

ANALYSIS 7
CAN JINPING AFFORD
TO RELENT?

MONEY 8
TECH MAHINDRA SUBSIDIARY SELLS
STAKE TO RAKUTEN FOR \$45 M

SPORTS 12
MI BEAT KKR
BY 49 RUNS

HYDERABAD, THURSDAY SEPTEMBER 24, 2020; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer



ADAH PREFERS HER
TERRACE TO GYM
FOR WORKOUT

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MINISTER OF STATE (RAILWAYS) SURESH ANGADI DIES OF COVID

Minister of State for Railways Suresh Angadi passed away Wednesday at AIIMS in New Delhi. Angadi was undergoing treatment for Covid-19. He was 65. Angadi had tested positive for novel coronavirus on September 14 ahead of the commencement of the Monsoon Session of the Parliament. Angadi represented Belagavi constituency in the Lok Sabha as a member of the BJP. Born in 1955, the BJP leader from Belgaum district in Karnataka has held several positions in the party in his long political career. He started as BJP vice president in Belgaum in 1996, and worked his way up.



KKR TO INVEST \$755 MILLION IN RETAIL ARM OF RELIANCE

Private equity firm KKR & Co Inc will invest \$755 million in the retail unit of Reliance Industries Ltd, the Indian conglomerate said on Wednesday, bringing the total funding in Reliance Retail to \$1.78 billion within a month. The Mumbai-headquartered Reliance has approached investors in Jio Platforms about buying stakes in its retail arm. Reuters had reported. While Silver Lake, another one of Jio Platforms' backers, said earlier this month it will invest \$1.02 billion in Reliance Retail.



MODI, SHAHEEN BAGH DADI ON TIME'S 'MOST INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE' LIST

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, an 82-year-old woman who became the face of the Shaheen Bagh protests in Delhi and actor Ayshmann Khurrana are among those on TIME magazine's list of 100 'Most Influential People of 2020'. The annual list features pioneers, artists, titans, leaders and icons from around the "who have had the most impact this year". While Modi is listed in the 'Leaders' category, Bilkees, a.k.a 'Dadi of Shaheen Bagh', has been featured under 'Icons'. Modi, who turned 70 this year, was last featured on the annual TIME magazine list in 2017.



SAUDI ARABIA BANS FLIGHTS TO, FROM INDIA OVER COVID SURGE

Saudi Arabia has banned flights to and from India amid a surge in Scoronavirus cases, according to an official document. In a circular issued on Tuesday, Saudi Arabia's General Authority of Civil Aviation (GACA) said it was "suspending travel to and from the following countries: (India, Brazil and Argentina) including any person who has been in any of the mentioned countries above in the last 14 days prior to their arrival to the Kingdom". However, it excluded "passengers who have official government invitations".



**Pvt equity inflow
in realty down 85
pc in Jan-August**

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Online land mutation will be free of cost: KCR

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao declared on Wednesday that henceforth Dharani portal would be the sole means to transfer and register every inch of land across the State. Besides, people having non-agricultural properties would be issued maroon-coloured Pattadar passbooks. Passbooks were being issued to protect people permanently from land litigations and disputes and to confer on them full rights on their properties.



The Chief Minister held a high-level meeting at Pragathi Bhavan to discuss inter alia the implementation of the new Revenue Act, registering non-agricultural properties on Dharani portal and related issues. He underlined that the state government's aim was to protect the properties of the poor and middle classes through the revolutionary new Revenue Act.

KCR urged people in the state to get mutations done online free of cost for their houses, plots, flats, houses constructed at the agriculture wells, farmhouses and other non-agricultural properties. The CM said "Henceforth every inch of land to be transferred and registered from one name to other would be done only through the Dharani portal".

**FIR against
Anurag Kashyap
after actress
alleges rape**

5

3 Maoists killed in exchange of fire

PNS ■ BHADRACHALAM

As part of the ongoing combating operations in the forest areas of Bhadrachalam district, special party police personnel and Maoists 'exchanged fire' around 7 pm on Wednesday near the hillocks in Chennapuram, under the Charla Police Station limits, resulting in the death of three Maoists, including two women.

According to Bhadrachalam district superintendent of police, the police recovered an 8 mm rifle and material used to trigger blasts, a kit bag, and other items of equipment belonging to Maoists from the encounter site. The special party police are continuing their hunt for the Maoists who survived the exchange of fire, the SP said.

ACP in ACB net

Sleuths unearth Rs 70 cr property in DA case

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Sleuths of the Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB) on Tuesday booked suo motu a case against Y Narasimha Reddy, ACP Malkajgiri, for allegedly amassing huge wealth disproportionate to his known sources of income. In raids that followed on Wednesday, ACB officials found the ACP to be in possession of assets worth of Rs 70 crore (local market value).



Y Narasimha Reddy

The ACB sleuths conducted simultaneous raids in 25 locations in two Telugu states, including his residence in Mahendra Hills, Hyderabad as well as at other places in Warangal, Jangaon, Nalgonda, Karimnagar districts and Ananthapur.

"Mr Reddy allegedly acquired assets disproportionate to his lawful sources of income by indulging in corrupt practices and dubious means during his service as a public servant," said ACB official.

**Is the Hyd Metro
Rail project in
financial trouble?**

4

TODAY

ALMANAC

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

Tithi: Ashtami: 07:01 pm

Nakshatram: Mula: 06:09 pm

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

Rahukalam: 01:37 pm - 03:07 pm

Yamagandam: 06:08 am - 07:38 am

Variyam: 04:34 pm - 06:09 pm, 12:00 am - 05:31 am

Gulika: 09:08 am - 10:38 am

Good Time: (to start any important work)

Amritakalam: 11:49 am - 01:24 am

Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:43 am - 12:31 pm

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Haze

Temp: 28/22

Humidity: 84%

Sunrise: 06:05 am

Sunset: 06:10 pm

Current Weather Conditions

Updated September 23, 2020 5:00 PM

Hundreds of women faced atrocities

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The lockdown necessitated by the Covid-19 pandemic may have confined people to their homes. But that 'home' was virtual hell for those who were at home with abusive partners as their atrocities only increased during the period.

In all, 134 cases of atrocities on women in Telangana and 104 on women in Andhra Pradesh were reported to the National Commission for Women (NCW) during the

In Telangana, during the months of May, June, July, 20,23, 22 cases respectively were registered with NCW



pandemic over the past six months. The abuse against women was high during June and July

in both the states and the country as well. As per the data provided by NCW, across the country from March to

No guarantee Covid vaccine in trials will work: WHO

PNS ■ GENEVA

World Health Organisation (WHO) chief Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus has said that the top health organisation has no guarantee whether any single Covid-19 vaccine now in development will work. While addressing a virtual press conference, the WHO chief said: "We have no guarantee that any single vaccine now in development will work."

"The more candidates we test, the higher the chance we will have of a safe and efficacious vaccine," he added.

Deepika, Shraddha, Sara summoned in drugs probe

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Actors Deepika Padukone, Sara Ali Khan, Shraddha Kapoor and Rakul Preet Singh have been summoned by the Narcotics Control Bureau in a stunning twist to the drugs probe linked to the Sushant Singh Rajput investigation. They have been asked to appear in the next three days.

These are the most high-profile names to come up in a widening probe into the link between drugs and the film industry, which emerged during the investigations into the death of Sushant Singh Rajput on June 14.

Deepika Padukone's manager



er Karishma Prakash had been questioned yesterday in a case that the Narcotics Control Bureau had filed on the basis of WhatsApp messages retrieved from Rhea Chakraborty's mobile phone, which revealed conversations on procuring drugs.

Investigators have found WhatsApp messages on

Karishma Prakash's phone, which reveal a conversation between one "D" and "K" on arranging drugs.

Rhea Chakraborty, a 28-year-old actor, was arrested in a separate case registered after 59 grams of marijuana was seized during searches in Mumbai.

NAMO VENKATESHA



Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy carries the silk clothes to be presented on behalf of the State Government, during his visit to Lord Sri Venkateswara Swamy as part of the Srivari Salakalpa Brahmotsavams in Tirumala, on Wednesday.

Bajrang Dal stage protest at YSRCP office in HYD

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Bajrang Dal activists on Wednesday staged a protest at the office of the YSR Congress here against the alleged "anti-Hindu policies" of the party government in Andhra Pradesh.

Bajrang Dal activists, who arrived at the YSR Congress office at Lotus Pond in Banjara Hills here, were taken into preventive custody and released later, police said.

Jagan seeks Rs 17,060 cr dues from Centre

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy on Wednesday submitted a memorandum to the Centre requesting that it

immediately release a sum of Rs 17,060.94 crore that was due to the state under various heads.

During his two-day trip to New Delhi, the Chief Minister

conferred with Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Tuesday night and again on Wednesday morning.

A release from the Chief Ministers Office here said

Jagan raised various state issues with Shah and sought the latter's support "to continue to respond effectively to the evolving Covid-19 crisis."

LOCKDOWN WOES

Hundreds of women faced atrocities

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

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'NAYA' ANDAAZ

GHMC polls: KCR leaves everything to KTR

L VENKAT RAM REDDY ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister and Telangana Rashtra Samiti supremo K Chandrashekar Rao, signalling once again that his sights are set on an enlarged role at the national level, has decided to keep himself away completely from the rough and tumble of the GHMC elections scheduled to be held in February 2021. The Chief Minister, accord-

ing to party sources, has entrusted the entire responsibility of ensuring the pink party's victory in GHMC polls to his son, party working president and IT Minister KT Rama Rao. Accordingly, KTR, deemed in party circles to be CM-in-waiting, will handle the gamut of activities for the elections, be it selection of candidates, devising party's election strategy or campaigning for party candidates.



Director of firm held

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Sleuths of the Directorate General of GST Intelligence (DGGI), Hyderabad arrested a director of a private limited company for allegedly evading taxes totaling over Rs 34.6 crore by issuing fake invoices and indulging in circular trading to avail input tax credit (ITC), thereby causing revenue loss-

es to the Government of India. Preliminary investigations revealed that the company had issued fake invoices worth Rs 139.93 crore and Rs 98.48 crore without actually making supplies and thereafter resorting to wrongful availment and utilization of Input Tax Credit (ITC) to the tune of Rs 19.7 crore and 14.9 crore respectively.

Telangana and AP witness rise in cancers

NAVEENA GHANATE ■ HYDERABAD

The number of cancer cases has been increasing year after year in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. While Telangana has added 3,335 cancer patients since 2016, Andhra Pradesh added 4,512 patients over the past four years. Going by data provided by the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare; in 2019, 68,883 patients in Andhra Pradesh and 46,464 patients in Telangana were suf-



fering from cancer. As per the National Cancer Registry Programme Report-2020 (NCRP), cancers related to

lung, mouth, stomach and oesophagus were the most common cancers among men. Cancers of breast and cervix uteri

were the most common among women. NCRP estimates that cancer cases in the country could increase to 15.6 lakh by 2025.

Across the country, while 12.6 lakh people were suffering from cancer in 2016, by 2019 this number rose to 13.58 lakh. However, the Ministry points out, the increase in the number of cases is reflected also by an increased coverage in terms of more number of Population Based Cancer Registries (PBCRs) or expansion of some existing

PBCRs. The information regarding estimated incidence of cancer cases in the country is based on the NCRP of Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR). The Ministry, while sharing data with members in the Lok Sabha, said, "The latest report of NCRP is for the year 2020, which is based on data for the period 2012-16, as compared to earlier report of 2016, which was based on data for the period 2012-14".

With a view to overhaul the erstwhile Hyderabad State's administrative machinery following the Sepoy Mutiny of 1857, some outsiders were brought by Nizam on the plea that there was a lack of 'capable persons' within the state, thus heralding the era of exploitation of the insiders. What was intended to be a passing phase, became a permanent feature and the 'outsiders' from the erstwhile Madras Presidency, later in the form of 'Seemandhra' rulers with the formation of Visalandhra, continued until the formation of Telangana State in varying proportions and in various forms.

When I was a student at New Science College, I bought a book titled 'Whither Hyderabad', authored by Syed Hasan. The contents of the book were remarkably interesting when I read it and they are still fresh in my memory. The book highlighted some of the problems of the premier Indian State. It traces the role

Revisiting Syed Hasan's 'Whither Hyderabad'

of outsiders brought by Nizam. They were supposed to train the locals to undertake higher responsibilities. Instead, local talent was meticulously suppressed, besides creating fresh opportunities to import more and more outsiders of their choice. Neither the foreign-returned Osmania University graduates, nor the otherwise talented local youth were able to enter the state service. Outsiders occupying key positions favoured only a fellow outsider draining wealth from Hyderabad. This gave rise to the feeling that persons coming to Hyderabad either for jobs or for economic benefits, as a rule, should not settle down for ever. This realization gave birth to Mulki Movement.

Thus, the Mulki Movement was born out of discontent and self-respect in every 'Hyderabad' as far back as in

The doctrine called for a definite stoppage of outsiders being brought to the state. The League believed capable Mulkis could be found and ought to be found for every administrative and technical post

1935 itself. Subsequently, a five-member group of well-meaning citizens of Hyderabad viz. Padmaja Naidu, Abdul Hasan Syed Ali, Burgula Ramkishan Rao, Bar-at-law SB Sharma and Syed Abid Hasan proposed to start an organization. Thus, 'The Nizam's Subjects League' was born at a critical juncture.

'Whither Hyderabad', published in 1935, gave an account of the prevalent problems of the Hyderabad State. In its preface, the Secretary of the League mentioned that the Mulki Movement was a self-

help and self-development movement without harming anybody or without being hostile or antagonistic to anybody. The 'doctrine' that the League prepared then categorically asserted the 'Rights and Privileges' of the sons of the soil. It said: 'The privileges of serving the state, profiting by the economic resources, shaping the administrative policies belong to Mulkis'.

The doctrine called for a definite stoppage of outsiders being brought to the state. The League believed capable Mulkis could be found and



VANAM JWALA NARASIMHA RAO
CHIEF PUBLIC RELATIONS OFFICER OF CHIEF MINISTER OF TELANGANA

ought to be found for every administrative and technical post. Even if they are found to be incompetent, they should be given a chance to benefit by their failures and to learn by experience, the League felt. They had a 'Right

to make mistakes' like any other human beings.

A few startling facts concerning the non-Mulkis in Hyderabad were given in the book. As per the 1931 Census, the Telangana Region in the Nizam's Hyderabad, including urban and rural areas, consisted of a population of around 75 lakhs. Probably it would not have been more than four to five lakhs in Hyderabad -- the main potential for employment then. Among them, the Non-Mulkis accounted for 2.5 lakhs and more than half of them were from the Madras Presidency (mostly people from the Telugu-English speaking coastal areas).

The Railways, general trade, educational institutions, Singareni Mines, irrigation projects under construction etc. mostly accounted for many Madrasis (from coastal areas). When it came to

exploitation, initially in those days, services were mostly manned by North Indians and they formed a clique with a view to keeping Mulkis out from the administration. The Mulkis therefore demanded that they should have the privilege to shape their own administrative policies and for that to happen the right type of Mulkis were to be chosen. That was the crux of the Mulki Movement of 1935.

The League also pointed out that the Muslim outsiders from North India advocated that Hyderabad State was only for Muslims and Hindu outsiders from southern (mostly from Madras Presidency) advocated ousting Muslims. Between these two outside elements, the atmosphere of the state got polluted. Outsiders not only entered the administrative machinery, but also systematically crippled the

potential of cottage industries of Hyderabad and Telangana. There was a time when the state could boast of several cottage industries that flourished and provided employment to lakhs of Mulkis. They included the paper industry (Karimnagar and Medak), dyeing and printing (Warangal, Karimnagar, Nalgonda and Medak), gold thread (Hyderabad), Woollen carpet (Warangal), Arms and weapons (Hyderabad and Warangal), metal (Adilabad), toy-making (Adilabad), Silver filigree work (Karimnagar) and bangles (Hyderabad).

The Mulki movement was not just for service benefits. It also meant that Mulki industries should thrive and nothing that can be manufactured or provided locally should be imported from other areas. Likewise, the demand for separate Telangana was not merely for more development, but equally for self-respect and for self-rule. Creation of Telangana State was the only answer.

Deepika, Shraddha, Sara summoned...

Continued from Page 1

She has been accused by the anti-drugs agency of arranging drugs for Bollywood star Sushant Singh Rajput, her boyfriend.

She and her brother Showik Chakraborty were sent to jail till October 6. Two employees of Sushant Singh Rajput and alleged drug dealers linked to the film fraternity are also among those arrested.

The names of Sara Ali Khan and Shraddha Kapoor, both co-stars of Sushant Singh Rajput, reportedly came up during the questioning of Rhea Chakraborty.

Director of firm held...

Continued from Page 1

The documents of the company, purportedly into commercial real estate, IT/ITES services, supply of coal, PCCP and BWC Pipes, execution of drinking water pipeline project and supply and installation of electro-mechanical works, will be scrutinised further, after which the amount of tax evasion may go up. The company's transactions in other states and its related parties are also now under the radar of DDGI. During searches, officials seized incriminating evidence like fake transportation documents related to invoices fabricated to falsely depict movement, supply and receipt of goods.

Bajrang Dal...

Continued from Page 1

A Bajrang Dal leader claimed that the protest, led by Bajrang Dal and VHP, was against certain allegedly objectionable comments of a minister in AP and incidents that "hurt the sentiments of Hindus, including a chariot allegedly getting burnt at a temple.

Peddlers use the postal route to send contraband

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a startling revelation, the Excise Department has said that the drugs are being delivered at door step of consumers through Speed Post if ordered online. Responding to a question posed to it by Forum for Good Governance under the RTI, the Excise Department said that several foreigners are involved in drug peddling in the city.

Since the order for supply of drugs is in minute quantities, detecting them was difficult, the reply said quoting postal authorities who went on record stating that it was not feasible to subject each and every letter that arrives here from overseas. To expand network of drug peddling, it was alarming to note that two engineering students, whom the Excise Department arrested, were



involved. It reflects the severity of the problem. In fact, the two engineering students were rused by their colleges on the grounds of consumption of drugs.

The RTI reply said that drugs are reaching homes of those who placed orders online through couriers. The origin of supply was traced to England and Germany. Cocaine, LSD is being imported from overseas in the garb of steel bowls. The excise officials have

identified a pharmaceutical shop selling drugs in Monda Market area of Secunderabad. The criticism against department was that it is not investigating the cases in-depth. As children of families with political clout and wealth were involved in drug consumption the investigation by department is being scuttled, it is alleged.

Forum for Good Governance Secretary Padmanabha Reddy demand-

The RTI reply said that drugs are reaching homes of those who placed orders online through couriers. The origin of supply was traced to England

ed that the government should respond immediately on the increasing drug culture in Hyderabad. If students get addicted to drugs, it would have adverse impact on country. He demanded stern punishment to those involved in drug peddling.

GHMC polls: KCR leaves...

Continued from Page 1

In the 2016 GHMC polls, KTR was given only the task of campaigning for the party's candidates, with KCR exercising his prerogative of selecting the candidates and crafting the party's election strategy. That done, KCR signed off the party's campaign by addressing a huge public rally at Parade Grounds in Secunderabad on the final day of poll campaigning.

This time, KCR will not address any public meetings or involve himself in the party's exercise for the GHMC elections.

There are strong reasons for KCR's decision. KTR has proven track record of steering TRS to a landslide victory in the 2016 GHMC polls, with the pink party winning 99 out of 150 wards -- a record of sorts for any party in the history of GHMC elections. That win was all the more important for TRS as it had no base in the city prior to

the 2014 Assembly polls and it could not contest the 2009 GHMC polls as there were no takers for TRS tickets then.

In GHMC limits, there are 24 Assembly constituencies. Previously, there were 15 Assembly constituencies and later on nine Assembly constituencies in Rangareddy and Medak districts were subsumed by GHMC, taking the total to 24. In the 2014 Assembly elections, the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen won seven seats in the Old City area out of the 24 seats in GHMC. In the remaining 17 seats, the TDP and the BJP won 14. The TRS had to satisfy itself with just 3 seats in GHMC in the 2014 Assembly polls, though it had come to power in the state.

Incidentally, it was in 2016 that, for the first time, KCR assigned election responsibility entirely to his son KTR, breaking over election-related tasks to his nephew T Harish Rao, known to

be a tough 'task master' and effective 'trouble shooter' in TRS. In fact, KCR then sprang a surprise by keeping Harish as well as his daughter K Kavitha away from GHMC polls in 2016.

