world body was supposed to prevent conflicts and war and yet over 80 conflicts took place since its inception. In the last three decades, US Presidents, right from Bush to Trump, have all criticised the UN for its functioning. The UN is also facing a resource crunch because members, including the US, do not pay their contribution in time.

India's involvement with the UN is remarkable. As a founding member, New Delhi's contribution in implementing the goals of the UN Charter and programmes has been substantial. It has been involved in many UN bodies and India is the current chair of the World Health Organisation's (WHO) executive committee. India is right now a member of the UN's Commission on Status of Women (UNCWSW), for four years (from 2021 to 2025). India was elected as a non-permanent member of the powerful UN Security Council (UNSC) for two years in June and the country served eight two-year terms earlier. New Delhi has been lobbying for the expansion of the UNSC and also staked a claim for a place in it. For some years now, whenever any of our Prime Ministers went abroad or any heads of State visited India, one issue that was always raised was getting support for India's candidature to the expanded UNSC. However, the reforms are not taking off for various reasons. For instance, the five permanent members are not keen on losing their veto powers. The UN chief has praised India's contribution to the peace-keeping forces as it has been the driving force behind many issues like the end of colonialism and apartheid and of global disarmament and terrorism. India is an ardent advocate of UN reforms. New Delhi initially had no ambition of becoming a permanent member of the Council. However, when the General Assembly took up the UN reforms in 1992, Japan, Germany and Brazil sought membership in an expanded Security Council. India too joined them in the chorus. However, many European countries object to Germany's claim, Argentina opposes Brazil and Pakistan opposes India, and so on. Thereafter, the four countries formed the BRICS group to work together.

The one question that is being repeatedly asked in today's circumstances is what is the future of the UN? Some want the UN to play a greater role in world affairs, while others want its role to specifically focus on humanitarian work. Reforming the system and getting wide international support and funds are the most important things needed for the UN. Almost from the early nineties, the reforms are being talked about but there is no progress in this regard, which is indeed unfortunate. Second, the UN needs to be modernised. Many feel that the present structure is flawed and many programmes are often duplicated. Third, there is an increasing feeling that the UN should be strengthened. The world body should be vested with more powers to deal with errant members.

Fourth, UN funding should not be stopped for any reason as the world body must remain independent. The UN is dependent on the contribution of cash, goods and services from its member states to finance and help its activities. Fifth, there is a need to cut down the strength of the staff. As *The Guardian* newspaper pointed out some time ago, "85,000 bureaucrats, an annual spend of about \$40 billion (\$26 billion) — 2,000 times that of the organisation's budget during its first year in 1946. Spending has quadrupled in the past 20 years — and still, several agencies struggle to balance their books."

However, despite all complaints and criticism, the UN is currently the only international body where heads of states can gather to discuss important issues and countries come together to try to work out some of the world's problems. Overall the UN is a mixed bag and it is for the members to make it effective. At this juncture it is crucial to improve the UN rather than destroy it.

*(The writer is a senior journalist)*

IT IS A WITCH-HUNT. PEOPLE IN THE FILM INDUSTRY ARE BEING FLOGGED BY SOCIAL MEDIA. PEOPLE WHO MADE THEIR NAMES IN IT HAVE CALLED IT A GUTTER.

—SP MP

**JAYA BACHCHAN**

**POINTCOUNTERPOINT**



WHEN THE FILM INDUSTRY IS FULL OF WITCHES WE WILL HAVE TO HUNT FOR THEM.

—BJP MP

**SUBRAMANIAN SWAMY**

# A boon or bane?

The Govt needs to fix the lacunae in the farm Bills instead of trying to push them through without consulting those it affects most, namely our farmers



**CHITTARVU RAGHU**

Central legislation, the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 was enacted with the main objective of prohibiting hoarding and black marketing of essential commodities. The other objective was to provide them to the common man at fair prices. This is because their cost to the consumer is dependent on various uncontrolled factors like climatic conditions, region of origin, supply chain, marketing and so on. Restrictions were stipulated under the Act and control orders were issued by respective States in relation to stocking, pricing and distribution. Over the years, we have been witnessing fluctuations in prices of essential commodities as well as other agriculture produce. This has often resulted in huge losses to farmers and control orders have often been invoked by the States to minimise the financial damage to them.

Now, there is an uproar among the farmers in the country and in political circles, too, after the Parliament passed three agriculture-related Bills, namely, the Farmers Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill 2020, Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020 and Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill.

A reading of the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020 shows that the same is being enacted to protect and empower the farmers. It is meant for them to engage with agri-business firms, processors, wholesalers, exporters, large retailers for farm services and sale of future farming produce within a mutually agreed remunerative price framework in a fair and transparent manner. A reading of the provisions shows that farming produce includes all the agriculture produce, foodstuffs, cereals, cattle fodder, cotton seeds and so on. And farm services under the Bill include even the provision for supply of seed, feed, fodder inputs for farming and so on by the wholesaler or retailer, who is termed as "sponsor" under an agreement.

This shows that the entire agriculture produce of a farmer would be under the control of the "sponsor", who could be a businessman or a corporate. The proposed Act specifically overrides the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 and all the State control orders and any other laws related to stock limit and so on under Section 7 of the Bill. The "sponsor", who would provide inputs for the farmer, would have overall control over the production, stocking and so on. Since the proposed Act overrides the Essential Commodities Act, 1955, there is no limit in relation to the number of agreements that may be entered into by the "sponsor" with various farmers. There is a possibility of a single "sponsor" monopolising the entire control of farming and the produce.

The next stage would be with regard to trade and marketing by the farmer. The Farmers Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020 has been introduced with the main objective of giving farmers and traders the freedom of choice relating to sale and purchase of the produce. The word "farmer" has been defined as an individual engaged in the production of agricultural produce and includes farmer-producer organisations (FPOs). The FPO is defined as an association or a group of growers. However, sections on the inter-State and intra-State trade have included only the word "trader". The trader has been defined as a person who buys farm produce and does not include a farmer. Therefore, the sum and substance of the

“  
 THOUGH IT APPEARS FROM THE READING OF BOTH THE FARM BILLS THAT THEY ARE BEING LEGISLATED FOR THE BENEFIT OF GROWERS IN RELATION TO AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITY, PRICE, MARKETING AND SO ON, IN REALITY THE BUSINESSMAN, CORPORATES, MIDDLEMEN MAY TAKE OVER THE ENTIRE CONTROL OF ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES. THERE CANNOT BE ANY REGULATION IN RELATION TO HOARDING AND BLACK MARKETING. THE ENTIRE AGRICULTURE PRODUCE OF A FARMER WOULD BE UNDER THE CONTROL OF THE 'SPONSOR', WHO COULD BE A BUSINESSMAN OR A CORPORATE. THERE IS A POSSIBILITY OF A SINGLE 'SPONSOR' MONOPOLISING THE ENTIRE CONTROL OF FARMING AND THE PRODUCE



proposed Act is that the inter-State trade or intra-State trade can be conducted by only the one who buys the farm produce.

The Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020 ends with the purchase of the stock by the "sponsor" who enters into a farming agreement with the farmer at the production level. The Farmers Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020 speaks with regard to the trade of the farm produce and spells out that the trader would be involved in the inter and intra-State trade.

Neither the word "trader" in the said Bill includes the "sponsor" under the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020, nor does the definition "sponsor" include the "trader" under the Farmers Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020. Both the Bills do not specify how the commodity will be dealt with after the produce is taken over by the "sponsor". Maybe the "sponsor" has to become a trader under the Farmers Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020 but the Bills are silent on this.

Though it appears from the reading of both the proposed legislations that they are being pushed for the benefit of growers in relation to agricultural activity, price, marketing and so on, in reality the businessman, corporates, middlemen may take over the entire control of essential commodities. There cannot be any regulation in relation to hoarding and black marketing. This lacuna has to be addressed by the Central Government and it must make suitable amendments to protect the interests of the farmers and the consumers.

Section 6 of the Farmers Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and

Facilitation) Bill stipulates that no marketing fee or cess levy under any State Agriculture Marketing Committee Act or any other State law shall be levied on farmers, traders, electronic trading and transaction platforms for conducting business in a "trade area."

The "trade area" has been defined as a place where the farmers produce can be collected. Obviously, the "sponsor" under the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020 would be in control of the farm produce and he may be acting as a "trader" who would utilise the trade area for the purpose of his business. In the process, the State Governments shall lose revenue, which otherwise would be available by way of market fee, levy and so on. Such a provision will adversely affect the revenue of the States.

Section 8 of the said Act of the Farmers Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020 stipulates dispute resolution but speaks with regard to a dispute arising out of the transaction between the farmer and a trader under Section 4. The "farmer" may not have any scope to offer his produce for sale to a trader in cases wherein he enters into an agreement with the "sponsor" under the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020.

When both the Bills are independently understood, those farmers who would not enter into an agreement with any "sponsor" for the purpose of production, may benefit in the course of time. But in the light of the businessmen/sponsor entering into the domain of the agriculture production, whether the farmer would be benefited or not is the question.

Certain amendments may be required to the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement on Price

Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020 in respect of pricing of farming produce under Section 5, mechanism for dispute resolution under Section 14 and power of the State Governments to make rules under Section 23 of the Bill, in the interest of protecting the rights of growers.

Certain safeguards can be provided to them in relation to the payment of the Minimum Support Price (MSP), the consequences if the farming produce is refused by the "sponsor" on the ground of quality and payment of money to the grower by the "sponsor".

