

## NATION 5

INDIA SHOULD TALK TO PAKISTAN TO  
DEFUSE BORDER ROW: FAROOQ

## AGENDA 9

EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY: CARVING A  
NEW PATH TO SUCCESS

VIJAYAWADA, SUNDAY SEPTEMBER 20, 2020; PAGES 12 ₹3



## sunday pioneer

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UNDAUNTED  
BY FAILURE,  
HUMBLED BY  
SUCCESSDRUG WITH POTENTIAL TO FIGHT  
COVID-19 IDENTIFIED

Scientists have identified a new drug that could prevent or mitigate the consequences derived from infection by SARS-CoV-2, the virus responsible for Covid-19. Preliminary results of the study conducted on animal models showed that the drug 4-Phenylbutyric acid (4-PBA) fully curbs mortality caused by respiratory failure derived from cellular stress, showed the research published in the journal Cytokine and Growth Factors Review. The inflammatory process identified in severe cases of coronavirus causes an uncontrolled and excessive release of cytokines – molecules in charge of organising the body's defences- which could even trigger vascular hyperpermeability and multi-organ failure.

EMIRATIS JOIN EXPATS IN HONOURING  
'GREATEST INDIAN ENGINEER'

Emirati and Indian expats and engineers in the UAE came together at a virtual event to pay tribute to M. Vishweshwaraya, the 'greatest Indian engineer', the media reported on Thursday. His birthday, September 15, is celebrated every year as Engineers' Day in India. The webinar was organised by Science India Forum-UAE, and among the speakers was Eesa Mohammed Bastaki, president of the University of Dubai, reports the Khaleej Times. "Sir Vishweshwaraya lived for nearly 102 years. He passed away four months before I went to Bombay when I was seven years old in August 1962. He had contributed a lot to India and the engineering world."

SRI LANKAN MINISTER CLIMBS TREE TO  
ADDRESS PUBLIC ON SHORTAGE OF COCONUTS

To convey the message to the people on the shortage of coconuts, Sri Lankan State Minister of Coconut Arundika Fernando climbed a coconut tree and said that the country is facing a dearth of 700 million coconuts due to high demand for local industries and domestic consumption. News First quoted Fernando as saying, "We hope to utilise every available plot of land for the cultivation of coconuts and boost the industry to one which would generate foreign exchange to the country." Giving a solution to the problem of prices of coconuts, he said that the government aims to reduce the prices amid the shortage of coconuts in the country.

4 OF FAMILY COMMIT SUICIDE AMID  
COVID-DRIVEN FINANCIAL CRUNCH

In a shocking incident, the bodies of a bullion trader and all three members of his family, including his two sons in their early twenties, were found hanging in separate rooms of their house in Jamdoli area, police said on Saturday. Trader Yashwant Soni, 45, his wife Manita, 40, and their sons Ajit, 23, and Bharat, 20, – allegedly committed suicide amid their worsening financial condition in last six months during the COVID-19 lockdown, they said. They committed suicide in their house at Radha Vihar colony in Jamdoli area under Kanota police station and the matter came to light on Saturday morning when Soni's brother visited them, the police said.

Learning lessons  
about corona the  
hard way

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Centre rejects Rs 750 crore  
bills of Polavaram project

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a shocking blow to the Andhra Pradesh government, the Polavaram Project Authority (PPA), a special purpose vehicle constituted for the purpose, has rejected reimbursement of bills worth Rs 750.118 crore to the state government.

The Andhra Pradesh government had so far spent Rs 12,505 crore between April 2014 and July 2020 on the Polavaram project. Of this, Polavaram Project Authority has declined to reimburse Rs 750.118 crore to the state government, Minister of State for Water Resources Rattan Lal Kataria told Rajya Sabha on Saturday.

He was responding to a



question raised by YSRC MP V Vijayasai Reddy.

The YSRC MP told the House that so far the Central government has reimbursed Rs 8,577 crore.

He informed the House that the Polavaram Project Authority was yet to reimburse Rs 478.65 crore.

Rattan Lal Kataria stated that the Water Resources ministry had on September 15 received a letter from Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy seeking early release of the Central funds as the state government was serious on completing the project by December 2021.

In the letter, Jagan had stated that the government requires around Rs 15,000 crore for the completion of the project by next year and pressed upon the centre to direct the National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD) to acquire the amount as loan.

Naidu targets Jagan after TTD  
scraps 'declaration of faith' rule

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Lambasting TTD chairman YV Subba Reddy for doing away with the norm of getting non-Hindus to sign a declaration expressing faith in the Lord to enter the Tirumala temple, Leader of the Opposition N Chandrababu Naidu on Saturday said that the TTD traditions cannot change every time there is a change of Government.

YV Subba Reddy had created a flutter on Friday by saying that a declaration was not required for non-Hindus enter the Tirumala temple. He had also condemned the allegations of propagation of other religions in Tirumala. "We have taken a decision to audit the TTD accounts with the CAG for accountability and transparency," Subba Reddy had stated.

Reacting to this, the Leader of the Opposition stated that any change in such long-held traditions would only hurt the sentiments of devotees. Naidu



further stated that 'Sanathana Dharma' means something that is ancient, permanent and has been followed without change through centuries.

Naidu on Saturday stressed the need to protect the divinity of Tirumala temple by preventing a spiritual breach from taking place atop Seven Hills under the Jaganmohan Reddy regime. He asserted that the long established traditions at TTD should not be changed for the sake of a "non-believer", alluding to the Chief Minister.

It may be mentioned here

that on July 26, 2012, then JEO of TTD KS Sreenivasa Raju stated that non-Hindus should declare their faith in Lord Balaji to be able to have darshan. He then saw to it that faith forms were placed at all temple offices and enquiry counters.

The decision relating to faith forms was taken following a controversy then over the entry of YSRC chief Jagan into the temple without signing the register declaring his faith in the Lord, despite entreaties by the temple authorities. The rule that non-Hindus should declare their faith in the Lord was originally introduced in April 1990 through Government Order No. 311.

Interestingly, then President Abdul Kalam signed the declaration of faith when he entered the shrine. Subsequently, there was another controversy when Congress chief Sonia Gandhi visited the temple.

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Congress: Only KCR  
benefitted from TS

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R&B tenders cancelled, AP  
government calls fresh bids

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy on Saturday asked the Roads and Buildings department to cancel the tender process and invite bids afresh to ensure total transparency.

The Jaganmohan Reddy government proposes to take up road development works worth Rs 6,400 crore in the state with a 70 per cent loan from the New Development Bank (NDB).

In the first phase, tenders were invited for works in 13 packages with an estimated cost of Rs 2,978 crore.

In the 13 districts in the state, a total of 25 bids were received for the works.

The standard bidding document of the World Bank was taken as the standard while preparing the tender documents.



ment here and the entire process was taken up with the approval of NDB, top official sources said.

"Everything is based on a tripartite agreement between the AP government, the Department of Economic Affairs and the NDB. Even the statutory Judicial Preview Commission cleared the tender documents," the sources said.

As per the agreement, the state government was required to complete award of at least 30 percent of works by September

30, failing which the NDB could withdraw the loan.

In spite of this, the Chief Minister decided to cancel the tenders and invite them afresh to ensure total transparency, the sources added.

Transport, Roads and Buildings Department Principal Secretary MT Krishna Babu told reporters that they have now requested the Centre to extend the September 30 deadline by another 45 days.

"We have appraised the Centre about the circumstances in which we took the decision. They have agreed to give us extra time but asked to complete the process fast," Babu said.

He said there was poor response to the tenders floated now though many firms apparently had eligibility.

Government  
introduces 3  
labour Bills  
in Lok Sabha

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Central government on Saturday introduced three bills related to labour laws, including on industrial relations, in the Lok Sabha amid opposition from the Congress and a few other parties.

Labour Minister Santosh Kumar Gangwar introduced the Occupational Safety, Health and Working Conditions Code, 2020, the Industrial Relations Code, 2020, and the Code on Social Security, 2020.

Gangwar withdrew the three Bills that were introduced last year and introduced the three new proposed legislations.

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## Covid forces early end to Parl session

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The ongoing monsoon session of Parliament is likely to be curtailed and may end by the middle of next week in view of the threat of the Covid-19 spread among parliamentarians, official sources said on Saturday.

At a meeting of the business advisory committee of Lok Sabha, which has floor leaders of all parties besides the government representatives and is chaired by the Speaker, most



political parties favoured curtailment of the session, which started on September 14 and was scheduled to conclude on October 1. A final decision will

be taken by the Cabinet Committee on Parliamentary Affairs. The Lok Sabha has so far passed three Bills to replace agriculture sector related ordi-

nances. Also, both the Houses have cleared a Bill to replace an ordinance for cutting by 30 per cent the salaries of MPs to ramp up funds in the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic. After some MPs, including Union ministers Nitin Gadkari and Prahlad Patel, tested positive for Covid-19 during the session, some opposition parties had conveyed to the government that conducting the full 18-day session could be a risky affair, sources said.

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No record on MSMEs shut  
down amidst Covid: Centre

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After claiming that the government has no data on the deaths of migrant labourers amid the nationwide lockdown as well as doctors who lost their lives due to Covid-19, the Centre on Saturday said that it has no record of MSMEs that have faced closure in the wake of the pandemic.

Interestingly, in a written

reply to a question in the Rajya Sabha, Minister of State for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises Pratap Chandra Sarangi also said that there is no data on the number of MSMEs closed down from FY 2014-15 to FY 2019-20.

On a question on the number of small and medium businesses closed from March to August 2020 due to the economic distress, the Minister

said: "No such record is available."

He, however, enumerated the steps taken by the government to support the MSMEs to revive, including the Rs 20,000 crore subordinate debt for MSMEs, Rs 3 lakh-crore collateral-free automatic loans for business, including MSMEs, and Rs 50,000 crore equity infusion through 'MSME Fund of Funds'.

## OBTUSE ANGLE



## 'Adhika Masam Brahmotsavam' commences at Tirumala

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

The nine-day 'Adhika Masam Brahmotsavam' held once in three years began at the shrine of Lord Venkateswara at Tirumala, near here, on Saturday.

The 'Brahmotsavam' began with the hoisting of the 'Garuda' flag atop the golden 'dwajathambham' (flag mast) by high priests amid chanting of Vedic hymn amid observing Covid-19 precautionary measures, a temple official said.

Later, the centuries-old processional idols of Lord

Venkateswara and consorts Padmavathi and Lakshmi, adorned with diamond-set ornaments and mounted on Pedda Sesha Vahanam (carrier) would be taken out of the sanctum sanctorum to the Kalyanotsava Mandapam inside the shrine, the official told PTI.

Special pujas were conducted for the celestial idols, he said.

For the first time in the history of the ancient hill temple, the customary practice of taking out Lord Venkateswara in

a grand procession on the 'vahanas' (celestial vehicles) around the temple was cancelled to avoid the huge congregation of devotees due to the Covid norms, the official said.

Because of 'Adhika Masam' (an extra month which makes it 13 months this year) in the traditional Hindu Lunar calendar, two 'Brahmotsavams' of nine days each are being conducted this year, he said.

The regular 'Navaratri Brahmotsavam' would commence on October 16, the official said.

Durga temple not  
to allow Covid  
mute Dasara  
festivities

Endowments Minister Velampalli Srinivas on Saturday said that foolproof arrangements are being made to ensure smooth performance of Dasara festivities at the Kanakadurga temple with Covid protocols in place.

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# LEARNING LESSONS ABOUT CORONA THE HARD WAY

## 'ALL AND SUNDRY'

The abrupt adjournment of the Telangana legislature sine die to avert further harm to lawmakers, lawkeepers and the media from the corona virus came as a surprise. Yet, none missed the paradox behind the decision to pack up business a full two weeks ahead of the scheduled closure on September 28. Not the least the legislators. They could only have been relieved after one among them, S. Ramalinga Reddy, succumbed to Covid-19, while some Ministers, including T. Harish Rao and Mohd Ali, were laid low by the virus. Six months ago, the same

MLAs had cheered Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao as he made light of the dangers posed by virus. 'Corona cannot come to Telangana. A wretched fellow carrying the virus travelling from Dubai brought it here', A scientist, he said, had told him that corona virus could be tackled by taking a dose of paracetamol, he said, amid much mirth and laughter. A thousand deaths later, the joke is clearly on them. And KCR's unnamed source should not be in the business of science. It took much cajoling by the Centre, the ICMR and stinging comments by the High Court for a reluctant administration to step up testing and allow private laboratories and hospitals to pitch in with their resources. Had the warnings been heeded in time, the monsoon session might

**Even before becoming Congress president, Sonia had treated then Prime Minister P. V. Narasimha Rao with disdain. She would make him wait on the phone line, despite Rao doing everything to please her like conferring the Bharat Ratna on her husband and even writ**

have its full course. A heavily truncated session had little time to discuss the plan to build a fancy Secretariat building amid a fund crunch, farmers' distress due to heavy rains, and the tragic fire accident in Srisailem project. The only significant business done was the passage of an Act ushering in reforms in revenue administration. The essence of Parliamentary democracy is a meaningful discussion where

the Opposition critically examines government programmes and makes constructive suggestions. In turn, the government enjoys the right of rebuttal, besides ensuring passage of legislation. Given the intense political rivalry nowadays, steamroller majorities, and round-the-year elections, such hopes are Utopian. So skewed is the balance in TRS' favour in the Assembly that the Congress has been reduced to a rump and the space of the



**S NAGESH KUMAR**  
Former Resident Editor,  
The Hindu

main opposition occupied by MIM, a ruling party ally whose agenda is restricted largely to the Old City. As a result, the Opposition is rarely able to put the ruling party in the dock on major issues. Governance involves seeking out views of those who dis-

agree and accepting or rejecting their ideas depending the degree of reasonableness. During 1978-83, a battery of tall leaders like Gouthu Latchanna, P. Sundarayya, M. Venkaiah Naidu, S. Jaipal Reddy and Ch. Rajeshwara Rao, who adorned the Assembly, would speak for hours on historic Bills relating to education and panchayat raj. They would give a torrid time to Chief Minister M. Channa Reddy, a political heavyweight himself, on the issue of corruption. Yet, it was never a one-man show as the Congress (I) too would field its best speakers to counter the Opposition. It is different ball game today. The thrust and parry of debates is missing. KCR and his son K. T. Rama Rao have good oratorical skills and make effective use of the local idiom

to come out on top. The Minister, countering the Congress about its claims of developing Hyderabad, said his government had spent Rs. 67,000 crore in the last six years. The trouble is that the government is quick to own up surveys that project it in good light but not the ones that give it poor ranking. The Centre's surveys on ease of doing business placing it in third place behind AP and UP and a step down from its previous ranking for startups were sought to be junked. With elections to the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation round the corner, an unusual political drama unfolded. City Minister T. Srinivas Yadav drove to the house of CLP leader Bhatti Vikramarka to escort him on a tour of Hyderabad. The

flashmob-like appearance was aimed at disproving Bhatti's allegations about hollowness of government's claims of having built one lakh two-bedroom houses in the city. Evidently, it was just political grandstanding aimed at extracting maximum mileage -- a feat difficult to achieve through routine campaigning and speeches however well-crafted. One possible objective of the TRS could have been to project the Congress and not the BJP as its main challenger in the elections. The saffron party had sprung a surprise by winning four Lok Sabha seats last year, leaving TRS with a single-digit tally of nine. A similar fear lurks as the BJP claims to have recovered from its drubbing in the Assembly polls. The TRS has also to reckon with the incumbency factor in the city.