On hindsight, it appears that 2016 GHMC polls were an KTR's 'acid test' to prove his mettle. He delivered. So, KCR, pleased at the historic GHMC win that his son gave him as gift, rewarded KTR with post of Minister of Municipal Administration. KTR holds that portfolio even today along with that of ITAT at a time when speculations are rife in TRS circles that KCR would hand over CM post to KTR anytime after the municipal polls in Hyderabad, Warangal and Khammam scheduled during February/March 2021, the present decision of TRS supremo to let KTR handle everything related to GHMC polls is seen as a watershed moment that takes KCR closer to CM's chair.

ACP in ACB...

Continued from Page 1

During searches, sleuths found massive moveable and immovable assets, including 55 acres of agricultural land at Anantapur, four plots admeasuring 1,960 sq. yards in front of Cyber Towers, Madhapur; two other house plots, one commercial G+3 building at Hafeezpet, two houses, Rs. 15 lakh in cash, two bank lockers, investments in real estate and other business, according to a statement from ACB. After evaluation of his assets, the government value of the properties found so far is about Rs. 7.5 crores, though their local market value is about Rs.70 crores, the ACB official said.

Further search is on. The case is under investigation. Narasimha Reddy previously worked as ACP Chikkadpally and Uppal Inspector of Police and in various other capacities in Hyderabad and Rachakonda Commissionerate.

Christian population in AP fell by 55% in over 40 years

SUMIT ONKA ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Christian population in Andhra Pradesh has seen a sharp fall over the last 40 years -- from the 1971 census. This fact came to the fore at a time politics in Andhra Pradesh are heated up by YS Jaganmohan Reddy, a Christian, became the Chief Minister of the state, the alleged recent attacks on temples and going away with the 'Declaration of Faith' at TTD. These events are adding fuel to the religious polarisation.

Of the 4.94 crore population, 6.82 lakh people belong to Christian community in Andhra, according to the 2011 census. Between 1971 and 2011, the number of Christians in Andhra Pradesh declined by more than half (55 percent), from 14.9 lakh to 6.8 lakh and their share in the population has declined from 5.37 percent to 1.38 percent.

According to the 2011 census, the majority of the population in Andhra Pradesh is Hindu (90.87 percent), followed by Muslims (7.32 percent) and Christians (1.38 percent).

In fact, the data show a decline in the number of Christians in the State. From 2004 to 2009, YS Rajasekhara Reddy, a Christian by faith, was Chief Minister of undivided Andhra Pradesh.

Surprisingly enough, the

2011 Census finds the drastic fall in the Christian population. From 2014 to 2019, there was no Christian Chief Minister as TDP was in power. The Centre for Policy Studies (CPS) claims the population of Christian in Andhra was rising consistently up to 1971, when it reached its peak value of 18.23 lakh in the then undivided State. After 1971, the number began falling sharply, dropping to 14.33 lakh in 1981 and to 11.30 lakh in 2011.

The share of Christians in the total population had risen from 1.68 percent in 1911 to 4.39 percent in 1971; it dropped to 2.68 percent in 1981 and has come down to 1.34 percent now.

The presence of Christians in Telangana has always been much lower than in Andhra Pradesh. Of about 18.23 lakh Christians in the region in 1971, only 3.36 lakh were counted in the 2011 Census.

Some researchers following religion population trends claim that the reason could be either those who converted to Christianity are returning to their native faith or they are misreporting themselves as Scheduled Caste Hindus in the Censuses so they can continue enjoying the benefits of reservation.

The Opposition parties are also of the view that more and more Dalits are embracing Christianity. State BJP leaders are of the view that free

schemes are being doled out to convert the poor to Christianity.

However, AP Christian Leaders Forum Chairman Oliver Rayi, who has also written to the AP Governor drawing his attention to the baseless allegation, contended that the Supreme Court of India (Civil Appeal No. 4870 of 2015) in its judgment of 29/04/2016 clarified that a person can change his religion but his caste does not change as it is related to his birth caste.

"This judgment made it clear that a person does not have to convert his entire family to the religion he or she has adopted after converting to a different faith or religion, nor does he or she have to change one's name. So a person of religion can convert to Christianity and enjoy the schemes and concessions given to them by the government.

In this case, blaming the government officials is just a vicious ploy, as it is the religion, not the caste, that the government officials consider and check if a person is entitled as a beneficiary for a scheme," he said, adding that population growth among Christians has remained lesser than other major religions.

Some Christian leaders are also of the view that why a Christian Chief Minister would harm the religion followed by over 90 percent residents of the state.

Jagan seeks Rs 17,060 cr dues from Centre

Continued from Page 1

"The fiscal stress has aggravated manifold on account of the drying up of revenues due to the inevitable lockdown measures, the reduced quantum of transfer of Central taxes in this fiscal and the increase in expenditure necessitated by the need to contain the Covid-19 pandemic," Jagan told the Home Minister.

The Chief Minister presented a list of grants pending to the state from the Centre and requested that they be released forthwith. The grants include Rs 2,253.52 crore for Rural and Urban Local Bodies (14th Finance Commission), Rs 3,622.07 crore GST compensation, Rs 700 crore development assistance to backward districts, Rs 1,000 crore for capital city development, Rs 1,600

crore rice subsidy, Rs 138.39 crore revenue deficit grant and Rs 3,740.53 crore under MGNREGS, the release said.

Besides, Rs 4,006.43 crore has to be reimbursed for the Polavaram irrigation project works. On Polavaram, he requested that appropriate steps be taken to approve the revised project cost and also authorise NABARD for raising the credit to Rs 18,000 crore.

No guarantee ...

Continued from Page 1

According to the WHO, almost 200 vaccines for Covid-19 are currently in clinical and pre-clinical testing. "The history of vaccine development tells us that some will fail, and some will succeed," Ghebreyesus said.

Also, the WHO, in collaboration with global vaccine alliance group Gavi and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), has launched a scheme COVAX. The aim of the collaboration is to accelerate the development of Covid-19 vaccines and enable equitable access for every country in the world.

The COVAX Facility enables governments to spread the risk of vaccine development and ensure their populations can have early access to effective vaccines.

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

NIT No.: 21/SE/SLPZ/GHMC/2020-21, Dated: 22.09.2020
Name of Work: Development of theme park, Circle-20 Serilingampally Zone, GHMC (1 Item), Estimate Amount/EVC (Rs in Lakhs): 100.00 Lakhs, Start Date/ Last Date & Time for Receipts of Bids: Dt: 25.09.2020 @ 03.00 PM - Dt: 03.10.2020 @ 3.30 PM, Officer Name, Address and Cell No: Superintending Engineer, SLPZ, GHMC Cell No: 7995077950
SUPERINTENDING ENGINEER, SERILINGAMPALLY ZONE, GHMC
I.D. No.: 5324-PP/CL/ADM/1/2020-21

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

NIT No.: 31/EE/CIR-20/SLPZ/GHMC/1-2/2020-21, Dated: 22.09.2020
Category of Work: Other Works, Estimate Amount (Rs): 16.20, Start Date/ Last date & time for receipts of Bids: From Dt: 23.09.2020 @ 01.30 PM, Date: 24.09.2020 @ 01.30 PM, Officer Name, Address and Cell No: Executive Engineer, Circle-20, SLPZ, GHMC Cell. 9154299724
EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, CIRCLE-20, GHMC
I.D. No.: 5315-PP/CL/ADM/1/2020-21

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

NIT No.: 17/GHMC/PTC-C22/2020-21, Dated: 23.09.2020
Name of Work: 3 Nos. Supply and Delivery of Sports Item in 3 Wards of Patancheru Circle-22, Estimate Amount/EVC: Rs.6.00 Lakhs, Start Date/ Last Date: Dt: 24.09.2020 @ 10.30 A.M., Officer Name, Address and Cell No: Executive Engineer, Patancheru Circle-22 Phone No: 9849906750
EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, PATANCHERU CIRCLE-22, SLP ZONE, GHMC
I.D. No.: 5261-PP/CL/ADM/1/2020-21

HYDERABAD BULLION RATES

GOLD	
₹ 52,470 (10 gm)	↓
₹ 760	
SILVER	
₹ 59,000 (1kg)	↓
₹ 1,600	

CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG

Dressed/With Skin	₹187
Without Skin	₹213
Broiler at Farm	₹129

EGG RATES ₹/100

HYDERABAD	507
VIJAYAWADA	510
VISAKHAPATNAM	515
RETAIL PRICE (HYDERABAD)	₹5.07

Hundreds of...

Continued from Page 1

In Telangana, during the months of May, June, July, a total of 20,23, 22 cases respectively were registered with NCW. Likewise, in Andhra Pradesh, June, July, August saw a peak of cases with 15, 18, 16 women respectively reaching out to NCW. In the country at large, May, June and July saw the highest number of complaints from women. Telangana is at 16th position and Andhra Pradesh at 17th position among the states and union territories in the country when it comes to the number of women who had reached out to NCW during the pandemic.

It may be mentioned here that Telangana doesn't have a Women Commission chief for more than 2 years now.

Online land mutation will...

Continued from Page 1

The Chief Minister asked people to register online the details of their non-agricultural properties, details of their family members, and Aadhaar cards' information after taking their house particulars from the panchayat and municipal employees and register them online.

If mutation for the property details was not done now, there would be a problem in transferring such properties to their children, the Chief Minister said.

The Chief Minister also announced that sites where the poor had been living for many years would be regularized. This would ensure protection of the poor and help them raise loans from banks. The issue of how to construct houses would be under the purview of the

Panchayat Raj and Municipal Acts. Nala conversion would be done free of cost for houses and other properties under the jurisdiction of Gram Panchayats and Municipalities.

Sarpanches, MPTCs, Village secretaries, Mayors, Municipal Chairmen, Councillors and staff should cooperate to exempt houses constructed at the agriculture wells from the agriculture category. MPOs should monitor this, the Chief Minister said.

"Register details about every house in the villages and municipalities online, allocate a house number, collect tax, and change nala conversion under non-agriculture category. The Panchayat Raj and Municipal officials should ensure cent percent registration of all the properties. The CM clarified that though there was some delay in commis-

sioning the Dharani Portal, the registration process of agriculture and non-agricultural properties would be done only through the Dharani portal. The CM also clarified that the mutation would not be applicable to houses constructed under Endowments, Wakf, FTL, Naala, and ULC jurisdictions.

The Chief Minister said this is the last chance to register, regularise and go for free naala conversion and the facility would not be available in future. The CM suggested that Ministers, MLAs and public representatives should take extra care in distributing the maroon-coloured passbooks. He also said that one last chance was being given to mutate the sada bainamas. Guidelines for this would be announced in a day or two.

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24-year-old man stabbed to death

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A 24-year-old man was stabbed to death by unidentified assailants at Wadi-e-Mustafa under Balapur police station limits on Wednesday morning. The victim was identified as Sayeed Momin Ali, 24, a private employee and resident of Wadi-e-Mustafa.

According to the police, the incident occurred at around 1 am when Momin Ali along with his friend Mohammed Khalid was returning from the residence of his another friend Farhan in the neighbourhood.

While they were proceeding to Momin Ali's house, four unidentified assailants stopped them and attacked Momin Ali with sharp weapons. They stabbed him multiple times and escaped from the spot, the police officials said.

Khalid along with his neighbours shifted Momin Ali to Osmania General Hospital for treatment. While undergoing treatment Momin Ali breathed his last.

Number of beds in hospitals treating patients decrease

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Regular beds in Coronavirus wards in private and government hospitals, identified as different from beds with oxygen facility and those in the Intensive Care Units, have come down over the past fortnight or so leading to hospitals re-allocating the beds to treatment of patients of other diseases.

The number of such beds decreased in government and private hospitals put together is put at 1,969.

Therefore, some private and government hospitals have been offering treatment for Coronavirus patients in wards that have beds with oxygen facility and in the ICUs.

Panicked by Coronavirus, symptomatic or asymptomatic patients used to run to seek admission in hospitals to receive treatment under the supervision of doctors for 14 days.



Now the situation changed drastically. The people have stopped approaching private or government hospitals. The hospitals have identified that only those patients who need oxygen or treatment in the ICU have been approaching the hospitals.

On account of increased awareness on people, the people have been receiving treatment immediately thereby avoiding the need for hospitalisation. Thus the problem of

shortage of beds has been got over, said a representative of private hospitals on the condition of anonymity.

Since September 10, in 42 government hospitals only 821 out of the 2055 were filled in regular Corona wards. But, by September 21, the number of beds in regular wards has come down to 1689, registering a drop in 366 beds in just 10 days. Similarly as on September 19, in 199 private hospitals the total bed strength

was 3779. But, only 1439 were filled. This leaves 2340 beds remaining unoccupied. The number of private hospitals has increased to 222 with a reduced bed strength of 2716. Of them 995 were filled. The reduction of beds in private hospitals in regular coronavirus wards was nearly 1603. In government and private hospital, the reduction is as good as 1969.

However, there was no sharp increase in the beds in oxygen wards or the ICU if 50 per cent of the wards in the two wards was any indication.

The total strength of beds in private hospitals in all wards was put at 10,484, but only 4423 could be occupied.

Since people are not coming forward to undergo hospitalisation for regular treatment of Covid, a prominent hospital in Jubilee Hills decreased beds in regular Corona ward. Same was the case with a big player in private sector in Secunderabad.

Educationalists unhappy with the new Inter history syllabus

NAMRATA SRIVASTAVA ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana State Board of Intermediate Education (BIE) reduced 30 per cent syllabus in the intermediate first-year and second-year courses for the academic year 2020-21. However, the revised syllabus for History hasn't gone down too well with the educationalists in the state.

According to the Board, topics including Separate Telangana State Movement and Telangana Praja Samithi were deleted. Several history teachers have shared their distress over the issue.

Prof Adapa Satyanarayana, a retired history lecturer of Osmania University, shares, "Removing separate Telangana state movement from the syllabus is not acceptable. That movement talks a lot about the aspirations and thinking of the people of Telangana and students should know about it."

Many of the history lecturers are even shocked that this



syllabus was passed. Professor Dr VJ Varghese, from University of Hyderabad said, "The current government in the state is the one which fought fiercely for a separate state. Had they not pushed so hard, probably the state wouldn't even come into existence. I am pretty surprised that this syllabus was passed."

Pointing out that there were other topics that could have been cut from the syllabus, Prof Adapa Satyanarayana, says, "There is a huge part ded-

icated to Mauryan history, those kind of parts can be cut."

Meanwhile, TS BIE has announced that they are still looking into the changes and this is not the final syllabus. "The release of these proposals prior to approval of competent authority, is unintended and premature. Decision of reduction of syllabus of each subject will be discussed and intimated in due course. Until then, the matter may please be treated as under examination," they shared.

IN BRIEF

Bharat Biotech inks agreement with WUSTL for Covid vaccine

Leading vaccine maker Bharat Biotech on Wednesday announced a licensing agreement with Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis for a novel chimp-adenovirus, single dose intranasal vaccine for Covid. The Hyderabad-based company owns the rights to distribute the vaccine in all markets except USA, Japan and Europe. While the Phase I trials will take place in Saint Louis University's Vaccine & Treatment Evaluation Unit, Bharat Biotech, upon obtaining the required regulatory approval, will pursue further stages of clinical trials in India and undertake large scale manufacture of the vaccine at its GMP facility located in Genome Valley, Hyderabad.



'Build it Better' programme to serve adolescent girls in need

Herbalife Nutrition, the global nutrition powerhouse, announced its association with Sambhav Foundation to support the 'Build it Better Programme' for women and children over the next ten months. The initiative aims to build awareness about the importance of nutrition and menstrual hygiene, maternal healthcare and childcare among adolescent girls and community women through interactive sessions. The program aims to cover 1650 adolescent girls from Class VI onwards and 500 women in each city. Post every session, sanitary napkins will be distributed to the women and adolescent girls. The nutrition powerhouse is in the 20th year of its business in India and has constantly endeavored to contribute actively to the communities it is present in. The 'Build it Better' initiative will address malnutrition, maternal mortality and menstrual hygiene amongst adolescent girls and pregnant women.

SBI opens first YONO branch in South India at Hyderabad

The State Bank of India has opened its first YONO branch at Hitec City in Hyderabad. It is fourth such branch and first in South India as part of digitalising banking services through YONO platform, said OP Mishra, Chief General Manager, SBI, Hyderabad Circle. YONO branch was digitally inaugurated from SBI Corporate Centre, Mumbai by Rajnish Kumar, Chairman, SBI in the presence of Challa Sreenivasulu Setty, Managing Director, SBI. The branch is located on the high streets of Hitec City wherein all tech giants have their presence nearby. Mishra informed that YONO is not just a product but a brand in itself with complete delivery channel of that of a branch in many aspects. This branch is poised to be one-stop digital gateway for the financial solutions to all the techies working in the vicinity. Customer base of the branch is purely retail and caters to all the tech savvy young generation working in and around Hitec City.

Coca-Cola initiates provision of safe drinking water in TS

With a focus on providing safe and clean drinking water for communities, Anandana, The Coca-Cola India Foundation, in partnership with Jaladhara Foundation and Water Health India initiated seven WaterHealth Centres (WHCs) in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. The Foundation has also invested in water treatment facilities of these districts to serve over 20,000 people of the community and provide them a sustainable livelihood. The initiative will facilitate improvement of community health by promoting consumption of safe drinking water and reducing susceptibility of villagers towards water borne diseases. Several low-income communities have been facing the problem of inadequate access to clean drinking water. Salinity, fluoride, chloride, iron and nitrate are the key contaminants found in most ground water samples of these districts, due to effluents discharged by industries.

Poll preparations pick pace

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The preparations for GHMC polls have started to gain pace. The first ordinary elections to GHMC after formation of Telangana State were held in the month of February, 2016. Its five years term will expire on February 10.

The State Election Commission started conducting zonal-wise technical training pro-



gramme from September 23 to 30 to the Deputy Commissioners and two efficient comput-

er professionals from each circle on pre-election activities involved in the election process and detailed training to acquaint with the software applications in the 'Te-Poll' application.

The application is meant for preparation and publication of electoral rolls, randomisation of polling personnel and counting personnel and automation of election process.



TS POLYCET Academic session to commence from Oct 7

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Department of Technical Education have allotted seats to students who participated in the first phase web-based counseling for admissions into diploma courses for the academic year 2020-21 through the Telangana State Polytechnic Common Entrance Test (TS POLYCET) 2020.

In authorities announced that a total of 45,207 candidates qualified in the TS POLYCET 2020 and 27,759 have exercised their web options. Out of 31,012 available seats in 128 polytechnic colleges, 22,064 (71.14 per cent) were allotted.

In 54 government polytechnic colleges, 11,205 seats were allotted out of 11,752, while in 73 private un-aided polytechnic colleges 55.85 per cent seats were allocated of 18,960 seats.

Similarly, while there were 300 seats in one aided polytechnic college, 268 were filled. A total of 47 polytechnic colleges including 40 government and seven private un-aided colleges had 100 per cent seat allotments in the first-phase.

Students who got seats have to self-report online through the official website of POLYCET and must confirm their seat and pay tuition fee on or before September 26.

TS to set new standards for EoDB: Minister KTR

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The state government will take up a string of reforms initiatives to improve the Ease of Doing Business (EoDB) index, and as a first step towards this, will soon be launching a Citizens Services Management portal offering all services at the click of a button. The proposed portal will enable citizens avail any service online.

"Telangana will set new standards in implementation of the EoDB for other States," IT and Industries Minister K T Rama Rao said here on Wednesday. A special dashboard will also be set up to monitor the reforms and programmes being carried out by the respective departments at regular intervals.

KT Rama Rao disclosed this at a high-level meeting with Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar and heads of various departments to discuss and improve the standards of EoDB in the State. He discussed the reforms to be undertaken in various departments under the EoDB and issues to be addressed within a stipulated time-frame.

The Minister shared details pertaining to reforms proposed in different departments including law, tourism, civil supplies, excise, Telangana State Film Development Corporation, Chief Commissioner of Land Administration and other departments.

He instructed them to put in all efforts to introduce these reforms in different departments and was confident that once implemented, there would be a significant change in citizen services delivered by each department. "We need to bring all these reforms within a month by streamlining the functioning of all the departments concerned," he said, and urged all department heads to work towards this end expeditiously.