Section 5, which contemplates pricing of the produce, does not stipulate any minimum price. It only speaks with regard to the "guaranteed" price to be paid for the produce. The provision is silent with regard to the "authority" which would determine the said guaranteed price. Section 23, which empowers the State Government to make rules, is also silent regarding this aspect. It only enables the State Government to frame rules in relation to the mode and manner of payment but gives it no right to fix the guaranteed price. A reading of the Act shows that the guaranteed price would be determined inter-se between the "farmer" and the "sponsor". When the "sponsor" is providing various inputs for the crop, obviously he would be in a position to command a particular price which may be adverse to the interest of the farmer.

The "sponsor", while determining the price, would also take into account the other factors like the cost of the inputs which in the end would reduce the farmer into a farm labourer.

The Government needs to fix the lacunae in the farm Bills instead of trying to push them through without consulting those it affects most, 60 per cent of the country's population.

*(The writer is Advocate, Andhra and Telangana High Courts)*

# Green buildings only hope in post-pandemic era

It is high time governments act by adopting mandatory energy-saving codes for new buildings and refurbishing existing ones



**ARCHANA JYOTI**

Sneha Singh shifted to an apartment in a highrise building with her husband and children in the national Capital two years ago. She has two air-conditioners, a TV, a refrigerator and other electrical appliances in her home. But she has stopped using air-conditioners now and has minimised the use of other electrical appliances because of the economic impact of the COVID-induced lockdown.

"With the mercury shooting up in April and May, it was extremely difficult for my kids to study or sleep. They were restless and unable to focus on their work," she says. But what she does not understand is that the problem lies with the design and construction of the flat, which was not built keeping the

health of its occupants in mind. With the virulent virus forcing Sneha to spend most of the time indoors, she and many other families like hers are now realising the importance of the quality of the environment inside the house.

Experts are of the opinion that green building technologies can help the world prepare for a future in which pandemics will be more common. In fact, the Singapore Green Building Council (SGBC) president Dr Ho Nyok Yong made it loud and clear at a webinar in May this year when he said, "Think of green buildings as giant N95 face masks, protecting you from harmful toxins the moment you step inside."

Echoing his observation, a study in Singapore said that people who stay in "green" buildings are less likely to suffer from fatigue, headache and even skin irritation, showing that their benefits stretch beyond saving energy.

In contrast, the health impacts of living in energy-inefficient buildings have been studied extensively in some countries like the UK and New Zealand. They have shown that the list

of consequences of non-energy efficient houses is long: Increased chances of respiratory infections, cardiovascular disease, gastro infections, asthma, allergy symptoms, poor mental health, arthritis, rheumatism and a higher number of falls — a major safety risk for the elderly. Closer home, in 2018, IIT Bombay and Doctors For You, an NGO, conducted a study in Mumbai's poorest ward, M-East, that established a co-relation between mortality due to tuberculosis (TB) and housing conditions. It found that eight to 10 per cent of the residents in the denser, less light-filled and more poorly ventilated complexes had TB, compared to one per cent of residents in a better ventilated project. Even within a building, the risk of TB declined on higher, well-ventilated floors.

Veteran architect Ashok B Lal explains, "Most of the time buyers are not aware that housing conditions have an influence on physical health. People must understand that houses are more than the physical structures providing shelter. For example, a warm and dry house can improve general

health outcomes and specifically reduce respiratory issues. Children living in crowded homes are more likely to be stressed, anxious and depressed, have poorer physical health, and inattentiveness at school."

Lal is a supporter of green building design focussing on reductions in energy and water usage, creation of healthy indoor environment and minimisation of environmental disturbances.

Realising the significant co-benefits of improving housing conditions, in 2018, the World Health Organisation (WHO) came out with guidelines on health and buildings. "Improved housing conditions can save lives, reduce disease, increase the quality of life, reduce poverty and help mitigate climate change," said the WHO, also noting that these can contribute towards the attainment of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) related to health (Goal 3) and sustainable cities (Goal 11). As per the guidelines, installing efficient and safe thermal insulation can improve indoor temperatures that support health, while also lowering energy costs and

reducing carbon emissions.

Thermal quality refers to whether the indoor temperature is comfortable and healthy. While most evidence relates to the impact of cold environment, overheating can also damage health through dehydration. In cold climates, better and improved energy efficiency can lower rates of excess winter mortality while in hot climates it helps reduce the risk of dehydration and negative health impacts, says Sameer Maithel, Director of research and advisory firm Greentech Knowledge Solutions and Head, Building Energy Efficiency Project (BEEP) Project Management and Technical Unit in India. BEEP is a bilateral cooperation project between the Union Power Ministry and the Federal Department of Foreign Affairs (FDFA) of the Swiss Confederation. Maithel says that the health quotients in energy-efficient buildings are: Thermal comforts, natural ventilation, daylight availability, which serves as a disinfectant as well as the source of Vitamin D, safe drinking water, sanitation and waste management.

Talking about the design princi-

ples of building green and sustainable homes in India, Lal says, "If we devote 60 per cent of the terrace area of a four-storey building to install solar panels, it will meet the energy demand of all its residents." The height of the building has a direct co-relation with its carbon emissions and is inversely proportional to affordability, he adds.

Refining the ventilation system is another key to minimising disease transmissions while saving electricity. Unfortunately, in India most buildings are not equipped to establish and maintain healthy indoor air quality and need to be upgraded. The number of buildings conforming to green labels covers only about one per cent of the urban buildings in India. Isn't there a risk that raising standards will push up costs further? "But in the bargain you cut down medical bills as well as enhance productivity," argues SP Garnaik, executive director of Energy Efficiency Services Limited (EESL), a joint venture under the Power Ministry.

On its part, with an aim to make workplaces healthier and greener in the COVID-19 scenario, EESL and the

US Agency for International Development's (USAID) MAITREE programme, launched the "Healthy and Energy-Efficient Buildings" initiative to ensure efficiency along with health components at workplaces.

"We hope that this pilot will spur urban planners, architects and property managers to rethink the design, operation and maintenance of the buildings so as to safeguard the health and well-being of the occupants at offices and homes as well," he says.

It is high time governments act by adopting mandatory energy-saving codes for new buildings and for the refurbishment of existing ones, assert experts. "This is all the more urgent in the light of soaring construction rates. Most buildings lack mandatory building energy codes. By strengthening these codes every three-five years, zero-emission and net zero energy codes could rapidly become the norm," says Maithel.

*(The writer is Special Correspondent with The Pioneer. The article has been published as part of CMS-BEEP Media Fellowship Programme.)*

SHORT READS



**Ducati launches Scrambler 1100 Pro range in India**

**New Delhi** : Italian superbike maker Ducati on Tuesday said it has launched all-new Scrambler 1100 Pro and the 1100 Sport Pro in India, priced at Rs 11.95 lakh and Rs 13.74 lakh, respectively (ex-showroom). The bikes come with an 1100-cc engine mated to a six-speed gearbox. "Scrambler is one of the most characterful, free spirited and powerful entry level Ducatis in our portfolio. The new Scrambler 1100 Pro range takes those qualities a notch higher allowing riders to explore endless possibilities on their rides," Ducati India Managing Director Bipul Chandra said in a statement. Ducati launches Scrambler 1100 Pro range in India. Bookings for the bikes are now open across all Ducati dealer ships in the country, the company said.

**Hindustan Zinc to raise up to Rs 4k cr through NCDs**

**New Delhi** : Vedanta Group firm Hindustan Zinc Ltd (HZL) on Tuesday said its board-constituted panel has approved raising up to Rs 4,000 crore through debentures. The approval on the same was given during the meeting of the committee of directors held on Tuesday, HZL said in a filing to the BSE. "The duly authorised committee of directors considered and approved offering for subscription on a private placement basis, up to 40,000 unsecured, rated, listed, redeemable, non-convertible debentures (NCDs) of a face value Rs 10,00,000 each," the filing said. It added that the fundraising would aggregate up to Rs 4,000 crore, including the option to retain oversubscription of up to Rs 1,000 crore. HZL is a subsidiary of Vedanta Ltd. Vedanta Ltd owns a 64.9 per cent stake in the company, while the government retains a 29.5 per cent stake.

**Canadian workers extend Ford contract, put stir on hold**

**Detroit, (AP)**: The union that represents Canadian auto workers has extended its contract with Ford beyond an 11:59 pm deadline, a sign that progress is being made toward an agreement. The Unifor union has scheduled a news conference for 10 am Tuesday to discuss the talks. It picked Ford as a potential strike target on Sept. 8. Union President Jerry Dias said in a statement late Monday that the bargaining committee is willing to work through the night to get a fair contract and avoid a strike at Ford's Canadian factories. The union wants product commitments for Ford's assembly plant in Oakville, Ontario, near Toronto in a new three-year contract. Production of the Ford Edge and Lincoln Nautilus SUVs ends at the plant in 2023. Dias has said the union is looking for electric vehicle commitments. Ford also has two engine plants in Windsor, Ontario. Together the three plants employ about 5,300 workers. "We will continue to work with Unifor to negotiate a globally competitive collective agreement," Ford said late Monday.

# Government needs to cap MDR on debit card at 0.6%

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government needs to cap the merchant discount rate on all types of debit and pre-paid cards at a lower rate of 0.6 per cent of the transaction value with a view to end distortions in the card payment ecosystem and promote digital transactions, suggested a study.

The study done by the Indian Institute of Technology Bombay further suggested that there could be an upper ceiling of Rs 150 for a prescribed merchant discount rate (MDR) of 0.6 per cent.

"To encourage digital payments where cash is a strong alternative, for small and medium merchants accepting POS based payments, and having annual turnover of at most Rs 2 crore, the MDR for all types of debit and pre-paid cards, for transactions up to Rs 2,000,



could be fixed with a cap of 0.25 per cent, while for transactions exceeding Rs 2,000, the cap could be 0.6 per cent," it said.

