

ANALYSIS 7 FDI THROUGH FRONT DOOR

MONEY 8 ESSENTIAL ITEM DEMAND SURGES WITH UNLOCK 1.0

SPORTS 12 AMIR CLEARED TO JOIN SIDE IN ENG

Established 1864 Published From HYDERABAD DELHI LUCKNOW BHOPAL RAIPUR CHANDIGARH BHUBANESWAR RANCHI DEHRADUN VIJAYAWADA

LATE CITY VOL. 2 ISSUE 284 *Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

HYDERABAD, FRIDAY JULY 24, 2020; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer



SAMANTHA SHARES SELF-CARE SECRETS

Page 11

www.dailypioneer.com



AMITABH BACHCHAN DENIES REPORTS OF TESTING NEGATIVE

Megastar Amitabh Bachchan on Thursday dismissed reports that he has tested negative for coronavirus and called the piece of news "an incorrigible lie".



DOCTOR HELD FOR RAPE ATTEMPT ON CORONA PATIENT IN UP

A government doctor at Aligarh's Deen Dayal hospital was arrested on Wednesday on charges of molesting and attempting to rape a 25-year-old woman, who was recuperating in the isolation ward after being tested positive for coronavirus.



AFRICAN-ORIGIN SIDDI TRIBAL ELATED ON BECOMING K'TAKA MLC

Shantharam Budna Siddi, a 55-year-old African-origin Siddi tribal, is elated on being nominated as a Karnataka Legislative Council (MLC) member by Governor Vajubhai Vala.



E-INVOICING OF GST COMPULSORY FROM OCT 1

The government proposes to roll out compulsory e-invoicing of GST from October 1, but has decided to raise the threshold to exempt smaller entities from this compliance.



Next 4-5 weeks crucial for Hyderabad and the state

Cautions director of public health Dr G Srinivasa Rao, hints onset of stage 3

NAVEENA GHANATE HYDERABAD

"Next 4-5 weeks are going to be crucial for the state; hence, especially in Hyderabad, the strict measures taken up by the government will continue," said Dr G Srinivasa Rao, Director of Public Health.

He has thrown ample hints at the onset of Stage 3. That is, an ominous stage when a disease spreads in the population in such a way that people don't know how they were exposed to the contagion.



(left) Dr K Ramesh Reddy, DME and Dr G Srinivasa Rao DPH addressing the media

how it spreads is not visible to naked eye. People are fighting and the government declared a war against this virus and has made all arrangements. To fight this invisible virus, follow 3 principles - wear mask, maintain 6 feet distance and wash your hands."

Dr Srinivas pointed that people in Tier-2 cities, especially erstwhile district headquarters, have to be very careful. He said, "People with any Covid-19-related symptoms should go to the nearest PHC and get themselves tested."

Eatala denies community spread

HYDERABAD: Health Minister Eatala Rajender has dismissed suggestions about the onset of 'community transmission' of Covid-19 in Telangana.

Kin moves court after hospital fails to hand over body

A woman has moved the Telangana High Court alleging that the body of her husband, who died of COVID-19, was not handed over to her by a private hospital here over pending dues, and sought relief.

1,000 in health dept infected with Covid, staff in grip of fear

PNS HYDERABAD

Reflecting the odds against the health authorities, it is now established that the TS Medical and Health Department accounts for nearly 1,000 of the 49,000 positive cases recorded in Telangana.

While sharing this bit of information, Director of Public Health Dr G Srinivasa Rao said: "Along with our department, the Police Department, GHMC, registered positives in their families. We are testing at 290 centers in the GHMC range."

Doctors pointed out that they were risking their lives in their fight against corona. Dr



K Ramesh Reddy said, "It is important to boost the morale of the health personnel. It is similar to fighting a war by soldiers at the border, risking lives to unknown virus. We expect proper support from society. Daily a PIL is being filed, because of which the medical community is getting demoralised."

TS crosses 50K Covid-19 cases

HYDERABAD: The total number of Covid-19 positive cases registered in Telangana crossed the 50,000 mark and stood at 50,826, with 1,567 new cases being recorded in the last 24 hours as of Thursday evening.

Now, isolation centres in Telangana districts

PNS HYDERABAD

Health Minister Eatala Rajender has directed the authorities to focus on equipping isolation centers in all districts. During a video conference with superintendents of hospitals and staff of the Telangana Vaidya Vidhana Parishad, Eatala asked officials to recruit or engage requisite personnel, including sanitation staff, patient care providers, lab technicians, and nursing staff for the isolation centers.

Referring to the standards of care, the Minister said, "We are in talks with researchers around the world to provide advanced treatment information from time to time. Experts say that even if the vaccine comes, it would not be of much use; 99% of people do not need medications like Remdesivir or be put on ventilator. Timely use of anti-inflammatory drugs can save lives."

The Minister said that Diet Contractors would be paid arrears shortly. Necessary sanitation staff, patient care providers, lab technicians and nursing staff would be hired shortly. Oxygen cylinders



Eatala asked officials to recruit or engage staff including sanitation, patient care providers, lab technicians, and nursing staff for the isolation centres.

Simian attack in Suryapet: Monkeys maul 30 lambs

PNS HYDERABAD

Monkeys wreaked havoc killing around 30 lambs in a village in Telangana's Suryapet district on Wednesday, officials said.

The incident occurred in Shobanadrigudem village, notorious for monkey menace. A group of about 20 monkeys attacked the lambs in a shed left behind by a shepherd

while taking the herd of sheep for grazing in agriculture fields. As no one was present in the house, the simians attacked the hapless lambs which were about 30 days old. Some neighbours tried to chase away the monkeys but failed. All the lambs died of being bitten by monkeys.

Senior IAS fume as privileged few call the shots in transfers, postings

L VENKAT RAM REDDY HYDERABAD

There is palpable heartburn among many senior IAS officers in Telangana State over what they perceive are improper transfers and nudges to the loop line in the name of reshuffle in the state administration.

Several senior IAS officers have been kept in the loop line by the state government which has posted them in what are deemed in official circles as



'insignificant' posts at a time when some retired officials as well as blue-eyed babus junior

to them have been heading multiple departments, including those known to be 'lucrative'.

Bus seething with anger in the loop line are understood to have recently met to share their concerns on the 'injustice' meted to them in postings. The pervasive feeling at this meeting was that the whole thing is demotivating and demoralising.

Permanent commission of women Army officers

PNS NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Defence has issued an order for grant of Permanent Commission to women officers in the Army.

In a landmark judgement, the apex court in February had directed that all serving women officers recruited under the Short Service Commission (SSC) scheme will have to be considered for Permanent Commission.

Army Spokesperson Col Aman Anand said the government order paved the way for empowering of women officers to shoulder "larger roles" in the Army.

"The order specifies grant of permanent commission to Short Service Commissioned (SSC) women officers in all 10 streams of the Indian Army," he said. Col Anand said the 10 streams where permanent



commission of women officers are being made available include army air defence, signals, engineers, army aviation, electronics and mechanical engineers, army service corps and intelligence corps.

At present, the Army offers permanent commission to women officers in two branches -- judge advocate general (JAG) and education.

"Their selection board will be scheduled as soon as all affected SSC women officers exercise their option and complete requisite documentation," the Army spokesperson said.

SpiceJet lifts 1,500 Indian students from Kyrgyzstan

PNS NEW DELHI

SpiceJet on Thursday said it will operate nine charter flights in association with Bollywood actor Sonu Sood to repatriate over 1,500 Indian students from Kyrgyzstan during the next two months.

"SpiceJet operated the first charter flight from Bishkek (capital of Kyrgyzstan) to bring back 135 students to their hometown of Varanasi today," the airline said in a press release. Scheduled international passenger flights continue to remain suspended in India since March 23 due to the coronavirus pandemic. The low-cost carrier has operated over 400 charter flights to repatriate around 65,000 Indians from countries like Oman, Qatar, Sri Lanka, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia.

KTR starts Nalgonda X Roads-Owaisi hospital flyover works

PNS HYDERABAD

As part of the plan to ease traffic congestion in Hyderabad, foundation stone was laid on Thursday for an elevated corridor to be built at a cost of over Rs 500 crore.

The elevated corridor from the Government Printing Press in Chanchalguda to Yadagiri Theatre is expected to ease the congestion between Nalgonda X Roads and Owaisi Hospital Junction, the stretch notorious for frequent traffic jams.

Being undertaken under Strategic Road Development Programme (SRDP), the corridor will be built at a cost of Rs 523.37 crore.

The elevated corridor will be passing through Chanchalguda



MAUD minister KT Rama Rao laid foundation stone for Rs 523 cr works for constructing flyover between Nalgonda X roads and Owaisi Hospital Centre on Thursday

Junction, Saidabad Junction, Dhobighat Junction and IS Sadan Junction.

Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) Commissioner D. S. Lokesh Kumar said the corri-

dor will come up with a length of 3,382 km, out of which the four-lane bi-directional flyover length would be 2.58 km and the remaining would be for the two side ramps.

Congress bid to upstage TRS on claiming PV's legacy

K VENKATESHWARLU HYDERABAD

The Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee, having seen Telangana Rashtra Samiti chief and Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao shoot from its shoulder, is now desperately trying to claim the legacy of former prime minister PV Narasimha Rao, more so because even the Bharatiya Janata Party has an axe to grind in the late Congress leader's birth centenary celebrations that began on June 28.

The saving grace for Telangana Congress is that it has already announced that it would

conduct year-long centenary PV birth anniversary celebrations from July 24th onwards. It formed a committee for the purpose under the leadership of former minister Dr J Geetha Reddy. In its first programme, the party will hold a virtual meeting on Thursday (July 24), for which it has enlisted former prime minister Dr Manmohan Singh, former Union ministers P Chidambaram and Dr Jairam Ramesh as speakers.

What has unnerved TPCC is that KCR is reportedly contemplating to give berth to PV's daughter Vani as MLC, obviously to cement his position as one who went beyond party



feelings to admire PV's contribution as befitting that of a

Telugu bidda.

Quick on the uptake, Telangana Congress made PV's younger brother PV Manohar Rao the chief patron of its own centenary celebrations. However, some of the family members of PV have made it clear to Telangana Congress that they would not attend the celebrations conducted by the Congress. Their searching question is: How could the Congress confine the centenary celebrations to Telangana as PV was a national leader?

PV's grandson and Telangana BJP spokesperson Subash on Thursday said the Congress party had no right even to

utter the name of such a great leader as PV whose mortal remains were not been allowed to lie in state in the Congress party office in Delhi and had to be rushed to Hyderabad. The same Congress party leaders were now raising a hue and cry, after having disowned PV's legacy. It was the Modi Government which built a memorial in Ektha Sthal in Delhi and released a postal stamp in honour of PV. Prime Minister Narendra Modi always spoke highly about PV in his public speeches, in Parliament and during his Mann ki baat programme.

TODAY ALMANAC Month & Paksham: Shravana & Shukla Paksha Panchangam. Time to Avoid: (Bad time to start any important work). HYDERABAD WEATHER Forecast: Cloudy. Temp: 26/22. Humidity: 92%. Sunrise: 05:53 am. Sunset: 06:52 pm.

Rising cases worry rural folks

PV KONDAL RAO ■ WARANGAL

Giving a clear indication of the presence of Coronavirus among the community in Telangana, health officials have urged the general public to be very cautious in the next four to five weeks, which will go a long way in containing Covid-19.



prevailing in the districts across the state. The rise in number of positive cases and the rapid tests are increasing and people feel that the pandemic has reached alarming proportions

in many interiors of these districts. The rise in number of positive cases in erstwhile Warangal district is sending shivers down the spine of people. Warangal urban region

seems to be the most affected area in the region. The official machinery, which has alerted the people about the rise in cases, is now concentrating on expediting the test process and advising the people to take necessary steps to contain the spread.

Though wearing masks and other precautions are not undertaken with utmost care in many areas, the rise in cases are ultimately posing a serious challenge to the administration. Reports from urban and rural areas of erstwhile Warangal reveal that the sudden spike could be a result of community spread.

many leaders in this part have been undertaking in the programmes designed by the government from time to time, the pandemic alarm is being sounded in some colonies of the Warangal city.

Meanwhile, Telangana has been witnessing rise in number of Corona positive days since the past few days, especially in Hyderabad. With the rise in cases, many are undergoing tests and taking precautionary measures to keep the novel Coronavirus at bay.

Congress bid to upstage TRS on...

Continued from page 1

The Congress leadership did not talk even a word about PV before and after his demise, he pointed out. The BJP leader said TPCC leaders hurriedly offered to pay homage to PV only after the TRS government declared year-long centenary celebrations.

went on to assert that the country would remember PV for scripting the economic reforms, the fruits of which all are enjoying today. He said Narasimha Rao's life was like a personality development lesson and his contribution to the country was no less than that of Jawaharlal Nehru.

Farmers told to switch to modern cultivation methods

PNS ■ SURYAPET

Minister for Energy G Jagadish Reddy on Thursday said that the farmers of Suryapet district will get Godavari water for irrigation till they feel that the irrigation facility is more than sufficient.



Power Minister Jagadish Reddy plants a sapling at Suryapet on Thursday

He laid the foundation stones for construction of Rythu Vedikas in Pen Pahad, Chivvemla and Atmakur S mandals of Suryapet rural district. Later at a programme held in Atmakuru S Mandal, he distributed pattas for Inam lands among beneficiaries of Patarlapadu and Kandagatla villages.

gave round the clock power supply to agriculture sector, now he is giving Godavari water to farmers of the district fully till the farmers feel water is sufficient to irrigate lands.

yields of produce. The constitution of Rythu Coordination Committees is a part of the exercise. Rajya Sabha Member Badugula Lingaiah Yadav, Praja Parishad Vice-chairman Venkat Narayan Goud, ZPTCS Biksham Sanjeev Naik, Penpahad MP Nemmadu Biksham, District Collector Vinay Krishna Reddy and others took part in the celebrations.

KTR starts Nalgonda X roads- Owaisi...

Continued from page 1

Municipal Administration and Urban Development Minister K. T. Rama Rao laid the foundation stone for the elevated corridor in the presence of Greater Hyderabad Mayor Bonthu Rammoan, Lokesh Kumar and other officials.

Senior IAS officers in TS sulk over transfers and postings...

Continued from page 1

Besides, it would send a negative signal to IAS officers working in "sensitive and responsible positions", it was deeply felt. What hurts them most is the fact some retired IAS officers are calling the shots in the government, while they, despite being in the peak of their career, need to act as per the directions of officials who ought to hang up their boots.

Subramanyam, Suresh Chanda, Chitra Ramachandran, Heeralal Samariya (1985), Rajeshwar Tiwari (1986), Rajiv Ranjan Mishra, Vasudha Mishra (1987), Shalini Mishra, Adhar Sinha and Rani Kumudini (1988). Many of his seniors are now on deputation to Centre and a few of his seniors are serving in the State.

that the TS government 'favoured' Somesh with 'lucrative' posts even before he was made CS. Somesh was given posting as principal secretary of revenue, commercial taxes and excise simultaneously --- all considered to be lucrative, though they are also 'revenue-earning departments' for the government.

Kin alleges hosptl not handing over patient's body...

Continued from page 1

The woman's husband, who worked as a watchman, was admitted to the hospital on July 13 with high fever and respiratory problems. The hospital took his samples for COVID-19 test and he was found to be infected by the virus.

LOCKDOWN LESSONS

Students don teachers' role for classmates in TS schools

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

At a time when there are no clear-cut guidelines on conducting online classes in Telangana, students of the state social and tribal welfare residential educational institutions have turned teachers for their classmates.



Though the idea is meant for students of TSWREIS and TTWREIS, children of other schools are also participating in the VLC

cation and teaching skills take up the role of teachers and impart learning to their younger schoolmates and peers in his or her village," Praveen Kumar said.

with good communication and teaching skills who have competency in a particular subject, are entrusted with teaching responsibilities, he said.

Next 4-5 weeks crucial for Hyd...

Continued from page 1

Don't ignore symptoms like fever or cold or cough and rest at home. Even if we want to save you, we can't if you are negligent."

Eatala denies...

Continued from page 1

Earlier, at a press conference, the DPH said: "The virus has gone into the community". However, later the DPH, speaking to media again, said that coronavirus was under control in the state and that the cases had declined.

Now, isolation centers in Telangna districts

Continued from page 1

Eatala asked the authorities of every government hospital to ensure that generator facility is available, along with stocks of diesel to run the machines. He gave these instructions in the wake of sudden shutdown of power supply in Gandhi Hospital at about 5:35 pm, which was restored at 5:56 pm.

Israeli doctors develop 'anti-diabetes drug'

PNS ■ JERUSALEM

A new drug being developed in Israel could be the answer to treating the main cause of Type 2 Diabetes, insulin resistance.

and normalizes all diabetes-associated parameters to the normal range.

also normalizes the glucose tolerance test," which measures the body's response to sugar, "and suppressed systemic inflammation, which is a component of diabetes."

The petitioner had initially paid an amount of Rs 2.50 lakh, which she had borrowed, and on July 22 the hospital authorities informed her that the total treatment charges were Rs 8.91 lakh.

"If you take care of the insulin resistance, you take care of the symptoms," he said. He stressed that they have not found any adverse side effects during their testing.

Chevon added that on a molecular level, "Zygosid-50...forces an intra-cellular exchange to take place," where it removes what's called "free iron" in cells and replaces it with zinc.