The meeting also discussed effective implementation of the historic TS-bPASS Act aimed at providing building construction and layout permits within a stipulated time period.

The Minister termed the TS-bPASS as a most convenient, easy and transparent manner and a first of its kind reforms exercise in the country.

60 L white collar jobs lost during May-Aug

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Formal sector unemployment has been rising sharply ever since a strict lockdown was imposed towards the end of March. The CMIE's Consumer Pyramids Household Survey (CPHS) has now revealed that nearly 6.6 million or 66 lakh white collar professionals (WCP) lost jobs between May and August.

White collar professionals like software engineers, physicians, teachers, accountants and analysts have suffered the biggest job loss among all salaried employees affected by the pandemic, according to the survey. CMIE clarified that WCPs do not include qualified self-employed professional entrepreneurs. Employment among such professionals



peaked in India during May-August 2019 at 18.8 million or 1.88 crore. The number gradually fell to 18.1 million or 1.81 crore in January-April 2020.

However, the latest wave of the survey revealed that employment among WCPs during May-August 2020 fell to 12.2 million. The survey noted that this is the biggest fall in employment for WCPs since 2016.

It is worth mentioning that an estimated 12.5 million white-collar professionals were employed during the wave of January-April 2016.

"All the gains made in their employment over the past four years were washed away during the lockdown," the CMIE survey noted. "Compared to a year ago, employment among the white collar professionals was down by 6.6 million. This

was the biggest year-on-year loss among all salaried employees," it added.

The survey added that industrial workers also suffered severely during the months of strict lockdown. In fact, the biggest loss of employment was seen among industrial workers after WCPs.

"The next biggest loss was among industrial workers. By a similar y-o-y comparison, they lost 5 million employees. This translates into a 26 per cent fall in employment among industrial workers over a year," CMIE said.

The CMIE survey said that the decline in industrial workers is likely to be largely in the smaller industrial units, indicating the impact of lockdown on micro, small and medium industrial units.

GHMC penalises 4 malls for illegal ads

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Enforcement Vigilance and Disaster Management (EVDM) wing of Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) on Wednesday penalised 4 commercial establishments for erecting unauthorised advertisements.

The penalties ranged from Rs 2 lakh to Rs 4 lakh.

Atrium Mall in Gachibowli and Forum Mall in Kukatpally were imposed a fine of Rs 4 lakhs each. Central Mall in Gachibowli and GVK Mall in Banjara hills were imposed with fine of Rs 2 lakh each. Enforcement, Vigilance and Disaster Management (EV&DM) wing of GHMC generated e-challans to these malls based on the complaints filed by citizens.

These fines were imposed for erecting unauthorised advertisements above 15 feet



height from ground level.

Activist Vijay Gopal tweeted to the EV&DM team about the erection of the illegal advertisement banner on the walls of GVK One Mall. This was followed by another complaint from Anila Thota about the illegal banner at Forum Sujana Mall. Another activist Vinay Vanagala tweeted about illegal hoardings at Atrium, Central and AMB malls.

While EV&DM wing has taken cognisance of illegal hoarding at AMB mall, they are yet to impose a fine.

GOUGH ROAD WOES

Defence officials want state govt to build alternative road

PNS ■ SECUNDERABAD

The defence authorities are hopeful that their meeting with GHMC Commissioner on September 26 would pave the way for the State government to build an alternative road to Gough Road to mitigate the difficulties faced by residents of North and North-Eastern parts of Hyderabad.

Due to frequent closures of the Gough Road to public in the past, there were controversies until the court and higher defence authorities intervened. Presently most of the narrow stretch of the road is battered and riddled with potholes and debris.

The Local Military Authority is keen on early completion of the alternative road. A team, comprising a surveyor and land acquisition officer from the defence estates offices, has surveyed the land. The prop-



osed alternative road, likely to extend from a spot on the Wellington Road to Anandbagh or Uttamgar, is expected to provide relief to commuters using the Wellington Road, Entrenchment Road, Gough Road and Ordnance Road to reach Safilguda, Yapral and other residential colonies.

It is learnt that once GHMC gets the land from the defence authorities, tenders would be floated for the construction of the alternative road. The authorities said meetings were held with GHMC Commissioner. The state gov-

ernment has been requested to freeze the requirements of defence land so that the case can be suitably considered by MoD for the benefit of citizens of Hyderabad.

The requirements conveyed by GHMC officials have been varying over a period of time leading to Defence Authorities' inability to consider the case. Lack of urgency on the part of the GHMC officials to implement the directions of High Court of Telangana passed in 2014 has led to continuous suffering of the residents by way of denying the use of alternative roads, it said.

A joint survey for finalising the land requirements has now been completed at the behest of Defence Authorities. The Defence Authorities will hold further meetings with GHMC Commissioner on September 26 to expedite the process for the benefit of citizens.

Gang of 4 held with marijuana

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The SOT of Madhapur arrested a gang of four members for allegedly selling marijuana near Kukatpally Metro Station on Wednesday. The accused were

identified as Naveen, Anand, Ananth and Sravan. They confessed that Anand brought the dry ganja from Sathupally village of Khammam district and selling the same in Hyderabad to earn quick buck.

Hyderabad Metropolitan Water Supply & Sewerage Board
e-TENDER NOTICE

e-Tender Notice No. & Date	Name of Work	Estimate Contract Value
30 to 33/CGM(EV) O&M-V/2020-21, Dt: 24.09.2020	Laying of 250/200 150/100mm dia Di water supply lines at (1) Sree Enclave, Yapral Section, (2) Chandragiri Colony, Defence Colony, (3) Santoshma Colony, Defence Colony and laying of SWG line at Ram nagar Colony under Ahal section, Sd-I, O&M Divn. No. XII.	Rs. 1,69,126.89 to Rs. 12,41,024.62

1) Tender Documents will be available online from Dt. 24.09.2020 from 5:00 PM onwards and the last date for receipt of tenders is Dt. 01.10.2020.
2) Name & address of Chief General Manager (Engg), concerned - Chief General Manager (Engg), O&M Circle-V, HMWSSB, Sainikpuri, Secunderabad-500 094.
3) The Contractors/firms are requested to upload the information in the ZIP format preferably.
4) Further details can be seen on @ http://tender.telangana.gov.in

Sd/- Chief General Manager (Engg), O&M Circle-V, Sainikpuri, Secunderabad-500 094. Customer Care Center - Dial 155713

Though the lockdown has been partially lifted and the Hyderabad Metro Rail has started chugging once again, its fate may have been sealed permanently.

This is because the Metro Rail has incurred losses of nearly Rs 300 crore for the five-and-a-half months that it did not operate. Additionally, it is running much below capacity since the period the Metro Rail has again began operations earlier this month.

From four lakh a day before the lockdown, the Metro Rail is now transporting only around 45,000 - 50,000 passengers per day presently. This would mean that the Metro Rail will still make losses with such a low passenger load.

The passenger numbers have not recovered because of multiple reasons. Firstly, passengers are still very chary of

Is the Hyd Metro Rail project in financial trouble?

patronising Metro Rail services because of the scare that Covid infection would spread rapidly in the Metro Rail compartments.

Secondly, the fact that major offices are still closed and so are educational institutions have kept passenger traffic low.

Though company officials are mum, the annual report of the Metro Rail for 2019-20, (that was released in the first half of August), had revealed that the company could seek extension of the 'concession' period by invoking the force majeure clause. The force majeure clause relates to the losses made by the company due to unexpected events.

The extension would allow the Hyderabad Metro Rail

Sources suggest that the Hyderabad Metro Rail Limited is yet to invoke the force majeure clause but is mulling seriously overwriting to the state government for 'financial aid' to cover the losses.

Limited company to make up for the losses made for the period that it was not operating.

Sources suggest that the Hyderabad Metro Rail Limited is yet to invoke the force majeure clause but is mulling seriously overwriting to the state government for 'financial aid' to cover the losses.

Analysts said that the state government is itself faced with a difficult financial posi-

tion and probably does not have resources to provide 'financial aid.' Therefore a request to that effect is hardly likely to get a positive response. Since the Metro Rail is in a bad way, analysts feel that the state government should take over its operations and run it as a state government enterprise.

Otherwise, it will languish without full patronage of the state government that has powers to put things right.



KINGSHUK NAG

The project for the Metro Rail was first awarded in August 2008 to a consortium led by Maytas Infra- that was promoted by Ramalinga Raju of Satyam fame. However with the Satyam scam coming

to the fore, the project went to cold storage and was withdrawn from the group. After fresh tendering, the project was awarded to Larsen & Toubro (L&T) which was very keen at that point to participate in a project in the state. Earlier, the company had been keen to take over Satyam which however was given to the Mahindras. However at that time, many analysts had felt that Hyderabad did not require a Metro Rail and it was just a fad that was promoted by the private sector looking for profitable opportunities.

Major cities like Delhi, Mumbai and Bengaluru landed with Metro Rail and even smaller urban conglomerates like Ahmedabad and Kochi are ready with similar propos-

als. "Once Satyam collapsed, better sense should have prevailed upon the government and it should have withdrawn the project. But the Chief Ministers then - K Rosaiah and the then Union Urban Development Minister S Jaipal Reddy were under the mistaken impression that the Metro Rail was greatly needed by the city. It is due to their misplaced efforts and zealotness that the government restored the project in Hyderabad," an analyst said.

The Metro Rail project is now run by L&T but the state government is an equal partner in the project. The project was conceived in the earlier years of this century by the then chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu and after

a failed attempt by his predecessor YS Rajasekhara Reddy and finally took shape during the KCR regime.

Though in most cities - like Delhi- the Metro Rail is run partly underground and partly over the ground, this is not possible in Hyderabad. With its rocky terrain, the entire rail line in Hyderabad is over ground.

This has led to displacement of more people and a higher cost to build lines at an elevated level. There are three lines that run from Uppal and Miyapur and from Uppal to Hitec City.

The third line runs through the Old City and has been the subject of many controversies. Now the line to Hitec City is proposed to be extended to Gachibowli. Such a proposal had been mooted by experts a long time ago when land was freely available. But the proposal had fallen on deaf ears.

CONGRESS LEADERS TO HIT THE STREETS OVER NEW FARM BILLS

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The opposition Congress party in Telangana will stage statewide protests on September 25 against the farm bills passed by the Parliament. Protest demonstrations will be held in all district and Assembly constituencies to demand the Centre to withdraw the 'anti-farmer' legislation.

Ruling TRS and the Congress have common ground in opposing the farm bills. While the TRS protest is confined to the Parliament, leaders of the main opposition party are gearing up to hit the streets over the issue. Stating that the new laws would cause a huge loss to the farmers, state Congress chief Uttam Kumar Reddy said the party would organise massive protests.



Party leaders are working to mobilise large gatherings of workers for the protests. Uttam Kumar Reddy demanded the government should amend the law by inserting a clause to ensure that farmers get Minimum Support Price (MSP), whether they sell their produce in market yard or

which used to regulate prices and mandi fees will no longer be able to do so with the new enactments. "These bills are going to cause the collapse of the system of selling farm produce in market yards. Because of the interference of the centre, the states have to lose their constitutional right of agricultural markets which is under the state list," he said. "The BJP government should have named the bills as APMC market collapse bill, contract farming promotion bill and corporate hoarding of food commodities bill. The intention of the government in passing these bills is to benefit Adanis, Ambanis, Amazon, Walmart and push farmers into severe losses," he added.

TRS leader in Rajya Sabha, K. Keshava Rao slammed the

BJP-led NDA government for not consulting the state governments and farmers before formulating the bills. "The cultural country, whose culture is agriculture, is now being sold to the corporate sector," he said in the Upper House.

While the TRS will not be staging protests, its leaders said the party will go to any extent to oppose the new laws. Animal Husbandry Minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav said that if required, Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao will lead a farmers' agitation at the national level. Claiming that a revolt is brewing against the BJP-led government across the country, the minister remarked that no government which played with the lives of farmers has ever survived their wrath.

'Economic empowerment of women need of the hour'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan on Wednesday exhorted women to strive to get economically empowered. Emphasising on the economic empowerment of women, she said that creation of wealth by women through entrepreneurship is crucial to tide over the Covid-19 induced economic instability.

The Governor was launching the 2-month long Atma Nirbhar self-employment training programme for Raj Bhavan parivar women at Raj Bhavan Community Hall, here. The training will be given by the Association of Lady Entrepreneurs of India, formerly known as the ALEAP.

Speaking on the occasion, Tamilisai said that when women earn money they judiciously use all that money for the family's welfare. "In these



testing times of pandemic, women need to learn new skills and start their own entrepreneurial ventures to create wealth and get economically strong and empowered," she added.

She stated that Atma Nirbhar Bharat programme launched by Prime Minister was the inspiration to launch this training programme for

women to prepare them as the future-entrepreneurs by ensuring loans and marketing facilities for their products.

She cautioned the participants to strictly adhere to the Covid-19 prevention norms, while undergoing the training and added that 'wearing of mask is the only available immunization as of now to prevent Covid-19 spread.'

MAKING VOICES HEARD



TRS MPs staging protest by holding placards against the new farm laws, at Parliament in New Delhi on Wednesday

Cong demands SEC to hold all-party meet

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Congress Party Elections Coordination Committee chairman Marri Sasidhar Reddy on Wednesday appealed to the State Election Commission to convene an all-party meeting on conduct of the GHMC polls. Addressing a virtual press meet at Gandhi Bhavan, Sasidhar Reddy said that a virtual meeting of the coordination committee with the participation of GHMC leaders of the Congress participated.

The meeting discussed the party's preparedness for the GHMC polls. The state government should specify whether it would increase the number of wards in the GHMC or not. Reorganisation of the wards, whenever it is done, should be done on the basis of 2011 Census whenever it is held, he said.

He alleged that there was history of effecting changes in quota for various communities in the GHMC polls without taking into consideration the Census. In 2016, the quota for various communities was announced a few hours before the issue of notification for the GHMC polls, he said demanding the authorities to announce the quota for the SCs and STs much in advance. He suggested the government to give at least 15 days for

resolving objections. On one hand the SEC sent letters asking political parties to give their option on the mode of polling: ballot or EVMs and on the other, it is making arrangements to hold the polls through ballot paper system, he alleged quoting information reaching him. Therefore, he said that he would meet the GHMC election commissioner and new SEC on the issue.

The SEC should send information available with him to all political outfits explaining the difficulties being faced by it in holding the elections on account of the Covid-19, he said reiterating his demand for holding an all-party meeting.

He appealed to the SEC to set up polling booths to ensure that the number of voters under each poll booth does not exceed 500. The toll-free number of the SEC is not at all functioning, he lamented. Earlier, many Muslim voters crept into the voters' list in areas of Hindu majority areas. Therefore, he suggested the identification of voters should take place only on the basis of the house number. As the Opposition parties pointed out an accusing finger over large scale deletion of voters names from the voters' list in 2015, Somesh Kumar was removed from the post the GHMC commissioner, he pointed out.

12.97L appeared for exams conducted by TSPSC

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Nearly 12.97 lakh people appeared for the exams conducted by TSPSC in 2018-19. As per the annual report of the commission, 18 job notifications were issued and about 45 exams were conducted.

Nearly 3,276 vacancies were notified in the year 2018-19. While 19.9 lakh people applied for the exams, only 12.97 lakh appeared. Nearly 3,436 appeared for interviews. TSPSC selected 15,995 persons for various jobs last year.

While for Departmental exams in May 2018, 26,157 people appeared, the number increased to 28,470 for departmental exams in November 2018. Of the 484 court cases, nearly 256 were disposed. Of the 107 disciplinary cases, 100 were resolved. About 4 cases of deviations were reported.

On Wednesday, TSPSC chairman Prof. Ghanta Chakrapani and members of the Commission submitted the TSPSC's annual report 2018-19 to Governor Dr. Tamilisai Soundararajan through a video conference. Prof. Chakrapani apprised her of the progress of various recruitments and implementation of reforms in TSPSC.

With 2,296 new cases, TS Covid tally over 1.77L



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana continued to log over 2,000 daily Covid cases as the state's tally crossed the 1.77 lakh-mark on Wednesday. With 2,296 new cases during the last 24 hours, the cumulative numbers mounted to 1,77,070. The period also saw 10 fatalities, pushing the death toll to 1,062.

The fatality rate in the state stands 0.59 per cent against the national average of 1.59 per cent. A total of 2,062 people recovered from the virus during the last 24 hours ending Tuesday 8 p.m. With this the cumulative recoveries in the state climbed to 1,46,135. The recovery rate has gone up to 82.52 per cent against the national average of 81.23 per cent.

The number of active cases in the state stands at 29,873 including 23,527 in home/institutional isolation. Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) reported

321 new cases while neighbouring Rangareddy and Medchal Malkajgiri districts recorded 217 and 173 cases respectively. Nalgonda district saw a big spike with 155 new cases, followed by Karimnagar (136), Warangal Urban (99), Siddipet (92), Nizamabad (82) and Sangareddy (81).

According to a media bulletin released from the office of the director of public health and family welfare, 55,992 tests were conducted during the last 24 hours.

With this the state has so far tested 26,28,897 samples. The samples tested per million population improved further to 70,809. Officials say this is much higher than the daily testing target of 5,600 per day as per the World Health Organisation (WHO) benchmark of 140 per million per day. A total of 17 government-run laboratories, 43 private laboratories and 1,076 rapid antigen test centres are conducting the tests.

Ryots rally to support Revenue Act

PNS ■ NALGONDA

Farmers on Wednesday took out tractor rallies in towns and villages across erstwhile Nalgonda district supporting the revenue reforms taken up by Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao. The rallies reverberated with "Jai Ho KCR" slogans.

In Suryapet, the farmers took out tractors rally on the main road of the town, from bus stand area to Jangon cross-roads, in which thousands of farmers from Penpahad, Chivvela and Atmakur(S) mandal participated in their



tractors. They fixed flexi banners of the Chief Minister on the tractors thanking him for introducing the revenue reforms. Hundreds of farmers took

out a rally in 3,000 tractors in Miryalaguda and Nalgonda towns. Before the commencement of the rally, the farmers performed ksheerabhishekam to the portrait of KCR.

Sky is the limit for this Ramagundam youth!

PNS ■ RAMAGUNDAM

North Indian states like Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and others are home to adventure sports like paragliding. But, a youth from Telangana, who nursed an ambition to take part in adventure sports, conducted a trail run of the power para glider, which he assembled procuring equipment from Italy and the USA by spending Rs 15 lakh, at the Genco Echo grounds to the delight of onlookers.

Efforts of the youth were appreciated from all sections of society. He was identified as

Arjun, who nursed an ambition to take part in adventure sports, conducts trail run of the power paragliding

Adepu Arjun, who graduated in commerce. His father was a retired employee of the SCCL. Being the youngest in the family, Arjun developed a pen-



chant for adventure sports. He along with his friends went to Himachal Pradesh and acquired necessary skills in

adventure sports. He also got membership in the WhatsApp group belonging to retired Army officials, pilots,

and sportspersons and paragliders and kept himself posted about the latest information about paragliders. He has been working hard to make a paraglider for the past three years. At last he made a para glider procuring equipment from Italy and the USA. On Monday, he glided in air for about 20 minutes with the help of his innovation and performed feats in air.

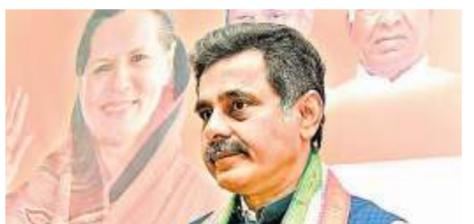
Elated over the success of the trial run, he urged the state government for a chance to conduct a para gliding event in Hyderabad with the participation of para gliders from other states.

Reject TRS in MLC polls: Konda

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Former MP Konda Visweshwar Reddy on Wednesday called upon legislative council voters of graduates' constituencies to puncture the ego of Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao and Municipal Administration Minister KT Rama Rao by rejecting the TRS candidates in the polls to the Upper House.

"Can't they see how a private security guard committed suicide by immolating himself in front of the State Legislative Assembly? The 54-year-old man took the extreme step as he could not get justice in



Telangana," he said. How can leader of the TRS, which failed to deliver justice to the people, face electorate in the Upper House elections, he questioned.

The former MP said the

TRS has money power. Therefore, he exhorted the voters of graduates' constituencies to stand by Congress and give their support to the party that granted statehood to Telangana.

