

Vatican reveals...

Continued from page 1

Manages real estate and investments, pays salaries, and acts as a purchasing office and human resources department.

Between the two documents - each with an unprecedented number of pie charts, graphs and maps - and two explanatory interviews, the Vatican issued more than 50 pages of financial material.

The 30-page APSA budget showed that it owns 4,051 properties in Italy and about 1,120 abroad, not including its embassies around the world.

Only about 14% of its Italian properties were rented at market rates, while the others were rented at cut rates, many to Church employees. About 40% were institutional buildings such as schools, convents and hospitals.

Warangal ‘smart city’ becoming a ‘flood-hit city’!

NS RAO ■ WARANGAL

Mishaps are very common during the rainy season every year in Warangal city, which is claimed as a smart city. But it turned out to be a flood-hit city. The GWMC authorities have no concern for the people. The lives of people are not taken care of. Warangal city has received funds to the tune of Rs 666 crore through various schemes in the name of smart city, a part of the funds from Hrudai, Amruth and Chief Minister special funds. Warangal is the biggest city

Appointment of Revanth as TPCC chief unites Uttam Kumar and Komatireddy!

K VENKATESHWARLU ■ HYDERABAD

The famous quote - 'there are no permanent enemies and no permanent friends in politics' has once again become true concern to Congress MPs from Nalgonda and Bhongir N Uttam Kumar Reddy and Komatireddy Venkat Reddy respectively.

Surprising their own party leaders, both the MPs addressed a joint press conference on Krishna waters and the TRS government's attitude. Though the MPs conducted a press meet on the recent hot topics, the Telangana Congress leaders were surprised at the joint press conference that too in

Nalgonda.

Both the MPs were elected from the erstwhile Nalgonda district, however, they were not good at terms during Uttam Kumar Reddy's tenure as TPCC president for the last seven years. Moreover, Komatireddy criticised Uttam Kumar whenever he got an opportunity.

One of the party leaders said on condition of anonymity that it is good for the party and also for the people as they came together to fight against the government for the sake of the people.

"They have been moving closely after the appointment of Malkajigiri MP A Revanth Reddy as TPCC Chief. Anyway it is a good sign for

Surprising their own party leaders, both the MPs addressed a joint press conference on Krishna waters and the TRS government's attitude.

the party as leaders' unity will improve the prospects of the party," he said.

It may be recalled that Komatireddy Venkat Reddy criticised Revanth Reddy on the very next day of his appointment as the TPCC Chief. He also stated that he will not go to Gandhi Bhavan for appointing Revanth Reddy

as TPCC chief. However, on the following day, Komatireddy stated that he will not speak about politics in the future. He also said that he would concentrate only on development works by meeting people of his constituency. On the other hand, Uttam Kumar Reddy didn't express any reluctance at Revanth Reddy's appointment but is not mingling like earlier with the party leaders as a former TPCC Chief.

Another leader on condition of anonymity said that both Komatireddy and Uttam Kumar Reddy are strong leaders and their unity, how it may have happened, will certainly help the party and people.

Mirabai's sensational...

Continued from page 1

With this, she exorcised the ghosts of the 2016 Games where she had failed to log a single legitimate lift. The gold went to China's Hou Zhihui with an effort of 210kg (94kg+116kg), while Aisah Windy Cantika of Indonesia took home the bronze with an effort of 194kg (84kg+110kg). Considered her weakness in the run up to the marquee event, Chanu attempted 84kg in her first snatch attempt. The Manipuri took her time and cleanly heaved the barbell. She lifted 87kg in her next attempt and raised the weight to 89kg, which was one 1kg more than her personal best of 88kg that she had lifted at the national championship last year.

However, she was unable to better her personal best and settled for 87kg in the snatch event only behind leader Zhihui, who created a new Olympic record with an effort of 94kg. The Chinese lifter also holds the world mark (96kg) in the category.

In the clean jerk, Chanu, the world record holder in the section, lifted 110kg and 115kg in the first two attempts. However, she was unable to raise 117kg in her final attempt but it was enough to fetch her a medal and open India's account. The diminutive Manipuri broke down after realising that she has secured a medal and hugged her coach in jubilation. She later broke into a dance too to celebrate the historic podium finish.

KCR, Jagan hold...

Continued from page 1

In fact, political and election strategist Prashant Kishor, who is a vocal opponent of the BJP, has already started playing an active role in the Presidential election.

Since the BJP is gradually losing its strength in the State Assemblies, it has to depend on regional parties to elect its pick as the President.

In Telangana, the TRS headed by KCR and in Andhra Pradesh, the YSRCP, are the strongest political parties in terms of the number of Legislators - both MLAs and MPs. The TRS has over 100 MLAs of the 119 Assembly seats at present and 9 of the total 17 Lok Sabha Members.

In Andhra Pradesh, the YSRCP has 151 of the 175 MLAs in the State Assembly, besides the support of five other MLAs - four TDP and one Jana Sena. The party has also won 22 of the 25 Lok Sabha seats. These numbers leave

both Jagan and KCR with enough votes in the Presidential poll to make a difference.

It may be recalled that in 2019, speaking to the media for the first time as Chief Minister, Jagan had said that it was unfortunate that the YSRCP did not have the chance to decide the Prime Minister as the BJP got the required majority on its own. He went on to add that he believed that KCR too thought that the TRS could play a crucial role in deciding the Prime Minister after 2019 Lok Sabha elections.

Both KCR and Jagan had believed that neither the BJP-led NDA nor the Congress-led UPA would get the strength to form the government at the Centre. It's another matter altogether that their calculations went awry.

From then on, the official stand of both the TRS and YSRCP has been 'equidistance from both BJP and Congress. Unofficially, both these parties are supporting the NDA government at Centre when their help is needed.

KCR hails Mirabai Chanu for first medal in Olympics

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao hailed India getting its first medal on the first day of the Olympics at Tokyo. He described Mirabai Chanu getting a silver medal in weightlifting as a great moment for the country and congratulated her for the achievement.

KCR desired that our sports

persons should continue the same zeal and get more medals for the country at the Olympics. Meanwhile, TRS working president and IT and Industry Minister KT Rama Rao congratulated the ace Indian weightlifter Mirabai Chanu for winning a Silver medal in the Women's weightlifting event at the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. "India is proud of you", KTR tweeted for her valuable win.

Tax evasion on...

Continued from page 1

'During the search, it was found that they have been operating several companies in the names of their employees, which have been used for booking bogus expenses and routing of funds...' Several of the employees, whose names were used as shareholders and directors, have admitted that they were not aware of such companies," the tax department said in a statement.

Bouncers: Can they be a law unto themselves?

Continued from page 1

Many clients of pubs and bars now feel the dire need for regulating the duties of bouncers as per rules applicable to them from the security standpoint.

V. Madhu, a customer of a pub, said: "The bouncers are used to collect money on behalf of the management. Here big people will come. A few will try to avoid the bill payments.

The normal staff cannot question them. Then bouncers will enter the scene and they will collect the money by hook or crook. At the same time, if any person who is close to the management or having influence is disturbing others, these bouncers will not care. They will treat the customers as per their status."

The head of a security agency said: "Actually, we sug-

gest they learn martial arts, instead of building unnecessary muscle power. But they do not follow it. They would like to display their huge personalities. A few bouncers are used to having close relations with high status people and participating in settlements also. If it comes to our notice, we will take action, but the management itself hides all these things from us".

The police also cannot object as the management hires them through security agencies. Unless and until a customer comes forward and complains, the police cannot enter any premises just like that and question anyone. The customers are demanding that the management should protect them first. Accordingly, the roles and responsibilities of bouncers should be regulated, they say.

Honest taxpayers...

Continued from page 1

She also lauded taxpayers for discharging their compliance obligations despite the difficulties caused by the pandemic," an official statement said.

Minister of State for Finance Pankaj Chaudhary observed that most of the processes and compliance requirements have been shifted to online platforms and the need for taxpayers to physically visit tax offices has

been eliminated or minimized.

He highlighted the fact that the interaction with taxpayers is now characterized by a spirit of trust and respect, relying more on voluntary compliance. Revenue Secretary Tarun Bajaj also complimented the department for having done well in adapting itself to the emergent changes in the economy and having been able to achieve a healthy growth in tax collections.

Extending her birthday greetings to KTR, Satyavathi Rathod said that KTR had enrolled the

cessive Governments had neglected Dalit empowerment.

KCR said that several schemes introduced by the Telangana government were being followed by others and Dalit Bandhu would also become model for the country. The Dalits of Huzurabad should feel proud that such a great scheme would be launched from their constituency. Its success would depend on the sincerity and integrity of Dalits and all of them should work unitedly. The meeting was attended by Finance Minister T Harish Rao, State Planning Board Vice Chairman Vinod Kumar and others.

amount would be directly credited to the accounts of eligible beneficiary, he said.

KCR said Dalit Bandhu scheme was a sincere effort by the government to give self-confidence to Dalits and give them the wherewithal to determine their own progress. The assistance given should not be spent on unproductive things but on employment-generation activities and vocations to develop financially. "For this, all of you should strive," he said.

The TRS government was treading the path of Mahatma Gandhi and DR Ambedkar who strove all his life for the economic progress of Dalits, though suc-

cessive Governments had neglected Dalit empowerment.

KCR said that several schemes introduced by the Telangana government were being followed by others and Dalit Bandhu would also become model for the country. The Dalits of Huzurabad should feel proud that such a great scheme would be launched from their constituency. Its success would depend on the sincerity and integrity of Dalits and all of them should work unitedly. The meeting was attended by Finance Minister T Harish Rao, State Planning Board Vice Chairman Vinod Kumar and others.

amount would be directly credited to the accounts of eligible beneficiary, he said.

KCR said Dalit Bandhu scheme was a sincere effort by the government to give self-confidence to Dalits and give them the wherewithal to determine their own progress. The assistance given should not be spent on unproductive things but on employment-generation activities and vocations to develop financially. "For this, all of you should strive," he said.

The TRS government was treading the path of Mahatma Gandhi and DR Ambedkar who strove all his life for the economic progress of Dalits, though suc-

cessive Governments had neglected Dalit empowerment.

KCR said that several schemes introduced by the Telangana government were being followed by others and Dalit Bandhu would also become model for the country. The Dalits of Huzurabad should feel proud that such a great scheme would be launched from their constituency. Its success would depend on the sincerity and integrity of Dalits and all of them should work unitedly. The meeting was attended by Finance Minister T Harish Rao, State Planning Board Vice Chairman Vinod Kumar and others.

amount would be directly credited to the accounts of eligible beneficiary, he said.

KCR said Dalit Bandhu scheme was a sincere effort by the government to give self-confidence to Dalits and give them the wherewithal to determine their own progress. The assistance given should not be spent on unproductive things but on employment-generation activities and vocations to develop financially. "For this, all of you should strive," he said.

The TRS government was treading the path of Mahatma Gandhi and DR Ambedkar who strove all his life for the economic progress of Dalits, though suc-

cessive Governments had neglected Dalit empowerment.

KCR said that several schemes introduced by the Telangana government were being followed by others and Dalit Bandhu would also become model for the country. The Dalits of Huzurabad should feel proud that such a great scheme would be launched from their constituency. Its success would depend on the sincerity and integrity of Dalits and all of them should work unitedly. The meeting was attended by Finance Minister T Harish Rao, State Planning Board Vice Chairman Vinod Kumar and others.

amount would be directly credited to the accounts of eligible beneficiary, he said.

KCR said Dalit Bandhu scheme was a sincere effort by the government to give self-confidence to Dalits and give them the wherewithal to determine their own progress. The assistance given should not be spent on unproductive things but on employment-generation activities and vocations to develop financially. "For this, all of you should strive," he said.

The TRS government was treading the path of Mahatma Gandhi and DR Ambedkar who strove all his life for the economic progress of Dalits, though suc-

cessive Governments had neglected Dalit empowerment.

KCR said that several schemes introduced by the Telangana government were being followed by others and Dalit Bandhu would also become model for the country. The Dalits of Huzurabad should feel proud that such a great scheme would be launched from their constituency. Its success would depend on the sincerity and integrity of Dalits and all of them should work unitedly. The meeting was attended by Finance Minister T Harish Rao, State Planning Board Vice Chairman Vinod Kumar and others.

amount would be directly credited to the accounts of eligible beneficiary, he said.

KCR said Dalit Bandhu scheme was a sincere effort by the government to give self-confidence to Dalits and give them the wherewithal to determine their own progress. The assistance given should not be spent on unproductive things but on employment-generation activities and vocations to develop financially. "For this, all of you should strive," he said.

The TRS government was treading the path of Mahatma Gandhi and DR Ambedkar who strove all his life for the economic progress of Dalits, though suc-

cessive Governments had neglected Dalit empowerment.

KCR said that several schemes introduced by the Telangana government were being followed by others and Dalit Bandhu would also become model for the country. The Dalits of Huzurabad should feel proud that such a great scheme would be launched from their constituency. Its success would depend on the sincerity and integrity of Dalits and all of them should work unitedly. The meeting was attended by Finance Minister T Harish Rao, State Planning Board Vice Chairman Vinod Kumar and others.

amount would be directly credited to the accounts of eligible beneficiary, he said.

KCR said Dalit Bandhu scheme was a sincere effort by the government to give self-confidence to Dalits and give them the wherewithal to determine their own progress. The assistance given should not be spent on unproductive things but on employment-generation activities and vocations to develop financially. "For this, all of you should strive," he said.

The TRS government was treading the path of Mahatma Gandhi and DR Ambedkar who strove all his life for the economic progress of Dalits, though suc-

cessive Governments had neglected Dalit empowerment.

KCR said that several schemes introduced by the Telangana government were being followed by others and Dalit Bandhu would also become model for the country. The Dalits of Huzurabad should feel proud that such a great scheme would be launched from their constituency. Its success would depend on the sincerity and integrity of Dalits and all of them should work unitedly. The meeting was attended by Finance Minister T Harish Rao, State Planning Board Vice Chairman Vinod Kumar and others.

amount would be directly credited to the accounts of eligible beneficiary, he said.

KCR said Dalit Bandhu scheme was a sincere effort by the government to give self-confidence to Dalits and give them the wherewithal to determine their own progress. The assistance given should not be spent on unproductive things but on employment-generation activities and vocations to develop financially. "For this, all of you should strive," he said.

The TRS government was treading the path of Mahatma Gandhi and DR Ambedkar who strove all his life for the economic progress of Dalits, though suc-

cessive Governments had neglected Dalit empowerment.

KCR said that several schemes introduced by the Telangana government were being followed by others and Dalit Bandhu would also become model for the country. The Dalits of Huzurabad should feel proud that such a great scheme would be launched from their constituency. Its success would depend on the sincerity and integrity of Dalits and all of them should work unitedly. The meeting was attended by Finance Minister T Harish Rao, State Planning Board Vice Chairman Vinod Kumar and others.

amount would be directly credited to the accounts of eligible beneficiary, he said.

KCR said Dalit Bandhu scheme was a sincere effort by the government to give self-confidence to Dalits and give them the wherewithal to determine their own progress. The assistance given should not be spent on unproductive things but on employment-generation activities and vocations to develop financially. "For this, all of you should strive," he said.

The TRS government was treading the path of Mahatma Gandhi and DR Ambedkar who strove all his life for the economic progress of Dalits, though suc-

cessive Governments had neglected Dalit empowerment.

KCR said that several schemes introduced by the Telangana government were being followed by others and Dalit Bandhu would also become model for the country. The Dalits of Huzurabad should feel proud that such a great scheme would be launched from their constituency. Its success would depend on the sincerity and integrity of Dalits and all of them should work unitedly. The meeting was attended by Finance Minister T Harish Rao, State Planning Board Vice Chairman Vinod Kumar and others.

amount would be directly credited to the accounts of eligible beneficiary, he said.

KCR said Dalit Bandhu scheme was a sincere effort by the government to give self-confidence to Dalits and give them the wherewithal to determine their own progress. The assistance given should not be spent on unproductive things but on employment-generation activities and vocations to develop financially. "For this, all of you should strive," he said.

The TRS government was treading the path of Mahatma Gandhi and DR Ambedkar who strove all his life for the economic progress of Dalits, though suc-

cessive Governments had neglected Dalit empowerment.

