

## WINDOWS

### Shah recovers, to be discharged soon

New Delhi: Union Home Minister Amit Shah has recovered and will be discharged from the All India Institute of Medical Sciences, eleven days after being admitted for post-COVID care. "He has recovered and is likely to be discharged in a short time," AIIMS media and protocol division chairperson Dr Aarti Vij said in a statement on Saturday. On August 18, Shah was admitted to the apex institute for post-COVID treatment after he complained of fatigue and body-ache. On August 2, he had tweeted after testing positive for coronavirus. He had said that he was fine but was getting admitted to a hospital on the advice of doctors.

### 3 terrorists killed in J&K encounter

Srinagar: A soldier was killed in the line of duty during an anti-terror operation in South Kashmir's Pulwama district in which three terrorists belonging to the Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) were gunned down, police said. The encounter broke out after security forces launched an anti-terror operation late last night at Zadoora area in the south Kashmir district. In the gunbattle that followed, three terrorists of the terror outfit were killed, police said. This is the second anti-terror operation in the union territory in 24 hours. Four terrorists were killed, and one was captured in Kiloora area of Shopian district in an encounter on Friday.

## BUSINESS



### 'BE INDIAN, BUY INDIAN WILL BOOST LOCAL CONSUMPTION'

P7

## SPORTS



### RAINA PULLS OUT OF IPL, BACK IN INDIA

P8

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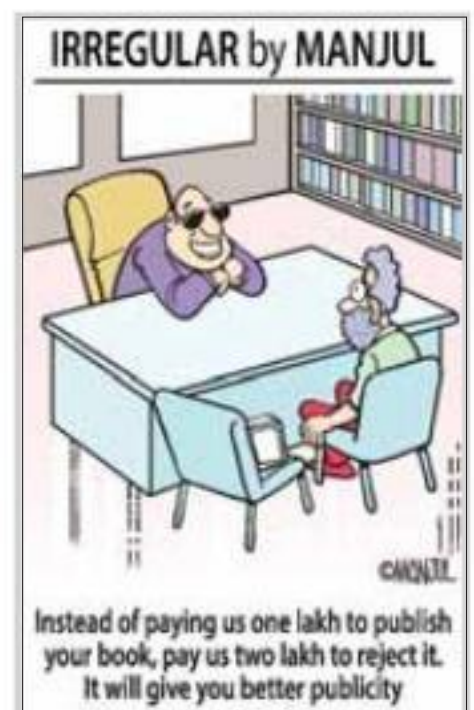
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## UNLOCK 4.0

# METRO SET TO CHUG AGAIN

Centre allows resuming Metro services from Sept 7 in graded manner

PURNA SINGH

New Delhi: The Union Ministry of Home Affairs has decided to allow Metro rail services from September 7 in a graded manner. The standard operating procedure (SOP) for the same will be announced soon in consultation with the Ministry of Railways.

It has also decided to allow students of classes 9 to 12 to visit their schools, in areas outside the containment zones only, on voluntary basis, for taking guidance from their teachers. This will be subject to written consent of their parents and guardians. However, schools, colleges, educational and coaching institutions will continue to remain closed for students and regular class activity up to September 30.

According to the new guidelines issued on Saturday for Unlock 4.0, social, academic, sports, entertainment, cultural, religious, political functions and other congregations will be permitted with a ceiling of 100 persons, with effect from September 21. However, such limited gatherings can be held with mandatory wearing of face masks, social distancing, provision for thermal scanning and



- ▶ Limited social, academic, sports, religious, political gatherings allowed from Sept 21
- ▶ Open air theatres can operate from September 21
- ▶ Online learning to be permitted and encouraged
- ▶ 50% of teaching, non-teaching staff can attend institutes
- ▶ HEIs allowed to take up research work by Ph D, PG students
- ▶ Class 9-12 students may visit their schools with riders
- ▶ Schools, colleges remain closed for regular class activity
- ▶ Cinemas, swimming pools locked down till Sept 30

hand wash or sanitizer. It has also decided to permit open air theatres with effect from September 21. Officials of the MoH said that these decisions were taken after extensive consultation with States and UTs. Another important decision was that online and distance learning shall continue to be permitted and shall be encouraged. The guidelines further say that states and UTs may

permit up to 50% of teaching and non-teaching staff to be called to the schools at a time for online teaching and tele-counselling and related work.

Skill or entrepreneurship training will be permitted in National Skill Training Institutes, Industrial Training Institutes (ITIs), short-term training centres registered with the National Skill Development Corporation or State

Skill Development Missions or other Ministries of Government of India or State Governments.

The National Institute for Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development (NIESBUD), Indian Institute of Entrepreneurship (IIE) and their training providers will also be permitted.

Higher Education Institutions only for research scholars (Ph D) and post-

graduate students of technical and professional programmes requiring laboratory and experimental works will be permitted by the Department of Higher Education (DHE) in consultation with the MHA depending upon the assessment of the situation, and incidences of Covid-19 in the States and UTs.

Cinema halls, swimming pools, entertainment parks, theatres (excluding open air theatres) and similar places will not be permitted till September 30. Lockdown shall continue to be implemented strictly in the Containment Zones till September 30.

Containment Zones shall be demarcated by the district authorities at micro level after taking into consideration the guidelines of MoHFW with the objective of effectively breaking the chain of transmission. Strict containment measures will be enforced in these containment zones and only essential activities will be allowed. The MoH said there shall be no restriction on inter-State and intra-State movement of persons and goods. No separate permission, approval or e-permit will be required for such movements.

## Will rejoin Paris climate pact, says Kamala Harris

Washington: Indian-origin Senator Kamala Harris, the US Democratic Party's vice-presidential candidate, has pledged to re-join the Paris climate agreement and re-enter the Iran nuclear deal to restore "our place in the world" and win back the "trust and support" of the US's Asian and European allies if her party wins the November presidential election.

Kamala Harris, is the running mate of Democratic presidential candidate Joe Biden. At a virtual



fundraiser on Friday, she was asked how a Biden-Harris administration would restore the "trust and support of our European and Asian allies."

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### Kamala 'not competent', Ivanka better: Don

Washington: Kamala Harris is 'not competent' to be President, US President Donald Trump has said as he launched an attack on the Indian-origin senator's credentials. Trump said he would support seeing a female President in the US but suggested that his daughter Ivanka Trump would be a better candidate for such a role.

### 8 held at Delhi rly station with gold biscuits worth ₹43 cr

New Delhi: The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) busted a global gold smuggling racket late on Friday when it apprehended 8 persons at the New Delhi train station with 504 gold biscuits, with foreign markings, hidden in their clothing.

The gold bars, valued at Rs 43 crore, were discovered concealed in the specifically customized fabric vests used by them, who were taking a trip on the Dibrugarh-New Delhi Rajdhani Express utilizing phony Aadhaar cards, the DRI Deputy Director stated.

The DRI said the arrests were made on the basis of particular intelligence collected by its Delhi Zonal Unit sleuths over months.

"Intelligence inputs suggest that these gold bars were smuggled into India from Myanmar through the worldwide land border at Moreh in Manipur, and the smuggling distribute, running from Guwahati, was trying to get rid of the contraband in Delhi, Kolkata and Mumbai," the DRI said. The gold bars are of 99.9 percent purity and jointly weigh 83.6 kg.



Youngsters swim in the swollen Yamuna river near a partially submerged temple, in New Delhi on Saturday

## Yamuna continues to flow at danger mark

New Delhi: The Yamuna was flowing precariously close to the warning mark in Delhi on Saturday morning, but the water level is expected to recede, officials said.

"The water level was recorded at 204.23 meters at the Old Railway Bridge at 10 am. It was 204.41 meters at 5 pm on Friday and 203.77 metres at 10 am on Thursday," an official of the irrigation and flood control department said.

Water was being released into the Yamuna at the rate of 7.173 cusec at 8 am from

the Hathnikund barrage in Haryana's Yamunanagar district. The flow rate was 13,871 cusec cusec at 4 pm on Friday, the maximum in the last 24 hours.

"The flow rate has remained between 10,000 cusec to 25,000 cusec over the last two days, which is not very high," the official said.

The water discharged from the barrage — which provides drinking water to Delhi — normally takes two-three days to reach the capital.

The water level rose on Friday due to rains in Delhi and

neighbouring areas, the official said.

The East Delhi district administration has deployed 24 boats, each with two divers, to monitor the situation. More boats and teams of divers are on standby.

The river had swelled to 204.38 metres on Monday, which was just a metre below the danger mark of 205.33 metres.

Normally, the flow rate at the Hathnikund barrage is 352 cusec, but the discharge is increased after heavy rainfall in catchment areas.

## Use mother tongue in all walks of life: Venkaiah

HANS NEWS SERVICE

New Delhi: Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu on Saturday said the native languages or mother tongue should be used extensively in various fields including administration. He stressed that imparting education in the mother tongue will enable a child to grasp and understand the subjects better than in any other language.

Addressing a webinar on "Our Language, Our Society and Our Culture" on

the occasion of Telugu Language day organised by the South Africa Telugu Community (SATC), he stressed on the need to preserve and protect Telugu Language. "All Telugus irrespective of whether they are living in India or abroad must strive for the promotion of their language and culture, which lay the foundation for the development of society," he said.

Telugu language experts and members of Telugu associations from all over the



world, including London, Sydney, Canberra, Abu Dhabi, Scotland, Hong Kong, South Africa, New

Zealand and Germany participated in the video conference.