SHORT READS



C'garh: Naxal camp busted in Bijapur; jawan injured

Raipur, : A jawan from the District Reserve Guard (DRG) was injured while defusing an IED recovered at a Maoist camp busted by the security forces in Chhattisgarh's Bijapur district on Wednesday, police said. A joint patrolling team of Central Reserve Police Force (CRPF) and DRG busted a naxal camp in a forest of Mariwada-Gongla villages under Gangaloor police station area, inspector general of Police (Bastar range) Sundarraj P told. On sensing the presence of the patrolling team, ultras managed to escape into the dense forest abandoning their camp, he said. Maoist uniforms, an improvised explosive device (IED), IED switches, torch, iron pellets, Maoist literature, tents, bags, medicines and materials of daily use were recovered from the camp, the official said.



Traders in MP agri markets to go on strike from today

Indore : Agriculture traders in Madhya Pradesh on Wednesday announced indefinite strike in about 270 markets beginning Thursday for reduction in the mandi fee on the purchase of agricultural commodities. A top officer-bearer of a traders' body said they are not opposing the farm bills passed recently by Parliament, but wanted the state government to protect their "business interest" by slashing the mandi duty. "The state government should immediately reduce the mandi fee that is charged from traders on the purchase of agriculture produce to 0.5 per cent from the current 1.5 per cent," said Gopaldas Agrawal, president, Madhya Pradesh Sakal Anaj Dalhan Tilhan Mahasangh Samiti. He said trading of commodities in about 270 small and big mandis in the state will remain shut until the government accepts demands of the Samiti.

Naxals kill man on suspicion of being police informer

Sukma : A 22-year-old man was killed by naxals on suspicion of being a police informer in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district, the police said on Wednesday. The incident took place in Jagargunda police station area, considered to be a Maoist-stronghold. The body of Uika Hunga, kidnapped by naxals last week, was found between Misiguda and Kundedvillages by some local persons on Wednesday morning, a senior police official said. As per the preliminary information, the ultras killed Hunga, a native of Kunded, on Tuesday evening, the official said, adding that the exact cause of the death will be known after autopsy. A handwritten Maoist leaflet found at the spot accused Hunga of being a police informer, and stated that Jagargunda area committee of the rebels took responsibility for the killing. The police denied that Hunga was associated with them.

Rajya Sabha returns two Appropriation Bills

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Rajya Sabha on Wednesday returned the Appropriation (No 3) Bill, 2020 and the Appropriation (No 4) Bill, 2020, authorising payment of certain sums from the Consolidated Fund of India for the current financial year.

The bills, which were passed by Lok Sabha on September 19, were cleared in the Upper House with a voice vote and without any discussion.

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman moved the Bills for consideration and passing.

The Appropriation (No 4) Bill, 2020 authorises payment and appropriation of certain further sums out of the Consolidated Fund of India for



services of the financial year 2020-2021, while the Appropriation (No 3) Bill, 2020 provides for authorisation of appropriation of money out of the Consolidated Fund of India to meet the amounts spent on certain services during the

financial year ended on March 31, 2017, in excess of the amounts granted for those services and for that year.

An Appropriation Bill is a money bill that allows the government to withdraw funds from the Consolidated Fund of

The bills, which were passed by Lok Sabha on September 19, were cleared in the Upper House with a voice vote and without any discussion

India to meet its expenses during the course of a financial year.

As per Article 114 of the Constitution, the government can withdraw money from it only after receiving approval from Parliament.



Cops use water cannon to foil Congress rally

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

The Haryana police on Wednesday used water cannons in Panipat to stop a Haryana Youth Congress-led rally from proceeding to Delhi to protest against Centre's farm reform bills.

Youth Congress president Srinivas B V also participated in the "tractor rally" which was stopped by the police at a barricade in Panipat district.

Humour mills go on overdrive after late night boom

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

It's a sonic boom! It's a pressure cooker bursting! It's a quake!

And yes, the late night boom that reverberated across the city and several parts of south Kashmir on Tuesday was indeed a quake, seismologists later confirmed. But before that, social media humour and rumour mills were already on overdrive with messages facetious, flippant and sometimes funny.

The National Centre for Seismology (NCS) confirmed that a 3.6 magnitude earthquake was recorded around 9.40 pm at a shallow depth of 5 km. No one was quite sure till



then what caused the loud noise and sudden shaking of houses in Srinagar - this was followed by another after 10 minutes.

Twitterati was unstoppable by then, using references from popular culture and current events for a series of posts.

One post blamed 'Rashi', a character from the 2,184-episode Hindi TV soap "Saath

Nibhana Saathiya" which ran on Star Plus for seven years. She put an empty pressure cooker on the gas stove and it eventually burst, it said, provoking mirth all around.

Amid continued tensions along the Sino-India border, another said it was "a missed call by China" and attached a string of smileys.

"Friends, we in #Kashmir are now in the era of municipality-limited earthquakes. 2-second tremor in 15 wards, with epicentre under galli no. 420," said a tweet amid confusion over whether it was an earthquake or an aircraft breaking the sonic boom barrier.

Tigress captured in Maha after killing of woman

PNS ■ MUMBAI

A tigress, which recently killed a woman in the Pandharkawda forest division in Yavatmal district of Maharashtra, was captured alive on Wednesday, an official statement said.

The tigress had "spread terror" in the forest division by attacking local people and cattle over the past two months, it said.

The big cat had killed a 60-year-old woman in Andharwadi village in the forest division on September 19. The tigress has now been shifted to a treatment centre in Nagpur, the statement said.



"The tigress which spread terror in the Pandharkawda forest division has been captured alive by the forest department officials. CM has praised officials and staffers concerned," the statement said.

CBI books ex-VC of VBU for corruption

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI has registered an FIR against former Visva Bharati University vice-chancellor Sushanta Duttagupta for alleged corrupt activities during his tenure at the historic university, officials said on Wednesday.

The action comes after a two-year-long PE into the allegations levelled against him during 2012 and 2013.

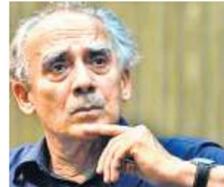
It is alleged that during his tenure as the VC he hid the fact that he was also getting pension from the Jawaharlal Nehru varsity, thus receiving excess payment of over Rs 13 lakh, the officials said.

Rajasthan HC stays arrest warrant against Arun Shourie

PNS ■ JODHPUR

The Rajasthan High Court on Wednesday stayed the arrest warrant against former union minister Arun Shourie in a case involving the sale of an Udaipur hotel at an alleged loss of Rs 244 crore to the exchequer.

The court told Shourie to appear before it and furnish a personal bond and surety on October 15, the next date of hearing in the case. The case pertains to the sale of public sector Indian Tourism



Development Corporation's Laxmi Vilas Palace Hotel to a private firm around two decades ago. The property was sold to Bharat Hotels Ltd for Rs 7.52 crore when Shourie was

the minister in charge of divestment in the Atal Bihari Vajpayee-led National Democratic Alliance government at the Centre.

On Tuesday, the High Court court had stayed the arrest of former disinvestment secretary Pradip Bajjal and two others - MD of Lazard India Limited Ashish Guha and MD of Bharat Hotels Limited Jyotsana Suri.

The fifth accused in the case is Kantilal Karamsey, whose firm was involved in the valuation of the hotel.

Parliament passes J&K Official Lang Bill, 2020

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Parliament on Wednesday passed a Bill for inclusion of Kashmiri, Dogri and Hindi in the list of official languages in the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir, in addition to the existing Urdu and English. The Jammu and Kashmir Official Languages Bill, 2020 was passed by Rajya Sabha through voice vote. Lok Sabha had cleared the legislation on Tuesday.

Remdesivir batch withdrawn due to inferior quality: Maha govt

PNS ■ MUMBAI

A batch of Remdesivir for treatment of COVID-19 patients has been withdrawn in view of "sub-standard quality" of the medicine, Maharashtra Health Minister Rajesh Tope said on Wednesday. He told reporters that the move caused a short-term shortage of the drug in the state.

"A batch of Remdesivir medicine was found to be (of) substandard (quality) and has been withdrawn, resulting into a short term shortage in its supply," he said. Seeking to



allay concerns over shortage of Remdesivir, the minister said the government held talks with pharma companies and ensured sufficient supply of the medicine for COVID-19 patients.

"I spoke to collectors of various districts in the state and asked them to place orders of the medicine (Remdesivir) as per their respective requirement. Its supply will soon increase and patients will get their routine dosages," the minister said. Tope further said NCP chief Sharad Pawar has stepped in and assured to arrange 1,000 injections of Remdesivir in his personal capacity for the treatment of people. Maharashtra had 2,72,410 active cases as on September 22 while the total caseload stood at 12,42,770.

'Fake news, rumours used to label 2008 Batla House encounter staged'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Fake news and "street rumours" were picked up by a section of politicians, activists and media to paint the 2008 Batla House encounter of IM terrorists as staged, retired IPS officer and the then chief of the Delhi Police special cell Karnal Singh has said.

The 1984-batch officer of the Union Territories cadre has come out with a book -- Batla House: An Encounter that Shook the Nation -- on the police operation on September 19, 2008 at house number L-18 in the Batla House locality of Jamia Nagar in south Delhi. The book has been published by Rupa Publications.

The officer was spearheading a probe into the 2008 Delhi blasts as the head or joint commissioner of police of the elite special cell that was raised specifically to undertake counter-terrorist operations.

Leads from the blast probed the special cell to Batla House where Indian Mujahideen terrorists were holed-up.

A gunbattle broke between the policemen, who went for a reconnaissance, and the terrorists in which special cell Inspector Mohan Chand Sharma lost his life, while two terrorists were eliminated.

Singh, who retired in 2018 as the Director of the Enfor



cement Directorate, spoke to PTI on the operation, seen as one of the most politicised police encounters of the country. "There was a perception built around the Batla House encounter by disseminating fake news," Singh said. "Many politicians, activists and media houses picked up street

rumours without any fact-checking." "For example, some alleged that Inspector Mohan Chand Sharma died due to three bullets fired at his back by his teammates and they also alleged that the terrorist did not fire at all. The post-mortem report clearly stated that Mohan had got two bullet injuries from front and not back," he said.

Doctors at the All India Institute of Medical Sciences conducted the post-mortem of the two terrorists also and collected their hand wash and sent it to the forensic science laboratory for dermal nitrate test to conclude if they had fired or not, Singh said.

From tracking SM for terror activity to planning ops

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

Dubbed Cargo, the headquarters of Jammu and Kashmir's elite Special Operations Group buzzes with activity as various teams work 24x7 to track terrorist activity, suss out the ground situation in the Valley and plan operations.

With each team working on a dedicated task, the SOG is moving full steam ahead with its efforts to hit out at terrorists trying to make Srinagar their base, said senior officials anxious to recast the image of the force.

The idea, said Jammu and Kashmir Director General of Police Dilbagh Singh, is to

ensure that Cargo becomes a centre of excellence rather than a place that evokes fear.

"I wanted to ensure that Cargo, a name which sent chills down people's spines earlier, becomes a centre for excellence and I guess that dream has been realised now," Singh said on Tuesday after congratulating SOG personnel for successfully completing an operation.

The building -- which once housed Indian Airlines cargo, hence the name, and is usually out of bounds for journalists -- carries the tagline of the SOG, also known as Special Task Force (STF). The sign outside says 'CARGO: In pursuit



of excellence."

"Hum awam ke dost hain (We are people friendly)," Singh said with Inspector General of Police Vijay Kumar by his side as the successful SOG squad saluted him.

The SOG commandos, dressed in black and wearing masks in view of the COVID-19 crisis, have adapted the slogan "How's the Josh" from the Bollywood film "Uri: The Surgical Strike".

This year, the SOG conducted seven operations within Srinagar city limits and eliminated 16 terrorists of various outfits, significantly higher than previous years

This year, the SOG conducted seven special operations within Srinagar city limits and eliminated 16 terrorists of various outfits, significantly higher than previous years.

Singh brushes off questions about controversies, including the alleged intimidation of journalists, saying it is not possible in this day and age with so many CCTVs present.

"Every one summoned here is shown charges and after hearing their side of the story they are escorted out with full respect. We are doing our job and that's all. I think the SOG is doing a good job," Singh told PTI.

A Cargo unit, headed by Superintendent of Police Tahir Ashraf, is using scientific methods during interrogation and has deployed dedicated teams for specified anti-terror activities, officials said.

DELHI RIOTS

No coercive action against Facebook V-P till Oct 15

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The SC on Wednesday directed a Delhi Legislative Assembly panel not to take coercive action against Facebook India VP and MD Ajit Mohan till October 15 in connection with a summons asking him to depose before it with regard to north east Delhi riots.

A bench of Justices Sanjay Kishan Kaul, Aniruddha Bose and Krishna Murari issued notices to the secretary of the

Legislative Assembly; the ministries represented by the Secretary General, and Delhi Police, asking them to respond to the plea.

The apex court's order came on plea by Mohan and others challenging the September 10 and September 18 notices issued by Delhi Assembly's peace and harmony committee that sought his presence before the panel which is probing the Delhi riots in February and FB's role in spread of hate speech.

Opp conundrum

The unity in the House, for once, was admirable but without a sustained campaign on the ground, visuals are futile



In the end, a moral victory is inconsequential, simply because it doesn't change the facts on the ground. As noted American satirist HL Mencken said, "In human history, a moral victory is always a disaster, for it debauches and degrades both the victor and the vanquished." So though, for once, the Opposition seemed to have got its way in meeting the President over the farm Bills and was united against the Government's gross subversion of parliamentary procedures in rushing through them in the Rajya Sabha by a voice vote despite lacking the numbers, what stops the new laws? The President is not likely to withhold assent or send the Bills back except

granting an audience. Even if he were to do so hypothetically, they would be passed again, with or without any amendments, as the ruling BJP has an absolute majority in the Lok Sabha and has already set a precedent of passing debatable Bills by voice vote without discussion, deliberation or consensus. Besides, the President is not bound to act within a time-frame. And the way more Bills were passed even as the entire Opposition stayed away from the House in protest, it looks like the ruling party has no compunction in reducing an august institution to a stamping authority. So Opposition members can speak and cry hoarse all they want but cannot seek solace in parliamentary procedure or vetting by committees to stop motivated laws from being enacted. And when it comes to street fights, last year's general elections showed us how the members of the grand anti-BJP alliance frittered away their best intentions to their selfish, regional interests. Till that cohesiveness congeals as a single movement, there cannot be any hope for the Opposition.

Worryingly, the Upper House passed three key labour reform bills that ought to have been discussed and debated given their sensitive nature. The Government has enough numbers in the Lok Sabha to override dialogue and even if outnumbered in the Rajya Sabha, it knows it can hijack debate by provoking the Opposition enough and use a voice vote in the resultant din. Or simply take advantage of a boycott. The three Bills relate to new labour codes on industrial relations, social security and occupational safety, all in the name of easing business while diluting workers' rights. Nobody expects the Government to be unreasonably welfarist but in a post-pandemic economy that has witnessed record joblessness, it allows companies with up to 300 workers to fire staff without government permission. The Government, however, feels that this would actually encourage employers to hire more than the previous limit of 100 and, in fact, create jobs. But employers in stressed times are hardly expected to be altruistic and given that our unorganised labourers comprise a big chunk of the country's workforce, they continue to be exposed to vagaries of market forces. The Rajya Sabha also passed the Foreign Contribution (Regulation) Amendment Bill, 2020, which ostensibly provides a framework under which organisations in India can receive and utilise grants from foreign sources. This is an umbrella watch on what is unsuitable to this Government the most, namely NGOs, research organisations, think tanks and civil society activists. And the carefully enunciated regulatory mechanism envisaged by the Bill, of course, remains vague about the conditions under which it can be used, lumping them as anything that is detrimental to "national interest." Nobody denies the need for greater transparency when it comes to activities sponsored by foreign sources but would that also be used to vet the PM CARES Fund, which is currently exempted under FCRA, or selectively be applied to "anti-national" NGOs? Or does the Government believe that NGOs shouldn't exist to point out gaps in its policies and implementation? Besides, most of these organisations have a high record of tax compliances over the years but by making Aadhar and SBI bank accounts mandatory for receipts, the Bill implies tighter controls and increased transaction costs, which are meant to create more impediments. This is just a way to stifle and discourage independent voices than a clean-up as is being proposed. It is the same kind of doublespeak that is latent in the farm Bills. On the face of it, they look reformist, dismantling the heavily cartelised Agricultural Produce Market Committees (APMCs) and middlemen, and allowing farmers freedom of movement and trade. Question is some of them do not have the investable resources or the expertise for an outreach beyond their geographic limits and would have to depend on "traders" or the corporations. The smaller and marginal farmers are not literate or educated enough and would not be able to counter the heft of corporations in negotiations and price fixing. In that sense, they could still end up being exploited as before. The farmers fear that in an open, competitive market, they would not get the minimum support price (MSP) that the Government promises to continue and given the diversity and multiplicity of markets, the guaranteed official procurement would be hit over time. Besides, nowhere do the Bills insist on the MSP as a criterion of farm pick-ups by "traders" and "sponsors." They would, therefore, still be in crisis and at the mercy of the dictates of marketers. Besides, the proposed laws are still vague on defining the mechanisms that would replace the regulated economy. This kind of obfuscation has become so familiar that it is in danger of becoming the norm than the exception. And without Question Hour in Parliament, it's time the questions are asked on the streets. The farmers' ire may just be the beginning of the next electoral plank.

Facebook vs Delhi

The technology major is like a media company and should be subjected to similar laws



Facebook should be answerable to Governments as the technology giant can fundamentally alter the course of public discourse not just through its own network but through other assets like messaging application WhatsApp and photo-sharing application Instagram. These are all powerful tools to build organisation and opposition but can also be used to silence dissent or manufacture violence. The safe harbour provisions under which such technology companies have escaped sanction for many years cannot be allowed to continue unchallenged. The likes of Facebook and Google are not just technology companies, they are media companies, too, and should be subjected to similar laws. Technologies like deepfake videos, where even a few photographs can be used to manufacture a video showing a personality spouting opinions far from his/her real stand, can potentially alter the course of a democracy. Think of this as the new terrorist attack before an election. By the time any rectification takes place, often due to delays, the damage has been done.

We agree that it is impossible to keep a check on every single user at every single point of time. However, it is also true that technologies are being developed to be able to quickly find potential hateful content. That said, it is important to haul these companies under the Central Government and on that front, Facebook India does have a point in refusing to appear before the Delhi Government's Peace and Harmony Committee. The company is currently being hauled over the coals in a parliamentary committee, not just in India but in several countries across the world as Governments realise that its power needs to be kept in check for the growth of democracy. This includes the United Kingdom and the United States. Indeed, we wish the parliamentary committee hearings in India were streamed live for the public to observe and decide for themselves. Tech majors can do more themselves. For example, they should work a lot closer with traditional media companies as well as develop technologies that can easily detect videos that promote hate as well as those where users threaten self-harm. Facebook should not be allowed to escape with impunity but making it answerable to multiple agencies will serve little purpose either. Indeed that could actually delay meaningful reform.

Field hockey player —Lalit Upadhyay

UN Secretary-General —Antonio Guterres

US President —Donald Trump

Russian President —Vladimir Putin

Worrisome optics

The virtual clean chit to one side of the protesters raises extremely dangerous and political portents for the policing institution and the nation



BHOPINDER SINGH

The police ought to be the natural, visible and trusted representative of the Government to immediately address any concern or perceived danger by the citizenry. Personnel are expected to be accessible, unbiased and positively interventionist to address any crisis. Maintenance of "law and order" is their foremost function. In a wounded and increasingly polarised society like India, where the societal faultlines and suspicions run deep, it is only the supposedly apolitical and "independent" institutions like the police that can theoretically rein in violent tempers, passion and hatred unleashed by those who have vested interest in keeping the societal pot boiling. From controlling secessionist movements, insurgencies, civic/communal riots, vandalism, traffic, mob control, theft, crime etc — the laundry list of policing duties is unforgivingly long. Many individuals from the policing forces across the country have distinguished themselves with supreme courage, conduct and dignity to uphold the lofty motto of *Satyameva Jayate* (Truth alone Triumphs). However, collectively the institutional image of the police in the public consciousness is far from the desired levels of probity, independence and empathic moorings.