## Government introduces 3 labour Bills in Lok Sabha

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According to the minister, over 29 labour laws have been merged into four codes and that one of them has already been passed. The Code on Wages Bill, 2019 was passed by Parliament last year. Gangwar noted that the government engaged in wider consultations over these bills with various stakeholders and that more than 6,000 comments were received online on the Bills. These Bills were later sent to a standing committee and 174 of its 233 recommendations have been accepted, the minister said. Congress leaders - Manish Tewari and Shashi Tharoor - opposed the introduction of the three bills. Tewari noted these three Bills are fundamentally changed versions of their earlier forms and urged the minister to withdraw them and hold wider consultations before introducing them. These Bills are also a blow to the rights of workers, he added. Regarding the Bill on occupational safety, health and working conditions, Tharoor said it fails to have specific provisions to safeguard interests of unorganised sector workers and also that there was no exclusive chapter on inter-state migrant workers. He also said that the Bill is discriminatory since there is no specific provision on women's welfare. With respect to the industrial relations code, he said it severely restricts the right of workers to strike and also allows state or central governments to amend the threshold for applicability relating to layoffs and retrenchment. Opposing the Bills, CPI-M member AM Arif wanted them to be sent to the standing committee. Earlier, Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP) leader N K Premachandran opposed withdrawal of three Bills which the new draft legislations replace.

# Difficult to ask every visitor for declaration: Subba Reddy

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) Trust Board Chairman YV Subba Reddy on Saturday sought to clarify on his remarks regarding the declaration of faith that he had made on Friday, raising the hackles of the Opposition parties. Speaking to reporters here, Subba Reddy said that thousands of devotees from all over the world visit the Sri Venkateswara Swamy temple every day, and during major festivals, the number of visitors ranges from 80,000 to over 1 lakh. "This includes people from different backgrounds and we can't ask if all of them to give the declaration of faith. It would be virtually impossible, wouldn't it? That's all I had said," Subba Reddy said. He added: "I only said that Sonia Gandhi and former chief minister YS Rajasekhara Reddy did not give a declaration when they visited Tirumala. Therefore, there is no need for Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy to give a declaration. Rule 136 of the TTD Act says

## Naidu targets Jagan after TTD scraps 'declaration of faith' rule

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Apparently in this context, Naidu insisted that traditions that came over centuries of worship cannot be changed now. He said that any religion was nothing but the faith and trust that the believers place in their God and in the Dharma that follows with it. He said that the TTD has been following this spirit by insisting on non-Hindus to express their faith in the Lord if they want to have Darshan or take part in ceremonies at the Seven Hills. He said that a matter of faith, culture and 'Sanathana Dharma' cannot be compromised for the sake of one single non-believer. He stated that if such a spirit-

al breach was allowed, it would bring evil upon the land and its people. Similarly former TTD Board member and TD leader AV Ramana termed the cancellation of declaration norm in Tirumala temple as an attack on Hinduism. He alleged that Jagan had no faith in Lord Balaji hence TTD chairman YV Subba Reddy changed the decades-old norm, hurting the sentiments of Hindus. Former minister and TD leader Amarnath Reddy, TNSR national coordination committee member Ravi Naidu and former minister KS Jawahar demanded Jagan step down from the post of CM for hurting the sentiments of Hindus. According to a memo issued by the government in 2014, the temple authorities will ask for a declaration if anyone has any credible evidence like names,

symbols of other religion." "YS Jaganmohan Reddy started his marathon padayatra after visiting the Sri Venkateswara Swamy temple as the Leader of the Opposition. At the end of padayatra he walked up to Tirupati to reach the temple. When the YSRCP came to power, Jagan visited the temple in his capacity as the Chief Minister. There is no need for any more evidence to suggest that he has immense faith in Sri Venkateswara Swamy. That is why I reiterate that Jagan need not give a declaration," Subba Reddy said. He added that Jagan is coming to present silk garments to Venkateswara Swami on Garuda Seva Day on behalf of the people of the state at the invitation of TTD. "I have said that there is no need to ask such a person for declaration. Thousands of devotees come to Sarvadarshana every day, I just said how could we identify who among all the thousands is in which body. I urge you not to create such unnecessary controversies during the Brahmotsavams," he added.

# Covid may force early end to Parliament session

Continued from Page 1

The government then started thinking in that direction, the sources said. Several MPs had also tested positive for Covid-19 around the time the session began and they were advised not to attend proceedings. In order to prevent the spread of Coronavirus within the Parliament complex, reporters and parliamentary staff entering the premises now have to undergo the rapid antigen test mandatorily on a daily basis, according to a new protocol put in place. Besides, members of both

## Journalists covering the monsoon session from press galleries of Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha also have the option to undergo the RT-PCR test, which is valid for 72 hours.

Houses are undergoing RT-PCR tests on regular intervals on a voluntary basis, said a senior Parliament official. A MP can undergo the RT-PCR test as many times he or she likes. Since the result of the much reliable RT-PCR test takes time, the antigen test has been

made mandatory on a daily basis. Government officials accompanying their respective ministers during the bill discussions also have to show a negative report of RT-PCR test taken within the last 72 hours of their visit to the complex.

## Kannababu wants debate on overreach of institutions

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister Kurasala Kannababu reiterated the need for a national level debate on functions and overreach of the four pillars of democracy. Regarding gag order on media, the Minister said there were cases against former Supreme Court judges but never was such a gag order issued but why a former A-G or his associates, including kin of a serving judge, are so special to attract the extraordinary provisions of gag is something people are unable to understand.

## Nani defends fuel price hike

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

I&PR Minister Perni Venkatramaiah (Nani) on Saturday sought to rebut the criticism of the levy of Road Development Cess of Rs 1 per litre on petrol and diesel by accusing the Opposition of distorting facts. Speaking to the media here, the Minister said the state has been revenue deficit as economic activity had come to a halt ever since lockdown was imposed due to Covid-19. He said that it has become difficult for the Government to allocate funds for infrastructure development. The money collected from Road Development Cess will be used only for the development of roads in the state, he said. The Minister said TDP



supremo N Chandrababu Naidu collected Rs 2 per litre of fuel as Amaravati cess for Capital Development and the prices of fuel have been increased by Rs 10 per litre since last December by the Central Government. "However, such facts remain unnoticed in a section of media," he said. "Naidu didn't spend money

on maintenance of roads during his five-year rule while Jagan has given the nod to repair damaged roads," the minister said and asserted that proceeds of the Road Development Cess would not be used for any other purpose but only to develop infrastructure in the state. "Chandrababu Naidu has corrupted all the systems in the Government," the Minister said, and asked the Central Government and Supreme Court to address the concerns on functioning of judiciary raised by YSRCP MP Mithun Reddy in Lok Sabha. The Minister also suspected a conspiracy hatched by Naidu over the series of incidents taking place in temples and said the Government will probe all the incidents and the truth will be revealed.

## TRS to oppose agri Bills in Rajya Sabha

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Alleging that the agriculture Bills brought in by the NDA government would cause great injustice to farmers in the country, TRS president K Chandrasekhara Rao on Saturday asked his party MPs to vote against them in the Rajya Sabha. Observing that the Bills would hurt farmers and benefit corporates, KCR told the TRS parliamentary party leader K Keshav Rao to strongly oppose them in Parliament. "Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Rao said that the farmers and farming related Bills introduced by the Centre in Parliament would do a lot of injustice to the farm sector in the country. The CM has instructed TRSPP leader K Keshav Rao to oppose the Bills tooth and nail in Parliament, as it would benefit the corporates and adversely impact the farmers," an official release said. TRS has seven members in the Rajya Sabha. The Bills, for public consumption, say that the farmers can sell their produce anywhere in the country, but, in

reality, they would enable traders to go anywhere in the country to buy the produce, Rao said. Though the NDA government says that the farmers can sell their produce anywhere in the country, is it possible for farmers to take their produce to other places, bearing heavy transport charges, he asked. "These Bills are nothing but a sugar coated pill. This should be opposed at all costs," the CM said. KCR further said that as on date, there is 50 per cent import duty on corn and that the Centre has decided to reduce it by 15 per cent. The Centre wanted to import one crore tonnes of corn and about 70 lakh tonnes of corn had already been purchased, he claimed. "For whose benefit 35 per cent of import duty was reduced? When the country is going through economic crisis how did they take such a decision? Corn is cultivated in a big way in the country. If we reduce the import duty on corn, what will happen to our own corn producers?" he asked. The Bills were passed by Lok Sabha this week.

## TDP MLA meets Jagan, sons join YSRCP

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Kumar said he was happy to see his sons joining the YSRCP and heaped praises on Jaganmohan Reddy, terming him as a leader with guts. Declaring Visakhapatnam as the executive capital of Andhra Pradesh proved the greatness of Jaganmohan Reddy, the MLA claimed. He also took pot shots at his parent Telugu Desam Party, saying that it may not return to power. MP Vijayasai Reddy said it is heartening to see Ganesh Kumar's family extending services to the people of Visakhapatnam. "Serving the society is a noble thought," he said. According to Vijayasai Reddy, Ganesh Kumar's sons joining the YSRCP will strengthen the party. He said that educated people from the TDP are joining the YSRCP after noticing the development being done by the Chief Minister. He said that many leaders will join the ruling YSRCP in the future, and predicted that TDP will be decimated from Visakhapatnam.

# Bill against those who attack healthcare workers passed

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Rajya Sabha Saturday passed a legislation that provides for up to seven years in jail for those attacking doctors and healthcare workers fighting the Covid-19 outbreak or during any situation akin to the current pandemic. The Epidemic Diseases (Amendment) Bill, 2020, was introduced by Health Minister Harsh Vardhan in the Upper House on Saturday. The Bill was supported by the members across party lines, however, some suggested to add in its purview hospital sanitary staff, ASHA (Accredited Social Health Activist) workers and Corona warriors' in emergency services such as police and personnel from other departments. Besides, members also

pointed out overcharging by some private hospitals in the name of Covid-19 treatment, turning this crisis into an opportunity for them. The Epidemic Diseases (Amendment) Bill, 2020, will replace an ordinance issued in April by the government. The government had brought the ordinance on April 22 to amend the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897, to make incidents of violence on health workers treating COVID-19 patients a non-bailable offence with provisions of a penalty and a jail term of up to seven years. The Bill intends to ensure that during any situation akin to the current pandemic, there is zero-tolerance to any form of violence against healthcare personnel and damage to property.

Under the proposed Act, the commission or abetment of such violence will be punishable with imprisonment for a term of three months to five years, and with a fine of Rs 50,000 to Rs 2,00,000. In case of causing grievous hurt, the imprisonment shall be for a term of six months to seven years and with a fine of Rs 1,00,000 to Rs 5,00,000. While, moving the Bill for passage in the Upper House, the Health Minister said such incidents have declined since the ordinance was issued in April. "We have all noticed that there has been a dramatic decline in the incidents of violence against health workers all over the country," he said. Vardhan explained that the ordinance had to be brought as incidents of harassment and



violence against health workers were increasing, amid a lack of awareness about coronavirus. "Everyone was feeling sad and bad. That was the time the government thought of taking a proactive step. When the government reviewed, it found there were minimal laws and

powers in some states. There was a need to have a central law to put in place a prohibitory mechanism to stop such activities," Vardhan said. Binoy Viswam of the Communist Party of India (CPI), who moved a statutory resolution on the Bill, said

there are serious lapses in it as it does not address the issue of violence on health professionals within the hospitals. Many hospitals are not paying the salaries to doctors and nurses, PPE kits are not being given and safety concerns are being ignored -- these issues have not been addressed by the Bill, he added. Participating in the debate, Congress' Anand Sharma said there is a need to expand the protection to include the police and personnel of various other services, engaged in providing relief. Pili Subhash Chandra Bose of YSRCP has asked the government to add other health workers into the bill along with doctors, while Vandana Chavan of the NCP suggested adding ASHA workers also.

## 2 sell banned substance, arrested

**DURGAPRASAD SUNKU**  
■ HYDERABAD

The South Zone task force team on Saturday nabbed two persons who were illegally selling mephentermine sulphate injection, a cardiac stimulant used on the sly for performance enhancement. There is high demand for the prohibited substance in the underground market as many youth take it for body-building. However, cardiologists are against the use of this drug. It is used as an injection by some gyms as well as to increase athletic performance, strength-building, and for increasing endurance by youth during workouts.





**FARMERS EXPLAINED BENEFITS OF MODERN FARMING**  
**VIJAYAWADA:** Agrochemical Company Insecticides (India) Ltd. has taken up a CSR project under their foundation IIL Foundation to work for the farmers in the backward areas of Andhra Pradesh, with National Food Security Mission (NFSM). As part of this project, a team of agri experts from the parent company of IIL Foundation will educate farmers and also support them with the latest products, modern farming techniques instead of the traditional technique of farming. On Saturday, a programme was organised at Darmavaram village in Echerla mandal of Srikakulam district. Agriculture Officer Usha Rani, Assistant Director, Agriculture Raviprakash and MPTC B Rajarao attended the programme and addressed the farmers and explained to them the benefits of modern farming. Company vice-president VK Garg said that, "We are very proud to be associated with the National Food Security Mission (NFSM). As a responsible corporate, we will work in the interest of farmers so that their input cost is minimised and productivity is increased. Paddy is a major crop of India and is the staple source of nourishment for people in the eastern and coastal India. We are hopeful that we would be able to do justice to the trust poised by the government officials on our team."

# Durga temple officials vow not to let Covid mute Dasara festivities

**PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA**

Endowments Minister Velampalli Srinivas on Saturday stated that foolproof arrangements are being made to ensure smooth performance of Sarvarinama Dasara Mahotsavalu 2020 at the Kanakadurga temple atop Indrakeeladri with all Coronavirus protocols in place. He was speaking after attending the Dasara festival coordination committee meeting that was held here on Saturday. The Minister appealed to devotees not to bring children below 10 years and asked citizens aged 60 and above not to visit the temple during Dasara festival. He said that Dasara festival would be held from October 17 to 25. The Minister said that the famous Dasara utsavalu would be held with devotion and tradition during nine days at the Durga temple.



Speaking about the conducting of Brahmotsavalu by the TTD, the minister directed Durga temple officials to follow all customs and traditions as usual and not to hurt sentiments of devotees. He asked them to set up a command control room on the temple premises and to impose round-the-clock surveillance for safety and security purposes. Srinivas said that the online booking facility for tickets of Rs

100 and Rs 300 and free darshan has been started and said that devotees who have bought such tickets online would be allowed darshan. Responding to the cancellation of bathing and tonsure services and Giri Pradikshana, the Minister sought the temple committee to conduct another meeting with priests to take a fresh decision on the issue.