The event was organised to coincide with the Birth Anniversary of Gidugu Venkata Rama Murthy, a Telugu linguist and pioneer in the promotion of the language.

Venkaiah Naidu called for developing simple scientific terminology in Telugu language saying it will help the common people to have a better understanding of science and technology. The Vice-President

said there should be a thorough review and introspection of the progress made in using Telugu and other Indian languages in day-to-day life. He said that a language symbolises the richness of one's civilization. The language also denotes the importance of games, languages, festivals and arts in society at large.

Vice-President said the glorious heritage and richness of a language can be protected and preserved only by passing it to the coming generations.

Observing that many native languages across the world were facing the risk of marginalisation in the era of globalisation, he cautioned that they would become extinct if the trend continued. The Vice-President pointed out that countries like France, Germany, Russia, Japan and China were able to effectively compete with other developed nations although they accorded pre-dominance to their native languages in all fields.

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## Realtor found dead in hotel room

HANS NEWS SERVICE

**Hyderabad:** A 55-year old, Venkata Narsaiah, a realtor by profession and a native of Karimnagar arrived in the city on Friday and booked a room in lodge in Nacharam stating that he was on an official visit and later on allegedly committed suicide by consuming poison. However, when there was no response from his room, the hotel staff informed the police. The police then arrived at the scene and broke the room and found the realtor to be lying dead on the bed along with a suicide note which said that, he was depressed with life as he had incurred huge debts amounting about Rs 1 crore and for this reason he is committing suicide.

## Kavitha helps disabled youth, provides scooter



Kavitha with Boga Vinay who lost his legs in an accident, in Korutla town

HANS NEWS SERVICE

**Hyderabad:** Former MP and Telangana Jagruti president Kalvakuntla Kavitha, helped a youth who lost his two legs in an accident by providing a scooter. Boga Vinay, an engineering graduate from Korutla town had met with a road accident in 2014 that severely damaged his legs. The youth who was unable to work for six years now and with medical bills over Rs 18 lakh, his family was also in distress and his

mother chose to look after him. Kavitha read about the heart-rending circumstances of Vinay and his family, immediately reached out to Vinay, interacted with him and assured support from the TRS party and herself. Kavitha on behalf of the TRS on Saturday, handed over a handicapped scooter to Vinay in presence of his mother in Hyderabad. Vinay's family thanked TRS, former MP Kavitha, Korutla MLA Vidya Sagar Rao for extending their support.

## 3 chain-snatchers arrested by CCS

**Hyderabad:** The CCS of LB Nagar, along with Meerpet police on Saturday arrested three chain snatchers who were regular offenders and have committed multiple offences in the Rachakonda Police Commissionerate limits. The accused were identified as Prakash, Venkatesh and Vamshi Krishna and also 16 tulas of gold ornaments a bike all worth Rs 10 lakh was recovered from their possession. According to police, the accused Prakash was a civil contractor and a real estate broker. While doing business he got in contact with Venkatesh who was a short film maker and they both got acquainted with Vamshi Krishna who gave the idea of committing thefts of gold chains from ladies walking alone on the streets.

The accused persons did not have any work and were struggling to make their ends meet. According to their plan, they would initially do re-see of a particular colony and after finalising a target they would act swiftly and commit the offence. In such a way, they had committed 11 offences in the year 2019 and 2020. However, they were arrested after a lot of investigation and were booked under section 392 of IPC and will be remanded to judicial custody, said the police.

## Bandi alleges misuse of Central funds by TS govt

- State BJP chief urges Union Agriculture Minister to ensure the funds released by the Centre is spent in TS transparently
- The Karimnagar MP meets the Union Ministers and submits representations on various development projects and release of funds to Telangana

HANS NEWS SERVICE

**Hyderabad:** Telangana BJP State president Bandi Sanjay Kumar requested the Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar to ensure that the funds released to Telangana under Agricultural Infrastructure Fund (AIF) are spent transparently. The Karimnagar MP met the Union Agriculture Minister and the Union Minister



Telangana BJP State president Bandi Sanjay Kumar calling on Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar in New Delhi on Saturday

of State for Railways, Suresh Aghadi and submitted representations on various development projects and release of funds to Telangana. He said the AIF is meant to transform and strengthen the lives of farmers in the country. However, at the same times, he expressed doubts about the misuse of the Central funds under the scheme in Telangana and sought the Union Agriculture Minister to take steps to ensure that the State government implements the scheme transparently.

He also asked the Union Ministers to mount pressure on the State government, for release of its share

for several developmental and new projects taken up under various ministries in Telangana. He said that delay in releasing funds from the State is a delay in the implementation of projects, he added. Similarly, he discussed with Suresh Aghadi the pending, progress of ongoing and new railway projects in the State, in particular the Hasan Parti-Karimnagar railway line project. He requested the minister to take steps for the construction of Railway Over Bridge at Thigalakuppalu in Karimnagar town in addition the second railway line between Karimnagar-Nizamabad.

## Woman ends life fearing coronavirus

HANS NEWS SERVICE

**Hyderabad:** A 50-year-old woman identified as, Aradhana Vijayvargiya allegedly committed suicide by hanging herself at her residence in Shalivahana Nagar in Malakpet, fearing she may contract the deadly coronavirus.

According to police, the woman took the extreme step on Wednesday night but, the issue came to light on Saturday. The woman was staying with her husband Surender Kumar Vijayvargiya on the top floor and their tenants who were in the ground floor contracted the virus.

Upon hearing about them, the woman started behaving abnormally and was depressed most of the time. She also used to confront her husband about contracting the virus, but he used to calm her.

However she went into depression and on Wednesday night after having dinner, she went into her room and committed suicide by hanging to the ceiling fan, said the police.

## Chennur MLA reviews Palle and Pattana Pragathi works

**Hyderabad:** Chennur MLA B Suman on Saturday reviewed the Palle Pragathi and Pattana Pragathi works with the Sarpanches of different villages in his constituency through tele-conference. The Chennur MLA enquired about the works pertaining to dumping yard, Vaikuntadhamam, Harita Haram and NREGA etc. Recently, Suman had interacted with the municipal commissioners and asked about the steps taken by

officials on Covid19, Pattana Pragathi, GIS survey, coordination with the agency and also the payment issues. He asked the officials to release funds from Pattana Pragathi. He also reviewed solid waste management and water supply through Mission Bhagiratha, street lighting, action plan for the rainy season, and urban forestry. The MLA also sought suggestions from the municipal commissioners for reforms in the Municipality.



## Rachakonda CP inaugurates traffic police station

**Bhongir:** Rachakonda CP Mahesh Bhagwat urged people to follow traffic rules to avoid accidents. On Saturday, Bhagwat inaugurated new traffic police station in Bhongir along with MLC A Krishna Reddy, DCP Narayana Reddy, traffic additional DCP Manohar. The estimated cost of the police station building is said to be Rs 25 lakh.

Speaking on the occasion he said that out of 2,000 autos, more than 1,100 autos were registered under My auto safe programme held in Bhongir. Also, as many as 30,000 cabs were registered under my safe cab programme held under Rachakonda Commissionerate jurisdiction.

Stating that recovery van and bikes were provided to the new traffic police station, the CP informed that sufficient staff would be allotted to the station very soon. MLC Krishna Reddy on the occasion stated that lorries and heavy duty trucks of other states are moving via Bhongir thus he suggested the local municipal officials to shift the roadside shops somewhere else from Jagdevpur chowrasta as many road accidents have been taking place near the junction.

Later, both MLC and CP planted saplings on the station premises. ACP N Bhujanaga Rao, traffic ACP Shankar, AR ACP B Krishnaiah and other officials also participated.

## NEET, JEE POSTPONEMENT

# NSUI chief's fast enters 3<sup>rd</sup> day

Condition deteriorates, shifted to hospital

HANS NEWS SERVICE

**Hyderabad:** Despite persuasion by TPCC chief, N Uttam Kumar Reddy to break the fast, the NSUI president, B Venkat whose BP and sugar levels dropped drastically, continued his fast on the third day and was shifted to a private hospital on Saturday.

While hailing the brave decision and determination of the NSUI president, Venkat Balmoor, the TPCC chief expressed concern over the deteriorating health condition of him. He along with other leaders V Hanumantha Rao, D Sridhar Babu sent him-off in

an ambulance. "Venkat took up the indefinite fast hoping for the well-being of the students in view of corona pandemic and risked his life. Because of the deteriorating health condition, we had to shift him to the hospital. The Congress will continue to agitate over the issue on his behalf with the demand to postpone all kinds of exams, both in State and across the country," he said.

Meanwhile police foiled the NSUI leaders' 'Chalo Raj Bhavan' programme as they were prevented from coming out on roads from Gandhi Bhavan, the site of 'indefinite fast'. According to Union leaders, the NSUI will not let down students of the country who wish



TPCC chief, N Uttam Kumar Reddy at Gandhi Bhavan while NSUI president, Venkat Balmoor, being shifted to hospital on Saturday

that government reconsider its decision of holding both at State and national levels.

## All set for TS ECET-2020 tomorrow: JNTUH

- It will be the first common entrance test to be held after the lockdown
- Students attending the test asked to strictly follow social distancing
- Candidates are asked to wear masks and frequently sanitize their hands

HANS NEWS SERVICE

**Hyderabad:** JNTUH said all necessary preparations have been made for conducting the TS ECET-2020 on Monday (August 31).

The computer-based test (CBT) will be held from 9 am to 12 noon in the morning session and 3 pm to 6 pm in the afternoon session.