Over the last few decades, the spectre of communal riots in 1984, 2002 or even the latest communal riots in February in Delhi, have raised serious questions about the institution's conduct. Almost always, the standard concerns of partisan preferences, apathetic behaviour, dilly-dallying and capitulation have dominated the post-mortem of each of these strifes with all ruling national and State parties guilty of complicity in the same, whenever in power. The convenience, lure and utility of a behemoth police force make for incalculable comfort for those in power, who ensure that the plethora of police reform committee reports over the years continues gathering dust. Various reform committees, led by Prakash Singh, Soli Sorabjee, VA Malimath, K Padmanabhaiah and JF Ribeiro, have attempted to professionalise and rescue the institution from the clutches of vested interests, but barring minor changes triggered by the Supreme Court's intervention, the essential narrative and outcome remain the same.



The recent 17,000-page chargesheet by the Delhi Police, that has named 15 people under the sections of the Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act, of the Indian Penal Code and Arms Act, has re-ignited the debate of institutional credibility. The father of the "All-India Administrative Services" (of which the Indian Police Service is an integral part), Sardar Patel, famously said, "...these people are the instrument. Remove them and I see nothing, but a picture of chaos all over the country." While the policing institution was certainly not removed, it did not live up to the expectations as the larger picture of civic chaos, corruption and deteriorating law and order is attributable, to an extent, on its conduct.

Already the harsher insurgencies have been essentially outsourced by the State Police to the Indian Army or to the Central Armed Police Forces. The frequency at which the Army is requisitioned to conduct flag-marches, control civic disorder or handle natural disasters does not show the State Police forces in a glowing light.

The significance of Delhi in the national imagination, owing to its status as the capital of the nation, makes Delhi Police the cynosure of administrative efficacy. From the offices of the Central Government, Supreme Court, foreign embassies, multilateral organisations to the sprawling metropolis of 17 million residents — the responsibility and privilege of maintaining *Shanti Sewa Nyaya* (Peace, Service, Justice) is on the largest metropolitan police service in the world. Despite over 80,000 personnel, Delhi Police is clearly overstretched with over 25 per cent of its staff committed to VIP duties and securing large-scale events that are typical to any capital city — leaving too few, to handle the restive city effectively. It has the unwanted distinction of having the maximum number of complaints registered against its own personnel. Frequent accusations of inaction, corruption and even collusion further mar the perception. The institutional rifts between and apparent from a very public and embarrassing siege of its headquarters by thousands of police personnel revolting and complaining against their own senior officers last year. The oddity of Delhi Police coming under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Home Affairs, as opposed to the elected Delhi Government, has been a constant bone of contention for successive regimes. The implied concern is the plausible political influence exerted on the Delhi Police by the Central Government. While there are good functional reasons for this, as is done in major metropolitan police forces of global capitals, the concerns of undue political influence are increasingly hard to ignore.

ALMOST ALWAYS, THE STANDARD CONCERNS OF PARTISAN PREFERENCES, APATHETIC BEHAVIOUR, DILLY-DALLYING AND CAPITULATION HAVE DOMINATED THE POST-MORTEM OF EACH OF THESE STRIFES WITH ALL RULING NATIONAL AND STATE PARTIES GUILTY OF COMPLICITY IN THE SAME, WHENEVER IN POWER

Irrespective of the Government in power, the narrative has been disconcerting.

The Delhi High Court had noted about the 1984 riots, "Though we boast of being the world's largest democracy and Delhi being its national Capital, the sheer mention of the incidents of 1984 anti-Sikh riots in general and the role played by Delhi Police and state machinery in particular makes our heads hang in shame in the eyes of the world polity." It is that lingering sentiment of kowtowing to the powers-that-be that has again sullied the optics accompanying the chargesheet pertaining to the Delhi riots. Indeed, the perpetrators and instigators of such violence are rarely one-sided, but the posited optics of a virtual clean chit to one side of the protesters raises extremely dangerous and political portents for the policing institution, as also for the nation. Importantly, the Commissioner of Delhi Police has clarified that they, "had questioned persons without regard to their religion and party affiliation." Yet some hard data continues fanning concerns. Delhi Police's recent campaign of *Dil ki Police* (Police with Heart) — with a heart replacing the 'o' in Police — has to go beyond slick slogans and denials as the chargesheet could have reflected a more nuanced diversity of purported arsonists. Now, eyes are on Delhi Police to uphold *Shanti Sewa Nyaya*, "without regard to religion and party affiliation" as was confirmed by its Commissioner. (The writer, a military veteran, is a former Lt Governor of Andaman & Nicobar Islands)

SOUND BITE

We know Hockey India and the coaching staff have put together a plan for us to resume competitive hockey. Our intensity in the national camp will increase October onwards and we are moving in the right direction.



Field hockey player —Lalit Upadhyay

We need to ensure that the developing world does not fall into financial ruin, escalating poverty and debt crises.



UN Secretary-General —Antonio Guterres

We will distribute a vaccine, we will defeat the virus, we will end the pandemic, and we will enter a new era of unprecedented prosperity, cooperation and peace.



US President —Donald Trump

As to healthcare, just like in economy, we now need to remove, as many as possible, obstacles to partner relations.



Russian President —Vladimir Putin

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Change in guard

Sir — Japan welcomed its newly elected Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga, replacing Shinzo Abe, who stepped down due to ill health after nearly eight years in office. India and Japan have had strong relations with the latter funding 80 per cent of the Mumbai-Ahmedabad bullet train project through a soft loan of ₹ 79,000 crore at an interest rate of 0.1 per cent, with a tenure stretching over 50 years and a moratorium period of 15 years. Now the onus of continuing the relation lies on Suga. Only time will tell if he will be successful in continuing Abe's legacy.

Rahul Chouhan
Ujjain

Return farm Bills

Sir — Eighteen Opposition parties wrote to the President urging him not to sign the farm Bills passed in the Parliament. In the letter, the parties brought to his attention how the process was an "absolute and total murder of democracy, ironically in the most hallowed temple of democracy, Parliament." After the disappointing show of arrogance by

the Government, the President should return the Bills and uphold the sanctity of the constitution.

Bhagwan Thadani
Mumbai

Defuse LAC tension

Sir — India and China have agreed to stop sending more troops to their respective sides of

the Government, the President should return the Bills and uphold the sanctity of the constitution.

Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh. The major decision taken during the sixth round of talks between the two countries came as a whiff of fresh air. However, various media houses have reported that China has doubled its total number of air bases near LAC, upgrading its military infrastructure. It is time for China to realise that escalating tension at the LAC would be

counter-productive. Can it let the US get more support from the region?

KV Seetharamaiah
Hassan

Ensure compensation

Sir — As per the data compiled by the Ministry of Labour and Employment, more than one crore migrant labourers returned

Geo-strategic significance of Gilgit-Baltistan

After using a territorially misleading map that includes parts of Kashmir, Junagadh and other Indian territories at the virtual meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation on September 15, it now seems that Pakistan is determined to elevate Gilgit-Baltistan to the status of a full-fledged province. India is categorical that the Union Territories of Jammu and Kashmir and Ladakh, including the areas of Gilgit-Baltistan, are an integral part of India.

Pakistan's resolve to include Gilgit-Baltistan will have profound implications. First, it legalises the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC). This conduit connects Balochistan and Xinjiang, and is a part of the flagship project of China's multi-billion dollar Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). India has expressed strong reservations against BRI as it passes through Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. Second, Pakistan assumes that if the India-China conflict flares up, the Kashmir issue would get internationalised and when the UN steps in, Pakistan will get to keep Gilgit-Baltistan.



Islamabad has decided in principle to give constitutional rights to Gilgit-Baltistan but the move has been firmly rejected by India. Pakistan's resolve to upgrade Gilgit-Baltistan comes at a crucial time when India is facing multiple border challenges with both China and Nepal while reviving a flagging economy.

Venu GS
Kollam

to their home States on foot during March and June. This also includes those who travelled during the lockdown. As per provisional available information, 81,385 accidents occurred on the roads (including national highways) during the said period with 29,415 fatalities. Now that the Government has the data on the number of deaths, it should ensure compensation for the families of the deceased. It cannot say there is no data.

Najibullah
Mumbai

Boost handloom sales

Sir — As Indian garment exports face stiff competition from neighbouring countries, encouraging the handloom sector can help revive the industry. Showcasing products with unique designs and skills can attract considerable attention of the international buyers. The Government should make it compulsory for every licensed textile mill to set up a handloom unit in its compound.

Madhu Agrawal
Chandni Chowk

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

A win-win situation for all

In these exceptional global conditions, cooperation — cooperation between competitors — will be vital as survival takes prominence over rivalry



HIMA BINDU KOTA

The contagion has changed how business is conducted the world over. Firms which are unable to adapt are perishing as remote-working has become a norm. The post-pandemic world could throw up a lot of challenges and businesses need to revise their strategies in numerous ways to acclimatise themselves to the disruptions. An open organisational culture towards innovation, structured horizon planning and most importantly exceptional value proposition for customers and stakeholders will help businesses survive in these difficult times. Flexibility has also become crucial during these testing times. For example, a number of companies like Ford, Coca-Cola, 3M, Honeywell have augmented their traditional business models and their usual products to produce PPE (personal protective equipment) to fight the outbreak. In these exceptional global conditions, cooperation — cooperation between competitors — will be vital in times to come as survival takes prominence over rivalry. According to Bengtsson and Kock, cooperation can be defined as a complex association between two business players, irrespective of their involvement, be it horizontal or vertical. A horizontal relationship would mean being business competitors or complementers in the same sector, producing similar products, whereas vertical business involves suppliers and customers. Research in this domain is unravelling tremendous benefits for competitors, who are forging mutually beneficial collaborations that are based on cooperation strategies where companies share resources such as equipment, funds and capabilities, like technical know-how, expertise and experience. These initiatives ensure mutually-beneficial outcomes by pursuing goals collaboratively that otherwise would be difficult to chase, which in turn improves their financial performance.

However, there is a catch here. Cooperation is not as easy as it seems, as rivals cannot suddenly collaborate, as this has to happen at all levels, top, middle and bottom. According to researchers, the degree of collaboration is inversely proportionate to the magnitude of rivalry or competition. In fact, it is a delicate balance between collaboration and rivalry. If businesses that complement each other work together, there is a potential for huge benefits. But if rivalry or competition is high, it could lead to adverse performance outcomes.

Several rival companies have taken advantage of collaboration and there are several motives to take this strategic route. First and foremost, the main motive is to effectively utilise scarce resources. Cooperation can effectively utilise scarce resources by integrating them to efficient production with lower risks. For example, in the electronics industry, Samsung Electronics and Sony worked together to develop the flat screen LED televisions by sharing R&D costs. This strategy is also used to increase the current market size or create a new market by introducing new products or services. Costs and risks are shared and companies can dominate their competitors. In the automobile industry, rivals Ford and Toyota teamed up to develop Atlas Ford F-150 hybrid pick-up truck, which went on to become the best-selling hybrid in this segment. The third motive is to augment the competitive position by increasing the market share. Protecting the current market share and increasing the same is one of the important strategies of firms. Giants like Google and Mozilla are working together with Google supporting and funding Firefox, Mozilla's web browser, to beat the web browsers of its rivals Apple and Microsoft.

There are several other examples to show how companies benefit through cooperation. EDX is a non-profit organisation, which was founded by rivals Harvard University and MIT to provide free online education worldwide. Similar cooperation can also be seen between Amazon (Kindle) and Apple (iPad). They entered into an agreement in 2007 to deliver Amazon e-books through an iPad Kindle App which enabled Amazon to access a wider market and made iPad a complete content provider. This type of cooperation is also seen in the airline industry where competitor airlines use each other's networks and ground staff for efficient services. One example is the Star Alliance network of competing airlines Thai Airways, Singapore Airlines, Lufthansa, Air India and many more. Its aim was to provide a seamless experience to travellers and also save on logistics, marketing and other costs. Fierce competitors in the beverage industry, Coca-Cola and Pepsi, along with Red Bull and Unilever have come together to set up a non-profit organisation to develop sustainable supply chain technologies, particularly in refrigeration, to fight global warming and ozone depletion. The phenomenon of cooperation gained popularity as a counter-intuitive strategy for a networked economy, leading to mutual benefits for both firms, like increasing their knowledge and expertise, sharing costs of new developments and R&D, improving market share and expanding into new markets. With the advent of technology, it is now easier for firms to reach out to competitors and other stakeholders. This strategy of cooperation among competitors and suppliers will be all the more useful in these exceptional times. (The writer is Associate Professor, Amity University, Noida)

STEPS TAKEN FOLLOWING THE ABOLITION OF THE SPECIAL STATUS OF JAMMU AND KASHMIR FURTHER COMPLICATED THE PROBLEM.
—TURKISH PRESIDENT RECEP TAYYIP ERDOGAN

POINTCOUNTERPOINT



THE REMARKS BY PRESIDENT OF TURKEY ON J&K ARE GROSS INTERFERENCE IN INDIA'S INTERNAL AFFAIRS AND ARE COMPLETELY UNACCEPTABLE.
—INDIA'S PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE TO THE UN TS TRUMURTI

Can Jinping afford to relent?

The Chinese President has failed to meet economic targets and is facing a challenge to his authority. Any pullback by the PLA will be viewed as a defeat, negating his second goal of a stronger military



ANIL GUPTA

The 12-hour military commander-level meeting, the first after the five-point consensus at Moscow, has once again ended with all indicators pointing towards a stalemate. India, on its part, is buoyed by the brilliant preemptive tactical actions on August 29-30, leading to gaining control of dominating tactical features on our side of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) on the southern bank of Pangong Tso. This was followed by readjustments of defences on the northern bank, gaining domination over the Fingers area where the Chinese have transgressed and are unwilling to restore *status quo antebellum*.

The manoeuvres of the Indian Army have empowered the Indian negotiators to hold parleys from a position of strength. However, China, through its mouthpiece, *Global Times*, and other State-owned and controlled media, remains in constant denial mode, blaming India instead for the current military stand-off. Despite the Chinese claims, Xi Jinping, the Chinese President and strongman, is acknowledged globally as the aggressor in pursuance of his cherished dream of becoming the strongest and the most powerful world leader.

The Indian stand so far has been determined, consistent and firm. India has outrightly rejected the Chinese suggestion of "meeting halfway." India rightly insists on its demand of "first-in, first-out," considering the fact that it was the People's Liberation Army (PLA) troops who violated the established agreements and protocols and made multi-pronged transgressions into our territory in eastern Ladakh in early May. The PLA is also guilty of not adhering to the decisions arrived at during the first Corps Commanders meeting on June 5 for de-escalation and disengagement, leading to the ugly clashes at Galwan.

The Galwan clashes, resulting in fatalities on both sides, made India and the world realise that it was a well-planned cartographic aggression by the Chinese with the express consent of the Central Military Commission (CMC) led by Xi. The obstinate attitude displayed by the Chinese thereafter proves beyond doubt that the final decision will also be taken by none other than Xi whose "China dream" and personal ambition are stake.

Xi is a career politician, privileged to have been born with a "Red spoon" in his mouth. His father, Xi Zhongxun, was "Red royalty", a hero of the Communist revolution who later fell out with Mao Zedong, according to Ananth Krishnan, an acknowledged China-watcher. After the purging of his father, Xi was shifted to rural China from the privileged living in Central Beijing, the area earmarked for the then Chinese elite. Xi struggled thereafter to enter the youth wing of the Communist Party and the final acceptance into the party is well-documented and an example of focussed determination, perseverance and hardship. Despite being born into the "Red royalty," he was not parachuted to the top and had to struggle his way through at every stage. His initial background and subsequent struggle to rise to power had made him ambitious and adamant.

Xi took over the reins of the party when it was in a disarray. He, therefore, began to con-

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DESPITE THE PROPAGANDA UNLEASHED BY THE STATE-CONTROLLED MEDIA OF THE INVINCIBILITY OF THE PLA FORCES, XI IS UNCERTAIN OF AN ASSURED VICTORY. EVEN A STALEMATE WOULD BE VIEWED AS AN INDIAN VICTORY AND A CHINESE FAILURE. THERE IS NO DEARTH OF DISSENTERS AT HOME WAITING FOR HIS FAILURE AND ENSURE THAT HE DOESN'T GET A SECOND CHANCE. XI IS FACED WITH A DILEMMA OF RELENT OR RETREAT. KNOWING THE AMBITIOUS PERSONA OF XI, HE IS UNLIKELY TO YIELD GROUND TO HIS DISSENTERS SO EASILY
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solidate his power and gradually became all-powerful through complete centralisation of authority. He brought to an end the "collective leadership" system in the Communist Party of China (CPC). He not only managed to gain hold of all the top three posts in China but also had a resolution passed for abolishing the President's term limit, enabling him to rule indefinitely. This act of his has not gone down well with the young and aspiring leaders within the CPC who see a dark future for them with bleak chances of rising to the top. Like all authoritarian leaders, Xi, too, has a fair number of dissidents and domestic opponents.

During his consolidation of power among other things, he has relied a lot upon emphasis on ideology and nationalism. Xi believes that the communist ideology must prevail upon everything else among the Chinese populace. The "3 W" strategy enunciated for the PLA is aimed at promoting and ensuring compliance of the ideology.

The PLA, as is well-known, is not a national army but the army of the CPC. Moreover, Xi's reliance on the indoctrinated cadre of the United Front Work Department over career diplomats, while appointing ambassadors to South Asian and other target countries, indicates his preference for ideology over diplomacy to carry forward his pet Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) project. Xi has also given a new image of aggressiveness and assertiveness to the Chinese diplomacy through "wolf warrior" diplomats. He wants to be recognised as the most powerful Chinese leader by challenging the supremacy of the American President.

To fulfil his ambition and imbibe nationalism, Xi has announced his

roadmap in what is referred to as the "China Dream."

"President Xi's dream is of a stronger nation with a strong military," according to Liu Mingfu, a retired Chinese colonel and author. The underlying idea behind the "China Dream" is to restore the ex-Middle Kingdom's glory and regain the Chinese supremacy through expansionism. It is also aimed at minimising internal dissension through national unity. Xi's ambition is to make China not only stronger but assertive as well. This is a very critical year for Xi in his roadmap for realising the "China Dream" by 2049, the centenary year of the People's Republic of China. There are two intermediary goalposts in 2021 and 2025. This year is the launchpad for 2021, the 100th anniversary of the CPC. Xi had promised the nation that by 2020 he would ensure poverty relief by bringing all Chinese above the poverty line and strengthen national defence and the Chinese armed forces.

However, the Chinese economy had begun to show a downward trend in 2019 itself when China's growth dropped to its slowest pace in nearly three decades. With the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, Xi was certain that he would not be able to meet his promised economic targets in 2020. Despite the bold face being put up by China, it is certain that its economy is undergoing a crisis. The banking system is the worst-hit, with growing unemployment and disrupted global supply chains adding to the pressure.

The centralisation works well as long as the going is good. But in times of crisis, many dissenting voices are raised. Xi is now facing a similar situation at home. As is evident, nothing

moves in China without his approval or consent. Xi has obviously failed to meet his promised economic targets to remove poverty and is facing a huge challenge to his authority. Any pullback at this time by the PLA troops will be viewed as a defeat for China, thus negating his second goalpost as well of a stronger military.

Can Xi at this juncture afford to take this risk and relent? That is why the Chinese media is talking of a "long haul" through the winters. Xi's calculation is based on the premise that a prolonged deployment would affect the Indian economy more than the Chinese one. He is mistaken. India stands unyieldingly to safeguard its territorial integrity and would not yield till China vacates from the transgressed areas. On the other hand, he is faced with growing dissension at home.

Despite the propaganda unleashed by the State-controlled media of the invincibility of the PLA forces, Xi is uncertain of an assured victory. Even a stalemate would be viewed as an Indian victory and a Chinese failure. There is no dearth of dissenters at home waiting for his failure and ensure that he doesn't get a second chance. Xi is faced with a dilemma of relent or retreat. Knowing the ambitious persona of Xi, he is unlikely to yield ground to his dissenters so easily. Rather than being forced to resign, he would prefer to relent at an opportune time and order the PLA to vacate. How and when is a matter of negotiations and timing. Meanwhile, India should not dither under any circumstances.

(The author is a Jammu-based veteran, political commentator and security and strategic analyst. The views expressed are personal.)

