



## WINDOWS



### Legendary vocalist Pandit Jasraj dies in US

**New Delhi (PTI):** Indian classical vocalist Pandit Jasraj died on Monday following a cardiac arrest at his home in New Jersey, his daughter Durga Jasraj said. He was 90. One of India's greatest music legends, Pandit Jasraj leaves behind a storied legacy spanning almost eight decades. "Bapuji is no more," his daughter Durga, also a musician, told PTI over phone from Mumbai. She was inconsolable and could not speak any more. Jasraj, who belonged to the Mewati Gharana, was in the US when the coronavirus-led lockdown happened and decided to stay back in that country. "With profound grief we inform that Sangeet Martand Pandit Jasraj ji breathed his last this morning at 5.15 EST due to a cardiac arrest at his home in New Jersey, USA," a statement issued by his family said here. "May Lord Krishna welcome him lovingly through the doors of heaven, where Pandit ji will now sing Om Namoh Bhagwate Vasudevaya exclusively just for his beloved Lord. We pray that his soul rests in eternal musical peace. Thank you for your thoughts and prayers, Pandit Jasraj ji's family, and the students of Mewati Gharana," it said.

### 9 mn followers on Vicky Kaushal Insta

**Mumbai:** Actor Vicky Kaushal on Monday crossed nine million followers on the social media platform Instagram. The 35-year-old actor shared the update on his Instagram Story. "Parivaar badh raha hai (the family is growing)... 9M," Kaushal wrote. The actor was last seen in the horror film "Bhoot - Part One: The Haunted Ship", which released in February. He will next be seen in "Sardar Udham Singh", in which he will play the title role of the Indian revolutionary. Kaushal's upcoming projects include the period drama "Takht", "Sam", the biopic on 1971 war hero Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw and the actioner "The Immortal Ashwatthama".



# SC refuses to put off JEE, NEET-UG examinations

## When the court is getting ready to open, why should exams be postponed, asks Supreme Court

**New Delhi (IANS):** The Supreme Court on Monday said life should move on even in Covid-19 times and declined to entertain a plea seeking the postponement of the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) and Joint Entrance Examination (JEE), slated in September.

A bench headed by Justice Arun Mishra noted that the postponement of the exams will put the career of the students in peril. Jus-



tice Mishra said if the exams are not held, then would it not be a loss for the country? Students will lose the academic year.

Declining to entertain the plea, Justice Mishra told the petitioners' counsel, "Are you not demanding that the court should be opened up amid Covid? Do you see this glass partition here. When we are getting ready to open up, you say exams should not be held?"

Justice Mishra added that education should be opened up, as Covid-19 may continue for a year more. "Are you going to wait another year?" Justice Mishra posed

this question to the petitioners' counsel. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, representing the Centre, contended before the bench that exams should be conducted, and all the necessary precautions will be taken.

Advocate Alakh Alok Srivastava, representing the petitioners, submitted before the bench that the risk of Covid-19 is increasing and several other exams have been cancelled. **Continued on Page 5**

### Pranab Mukherjee continues to be critical

**New Delhi (PTI):** The condition of former President Pranab Mukherjee continues to be critical and he is on ventilator support, the Army's Research and Referral hospital said on Monday. Doctors attending on him said that his vital and clinical parameters are stable and he is being closely monitored.

Mukherjee was admitted to the hospital in Delhi Cantonment on August 10 and was operated for removal of a clot in the brain. The 84-year-old has been in a coma and continues to remain critical since then. He has also tested positive for COVID-19.



Monsoon clouds hover in the sky above the Raisina Hill during rains in New Delhi on Monday

### China ready to settle differences with India

**Beijing (PTI):** China on Monday said it is ready to work with India to enhance political mutual trust, properly manage their differences and safeguard the long-term development of bilateral ties. Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesman Zhao Lijian said this at a regular briefing when a Western media journalist sought China's reaction to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remarks that the Indian armed forces have given a befitting reply to those challenging the country's sovereignty.

Responding to the question, Chinese foreign ministry spokesman Zhao said that "we have noted Prime Minister Modi's speech." "We are close neighbours, we are emerging countries with over one billion people. So, the sound development of bilateral ties not only serves the interest of the two peoples but also stability, peace, prosperity of the region and the whole world," he said.

"The right path for the two sides is to respect and support each other as this serves our long-term interests," Zhao said.

# China funds study on why Nepal youth joining Indian Army's Gorkha regiment

**New Delhi (IANS):** China has given 12.7 lakh Nepalese rupees to a Kathmandu-based NGO to carry out a study on what motivates Gorkha community members to join the Indian Army.

Sources said that in the first week of June, China's Ambassador to Nepal, Hou Yanqi, funded a Nepalese NGO -- China Study Centre (CSC) -- to conduct a study on Nepal's reaction to Prime Minister Narendra Modi's remarks that the Indian armed forces have given a befitting reply to those challenging the country's sovereignty. "The CSC has been asked to conduct the study by addressing several points such as the reasons behind Nepal's joining the Indian Army, areas of Nepal from where such recruits are being made and their social-economic impact, their interest in joining the armed forces of foreign countries, among others," a source said. There are seven Gorkha regiments in the Indian Army comprising around 28,000 Nepali citizens. The regiments have a total 39 battalions. In total, there were 11 Gorkha Regiments, out of which four went to the British Army after Independence.

**Continued on Page 5**

## China supplies Pak with armed drones

**New Delhi (IANS):** Engaged with India at their border in eastern Ladakh, China is, at the same time, helping Pakistan to enhance its firepower by selling to it state-of-the-art defence items. Intelligence sources said Pakistan is procuring medium-altitude, long-endurance unmanned aerial vehicle 'Cai Hong-4' (CH-4) from China in bulk.

Sources said that a 10-member Pakistan Army team, led by Brigadier Mohammad Zafar Iqbal, has visited China to review the procurement process. "The Pakistan Army team went to



China for factory acceptance test for items procured from the Aerospace Long-March International Trade Company (ALIT), China. The

team was led by Brigadier Mohammad Zafar Iqbal," a source said. The CH-4 has a take-off mass between 1,200-1,300

kg, depending on the variant, and can also carry a wide range of payloads. It is now in service with various military forces, including the Iraqi Army and the Royal Jordanian Air Force.

Sources also stated that the ALIT has offered Pakistan command and control options for these UAVs, including direct line-of-sight and satellite communications. Pakistan has planned to deploy these UAVs at Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir to create further unrest. "China is helping Pakistan to do so," said the source.



### China deploys high altitude artillery guns in Tibet

**New Delhi:** China has deployed high altitude artillery guns in Tibet amid the ongoing border tension with India in eastern Ladakh. "The artillery guns, at an altitude of 4,600 meters, are deployed in Tibet general areas since last week of July," sources

said. It was also revealed that China has deployed its '150 Light Combined Arms Brigade of 77 Combat Command' in Tibet Military District. China has increased deployment of forces manifold in the Tibet region and has positioned the Combined

Arms Brigade in deep areas near the Line of Actual Control with India. China has positioned troops, artillery and armour in three sectors of Line of Actual Control - western (Ladakh), middle (Uttarakhand, Himachal) and eastern (Sikkim, Arunachal).



Indian Air Force helicopter rescues a man holding on to a tree (in red circle) in an overflowing dam in Chhattisgarh's Bilaspur on Monday

### Four dead in Cincinnati shooting

**Cincinnati (AP):** At least 18 persons were shot, including four killed, as gunfire erupted in several places around the city overnight, authorities said Sunday. Officers responded just after 12:30 am. Sunday to the Avondale neighborhood and found 21-year-old Antonio Blair with gunshot wounds, police said in a statement. He was taken to University Hospital and died there, they said.

Three other gunshot victims were also taken to the hospital. At about 2:15 a.m., officers responded to a report of gunfire in the Over-the-Rhine neighborhood where 10 people were shot, police said. One died at the scene and another at the University of Cincinnati Medical Center; they were identified in a statement as 34-year-old Robert Rogers and 30-year-old Jaquiez Grant.

Three people were shot at about midnight on Saturday in the Walnut Hills neighbourhood, about a block away from the Harriet Beecher Stowe house, police said.

**Continued on Page 5**

# IITs should focus on farmers' problems: Venkaiah Naidu

**New Delhi (PTI):** IITs should start major research programmes to boost the rural economy through the development of sustainable technologies, Vice-President Venkaiah Naidu said on Monday.

The research at IITs and other higher education institutes, he said, must be relevant to society and focus on finding solutions to various problems faced by mankind from climate change to health issues. "Indian institutions will be counted among the world's best only

when they start impacting the societies around them by developing optimal and sustainable solutions to the problems faced by the nation. Research should focus on making the lives of people comfortable, quicken the progress and ensure a more equitable world order," Naidu said in his address at the diamond jubilee celebrations of IIT Delhi.

Calling upon the IITs to pay attention to the problems faced by the farmers and rural India, the Vice-President asked them to

work not only for enhancing agri-production, but also specially focus on the production of nutritious and protein-rich food. "With more than 50 pc of our population still dependent on agriculture, it is important for IITs to start major research programmes to boost the rural economy through the development of sustainable technologies," he said.

"Higher education institutions should not work in silos and form a symbiotic relationship with the industry to develop cutting-edge



Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu addresses the inaugural ceremony of the Diamond Jubilee celebrations of the Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi, through video conferencing, in New Delhi on Monday

technology and the industry experts in various areas should act as mentors in guiding researchers. This type of collaboration will help in fast-tracking projects and produce quicker results," he added.

"There should be greater investment in R&D projects which focus on finding solutions to societal problems. I call upon the private sector, including industry bodies like CII and ASSOCHAM, to collaborate with academia in identifying such projects and fund them liberally," he said.



# Womenia

TWEET PATROL


**NEHA DHUPIA**  
**@NEHADHUPIA**

Monday morning blues of a different kind... ☐

#workfromhome @BigGirlPvtLtd



## Aahana Kumra: Cannot wait to be back on stage

**KUMRA HAS RECENTLY FEATURED IN 'ONE ON ONE - UNLOCKED', A DIGITAL PLAY THAT CAPTURES OUR LIVES DURING LOCKDOWN**

SIDDHI JAIN

Having embraced theatre going digital, film and theatre actor Aahana Kumra says she cannot wait to get back on stage to perform, and laments COVID-19 affecting the sanity of theatre community and snatching away "so much joy from all of us".

Kumra is known for her roles in 'Lipstick Under My Burkha' and 'The Accidental Prime Minister', and has starred in the recently-released action thriller 'Khuda Haafiz'. She started as a stage actor, and still holds the medium very close to her.

"I don't think a lot of people really earn too much through theatre. But I don't think any of us do theatre because of making fat paychecks. We do it because we really find joy in traveling together, in rehearsals, in food. Food is such an integral part of

the theatre community. Like everybody binds together with food and you can ask any person who does a performance how exciting it is to even get sev puri in between the shows or getting chutney sandwiches and cold coffee in NCPA is something which we all love," said Kumra.

Recalling her time on-stage, she added: "I can't wait to go back and perform on stage, the spiraling staircase of Prithvi, green rooms, the smell, the excitement, the butterflies in our stomach. There are so many things the adrenaline rush when you're on stage, the fun of give and take with the other actors, the fun of give and take with the audience."

Kumra feels that COVID-19 has "really snatched away so much joy from all of us" and "affected our sanity because the theater community really remains sane because of this

community work, this feeling of belonging to some place and somewhere."

Iterating that even after entering the mainstream film industry, she always wanted to do at least

one new play every year, with one new production, because "it really keeps you in the loop of staying fresh, staying in touch with your actual roots, with who you really are and with your commitment to theatre". As per Kumra, that was starting to not happen, once shoots got hectic.

Embracing theatre going

digital, Kumra asserts that at the moment, this is the way forward.

"I'm sure every artist who has ever performed on stage misses being on stage and we miss our staff who help us put our entire production together. But the joy of doing theatre is community. It is community interaction. It is community

work. It is giving each other feedback, to be able to take each other's feedback and put that into our next show or our next rehearsal. And to be able to really discover the joy of the process. I think more than just the shows, we've all really had fun in the discovery of the process of making a play together," Kumra signs off.



SUJATA ASSOMULL

Ever since the outbreak of COVID-19, there has been a heightened awareness within the media about being "Vocal for Local", especially when it comes to fashion. Last weekend saw fashion bodies such as the Fashion Design Council of India and Lakme Fashion Week asking the fashion fraternity to share

pictures with the hashtag #Vocal4Handmade.

Over 60 million people are employed by the apparel and textile industry, the COVID-19 epidemic has upturned the lives of many of these highly skilled artisans. Between the current migrant exodus and the forced closure of factories the future of this precious sector is at risk. Within this set of skilled artisans are hand-

## Look beyond fashion labels and hashtags to be #Vocal4Handmade

loom kaarigars, of which 44 lakh are registered.

While 95 per cent of the world's handloom fabric comes from India, it is worrying to know how little real respect is given to these workers in their home country. Just the day before Handloom Day craft activist Laila Tyabji announced that the All Indian Handicrafts Board had been abolished.

**Think like your grandmother**

Neeti Mehra, the founder of Beej Living, a journal on slow living and a sustainability consultant says, "We need to reconnect with our heritage of fabrics and silhouettes which look good, feel good and are good for our skin." Her tip is to buy garments directly from on-line organisations who you know are working in the handloom sector such as Dastkar or SaveTheLoom.Org.

The added bonus when buying from these organisations is it also shifts your mindset to start shopping the way our grandmothers

did. They knew the basis of clothing was cloth and it took precedence before the cut, colour or styling. Often buying unstitched materials, they valued anything handmade over machine made. Our grandmothers always had a great tailor (or masterji) on hand to both make and remake clothes.

**Do your Homework**

Informed shopping must replace impulse buying. Ekta Rajani, a leading creative design consultant, stylist and a slow fashion advocate believes that you should begin where you can.