Over 26,700 candidates have downloaded hall tickets to write



the test, informed TS ECET-2020 convener and JNTUH Registrar Dr M Manzoor Hussain informed on Saturday. As many as 59 observers and 9 special observers are drafted from JNTUH, Kakatiya University, Osmania University, Telangana University for the conduct of the State-level test, he added.

He said that the mock tests were made available on the website for all candidates to practice

the CBT as many times as they wish for a better understanding of the test. He asked the candidates to visit the TSECET-2020 website for further details.

The candidates are also asked to visit the allotted test centre before the examination. Besides, they are asked to wear a quality mask and sanitize their hands frequently, and avoid close interaction with other candidates at the test centres.

## RARE SIGHT



The halo, the full rainbow around the Sun, a rare sight in the daily grind of life, captured by our lensman G Shyam Kumar at the district Collectorate arch in Hanamkonda on Saturday.

## TERROR THREAT

# Security beefed up for Raja Singh

The Police Commissioner said that there was a security threat from terrorists to the MLA who is often seen riding a two-wheeler leaving behind his security cover

HANS NEWS SERVICE

**Hyderabad:** City Police has beefed up security of Raja Singh, the lone BJP MLA in Telangana, in the wake of threat from terrorists.

City Police Commissioner Anjani Kumar on Friday wrote a letter to the Goshamahal MLA, informing him about a threat from a terrorist organisation.

According to police sources, the security for the MLA has been beefed up at his residence. The Police Commissioner said that there was a security threat to the MLA who is often seen riding a two-wheeler leaving behind his security cover.

He further said, "providing proper security to the MLA is our top priority. It is to inform you that due to your threat perception, enhanced security has been provided to you, and security personnel are also being alerted and checked from time to time. Special training has been or-



ganised to all your personal security personnel."

The CP advised the ML to avoid riding motorcycles as it has been often noticed, rather than prefer the bullet proof car provided by the government for his own security, stated the Commissioner.

The MLA has released an audio message in response to the letter and asked the Commissioner and government of Telangana to clarify the threat elements. He also further said that he will write a letter to the Union Home Minister Amit Shah and State Home Minister Md. Mahmood Ali regarding this issue.

# Muslim group wants written order for rebuilding of Sectt mosques

We do not want empty rhetoric by CM in Assembly, says Tahreek Muslim Shabban president Mushtaq Malik

HANS NEWS SERVICE

**Hyderabad:** The city-based Tahreek Muslim Shabban, which vowed to build two mosques at the same place in Secretariat, cautioned the Chief Minister from indulging in rhetoric over the issue in the upcoming Assembly session and issue a written order to resolve the matter if he is sincere.

The organisation which spearheaded the 'million march' against the CAA in beginning of this year, is confident of crossing 'one million signatures' on the latest issue it has picked up. "We have received signatures not only from Muslims but also from non-Muslim brothers from Secunderabad and districts. This is a huge mandate and we shall be sending the representation to



Muslim taking part in signature campaign in Hyderabad

Pragathi Bhavan and representation would also be made to the Governor in the coming days,"

said Shabban president, Mushtaq Malik, while addressing the media persons.

He reiterated that as per law, the land where the mosque stood, would certainly become property of Wakf and not even the government has the right to change its status. "The Parliament Act, Wakf Act and even the Supreme Court ruling acknowledges this fact, citing 'once wakf is always wakf' and the KCR government has done the crime, as it was planned," he said.

The leader pointed out that the Muslim community would not be convinced now by oral promises of KCR, if he comes up with another in the upcoming Assembly sessions in September. "We have seen umpteen promises which were never fulfilled till now. Hence, we shall not keep quiet till order is passed in favour of constructing mosques at the same place," he cautioned.



# US, UK handled pandemic worse than other advanced nations: Poll

**Washington (IANS):** The US and the UK have handled the coronavirus pandemic worse than any other advanced nation, according to a new poll.

According to the poll conducted by the Pew Research Center, only 46 per cent of Britons and 47 per cent of Americans think their government has coped well with the pandemic, far lower than Denmark with 95 per cent, Xinhua news agency reported.

They are the only two countries where a minority of people said the government had done well.

The US ranked last, with 18 per cent saying that the country is more united now after the Covid-19 outbreak.

That is a full 21 percentage points below the next lowest-ranking countries.

Germany and France had the second and third lowest score for feelings of unity, where 39 per cent of respondents said their country



was more united than before.

The US is the worst-hit country with 5,913,564 confirmed Covid-19 cases and 181,767 deaths, both tallies accounting for the highest in the world.

The UK has so far reported a total of 333,798 cases and 41,573 deaths.

As of Saturday, the overall number of global coronavirus cases stood at 24,646,610, while the deaths increased to 835,730, according to the Johns Hopkins University.

The UK government has unveiled a series of measures to allow the safe mass rollout of a Covid-19 vaccine in the near future, the Department of Health and Social Care announced.

According to the announcement on Friday, the measures include reinforced safeguards to support the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency to grant temporary authorization for the use of a new vaccine, provided it meets the highest

safety and quality standards, reports Xinhua news agency.

It also includes expanding the trained workforce who can administer Covid-19 and flu vaccines.

"We are making progress in developing Covid-19 vaccines which we hope will be important in saving lives, protecting healthcare workers and returning to normal in future," said Professor Jonathan Van-Tam, deputy chief medical officer for England.

## 2007 UK AIRPORT ATTACK

### LeT terrorist in NIA custody

**New Delhi (IANS):** In a major breakthrough, the National Investigation Agency (NIA) arrested a Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) terrorist, who is closely related to the mastermind of the 2007 Glasgow airport attack, after he was brought to India from Saudi Arabia, officials said on Saturday.

According to senior NIA officials related to the probe, Shabeel Ahmed was brought to India late Friday.

Ahmed had moved from Bengaluru to Saudi Arabia in 2010-11. He was also arrested in connection with the 2007 attack in which a person died, said an NIA official requesting anonymity.

The official said that Ahmed is the cousin of the UK airport attack mastermind Kafeel Ahmed.

Anti-terror probe agency officials said that Ahmed was also wanted in a case registered by the Delhi Police Special Cell in 2015 and was declared a proclaimed offender by a Delhi court on July 12, 2016.

In August 2017, the Indian agencies had brought in another Al Qaeda in the Indian Subcontinent (AQIS) suspect named Syed Mohammed Zishan Ali



from Saudi Arabia. He is believed to be married to Ahmed's sister.

The official said that the role of Ahmed in India came under scrutiny after the Special Cell busted a major AQIS network, with the arrest of Cuttack-based cleric Abdul Rehman and others in December 2015.

According to agency officials, Rehman allegedly told the police that he met Ahmed in Bengaluru in 2009, shortly after the latter had returned from the UK after serving a sentence.

The official added that Ahmed will be produced before a court later in the day in Delhi. He will taken to other places, including Bengaluru, for further investigation on transit remand.

# Migrant labourers turning out to be a poll issue in Bihar

**Patna (IANS):** The migration of labourers is turning out to be a poll issue for the opposition parties in Bihar. Tejashwi Yadav, leader of the opposition, has slammed Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar for being unable to create jobs in the state. As a result, workers who walked thousands of kilometres to reach their homes from other states during the lockdown are again heading towards states having more job opportunities.

Tejashwi Yadav's statement came a day after Pappu Yadav, president of the Jan Adhikar Party, sharply attacked CM Nitish Kumar on the same issue.

"The development of Bihar is currently reflected at the airport of Patna where hundreds of workers are assembling to catch flights. The development is also visible in villages where buses are being sent by employers from other states to take our skilled labourers," Tejashwi said.



"These labourers travelled thousands of kms during the Covid-19 lockdown to reach their homes. They deserve some respect and jobs back home. The employers from other states are

sending air tickets and buses for the labourers of Bihar. It clearly explains the approach of the Bihar government," Tejashwi added.

Tejashwi claimed that around

40 lakh migrant labourers returned home during the lockdown. The Nitish Kumar government had announced that it will deposit Rs 1,000 in every labourer's account. Fifty per cent of them are deprived of government aid. More importantly, Bihar has a double engine government but neither the state nor the centre have extended their helping hand towards them," Tejashwi said.

"Nitish Kumar is a respectable person. I respect him personally. At the same time, he is also a liar. He hid the actual data of corona infected persons. There are 84 lakh people in Bihar's 16 districts who are affected by floods. I have pointed this out several times but the CM went for an aerial survey just twice," Tejashwi said.

"In the last 28 days, 80,000 new cases of Covid 19 have been recorded in the state including 376 who have lost their lives," Tejashwi added.



## Black Panther star Boseman dies at 43

**Washington:** American actor Chadwick Boseman, best known for his role in Black Panther, has died of cancer, the BBC reported, quoting his family. The 43-year-old actor died at his home in Los Angeles with his wife and family by his side. Boseman had not spoken publicly about his diagnosis.

"A true fighter, Chadwick persevered through it all, and brought you many of the films you have come to love so much," his family said in a statement.

"From Marshall to Da 5 Bloods, August Wilson's Ma Rainey's Black Bottom and several more - all were filmed during and between countless surgeries and chemotherapy. It was the honor of his career to bring King T'Challa to life in Black Panther," it said. Boseman's family said he was diagnosed with colon cancer four years ago.

## India received 296 mm of rain in Aug, highest in 44 years: IMD

**New Delhi:** India has received the highest rainfall in August this year since 1976 -- 25 per cent more than the average, after recording 10 per cent less downpour than the average in July, thus setting a new record after 44 years, the IMD said.

The India Meteorological Department however, has forecast that the monsoon may slow down in September.