KCR said that several schemes introduced by the Telangana government were being followed by others and Dalit Bandhu would also become model for the country. The Dalits of Huzurabad should feel proud that such a great scheme would be launched from their constituency. Its success would depend on the sincerity and integrity of Dalits and all of them should work unitedly. The meeting was attended by Finance Minister T Harish Rao, State Planning Board Vice Chairman Vinod Kumar and others.

amount would be directly credited to the accounts of eligible beneficiary, he said.

KCR said Dalit Bandhu scheme was a sincere effort by the government to give self-confidence to Dalits and give them the wherewithal to determine their own progress. The assistance given should not be spent on unproductive things but on employment-generation activities and vocations to develop financially. "For this, all of you should strive," he said.

The TRS government was treading the path of Mahatma Gandhi and DR Ambedkar who strove all his life for the economic progress of Dalits, though suc-

cessive Governments had neglected Dalit empowerment.

KCR said that several schemes introduced by the Telangana government were being followed by others and Dalit Bandhu would also become model for the country. The Dalits of Huzurabad should feel proud that such a great scheme would be launched from their constituency. Its success would depend on the sincerity and integrity of Dalits and all of them should work unitedly. The meeting was attended by Finance Minister T Harish Rao, State Planning Board Vice Chairman Vinod Kumar and others.

amount would be directly credited to the accounts of eligible beneficiary, he said.

KCR said Dalit Bandhu scheme was a sincere effort by the government to give self-confidence to Dalits and give them the wherewithal to determine their own progress. The assistance given should not be spent on unproductive things but on employment-generation activities and vocations to develop financially. "For this, all of you should strive," he said.

The TRS government was treading the path of Mahatma Gandhi and DR Ambedkar who strove all his life for the economic progress of Dalits, though suc-

cessive Governments had neglected Dalit empowerment.

KCR said that several schemes introduced by the Telangana government were being followed by others and Dalit Bandhu would also become model for the country. The Dalits of Huzurabad should feel proud that such a great scheme would be launched from their constituency. Its success would depend on the sincerity and integrity of Dalits and all of them should work unitedly. The meeting was attended by Finance Minister T Harish Rao, State Planning Board Vice Chairman Vinod Kumar and others.

amount would be directly credited to the accounts of eligible beneficiary, he said.

KCR said Dalit Bandhu scheme was a sincere effort by the government to give self-confidence to Dalits and give them the wherewithal to determine their own progress. The assistance given should not be spent on unproductive things but on employment-generation activities and vocations to develop financially. "For this, all of you should strive," he said.

The TRS government was treading the path of Mahatma Gandhi and DR Ambedkar who strove all his life for the economic progress of Dalits, though suc-

cessive Governments had neglected Dalit empowerment.

KCR said that several schemes introduced by the Telangana government were being followed by others and Dalit Bandhu would also become model for the country. The Dalits of Huzurabad should feel proud that such a great scheme would be launched from their constituency. Its success would depend on the sincerity and integrity of Dalits and all of them should work unitedly. The meeting was attended by Finance Minister T Harish Rao, State Planning Board Vice Chairman Vinod Kumar and others.

amount would be directly credited to the accounts of eligible beneficiary, he said.

KCR said Dalit Bandhu scheme was a sincere effort by the government to give self-confidence to Dalits and give them the wherewithal to determine their own progress. The assistance given should not be spent on unproductive things but on employment-generation activities and vocations to develop financially. "For this, all of you should strive," he said.

The TRS government was treading the path of Mahatma Gandhi and DR Ambedkar who strove all his life for the economic progress of Dalits, though suc-

cessive Governments had neglected Dalit empowerment.

KCR said that several schemes introduced by the Telangana government were being followed by others and Dalit Bandhu would also become model for the country. The Dalits of Huzurabad should feel proud that such a great scheme would be launched from their constituency. Its success would depend on the sincerity and integrity of Dalits and all of them should work unitedly. The meeting was attended by Finance Minister T Harish Rao, State Planning Board Vice Chairman Vinod Kumar and others.

amount would be directly credited to the accounts of eligible beneficiary, he said.

KCR said Dalit Bandhu scheme was a sincere effort by the government to give self-confidence to Dalits and give them the wherewithal to determine their own progress. The assistance given should not be spent on unproductive things but on employment-generation activities and vocations to develop financially. "For this, all of you should strive," he said.

The TRS government was treading the path of Mahatma Gandhi and DR Ambedkar who strove all his life for the economic progress of Dalits, though suc-

cessive Governments had neglected Dalit empowerment.

KCR said that several schemes introduced by the Telangana government were being followed by others and Dalit Bandhu would also become model for the country. The Dalits of Huzurabad should feel proud that such a great scheme would be launched from their constituency. Its success would depend on the sincerity and integrity of Dalits and all of them should work unitedly. The meeting was attended by Finance Minister T Harish Rao, State Planning Board Vice Chairman Vinod Kumar and others.

amount would be directly credited to the accounts of eligible beneficiary, he said.

KCR said Dalit Bandhu scheme was a sincere effort by the government to give self-confidence to Dalits and give them the wherewithal to determine their own progress. The assistance given should not be spent on unproductive things but on employment-generation activities and vocations to develop financially. "For this, all of you should strive," he said.

The TRS government was treading the path of Mahatma Gandhi and DR Ambedkar who strove all his life for the economic progress of Dalits, though suc-

cessive Governments had neglected Dalit empowerment.

KCR said that several schemes introduced by the Telangana government were being followed by others and Dalit Bandhu would also become model for the country. The Dalits of Huzurabad should feel proud that such a great scheme would be launched from their constituency. Its success would depend on the sincerity and integrity of Dalits and all of them should work unitedly. The meeting was attended by Finance Minister T Harish Rao, State Planning Board Vice Chairman Vinod Kumar and others.

amount would be directly credited to the accounts of eligible beneficiary, he said.

KCR said Dalit Bandhu scheme was a sincere effort by the government to give self-confidence to Dalits and give them the wherewithal to determine their own progress. The assistance given should not be spent on unproductive things but on employment-generation activities and vocations to develop financially. "For this, all of you should strive," he said.

The TRS government was treading the path of Mahatma Gandhi and DR Ambedkar who strove all his life for the economic progress of Dalits, though suc-

cessive Governments had neglected Dalit empowerment.

KCR said that several schemes introduced by the Telangana government were being followed by others and Dalit Bandhu would also become model for the country. The Dalits of Huzurabad should feel proud that such a great scheme would be launched from their constituency. Its success would depend on the sincerity and integrity of Dalits and all of them should work unitedly. The meeting was attended by Finance Minister T Harish Rao, State Planning Board Vice Chairman Vinod Kumar and others.

amount would be directly credited to the accounts of eligible beneficiary, he said.

KCR said Dalit Bandhu scheme was a sincere effort by the government to give self-confidence to Dalits and give them the wherewithal to determine their own progress. The assistance given should not be spent on unproductive things but on employment-generation activities and vocations to develop financially. "For this, all of you should strive," he said.

The TRS government was treading the path of Mahatma Gandhi and DR Ambedkar who strove all his life for the economic progress of Dalits, though suc-

cessive Governments had neglected Dalit empowerment.

KCR said that several schemes introduced by the Telangana government were being followed by others and Dalit Bandhu would also become model for the country. The Dalits of Huzurabad should feel proud that such a great scheme would be launched from their constituency. Its success would depend on the sincerity and integrity of Dalits and all of them should work unitedly. The meeting was attended by Finance Minister T Harish Rao, State Planning Board Vice Chairman Vinod Kumar and others.

amount would be directly credited to the accounts of eligible beneficiary, he said.

KCR said Dalit Bandhu scheme was a sincere effort by the government to give self-confidence to Dalits and give them the wherewithal to determine their own progress. The assistance given should not be spent on unproductive things but on employment-generation activities and vocations to develop financially. "For this, all of you should strive," he said.

The TRS government was treading the path of Mahatma Gandhi and DR Ambedkar who strove all his life for the economic progress of Dalits, though suc-

cessive Governments had neglected Dalit empowerment.

KCR said that several schemes introduced by the Telangana government were being followed by others and Dalit Bandhu would also become model for the country. The Dalits of Huzurabad should feel proud that such a great scheme would be launched from their constituency. Its success would depend on the sincerity and integrity of Dalits and all of them should work unitedly. The meeting was attended by Finance Minister T Harish Rao, State Planning Board Vice Chairman Vinod Kumar and others.

amount would be directly credited to the accounts of eligible beneficiary, he said.

KCR said Dalit Bandhu scheme was a sincere effort by the government to give self-confidence to Dalits and give them the wherewithal to determine their own progress. The assistance given should not be spent on unproductive things but on employment-generation activities and vocations to develop financially. "For this, all of you should strive," he said.

The TRS government was treading the path of Mahatma Gandhi and DR Ambedkar who strove all his life for the economic progress of Dalits, though suc-

cessive Governments had neglected Dalit empowerment.

KCR said that several schemes introduced by the Telangana government were being followed by others and Dalit Bandhu would also become model for the country. The Dalits of Huzurabad should feel proud that such a great scheme would be launched from their constituency. Its success would depend on the sincerity and integrity of Dalits and all of them should work unitedly. The meeting was attended by Finance Minister T Harish Rao, State Planning Board Vice Chairman Vinod Kumar and others.

amount would be directly credited to the accounts of eligible beneficiary, he said.

KCR said Dalit Bandhu scheme was a sincere effort by the government to give self-confidence to Dalits and give them the wherewithal to determine their own progress. The assistance given should not be spent on unproductive things but on employment-generation activities and vocations to develop financially. "For this, all of you should strive," he said.

The TRS government was treading the path of Mahatma Gandhi and DR Ambedkar who strove all his life for the economic progress of Dalits, though suc-

cessive Governments had neglected Dalit empowerment.

KCR said that several schemes introduced by the Telangana government were being followed by others and Dalit Bandhu would also become model for the country. The Dalits of Huzurabad should feel proud that such a great scheme would be launched from their constituency. Its success would depend on the sincerity and integrity of Dalits and all of them should work unitedly. The meeting was attended by Finance Minister T Harish Rao, State Planning Board Vice Chairman Vinod Kumar and others.

amount would be directly credited to the accounts of eligible beneficiary, he said.

KCR said Dalit Bandhu scheme was a sincere effort by the government to give self-confidence to Dalits and give them the wherewithal to determine their own progress.

Rising fuel prices: EVs taking over sooner than you think!

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The residents of the city are inclined towards electric vehicles as the prices of petrol and diesel have increased enormously burning a hole in the pockets of middle classes. As the government exempted life tax and vehicle registration charges to 2 lakh electric vehicles on the first come first served basis, the people have developed interest towards the electric vehicles.

Transport authorities attribute the rise in purchase of e-vehicles to factors such as increase in fuel prices, reduction in goods and services tax (GST) as well as better affordability due to low costs of ownership.

"Along with fuel prices, the reason for increase in people going for electric vehicles is



government subsidies and exemptions of taxes are some of the key factors that might be encouraging people to choose electric vehicles over diesel or petrol variants," said Ravinder, RTO.

According to owner of an e-vehicle show room in the city, over 5,000 e-vehicles (two-wheelers) have been sold during the past one month. People also have been evincing interest towards e-cars and e-autos,

but their booking is yet to commence.

Pending a policy formulation by the state government of Telangana on e-vehicles, the sale of e-scooters is going on in the city. But the people are showing more and more interest to acquire these vehicles.

Though the government exempted paying life tax and registration charges on some e-vehicles, the state government is also collecting 2 per cent towards tax on the second vehicle owned by a person. The transport department is yet to give clarify whether the 2 per cent tax is applicable to e-scooters or not.

These e-bikes travel up to 110 km with a single charge. As there are not many charging stations in the city, the owners of these vehicles are getting their vehicles charged at their

home. Because of limitations on distance travelled, the owners have to return home after travelling some distance to get their vehicles charged again.

Because of lack of many charging stations, people are backtracking on booking e-cars and e-auto rickshaws.

The transport department contemplated establishing charging stations at all important junctions, petrol stations, super markets, malls and other commercial establishments way back in 2018. But these charging stations are located at Secunderabad and Kachiguda railway stations, some RTC depots for charging e-buses. These facilities are yet to be accessible for common man.

Some e- auto rickshaw manufacturing companies are ready to set up charging stations in twin cities.

British-era musical flood alert system to get new lease of life

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

As Telangana officials scrambled to save lives and property amid the recent flood and heavy rain, one senior official in Hyderabad literally stumbled upon a melodious musical flood warning system which went mute at a reservoir.

"Came across this very interesting flood warning instrument at Osman Sagar on Friday," said Telangana municipal administration principal secretary Arvind Kumar on Saturday about an old gramophone.

Kumar said the gramophone plays music to alert when flood water levels reach the danger marks in the reservoir, which was built about a century ago and provides drinking water to Hyderabad city.

The gramophone plays once the water level is reaching danger mark. Each line on the gramophone record represents the actual water level," said the senior Indian



Administrative Service (IAS) officer.

Considering its current mute state, he promised to get it repaired as soon as possible.

Mounted on a pedestal, the musical instrument was made of multiple metallic discs and a couple of cylinders.

Another picture shared by Kumar revealed components brought from England during the British rule to build the Osman Sagar dam.

The component makers' identity read, 'Musi Valley Project, Gandipet. Ransomes & Rapier Ltd, Ipswich, 1914, England'.

On Friday, the senior official visited Himayat Sagar and Osman Sagar to review their water levels as inflows rushed in due to heavy downpour.

Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao dispatched Kumar to check their water levels.

TORRENTIAL RAINS

TS gets respite after four days

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

After four days of torrential rains, Telangana had a respite on Saturday with the weather clearing up in several districts.

During the last 24 hours, the average rainfall in the State was 12.2mm against the 12.9mm normal. Till 8 am, the highest rainfall of 93.8mm was recorded at Mosra (Nizamabad), followed by 89 mm at Kolkonda, and 74 mm at Peddamunthal, Vikarabad.

The cumulative rainfall from June 1 to July 24 was 540.8mm against the normal of 317.2mm with a deviation of 70 per cent.

As many as 360 mandals in 24 districts received large excess rainfall and 177 mandals in nine districts received excess rainfall.

MP M Kavitha gets six months jail term

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Court of People's Representatives on Saturday sentenced six months imprisonment and slapped a fine of Rs 10,000 to TRS MP of Mahabubabad Maloth Kavitha for distributing money to voters during the 2019 elections.

However, the TRS MP got bail after paying a fine of Rs10,000 to the Court of People's Representatives.

The Court has given permission to the MP to approach the High Court.

A case has been registered against her at Burgam Pahad police station of Bhadradi Kothagudem district under Mahabubabad Parliamentary constituency for allegedly distributing money to the voters during the 2019 elections.

Maloth Kavitha is the daughter of former Minister Redya Naik. Their family first



worked with Congress, later joined TRS. She won the election against Balaram Naik of Congress by a margin of 1,47,000 votes.

After constituting Courts of People's Representatives, the cases were concluded at the earliest earliest. Recently, former Minister Danam Nagendar has also faced the same fate as MP Maloth Kavitha.



ARTWORKS GALORE

MLA Nannapuneni Narendar expressed his admiration for TRS party working president KT Rama Rao by creating a hundred feet 'Green Art' portraying KTR on the ground in Warangal as part of 'Mukkooti Vruksharchana' (Left) A child etches KTR's image on a leaf to mark the latter's birthday celebrations on Saturday (Right).



Man held for stealing debit cards at ATM

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Rachakonda Police nabbed a person on charges of diverting the attention of elderly customers and stealing their debit cards at ATM centres at Bhongir Town here on Saturday.

The arrested person was T Raju alias Rajender, 40, a resident of Gangadhara. Police said Rajender targeted elderly customers who come to ATM centres to withdraw cash and on the pretext of helping them, collected the PIN and by diverting their attention exchanged the card with a duplicate one. "Using the cards, he then siphoned money from their bank accounts. He is involved in several cases. We seized 15 ATM cards from him," said K Narayana, DCP Bhongir.

The Bhongir police arrested the accused.

Dark side of IVF comes into focus

SHREYA SRIKONDA
■ HYDERABAD

IVF is gradually losing the stigma attached to it, and is going on to become a safe, accessible option for many couples aiming to conceive.