MLA Malladi Vishnu said that last year, Dasara was held with pomp and devotion and this year also, the festivities would be held with piety and the wishes of the devotees would be fulfilled while following the Coronavirus protocol. Endowment commissioner Arjuna Rao asked various departments to work in coordination for the success of Dasara festival.

Krishna district Collector A Md Imtiaz said that devotees should come to the temple in the allotted time slot and this

arrangement has been made to stop overcrowding and thus avert Coronavirus spread.

He said that rapid antigen tests will be conducted on temple priests and staff every day and RTPCR tests would be held after the conclusion of the festival.

Durga temple executive officer MV Suresh Babu said that 10,000 devotees will be allowed per day for Darshan during the nine days of Dasara festival. He said that online booking and ticket counters will be started at bus and railway stations for the devotees who come from Telangana and other States.

He appealed to devotees to follow Corona protocol during their visit to temple for Dasara festival and to cooperate with the temple administration to restrain pandemic Corona. He asked devotees who booked darshan tickets through online mode to bring print copies of the same for darshan.

# TDP stand in HC exposed it: Nani

**PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA**

Insisting that there was insider trading in the Amaravati capital location which has 'exposed double standards of the TDP', Civil Supplies Minister Kodali Venkateswara Rao on Saturday said that going by the recent developments, it seems that there is an overreach of independent institutions.

Speaking to the media here, he said it was TDP supremo N Chandrababu Naidu and his men who has sought an inquiry into Amaravati deals and were now trying to stall the probe.

Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy always had one viewpoint on the land scam and the investigation has vindicated his stand, the Minister said.

"There is every need to take up the issue at the national level and hence it was raised in Parliament," he said.

All the bravado of the TDP leadership fizzled out once the process was set in motion and TDP leaders had petitioned the High Court to stall the investigation, he said.

While asserting that the YSRCP government holds the judiciary in high regard, he however pointed out that "some institutions" in the state seem to be arrogant.

"These investigations are not about individuals or political parties but are about the wealth of the state that was plundered by the previous government, and hence, we are answerable to the poor people of the state. These minor issues will not deter us from carrying out what we had promised to the people about the irregularities of the previous government," he said.

On the issue of alleged attacks on temples in the state, the Minister alleged that Naidu was working towards disturbing the communal harmony prevailing in AP.

Responding to the criticism unleashed against the State government on levying road cess on commercial vehicles travelling through the state, the Minister said the decision was taken only towards road maintenance. He pointed out that it was far less than Rs 3,750 collected by the Central government by way of toll in the state from the trucks traversing through Andhra Pradesh.

He further remarked that the TDP has no moral ground to criticise the government.



# Why is Minister Jayaram still free, Lokesh wants to know

**PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA**

TDP MLC Nara Lokesh on Saturday demanded the YSRCP Government to explain why it had arrested "innocent" Atchannaidu in the ESI scam but was not initiating any action against Labour Minister Gummanuru Jayaram despite having clear proof of his corruption. Lokesh demanded the immediate arrest of Jayaram because of what he said was

evidence regarding the luxury car his son received as a gift from an accused in the ESI scam.

In a statement, Lokesh asked why the Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB) officials were not arresting the Minister despite having proof of his involvement. A Benz car bought with looted money was offered as a gift to the YSRCP Minister, he alleged adding that "It's brazen plun-

der of money meant for the betterment of the poor people in the State".

Condemning the lack of action against the Minister, Lokesh called it a 'loot and scot' regime in AP which was creating an all round socio-economic and political crisis affecting all sections of people in the State now. Money meant for the poor families was being looted and plundered openly without any fear of the laws of the land and the judicial institutions, he alleged.

# Eligibility criteria relaxed for horticulture posts

**PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA**

Horticulture Commissioner Chiranjeevi Choudhary on Saturday said that the State Government has relaxed some of the eligibility criteria mentioned in the notification issued earlier for 1,783 vacant Village Horticulture Assistant posts at Village Secretariats.

In a statement here on Saturday, the commissioner said as per the guidelines under implementation at present only candidates, who have completed four-year B Sc (Horticulture) degree recog-

nised by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research from any recognised university or a two-year Diploma in Horticulture from YSR Horticulture University, are eligible for the posts. No other qualifications other than these would be considered for recruitment to the posts, he clarified.

Choudhary asked the candidates to note that even if anybody appears for the examination to be held on September 25 with educational qualifications other than those mentioned as per the new guidelines would not be considered.

# No decision yet on 'Made in India' items in military canteens

**PNS ■ NEW DELHI**

The defence ministry has not taken any decision on selling only "Made in India" products in military canteens run by it across the country, the government said on Saturday.

"No decision has been taken in this regard," Minister of State for Defence Shripad Naik told the Rajya Sabha.

He was replying to a question on whether the defence ministry will consider using and selling only "Made in India" products in its stores in light of Prime Minister Narendra Modi's focus on self-reliance and "vocal for local".

In an address to the nation in May, Modi spoke extensively on the need to focus on a self-reliant India and called for promoting products made in India with a larger aim of making Indian economy stronger.

# Gas filled balloons explode during Modi's birthday fete

**PNS ■ CHENNAI**

A huge bunch of balloons burst into a ball of fire after sparks from firecrackers punctured them just before release during Prime Minister Narendra Modi's weeklong birthday celebrations here, injuring a number of people, police said on Saturday.

The incident occurred when BJP members, all set to release the balloons, burst firecrack-

ers while garlanding a farmers wing state level office-bearer, Muthuraman at Padi on Friday.

The BJP is celebrating Modi's birthday (September 17) as "Seva Diwas" for a week.

Sparks that emanated from the crackers punctured the balloons and they burst into a huge ball of fire, prompting party workers to take to their heels and the blaze dissipated in moments, police said.

# Covid-free world by end of 2021?

**NAVEENA GHANATE ■ HYDERABAD**

**Q: Research suggests that masks can be as important as vaccines. What are your observations?**

**A:** If everyone wears a mask, it is almost like getting a vaccine; it is the best prophylaxis for this virus. If everyone puts on masks, in six weeks the infection rate will drastically come down. But unfortunately people are not listening. There was a modelling hypothesis done in Harvard, where they found that if everybody in a community wore good masks, it is equivalent to implementing 90 per cent of complete lockdown. Unfortunately we got realisation late because WHO misled us stating that it is droplet infection. But research shows it is aerosol infection and one can catch infection even in a closed room, which is not properly air-conditioned. Even if you speak loudly or laugh loudly, you can transmit the infection up to nine feet. Initially we thought it is six feet distance, but now we know it is nine feet distance that has to be maintained.

**Q: Does the virus stay in the gut for long, considering faeces have traces of the virus?**

**A:** Coronavirus attaches itself to ACE2 receptors and these are present in the cells throughout the gastrointestinal tract, predominantly in the small intestine. ACE2 receptors are present in the liver and pancreas as well. So in 20-30% of Covid-19 patients there will be gastrointestinal symptoms in the form of diarrhoea, nausea, vomiting and abdominal pain. We've seen a few cases of

pancreatitis and hepatitis, especially in those people who already have fatty liver. It stays longer in the gut than in the lungs. While in lungs it stays for two weeks or at the most 4 weeks; in the gut, it stays longer -- up to six weeks. So even after someone is cured, they continue to secrete through faeces. This is called a fecal-oral route, but it is still not clear if it spreads through faeces.

**Q: Do genetics have any role in COVID-19 susceptibility?**

**A:** There is definite evidence as the incidence and mortality rates in South East Asia are less, compared to those of other countries. Even in India, the rates are not very large when compared to other populations. Vietnam, Myanmar, Cambodia also reported very low infection. There are some genetic factors that seem to protect, but then there are a lot of immunological theories. We may have had previous infection of coronavirus, they may have protective antibodies. There is possibly a genetic factor because a virus enters into our body through an enzyme called TMPRSS2. In Indians and South Asians, the enzyme is not strong.

**Q: Is the strain varying in different states of our country?**

**A:** Within the country, the strain keeps mutating; in one region, you can find a little mutation after a few weeks. Initially the original strain was not very virulent. But later on different stages of mutations came. Even now strains are mutating but this mutation is not causing a difference in virulence or differ-

With no incontestable vaccines or drugs immediately in sight to contain Covid-19, and amidst world-wide watch for light at the end of the tunnel, eminent gastroenterologist Dr D Nageshwar Reddy says confidently that mid-October would mark the beginning of the end of the pandemic. In an interview to The Pioneer, Dr Nageshwar Reddy, Chairman of the Asian Institute of Gastroenterology, highlighted the possibility of majority of people getting vaccinated by April 2021 and life getting back to normalcy by the end of 2021.

**“** Even if you speak loudly or laugh loudly, you can transmit the infection up to 9 feet  
No second peak of pandemic in India  
Wearing masks is equivalent to implementing 90% lockdown  
**— D NAGESHWAR REDDY, Chairman, Asian Institute of Gastroenterology**

ence in immunity in different parts of the country. So why is it that States like Gujarat have more deaths and Maharashtra have more cases – there may be a genetic factor or variation, which is making a difference. We haven't studied it yet in India.

**Q: What are your observations around the controversy surrounding plasma therapy?**

**A:** We believe that plasma is very effective if given early and the controversy about it is very unfortunate. We have an on-going study which states: (1) Plasma has to be given between 5-7 days and (2) Plasma should have neutralising antibodies and not just antibodies. If the neutralising antibodies are 1 in 40, then it is very effective. Most centres don't have neutralising antibodies and they are just giving convalescent plasma.

**Q: What is Long Covid?**  
**A:** People who have severe or critical disease, these people have fatigue, joint pains, inability to do their work, loss of appetite sometimes lasting 2-3 months. This is called Long Covid. The body is producing antibodies against the virus. The virus stimulates the body's immune reaction in an uncontrolled manner and becomes like auto-immune diseases. Especially in children (aged 5-10 years) who are coming with joint pains, low-grade fevers, hypertension, BP. It will go on stimulating the immune system, with the body producing antibody-antigen syndrome. This is called Kawasaki syndrome. True magnitude of this will be known next year when all this original disease is gone.

**Q: What is your observation on reinfection cases and antibody levels?**



**A:** Majority develop antibodies. Some may not have antibodies, but they will have immunity in spite of it due to T-cell. Even if you don't have high antibodies, the body recognises the virus and clears it off within 24-48 hours. All mutations occurring in this Covid-19 are outside the antibody domain called receptor-binding antibody domain. It won't cause disease again, but there will be a short span of reinfection similar to recurrent common cold. Initial reports of reinfection are not true reinfection as some of the RNA particles stay back in the nose. True reinfection is recovery from disease and documentation with other strains of virus. In India, the virus is not genotyped.

**Q: Is there a rush to invent a vaccine?**

**A:** Vaccines usually take decades because it is done in leisurely fashion. If you want to get a vaccine, it would take one year. But in the case of coronavirus it is unprecedented. The amount of money, science behind this, and the number of people following this has never happened in medical science. Permissions are being granted quickly and governments are pushing it.

We are involved in vaccine trials as well. The timelines are not abnormal. Irrespective of whether the vaccine is working or not, the producers are making vaccines because the government has written a guarantee that if the vaccine doesn't work, they will still be paid. This further shortened the duration of making vaccines. There are six vaccines that have gone to Phase 3 trials and the results are encouraging. By the end of January, we might be getting the first few vaccines.

**Q: Did we touch the peak in the number of cases? Is a second peak expected?**

**A:** We are at the peak now as we are seeing a large number of cases being reported. In September and part of October we will have peak and in the later part of November it will come down, if people take masks seriously. About the second peak, other countries are worried due to cold weather but we don't have such a problem, except for a few weeks of December when it will be cold. But again with Coronavirus we can't predict. We are doing field surveys now as part of research and in Hyderabad 20-30 per cent have antibodies; similar to the situation in other states. Once antibody levels go to 50 per cent, the rates will come down. We have 4,000 employees in our hospital. When we tested all of them, about 200 employees had Covid-19 but 400 had antibodies. There were 200 who didn't have an infection, but got antibodies. If 1 lakh people are infected, this means 2 lakh people are getting antibodies. If we wear masks, 4 times people will develop antibodies.

# Relief as RTC resumes services in Vijayawada, Vizag

**C PRADEEP KUMAR ■ VIJAYAWADA**

Saturday was a day of mixed emotions among the residents of Vijayawada, especially those who use public transport.

While there was immense relief after the city buses started plying on Vijayawada roads after a gap of about six months since the Covid-induced lockdown was announced, there was also trepidation about how safe these vehicles were to travel.

Right from 6 am onwards

the buses started zooming out of the depots and traversing six routes, while Covid guidelines mandated by the Central government were rigorously followed. Only one person was allowed to sit in the seat with the bus capacity being limited to 60 percent.

In more relief, passengers were charged a minimum fare according to the authorities. However, the APSRTC authorities made it clear that the buses will be operated only till September 26 and beyond if allowed to by the government.

Passengers were allowed into the bus after sanitising their hands and wearing of face masks was mandatory.

The buses were operated on the Mailavaram, Agaripalli, Vissanapeta, Pammaru, Vidyardharapuram and Mangalagiri routes on a trial basis.

Thermal scanning was done on passengers before they were allowed to board the bus. No standing passengers were allowed and those above 60 years too were barred from boarding the bus.

Speaking to The Pioneer, ED



Operations, KS Brahmananda Reddy said that the local bus services were allowed to ply on the roads in Vijayawada and Visakhapatnam after about six months on Saturday. "He said that about 127 services were operated in Visakhapatnam while 100 bus services were

operated in Vijayawada. All Covid protocols were followed while operating the buses from 6 am to 10 pm in various routes," Brahmananda said.

He said that about 30 per cent occupancy by the passengers in various routes was reported which was a bit less than expected and expressed the hope that from Monday, the occupancy will pick up.

Brahmananda said that passengers had been relying on auto-rickshaws, cabs and other private transport to reach their destination as the buses were

being confined to depots for about six months from almost March last week.

M Venkateswara Rao, a private employee, said that it was a great relief that the RTC has started operating city service.

He said that he was forced to take an auto to reach his work place since the past many months and expressed the hope that the bus services would be continued beyond September 26.

He said that the RTC should operate more bus services for the convenience of passengers.

# 8,218 cases take tally to 6.17 lakh

**PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA**

Andhra Pradesh's coronavirus tally touched 6.17 lakh on Saturday as the state completed a total of 50.33 lakh sample tests, returning an overall positivity rate of 12.27 per cent.

In the 24 hours ending 9 am on Saturday, 8,218 fresh cases were reported in the state while 10,820 people got cured and were discharged.

The latest bulletin said 58 more patients succumbed to the pandemic in 24 hours, taking the total toll to 5,302.

After a total of 5.30 lakh recoveries, the number of active cases reduced further to 81,763, the bulletin added.

East and West Godavari districts reported 1,395 and 1,071 new cases of Coronavirus and had 12,292 and 8,622 active cases respectively.



# MLC polls turn prestigious for parties

**K VENKATESHWARLU**  
■ HYDERABAD

Political parties in the state are taking Graduate Constituency MLC elections on a prestigious note. They are gearing up for the polls and have begun preparations at ground level. The Graduate MLC elections will be held for two constituencies—Nalgonda-Khammam-Warangal and Hyderabad-Rangareddy-Mahbubnagar.