"There are several touch points one can read up on: material -- natural fibers, low resource fibers; dyes natural or synthetic; is the product made locally or made abroad; does it use upcycled or virgin materials and also is the product made in small batches or mass produced. You can't fall in love with what you aren't familiar with. Read about the modern fashion industry's inherent

problems, visit more exhibitions where you can interact directly with artisans, touch, feel and understand fabrics, travel to India's leading weaving and textile centers (post Covid), experiment with textures and drapes."

**Be an Ambassador of Indian Fashion**

Last weekend, we celebrated India's 74th day of Independence; discover fashion influencers and bloggers who have shared pictures of their brightest and best "Make in India" outfits.

As Mehra says, "India has the softest of mals and silks, the beauty of our dyeing and print techniques such as dabu, kalamkari, ajrakh, batik, bandhani are incomparable, and the versatility of our drapes are unparalleled globally such as the sari. Our biggest fashion faux pas is not experimenting with our own sense of unique style and our resplendent heritage in our daily lives".

## A fashionable collaboration

PUJA GUPTA

Fashion influencer Aashna Shroff enjoys a huge fan following on her social media handle. Her target audience is young and fashionable. Her mantra and something she advises aspiring bloggers follow is always stay true to yourself and your sense of style, cause that's the only way they'll stand out. With over 794k followers on Instagram, Shroff is known for her chic style and trendy fashion choices; this makes her a hot favourite amongst brands to promote their products. The most recent of which was for The CAI Store, a homegrown womens footwear brand, which launched its new collection 'You are Magic'.

Shroff speaks about her collaborations and her fashion preferences. Excerpts:

**What is the idea behind the collection and how are you a good fit for the collaboration?**

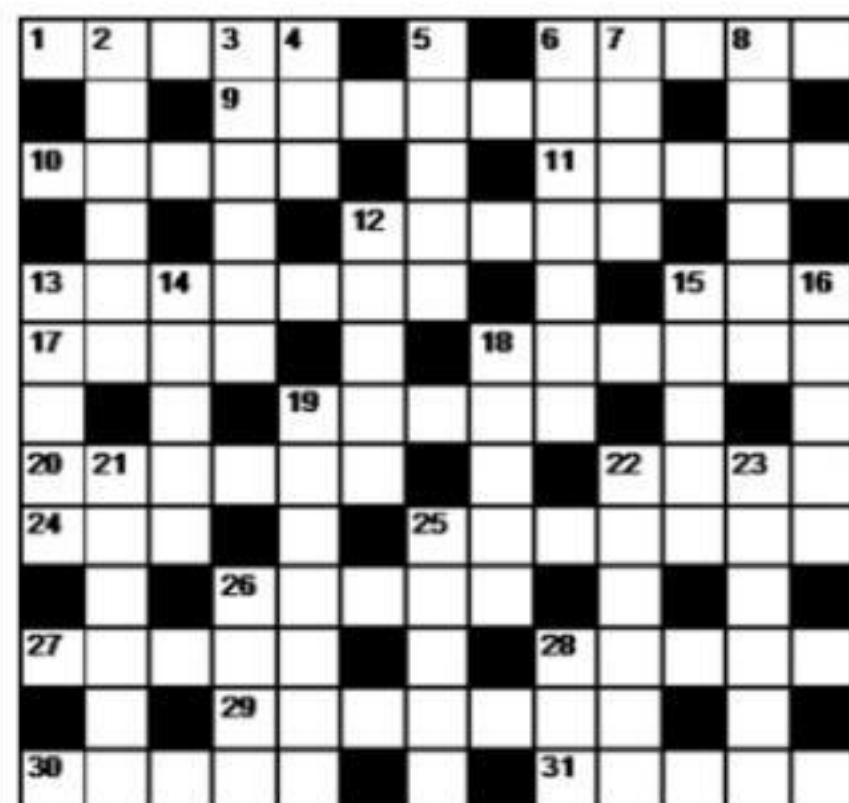
The idea behind the collection is to create a line of shoes where there's something for every woman. We believe that every woman is truly magic, and hence we decided to call the collection 'You Are Magic' with 3 different themes to it; 'Discover, Embrace and Empower'. Believing in yourself and your magic is a journey, and once a woman discovers the magic she has within and truly embraces it, is when she can empower herself; then there's no stopping her. "Discover" is more neutral, casual and carefree, with jute being the real hero of the pairs, we kept the bold blacks and metallics for "Empower" while "Embrace" is all about very colourful and fun strappy heels!

**What is unique about this collection?**

I'm someone who experiments a lot with my fashion, and I don't have one particular style aesthetic, that's what I love about the collection too. If someday I feel like going bohemian, I'll reach out for one of the jute pairs, or if someday I feel like wearing a power suit with statement heels, I have so many colours to choose from. Or even if I'm looking for something that's comfortable but also glam and shiny, we've got that covered too! And when you look at the entire collection, it's the perfect blend of CAI and my style together.

**Your thoughts on conscious fashion led by homegrown brands?**

I personally feel homegrown brands are a great podium to show the beautiful talent and creativity that the craftsmen our country has. I've seen firsthand the amount of thought and love that goes into each pair of shoes that CAI creates, and it makes me proud to support the same in every way that I can. I'm always surprised/impressed at how great locally made products and goods are! One doesn't have to look anywhere else because the best is made in our own home country!



SOLUTION TO AUGUST 17

### CROSSWORD

**Across**

- 1 Swamp (5)
- 6 Exuded (5)
- 9 North African wild sheep (7)
- 10 Declare (5)
- 11 More mature (5)
- 12 Extremely small (5)
- 13 A corn whiskey (7)
- 15 Public vehicle (3)
- 17 Kitty starter (4)
- 18 Most certain or confident ? (6)
- 19 Noses or bills of birds (5)
- 20 Paid attention to ? (6)
- 22 "B" in N.B. (4)
- 24 Spike of corn (3)
- 25 Separate (5,2)
- 26 Sea-birds (5)
- 27 Parting words for Pierre (5)
- 28 Discrimination against the elderly (5)
- 29 Direct path (7)

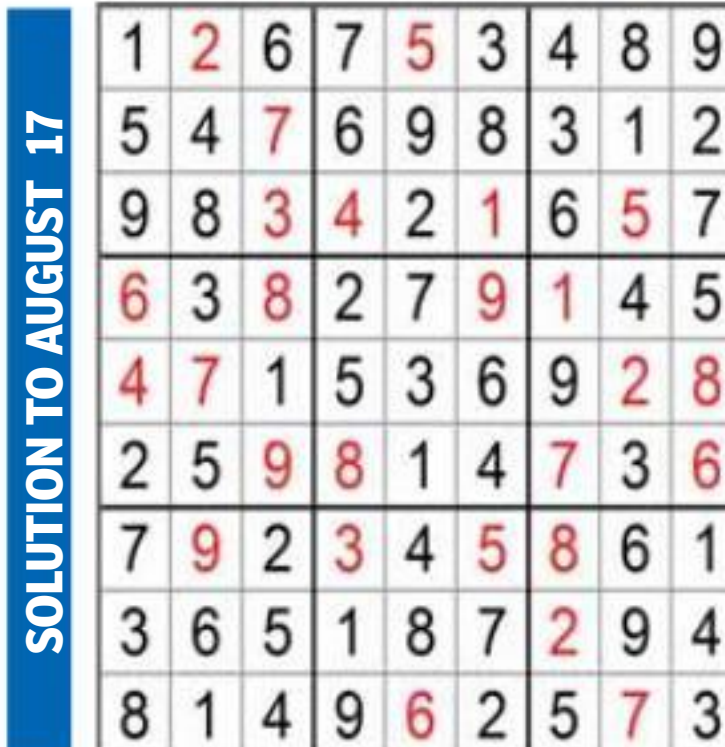
30 Concede (5)

31 Apparel (5)

**Down**

- 2 It has an equal and opposite reaction ? (6)
- 3 Ironical writing (6)
- 4 Garden tool (3)
- 5 Booth in the theater (5)
- 6 Having a smell (7)
- 7 Norwegian city (4)
- 8 Volcano in Antarctica (6)
- 12 Cut grass (5)
- 13 Wash (5)
- 14 Absolute (5)
- 15 Engender (5)
- 16 Rising sharply (5)
- 18 Jumps over a moving rope (5)
- 19 Shh! (2,5)
- 21 Merited (6)
- 22 Larger or bulkier (6)
- 23 Hospital employees (6)
- 25 Cunningly (5)
- 26 Asian desert (4)
- 28 In addition (3)

### SUDOKU



### NEWS ROUNDUP

#### Malaika Arora shares how to enhance beauty with organic body scrub

Dancing diva Malaika Arora has a beauty tip that can be easily followed by anyone. "Who said coffee is always bad for your health. Here's a tip to turn that villain into a hero," she captioned her post on Instagram.

Then she shared how to go about it. "Body scrub: Mix the leftover coffee ground with Some brown sugar and coconut oil. It serves as an easy, instant and aromatic home scrub. The caffeine in the coffee has potent antioxidants that help protect skin from sun damage and helps promote overall skin health #MalaikasTrickOrTip #OrganicBodyScrub#DIYBodyScrub," she wrote.

Among various things, Malaika has been doling out some skincare tips on social media.

Earlier in a clip, she was seen talking about the benefits of aloe vera and shared that she uses it on herself as her skin is very sensitive.







## Sharon Stone calls out people without masks as sister fights Covid

### Thousands, without masks, party at Wuhan Water Park in China

**London:** Hollywood star Sharon Stone lashed out at non-mask wearers after her sister Kelly Stone was tested positive for coronavirus. Sharing 59-year-old Kelly's diagnosis on Instagram, the actor urged her followers on social media to wear a mask and save their lives as well as of the people around them. "My sister Kelly, who already has lupus, now has Covid-19. This is her hospital room. One of you non-mask wearers did this. She does not have an immune system. The only place she went (to) was the pharmacy. Can YOU FACE THIS ROOM ALONE? Wear a mask! For yourself and others. Please," Stone wrote alongside photographs of her sister's hospital room, featuring a health worker dressed in full PPE and

medical equipment.

The 62-year-old actor, who also posted a video elaborating on her sister's condition, further revealed that Kelly's husband Bruce Singer was fighting for his life. Stone said that her mother, Dorothy, who has had two heart attacks and a pacemaker installed since lockdown, has been unable to get tested for the virus.

The actor stated that she also tried to contact governor of Montana, where the family lives, and hasn't been able to get in touch him. My grandmother died of Covid and my godmother died of Covid. My sister and her husband are fighting for their lives and my sister is not doing well.

Meanwhile, thousands of partygoers packed out a water park over the weekend

in the central Chinese city of Wuhan, where the coronavirus first emerged late last year, keen to party as the city edges back to normal life.

The popular Wuhan Maya Beach Water Park was filled with people frolicking in swimsuits and goggles for an electronic music festival, many perched on rubber dinghies or wading up to their chest in water.

The water park reopened in June after Wuhan gradually opened up after a 76-day lockdown and strict restrictions to try and control the spread of the virus.

The park -- which local media says has capped attendance at 50 percent of normal capacity -- is offering half price discounts for female visitors.



## 90 inmates of UP shelter home test +ve

**Bareilly (IANS):** Ninety inmates of a government women shelter home have tested positive for Covid-19.

Deputy Director of Women Welfare Department, Nita Ahirwar said, "In the past two days, 90 inmates of Nari Niketan here have tested positive for Covid-19. All of them have been isolated. "How the inmates got infected with the coronavirus is being investigated," she said.

All the inmates are asymptomatic and they have been quarantined at the two-storied home.

Earlier, a support staff member had tested positive for the virus.

# '100 CONG LEADERS DEMAND CHANGE IN PARTY LEADERSHIP'

**New Delhi:** Sacked Congress leader Sanjay Jha on Monday in a sensational revelation said that around 100 Congress leaders, including Member of Parliament, have written to Sonia Gandhi regarding the change in the party leadership and transparent elections in the party.

Taking it to Twitter, Sanjay Jha said, "It is estimated that around 100 Congress leaders (including MPs), distressed at the state of affairs within the party, have written a letter to Mrs Sonia Gandhi, Congress President, asking for change in political leadership and transparent elections in CWC."

The letter which was mentioned by Jha comes after weeks of truce between the Chief Minister of Rajasthan Ashok Gehlot

**The leaders are distressed at the state of affairs within the party and have written a letter to Sonia Gandhi, asking for change in political leadership and transparent elections in CWC, says sacked Congress leader Sanjay Jha**

and Sachin Pilot, according to The Statesman report.

Sanjay Jha was sacked as the Congress spokesperson in June



after writing a column criticising the functioning of the political party. The step was taken by the party after, Jha had written an ar-

ticle which said, "The Congress has demonstrated extraordinary lassitude, and its lackadaisical attitude towards its own political

obsolescence is baffling..."

"There are many in the party who cannot comprehend this perceptible listlessness. For someone like me, for instance, permanently wedded to Gandhian philosophy and Nehruvian outlook that defines the Congress, it is dismaying to see its painful disintegration," he had said.

Her one-year term on the post ended on August 10, but the party said that she will continue on the post till a proper procedure was implemented.

"Sonia Gandhi is the president, she will continue till such time as a proper procedure is implemented and it will be implemented in the not too distant future," said Congress spokesperson Abhishek Manu Singhvi.



## 2 terrorists, 3 jawans killed

**Srinagar (PTI):** Hours after a militant attack left two CRPF jawans and a Jammu and Kashmir policeman dead in Baramulla district of the union territory on Monday, security forces chased the ultras and killed two of them in an encounter, police said.

Two militants, suspected to belong to the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), were killed in an encounter with the security forces in Kreeeri area of north Kashmir's Baramulla district, a police official said.

He said the encounter began hours after the attack on a "naka" party of the security forces in which two CRPF personnel and a special police officer (SPO) of Jammu and Kashmir police were killed.

Immediately after the attack, the security forces cordoned off the area and launched the searches to nab the militants, he said.

Contact was established with them and during the exchange of fire, two militants were killed, the official said.

He said the operation was going on, when the last report came in.