Currently, for businesses with annual turnover of Rs 20 lakh or more, the debit card MDR is capped at 0.9 per cent of the transaction value or Rs 1,000, whichever is lower.

To maintain parity, alongside the revision of MDR caps, the

extant mandates that currently promote excessive free cash withdrawals should be revised, it said.

It is to be noted that to promote small ticket debit card merchant transactions up to Rs 2,000, the government during 2018 and 2019 made MDR zero for the merchants, and provided banks a monetary support, towards MDR at the rate of 0.4 per cent.

In contrast, effective January 1, 2020, the government made MDR zero for every transaction using RuPay debit cards alone.

Neither merchants nor the government paid the banks any MDR for such merchant transactions. However, banks were allowed to impose MDR on the merchants for every transaction using mastercard/VISA debit cards, it said.

The study also made a strong case for removing Goods and Services Tax (GST) on POS machines with the overall objective of enhancing infrastructure for digital transactions.

The discriminatory approach adopted by the card payment networks to supervise their own 'no surcharge rule; for credit cards, needs to be addressed by regulator RBI, it said.

# 'Geopolitical impact will be big risk for firms with global footprint'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

OYO Hotels & Homes founder CEO Ritesh Agarwal on Tuesday said geopolitical impact is going to become one of the big risks for companies that have a global footprint.

Speaking at an ALMA event, Agarwal said OYO has adopted a strategy of being 'globally local' to tackle this risk.

"Geopolitical impact is going to become one of the big risks for companies which are global. China is one but in the same way there are various countries across the world which are enacting policies where companies over time are being seen as diplomatic enablers and not just as big businesses," he said.

He was responding to a question on the impact of rising tension between India and China on its business.

OYO was founded by Agarwal in 2013 as a way to reserve budget accommoda-



tions online with reliable quality. Backed by SoftBank, it has expanded internationally with an aim to become the biggest hotel chain in the world by room count before the coronavirus outbreak.

Business has however been hit hard by the pandemic and the company has in recent months announced management pay cuts, freeze on marketing spending and placing thousands of employees globally on indefinite furlough.

Stating that the company's policy has been "to be global-

ly local", Agarwal said the OYO properties in Japan, London and Denmark look different from each other.

"But the technology layer is the same, technology is the lever on the consumer and partner side, but the brand and the cultural impact, the employees, leadership to as much extent as possible is local," he said.

Ola co-founder and CEO Bhavish Aggarwal, who was also present in the session, said Indian companies are well-respected globally.

# Sensex tumbles 300 pts; Nifty ends below 11,200

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark Sensex tanked 300 points on Tuesday, tracking losses in index-heavy weights Reliance Industries, HDFC twins and Maruti amid weak cues from Asian peers.

The 30-share BSE index settled 300.06 points or 0.79 per cent down at 37,734.08. The broader NSE Nifty fell 96.90 points or 0.86 per cent to 11,153.65.

Maruti was the top loser in the Sensex pack, shedding around 3 per cent, followed by L&T, IndusInd Bank, Axis Bank, ONGC, Reliance Industries, Asian Paints and HDFC.

On the other hand, HCL Tech, TCS, Sun Pharma and Tech Mahindra were among the gainers.

Indian market was subdued following continued selling in other major markets across the globe due to fresh worries over



another round of restrictions due to increase in COVID-19 cases, which could harm the already sluggish economic recovery, said Narendra Solanki, Head-Equity Research (Fundamental), Anand Rathi.

During the afternoon session market briefly tried to recover, but failed to sustain as fresh selling across the broader markets returned, he added.

Bourses in Shanghai, Hong Kong and Seoul ended with losses, while stock exchanges in Europe opened on a positive note.

# Strides Pharma arm gets nod for tension headache tablets

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Drug firm Strides Pharma Science on Tuesday said its subsidiary, Strides Pharma Global Pte Ltd, has received approval from the US health regulator for Butalbital, Acetaminophen, and Caffeine tablets, used to treat tension headache.

The approved product is bioequivalent and therapeutically equivalent to the Reference Listed Drug (RLD), Butalbital, Acetaminophen, and Caffeine tablets of Actavis Laboratories FL Inc.

Strides Pharma Global Pte Ltd, Singapore, has received approval for Butalbital, Acetaminophen, and Caffeine tablets USP in the strengths of 50 mg/325 mg/40 mg from the United States Food and Drug Administration (USFDA), Strides Pharma Science said in a regulatory filing.



Quoting IQVIA MAT July 2020 data, Strides Pharma Science said the US market for Butalbital, Acetaminophen, and Caffeine tablets is approximately USD 40 million. "The product will be marketed by Strides Pharma Inc in the US market," the company added. The company has 126

cumulative abbreviated new drug application (ANDA) filings with USFDA of which 91 ANDAs have been approved and 35 are pending for approval.

Shares of Strides Pharma Science were trading 2.29 per cent higher at Rs 674.20 apiece on BSE.

# TVS Motor launches Apache RTR 200 4V

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

TVS Motor Company on Tuesday launched a new variant of TVS Apache RTR 200 4V motorcycle equipped with a new braking technology, Super-Moto ABS, priced at Rs 1,23,500 (ex-showroom Delhi).

The motorcycle will offer single-channel ABS function, giving it formidable stopping power and superior braking control coupled with the fun of sliding around the race track, the company said in a statement.

TVS Apache RTR 200 4V is powered by a 197.75 cc single-cylinder, 4-stroke engine delivering power of 20.5 PS of power at 8,500 RPM. It is enabled with Race Tuned-Fuel injection 'RT-Fi' technology.

The RT-Fi allows consistent power delivery and fuel economy with improved engine



durability and better emission control, the company said.

The motorcycle is also equipped with GTT (Glide Through Technology) for effortless urban riding to offer a smooth and comfortable ride. In other variants, the TVS Apache RTR 200 4V is equipped with dual-channel ABS with RLP (rear wheel lift-off protection) control, and RT-slipper clutch (which prevents locking up of rear tyre).

The motorcycle also comes equipped with features such as 'feather touch' start, an all-new LED headlamp with claw styled position lamps.

# PSBs get more retail credit inquiries: Report

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The state-run lenders are seeing faster pick up in retail credit inquiries than their private counterparts on quicker reopening of branch network, a report by a credit information company (CIC) said on Tuesday.

Despite the inroads done by digital alternatives, through which lenders are receiving inquiries and even disbursing loans online, branch offices continue to play an important role, Transunion Cibil said in the report.

The lenders get in touch with CICs while doing diligence on every credit proposal, which triggers inquiries.

It can be noted that many analysts have said that a large share of the incremental credit demand is coming from the more aggressive private sector lenders who also have larger capital buffers.

"Public (sector) lenders saw the biggest rebound in inquiries in July and August 2020, most likely because they were early in recommencing operations than their private and NBFC (non-bank finance



companies) counterparts," the report by Cibil said.

Inquiries from over a dozen state-run lenders for the two months were at 102 per cent of the same observed in January-February this year and 118 per cent of that in the same period a year ago, it said.

The same numbers for the private sector lenders were at 70 per cent and 78 per cent, respectively, while for NBFCs and housing finance companies, inquiries were much lower at 51 per cent of the pre-COVID period in January-February and 57 per cent of the levels observed in July-August last year.

At a system-wide level, inquiry volumes rebounded in July-August, but were still lower than the pre-COVID period, the report said, adding that as of August 2020, the inquiries were at the same level as during April 2018.

It also said that a lot of demand seen in July-August was pent-up loan demand which had been affected due to the coronavirus-induced lockdowns.

In what can be called as a welcome step, a bulk of the inquiries were for secured lending products like mortgages, auto loans, while those for unsecured ones like person-

al loans and credit cards were trending lower.

It can be noted that concerns over asset quality have been raised following instances of job losses or salary cuts as a result of the pandemic-induced economic contraction.

As cities continue to dominate the data of new COVID-19 infections, a larger proportion of inquiries came from rural and semi-urban areas, Cibil said. The share of metro areas in credit inquiries fell to 37 per cent in July-August as against 41 per cent in the same period a year ago and 40 per cent in January-February this year, it said.

# REPL bags 2 projects in Andhra, Odisha

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Infrastructure consultant Rudrabhishek Enterprises Ltd (REPL) has bagged two projects for the development of a new medical college in Andhra Pradesh and 93 schools Odisha.

"The Odisha Mineral Bearing Areas Development Corporation (OMBADC) has appointed REPL to provide consultancy and prepare Detailed Project Report (DPR) for development of education infrastructure for 93 schools in Sundargarh district," the company said in a statement.

The estimated cost for developing each school is Rs 1.5 crore.

The Andhra Pradesh Medical Services & Infrastructure Development Corporation (APMSIDC) has appointed the REPL for rendering architectural and engineering services for a new medical college at Madanapalli in Chittoor District of Andhra Pradesh, it added.

"The estimated value of the civil work for the medical college project along with a 500 bedded hospital facility at Madanapalli is Rs 250 crore. It is expected that the project will get completed in 2 years," the statement said.

REPL CMD Pradeep Misra said, "Ensuring education and health infrastructure in tier 2 and 3 cities are extremely important to improve the living standard. The impact of such initiatives may not be directly quantifiable and measurable. However, it will have multiplier positive impact on socio-economic condition."

REPL is a leading firm in urban development & infrastructure consultancy. It is listed on National Stock Exchange (NSE), under NSE emerge platform.