"The forecast so far has been correct regarding the monsoon. The distribution of the monsoon across the country has been better and consistent. There was strong rainfall in August, but in September, the monsoon may gradually weaken. However, areas that received less rain may see increased rainfall," said IMD Director General Mrutyunjay Mohapatra.

The latest IMD report said: "From August 1-28, India has received 296.2 millimeters of rainfall, while the average rainfall during the month is 237.2 millimeters. Thus, the country has received 25 per cent more rainfall in August than the average.

## Sushant case: CBI questions Rhea again

**Mumbai:** Actress Rhea Chakraborty, who is accused of abetting the suicide of film star Sushant Singh Rajput, reached the DRDO guest house in Mumbai for the second consecutive day on Saturday for questioning by the Central Bureau of Investigation, an official said. A vehicle carrying Rhea Chakraborty (28) reached the DRDO guest house in suburban Santacruz, where the probe team is stationed, around 1.30 pm. She was escorted by a police van. Earlier in the day, the CBI team requested the city police to provide security to the actress and the cops acted on the request, an official said.

Rajput's flatmate Siddharth Pithani, cook Neeraj Singh, domestic help Keshav, manager Samual Miranda and accountant Rajat Mewati were already being quizzed by the CBI team since Saturday morning at the guest house.

## India's trajectory of daily cases highest-ever globally

**New Delh (IANS):** The coronavirus pandemic in India currently seems to be at its worst, as the country's trajectory of daily cases continued to be the highest-ever recorded globally since the start of the health crisis in December 2019.

On Saturday, India reported 76,472 new coronavirus cases, taking the total tally to 34,63,972, according to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

This was slightly lower than the country's all-time spike of 77,266 cases a day earlier.

Single-day cases in India have been rising at an alarming rate in the last three weeks, putting it ahead of the US and Brazil, the two worst-hit countries.

Out of the total 34,63,972 cases, the number of recoveries surged to 26,48,998, while the death toll climbed to 62,550 with 1,021 people succumbing to it in a span of 24 hours.

India's journey to over 34 lakh cases took almost seven

months since the emergence of the first case on January 30.

On July 17, the country had logged 10 lakh cases, which then doubled to 20 lakh in 20 days, on August 7 and added another 10 lakh by August 23.

It has now added four lakh cases in six days.

At this point, it is pertinent to compare parameters to see the progression of the virus.

The doubling rate, which is the rate at which the total cases in the country are doubling, is 32 days as against 68 days in Brazil and 96 in the US.

The positivity rate, which is the total confirmed cases out of the total tests conducted that day, has come down as compared to July. It currently stands at 8.23 per cent.

Another parameter - case fatality rate, which is the proportion of deaths among the confirmed cases, is 1.8 per cent.

The rate is better than the global average of 3.4 per cent and also of the US and Brazil, at 2.1 per cent and 3.2 per cent, respectively.

## Influence of dictatorship on country rising: Sonia

**New Delhi:** Congress president Sonia Gandhi on Saturday alleged that anti-national and anti-poor forces were spreading hatred and venom of violence in India and the influence of 'tanashahi' (dictatorship) on the country's 'lokshahi' (democracy) was rising.

She also said that the founding fathers of the country would have never imagined that the Constitution and democracy will be in danger 75 years after the Independence as "bad thinking is now dominating, freedom of expression is in danger and democratic institutions are being ruined".

Gandhi was addressing the foundation stone laying ceremony of the new Chhattisgarh assembly building to be built in Nava Raipur, the upcoming capital city of the state, through a recorded video message in Hindi.

"For the past some time, an attempt is being made to derail our country.

## POSTPONE OR CANCEL THE NEET AND JEE

# AISA urges CMs to invoke Disaster Management Act

**New Delhi:** The All India Students Association (AISA) has written to all chief ministers, urging them to invoke the State Disaster Management Act to postpone or cancel the NEET and JEE exams scheduled next month. "Students who are appearing for exams conducted by Central government are residents of your state, and it becomes your government's prerogative to safeguard their health and interests. It was a welcome step by few state governments to file a review petition in hon'ble Supreme Court asking it to review its order-demanding holding of exams. However, it is more important for your government to stand by your students, as you are well aware of the threat of pandemic and havoc it has had on lives and livelihoods of many families," the letter read. "On behalf of Puducherry government, we filed a writ petition in SC to stall NEET exam. The case has been filed in my name.

The petition will be heard by next week. We hope for a good ruling from the SC which will safeguard the student community", said RK R Anantharaman, Puducherry MLA.

The Jharkhand government has allowed reopening of hotels, lodges as well as restaurants and also given a go-ahead to public transport to ply within the state for a month till September 30 in view of the JEE-NEET examinations scheduled next month.

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav targeted the BJP over the holding of the JEE and NEET exams amid the COVID-19 pandemic, saying the party's attitude towards students is "devoid of humanity". This comes a day after Samajwadi Party (SP) workers staged a protest outside the Raj Bhawan here over the issue.

Congress held nationwide protests and ran an online campaign against the Centre's deci-

sion to conduct JEE and NEET examinations amid the COVID-19 pandemic, with party chief Sonia Gandhi urging the government to listen to the voices of students and act according to their wishes. Congress leader Rahul Gandhi also urged the government to hold a conversation with students over the issue of conducting NEET and JEE exams amid the pandemic and take a decision after arriving at a consensus, PTI reports.

The Uttar Pradesh government is in favour of holding the NEET and JEE, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said. The statement comes following opposition parties including the Samajwadi Party and Congress demanding that the National Eligibility-cum-Entrance Test (NEET) for medical colleges and Joint Entrance Examination (JEE) for engineering colleges be deferred due to COVID-19 pandemic.

# Special clothing, diet, shelter for 35K extra troops in Eastern Ladakh

**New Delhi (IANS):** As stand-off with China remains unresolved, the Indian Army gears up for formidable logistical challenges posed by harsh climate at heights exceeding 12,000 feet and temperature as extreme as minus 50 degrees Celsius.

The force requires special clothing, diet and shelter for around 35,000 extra troops deployed in Eastern Ladakh. Most of the friction points in Ladakh like Pangong Lake and Galwan Valley where the face-offs have happened are 14,000 feet above the sea level.

The force will incur an estimated expenditure of around Rs 400 crore for providing special winter clothing to cater to the enhanced deployment. The cost per soldier for special clothing equipment to brave the harsh winter is around Rs 1 lakh.

"To meet clothing and sheltering requirements for operations in these areas, a Special Clothing and Mountaineering Equipment



(SCME) at cost of around Rs 1 lakh per set is provided to each soldier," the officer said.

The SCME set comprises snow clothing and equipment for survival, resuscitation, rescue, mountaineering equipment and tents.

"The equipment is of superlative quality standards offering attributes such as light-weight, thermal, equilibrium, waterproof, breathable and durability," the officer said.

The winter clothing and gear includes special three layered jackets and trousers, boots, snow goggles, facemask, rucksacks and others.

Temperature-controlled special tents and pre-fabricated huts are also provided. These can maintain the optimum temperature at the freezing heights where oxygen levels are also low, as in Ladakh.

Troops operating in high altitude areas suffer from anorexia,

a syndrome which results in loss of appetite.

This special provision to meet the taste of troops has been made with an aim to enhance, motivate and incentivise food intake.

"Indian Army provides a scientifically formulated special diet to its troops consisting of high calorific and nutrient value items to offset the loss of appetite and reduced intake of food which soldiers suffer in such a climate," said a senior Indian Army officer.

Rations scaled to soldiers in the Indian Army have been scientifically designed and evolved to provide adequate nutrients and to cater for the daily routine, training and for operating in different terrain conditions.

"Rations are accordingly authorized at different scales for all ranks serving at altitude below 9,000 ft, between 9,000 ft and 12,000 ft and above 12,000 ft with progressive increments for challenges at higher altitudes," the officer said.

## 'Messenger of God' FM must answer for pre-Covid mismanagement: PC

**New Delhi:** Senior Congress leader P Chidambaram on Saturday took a dig at Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman over her 'Act of God' remarks on the economy, saying will 'the FM as the Messenger of God' answer how should the 'mismanagement' of the economy before the coronavirus pandemic be described.

Sitharaman on Thursday had said the economy has been hit by the pandemic, which is an 'Act of God', and it will see a contraction in the current fiscal.

Taking a swipe at Sitharaman over the remarks, Chidambaram said, 'If the pandemic is an Act of God', how do we describe the mismanagement of the economy during 2017-18, 2018-19 and 2019-20. Before the pandemic struck India?"

"Will the FM as the Messenger of God please answer?" the former finance minister asked.

Chidambaram also slammed the Centre for asking states to

borrow more to make up for revenue losses due to pending GST dues.

He asserted that the two options given by the Modi government to the states to bridge the GST compensation gap are unacceptable.

"Under the first option the states are asked to borrow by pledging their future receivables under Compensation cess. The financial burden falls entirely on the states," Chidambaram said.

"Under the second option, states are asked to borrow from the RBI window. It is more market borrowing, only by a different name. Again, the entire financial burden falls on the states," he said in a series of tweets.

Chidambaram claimed that the central government is absolving itself of any financial responsibility.

This is a 'gross betrayal' as well as a 'direct violation of the law', he alleged.



## Lokesh blames govt for rising attacks on Dalits

HANS NEWS SERVICE

**Amaravathi:** TDP general secretary Nara Lokesh blamed the Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy government for a series of attacks and incidents of tonsuring of people from Dalit and weaker sections in the state.