Inspector General of Police (IGP) Kashmir, Vijay Kumar, said three militants suspected to belong to LeT carried out the attack.

"According to eye witnesses, there were three militants who came from the nearby dense orchards and started firing indiscriminately on the "naka" in which our three jawans -- two from CRPF and one J-K Police -- were martyred. It seems the LeT has carried out the attack. We will give them a befitting reply soon," Kumar told reporters at the site of the attack.

"We have cordoned off the area and searches are on. We are hopeful that we will neutralise them soon," he had said.

## Covid test for MLAs before UP Assembly session

**Lucknow (IANS):** All Uttar Pradesh legislators will have to undergo antigen tests for the confirmation of Covid-19 before they participate in the upcoming Monsoon Session of the state legislature that begins on August 20.

The state is already witnessing a spurt in COVID cases and two UP ministers - Chetan Chauhan and Kamal Rani Varun - have succumbed to the deadly virus this month.

According to sources, the speaker of the state assembly Hriday Narain Dixit has already discussed the issue with chief minister Yogi Adityanath and both have agreed to this in principle.

A senior official of the Vidhan Sabha secretariat said that the health department had been directed to make arrangements for conducting the test for all MLAs.



## Bihar extends lockdown till Sep 6

**Patna:** The Bihar government on Monday extended the lockdown till September 6 in view of the prevailing COVID-19 situation in the state, as per a notification. The decision was taken at a meeting of the Crisis Management Group chaired by Chief Secretary Deepak Kumar. Restrictions will remain in place in the district headquarters, sub-divisional headquarters, block headquarters and all municipal areas in the state, according to the notification issued by the Home Department. Strict measures will be enforced in the buffer and containment zones, it said. All religious places will remain closed and no congregation will be allowed.

## TMC MLA Samresh Das dies

**Kolkata:** Trinamool Congress MLA Samresh Das, who had tested positive for COVID-19 recently, died at a hospital in West Bengal's East Midnapore district on Monday, party sources said. He was 76. The three-time MLA from Egra assembly constituency in the district was admitted to the hospital a few days back after he had tested positive for coronavirus and developed complications of heart and kidney, party sources said. He died this morning, a senior party leader said. West Bengal Chief Minister and TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee, in a message, condoled his death.

## Odisha Minister tests positive

**Puri:** Odisha's Rural Development and Labour Minister Susanta Singh on Monday said he has tested positive for COVID-19. The MLA from Bhatli assembly constituency is the first minister in Odisha to have been infected with the virus. "I have tested positive for Corona and I am stable now. Those who have come in contact with me recently are requested to stay isolated and get tested," the minister tweeted. Singh was the chief guest at the Independence Day celebrations in Balasore district.



## 4 test +ve at Pawar's home

**Mumbai:** Four persons at NCP chief Sharad Pawar's residence in south Mumbai have tested positive for coronavirus, Maharashtra Health Minister Rajesh Tope said on Monday. Pawar's test results have come out negative, but he will be asked not to go on any state tour for next some days, Tope told reporters.

"Two people, including a cook, and two security guards at Pawar's 'Silver Oak' residence in Mumbai have tested positive for coronavirus," the minister said. He said Pawar was taken to Breach Candy Hospital here on Sunday for test and the results came out negative.



## RECORD 57,584 PATIENTS RECOVER

### Corona death toll surges past 50K, India's case tally crosses 26L

**New Delhi (IANS):** India's novel coronavirus tally crossed the 26-lakh mark on Monday with 57,981 new cases in 24 hours, while the death toll climbed to 50,921 with 941 more fatalities, said the Health Ministry. Out of the total 2,647,663 cases, recoveries have surged to 19,19,842 with a record 57,584 more people recuperating in the past 24 hours, taking the recovery rate to nearly 72.51 per cent. The actual caseload of the country is the active cases, which currently stand at 6,76,900. The country had touched the two-million mark on August 7 and added more than six lakh cases in ten days. The silver lining, however, is that the gap between recoveries and active cases is growing every day. Currently, recoveries are over 12 lakh more than the active cases. As far as the death toll is concerned, the country had registered its first death on March 13 and crossed the 25,000-mark on July 17. The next 25,000 deaths were logged in the span of a month.



## Tests in India cross 3 crore mark

**New Delhi:** The total number of tests for detection of COVID-19 has crossed the 3 crore mark in India, according to the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) data. A total of 3,00,41,400 samples have been tested until August 16 with 7,31,697 samples being tested on Sunday, the ICMR said. "Focussing on timely and aggressive testing, India has exceeded 3 crore tests," the Health Ministry tweeted on Monday.

## China deploys high altitude artillery guns in Tibet

**New Delhi (IANS):** China has deployed high altitude artillery guns in Tibet amid the ongoing border tension with India in eastern Ladakh.

"The artillery guns, at an altitude of 4,600 meters, are deployed in Tibet general areas since last week of July," sources said.

It was also revealed that China has deployed its '150 Light Combined Arms Brigade of 77 Combat Command' in Tibet Military District. The combined arms brigade is an adaptation of the American brigade combat team concept of efficient control and integration of various arms, rather than simple convergence. China has increased deployment of forces man-

ifold in the Tibet region and has positioned the Combined Arms Brigade in deep areas near the Line of Actual Control with India.

China has positioned troops, artillery and armour in three sectors of Line of Actual Control - western (Ladakh), middle (Uttarakhand, Himachal) and eastern (Sikkim, Arunachal). China has also mobilised soldiers near Uttarakhand's Lipulekh Pass, a tri-junction between India, Nepal and China situated atop the Kalapani Valley.

The border tension between India and China has not been resolved despite several rounds of military and diplomatic talks. China's commitment for

disengagement at the border in eastern Ladakh remains unsatisfactory and India has directed its armed forces to prepare for a long haul. China has also set up per-

manent structures near the border areas going against its commitment to India of disengagement.

## China enhances Pak firepower with drones

**New Delhi (IANS):** China is helping Pakistan to boost its firepower by selling it state-of-the-art defence items, including armed drones, even as it is engaged with India at the borders in eastern Ladakh. Intelligence sources said Pakistan is procuring medium-altitude long-endurance unmanned aerial vehicle (UAV) - Cai Hong-4 (CH-4) -- from China in bulk. Sources said that a 10-member team of Pakistan Army led by Brigadier Mohammad Zafar Iqbal has visited China to re-

view the procurement process. "The Pakistan Army team went to China for factory acceptance test for items procured from Aerospace Long-March International Trade Company (ALIT), China. Then was led by Brigadier Mohammad Zafar Iqbal," a source said. It was also revealed that Iqbal has earlier visited China in December 2019 for the factory acceptance test of the first tranche of Cai Hong-4 for which delivery was to commence in 2020.

VIRTUALSOFT SYSTEMS LIMITED						
Regd. Off: S-101 Panchsheel Park, New Delhi - 110017						
CIN-L72200DL1992PLC047931						
EXTRACT STATEMENT OF UN AUDITED STANDLONE & CONSOLIDATED FINANCIAL RESULT FOR THE QUARTER JUNE 30, 2020						
(Figures Rs. in Lacs)						
Particulars	Standalone			Consolidated		
	Quarter ending/ Current Year ending	Year to date Figures/ Previous Year ending	Corresponding 3 months ended in the previous year/ Quarter Ending	Quarter ending/ Current Year ending	Year to date Figures/ Previous Year ending	Corresponding 3 months ended in the previous year/ Quarter
	(Un-Audited)	(Audited)	(Un-Audited)	(Un-Audited)	(Audited)	(Un-Audited)
	30.06.2020	31.03.2020	30.06.2019	30.06.2020	31.03.2020	30.06.2019
Total income from operations (net)	9.50	90.67	11.11	22.96	555.22	155.92
Net Profit / (Loss) from ordinary activities after tax	(18.50)	(60.66)	(25.61)	(72.73)	(481.32)	(154.09)
Net Profit / (Loss) for the period after tax (after Extraordinary items)	(18.50)	(60.66)	(25.61)	(72.73)	(481.32)	(154.09)
Equity Share Capital	1029.76	1029.76	1029.76	1029.76	1029.76	1029.76
Reserves (excluding Revaluation Reserve as shown in the Balance Sheet of previous year)	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00	20.00
Earnings Per Share (before extraordinary items) (of ₹ 10/- each) Basic : Diluted :	(0.18)	(0.59)	(0.25)	(0.71)	(4.67)	(1.50)
Earnings Per Share (after extraordinary items) (of ₹ 10/- each) Basic : Diluted :	(0.18)	(0.59)	(0.25)	(0.71)	(4.67)	(1.50)
Basic : Diluted :	(0.18)	(0.59)	(0.25)	(0.71)	(4.67)	(1.50)
	(0.18)	(0.59)	(0.25)	(0.71)	(4.67)	(1.50)
NOTES: (The above is in extract of the detailed format of the Standalone and Consolidated Quarterly Un-Audited Financial Result for the Quarter ended June 30, 2020 filed with the Stock Exchange under Regulations 33 of the SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full format of the Quarterly Financial Results are available on the Stock Exchange websites. www.bseindia.com and on the Company websites. www.virtualsoft.com)						
For Virtualsoft Systems Ltd. Sd/- Gokul Tandan Managing Director						
New Delhi Date 14/08/2020						



## Centre should save fruit industry of Kashmir

Now that a year has passed since the abrogation of Article 370 in Kashmir, it is time to reflect upon the status of the fruit industry of the valley that is key to the economy of the region. It is now the time for the apple season. The picking would start in this month and go on depending on the variety. As per the numbers available with the Department of Horticulture, Kashmir, about 8,000 to 10,000 crore rupees of Kashmir's economy is dependent on the apple industry and nearly one-third population of the Valley is associated with this sector. In any other year, at an average, north and south Kashmir produces more than 7 lakh metric tonnes annually, separately, while the central region and Srinagar contributes about 1.5 lac metric tonnes in the total Valley's apple production. Then there is the box business. About 20 lakh wooden boxes are made in Kashmir for the purpose

of exporting apples. Kashmir apple market till recently was controlled by a cartel of exporters who would exploit the farmers to the hilt. When the Union government announced the abrogation of the Article-370, fruit traders feared that it would lead to further deepening of the cartel network, thereby depriving the traders of their profits and disrupting the whole supply chain in a massive way. Immediately after the abrogation of Article-370, the Central government announced that the Union Home Ministry and the Ministry of Agriculture would oversee the smooth procurement, wherein the Centre would directly buy apples. In a notification, the Union government directed that the State government will ensure direct payment in the bank account of the apple grower through Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT). It further added that all categories of apples – A, B and C – will be procured from the apple producing districts in Jammu and Kashmir as well as designated mandis in Sopore, Shopian and Srinagar. To ensure the transparency and efficiency of the entire process, the State-run National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India (NAFED) has been roped in to facilitate the process of procure-

ment of produce of the fruit growers in the region. Accordingly, NAFED will procure 60% apples produced in the Union Territory of J&K. This move assumes significance in the wake of the terrorists threatening apple growers not to sell their produce in the market. Payments will be made directly to the growers' bank accounts through the direct benefit transfer (DBT) mode within 48 hours. NAFED would procure apples from farmers through the directorate of Horticulture, Planning and Marketing. According to official data, Kashmir accounts for production of 91% walnuts, 90% of almonds, cherry and saffron, and 70% apples in the country, worth a total of Rs 7,000 crore annually. In addition, the Centre government will pump an additional Rs 8,000 crore to help apple and dry fruit traders in J&K including Rs 2,000 crore towards procuring apples directly from growers. The move is aimed to send positive signals to the business community. It is time, the officials worked diligently to implement the scheme. The tourism sector has already taken a hit in Kashmir. The fruit season cannot go waste. Any failure in ensuring the procurement now will only lead to further despondency among the people.



## NEP: Transformational step towards ₹5 trillion economy

SACHIN GUPTA

The nation is in the process of transformation by launching the National Education Policy under the visionary leadership of our Prime Minister Narendra Modi and HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank. Education is one of the most important transformers of the economy and the National Education Policy has made a sincere attempt to transform all the sectors and segments of the educational sector of the economy to ensure sustained supply of world-class manpower to make India one of the global superpowers. The New National Education Policy 2020 shall replace the National Educational Policy launched in 1986 which was launched after replacing the previous policy document of 1968.

The National Educational Policy is a transformational initiative to bring a paradigm shift in the domain of education in our country in both qualitative and quantitative dimensions. The focus is on universalisation of primary education by taking the GER in Primary Education to 100 percent by 2030 and has envisioned a mission of achieving GER of 50 % in higher education.

The new National Education Policy is based on the foundational dimensions of access, affordability, equity, quality and accountability which has made it robust and comprehensive from multiple dimensions.

The new national policy has emphasized more on curriculum reforms with an enhanced focus on outcome-based approach and to

minimise the load of the bag of the youngsters by removing the redundant and less important content from the curriculum. NCERT shall be the key driving force behind curriculum reforms for schools. The policy has envisioned setting up multiple bodies to achieve excellence in the three broad areas of teaching, learning, and assessment for inclusive growth and development.

The National Education Policy is a culmination of the comprehensive process of series of consultations, meetings, feedbacks, expert comments, citizens' response and views, ideas, and suggestions taken from academicians, researchers, policymakers, parliamentarians, Ministers and other stakeholders of society.

The new National Education Policy shall open fresh vistas of opportunities for students to study in foreign universities on Indian soil thereby checking the outflow of precious foreign exchequer. The latest policy has recommended for replacement of 10+2 model with a new model of 5+3+3+4 Model wherein the students will have a load of relevant, modern, and contemporary curriculum designed under the

leadership of experts from NCERT. The NEP has focused on academic delivery in mother tongue or regional language till class V which has done away with the compulsion of studying English from a tender age.

With an aim to give an exponential and catalytic boost to the rate of growth in the GER, all single-stream colleges, and universities have been suggested to become multi-disciplinary by 2040 and single-stream institutions/universities should be phased out by 2040.