The parties are considering these elections as prestigious and hence have already started the election process and sending voter enrolment pro-formas to the graduates to enroll their names whenever the Election Commission begins enrolment of the votes. Though the elections will be held apolitically, the political parties in the state wants to show their strength by fielding their candidates.

However, the competition is more in Congress party for the two graduate MLC tickets. Senior leaders like G Chinna Reddy is expecting ticket for the graduate MLC elections as Congress senior leader and



former Minister T Jeevan Reddy, who won the Karimnagar graduate constituency election with a thumping majority, lost Assembly elections in 2018.

Jeevan Reddy's thumping victory tempted leaders like Chinna Reddy, who also lost Assembly elections like Jeevan Reddy. Chinna Reddy has applied for the MLC ticket to contest from Hyderabad-Rangareddy-Mahbubnagar Graduate Constituency which is in the hands of BJP now. Not only Chinna Reddy but also the leaders like Ch Vamshichand Reddy, SA Sampath Kumar,

Dasoju Sravan, Kuna Srisailem Goud, who lost Assembly elections, are trying for the Hyderabad-Rangareddy-Mahbubnagar Graduate Constituency ticket along with leaders like Indira Shobhan, Harsha Vardhan Reddy and several others.

The BJP, which is stating that it is the only alternative to the ruling TRS, is preparing strategies to win both Hyderabad-Rangareddy-Mahbubnagar and Nalgonda-Khammam-Warangal Graduate Constituencies this time.

Party senior leader N Ramchander Rao is sitting

**Many senior leaders from Oppn parties are looking forward to contest polls, which in turn will benefit the ruling TRS**

MLC from Hyderabad-Rangareddy-Mahbubnagar Graduate Constituency. According to sources, the party is fielding N Ramchander Rao once again from Hyderabad-Rangareddy-Mahbubnagar constituency.

Besides these national parties, Congress and BJP, the TJS is also going to field its candidates in the MLC elections. TJS Chief Prof M Kodandaram, who didn't contest yet though he floated the party much before Assembly elections, himself is going to test his fortune from Nalgonda-Khammam-Warangal Graduate Constituency. He sought the support of the

Congress, TTDP, CPI, CPM and CPI ML New Democracy too. There are rumors that the ruling TRS is seriously trying its best to see that Kodandaram does not win these elections and is preparing Kodandaram centric plans. It's not that easy for Kodandaram to win the elections if opposition parties don't extend their support.

On the other hand, Telangana Inti Party chief Dr Cheruku Sudhakar too wants to contest MLC elections from Nalgonda-Khammam-Warangal graduate constituency. Besides these political parties' candidates, many independent candidates are also vying to contest the elections. Both Kodandaram and Cheruku Sudhakar worked with TRS chief K Chandrasekhar Rao and separated from the latter. One of the political analyst opined that many stalwarts like Kodandaram, Cheruku Sudhakar, Chinna Reddy, N Ramchander Rao, Ch Vamshichand Reddy, SA Sampath Kumar, Kuna Srisailem Goud and several others may become an advantage to the ruling TRS.

# TS Government likely to revise market value of lands

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

The State Government is keen to recover the loss of revenue due to Coronavirus through revising the value of lands upwards. It may be recalled that Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao raised the issue on the floor of the State Legislative Council on September 13.

He said the execution of the irrigation projects and implementation of the Rythu Bandhu scheme has increased the value of the lands in the open market. He said that an acre of agriculture land costs at least Rs 10 lakh anywhere in Telangana. At some places, its cost went up to Rs 1 crore, he added. The statements drop the hint that the state government is keen to revise the market value of lands upwards.

The Stamps and Registration Department has studied the land prices in the open market in 2019 and submitted a report to the government and recommended the



government to increase the land cost. As the market value is very less the Stamps and Registration Department is not able to earn enough revenue by way of stamp duty and fees. The state government did not entertain the increase in the prices of land values then. It went back fearing backlash from the people. Now the situation is totally different. There is huge variation in land prices.

In 2013, the Kiran Kumar Reddy Government revised the market value of lands in undivided Andhra Pradesh. The same rates are prevalent

even now. As per the state government's assessment, the revenue realised from Stamps and Registration Department in 2019-20 was Rs 6,446 crore. In 2020-21, it targeted to earn Rs 10,000 crore revenue. The Government of Telangana collects 6 per cent of the market value towards registration fees, stamp duty and transfer duty, while AP collects 7.5 per cent towards the same charges. By any amount, the stamp duty and registration is very less, feels the government which is toying with the idea of increasing the market value of the lands.

# HC relief for contract employees

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

In a relief to contract employees working in various government departments of the state including power utilities, a full bench of Telangana High Court comprising the Chief Justice of the state Justice RS Chauhan, Justice A Rajasheker Reddy and Justice Naveen Rao held that the employer viz-aviz state government service and service power utilities has got the power to apportion marks towards service rendered on temporary basis.

The bench, however, said that the marks, so apportioned, should not be more than 20 marks out of total marks of 100 or not more than 20 per cent of the total marks while having direct recruitment. The bench has also upheld the constitutional validity of Rule 31 of the Telangana State and Subordinate Service Rules, 1996 and added that the exercise of power under the



said Rule was legally valid. It also said that the power of relaxation of Service Rules could be exercised by the Government in order to remove the restriction on computation of temporary service imposed by the Service Rule, and to enable the temporary employee to compute the temporary service as weightage in the process of regular recruitment.

It, however, made it clear that if the Service Rules do not envisage assignment of marks for temporary service in the

regular recruitment, it was for the employer to assign such weightage. For, such a power is an enabling power. It does not bestow any vested right upon a temporary employee to insist upon extension of weightage to temporary service rendered by him," the bench said. Referring to the petitions filed on the issue. It said that as the binding Settlements require assignment of marks for temporary service in the regular recruitment, the temporary employee is entitled to seek its enforcement.

# Reach out to students in Agency, officials told

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

Tribal Welfare Minister Satyavati Rathod on Saturday called upon ITDA project officials and district tribal welfare officials to work with more efficiency to ensure the fruits of welfare schemes being implemented in the department trickle down to the beneficiaries. She reviewed implementation of development schemes in the department with ITDA project officials and District Tribal Welfare officials in a meeting held at MCR HRD Institute here on Saturday. Later speaking to media, she said that she asked the participants of the meeting to complete the works suspended mid-way due to Covid-19.

He said that the depart-



ment always puts the interests of tribals first whether food processing units are set up in tune with KCR's ideals or other industries set up. The department always strives hard to ensure the new industries improve living standards of tribals. The Tribal Welfare Minister said that the teachers asked to teachers to reach out to ST students at their homes because there are no proper educational amenities in Agency areas.

# Vijayashanthi slams KCR

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

TPCC Campaign Committee chairperson Vijayashanthi on Saturday launched a scathing attack on Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao over the death of 12-year-old girl who died after falling into an open nala at Deendayala Nagar in Malkajigiri area. "Hyderabad will enter the Guinness World records if they take into consideration the deaths due to nalas, drainages and manholes during the rainy season," she alleged. "It has become a common thing for the TRS leaders to give assurances whenever incidents like Sumedha take place. The government says that it will see that such incidents will not be repeated," she pointed out. Vijayashanti said that the TRS leaders have also got habituated that they will criticise the previous governments whenever such incidents happen.

# TS wins praise for Covid management

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

Union Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal along with Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba on Saturday held a video conference with Chief Secretaries of twelve states and enquired about the steps taken by the various states in containing the spread of Coronavirus. Cabinet Secretary complimented the state for managing the pandemic well and maintaining low case fatality compared with national average.

Ramping up the number of Covid tests and making testing facilities available in large number of locations across the state such as Primary Health Centres, Urban Health Centres and Basthi Dawakhana in the state was also appreciated by the Cabinet Secretary.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar



informed that the government is having a close watch on the situation and fully geared up to handle the pandemic, even as the number of positive cases have started declining. Explaining the various measures taken by the state government, Chief Secretary said that testing has been ramped up in the state. RT-CPR testing is being done on every person who is found symptomatic under rapid antigen test. The government has formulated a strategy to make all beds equipped with oxygen facilities.

# Cops clear traffic to help organs reach hospital

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

Hyderabad Traffic Police provided a green channel for ambulance transporting live organs. The ambulance covered 36.8 km in 25 minutes. In this year alone, Hyderabad Traffic Police has facilitated organ transport nine times.

The Hyderabad and Cyberabad Traffic Police coordinated and arranged Green Channel for transportation of live organ (Lungs) from Rajiv Gandhi International Airport, Shamshabad to KIMS Hospital, Begumpet.

The distance between Rajiv Gandhi International Airport, Shamshabad to KIMS Hospital is 36.8 km which was covered in 25 minutes. The medical team carrying live organ (Lungs) left at 13:23 hrs from RGI Airport, Shamshabad and reached KIMS Hospital, Begumpet, Hyderabad at 13:48 hrs.

Taking to Twitter Hyderabad City police



Commissioner Anjani Kumar said, "Greatest sense of satisfaction, when an Ambulance carrying live Organ was escorted from Shamshabad Airport to KIMS Hospital in 24 minutes. Though it must have caused inconvenience to some but you will agree that it was for a good cause. Kudos to traffic police and the public."

# Cong blames municipal minister for death of girl

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

AICC Member and TPCC official Spokesperson G Niranjana on Saturday blamed Municipal Administration Minister KT Rama Rao for the death of 12-year-old Sumedha Kapuria, who drowned in an open Nala at Malkajigiri on Friday. He demanded the Minister to resign for his post.

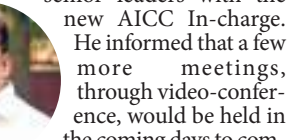
"Residents of Greater Hyderabad are afraid to step out of their homes in rains. KTR is misleading the people with figures and wasting time of officials with his review meetings without taking any concrete measures to safeguard the lives of the people," he alleged. Niranjana, in a statement asked KTR to reveal as to why precautionary measures were not put in place at vulnerable places as the heavy rains are lashing state since the last few days."

# Cong: Only KCR benefitted from TS

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

AICC In-charge for TPCC Manickam Tagore on Saturday urged the party leaders to adopt a constituency-centric approach in order to win next Assembly elections in 2023. Manickam Tagore, along with TPCC president N Uttam Kumar Reddy, had a video-conference through Zoom App with AICC Secretaries, contested candidates of Lok Sabha, former Ministers and other senior leaders.

CLP leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka, AICC Secretaries NS Bose Raju and Sreenivasan Krishnan, TPCC working presidents Ponnamp Prabhakar and J Kusum Kumar, former Union Minister Renuka Chowdhary, former ministers Dr J Geetha Reddy, R Damodar Reddy, Marri Shashidhar Reddy, AICC spokesperson Dr Dasoju Sravan, contested candidates



including Mallu Ravi, R Damodar Reddy, Anjan Kumar Yadav, Feroz Khan, Madan Mohan, Gaddam Vinod, Konda Viveshwar Reddy and S Chandrasekhar participated in the meeting. TPCC chief Uttam Kumar Reddy introduced the leaders to Manickam Tagore and said that it was the second meeting to facilitate interaction between senior leaders with the new AICC In-charge. He informed that a few more meetings, through video-conference, would be held in the coming days to complete the formal introduction of all leaders and take their views and suggestions on strengthening the Congress. He said that Tagore would visit Hyderabad in the first week of October after the end of Parliament session. In his opening remarks, Uttam said that the agenda for the meeting was to discuss membership drive, Dubbak by-elections, MLC polls and others.

# Teachers go the extra mile to teach students

**NAMRATA SRIVASTAVA**  
■ HYDERABAD

The pandemic and subsequent lockdown in the country raised several questions on the continuity of education for several students. With the schools closed for a good six months, several teachers, especially those in their fifties, have been going the extra mile to make sure that the education of their students is not affected during the pandemic. Most of these teachers, who have taught their lessons in the traditional, classroom setting for decades, have to change their medium of interaction with the kids. While initially there were a few hesitations, these teachers are learning quickly.

P Uma, a 58-year-old, government school teacher, shares how she used her time recover-



P Uma

ing from Coronavirus to learn a bit of new technology so that she can take the class. "All of it is so new. I won't claim that I have learnt it all, I am still learning and mostly my daughter helps me with various things. I teach Environmental Science to primary kids. A lot of lessons were outdoor based. But now, I perform experiments at



Murthy

home as they watch and make slides for them as well. It's nice to know that even in pandemic my students' education is not affected."

While learning new technology initially was a bit scary, most teachers are finding it exciting now. After all, as they say, there is no age to learn anything. Talking about her experience of learning new



Telichetty Ranga Bai

things at 58, Telichetty Ranga Bai, English teacher at Kendriya Vidyalaya Tirumalagiri said, "Learning new things at this age is really thrilling. Had it not been so we would have been with chalk and talk. It has also boosted our morale. I have been using Zoom and Google for taking the classes." Incidentally, it's not just the schools teachers

who have stepped up their technical knowledge. Teachers, who used to take tuitions for students also are using online medium to ensure their kids get maximum support. Murthy, a 61-year-old retired mathematics teacher, who ran tuition for students' started a YouTube channel so that classes won't stop. "I took tuition for over 20 kids. But, the pandemic halted all the classes. Many parents insisted that I take the classes, but I thought it was too risky. That's when I thought of making my videos. Initially, I understood nothing about making videos or uploading and giving appropriate captions. My son helped. Slowly, I am grasping various things. It's nice to learn something new at 61, while imparting knowledge to your students," he said.

## GIFT A SMILE



Social Welfare Minister Koppula Eshwar, MLA Arekapudi Gandhi and Ex MLA K Prabhakar Reddy donated Covid-19 response ambulances to the state government under 'Gift A Smile' initiative, on Saturday

# TRS leaders cheating people in every election, alleges Bhatti

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

CLP Leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka on Saturday alleged that TRS leaders from Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao to Municipal Administration Minister KT Rama Rao and Animal Husbandry Minister Talasani Srinivas Yadav won the elections by deceiving the people of Greater Hyderabad in every election. "The TRS leaders are troubling the people after winning the elections. Minister Talasani Srinivas left the people to the wind instead of showing 1 lakh houses in GHMC limits," he alleged.

Speaking to the media on Saturday along with V Hanumatha Rao, Dasoju Sravan and others at Indira Bhavan, Bhatti alleged that KCR, KTR and Talasani assured the people of Hyderabad that the government would give construct 1 lakh houses but the government constructed only 3,428 2BHK units. The government has to construct 96,000 2BHKs in 150 divisions (24 Assembly



Constituencies) in Hyderabad city but it constructed mere 3,428 2BHKs only," he pointed out.

He alleged Talasani showed 2BHKs in Maheshwaram, which were constructed in 2016, constituency instead of Greater Hyderabad. There is no truth in the words of Talasani, Bhatti alleged. The government vacated 150 families four years ago in Ambedkar Nagar Colony, however, the colony is still vacant till date, Bhatti alleged. "Even in Mallepally, the government left the vacant place by laying foundation stone," he said. The Congress leaders

will explain to the people of all the divisions of Hyderabad city about the deceivings of TRS party, he said. Bhatti said that the TRS government is stating that there is no vacant land in Hyderabad city to construct DBHs but the Congress is ready to show the land in Hyderabad city. "We will sit in chairs in Miyapur lands as KCR assured in Warangal that he will construct houses by sitting in the chair in Warangal but nothing has happened over there", he said. The Congress will wage the same fight for the sake of Warangal and Khammam people, he said.