Table with market rates for Gold, Silver, Chicken, and Eggs in Hyderabad, Vijayawada, and Visakhapatnam.

Simian attack in Suryapet

Continued from page 1

Suryapet is one of the districts in the state facing monkey menace. Hordes of monkeys enter homes, raid business establishments and harass people.

1,000 in health dept infected with...

Continued from page 1

Dr Srinivas Rao advised people to avoid getting tested unnecessarily. He said, "Many people are getting tested even if they don't have symptoms. More than half of them don't even have symptoms. It is not correct. The persons who actually need the test, especially those with symptoms are ending up in line because of such persons."

TS crosses 50K Covid-19 cases

Continued from page 1

The death toll climbed to 447, with nine Covid-patients succumbing to the virus in the last 24 hours. In all, 31 of the 33 districts in the state reported cases on Thursday.

medication will not cross Rs 350-400. Basic antibiotics and vitamin supplements can cure the disease. However, as the prognosis becomes more severe, injections can vary between Rs 10,000-35,000.

Dr Ramesh said, "With mild symptoms, the cost of

CRIME CORNER

Man nabbed for stalking women

HYDERABAD: The Cyber Crime Police on Thursday arrested an accused person who is involved in stalking and insulting women on social media. The arrested person has been identified as 26-year-old Mohammed Ahmed, a private employee from Kurnool of Andhra Pradesh. A complaint was received from a victim, from whom the accused had taken her phone number and photos from her Instagram account and demanded Rs 10,000 for deleting her photographs. According to the police, Ahmed searches profiles of women on social media platforms and collects their mobile numbers and photographs available on their profiles. He then calls them and blackmails them to extract money from them for deleting those photographs and phone numbers. He also sets the photographs of the victims as his WhatsApp display picture to trap other girls. The police said that the accused insists the women to have a relationship with him. The accused has six cases registered against him across various police stations in the Hyderabad Commissionerate and one case under the Rachakonda Commissionerate.

TV actress Rekha commits suicide

HYDERABAD: A television actress, Maddela Sabeera alias Rekha, 42, committed suicide at her house in Vidyannagar, Hyderabad. According to the police, Sabeera, a native of Guntur district in Andhra Pradesh, moved to Hyderabad pursuing her dream to act in movies. "She had acted in a couple of television serials but after that there were no offers. Then she returned to Guntur and got married. However, they got separated and she was married to Chaitanya and shifted to Hyderabad," said the police. Chaitanya was into real estate business and she resumed her career in the television industry. Gradually, their businesses ran into losses due to which she plunged into depression. On Wednesday, she went to take a bath but did not come out from the bathroom even after a long time after repeated calls. Chaitanya alerted the police who found her dead in the bathroom. A case has been registered and investigation is on.

Hospitals face severe 'nursing shortage'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The work load on the nurses has increased enormously due to the Coronavirus outbreak.

The nurses visiting the city from other states in search of work are being harassed by the managements because of shortage of hands not refusing to concede their demand of allowing them to go back to their native place.

The nurses from other states have been working under hazardous circumstances including the risk of contracting the virus, long duty hours, threat of passing the infections to children at home.

Expressing their inability to continue in work, they have been asking the managements to return their certificates so that they will go back to their native place. But the managements are refusing to concede their demands and assigning them duty in Covid wards.



In a latest development, nurses in Mehdiapatnam area of the city resorted to dharna in front of the hospital and complained to the medical and health department that the hospital management is physically and mentally harassing them.

Many Corona patients are inclining towards receiving treatment in corporate hospitals because of the spike in the cases and the adverse patient to hospital bed ratio in government hospitals. Though the

cost of treatment is very high, they are keen on getting admitted to private hospitals.

Currently beds in both government and private hospitals have been full with Covid patients. The specialist doctors examine the patients and prescribe medicines. But nurses would have to take good care of the patient. They have to spend most of their work time with Covid patients. There is risk of contracting the virus. At the same time, the pressure

from their families on nurses is very high. The families have been asking them to quit their job and return home.

During lockdown period, the private hospitals removed many staff members from their rolls as there were no patients for them. As unlock period commenced, the number of cases increased. Many staff nurses resigned from their job and left for home. There is a severe shortage of nurses in private hospitals. The managements are offering attractive packages to woo nurses. The managements offer Rs 50,000 to them hiking the salary. They are offering free transport, free food, but nurses are hesitating to work in Covid wards. According to WHO guidelines, for every population of 2,000 there should be a doctor and five nurses. The requirement of nurses in government hospitals is 20,000, but there are only 7,000.

Arvind unhappy over Haritha Haaram's tardy progress

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority Commissioner Arvind Kumar has reportedly expressed displeasure over the implementation of the mass afforestation drive 'Telanganaku Haritha Haram' (TKHH).

The plantation of saplings has not yet reached at least 50 per cent of the target. He wanted the HMDA urban forestry department personnel to plant at least 3 crore saplings by July-end to reach 60 per cent of the target.

Further, he wanted the officials to achieve the full target of planting 5 crore saplings by August 15.

Reviewing the progress of urban forestry development with officials here on Thursday, Arvind Kumar advised the officials of urban forestry department to plant saplings between the plants that formed the avenue plantation so as to raise a green wall on either side of the road. The commuters should feel the avenue plantation as a green



wall, he said. As part of tank bund beautification, saplings should be planted in two attractive rows. Plants should be planted along the slope of the bund without harming the bund.

Arvind Kumar called for developing tree parks, Yadadri Model Plantations, Smriti Vanams, in municipalities and municipal corporations under the HMDA limits with the help of the elected people's representatives to reach the target.

He entrusted the task of fulfilling the Haritha Haram targets under ORR and Hyderabad

Growth Corridor limits to ORR Project Director Santosh.

He made it clear that he would not show leniency towards anyone if the orders of Municipal Administration KT Rama Rao to plant saplings and nurse them extensively in seven districts under the HMDA limits are not implemented.

Divisional Forest Officer and four forest department managers told the HMDA commissioner to submit a progress report indicating the saplings planted region-wise by the month-end.

No auction for Balapur Ganesh laddu this year

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Coronavirus has cast its shadow on the Balapur Ganesh festival celebrations, the second biggest in Hyderabad after the Khairatabad Ganesh festival celebrations.

For the first time in over 25 years, the Balapur Ganesh Utsav Committee will not auction the 21-kg laddu prasad this year. The committee at its meeting held on Thursday, decided to make the celebrations this time a low-key affair because of the pandemic.

Further, the committee decided to limit the height of the Ganesh idol this year to mere six feet as against 21-feet last year. In addition, the committee cancelled the auction of Balapur Ganesh laddu prasad. Annually several thousands would witness the laddu auction.



In 1994, which is the first year to commence the auction, Kolanu Mohan Reddy auctioned the laddu for Rs 450. Since then, Kolanu family won the auction of the laddu at least nine times. Last year's auction had fetched Rs 17.60 lakh. The laddu auction at Balapur that starts early in the morning of the 11th day of the puja is a major attraction every year and is followed by a procession to Hussainsagar lake, 20 km away.

75-yr-old Covid suspect jumps off building

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A 75-year-old man, suspected to be infected with Coronavirus, committed suicide by jumping off a hospital building at Banjara Hills on Thursday. The victim was identified as R Nagender, a retired employee of Air India. He was residing in Ameerpet along with his wife and two sons. According to the police, Nagender had shown symptoms of the virus and had gone to Nikhil Hospital at Srinagar Colony on Thursday. After a while, he went to the terrace of the building and jumped down from it. He suffered critical injuries after he landed on the trees below. The hospital staff immediately took him inside and put him under emergency treatment. Nagender later succumbed to the injuries that he received.

Rain inundates Osmania Hospital new wards too

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In less than 24 hours after the heritage building of Osmania General Hospital was evacuated and sealed, all its wards that had been shifted to the Quli Qutb Shah building were also inundated following rains on Wednesday and Thursday.

The sheet of water in the Quli Qutb Shah building is causing issues for patients, attendants and staff. Doctors now point out that mere shifting of the wards from the old building is no solution. They say the foundation stone for the new Osmania Hospital should be laid forthwith and the entire structure raised on a war-footing.

Meanwhile, INTACH members demanded 'restoration' of OGH's specified heritage building that lies on just one acre piece of land. The committee members urged



the government to refrain from creating an erroneous impression that heritage enthusiasts had been obstructing the construction

of a new structure. They said the government could still go ahead and raise a new structure in the other 25.5 acres of the premises.

Man held for blackmailing woman

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The sleuths of Cyber Crime Police Station, Rachakonda arrested a stalker who harassed and threatened a girl over social media for allegedly denying his proposal.

The accused was identified as Ashwaq Ali Shaik, 26, resident of Thattianaram, Hayathnagar, said the police.

The arrest was made following a complaint from the victim. He admitted that he knows the victim as she lives in the vicinity of his house. With an intention to befriend her, he searched her social media profile and sent a friend request to her and started chatting. He later proposed to her but she denied, following which he bore a grudge and went to her college, where he forcibly took selfie pictures with her and started blackmailing her to come with him in his car, further threatened to share that picture to her family members.

Midday meals to improve attendance

NAMRATA SRIVASTAVA ■ HYDERABAD

Soon after Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao announced extension of the mid-day meals scheme to students of all government junior and degree colleges in the state, many students and college organisations welcomed the move.

The scheme will encourage many students to take admission in state-run junior and degree colleges. State President of Telangana State's Technical Colleges Employees Association (TSTCEA) Santhosh Kumar states, "We welcome this move. With mid-day meal being offered at colleges, many students who



dropped out after school or intermediate might also take admission in the college."

Giving an insight on how else the mid-day meals at government colleges and junior colleges might help, M Venu,

General Secretary, Telangana Joint Action Committee (TJAC) for all the students' organisations in the state said, "A lot of students, who are in the rural sector actually go home after the first half of the

college for lunch and do not come back. Some of them work and others live far, so going back is a bit of an issue. Mid-day meals at college will ensure that the students attend all the classes, without skipping their lunch. This scheme would also ensure that students get at least one healthy meal a day."

However, when asked if the mid-day meal enough for the students? He said, "The government announced this plan earlier too, and nothing has been done as yet. Most colleges outside Hyderabad don't have washrooms or drinking water facilities also. Government should work on that too besides initiating such schemes."

Police book case against Aditya Homes chairman

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Banjara Hills Police booked cases against the chairman of Aditya Homes Kota Reddy on Thursday following a complaint from a former partner.

According to sources, Subba Reddy, chairman of Vamsi Ram builders, had approached the Banjara Hills police alleging that he and Kota Reddy had partnered up for a joint venture in Gandipet area and that he had incurred a loss of Rs 79 crores in that deal.

He blamed Kota Reddy for the loss and lodged a complaint against him at the police station on Thursday.

"Following notices, Kota Reddy and his son Aditya have appeared at the PS for questioning. The case is under investigation. We are verifying allegations and questioning those involved in the venture," said the police.

UGC GUIDELINES

JFME plans series of protests

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Joining the list of many students' organisation who spoke against the new UGC guidelines for final examinations, the Joint Forum for Movement on Education (JFME) plans a series of action against the commission.

"As you know, the MHRD notification and the UGC guidelines issued on July 6, have made examinations com-

pulsory for all terminal semester students," read a statement by JFME adding, "On the other hand, teachers and students have been demanding that in view of the rising cases of Covid-19, no examinations should be held. Terminal semester students must be given the same relief that has been given to the continuing students, in terms of evaluation of grades for the semester. Many state governments had

given this relief to students that has now been jeopardized by the UGC guidelines."

Giving details about what they have planned, they added, "JFME has initiated a petition to the PM to demand the immediate withdrawal of UGC guidelines, the immediate cancellation of the mandatory requirement of examinations for final year students and for alternative forms to be adopted for grant of degrees."

Group detained for attack on RGV's residence

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Hyderabad city police detained a group of individuals after they allegedly attacked the residence of filmmaker Ram Gopal Varma at Jubilee Hills on Thursday.

The incident comes after the trailer of RGV's new movie 'Power Star' was leaked online. The film has already sparked controversy as Hollywood star and Jana Sena leader Pawan Kalyan is fondly called 'power star'. The director, however, has denied that the movie is based on the actor-politician. Some celebrities have started a war against the director on Twitter.

RGV tweeted about the incident. "P k fans claiming to be janasena members attacked my office and they have been thrown out into the lockup by my guards and Cops. I want to kiss and make love to them for giving me more publicity for POWER STAR (sic)," the director wrote.

Oxygen devices donated to CRH

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

High-flow nasal cannula oxygen devices have been donated by Gajanan Malhya, General Manager of South Central Railway on behalf of SCRSA to Dr Prasanna Kumar, Principal Chief Medical Director (PCMD), South Central Railway.

These units are very useful for treating Covid patients

suffering with respiratory infection. SCRSA has donated 04 such equipments for the use of Covid treatment at Central Railway Hospital (CRH), Lallaguda.

A 110-beds capacity special Covid ward has been setup at Central Railway Hospital, Lallaguda with necessary infrastructure for treating both serving and retired railway employees and their depen-

dents. Necessary treatment has been started for Corona patients having mild/very mild symptoms based on the advisory by the state government.

While the Hospital already had provision of ventilators for providing oxygen for Covid patients with respiratory infection, it was felt that the high flow nasal cannula oxygen devices will further strengthen the facilities at the Hospital.

Smokers quit in highest numbers during Covid

NAVEEN KUMAR ■ HYDERABAD

Those facing withdrawal symptoms post lockdown announcement have now quit smoking. Though many were planning to quit, they were unable to due to easy access. However, staying at home has compelled them to control the urge and quit smoking altogether.

In many families, people would not smoke at home out of a sense of respect for their elders or because of the absence of social cues of parties and post-lunch tea breaks.



"I have been trying to quit smoking for quite some time now. It was always one of those stop and start affairs.

What the lockdown did to me is to bring things into perspective, a moment of quiet reflection in the middle of a pandemic, on how much I prioritise my health. I had never spent so much time at home. It gave me enough time to think: if not now, then when?" says Rajesh Sahoo, a techie from Cognizant.

Moreover, data from the Zoe Covid Symptom Tracker app suggested smokers were 14 per cent more likely than non-smokers to develop the three 'classic' symptoms of Coronavirus infection - fever,

persistent cough and shortness of breath. An official release from World Health Organisation (WHO) said, "The available evidence suggests that smoking is associated with increased severity of disease and death in hospitalised Covid-19 patients."

"It is not the normal 9-to-5 job in the creative industry; you always have to be ideating. After crazy meetings and brainstorming, you could leave all of it aside for a little while, to have a smoke," said Nithin Raj, a copywriter from an advertisement agency.

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA
O/o Regional Officer, P.R. Region, Nizamabad.
e-Proc Tender Notice
NIT No.32,33/2020-21, Dt: 18.07.2020
No. of works (02) Name of the works : C/o Rythu Vedika work sheds at Armoor (V&M) of Armoor Assembly constituency in Nizamabad District and other same work in undesignated. TOTAL ECV:44.00 Lakhs. Tender schedules can be upload from on e-Procurement market site from 21.07.2020 from 10:30 onwards until 02 Tenders are uploaded with validity on (7) working days from the date of uploading and publishing of each NIT online. Other details and Future Amendments can be had from e-procurement market place at www.tender.telangana.gov.in Ph No. 08462-239502
R.O.No.284-DPCL-AGENCY/ADVT/11/2020-21 Dt: 21-07-2021 Sd/- Regional Officer, P.R. Region, Nizamabad

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA
PANCHAYATHI RAJ ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT
Regional Office, Rangareddy, Z.P.P. Compound, Anandnagar Colony, Khairatabad, Hyd-04.
Encl.-Lr.No.77/Amenendment No.1 to NIT No: ROPRED/RR/155 & 156/2019-20, Dt:21.07.2020
E-mail : se_pr_reg@telangana.gov.in NIT AMENDMENT NO.1, Dt: 21.07.2020
As per Tender Notice: NIT No.139-166/2019-20, Dt:31.10.2019 with starting date of downloading schedules from dt:05.11.2019 to onwards and last date is dt:13.11.2019, Amendment No.1 as NIT No. 155 & 156/2019-20, Dt: 21.07.2020 with starting date of downloading schedules from dt:25.07.2020 to onwards and last date is dt:03.08.2020. Further details can be seen at e-Procurement market place i.e., www.tender.telangana.gov.in. All further details can be seen on the net at e-procurement market place i.e., www.tender.telangana.gov.in. Further details can also be obtained from office of the Regional Officer, Rangareddy, Z.P.P. Compound, Anandnagar Colony, Khairatabad, Hyderabad- 500 004.
R.O.No.286-DPCL-AGENCY/ADVT/11/2020-21 Dt: 21-07-2021 Sd/- Regional Officer, P.R.E.D, Rangareddy

No clarity yet on TPCC chief post

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Selection of the TPCC president is progressing akin to one step forward and two steps backwards. The Congress leaders are worried not knowing when the Congress high command takes a decision. The issue comes up for discussion every time, but the high command is putting the issue on hold all of a sudden.