The implementation of the new National Educational Policy shall be done with a collaborative approach in consultation and cooperation of the States in the light of the fact that education is on concurrent list wherein both the Central and State governments are empowered to enact laws. The major focus of the governments shall be to garner optimal level and utilisation of funds to fructify the envisioned dreams of the new National Educational Policy.

The multi-regulatory structure of the regulatory environment is likely to witness a thorough overhaul for streamlining the regulatory mechanism to make the new over-arching regulatory environment more enabling and facilitating to enable the stakeholders to focus more on quality-related dimensions oriented more towards self-disclosure. The high-level implementation team shall evolve well defined targets and Key Performance Indicators for the various stakeholders and the team shall evaluate the performance of all the stakeholders against the well-defined targets in advance. The New National Education Policy is more normative than prescriptive, and the States will also have a significant say in the process of implementation.

To summarise, the new National Education Policy has ushered a new era of new hopes and new horizons to achieve new benchmarks of excellence to enable India to emerge as a 5 trillion economy by radical transformation of the educational sector of the economy.

(The writer is Chancellor, Sanskriti University, Mathura, UP. Views expressed are personal)



Madabhushi Sridhar Acharyulu

The Supreme Court bench headed by Justice Arun Mishra on the eve of 73rd Independence Day held Prashant Bhushan, advocate of Public Interest Causes, guilty of crime of contempt of court for his two

tweets.

On 29 June, Prashant Bhushan shared an image of CJI Bobde sitting on a Harley Davidson superbike, commenting that the CJI was sitting on a bike belonging to a BJP leader without a mask or helmet, at a time when the Supreme Court was "denying citizens their fundamental right to access justice" because it was in lockdown mode".

The Supreme Court held: "This tweet was not against the CJI in his individual capacity but as the head of the judiciary... from March 23 to August 4, the Supreme Court Benches had 879 sittings and heard 12,748 matters. It noted that Bhushan himself not only appeared as a lawyer during this period but also challenged the FIR against him. The court refused to accept his tweet as written out of anguish".

On 27 June, he wrote: "When historians in future look back at the last six years to see how democracy has been destroyed in India even without a formal Emergency, they will particularly mark the role of the Supreme Court in this destruction, & more particularly the role of the last 4 CJIs."

The Supreme Court held it tends to give the impression that the highest constitutional court of the country has in the last six years played a vital role in the destruction of Indian democracy. "There is no matter of doubt, that the tweet tends to shake the public confidence in the institution of judiciary... the said tweet undermines the dignity and authority of the institution of the Supreme Court of India and the CJI and directly affronts the majesty of law," it Bench said.

An advocate is regarded as officer of court. While judge is on the Bench, the other officer is on the other side of bar. The Supreme Court lawyers are selected from the Bar also. Like some advocates who became judges, a vociferous defender of public cause like Prashant Bhushan also had clear eligibility to become judge. It is just a matter of chance. A judge will judge only the matter before him. But a citizen is free to judge any matter, he can take the matters before the constitutional courts for their judgment. Unless someone files a petition, the courts also will not get a chance to review a decision of executive. It surprises to know that an advocate who is all through his life present before the Supreme Court Judges, defending constitutional rights of people, winning and losing, fighting and challenging, was considered to have lowered the authority and held guilty. The court considers that he has no freedom to pass two comments, for which he was held guilty.

What are the professional duties of advocates? A senior advocate Iqbal Chagla, who has been practicing for the last 55



An advocate is regarded as officer of court. While judge is on the Bench, the other officer is on the other side of bar. The Supreme Court lawyers are selected from the Bar also. Like some advocates who became judges, a vociferous defender of public cause like Prashant Bhushan also had clear eligibility to become judge. It is just a matter of chance. A judge will judge only the matter before him. But a citizen is free to judge any matter, he can take the matters before the constitutional courts for their judgment. Unless someone files a petition, the courts also will not get a chance to review a decision of executive. It surprises to know that an advocate who is all through his life present before the Supreme Court Judges, defending constitutional rights of people, winning and losing, fighting and challenging, was considered to have lowered the authority and held guilty. The court considers that he has no freedom to pass two comments, for which he was held guilty.

years, wrote about his experience, how he questioned some corrupt judges and got rid of them. "In 1990, it fell upon myself to move resolutions against five sitting judges of the Bombay High Court, impugning their integrity and calling for their resignation. I was warned by friends that this constituted clear criminal contempt and under the extant law, justification was not a defence. My only raison d'être was that one owed it to posterity not to sit idle even as the fountain of justice was polluted. The resolutions were passed, albeit with much-heated debate: One judge resigned, two were transferred and two were denied any further judicial work. Fortunately, we had Justice Chitatosh Mukerjee as the Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court and Justice Sabyasachi Mukerjee as the Chief Justice of India".

Iqbal Chagla narrated another incident like above: "An interesting sequel was when I called on the CJI in Delhi (I had become the president of the Bombay Bar Association). He received me at his residence. A grim-faced CJI and asked: 'Mr Chagla, do you intend to do this again?', 'Good heavens, no, Chief Justice, once was enough', I replied. 'Then, may I congratulate you? It needed to be done. Our own enquiries revealed they were bad eggs and deserved to be removed.' Contrary to my assurance, it fell to my lot, five years later, to move a resolution against a sitting Chief Justice of the Bombay High Court calling for his resignation on grounds of corruption. Again, the resolution was carried, and the chief justice resigned.

Sanjay Hegde, another senior advocate says Supreme Court is everything for

them, and does not think that authority of Supreme Court is so weak that it can be shaken by two tweets. By these two tweets, he did not obstruct the judicial process, there was no obstruction caused. EMS Nambudripad, Arundhati Roy and Prashant Bhushan were convicted for contempt. But P Shiv Shankar, Union Minister for Law, who made a scathing attack on entire judiciary attributing bias etc was acquitted. Those who study the law of contempt of court, will be astonished to find these two contradictory orders. Contempt power should not be used to silence the speakers who are speaking against power. This power has to be used only to enforce specific orders of court but not to force critics to silence with the power of punishing them, Sanjay Hegde said.

Former Chief Justice of India R M Lodha questioned the urgency of hearing this criminal case of contempt against an activist lawyer as if heavens were falling. He said that the virtual court system initiated to urgently hear and protect personal liberty was "actually impairing somebody's liberty". Justice Lodha was referring to procedural fairness and explained. "...virtual court hearing was not a proper system for delivery of justice in a criminal contempt matter. "A criminal contempt matter is between the court and the contemnor. No third party is involved. So, the contemnor should be fully assured that he is being provided procedural fairness and a full hearing. A virtual court does not meet these parameters. A physical hearing was more assuring than a virtual one," he said. On "scandalising of court" as a ground for contempt, Justice Lodha noted that this law, as long as it remained in the country, should not be applied in a routine manner. "Scandalising the court or lowering the dignity of the court are not stereotype phrases. They are impregnated with a lot of meaning and substance that requires deeper reflection. They should not be applied in a routine manner, or merely because somebody feels that the dignity of an individual has been lowered."

Section 12 of Contempt of Court Act says:

(1) Save as otherwise expressly provided in this Act or in any other law, a contempt of court may be punished with simple imprisonment for a term which may extend to six months, or with fine which may extend to two thousand rupees, or with both:

Provided that the accused may be discharged, or the punishment awarded may be remitted on apology being made to the satisfaction of the Court.

Explanation: An apology shall not be rejected merely on the ground that it is qualified or conditional if the accused makes it bona fide.

As the apex court has scheduled the hearing on deciding sentence to be imposed on convicted contemnor, it is hoped that this could still be avoided by tendering an apology by Prashant Bhushan or accepting his 'regret' as an apology under Contempt of Court Act.

(The writer is Dean, School of Law, Bennett University, and former Central Information Commissioner)

## Indo-American ties will be stronger post US polls

This is with reference to the report 'Biden vows to back India (Aug17). Democrat Presidential candidate Joe Biden expressed his support for India in any confrontation between India and Pak. He said, if elected, his administration would stand with India against the threats New Delhi facing with its neighbouring country and vowed to strengthening bond between the US and India. Elections for president in the US will held on November 3 and former VP Biden is giving tough competition to Republican nominee and current President Donald Trump. I hope with a new President after the elections, the US will cement ties with India deeply.

Sanjana Soni, Hyderabad

## End of an era in Indian cricket

Former cricket captain MS Dhoni's announcement of retirement on Saturday from international cricket came as a bolt from the blue and has stumped the cricket fans. In fact, Dhoni was the most dashing wicketkeeper batsman and the best finisher of the game in pressure situations. These qualities marked his destined rise to the top captain of Indian cricket team. Dhoni's most enduring legacy is that he won all the ICC trophies. He also took India to the top of the Test rankings for the first ever time. He was the world's best wicketkeeper and most destructive batsman. His "helicopter shot" will be remembered as one of the India's best limited overs match, per-

## India has nothing to do with Kamala Harris

The Vice-Presidential candidate for Democratic Party in the US carries an Indian first name and her mother is of Indian origin. This cannot be the reason why we should rejoice her candidature. She is not an Indian and is not obliged to take pro Indian stand during elections or afterwards as that will not give her any political mileage. Her stand on Kashmir and China may or may not be favourable to us and she may not support Indians in the matter of Visa. Like any other US Head of State, diplomacy from our side only can help and in any case in the US administration, it is the President who is all powerful. Hence let Indians not rush to celebrate so soon.

M Raghuraman, Chandivali, Mumbai

haps the best. He was the master of chases, but his flamboyance is founded on an inexplicably cool and calculated mind. After taking over Test captaincy from Anil Kumble, he took the team to the pinnacle of Test championships that established him as India's best captain in a long time. Dhoni's exit marks the end of an era for Indian cricket. Unlike a couple of his celebrated contemporaries, Dhoni was always a team player. The interests on the team were paramount to him. Dhoni redefined the con-



cept of the limited-overs match winner. At his peak, he was relentless in his quest for victory and strong-shouldered both as wicketkeeper and batsman. Such is Dhoni, a leader par excellence in cricket. Now Indian cricket has years to discuss the secrets of Dhoni's longevity and the impeccable legacy he leaves behind. His cool demeanour and unorthodox brilliance paved the way for some of Indian cricket's memorable moments.

Kodihalli S Rao, Shreenagar, Thane, Maharashtra

## Move to dismantle PSUs exposes BJP's evil designs

The stakeholders in Coal India Limited, the workers, have been vehemently opposing the opening of the sector to private players. They went on a 3-day strike in July and today they are on a nationwide strike. Their demands are in the national interest. They oppose privatisation of Coal India Limited (CIL) and rightly demand to withdraw the commercial coal mining in 41 coal blocks that may fetch Rs 33,000 crore to the government exchequer. The NDA government's greed didn't stop here. It wants to further reduce its stake from 66% to 51% in Coal India Limited (CIL) thereby offloading its 15% stake for Rs 12,000 crore. The government following its predecessor government more religiously, stands firmly with the corporates in providing tax concessions. It is unwilling to divulge names of big defaulters to banks, leave alone recovering from them. So, whatever may be the noble declarations by the Union Minister, the government is hellbent to mobilise 2.01 lakh crores through disinvestment of public sector companies from CIL to LIC. This is more of an ideological effort by the ruling elite on time tested PSUs in India. Only a deeper and wider public resistance can counter this. The Central government leaving no stone unturned to dismantle the PSUs even during the worst humanitarian crisis like Covid-19, speaks volumes about the masters they are compelled to serve and not the people to whom they are accountable to.

A Raghunatha Reddy, Raghavendra Township, Kadapa, AP

thehansreader@gmail.com



FLOOD RELIEF

# Funds not an issue, AP CM to officials

- Tells the officials during a review that they should be on high alert as Covid threat is also there
- Says people in relief camps should get all needed help and there should be no difficulty in procuring essential commodities as adequate amount of funds will be made available
- Collectors of two Godavari districts update the CM on flood situation and relief measures

HANS NEWS SERVICE

**Amaravati:** Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy instructed the officials to be on high alert in wake of the Godavari floods and provide all necessary relief to the affected people and be more attentive as the Covid-19 is also prevalent.

During a review meeting held here on the flood situation with the collectors of East and West Godavari districts, the Chief Minister said that there should be preparedness from the official side and succour should be provided to people living in low-lying areas. He said that people in the relief camps should get all needed help and there should be no difficulty in



Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy reviewing flood situation with officials of East and West Godavari districts from his camp office at Tadepalli on Monday

procuring essential commodities.

As Covid is also prevalent, the officials should take double care and National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) teams should be placed at vulnerable points and expenditure should not come in way to provide help to the needy, he said.

East Godavari district collector Muralidhar explained that 161 villages in 13 mandals were affected and in Amalapuram area 12 more villages were affected while 63 relief camps were set up so far.

Masks and sanitisers are also

made available in the relief camps and Covid tests are being conducted wherever necessary. Medical camps are also being set up and nutritious food is provided and with the possibility of communication system getting affected, satellite phones are being kept ready. “We have 14 launches (mechanised boats) for ferrying essential goods. The crop loss has to be assessed after the floods water recedes,” Muralidhar said.

West Godavari district collector Mutyala Raju said that 30 vil-

lages in 7 mandals were affected and drinking water is being provided. NDRF teams are placed at three points and old aged people and pregnant women are being evacuated. Primary health centres are equipped with generators while medicines for snake bites are stored. At four places near Polavaram project where the river bank is weak, sand bags were placed to strengthen and prevent breaches. Polavaram MLA Balaraju also participated in the video conference.

- The State govt facilitates UPI payments at the secretariats in collaboration with NCPI and Canara Bank
- People can pay fees in digital mode for the 543 types services they avail from secretariats

HANS NEWS SERVICE

**Amaravati:** In a move to ease the payment option and provide an all-new level of convenient transaction for the public in village and ward secretariats, Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy launched digital payment system in village and ward secretariats on Monday.

The state government will facilitate UPI payments at the secretariats in collaboration with the National Payments Corporation of India (NCPI) and Canara

## AP CM launches digital payments in village, ward secretariats

Bank. As of Monday, digital transactions have started in 15,004 secretariats across the state. The state government is currently providing 543 types of services in the village and ward secretariats.