Dr Anuradha Katragadda, fertility specialist, Fellow of the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, at the Anu Test Tube Baby Centre talks about how the process has been developed and popularised in the last 4 decades.

The Anu Test Tube Baby Centre was the first clinic where an IVF baby was born in Andhra and Telangana, 27 years ago. Since then they've successfully seen the birth of thousands of babies through IVF.

IVF is getting more popular these days, which brings about more commercialisation. Many clinics claim very high rates of success, which is just not true. People think that it is an easy procedure. It is not true, those



who undergo the process or conduct it know how time-consuming and tough it is. Also, patients might not always know the treatments they undergo and there is a lack of transparency surrounding the whole process. But with popularisation, there has been a reduction in stigma around the process. Many couples who want to conceive quickly opt for IVF even before trying the natural methods. Doctors need to be as transparent as possible, laying out all the options

and guiding them through them all. She says that a couple must be well-informed of all the options before opting for IVF, and to be clear that the chances of successful pregnancy are 40 per cent even with all the advancement the technology has seen in the past few decades.

"A couple might not be able to conceive after the first, second or third time of trying IVF, if they focus on natural pregnancy it might have happened on its own. IVF can be repeated many times, but there is no guarantee that it will be successful," she says.

But the risks and complications have drastically come down from what we used to see earlier, since 1994. When we started the clinic, success rate was about 15 per cent and over the next few years it gradually increased to 30. The popularity brings about research and development in the technology, where more accurately pregnancy can be induced by

analysing the embryos and placing the ones with most chances of being fruitful into the uterus. This is a process developed recently, the doctor informs. They follow guidelines of HFEA, the Human fertilization and embryology authority. The guidelines instruct for the transfer of a single embryo rather than multiple, which decreases the chances of twins being conceived. By analysing cells carefully, they are able to determine which is the most likely to be successful. She mentions the complications that IVF brings about. "There are very mild side effects which are reversible. Headaches, nausea and other such are common. Some rare cases might bring about thrombosis, an issue where blood clots happen in the cells. But with enough resources and awareness, we can control these issues. They are only until the patient conceives, and once they do, these issues can be managed."

Cops invoke PD Act against two chain snatchers

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

As part of ongoing drive against habitual offenders to create sense of safety and security to the public, especially women, the Rachakonda Police Commissioner Mahesh M Bhagwat invoked proceedings under PD Act against two habitual and notorious chain snatching offenders, hailing from Nalgonda district and detained them in Central prison at Cherlapally on Saturday.

Meerpet Police arrested the accused and recovered gold ornaments from their possession and remanded them to judicial custody on June 17.

As such, with a view to prevent them from committing such chain snatching offences, PD Act has been invoked against them.

CS reviews strengthening of medical infrastructure in TS

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

As per the directions of the Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao, Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar, IAS held a meeting with officials and reviewed the strengthening of medical infrastructure at BRKR Bhavan on Saturday.

Health officials briefed the Chief Secretary about the measures taken up in this regard. Installation of PSA oxygen generation plants, making all beds in government hospitals into oxygen beds, ramping up of additional storage capacity of Liquid Medical Oxygen, increasing pediatric oxygen and ICU beds and strengthening and upgrading of district hospitals were discussed during the meeting.

The Chief Secretary directed the officials to expedite filling up of existing vacancies, ensure adequate stocks of med-



icines, diagnostic equipment biomedical equipment, testing kits and other essentials.

Somesh Kumar also enquired about the progress in respect of the seven new medical colleges which were recently sanctioned by the state government.

Principal secretary of IT Jayesh Ranjan, secretary of health SAM Rizvi, Secretary of

Disaster Management Rahul Bojja, special secretary of finance Ronald Rose, CIG Sheshadri, Director of Public Health G Srinivas Rao, Director of Medical Education D Ramesh Reddy, MD of TSMIDC Chandra Shekar Reddy, MD of TSIC Narasimha Reddy, OSD to CM Gangadhar and other officials were present.

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION
NIT No. 11/Cir-16/Egg-Div-16/Div-98/SBZ/GHMC/2021 Dt: 23-07-2021
Name of Work: CC road & Maintenance works in Circle - 16, Secunderabad Zone, GHMC Total Tender Amount Rs.95.90 Lakhs. SI. No.1 to 7 Start Date: 26/07/2021 From 11.00 AM : Last Date & Time for receipt of Bid : 29/07/2021 at 11:00 AM. M.SHANKER, Executive Engineer, Division-16, Circle-16, Amberpet, Secbad Zone, GHMC Cell: 9963677718 Address of the Concerned Executive Engineer, Div-16, SBZ, GHMC Abids, Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation. Further details can be seen at E-Procurement WWW.tender.telangana.gov.in
R.O. No. : 14233-PP/CLADVT/1/2021-22 EXECUTIVE ENGINEER DIV-16, SBZ, GHMC

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA
OFFICE OF THE REGIONAL OFFICER, PAICHAYATH RAJ MAHABUBNAGAR
TENDER NOTICE
NIT No. TQ/239 to 240/2021-22 Dt: 23.07.2021
No. of works (17) under Grants MWD, STSDF, CRR, DMF, RGSA & SDF Works in Jogulamba Gadwal, Wansaparthi, Nagarkurnool & Mahabubnagar Districts. Estimate Cost Rs.1612.88 lakhs. The tenders will be available on procurement <https://tenders.telangana.gov.in> from 26.07.2021 to 04.08.2021. Further details can be had from the office.
R.O.No:HS-PP/CLADVT/1/2021-22 Dt:24.07.2021 Ed: Regional Officer, PR Mahabubnagar

HYDERABAD METROPOLITAN DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
Swarna Jayanti Commemorative Complex, 4th Floor, Amberpet, Hyderabad
Public Notification No. 15/31 of HMDA Act 2003
(S.O. No. 1587 Dt: 07.07.2021)
In exercise of powers conferred by Sub-Section (1) of Section 15 of Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority Act 2003 (Act No. 8 of 2006), the Government hereby makes the following draft variation to the land use envisaged in the notified Metropolitan Development Plan-2031 approved vide G.O.No.33, MABUD Dt:24.01.2013, as required by sub-section (1) of the said section.
The site in Sy.No.808, 809, 811, 812, 813, 814, 819, 820, 821, 822, 823, 824, 825, 826, 827, 828, 829, 830, 837, 838 of Dundigal Village, Dundigal Gramamessama Mandal, Medchal-Malkajgiri District to an extent of Ac.66.27 Gzs. which is presently earmarked as Peri-Urban use zone in the notified Master Plan: MCP-2031 issued vide G.O.No.33 MABUD Dept., Dt:24.01.2013 is now designated as Residential use zone.
The details of the above are available in websites <https://gazette.telangana.gov.in> and <https://hmda.gov.in/>.
Sd/-
R.O.No.2090-PP/CL-AGENCY/ADVT/1/2021-22, Date:24.07.2021 Metropolitan Commissioner, HMDA

Police organise job mela in city

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

City Police Commissioner Anjani Kumar inaugurated a Job Mela organised by the Hyderabad City Police at Nampally here on Saturday.

"These days, job connectivity brings the job closer to you. This job fair is being organised in collaboration with the TMI Group and other companies. A long journey starts with one first step.

This first job will give you a little experience," Anjani Kumar said, thanking the companies for coming forward to offer jobs, as several youth had lost their jobs due to the pandemic.

Officials said so far, 24 reputed companies had come forward to offer nearly 4,000 jobs. In all, nearly 800 job aspirants attended the mela and got registered, out of whom over 250 were directly selected and given jobs.

MAHMOOD ALI OPENS NEW PS HM: We proved ourselves by developing Telangana

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The state government has proved that the state of Telangana would be developed under self administration of Telangana people, said Home Minister Mahmood Ali after inaugurating the newly constructed Chandrayangutta Police Station in the city on Saturday.

"Few have campaigned that there will not be law & order and sufficient power, but people are witnessing what's happening in the state," the Home Minister said. Along with DGP Mahendar Reddy, Ministers Talasani Srinivasa Yadav, MP Asaduddin Owaisi, MLC Surabhi Vani Devi, DCP Gajarao Bhupal and others have participated in the programme.



Speaking on the occasion, DGP Dr Mahendar Reddy has stated that Chandrayangutta Police Station which has been serving 4 lakh people in the city was in a very small old building until now. As the state government has given top priority to police, the facilities have been given and a good infrastructure was arranged,

the top cop said adding that the police officials should improve the quality of serving the people. Commissioner of Police, Hyderabad Anjani Kumar has stated that the department has only vision under the leadership of DGP Mahendar Reddy that each and every police station should serve like one.

BITCOIN FRAUD 1 held for cheating people of Rs 3 lakh

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Detective Department of Hyderabad Cyber Crimes Police have arrested a person who cheated people to the tune of Rs 3.1 lakhs under the pretext of selling bitcoins.

The accused person identified as Akshay Gowda, 25, a resident of Bangalore was arrested on Friday and brought to city on Saturday.

A complaint was lodged by P Manish Reddy, a resident of Hyderabad on April 8 stating that he was cheated to the tune of Rs 3,14,526 through online on the pretext of selling bitcoins. Hence, he requested to register a case.

After registering the case, the Detective Department of the Cyber Crime wing has taken up the investigation and have found that the accused

had technical expertise and cheated many people in the name of bitcoin trading.

The modus operandi was that the accused made friendship with the bitcoin traders through binance and Wzrix websites. Initially, the accused sold bitcoins to the online traders by receiving money to his bank account.

After selling bitcoins 2 to 3 times, he would gain their confidence in them and start offering them huge commissions on buying bitcoins. Believing the version of the accused, the victims have transferred huge amounts to the accused. After receiving a huge amount, when the victims called to the accused, he stopped responding to their calls and messages and thus victims used to find out that they were cheated.

Godavari continues to be in spate

MELLY MAITREYI
■ HYDERABAD

With incessant rains across Telangana and extensive rains in Maharashtra and upper riparian States, the Godavari River is in spate with the water level rising steadily at Bhadrachalam.

Ministers in the districts in the catchment areas of the Godavari and Krishna rivers are constantly monitoring the situation as directed by Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao.

State Transport Minister Puvvada Ajay Kumar and Women and Child Welfare Minister Satyavathi Rathod monitored the situation in Bhadrachalam and Mulugu districts and coordinated with the respective District Collectors.

An alert was sounded for Godavari basin as the IMD has predicted heavy rainfall over the next two days.

Meanwhile, the intensity of flood inflows into the Sri Rama Sagar Project continued at 2.15 lakh cusecs and the outflow at 2 lakh cusecs, while the present



storage capacity is at 84.29 tmc ft as against full storage capacity of 90.31 tmc ft.

On Thursday, 35 gates of SRSP were opened as the water level in it reached almost its capacity and on Friday 33 gates were lifted to let water flow downstream.

Sripada Yellampally received inflows at 4.78 lakh cusecs and the outflow was at 4.78 lakh cusecs, with the water

level reaching 480.32 ft as against FRL of 485.56 ft. The present storage level is at 15.88 tmc, as against the full capacity of 20.18 tmc.

Singur project in Sanga Reddy continued to get inflows on Friday at 4,385 cusecs and the outflow was at 386 cusecs. The present storage capacity is at 20 tmc, as against the full storage capacity of 29.91 tmc at FRL of 1717. The present water

level at the project is 1,711 feet.

In the Krishna basin, Jurala continued to get heavy inflows at 1.5 lakh cusecs and the outflow was at 1.59 lakh cusecs. The storage level on Friday was at 6.46 tmc, as against full capacity of 9.66 tmc.

Water level at Tungabhadra touched 1,623 ft as against 1,633 ft and the present storage capacity is at 67.18 tmc (full capacity 100.86 tmc).

Farmers seek compensation for crop loss

MALLEPALLI GOVERDHAN
■ NAGARKURNOOL

The officials of the state government have prohibited movement of all vehicles, except ambulances, on Priyadarsini Jurala project road as the water level in the project is increasing with each passing day as inflows into the project from Narayanapur and Almati dams are increasing.

As a result, road connectivity to hundreds of villages have been affected as bunds of several tanks and ponds breached due to heavy rains. The farmers have been hit hard with submergence of standing crops in thousands of acres. The farmers have been appealing to people's representatives for payment of compensation for the crop loss.

'CM spending sleepless nights as vote share for Eatala increases'

PNS ■ KARIMNAGAR

Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao is spending sleepless nights as the vote share of BJP candidate Eatala Rajender has increased from 50 to 71 per cent, says BJP state president Bandi Sanjay.

Taking part in 'Praja Deevana Pada Yatra' public meeting held here on Saturday, he claimed that all surveys, including intelligence reports, are strongly in favour of Eatala.

The worried Chief Minister launched Dalit Bandhu, he said calling it as a new drama.

On the lines of compensation to flood-hit in Hyderabad, Dalit Bandhu, launched prior to Huzurabad by-elections, Dalit Bandhu would also be stopped after benefiting 10 or 100 families, he apprehended.

He vowed not to let off the CM till all the eligible families received Rs 10 lakh under Dalit Bandhu.

Questioning the government over delay in extending EWS quota for the poor in upper castes, Sanjay said that



the BJP upon coming to power would unearth corruption of KCR and distribute his 'ill-gotten' wealth among the people.

He accused KCR of duping the Dalits by promising to make a Dalit the CM if TRS comes to power. Moreover, he got the Dalit deputy CM dismissed from service.

The BJP, upon coming to power in state, would install Ambedkar statue in the city and declare September 17 as Telangana Liberation Day, another promise which KCR failed to implement, Bandi Sanjay said.

He called KCR as the 90 ML CM. He would after taking the first peg, he would promise a government job for each house.

After the second peg, he would promise 2BHK houses for all. Taking the third peg, he would promise three acres to Dalits.

After fourth peg, the CM would promise making KTR the CM. After the fifth peg, he would claim himself to be five elements in the world. After taking the sixth peg, he would promise to implement Ayushman Bharat scheme. After taking the seventh peg, he would deny making any promise, Bandi Sanjay quipped.

He hinted at the BJP launching a huge movement in Telangana in support of farmers. The Huzurabad elections would be a sure pointer to BJP returning to power in the state in 2023.



MLA inaugurates sheds built for street vendors

PNS ■ GADWAL

Local MLA Bandla Krishna Mohan Reddy along with municipal chairman BS Kesav, vice-chairman Babar inaugurated sheds constructed for the benefit of street vendors in front of government girls' school in the town.

Later, the MLA cut birthday cake on the occasion of IT Minister KT Rama Rao's birthday and fed it to the municipal chairman and vice-

chairman and conveyed birthday greetings to the Minister.

Addressing a gathering later, the MLA said that the street vendors have been hit hard during the Covid-19 period and have been facing severe financial difficulties.

The government will put special efforts to benefit the petty vendors to lend support to the street vendors financially during the current second wave of the Covid-19, he added.

'Health amenities in town on par with those in Hyderabad'

PNS ■ MAHABUBNAGAR

Excise Minister Dr V SrinivasGoud on Saturday said that medical and health facilities in the district are on a par with those available in the state capital.

He was planting saplings in connection with the 'Mukkoti Vruksharchana' held on the occasion of birthday of IT Minister and TRS party working president KT Rama Rao. He planted the saplings in the park of the government hospital here.

All amenities are available in the medical and health sector in the district, especially for treatment of Corona virus like oxygen plants, injections, medicines and so on.

There is no need for patients to go to Hyderabad for advanced treatment facilities as all amenities



are available in the district. The Minister hints at establishing a major hospital in addition to the existing hospital.

Earlier, the minister flagged off mobile fish outlets sanctioned by the National Fisheries Development Corporation on 60 per cent subsidy to the self-help groups and unemployed women.

District Collector S Venkat Rao, Additional Collector TejasNandlal, district government hospital superintendent Dr Ram Kishan, medical college director PuttaSrinivas, municipal chairman KC Narasimhulu, other elected people's representatives and others took part in the programme.

8k ration cards to be issued in Sangareddy

PNS ■ SANGAREDDY

District Collector Hanumantha Rao on Saturday said that ration cards would be given to beneficiaries from July 26.

In all, 8139 beneficiaries have been identified for

the purpose. The new card holders are entitled to receive ration from August. The MLAs, elected people's representatives would

distribute ration cards among the beneficiaries.