The party sources say the main tussle for the top post is between two MPs of the party - Revanth Reddy and Komatireddy Venkat Reddy. The million-dollar questions that the party circles hotly discuss are "When the selection of the TPCC president takes place? Who will be given reins of the party in the state? Will the TPCC issue a notification? What is on the mind of the party high command? Will the party loyalists get an oppor-



tunity? What would be the impact of the social equations?" Recently, Komatireddy Venkat Reddy calling on Sonia Gandhi in Delhi gave rise to speculations over his appointment as the successor to N Uttam Kumar Reddy, the existing TPCC president. Not to be outdone, Malkajgiri MP is leaving no stone unturned to

secure the post, it is learnt. Recently, he is understood to have made a courtesy call on DK Sivakumar, Karnataka PCC president, in Bengaluru. Meanwhile, publicity among party circles gained ground that Revanth stood more chance to get appointed as TPCC president.

The party seniors are of the

According to party sources, the main tussle for the top post is between Malkajgiri MP Revanth Reddy and Bhongir MP Komatireddy Venkat Reddy

view that Revanth Reddy is lobbying for the post through KC Venugopal, AICC General Secretary. That is why he visited Bengaluru even during the most turbulent Covid times to meet Sivakumar.

The MPs are understood to have been mounting severe pressure on Venugopal. Moreover, Congress seniors are

trying to scuttle the chances of Revanth Reddy to become the TPCC president. The Congress loyalists' forum is trying to mount pressure on the top leaders in Delhi not to give the post to those who crossed over to Congress from other parties. The forum which dashed letters to high command twice giving the top post to the party loyalists is preparing to write yet another letter on the issue, it is learnt. Meanwhile, Revanth Reddy dismissed the loyalists' forum contention saying that he is not a new comer to the party contending that he is already an MP and is saddled with the TPCC working president post. So there is no rationale behind seniors objecting his appointment to the post. Recently, he made it clear in a freewheeling interview that he is ready accept whatever responsibility that the Congress high command gives him.

RTC earns Rs 5L a day through cargo services

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In the existing cash-starved situation, the parcel and cargo services of the TSRTC are helping it to net at least Rs 5 lakh per day on an average. The RTC buses transport at least 1,000 tonnes of cargo a month.

The RTC has devised a strategy to earn non-ticket revenue since it is not optimistic of recovering the lost business in near future as buses are not plying on all routes because of the Corona threat. As part of the strategy, the TSRTC has requested e-commerce giant Amazon to allow it to transport goods for it to various destinations in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh to sustain its revenue.

The first phase of talks with Amazon will be held soon prior



to reaching an agreement with it. The RTC started its cargo services about three months ago and kicked off the parcel services 22 days ago. Currently the RTC buses are transporting medicines to various towns and cities from Hyderabad.

The RTC cargo services won a contract from Education Department to transport textbooks. It transported 350 tonnes of textbooks and is likely to transport another 600 tonnes.

The parcel services official

Krishnakant said that the RTC has orders to transport goods of BC Welfare and Women and Child Welfare Departments. If the services are extended to Karnataka and Andhra, the RTC income improves. On account of Rakhi Festival, the RTC has slashed the transportation costs to transport bundles of rakhis to various destinations. The RTC exhorted the people to make use of the facility as the transportation costs are less than the cost of a rakhi.

Delayed milling of paddy puts burden on government

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Though there is bumper harvest of paddy in the last Yasangi, the milling of paddy is being delayed as the combined milling capacity of over 2,200 rice mills is 1.50 crore tonnes. The paddy yield in the last Yasangi procurement season was put at over 1 crore tonnes. The millers purchase 50 to 60 per cent of the yield additionally from open market for milling purposes.

The milling has been taking long time. The government procured paddy by availing loan from banks. If the millers convert the paddy into rice and give it to the Food Corporation of India, the Centre gives money to the state government. The delay in rice milling is mounting the debt burden on the government.



The government has decided to increase capacity of existing mills and wants to set up many more mills in the mega food park. The Telangana Rice Millers' Association President Gampa Nagender told a section of the media that at least

800 to 1,000 rice mills are necessary. To set up a rice mill with a capacity to mill 16 tonnes per hour, it would cost at least Rs 25 crore. To store by-products of milling paddy, 10 acres of land is necessary, he said.

Jana Reddy bats for Varavara Rao's release

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Former Home Minister and Congress senior leader K Jana Reddy on Thursday addressed letters to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao asking them to initiate steps to get interim bail to revolutionary poet Varavara Rao in view of his health condition. In the letter, he mentioned that opportunity to be given to the family members to look after Varavara Rao. Jana Reddy reminded that Varavara Rao played an active role during the peace deliberations between the then Andhra Pradesh government and Maoists.

SCENIC ROUTE



Road towards Yadadri wears a lush green look, thanks to Hyderabad Metropolitan Development Authority for taking up greenery and beautification works on the road medians covering 30-km from Ghatkesar Outer Ring Road till Yadadri



Kavitha in home isolation as driver tests Covid positive

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Former TRS MP Kalvaluntla Kavitha's driver has tested positive for Covid-19. Following this development, her family are now under home isolation in Hyderabad. Earlier in the day, the ex MP met Mayor Bonthu Ram Mohan and released a song on the occasion of Minister KT Rama Rao's birthday.

Judson seeks Uttam's suspension

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

AICC member and TPCC general secretary Bakka Judson addressed a letter to the AICC chief Sonia Gandhi and urged her to protect Telangana Congress from 'Corporate, Feudalistic, Self-centered, ideological' TPCC president N Uttam Kumar Reddy. Judson said that he requested TPCC president to conduct TPCC committee meeting followed by Executive Committee over the elections.

"As a responsible office bearer, I did not receive any reply from TPCC president till date. Reviewing our performance, accountability and taking essence of the meeting and implementing new strategies to make organization strong is our practice but no such exercise done," he said.

He said that due to lack of review and exercise, BJP has emerged as the second largest party in Parliament elections by bagging 4 MP seats. TRS, BJP and MIM are in mutual understanding because of

He requested Sonia to appoint a high-level AICC Committee to take action as Uttam doesn't have any right to continue as TPCC president

Uttam Kumar Reddy's non performance, he alleged.

"Assembly elections were completed in 2018, and Parliament Elections completed almost a year ago, but till date, Uttam did not conduct a review," he said and added that

In the letter, Judson requested Sonia Gandhi to appoint a high level AICC Committee to take action as Uttam doesn't have any right to continue as TPCC president. Suspending him from the party is the right solution if not this will become practice for other leaders in the future, he said.

Set up mobile units for plasma collection: Congress

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Plasma Donors Association (TPDA) president Gudur Narayana Reddy, who is also TPCC Treasurer, on Thursday urged Governor Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan to direct the State Government to establish Mobile Units for Plasma Collection to save the lives of people affected with the Covid-19.

Narayana Reddy, who has recently recovered from Covid-19, expressed serious concern over the low-pace of Convalescent Plasma Therapy to treat the Covid-19 patients in Telangana State. He appreciated the Governor for highlighting the importance of plasma donations during her recent visit to the ESIC Hospital. He said that the State Government should take immediate measures to boost the use of plasma therapy for the treatment of Covid-19 cases.

The TPDA president said that plasma therapy was being implemented globally as one of the effective methods of treat-



ment, especially in lieu of dedicated medicines to treat Coronavirus patients. He pointed out that the US FDA has approved the use of plasma from recovered patients to treat people who are critically ill with COVID-19. The method has been used in the past to treat diseases such as polio, measles, and mumps, in the 1918 flu epidemic.

He said that the Placid Trial conducted by the ICMR by involving 52 institutions has given encouraging results. However, he said that the investigators who were involved in the Placid Trial have pointed out that the

patients must receive the plasma within five to 10 days of their diagnosis and the plasma must be fresh belonging to a recovered person who has had a symptomatic illness.

Therefore, Narayana Reddy said that it would be a challenging task for the TPDA to identify the eligible donors and convince them to donate their plasma to a deserving recipient as there were no mobile plasma collection units. These mobile units will be less infectious, more flexible and donors will come up for plasma donation more enthusiastically.

SCCL to plant over 35 lakh saplings

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Singareni Collieries Company Ltd (SCCL) on Thursday launched planting of 35.47 lakh saplings under the ongoing 'Haritha Haram' programme and the 'Vriksharohan Abhiyan' launched by the union government. On Thursday alone the SCCL has planned planting of 2 lakh saplings in one go at 11 of its facilities all across the State including its headquarters here.

According to a SCCL statement, Chairman and Managing Director N Sridhar launched the programme by planting a sapling at Singareni Bhavan. He said that already the company has planted 11 lakh plants so far and is also implementing the nationwide programme launched by the union government on Thursday.

He called upon the staff and the villagers that live on the fringes of the coal mines to take part in planting trees in a big way.

MEDIA COVERAGE

High Court tells govt to inform its stand

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana High court on Thursday asked the state government to inform its stand by Friday on a petition filed by VIL media private limited which runs V6 TV news channel with a plea to allow the print and electronic media to cover and report the ongoing demolition activity of old Secretariat buildings in the city. A single judge bench headed by Justice Challa Kodanda Ram said that he would pass appropriate orders if the state did not respond by the deadline on the issue. Arguing the case, the counsel for the government told the HC that as per provisions of the construction rules, only workers would be allowed to the demolition site and made it clear that it can't allow the media at the demolition site.

He said that 95 per cent of the demolition works has been completed by it. He however sought time from the HC to seek to appraise the stand of the state government on the



issue till Monday. However, the HC declined to give time till Monday.

'Get instructions from officials'

Dealing with a batch of petitions including a PIL filed seeking the construction of new multi-storied buildings to house the Osmania General Hospital, nursing college and hostel at Afzal Gunj in the city, a division bench of the Telangana High Court directed the state government to get instructions from the authorities concerned on the issue.

It also asked the government to inform it whether the existing building was a heritage structure or not.

Appoint full-time doctors in TIMS, demands BJP

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Expressing dissatisfaction over inadequate facilities in TIMS hospital, Telangana state BJP on Thursday urged the state government to provide full-fledged facilities in the hospital for giving treatment to Covid-19 patients.

A three-member team led by BJP MLC N Ramachander Rao visited TIMS hospital at Gachibowli and inquired about facilities being provided to Coronavirus patients. Though it was a good project converting the sports complex into a Covid-19 centre, the government has failed to provide adequate facilities when Covid-19 cases are increasing day by day across the state, Rao said after visiting the hospital.

The BJP MLC urged the TRS government to immediately recruit more doctors and paramedical staff on regular basis



to provide better services to the patients as there were at present only 125 doctors including staff appointed on contract basis. He said the hospital has capacity of 1,260 beds, but only 42 patients were admitted now, he said adding that the hospital should be utilised fully to reduce burden on Gandhi hospital, Chest hospital and King Koti hospital.

Expressing concern for not providing enough PPEs to doctors and other staff, Rao said the government should

take measures to provide full-fledged facilities in the hospital for giving treatment to Coronavirus patients. If the government takes more measures for their safety, it would embolden their moral who are risking their lives in providing treatment, Rao said.

He appreciated the services of doctors and other paramedical staff who are relentlessly working for providing treatment to Covid-19 patients, but they are not getting proper encouragement from the government. It may be recalled that sports complex in Gachibowli was initially mooted as a quarantine centre for asymptomatic air passengers. The 14-storey building, which was unused for over a decade, was converted into a Covid-19 centre. In the third week of April, the State government announced that it will be turned into TIMS.

Heavy rains lash Hyderabad, more in store

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Several parts of the city received heavy rain during wee hours of Thursday leading to water logging on roads causing difficulty to commuters. Several low-lying areas were inundated in the city.

Banjara Hills, Jubilee Hills, Panjagutta, Kukatpally, Koti, Abids, Malakpet, Dilsukhnagar, LB Nagar, Qutubullahpur, Jeedimetla, Gajula Ramaram, Suraram, Musheerabad, RTC X roads, Ashok Nagar, Tank Bund, Nampalli, Dar-ul-Salam and many more areas of the city received heavy rain.

The GHMC personnel have been taking steps to clear the obstacles to ensure smooth flow of water through drainages. Water entered into many low-lying areas in Cantonment area, Bowenpally, Secunderabad, Warasiguda, Begumpet and other regions.

Besides Hyderabad, elsewhere in the state, Vikarabad received constant rainfall since



IMD issued heavy rain alert along with thunderstorm warning for parts of Telangana for two days

morning. Heavy rains are lashing Tandur Assembly constituency causing floods to the streams and water bodies. In Peddemul mandal, the Gazipur stream is in spate disrupting the road communications between Tandur and Sadavispet. The Bandala stream near Inelli is overflowing the Tandur-

Chincholi road leading to stranding of hundreds of vehicles on either side of the road. At Mominpet, streams titled Chilukavagu and Kanala Vagu are in spate.

Kulcharam in Medak district recorded a rainfall of 10.8 cm so far. Janagan, Adilabad and Vikarabad districts received

rain fall ranging between 7 and 9 cm. The Met office authorities attributed the rains to formation of a low-pressure area from Chhattisgarh to South Telangana over Telangana and Coastal Andhra Pradesh. The officials predict rains on Friday too under the influence of the low-pressure area. Under the

Following heavy rains in the city, Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation personnel swung into action and cleared the obstacles to ensure smooth flow of water through drainages

limits of Boduppal Municipal Corporation in Medchal district, flood water entered the Dwaraka Nagar Phase-2 because of the rain lashing the area since morning. The residential colonies remind us of small ponds. People are finding it difficult to go out to fetch essential commodities.

SHORT READS



MP: Journalist dies after being shot over old rivalry

NIWARI: A 35-year-old journalist working for a Gwalior-based daily died after a group of persons allegedly shot him and attacked him with sticks over an old rivalry in Madhya Pradesh's Niwari district, police said on Thursday. The incident took place near Putri Khera village in Sendri police station limits on Wednesday evening. The victim, Sunil Tiwari, and his brother were heading towards the village on a motorcycle when seven persons, including three identified as Awdhesh Tiwari, Narendra Tiwari and Anil Tiwari, intercepted the duo, sub-divisional officer of police Balam Singh Parihar said. The accused allegedly attacked the victim with sticks and shot him, he said. The journalist's brother somehow managed to escape from the spot to reach the village to get help, while the attackers fled leaving the victim grievously injured, he said.

Upset about actor's death, minor girl kills self in C'garh

DURG: Upset about the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput, a 13-year-old girl allegedly committed suicide in Chhattisgarh's Durg district, police said on Thursday. The Class 7 student was found hanging from the ceiling of her home in sector-7 of Bhilai town on Wednesday evening, said Trinath Tirpathi, station house officer of Bhilai Nagar police station. "A suicide note was recovered from the scene, in which the girl has stated that she was taking the extreme step as she was upset about the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput," he said. According to the girl's father, his daughter was a fan of the actor and kept watching his videos and films, the official said. The victim always looked for news related to the Chhichhore actor, who was found hanging in his Mumbai home on June 14, the SHO said quoting the girl's father. Incidentally, the girl was watching the movie Chhichhore on Wednesday evening, when her father stepped out to fetch the rest of the family from her grandparents' place at Railway Colony in Durg, he said. On its return, the family found that the girl hanging from the ceiling, the official said.

Northeast has potential to become India's growth engine: PM Modi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The northeast has the potential to become India's growth engine, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Thursday, noting that peace is now being established in the entire region. He made these remarks at the foundation stone laying ceremony of the Manipur water supply project via video link.

While blockades have become a part of history in Manipur, the era of decades of violence in Assam has ceased. In Tripura and Mizoram too, youth have abandoned the path of violence and the Bru-Reang refugees are now moving towards a better life, he said in his address.

The prime minister noted that the government is making constant efforts to improve connectivity in the northeast region, be its highways, laying of rail tracks or upgradation of airports.

The foundation stone laying programme, the prime minister said, is an example of the fact that even during the crisis triggered by the novel coronavirus, the country has not stopped working.

Till the time a vaccine is developed, we have to vigorously fight against coronavirus and the development works should also be carried forward with full force, he said.

Referring to the "aatma nirbhar Bharat abhiyan" (self-reliant India campaign), the prime minister said now clus-



The prime minister noted that the government is making constant efforts to improve connectivity in the north-east region, be its highways, laying of rail tracks or upgradation of airports

ters are being developed for value addition and marketing in local products. In these clusters, all the facilities will be given to agro startups and other industries.

He said the northeast has the potential to replace India's bamboo import with local production.

There is a huge demand for incense sticks in the country, but for this, India imports bamboo worth crores of rupees, he lamented.

A lot of work, Modi pointed out, is being done to change this situation.

He said a huge investment is being made under the National Bamboo Mission. This will benefit the youth of the north-east, and the startups here. Many institutes are now

being set up for health, education, skill development and startups.

With the formation of sports university and world class stadium, Manipur is becoming a major hub for the country's sports talent, he observed.

Speaking on the water supply project, the prime minister said it is a big day for lakhs of people of Manipur, including Imphal, as it will reduce the water problems faced by them.

He said women will especially benefit as they won't have to travel for kilometers to fetch clean water. The project has been designed keeping in mind needs of the next 20-22 years and lakhs of people will get access to clean drinking water, while thousands will get employment, he said.

NE's prosperity always priority of Modi govt: Shah

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Thursday congratulated Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the Manipur water supply project and said the development and prosperity of the Northeast has always been the priority of his government.

Shah said the project, whose foundation stone was laid by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Thursday, will provide safe drinking water to more than 2.8 lakh households and also generate huge employment opportunities in Manipur.