SHALINI SAKSENA speaks with experts who say that the rising numbers need to be tackled on a war-footing as a 2019 report by the World Health Organisation revealed that 7.5 per cent of Indian population suffers from some form of mental disorder, which constitutes one-sixth of all health-related disorders and accounts for nearly 15% of the global mental, neurological and substance abuse burden

Triggers

■ **Stressful events:** Personal events like divorce, loss of job, death of a friend or close relative may cause depression.

■ **Family history:** Genes have a role to play, so if you have a parent or a sibling with the condition, chances are you will also develop it.

■ **Giving birth:** The hormonal and physical changes in a woman's body during pregnancy and after birth, coupled with the added responsibility of a new life, may cause postnatal depression, also known as baby blues'

■ **Substance abuse:** Sustained high consumption of alcohol and psychedellic can affects brain.

■ **Illness:** Chronic or life-threatening illness like cancer, can cause depression. Other triggers can be poor hormonal balance (hypothyroidism) or head injury.

■ **Gender:** Women are more commonly prone to depression than men, mainly due to socio-cultural surroundings.

A 15-year-old student has allegedly died by suicide because she could not cope with online classes. The Class X student, Subiksha, from Sivaganga district, Tamil Nadu allegedly ended her life on September 15, 2020 since she couldn't understand the lessons taught through the online sessions. Subiksha was depressed as she was not able to follow the lessons and feared that she would not be able to score high marks in her exams if she was to study via online classes.

On August 14, 2020, a decomposing body of a 40-year-old doctor working at AIIMS was recovered from his residence in South Delhi. Mohit Singla was found hanging in a room on the second floor, which was locked from inside. The doctor worked with Department of Paediatrics at AIIMS. A suicide note was recovered that said: 'It was his life, his choice and he didn't want to live till 60-70 years. The letter also said he couldn't hide his mental state anymore.'

On August 10 2020, a 22-year-old medical student, Vikas, had allegedly committed suicide at AIIMS. He was a second-year MBBS student from Bengaluru, and had been seeking treatment at the institute for depression.

On July 11, 2020 Dr Anurag Kumar (25), a junior resident with the psychiatry department, allegedly committed suicide at AIIMS.

Depression is a term we often throw around without realising the depth of the disease. "It is a mental health condition that affects people of all ages in the form of one or recurrent major depressive episodes that can be mild, moderate, or severe. There is no single cause of depression; it is a disorder of the brain that occurs due to a combination of genetic and environmental factors working together. It is a frequent mood disorder that is severely disabling and has a significant impact on everyday life of an individual as well as society at large, including a substantial economic burden on society," Dr Prakriti Poddar, director Poddar Wellness Ltd explains.

According to The Lancet, mental disorders are among the leading causes of non-fatal disease burden in India and 197.3 million people had mental disorders in India in 2017, which includes 45.7 million people with depressive disorders and 44.9 million people with anxiety disorders. It goes onto state that mental disorders comprised 2.5 per cent of the total disability-adjusted life-years in 1990 that increased to 4.7 per cent in 2017. Among non-communicable diseases mental health is the largest contributor to economic loss in India.

PREVENTION

✱ **Take good care of yourself. Get enough sleep, eat nutritious food, and exercise regularly.**


✱ **Reach out to family and friends if you are feeling lonely or sad and spend time with them.**

✱ **Fight stress with exercise, meditation, and yoga.**

✱ **Know yourself better. Find your strengths and pay attention to what makes your symptoms worse. This can help your doctor or therapist.**

✱ **Stick with your treatment plan. If you are on medicine, take it as prescribed.**

✱ **Do not skip sessions and tell your doctor what is and is not working for you**



"It is time we shun this one at a time approach towards depression and other mental health conditions and take up the cudgels to support them. Depression is a risk factor for suicidal thinking and good mental health care can reduce the risk, there are several ways to ensure the affected person can access these. Suicide prevention programmes and hotlines can provide support and can withhold the tendency for some time. However, the focus and its prevention draws attention away from the fact that in worst case situations depression and resultant suicidal thinking/suicide attempts/suicide can be compelling," Dr Poddar says.

The COVID-19 pandemic has added to the stress and disrupted not only just businesses but also our consumption patterns and the way we live. The pandemic induced forced work from home and online education has become the new normal. Screen time has gone up exponentially and a lack of physical activity has significantly impacted mental and physical health. Established routines are completely unsettled. Within a week of the lockdown, reported cases of mental health went up 20 per cent.

A Tata Salt Lite survey has indicated that for Delhiites, work related issues and technology related issues were the top reasons

forgetting angry and stressed. Every three out of five (61%) respondents admitted that they would feel extremely angry, make errors or even argue with their boss if they were assigned work on their holidays or if they were asked to work longer on Fridays for some urgent work.

According to Dr Raj Kumar Shrivastava, senior consultant and head, Department of Mental Health and Behavioral Science, Max Super Speciality Hospital, Patparganj, depression is the most common form of psychiatric problem. "It has always been there. Today, people have started talking about it more. People are more open and reporting is on the rise. The role of social media and the celebrities also talking about their mental health, people have become courageous. The pandemic has not helped matters. Fear of infection, losing jobs and negativity around the Coronavirus has added to the burden. There is a change in the lifestyle of people as well. The uncertainty has made people anxious. Glorifying suicide of a celebrity by the media is to be blamed. One has to understand that the person who commits suicide, that person is not mentally strong. Even the smallest things in one's life can be a trigger leading to mental illness," Shrivastava says.

The good is that stigma around mental illness is getting diluted, people are willing to talk about their problems. "However, in smaller towns the problem still continues. In the metros the situation is much better. What is more important is to look for signs. There is a term, intent to suicide in psychiatry. It may be a casual phrase which can be a phase that a person is going through. But if the phrase becomes repetitive, that is a red flag," Dr Shrivastava tells you.

Pallavi Joshi, clinical psychologist at Sri Balaji Action Medical Institute, tells you that people are more aware today and open to talking about mental illnesses. "But there is a need to go through psychometric tests and then diagnose. There are a series of tests that the person is put through. Clinically diagnosed depression is a serious problem. The present generation, if denied certain comforts feels they are depressed; this is not true. The coping mechanism is low for Gen Z now for a few reasons. Lack of physical exercise is one reason. It makes some changes in the brain. Second, the older generation was asked to do certain things like help the mother in the kitchen or offer water to the guest. Kids had household chores to do. They felt needed and had a role to play. Today, they don't have this and are unable to tackle the pressure. Contributing to the life of others has its benefits, it prevents mood swings, getting bored and falling into depression," Joshi explains.

Natasha Sharma, counselor, psychotherapist and clinical hypnotherapist opines that the younger generation has lost the art of communication because they have been living in the virtual world of social media and reality is so different.

"Therefore, the lockdown has been so devastating. Humans are social animals. We are meant to be in community. We shrivel up when there is no touch. Isolation is the severest of punishment in jails, there is solitary confinement. This is psychologically the worst thing that one can do, to a human being. Then there is an illusion of being connected due to social media. We don't pick up our phones anymore. There was a time when one had to wait one's turn to speak over the one phone in the house. Today, even with each one having a phone, we send messages. There is no face-to-face conversation. There is no touch which is a form of communication; there are verbal and non-verbal modes of communication when you are in the same room or in a relationship. What we are seeing is the dark side of technology," Natasha says.

For a person to commit suicide, research suggests that 90 per cent people who com-

mit suicide have undiagnosed mental disorder. That is not to say that because you have mental disorder, one will commit suicide. There is impulsive suicide as well which doesn't follow any steps. But suicide does involve a lot of steps and intervention therefore is required which has lot of steps. Skipping a step can result in a loss of life. Essentially, there is no one cause but a bunch of precipitating factors that come together at a particular time or stage.

Pulkit Sharma, Puducherry-based clinical psychologist, says what has changed between then and now is that on an external level. Back then there was a good support system. "People were well-connected. If something bad would happen, society would rally around the person. Face-to-face communication helped and the relationships were deep and meaningful and not superficial like today. Earlier, life was less complicated. Today, the work culture is such that the mind never gets a break. We are doing a lot and have no space to just be yourself. Social media, the virtual world, has added to the problem. One might have 500 friends online, but none whom they can really connect with emotionally," Sharma tells you.

Though people today may be doing well financially, there is a feeling of lack of accomplishment. "Beyond money, life is empty today. People are working like machines especially for those in the corporate sector. The sources on which one's self-esteem was based earlier, were deeper and were about value, ethics and work performance. Today, it is superficial; it is all about material things — it is about how much you earn, how you look and what you own. This superficial life can ditch you fast and can lead to depression. 'I have lost my charm' and 'I don't look like I used to' are common and become triggers," Sharma explains.

Since there is no or little Government help in order to reach out to people with mental illness, Natasha tells you that it is the people around, the society that needs to step in and lend a hand.

"There are rumblings that there may be something happening at the Government level. We, as a nation, are under-equipped. We have not Centre of State level policy for suicide prevention. We have no national helpline for suicide prevention, whatever is happening it is due to certain people. There are not enough mental health professionals per capita; there are not enough mental health clinics or hospitals given the population. So, the Government should take up steps. While some head way has been made, a lot more needs to be done," Natasha says.

## GATEKEEPERS ARE OUR EYES, EARS AND HANDS ON THE GROUND

Shalini Saksena ■ NEW DELHI

Last December, when Kushal Punjabi committed suicide his friends were shocked. He had been out at a friend's party on December 25, 2019 and none of his friends picked up the signs that Punjabi was depressed and when they said goodbye that would be the last time, they would see him alive. That got his good friend Harmeet Singh of Meet Brothers thinking.

"When I said goodbye to him at the end of the party I never realised that I would not see him alive again. The next day when I got the news, I was shocked; I couldn't believe it. When I went to his house and saw his mother

and sister in tears and inconsolable, I knew that I had to do something about it — how to help others. Charity, like they say begins at home and hence The WeCare Initiative was launched on World Suicide Prevention Awareness Day on September 10, 2020," the singer-music director tells you.

The aim of the initiative is to train common people as gatekeepers to who can then spot the signs of depression in others and offer help by asking them pertinent questions without alarming the person but ensuring that he opens up and gets the help that he needs. The focus is to also reduce the stigma around emotional and mental health issues, spread awareness about suicide

prevention and change the way people look at mental and emotional health. By training as many people as possible within the industry as gatekeepers, there will have eyes and ears everywhere to identify the signs of suicide and know what to do and how to help. "The idea is to train ordinary people who can identify signs of depression among others, create awareness about the issue and where necessary help the person suffering from mental illness get the necessary help he requires. The training is imparted by experts. It is a two-hour session which people can join after registering at [www.wecareinitiative.co.in](http://www.wecareinitiative.co.in) and paying a fee of ₹1,000. The initiative has been



launched with the help of a few friends and well-trained professionals. The rising rate of suicides in the country, especially in the entertainment industry, has brought the conversation around mental health into the open and that's the first step," Singh explains.

Natasha Sharma, executive director of the initiative tells you the one of the goals on their initiative is about suicide prevention and how to tackle the mental disorders. "The more we talk about it, the more it will help people. One of the reasons for the rise in suicides can be attributed to the lockdown due to the pandemic. Today, the world is a very pressured place. There is a lot of financial pressure and the younger

generation is a lot more sensitive than what people were of the 70s-80s. Anxiety is on the rise. They see everyone struggling; they are worried about their future," Sharma says.

She tells you that before any initiative starts, it is important to define a target audience.

"For us it is the entertainment industry and not just Bollywood. There is this institute in the US, the QPR Institute by Dr Paul Quinnett, founder-CEO. He has 20 years of research-based programmes and one of them is gatekeepers training programme. There is an NGO in Bengaluru, Suicide Prevention India Foundation. We have collaborated with them endorsed by

QPR Institute and we conduct gatekeeper training which teaches people who to identify signs and what to do about it. It is a sensitising training where people are taught to look for certain signs that this person is going through or attempting or planning suicide and understand what he is going through. As a gatekeeper you will know and save a life. It may be 20 years down the line but the gatekeeper will know. We realise that we can't be accessible to everyone. What we can do is train as many gatekeepers as possible to be our eyes, ears and hands on the ground. If we can train enough gatekeepers, we can prevent the next Kushal Punjabi from happening," Sharma says.







IT'S NOT HOW MUCH WE  
GIVE BUT HOW MUCH LOVE  
WE PUT INTO GIVING  
— MOTHER TERESA

VIJAYAWADA, September 20, 2020

tarot | 8



**YOUR  
WEEK  
AHEAD**

MADHU KOTIYA



**ARIES** March 21-April 19

This week some challenges are foreseen on the health front. Problems may come up at the same time and make you restless. Indigestion, gastric, BP and depression issues may crop up. Your emotions and sensitivity are badly affected. You must relax. On the career front, your work graph will take a new turn this week, as your potentials will be duly recognised. The finance part will also improve. You will feel the positive vibrations at the workplace. This is a week of attainment, accumulation and finding inner satisfaction. On the personal front, be cautious in your relationships. You may be marked as arrogant or incompatible. Married couples may not be in harmony and want their own space to escape any conflict and tension.

**Lucky number** 10  
**Lucky colour** Off-White  
**Lucky day** Monday



**LEO** July 23-Aug 22

This week you will be balancing five elements in life and have harmony between body, mind, and soul. Those with an ongoing health issue may benefit greatly from an alternative therapy like nutritional counselling, massage, dietary restriction etc. Professionally, you need to sharpen your skills. Career counselling from someone experienced would be a good idea. Attending short courses, workshops, or lectures etc will help you in your goals. Work should be going very well if you can be organised and work as per the rules. Relationship wise you are lucky as the people around you listen to you with respect and value your ideas. At professional and personal fronts, you live life king size. In love, you make an impression on your partner with your positive and honest approach.

**Lucky number** 16  
**Lucky colour** White  
**Lucky day** Sunday



**SAGITTARIUS** Nov 22-Dec 21

This is a great week for your creativity and optimism, and you believe that everything will turn out in your favour. You are generous and willing to share. You have learnt to accept your flaws and to accommodate others. It gives you the strength to be what you want to be. Health will be fine, and you will enjoy it. On the work front, a feel-good factor will bring a smile on your face. This week you find the support of colleagues and seniors, and there is a chance that your name may be recommended for promotion. Make the best use of this time. On the love front, you may have your eye on someone who you feel is not treating you the way they should. The best solution would be that you stop fantasising about this person entirely.

**Lucky number** 9  
**Lucky colour** Red  
**Lucky day** Tuesday



**TAURUS** April 20-May 20

You have overcome the challenges you were facing and are now feeling on top of the world. Appreciation for a job well done on the domestic front will be encouraging. You have the blessings of elders and it radiates your personality. You have inner satisfaction, with positive energy after easing a difficult situation. On the career front, a good message is on the cards. Some of you will be promoted and assigned an important task which will give a boost to your career. You might attend a virtual seminar or training session to enhance your skill. The stars are with you and you enjoy the results of your hard work. Relationship wise, if you like someone goes ahead and express yourself. Avoid the loose talk as this may spoil your relationship.