In case beneficiaries not able to receive their ration cards, they can download their ration card with the help of their Aadhaar Number at Mee Seva Centre. The district Collector said

that 1,233 cards have been sanctioned to Andole mandal, 1,288 to Narayanakhet mandal, 2,022 to Pathancheru mandal, 1,382 to Sangareddy constituency, 1,819 to Zaheerabad constituency, the district Collector added.

TRS MLA: Planting 3 cr saplings would drive away drought

PNS ■ MEDAK

Local legislator Padma Devender Reddy described planting three-crore saplings on a single day on Saturday in connection with KTR's birthday was a great initiative and stands as a testimony to the firm resolve of the Municipal Administration Minister.

She cut cake along with municipal chairman Chandrapal, vice chairman Mallikarjuna Goud and others at her camp office in connection with KTR's birthday and later planted saplings on the premises of her camp office. Later, she distributed fruits among the patients and planted saplings on the premises of the Government Hospital here. She performed special pujas at Saibaba temple here. Conveying her hearty greetings to KTR, she wished KTR go on to occupy many more positions.

Sabitha: Take steps to distribute new ration cards from July 26-31

PNS ■ RANGA REDDY

Education Minister Sabitha Indra Reddy has said

that 35,488 will be benefited by issue of ration cards and asked officials to make arrangements for distribution of the ration cards from July 26 to 31.

Reviewing the activities of the civil supplies department with officials in her chambers here on Saturday, Sabitha asked the officials to make arrangements for distribution of the rice among the new card holders from August 1.

The ration cards are meant to satisfy the hunger of the poor people, she said adding that there would be a ray of hope in the lives of the beneficiaries as they have been

Minister distributes 1L dictionaries

PNS ■ RANGA REDDY

Education Minister Sabita Indra Reddy on Saturday appealed to one and all to plant saplings to sustain human race. She appealed to people to overcome environmental pollution with the help of Haritha Haram.

She kicked off a programme to plant one lakh saplings in one hour in 250 acre forest land in Gungul vil-

lage of Yacharam mandal. She also planted saplings on the occasion. She distributed one lakh dictionaries among students along with MLA Manchireddy Kishan Reddy spending from her pocket. Later, she cut cake in connection with KTR's birthday and conveyed her greetings to him. She said that KTR yearned to develop not only Hyderabad, but municipalities and municipal corporations.

people will be able to get rations. She asked the officials to take steps to solve the problems in the public distribution system.

Ranga Reddy district Collector Amoy Kumar, additional collector Tirupati Rao, civil supplies district manager Kama Rani and others were present at the meeting.

Treat planting trees as duty: Shyamala Goli

PNS ■ MEDCHAL MALKAJGIRI

Indian swimmer Shyamala Goli on Saturday inaugurated the plantation programme aimed to plant 1,116 saplings on the premises of Marri L a k s h m a n R e d d y Institute of T e c h n o l o g y campus as part of the N a t i o n a l Service Scheme as part of the 'Mukkoti Vruksharchana'.

The saplings planted will become ecological wealth for the posterity. To check growing environmental pollution, planting of saplings is the only way out.

The MLITM presented a cheque for Rs 50,000 to Symala Goli, who is scheduled to take part 35-km swimming competition from Catherine ilsad to Los Angeles, separated by 35 km.

Covid will be non-existent by May '22, says spiritual leader

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Coronavirus will be non-existent by Vaisakham (May 2022), according to revered spiritual leader Sri Sri Sri Guru Viswa Spoorthi, whose extended family across the globe celebrated Guru Poornima celebrations on Saturday.

In his message on the occasion, Sri Sri Sri Guru Viswa Spoorthi said, "Coronavirus would become less effective by the end of Ashadam (June/July) and will see a gradual decline by Kartikam (October-November) and will be non-existent by Vaisakam (May/June).

Coronavirus and the destruction it caused would be etched in human memory forever, the spiritual leader said. Post-Covid symptoms like breathing issues would continue for some time. The path of Yoga, Pranayama and Meditation was the only effective long-term cure for such issues, he said.



Earlier, devotees of the Guru said, with the divine blessings of Sri Sri Sri Guru Viswa Spoorthi, the members of the extended Spoorthi family celebrated Guru Poornima in a grand fashion. Devout followers of the Guru in Hyderabad, Vijayawada, Visakhapatnam, Tirupati, Khammam, Kakinada, Kodada, Mancheriyal, Venugantuprolu, Nuzividu, Vijayanagar (M. Gummadam), Srikakulam

(Balada), Nagpur, Pune, Bhiwandi, USA, Australia, Canada, Singapore and many other places took part in the Guru Poornima celebrations. Voleti Parvateesam, former director of Doordarshan, who was the chief guest, delivered a speech.

The members of the Spoorthi family also conducted various social service activities in honour of Sri Sri Sri Guru Viswa Spoorthi.

'Rajiv Rahadari to be green corridor'

PNS ■ SIDDIIPET

District Collector P Venkatrami Reddy on Saturday said that the Rajiv Rahadari would be developed as a green corridor.

As part of Green India Challenge, the district Collector along with local people's representatives planted saplings in Tejavanam Urban

Park in Marpadaga village. Forest department authorities also took part in the programme.

He said that it was planned to plant at least 12 lakh saplings on Saturday. In addition, the forest department is taking steps to plant 1.50 lakh saplings specially. In each mandal, 30,000 saplings would be planted in Brihat Harita Vanam.

The greenery development programme is going on a war footing in all towns, mandals and villages with the support from elected people's representatives. On account of heavy rains, programme to plant saplings in three rows on either side of Rajiv Rahadari as part of avenue plantation has been put off. As there is let up in rain fall, the programme would be

continued from Monday onwards.

He said that the saplings planted would be protected for three years. District Forest Officer Sridhar Rao, DRDO Gopal Rao, district Panchayat Officer Parthasarathy, local MPP Ryagala Suguna Durgaiah, people's representatives, forest officials took part in the programme.

'Plant saplings in mining areas to keep temperature under control'

PNS ■ PEDDAPALLY

Welfare Minister Koppula Eshwar on Saturday took part in Mukkoti Vruksharchana held at Abdul Kalam Stadium here in connection with the birthday of Municipal Administration Minister KT Rama Rao.

As part of the mega plantation drive, saplings have been planted in Yellandu Guest House, police guest house, Rama temple, local residential colonies by the Minister along with Rajya Sabha member Joginapalli Santosh Rao, MP Venkatesh, Ramagundam commissioner of police Satyanarayana, ZP chairman Putta Madhukar, MLA Korukanti Chander, state police housing chairman Koleti Damodar and others planted



saplings. Koppula Eshwar said that over 230 crore saplings have been planted in the past seven phases of Haritha Haram programme held in the state. He described the MP Santosh Kumar's Green India Challenge, commenced four years ago, as tremendous suc-

cess in the country. Several industrialists, film actors, VIPs accepted the challenge and planted saplings. He said that the target is to plant 10 lakh saplings in the area as part of the plan to plant three crore saplings in the state as a birthday gift to KTR.

The day temperature in Ramagundam region is increasing annually, therefore, the Minister asked the officials to plant saplings in SCCL open cast mining areas.

MP Santosh Kumar recalled that last year 75 lakh saplings have been planted for KTR's birthday. This year, the number increased to three crore.

He said that from minister to party activist everyone is planting saplings and wanted them to carefully nurse the saplings planted.

PM announces Rs 2L ex gratia to kin of victims in road mishap

PNS ■ NAGARKURNOOL

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who was shocked at the death of seven persons in a ghastly road accident involving two cars while travelling on Srisailem-Hyderabad road, on Saturday announced Rs 2 lakh ex-gratia to the next of kin of deceased and Rs 50,000 to the injured.

The travellers in one of the cars involved in the road mishap have been returning to Hyderabad after having darshan of deity at Srisailem. It may be recalled that seven people, including a woman and a teenager were killed when two cars collided near Chennaram gate on Friday evening.

RAIDS ON MEDIA GROUPS

CBDT probing ₹2,200-cr ‘fictitious transactions’

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBDT on Saturday claimed to have detected ‘fictitious transactions’ of Rs 2,200 crore after the Income Tax Department carried out multi-city raids against the Dainik Bhaskar media group early this week.

It said the searches that were launched on July 22 in nine cities like Bhopal, Indore, Delhi, Ahmedabad, Noida and some others are “continuing and further investigations are in progress.”

The voluminous material found during the search operations is being examined,” the CBDT statement issued here said.

The Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) frames policy for the IT Department.

While the statement did not name the group, official sources identified it to be the Bhopal headquartered Dainik Bhaskar group which is involved in various business sectors like media, power, textiles and real estate

with a group turnover of more than Rs 6,000 crore per annum. “Cyclical trading and transfer of funds among group companies engaged in unrelated businesses to the tune of Rs 2,200 crore has been found.

“The enquiries have confirmed that these have been fictitious transactions without any actual movement or delivery of goods. The tax effect and violation of other laws are being examined,” the statement alleged.

The media group, on the day of the raids, had posted a message on its website saying the government was scared of its true journalism. From bodies in river Ganga to Corona deaths, the group that brought the real numbers in front of the country is being raided by the government, it alleged in a message in Hindi.

“I am independent because I am Bhaskar. Only the readers’ will matters in Bhaskar,” it had said. The CBDT statement alleged that the group has more than 100 companies including the holding and subsidiary com-

panies and that they have been operating several companies in the names of their employees that have been used for booking ‘bogus’ expenses and routing of funds.

“During the search, several of the employees, whose names were used as shareholders and directors, have admitted that they were not aware of such companies and had given their Aadhaar card and digital signature to the employer in good faith.

“Some were found to be relatives, who had willingly and knowingly signed the papers but had no knowledge or control of the business activities of the companies, in which they were supposed to be directors and shareholders,” the CBDT claimed.

Such companies, it alleged, have been used for multiple purposes like “booking bogus expenses” and “siphoning off” the profits from listed companies, routing of funds so siphoned into their closely held companies to make investments, making of circular transactions etc.

Decided in Rio Olympics itself that I will prove: Chanu

PNS ■ TOKYO

An Olympic medal finally around her neck, star Indian weightlifter Mirabai Chanu on Saturday said she can finally take a break at home without worrying about training after managing just five trips to her place in Manipur in the last five years.

“I have just been home for five days in the past five years. Now I will go with this medal,” said Chanu, whose family is based in Nongpok Kakching village about 20 kilometres from Imphal.

“I will now go home and eat food made by my mother,” she added.

Chanu revealed that after the Rio Games debacle she changed her training and technique completely so that she could redeem herself in Tokyo.

Competing in her second Olympics, Chanu claimed the silver medal in the 49kg category with a total of 202kg (87kg+115kg). It was India’s second Olympic medal in the sport after Karnam Malleswari’s bronze that came 21 years ago at the Sydney Games.

“My dream of winning an Olympic medal has been fulfilled today. I tried a lot in Rio,

Prez congratulates Mirabai for winning silver medal

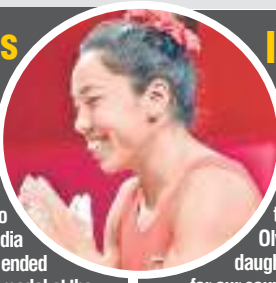
DELHI: President Ram Nath Kovind on Saturday congratulated Mirabai Chanu for winning a silver medal in weightlifting in the Tokyo Olympics. Chanu, 26, ended India’s 21-year

wait for a weightlifting medal at the Olympics by clinching the silver medal in the 49 kg category to open the country’s account in Tokyo on Saturday. “Heartiest

congratulations to Mirabai Chanu for starting the medal tally for India in the Tokyo Olympics 2020 by winning silver medal in weightlifting,” Kovind tweeted.

Vice president hails Mirabai Chanu

DELHI: Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu on Saturday congratulated weightlifter Mirabai Chanu for winning the silver medal for the country in Tokyo Olympics and said it had given Team India a fantastic start at the games. Chanu ended India’s 21-year wait for a weightlifting medal at the Olympics by clinching a silver medal in the 49 kg category to open the country’s account in Tokyo. “Heartily congratulations to Mirabai Chanu for winning a silver medal in 49 kg weightlifting competition and giving Team India a fantastic start at the Tokyo Olympics 2020. The nation is very proud of her achievement. My best wishes for her future endeavours,” Naidu said.



India is proud of her daughter: Rahul

DELHI: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Saturday lauded weightlifter Mirabai Chanu for winning the first medal for the country in Tokyo Olympics and said India is proud of her daughter. “Congratulations to Mirabai Chanu for our country’s first medal on the very first day. India is proud of her daughter,” he said on Twitter. Chanu ended India’s 21-year wait for a weightlifting medal at the Olympics by clinching a silver medal in the 49 kg category to open the country’s account in Tokyo on Saturday. It was also the first time that India managed to win a medal on the opening day of competitions.

put in a lot of effort but it was not my day then. I thought that day only that I will prove myself in Tokyo,” Chanu said during a virtual press conference organised by the Sports Authority of India (SAI).

Considered a strong medal

contender five years ago in Rio as well, Chanu buckled under pressure in the women’s 48kg event and failed to log a legitimate lift.

“I learnt a lot from that day -- my training and technique was changed, we put in a lot of

effort after that.

“I was very sad after Rio, there was a lot of pressure on me and I got nervous, I couldn’t understand anything for days but then coach sir and the federation counselled me, told me that I have a lot of poten-

Rs 2.55 cr ex gratia to kin of 17 scribes who died of Covid

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha government has sanctioned an ex-gratia of Rs 2.55 crore to the family members of 17 working journalists of the state who died due to COVID-19, an official release said.

Chief Minister Naveen Pattnaik approved a proposal in this regard put-forth by the Information and Public Relations (I&PR) Department on Friday. An assistance of Rs15 lakh each has been sanctioned for the families of 17 working journalists of the state, who died due to the infection.

The list of journalists who have been sanctioned ex-gratia include four from Bhubaneswar. They are—Manas Jaypuria from Zee Odisha, Basanta Das (Freelance), Bijayan Laxmi Mohanty (Ajikali), Pritiman Mohapatra (Times of India).

Three journalists from Bolangir - Subhansu Sekhara Mishra (Sambad), Jateesh Chandra Khamari (Sambad) and Kailash Chandra Sahoo (Pragatibadi) are also in the list.

Similarly, Gobind Behera (TV News 6 Web), Pradeep Kishore Sahu (Sambad), Kishore Chandra Dash (Samaj), Nareish Kumar Behera (Odisha Files), Ratnakar Moharana (Kalinga

This financial assistance will be disbursed to the next of kin of the deceased journalists from the Journalist Welfare Fund.

Jyoti), Nandini, Nilaya Ranjan Pattnaik, (Block Correspondent), Karunakar Sahoo (Anupam Bharat) were from Ganjam districts, whose family members will get the benefits.

Moreover, the next of kin of Bhanuprakash Rath (Naxatra TV) from Kalahandi and Ashok Kumar Sahoo (Manthan) and Pravat Kumar Routray (Loka Sampark) from Jajpur district would get the assistance. This financial assistance will be disbursed to the next of kin of the deceased journalists from the Journalist Welfare Fund.

Few such cases have been received by the Information and Public Relations Department which will be disbursed after due verification, sources said. After required enquiry at the district level, eligible applications will be considered for disbursement of the ex-gratia compassionate assistance, an official said.

Gujarat: Four minors among nine killed in LPG explosion

PNS ■ AHMEDABAD

Four children and five others have succumbed to severe burn injuries they had suffered in an explosion and fire that was triggered by leakage of gas from an LPG cylinder in a room on the outskirts of Gujarat’s Ahmedabad city, a police official said on Saturday.

The incident had occurred on the night of July 20. While eight victims - labourers and their family members - died in the last couple of days during treatment, another one succumbed on Saturday. All of them were from Madhya Pradesh, he said.

“Leakage of gas from an LPG

cylinder had triggered explosion and fire, in which 10 persons, including children and women, had suffered severe burn injuries. The incident has claimed the lives of nine of them so far. They were undergoing treatment at the civil hospital,” inspector P R Jadeja of Aslali police station said.

Three persons died during treatment on Thursday, five others succumbed on Friday and one more on Saturday morning, he said.