"Development and prosperity of North Eastern region has always been the top priority of Modi govt. In his continued efforts, PM @narendramodi ji today laid the foundation stone of Manipur Water Supply project worth ₹3,054 crores. I congratulate PM for this unprecedented project," Shah tweeted.

He said the project is yet another manifestation of the prime minister's resolve towards 'Har Ghar Jal' (water in every home) and a prosperous



Northeast. The foundation stone of the project was laid by Modi via video link.

An externally funded project, the Manipur water supply project was designed to provide freshwater household tap connections (FHTCs) to remaining households in Greater Imphal planning area, and for 1,731 rural habitations covering 2,80,756 households in all 16 districts of Manipur.

The project outlay is Rs 3054.58 crore, with a loan component funded by the New Development Bank.

An externally funded project, the Manipur water supply project was designed to provide freshwater household tap connections (FHTCs) to remaining households in Greater Imphal planning area, and for

1,731 rural habitations covering 2,80,756 households in all 16 districts of Manipur.

The project outlay is Rs 3054.58 crore, with a loan component funded by the New Development Bank.

1,731 rural habitations covering 2,80,756 households in all 16 districts of Manipur.



Ayodhya temple to get bigger, taller, more magnificent

PNS ■ AYODHYA

The proposed Ram temple in Ayodhya will now be bigger and taller in size. According to Nikhil Sompura, an architect and son of C. Sompura, chief architect of the temple, "The earlier design was prepared in 1988. Over 30 years have passed... the footfall is likely to increase. People are also very enthusiastic about visiting the temple. So, we thought its size should be increased. As per the revised design, the height of the temple has been increased from 141-feet to 161-feet."

Sompura said that two mandaps have also been added to the design and all pillars and the stones that were carved based on the earlier design will still be used. Only two new 'mandaps' have been added. The original design that was prepared in 1988, mentioned its height as 141 feet which has been raised to 161 foot tall. The construction will begin after a grand ground-breaking ceremony on August 5 and for this, invitations have also been sent to the Prime Minister's Office and other VIPs. The construction of temple will take around 3.5 years, Sompura said.

Shankaracharya objects to 'Bhoomi Pujan Mahurat'

The Jyotishpeethadheeshwar and Dwarka Shardapithadheeshwar, Jagadguru Shankaracharya Swami Swaroopanand Saraswati has questioned the "muhurat" of August 5 for laying the foundation stone of the Ram temple. The Shankaracharya said generally good work is initiated in the "Uttam Kaal" section of the Hindu calendar. "The August 5 date falls in the Dakshinayan Bhadrpadamonth of the Hindu calendar. August 5 is the second date of Krishna Paksha. In the scriptures, the beginning of the construction of the home/temple in the Bhadrpadamonth is prohibited," he said. He said that according to Vishnu Dharma Shastra, the launch in the Bhadrpadamonth is the cause of destruction. The 'Daivagna Ballabh Granth' states that the home, made in Bhadrpadam, brings poverty. Vastu Pradeep also says the same.

DRDO establishes Covid-19 testing facility in Leh

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The DRDO has established a COVID-19 testing facility at the Defence Institute of High Altitude Research (DIHAR) in Leh to augment the existing capacity for identification of coronavirus cases in the union territory of Ladakh, according to an official statement.

The testing facility, which was inaugurated by Ladakh Lieutenant Governor R K Mathur on Wednesday, is capable of screening 50 samples per day, said the statement by the Defence Ministry.

"The facility can also be utilised for training manpower for COVID-19 testing and will be of great help to address



future bio-threats and carrying out R&D (research and development) activities pertinent to agro-animals diseases," the ministry noted.

In Ladakh, the virus has

infected 1,206 people and killed two people, as per data on the Union health ministry's website. There are 186 active COVID-19 cases in Ladakh as of now, it stated.

Pak Army shells forward areas along LoC in Poonch

PNS ■ JAMMU

The Pakistan Army on Thursday opened fire and shelled forward areas along the LoC in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district, officials said.

The Indian Army effectively retaliated. "At about 1100 hours, Pak Army initiated unprovoked ceasefire violation by firing with small arms & shelling with mortars along the LoC in Qasba sector of Poonch district", a defence spokesman said. This is the third day that Pakistani forces have violated the ceasefire along the LoC.

UK welcomes efforts by India, China to de-escalate tension in Ladakh

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The UK on Thursday welcomed efforts by India and China to de-escalate tension along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in eastern Ladakh.

British High Commissioner Sir Philip Barton also expressed concern over Chinese action in Hong Kong as well as cases of human rights abuses against Uyghur Muslims in Xinjiang.

The UK, he said, is aware of the challenges presented by "some Chinese actions" and has been working with its close allies like the US to deal with them. "I would like to say that the progress we have seen in managing the tensions and the commitment the two special repre-



sentatives made on boundary question on July 5 to disengage and de-escalate is welcome," the newly-appointed envoy said during an online media briefing.

He said the Chinese actions in Hong Kong as well as along the

LAC are "concerning". The British envoy also talked about the "tragic loss of lives" of Indian soldiers along the LAC and hoped that both sides would be able to achieve de-escalation of tensions through talks.



SC allows Raj HC to pass orders on plea of Pilot, 18 MLAs

DIRECTIONS SUBJECT TO ITS VERDICT

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Thursday allowed the Rajasthan High Court to pronounce order on plea of 19 dissident Congress MLAs, including sacked deputy CM Sachin Pilot, against the Assembly Speaker's notice for initiating disqualification proceedings against them, but said that it would be subject to the outcome of the petition before the top court.

Rajasthan Assembly Speaker CP Joshi however failed to get any interim relief on his plea alleging that the high court cannot interdict the disqualification proceedings undertaken by him under 10th schedule of the Constitution.

A bench of Justices Arun Mishra, B R Gavai and Krsihna Murari said Joshi's plea raises important questions and requires prolonged hearing. We are not restraining the High Court from passing the order but it will be subject to the outcome of the petition (of Speaker) before the Supreme Court, the bench said, while fixing the plea for hearing on July 27.

Voice of dissent in democracy cannot be shut down, the bench observed.

We are trying to find out whether this process (disqualification) was permissible or not," it said, while questioning Joshi on the reasons for initiating disqualification proceedings against the 19 dissident Congress MLAs.

Senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Joshi, listed the reasons for starting the disqualification proceedings, saying that these MLAs did not attend party meetings and conspired to destabilise their own government.

The bench said: This is not a simple matter and these MLAs are elected representatives."

Responding to a query of the bench, Sibal said, These MLAs had gone to Haryana, stayed at a hotel and gave TV bites that they want floor test." He said the issue as to whether the disqualification process is permissible or not cannot be taken note of by the court at this stage. Our grievance is purely constitutional and there cannot be any order till decision is taken by the speaker.

Sense of despair among Congress workers, says Kuldeep Bishnoi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Haryana Congress leader Kuldeep Bishnoi on Thursday said there is a sense of despair among party workers over the treatment meted out to young leaders like Jyotiraditya Scindia and Sachin Pilot, and also urged the leadership to promote mass leaders in every state in the war against the BJP.

"Taking on the old guard, he asked the Congress leadership to give other responsibilities to those who have been occupying high positions for 35 years and have never contested elections.

Bishnoi, who is son of former Haryana chief minister Bhanu Lal, triggered speculation when he posted a picture of himself with Scindia and Pilot on Twitter.

"Many congratulations @JM_Scindia. A well deserved one," he said along with the picture, on a day when Scindia took oath as Rajya Sabha member of the BJP. He also congratulated former Congress leader Priyanka Chaturvedi, who also took oath as a Shiv Sena member of Rajya Sabha on Wednesday. "Sincere congratulations @priyankac19 on your hard-earned success. Best wishes for a bright future."



Siddaramaiah demands probe into irregularities in Covid management

PNS ■ BENGALURU

Alleging large-scale corruption in COVID management in Karnataka to the tune of at least Rs 2,000 crore, former chief minister Siddaramaiah on Thursday demanded a judicial inquiry by a sitting High Court judge.

The government, however, dismissed the charges saying no irregularities have taken place.

"The total money spent on COVID management is Rs 4,167 crore whereas state Health



Minister B Sriramulu says only Rs 324 crore has been spent. Equipment and materials were purchased double or triple

the existing cost. At least Rs 2,000 crore has been pocketed by the ministers and officials," Siddaramaiah, who is the leader of opposition in the state assembly, told reporters. He demanded a judicial inquiry by a sitting judge of the high court.

Releasing some documents to the media to substantiate his allegations, the former chief minister claimed that the health department spent Rs 700 crore "some of the amount has been spent and some is in the pipeline."

COVID-19 Conducting exams in varsities in MCQs format not feasible alternative, say academicians

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Conducting exams in universities in Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs) format in view of COVID-19 pandemic is not a feasible alternative as it cannot test students' analytical skills and students pursuing subjects like literature will be at a disadvantage, academicians have pointed out.

The concerns by academicians come against the backdrop of the Delhi High Court asking the University Grants Commission (UGC) to clarify if final year examinations of the universities be conducted based on MCQs, open choices, assignments and presentations, instead of long form exams.

The UGC officials, however, maintained that over 6,000 universities in the country have already conducted exams for final year students or are plan-



ning to conduct them. Earlier this month, the UGC in its revised guidelines directed the higher education institutions that final year examinations be conducted in September 2020, instead of July 2020, as per its guidelines announced in April.

Punjab, Maharashtra, Odisha, Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Delhi have announced reservations against the plan, citing the COVID-19 situation.

Rajesh Jha, a political science professor and executive council member of DU, said, "Our students are not prepared for a new format of exams. They have been taught to analyse things and will be caught unprepared for any new format. All of a sudden you cannot impose a system. You need to test it before

implementing it. Coronavirus time cannot be used for experimentation."

84 TN Raj Bhavan staff test positive for Covid-19

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Eighty-four security and fire services personnel deployed in Raj Bhavan have tested positive for COVID-19 but none of them came into contact with Governor Banwarilal Purohit or senior officials, the government said here on Thursday.

As few men posted at Raj Bhavan showed symptoms, testing was done for 147 personnel and 84 of them, comprising

security and fire service staffers, were found positive for coronavirus, a Raj Bhavan release said.

"All these persons were further investigated and now have been quarantined by the health department. All these persons were working on the outer side of Raj Bhavan like the main gate and not in the main building," the release said, adding none of them came into contact with governor Purohit or senior officials.

Saikat Ghosh, an English professor at the Shri Guru Tegh Bahadur Khalsa College and Academic Council member, said, "The way the subjects and the syllabus have been designed, we teach those subjects even at the undergraduate level in a fair amount of detail and we encourage students to show analytical skills. Analytical skills cannot be tested through the MCQ format, which favours information"

can take exams in such a format." "Plus problems are multiplying-- coronavirus cases are on the rise and students in Assam and Bihar are also facing issues due to floods. Internet connectivity is already an issue and the flood situation has complicated the connectivity situation, so even if the MCQ format exams happen they will happen in an online format which will not be feasible for students," he said.

Saikat Ghosh, an English professor at the Shri Guru Tegh Bahadur Khalsa College and Academic Council member, said, "The way the subjects and the syllabus have been designed, we teach those subjects even at the undergraduate level in a fair amount of detail and we encourage students to show analytical skills. Analytical skills cannot be tested through the MCQ format, which favours information"

This round to Pilot

SC says disqualification can't be based on dissent, asks why Speaker approached court when he should be neutral



Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot may have been a tad too offensive in seeking the court's intervention to deter his one-time deputy Sachin Pilot from challenging the disqualification notice sent to him and his loyalist MLAs under the anti-defection law. But the Supreme Court firmly underlined what democracy is, the kind Gehlot has been claiming to defend, and what constitutional processes are. "Assume a leader has lost the faith of persons. While remaining in the party, they cannot be disqualified. Then this will become a tool and no one can raise their voice. The voice of dissent in a democracy cannot be suppressed like this," said Justice AK Mishra as the top court refused to stop a High Court verdict on a petition by 19 rebel Congress MLAs, challenging their disqualification notices. Clearly, the court laid down the thin line between the democratic right to dissent, that is healthy for building participatory dialogue and one which deserves a listen, and an ego-driven revolt. And it went with Pilot's defence that the notices were an attempt to curb "freedom of speech." For the last few days, the Pilot camp has been challenging the showcause saying the House was not in session and they hadn't done or said anything to indicate they were parting ways with the Congress. Both Gehlot and Pilot camps have been seeking refuge in the interpretation of clause 2(1)(a) of the 10th Schedule of the Constitution. Going by the several Supreme Court judgments in the matter, it could be said that any anti-party activity was tantamount to voluntarily giving up the membership of the party. Gehlot has been building evidence of Pilot's breakaway moves since, like parading MLAs claiming bribery offers and releasing alleged tapes of senior BJP leaders coaxing rebels, to justify this argument. But Team Pilot argues that the clause cannot be overstretched to disallow the right to express one's opinion. Rajasthan Speaker CP Joshi, who served the notices last week, had argued that the rebels cannot petition the High Court before he took action. And that as a constitutional authority, he had the right to do so even when the House was not in session as the rebels had skipped two meetings of the legislature party. In fact, anticipating an adverse verdict, Joshi moved the Supreme Court even before the High Court could declare its ruling on the Pilot camp's plea. The Supreme Court even took note of this impatience to latch on to power. The court asked, "it is the matter of just one day. Why can't you wait?" And reminding the Speaker of his constitutional role, the judges asked why he, as a neutral person, should approach the court at all in a pre-emptive manner or appear partisan? The Supreme Court can anyway hear appeals against High Court rulings but why did the Speaker assume that the latter would be favourable to the rebels? This presumptive tactic might just impact all the other moves of Gehlot. So far, in a bid to save his Government, he has been aggressively taking on the BJP for another version of "Operation Lotus" and poaching a discontented and maladjusted Pilot. He even wrote to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, alleging the BJP's attempts to dislodge his Government, naming Union Minister Gajendra Singh Shekhawat and making Modi himself complicit in the goings-on in his party. But his adventurism on the rule of law has betrayed the maturity and astuteness with which he acted before the BJP could move in, herding legislators, furnishing numbers to the Governor and gathering evidence against Pilot. Getting the Speaker to defend the disqualification notices has clearly backfired and exposed his anxieties. Gehlot claims he has 106 MLAs on his side, still a narrow lead in a 200-member Assembly. If the High Court disqualifies Pilot and his 18 MLAs, the majority mark of 101 will come down and Gehlot will be safely home. If not, the rebel MLAs can vote against his Government and narrow the margins.

As Gehlot continues to prepare a back-up plan and publicly deride Pilot, it would have been better if he had accommodated him as shrewdly and continued his chief ministership. Now, it looks like he is the one impatient instead of Pilot. The younger Congressman and once an acolyte of the Gandhi scions cannot look back either as he has waded deep into the contest. He is drawing political sustenance from the grass-roots where he has worked for the last six years or so. The Gujjars of three States — Rajasthan, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh — has amassed behind him just like they did for his father Rajesh Pilot. This means a sizeable votebank that could make Pilot attractive to the BJP. The fact that he changed his plea in the High Court and made the Centre a party to it is some indication that he will gravitate to the other polarity. That's the sad part, the assumption that Congress' breakaways, most of them talented with fresh ideas, will do better in the BJP than in the party that they had volunteered for. The example of Himanta Biswa Sarma in the Northeast shows that the BJP is consolidating with ex-Congress talent. Old Congresswallahs may say the young are pesky and impatient but the crossoverers have meant that the Congress has lost Goa, Manipur, Uttarakhand, Arunachal, Madhya Pradesh and Karnataka. Is Gehlot's ego turf worth it?

The Rafale arrives

India's long tradition of French fighter jets continues. The game-changer aircraft will boost our capabilities



In 1953, newly independent and democratic India placed a large order for fighter jets. The contract didn't go to the British. Instead, India ordered 70 Dassault Ouragan aircraft from France and a strange love affair developed between Indian fighter jocks and French jets. Over 140 Ouragans served the Indian Air Force (IAF) before they were replaced by Dassault Mystere IV aircraft of which India operated over 100. The latter distinguished itself admirably in the 1965 war with our unfriendly western neighbour. While India did not operate the legendary Dassault Mirage III and Mirage 5, which acquitted themselves with distinction over the skies of the Sinai peninsula during the two Arab-Israeli conflicts, we did order a small number of the Mirage 2000 aircraft. It quickly became a frontline fighter for us and played a critical role during the Kargil war. It even delivered the weaponry that destroyed a terrorist hideout in Balakot early last year. And now, India will start receiving the next generation of French fighting prowess, the Rafale.