With this initiative of UPI payments at the secretariats, thousands of rural customers can now pay for these services via digital payment if required. The Chief Minister has taken up this UPI-based payment system initiative to promote digital payments in village/wards secretariats. The initiative will further reduce the risk of Covid-19

transmission due to contactless payments.

After entering the details, a QR code will be generated on the screen of the computer, which can be scanned by using any UPI enabled application of the consumer through his/her mobile phone. When a customer approaches the village and ward secretariat to avail any of the government services, the official will enter all the necessary details of each customer in their secretariat's portal. After scanning the QR code both the consumer and secretariat employee will get the transaction confirmation.

## MLA appeals to CM to rethink move to drop sports complex

HANS NEWS SERVICE

**Visakhapatnam:** Visakhapatnam West constituency MLA P G V R Naidu (Gana Babu) appealed to the Chief Minister to reconsider the decision taken to cancel the allotted land for the multipurpose sports complex at Aganampudi.

Vice-president of Volleyball Federation of India Gana Babu wrote a letter to Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy to take necessary steps to ensure the project takes off.

He mentioned that Vizag hosted Volleyball World Championships, Asian Championships, a series of national and international Beach Volleyball events and also national level events in skating, boxing, tennis and athletics.

Keeping this in view, the previous government had allotted 80 acres of land at Aganampudi in Visakhapatnam for the sports complex. The MLA said: “We came to know that the Sports Authority of Andhra Pradesh (SAAP) allotment was cancelled recently and the land will be used for other purposes. It is indeed a very sad news for the sports lovers,” the MLA opined. He requested the government to rethink it.

## Dr Ramesh applies for anticipatory bail

**Vijayawada:** Dr Ramesh Babu, Chairman and Managing Director of Dr Ramesh Hospitals, applied for anticipatory bail in the Eighth Additional District and Sessions Judge Court here on Monday.

It may be recalled that 10 persons perished in a fire mishap that occurred in the Covid-19 centre administered by Dr Ramesh Hospitals at Swarna Palace Hotel recently.

Since then the police who launched massive investigation into the mishap have been making efforts to arrest Dr Ramesh Babu. Three others were already arrested in the case.

The Eighth Additional District and Sessions Judge Court which received the anticipatory bail application posted the same for hearing on August 21.

## Kin complain of lack of proper info on patients at Covid hospitals

CHOWDARI LAKSHMANA RAO

**Srikakulam:** Information on Covid patients is not being provided by the officials and staff of the Covid hospitals to the kin of the patients.

Government's Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) hospital located in Srikakulam city and a private teaching hospital Great Eastern Medical Sciences (GEMS) located at Ragolu near the city were initially identified as Covid hospitals.

After admission of the patients, information regarding treatment of patients and information pertaining to patients' deaths while on treatment is not being properly provided, complain kin of patients.

From village or ward level volunteer, medical, revenue and doctors and staff at hospitals are not providing proper information and everyone is escaping by providing evasive reply, allege family members of patients.

Two incidents have exposed loopholes in the Covid monitoring system in the district. One G Eswara Rao (67), a resident of Gokarnapalli in Pondurumandal reached Srikakulam road railway station on Falaknuma train on July 21 from Hyderabad.

He was sent to government RIMS hospital directly from the railway station but the medical

- Say that they are not receiving information on treatment being administered to patients and their health status
- A patient S Venkata Rao of Lankapeta village in Garamandal was first admitted at RIMS hospital in Srikakulam on July 19
- Later, he was shifted to GEMS hospital at Ragolu
- Unable to secure information on his health status, his family members lodged a complaint with Gara police
- Gara police forward the complaint to Srikakulam rural police

staff there refused to admit him.

Same day Eswara Rao reached his native village Gokarnapalli. After three days, he received a phone call from the revenue staff and soon after the call he was picked by the medical ambulance staff and was admitted to RIMS hospital. A Even three days after the got admitted to the hospital, his family members did not receive any information about him. They made phone calls to doctors, officials and political leaders etc but they could not get any information.

Finally, his family members lodged a complaint with the Ponduru police for information. “We have received a complaint and informed it to medical and health officials for proper verification,” Ponduru Sub-Inspector (SI) K Ramakrishna explained to *The Hans India*.

Another Covid patient S Venkata Rao of Lankapeta village in Garamandal was admitted at

RIMS hospital Srikakulam on July 19 and later he was shifted to GEMS hospital at Ragolu. But information regarding the patient is not being provided to his family members.

They also made all types of efforts to get information but were vexed with the improper replies provided at different levels and lodged a complaint with the Gara police.

“We have received a complaint and forwarded the same to Srikakulam rural police,” Gara SI, M Hari Krishna told this newspaper.

Finally, the patient, Venkata Rao's dead body was found at GEMS hospital on Friday. “We are admitting patients by registering address on their Aadhaar cards and will rectify problems,” said District Surveillance Officer for monitoring of Covid cases Dr Bagadi Jagannadha Rao and District Medical and Health Officer Dr M Chenchayya.

## SC upholds HC order halting house sites distribution

HANS NEWS SERVICE

**New Delhi:** The Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy government's plan to distribute house sites to weaker sections in Amaravati received a setback in the Supreme Court on Monday.

The Chief Justice Bench of the Supreme Court led by Chief Justice Sharad Aravind Bobde upheld the orders of Andhra Pradesh High Court stalling the distribution of house sites in Amaravati by making changes in the master plan to convert part of the capital city into a residential zone (R-5 Zone).

The bench felt that the High Court had gone in the right direction in the hearing on Amaravati lands issue and it had found prima facie grounds to do so.

The bench, however, directed that the High Court complete the final hearing of the case at the earliest. It may be recalled that the High Court had suspended

- Asks the HC to complete the final hearing in the case as early as possible

- The AP High Court suspended the orders by the YSRCP govt changing master plan of Amaravati to enable distribution of house sites to the poor

- In petition by the State govt seeking lifting of status quo order on 3 capitals, the Chief Justice Bench recuses itself and transfers the case to another bench, which will hear it on Aug 19

the orders issued by the Jagan government making changes to the master plan of Amaravati so as to enable it to distribute house sites in the capital region. The suspension would be in force till the government completes the inquiry, it said.

The petitions in the High Court

were filed by Avala Nanda Kishore, a farmer of Venkatayapalem and some others opposing the land sites distribution.

The state government challenged the High Court order in the Supreme Court, which refused to intervene.

Meanwhile, in yet another petition of the state government seeking a vacate order on the stay of the High Court on the GO nullifying the CRDA Bill and the Decentralisation of Development Bill, the Chief Justice Bench transferred the case to another bench. The latter would take up the case on August 19.

The Andhra Pradesh High Court has put the brakes on three capitals in the state and granted status quo on Governor Gazette. The High Court has issued a stay on Decentralisation of development and CRDA repeal bill till August 14 and directed the government to file a reply counter.

## Naidu seeks Central probe into alleged phone tapping

HANS NEWS SERVICE

**Amaravati:** TDP president N Chandrababu Naidu on Monday alleged that the YSRCP led by Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy was resorting to massive phone tapping in order to perpetrate and foist its 'Jungle Raj' on all sections of people in the state.

He urged in a letter to Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday to order an inquiry by a competent authority of the Government of India into the alleged tapping of phones in the state.

The Centre should take stringent action so as to prevent the Jagan Mohan Reddy-led Yuva Jana Shramika Rythu Congress Party (YSRCP) and some private persons from resorting to such illegal activities that pose a threat to national security, he urged.

He alleged that the YSRC was illegally tapping phones of opposition parties, advocates, media persons and social activists.

“It appears that the ruling YSRCP has now even targeted judiciary, the third pillar of the democracy, as it is facing hurdles from the judiciary,” the TDP president alleged in the letter, a copy of which was also marked to Union communications and law minister Ravisankar Prasad.

Alleging that some private persons were also illegally tapping phones using cutting-edge technology and tools, Chandrababu Naidu apprehended that if such illegal phone tapping

- Accuses the YSRCP govt of targeting even judiciary, the third pillar of democracy, besides opposition leaders, journalists and advocates

- Says if such illegal phone tapping goes unchecked, it will pose a serious threat to the integrity and security of the nation

went unchecked, it would “pose a serious threat to the integrity and security of the nation.” He said the tapping was being done using “illegal software and unlawfully.”

“The people of AP are facing a grave threat under the rule of YSRCP. Ever since the YSRCP came to power, there has been a systematic and concerted attack on the democratic institutions in the state. Initially, the process of governance was completely derailed by attacking the investors and policies of previous government. This was followed by attack on institutions like State Election Commission and Andhra Pradesh Public Service Commission (APPSC),” he said.

Concomitantly, the YSRCP has been attacking and threatening leaders of opposition parties, advocates, media persons, and social activists among others through various deceitful means, he alleged.

In the long run, such nefarious activities would result in breakdown of democratic values and freedom of speech leading to jungle raj, the TDP chief added.

## Inter syllabus cut by 30%

HANS NEWS SERVICE

**Amaravati:** To reduce the burden on Intermediate students, Board of Intermediate Education (BIE) reduced the syllabus by 30 per cent this year. BIE has taken this decision in view of reduction of working days for junior colleges due to lockdown imposed owing to Covid-19.

The Inter board has released the new syllabus for 2020-21 for the 1st year and 2nd year and posted the syllabus information on the respective subjects on the official website.

The Intermediate board had clearly mentioned the details over the curriculum related to Science and Arts subjects on its portal. The officials said that details regarding languages will also be uploaded in a few days.

It may be noted that the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) has decided to reduce the syllabus by 30 per cent for the academic year 2020-21 due to Covid-19 lockdown.

Following the same, the AP Inter board has taken syllabus compression measures.

Meanwhile, the board has also placed short mark memos with the latest marks of the respective candidates on its website following the completion of the recounting and re-verification process for the Intermediate 2019-20 academic year. Candidates can download it from the website.

## Four dead in Cincinnati shooting

Continued from P1

News outlets reported the shootings took place within 60 to 90 minutes of each other, but Assistant Police Chief Paul Neudigate told reporters that they “seem to be separate independent incidents but horrific and tragic.”

Police didn't immediately provide details about the fourth fatal shooting but confirmed that it occurred on the city's West End, where television news reports indicated that one person was shot later Sunday morning and was pronounced dead at the scene.

No suspect information was immediately available in any of the cases. “One extremely violent night in the city of Cincinnati,” Neudigate had said before the fourth shooting was announced. “Why? That's going to be the question.” Cincinnati's police chief later on Sunday called the level of violence “unacceptable.”

## SC refuses to put off JEE and NEET-UG exams

Continued from P1

Justice Mishra replied, “How can you assume the authorities are not aware of this situation?”

The bench said it will not interfere with the policy decision taken by the authorities concerned and took on record Mehta's submission that exams will be held with adequate precautions.

“Lakhs of young students are likely to appear in the aforesaid JEE (Main) April-2020 and NEET UG-2020 Exams in the months of September 2020. Meanwhile, Covid-19 cases are increasing in India at an alarming rate.

The deadly pandemic Covid-19 has already affected about 20 Lakh people in India and the situation is worsening by every passing day. Conducting the aforesaid examination across India at such a perilous time, is nothing else but putting the lives of lakhs of young students (including petitioners herein) at utmost risk and danger of disease and death”, said the plea.

## China funds study on why Nepal youth joining Indian Army's Gorkha regiment

Continued from P1

India has the 1st, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 8th, 9th and 11th Gorkha regiments while the British Army has the 2nd, 6th, 7th and 10th regiments. The Gorkha community consists of mainly of four different tribes -- are Khas (or Chetri), Gurung, Limbus and Rais.

The recruitment of Nepali Gorkhas into the Indian Army stems from an arrangement agreed to in 1947 between India, the UK and Nepal, known as the Tripartite Agreement.

But Nepal has now stated that this agreement is redundant. The assertion was made after Nepal Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli

first raised the issue during his meeting with former UK Prime Minister Theresa May.

In the meantime, sources also said that the Communist Party of Nepal-Biplab, a banned underground insurgent outfit, has launched an extensive people's awareness programme to stop the youth of Nepal from joining the Gorkha regiments of Indian Army. Sources said the cultural wing of the CPN-Biplab is organising street plays, folk dances and other cultural events to spread anti-India campaigns.

The ties between India and Nepal have come under strain after Indian Defence Minister Raj-

nath Singh inaugurated an 80 km long strategically crucial road connecting the Lipulekh pass with Dharachula in Uttarakhand on May 8. Nepal protested the inauguration of the road, claiming that it passed through its territory. Days later, Nepal came out with a new map showing Lipulekh, Kalapani and Limpiyadhura as its territories.

Nepal's Parliament in June approved the new political map of the country featuring areas which India maintains belong to it. India said Nepal's action violated an understanding that the two countries can resolve the border issues through talks.



## TODAY'S QUOTE

### Taxing liquor more counterproductive

“Liquor is already a highly-taxed category and adding more tax on top of that has been a bit counterproductive. India is perhaps the only country in the world where the tax on per milliliter of beer is higher than that of spirit.

- **United Breweries MD Rishi Pardal**



## COVID JOLT

### Japan's economy contracts 28% in Q2

Japan's economy contracted by 27.8 per cent from the previous quarter in the April-June period, marking a record decline in 40 years mainly due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the government said in a report on Monday. The figure marks the largest contraction since the April-June quarter of 1980.

## FOREX (buy rates in ₹)

US Dollar	79.38	South	
Euro	93.19	African Rand	4.94
UAE Dirham	22.42	Hong Kong Dollar	11.11
Thai Baht	2.76	Japanese Yen	0.81
British Pound	102.13	New Zealand Dollar	51.35
Australian Dollar	56.51	Saudi Riyal	21.96
Canadian Dollar	59.43	Swedish Krona	9.91
Swiss Franc	85.85	Singapore Dollar	57.42

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## BIZ BRIEFS

### 5Paisa Capital unveils app

**Hyderabad:** Discount brokerage firm 5paisa.com has launched a free investing education app – 5paisa school - for new investors in the stock market to help them understand about safe investing and successful wealth creation. The app focuses on micro-learning and has many one-minute modules to meet expectations of young investors. The firm has over seven lakh active users and offers equity investing at zero brokerage, mutual funds, insurance, and loans among others on its platform. Prakash Gagani, CEO, 5paisa.com said, “We have seen many millennials and new investors losing money in equity due to lack of adequate knowledge and guidance. 5paisa school is a free app and can be used by anyone with simple two-step authentication process.”