The labourers and their family members were sleeping in the small room when the gas from their cylinder started leaking. When their neighbour knocked

on their door to alert them about it, one of the labourers got up and switched on the light, which triggered a spark and led to the explosion due to concentration of gas, another police official said.

The 10 injured persons included the neighbour who had come to alert them, and all of them were rushed to the civil hospital for treatment, he said.

The deceased have been identified as Rampyari Ahirwar (56), Rajubhai Ahirwar (31), Sonu Ahirwar (21), Seema Ahirwar (25), Sarju Ahirwar (22), Vaishali (7), Nitesh (6), Payal (4), and Akash (2), all natives of Guna district in Madhya Pradesh, the inspector added.

Buddha’s teachings more relevant now as humanity faces Covid crisis: Modi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Saturday that Lord Buddha’s ideas are all the more relevant now as humanity faces the COVID-19 crisis and asserted that India has shown how to face even the most difficult challenge by following the path shown by the founder of Buddhism.

In his message at Ashadha Purnima and a Dhamma Chakra Day programme, which marks the day when Buddha gave his first sermon after attain-



ing enlightenment, he said the world has felt the power of Lord Buddha’s teachings in times of tragedy.

“The entire world is moving in solidarity following the teach-

ings of the Buddha. In this, the ‘care with prayer’ initiative of the International Buddhist Confederation is praiseworthy,” the prime minister said.

Quoting ‘Dhamm Pada’, Modi said enmity does not quell enmity but is rather won over with love and a big heart.

“In times of tragedy, the world has felt this power of love and harmony. As this knowledge of Buddha, this experience of humanity gets enriched, the world will touch new heights of success and prosperity,” he added.

Vijayan hails PH staff for tackling Nipah, Covid

PNS ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Kerala was able to face the challenges posed by Nipah and COVID-19 due to the admirable efforts of the State public health department, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan said on Saturday.

He was speaking at the online inauguration of several projects and schemes, worth Rs 25 crore, which have begun or will begin soon.

He said that the state’s public health infrastructure has been appreciated by many countries and its work is something to be proud of as thoughts ‘admirable efforts’, Kerala was able to face and deal with challenges posed by diseases like Nipah and COVID-19.

In order to further strengthen the health infrastructure, the previous government had decided to convert 886 primary health cen-



tres (PHCs) in the state into family health centres, he said.

As of now 480 PHCs have been converted to family health centres whose main feature was provid-

ing specialised treatment and facilities to the public at the primary level, he said.

He further said that the family health centres will have more doctors, OPD facilities will be available till evening and they will have labs and other testing systems.

Besides the PHCs, over 1600 health sub centres have been converted to health and wellness centres, where better medical

facilities and treatment would be available to the general public, he added.

Apart from the family health centres and the health and wellness centres, the other schemes and projects which were inaugurated included a welfare scheme for pregnant tribal women, a vaccine storage facility in Ernakulam and various baby care centres in various hospitals in the state.

Telcos can’t be subject matter of any future plea on AGR dues: SC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Adjusted Gross Revenue (AGR) related dues payable by telecom majors, including Vodafone Idea and Bharti Airtel, cannot be a subject matter of any future litigation, the Supreme Court has said.

A bench headed by Justice L Nageswara Rao stated this while dismissing the plea of telcos seeking rectification of alleged errors in the calculation of AGR.

The top court said the dispute relating to AGR has been pending in courts for a very long period of time and the dues payable by TSPs (Telecom Service Providers) cannot be the subject matter of any future litigation.

It said there is no room for any doubt from the perusal of the earlier judgement dated September 1, 2020 with respect to this court entertaining any application for

altering the AGR dues of the TSPs.

The court said that issues concerning the ambit of proceedings under Section 18 of the Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code, 2016 in relation to spectrum, the manner in which payment has to be made by and liabilities apportioned between the TSPs in case of spectrum sharing and spectrum trading, “with which we are not concerned in these Applications”, were also dealt with in its judgement dated September 1, 2020.

The telecom companies had pleaded before the apex court that arithmetical “errors” in the calculation be rectified and claimed there were cases of duplication of entries.

“Though these applications appear to be innocuous at first blush, the end result of the relief sought by the applicants in the guise of correction or rectification of the defects or arithmetical



errors in the calculation of AGR dues, would be recalculation which would amount to the AGR dues, as specified in the order of this Court dated July 20, 2020, being altered.

“The dispute relating to AGR dues had remained pending in courts for a very long period of

time and bearing this in mind, this Court was at pains to emphasise, at the cost of repetition, that the AGR dues payable by TSPs cannot be the subject matter of any future litigation,” the bench also comprising justices S A Nazeer and M R Shah said.

The apex court said the order

dated July 20, 2020 makes it clear that there is no scope for any recalculation/re-computation of AGR dues.

“Even at the time of passing of the order dated July 20, 2020, an attempt was made to seek recalculation and reassessment, as recorded in the order, which was rejected by this Court outright,” the bench said.

The top court in September last year had given a time period of 10 years to telecom service providers struggling to pay Rs 93,520 crores of AGR-related dues to clear their outstanding amount to the government.

During the hearing on the applications on July 19, the bench had referred to an earlier order passed by the apex court in the matter and observed that it said no re-assessment of AGR-related dues can be done.

One of the lawyers represent-

ing a telecom firm had contended that they were not blaming the Department of

Telecommunications (DoT) for it as there are arithmetical entries and they want to place the entries before the department so that they can re-consider it.

In its September last year order, the apex court had said that telecom operators shall make the payment of 10 percent of the total dues as demanded by the DoT by March 31, 2021 and the rest amount to be paid in yearly installments commencing from April 1, 2021 to March 31, 2031.

The top court, which had held that demand raised by the DoT in respect of AGR dues will be final, had said there shall be no dispute raised by the telcos and there shall not be any re-assessment.

The apex court had in October 2019 delivered its verdict on the AGR issue.

INDIA CORNER

MP: Five killed, 18 injured in lightning strikes in Panna district



Five persons were killed and 18 others injured in four incidents of lightning strikes in Madhya Pradesh’s Panna district, the district officials said on Saturday. According to district authorities, the incidents took place at Ureha, Pipariya

Joshi says party has not spoken to him about succeeding Yeddy



Union Minister for Coal, Mines and Parliamentary Affairs Pralhad Joshi on Saturday said the BJP top leadership has not spoken to him about succeeding Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa, whose exit seems imminent, and it is only the media which is discussing the matter. As Yediyurappa had announced that he would abide by the party’s top brass instruction on July 25, Joshi said he has no clue whether the central leadership has asked him to resign. “No one has spoken to me about it (succeeding Yediyurappa). It’s only the media, which is discussing it. Asno one has spoken to me, there is no need to react to it,” Joshi told reporters. Asked what if he is made the chief minister, the Union Minister quipped, “I never answer hypothetical questions with ‘ifs’ and ‘buts’.. I don’t want to answer such questions.” To a question, Joshi said he would not react because he was not aware that the chief minister had been asked to resign. He emphasised that the ‘supreme leaders’ Prime Minister Modi and Amit Shah apart from the BJP leadership led by party president J P Nadda would decide.

BSY directs in-charge Ministers to stay put in rain-hit districts



With torrential rains battering several parts of coastal, mainland and north-interior Karnataka, causing flood like situation and landslides, Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa on Saturday directed district in-charge Ministers to stay put in their respective districts and monitor the relief and rescue operations there. The Chief Minister will himself be travelling to rain and flood affected border district of Belagavi in north Karnataka on Sunday, to assess the situation there. “The Chief Minister this morning spoke to district in-charge Ministers and Deputy Commissioners of various districts and gathered information about the rain and flood situation there. He has directed the in-charge Ministers to stay put in their respective districts,” the CMO said in a statement, which also informed about Yediyurappa’s travel to Belagavi on Sunday.

Maha considering relaxations for fully-vaccinated people



The Maharashtra government is considering granting exemptions from coronavirus-induced restrictions to the fully-vaccinated people, Deputy Chief Minister Ajit Pawar said on Saturday. Speaking to reporters, Pawar also said the government was mulling an extension of the timings of shops and restaurants from the current deadline of 4 pm. He said a decision on granting relaxations on the weekends is likely next week. “The state is thinking of granting relaxations to those people who have got both doses of COVID-19 vaccine. This will encourage citizens to get inoculated,” he said. Pawar said demands are raised to extend the timings of shops and restaurants from 4 pm to 7 pm. “We are thinking of extending the timing for shops and restaurants but the final decision will be taken by the CM. We are meeting with experts on Monday after which a decision will be taken on relaxations on weekends,” the deputy CM said.

Country will continue to attract high foreign investments: Goyal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal on Saturday expressed confidence that India will continue to attract high foreign direct investment (FDIs) in the current financial year.

He said India has received highest ever FDI in the Covid-impacted 2020, in contrast with a shrinkage in investment inflows globally.

In 2020-21, FDI into the country grew by 19 per cent to USD 59.63 billion. Total FDI, including equity, re-invested earnings and capital, rose 10 per cent to USD 81.72 billion during 2020-21 as against USD 74.39 billion in 2019-20.

"This year, we are very confident that we will continue this streak of seven continuous years of historic highs in our



foreign investments," Goyal said at the CII-Horasis India Meeting webinar.

Similarly, he said, India's exports too are recording healthy growth and would reach USD 400 billion by the end of the current financial

year.

During July 1-21, export crossed USD 22 billion and it is 'poised to cross USD 32-33 billion by end of the month (July), which means our run rate is on track to achieve USD 400 billion of exports tar-

get for the first time ever".

Further, he said that currently India is in talks with 16 countries including the UK, the EU, Australia, Canada, and the UAE for trade agreements.

With some countries, India is working for early harvest agreements which will allow the country to quickly identify areas of mutual interest and progress negotiations faster towards a comprehensive economic partnership agreement, or FTAs, the minister said.

"We have focused our efforts on a few very promising agreements where I can clearly see huge comparative advantages for India to get market access and the ability to trade both in goods and services in a much bigger way. The UK, EU, Australia, Canada, UAE are countries with whom we can very quickly expand our dis-

cussions and engagements," he added.

India has inked FTAs with several countries, including Japan, South Korea, Singapore, and ASEAN members.

Under such agreements, two trading partners significantly reduce or eliminate import/customs duties on the maximum number of goods traded between them.

Talking about vaccination, he said the government had permitted the private sector to procure 25 per cent of Covid-19 vaccines but they are not buying.

"CII should take a lead and get all of you to ensure that you take that 25 per cent vaccines... Some industry group said we will do one crore vaccinations...Nobody has gone to Bihar, North East, Jharkhand to run campaigns to remove vaccine hesitancy," he said.

Odisha's seafood exports cross Rs 3,000 crore

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

The Odisha government has decided to frame a dynamic and facilitating policy for tapping the available potential of brackish water aquaculture as the sector has recorded a significant growth in the last 10 years, an official said.

The decision in this regard was taken at a meeting held on digital mode under the chairmanship of Chief Secretary S C Mohapatra on Friday.

Secretary Fisheries and Animal Resource Development R Raghu Prasad said that there was significant growth in the sector over the last 10 years. The production of brackish water fish has increased from 11,460 MT in 2011-12 to 97,125 MT in the year 2020-21 thereby marking a record growth of 747.51 per cent.

The area under brackish water aquaculture also increased from 5,860 hectares to 17,780 hectares during the same period, he said.

The seafood export value from Odisha also increased from Rs 801 crore in the year 2011-12 to Rs 3,107 crore in



the year 2020-21 despite the economic slowdown caused by COVID-19. The quantum of export in the year 2011-12 was around 21,311 MT which increased to 60,718 MT in the year 2020-21.

"Odisha seafood has caught the global market more particularly in Japan, China, USA, countries in the European Union, South East Asia and the Middle East," said Prasad.

He also said: "There is greater potential of brackish aquaculture in the state both in the government and private land. The sector also can attract more private investments".

Keeping the potential of the sector, the chief secretary directed the departments of Revenue and Disaster Management, Fisheries and Animal Resources Development, Forest and Environment department and the Odisha Industrial Infrastructure Development Corporation to work out a dynamic and facilitating policy for tapping the available potential of brackish water aquaculture in the state. IDCO was directed to identify the potential land in different districts and develop a land bank for the purpose in close coordination with fishery officers and respective collectors.



'India to become \$5 trn economy in 5-10 years'

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The country is in an exciting phase of growth and the economy is expected to add USD 2.5 trillion in the next 5-10 years, Paytm founder and CEO Vijay Shekhar Sharma said on Saturday.

"If this country's economy is USD 2.5 trillion today. In next 5-10 years, you will see another USD 2.5 trillion. It took 70 years for us to make it USD 2.5 trillion ... Now only in 10 years all that history will be recreated and doubled.

"It's an amazing, inspiring moment for us to be in India and lucky to be in India," Sharma said while speaking at a 2-day virtual youth conclave organised by IMC Chambers of Commerce and Industry.

He said one should never hesitate to do what they feel very strongly about even if it seems small.

"When somebody makes you feel that you're solo, that's just the way you handle the adversity. And once you are a success, all these adversities will become the folklores, so you should never feel bad about it," he added.

Meanwhile, Arin Capital Chairman Mohandas Pai in another session of the conclave said, new business models can come up as the wide distribution network is no longer the limiting factor for businesses. "So your business models can come up, you can start a business and produce something in India and sell to the whole world cheaply," he added.



Avigna to invest Rs 837 cr to build industrial parks

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Avigna Industrial & Logistics Park on Saturday said it will invest Rs 837 crore in Tamil Nadu to develop industrial parks.

The company has signed a MoU with the Tamil Nadu government for an investment of Rs 837 crore in the state, Avigna said in a statement.

The agreement has been signed between Managing Director Rajasekaran S and

Executive Director Abhijit Verma from Avigna Group and Tamil Nadu Chief Minister MK Stalin.

"We are pleased to announce this collaboration with the State Government and look forward to not only develop industrial parks but also bring economic development to the people of the state by generating employment opportunities," said Abhijit Verma, Executive Director and CEO of Avigna Group.

Over 620 products see price after trade margin regulation on medical devices

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Around 620 brands have witnessed reduction in prices so far with the government capping trade margins on five critical medical devices such as pulse oximeter and digital thermometer, used extensively in the treatment and prevention of Covid-19, at 70 per cent with effect from July 20, Chemicals and Fertilisers ministry said on Saturday.

On July 13, the National Pharmaceuticals Pricing Authority (NPPA) had invoked extraordinary powers under the Paragraph 19 of DPCO, 2013, to put a cap on trade margin of five medical devices -- oximeter, glucometer, BP monitor, nebuliser and digital thermometer.



The margin was capped up to 70 per cent on Price to Distributor (PTD) level.

"Pursuant there to, a total of 684 products/brands of these medical devices have been reported as on July 23, 2021 and 620 products/brands (91 per cent) have reported down-

ward revision of MRP," Chemicals and Fertilisers ministry said in a statement.

The maximum downward revision has been reported by an imported brand of pulse oximeter, showing reduction of Rs 2,95,375 per unit, it added.

The downward revision of

'Rise of e-commerce creating opportunities for retailers'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Rising prominence of e-commerce is creating opportunities for every retailer and the long-term outlook for the industry looks positive, supported by rising income, favourable demographics and increasing urbanisation, said Spencer's Retail Chairman Sanjiv Goenka.

The future of retail lies in 'Omni-Channel' approach, which means converging sales through both physical stores and online, according to the latest annual report of Spencer's Retail.

Besides, consumer lifestyles have undergone a "massive change" after the pandemic, leading to the emergence of newer articles of consumption even as the importance of some other "diminished".

"Rising prominence of e-commerce is creating opportunities for every retailer and this trend is likely to continue. Retailers could leverage digital channels (e-commerce), enabling them to reach out to



more consumers," said Goenka while addressing shareholders.

Talking about Spencer's e-commerce business, Goenka said it has witnessed multifold growth in the online space.

"There is a huge opportunity, not only through the current model which is achieving rapid growth but it can also scale up much further by adding multiple products, markets, and new geogra-

phies," he added. "During 2020-21, it also pioneered in phone and WhatsApp Chatbot ordering, along with various tie-ups, including Uber, Swiggy, Dunzo, RWAs and others to strengthen its Out-Of-Store channel. Spencer's has witnessed 6.5x growth in their e-commerce business from 2018-19 and 4.5x growth from 2019-20," the annual report said.