The Rafale is a dramatic step up for the IAF. With its supreme weaponry and electronic warfare capabilities, it is far superior to anything that either of the troublesome twosome on India's eastern and western border have. It is an expensive plane and an initial planned order for 126 aircraft has been peeled back to 36. It is but certain that a follow-up order will be placed soon. However, India would do well to remember the acquisition problems it has faced in the past. With the Mirage 2000 and the Boeing C-17 Globemaster, a heavy lift logistics aircraft, India dithered with making its follow-up orders. Both aircraft had seen their production lines close and India was left twiddling its thumbs. We cannot afford to vacillate like this with acquisitions again as the previous UPA administration hesitated for years over military hardware acquisition. As a result, it left gaping holes in India's security apparatus, which are only being patched up today. The Rafale is a great new addition to the IAF and will give India an edge both in weapons delivery and air-to-air combat. But they cannot come fast enough. However, India must not give in to knee-jerk reactions. Instead, we must plan out a thorough acquisition strategy with more domestic manufacturing, which will not only help the local economy but also develop India's military-industrial potential. The events of the past few months have taught us that we cannot trust the Chinese, particularly its President. We have to be prepared for the worst. The Rafales will help.

opinion

Farewell, my Queen

The Boeing 747 is being withdrawn from passenger service. It changed aircraft design, made flying affordable and pushed airports to improve their facilities



KUSHAN MITRA

The British Airways' announcement that it is going to retire its fleet of Boeing 747s from commercial passenger services hit many aviation fans pretty hard. I have probably flown more passenger miles in the British Airways' 747 aircraft than on any other airline. In the past few months, two other iconic operators of the Boeing 747, Australian airline Qantas and Dutch airline KLM, also announced that they flew their last jumbo flights. In the last couple of years — thanks to the emergence of more point-to-point flying, higher frequency and the sheer efficiency of modern twin-jet aircraft like the Boeing 787 and Airbus A350 — more and more 747s are being retired across the world.

Air India withdrew the jumbo flight's operations a couple of years ago but has been using it for some Haj and Ummah-related duties. Most other American, Asian and European operators have retired the plane from service. However, there are exceptions like Air China, Lufthansa and Korean Air, which operate the newer 747-8 variant, and a couple of other airlines such as Thai Airways that operates the older 747-400. In fact, my last 747 flight was unexpectedly on the Thai Airways from New Delhi to Bangkok and back last year in October.

The global aviation industry is in a meltdown after the Wuhan virus laid waste to the global economy. Global aviation was a primary vector in the spread of the virus and many nations sealed their land borders. Others like India banned all flight operations though limited repatriation flights are still being carried out.

Many airlines have read the writing on the wall and they understand that even if a solution, such as a vaccine to this accursed pestilence is found, traffic will not recover for months, may be even years. The Boeing 747 is too large an aircraft for reduced traffic. This means higher operating costs. As for Airbus A380, airlines are quickly retiring these aircraft, too. Air France, the airline of the nation where the A380 is put together, just retired all of its Airbus A380 fleet, the youngest being a decade-old. Airlines will tell you that it is cheaper to fly two Boeing 787 Dreamliners than a single 747 or Airbus A380.

While cargo variants of the 747 are still flying in great numbers, both those built at the Boeing factory outside Seattle, Washington, and those planes converted from passenger operations to freight, have halted operations. After all, the 747 was initially conceived as a cargo plane and the iconic "hump" on the air-



craft was there to allow the nose to be lifted up for the cargo to be loaded. Cargo operations with the 747 are likely to continue for many, many years because there is no direct replacement for it. In fact, most international air cargo operators still follow a "hub and spoke" model for cargo travelling between major airports.

The last convoy carrying fuselage and wing sections of the A380 has reached the final assembly line in Toulouse and the aircraft will be completed in a couple of months. Even then, the single largest operator of the A380 aircraft, the Dubai-based Emirates Airline, is retiring its oldest twin-deck behemoths. But it is ironic that the Boeing 747, which undertook its maiden flight in 1969, would have significantly outlived the Airbus A380, a plane built with typical European arrogance to one-up the US. The A380 is undoubtedly an amazing engineering and technological achievement unlike the Boeing plane, but is an unmitigated commercial disaster.

The Airbus A380 line will close soon as the last nine planes are prepared for delivery. In the 15 years since the factory opened its doors, a mere 251 entered commercial service. Boeing is expected to close its 747 lines in 2022, with 16 aircraft (all cargo variants) remaining to be delivered. Around 1,558 planes have already been delivered since 1970. And while the current options such as the 747-8 have lit-

tle in common with the earliest model — 100 and 200 variants — just one look, and you know that it is 747. I think (I do not believe that I am alone here) this is the single most important reason that the 747 is seared into our memories; it looked unique when it was first flown and it still does with the hump at the front and its sharply swept wings.

There was an aesthetic beauty in the 747, which the A380 simply does not have. The latter is functional but not pretty. Truth be told, I rarely got to fly in 747s of late, the move to withdraw it from service across the world having begun in the early 2010s. Of course, those two flights to Thailand were a pleasant surprise, a couple of British Airways flights across the "pond" stuck in a middle seat less enjoyable. But I did experience that ultimate joy of an aviation fan. I have flown on the upper deck of a 747, which is one of the single most fun things one can do.

The last time I did that was on a British Airways evening service from Chicago O'Hare to London Heathrow. As far as my memory goes, I think I just slept throughout that flight. I never knew it was going to be the last time. Even as global air travel boomed during the past decade, a lot of that was due to the rise of low-cost airlines, hopping and skipping around the world with their gigantic fleets of Airbus A320 and Boeing 737 aircraft.

While it will be interesting to

see what happens to these airlines, even Indian ones, in the aftermath of the Chinese contagion, international air travel, too, has changed. In no small part, thanks to the emergence of more point-to-point flying and ultra-long-haul flights.

A decade ago, a non-stop flight to and fro from India to the US was just about possible with a load of penalties. Today's Boeing 777 and 787s and Airbus' A350 can make the crossing with a full load in just 16 hours. Imagine travelling from New Delhi to San Francisco in the 1970s and 1980s when the 747 had just begun service. An Air India or Pan American 747 would have taken you to New York's JFK after stopping at least two-three times. You would have to change planes at JFK and then make the cross-country hop across the US, may be with another stop or two. Travel time with stop-overs may have been around two days.

Before the pandemic started, both Air India and United Airlines had non-stop services between the two cities, 15 hours from take-off to touchdown. Sure, that might seem like a lot of time without any "fresh air" but there was no need to walk bleary-eyed with screaming children across a strange airport, dealing with security and waiting for hours through weather delays and the risk of lost baggage, thanks to the multiple connections. But without the Boeing

747, none of this would have happened. The 747 made large-scale international commercial travel viable; it democratised travel in a way that was previously unimaginable. It is because of the Boeing 747 that there was a huge wave of migration of engineers and doctors out of India in the 1970s and 1980s.

The 747 made flying affordable; it made global airports improve their facilities, jetbridges that connect planes to the terminal became a standard feature at airports as did massive automated baggage handling. Airports built bigger runways and larger infrastructure to cater to the masses that a single jumbo jet brought in. The 747 changed aircraft design; the high-bypass turbofan engines developed for it transformed aviation. It led to the development of the trijets Douglas DC-10 and Lockheed L-1011 Tristar by rival companies.

It is the development of the high bypass turbofan, which literally sips fuel compared to older engines, that led to the creation of all modern planes such as the Boeing 777, which has the largest engine in commercial service. The 747 was the "Queen" and the world of aviation comprised its subjects. Even though fewer and fewer 747s remain in the skies ferrying passengers, the legacy of the Boeing 747 is one that will continue for a long time to come.

(The writer is Managing Editor, The Pioneer)

SOUNDBITE

PM Modi is 100 per cent focussed on building his image. India's captured institutions are busy doing this task. One man's image is not a substitute for a national vision.



Congress leader —Rahul Gandhi

There's the knowing smile. Not because I know things for sure...but mostly because I am at peace with the idea of not knowing...what's important will reveal itself at the right time...



Actor —Sushmita Sen

The Trump administration has maintained close contact and tremendous cooperation with India on the latest Chinese border aggression.



US Ambassador to India —Ken Juster

If you take racism and discrimination in the world, one of the most important things is to teach your children history as it should be and not the sanitised version of it.



Former Sri Lanka captain —Kumar Sangakkara

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Some succour

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "A glimmer of hope" (July 22). The news that early stage clinical trials of the Oxford University COVID-19 vaccine have proved that it is safe and induces an immune response gives the world hope at a time when we are facing one of the deadliest pandemics in history.

Though more tests have to be done before it is made available for the public, there is hope for mankind even as the pandemic has already claimed more than six lakh lives and infected millions of people around the globe. Many other nations, including India, are also on the path of developing a vaccine. There is something to rejoice as the Serum Institute of India, one of the premium immunobiological drugs manufacturers of the country, has entered into a manufacturing partnership with AstraZeneca once the vaccine trial is successful.

The human trials will be done in August and a confirmed analysis will be possible by October/November, according to the firm. If everything

Oxford vaccine promising but let's be real

This refers to the editorial, "A glimmer of hope" (July 22). With 15 million cases and six lakh deaths globally, biomedical companies are under tremendous pressure to deliver a safe and effective vaccine for Coronavirus. While the outbreak is peaking by the day, a silver lining on the horizon is also flashing. A new vaccine development technology — RNA vaccine, also known as mRNA — is emerging as the front-runner to alleviate mankind's COVID-19-inflicted miseries. The three leading vaccines by Oxford — AstraZeneca, Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna — are mRNA based and are also in the final phase of trials. The technology, capable of faster rollout at affordable prices, is versatile and promising. It is known to produce safe and long-lasting immune response in addition to better management of a class of white blood cells called T-cells. White cells, as we all know, help the body get rid of infected cells. That two dozen of the 150 vaccinations are mRNA driven is not surprising. All the three front-running vaccines score high on "dual immune response" comprising antibodies and T-cells.

Though some euphoria is justified, yet we must understand that vaccine development is a lengthy and painful process. Even the vast amount of data from clinical

trials is unable to justify the hypothesis the biomedical community has set out to prove. The durability of the immune response system as also the longevity of the regenerated T-cells together are concern areas. The universal safety of vaccines across age groups remains worrisome as representation of the vulnerable groups in the clinical trials is said to be limited. While the need for a safe and effective vaccine is given, expediency cannot override quality. Being optimistic is good but being one with caution is better.

M Pradyun Kannur



trials is unable to justify the hypothesis the biomedical community has set out to prove. The durability of the immune response system as also the longevity of the regenerated T-cells together are concern areas. The universal safety of vaccines across age groups remains worrisome as representation of the vulnerable groups in the clinical trials is said to be limited. While the need for a safe and effective vaccine is given, expediency cannot override quality. Being optimistic is good but being one with caution is better.

SK Prabhakar Gurugram

Futile exercise

Sir — This refers to the article, "Leave Lutyens alone" (July 21) by Yashovardhan Azad. The writer is right to raise alarm over the Government's plan to

restructure the Lutyens' zone. Parts of this area have maintained a distinctive architectural heritage and urban character. The razing of buildings from the Rashtrapati Bhawan to India Gate will rob the Lutyens area of its beauty.

Instead of getting a facelift, the large open spaces may get obliterated. Many beautiful buildings in the Lutyens' zone add grace and charm to the city. One finds it difficult to understand as to why such a restructuring is required at places which are brimming with charm and beauty. The Government should instead focus its energy on redeveloping and beautifying the old city of Delhi and also perking up the economy.

Devendra Khurana Bhopal

Adapt to changes

Sir — The pandemic has led to several changes. But the judicial system has found it difficult to adapt to changing times. In fact, the pandemic has only made matters worse for our courts. Piled up cases, outdated laws, lengthy legal proceedings and the lack of legal reforms are some of the things that demand immediate attention.

Rati Jain Via email

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

India can exit fiscal tight spot

For this to happen, GDP growth and the economy have to be treated and run like a corporate house, hungry and lean



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and top Cabinet Ministers have spent the last fortnight talking to numerous stakeholders and potential investors across the globe and at various fora, trying to convince them that India has lifted the shutters and is ready for business. Nitin Gadkari, Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways and MSMEs, has talked about potential opportunities for investors on the Delhi-Mumbai, Delhi-Meerut highway corridors, the linked and now commercially-available waterways and has gone on record to promise daily, weekly and monthly returns from investments in India's infrastructure. Similarly, Minister of Communications, Electronics and Information Technology Ravi Shankar Prasad has announced an ambitious production-linked incentive scheme for large-scale electronics manufacturing firms, with potential financial incentives and sharp focus on high-value, globally-produced components of mobile phones and air conditioners.

Modi himself, at multiple fora and one-on-one conversations with top CEOs, has made a strong pitch for refuelling India with upgraded, long-term investments for a brighter future for enterprises and the global world order. Much of this effort has been made to keep the money coming in for Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, who has been trying to find alternate sources of revenue during one of the biggest economic slowdowns India has seen in recent memory and to ensure that the State fulfils its commitment of providing basic amenities like food and medical care to a large section of the population. These efforts are the need of the hour for India, which is faced with the dual challenges of a raging pandemic and military/economic ambush from an aggressive neighbour, China. And there is still a large track left to be covered to become a larger than \$5 trillion economy in a very short period.

So, what can be done? To begin with, GDP growth and the economy have to be treated and run like a corporate house, hungry and lean. Some may argue that it could lead to overlooking the welfare of a vast majority of the population. In a democracy, this could lead to uncomfortable questions in Parliament at a time when elections in some States are around the corner. While I won't comment on the latter part of the argument regarding the politics behind stalling growth projects, the fact remains that there are many enterprises and cooperatives around the world where sustainable development of employees has gone hand in hand with healthy business growth.

To take an example, the Government has access to a vast amount of cash. It can very well enter into minority shareholding or profit-sharing arrangements with private fund managers and sovereign wealth creators, who can be tasked with bringing in high-value returns in a relatively short span of time. Of course, the challenge would be to put the perfect agreement papers in place, as too tight controls on managerial capacity could lead to efficient fund managers losing interest. On the other hand, too less control and the Government could be pulled up for corruption and collusion with wrong parties.

Second, the Government can again, by strategic choice, pick up a bunch of real estate and infrastructure projects stalled across the country due to lack of funds or slowing demand (even before the COVID-19 crisis began). The Government's track record of taking up construction has been much below market standards but it can make a fresh start by bringing world-class builders and infrastructure specialists on board. A leading example of bringing efficiency by smart partnering and teamwork is Delhi Metro, where both the Central and State Governments have an equal ownership but the money to build the 489-kilometre suburban railway network has come from Japan. The corporation thus formed runs with 10 nominees from the State and Central Government and eight (including the Managing Director) full-time Directors. What it ensures is equal say for most stakeholders and also brings the necessary momentum behind the wheels to tunnel through the toughest and most congested lanes of Delhi.

In a similar approach, Smart City, a pet project of the Government that is in tune with Digital India, can be broken into smaller self-sustaining, futuristic enterprises with an independent Board of Directors, equal nominees from the Union and State Government-concerned and a full time professional CEO (with a competitive salary to begin with). This team of approximately 20 people will have the task of converting an available chunk of land and its civic amenities into a global, high-tech piece of excellence, while empowered to raise funds for itself.

Modi has often been praised for his respect for the bureaucracy and bringing in the right talent for implementing projects on a mission mode. If he and his talented team put their mind to converting Smart City projects into globally-marketed profitable ventures in a relatively short span of time, it could be a game changer. It could help the country to come out of the current economic crisis and turn it into one of the biggest opportunities for the nation. (The writer is a policy analyst)

ATTEMPTS ARE BEING MADE TO DESTABILISE ELECTED GOVERNMENTS. I DON'T KNOW TO WHAT EXTENT YOU ARE AWARE OF ALL THIS OR YOU ARE BEING MISLED.

—RAJASTHAN CHIEF MINISTER

ASHOK GEHLOT

POINT COUNTERPOINT



IT IS CLEAR FROM THE LETTER OF THE CM TO THE PM THAT HE HAS LOST THE CONFIDENCE OF HIS MLAs AND HIS GOVERNMENT IS IN MINORITY.

—RAJASTHAN BJP CHIEF

SATISH POONIA

FDI through front door

The Govt must allow 100 per cent FDI in retail as this will level the playing field for all, eliminate discretion of bureaucrats whose writ is all-pervasive and help small traders



UTTAM GUPTA

On April 22, the California-based US internet giant, Facebook, announced its decision to buy 9.99 per cent stake in Jio Platforms Limited (JPL) paying more than ₹43,450 crore. JPL is a 100 per cent subsidiary of Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) and has in its fold a wide spectrum of businesses such as wireless broadband, home broadband, enterprise broadband, narrowband, internet-of-things businesses, a bouquet of digital applications, e-commerce and so on.

This was followed by a flurry of investments with big names such as General Atlantic, Silver Lake, Qualcomm, Intel, Vista, Google and so on, bringing in cumulative investment of over ₹1,00,000 crore, taking the total to ₹1,50,000 crore. In lieu of this capital, they get aggregate shareholding of 30 per cent or ₹5,000 crore for every one per cent, thus valuing the company at a whopping ₹5,00,000 crore.

Even as foreign investors see value in every segment of the business on this platform, at the centre stage is e-commerce, which is being powered by JioMart commerce platform — a unit of JPL. In fact, Facebook has come in primarily with an eye on tapping opportunities in this area and signed a comprehensive agreement with JPL to exploit synergies between the two conglomerates.

The duo intend to offer technology-enabled wherewithal to enable consumers access neighbourhood stores and have products delivered at their doorsteps. About 30 million of these stores will be empowered to digitally transact with every customer in their neighbourhood (over 400 million-strong Indian database of WhatsApp — a 100 per cent subsidiary of Facebook — will come in handy). JioMoney — RIL's payment platform — will be integrated into the JioMart venture to facilitate hassle-free seamless payment for transactions. The model operated by Reliance under JioMart is a combination of online and offline retail. Apart from Reliance Retail Limited (RRL), which has thousands of retail stores spread all over India and gets hooked on to the Jio platform, it will be serving tens of millions of neighbourhood stores in a variety of ways viz. handling, procurement, storage, payment, delivery and so on. Since all of this will be powered by a digital eco-system, the model is a hybrid of online and offline.