**Lucky number** 1  
**Lucky colour** Indigo  
**Lucky day** Friday



**VIRGO** Aug 23-Sep 22

Your efforts towards good health will pay you well this week. You feel energetic, creative, and versatile. There is a sense of purpose in life, and you are charged. Practices such as yoga, Pranayam and healing exercises help you keep fit and rejuvenated. Spiritualism will help you to restore your confidence and add a spark in life. On the career front, all of a sudden, you may find things working out much better. A powerful person is likely to support you. This is a good time to ask for a raise or to seek employment that pays more if you are so inclined. Overall, your career front is looking up. In the context of love, it's important to remember that no relationship can stand up to constant analysis. Try to give your beloved some breathing space.

**Lucky number** 20  
**Lucky colour** Golden  
**Lucky day** Sunday



**CAPRICORN** Dec 22-Jan 19

The week starts with never-ending activities such as meeting, attending to guests etc. This will give you no time for yourself. You are working hard. There are chances that you may get bruises or hurt yourself. Stay focused while you drive and take all safety measures to avoid any unpleasant situation. On the work front, you feel at ease as things are going in your favour. Great things come in a small package and this is what going to happen with you. There will be new opportunities in a job, and those who are unemployed will get that job in their desired field. On the personal front, your partner may put things in some challenging situations and give you excuses of not accepting your relationships by parents.

**Lucky number** 8  
**Lucky colour** Camel Brown  
**Lucky day** Friday



**GEMINI** May 21-June 20

This week positive energy flows in your veins. You must use this energy in some creative pursuits. This can be a very creative time for you, and a good time for you to dream, play and be inventive as a child. On the professional front, things are likely to go your way. This seems to be an excellent time career-wise. A raise or promotion is certain for those who work in the private sector. Stay focused. Approach of a senior official will help make your work easy. On the relationship front, action holds the key. You need to talk to your partner face to face to sort out the mess which has been created knowingly or unknowingly between you two. Take out some time and plan a romantic endeavour to boost up your love life.

**Lucky number** 12  
**Lucky colour** Yellow  
**Lucky day** Wednesday



**LIBRA** Sep 23-Oct 22

This week you will be filled with confidence and be in the best of your health. Your health efforts are likely to bear fruit. Do not hesitate to consider alternative ways to treat or deal with health challenges. Professionally, the way your career graph is going at present, you need a break and professional counselling. Seek some advice from your senior for better results. To maintain control over your domain and to achieve mastering in your trade, someone's guideline will give a boost to your career. Join a virtual professional course/seminar or workshop to enhance your skills. On the love front, there will be tension. A rejection or break up might be faced. The singletons will remain single. This is the time to make thoughtful bonding whether in love or marriage.

**Lucky number** 11  
**Lucky colour** Pastel Blue  
**Lucky day** Thursday



**AQUARIUS** Jan 20-Feb 18

This week, avoid anger and aggression. Listen to your body and treat it accordingly. Seek the advice of an elderly person in the family, maybe your mother or aunt. Her homemade remedies will give you relief in your current health problems. Workwise, you are filled with the guts and try your level best to achieve what you want in life. Those who are waiting for final verdict in court in legal hassle will be pleased to have the case turned in their favour. Those in media, opposition, and justice etc fields will do well this week. On the personal front, love is not happening, neither do you have time to think about the matters of the heart. The existing relationships too may suffer due to the lack of understanding and busy schedule.

**Lucky number** 7  
**Lucky colour** Brown  
**Lucky day** Thursday



**CANCER** June 21-July 22

This week you are confused and contemplating a change in your life. Health is fluctuating and affecting the quality of life. You need guidelines, a session of counselling to gain the results of your past behaviour. It is never too late to improve. Sow the seeds today for better tomorrow. On the work front, there will be challenges. With your determination and will power you are likely to take hold of the situations and emerge a winner. Electrical, technical gadgets may create problems and take most of your time. On the personal front, this week is likely to bring love to the centre stage of your life. This is either a new relationship or a powerful re-bonding of an old one. You share your joy with those around you who need it.

**Lucky number** 17  
**Lucky colour** Silver  
**Lucky day** Saturday



**SCORPIO** Oct 23-Nov 21

This week as well as in general, you need to let go of the past wounds to move forward. This is a time that you must look within yourself thoroughly to analyse the areas of fears, trying to hold onto things. Non-attachment is also freedom. Learn about the energy centres in the body and meditate on how you are functioning. Be open to changes as it is the only constant in life. This week professionally, the need of the hour is to give your time and attention to your work. You need to be sure that your work balance is where it needs to be. Make sure you do justice to your work. Avoid confrontations and conflicts with the people at work area as that will only tarnish your image. You will find success in love and rejoice this week.

**Lucky number** 13  
**Lucky colour** Rose Gold  
**Lucky day** Tuesday



**PISCES** Feb 19-March 20

Health looks promising this week. Some of you may gradually regain your health and feel a new spark of creativity. This is a great time to try a new health care approach, especially preventative care. Exercise, eating well, and making sure that you get enough sleep are all common approaches that you can consider. On the work front, a change of place, relocation, posting or transfer is on the cards. You are filled with new hopes and aspirations as it is your desired post for which you have been aspiring for a long time. The new avenues of progress will be opened, and you get a chance to prove your worth and potentials. On the personal front, you are demanding and very strict in your relationships, and this attitude will not go in married couples' favour.

**Lucky number** 3  
**Lucky colour** Peach  
**Lucky day** Saturday

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**ASTROTURF**  
BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

# Living in a giving mode

One day, sense of reasons dawned upon a feuding couple, when they came together seeking guidance on how to improve their relationship. Their common urge was: "Suggest some *puja* or such remedial measure as would help improve our relationship."

Well, caught up on the plane where the problem exists — both of you stuck to own perceptions — you can't find a way out. Unless you change your perception, things won't improve. No belief driven *puja* can invade your mind space to make necessary correction. You need to first explore the premise on which the institution of marriage stands. You may then be able to understand where you are going wrong. Following which, you may become keen to redo your perceptions.

Both of them then countered in chorus: "Sir our expectations from each other are not being met, which remains the bone of contention. Is it not natural to carry expectations?" Well, there is nothing wrong in having expectations. But before that you need to appreciate that every being is born unique. Each would thus, reflect varying desire and mind-trends, coming as they may as Karmic carryover from the past. So, differences of

opinion is natural. Coming to marital relationship, it is not simply meeting of two unique characters, but sporting different psyche as well. And it needs no elaboration that convergence of two corresponding opposites prove productive and fulfilling. When there is discord, it becomes painful. The choice is yours.

Now, how to go about? It simply calls for a lesson in the art of living, which may help you be in accord, overriding individual limitations. Here, exposure to some fundamental truths of life becomes imperative.

All existences in the cosmos — planets, stars and other astral bodies — have been serving the larger existence in a giving mode, not expecting anything in return thereof. Such a humongous crowd of cosmic bodies are in perfect harmony and balance, because they are bound by the design underlying them, with no scope for making any exception. Look at the beauty of cosmic design. All planets in the immediate galaxy, while going round the Sun, traverse their exclusive path, each respectively moving at their own speed. Each, thus, enjoys its own independent space, simultaneously maintaining relativity amongst them. It is, as if



a family discharging their individual and collective obligations in service of the larger existence. Even on earth plane, trees, plants, animals, birds and micro-organism are bound by their predefined nature, and therefore, continue serving the larger existence in a giving mode. They are not bothered who benefits, nor do they have any expectation from us. If we attend to them, it is to serve our own interest. Trivial looking termites for example, feed themselves by creating hole deep inside the soil structure. That facilitate entry of oxygen to augments earth-mass's dynamic potential. They have to, however, meet their end before the crop comes up, but not before servicing the cause of larger existence.

Human beings enjoy the exclusive privilege to guide their actions by choice and discrimination. This, coupled with the sense of ego, make them live in a demanding mode. What we forget that being an inseparable part of a unified organism, necessarily framed into an interdependent setup, we all have a shared destiny. No individual is capable of meeting one's bare existential needs all by oneself. That makes complementing and supplementing each other's efforts imperative, to carry on the cycle of life.

The problem with the two is that, bound by individualistic whims and fancies, the two are living in a demanding mode, trying to impose one's will on the other, which creates conflict. Look at your astrological pointers. Whereas one is born in Sagittarius *laguna*, with Moon there itself and placed adverse to Uranus, which implies being tactless, undiplomatic, and erratic. Mars placed adverse to Jupiter is indicative of inflated ego. Moon again ill-disposed to Neptune, implies being stuck to one's own delusional perceptions not open to look beyond for a reality check. In the other case, the *laguna* and Moon both, occupy fixed sign, which indicates fixated one track mind. Sun placed adverse to Jupiter speaks of swag-gering ego. Moon placed adverse to Neptune is indicative of being stuck to one's own delusional perception. The result is there to see. Once, you start living in a giving mode, you will care for each other's concerns and sensibilities. In the process, you will be particular about servicing each other's expectations. Your life will turn into a beautiful experience.

The writer is an astrologer, vastu consultant and spiritual counsellor. Connect with him at Tel: 91-11-9818037273/9871037272 Email: bharatbhushanpadmadeo@gmail.com







**A man extraordinaire**  
*An Extraordinary Life stands out because of the main protagonist, Manohar Parrikar*



**Living in a giving mode**  
*Once you start living in a giving mode, you will care for each other's concerns and sensibilities*



*If I look at the message I'm portraying, I think it definitely is be who you are, but be your best you*  
— Kim Kardashian



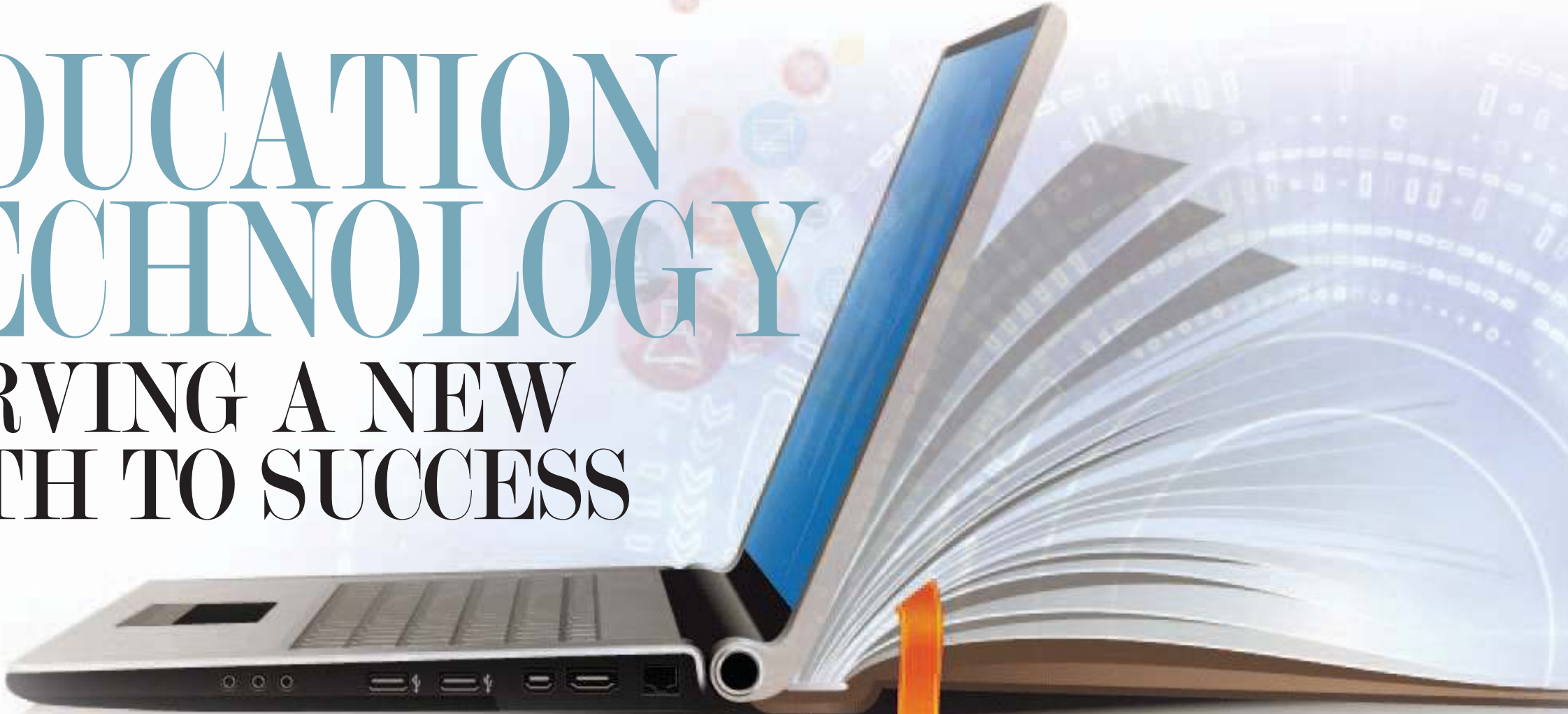
the pioneer  
agenda

FROM THE INSIDE

The Ed-Tech industry in India has been going through three major push backs including resistance from schools, the lack of trust in online education and the reach of internet and communication devices such as computers, tablets and mobile phones. Covid-19 served as a catalyst in resolving these concerns. The outbreak encouraged schools and other educational institutions to embrace technological solutions, writes PRAVEEN PARAMESWAR

# EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY

## CARVING A NEW PATH TO SUCCESS



Covid-19 has taken the country off-guard and is seen impacting the Indian economy. As per the Moody's report published in June 2020, India's GDP is expected to shrink by 3.1%. Going one step further, the Dun and Bradstreet Report released in August 2020 predicted that the GDP would contract by 4.5% this fiscal year. Amidst these daunting numbers, one industry that is still reflecting a ray of hope while showing unprecedented growth in India is the Education Technology, that is, the Ed-Tech sector. RS Components, analysing the Crunchbase data, observes that other than the USA, India is the second country that hosts the most number of Ed-Tech companies in the world.

In 2020, Ed-Tech stands as the most funded business sector in India. Only between January and July \$998 Mn has been invested across 31 deals. Furthermore, the ed-tech sector, according to the Omidyar, Redseer report, 2020, is expected to touch a size of \$3.5 Bn by 2022.

To understand the inner working of this sector and map its growth, let us delve deeper and analyse the current scenario along with the latest trends, impact, opportunities, possible pitfalls and the way ahead for the Ed-Tech industry.