MONEY MATTERS

TVS Motor launches electric scooter in Kochi

TVS Motor Company, manufacturer of two and three-wheelers globally, on Saturday announced the launch of their TVS iQube Electric scooter in Kochi. Kerala Transport Minister Antony Raju and Joint Managing Director of TVS Motor Company, Sudarshan Venu,



jointly launched the scooter. "TVS iQube Electric is a green and connected, urbanscooter powered by an advanced electric drivetrain and next-gen TVS SmartXconnect platform," the company said in a release. Venu said the TVS Motor company was transforming into digital age company offering world class Green and Connected products. He said the TVS iQube Electric ecosystem is built around digital platforms that enable complete digital retail experience to customers. "As India moves ahead, its mobility solutions would increasingly be experience-led, and nowhere is this felt sharper than among the youth of India. Our focus on India's youth is embodied in the first of the TVS electric portfolio.

Runaya sets up aluminium dross processing unit

An aluminium dross processing and refining unit has been established at Odisha's Jharsuguda by Runaya, one of the country's fastest growing manufacturing start-ups. A company official claimed that the unit at Jharsuguda is India's first integrated aluminium dross



processing unit. The facility established at an investment of Rs 64.43 crore was inaugurated by Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik on Friday. This will provide an end-to-end green and sustainable solution for recovery of aluminium from dross and processing residual waste to manufacture steel slag conditioners. "Odisha is fast emerging as the manufacturing hub of Eastern India and has enabled the growth of industries in the state. We have always endeavoured to provide a hassle-free and smooth business environment for the investors in Odisha. I assure continued facilitation and support from the state government," Patnaik said after inaugurating the project.

Assam's small tea growers demand MSP for green leaves

Small tea growers of Assam have urged the state government to fix a minimum support price for their produce as the low price realisation has been a longstanding issue for them, a statement said. Small tea growers sell their crops to bought leaf factories (BLFs). During an interaction with Industry and Commerce Minister Chandra Mohan Patowary on Thursday, representatives of small tea growers' associations of the state raised the issue of low price realisation and sought the MSP for their produce in the peak and lean seasons. They requested the state government to fix a fair price or minimum rate of their tea leaves. The issue of overpriced manure and challenges of the small tea growers of Assam were raised in the meeting, the statement said on Friday. "There will be no compromise on the quality of tea leaves and fair price," the minister said, adding that their grievances will be addressed.



Eicher Motors to develop range of EVs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Eicher Motors is developing a complete range of electric bikes in order to cater to different set of customers across various markets, as per a top company official.

Royal Enfield, which sells models like Classic, Bullet, Himalayan, Interceptor INT 650, Continental GT 650 and Meteor 350 in the country, is a part of Eicher Motors.

"The EV segment is gaining momentum with positive policy action. With an eye on the future, we are strategically working on developing our future EV products, while we continue to work on our internal combustion engine offerings," Eicher Motors Managing Director Siddhartha Lal said in the company's Annual Report for 2020-21.



Informing the company shareholders, he noted that the company has capabilities in

product development and manufacturing, coupled with a strong brand and an extensive

distribution network.

"We are leveraging all that with our keen understanding of

consumers to develop a complete range of premium electric vehicles and services for global markets, in our inimitable style of modern classic motorcycles," Lal noted. A leader in the 250cc-750 cc bike segment, the Chennai-based Royal Enfield sold a total of 6,09,403 motorcycles in the last fiscal.

Besides, the bike business under Royal Enfield, Eicher also has presence in the commercial vehicle space through VE Commercial Vehicles, a joint venture with the Volvo group. The JV produces trucks, buses, engines and engineering components.

Lal noted that while the auto major maintains immense focus on our long-term strategic business plans and goals, it strongly believes in developing an overarching Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG)

vision, with renewed commitments, targets and direction - which will be extended to its partners as well.

Eicher has made improvements in energy consumption and waste management systems, two of the manufacturing units have been certified water positive, and the company steadily increases its renewable energy component as well.

"Our future commitment will be aligned with the global call for action against climate change and support the sector transition to a low carbon economy. Our development and CSR programmes will be linked to ESG action," Lal said.

The company strives to build trust and leave a positive impact not only in its own manufacturing units, but across the entire product value chain, he stated.



Support system for rural India

If more private companies perceive rural development as a market investment, we will be able to better support our rural regions

8



Education on pandemic mode

Education has gone through many changes in the last one-and-a-half-year. However, the question remains

9

For marriage to be a success, every woman and every man should have her and his own bathroom. The end
— Catherine Zeta-Jones



Identifying a passive aggressive partner could be the first step towards curbing the hostility growing between you and your partner, writes NIDHI UPADHYAY

HOW FINE IS 'I AM FINE'?

We all use 'I am fine' as the most powerful means to avoid any potentially costly confrontations, be it with a spouse, with your colleague at work agrees with your constructive feedback in the meeting to avoid confrontation and later forgets to copy you in an important email? What if your usually punctual spouse doesn't show up on time for a dinner date simply because he or she disagreed with your choice of restaurant? And what if you have noticed a pattern in this behaviour but every time you try to bring it up with your spouse you are dismissed for reading too much between the lines?

While developing the characters for *That Night*, I accidentally stumbled upon an interesting article about passive aggression in a marriage and how sometimes what might appear like a difference of opinion on the surface could be a classical setup for passive aggressive relationship. Although the partner exhibiting such behaviour in a relationship might not be a full-fledged, card carrying passive aggressive personality, but he or she could be a member of the club, subtly abusing the partner emotionally and sometimes physically too.

According to WebMD: Passive-aggressive behaviour is when you express negative feelings indirectly instead of openly talking about them. During World War II, when soldiers wouldn't follow officers' orders, experts described them as "passive-aggressive." Someone who uses passive aggression may feel angry, resentful, or frustrated, but they act neutral, pleasant, or even cheerful. They then find indirect ways to show how they really feel.

We all might show a streak of passive aggression at times, however, when this repetitive sulking, backhanded compliment, withdrawal, or manipulation becomes a way of life, it can result into grave consequences in a relationship, especially in a marriage. Identifying a passive aggressive partner could be the first step towards curbing the hostility growing between you and your partner.

While each passive-aggressive spouse might operate differently, but they all have one thing in common: they avoid confrontation, and often these individuals appear and behave outwardly supportive or content, which makes it all the more difficult to spot them. However, identifying a behavioural pattern can serve as a key differentiator between a momentary angry acceptance and a passive aggression in a relationship.

RECOGNISING PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR

Below are some red flags that can help you identify a harmless sulking from a hostile one.

- **Disguised Verbal Hostility:** 'I'm Just Saying' a sentence that sounds so harmless can be your partner's coping mechanism developed over the years to express his or her angry feelings without being affirmative about it.

ings without being affirmative about it.

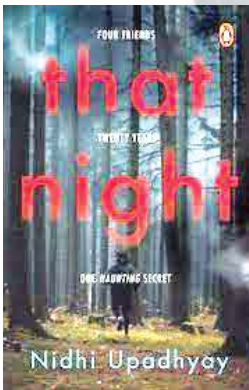
- **Disguised Hostile Humour:** 'Can't You Take a Joke?' The backhanded compliment or sarcasm could be another powerful weapon often used by a passive aggressive partner, especially in the instances when they are confronted about their demeaning act. Playing a victim card 'that it was meant to be a joke' is their knee-jerk reaction to avoid any uncomfortable conversations.
- **Guilt-Baiting:** 'You were taking so long to finish that call with your mom that I started the match instead.' Aggressive passive spouses are an expert at wielding guilt as a weapon to show their disagreement or hostility. They inadvertently or skillfully manipulate and coerce you into an agreement by attacking your vulnerable spots.
- **Disguised Psychological Manipulation:** 'I think you need to go for a yoga class to manage your stress.' Passive aggressive spouse usually have a tendency to change your perception by spinning the whole blame on you for being the inconsiderate or the short tempered one.
- **Stonewalling:** Avoiding responsibility, duty, and obligations and withdrawing from a relationship is another trick up the sleeves of these individuals. It's their way of maintaining power and control by imposing many hurdles for you to jump through.

While the phrases such as 'I am just saying,' 'It was a joke' and the silent treatment are invariably part of every marriage, it should not be a breeding ground for hostility that leaves the receiving partner shattered and confused about her or his own worth in a relationship. Unfortunately, often these tricky psychological manoeuvres take absolutely no planning on your passive-aggressive partner's part. On the contrary, they are acting on pure instincts. Hence identifying the cause for such behaviour could work as a powerful tool to stop such manoeuvres in the track.

While the phrases such as 'I am just saying,' 'It was a joke' and the silent treatment are invariably part of every marriage, it should not be a breeding ground for hostility that leaves the receiving partner shattered and confused about her or his own worth in a relationship. Unfortunately, often these tricky psychological manoeuvres take absolutely no planning on your passive-aggressive partner's part. On the contrary, they are acting on pure instincts. Hence identifying the cause for such behaviour could work as a powerful tool to stop such manoeuvres in the track.

POSSIBLE CAUSES FOR PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR

- **Upbringing:** Voicing your strong opinion was(is) often categorised as disrespectful in most Indian households. However, a constant suppression of opinion during the formative years can impact adversely, pushing an individual to find ways to passively channel their anger or frustration.
- **Sense of powerlessness:** A manipulation in a marriage can often be a side-effect of tussle of power between the partners, especially when one partner feels out of control in a situation or area where his or her spouse is enjoying success. This sense of insecurity can fuel underhanded tactics to sabotage the partner's success and emotional wellbeing, sometimes without even realising it. This power hunger can also manifest into establishing their territories by subtle emotional and physical abuse.



WHILE EACH PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE SPOUSE MIGHT OPERATE DIFFERENTLY, BUT THEY ALL HAVE ONE THING IN COMMON: THEY AVOID CONFRONTATION, AND OFTEN THESE INDIVIDUALS APPEAR AND BEHAVE OUTWARDLY SUPPORTIVE OR CONTENT, WHICH MAKES IT ALL THE MORE DIFFICULT TO SPOT THEM. HOWEVER, IDENTIFYING A BEHAVIOURAL PATTERN CAN SERVE AS A KEY DIFFERENTIATOR BETWEEN A MOMENTARY ANGRY ACCEPTANCE AND A PASSIVE AGGRESSION IN A RELATIONSHIP



- **Inability to accept their own emotion:** Passive aggression is a personality disorder, and these individuals cannot approach situations, feelings, relationships or communication directly. They are often unaware of what they are doing, and when confronted, they refuse to acknowledge both the behaviour and the results.
- **Low self-esteem:** The passive-aggressive partner often feels that he or she is the one at the receiving end, inadvertently playing the victim card. These individuals often operate out of a deep sense of insecurity, and they persistently feed their negative emotions to justify their actions, sometimes to the extent of demeaning the partner in an attempt to elevate themselves.
- **Buried feelings of inadequacy and injustice:** Often words like 'it's unfair' can be passive aggressive person's way of communicating that the spouse has some kind of unfair advantage over them in a relationship. It could be in career, relationships at work and family, or kids.

HOW TO COPE WITH PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOUR

Once you have identified a classical pattern of passive aggression in your spouse, the most critical step is to protect your and your partner's emotional wellbeing. The following few steps can act as a crucial steppingstone in bringing your relationship back to a healthy track.

- **Accepting the situation:** It's painful to accept that your spouse is operating within a passive-aggressive pattern, especially, because these individuals have a tendency to manipulate your emotions by displaying sacrifices made by them in a relationship. They usually go an extra length to prove that their love for their spouse is unmatched. But if you notice a concrete pattern in the sugar-coated humiliation or purposeful withdrawal to punish you, it's time to trust your instincts and accept the reality.
- **Identify the trigger:** There is no excuse for aggression and abuse of any form in a marriage. However, knowing the reason for this aggression can help you predict the behaviour pattern of your spouse. Also, sometimes the issue can be as trivial as your spouse fearing to hurt your feelings and thus, he or she inadvertently finds an underhanded way to express his or her dislike. Understanding the triggers can minimize the potential damage to your relationships.
- **Don't justify your spouse's behaviour:** The chances are that you have been manipulated enough in a relationship by now that you tend to find flaws in you than in the spouse who appears so nice and non-confrontational. So, train yourself to stop inwardly justifying or finding excuses for your spouse's unacceptable behaviour.
- **Stay calm and keep your anger in control:** It's essential to keep a check on your emotions, especially when the passive aggressive spouse is acting up. If you can recognise triggers of your own anger and get a control of your reactions, you are less likely to get psychologically manipulated or gaslighted by the partner.

tions, especially when the passive aggressive spouse is acting up. If you can recognise triggers of your own anger and get a control of your reactions, you are less likely to get psychologically manipulated or gaslighted by the partner.

- **Establishing a healthy channel of communication:** It is important to approach your spouse with vulnerability and empathy as passive aggressive individuals are hypersensitive and often operate from low self-esteem or sense of insecurity. You can help them by wording their angry feelings in a way that it doesn't appear judgmental yet factual. Share with your spouse how his or her behaviour hurts you but do it without placing the blame on them.
- **Set healthy boundaries and ground rules:** It hurts deeply to accept that your spouse might not have your best interest in mind always. However, it is important to set boundaries to protect yourself from any form of emotional or physical abuse. By drawing a clear list of acceptable and unacceptable behaviour might help you and your partner identify the patterns you've been experiencing. Also, setup consequences for the next time he or she does the same thing and don't back down if they demean you.
- **Seek help of a marriage therapist:** It never hurts to seek help of a good marriage therapist. With the right approach and professional support, you can overcome passive-aggressive patterns and manipulations in a relationship to build a happier, healthier marriage together.

However, even after repetitive efforts at your end, if your partner still believes that you are at fault, in that case, you might be forced to take the tough decision of saving yourself from any form of emotional abuse. If despite all your love and patience your partner is persistently falling back to his or her old ways of demeaning you or manipulating you, or they refuse to seek help, it's time to walk out of a relationship that is ruining you (and your partner) inside out. Because marriage should not be about turning yourself inside out, it should also be about loving yourself and defining your own worth in a relationship, and it can only happen when the boundaries about what is acceptable and not are defined clearly for both the partners. And if something unacceptable still finds its way into your marriage, time and again, despite all your efforts, perhaps walking away from a relationship would be a better idea. Because these episodes of withdrawal, aggression, abuse and manipulation are a double-edged sword that wounds you and your partner, too. So, before you fall out of love with yourself and with your partner seek help.

The writer is an engineer-turned-headhunter. *That Night*, published by Penguin, is her debut novel



IF YOU CARRY JOY IN
YOUR HEART, YOU
CAN HEAL ANY
MOMENT
—CARLOS SANTANA

NEED TO BUILD A SUPPORT SYSTEM FOR RURAL INDIA

If more private companies perceive rural development during and beyond disasters as a market investment, instead of an evangelist or missionary ad-hoc project, we will be able to better support our rural regions

STILETTOS


**MINIMA
CHATTERJI**

With the tragic second wave of Covid-19 in India done and dusted, malls and restaurants in cities are once again thronging with customers. However, in rural India the devastating effect of Covid-19 this time round has been so grave that the mood there might take far longer to pick up.

By May 2021, one in every two cases was in India's rural areas, while states like Uttar Pradesh and Rajasthan had 75% of their cases in rural areas. Exposing the weakness of the public healthcare system, rural India only had 40% of the beds in the country even when it is home to 70% of India's population. In fact the number of hospital beds per 10000 population between 2010 and 2020 reduced from 9 to 5.

I spent much of last month leading the philanthropic effort of a consortium of partners to establish more Covid care facilities in rural parts of India. It has been challenging to raise funds for Covid relief in the second wave as charitable funds for health care in India have dried up while government regulations have clamped down on international funds coming in to the NGOs in the country.

Secondly, given the intensity of this wave, only ICU beds or at least beds equipped with oxygen concentrators were mostly needed in the second wave, pushing up the effort and cost of equipment procurement. Thirdly, many individuals and organisations including established not-for-profits were no longer contributing to the cause voluntarily but instead leveraged the desperate situation of the second wave to make a buck.

Nonetheless with the support of local NGO iBihar and its founder Anis Bari, the sustained efforts of Anant National University, besides my own firm Sustain Labs, we managed to establish 13 Covid care facilities in rural Bihar.