### Milaap offers free fundraising

**Hyderabad:** Crowd fund raising platform Milaap said it would offer free fundraising during the upcoming festive season. During this time, people who raise funds through this platform will have to pay any platform fee. “In the past few months, as the crisis of the Covid pandemic unfolded, we have witnessed an unprecedented wave of generosity from people. Thousands raised funds on Milaap to help people in distress. Now, we have made Milaap free for all relief related fundraisers as a token of gratitude,” said Mayukh Choudhury, co-founder and CEO of Milaap. With this zero per cent platform fee, we will rely on voluntary tips from our donors to help with the costs associated with providing our best-in-class customer service, trust & safety protections, and social fundraising technology, he added.

### Optum's CSR initiative

**Hyderabad:** Optum, a part of UnitedHealth Group (UHG), has committed Rs 11.45 crore to fight the Covid-19 pandemic in India. This includes Rs 2.3 crore contribution to Telangana CM's Relief Fund. The funding is part of a \$10 million Covid-19 global fund committed by UnitedHealth Group for countries where its businesses operate. The contribution will provide urgent assistance to the most impacted communities, including health care workers, hard-hit and underserved citizens, seniors, and people experiencing homelessness and food insecurity as well as government labs experiencing a shortage of equipment. “The Covid-19 public health emergency has compounded the many challenges faced by India's frontline health workers and vulnerable residents experiencing loss of income. Our efforts are aimed at these sections,” said Ritesh Talapatra, Managing Director, Optum Global Solutions (India).

### Les Roches, QI in pact

**Hyderabad:** Les Roches has partnered Quintessentially India, a luxury concierge and lifestyle management service company, to offer services to students travelling to Switzerland for education. Under this partnership, Les Roches will offer free access to a private Quintessentially account manager that will help students prepare their travel details for Switzerland for the October intake this year, offering a personalized services pack which will include flight booking, airport transfer, meet and greet at the airport with fast track checking and emigration, VIP lounge access and a personal protective equipment pack. Mishti Bose, CEO, Quintessentially India, said “It is an absolute honour to collaborate with Les Roches, one of the leading hospitality institutions in the world. We believe our brand ethos is in perfect tandem with the ethos of Les Roches”.

# GDP likely to contract 16.5% during Apr-June

SBI report has earlier projected a contraction of over 20% in Q1

**Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra have been impacted more severely with increasing coronavirus penetration in rural areas**

**Mumbai:** State Bank of India's research report Ecwrap expects the country's GDP to contract by 16.5 per cent during the first quarter of the current fiscal.

Earlier in May, Ecwrap had estimated Q1 FY21 GDP contraction at over 20 per cent and now pegs it at much lower contraction of 16.5 per cent for the quarter, “though with the relevant caveats in the current uncertain scenario”, the research report released on Monday stated.

It said degrowth in corporate GVA (better than expected results of some financial and non-financial companies) has been significantly better than revenue degrowth in Q1FY21 as far as the results of the listed companies are concerned.

So far, around 1,000 listed entities have announced their results for the first quarter. The results indicate more than 25 per cent decline in topline and more than 55 per cent decline in bottomline. However, it is interesting to mention that the decline



in corporate GVA (gross value added) is only 14.1 per cent, it said. “In principle, revenue decline of listed companies has been far outstripped by cost rationalisation thereby not impacting margins,” the report said.

It further said over the months of July and August, coronavirus has now significantly penetrated the rural areas. The percentage of cases in rural districts to total new cases has risen to 54 per cent in August.

Also, the number of rural districts with less than 10 cases have reduced significantly. Andhra Pradesh and Maharashtra have been impacted more severely with increasing coronavirus penetration in rural areas.

“These districts contribute mostly around 2-4 per cent of

GSDP (gross state domestic product) of their respective states, indicating that cases are penetrating deep rural hinterlands,” the report noted.

The report estimates total (GSDP) loss due to Covid-19 to be at 16.8 per cent of GSDP.

State-wise analysis indicates that top 10 states accounted for 73.8 per cent of total GDP loss, with Maharashtra contributing 14.2 per cent of total loss followed by Tamil Nadu (9.2 per cent) and Uttar Pradesh (8.2 per cent), it said.

Subsequently, the per capita loss for all India is around Rs 27,000 with states like Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Telangana, Delhi, Haryana, Goa, exhibiting loss of more than Rs 40,000 per person in FY21, the report stated.

## Ester plans ₹ 1,350 cr new plant in Telangana

To set up polyester film manufacturing plant in phases

HANS BUSINESS

**Hyderabad:** Ester Filmtex Limited, a subsidiary of Gurgaon-based Ester Industries Limited, on Monday announced its plans to set up an advanced polyester film manufacturing facility with an investment of Rs 1,350 crore in Ranga Reddy district.

To be set up in three phases and completed by the third quarter of calendar year 2022, the plant will create direct employment potential for about 800 people. The end products of the proposed unit will find its applications in the packaging material and will help to contribute towards strengthening the value chain of the flexible packaging industry. The company proposes to export 30-40 per cent of its production. The plant will come up at Chandanvely village in Shahbad Mandal of Ranga Reddy district.

Arvind Singhania, Chairman, Ester Industries, said: “Ester Filmtex had chosen Telangana State due to its industry-friendly policies and growth-oriented approach of Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao and Minister for Industries & IT KT Rama Rao. As compared to other states, Telangana is far ahead in respect of investment-friendly climate, ease of doing business, industry-friendly policies like TS-iPASS, T-IDEA, etc.” Industries Minister KT Rama Rao welcomed Ester



Industries Minister KT Rama Rao and Industries Secretary Jayesh Ranjan at the virtual announcement of new plant by Ester Filmtex Limited on Monday

Industries Minister Telangana and assured all possible support from the state government in getting the plant commissioned at the earliest.

Ester Industries, a listed company established in 1985, has 32 years of experience in the manufacturing of polyester films, specialty polymers, and engineering plastic compounds. It has manufacturing facility in Khatima district, Uttarakhand, with the capacity of 67,000 tonnes per annum (TPA) of polyester resin, 57,000 TPA of polyester film, 30,000 TPA of specialty polymers and 16,500 TPA of engineering plastics. The company currently exports about 30 per cent of its production of polyester films with sales and distribution network in more than 56 countries across the world. Specialty polymers are manufactured primarily for the US and other overseas markets.



### HTCP plans new plant in Telangana

HANS BUSINESS

**Hyderabad:** Hey Tomorrow Consumer Products Pvt Ltd (HTCP) launched Hayden, a fruit and vegetable wash liquid. The city-based company is setting up an fully-automated plant with an investment of Rs nine crore to produce products that offer solutions to everyday problems.

“With special properties to penetrate uneven surfaces of fruits and vegetables to clean all dirt, 99.9 per cent of germs, pesticides and other impurities embedded in them, Hayden is made only from natural extracts, making it the only product in the market that's 100 per cent organic,” said Anitha Nallapati, the company's Director.

The company expects the vegetable & fruit cleansers segment in India is estimated at Rs 2,400 crore by 2025 with an expected annual growth rate of 300 per cent. The company is eyeing Rs 14 crore turnover. The company is aiming at completing the new plant by end of next year. “It will create 150 direct and indirect jobs,” said Monica Ravilla, company's another Director.

## Markets log 1st gain in 4 sessions; auto shines

**Mumbai:** Market benchmarks Sensex and Nifty broke their three-session losing streak on Monday as gains in power, auto and FMCG stocks offset weakness in banking counters.

After opening 185 points higher, the BSE Sensex was gripped by early volatility and swung about 386 points during the session. The 30-share index finally settled 173.44 points or 0.46 per cent higher at 38,050.78. Likewise, the NSE Nifty ended 68.70 points or 0.61 per cent up at 11,247.10. On the Sensex chart, NTPC, Bajaj Auto, Tech Mahindra, ONGC and Maruti were among the major gainers, climbing up to 7.92 per cent.

On the other hand, SBI, Bharti Airtel, Reliance Industries, Sun Pharma and ICICI Bank and HDFC Bank ended with losses of up to 1.73 per cent. Sectorally, BSE power, metal, utilities and auto in-

dices rose as much as 2.96 per cent.

Bourses in Asia, barring Japan, closed significantly higher after China's central bank infused cash into the financial system. Japan's Nikkei slumped after the country's GDP shrank 7.8 per cent in the April-June period compared with the previous quarter.

“Indian indices overcame an uncertain start and traded in a range, before ending the day with gains. Global cues were

also mixed due to the delay in the approval of the US stimulus package and mixed economic data coming in from around the world,” said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Service. The markets are trading uncertain and investors are advised to remain cautious. The valuations in the market are a concern, and there could be profit booking in the near term, he added.

# CEOs of big firms/PSUs not to be issued summons

**New Delhi:** The Directorate General of GST Intelligence (DGGI) has issued guidelines, which seek to soften the impact of investigations and ensure that no excesses are committed that include minimal personal summons, no repeated summons and generally not issuing summons to CEOs and CFOs of large companies in the first instance for GST evasion.

In a circular issued last week, the Directorate said, “As an enforcement agency, it is imperative for the DGGI to maintain a balance wherein investigations should proceed strictly, as per law, while simultaneously ensuring that no excesses are meted out to the taxpayers and their sensibilities are respected.”

The officers have been asked to ensure that a summons for personal



DGGI has issued guidelines to ensure that no excesses are committed during investigation in GST evasion

appearance is issued only when specifically required. This would imply that the personal presence of an individual is minimised.

In addition, summons should not be issued repeatedly and as far as practicable, a comprehensive statement should be recorded in the first instance itself. The impli-

cation of this measure is that any harassment is avoided with repeated summons, personal appearances and whatever needs to be recorded is done at the first instance.

The DGGI has also prescribed that summons for calling for information should also not be issued in piecemeal manner and as far as possible all relevant information should be gathered in one go.

In an important intervention, the DGGI prescribed, “Senior management officials such as CEO, CFO, General Manager of a large company or a PSU should not generally be issued summons at the first instance unless the evidence suggests otherwise.”

The DGGI further said that while conducting a search, the officers should be sensitive towards

the assessee or party. Special attention should be given to elderly, women and children present in the premises under search.

“Children should be allowed to go to school, after examining their bags. A woman occupying any premises, to be searched, has the right to withdraw before the search party enters, if according to the customs she does not appear in public. If a person in the premises is not well, a medical practitioner may be called. Religious sentiments of the person under search should not hurt in any way,” the DGGI said.

Further, amid the Covid-19 pandemic, proper social distancing norms should be followed and the search team should take all precautionary measures as contained in the guidelines.

# IT SERVICES, RIL SET TO BENEFIT AS INDIA INC TAKES DIGITAL RIDE

Companies that embrace digital tools will eventually perform better than peers: report

**New Delhi:** IT services companies, automation firms and new economy plays like Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) will be the key beneficiaries of India Inc's renewed digital push.

According to a research report by foreign brokerage Bernstein, “We tap into the combined wisdom of 40 top management teams, as we assess their commentary in recently released annual reports. We observed a few common themes - digitization, renewed focus on cash flow, cost efficiency and commentary on the uncertain demand environment.”

Digital initiatives dominate in the annual reports as digital featured 451 times in RIL's annual report and 203 times in L&T's annual report. While digital has been a part of the strategy for most, it has received significant attention this time. Consumer companies want to tap into consumer analytics, to understand preferences, targeted marketing through digital advertising, enhance social media presence and adapt to online distribution.

Auto OEMs have enhanced online presence post Covid, to minimize physical touchpoints with



some offering customization options. Financial companies are responding to digital initiatives - AI to help as a predictive tool and also help in hyper personalized offerings. “Companies that embrace digital tools will eventually perform better than peers. Enablers of technology such as IT services companies, automation firms and new economy plays (such as RIL) are key beneficiaries, apart from those that embrace digital”, the report said. Another emerging theme is preservation of cash and cost efficiency. Most companies have embarked on cost cutting spree over and above the usual cost focus paradigm. In addition, capex is being

cut as the focus is on liquidity and cash flows.

“We believe that as demand recovers, margin improvement will sustain for a bit longer as companies cling on to risk aversion mode - and hence could become a near-term theme. Capex cuts are negative for the economy and for specific industrial-focused companies”, the report said.

There is also low visibility on demand. The report said top management are optimistic by nature, but it is different this time with most highlighting demand outlook uncertainty. Some point at impact on economy and consumer incomes as challenges while a few expect re-

covery to be quick when Covid normalizes.

“We sensed an optimism among premium auto plays and personal mobility as a potential driver from mass market plays. Consumer staple companies cited challenges on the demand front, with even HUL mentioning that there are many unknowns today and hence, the near-term outlook is extremely uncertain”, the report added.

The report said that staples companies are however witnessing increased demand in health and hygiene categories and products such as tea and coffee. Companies are hence expanding product portfolios. IT companies believe that the discretionary part of spends could get cut while cement, steel and construction companies cited lack of visibility.

Telecom was an outlier with positive comments while IT services companies were the only ones to reinstate guidance post Covid. “In our view, the response to Covid will ensure that as the recovery emerges, companies will report better than expected margins and cash flows for a few quarters until the gains are given up in a usual competitive business scenario”, it added.