In a statement on Saturday, Lokesh said the latest incident at Pendurthi where one Srikanth was subjected to torture and was tonsured would have been averted had the YSRCP government taken tough action against the real culprits behind the similar incident at Sitanagaram in East Godavari district.

“There is absolutely no safety and security for the downtrodden sections under this atrocious regime. The government should have given the strongest possible punishment when Vara Prasad was tonsured in East Godavari District. The victim could not get any justice and had to finally write a letter to the President of India. Even now, after so many days, Prasad was waiting for justice,” he said.

He alleged that the government played a spectator’s role when the police had beaten to death another Dalit youth named Kiran Kumar in Chirala town. Had proper action been taken in such incidents, the spate of atrocities on Dalits would have been stopped at that time itself, he added.

Meanwhile, former minister Nakka Ananda Babu said that the negligence of the state government was visible in each and every atrocity case for the last 14 months. He demanded stringent action on the accused in cases of atrocities on Dalits in the state.

## Jana Sena to file counter in HC against capital shifting

HANS NEWS SERVICE

**Mangalagiri:** Jana Sena Party has decided to file counter in connection with the cases being heard in Andhra Pradesh High Court over shifting of capital city, in the backdrop of the High Court order that the political parties if they are interested could file counter affidavits within three weeks.

A teleconference was conducted by party chief Pawan Kalyan on Saturday with Political Affairs Committee (PAC) chairman Nadendla Manohar, party general secretaries Thota Chandrasekhar, T Sivasankar and Bolisetty Satya and political secretary to party president P Hariprasad.

Speaking on the occasion, Pawan Kalyan said thousands of farmers who gave their lands shall not be meted out injustice under any circumstances.

“We will file counter and stand up as a responsible political party till the end for the cause of farmers,” he said.

# 7 held for tonsuring Dalit

- Bigg Boss fame Nutan Naidu's wife among the arrested
- The victim alleged that he was summoned to Naidu's house after he quit the job as servant to enquire about a missing cellphone
- Then he was assaulted by six persons and was tonsured
- Police recover the CCTV footage of the entire incident

HANS NEWS SERVICE

**Visakhapatnam:** The police arrested seven persons involved in the incident of harassing and tonsuring the head of a 20-year-old Dalit youth Karri Srikanth at *Big Boss* fame Nutan Naidu's residence.

Nutan Naidu's wife is among those arrested.

Commissioner of police Manish Kumar Sinha released the CCTV footage of the incident and said that a case has been registered and investigation was in process.

The commissioner told the media that Srikanth, belonging to Pendurthi mandal, worked for four months at Nutan Naidu's residence but had quit his job on August 1.

However, Srikanth was summoned home by Naidu who accused him of stealing a mobile phone.

When Srikanth told Naidu to file a police complaint, he was called to Naidu's home again.

Srikanth denied stealing the mobile phone, and said he was allegedly harassed and tonsured forcibly by a barber at Naidu's residence.

He said he was accused of steal



Commissioner of Police Manish Kumar Sinha releasing video footage of K Srikanth's alleged assault by his former employer to the media in Visakhapatnam on Saturday. (Right) A CCTV footage of Srikanth being tortured by a lady at Nutan Naidu's residence.



ing a phone based on a grudge nursed by the former employer against him.

Srikanth said that he was threatened that he would face dire consequences if he lodged any complaint and was assaulted for a long time as more than five persons took turns in beating up him. All these were captured in the CCTV which was released by the CP. The police filed cases under IPC sections 307, 342, 324, 323, and 506, among others.

Meanwhile, the incident evoked rage among Dalit activists across Visakhapatnam.

Demanding justice for Karri Srikanth, former TDP MLA and TDP women president V Anitha said that the government failed in protecting the Dalit rights as they continue to be attacked across the state.

She urged the people to safeguard the rights of the Dalits. She alleged that the YSRCP leaders lack individuality and speak only 'scripted texts'. Similarly, Human Rights Forum, AP and TS coordination committee member V S Krishna, said that tonsuring, a repugnant caste atrocity, was done to humiliate Dalits who stand up for their rights. He emphasised that Srikanth's tonsure case should be pursued meticulously so that those involved in the atrocity be convicted. Krishna cited recent atrocities against Dalits including I Varaprasad and Y Kiran Kumar, a Dalit youth, who died allegedly because of police beatings in Chirala in Prakasam district.

## Census to delay districts' rejig

HANS NEWS SERVICE

**Amaravathi:** The much-touted reorganisation of the districts in the state is likely to be taken up soon after the census data is computed and finalised. The state government has proposed to double the present 13 districts into 26 and has constituted a study team under the aegis of the Chief Secretary.

The government is focusing on not only decentralisation of administration through this measure, but also looking at access to government offices and easy administrative convenience.

Meanwhile, the Central too is planning to undertake a comprehensive review of the panchay-

- Centre is also planning to take up a comprehensive review of panchayats, mandals and blocks across the country after the final census data is computerised
- So, the state govt too is likely to take up the exercise only after census process is over

ats, mandals and blocks across the country.

This will be based on the final census figures. Hence, the division of districts could also be taken only after this exercise, it is now being felt.

This January, the Centre issued freeze orders on reorganisation of geographical units in the country till the Census figures are finalised.

The committee headed by AP Chief Secretary too has identified several issues pertaining to the reorganisation in the state.

Another incentive for forming new districts is that the newly-formed districts will get special allotments from the Centre.

Thus, the funds from the Centre for the state will increase, official sources point out.

## 3 die as vehicle hits parked lorry

- 10 others injured in the mishap
- All the victims are labourers from Jharkhand on their way to Gangavaram port in Vizag

HANS NEWS SERVICE

**Srikakulam:** Three persons died and 10 others injured when the Bolero vehicle they were travelling on hit a parked container truck at Nemali Narayanapuram in Palasa mandal on National Highway-16 on Saturday.

According to Kasibugga sub-inspector Y Madhu, a total of 13 workers from Jharkhand state were going to Visakhapatnam to work at Gangavaram seaport by engaging a Bolero-XL vehicle. Due to long distance drive, the tired driver crashed into a container truck parked on road side. Three workers suffered se-



Mangled Bolero vehicle at mishap site near Palasa

rious injuries in the mishap. Of them, two workers died at Palasa government hospital while undergoing treatment while another succumbed at RIMS hospital in Srikakulam. The he deceased were identified as Sujith Gowdo, 30, GuruBadri Gowdo, 28, and Ranabeer Bongo, 30.

Ten workers who received

minor injuries were being treated at Palasa government hospital where their condition is said to be stable.

On learning of the incident, police rushed to the spot and shifted the injured workers to the government hospital at Palasa. Details of the victims are being collected from Jharkhand state officials.

## Peddireddy draws Naidu ire over attacks on SCs

HANS NEWS SERVICE

**Amaravati:** TDP president N Chandrababu Naidu came down heavily on panchayat raj and rural development minister Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy for encouraging attacks and atrocities against SCs in Chittoor districts.

In a statement on Saturday, Naidu expressed concern that even the police were trying to cover up cases of atrocities against Dalits using threats and inducements against the families of victims.

Naidu demanded that the police disclose the details of call lists and records in the cell phone of Punganur Dalit youth Om Prathap whose death raised many questions. He asked what was the need for the police to take away the victim's phone when they initially said there was no case and no suspicion on anybody.

The TDP chief strongly objected to the manner in which post mortem was carried out secretly on Prathap's body. It was another mistake on the part of the police to snatch away the

- Accuses the Minister of encouraging attacks on Dalits in Chittoor districts
- Suspecting police cover up in Om Prathap's death in the district, he questions the need to snatch away his phone by police
- Demands revelation of call data of the youth

victim's cell phone from the family members, he added. The call lists were crucial to unravel the mystery behind the death. The police should reveal the call data which would bring out the facts as to who made threatening calls, he added.

Naidu pointed out that only after the TDP's demand, the post mortem was conducted, that too in a secret manner. In Choutupalli too a Dalit's was taken away, he said.

“They made the people believe that the Dalit died when a tractor overturned. But the fact was that there were burn injuries on the victim's body,” Naidu said.

## 10,548 fresh Covid cases reported in AP

**Amaravati:** The rapid surge of coronavirus cases continued in the state as more than 10,000 were added afresh for the fourth day in a row.

With 10,548 new cases added in 24 hours ending 9 am on Saturday, the states overall Covid-19 tally rose to 4,14,164.

The latest bulletin said 8,976 patients got cured and discharged in the last 24 hours while 82 more succumbed to the pandemic.

The overall toll rose to 3,796, while the total recoveries increased to 3,12,687, according to the bulletin. The state now has 97,681 active cases, it said.

The infection positivity rate in AP climbed further up to 11.49 per cent after 36,03,345 tests were completed at the rate of 67,478 per million population. While East Godavari district continued to report fresh cases of over 1,000, SPS Nellore too has been showing a similar spike for the past three days.

Kadapa (991) and Visakhapatnam (988) reported close to 1,000 new cases, while West Godavari, Anantapur, Chittoor and Prakasam added over 800 each.

## BSF foils Pak infiltration bid

Continued from P1

The BSF said its troops foiled nefarious design of Pakistan to infiltrate terrorists into Indian territory with this detection. “Efforts of alert BSF troops deployed in our counter-infiltration grid once again resulted in neutralizing the evil designs of terrorists.”

A BSF officer said there have been regular inputs about the presence of terrorists on the Pakistani side looking for infiltration options into the Indian territory.