Two things are abundantly clear: Reliance Industries is deeply entrenched in Indian retail — already through RRL and now increasing its footprint exponentially through the Jio Platform. It is getting a massive injection of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI), with Facebook alone having pumped ₹43,450 crore into JioMart. But this is out of sync with the extant policy in regard to FDI in retail. For the purpose of FDI, unlike the international practice where retail is treated as a single homogenous sector without any distinction, the Indian Government has divided retail into several classes. In India, we have Single-Brand Retail (SBR) and Multi-Brand Retail (MBR) and there are sub-categories within each. Here, we deal with MBR or retail — as it is known in common parlance.

Within MBR, there is the "physical" format or offline, which takes two forms: The euphoric mom-and-pop stores, also nicknamed neighbourhood stores, and organised retail. Then, we have the online format, which has two sub-categories, the marketplace model and the inventory-based model.

In the physical format, as per a policy approved by the then UPA dispensation in 2012, as much as 51 per cent FDI is allowed but with a plethora of riders such as 30 per cent local sourcing, minimum investment of \$100 million and prior approval of the State where the retail shop is to be set up. In 2016-

LOOKING AT WHAT IS HAPPENING ON GROUND ZERO, IT IS ABUNDANTLY CLEAR THAT THE MODI GOVERNMENT HAS NO OBJECTION TO PERMITTING FDI IN ONLINE RETAIL AND EVEN IN OFFLINE RETAIL (ALBEIT WITHOUT ANY RIDERS) AS AMPLY DEMONSTRATED BY THE TREATMENT METED OUT TO AMAZON/FLIPKART EARLIER AND NOW TO FACEBOOK RIDING PIGGYBACK ON RIL. WHY SHOULD IT BE ALLOWED TO HAPPEN IN A VAGUE AND CONVOLUTED MANNER? WHY SHOULD THE POLICY NOT BE CLEAR-CUT AND TRANSPARENT?



17, an unprecedented 100 per cent FDI in food retail was allowed, subject to the foreign retailer selling items which are sourced only from Indian farmers and processed locally. Besides, 25 per cent of investment should be in agri-infrastructure like irrigation, farm machinery/implements and so on. In the online format, as per guidelines issued in early 2016, (Press Note 3) 100 per cent FDI is allowed under the so-called marketplace model. The marketplace is a platform where vendors sell their products to consumers even as its owner merely acts as a facilitator. The marketplace owner provides services such as booking orders, raising invoices, arranging delivery, accepting payments, handling rejections, warehousing and so on. But, s/he can't hold inventory and undertake direct selling.

The permission for 100 per cent FDI in the marketplace is subject to two main riders, that is "the entity cannot permit more than 25 per cent of total sales on its platform from one vendor or its group companies. Further, it can't directly or indirectly influence the sale price". Sans any specification as to "who the vendor is", a firm linked to the marketplace (either its subsidiary or a Joint Venture with an Indian company) is eligible.

Thus, contrary to the real intent of the policy, which disallowed the marketplace owner from direct selling to individual consumers, the fine print permitted them to do so — albeit by its subsidiary or JV. This is precisely what e-commerce majors such as Amazon and Flipkart/Walmart have been doing even though they came in as marketplace operators. They are operating as direct sellers, controlling inventory, giving discounts and so on.

A clarification to Press Note 3 issued on December 26, 2018 has not materially altered the position on ground zero. It says "the owner of the marketplace or its subsidiary or its JV with Indian compa-

ny can't have ownership of the seller." Further, "a seller/firm on the platform can't source more than 25 per cent of its inventory from a firm connected with the latter." The marketplace owner can get around both. First, by having less than 50 per cent shareholding in the seller firm and argue, he has no control (albeit majority) over the latter and second through the wholesale arm continuing supplies to the seller but within the 25 per cent threshold.

The clarification has not deterred their hold over Indian retail; they are dominant sellers themselves, giving little space to millions of small vendors for whose benefit this unique policy dispensation of the marketplace was designed. Disingenuous bureaucrats allowed them to do so by crafting policy architecture to suit them. The small vendors, through their umbrella organisations such as All India Online Vendors Association (AIOVA), Retailers Association of India (RAI), Delhi Vyapar Mahasangh (DVM) and so on, have petitioned judicial authorities at various levels seeking action against Amazon/Flipkart for violation of FDI norms and indulging in unfair practices but have not got any relief. The sole reason is that the courts go by the fine print which suits these giants.

Unlike the marketplaces of foreign e-commerce majors, JioMart commerce platform floated by RIL holds the potential of giving a boost to the small vendors, but even this may not gel with the extant policy framework. Even as the main thrust of the policy is on "complete prohibition of FDI in direct selling to individual consumers", JioMart, which is deeply entrenched in direct sales, has received investment from Facebook — a foreign company.

Like Amazon *et al*, Reliance/Facebook may get around by citing that foreign shareholding in the seller firm is less than 50 per cent or a wholesaler linked to

JioMart owner Reliance/Facebook will keep its supplies to the vendor within the 25 per cent threshold. Or they may carve out a separate entity entirely for food retail where 100 per cent FDI is allowed. This way, the two would be able to demonstrate that they are not violating the rule book. But this is not the way to go.

Looking at what is happening on ground zero, it is abundantly clear that the Modi Government has no objection to permitting FDI in online retail and even in offline retail (albeit without any riders) as amply demonstrated by the treatment meted out to Amazon/Flipkart earlier and now to Facebook riding piggyback on RIL. If that be so, then why allow it to happen in a vague and convoluted manner? Why should the policy not be clear-cut and transparent? Why should FDI not be allowed through the front door?

The Government should shun the marketplace model. It should allow 100 per cent FDI in retail in both online and offline without any riders (the special categories such as 100 per cent FDI in food retail should go). This will level the playing field for all, online vs offline, food retail vs non-food, marketplace vs inventory and so on and eliminate discretion of bureaucrats whose writ is all-pervasive when it comes to grant of approvals.

It will help small traders by leading to all-round development of infrastructure and offering a wide range of choice for sourcing products. They can and will co-exist with big players — both foreign and Indian. It will be pro-consumer in the long-run with many players catering to their needs at competitive/affordable price. Sans these policy changes, under business as usual scenario, the consumers will pay a heavy price in the medium to long-term as Indian retail will be cartelised by a few players viz. Amazon, Walmart and Facebook/RIL.

(The writer is a New Delhi-based policy analyst)

A flood of urban woes during the rains

Traffic snarls, waterlogging and the loss of lives show that a manageable issue has been allowed to deteriorate



KOTA SRIRAJ

might be, every passing year they bring in their wake the ever-growing problem of urban flooding.

This has been experienced for decades in India but sufficient attention has not been given to specific efforts to deal with it. In the past, any strategy on flood disaster management largely focussed on riverine floods affecting large extents of rural areas. Urban flooding is significantly different from rural flooding as urbanisation leads to developed catchments and in the event of heavy/high intensity rainfall, there is higher run-off, which increases the flood peaks from 1.8 to eight times and flood volumes up to six times. Consequently, flooding occurs very quickly due to faster flow times, sometimes in a matter of minutes.

The recent death of a mini-truck driver after his vehicle got submerged under the Minto Bridge after a spell of rain in Central Delhi underlines the growing threat of urban flooding. While most of the time urban India patiently endures huge volumes of



flooding and the resultant traffic snarls, when people start losing lives, it is time for the citizens and the authorities to consider the problem seriously and deal with it effectively. Though large cities like Mumbai, Delhi and Chennai go through urban flooding annually, the recurrence of the problem suggests that no lessons are learnt and no infrastructure is built or improved to prevent it. Just a few hours of hard rain in metropolitan cities can present a very embarrassing spectacle as daily life is thrown out of gear and the cities become unwitting

examples for the developed world to learn from. Another concerning aspect is that urban flooding increases the chances of contagious diseases like typhoid, cholera, leptospirosis, hepatitis and even COVID-19 spreading far more easily. For instance, floodwaters in Assam spread discarded medical waste and used PPE from hospitals and COVID-19 care centres, raising fears of infection among people in inundated areas.

One of the major reasons for urban waterlogging are the archaic sewer systems in our cities that are heavily choked with silt and garbage. Indian metros not only need regular cleaning of sewers and storm water drains, particularly before the onset of the rainy season, they also require an advanced system that is based on the latest technology and satellite data that can calculate the quantities of water run-off every monsoon and accordingly estimate the load factor on the sewerage and storm water system.

Another reason for flooding of cities is excessive concretisation and

paved areas in the urban landscape. This has not only resulted in exacerbating the heat island effect and causing a sharp spike in ambient temperatures but preventing rainwater absorption into the ground and recharging of the water table. This, too, increases the rainwater run-off, putting undue pressure on the drainage network.

The efforts to prevent urban flooding will be incomplete unless the ground water absorption rate of rainwater as compared to the run-off rate is balanced. Another issue pertaining to urban flooding is the role played by illegal construction and how it is impacting the storm water drainage system across India's major cities. As urban sprawls increase rapidly, unauthorised construction and unplanned digging by civic agencies are becoming two major issues that are further impacting our already overburdened drainage systems adversely. Flooding will continue to trouble urban citizens unless these impediments are addressed and removed.

We often marvel at infrastructure planning of ancient India, especially the drainage system of the Mohenjodaro and Harappa cultures that date back to 2400 BC. Sadly we are unable to replicate the excellence and success of the bygone era in today's time. Urban flooding is avoidable and in order to ensure safety of lives and property, it is essential for the Government to rapidly develop strategies that draw from the best of the world's benchmarking practices in urban rainwater management. We need city-wise protocols that cater to the typicality of the demographics and geography and automatically kick in when the area receives a certain quantum of rainfall.

Traffic snarls, waterlogging and the loss of lives due to urban flooding are a painful indication that a manageable issue has been allowed to deteriorate and get out of hand. It is time authorities around the country wake up.

(The writer is an environmental journalist)



FOREIGN EYE



WE ARE NOTHING WITHOUT HISTORY

In an age of tweets and electronic messaging, handwritten letters are as fashionable as wooden spinning wheels. Incidentally, MK Gandhi's collected writings and letters span 98 volumes. Such letters provide historians with a flashlight into the times in which they were written. Bereft of them, historians look at their shoelaces for inspiration. (Dawn editorial)

(Dawn editorial)

CAPSULE



Kia Motors expects Sonet to pump new energy
NEW DELHI: Kia Motors India on Thursday said its upcoming model Sonet, to be launched during the festive season this year, will inject new dynamism in the compact SUV segment in the country. The company, which is going to unveil the sub-four meter SUV globally on August 7, has released the first official rendering of the new production-ready Sonet. The model, which is slated for launch during the upcoming festive season, aims to set new design benchmarks and inject a new dynamism in the compact SUV segment, Kia Motors India said in a statement. "With the new Kia Sonet, we had the ambition to give this compact SUV a strong and muscular character found only in much larger vehicles," he said.



Airbus workers on strike against Spain layoffs
MADRID: Airbus workers in the European aircraft manufacturer's eight plants in Spain are striking Thursday against the consortium's decision to cut 1,600 jobs over the next few months. Battered by the coronavirus pandemic, Airbus announced last month that it must eliminate 15,000 jobs, or more than 10% of its global workforce, to safeguard its future and warned of more thin years ahead. The cuts are mostly in Europe and affect 900 employees in Spain. They're in addition to 700 layoffs out of 2,600 global job cuts in the consortium's defense division. Workers chanted "Zero layoffs!" as they marched from the Airbus plant in Getafe, to the local townhall, demanding more political involvement to revive the industry and investments that will guarantee long-term employment.



India's LPU student bags Rs 1.3 cr PhD scholarship
NEW DELHI: Punjab-based Lovely Professional University (LPU) said its post graduate agriculture student Sumant Bindal has bagged a fully-paid scholarship of Rs 1.3 crore to pursue PhD in plant sciences at Australian National University. This is perhaps the biggest scholarship ever bagged by an agriculture student from India. The PhD programme would commence in September 2020 at ANU. "Jalandhar-based LPU said in a statement. Bindal, a post graduate in agri-genetics and plant breeding would be doing research on 'Identification of signalling pathways activated by resistant genes against Fusarium wilt in tomato', the private university said. His research would focus on how to make tomatoes completely resistant to Fusarium wilt, a plant fungus that infects tomatoes worldwide, and has reportedly caused up to 45 per cent yield loss to tomato crop in India in the past, it added.

'Identified 20 sectors where India can become global supplier'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government has so far identified 20 sectors where India can meet domestic demand as well as become a global supplier, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Thursday. He said industry body Ficci and other associations are working with the government in this regard. "We have identified first 12 sectors and now 8 more, so we have 20 sectors in which Ficci and other associations are very much part of our engagement, where we have identified sectors where India can not only meet own domestic needs but also become globally competitive and become global leader supplying to the world," he said in a Ficci webinar. These sectors include food processing, organic farming, agro chemicals, electronics, industrial machinery, furni-



ture, leather, auto parts and textiles, among others. He also highlighted that despite having skilled carpenters and artisans, India continues to import furniture. "Can we not prepare India to become the factory of the world for furniture, can we not build to scale at competitive prices so that the world looks at India, to source from India," he added. Further talking about yoga,

100,000 or 500,000 yoga teachers who would find an opportunity across the globe," Goyal noted. He said one has to take a person in yoga room for four sessions only and for the fifth session, the person will come "running and then for the rest of his life, he would want to be a yoga participant, that is the power of yoga". Cure is not only about medicine or about visiting hospital or a doctor for treatment, the huge possibilities of yoga as a preventive medication are known to many but have not been captured as an opportunity. "I do not know whether all of us have failed the nation and the people of India, where despite the Prime Minister with his vision of opening up door, opening up opportunities, for all of us, (we) have not seized the moment," the minister asked.

Pandemic to cost Aus USD 131 bn this yr

PNS ■ CANBERRA

Australia's response to the coronavirus pandemic tipped the government's budget 85.8 billion Australian dollars (USD 61 billion) into the red in the last fiscal year and will create 184 billion dollars (USD 131 billion) more debt in the current year which would be the nation's biggest deficit since World War II, treasury figures showed on Thursday. Treasurer Josh Frydenberg revealed Australia's crumbling economic outlook based on increased government spending to stimulate to economy and declining tax revenue. The conservative government had forecast in December a 5 billion dollars (USD 3.6 billion) surplus in the fiscal year that ended June 30, 2020: the first surplus in 12 years.



Sensex surges 269 pts

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark Sensex jumped 269 points on Thursday, led by gains in index heavyweight Reliance Industries, ICICI Bank and Kotak Bank amid hopes of fresh government stimulus to support the economy. The 30-share BSE Sensex ended 268.95 points, or 0.71 per cent, higher at 38,140.47. Similarly, the NSE Nifty advanced 82.85 points, or 0.74 per cent, to close at 11,215.45. Shares of Reliance Industries climbed around 3 per cent to hit a record closing high of Rs 2,060.65. SBI, ICICI Bank, Tech Mahindra, ITC and Kotak Bank were among the other winners. On the other hand,

California in new deal with mask maker

PNS ■ SACRAMENTO (US)

California will spend an additional USD 315 million on protective masks through a contract with a Chinese manufacturer. Governor Gavin Newsom announced the deal with BYD on Wednesday as he touted California's efforts to procure masks for health care and other essential workers. Newsom signed a USD 1 billion contract with BYD in April and the first masks began arriving last month after delays. Newsom said California will soon launch a competitive bidding process to try to get more masks at lower prices. But he also acknowledged the masks aren't always getting to workers that need them and pledged a more aggressive state response.

Monetisation by RBI has a cost: Rajan

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Former RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan on Thursday said the central bank has been expanding its balance sheet and buying government debt on the back of excess liquidity amid the economic slowdown but cautioned that this comes at a cost and cannot be a lasting solution. He said central banks in many emerging markets are resorting to such strategies and disagreed with votaries of



Raghuram Rajan

"The RBI has been expanding its balance sheet and it has been buying government debt. But effectively, in that process, what it is doing is borrowing from the banks at the reverse repo rate and lending on to the government," Rajan said speaking at a conference organised by Singaporean lender DBS Bank. It can be noted that at present there is excess liquidity in the system as people get more risk averse and save more and the demand for credit is sluggish.

Banks are parking the money with the RBI in the reverse repo window, earning very less. It can be noted that monetisation of the fiscal deficit is one of the suggestions put forth by a slew of economists and analysts as a prescription to tackle the current environment. Rajan said there are limits to monetisation and the process can go long only for a limited period of time.

Rupee settles flat at 74.75 against US dollar

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The rupee pared its initial gains and settled on a flat note at 74.75 against the US dollar on Thursday as escalating tensions between the US and China weighed on investor sentiment. At the interbank forex market, the domestic unit opened on a strong note at 74.65, but erased the gains and finally closed at 74.75, unchanged from its previous closing. During the session, the domestic unit witnessed an intra-day high of 74.52 and a low of 74.87 against the US



dollar. Forex traders said the uptick in the rupee during the day was supported by weak greenback, foreign fund inflows and positive domestic equities, but rising tensions between the US and China weighed on investor sentiment and restricted the gains.