The REPL is associated with the Centre's flagship programmes such as Smart Cities, PMAY, AMRUT, Jal Jeevan Mission, & Skill India Mission at multiple locations under various capacities.

# 'Not forcing anyone to invest in small-caps'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Sebi chief Ajay Tyagi on Tuesday said the markets regulator is not forcing anyone to invest in small-caps and investment should always be in the interest of investors amid new portfolio allocation rules for multi-cap mutual fund schemes.

The regulator, earlier this month, directed multi-cap funds to invest at least 25 per cent of their corpus each in large-cap stocks, mid-caps and small-cap stocks.

This raised concerns among the mutual fund industry and fund managers estimated that the move would result into Rs 30,000-40,000 crore moving out of large-cap to mid-cap and small-cap companies.

Earlier, there was no restriction on the exposure such funds needed to make in large, mid and small-cap stocks and therefore majority of the multi-cap funds have run with a large-cap bias.

# Sebi contemplates stress testing in liquid assets

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

New Delhi, Sep 22 (PTI) With an aim to bring liquidity, markets regulator Sebi is mulling stress testing, minimum asset allocation in liquid assets and swing pricing like mechanism for all open-ended debt oriented mutual fund schemes, its chief Ajay Tyagi said on Tuesday.

Sebi is facilitating the setting up of an expert committee to frame a stress testing methodology, encompassing liquidity, credit and market risks, Tyagi said while addressing industry body Association of Mutual Funds in India (Amfi) 25th annual general meeting.

The committee will also design a framework to determine the minimum asset allocation required in liquid assets,

taking into account the nature of scheme's assets, type of investors, outcome of stress testing and minimum redemption requirement during gating, he added.

In the interim, taking into account the recommendations made by the mutual fund advisory committee, Sebi said it would be stipulating a minimum holding of liquid assets by all debt-oriented schemes.

While overnight schemes are primarily invested in liquid assets such as government securities (G-Secs), treasury bills (T-bills), repo in G-Sec and cash, and there is a provision for liquid schemes to hold a minimum 20 per cent in liquid assets.

The other debt-oriented schemes currently have no such requirement and can



invest in various categories of corporate bonds, commercial papers, whose secondary markets may not have enough liquidity.

As far as performance of the mutual fund industry is concerned, Tyagi said overall, the industry has weathered the storm well, which demonstrates the robustness of the regulatory framework as well as

the maturity of the industry. The industry, however, also went through several patches of challenges, especially on the debt mutual fund side.

"Some of the issues that arose during the period are now addressed and some are in the process of being addressed," he noted.

In March-April 2020, significant risk aversion and subse-

quent illiquidity were observed in the bond market especially in "AA" and below rated papers.

The move created significant challenges in the form of redemption pressures being faced by debt mutual funds, on account of not only normal year-end redemptions, but COVID-19 related redemption pressures.

"...That experience brought to fore not only the structural issues related to the corporate bond markets but also revealed some areas of improvement in respect of the practices followed in the mutual fund industry," Tyagi said.

Another issue that got highlighted was the possible impact of large redemptions on remaining unitholders of a scheme.

# Longview Tea estate in Darjeeling to reopen on Wednesday

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Longview Tea Garden in West Bengal's Darjeeling district will resume its operations from Wednesday after the management of the estate has agreed to clear dues of its workers, an official said.

The management of the garden, which employs around 1,200 workers, had declared suspension of work at the estate on August 21 over some labour-related issues, he said.

Additional labour commissioner of north Bengal Md Rizwan said a tripartite meeting among the representatives of the management, members of three trade unions and the



government officials was held on Monday to resolve the issues.

"The garden will reopen from tomorrow and the management has agreed to pay all the dues of the workers, which include bonus for last fiscal, salaries and wages of the employees and workers amounting to around Rs 80

lakh," he said. The dues will have to be paid by the management by October 7, he said, adding that Longview is the largest tea estate in the hills in terms of area and number of employees.

The tea estate management could not be reached for comments.

## SHOE STRIKE FOR CLIMATE ACTION



**S**triking for climate justice without leaving your homes — doesn't it sound safe and revolutionary? Yep, called the Shoe Strike, the protest allows you to stand for climate action without being in your shoes — a safe way to protest during the pandemic. How? People will leave their shoes at the place of protest, along with their message. More than 1,000 shoes have already been collected from Hyderabadis willing to support the strike. Let the shoes do the talking now, believes the founder!

In a first-of-its-kind environmental strike in India, Fridays for Future Hyderabad — an initiative of children and youth climate activists from the city will be taking part in the Global Climate Strike on September 25, 2020, along with 7 million protestors across the world.

But what are the youth and children of Hyderabad demanding from the Telangana government? 23-year-old Angel Vinod, student cum climate activist says, "Wetlands and forests are crucial for our survival. We cannot keep increasing infrastructure while ignoring ecology. The government has all the tools and funds to restore and conserve these, so why not?"

The concept of blatant infrastructure development is unsustainable as it revolves around the idea of aggravating population growth, poverty, and rapid urbanisation.

The problem with this approach is that it destroys the natural topography and well established functional eco-systems take eons to develop. This damage is irreversible and can be the possible cause behind the deterioration of this city of pearls. It's fast mobility at the cost of our lungs. "Conservation is true development. The only way we survive is by co-existing with our ecosystems naturally. Let's cherish the key of our existence," 28-year-old Priyanka Kota, a social activist urges.

Hyderabad was once a city of lakes with

3,000-7,000 water bodies — we barely have 100-500 remaining. Instead of restoring them, the government seems to rather fence it and build walking tracks. These lakes made with the right efforts and political sources could be turned into large reservoirs of water in the near future.

27-year-old Arpit, a Teach for India alumni aptly puts it this way: "Forests are Green Lakes are Blue But Concrete and Ecoparks Don't make them so new Hyderabad demands its old view."

## Symphonic drabbles with a realistic flair

The pandemic hit us all hard, while some are still reeling from the effects of being confined indoors, some others made the best out of the time they got. One such teen from the city is Ishika Ranjan, who leveraged her creative instincts amid the lockdown to publish *'Our World: A symphony of Drabbles by three generations'* — her, her mum and grandpa! Read on as **K RAMYA SREE** reviews the book

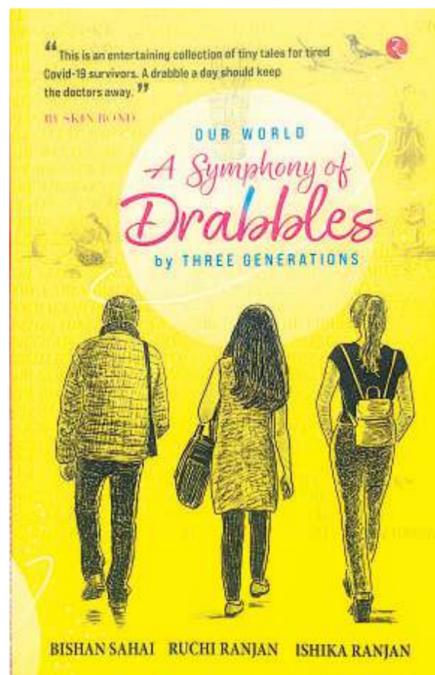
**N**otwithstanding the emergence of a whole new breed of talented English writers across genres, the fact of the matter is that there are just a handful that are into the unique world of drabbles. In fact, it is so minuscule that many from the community are unaware of drabble and what it is all about.

To the uninitiated, a drabble is a short work of fiction of precisely one hundred words. In a way, a drabble is a test of the writer's dexterity at playing with words as a full-fledged narrative has to be expressed in the 100-word format.

An exciting prospect is that we have a young drabble writer right here in Hyderabad, who has set her eyes on making it big in the unique league. She is among the few teenagers, yes, she is just 15 years old, to make appropriate use of her creative instincts when stuck indoors because of the COVID-19 lockdown.

Even more heart-warming is that she has published a book where she roped in her mother, Ruchi Ranjan, and grandfather, Bishan Sahai, as co-authors. Meet Ishika Ranjan, whose very lucid presentation, *'Our World, A symphony of Drabbles by Three Generations'*, comprises 86 stories in the form of drabbles. What makes it a lively read is that stories span several genres and have been written by three individuals representing different generations of a family.

**About the book:** This is a fascinating potpourri of fiction and vividly captures the entire gamut of human emotions—childhood innocence, humour, quixotic, skirting around tales of soft sci-fi and adventure, nostalgia, and



**WHAT MAKES THIS A LIVELY READ IS THAT STORIES SPAN SEVERAL GENRES AND HAVE BEEN WRITTEN BY THREE INDIVIDUALS REPRESENTING DIFFERENT GENERATIONS OF A FAMILY.**

empathy. In order to give shape to her inner calling, Ishika has taken up the lockdown challenge and has honed her skills in drabble writing to

remarkable levels. As it goes with the grandfather, who has spent decades of his 90+ years in the corporate world, his jottings are mostly anecdotes from his workplace and interactions with colleagues and friends, each is laced with humour.

Ruchi Ranjan's canvas is largely created by observing and understanding her surroundings, people, and their idiosyncrasies.

Beginning with 'Chee Chee' where Bishan Sahai speaks about the Chinese revolution, we next read 'The Rainbow Girl', about a school-going girl jumping with joy at the very sight of a rainbow.

This book is a collection of accounts that speak about Dalgona coffee, hair spas, and a naval exercise, where the captain of a ship makes a hash of the job and what not. "LIFE IS TOO SHORT FOR SADNESS; LIFE IS TOO SHORT FOR TEARS!"