Time to fight tobacco use with telemedicine

Unlike many other medical conditions, treating tobacco addiction and diagnosing its sequelae, like oral cancers, can often be done remotely



ROMITA SHAH

VIVIAN SHARAN

The Coronavirus pandemic has prompted billions to seek shelter in their homes as countries across the world have gone into lockdowns at different times and in many phases. Although doing so has checked the spread of the virus to a certain extent, it has not slowed the progression of other diseases. Therefore, the need to find innovative ways to stem and treat such diseases grows daily and for many countries, telemedicine has provided a cheap and practical way to meet this need.

It is a quintessential example of the Fourth Industrial Revolution in action and is an area in which India has already demonstrated its ability to lead.

Few interventions are as conducive to piloting ambitious telemedicine in India than tobacco cessation and there are three reasons for this.

First, as the Foundation for a Smoke-Free World's India Report shows, tobacco use is widely prevalent in the country and its results are devastating. There are nearly 270 million adult users of tobacco in India. Experts estimate that tobacco use is responsible for nearly 10 per cent of all deaths in the country and the resulting economic burden amounts to more than one per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP). This figure rises when we consider the economic toll of tobacco-related disability and other indirect costs. Ultimately, the burden of tobacco use constrains healthcare, particularly for the poor.

Second, many of those most affected by tobacco use live in places with few specialists to provide cessation services. The shortage of healthcare providers is acute in these regions where brick-and-mortar clinics are few and far in between. India already suffers from a shortage of healthcare providers, with only one doctor for

every 1,400 people and only one hospital bed for every 2,000 people (well below the World Health Organisation's recommended norms).

Third, unlike many other medical conditions, treating tobacco addiction and diagnosing its sequelae, such as oral cancers, can often be done remotely. Tobacco cessation is predicated on counselling for behaviour, which can be effectively delivered via telemedicine platforms. India has more cases of oral cancer than anywhere else in the world due to the popularity of smokeless tobacco products in the country.

The scale of tobacco use and its resulting harms, its disproportionate toll on those in rural areas and the ability to effectively treat it and diagnose many of its sequelae make it a natural contender for telemedicine. However, some structural changes are required to successfully integrate telemedicine in the healthcare sector's arsenal. Specifically, the three "Ds" — doctors, diagnostics and data — require redoubled focus in this context. The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare's recently-notified Telemedicine Practice



Guidelines provide a scope for registered medical professionals (RMPs) to familiarise themselves with telemedicine. The guidelines include instructions for RMPs to maintain digital records of patients, including evaluation and management reports.

Doctors may still require guidance to select appropriate software and technology that can help streamline these tasks. Though specialised digital applications to facilitate cessation are available, doctor awareness is the key to unfetter their use-case. Additionally, issues of medical ethics and liabilities need to be addressed, to build patient trust.

The second critical area is investments in diagnostics. Recent experiments with tele-diagnostic services in Maharashtra have enabled the use of photos to detect early cases of oral cancer and identify at-risk patients. This ensures that RMPs can make clinical evaluations to identify early onset of diseases to reduce the time between diagnosis and treatment.

The country requires similar interventions that leverage the combination of widespread smartphone access and state-of-the-art diagnostics. But scale requires private sector investments, based on a profitable business model.

Diagnostics capabilities can likely be bolstered through hub-and-spoke telemedicine models to ensure access to larger markets at reduced rates of service distribution. Moreover, the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) to augment diagnostic capabilities of physicians can also reduce healthcare costs. Studies estimated that the use of this model to treat stroke patients can reduce costs by 10 per cent.

India's fragmented healthcare ecosystem has multiple public, private, and individual healthcare providers.

Therefore, it is often a challenge for healthcare professionals to maintain robust medical records. Even when they do, such records are not easily portable, and patients rarely get timely access. Digitisation of health records can help doctors administer appropriate treatment and create a knowledge bank that will help officials understand trends in public health, such as the burden of tobacco use.

It is important that such solutions are designed as open data ecosystems, subject to user audits and not as vulnerable single points of failure. Studies indicate that high, out-of-pocket expenditure on healthcare pushes around 32-39 million citizens below the poverty line every year.

Telemedicine services offer an opportunity to leapfrog traditional constraints to quality healthcare. The three "Ds" offer the means to unlock such potential and reduce the healthcare burden that is a consequence of widespread tobacco use.

(Shah is research manager at the Foundation for a Smoke-Free World and Sharan is partner, Koan Advisory Group. The views expressed are personal.)



FOREIGN EYE



A CRISIS MADE IN DOWNING STREET

The UK is facing a Covid calamity made in Downing Street. Infections and hospital admissions are rising rapidly. The epidemic is outpacing the rate at which the testing regime is expanding, meaning that it is not possible to properly track the spread of the disease. If nothing changes, the UK's chief scientific adviser, Patrick Vallance, warned there could be 200 deaths a day by mid-November. (The Guardian editorial)

SHORT READS



Food delivery sector showing stronger signs of recovery

New Delhi: The food delivery segment in India has shown stronger signs of recovery with the overall sector clocking over 85 per cent of the pre-COVID gross merchandise value (GMV). Zomato Founder and CEO Deepinder Goyal said on Wednesday. The key insight is that the food delivery sector has recovered and even grown beyond pre-COVID levels in a number of large pockets of the country, led by some of the most affluent residential areas in the country. Goyal said in a blogpost. Delhi and Mumbai are nearing full recovery at around 95 per cent of the pre-COVID levels, he added. Metros such as Bengaluru, Hyderabad, and Chennai are at around 80 per cent of pre-COVID sales. Some cities such as Kolkata, Patna, Jamshedpur, Ranchi, and Siliguri have recovered completely and have exceeded pre-COVID levels, he said.



Honda: Virtual showrooms to enhance ease of buying

New Delhi: Honda Cars India on Wednesday said it has launched virtual showrooms as part of its digital plans to move closer to customers. This platform will enable customers to discover and engage with Honda's entire model range in a seamless digital experience from the comfort of their homes, the Japanese automaker said in a statement. "With this initiative we have brought experience of a real Honda showroom in a virtual form to our customers so that they can digitally explore and experience the features of their favourite Honda cars on the go and also from the comfort of their homes in a convenient manner," Honda Cars India Senior Vice President and Director, Marketing & Sales, Rajesh Goel said.



Amazon India launches third FC in Ahmedabad

Bengaluru: Amazon India on Wednesday announced the launch of a new fulfilment centre (FC) in Ahmedabad, third in the city, ahead of the festive season. Spread over more than two lakh square feet area, the new FC will help sellers offer a wider selection within the region and neighbouring states, it said in a statement. With this infrastructure expansion, Amazon will now offer storage capacity of more than 1.5 million cubic feet across three FCs to its more than 80,000 sellers in Gujarat. The company launched a new sort centre and expanded the capacity of an existing sort centre for faster delivery of customer orders in Gujarat, it added.

Pvt equity inflow in realty down 85 pc in Jan-August

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Private equity investment in Indian real estate plunged 85 per cent during January-August period of this year at USD 866 million (around Rs 6,500 crore) as investors remained cautious due to the COVID-19 pandemic, according to Colliers International and FICCI report.

The private equity (PE) inflow stood at USD 5,795 million in the corresponding period of the previous year. Data centres segment attracted maximum investment so far this year at 46 per cent of the total inflows.

Office segment accounted for 24 per cent of the total PE investment at USD 207 million (around Rs 1,500 crore) till August of this calendar year. Industrial and warehousing share stood at 12 per cent, hospitality 9 per cent, housing 8 per cent and co-living one per cent.

"Investors, both foreign and domestic, are adopting a cautious approach to Indian real estate in the backdrop of the



ongoing pandemic," said the report 'Future India: Captivating Strategic and Private Equity Investments'.

"According to Colliers International, through August 2020, overall private equity inflows into Indian real estate stood at Rs 65 billion (USD 866 million), which is just 15 per cent of the corresponding period in 2019," it added.

The report said that newer asset classes such as data centres and rental housing gained prominence among investors. "During 2020 through August, the leading segments have been data centres, driven

by demand for cloud infrastructure, as well as offices as they tend to offer steady rental income. Robust domestic consumption also maintained investors' confidence in industrial and logistics assets," the report said.

During January-August 2019, office segment got 47 per cent of the total PE inflows that stood at USD 5,795 million. Industrial and warehousing had received 9 per cent funds, hospitality 12 per cent, housing 8 per cent, retail 18 per cent and mixed use development 6 per cent. Colliers International advised investors to focus on

The private equity (PE) inflow stood at USD 5,795 million in the corresponding period of the previous year

data centres in order to leverage growing demand for cloud computing. It recommended them to continue to focus on the office segment to capitalise on steady rental income as well as enhanced liquidity offered by the Real Estate Investment Trusts (REITs.)

"In the backdrop of robust demand from e-commerce and other consumer-led occupiers, we recommend investors stay focused on the industrial and logistics segment in order to reap the benefits," the consultant said.

It suggested investors to consider equity investments in completed units of affordable and mid-segment residential projects.

IT workers, who returned to Bengal, given job offers

PNS ■ KOLKATA

West Bengal Finance and IT Minister Amit Mitra said on Wednesday that 3,000 information technology professionals, who have returned to the state from other parts of the country due to the COVID-19 pandemic, have been given job offers through the 'Karmo Bhumi' initiative.

The job portal, launched on June 8, witnessed around 37,000 registrations, while more than 24,000 have been processed, he said. 'Karmo Bhumi' is an initiative of the state government to collaborate between job seekers and employers in the IT and ITES sector.

"It was launched as a skill registration platform for those who have returned to West Bengal from other states on account of the pandemic.

"So far, 3,000 IT professionals have been selected for jobs under the scheme within three months from its launch," Mitra said addressing a webinar



organised by CII. He also urged the industry to take up space in the IT parks in tier-2 and tier-3 cities in the state.

"Small towns and cities were neglected in the past so the state government has set up 17 IT parks in these areas such as Siliguri, Kalyani and Durgapur. Five more such parks are in the process of completion.

"The idea is to bridge the digital divide and many renowned companies like Essar Information Technology have taken up space in one of them," Mitra said.

Speaking on the proposed Silicon Valley hub in New

Town, Mitra said Reliance had taken up 40 acres of land for setting up a data centre for Jio. TCS, which has already employed 45,000 IT professionals in the state, has taken another 20 acres of land in the hub to create an additional 15,000 jobs, he said.

Mitra said this would be the IT giant's biggest centre in terms of job creation in the country.

Reliance was given land in Digha in East Midnapore district for bringing an undersea cable from Singapore which will greatly benefit not only Jio but also IT companies operating in the state, he said.

"Another big IT company is coming up with a data centre in the state," Mitra said without divulging the details of the project.

He said the state government has also collaborated with Japan's Fujisoft to provide training in 3D designing to professionals of the MSME sector, for which it made an expenditure of Rs 34 crore.

Sensex ends 66 pts lower; Bharti Airtel crashes 8%

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Extending its losses for the fifth straight session, equity benchmark Sensex ended 66 points lower on Wednesday, tracking weakness in Bharti Airtel, TCS and Bajaj Finance despite largely positive cues from global markets. After opening on a positive note, the 30-share BSE index pared all intra-day gains to settle 65.66 points or 0.17 per cent down at 37,668.42. Similarly, the NSE Nifty fell 21.80 points or 0.20 per cent to close at 11,131.85. Bharti Airtel was the top laggard in the Sensex pack, tanking around 8 per cent, followed by Tata Steel, IndusInd Bank, NTPC, Power Grid, and TCS. On the other hand, Axis Bank, HUL, Infosys, Nestle India and HDFC Bank were



Tech Mahindra subsidiary sells stake to Rakuten for \$45 M

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



IT services major Tech Mahindra on Wednesday said its subsidiary has divested over 18.5 million shares in AltioStar Networks for USD 45 million (about Rs 331 crore) to Rakuten USA, Inc.

Tech Mahindra (Americas) Inc - an 100 per cent subsidiary of Tech Mahindra Ltd - divested its holding of 18,518,518 C1 Preferred shares in AltioStar Networks," Tech Mahindra said in a regulatory filing.

Given that it is a minority investment, there is no contribution to turnover/ revenue/ income and net worth by AltioStar Networks, Inc during last financial year, it added.

"The buyer is Rakuten USA, Inc," the filing said, adding the consideration received from the sale is USD 45 million.

Rakuten Mobile and Tech Mahindra have also signed an agreement, where the Indian

tech firm will be a preferred partner and provide technologies as well as software capabilities to support the development and deployment of mobile networks for global customers of RCP (Rakuten Communications Platform).

Through the agreement, Tech Mahindra will also provide managed IT, security and network services to Rakuten Mobile, a statement said. There are also plans to designate Tech Mahindra as an official reseller of RCP, it added.

"This first of its kind collaboration with Rakuten Mobile not only strengthens our existing partnership with them but will also enable us to drive innovation in the telecom space, provide enhanced cus-

Rakuten Mobile and Tech Mahindra have also signed an agreement, where the Indian tech firm will be a preferred partner

tommer experience and lead the transformation in mobile network technology from the forefront," Tech Mahindra Managing Director and CEO C P Gurnani said.

Mickey Mikitani, Chairman, President and CEO of Rakuten Inc, said that with a common vision for digital transformation of the telecommunications industry, the company is very excited about the potential of the partnership with Tech Mahindra in bringing more agile, responsive and efficient services to customers around the world.

Dehradun Airport to be upgraded by Oct

PNS ■ MUMBAI



The first phase of AAI-run Dehradun Airport's upgradation work, including construction of a new domestic terminal building, is expected to be completed by next month, an official release said on Wednesday.

The Airports Authority of India (AAI) is investing Rs 353 crore for the airport's facelift to enhance its peak passenger handling capacity by eight-fold to 1,800 passengers, as per the release.

The first phase of development work includes the construction of a domestic terminal building along with utility block, car park, sewage treatment plant, rainwater harvesting structures and other ancillary structures, the AAI said.

Almost 80 per cent of the development work of the first phase is completed and the project is likely to be ready by October, it added.

With an area of 42,776 sq metre, the new terminal building will have a concourse, check-in area, security hold and arrival lounge at ground floor. It will also accommodate various offices

AAI is investing Rs 353 crore for the airport's facelift to enhance its peak passenger handling capacity eight-fold to 1,800 passengers

on the mezzanine floor. Equipped with 36 check-in counters and four aerobridges, the new terminal will have all the modern facilities like self-check-in kiosks and in-line baggage screening facility, the AAI said, adding ample retail space spread in an area of 6,465 sq metre is also planned to help accelerate the generation of revenue and employment.

The design height of the building is optimally done to reduce the cost of construction and operation, it said.

Likhitha Infra fixes band at Rs 117-120 per share

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Oil and gas pipeline infrastructure service provider Likhitha Infrastructure on Wednesday said it has fixed price band of Rs 117-120 per share for its IPO, which will open on September 29.

The initial public offer (IPO) consists of fresh issue of up to 51 lakh equity shares, representing 25.86 per cent of the post-issue shareholding, Likhitha Infrastructure said in a statement.

At the upper end of the price band, the company will raise Rs 61.2 crore through the IPO.

Proceeds of initial share sale will be utilised by the company towards its working capital requirements so as to capitalise on the growing demand from oil and gas sector, and for general corporate purposes. The Hyderabad-headquartered firm has over two decades of experience in laying pipeline networks along with construction of associated facilities, as well as providing operations and maintenance services to leading city gas distribution companies in India.

Toyota launches SUV Urban Cruiser with price starting at Rs 8.4 lakh

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Japanese auto major Toyota on Wednesday launched its compact SUV Urban Cruiser, which it has sourced from compatriot Suzuki, in India with price starting at Rs 8.4 lakh as it looks to use cross-badged products from the latter to draw more customers in the volume segment.

The Urban Cruiser is the second model to be launched in India under the global Toyota-Suzuki alliance after the premium hatchback, Glanza. It is the cross-badged ver-

sion of Maruti Suzuki's compact SUV Vitara Brezza.

The model is powered by K-Series 1.5 litre four-cylinder petrol engine and will be available in manual transmission and automatic transmission options in three variants of mid, high and premium priced between Rs 8.4-11.30 lakh.



Virata Brezza on the other hand is priced at Rs 7.34 lakh for the entry level variant and goes up to Rs 11.15 lakh for the top end (all prices ex-showroom Delhi).

"Globally, our collaboration with Suzuki is going very well, particularly in India. Once again Urban Cruiser will show us a much stronger relationship," TKM Managing Director Masakazu Yoshimura told PTI.

He said the cross-badged products from Suzuki will serve to draw more customers to the Toyota fold to develop a long-term relationship with the company. Citing the

example of Glanza, which Maruti Suzuki sells as Baleno, he said the company has so far sold 30,000 units and that is Toyota's first challenge into the B-segment targeting young millennial customers in India.

"Surprisingly, the product has been well accepted, and our aftersales marketing strategy is also well accepted," Yoshimura said adding even sales of Maruti Suzuki Baleno has increased.

"With Maruti Baleno and our Glanza, (together) as a motor industry we are welcoming old and new car buyers into that segment. Either from two-wheelers or second hand cars, many first-time customers are the majority of the buyers," he said.

Hexaware Technologies to offer Rs 475 per share for delisting

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



IT firm Hexaware Technologies on Wednesday said will offer Rs 475 per share as the final price for its delisting offer.

The company stated the offer was successful and 8.72 crore equity shares had been validly tendered.

The bid process for the delisting offer - where the promoters were offering a floor price of Rs 264.97 per share - had started on September 9 and closed on September 16.

"The acquirer (HT Global Holdings BV) and promoter (HT Global IT Solutions Holdings Ltd) have accepted the discovered price of Rs 475

per equity share as the final price for the delisting offer (exit price)," Hexaware said in the filing on Wednesday.

The company said, as per the rules, the delisting offer would be deemed successful only if a minimum number of 8,38,00,030 offer shares were tendered and acquired at or below the exit price.

"The acquirer shall acquire the 8,72,86,523 equity shares validly tendered at or below the

exit price in the reverse book building offer process. Post completion of the acquisition, the shareholding of the acquirer and promoter, along with other members of the promoter group, shall be 91.16 per cent of the fully paid up equity capital of the company," it added. This would exceed the minimum number of equity shares required for the delisting offer to be successful, as per delisting regulations.

The filing said all public shareholders, who have validly tendered their equity shares at or below the exit price, will be paid Rs 475 per share.

The last date for payment to public shareholders, whose bids have been accepted, will be September 30, it added.

TF formed to set up power equipment zones

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A task force has been formed to set up power equipment manufacturing zones in the country, Union minister R K Singh said on Wednesday while directing domestic manufacturers to stop imports from countries "which are of concern".

He also informed that the government is keeping a strict vigil on imports as the focus is to boost local manufacturing and reduce dependence on imports for power equipment. The Minister for Power, New and Renewable Energy was speaking at Indian Electrical and Electronics Manufacturers Association (IEEMA) Annual Convention 2020.

"Our sector is very vulnerable to cyber attacks. We have



connected the whole country into one grid...you bring down one part and rest will collapse. Therefore we need to check all imports. (In fact) we are checking if some device is inserted in the imported item. So my advice to you is stop importing from countries from which we apprehend a risk or coun-

tries which are of concern," the minister said.

The government will continue to examine imported equipment with a "magnifying glass" for years, he said, indicating choice of importing may cause business losses as well.

Singh further said that there is a need of a government-

industry partnership in the sector. The whole world works on this pattern.

The government wants to make the industry 'Aatmani bhara', he said adding manufacturing of equipment will create jobs in India. It will also avoid forex outgo.

"I have set up a task force and given them the target of setting up manufacturing zones (in the country). I am thinking of setting up at least three to four manufacturing zones where you will get land at very reasonable prices, power at very reasonable prices, and we will set up a common testing centre..." the minister said. Singh also said, "If we need to create jobs here then we need not to spend our money outside the country...in China or in other countries."

Covid-19: Govt permits ISO tank containers to carry liquid oxygen

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid the Covid, the government has allowed the Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation (PESO) to grant permission to stakeholders for carrying liquid oxygen in tank containers in bulk.

According to an official statement issued on Wednesday, PESO has also devised a system to receive online applications from the stakeholders to expeditiously grant permission to transport liquid oxygen in ISO tank containers.

These containers are manufactured as per the ISO requirements. These are designed to carry liquids in bulk. One tank can carry 20



MT of liquid oxygen.

The statement said that due to the pandemic, an urgent need was felt to transport oxygen in sufficient quantities, at a short notice, from surplus areas to deficit ones.