**INDIAN ED-TECH INDUSTRY: GROWTH AND INVESTMENT**

The umbrella term of 'Ed-Tech' largely consists of five segments, which include Online Teaching and Test Preparation; Assessment, Guidance and Mentoring; Skill Development and Certification; Professional Development Programmes, Infrastructural and Administrative Solutions. Amongst these segments, Online Teaching and Test Preparation leads the market with a 64% share and further anticipating size of \$515 Mn by 2021. The sector is lately experiencing a boom as it alchemises with artificial intelligence and neuroscience

The growth of Ed-Tech in India started around 2004-05 when ventures such as Everonn, NIIT and Educomp made their mark through digital course content, smart classrooms and skill development programs. The industry has been reaching new heights with 3000 companies, including Byju's, Unacademy etc. along with various investors like Tiger Global, General Atlantic, Steadview Capital, GGV Capital, Foundation Holding, Aarin Capital, Simplilearn and Blume Ventures venturing into this landscape.

**IMPACT OF COVID-19**

The Ed-Tech industry in India has been going through three major push backs including resistance from schools, the lack of trust on online education and the reach of internet and communication devices such as computers, tablets and mobile phones. Covid-19 served as a catalyst in resolving these concerns. The outbreak encouraged schools and other educational institutions to embrace

technological solutions. In addition to this, it also influenced offline institutions to collaborate with companies such as Embibe and Simplilearn.

Not just this, parents are also trying to adapt to the new normal and subscribing to educational help platforms such as Byjus or Toppr or Global Shiksha, Khan Academy and others. People are going an extra mile to adapt to the Ed-Tech culture and connecting internet, mobile phones, TV, computers and tablets more to learning.

**THE BENEFIT COMMON PEOPLE ENJOY FROM THE GROWTH OF ED-TECH**

The growth of technology in the education sector is, in fact, impacting lives of millions majorly in five different ways:

- Many of the top-notch teachers, courses and institutions were only accessible for people who live in the city. But technology dilutes the geographical borders. Today, a person sitting 200 kilometres away from a city like Bangalore or Mumbai or Thiruvananthapuram or Lucknow would get easy access to high-class lectures and tutorials.
- Platforms such as Unacademy and Upgrad are helping people to learn/get certified/professionally qualified even along with the job they do. This helps more people to up-skill them without moving out of jobs.
- Technology in the coming years shall make education accessible for more people who are not able to afford fees at schools or colleges. This would also help the government to provide education to children and adults without much capital investment in high rise buildings and infrastructure, leading to the real democratisation of education in India.
- Assessments, guidance and mentoring are some of the areas that have to consider multiple data points at the same point. Most of the time these aspects go wrong in education as it is humanly impossible to consider multiple variables together. High profile technology is, in fact, solving this problem to a large extent. This would make assessments, guidance and mentoring people easier and more accurate, thus the right people would reach the right places in life.
- Another major impact of Ed-Tech in the life of common people is that education becomes more effective through visual aids, augmented reality, virtual reality and videos with meaningful graphics. This will help children and adults to comprehend the conceptual level of knowledge rather than mugging up as used to happen during the early days.

**CURRENT TRENDS IN THE ED-TECH INDUSTRY**

The current trends in the Ed-Tech industry in Indian can be presented through the following four points:

- The growth of Ed-Tech in India is not a linear or organised graph. It becomes extremely dynamic in nature. Thus only companies who are really agile, open to change and vibrant can sustain in the market.
- Early entrants to the market who could

WE SHOULD AIM AT MAKING INDIA THE HUB OF EDUCATION TECHNOLOGY, WITH THE MOST NUMBER OF COMPANIES, MAXIMUM INVESTMENT AND HIGH MARKET SIZE. THIS NOT ONLY ENHANCES BUSINESS IN THE COUNTRY BUT ALSO TAKES INDIA TO THE NEXT TRAJECTORY OF GROWTH. THIS WOULD BE THE RIGHT TIME TO DEVELOP 'MAKE IN INDIA' AS THE MOST POWERFUL BRAND IN THE GLOBAL ED-TECH SPACE

raise considerable capital, such as Byjus, increased the quality of content, visual treatment and sophistication of technology to a very high level. This demands any new entrant to match the high standards of their products, in order to satisfy the customers.

- Ed-Tech being a very large and broad industry with too many areas to address, a collaboration between non-competing players is becoming a new norm. Assessment companies joining hands with content providers or infrastructure agencies partnering with skill development companies are a few endeavours taking place all across the globe. Organisations have understood the power of co-creation of success.
- The New Education Policy (NEP-2020) sets the tone perfectly for the intervention of technology in education. This would enable the Ed-Tech industry to make India globally competitive.

**FUTURE AVENUES FOR START-UPS**

The significant areas where new startups can work on and create new horizons of growth will include the following:

- **Vernacular Languages:** 80% of India speaks vernacular languages. The New Education Policy, 2020 (NEP), also emphasises on education through regional languages. In every vertical, ranging right from online tutoring to skills development to assessments, vernacular content is yet to be well addressed. To understand its nature, it is important to note that even a unicorn such as Byjus has not started venturing into the vernacular market yet. Addressing the education requirements through all 22 officials in India would be a great space for start-ups to play.
- **Technological reforms of the 21st century:** Even though many companies claim that they use the technologies of the 4th industrial revolution such as artificial intelligence, augmented reality, big data analytics etc., very few companies use them productively, that too on a very small scale. Majority of the brands attempting to amalgamate artificial intelligence in their modules/ approach are yet to tap into its true potential. On the other hand, some companies use augmented and virtual realities mostly to enhance marketability than to manifest its real power. This is where the start-ups can work on and develop cutting edge technology solutions that can power any or all of the 5 segments in the ed-tech industry.
- **Research to blend Technology and Behavior Science:** This is an area where research-based startups can pitch their ideas. Currently, a gap that the

Ed-Tech industry is coming across includes not having alchemists who can blend technology and behavioural sciences seamlessly. Insightful research is one factor that could help in bridging this gap. Multifunctional teams consisting of technologists, psychologists, sociologists and neurobiologists can identify hundreds of areas that require in-depth attention in the ed-tech domain.

- **Assessments, Guidance and Mentoring:** Right people reaching the wrong places causes huge loss. In addition to this, financial loss, lack of happiness, fulfilment, purpose are some vital elements that people largely lack. This can be resolved through addressing assessment, guidance and mentoring techniques in the most appropriate manner. Startups who tap this nerve of the market can become the game changers of the sector while rightly using the modern-day technology and immersive solutions to one's benefit.
- **Skill Development:** National Skill Development Council (NSDC), various Sector Skill Councils (SSCs) and different State Skill Development Missions (SSDMs) are on a mission to bridge India's skill gap. The speed of change in technology is expected to make more than 48% of jobs obsolete in the next ten years, as observed by the Oxford Martin School study. This makes it inevitable to train every student with the best skillset, thus requiring more players to step forward and up-skill a large proportion of our workforce.

**POSSIBLE PITFALLS FOR STARTUPS**

Considering that the Ed-Tech industry is hardly 14 to 15 years old in India, its infancy stage does not enable the newcomers to learn from a plethora of successful cases. Thus, there are a lot of chances that lack of understanding of the market or misjudgment might make startups err. Some of the possible mistakes are listed below.

- Online tutoring and test preparation through video content would be a business with fewer obstacles here and there. Thus many people may just take a deep dive, considering the growth of ed-tech experiences. It is a fact that the market still has space for newcomers. But the incumbents have raised the bar of quality very high. Therefore any person who gets into the market with a couple of lakhs investment on a camera, microphone, a bunch of amateur teachers and a website created out of a template in Envato would not be growing further. If the newcomers overcome the current quality players in the market, it will get easier for the sector to grow.
- Many of the start-ups see a captive market inside schools and with gov-

ernments. Even though the cost of acquiring customers would be lesser, compared with the direct to customer strategy, time to close a deal would be very long in the B2B or B2G segment. Time and money would be lost if the newcomers wait to close large businesses with governments or large school chains. Thus it is ideal to start with direct access to students and keep B2B or B2G as a parallel track.- Education is a vertical where human behaviour and mindset carries a lot of significance. Only if technology solutions can consider the behavioural aspects as well, companies can sustain the market. Many players only develop a team consisting of technical experts or some content developers, but miss out on collaborating with behaviour experts. This could serve as one of the common mistakes and should be avoided.
- The pandemic might be serving as a catalyst but it is imperative for us to remember that this scenario would last forever. Education will not travel backwards from the current affinity that it's built with technology. It's essential for one to have a plan when thinking about the road ahead for their venture.

**THE WAY FORWARD**

In India, the education sector is considered as one of the most stable, robust fields with low-income elasticity. According to the Economic Survey (2018), the income elasticity towards the healthcare sector was 1.95, whereas it was 0.93 for products in the education sector.

This scenario, along with the wide acceptance of ed-tech during Covid-19 would certainly lure more investments in this industry. In this case, the intervention of policymakers, influencers, launchpads and mentoring bodies should be focusing on channelising this growth to the right direction by ensuring entry of companies to the appropriate areas, channelising investment to the organisations attending the right requirement and helping ventures with proper hand-holding. We should aim at making India the hub of Education Technology, with the most number of companies, maximum investment and high market size. This not only enhances business in the country but also takes India to the next trajectory of growth. This would be the right time to develop 'Make in India' as the most powerful brand in the global ed-tech space.

The writer is CEO, Lifology. Lifology is India's first career eco-system for parents







HOME THEATRE

Laugh the American way



**OUR CARTOON PRESIDENT**  
Disney+Hotstar  
Season 3, Episodes 10  
Animation  
Rated: 6/10

Trump roasts Trump with his own signature brand of stupidity, outrage and elan. Season 3 takes off with the Impeachment sham that Trump survived with flying colours. As he puts it: “I can do anything and get away with it as I have been chosen by the people of America.”

The self-deprecating humour, the audacity of impunity that Trump wears brings in a lot of laughter into this very American series much like *The Simpsons*. It will appeal to the people who are in the knowledge of America’s domestic politics, policy blunders and the demeanour that the President sports.

Trump is undoubtedly a globally recognised political

clown so situations around him are insanely funny and the scriptwriter has done well to catch all the nuances to present Trump roasting himself, more specifically roasting the citizens of America for voting him in.

Ticklish subjects like foreign affairs, economy and the upcoming Presidential elections are issues some of the episodes touch upon and that includes the Clintons coming into the picture from their living room television viewing and keeping their hyper candidate in the race who is on a personal high of anxiety, aspiration, scepticism of her prospects and yet compelling optimism in dreaming to be the possible first-ever native American woman President!

Entirely up to you whether you are in a mood to connect to this sort of very American comedy. One thing is there though, Season 3 shows no fatigue whatsoever in pressing the funny bone button.

Sleep over this one

**HOLLY SLEPT OVER**  
Amazon Prime  
\*ing: Josh Lawson, Nathalie Emmanuel, Britt Lower, Erinn Hayes, Ron Livingston  
Rated: 3/10

Some movies are made out of nothing, conveying nothing and thinking nothing about the amount of waste they produce. *Holly Slept Over* tops in that segment. A thoughtless, disastrous comedy-drama propelling sexual adventurism to save a sagging marriage where sex has become boring and a tool to somehow have babies, it is a romp in the bed by a committed couple and the wife’s lesbian girlfriend who stops over for a night after 12 years of a breakup.

Other than the protagonists being extremely pretty, the house where the action takes place being sexy, the neighbours having their own between the sheets issues with yucky outcomes, there is nothing in the movie that will keep you interested, or let me say not get you irritated.

Holly (girlfriend) breezes into the couple’s home with not even a blink, sleeps straight seven hours, gets up all decked up and her friend’s husband proposing a threesome! They agree and do it without wasting any time or sparing a thought to even their



viewers. And then it is all over, Holly leaves, the couple rocks and the neighbours too learn to live, well, between the sheets once in a while.

Who, how, what, why? Don’t look for answers in this one which much too casually degrades the entire institution of marriage, fidelity and the works.

Can be totally ignored even on a very idle week day or week-end.

Watch it for Holland & Pattinson

**THE DEVIL ALL THE TIME**  
Netflix  
\*ing: Tom Holland, Robert Pattinson, Bill Skarsgård, Jason Clarke, Eliza Scanlen  
Rated: 6/10

Almost all of us find it difficult to see a character that we have followed over years and identify with, see playing another role — definitely not the fault of the actor. But the truth is that the characters that they have played leave such an impact that it becomes impossible to break the mould in which we are used to seeing them. This probably makes the task of the director and the actor tough but the end result is worth it and *The Devil All The Time* is a prime example how actors step out of the mould that viewers put them in and show that at the end of the day, it is job and a role that they stepped into even if it was for a few years.

The psychological thriller based on the novel of the same name by Donald Ray Pollock is directed and co-written by Antonio Campos and produced by Jake Gyllenhaal and Randall Poster. The story is simple enough. But there are many characters

and while it does, at times, become difficult to follow the thread of each character’s journey, they tend to collide with each other from time to time. The way it all comes together is interesting.

What is even more brilliant about this movie is the performance that Tom Holland and Robert Pattinson have given. Holland as a young man trying to protect his family from all the evil gives a stellar performance. However, it is Pattinson who stands out here even though he doesn’t have as meaty a role as Holland. He may have a total screen presence of 30-35 minutes but the way he manages to break away from Edward Cullen is stunning. As the preacher in this one and a high-pitched Southern drawl, he is a surprise.

A report says that the actor had crafted the accent in his room for days and didn’t let anyone hear it — not even Campos. It is riveting to watch him deliver the dialogues in this accent, so different from the extremely polished Cullen.

While the movie itself doesn’t have much to say apart from the good versus evil, God versus the devil, what makes this 138-minute film worth a watch are Holland and Pattinson’s acting.

— Shalini Saksena

Smashes patriarchy



**DOLLY KITTY AUR WO CHAMAKTE SITARE**  
Netflix  
\*ing: Konkana Sen Sharma, Bhumi Pednekar, Amol Parashar, Aamir Bashir, Kubra Sait, Vikrant Massey, Neelima Azmi  
Rated: 5.5/10

Off late, Bollywood has started making movies that are beyond glam women and having them be an arm candy for the hero and do a song and dance. Not that there is anything wrong with such films, the only problem is that few realise that what they see on the screen is a make-belief world and there is more to life, especially for women — they have aspirations, ambitions and needs.

*Dolly Kitty Aur Woh Chamakte Sitare* by director Alankrita Shrivastava and produced by Ekta Kapoor and Shobha Kapoor under their banner Balaji Telefilms is one such film. Shrivastava is known to make films that explore gender roles and the judgement on how women in our society should behave

without questioning the moral values of the men. The film tries to bring out complexities of relationships, questions what is right and wrong as the story progresses.

The good part is that it doesn’t pass any judgement on the choices the women make. In fact, it goes on as far as saying that it was the choice that they made because there is more to them than needs to be explored. The two-hour running time may appear to be a bit longer than what we are used to, but the story keeps the viewer engrossed.

Konkana Sen as Radha *aka* Dolly gives a great performance as she explores her relationship — with her husband, with her younger son, with her sister, with her a delivery boy and her mother. Bhumi Pednekar as Kaajal *aka* Kitty too gives a brilliant performance. Amol Parashar, Vikrant Massey and Aamir Bashir do justice to their performances.

— Shalini Saksena

Plan Your Day

Catch your favourite musicians live in an all-star virtual fundraiser event ‘Together, Louder, Stronger’ on September 26, 2020 at 6:30 pm, helping and supporting the performance industry workers and folk artists during the ongoing pandemic crisis.