A patrol detected the tunnel 50

metres from the border fence on the Indian side on Thursday. “BSF has found some plastic sandbags at its mouth with Pakistani markings. It was being dug nearly 25 to 30 feet beneath the ground. The BSF has launched a massive search operation and anti-tunnelling drive to detect such tunnels,” said the officer on condition of anonymity.

The nearest Pakistani border post is about 400 metres from the tunnel. “The modus operandi of digging tunnels to push terrorists is an old tactic of Pakistan. It seems

Pakistan has started imitating Hamas fighters, who dig out underground tunnels to enter Israel,” said an officer from the counter-insurgency wing of the Jammu & Kashmir police.

In September 2019, the BSF launched an operation along the border to detect underground, cross-border tunnels. The BSF also uses ground-penetrating radars to detect tunnels.

Pakistan has chosen areas like Samba for digging such tunnels to push armed terrorists.

## Use mother tongue in all walks of life: Venkaiah

Continued from P1

Paying rich tributes to Gidugu Venkata Rama Murthy, he described him as a multi-linguist, historian and social visionary, who strove to simplify Telugu language and make it more comprehensible to the common man. Because of his untiring efforts, the language has percolated to the masses.

Protecting and promoting the Telugu language will be a real tribute to Gidugu Venkata Rama Murthy, the Vice-President added.

Dr Ch Ramesh, MLA, Telangana Legislative Assembly; Kavitha Kalvakuntla, president of Telangana Jagruthi; Vikram Petluru, chairman SATC and Ganesh Totempudi, Germany-based scientist were among those who participated in the virtual event.

## Soaring veggie prices make lives tougher

- Prices of several vegetables have doubled or tripled in the last few weeks
- Monitoring and control by officials during lockdown kept prices under check during lockdown

V PRADEEP KUMAR

**Tirupati:** Soaring vegetable prices are forcing people to cut back on their consumption. The prices of various vegetables, leafy vegetables and potatoes have skyrocketed in the last few weeks.

During lockdown in April and May, the officials monitored the prices and took stringent action against those selling them at higher prices. Even after relaxation of lockdown, prices remained stable for some time.

However, in the last few weeks may be owing to rains or other reasons, prices of vegetables have been going through the roof, with some veggies costing thrice as much as two months ago.

Tomatoes were sold at around Rs.10 a kg three months back but now people are forced to shell out Rs.40-60 depending on the quality. Brinjal was sold at Rs 20-



People buying vegetables at Rythu Bazaar in Tirupati

25 during lockdown but now costs between Rs.45-60. So is the case with many varieties, including bitter melon, cauliflower, ladyfingers, whose prices have crossed Rs.50 a kg while carrots, green chillies, capsicum, beans, etc., are costing more than Rs.65 per kg.

Green leafy veggies also have become out of reach for the common people as they cost between Rs 20-30 for a small quantity. Even the displayed rates in the Rythu Bazar gives a clear picture of huge hike in prices whereas in other makeshift markets which the Municipal Corporation officials have set up since lockdown after closing down the municipal

wholesale vegetable market, the prices are much higher as there was no control.

The vendors claim that even at these prices they are not able to cover their costs which have gone up due to increased transport expenses and other overheads. Due to the recent rains there was a shortage of supply of various vegetables and the difficulties being faced by the sellers in transporting them have all contributed to increased prices and reduction in demand.

The rising prices of vegetables are imposing further financial burden on the people who are already reeling under Covid-induced job losses and pay cuts.



## COMBATING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

## Indian crisis management skills have to deliver once again

RAVI TEJA KATHURIPALLI

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic is being felt across the country. Unprecedented crisis has left us broken. Despite all the suffering caused by this coronavirus pandemic, if local healthcare systems emerge stronger and receive more investment, at least it would leave something positive for the future. The nature of the crisis gives us the opportunity and the time to undertake a course correction by addressing the most pertinent structural issues that might usually be avoided in usual circumstances.

This crisis is a reminder of the importance of a well-functioning public health system. It opens up an opportunity for course correction in this sector. An effective public health system would have afforded policymakers greater leeway in deciding about the economic shutdown. However, the choice of preventive strategies against the spread of COVID-19 is limited to stringent lockdowns because of India's public healthcare infrastructure deficit and high population.

Infrastructure stimulus is usually understood as providing finance for highways, high-speed trains and airports. Investing in schools and hospitals is rarely seen as being a crucial part of "infrastructure development". Healthcare's availability and affordability does not receive as much attention in policymaking as hard infrastructure does. This approach needs to change. India's public health expenditure stood



at 1.15 per cent of its gross domestic product this must take a quantum leap and must be more than doubled to reach the goal of 2.5 per cent set by the National Health Policy 2017, while being further increased to 3-4 per cent of the GDP in medium term.

Increasing the share of GDP on health will not only address the infrastructure deficit, improving the quality and productivity of the economy's human capital, but can also reduce the economic cost of the lockdowns. In the relatively short time since doctors detected the first case, the coronavirus pandemic has put the healthcare sector under tremendous strain. Depart-

ments dealt with bed and ventilator shortages, testing delays and a lack of personal protective equipment. These issues emphasised some of the improvement opportunities for healthcare professionals to target while simultaneously showing how technology could fill the gaps.

If the funds can be made available, what should the central government spend on? The bulk of the spending should go into upgrading infrastructure in primary and secondary care centres, that is district hospitals and primary health centres. If executed well, these investments will improve the quality of human capital, and create jobs and markets for pharma products

and medical devices. The government can be the primary financier or provider of healthcare. It need not necessarily be the producer.

For this, a specially-designed fiscal stimulus can be funnelled into public health, and policy bottlenecks removed so that the sector becomes the engine of GDP growth in the coming months. Subsidised loans, earmarked land, prompt single-window clearances and approvals, tax holidays, and other such fiscal tools can be deployed to manufacture medical devices and medicines and set up hospitals.

As we unwillingly enter into the coronavirus epoch, which

will be around be around for some time now, PPPs are again in the forefront as one of the optimal solutions to tackle this pandemic disease that has crippled economies. Large hospitals should be set up on a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) basis. For instance, the Punjab government in Mohali announced a PPP tender on a revenue sharing basis. Countries such as the UK and Australia too have their own approach to PPPs, wherein they focus on the "Development / Rehabilitation of Facilities and Facilities Management".

It is evident that if India focuses on anything it has a capacity to conquer it. The clear visible example is, starting from practically nothing, India has now become the world's second largest supplier of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in just 60 days after lockdown. In two months, the industry has grown 56 times. Over 600 companies in India are certified to produce PPE and the country today manufactures more than 4.5 lakh pieces of PPE a day.

If new business models need to be created, now is the time to design them. Affordability, quality and accessibility to proper health care will be key. We will be successful in turning COVID-19 into positive occurrence to an extent, if all citizens across income groups are able to use the public health system equitably. We should convert this global pandemic adversity into an opportunity.

## PAST AND PRESENT

## CATCH THEM YOUNG

M SOMASEKHAR PRASAD

"Youth Engagement for Global Action" is the theme of the International Youth Day this year. The theme seems to be a bit vague, but it doesn't definitely carry the narrow meaning that more and more youngsters must take an active part in agitations and strikes which are global in nature.

Nagging issues like poverty, corruption, racism, hunger, gender discrimination, environmental issues, unemployment, exploitation are everywhere, in every town, city, country, and continent. In a sense these issues and problems are universal and global and have become stumbling blocks in the way of achieving global peace, progress and equality. Time has come for creating more and more opportunities for youngsters to use their skills, initiatives, and voices in uprooting and mitigating these social challenges. And that is why the clarion call of the UN for youth.

According to its programme, youngsters must be encouraged to engage themselves at regional, national and international levels in finding lasting solutions to these challenges. Why the youth of the world are in focus in particular? Because out of 700 crore of the world population, about 100 crore youngsters are in the 15-24 age group. These young people are the invaluable assets of a nation and are storehouses of energy, vitality, imagination, aspirations and skills, and above all, dreams to do something differently. All these virtues are vital in achieving wealth and common welfare and in usurping social and economic transformations that would ensure safety and security of people at large. How to motivate these young people and tap their talents and skills? This is particularly difficult in a society where corruption is rampant, and most of the leaders are mediocre who seldom think about what youngsters want. People have lost their faith in institutions which are meant for the common weal of the society and of the generations to come.

In our country today we have about 22 crore young people in the 15-24 age group and this is a big boon for any society. But how to catch them young? Who can inspire and motivate them into action? Who can make them learn to love others as they like others love them?

To catch them young, and motivate them, we need people known for their principles and spotless personality. John Wooden, American basketball player, says "Young people today need models, not critics." They need a Kalam, a Malala who can motivate, empower and give them right opportunities. Such leaders alone can identify the issues that hold young people back, connect with them by creating conducive skills to give them leadership roles.

This is what Chetan Bhagat wants for our young people in his maiden non-fiction book, "What Young India Wants". Unfortunately most of our young people have a defeatist attitude towards life. They must overcome this to give their mite to the society. Chetan asks young people to do their bit to bring in change in their lives and in others without waiting for netas' support or patronage. This is the same story of young people everywhere. If young people can channel their skills and talents under the aegis of selfless leadership, they can be engines of change and make the world a worthy and safe place to live in. With this goal in mind, the UNO has rightly chosen youth as its focal point.



## Muharram – the beginning of the Islamic New Year

The word "Muharram" means forbidden and sinful. The festival of Muharram is the first month of the Islamic calendar. About 14 centuries ago, on the day of Ashura, the grand son of Prophet Muhammad, Hazrat Imam Hussain and his little son Ali Asgar were killed in the battle of Karbala. Hazrat Imam Hussain was killed but his message of kindness and justice lives on among his followers.