Due to this, it was felt necessary to give permission to PESO for the purpose.

"The Department for Promotion of Industry and

Internal Trade (DPIIT) has given permission to PESO to introduce ISO tank containers for movement of liquid oxygen for domestic transport," it said.

Amid the pandemic, the movement of oxygen within the country through these containers shall greatly enhance the translocation of safe and fast movement of oxygen through road networks, the statement said.

It added that the permission has been given for one year initially to expeditiously deal with the emergent situation.

"Since they can carry a huge amount of oxygen at one go, ISO containers will help translocate sufficient oxygen to areas where required," it said.

CMA CGM adds 23K TEU LNG powered vessel to its fleet

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Shipping and logistics company CMA CGM Group on Wednesday said it has added 23,000 twenty-foot equivalent unit (TEU) container vessel to its fleet.

The liquefied natural gas-powered vessel has been named after the company's founder Jacques Saade, it said.

"The CMA CGM JACQUES SAADE has joined CMA CGM Group's fleet, thus becoming the largest LNG-powered container ship in the world," the company said in a statement.

YOUNG HYDERABADIS SPIRAL REVOLUTION, SHAKE CONSCIENCE

The Kondapochamma Sagar Reservoir has become a must-visit getaway for the people of Hyderabad, thanks to the selfies posted on Instagram and elsewhere by netizens. But what many missed, was the harsh reality behind its construction, brought to light by a youngster, whose video was shared by friends, followers, and even random people on the internet, widely. Hyderabad-based student Sai Aditya and his friends talk to *The Pioneer's* RACHEL DAMMALA about the plight of Kondapochamma Reservoir oustees, what needs to be done, the responsibility and privileges of an educated citizen living under a comfortable roof, and more



How could people sleep peacefully knowing there are families thrown out of their homes in the middle of the night and have very little hope of going back home or being given another comfortable place to say.

ADITYA

At a time when the COVID-19 pandemic has created panic amongst people, making them shut themselves indoors and hope for normalcy to set in as quickly as possible, the crisis brought to light some organisations, communities, and individuals who cared little for themselves, and were willing to go to lengths and shout at the top of their voices, for those that didn't have a voice. One such community is that made up of youngsters, made and brought together by random youth across cities and other barriers, with the aim and idea to bring people's attention to issues that hard-

ly hit headlines today. Nameless, faceless, but definitely not aimless. If you're a Hyderabadi, or from Telangana and are active on social media platforms like Instagram and Twitter, you definitely will have come across the campaign to help the wronged oustees of the Kondapochamma Sagar. Yes, we're talking about Sai Aditya, who turned activist overnight and became restless once he found out about the injustice meted out to those who have been "rehabilitated" from the Kondapochamma Sagar area, which includes close to 25-30 families from three villages - Mamidyala, Biranpur,

and Tandempally. To the uninitiated, residents of these three villages have rehabilitated to RR Colony on the night of April 30 with the promise of rightful compensation to their houses and properties they had left behind in their villages. They were left to stay in sheds, not even a proper house with a proper roof, forget the 2-BHK they were promised. The villagers went to court to fight to get what they deserved, which only worsened their chances of getting them. It was this reality that Aditya uncovered and his friends shared and ensured Hyderabadis learn of the "beautiful" reservoir they

have visited or are yearning to visit. "How could people sleep peacefully knowing there are families thrown out of their homes in the middle of the night and have very little hope of going back home or being given another comfortable place to say," wondered 22-year-old Aditya in one of his videos that went viral. He has now taken it upon himself to help the oustees with food and emergency kits until they are given the homes they were promised. He has urged people to donate, and the response has been overwhelming, to his surprise. At the time of writing this article, he has received donations from

over people. This community of donors, most falling inside the bracket of "youth" hopes to be able to supply these families for the next few days with food, and other necessities until they are given proper food and homes to stay in. "It had been raining and the roof could give in any second. Water from the sheds wetted their groceries, leaving them nothing to eat, wear or even sleep," shares Aditya. Today, over lakhs of people know about their condition and, though a minuscule number, are willing to come forward to raise their voices against injustice. But it's not just an MBA student with a camera that

could've shaken the conscience of several youngsters in Hyderabad. He had his friends, a journalist, a senior from college with powerful influence, and other such young people that came forward to help Aditya unearth and boldly speak the truth. It was these people who cared for their fellow human beings, that has several netizens rallying for justice for the oustees today. "As an ordinary citizen, the biggest help one could offer is by raising awareness in our circle of friends and community. Sharing the news in our social media circles, talking to friends and family about the issue and highlighting the need for us

citizens to be aware of success issues go a long way. Many of us do not have the courage to do what people like Adi do, that too at the ground level. When one just like us could go and do something like what he did, we could simply say we fail as a society when we don't the least to share and spread awareness, if not directly help our fellow citizens," says Bilu, an entrepreneur, and one of Aditya's companions working with him for the campaign. Aditya believes people on social media can contribute by doing more than just sharing a video. "Take an initiative to follow up, actively look up information, ques-

tion things you think are unjust around you, raise your voice, not share someone else's voice alone," says Aditya and his associates second him. They hope more people that are aware and have a platform (social media) and voice will intentionally work towards such causes. The fundraiser ends this Sunday, on September 27. To help or contribute, you can pay them via Google Pay or Phone Pe on 8317643638. Surely Aditya and his companions, which he hopes will grow with time to be an even bigger community of people who care for each other, are making this world a better place to live in.

Starting out young, yet strong

Move over the old and the well-settled leading campaigns and bringing in change. Taking heed of and living and walking the saying "Be the change you wish to see in the world," is a 9th grader Mishkkaa. She talks to *The Pioneer's* K RAMYA SREE on how she has been raising awareness and funds to feed the stray animals amid the pandemic



Children being aware of various important aspects of major social issues is something commendable. The thought of sharing what they know with a wider audience is what makes it inspiring. Mishkkaa, a 14-year-old Hyderabad-based youtuber, studying in class 9 started a YouTube channel with the title Mishkkaa — "The Billi of Hollywood" in 2016, with the support of her parents. From bullying, to 'playing outdoors vs using gadgets' to 'good touch bad touch', and LGBTQIA+ community, the teen discusses all such issues on her channel, while hosting talk some shows as well. Mishkkaa, who has always been an animal lover, was heartbroken to see strays going hungry especially during the lockdown when all restaurants shut shop. In order to help and support the shelter-less animals, she raised funds of over Rs 38,000 during the lockdown to help feed these animals.

The 14-year-old tells us, "I always wanted to bring a puppy home, but because of my parents, couldn't get one. My heart always went out for the shelter-less animals on roads rampaging for food. Most of them looked malnourished. Especially during the lockdown, there were many dogs, that died of hunger with all restaurants closed. I was moved when our society's (apartment) security guard shoo away a stray dog to prevent it from entering the society. The poor puppy ran and came under a vehicle and lost its life. All these incidents pushed me to do something for these poor souls." "I got in contact with Zabi, a well-known animal activist from Hyderabad. Since I didn't know much about animals, I wanted someone's support, someone who would teach me about animals, their nature etc. I later approached a crowdfunding platform milaap.org where I raised over 38,000 rupees during the lockdown and used it to feed the



strays in the city," she explains. Mishkkaa's latest video is on the issues of stray dogs and why we should support these shelter-less animals. She explained in the video why dogs are barking, crying and wailing more during the COVID pandemic with an example from her gated community. While most people look at it

IN ORDER TO HELP AND FEED THE SHELTER-LESS ANIMALS, SHE RAISED FUNDS OF OVER RS 38,000 DURING THE LOCKDOWN

as an inconvenience or disturbance, Mishkkaa realised that the dogs are barking because they have no food. She emphasised on individuals not feeding dogs because of the fear of catching the virus. She also pointed out that since the restaurants are closed, it's difficult for stray dogs to get food. Apart from her online classes Mishkkaa is putting in her heart and soul to promote the fundraiser. She has also supported a fundraiser earlier to support the Kerala Flood victims and hopes this act of hers will benefit and inspire many.



Hello Zindagi

This weekly column by senior journalist Swati Sucharita, beginning tomorrow, seeks to highlight hope and optimism, in an increasingly gloomy, pandemic-struck post-Covid 19 world.

At 7, child prodigy honours literary legacy with first book

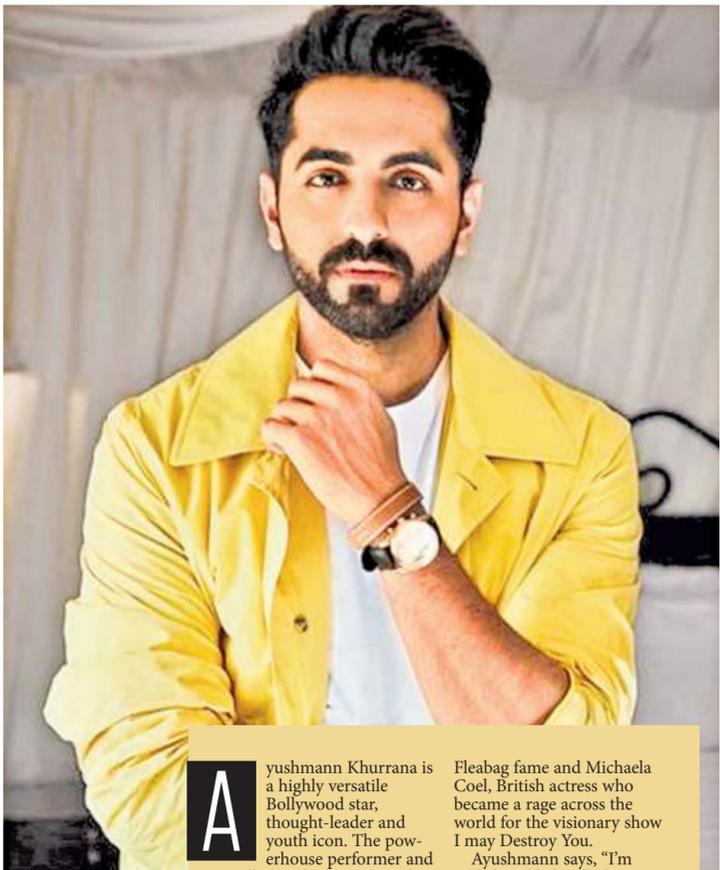
Padma Bhushan recipient Rashtrakavi Maithalisharan Gupts and Santkavi Siyaramsharan Gupt's great grand daughter Abhijita Gupta, who is all of seven years and a child prodigy, has penned her first collection of stories and poems. The book titled 'Happiness All Around', and was launched by Oxford Bookstores' children's wing, Oxford Junior in collaboration with Invincible Publishers. Seven-year-old Abhijita, taking after her family's literary legacy, had started writing at a very tender age of five years. "Abhijita is a student of class 2 and is a third generation writer, to poet duo Rashtrakavi Shri Maithalisharan Gupt and Santkavi Shri Siyaramsharan Gupt. She is avid reader and very expressive with her pen. She wrote her first story when she was a little over five years. By the grace of goddess Saraswati she is carrying forward the traits of her forefathers and we hope she extends the legacy of Sahitya Sadan Gharana," her parents Ashish Gupt and Anupriya Gupta told



LANSlife. They added that the title of the book, cover page and all the illustration are also a part of her creativity. "For her, every little thing around her matters: what she sees, she hears, she touches, she smells, she tastes and she feels — constantly soaking in the environment around her. And, her debut book proffers just that — the pure senses and humane values like an elixir." The collection is an attempt to give children something to read, written by someone of their own age. The book could prove equally useful for parents of young children, as it gives an insight into the mind of a six-seven-year-old and what thoughts and things interest her. The writings have been left untouched so that the innocence, mistakes included, of the child are not diluted.

what's brewing?

Hollywood star John Cusack on his interest in India, Kashmir



Ayushmann among five Indians in Time list of 100 Most Influential People

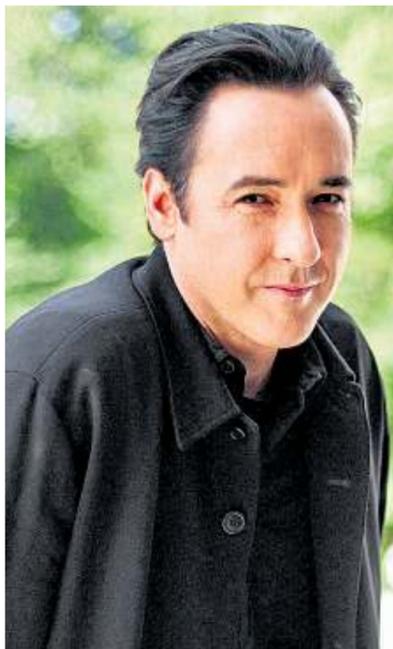
Ayushmann Khurrana is a highly versatile Bollywood star, thought-leader and youth icon. The powerhouse performer and an all-round entertainer who has delivered eight hits in a row, has etched his name in the history of Indian cinema with his progressive, social entertainers. Today, people refer to his brand of inspired and clutter-breaking cinema as 'The Ayushmann Khurrana Genre'.

His meteoric rise to stardom goes hand in hand with him becoming the poster boy of content cinema in India. Ayushmann's contribution as an actor to bring about social change through his films has been hailed by the most reputed global publication - the TIME Magazine.

Ayushmann has been judged as one of the most influential people in the world by TIME, which has featured him in the most coveted and prestigious 'Time's 100 most influential people' list of 2020. Some of the other global artists to feature in this list are music sensations Selena Gomez and The Weeknd, the visionary director of Parasite Bong Joon Ho, Phoebe Waller-Bridge of Fleabag fame and Michaela Coel, British actress who became a rage across the world for the visionary show I May Destroy You.

Ayushmann says, "I'm truly humbled with the recognition that TIME has bestowed on me. As an artist, I have only looked to contribute towards bringing a positive change in society through cinema and this moment is a huge validation of my belief system and my journey. I have always believed that cinema has the power to bring about change by triggering the right conversations among people and society. Hopefully, through my content choices, I have been able to contribute towards my country and countrymen."

The National Award-winning Bollywood star is among five Indians who have made the prestigious list in 2020, along with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Google CEO Sundar Pichai, London-based Indian origin doctor Ravindra Gupta who worked to find a cure for AIDS, and Bilkis Dadi, who was at the forefront of Shaheen Bagh protests in Delhi against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA).



Hollywood star John Cusack says he got closer to knowing and understanding India during his pursuit to understand the world in a better way.

The actor has been vocal about the events, or turmoils, happening in India, and addressed them through social media.

Speaking about his understanding of India, Cusack said, "I've been there a few times and I have a great friendship with (author) Arundhati Roy."

"(We have done) some activist things (together) and we wrote some essays together about meeting Ed Snowden in Russia with Daniel Ellsberg and her. So I've gotten to know India by going there and through her eyes, which is quite extraordinary. So that's where my interest in India and Kashmir and all those issues came from. (I am) just trying to understand the world,"

added the actor, who is known for his strong opinions as well as his acting skills.

Cusack began acting in the eighties, and gained popularity for his roles in *Better Off Dead*, *Say Anything...*, *Bullets over Broadway*, *Grosse Pointe Blank*, *Being John Malkovich*, *High Fidelity*, *1408*, *Igor*, *2012*, *The Raven* and *Serendipity*.

Now, he is headed to the digital world with the conspiracy thriller series *Utopia*.

The eight-episode series is about saving the world, while trying to find your place in it. It is about a group of comic fans who meet online and bond over their obsession of a seemingly fictional comic called, *Utopia*.

Inspired by the British series of the same name. The American remake is written by *Gone Girl* author Gillian Flynn, who also serves as showrunner and executive producer.

Reflecting on why it took so long for him to make his digital debut, he said, "I hadn't really been offered anything that I thought was really good, or that I wanted to do."

"This was the first thing that came along, that had a great writer, and it was a terrific part. So, it was kind of easy and no brainer for me... Gillian sent me all eight episodes, and I started reading them and it was a real page turn. I think I read the entire eight episodes in one day because I wanted to see what happened next. It was very surprising and terrific writing, and it was nice to be asked by her to do it."

The show will premiere on Amazon Prime Video on September 25 in India. It also stars Ashleigh LaThrop, Rainn Wilson, Sasha Lane, Dan Byrd, Jessica Rothe, Desmin Borges, Javon Walton, Farrah Mackenzie, Christopher Denham, and Cory Michael Smith.

Manoj Bajpayee on turning singer: 'Nobody could think of rapping in Bhojpuri'

Actor Manoj Bajpayee is being praised for his rapping skills in the new single, *Bambai main ka ba*. The song has been very well received and the National Award-winning actor says the reason behind its success is because the track is in a native language and that it deals with the migrant issue.

Talking about the song becoming popular among all age groups, Manoj told *IANS*, "It's very unique rapping, because it's in a native language. Nobody could think of rapping in Bhojpuri and that too about something that is prevalent."

The actor, who joined hands with filmmaker Anubhav Sinha for the number, says the migrant issue is something that is not the product of today. "The migrant problem has been there all this time. People leaving their houses and going to big cities in search of life — this problem has always been there and that's why people are loving the song. These factors are working and it came together very well," he said.



FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



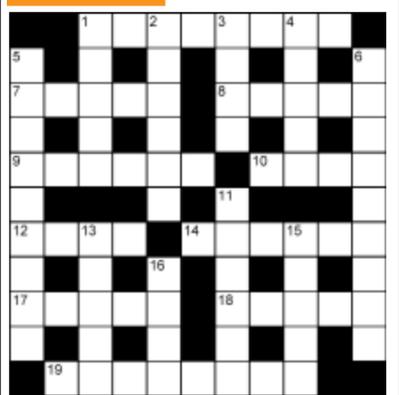
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



NANCY



SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

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

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

DOWN

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

4 Normal

- A graceful dancer
- Loss of eyesight
- Humans
- A maker of bread
- Shed these when crying
- A worshipped statue

SOLUTION



KARTHIKEYA PLAYING A 24-YEAR-OLD

new NIA recruit in my film: Sri Saripalli



Sai Tej-Katta film to roll next month



With the filming on *Solo Brathuke So Better* which resumed on August 31 last month more or less completed, Sai Tej will begin his film with director Deva Katta from next month. The untitled film was launched earlier this March but couldn't get on with principal shoot due to COVID-19 outbreak.

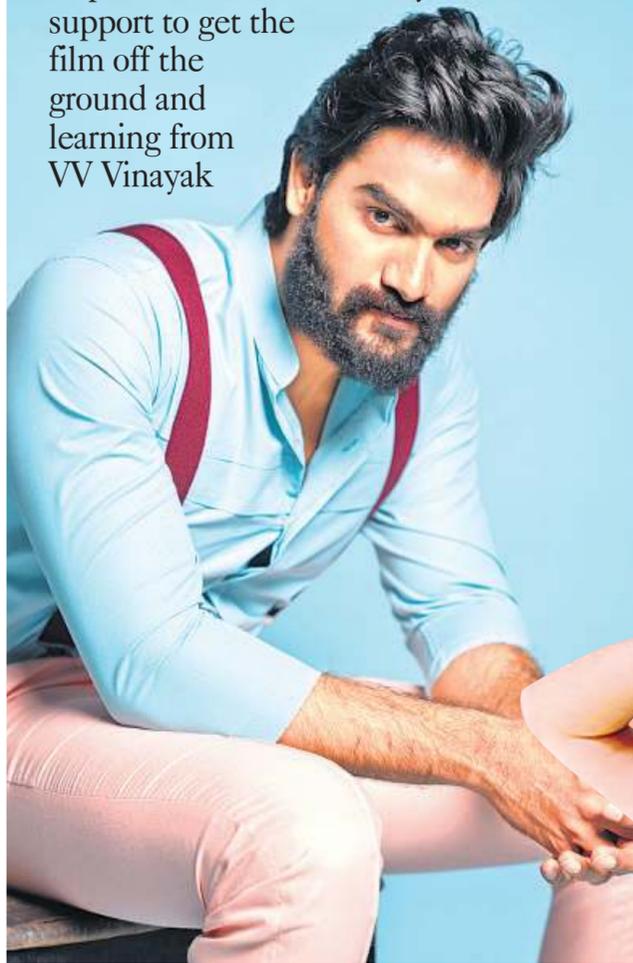
"SDT#14 prep work on high gear!! Twelve-aspect Mise-En-Scene session-1 with all HoDs!! Shoot from mid October," film's director Deva Katta posted on Twitter on Wednesday, tagging a picture of his head of

departments.