Hosted by Anahad Foundation and produced by Believe Entertainment, the digital event will be live on Facebook and YouTube and will see a stellar line-up of 20 mainstream, independent and talented artists like Shaan, Mame Khan, Jonita Gandhi, Benny Dayal, Mamta Sharma, Bhuvan Bam, Nithyasree Mahadevan and many more supporting the cause and raising funds during this critical time.

Tune in to this exclusive digital event and provide your support to the entertainment industry — Together, Louder, Stronger!

Log on to <https://www.facebook.com/anahad.ngo/>.

TELLY TALE

MEET THE NEW KOMOLIKA

Nowadays actor Paritosh Tripathi is making the audience love him more by playing various Bollywood actors in the



show *Filmistaan* on Star Sharat. Everyone is already loving the comic tuning between Sunil Grover and Paritosh Tripathi. People are appreciating their work. Paritosh has not stopped here, the actor cum writer is all ready to play the most loved vamp in the *saas-bahu* series, none other than Komolika, this will be a site to watch. He is gathering much popularity in the orange shimmer *saree* draped in Bengali style with perfectly curled hair and make up that is making him look more like the character.

On this new look Paritosh comments: “Initially when my show maker Preeti Simoes, came to me with this idea of playing a popular female antagonist character, I was not very sure about it. But she convinced me, and I was ready to do it. Till date I have played many characters in the show, most of them have been male. I was not very sure that my audience would accept me in this new *avata*r? Will I do justice to the Komolika character. I did my best, and when the pictures were out on social media. I was blown after receiving so much love and comments like: cute, beautiful and charming which I am still receiving. I am loving it.”

We will watch Paritosh doing this fascinating act soon in the show.

SATYAJIT SHARMA’S NEW OUTING

Impressing the television viewers with his power-packed roles, renowned actor Satyajit Sharma is all set to venture into the digital space with ALTBalaji and ZEE5 Club’s upcoming web series *Bicchoo Ka Khel*. The stellar actor will be seen essaying the role of Anil Chaubey, an overconfident lawyer who brags about being the best criminal and civil lawyer in the state. Alongside him, the crime drama will see other talented actors like Divyendu Sharma, Anshul Chauhán, Mukul Chadda, Gagan Anand, Zeishan Quadri, amongst others.

The popular TV actor is a known face amongst the masses, having starred in a host of daily Hindi soaps. *With Bicchoo Ka Khel*, he will be playing the role of a lawyer with top connections to the mafia and the cops who help him to create his empire.

Speaking about the series, Satyajit Sharma quipped: “It feels great to be a part of a crime thriller like *Bicchoo Ka Khel*. I play the character of Anil Chaubey, an overconfident lawyer who’s been a jugaadu since childhood. It has been extremely interesting to act in the series with a talented cast and a great crew, an amazing



storyline. I hope the audiences enjoy and shower their love for my character and the series.”

*Bicchoo Ka Khel* is a crime thriller that revolves around the story of Akhil, a budding writer whose life is nothing less than a roller-coaster ride with twists and turns to keep you at the edge of your seat.

SAMBHAVNA ALL SET TO PLAY MAHUA

Bollywood sensation, performer, and vlogger, Sambhavna Seth has made her mark in the entertainment industry. The actor will be making her comeback to television and is all set to make heads turn as she enters &TV’s *Gudiya Humari Sabhi*



*Pe Bhari*. Portraying the role of Radhe’s (Ravi Mahashabde) first wife Mahua, Sambhavna is all set to wreak comical havoc in the lives of the close-knit Gupta family.

Adding an extra dose of entertainment and humour to the chaos, Mahua comes with her son that leads to creating an unsettlement in the family to the extent that Sarla (Samta Sagar) goes to stay in the Haveli. The most fun part, however, is that Radhe has no memory of ever getting married to anyone besides Sarla, forget having a child. What unfolds is a comical situation that develops between these three characters.

Expressing her excitement, Mahua *aka* Sambhavna Seth says: “I am excited to back on television to portray the role of Mahua in a light-hearted show on &TV, *Gudiya Humari Sabhi Pe Bhari*. This is the first time I will be exploring a light-hearted genre. As Mahua now enters the show, the audience will now be privy to a higher notch of comical chaos and entertainment. I am sure the audience will enjoy this new role of mine and continue to shower me with their love and support. I am eagerly looking forward to work with everyone in the show.”

DISNEY BRINGS IMAGINE THAT

Disney Channel is all set to treat its young viewers and families with an all new DIY show *Imagine That*. Helmed by every child’s favourite art mentor and friend Rob, the show brings imagination alive through DIY with upcycling as the key theme. One of the pioneering faces of DIY art, Rob promises to take the Imagine That experience to a whole new level for young fans and their families.

The show will focus on a child’s natural creative palette through experiential initiatives, all centred around repurposing. The show will see Rob engage with children as their mentor and friend who encourages their imaginative minds through fun and innovative DIY. It aims at inspiring the young ones to create top quality art out of materials that are usually discarded at home. Be it robots from bottle caps, monsters from egg shells, gorillas from kitchen cutlery, fish out of cables and other home e-waste; *Imagine That* will focus on upcycling everyday items and much more.

“A child’s mind is filled with curiosity and imagination and with *Imagine That*, we are encouraging kids to push the boundaries of their creativity. The show, will take DIY a step further by making innovative and fun artsy products out of simple and easily available day-to-day things. I believe that imagination and creativity together can make a change the world we live in and this show will help kids and their families have lots of fun with DIY while understanding the process of repurposing,” said Rob.

Disney Channel has been consistently bringing fun and wholesome entertainment for kids and families. Post a successful summer with new series such as *Bapu, Guddu and Gadget Guru Ganesha*, the channel now extends a new treat filled with imagination and creativity with *Imagine That*.

‘I love playing Kalyani’

SHEETAL MAULIK, who plays Kalyani in *Pyar Ki Luka Chhupi*, speaks with SHALINI SAKSENA about how she ended up playing a negative character, her first break and challenges in shooting under the new normal

■ You play a negative character in *Pyar Ki Luka Chhupi* for the first time. How is it going?

I am thoroughly enjoying it and the same can be seen on screen. It depends on how far you are willing to take the role and how you play it out. You know your limitations and playing such a character is tougher since you are not playing just one role. Earlier, I have been part of comedy shows and done lead roles that have been positive. Doing a show where you are playing a negative role, it gives you an opportunity to explore yourself and do something that you would not do in real life. You are portraying something that is opposite to what you are, be negative and yet be funny.

■ Were there apprehensions in taking up the role?

I have always wanted to explore my acting abilities. When I got an opportunity to be part of this show, I had no reason to turn it down. There were two things playing. First, I have been waiting to work with the makers of *Pyar Ki Luka Chhupi*. Second, since I had already done lead roles and comedy, I wanted to take up this project. The only challenge was to train myself for the accent. Kalyani is a totally Kanpuriya woman.

■ You also had to perfect a new language. What was the preparation?

When I gave the auditions, I knew that I didn’t have the accent correct. The only reason why I got the role was because they felt that I could act. But after that the team really helped me. The script comes in the language that I am supposed to speak. The only thing that I had to perfect the accent correctly for the dialogues. For this, I heard a number of jokes from the region. An assistant, Prem, who is from the area, would tell me how to speak certain words. This helped.

■ How did you get interested in acting?

I am a trained Bharatanatyam dancer. I have been dancing since I was three. I still practice it and Kuchipudi. There was a contest but I couldn’t participate. The organisers asked me to open the contest. I performed. Sachin Pilgaonkar, who was there, told me to take up acting. I told him, I couldn’t act. He said not to worry and took me for a role in an episodic show of his. Once the make-up is on, it has been on. I have done Hindi and Marathi theatre. I have worked with the likes of Bhavana Balsavar and Shubha Khote. My journey has been that of a learner. I have not taken any acting lessons. I am able to emote and understand the character because I have done theatre.

■ How did you get your first break with *Akkad Bakkad Bambe* Bo?

Actually, I did *Hello Dolly* before this. I had played a kleptomaniac for production house Sagar Films Pvt Ltd. When they came up with *Akkad Bakkad Bambe* Bo, they knew I could act and that is how I came on board for this



project as a lead. It was a different role. I played a student.

■ You have now been in the industry for over a decade. How has the journey been thus far?

It has been good. One has to go with the flow. Yes, there have been changes. But if we don’t move forward, we won’t be able to move past the negatives. The good is that we are paid better. Then, there were actors, today we have stars. It is important to understand that change is a reality. To accept it is necessary. When I was young, I played roles according to my age. Now I am doing roles that fit my age.

■ What is the toughest thing about being an actor?

Everything that comes your way is

tough. Even with Kalyani’s role, I still get butterflies when I am on camera. There is always the fear that I may not be able to remain the skin of the character. The good is that it makes me more determined to do my work better.

■ How tough is it to shoot under the new normal?

When we first started, I was afraid. I have a four-year-old daughter. My father lives with me. The fear was very high. I was not sure whether I should get back to work or not. But the makers have been thorough with precautions and I am doing the same.

■ What next?

I am concentrating on this show. I work 25 days a month. The rest of the days I want to spend with my family and catch up spending time with my daughter.



# Undaunted by failure humbled by **Success**



Not all of us have an easy journey to success, in fact it comes naturally to very few. All others have to work hard to be deemed successful. One such person is Mitte Sreenivas, the Deputy Inspector General of Police, Telangana State who has handled many responsibilities with aplomb, including heading the CID team. His journey towards a successful career hasn't been an easy one. In this candid conversation with **The Pioneer**, Sreenivas speaks to **NAMRATA SRIVASTAVA** about his childhood, becoming an entrepreneur and the hard work behind becoming an IPS officer.



## **A MISCHIEVOUS CHILD**

I hail from Mahabubnagar. Although I studied in Hyderabad till fifth standard, my family moved back to Mahabubnagar. My father was a businessman and my mother a housewife.

I was the most mischievous of my siblings. I was good at studies, but I really liked spending time with my friends. So after school, we would go out and play cricket or football. We were a naughty bunch, so we would do some badmashi as well. It was a great time, I don't have many pictures of those times since taking photos everyday wasn't so much popular as today, but I cherish those memories even now.

I was ambitious right from my young age. I remember at that time, students would opt for either engineering or medicine. I was inclined towards becoming a doctor.

So, after completing my schooling and Intermediate, I came to Hyderabad, rented a small room and dedicated my heart and soul into clearing the medical entrance exam. I gave the examination twice, but somehow couldn't get a very good rank.

That was the first time in life I realised, by experience, that we have to face failures at some point or the other in life. No matter how careful one is, everyone faces failure once in a while - it's natural.

A successful entrepreneur Since I couldn't do well in the medical entrance test even after putting in two years of hard work, I was in a bit of a dilemma about what to do next. A friend of mine informed me about this course in Osmania University, that students could take in one

sitting instead of three years. I don't think it's in practice anymore.

But I thought that was a good way of getting a degree in a year and not wasting valuable time. So, I got a Bachelor of Arts from OU and started looking for work opportunities.

It was then that I got to know about the mining sector booming in Karnataka. So, I and three of my friends started a mining company in Karnataka and we dealt with manganese ore.

Most people get shocked when I tell them that at the time when we started the company, I was just 21 years old.

Fortunately, within just a few years, the company was thriving. We had a very handsome and stable income. It was very gratifying to know that at this small age I was able to amass so much and was running a successful company.

But, there was certainly something amiss. I wanted to do more, but at that time did not know how.

## **THE TURNING POINT**

One day, I believe it was a Sunday, we four (I and three of my friends, who were also the partners in the mining firm) were at home, and received a call that a few of the workers in the mining company had fought amongst themselves and were taken to the police station. I went there and met the IPS officer posted at the station. He was very supportive. But, the way he carried himself and spoke impressed me a lot.

By the time I returned home, I had already decided that I too wanted to wear the uniform. So, I

sold everything, came back to Hyderabad and put every waking hour into studying for UPSC. I tried a lot of times, but things didn't work again. So, I also competed in the Andhra Pradesh Public Service Commission, for the post of Deputy Superintendent of Police. I got to know that based on my performance here, I could become an IPS officer. I put in my best, and got through the examination. I was promoted as an IPS within a few years.

## **RAISED BY A STRONG WOMAN**

My mother was my biggest inspiration. I lost her a couple of years back. When I was 10-11 years old, one day the Collector of Mahabubnagar district visited our area. We were facing some water issues then. My mother went to speak to him about it and took me along. But, back in those days, bureaucrats hardly met the general public and my mother wasn't allowed to meet him. She was very bold. So, in front of at least 20-25 people, she held my hand and said that one day my son will become a collector too.

I didn't understand it then, in fact I was confused about how I could become a collector. Even when I ran a successful business she kept prompting me to try for UPSC. In fact, I might have stopped attempting to be an officer, had she not constantly motivated and encouraged me.

She was very happy when I became a police officer, but she would always say that I couldn't become an IAS. She taught me to be a fighter and never to give up. I really miss her a lot.

## **DOTING HUSBAND, DOTING FATHER**

My job is such that I am mostly busy, out for duty, sometimes posted out of the city. So, whatever time I get, I love to spend it with my family. My wife, Vasavi Jagannadham, is a Joint Commissioner in Goods and Services Tax (GST) Department. We have a teenage daughter, Sahiti Suhana. I just love spending time with my daughter, she means the world to me.

## **TIME WELL SPENT**

We love to go hiking and camping. And when we are with nature, we make sure we are just there, and absorb in the beauty. Whenever I get some time, I make sure I take out my bike and go for a long ride. I enjoy horse-riding a lot as well.

I also love to design and innovate things. I have designed my house. In fact, I own a car with an open roof that was completely designed by me. Right now, I am trying to make an electric car. I love to make things as simplified as possible.

I read a lot, I consider this to be next to meditation. I have always been a man of science, so reading about new scientific inventions, futuristic technologies and innovative devices really excites me. In fiction, I prefer thrillers and detective novels.

## **A FITNESS FREAK**

I am not so much of a foodie. I love to cook biryani for my family though; my daughter relishes it. I also like using the barbecue to make dishes. I am also a fitness freak. In the Police Department we are continuously dealing with crime and criminals. It becomes very important to take measures and make sure to detoxify your inner self. I think exercising helps me there.

I can't spend hours in the gym due to my work timings. But I make sure that I am working out every day, even for a short time. It helps keep my mind active. Of late, I have also started yoga and meditation. They help me focus better.

## **RAPID FIRE**

### **Favourite colour:**

Blue, it enchants me.

### **Favourite book:**

Many. I would say Sherlock Holmes.

### **Dream vacation destination:**

I love beaches. I would love to spend a nice vacation with my family on an Hawaiian island or even the Andamans.

### **Favourite movie:**

All James Bond movies. I am a huge fan of the franchise.

### **Favourite actor:**

Absolutely love Pierce Brosnan

### **Biggest stress reliever:**

I feel really relaxed when I am with nature and surrounded by it.

### **Advice to youngsters:**

Don't give up. Keep trying, be consistent. Your hard work will pay off.