OUR WORLD... while being witty has also been informative, telling us how a papaya leaf juice can help treat a Dengue patient. It also tells about the loyal relationship between a dog and human beings. And about how a teacher changed a student, who happened to steal things. That is not just it. It even connects with the current happenings in the world and seeking to become the President to curb atrocities happening around us.

**Conclusion:** The trio's subversive brilliance shines in unexpected ways, all through. The language instantly transports the reader into their world, which is a tribute to the near-realistic writing skills of the three. It's simple, easy to read, and stays connected. It tells you stories from the eyes of three people separated by generations in a simple but 'I have experienced all these' manner.

What comes across as its major feature is a sense of positivity and sensitivity in all the stories. A highly appreciable effort, it makes the reader go back in time to recall one's childhood memories or catch up with adolescent and adult experiences.

**Title:** *Our World, A symphony of Drabbles by Three Generations*  
**Authors:** Ishika Ranjan, Ruchi Ranjan, and Bishan Sahai  
**Publisher:** Rupa publications  
**Pages:** 108  
**Price:** Rs 295

## Cinema is god, OTT is an idol



Vishnu Priya, fondly called Sirisha by the audiences for her performance in *Abhishekam*, stands out among many others for her hard work, talent, and yes, curly hair. Known for the dedication she puts into every project she takes up, Vishnu Priya is loved and ever remembered as the girl next door among Telugu households. Not just serials, she made a mark for herself in films too. She speaks to *The Pioneer* about her favourite character, OTT vs Cinema, working amid pandemic, and more.

**M**aking people laugh...

I wasn't the person to make a career with serials and movies, but after repeated calls from a director, I thought 'why not give a try in serials' because that's the stream where I get to entertain people and make good name for myself too, and that's the story of how I started my career here. I worked with projects such as *Idharamailu*, *Kunkuma Puvvu*, *Deveyani*, and many more. Now I play an active role in *Trinayani* and *Abhishekam*, both projects that I'm most proud of and consider myself privileged to work for, because of the different roles. I loved the characters although playing negative roles is slightly disappointing. But with *Trinayani*, where my character makes people laugh, I'm most satisfied and find it so much fun.

**Journey with Abhishekam....**

I like every role I have played, whether it's a movie or a serial. They have all been unforgettable, priceless experiences! When I see myself on-screen, my memories drive me to the day I was part of them. *Abhishekam* is my first project on television, I have been

working in this project for the past 7 years now, and I got married to Siddhu during the project. We're blessed with a baby boy and I'm still part of this project, which has not only given me the opportunity to grow as an actor but has also shaped me into being the person that I am today.

**Sirisha's character owns a special place in my heart...**

My longest-running and most loved character is that of Sirisha because it carries a lot of memories and to date, I have been part of that and it's the most unforgettable one. Today, people and society recognise me because of *Abhishekam* and the character of Sirisha. I love all the characters and enjoy every role, but Sirisha has a special place in my heart.

**Flight phobia...**

The film *Ee Rojullo* directed by Maruti sir was my first project that got me thinking about show business as a career option. The film turned out to be a hit, it got me many more directors offering good roles, but I couldn't take them up due to my fear of flying.

**OTT Vs cinema**

In my definition, cinema is the god of everything. OTT is an idol of that god. But yes, OTT is

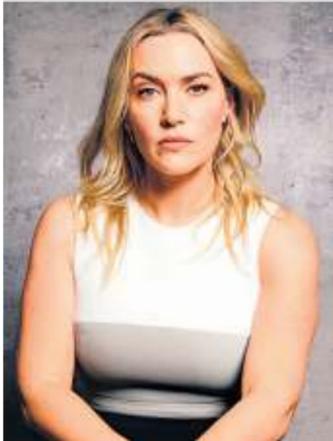
bringing to people what and when they cannot venture out to watch. So I guess it's safe to say it has its set of advantages.

**Changing trends in soap operas**

The major changes I have witnessed is that there is a huge difference in the picture quality and technology used in the making of the serials, and even in the budget. Nowadays even serials are not compromising on the budget and are on par with films. These days, production houses are coming up with a large variety of concepts that are equally entertaining for the audience like cinema.

**Pre and post-COVID**

Before COVID, we would act with full liberty and freedom, but now we are really scared to act with people around us. It's been a really big task to act standing close to each other, that too with a one-year-old baby at home. Because of my son Ayanish, I take steam twice a day and only then consume food or go about my other activities, which will increase immunity while also wearing masks, using hand sanitizers, gloves, etc. The production team is ensuring we follow all the safety measures issued by the government of Telangana.



## Priyanka Chopra, joins H'wood A-listers as narrator of new series

**P**riyanka Chopra is joining a bunch of big Hollywood names for a new project. The actor will lend her voice to an episode of *A Word of Calm*, an HBO Max series produced in collaboration with the Calm app. Priyanka, Kate Winslet, Lucy Liu, Keanu Reeves, Mahershala Ali, Idris Elba, Oscar Isaac, Nicole Kidman, Zoë Kravitz and Cilian

Murphy will all lend their voices for half-an-hour episodes each. The series will promote stress-relief and will show the actors narrating a story in their soothing voices while calming imagery plays on the screen. Sharing the news, Priyanka wrote in a tweet that she was 'excited' about the project. "Excited to join such an amazing group of 'calming' voices for @hbomax's @calm series,

A World Of Calm. Coming Oct 1st," she wrote. HBO's official statement about the series read, "Transporting the viewer into tranquility through scientifically-engineered narratives, enchanting music and astounding footage, to naturally calm your body and soothe the mind. Each story is brought to life by a different iconic voice and will take viewers on a journey every-

where from a noodle maker's kitchen in Seattle, to the forests of Latvia, and beyond our solar system to the outer stretches of the universe." Priyanka has multiple Bollywood and Hollywood projects in the pipeline. She will be seen in Netflix's adaptation of Aravind Adiga's Booker Prize-winning book, *The White Tiger*. Actor Rajkumar Rao is also a part of the film.



## Jhanvi Kapoor to walk for Manish Malhotra at digital ICW

**B**ollywood actress Jhanvi Kapoor will be closing the show for veteran designer Manish Malhotra at the grand finale of first-ever digital India Couture Week on Wednesday. Talking about the virtual show, Malhotra told *IANS*, "It's a complete new experience to showcase my collection on a digital medium. The essential madness of runways will be missing, but I guess, it will be a new learning." On having Jhanvi as his showstopper, he said, "I'm happy to have Jhanvi walk-

ing for the show. I've known her from her childhood and am currently working with her on a movie project. She has an inherent style that's so reflective of late Sridevi's character. It's always fun to work with her." The collection explores masterful embroideries from Rajasthan,

Ahmedabad, Kutch that are re-interpreted in the signature aesthetic and style of the designer. "The collection constitutes a big identity of Indian cultural nuance with rare, never-seen, and never-used before archival fabrics that bring forth the real repertoire from the Punjabi and Awadh provinces." He added, "The collection breaks-away from the aesthetics of fast-fashion and aims to revive the slow and purist workmanship of our indigenous craftsmen and artisans. It seeks to recall our age-old craft and techniques while keeping the first line of inspiration from the most enduring facets of our indigenous living."



## Cricketing legend Kevin Pietersen bats for rhino conservation

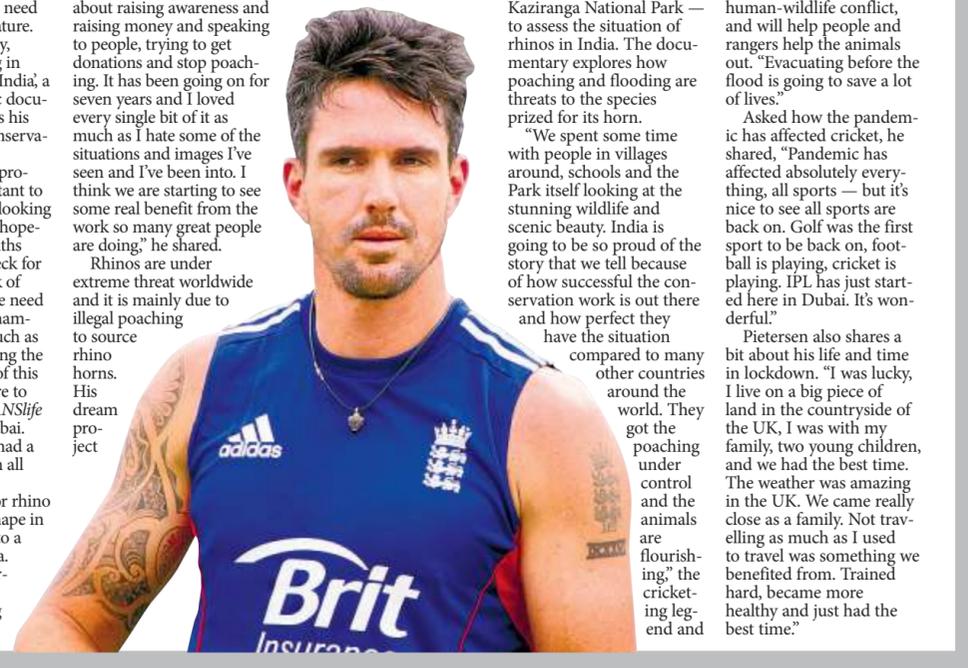
**F**ormer England cricket captain and a part of the commentary panel for the ongoing IPL 2020, Kevin Pietersen, says that in the midst of a global pandemic, people are starting to realise that we need to start protecting nature. On World Rhino Day, Pietersen is featuring in 'Save This Rhino - India', a National Geographic documentary that exhibits his passion for rhino conservation. "We need to start protecting what's important to us. We need to start looking after the planet, and hopefully the last six months have been reality check for all of us to take stock of what we got, what we need to do to try to not hammer the planet as much as we've been hammering the planet. If we get rid of this planet, we're nowhere to go," Pietersen told *IANS* over phone from Dubai. A cricketer who's had a hall of fame career in all formats of the game, Pietersen's passion for rhino conservation took shape in 2013 when he went to a safari in South Africa. "I started to understand the dynamics around the poaching crisis and how rhi-

nos are being killed every single day and if we didn't do anything, by 2025, we'd lose an entire species. At that stage, I thought I might as well use my profile for good. I love wild animals and the outdoors. So, I started to bang the drum about raising awareness and raising money and speaking to people, trying to get donations and stop poaching. It has been going on for seven years and I loved every single bit of it as much as I hate some of the situations and images I've seen and I've been into. I think we are starting to see some real benefit from the work so many great people are doing," he shared. Rhinos are under extreme threat worldwide and it is mainly due to illegal poaching to source rhino horns. His dream project

SORAI — Save our Rhino in Africa India — is an initiative for the ongoing preservation and protection of Rhino in Africa and India and the ongoing education, awareness and public support of this issue globally.