A social drama, the film will see Sai Tej in the role of a young IAS officer, while Ramya Krishna is believed to be playing a chief minister. Nivetha Pethuraj is cast opposite Tej in the film, a joint production venture between J Bhagawan and Pulla Rao. Katta planned to shoot a month schedule in Eluru and Kolleru Lake and it remains to be seen whether he will stick to this plan.

After completing this film, Sai Tej will move to the sets of Karthik Dandu's mystic thriller based on the superstitious beliefs of the late 70s.

Sri Saripalli, the director of Karthikeya's new film, talks to NAGARAJ GOUD about the inspiration behind the story, his actor's support to get the film off the ground and learning from VV Vinayak



Announced officially earlier this week, Karthikeya's new movie with Sri Saripalli is 40 percent completed. The actor agreed to spearhead the film after his breakthrough project *RX100* (2018) but as he was tied up with other commitments, Sri was "willing to wait." "The project went to floors 18 months after it was green-lit. It was worrisome because here in the industry anything can. There were hiccups on the way but Karthikeya stuck with me through thick and thin. He was just a phone call away and was prompt with his responses. He was the one who saw light at the end of the tunnel and kept me pushing. The project took off because of him," Sri tells us.

A Hyderabad-set drama, the still-untitled film, Sri says, is an action-comedy set in an NIA backdrop. "Karthikeya will be seen as a 24-year-old new NIA recruit. The character is close to what he is in real life and it is the reason why I didn't alter a single scene to suit his body language. I'm not making an unconventional film. It is a film meant to entertain the audi-

ence. The characters are serious and will be associating with their job honestly but the irony of the situation makes the audiences crack up. From start to end credits, we are trying to make sure that there is a smile on their face throughout the running time and their way back home. The teaser will encapsulate the basic concept of the film. The next schedule will mostly start in January," the director, who has a master's degree in filmmaking from Universal Studios, US, points out.

The director has an interesting story to share on how he started developing the story. "My apartment in Jubilee Hills shared a compound wall with the CBI colony and I would see officers going in and coming out from my window. I didn't get to talk to them but could get a hang of their body language to an extent. From the observations, I conceived a character and formulated a story. Later, I realised that the story conflict falls under the purview of NIA not CBI. So I started digging more about NIA online. I've taken some cinematic lenience but the film would be authentic to look at. I'm

too small a person to get rendezvous with NIA officers for thorough research but that said I kept the proceedings simple," he explains.

Sri is introducing Tamil actress Tanya Ravichandran into Telugu with the film. On the thought-process that went behind her casting, he informs that the role's prerequisite was a trained classical dancer. "Our best option in Telugu was Sai Pallavi but she was beyond our budget. So we didn't even try to approach her. I got to know about Tanya later and after scanning through her dance videos, I've signed her. We even shot portions involving her and she has done a fantastic job," informs the director, who assisted Vinayak for films like *Naayak* and *Alludu Sreenu*. "With Vinayak garu, the prep he undertakes before he embarks on a project is enormous. He shoots what he needs. In both the films I've worked under him, there isn't a single shot that he didn't use in the final product."

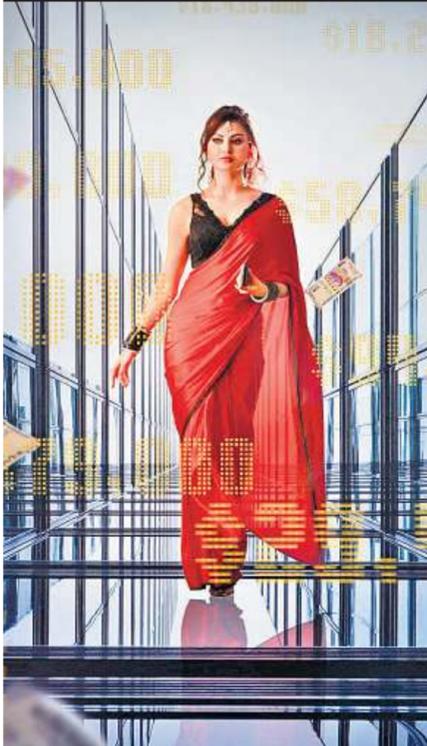
BLACK ROSE is an emotional thriller: Makers

The first look of actress Urvashi Rautela from her Telugu debut *Black Rose*, created by Sampath Nandi, was unveiled by the makers on Wednesday. Mohan Bharadwaj, screenplay writer of films like *Sneha Geetam* and *Dongaata*, is making his directorial debut with the project whose filming has been wrapped up in a start-to-finish schedule. It went to floors on August 17 last month.

Based on a character named Shylock from Shakespeare's *Merchant of Venice*, the film, according to Nandi, also deals with the point 'transactions which have

no conscience or morals... are indicators of death' from *Kautilya's Arthashastra*.

Bharadwaj said that it narrates the tale of a strong modern woman, Vasudha. "She is a 30-year-old beautiful, matured and kind woman. But she goes through a lot personally and professionally and how she confronts her challenges make the entire story," he said and added that people in this world can be categorised into two kinds — those who want to succeed in life and those who want to survive. "Vasudha belongs to the third category in that she wants to be happy," he stated about the emotional thriller.



OTT release for Anand's second film



Wrapped up before the coronavirus-induced lockdown, Anand Deverakonda and Varsha Bollamastarrer *Middle Class Melodies*, produced by Bhavya Creations, will have a direct-to-web release. According to a source, the makers have successfully negotiated the digital release with a streaming giant.

The source informs, "The makers have been in talks with a leading streamer for the past two months and the deal was finalised recently. The film will drop on the streamer in the first half of November. The makers have been asked to get ready with the promotional material."

A slice of life film minus the big stakes and outstanding drama, the film, directed by debutant Vinod Anantoju from a script of Janardhan Pasumarthi, sees Anand playing a vil-lager Raghava, an expert in whipping out Mumbai chutney. Hailing from Kolakaluru, which is 20.5 kms drive from Guntur, he aspires to open a hotel in Guntur and introduce Mumbai chutney to the locals. Fresh faces like Chaitanya Garikapati, Divya Sripada, Goparaju Ramana, Surabhi Prabhavathi, Prem Sagar and Prabhavathi Varma have played supporting roles.



Adah prefers her terrace to gym for workout

Actress Adah Sharma is into martial arts, and often shares videos where she can be seen using the Silambam sticks to workout.

"Lockdown or no lockdown I work out on my terrace. I don't really go to the gym. I mean I got to the gym sometimes but I really like my terrace. There is a sea view, breeze and so much space to do my martial arts. For the Silambam sticks I need a lot of space. I cannot do it in a closed space."

On why there are only a handful of actresses who seem interested in martial arts, Adah said, "I think people pick an activity that is easier to get results quicker."

She feels that learning a new activity takes time. "You get results quicker by running on the treadmill for 40 minutes — you would burn as much as I would probably in two hours with the (Silambam) sticks, because when you are learning a new skill you won't be immediately able to fluidly do it. You take time to get into it," she said, adding, "But I really like doing challenges. I got a few bruises. But it's fun and I enjoy it."

NITHIIN BACK ON SETS

As reported by us earlier this month, the filming of Nithiin and Keerthy Suresh-starrer *Rang De*, directed by Venky Atluri, resumed in Hyderabad on Wednesday, with the unit following all safety protocols. The unit will shoot in the city for nearly two weeks before flying off to Europe for the other portions. The makers have reiterated that the film is scheduled for a Sankranti release, ruling out a direct OTT release.



TODAY
KINGS XI PUNJAB VS RAJASTHAN ROYALS
Live from 7:30pm
STAR SPORTS 1 & 3



IPL
2020

Faf du Plessis | 130 runs
Sam Curran | 4 wickets

Josh Philippe is someone who has got so much talent. He can play a number of roles. We have seen how successful he can be at the top of the order (in Big Bash)

I've come in with some confidence through good performances this year, but also maybe putting less responsibility on myself than some other years

Malinga is like Pollard, has been a massive player for us. It was unfortunate that he couldn't make it due to personal reasons. That gives an opportunity to others

Samson takes the game head on and he hit some seriously good sixes. He has a positive intent and my role was to give him more strike. Fortunately it worked well

DUGOUT
MOTION PICTURE



Mumbai Indians Windies all-rounder Kieron Pollard poses with his special shirt that was given to him prior to the start of the match as he steps on the field to play his 150th game for Mumbai Indians in the Indian Premier League

MI beat KKR by 49 runs

MI 195/5 (20 overs) ■ KKR 146/9 (20 overs)

PTI ■ ABU DHABI
Skipper Rohit Sharma pumelled the Kolkata Knight Riders bowling into submission and powered Mumbai Indians to an imposing 195 for five here on Wednesday. After Shivam Mavi (2/32) removed opener Quinton De Kock (1) cheaply, Rohit (80 off 54 balls; 3 fours, 6 sixes) and Suryakumar Yadav (47 off 28; 6 fours, 1 six) conjured 90 runs for the second wicket to pull the team out of trouble.



Rohit Sharma chats with his Mumbai Indians teammate Suryakumar Yadav during Mumbai Indians innings

Malinga's absence is opportunity for others

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI
The absence of veteran pacer Lasith Malinga is an opportunity for others to step up, according to Mumbai Indians captain Rohit Sharma. The 37-year-old Malinga has been ruled out for the season and in his absence, MI relied upon James Pattinson and Jasprit Bumrah to deliver in the death overs in the IPL season opener against Chennai Super Kings. It didn't quite work out for them and they ended up losing the match by five wickets. "What happened in the past is in the past," said Rohit after the toss on Wednesday. "There are some areas where we need to rectify. Hopefully we don't make those mistakes." "Malinga is like Pollard, has been a massive player for us. It was unfortunate that he couldn't make it due to personal reasons. That gives an opportunity to others. We need to enjoy our cricket as a squad." KKR captain Karthik chose to field first, despite teams batting first winning three of the four games that have been played in the season thus far. "We will bowl first." **IAN S**



Sanju Samson in action against CSK

Sanju worked on fitness, power-hitting

PTI ■ SHARJAH
Convinced that possessing an array of shots is a must to go with power-hitting, wicket-keeper batsman Sanju Samson says he worked on these aspects during the coronavirus enforced break. The work done by Samson was there to be seen when he pulverised the Chennai Super Kings on Tuesday night, setting up a Rajasthan Royals win with his blistering 32-ball 74-run knock, studded with nine sixes and a boundary. That he is an impact player is a known fact but his clean and elegant hitting earned praise from one and all. "I think range-hitting is what the game demands in this generation. I had time to work out in these 5 months, and I think I've increased that ability," Samson said at the post-match presentation. "I've been working hard on my fitness, diet and training, and on my strength, because my game relies a lot on power hitting," he added. Samson, who was adjudged Man-of-the-Match, said his plan is to go and hit all the deliveries in his arc. "My game plan is stand and deliver. If it's in the arc I go for it, and it's very important to keep the intent to hit the ball if it's there to be hit."

Rohit, who began with a maximum, displayed his languid grace and elegance as he took the Kolkata attack to the cleaners. Surya effortlessly smashed four boundaries off Sandeep Warrier (0/34), including a cover-drive and a flick, in the third over. Rohit got going after smashing pacer Pat Cummins (0/49) for two maximums — both his trademark pull-short. With the two looking good and hitting sixes and fours at will, Mumbai raced to 94/1 after 10 overs. Kolkata, however, cut short Surya's stay when he was run out. Rohit continued his brutal onslaught against chinaman Kuldeep Yadav (0-39), smashing him for two maximums. Saurabh Tiwary (21), Hardik Pandya (18) played perfect second fiddle to Rohit, who literally bulldozed the opposition bowlers. Kolkata tried to pull things back by removing Rohit, Hardik in quick succession even as Mumbai added 48 runs in the last five overs.

14-day quarantine didn't help: MS

PTI ■ SHARJAH
The extended two-week quarantine of Chennai Super Kings hampered his preparations as he did not get enough time for batting practice, said captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni after his side lost to Rajasthan Royals by 16 runs in their second IPL game. Dhoni came in to bat at No 7, sending the likes of Sam Curran and Kedar Jadhav ahead of him in a mammoth 217-run chase on Tuesday. Asked why he came so low in the order, the CSK captain said, "I haven't batted for a long time, 14-day quarantine doesn't help." "Also, we wanted to try different things, give opportunities to Sam (Curran). We have the opportunity to try different things. If they don't work, you can always go back to your strengths," the CSK skipper said.

Dhoni's reference was to CSK's extra one-week quarantine after 13 people in their contingent tested positive for Covid-19, resulting in missing out on important training sessions. He was not out on 29 off 17 balls with three sixes in the last over. Although he didn't name Murali Vijay but the veteran opener's run-a-ball 21 was one of the reasons for CSK falling short besides an off-day from his spin duo of Ravindra Jadeja and Piyush Chawla. "With 217 on the board, we needed a very good start which was not the case. Steve (Smith) and (Sanju) Samson batted very well. We need to give credit to their bowlers. Once you've seen the first innings, you know the lengths to bowl," Dhoni said. "Their spinners did well to bowl away from the batsman. Our spinners made the error to bowl too full. If we would've maybe restricted them to 200, it would've been a good game."

Kings look to open account

PTI ■ DUBAI
Kings XI Punjab will look to put behind the controversial 'short run' decision in their IPL opener and start afresh when they take on Virat Kohli's Kolkata Knight Riders on Thursday. In their opening game against Delhi Capitals, the square-leg umpire erroneously called KXIP's Chris Jordan for a 'short run' in the third ball of the 19th over, effectively costing his team the closely fought game. KXIP went on to lodge an appeal to the match referee over the incident but on Thursday, KL Rahul and Co would like forget the unsavoury incident and focus on the task ahead. In contrast, RCB opened their campaign on a winning note defeating Sunrisers Hyderabad by 10 runs, raising hopes that things might finally fall into place



for them this season. Devdutt Padikkal started his IPL career on a classy note hitting a sublime half-century and will once again be in focus, while AB de Villiers will also look to continue in the same vein following a crucial half-century. Both Kohli and Aaron Finch looked good on Monday night and would be itching to spend more time in the middle. Yuzvendra Chahal, as always, will be the key man in the RCB bowling attack. But Umesh Yadav continues to leak runs and going by his showing in the first game, he could be replaced by Mohammad Siraj. It remains to be seen if the team can fit in England all-rounder Moeen Ali in the middle-order. With Josh Philippe being chosen as the specialist wicketkeeper batsman to start with, Ali can only replace Dale Steyn in the eleven. For KXIP, Mayank Agarwal looked in imperious touch but was gutted to not be able to get his team over the line with just one run required to win. Rahul, Glenn Maxwell and Nicholas Pooran will be expected to step up as they possess the ability to take away the game from any opposition. Big hitters Chris Gayle, who was left out of the opener for better balance in the eleven, could be back and batting all-rounder Jimmy Neesham could also be given a chance. KXIP's bowling is spearheaded by Mohammed Shami, who proved his high worth in the team's opener. Young leg-spinner Ravi Bishnoi will go into the game more confident, having impressed against Delhi Capitals.

Batting at No 7 is not leading from front: Gambhir lashes out at Dhoni

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
Mahendra Singh Dhoni did not lead from the front by dropping himself down the batting order during a mammoth chase, opined former India batsman Gautam Gambhir, tearing into CSK captain's decision to bat at number seven against Rajasthan Royals. The former India opener reckons that if any other captain had done this, he would have drawn a lot of flak but since it is Dhoni, people are not even talking about it. "I was a bit surprised to be honest. MS Dhoni batting at No 7? And sending (Ruturaj) Gaikwad, Sam Curran before him. Makes no sense to me. In fact you should be leading from the front," Gambhir told ESPNcricinfo's T20 Time Out. "This is not what you call leading from the front. Batting at No 7 when you're chasing 217. The game was over. Faf was probably the lone warrior," he said. "See, if someone else would have done this, some other (batsman) captain had batted at No 7, he would have got a lot of flak. It is MS Dhoni — probably that's why people don't talk about it."



Faf du Plessis raises his bat after scoring fifty runs against Rajasthan

The 38-year-old Gambhir, who played 58 Tests and 147 ODIs between 2003 and 2016, also questioned CSK's intent to win the game. "There is nothing wrong if you end up getting out early, at least start leading from the front, trying to inspire the team as well. What you did in the last over (hitting 3 sixes in last over), probably if you'd done that coming in at No 4 or 5, alongside Faf, you could have made a game out of it," said Gambhir. "Probably there was no such intent to make a game out of it. I thought after the (first) six overs, they had literally given up on the game. And probably MS was trying to get back into that match rhythm of batting till the end and get some runs under his belt so he can actually play these kind of innings in the coming games. "You've got to be in the present, try and win each game possible. I thought there was no intent to win the game and they were never there in the chase." On Dhoni hitting three sixes in the final over, Gambhir said, "Yes, you can talk about MS Dhoni's last over but it was of no use to be honest. It was just all personal runs."

Dhoni will take some time to find form: Fleming

Sharjah: It will take some time to see MS Dhoni — the finisher, that everyone is waiting for, says Chennai Super Kings head coach Stephen Fleming as his side fell short in its run chase against Rajasthan Royals despite having the former India captain at the crease. "We have this question every year. He was in in the 14th over, which is pretty much optimal time, and sort of batted accordingly. He is coming back from not playing a huge amount of cricket," Fleming said at the post-match press conference. "So, the expectations to see him at his best is gonna take some time. But you see him towards the end, he was very good. Faf du Plessis carried the

form, so we weren't too far away. It wasn't the batting that was the worry to be honest." Fleming said his spinners were slow in adjusting the length of their deliveries (they bowled overpitched). Sanju Samson (74) was on fire against their spinners. "Their (RR) hitting was very good in the 8 overs they faced. It was a good surface (to bat) and we were slow on adjusting. We did not adjust quickly. There was intent to adjust but execution was poor. "So it was dangerous time and we had to just hang in there and try. We came close to pulling back to a manageable score but that last over took us out of reach." **PTI**

Bianca to miss rest of 2020

Ottawa: Last year's US Open champion Bianca Andreescu said on Tuesday she will sit out the remainder of the season to focus on her "health and training" after a year beset by injury. Andreescu, who beat Serena Williams at Flushing Meadows 12 months ago, has not played a match since hurting her knee last October at the WTA Finals in Shenzhen. "I have come to the difficult decision to skip the clay court swing this year and will be taking the remainder of the season off to focus on my health and training," Andreescu wrote on Twitter. "As hard as it was to come to this conclusion, I have so much to look forward to in 2021, including the Olympics; I want to use this time to focus on my game so I can come back stronger and better than ever." Andreescu joins defending Roland Garros champion Ashleigh Barty and newly-crowned US Open winner Naomi Osaka on the absentee list for the September 27-October 11 Grand Slam in Paris.

Women's FIFA U-17 World Cup likely to be postponed again

PTI ■ NEW DELHI
The women's FIFA Under-17 World Cup, which has been rescheduled to February-March, is likely to be postponed yet again in view of the Covid-19 pandemic. Originally scheduled to be held in five venues of India from November 2 to 21, the women's age group showpiece was pushed to February 17-March 7 next year due to the pandemic, which has played havoc with sporting calendars worldwide. With the health crisis still showing no signs of abating and with the qualifying tournaments yet to be held in Africa, North and Central America and South America, there is a high possibility of the tournament getting postponed yet again. "There is a high possibility that the women's FIFA U-17 World Cup will be postponed again. The new time frame when the tournament will be held is yet not known. But most probably it is getting postponed," a source privy to the development told PTI. All India Football Federation (AIFF) general secretary Kushal Das, however, told PTI that there is "no official update" on the matter yet. But when asked specifically whether there is a possibility of the postponement of the tournament in view of the prevailing situation, he said, "It can be postponed." With less than five months left for the tournament, the confederations of Africa (CAF), North and Central America (CONCACAF) and South America (CONMEBOL) are yet to hold their qualifiers. Europe (UEFA) cancelled its qualifying tournament last month and nominated Spain, England and Germany — its highest-ranked teams. The confederation of Oceania (OFA) did the same and nominated New Zealand as its representative in the U-17 World Cup. Only Asia (AFC) conducted the qualifiers as scheduled. Japan and North Korea qualified after becoming the champions and runners-up respectively in the 2019 AFC U-16 Women's Championship. The AIFF had planned to start the national camp early next month but it may not happen if the tournament is postponed.