Hazrat Imam Hussain was martyred by the army of Yazid tyrant ruler of Syria on the 10th day of Muharram at Karbala. The martyrdom of Imam Hussain, his struggle for justice and for upholding Al Haqq the truth is commemorated today. On the day of Ashura (10th Muharram) Hazrat Imam Hussain made the ultimate sacrifice. The noble reason for his martyrdom firstly was to preserve Islam. Muharram is also reminder that one should overcome oppression and tyranny and help the oppressed.

Hazrat Imam Hussain's sacrifice has been inspiration for many. Gandhi ji said "I learnt from Imam Hussain, how to be oppressed yet victorious". Muharram is the beginning of the Islamic New Year, so it's the perfect time to make resolutions and establish good habits that you can reap the rewards all year around.

Zakir Hussain, Kazipet



## Pakistan's continuing proxy war

Terror is the crux of the issue which India has been facing from its hostile neighbour Pakistan for long and taking into account the track record of Pakistan from 1999 till now, the attacks against India have only increased with great intensity at periodic intervals. As a result, bi-lateral talks between the two nations could not take place after Pakistan refused to discuss terrorism emanating from its soil.

Even when the brutal attack by terror outfit Jaish-e-Muhammad killing more than 40 CRPF personnel travelling in a bus at Pulwama in 2019 affirming that all terror attacks are planned by masterminds trained and sheltered in Pakistan, Pakistan's blunt denial despite providing clinching evidence of its involvement only strengthened its evil intentions. Further, when the mastermind of 2008 Mumbai terror attack still roaming free in Pakistan with no credible action taken against him for the heinous crime so far is regrettable, it only goes to show that it is a country that has a tendency to put a gun to his own head to spread fear and then shift blame on India.

The fact of the matter that Pakistan rejecting every attack made on India by its terrorists with the tacit approval of ISI-army and civilian government is a clear revelation that it harbours terrorists and that it has no intention to track them on its soil and bring them to justice. In fact, when what is witnessed is Pakistani army engaged in proxy war at the borders and its dreaded terror outfits out to bleed India frequently, there has been always discrepancies in what Pakistan has been saying at UN.

At every UNSC meeting, Pakistan's single-point agenda has been to confront India by pointing that terror attacks in Pakistan were carried out by mercenaries hired by India. Every time, India has expressed skepticism over reports and statements from Pakistan which were based on lies and falsehood. Despite its lies being nailed down each time, Pakistan is not only continuing to sponsor terror activities in India but shamelessly making a false propaganda to take the international community for a ride that it is a victim on one side and at the same time coming out that preventive steps are been taken to crush terrorism from its soil.

Though Pakistan's wrong-doings in the sub-continent has already been exposed at the UN and its continued grey-listing at the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) are enough proof that Pakistan is a safe haven for terrorists, still, it is imperative India must continue its exercise and vociferously expose all evil designs of Pakistan playing a victim card at the UNSC 2021-22 by building a case strongly with substantial evidence that Pakistan is a breeding ground for terror and that its claim as a peace-loving nation is a sham only to hoodwink the FATF in order to come out from its blacklist.

K R Srinivasan, Secunderabad



## Indian netas can learn from Japanese PM

Japanese people are perhaps the most disciplined ones in all respect globally throughout the world making the small island-country progressing in every field despite odd circumstances. Their Prime Minister Shinzo Abe has set a noble example for politicians across the world including in largest democracy of India by mid-way resigning before his term ends after 13 months in September 2021. What more, he in his farewell speech instead of boasting his achievements, regretted for unfulfilled commitments made to his public. Even India had idealistic politicians like Nanaji Deshmukh who resigned from post of Union Cabinet Minister on reaching to the age of 60 years to follow his own philosophy that persons above 60 years must not remain on legislative posts. On the contrary, oldest national party of India has not yet been able to find a new President even though its present President apart from being an aged person is also not keeping well. India should study a model whereby no person may be able to contest any direct election after achieving age of 65 years. Experienced ones if needed in central government, can be made members of Rajya Sabha. However totally useless constitutional provision of having legislative-councils in states should be abolished because these serve no practical purpose other than being an undesired white-elephant on state public-exchequer for rehabilitating favourites of political bosses in legislature. Moreover system of one person one post should be implemented so that a person may not get legislative and party posts at one given time.

Subhash Chandra Agrawal, Delhi

## Time to join hands

This is reference to "Time to come together for public good". During the pandemic, political parties attempt to use the situation to their advantage. It's the same case in Brazil, President Jair Bolsonaro's policies have given poor response against Covid-19. The Brazil Government and democratic institutions just don't care. Brazil's Federal Supreme Court, is consistently maintaining state social distancing policies but Bolsonaro administration opposes it. According to Bolsonaro himself, unemployment is worse than Covid-19 itself. He even stated that there would be anarchy because of unemployment and food scarcity at home arises due to school and work closures. Betraying public during pandemic does not seem to have strengthened political support. The Covid-19 impact in Brazil is increasing day by day. Yet the country's democratic and health institutions have taken steps to protect people. So, Indian state governments should too adopt a similar step and should not become dependent on the Centre in this situation. India need to come together for the large public interest.

Sanjana Soni, Hyderabad

## TS govt makes a daring move

The Telangana government's recent order to the Sub-Registrar of Registration department not to register the illegal construction of the plots, apartments or structures without valid permission from Panchayats, municipalities or municipal corporations including GHMC is a daring decision and is appreciated. This sudden order of the TS government has put lot of recent poor buyers in doldrums.

As a consequence property registrations have come to a standstill from Thursday. Thousands of people who purchased properties are now finding it difficult to register them. With the government machinery going easy for the past many years lot of unauthorised constructions have been mushroomed across not only in TS now but also in the erstwhile combined Andhra Pradesh. Of course curbing unauthorised constructions and layouts is a good move and one should always welcome it, but implementing with retrospective effect is creating problems for the genuine purchasers.

For example if the builder unauthorisedly constructed a sixth floor where permission is given for five floors as per the recent order all the apartment owners would be unable to register it. This is a good move and if implemented continuously illegal constructions will be minimised to the barest minimum in future. The AP government also brought a BPS scheme to regularise the unauthorised constructions during Chandrababu Naidu government it is not yet completed. Hence in future the officials concerned should strictly follow the rules and regulations while giving permission to construct new buildings in future we can avoid this type of unauthorised constructions.

TSN Rao, Bhimavaram

## Postponing NEET, JEE exams not a better choice

The proposed conducting of NEET and JEE exams could be an unenviable task for the government amidst pandemic. To write tests for students and to make them appear for tests for parents in the testing times are also herculean tasks where public transport, hotels and lodges are not in place. The pandemic is unlikely to get under control for coming few months. So now postponing the exams, in the name of it, may not be a better choice. With proper precautions and arrangements in place the exams should be finished to save the academic year. The number of exams can be minimised where ever possible for example by clubbing JEE mains and Advanced in to one, taking the extraordinary situation in to account.

Dr D V G Sankararao, Nellimarla



## Act of God? Really?

The Finance Minister throwing blame on God for the prevailing chaotic condition is nothing but an act of exploiting the religious belief of the people to cover up the failures and misdeeds of the government. The class-oriented, pro-rich acts of the government that goes on unchecked has landed the country in such a pitiable condition that has its far reaching negative impacts on the social and economic sphere of the toiling mass of this country.

Demonetisation could not yield any positive result but saw the closure of firms and stripping off jobs and livelihood of crores of poor people. Then came unplanned GST that paved way for closure of still many firms depriving livelihood of millions. All the concerned parties are still lingering around the confusion it has created. Even falling sick is treated as an act of enjoying comfort or luxury that medicines and treatment are taxed whereas condom is exempted from GST.

The rabid drive to tax the consumption instead of profit is seeing the plight of the poor sparing the affluent. Many economic luminaries have suggested to focus on improving the purchasing power of the general public, which can reverberate the market to revive production and economy. But still the huge packages, concessions and exemptions are wantonly and consciously extended to production sector knowing well that it cannot yield any positive result in a dry market. Instead of taxing the wealthy section the focus is on taxing the wealth creating work force.

Similarly instead of helping the farmers with assured returns for their produce their hopes are shattered with the three ordinances, which are aimed at corporatising farming sector. For success of any economic order the enthusiastic participation of the working class is an inevitable component. Whereas under the guise of improving the ease of doing business and improving investor confidence the hard earned labour Acts and privileges are stripped off and Codes are introduced rendering the whole class into a highly subjugated class to hasten the process of abject exploitation. The Covid19 is seen as an opportunity to drive more harmful reforms rather than revamping and improving the public healthcare system.

Above all the condition of Indian economy, which could even withstand the Tsunami like blow the global economy thrust in the form recession of 2008, started dwindling fast ever since 2014. The strong foundations are being dismantled to help the affluent section resulting in growing gap between the haves and the have-nots and plunging the country's economy unfathomably down. So it is a man-made disaster, blaming God is fooling the people. It is time to set the things right.

A G Rajmohan, Anantapur

## II

The Government of India's official statement is "Act of God" regarding present financial situation in the country. Two simple questions are in order. One is, why pay taxes to government, instead pray God for mercy. Secondly, Why construct 'Super Big Mandir's when God is not kind enough to help Government of India. Anything else is superfluous.