Radico Khaitan Q1 net falls 19.52 pc to Rs 44.07 crore

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Liquor firm Radico Khaitan Ltd on Thursday reported a 19.52 per cent decrease in standalone net profit at Rs 44.07 crore for the first quarter ended June 30, 2020, due to disruptions caused by COVID-19. The company had posted a net profit of Rs 54.76 crore in the April-June quarter a year ago. Its total revenue from

operations declined 33.70 per cent to Rs 1,774.65 crore during the quarter under review as against Rs 2,677.07 crore in the corresponding quarter last year, Radico Khaitan said in a BSE filing. The company said "because of lockdown, the volume for the quarter ended June 30, 2020, was impacted partially, as there were no sales during the period April 1, 2020, till May 04, 2020.

PNB Housing Fin Q1 net profit falls 10 pc to Rs 257 cr on lower disbursement

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The company's net interest income also slipped 22 per cent to Rs 487.8 crore during April-June, as against Rs 625.5 crore in year-ago period, it said in a regulatory filing. Total income during the quarter also fell to Rs 1,872.33 crore from Rs 2,232.58 crore. "During the quarter, the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the disbursements resulting in the lowest quarterly disbursements

in more than 24 quarters. However, with all our branches now operational, we are witnessing an increasing trend in disbursement on a month on month basis. "The company has rolled out its business plan for the FY 2021 and will continue to focus on the lower risk weighted retail assets, resulting in higher percentage of retail book in the total AUM," Neeraj Vyas, said.

Demand for essential commodities surged after Unlock 1.0 as their shipment volume was nearly three times higher after the relaxations as compared to the lockdown period, according to a report by e-commerce logistics aggregator Shiprocket. The shipment volume of essential products was nearly three times higher after the relaxation in lockdown from Unlock 1.0 and over 40 per cent of the overall shipment volume came from essential categories as compared to the lockdown period, said the report. There has been an increase of 65 per cent in active shippers

PNS ■ MUMBAI

to continuing its services in the Unlock 1.0 without hindrances in the supply chain and shipping, he noted. "It's interesting to see an increased demand for hyper-local services amid this pandemic. We hope the situation improves and the world returns to normalcy soon," he added. Further, Mumbai, Delhi and Bengaluru clocked the highest number of pick-ups and deliveries which underlines pent-up demand in these cities during the lockdown, report added. Also, sellers in these cities were able to overcome challenges more quickly in becoming operational, it added. While Delhi leads the pick-up activities, Mumbai is the top city in terms of delivery.

Flipkart Group to launch of Wholesale, acquires Walmart India biz

PNS ■ BENGALURU

The Flipkart Group on Thursday announced the launch of Flipkart Wholesale, a new digital marketplace, and the acquisition of 100 per cent interest in Wal-Mart India Private Limited, which operates the Best Price cash-and-carry business. Kiranas and MSMEs are central to India's retail ecosystem and Flipkart Wholesale will focus on meeting their needs by providing small businesses a wide selection at significant value, the company said in a statement. "Whether in grocery, general merchandise or fashion, these businesses will have one-stop access to an extensive selection of products with attractive schemes and incentives, supplemented with data-driven recommendations for stock selection, delivered through a fast and reliable network to drive greater efficiencies and better margins," it said. Best Price currently supports more than 1.5 million members, including kiranas and other MSMEs. Top Indian brands, local



manufacturers and sellers have partnered with Flipkart Wholesale to ensure the availability of an exhaustive range of products and merchandise for kiranas and MSMEs, the statement said. Kalyan Krishnamurthy, Chief Executive Officer, Flipkart Group, said, "The acquisition of Walmart India adds a strong talent pool with deep expertise in the wholesale business that will strengthen our position to address the needs of kiranas and MSMEs uniquely." Flipkart Wholesale will launch its operations in August 2020 and will pilot services for

the grocery and fashion categories. It will be headed by Adarsh Menon, a veteran at Flipkart. Sameer Aggarwal, Chief Executive Officer at Walmart India, will remain with the company to ensure a smooth transition, after which time he will move to another role within Walmart. With the acquisition of the Walmart India business, its employees will join the Flipkart Group and the home office teams will integrate over the next year. The Best Price brand will continue to serve its members via its omnichannel network of 28 stores and e-commerce operations.

Amazon joins hands with Acko to offer auto insurance in India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amazon Pay on Thursday said it has tied up with Acko General Insurance Ltd to offer two- and four-wheeler insurance policies in India. Amazon Pay, which is the payments unit of Amazon India, will help customers purchase insurance effortlessly, and Amazon Prime members will get extra benefits including additional discounts, a statement said. Customers can buy auto insurance from Amazon Pay page, Amazon app or mobile website and they can get a quote for their car or bike's insurance by providing basic details, it said. In this quick paperless insurance plan, customers can get hassle-free claims with zero paperwork, one-hour pick-up, and three-day assured claim servicing and one-year repair warranty in select cities. Policyholders will also have



Customers can buy auto insurance from Amazon Pay page, Amazon app or mobile website and they can get a quote for their car or bike insurance

Bharti AXA gets Rs 800 cr crop insurance

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Private non-life insurer Bharti AXA General Insurance on Thursday said it has received Rs 800 crore worth crop insurance mandate from Maharashtra and Karnataka governments to insure farmers in both the states under the Pradhan Mantri Fasal Bima Yojana (PMFBY). The company has secured authorisation for three years from both the state governments to implement the PMFBY in six districts of Maharashtra and three districts of Karnataka, a release said. "Apart from implementing crop insurance for farmers in both the states, we will also capitalise on innovative technologies and digital capabilities for sharing relevant information about the PMFBY and ensure speedy and hassle-free claim assessments in the respective districts," the company's CEO and MD Sanjeev Srinivasan said.

Power demand to decline 8 pc in FY21, discoms' revenue to fall 13.1 pc

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Power demand is expected to decline by around 8 per cent in current fiscal due to the steep fall in demand from commercial and industrial segments on the back of COVID-19 pandemic-induced nationwide lockdown, Emkay Global Financial Services said in a report. According to the agency, the fall in demand is likely to result in a 13.1 per cent year-on-year (YoY) decline in revenue of discoms (distribution companies) to Rs 6.8 lakh crore in FY2021. The nationwide lockdown to contain the spread of the deadly coronavirus during the first three months of the fiscal has significantly



impacted economic activity, leading to 17 per cent fall in Q1FY21 power demand, it said. "Our analysis reveals that power demand will decline 8 per cent year on year in FY21 on a steep fall in commercial and industrial (C&I) demand," the agency said. Further, the gap between average cost of supply and average revenue realised in FY21 is expected to increase

to Rs 0.95 per unit from Rs 0.50 per unit in FY2020, translating to an under-recovery of Rs 1.12 lakh crore. According to Emkay, discoms' overdue has reached Rs 1.17 lakh crore, which is close to the peak level witnessed pre-UDAY. "Discoms' financial stress has been aggravated in this period due to the fall in power demand from the commercial and industrial segments and waiver of fixed charges by many discoms to the industrial segment. "The overdue level is likely to remain high in FY21 due to the expected rise in under-recovery and slow progress in the Aatmanirbhar scheme toward loan disbursement," it said.

Essential item demand surges with Unlock 1.0

PNS ■ MUMBAI

There has been an increase of 65 per cent in active shippers in the D2C segment, according to a report



in the direct-to-consumer (D2C) segment, it added. During the lockdown, there were supply disruptions, and delivery services faced huge challenges and were unable to meet the demand or orders, it said. The report is an analysis of shipment trends in post-lock-

down India in the D2C sector for a period between May 18 and June 30, with a sample size of over 26,000 sellers across the country. The report further said 60 per cent of sellers felt that the blend of both offline and online will continue to be preferred demand channel.

Less than 2 per cent of sellers were not sure how the new normal will look like for them, it added. "The lockdown created a major disruption in the supply chain, and the demand-to-supply ratio was not balanced with the demand increasing exponentially. Our report was based on the patterns and trends observed," Shiprocket co-founder and Chief Executive Officer Saahil Goel said. He added that Unlock 1.0 has paved the way for a new phase of logistics operations in India. The government has eased restrictions on several aspects of logistics and e-commerce and Shiprocket looks forward

to continuing its services in the Unlock 1.0 without hindrances in the supply chain and shipping, he noted. "It's interesting to see an increased demand for hyper-local services amid this pandemic. We hope the situation improves and the world returns to normalcy soon," he added. Further, Mumbai, Delhi and Bengaluru clocked the highest number of pick-ups and deliveries which underlines pent-up demand in these cities during the lockdown, report added. Also, sellers in these cities were able to overcome challenges more quickly in becoming operational, it added. While Delhi leads the pick-up activities, Mumbai is the top city in terms of delivery.

'NO NEPOTISM IN TOLLYWOOD, IT'S DEMAND & SUPPLY'

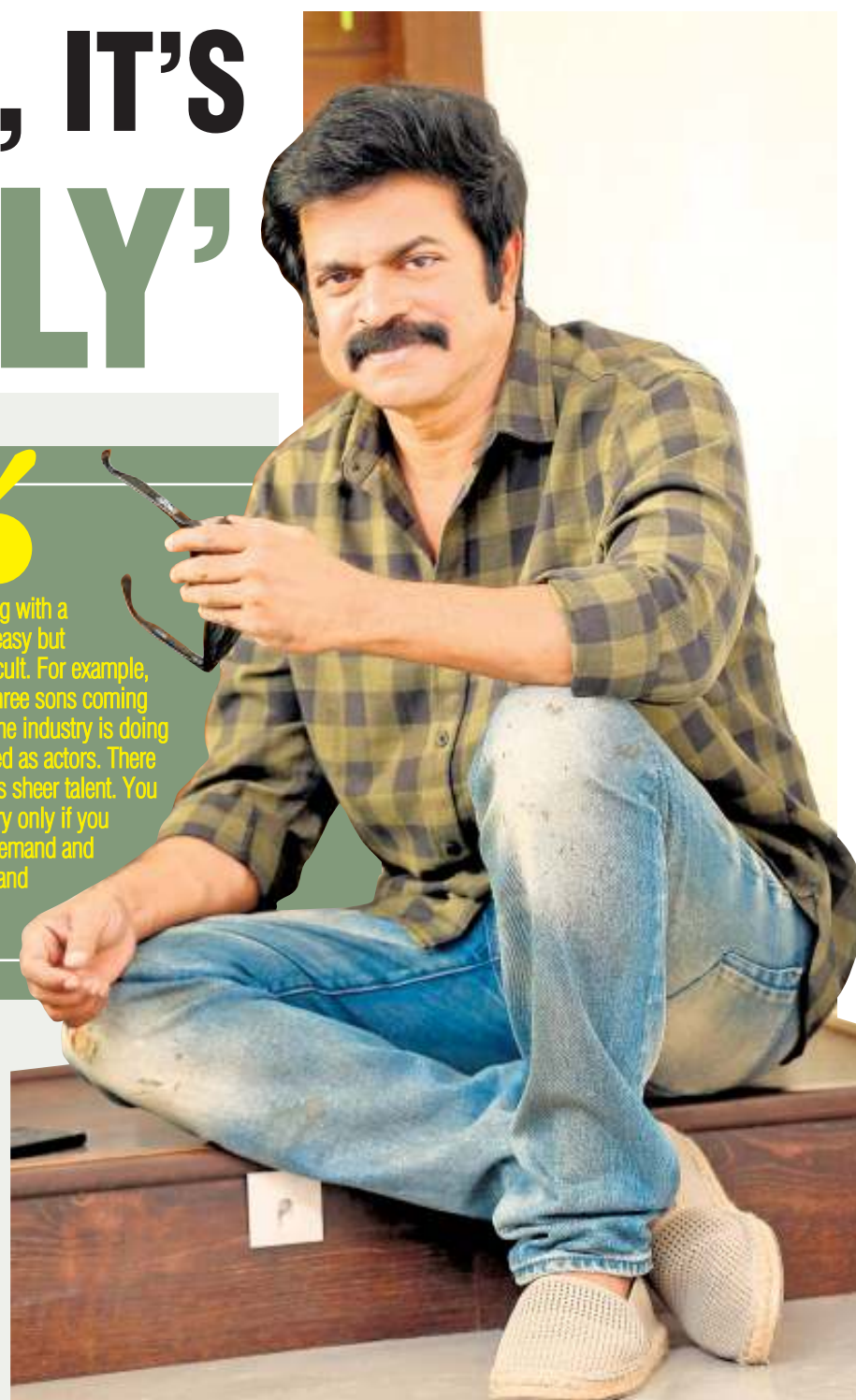
A friend, brother, villain, comedian — actor Brahmajji has played it all in his 25-year-long career in Telugu cinema and has become one of the most sought-after character artistes now. The 55-year-old actor speaks to K RAMYA SREE about nepotism, the reason for not succeeding as a hero, and more...

Although we have hundreds of character artistes in the Telugu cinema, there are only a few who gained the same love and support that the audience would give to protagonists. One such artiste is Brahmajji. With hundreds of films to his credit, the actor is one of the most loved character artistes in the TFI. Speaking about his entry to films, Brahmajji, who made his debut in the industry in 1995 said, "I came to Hyderabad after I joined a film institute here. Until then I was studying in Eluru. My father who happens to be a *tahsildar* had many transfers, so my entire childhood had us traveling from one place to another."

Brahmajji played several characters, including negative shades, but isn't considered a typical hero. Krishna Vamsi, a dear friend of Brahmajji, launched him as a hero in his film *Sindhooram* but the film tanked at the box office. When asked why he couldn't succeed as a hero he said, "Only a few are lucky. I didn't even think of becoming a hero. Krishna Vamsi wanted to make me a hero but it didn't work out. I didn't take my failure as a hero seriously. I'm happy as a character artist and I'm leading a comfortable life. If you ask me, with present competition among heroes, the life of a character artist is way better than that of a hero because every Friday is a war. If a hero does one film in six months, we as character artistes can do about five to six films. We have more interaction with the audience."

Brahmajji who brings with him over 25 years of experience in the film industry feels nepotism doesn't exist in the field of art. "Many outsiders are doing well in the industry, see for instance Naveen Polishetty, Nani, Vijay Deverakonda and many more. These people are extremely talented, hence they are surviving the tough competition here. Entry for heroes coming with a background might be easy but sustaining here is difficult. For example, only one son among three sons coming with a background in the industry is doing well, the other two failed as actors. There is no nepotism here. Its sheer talent. You will grow in the industry only if you have talent. It is only demand and supply in the industry and not nepotism."

Things are a lot better today, believes Brahmajji, when it comes to making a comfortable space for yourself in the industry. "It is a lot easier for people to come to limelight now, there are many means to showcase your talent. Back then, we had to run from pillar to post for opportunities. Today, people are making it big by posting short films on youtube, videos on TikTok, etc.," he tells us. The actor's son too made his debut with *O Pitta Kada*. His son worked for the Indian Navy before his debut in Telugu cinema. The Who's who of Tollywood attended the pre-release event of *O Pitta Kada* because of the friendly relationship the actor maintains. "My son felt he wasn't able to spend enough time with the family as he was in the marine for four months. He then decided to get into films. He underwent training in acting. As trail and error, we first shot a small portion of the film and showed it to others which later developed into a full-fledged film after watching my son's acting skills. I told my son to go back to his job if he doesn't sustain here," the actor concludes.



Entry for heroes coming with a background might be easy but sustaining here is difficult. For example, only one son among three sons coming with a background in the industry is doing well, the other two failed as actors. There is no nepotism here. Its sheer talent. You will grow in the industry only if you have talent. It is only demand and supply in the industry and not nepotism.



Are you interested in a 'RISHITA'?