## MSR India launches copper-filtered mask

HANS BUSINESS

**Hyderabad:** MSR India, a city-based listed company which markets products under Dr Copper brand, on Monday said it launched copper-filtered N-95 reusable face mask and also Dr Copper Care Key, a patented device that reduces risk of touching virus-infected surfaces. Along with its feature to help as bottle opener, the device enables individuals to open doors of homes and cars, push buttons of elevators and keypads without touching the surface. Whereas, the copper-filtered mask by Dr Copper a five-layered N95 mask which can be reusable up to 35 times. This mask is designed primarily for the purpose of controlling the contamination with self-disinfecting property that copper has. It offers five-layered protection with air mesh cloth.

“By consecutively winning Asia's Greatest Brands & Leaders awards for the years 2018-19 & 2019-20 from Asia One, our hunger for growth is honoured. Now with these two new product inventions, Dr Copper will passionately strive to build



a healthier nation, motivated by Made in India notion and Vocal for Local slogan,” said Dr M Malla Reddy, CEO, MSR India.

The care key device is a surface distancing key, also known as Covid key, which is made of 99.9 per cent pure copper. It helps users with more than 20 day-to-day tasks without touching surfaces. The ability of pure copper in killing any virus, including SARC Covid-19 is the primary reason for launching this key, he added.

Established in 2015, Dr Copper is now among the leading brands in product category. It sold over four million water bottles to over three million customers. MSR India is listed on BSE.



## RAIN FURY

# KTR directs officials to work in tandem to hasten up relief steps

HANS NEWS SERVICE

**Hyderabad:** Municipal Administration Minister KT Rama Rao on Monday directed the officials of the rain-affected districts to work with coordination and take up relief measures and avoid inconvenience to the people.

The minister interacted with the Sirilla district additional collector R Anjaiah and SP Rahul Hegde over phone and instructed them to take precautionary steps to ensure there is no loss of human lives or properties in wake of the heavy rain forecast for the next two days. He alerted the officials on the steps to be taken in wake of the incessant rains for the last five days and water bodies overflowing.

The MAUD minister asked officials to shift the people living in low lying areas to nearby schools, Gurukulams, Ashrams and provide all types of facilities and ensure no loss of life. 'Deploy the emergency rescue teams if there are reports of people stuck in the floods. Work in coordination with

The Minister asks officials to shift the people living in low-lying areas to nearby schools, Gurukulams, Ashrams and provide all types of facilities



the police and revenue officials and ensure no untoward incident occurs', said the minister.

The minister asked the Pan-chayat Raj and R&B officials to get ready to take up road repairs

wherever they are damaged. The officials informed that they had shifted people from the low-lying areas like Illantakunta, Anantagiri, Vemulawada, Koinapally, Yellareddypet, Venkatapur, Gambhirapet, Jagadamba Tanda. The minister talked to the local MLA Rasamayi Balkishan on the relief measures taken up in the Anantagiri area in Illantakunta mandal. He directed the MLA to oversee the relief works and asked the officials to have machines to pump out water from the areas.

## KTR to visit flood-hit areas in Warangal today

HANS NEWS SERVICE

**Hyderabad:** Municipal Administration Minister KT Rama Rao would visit flood affected areas and interact with people in Warangal town on Tuesday. He would reach Warangal by helicopter at 9.30 am. After aerial review of the flood affected areas in the town, the minister would visit to the inundated areas, rehabilitation centers in the city by

road and interact with the affected people.

Later, the Minister would review with the ministers E Rajender, E Dayakar Rao, Satyawathi Rathod, Government Chief Whip D Vinay Bhaskar, MPs, MLAs, Mayor, KUDA Chairman and other public representatives. KTR would be travelling to areas like Arts College Grounds, Nayeem Nagar Drainage area, Sammaiah Nagar, Kothur Nala, Ped-

dammagadda Nala, PMSSY Hospital, Grace Market, Enumamula (via Pochamma Maidan, Kashibugga), Kashibugga, Venkataramana Junction, Mills Colony, Chintal Flyover, Fort Road, Petrol Bunk, Ranga-saipet, Khammam Road, Hunter Road, nala near Santoshi Mata temple, Potana Road, Mulugu Road, Alankar Bridge, SBH Colony. He would have a review meeting at NIT auditorium.

## CRUMBLING ROADS



While roads in the districts across the State turned into rivers following incessant rains, large potholes and patches of roads washed away can be seen on many arteries in Hyderabad. It is no secret that 'Hyderabad's crumbling roads have been exposed by the incessant rains lashing the city over the last few days. A road in SR Nagar is in woeful state leading to crawling of traffic on this stretch. Photo : Adula Krishna

## Steep decline in Covid cases across State

894 new cases, 10 deaths reported in 24 hours

HANS NEWS SERVICE

**Hyderabad:** Telangana reported just under 900 new cases when Covid tests also dropped below 9000 due to public holiday on Sunday. With tests number falling considerably, share of each district amongst new cases also decreased. GHMC reported just 147 cases with Ranga

Reddy 85, Karimnagar 69, Peddapalli 62, Medchal 51 cases. Ten patients died taking the total deceased count to 703. 894 new covid cases pushed the overall count to 92,55. With over 2000 patients cured in a single day, the total cured figure rose to 70,132 in the State. The active cases stood at 21,420 out of which 14,404 are in home isolation.

## DGP holds video conference, alerts police about monsoon

**Hyderabad:** The Director General of Police (DGP) of Telangana State on Sunday held a video conference with the Commissioners and Superintendents of the State Police instructing them to be on high alert regarding the ongoing monsoon.

He instructed the department to monitor the situation on a real time basis and the department shall work round-the-clock to ease the difficulties of citizens. He also asked the police officials to work with the revenue and municipal departments of their respective areas in order to get more information about the areas facing issues.

The DGP further told the officers to be present at the control rooms set up in the respective district collector's office building and monitor the situation. Moreover, the higher officials are also currently monitoring the situation from the headquarters upon instructions from the Chief Minister, K Chandrashekar Rao.

# CM pats Transco, Genco CMD for non-stop power supply during rains

Though the electricity department faced problems due to heavy rains and flood situation, there was no problem with regard to power supply anywhere, Transco CMD Prabhakar Rao to the Chief Minister

HANS NEWS SERVICE

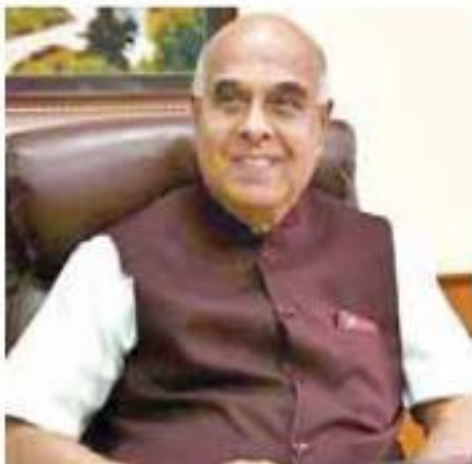
**Hyderabad:** Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao on Monday congratulated the Transco, Genco CMD D Prabhakar Rao and his staff for ensuring continuous power supply in the State without any break even during the calamity and also making sure the power grid does not fail.

The Chief Minister Chandrashekar Rao had a special review on the power situation here on Monday. CMD Prabhakar Rao explained about the power generation and also the supply in the State. He said that though the electricity department faced problems due to heavy rains and flood situation, there was no problem with regard to power supply anywhere.

He informed that in Karimnagar seven heavy towers with a ca-



capacity of 220 KV were washed away due to heavy floods. In Warangal two 33 KV Substations at two places were submerged in water. "We have stopped power supply to 54 villages under the SPDCL limits as the villages were submerged in water. Power supply was also disconnected as a precaution to 248 distributor transformers, 159 in SPDCL limits, 89 in NPDCL limits," said Rao.



Since there are heavy flows of water in projects such as Upper Jurala, Lower Jurala, Srisailam, Nagarjuna Sagar, 1200 MW of Hydro electric power was generated. "Since there is a fall in power demand in the state, we have decreased the power generation at KTPC, Singareni, KTPP Plants," explained Prabhakar Rao.

The CMD informed that this year the peak demand registered

was 13,168 MW, which is the highest so far and it never happened even during the undivided Andhra Pradesh. But the demand fell to 4,200 MW during the current rainy season. When such a situation arises, the Grid breaks down. However, the electricity organisations in Telangana State have prevented such a disaster, which was appreciated the Chief Minister. Earlier, Prabhakar Rao reviewed the power situation in the State with the Transco and Genco officials. He appealed to the public to alert electricity staff when they spot damaged power lines hanging on buildings or lying on roads, if rainwater inundated apartment cellars, voltage fluctuations etc. Also, control rooms with helplines (1912 and 100) were established and people were told to call these numbers for any complaints.

## 'Cong depends on foreign newspapers to attack BJP'

- Congress and Rahul Gandhi's helplessness exposed, says BJP spokesperson Krishna Saagar Rao
- Social media companies didn't give electoral victories to BJP



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**Hyderabad:** Telangana BJP chief spokesperson K Krishna Saagar Rao said that Congress MP Rahul Gandhi has become so helpless that he has to depend on foreign newspaper columns to attack the BJP and RSS in India.

In a statement on Monday, he said that it is pathetic to see the Grand Old Party and its former president have no real issues concerning people and to meander around trivia. It exposes that the Congress party has betrayed the trust people have reposed in it, as an opposition party. He reminded that social media doesn't win elections for BJP. Instead, it's the

party's leadership, ideology, commitment and track record and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's clean governance, which lead the BJP to victory in almost all elections, he added. Rao said that the multinational Gandhi seems to have fallen in a social media trap and may have even relied on it to win the last general elections. "No wonder, he seems extremely frustrated, and looks quite juvenile when he accuses that multinational, stock market listed, social media companies are controlled by the BJP and RSS," he said.

The BJP leader said that the juvenile remarks of Rahul Gandhi have proven himself as intellectually challenged, all over again.

## Rising number of pending cases pains Governor; asks law colleges to upgrade

**Hyderabad:** Governor Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan expressed anguish over the increasing pendency of cases in the courts of law. The delay in the disposal of cases is resulting in untold hardship to the litigants.

The Governor inaugurated a 10-day online workshop on "Effective teaching, learning and research in law: Covid-19 challenges" organised by the Department of Law, Osmania University on Monday.

At the inauguration of the workshop, Soundararajan said that besides improving the infrastructure and manpower at the courts of law to facilitate speedy disposal of cases, there must be a greater use of technology.

Stating that as the nature of the litigations is changing very fast and one must constantly update the

knowledge of the domain, the Governor said, "It is high time that the traditional law colleges must update their curriculum and methodology to compete with the prestigious national law schools that are attracting the talented youngsters."

The increase in cybercrimes and issues like cyber bullying, hacking, digital character assassination and cyber stalking are resulting in depression among the younger generation. These issues must be addressed on a priority basis, the Governor said. Referring to the 100-year old Law Department in Osmania University, she said that it has produced many eminent jurists, advocates, administrators, leaders, teachers and legal luminaries. Soundararajan exhorted the faculty to continue the great tradition and

set high standards in the legal education.

Constant updating of the syllabus, technology-driven education, case laws, the inclusion of cyber laws, intellectual property laws and addressing current issues are the need of the hour in legal education, she said. The Governor appreciated the Law College in initiating the 10-day long online workshop akin to 10 days Dusshera celebrations to re-strategise their teaching, learning and research methodologies during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Osmania University Registrar Gopal Reddy, online workshop convener Gali Vinod Kumar, Dean Panth Naik, GB Reddy, keynote speaker R Venkata Rao, principal Vijaya Laxmi, vice-principal Radhika Yadav and others also took part.

## Uttam rues commercialisation of politics

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**Hyderabad:** TPCC president N Uttam Kumar Reddy has expressed concern over commercialisation of politics, especially in Telangana.

Addressing a condolence meeting of former MP Nandi Yellaiah at Gandhi Bhavan on Monday, Uttam said that it was difficult to find leaders like Nandi Yellaiah who epitomised values, honesty and integrity in public life and sincerity and loyalty to the party.

These days, he said, values and discipline are missing in both politics and public life. Nandi Yellaiah was a man of sterling character and discipline and he rose from the level of a corporator to the Member of Parliament only due to his superior values and re-



TPCC president N Uttam Kumar Reddy along with Congress senior leaders after paying floral tributes to former Congress MP Nandi Yellaiah who died recently, in Hyderabad on Monday

fined thoughts.

Uttam Kumar Reddy said that it was highly unfortunate that today people are witnessing an era where there is complete crass

commercialisation of politics. Entire electoral process has become so corrupt that right from Gram Panchayat to MP level everyone is talking only about

money. He said character, sincerity and commitment to the people in public life have gone missing these days. Consequently, money is controlling the corridors of power in all sphere of public life, he said.

The TPCC Chief said that the life and political career of Nandi Yellaiah must inspire people to do an assessment of the existing political system. He said that the society must explore answers to find out the reasons responsible for the distortion of politics. He said good leaders, who sincerely believe in values and principals, could guarantee quality in politics which eventually brings prosperity in the entire society. Congress cadre must emulate Nandi Yellaiah for his integrity and loyalty to party, TPCC chief said.

## Pvt hospitals reluctant to part with 50% Covid beds to govt

- The hospital managements fail to turn up to attend the meeting with the Health department officials on Monday
- The corporate hospitals earlier appeared to be ready to give 50 per cent of beds in lieu of giving free hand in Covid treatment offered to people in the remaining 50 percent beds

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**Hyderabad:** The Health department's plan to acquire 50 per cent of beds in private hospitals is not going to be a smooth ride. A meeting on this issue between hospital managements and senior officials of the department was not held as scheduled as representatives of corporate hospitals failed to turn up. While corporate hospitals are ready to give 50 per cent of beds they sought free hand for Covid treatment offered to people in the rest of the 50 percent beds. The

Health department officials, however, were not keen on this and they put a price cap of Rs 4 lakh for treatment done in the remaining 50 per cent beds in control of private hospitals. This issue was discussed in the last meeting held on Friday and hospital managements sought time till Monday to discuss with other members on this before arriving at a final decision. It looks like there was no consensus arrived between the corporate hospitals and hence they did not come for talks as planned.