The mission is to save rhino from extinction. The documentary 'Save The Rhino: India' premieres on September 22 on Nat Geo Wild and features explorer Krithi Karanth. They walk in one of India's incredible forests — Kaziranga National Park — to assess the situation of rhinos in India. The documentary explores how poaching and flooding are threats to the species prized for its horn. "We spent some time with people in villages around, schools and the Park itself looking at the stunning wildlife and scenic beauty. India is going to be so proud of the story that we tell because of how successful the conservation work is out there and how perfect they have the situation compared to many other countries around the world. They got the poaching under control and the animals are flourishing," the cricketing legend and

conservation enthusiast shared. He adds that since the river Brahmaputra floods its banks every year, they are working to launch a technology around early warning flood systems which helps with the human-wildlife conflict, and will help people and rangers help the animals out. "Evacuating before the flood is going to save a lot of lives." Asked how the pandemic has affected cricket, he shared, "Pandemic has affected absolutely everything, all sports — but it's nice to see all sports are back on. Golf was the first sport to be back on, football is playing, cricket is playing, IPL has just started here in Dubai. It's wonderful." Pietersen also shares a bit about his life and time in lockdown. "I was lucky, I live on a big piece of land in the countryside of the UK, I was with my family, two young children, and we had the best time. The weather was amazing in the UK. We came really close as a family. Not travelling as much as I used to travel was something we benefited from. Trained hard, became more healthy and just had the best time."



### FUN

#### ARCHIE



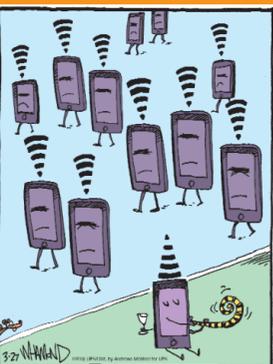
#### CALVIN AND HOBBS



#### GARFIELD



#### REALITY CHECK



#### SPEED BUMP



#### CROSSWORD



#### NANCY



#### SUDOKU

Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

#### ACROSS

- Keep live fish in this
- An archer fires this
- Very mean and unkind
- Sad because you are on your own
- Scheme
- A red gemstone
- Defeated
- Wearing nothing
- Stage dramas
- These are pushed around a supermarket
- Normal
- A graceful dancer
- Loss of eyesight
- Humans
- A maker of bread
- Shed these when crying
- A worshipped statue

#### DOWN

- Wear this over clothes to keep them clean
- Sick
- Eat this grain cooked



#### GINGER MEGGS



# VARUN TO BE BACK IN THE RING IN NOVEMBER



## Sept 22 saw my birth as an actor: **CHIRU**

**W**hile Punadhirallu holds the distinction of being the first time

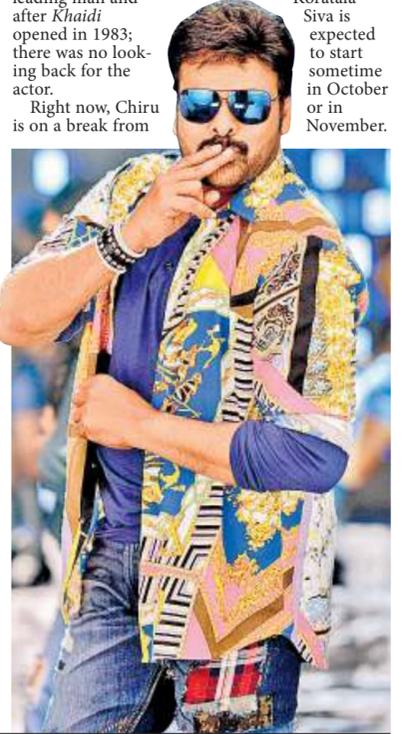
slowly graduated to become the leading man. Early 80s saw him as a bankable young leading man and after *Khaidi* opened in 1983; there was no looking back for the actor.

shooting due to COVID-19 pandemic. The filming of his next, *Acharya*, with Koratala Siva is expected to start sometime in October or in November.

that Megastar Chiranjeevi has ever faced a film camera, it was *Pranam Khareedu*, however, that made it to the cinema halls first. Directed by K Vasu, the film clocked 42 years of release on Tuesday.

Naturally, the Megastar was ecstatic and posted an emotional note taking to Twitter. "Like the prominence that August 22 holds in my life, September 22 also has similar prominence. While I was born on August 22, September 22 saw my birth as an actor. It was the release of my debut film. To the people and to especially my fans who have helped me reach where I'm right now, I extend my heartfelt thanks," Chiru wrote.

After playing supporting roles early on in his career, Chiru



More than six months after its shoot was halted due to COVID-19 pandemic, Varun Tej's boxing drama with Kiran Korrapati will resume in Hyderabad from early November. The action will go on in the city till March, finds NAGARAJ GOUD

**A**fter a 16-day schedule in Visakhapatnam, Varun Tej's untitled next with debutant director Kiran Korrapati was geared up for lengthy outing in Hyderabad but the pandemic played spoilsport, throwing its schedules into a tailspin. And now after more than six months, the director is set to recommence work on the schedule chart of the film. "I will start work on the project from next week. We are planning to resume filming from November 2 in Hyderabad. The shoot will progress in the city until March. We are planning to

visit the National Capital region in late March and there might be a North-East schedule too for a week," Kiran, who earlier assisted VV Vinayak, Harish Shankar and Raghava Lawrence, tells us. He adds that they might visit Vizag next summer for the filming of a song.

A joint production venture between Allu Venkatesh and Sidhu Mudda, the untitled film is a commercial sports drama with Varun Tej donning the boxing gloves. The likes of Jagapathi Babu, Suniel Shetty, Upendra, Nadiya and Naveen Chandra are on board for the supporting roles. Recently, there were

rumours that lead actress Saiee Manjrekar, who was making her Telugu debut, has been replaced with Nabha Natesh. Dismissing them as pure gossip, Kiran clarifies, "She is very much part of the project. Scenes involving her, Varun and Naveen Chandra were shot in Vizag earlier, so the question of replacing her doesn't arise." Right now though, Kiran is concentrating on delivering a chartbuster soundtrack. "Work on two songs is underway. Composer Thaman has given a couple of nice tunes and lyrics are being written by Ramajogayya Shastrri," the director ends.



Lack of good eateries around their workplace in Khajaguda, Hyderabad that serve authentic Telugu cuisine, drove Majili producers and Sudheer Varma's brother Phani to open 1980s Military Hotel

**P**roducers Sahu Garapati and Harish Peddi of Shine Screens along with Phani Varma, brother of director Sudheer Varma, have forayed into the hospi-

ality business. Their venture, 1980s Military Hotel, was launched by directors Anil Ravipudi and Shiva Nirvana earlier this week. Located near Delhi Public School, Khajaguda, the directors expressed that the hotel name itself was enough to draw food lovers and hoped that it would attain a good name in the future.

Speaking to *The Pioneer*, Harish said the opening day's business was more than what they'd expected. "We didn't expect any walk-ins; we thought our friends and relatives would visit us but surprisingly the locals turned up in good numbers and enjoyed the food. There

was some confusion with regards to taking orders due to the rush but overall it was a satisfying day for us," Harish joyously expressed.

Harish and his partners initially thought of opening the hotel in April but for the lockdown. While this is his first tryst with the hospitality sector, his friend Sahu was associated with a couple of restaurants earlier in the city before quitting them due to his tight schedule. "His passion for food meant that he joined us in the Military Hotel," Harish quipped.

Harish added that the hotel was established to serve authentic Telugu food which gives the home-made

feel. "Yes, there are many hotels which offer Telugu food but they are adding some other flavours to our food. Our menu is devoid of offerings like chicken 65, butter chicken and chilli chicken. We are offering chicken fry, mutton fry, chicken curry, mutton curry like how our grandmothers made it with less masala and no colour coating. We are bringing old style cooking into our kitchen. Hyderabad is famous for its dum biryani but we wanted to be different and it is the reason why we are focusing on flavoured chicken and mutton pulao. We also specialise in traditional thalis. There will be

other Military Hotel outlets in different corners of the city if our business blossoms here."

Shifting focus to production venture *Tuck Jagadish*, he said the film will resume in Hyderabad from first week of October. "We are planning the schedule in a systemic way. Firstly, we will begin with scenes which require lesser actors. We are planning to wrap up the entire shooting by mid-December in adherence with safety protocols. There might be a week schedule in Rajahmundry in December," he said. — NG

## Majili producers start a military hotel

## Fitness and compassion can bring long-term happiness: Urvashi



**A**ctress and former beauty queen Urvashi Rautela, who is making her Telugu debut with Sampath Nandi's *Black Rose*, says rather than be addicted to the short-term pleasures of alcohol, drugs or gambling, people should invest their time in things that bring lasting happiness.