The new Netflix show *Indian Matchmaking* has everyone hooked to it, making it one of the top 3 shows being watched by Indians on Netflix. All about an Indian matchmaker catering to the colourist, sexist and casteist demands of potential brides and grooms, and their parents, the show has fueled debates online and off it, on the ugly side of arranged marriages in India. *The Pioneer's* SHIKHA DUGGAL talks to women from the city across all ages and walks of life, to gauge what they think of the show and what one can learn and unlearn from it

To watch a show like *Indian Matchmaking* in 2020 can drive you nuts! The new web series released on Netflix last week and is receiving mixed reviews. *Indian Matchmaking* showcases our country's obsession with criteria like height, caste, colour, etc. infused with Sima Aunty's (the famous real-life matchmaker from Mumbai) matchmaking tactics. While some on the internet say that the 'show is simply holding a mirror to the ugly society we are a part of', many others argue that the show, instead, just whitewashes the preconceived notions of an arranged marriage with modernised ideas. The families of the characters in the show and Sima Taparia believe in the most atrocious ideas of marriages, being problematic at parts. The desire to have a wife who performs all duties, works, and manages household seems one-sided. She needs to be accommodating, fun, and outgoing, all at the same time! Yet in one of the characters, Aparna's case, her determined nature, and confidence isn't admired but considered to be negative. Hypocrisy much? Astrology in matchmaking is another hype in the show. The world perhaps can't depend on *kundlis* or the important decisions by the elite on marriage cannot be based on a nakshatra anymore but

the web show takes you back to the olden times where Sima Taparia consults a famous face reader for her failed compatibility issues. "Hi, I am Sima Taparia from Mumbai. The girl should be flexible, know how to compromise and adjust" — this phrase caught the attention of a post-graduate student of Mass Communication from St. Josephs Degree College, who made her curious to know why Sima Taparia is trending. "I happened to watch the trailer of *Indian Matchmaking* and found it uncanny-cum-fun and decided to binge-watch it. In the very first episode, the show managed to establish a patriarchal and stereotypical nature, wherein a matchmaker is in pursuit of rich, successful, and good-looking matches from abroad. Even to this day, in India, arranged marriages ask for adjustments, especially from us women. Mrs Sima is following the same age-old tradition in the show. The grooms are being emotionally manipulated by their mothers. Pressure is being built up after a certain age, with an urgent need to get married. Problems of sexism, ageism, casteism, and colourism continue to persist. All in all, the show is full of sarcasm with a little bit of cringe and I suggest our Indian parents grow out of such norms as Ankita Bansal's father from the show rightly does. He believes in her daughter's fierce theories

about equality and that's admirable," shares Prishita Motay. The web series also acknowledges loneliness and that makes the audiences not stop watching it. This show is a hot mess, a fantasy that's catering to the white audiences with its exotic appeal of *desi* weddings. Some watchers were mortified, embarrassed, sardonic, confused, and some could relate to it. "Half an hour into *Indian Matchmaking* and I fast-forwarded it. It's a cesspool of matching *kundlis*. It's all rooted in caste. I can just see it as a branding stunt for Sima Taparia! Personally, our families didn't take such a path to get us hitched. It doesn't seem like it's about finding love but more about keeping supremacy pure. The criteria every parent put forward leads you to body shaming — it's just uncool! This road to getting married needs to be fixed instead of being prosecuted as a Netflix special," argues Pradeepthi Vissamsetti, a Teluguite and city editor for the famous blog on parenting called Mompresso. Pradeepthi also frowns at the marriage timelines discussed on the show, but says it makes sense to some extent. She feels the pressure becomes stronger in our twenties to thirties and we keep hearing that it's time to settle down! "I second this ideology because I understand our loved ones have certain expectations



Half an hour into *Indian Matchmaking* and I fast-forwarded it. It's a cesspool of matching *kundlis*. It's all rooted in caste. Personally, our families didn't take such a path to get us hitched. The criteria every parent put forward leads you to body shaming — it's just uncool! This road to getting married needs to be fixed instead of being prosecuted as a Netflix special.

PRADEEPTHI VISSAMSETTI
 CITY EDITOR, MOMPRESSO



As a life coach now, I have helped many young girls find a suitable groom, built their projector image or stalked their social media accounts and suggested them to remove certain pictures that don't go well by their personalities, because, let's face it, this new age has no end to comparisons. I personally liked the matchmaker as she's quite passionate about her work.

PRIYA RAJIV,
 A TRAINED LIFE COACH

from us, but if it doesn't work out, it leads to stress or disappointment as seen with Nadia's character — she wonders if the opposite of loneliness is marriage, lacks self-confidence and is anticipates too much. Healthwise too, it's beneficial for a woman to get married before her thirties in terms of her future pregnancies but she must be able to pursue her dreams even after getting married," she opines. There are many issues about what women have to be like, for them to be considered as wife material. Marriage is great but it may not fix one's insecurities, love is hard work, and must flow from both ways, believe several young women in the city. Everyone deserves to have the best for themselves when considering marriage, regardless of gender. With similar expectations comes Pradyuman who has been rejecting women by just looking at their photos, to which Sima Aunty suggests he meet a life coach. A life coach from our own city says, "Arranged marriages are a very intrinsic part of our culture and also the iota of the web series. I found my match through a matrimonial advertisement too, in why my biodata read: attractive and vivacious. As a life coach now, I have helped many young girls find a suitable groom, built their projector image or stalked their social media accounts and suggested

them to remove certain pictures that don't go well by their personalities, because, let's face it, this new age has no end to comparisons. Fun fact — no matter how progressive we become, a good looking man/woman will always be our first ordeal. We need a cordial shift to this approach. I personally liked the matchmaker as she's quite passionate about her work. The problem arises when people don't have an open mind. Episode four takes the character Pradyuman to a life coach who asks him to introspect himself which helped him become a lot less fickle-minded and fussy. But why a life coach, you ask? It's because the kids of this generation seem to be too picky and confused, they have multiple desires. It's like they are on a shopping spree! This takes us to another area - when an individual rejects his/her potential partner, it tends to demean their morale and confidence, which we need to be careful about," explains Priya Rajiv, a trained life coach. This graduate from the University of Oxford also loved the way Nadia Jagessar was open to change, passionately looks for love the love of her, and is a woman of laughter. So if you've binge-watched Smriti Mundhra's *Indian Matchmaking*, are you ready to evolve for the better, break stereotypes and dismiss plans for the ideal bride/groom?

Orlando Bloom gets tattoo in honour of dead pet dog



BREAKING THE STIGMA AROUND PERIODS

All women are familiar with TVCs and commercials for sanitary napkins which depict menstrual flow with 'blue liquid' as a way of discreetly depicting blood.

Decades later there's finally a brand which shows blood in TV communications as it should be — red. The aim is to bring forth an important and often neglected topic of "Heavy Flow" during periods; a problem which affects almost 25 per cent women in India and requires them to change their pads every 2 hours.

RIO Heavy Flow Pads by Nobel Hygiene changes the face of Indian Advertising by launching their TVC with a pan-India campaign. The first phase of the launch in February was paused after several complaints were filed with ASCI on the usage of blood shown in the commercial. However, after deliberations with ASCI and an independent review, RIO Pads have been allowed to air the advertisement with minor modifications in the second phase of the launch.

Actress Radhika Apte, brand ambassador for RIO

pads features in the TVC. She reiterates, "I have said this earlier and I will say it again. I do not see the issue in showing actual blood. Blood in a fight sequence in a film is fine but not for periods? Why can't we just show what heavy flow is really like? Why can't we show blood? I am glad that RIO has taken up this challenge and they are standing by it with conviction. Getting a go-ahead on this advertisement is very reassuring. If this ad can start even a single conversation, then that is a win for all the unheard voices. If we can remove even an iota of stigma around periods via this ad and encourage people to accept it as a normal and natural phenomenon then it will be a big win for us all. Period."

Commenting on the launch, Kartik Johari, Vice-President, Nobel Hygiene, said, "We are extremely proud to take this first step on behalf of all the women in India. There can be no talk of education, awareness or equality when the biological truth of half the population is censored. Our resolve to continue this conversation has been renewed, start-

ing with the depiction of blood. To show the unadressed problem of Heavy Flow, without showing blood itself, is so absurd a concept, but it didn't even occur to us. All our communications are deeply inspired from our research, showing the first true and honest representation of periods for consumers. Awareness is needed, and conversations can only begin after acknowledging reality."

He further added, "We took special care to ensure our communication remained as authentic as possible. The entire creative was scripted by a woman, based on real narratives from women, directed and shot by a woman, and is being marketed by women. Additionally, 1000s of women have already applauded our product and messaging; we are proud to have brought this innovation for Indian ladies who receive no respite from Heavy Flow. We are sure that other players in the market are excited by this new paradigm, and we call upon everyone to take advantage of this exciting shift to educate and reconnect with their consumers!"

Actor Orlando Bloom has had an ace of spades inside a heart inked under the name of his late dog Mighty, on his chest.

A week after his dog went missing, Bloom shared on Instagram on Wednesday that his dog is dead, reports *etonline.com*.

Paying a tribute to the pet he had welcomed into the family in 2017, he wrote, "Mighty's on the other side now. After seven days of searching from sunrise to sunset and into the wee hours, today, the 7th day — the number of completion — we found his collar."

"I have wept more this week than I thought possible, which has been very cathartic and healing."

Bloom wrote that he "left no stone unturned" in the search for

Mighty, which included him crawling "thru all the man holes, under the roads, (searching) every back yard and creek bed".

"I feel so grateful to have learned from my little Mighty man that love is eternal and the true meaning of devotion," Bloom wrote.

"I feel sure he was looking down on me whistling in every back yard and knowing that I was doing all I possibly could to respect our bond. He was more than a companion. It was a soul connection for sure."

"I'm sorry. I love you," he continued. "Thank you. RIP my MIGHTY HEART."

Bloom concluded his post by thanking his community for its support, which allowed him to "see the best of people even in the worst of times".



HIMESH RESHAMMIYA: TODAY'S SINGERS SHOULD COMPOSE THEIR OWN SONGS

Composer Himesh Reshammiya feels that singers should try and compose their own songs because only then they will know the soul of their own composition.

"My songs have never been in the conventional zone. They have always been different and that is why I feel it's almost impossible for someone else to perform them," he said.

He feels the understanding of the nuances of a composer's version is very rare.

"For example, Arijit (Singh) has the right kind of pick up sense, but not everyone has that. I feel today's singers should try and compose their own songs because only then they will know the soul of their own composition and that'll shine through and connect with listeners," he said.

The style of working was different a few year ago, he pointed out. "Earlier, singers and composers used to get 8 to 10 hours to jam and rehearse with the musicians. They used to interact before starting any project, but nowadays singers don't get that much time. It is a sad reality that composers today often just send a tune to the singers over

WhatsApp and ask the singer to dub the song themselves. So, the process doesn't see the kind of coming together of talent, synergies and improvisations that used to be a part of the previous process," he explained.

Himesh recalled, "Back in the day, Alka Yagnik ji and I dubbed *Tere naam* for eight hours and that made the song such a hit. Amidst the new normal, I feel digital is the most direct medium between the singer and their audience and that's where they should reach out to them. Compose 100 songs, 500 songs you might fail 99 times but you will get that one hit song once you've hit the right chord."

"I love Michael Jackson, he is a legend but he never sang for Tom Cruise, he has his own identity. This is what I want for all singers, this is the time where we all need to hold hands and succeed together," he shared while shooting for an episode of *Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Li'l Champs*.

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



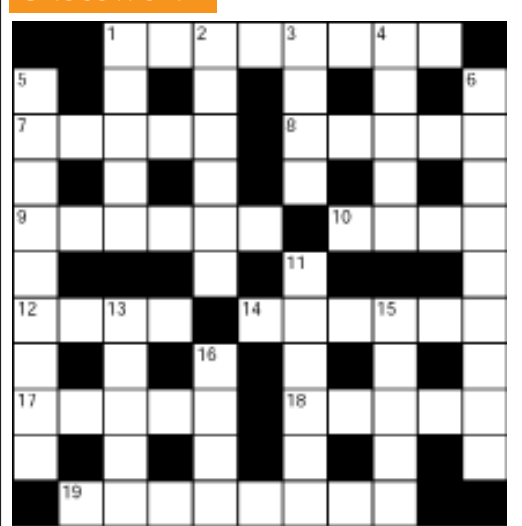
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 1 Made or became larger
- 7 A month
- 8 An item of furniture
- 9 One of the continents
- 10 A graceful water bird
- 12 Give assistance
- 14 Purchased
- 17 Sample by mouth
- 18 Tiny
- 19 Bewildered

DOWN

- 1 Mistake
- 2 A building for a king or queen
- 3 Short letter
- 4 Where your arm bends
- 5 A skydiver wears this
- 6 Jack climbed this in a story
- 11 Buildings for people
- 13 A rope thrown by a cowboy
- 15 Keep watch over
- 16 A green thing growing on a tree



SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

Regaining strength in nature's lap

An abode for positive vibes and more, Manisha Koirala's Instagram posts are something her followers look forward to and share too. The yesteryear actress who bravely fought cancer years ago shares her struggles, victories, and more, with her family of followers on Instagram.

Wednesday's post was one of those that has the actress sharing pictures from her life with some philosophical bits to offer.

"Regaining strength", the 49-year-old actress captioned a bunch of photos from a walking trail through a forest. Remembering author Robert Frost's words while sharing the photos and videos from her latest adventure she quoted, "The woods are lovely, dark and deep. But I have promises to keep, and miles to go before I sleep."

Manisha Koirala shared her no make-up, no-filter pictures that showed her grey strands of hair and bindi in her close-up

selfie to which her fans replied with much love. Many even asked her where she clicked the picture and some others, gave her their warmth and hug in this time of the pandemic.

Manisha Koirala, who was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in 2012, which she fought a tough battle with and conquered. Koirala was last seen in Netflix film *Maska*, ahead of which she also featured in films such as *Prassthanam*, *Sanju*, and in a segment in Netflix's *Lust Stories*.

MAKERS OF ASALEM JARIGINDI? CONFIDENT OF GOOD RESPONSE

Coming soon is a suspense thriller love story based on real events that took place in Telangana called *Asalem Jarigindi*?

Producer King Johnson is confident that the film will do well, thanks to how the recently released songs from the film has received. The songs sung by famous singers like Vijay Yesudas, Vijay Prakash, Yazin Nizar, Malvikan, Ranky, Bhargavi Pillai, and composed by Yelendra Mahaveer have received rave reviews from OTT platforms like Amazon Music, Spotify, Geosavone and Apple Music.

The film has received its clearance from the Censor board and will soon be released, but will it hit the silver screen or settle for an OTT platform is the big question. "We are discussing the matter internally. The

film has come out better than what we've expected," said Johnson. "This film is based on real incidents that took place in Telangana. Shot with an 8K resolution camera, the film's famous background score by S. Chinna gave life to the film, and Sethu's special effects are what will make the audience feel the situation," Johnson tells us.

He also said that actor Sriram who plays the protagonist in the film had brought more hype to the story which had scope for good performance and is confident that the film would be well received by the audience after seeing his talent.



Sai Dharam Tej and 'Return of the weights'



Actor Sai Dharam Tej is back to working out. On Instagram, the actor shared a picture of his home gym, with dumbbells and other exercise equipment all around. On the image, he wrote, "Return of the weights."

The actor had earlier shared a picture of himself running.

"Run Your Own Race. It's YOU Vs YOU. Be a BEAST," he wrote on the photo-sharing website. Sai made his acting debut with *Pilla Nuvvu Leni Jeevitham*. He was then seen in films like *Rey*, *Subramanyam for Sale*, *Supreme*, *Thikka*, *Winner*, *Tej*, *I Love You* and *Prati Roju Pandage*, among many others.

He will next be seen in *Solo Brathuke So Better* directed by Subbu. It also stars Nabha Natesh. The film's release got postponed due to the coronavirus pandemic.

Samantha shares self-care secrets

Southern star Samantha Akkineni has doled out tips on self-care.

With a black-and-white picture of herself she posted on Instagram, Samantha wrote, "We wake up early. Meditate. Positive thoughts. Take that apple cider vinegar. Cleanse both body and mind. Pamper self with long skin care routine. Exercise. Hydrate. More positive thoughts and game face on yo."

The image currently has 1 million likes. Samantha recently shared that she and her pet puppy Hash currently have a case of Covid-19 blues.

On an Instagram picture of Hash sleeping by the staircase, she wrote, "We are having a case of the #covid-blues. How are you guys doing? I just want to remind you to remind yourself that you're awesome and you're doing just great and it will all be okay #stayhome #staysafe."

Samantha is known for her performances in films such as *Ye Maaya Chesave*, *Neethaane En Ponvasantham*, *Eega*, *Mersal* and *Rangasthalam*. She impressed all with her role in *Super Deluxe* last year.

She will next be seen in *Kaathuvaakula Rendu Kaadhala*, starring Vijay Sethupathi. The film also stars Nayanthara. It is directed by Vignesh Shivan.



Tamannaah's 'pawfect' PUPPY LOVE

Actress Tamannaah Bhatia is an ardent animal lover and says there is no love like puppy love. Tamannaah took to Instagram, where she posted a motley of pictures of herself along with stray puppies. She captioned the image, which currently has 349K likes on the photo-sharing website: "There's no love like puppy love #DogsAreTheBest #furryfriends #doglover #pawfect."

Meanwhile, Tamannaah is excited about the Telugu remake of the Kannada superhit *Love Mocktail*.

Director Nagashekar has roped in the actress along with Satya Dev as protagonists of the untitled remake. The makers are hoping that the film will go on floors in mid-September and will be shot in Visakhapatnam and Hyderabad.

The original film was released in January, 2020. Directed by Krishna, *Love Mocktail* follows the story of Aadi and his quest for love.

Lavanya 'a happy girl' on returning to hometown Dehradun

With domestic flight operations resuming, southern actress Lavanya Tripathi travelled back to her hometown Dehradun to meet her parents.

The actress shared a video on Instagram stories where she can be seen at the airport, dressed in PPE suit and wearing protective eye gear and mask. "Ok can't breathe," she wrote on the image.

She then shared a picture collage of things that made her day "happier", on her "Day 2" of homecoming.

Lavanya shared pictures of the greenery surrounding an empty road and the mountain ranges. "Finally coming to Doon and meeting my family made me a happy girl," she wrote.

Lavanya rose to fame with roles in films like *Andala Rakshashi*, *Doosukeltha*, *Bramman*, *Bhale Bhale Magadivoy*, *Srirastu Subhamastu*, *Yuddham Sharanam* and *Antariksham 9000 KMPH*.

The actress will next be seen in the Telugu film, *A1 Express*, co-starring Sundeeep Kishan. The film, which is reportedly a remake of the 2019 Tamil film *Natpe Thunai*, is directed by Dennis Jeevan Kanukolanu.