## IIT-H incubated startup unveils electric scooter ETRANCE+



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**Hyderabad:** Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad (IIT-H) incubated startup PURE EV launched its latest electric scooter model ETrance+.

The new model is claimed to come with a 1.25 kwh portable battery providing 65 kilometre on road range.

It may be mentioned here that the company has an in-house battery manufacturing facility and a research setup based out of IIT-H campus. The company's R and D team works on core areas of battery thermal management system for the development of long-range and high-performance lithium batteries.

Highlighting the unique aspects of the new model, Rohit Vadera, the chief executive offi-

cer of PuREnergy said, "On the eve of Independence Day, we are proud to announce the launch of this entry-level scooter giving the Indians freedom from monthly fuel expenses. We are constantly innovating keeping in mind the requirements of the middle-class Indian consumers."

He said that the importance of personal mobility has increased significantly during the current Covid-19 crisis. People are looking for electric scooters at affordable prices. Against this backdrop, the ETrance+ is said to come keeping in mind the parameters to suit Indian road conditions. It is claimed to have the advanced features like regenerative braking, eABS and a SOC indicator that shows the percentage of battery capacity remaining. He said that the new model

will meet the requirements of the majority of customers looking to buy EVs for their daily short commutes. Earlier, the Electric Vehicle Startup had launched four products.

Dr Nishanth Dongari, founder of PURE EV and Associate Professor in the Department of Mechanical and Aerospace Engineering, IIT-H said, "The launch of ETrance+ is another important milestone for the company and such innovations are becoming feasible even during the pandemic due to our in-house battery technology."

Further, the incubation startup intends to emerge as one of the pioneers in India in shifting the customers' preference towards new generations lithium battery-powered electric scooters, he said.



# Indian team lauds decision to reschedule 2022 FIFA WC qualifiers

**New Delhi (IANS):** The wait for the return of international football continues with the rescheduling of the 2022 FIFA World Cup and 2023 AFC Asian Cup joint qualifiers by FIFA and AFC. However, the announcement has not dampened the spirits of Indian national team players.

Goalkeeper Gurpreet Singh Sandhu has sounded out the mood for the rest of the team, making it clear that it is a very good decision, keeping the safety of the players in mind.

In a live chat with AIFF TV, Gurpreet said: "I had a feeling about it. With the pandemic, it's not a very good situation -- to have a resumption of international football right now. It is important to have safety in mind," he stated.

"I'm raring to get back on the pitch. I can assure it's the same for the rest of the players too. I am raring to get back. From a player's perspective if you don't get an opportunity to play, you get ready for the next one."

Midfielder AnirudhThapa complemented Gurpreet high-



lighting "health of players is of paramount importance".

"My first thought after the announcement was that our wait to get back gets longer. But we need to think from a bigger perspective as well. Safety is important. I fully stand by the deci-

sion," Thapa stated.

Defender Adil Khan feels that although the postponement is "unfortunate", it has been taken "keeping in mind the safety of all the players".

"It is unfortunate that the qualifiers got postponed. But I

think it's an extremely good decision. It's a bit of a catch-22 situation. We are all sorely missing out on being out there on the pitch, but on the other hand, we also have to take into consideration the safety of everyone involved in organising

a match," said Adil.

Adil's fellow defender PritamKotal also feels that there is a great risk to the players who have to travel to different venues in order to play.

"We all saw what happened with the Bangladesh players and the players of the Indian hockey team. Many of them tested positive. I think when you have this kind of a situation at hands, it is wise to delay international sporting events that can be held at a later stage. Not only do you lose a lot of players for some while because of the virus, but the safety of these players are also in doubt," said Kotal.

With no football being played, the 27-year-old is now spending a lot of time collecting as much information about fitness as possible.

"I have been reading a lot about fitness. Normally I don't get the time to do so. But now that I have the time, I try to gather as much knowledge as possible - knowledge that will, later on, help me become a better player," Kotal informed.



## Indias' 1<sup>st</sup> full-fledged girls residential football academy launched

**Bengaluru (IANS):** RFC Girls Football Academy, India's first full-fledged girls residential football training facility, was launched by Rebels FC on Monday in Bengaluru.

The academy will provide top of the line scientific training for young female players to achieve their dream of becoming a professional football player and also help them pursue a career in the sport. The full-fledged residential football program integrated with educational pursuits is located in a campus at New Age World School, Yelahanka, Bengaluru.

The football training destination is open to Under 13 to Under 22 youth from all socio-economic

backgrounds, offering them an international level of training programs formulated by its highly qualified technical team honoured with UEFA and AFC coaching licenses led by our Technical Director, Ajit Braich.

"I would like to congratulate RFC for setting up the Girls Residential Football Academy. We at the AIFF have a very robust plan to develop women's football in India starting with the U17 Women's World Cup in 2021 and hosting of the Women's Asian Cup in 2022. Academies like RFC will go a long way in achieving the goals," Kushal Das, General Secretary, All India Football Federation said.

## India's Prince signs with First Love Christian Academy in US

**Washington (IANS):** The NBA Academy India's Pranav Prince has signed up with the First Love Christian Academy, a private high school in Washington, Pennsylvania.

The 17-year old becomes the second male student-athlete from the NBA Academy India to get a high-school basketball scholarship in the US.

Prince first participated in the 2016-17 Reliance Foundation Jr. NBA program before joining the NBA Academy India in 2018 as a part of academy's second class of student-athletes identified through the ACG-NBA Jump program.

The 6-6 guard represented the NBA Academy India at the 2018 and 2019 NBA Academy Games in Australia and the US, respectively. He led the NBA Academy India in scoring (15.3) and rebounding (8.8) in the Stage 1 of Euro Youth Basketball League in Hungary in 2019.

Prince was one of the 23 NBA Academy prospects from 15 countries selected to participate in the NBA Global Academy Development Camp in Australia in November 2019.

"I would like to thank First Love Christian Academy and coach Khayree for offering me this opportunity to play for their high school team. I am also grate-



ful to my family and every member of the NBA Academy India and all my coaches who have supported me through the journey," said Prince.

"I'm excited to announce that Pranav Prince will become the first student athlete from India to attend our program and will be playing on our national team. We work extremely hard to identify and develop international student-athletes at a high level, competitively, culturally and globally as we prepare them for the next level," said First Love Christian Academy CEO Nathan Roesing.

Prince, who is from Kerala, was a member of the India U-16 team that went unbeaten in the SABA Basketball Championships 2019 and clinched a spot in the next edition of the FIBA U16 Asia Cup.



## Nishikori tests +ve for Covid-19 ahead of US Open

**Washington (IANS):** Japanese tennis player Kei Nishikori has tested positive for coronavirus and has withdrawn from the Western & Southern Open which starts next week. "This morning while still in Florida, I got tested for COVID-19 and tested positive," said Nishikori in a statement on Sunday as per BBC Sport.

"I will have to pull out of the Cincinnati tournament at this time. Me and my team will get tested again on Friday at which point I will have another update," he added. The 30-year-old further said he is "feeling well" but will now isolate and get tested again on Friday. According to America's public health authority, those who test positive for coronavirus must isolate themselves for 10 days. Under those rules, Nishikori's isolation would end on August 26, five days before the US Open begins in New York. Defending champions Rafael Nadal and Bianca Andreescu have already withdrawn from this year's US Open -- slated to begin from August 31 -- due to COVID-19.

## ENG vs PAK 2ND TEST

## No respite from rain as England remain on 7/1

**Southampton (IANS):** England were on 7/1 against Pakistan at Lunch on Day 5 of the rain-hit second Test as no play was possible in the first session at the Ageas Bowl on Monday.

At Lunch on Day 5, Dom Sibley was batting on 2 with Zak Crawley on 5. England trail Pakistan by 229 runs. No play was possible on Day 3 because of persistent rain and bad light.

Resuming at 223/9 on Day 4, Mohammad Rizwan top-scored for the tourists with a fighting 72 as Stuart Broad and James Anderson returned figures of 4/56 and 3/60, respectively, to bowl out Pakistan for 236.

England lost Rory Burns (0) in the first over itself as Shaheen Shah Afridi had the left hander caught at second slip by Asad Shafiq.

Only 5 overs were possible before the skies opened up again and early lunch was taken. On Day 2, England made quick work of the Pakistan tail after Babar Azam's dismissal by getting rid of Yasir Shah and Shaheen Afridi in quick succession. However, Rizwan went on the counter after that and helped his team past the 200-run mark.

**Brief scores:** Pakistan 236 (Mohammad Rizwan 72, Abid Ali 60, Babar Azam 47; Stuart Broad 4/56, James Anderson 3/60) vs England 7/1 (Dom Sibley 2 batting, Zak Crawley 5 batting).



## England owe Pak a reciprocal tour in 2022: Akram

**Southampton (IANS):** Wasim Akram has said that England owe Pakistan a reciprocal tour after Azhar Ali's men travelled for three-Test series to the United Kingdom amid the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Pakistan are currently involved in the Test series in England following which the two teams will contest in three T20Is as well.

"You boys owe Pakistan cricket, and the country, a lot, with the boys coming over here. They've been here almost two and half months in the bio-secure environment," Akram told Sky Sports Cricket.

"So if everything goes well, England should tour Pakistan. I promise you they'll get looked after on and off the field there and every game will be a packed house," he added. England have not toured Pakistan since 2005-06 over security concerns following the 2009 terrorist attack on the Sri Lanka team bus in Lahore. The Three Lions are, however, scheduled to tour the country in 2022.



## Warne backs Rashid to make Test comeback for England

**Southampton (IANS):** Spin legend Shane Warne feels that leg-spinner Adil Rashid should be drafted back in the England Test team. Rashid has been out of the Test team since early 2019, when he won the last of his 19 caps against the West Indies, but he recently recovered from a dodgy shoulder to return to England's white-ball side.

"I think England are missing a trick by not having Rashid -- he's probably coming into the best form of his life," Warne was quoted as saying by Sky Sports.

Warne was discussing the state of international spin bowling alongside Michael Atherton and Nasser Hussain on Sky Sports' YouTube channel.



## HALEP BEATS MERTENS TO CLINCH PRAGUE OPEN TITLE

**Prague (IANS):** Top seed Simona Halep produced a scintillating performance as she defeated Elise Mertens in straight sets to clinch the Prague Open title.

Halep beat No. 3 seed Mertens 6-2, 7-5 in the summit clash that lasted one hour and 33 minutes on Sunday. The World No. 2 has now collected trophies in both her last tournament before the WTA Tour shutdown, in Dubai in February, and her first tournament since its resumption, extending her winning streak to nine matches and counting. "It was really tough to get back to official matches after such a long break," she told press as per the WTA website after the match. "The emotions after staying in the room for 10 days were not easy - but you know, I have to take the positives also, I was able to win the tournament which means a lot. This was Halep's 21st career WTA trophy - the fifth-highest tally of active players behind only Serena Williams, Venus Williams, Kim Clijsters and Petra Kvitova.

**Chennai (Agencies):** Suresh Raina, who announced his retirement from international cricket on 15 August along with former India captain MS Dhoni, has spoken about the decision and also revealed the day's events.

According to a report in ESPN-Cricinfo that cites another report from Hindi daily Dainik Jagran, Raina knew about Dhoni's imminent retirement and was prepared for the moment.



## Raina reveals reason behind him, Dhoni choosing Aug 15 to announce retirement

"I knew Dhoni would announce his retirement upon reaching Chennai, so I was ready. After announcing our retirement, we hugged and cried a lot. I, Piyush, Ambati Rayudu, Kedar Jadhav, and Karn sat together after that, talked about our careers and our relationship. We parted during the night," Raina said.

Both Raina and Dhoni are members of Indian Premier League side Chennai Super Kings

and will soon fly to UAE to play this year's edition.

Raina also said that both him and Dhoni had decided to announce their retirement on Independence Day and gave a unique reason behind selecting this particular day.

"We had already made up our minds to retire on Saturday (August 15). Dhoni's jersey number is 7 and mine is 3. Put it together and it makes 73.



"Suresh Raina has been one of the key performers in limited-overs cricket for India. Coming lower down the order and playing some of the match-winning knocks requires a lot of skill and talent. He along with Yuvraj Singh and MS Dhoni formed a solid middle order for India in ODIs. I wish him and his family all the very best," Sourav Ganguly, BCCI President

## India playing Pakistan would give Test cricket a massive boost: Atherton



**Southampton (IANS):** Former England captain Michael Atherton believes the chances of India and Pakistan contesting in a bilateral cricket series are minimal at the moment, which according to him is a "great shame".

While the two countries have faced each other numerous times in multi-national tournaments organised by the International Cricket Council (ICC) or the Asian Cricket Council (ACC), India and Pakistan have not faced each other in a bilateral series since Pakistan's 2012/13 tour of India for two T20Is and three ODIs. The last time the two sides played a Test series against each other was when Pakistan toured India for a three-match series in 2007/08.

"I think the chances of India and Pakistan playing each other outside of ICC

tournaments, even at a neutral venue, are minimal at the moment," said Atherton, who visited Pakistan earlier this year to film the Sky Sports Cricket documentary Out of Exile. "They seem as far apart as ever from playing each other which is a great shame because it would be the one thing that would give Test cricket a massive boost," he added.

The two Asian giants last faced each other in the 2019 World Cup at the Old Trafford in Manchester when Virat Kohli's men thrashed Pakistan in the round-robin game. "Pakistan vs India games are unbelievable affairs as we saw at Emirates Old Trafford in the World Cup last year," said Atherton. "I think there were around 600,000 applications for tickets for a ground that holds 25,000," he added.

## China Badminton Super League to begin from Aug 27

**Beijing (IANS):** The 2020 China Badminton Super League will run from August 27 to September 14 in Chengdu, the Chinese Badminton Association announced on Monday. Eight clubs, including 2018-19 Super League champions Zhejiang Nengyuan, will participate in the mixed team league that will run in a knockout competition format this year, reports Xinhua news agency. Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, all games will be played in empty arenas, with all players, coaches and other staff required to take nucleic acid tests before the tournament.