"At times we motivate ourselves by thinking of what we want to become. At times we motivate ourselves by thinking about who we don't ever want to be like. We are addicted to our thoughts. We cannot change anything if we cannot change our thinking. That's why we all should be addicted to fitness," Urvashi said.

She believes that fitness and compassion are two things that can bring long-term happiness.

"I believe compassion and fitness are among things we can practice that will bring immediate and long-term happiness to our lives. I'm not talking about the short-term gratification of pleasures like alcohol, drugs or gambling (though I'm not knocking them), but something that will bring true and lasting happiness — the kind that sticks. I swear by and believe in this Dalai Lama quote," said the actress.

## Anup's music for Satish Vegesna

**A**fter working with Mickey J Meyer for his films like *Shatamanam Bhavathi* and *Srinivasa Kalyanam*, filmmaker Satish Vegesna preferred Gopi Sunder for *Entha Manchi Vaadavuraa*, starring Kalyanram. Now for his forthcoming film, *Kothi Kommach*, featuring youngsters Meghamsh and Sameer Vegesna, he has opted for the musical notes of Anup Rubens.

A source says, "As the film is a young entertainer, Vegesna felt the need to have a peppy yet rooted album. The first name that crossed his mind for the purpose was Anup, who was in after hearing the story. Three tunes have been recorded so far and Vegesna is pumped up

about the album." A confusion comedy between two couples, the film's first half, set in Visakhapatnam, will have a lot of young at heart flavor, while the second half, to unfold in Amalapuram, will focus on family ties and emotions. The film will be launched on Dasara next month, with the shoot set to roll in November. MLV Satyanarayana is the film's producer. — NG

**AS THE FILM IS A YOUNG ENTERTAINER, VEGESNA FELT THE NEED TO HAVE A PEPPEY YET ROOTED ALBUM.**





As a 36-year-old to come here, having not played a lot of cricket, in the middle of some talented youngsters - was a pleasing start. Very happy with the basics

Padikkal is a brilliant young player, he has shown it over the last couple of years, how talented he is and how destructive he could be at the top of the order

Shubman is a quality player. There is a lot of expectation from him around the world, I'm sure he will exceed all expectations and I'm really confident about that

Bumrah is a world class bowler, he is trying very hard over the last couple of days to find rhythm. I am 100 per cent sure he will be on the mark in the coming games

## KKR face MI in battle of equals

PTI ■ ABU DHABI

Grace and strength will be on one side while poise and killer instinct on the other when a revamped Kolkata Knight Riders take on Mumbai Indians, who have once again filtered in the beginning of the IPL, on Wednesday.

Since 2013, MI have never won an opening game and the script didn't change against Chennai Super Kings also.

MATCHES	25
KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS	06
MUMBAI INDIANS	19

They will be keen to bounce back while KKR would look for a perfect beginning as it will be a battle between big hitters on both sides on a sluggish Abu Dhabi track.

It will be Shubman Gill's third IPL, the one where he would like to own the stage with his languid grace and effortless hitting, which he is so capable of. He can hit sixes over extra cover with grace and caress the ball through covers too.

These are exactly the traits that made Rohit Sharma, the great white ball exponent that he is. Seasoned Rohit versus young Shubman is one for the keeps and makes this battle enticing.

But it's not just grace which makes T20 so appealing. The brute masculinity of power that sends the ball soaring into the orbit is what makes it so special.

Hardik Pandya, who is back with a chiselled body. There is no doubt that he can unleash his firepower against Sunil Narine and Kuldeep Yadav as well as KKR's highest paid



Stats: Faisal Features

KKR has Eoin Morgan, easily the best white ball captain in international cricket at the moment, who could advise Dinesh Karthik on how to tackle tense moments.

Whether he would fit in among the four overseas players is the question as Knights have Narine, Tom Banton, Russell and Cummins, who walk into any T20 playing XI.

For Mumbai, it is important that Nathan Coulter-Nile, with more all-round T20 utility compared to Trent Boult, gets fit to add more balance.

They could think about using Ishan Kishan's explosive firepower rather than bulky Saurabh Tiwary, who can't rotate the strike with ease.

Apart from pacers and spinners Krunal Pandya and Rahul Chahar, they need one more option in the bowling and that can be in form of Pandya and Kieron Pollard.

Both Hardik and Pollard, who did not bowl against CSK can jointly share the responsibility of another bowler.

# Samson, Smith star as RR beat CSK by 16 runs

RR 216/7 (20.0 overs) ■ CSK 200/6 (20.0 overs)



Deepak Chahar takes catch of his own bowling to dismiss Yashasvi Jaiswal



Steve Smith congratulates Sanju Samson after he completes his fifty

PTI ■ SHARJAH

Rajasthan Royals got off to fantastic start in IPL 2020 by registering a comfortable 16-run win over the mighty Chennai Super Kings in Sharjah on Tuesday. Faf du Plessis hit a fifty but CSK's required rate kept on climbing. Rahul Tewatia struck twice in one over to RR on top.

This happened after Chennai Super Kings lost openers Shane Watson and Murali Vijay in quick

succession to RR spinners - Rahul Tewatia and Shreyas Gopal - after getting off to a good start.

Jofra Archer hit four sixes in the final over as RR ended up with 216 for 7.

Sanju Samson and skipper Steve Smith smashed quickfire half-centuries to guide Rajasthan Royals to a formidable 216 for seven against Chennai Super Kings in an IPL match here on Tuesday. Sent into bat, Rajasthan lost young opener Yashasvi Jaiswal (6) in the third over but then Samson joined hands with Smith as the duo played sensibly initially before the Kerala wicket-keeper batsman went hammer and tongs at opposition spinners.

Samson (74 off 32) looked in great nick, while Smith, returning to competitive cricket after recovering from concussion suffered before the ODI series against England, made 67 off 49 balls to lay the base for Rajasthan's total.

In the final over, Jofra Archer (27 off 8 balls) hit four sixes off Lungi Ngidi as Royals got 30 runs to take the score past 215.

In all, Royals hit 17 sixes with Samson accounting for nine of them and Smith and Archer having four each in their kitties.

## DUGOUT



reihuki What a cracker of a start to the IPL. Special effort by the team  
danishsaiit @rahulki - "Munde Baa" Golden words KL. Love you.  
mayankagarwal @danishsaiit LEGEND!

KXIP captain KL Rahul was caught on stump mic hurling abuse in his mother tongue Kannada during their match against Delhi Capitals on Sunday. Trolling Rahul, a comedian Danish Sai commented on his Instagram post, writing, "Munde baa... Golden words KL. Love you"

## MARSH MAY MISS ENTIRE IPL

Australian all-rounder Mitchell Marsh is likely to be ruled out of the remainder of the IPL as the ankle injury he suffered during the game against RCB has turned out to be "serious". "It seems a serious injury. I am not sure if he be able to compete in any of the matches," a team source told PTI on Tuesday. The team has not yet officially commented on the extent of his injury. It will be a huge loss for SRH, who may now consider bringing in 37-year-old Dan Christian, who has the experience of playing 40 IPL games as a middle order batsman and a right arm seamer. World No 1 T20 all-rounder Mohd Nabi could get a look in into the playing XI.

## 20 CR WATCHED IPL 13 OPENER

The opening match of the 13th edition of the IPL was watched by 20 crore people, said BCCI Secretary Jay Shah on Tuesday. As per Shah, this was the highest-ever opening day viewership for any sporting league in any country as defending champions Mumbai Indians faced CSK on September 19 at the Sheikh Zayed Stadium in Abu Dhabi. "Opening match of #Dream11IPL sets a new record! As per BARC, an unprecedented 20 crore people tuned in to watch the match. Highest ever opening day viewership for any sporting league in any country - no league has ever opened as big as this," said the BCCI Secretary in a tweet while tagging BCCI President Sourav Ganguly, Uday Shankar - President of The Walt Disney Company, APAC, and Chairman of Star and Disney India - and Disney+Hotstar.

## I WAS VERY NERVOUS: PADIKKAL

Considered a future India star, Devdutt Padikkal made an impressive IPL debut with a scintillating fifty but the young Kerala batsman says he was nervous when his place in the playing XI was confirmed to him. "I was very nervous upon hearing the news of making my debut. But when I came to bat I settled down after playing a few balls," Padikkal told Chahal during an interaction after the match. Padikkal said he has learnt a lot from RCB and India skipper Virat Kohli. "The last one month that we practised, I learnt a lot from Virat bhajiya. I kept asking him questions whenever I was around him. Even today, when I was playing with Finch, he showed a lot of confidence in me," he said.

## ENSURE BETTER UMPIRING: NESS TO BCCI

Kings XI Punjab co-owner Ness Wadia wants the BCCI to ensure better umpiring standards and optimum use of technology in the IPL, following an umpiring howler which cost his team a match against Delhi Capitals. "It is exceedingly unfortunate that today with tremendous use of technology, we still do not use technology to ensure the total fairness and transparency in cricket game like several other leagues across the world including EPL, NBA, etc.," Wadia said in a statement to PTI. "I would request BCCI to ensure better umpiring and to ensure henceforth that technology is used to the maximum so as to ensure fairness and transparency in a game which is used across the best leagues in the world."