It is indeed easy and not incorrect to blame the government as state governments with higher expenditure on health had lower confirmed cases of Covid. However, at a time when the government has demonstrated substantial inertia in effectively managing the pandemic in the country, the civil society must (and has!) step up. With management expertise, wide distribution networks in the country, human resources at disposal, the private sector has an especially strong role to play in disaster management in rural India. Corporations hold enormous influence within their domains and communities around their factories and depots that are often located in remote or rural areas. In this context, government effectiveness in rural areas can thus be strengthened by leveraging existing private

sector capacities, reach and core competencies.

There is a need to emphasize greater market driven ways for the private sector to support rural development in India, during and beyond disasters. A balanced approach to driving market driven rural development strategies ensure that the development is sustained as stakeholders see incentives to do so. CSR funds alone, on the other hand, are undependable as it runs dry exactly at the time of socio-economic crisis such as the current pandemic, which is ironically when it is most needed.

There are at least three ways that the private sector can play a central role in managing disasters better in rural India.

First, through the investments they make and the decisions they take, companies directly impact the

**THERE IS A NEED
TO EMPHASIZE
GREATER MARKET
DRIVEN WAYS FOR
THE PRIVATE
SECTOR TO
SUPPORT RURAL
DEVELOPMENT IN
INDIA**

world around us. Establishing markets in rural regions and offering affordable products and services to rural India is a market opportunity. For example, Visaka Industries Limited is a Hyderabad based diversified company that manufactures asbestos cement roofing sheets, building products and textile yarn, in ways that established it as a primarily green business. Further, 90% of Visaka's asbestos sheets, 30% of VBoard products, and 20% of its ATUM solar roofing are sold in rural and semi-urban parts of the country, thus enhancing the quality of life of rural communities.

Similarly, ICICI too has a substantial rural presence. 650 of ICICI's rural branches are in previously unbanked villages and which also promote entrepreneurship among women by developing

tailored financing and loan options catering to rural India. During disasters such as the ongoing pandemic, the reach and institutionalised presence of companies in these rural areas are of paramount importance for providing sustained livelihood and disaster relief to people.

Secondly, rural India still needs to be better connected to cities via roads, highways, and also telecommunications. Goods for relief work (and beyond) need to be transported by roads to villages and this becomes difficult to do if road infrastructure is inadequate. Until June this year we also saw that the vaccination distribution exclusively relied on a digital portal for booking vaccination slots for a significant population of the country, which became an impediment for India to achieve universal immu-

nisation. Ultimately on June 2, 2021, the Supreme Court asked the government to explain how the use of the CoWin app for booking slots is going to overcome the digital divide in rural and urban India, following which offline channels of vaccine booking were introduced. This again is an opportunity for the private sector to step in and build physical and digital infrastructure that connects rural India better to the rest of the country. Indeed the government needs to also prioritise the development of infrastructure projects, make approvals more efficient, besides tightening quality control.

Third, we need more public private partnerships. Disasters by themselves are beyond anyone's control. However, the preparation and response to them can be managed so that the human and economic losses can be minimised or eliminated. This is why, whereas states have the overall responsibility to drive disaster recovery and mitigation efforts it must be understood as a shared task between the government and relevant stakeholders. Currently the Indian private sector provides disaster support in a less systematic and more ad-hoc manner. Far more strategic and planned partnerships between the government and the private sector for rural development and disaster mitigation and recovery remains an area for improvement.

If more private companies perceive rural development during and beyond disasters as a market investment, instead of an evangelist or missionary ad-hoc project alone, we will be able to better support our rural regions and not lose as many lives during disasters.

The writer is the CEO of Sustain Labs, a company that transforms companies towards being sustainable and profitable.

She is the author of Indian Instincts: Essays on Freedom & Equality in India, and a Global Leadership Fellow at the World Economic Forum

Changing demographic profiles & women

The formation and the break-up of a society determine the consequences of a radical shift in external forces. For instance, the negligible say of women in the USA before the 1800s prompted women leaders to band together to promote a new, separate women's rights movement and change the direction of Abolitionist Movement of the 1830s.

Generations upon generations, the gender equality rhetoric has filled the gap of responsibilities and rights through gradual and profound movements around the globe. However, the 21st-century demographic picture is still blurry for women, which face constant denial of individual rights and powers.

The Covid-19 pandemic has been the greatest peacetime disruptor of years of progress in demographics of the society, especially in India, where there only 943 females per 1000 males. Moreover, in 2020, India ranked at 189th position out of 201 countries in terms of female to male ratio. In a society where 77% of parents prefer a male child over a female, this disproportion in the gender ratio has had profound implications in the lives of an average Indian woman during the pandemic.

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE, DIVORCE & CHILD CUSTODY

With only 66% women literate as compared to 83% men in India, the social awareness among women is at the lowest, which makes them incapable of voicing their power against domestic abuse. Indian women filed more domestic violence complaints than recorded in a similar period in the last 10 years. But even this unusual spurt is only the tip of the iceberg as 86% of women who experience domestic violence do not seek help in India. Social isolation amid the pandemic has also caused circumstances where victims and aggressors cannot separate, and there are fewer options

Closing the gender gap in digital inclusion is an urgent priority in the pandemic. This involves a special focus on women-owned enterprises under the stimulus programmers, write **RAJESH MEHTA & UDDESHYA GOEL**

for women to escape their conditions, especially in the rural regions.

Despite this fact, post first wave, India saw a nearly three-fold increase in cases pertaining to divorce and child custody being filed. From an average of 1,280 cases in a month, their numbers went up to it 3,480 during the lockdown. This has placed them in a situation where they have to face social denial and the increased financial burden of their child individually.

THE SECOND SHIFT AND MENTAL WELL-BEING

A study by McKinsey found mothers are more than three times as likely, compared with fathers, to meet the majority of the demands for housework and caregiving during the pandemic. In addition, they are more than one and a half times as likely as fathers to spend three or more hours per day on these activities.

This "second shift" is where women complete their day of paid work and then spend another full shift doing work at home supporting children, families and at-home tasks. This dynamic has been exacerbated by the limits and lockdowns associated with the pandemic.

Naturally, this has brought detrimental effects on the mental fitness of working women, which constitutes 21% of the total workforce in India. According to a *LinkedIn* survey, the pandemic is taking a toll on the emotional well-being of India's working women as 47% report they are experiencing more stress. For men, this number stood at 38%, pointing towards a disproportionate impact on women.



JOB LOSSES AND POVERTY

Female job loss rates due to Covid-19 are about 1.8 times higher than male job loss rates globally, at 5.7% versus 3.1% respectively. Moreover, 4.5% of

women's employment is at risk in the pandemic globally, compared with 3.8% of men's employment. This is because women are over-represented in industries that are likely to experience the greatest

declines because of the pandemic. These include hospitality and foodservice, retail, education and manufacturing.

As a direct consequence, the pandemic will push 96 million

people into extreme poverty by 2021, 47 millions of whom are women and girls, widening the gender poverty gap.

WIDENING ENTREPRENEURIAL GAP

In India, women-owned a little over 20% of all micro, small and medium businesses compared to nearly 80% among men in FY21. The crisis has made family resources scarce for women, such as financial capital to invest in businesses or digital devices that families must now share as children's schooling has gone online. This has brought a disproportionate impact on female entrepreneurship, including women-owned microenterprises in developing countries like India

THE LOST FUTURE TALENTS

The cascading effect of pandemic-induced economic insecurity is not just the income losses but also the rippling effect of years of education denied to women and girls. Impacts on education and employment have long-lasting consequences that, if unaddressed, will reverse hard-won gains in gender equality.

According to a UNESCO estimate, a total of 11 million girls may leave school by the end of the Covid crisis; evidence from previous crises suggests that many will not return.

Lack of education and economic insecurity also increases the risk of gender-based violence. Without sufficient economic resources, women are unable to escape abusive partners and face a greater threat of sexual exploitation, trafficking and teen pregnancy.

These consequences won't disappear when the pandemic subsides: women and girls are likely to experience long-term set-

backs in workforce participation and income. The fallout will be most severe for the most vulnerable women, those who are rarely in the headlines: migrant workers, refugees, marginalised racial and ethnic groups, single-parent households, youth and the poorest of the poor.

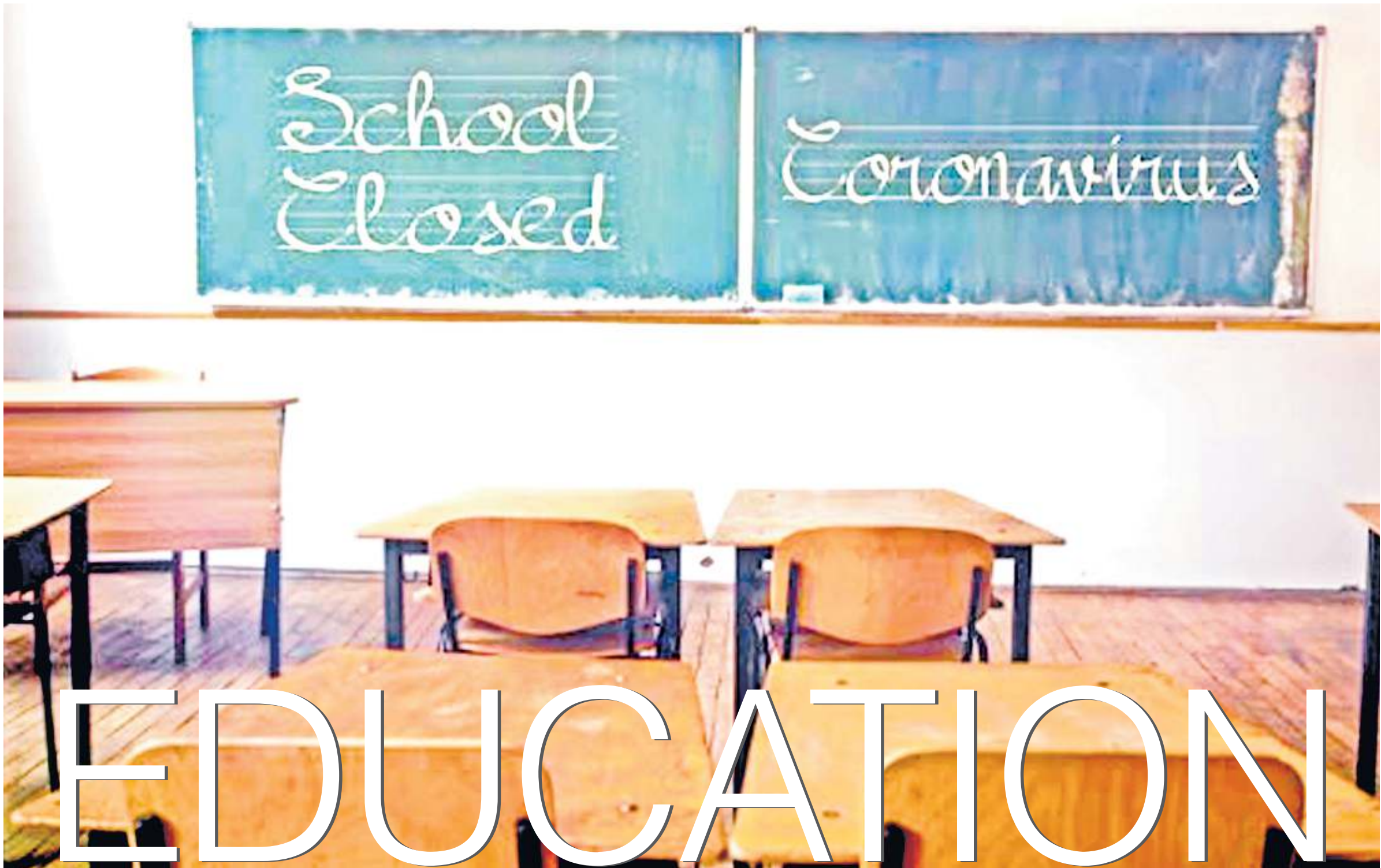
DIRECT INTERVENTIONS

The challenge is huge but the cause is even gargantuan. Direct interventions are needed to draw an inflection point in the current demographic status to bring a fundamental change down the line. This mandates addressing attitudinal biases. Any drive toward gender parity arguably starts with efforts to change entrenched, widespread attitudes about women's role in society. This is an extremely difficult and complex challenge that will require all stakeholders to play a sustained part over the long term.

Addressing unpaid child care cannot be overstated. There is an immediate requirement of reducing the gender imbalance in responsibility for care. This involves employer- or state-funded provision of childcare or tax policies that encourage both spouses to work and a professionalised childcare industry, with public-financing support to enable women to work and create employment for others

Interventions are also required to address digital and financial inclusion. Closing the gender gap in digital inclusion is an urgent priority in the pandemic. This involves a special focus on women-owned enterprises under the stimulus programmers. Tax burdens should be eased and where possible, governments should source food, personal protection equipment, and other essential supplies from women-led businesses.

Mehta is a consultant in Market Entry, Innovation & Public Policy and Goel is a researcher with interest in public policy, international business and capital markets



ON PANDEMIC MODE

Education has gone through many changes in the last one-and-a-half-year. However, the question remains unanswered on their permanency. Experts tell MUSBA HASHMI that it is the entire system that needs an overhaul for better results

In March last year schools' gates were shut, hoping to open in a few months, but that month never came. It has been more than 18 months into the pandemic, and it remains unclear when physical classrooms will resume — though, it will not become part of history.

From online classes to no Boards, the education sector had seen several unprecedented changes during this period. Were these for the better is a question still unanswered.

50:50 SCENARIO

However, the constant to and fro in Boards or school assessment decisions has exposed several fault lines in the education sector. Amid all the noise, students are left confused regarding their future. "The pandemic has, indeed, exposed fault lines and fundamental flaws in the education sector that existed even earlier. We must take this opportunity to not merely sail through the pandemic but to reform the system from scratch based on sound scientific principles of what constitutes good learning," says Dr Jamshed Bharucha, Founding Vice Chancellor, Sai University. He adds that the 50-50 formula on CBSE Boards is an understandable decision under crisis circumstances, but it should spur systemic reform for the future.

However, Bharucha says, "I would be interested to hear the explanation of why Class X and Class XI are given equal weightage, given that students are conditioned to view 11th as less important.

Students should not be penalised for not having taken 11th exams seriously, which has been the cynical message communicated to them by the system."

Prof Dheeraj Sanghi, VC Designate, JK Lakshmiipat University, believes that as a short term measure to reduce anxiety and stress in students, this is a welcome move. But this does not address the issue of quality at all.

On the other hand, Dr Sanjay Govind Patil, Associate Dean & Director — RICS School of Built Environment, Amity University, Mumbai, says that it is a much-appreciated step to help break down the syllabus. "I fully vouch for this move because it will break down the entire assessment into small parts; hence, learning will be much better. Students' shortcomings in the previous part exam could be overcome in the next exam through a robust feedback mechanism, thus achieving a better learning outcome," opines Patil.

RE-ENERGISE SYSTEM

High-stakes exams, Bharucha says, have no empirical support in research on learning. The learning tends to be transient, devoid of meaningful context, and does not transfer well to the kinds of problems students will have to solve as professionals. Research shows that, if administered frequently — with feedback after each exam and repeated testing of the same material in different ways — exams can be powerful tools for learning, not just for assessment.

"The system has failed students by contin-

uing to rely on high-stakes examinations. Why should a single mark on a single high school exam be the measure of what you've learned throughout high school? Why should it determine what you can and cannot do in the future? Research on how the brain learns is completely at odds with this system of learning and assessment," says Bharucha.

He adds that the CBSE Board decisions for this batch are understandable, but they are band-aids; they should be followed by meaningful steps to re-energise, mentor, and empower students whose education got disrupted and lives thrown into confusion. Most of these students, probably, will adjust and be fine. But, some may fall between the cracks of this rigid system of narrow credentialing and career channelling.

TIME TO NURTURE

"The Board should establish a committee consisting of a broad range of stakeholders — including students — to hear the concerns of students who have been adversely affected and to propose ways to get these students back on track in life. A nation has a responsibility to ensure that every single child should have a productive path forward," says Bharucha.