## KOHLI PRAISE GAME CHANGER YUZI

Crediting Yuzvendra Chahal's three-wicket burst for his side's 10-run win over Sunrisers Hyderabad in their IPL-opener, RCB captain Virat Kohli said the wrist spinner proved that he can get purchase on any wicket. "It's amazing to be honest. Last year, we were on the other side of the result, 6-nil to start. It is nice to be 1-nil. We kept our composure tonight," Kohli said at the post-match presentation. "Yuzi (Chahal) comes in and completely changed the game for us. Not many spinners got much out of the pitch, but tonight he showed that you can turn it if you have it in your wrists. He showed he can get purchase on any wicket. The way he came in and bowled attacking lines, he changed the game."

# Morgan aims to complement Russell

## BIG HIT

PTI ■ ABU DHABI

Eoin Morgan could well be the 'ice' to Andre Russell's 'fire' as England's World Cup winning captain gets ready to complement the pyrotechnics of the big-hitting Jamaican when Kolkata Knight Riders take the field in this edition of Indian Premier League.

One of the more dependable middle-order batsman in the limited overs cricket, Morgan was bought by KKR at the auc-



the qualifiers by a whisker in 2019. "I know (Andre) Russell has done that role significantly well for a number of years for Kolkata. He's done exceptionally well. If I get a go, hopefully I will be able to aid that," Morgan said during a virtual media interaction.

The KKR vice-captain further said he's more experienced now and his batting is coming off really well.

"I think it's been quite a few years since I played (at KKR). Just looking at batting, my game has really come on quite a lot in the last three to four years. I would like to think I've come on

quite well," Morgan, who will be back at the franchise after his stint from 2011-2013, said.

Besides Morgan, KKR have also bolstered their batting with his compatriot Tom Banton who became a sensation in the Big Bash League, while the bowling too looks fiery with the addition of Aussie world number one Pat Cummins.

"I think with the squad that we have, it gives us better options, particularly in batting and bowling. I think within the squad we have a number of very versatile cricketers who can specifically control the batting department," Morgan said.

# Good to play strong Mumbai early: DK

Abu Dhabi: Mumbai Indians consist of world-class players and that is why it is good for us to play the four-time champions early in the IPL, Kolkata Knight Riders skipper Dinesh Karthik said on Tuesday.

The two teams have faced each other 25 times and the Kolkata-based franchise has won only six matches.

"They (Mumbai Indians) have a team of world-class players; they are a strong lineup and the number of IPL titles they have won shows that. It's good that we are playing Mumbai early in the tournament. Every year is a different year. I am sure it will be a great game tomorrow," said Karthik during a virtual press conference on Tuesday.

Karthik also hinted that Shubman Gill and Sunil Narine will be opening the batting for KKR. "Shubman is a quality player. I am sure he will exceed all expectations and it's good to have him. Gill and Narine make a good opening combination," he said.

Karthik admitted that he has the 'problem of plenty' to pick the XI from a revamped Kolkata Knight Riders squad.

"One of the tough points for KKR at this point of time is picking the right XI. A lot of guys have put their hands up and are ready for



Mumbai Indians skipper Rohit Sharma chats with Kolkata Knight Riders captain Dinesh Karthik during training session

selection. It's going to be an interesting one and a tough one but that's a good sign."

"We are in a good space. One of our strengths is the variety we have in our pace department. All four Indian pacers are shaping up really well. It's going to be a hard decision to make who's going to start the tournament," Karthik said.

# Warner backs young Indian batsmen

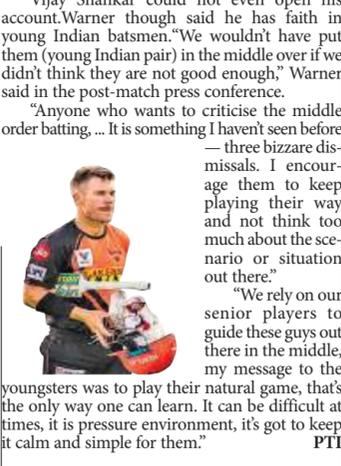
DUBAI: Sunrisers Hyderabad skipper David Warner has backed young Indian batsmen Priyam Garg and Abhishek Sharma to "keep playing their natural game" after their disappointing outing against the Royal Challengers Bangalore.

The 19-year-old Garg (12) and 20-year-old Sharma (7) couldn't grab the opportunity as the former was bowled while trying to scoop the ball past the keeper and the latter fell prey to a terrible mix-up with Rashid Khan.

Vijay Shankar could not even open his account. Warner though said he has faith in young Indian batsmen. "We wouldn't have put them (young Indian pair) in the middle over if we didn't think they are not good enough," Warner said in the post-match press conference.

"Anyone who wants to criticise the middle order batting... It is something I haven't seen before - three bizzare dismissals. I encourage them to keep playing their way and not think too much about the scenario or situation out there."

"We rely on our senior players to guide these guys out there in the middle, my message to the youngsters was to play their natural game, that's the only way one can learn. It can be difficult at times, it is pressure environment, it's got to keep it calm and simple for them."



youngsters was to play their natural game, that's the only way one can learn. It can be difficult at times, it is pressure environment, it's got to keep it calm and simple for them."

# Evergreen Ibra

Zlatan nets brace in Milan's opener

AFP ■ MILAN

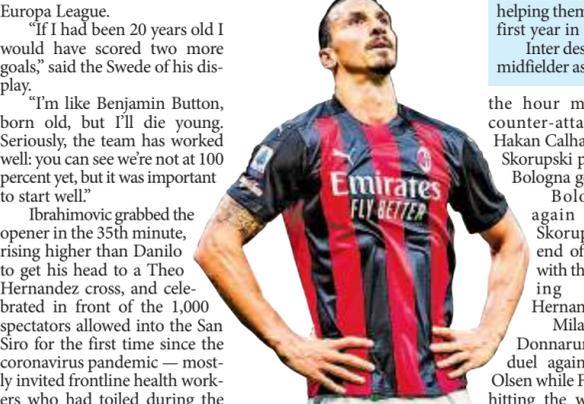
Zlatan Ibrahimovic scored twice as AC Milan got their Serie A campaign up and running with a 2-0 win over Bologna on Monday.

Ibrahimovic, who turns 39 next month, showed he has lost none of his goalscoring skills having also netted last week against Irish side Shamrock Rovers in the Europa League.

"If I had been 20 years old I would have scored two more goals," said the Swede of his display.

"I'm like Benjamin Button, born old, but I'll die young. Seriously, the team has worked well; you can see we're not at 100 percent yet, but it was important to start well."

Ibrahimovic grabbed the opener in the 35th minute, rising higher than Danilo to get his head to a Theo Hernandez cross, and celebrated in front of the 1,000 spectators allowed into the San Siro for the first time since the coronavirus pandemic - mostly invited frontline health workers who had toiled during the



worst of the crisis.

The Swede missed a chance for a second shortly after when he was denied by a sliding tackle from Brazilian defender Danilo.

But six minutes after the break he added a second from the penalty spot after a Riccardo Orsolini foul on Ismael Bennacer.

He missed a chance for a third just after

# Vidal joins Inter

Milan: Inter Milan have completed a deal to sign Arturo Vidal from Barcelona for 1 million euros, the clubs announced on Tuesday.

"Barcelona and Inter Milan have reached an agreement for the transfer of the player Arturo Vidal," Barca said in a statement.

"The Italian team will pay FC Barcelona 1 million euros in variables."

After joining in 2018, Vidal played 96 games for the Catalans and scored 11 goals, helping them win La Liga in his first year in Spain.

Inter described the Chilean midfielder as a "warrior". "From



today, Vidal will be on the front line for the Nerazzurri, with the same objectives as ever: fighting, giving it his all, and winning," the Italian club added.

Bologna finished a man down with Mitchell Dijks send off with two minutes to go but it made no difference to the match.

"They had Ibrahimovic, we didn't," said Bologna coach Sinisa Mihajlovic.

"Ibra made the difference, everything Milan created came through him. But it was a balanced game.

"Maybe we didn't believe in ourselves enough, but the lads were in it to the end, we created two big scoring opportunities."

# City start season with nery win

AFP ■ WOLVERHAMPTON

Pep Guardiola labelled Phil Foden as "incredible" after Manchester City survived a scare to start their Premier League title challenge with a 3-1 win against Wolves on Monday.

City's delayed start to the campaign - due to their involvement in last season's Champions League - had allowed Liverpool to build a six-point lead over them before they had even kicked a ball.

Guardiola's side could not afford to slip up at Molineux if they wanted to keep pace with the champions and they raced into a two-goal lead before half-time thanks to Kevin De Bruyne's penalty and Foden's cool finish.

City's swaggering first half gave way to an anxious spell as Wolves dominated after the interval and they had to cling on after Raul Jimenez got one back before Gabriel Jesus sealed the points in stoppage time.

Foden's goal was a welcome morale boost in his first match since the midfielder was sent home in disgrace, along with Manchester United's Mason Greenwood, after the pair invited local women into the England team's hotel.

"For the goal and in the second half Foden played incredibly well, he helped us keep the ball," Guardiola said.

While City equalled Aston Villa's record of winning 10 consecutive opening fixtures to a top-flight season, there



Kevin de Bruyne scores Man City opening goal

is little doubt Liverpool remain the Premier League's preeminent force for now.

But Guardiola was delighted to open with a victory given the shorter than usual pre-season.

"We could not run much because we are tired in our legs but in general we did a good game," he said.

"The period that we are in, the situation that we had this last two weeks, I expected some moments where we suffer but in general we controlled it well.

"It was a good performance. We know how difficult it is in this stadium.

"Sometimes we need more time to get to our best condition but it was a good start to come here and win."