The Board should also establish a diverse blue-ribbon committee to implement NEP recommendations at the high school level. The goal should be to enable students' unique talents and shortcomings and give them the fundamental cognitive tools to pursue their dreams. Society benefits when all talent is unleashed — in all its messy but glorious diversity.

"There is no empirical basis for forcing students to make irreversible choices between streams. A student may love math and literature, computers and music, biology and economics. It's the unforeseen combinations of ideas that will trigger future innovations — and continuous innovation is what drives economies. We, as educators, are deeply mistaken if we believe we know which branches of knowledge are in the best interests of our children to know," adds Bharucha.

Sanghi says that the problems of quality in education were well-known much before the pandemic. "I feel that the problems of quality in the school education sector were well-known much before the pandemic. The Annual State of Education Report (ASER) has been telling us how poorly our students have been performing even with our standards. As far as international standards are concerned, we have not even participated in the Program for International Students Assessment (PISA)," says Sanghi.

TECHNOLOGY MYTH BUSTED

Yet, the pandemic has exposed one myth which was that technology would solve all our problems. "There is no doubt that technology can help, but we have seen during the pandemic that access to technology is limited. We may take pride in having the largest number of mobile phone users with Internet access or the high-



WHEN WE FINALLY OPEN UP, WE MAY NEED TO REDESIGN THE CURRICULUM OF THE NEXT FEW YEARS. MAYBE INTRODUCE SOME FRESHER COURSES. EACH SCHOOL BOARD WILL HAVE TO PLAN THE POST-PANDEMIC SCENARIO CAREFULLY. IT SHOULD NOT HAPPEN THAT THEY NOW WANT TO COVER BOTH — WHAT WAS LEFT DURING THE PANDEMIC AND THE USUAL SYLLABUS OF THE NEXT CLASSES. THAT WOULD BE TOO MUCH OF A BURDEN ON STUDENTS

— PROF DHEERAJ SANGHI, VC DESIGNATE, JK LAKSHMIIPAT UNIVERSITY

est per capita data consumption, but all this is skewed, and the poor still has little access to online education. If we want to depend on technology to improve the quality of our education, we will have to seriously think about how underprivileged sections of our society can get access to both devices and data, and perhaps space where they can study peacefully," adds Sanghi.

Being compelled to teach online has highlighted the known weakness of passive forms of learning in which teachers speak and students listen. To keep the attention of students online, teachers have had to make the online sessions more interactive.

"But active and interactive learning should be the norm even in the physical classroom. In a physical classroom, a student can be physically present but mentally absent. Only by having students actively engaged (speaking, solving problems, collaborating, creating) in the classroom can meaningful and enduring learning be optimised. So, let's come out of the pandemic with an agenda for fundamental reform that is more than a temporary crisis fix," says Bharucha.

PLAN FOR POST-PANDEMIC

Since we are amid a pandemic of the kind that hasn't happened in the world for 100 years, Sanghi says, there is going to be an emergency response, and the decisions will change as the trajectory of the virus changes.

"So, confusions will happen, and that would cause anxiety and stress amongst the students. We need to work on two aspects. One, what to do while the pandemic is still a threat, and education will continue to see disruptions. And second, what to do when the pandemic threat has sufficiently faded, and we are back to some normalcy," he says.

In the current scenario, experts believe that we must keep some semblance of education going, at least what is considered as more important aspects of it, so we have reduced syllabus, easier exams, teacher training in online education, access to technology for the poor and so on.

"When we finally open up, we may need to redesign the curriculum of the next few years. Maybe some fresher courses. Each school Board will have to plan the post-pandemic scenario carefully. It should not happen that they now want to cover both — what was left during the pandemic and the usual syllabus of the next classes. That would be too much of a burden on students," opines Sanghi.

BRING HONESTY IN EVALUATION

Experts say that there are many issues in every aspect of school education. And we do need to rethink the whole education process holistically. However, few simple things can improve the quality of education in the short term drastically.

"One idea is to ensure that the marks printed on the board marksheets reflect the educational attainments of the students. And, I am

not referring to this year's process where you get some marks assigned based on your performance in something completely different. Even in pre-Covid times, CBSE would add lots of marks to the actual marks obtained by the students; this is beside the practical marks where the whole country seems to get perfect scores. And that is on top of having easy papers and an extremely liberal grading. It may be noted that CBSE has the reputation of being one of the best school boards in India. If we can bring in honesty in evaluation by the boards, there will be a lot of pressure within the system to perform better," says Sanghi.

He adds that the boards cannot be honest since there is competition among the school boards to be more dishonest than the others - a race to the bottom. "They justify it on the grounds that if one board tries to be honest, its students will face difficulty in gaining admissions in universities that only look at Class XII marks. Also, if one State board tries to be honest, the pass percentage in that State would go down, leading to political issues. And frankly, there is no political constituency for quality education. There is only a lip service paid to the quality," he says.

MULTIPLE BOARDS REQUIRED

The changes, Sanghi says, should begin with having a large number of school boards. "Maybe every district should have one. There may be some school boards that are State-wide and a few which are national. By having 100s of small school boards, it would be possible for some boards to do experiments in improving quality that may succeed, and others could learn from it. Also, political pressures would be lower on individual boards if they all affect a smaller number of students," opines Sanghi.

Second, there could be a few standardised tests in various subjects that would be optional for students. Students will take those tests only if the university they seek considers these test scores as one of the inputs in deciding admissions. "Universities should develop admission strategies that consider multiple parameters (and unlike the popular perception, it is possible to have a completely objective system that considers multiple parameters). If the admissions are based on standardised tests and other achievements of the students, we could start the admission process six months early. Students can be offered admission before the Board exams, and they will then take those exams in a stress-free fashion," adds Sanghi.

Bharucha thinks, "In the future, continuous modes of assessment should be adopted (bi-weekly or monthly). Research shows that frequent assessment produces more enduring learning than a single assessment at the end; this will not be the last pandemic, nor will it be the last crisis that disrupts our lives. Learning and assessment must both be continuous. At any given cross-section in time, the student, the school, and the Board should know where a student stands."

IndiGo, SpiceJet staff arrested for smuggling Gold



Seven persons, including four staffers of IndiGo and SpiceJet airlines, were arrested by the customs officials at Indira Gandhi International (IGI) airport here for allegedly smuggling into the country gold worth Rs 72.46 lakh, an official statement said on Saturday. Three persons were intercepted by the customs officials after their arrival from Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, on Tuesday, it said. Detailed personal and baggage search of the two passengers resulted in the recovery of two gold bar pieces and one gold biscuit collectively weighing 517.2 grams and valued at Rs 22.89 lakh, the statement issued by the customs department said. One of the passengers has admitted to have handed over 160 grams of gold to IndiGo airline staff, it said. On the basis of interrogation, it has transpired that three members of a syndicate of IndiGo airline and one member of SpiceJet were also involved in smuggling of gold and they have also admitted their involvement in smuggling of 960 grams gold previously, the statement said. The total value of the smuggled goods including previously smuggled gold comes to Rs 72.46 lakh, it added.

PEGASUS MAKER SAYS MILLIONS SLEEP WELL AT NIGHT

Amid the raging controversy over its surveillance software Pegasus, Israeli cyber security company NSO Group has defended itself by saying that millions of people around the world sleep well at night and walk in the streets safely due to such technologies available with intelligence and law enforcement agencies. The company also stated that it does not operate the technology nor does it have access to the data collected by its clients. The alleged use of the Pegasus software to spy on journalists, human rights defenders, politicians and others in a number of countries, including India, has triggered concerns over issues relating to privacy. Politicians, rights activists and journalists were among those targeted with phone spyware sold to various governments by the Israeli firm, according to an international media consortium. "Millions of people around the world are sleeping well at night, and safely walking in the streets, thanks to Pegasus and similar technologies which help intelligence agencies and law enforcement agencies around the world to prevent and investigate crime, terrorism, and paedophilia rings that are hiding under the umbrella of end-to-end encryption apps," a spokesperson for NSO said. "NSO, together with many of the other cyber intelligence companies in the world, provides cyber intelligence tools for governments

because law enforcement agencies around the world are in the dark and there's no regulatory solution that allows them to monitor malicious acts on instant messaging and social media", the company said. On the controversy around its snooping software that has rocked the world, the spokesperson asserted that "NSO does not operate the technology, nor do we have visibility to the data collected". "We are doing our best to help create a safer world," it said. NSO in a written response to PTI in October 2019, when the issue first came to the limelight with reports of misuse in India, had said that it considers "any other use of our products than to prevent serious crime and terrorism a misuse, which is contractually prohibited". "We take action if we detect any misuse. This technology is rooted in the protection of human rights - including the right to life, security and bodily integrity - and that's why we have sought alignment with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, to make sure our products are respecting all fundamental human rights," it said, a stand its executives still maintain. Without confirming, or denying, if the software was sold to India, the company had said

that its "products are licensed to government intelligence and law enforcement agencies for the sole purpose of preventing and investigating terror and serious crime". "To protect the ongoing public safety missions of its agency customers and given significant legal and contractual constraints, NSO Group is not able to disclose who is or is not a client or discuss specific uses of its technology," the written statement had said. Amid the latest controversy, Israel has established a committee to review the allegations of misuse of the NSO group's surveillance software and hinted at a possible "review of the whole matter of giving licences". "The defence establishment appointed a review committee made up of a number of bodies," lawmaker Ram Ben-Barak, the head of Knesset's Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee, told Army Radio on Thursday. "When

they finish their review, we'll demand to see the results and assess whether we need to make corrections," Ben-Barak, who earlier was the former deputy head of Israel's Mossad spy agency, added. Israel's priority was "to review this whole matter of giving licences", he stressed. NSO's chief executive, Shalev Hulio, welcomed the move, telling Army Radio that he would "be very pleased if there were an investigation so that we'd be able to clear our name".



'Erotica' is not 'porn': Shilpa



Actor Shilpa Shetty has said she was unaware of the exact nature of content on 'Hotshots' - the mobile app via which her husband, Raj Kundra, is accused of streaming pornographic content - Mumbai Police sources have told news agency ANI. Police sources told ANI that Ms Shetty said it was another accused - London-based Pradeep Bakshi, Kundra's brother-in-law - who was involved with the app. She also stressed the difference between 'erotica' and 'pornography', and said Kundra was not involved in producing pornographic content. Police recorded Ms Shetty's statement yesterday evening as they questioned her. They were checking if she knew about her husband's alleged link to the pornographic films, sources said. Also yesterday Kundra, who was arrested this week, was sent to police custody till July 27. Police said they had seized 48 TB worth of images and videos, most of which is adult content. Police also said they had a record of transactions - from an account in Yes Bank registered to Mr Kundra to one in the United Bank of Africa. They suspect money from sale of pornographic content was used for online betting. Rs 7.5 crore has been seized so far. During yesterday's hearing his lawyer, Abad Ponda, had objected to classifying the seized content as 'pornography'. Mr Ponda said the content could not come under Section 67 of the IT Act - for which bail is not allowed - as similar material is available on OTT platforms like Netflix. It can be covered only under Section 292 of the Indian Penal Code - which deals with "lascivious" material, he said, adding "no further custody is needed". Kundra has denied any wrongdoing, and has also named Pradeep Bakshi as the key figure.



FB, YouTube 'judge, jury & executioner' on vaccine misinformation: White House

The White House has said YouTube, not just Facebook, on its list of social media platforms officials say are responsible for an alarming spread of misinformation about COVID vaccines and are not doing enough to stop it, sources familiar with the administration's thinking said. The criticism comes just a week after President Joe Biden called Facebook and other social media companies "killers" for failing to slow the spread of misinformation about vaccines. He has since softened his tone. A senior administration official said one of the key problems is "inconsistent enforcement." YouTube - a unit of Alphabet Inc's Google - and Facebook get to decide what qualifies as misinformation on their platforms. But the results have left the White House unhappy. "Facebook and YouTube... are the judge, the jury and the executioner when it comes to what is

going on in their platforms," an administration official said, describing their approach to COVID misinformation. "They get to grade their own homework." Some of the main pieces of vaccine misinformation the Biden administration is fighting include that the COVID-19 vaccines are ineffective, false claims that they carry microchips and that they hurt women's fertility, the official said. Social media companies have come under fire recently from Biden, his press secretary, Jen Psaki, and Surgeon General Vivek Murthy, who have all said the spread of lies about vaccines is making it harder to fight the pandemic and save lives. A recent report from the Center for Countering Digital Hate (CCDH), which has also been highlighted by the White House, showed 12 anti-vaccine accounts are spreading nearly two-thirds of anti-vaccine misinformation online.

CBI raids 40 locations, Sr IAS officer's home in J&K gun licence scam

The CBI raided 40 locations across Jammu and Kashmir and Delhi this morning, including the residence of senior J&K IAS officer Shahid Iqbal Choudhary in Srinagar, in connection with the illegal sale of gun licenses. In J&K the raids took place in Srinagar, Udhampur, Rajouri, Anantnag and Baramulla. Choudhary is currently Secretary (Tribal Affairs) and CEO Mission Youth, J&K. He previously served as the Deputy Commissioner of Kathua, Reasi, Rajouri and Udhampur districts, during which time he allegedly issued thousands of licenses - under fake names - to people in other states and UTs. At least eight former Deputy Commissioners are being investigated by the central agency. Since 2012 over two lakh gun licenses have been issued illegally from J&K. It is believed to be India's biggest gun license racket. Last year two officials, including IAS officer Rajiv Ranjan, were arrested by the CBI. Mr Ranjan and Itrat Hussain Rafiqi, during their tenures as Deputy Commissioner of Kupwara district, allegedly illegally issued several such licences. In February last year the agency arrested a private individual who was "involved in various financial transactions with other co-accused, including public servants". The CBI has previously said it has unearthed a "deep-rooted conspiracy" in this matter. The scam was first discovered by Rajasthan's Anti-Terror Squad in 2017, when they arrested Mr Ranjan's brother and others working as middlemen for gun dealers.

138 dead in Maha rain fury, 90,000 moved to safety

At least 138 people have died in rain-related incidents, including multiple landslides, in Maharashtra. The deaths include 36 who died in a landslide in the coastal Raigad district, about 70 km from state capital Mumbai. Several districts - primarily the Konkan region - have been receiving incessant rain over the past few days, leaving thousands stranded in floods and landslides. "138 accidental deaths reported in Maharashtra due to rain and other monsoon-related incidents," Maharashtra Minister of Relief and Rehabilitation, Vijay Wadetiwar, said. Satara district in Western Maharashtra has also been battered by rain and several people have been swept away by floodwaters, an official was reported as saying by

news agency PTI. The official put the death count in Satara at 27. Other fatalities include those reported from eastern districts such as Gondia and Chandrapur, he said. "Rainfall in various parts of the state often coinciding with high tides and also discharge from dams led to various regions... getting inundated," the Maharashtra government said in a press release. At least 84,452 people, including over 40,000 in Kolhapur district, were shifted to safer places in Western Maharashtra's Pune division, officials said. At least 54 villages have been completely affected due to the floods while 821 were partially affected in Kolhapur, where the Panchganga river is flowing at a level higher than that witnessed during the peak of floods in 2019, officials said.

'WE WANT TO DO, BUT...': Elon Musk's reply on launching Tesla in India

Tesla Inc is likely to set up a factory in India if successful with imported vehicles, Chief Executive Elon Musk said on Twitter, after the company wrote to Indian ministries seeking a big reduction in import duties on electric vehicles, according to two sources with knowledge of the matter. The electric-car maker's pitch to lower duties, however, is likely to face resistance from Prime Minister Narendra Modi's administration which has championed high import taxes for many industries in a bid to boost local manufacturing. "We want to do so, but import duties are the highest in the world by far of any large country," Musk said in reply to a tweet about launching the company's cars in India. "But we are hopeful that there will be at least a temporary tariff relief for electric vehicles," Musk added.

Other luxury automakers in India have also lobbied the government in the past to lower taxes on imported cars but have had little success due to opposition from rivals with domestic operations. Tesla, which aims to begin sales in India this year, said in a letter to ministries and the country's leading think-tank Niti Aayog that slashing federal taxes on imports of fully

assembled electric cars to 40% would be more appropriate, according to the sources. That compares with current rates of 60% for cars priced below \$40,000 and 100% for those above \$40,000.