G Sivarama Krishna, Hyderabad



# Health infra development, an absolute must in Telangana

M SOMASEKHAR

Known for his bold, sometimes dismissive and practical remarks on the ongoing Covid - 19 pandemic, Telangana State Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao made a strong plea for urgent steps to beef up public health infrastructure in India to face present and future challenges.

He urged Prime Minister, Narendra Modi to focus on ramping up healthcare infrastructure from the lessons of handling the coronavirus pandemic so far during a video conference on August 12 in which 10 Chief Ministers took part.

Going by sheer data provided by various governments, though the absolute number of cases is climbing rapidly crossing 35 lakh as on date, the recovery and mortality percentages claimed are among the best when compared to the US, UK, Brazil, Spain etc. This, despite harrowing tales of patients & families going through agony and hospitals/ doctors caught woefully short of protective gear and beds to fight the COVID19 pandemic.

### The Telangana story

In the five months since lockdown, Telangana State has not covered itself with much glory as far as its transparency, preparedness and a firm strategy to control the pandemic is concerned. Neither has it tested adequately nor has it been forthcoming in giving relevant & timely information to boost public confidence. These aspects have been clearly echoed by Doctors Forum, media and even the Prime Minister asking the State govt to step up testing.

In the beginning phase of March, the State govt was a bit dismissive saying that the virus dare not enter Telangana and if it did will easily handle it. Once the numbers started climbing, it said govt hospitals were equipped to take care. As criticism started growing, it announced converting a large 1000-plus room complex in Gachibowli Stadium complex into a hospital- Telangana Institute of Medical Sciences & Research (TIMS).

But, gaping holes started appearing in the statements, as doctors at the Gandhi Hospital, the main Covid treatment centre went on strike demanding more protective equipment and safety from patients' families too. Next, scenes of wards flooded with water in the Osmania General Hospital exposed the state of affairs.

### Healthcare infrastructure in Telangana

According to the healthcare index rankings (overall performance) of NITI Aayog for 2018, announced in mid 2019, Telangana was 10th among



the 21 larger states surveyed. Kerala was number 1 and Uttar Pradesh was last. Telangana finds itself at the bottom among the five southern states.

The NITI Aayog, indicated that the overall performance of the State in various sectors of healthcare have been average. The situation was worse in indicators like low birth weight of newborns, availability of 24/7 facilities in the 74 PHCs or heart care units in districts.

Some news to cheer was the improvement in Neonatal Mortality Rate (NMR) and general health of under 5 year old. The State had improved its performance in Governance and data integrity as far as reporting was concerned and least deviation between State and Central programmes.

Nonetheless, the State's tertiary care is not only understaffed but also outnumbered to cater to the patients. With one chest hospital, one mental health hospital, and one cancer hospital, specialised treatments are hard to find.

Even tertiary care centres in Hyderabad are ill-equipped, with an acute lack of medical infrastructure and healthcare professionals, with doctors and nurses working at almost 50 per cent of personnel capacity, it observed.

### Healthcare budgets

In Telangana, there has been a steady dip in allocations to health in successive budgets. In 2018-19, it accounted for 3.9 per cent or Rs 5,976 crore of the Rs 1.49 lakh crore Budget. In 2019-20, it dropped to 3 per cent or Rs 5,536 crore of the estimated Rs 1.82 lakh crore Budget (later downsized to Rs 1.46 lakh crore due to fall in revenues). In 2020-21, the State allocated Rs 6,186 crore of the estimated Rs 1.82 lakh crore Budget.

Even at the Centre, the allocation to

health has been slowly increased in the successive Union Budgets, it accounts to around 1.4 per cent of the GDP, way short of the required minimum of 2.5 per cent. And only about 20 percent are covered by some sort of insurance.

### Existing infrastructure

The twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad are fortunate to have a string of nearly a dozen large, public funded hospitals. Of these, nearly eight are from the Nizam's contributions and British period. For example, the Gandhi Hospital, Secunderabad was started in 1861 and has grown into a large, modern hospital and teaching Centre. At present, it is the nodal, treatment centre for Covid-19 patients in Telangana.

In Hyderabad, the century old, Osmania General Hospital, now in a pathetic state, Fever Hospital, Niloufer paediatric, Maternity, King Koti and specialised ones like Chest, MNJ Cancer, ENT, Institute of Mental Health, Nizam's Orthopaedic, SD Eye and alternate systems like Unani, Ayurveda and Homeopathy, were all established pre-Independence and many during the time of the last Nizam of Hyderabad, Mir Osman Ali Khan.

These and the likes of the MGM Hospital in Warangal, catered to the predominantly communicable diseases and needs of the population for decades. From the 1980's, the situation started changing and the govt policies were slowly tuned in to encourage private sector entry. Consequently, a proliferation happened in private practitioners, nursing homes and gradually to corporate hospitals.

### Growth in private sector and medico- entrepreneurship

The rapid growth led by chains like Apollo also gave rise to medico-entre-

preneurs and saw the rise of CDR, CARE, Medicity, LVPEI, Yashoda, Global, KIMS, AIG, Medwin, Sunshine, Continental, MaxCure to many mid-sized ones. In the last decade, multinational groups from Malaysia and investors from the a Gulf and US have invested too to bring the 'best in class' healthcare facilities in Hyderabad.

With the growth of the private sector, specially triggered during the rule of the Telugu Desam Party (1983-89) led by Chief Minister, NT Rama Rao, the govt infrastructure of hospitals and Primary Health Care (PHCs) in rural areas got impacted both in terms of qualified manpower, latest medical facilities and stagnant or little increase in budgetary allocations. With a cap on medical colleges and lure to go abroad, the domestic healthcare suffered.

Around 1986, the Andhra Pradesh Vaidya Vidhana Parishad was conceptualised to be a bridge between the large government hospitals and PHCs. It envisaged building a chain of 100-bed, tertiary care hospitals across Andhra Pradesh. The idea got a big boost with World Bank funds. Between 1995-2002, nearly 160 hospitals were established, of these 103 are in Telangana.

The trouble with a majority of the healthcare infrastructure in Telangana today is a shortage of manpower, qualified doctors and latest equipment. Except for a score of PHCs, many are in a pathetic situation. The net result has been the over dependence on Hyderabad for medical needs.

Expectedly, the private sector gradually monopolised healthcare in non-communicable diseases, built multispeciality facilities that gave returns on investment and profits too.

The govt stuck to communicable diseases like TB, malaria, water borne diseases and public health matters. It only upgrades the Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences, Gandhi Hospital and established the Rajiv Gandhi Institute of Medical Sciences in Adilabad etc. An All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) type facility is coming up in Bibinagar on the outskirts of Hyderabad.

Though, Telangana can take pride that Hyderabad has emerged as the medical capital of the country, a vast majority of the other 32 districts are facing severe issues of shortages and desperately need strengthening. The struggles in the ongoing Covid-19 situation is a grim lesson of this stark reality. It's common to hear experiences of high billing in private sector to neglect in govt hospitals.

Therefore, the Chief Minister has his job cut out, to first turn his wise counsel of building strong healthcare to improve the quality of life of people of Telangana across districts by a strategy that involves, increasing budgets, recruiting doctors and other medical professionals, latest equipment and training and increasing medical college seats to cater to the growing demands.

Schemes like Kanti Velugu (eye care), KCR Kits, Basti Dawakhana on the lines of Delhi's Mohalla Clinics, variants of Arogyasri and insurance supported for poor are laudable. So are the new medical Colleges, about 33 started since formation of Telangana in 2014. But what is needed is a long term, sound and sustainable healthcare infrastructure in the govt and also perhaps through public-private partnerships.

*(The writer is a senior journalist and former Associate Editor, The Hindu BusinessLine)*

## How Covid-19 happened and charting the path forward

As the world continues to battle the coronavirus pandemic, here's a captivating, authoritative, and eye-opening full story of how and why it happened. With the accumulated knowledge of our failings and a wealth of expert opinions, veteran science journalist Debora MacKenzie charts a forward path in "COVID-19 - The Pandemic that Never Should Have Happened, and How to Stop the Next One" for protecting humanity from even worse threats to come.

Over the last 30 years of epidemics and pandemics, we learned every lesson needed to stop this coronavirus outbreak in its tracks. We heeded almost none of them -- and the previous viruses that should have prepared us. This, coupled with some shocking public health failures, paved the way for a pandemic on a scale never before seen in our lifetimes, the book, published by Hachette, says.

MacKenzie has been reporting on emerging diseases for more than three decades, and she draws on that experience to explain how Covid-19 went from a potentially manageable outbreak to a global pandemic. Offering a compelling history of the most significant recent outbreaks, including SARS, MERS, H1N1, Zika, and Ebola, she gives a crash course in Epidemiology 101 - how viruses spread and how pandemics end - and outlines the lessons we failed to learn from each past crisis.

In vivid detail, MacKenzie takes us through the arrival and spread of Covid-19, making clear the steps that governments knew they could have taken to prevent or at least prepare for this. Looking forward, she makes a bold, optimistic argument: this pandemic might finally galvanise the world to take viruses seriously. Fighting this pandemic and preventing the next one will take political action of all kinds, globally, from governments, the scientific community, and individuals - but it is possible.

"This definitely deserves a read - the first of the post-mortems by a writer who knows what she's talking about," says Laura Spinney, author of "Pale Rider: The Spanish Flu of 1918 And How It Changed The World". MacKenzie, who has been reporting on Covid-19 from the start, was among the first journalists to suggest that it could become a pandemic.

From SARS to Rabies and Ebola to AIDS, she's been on the frontline in reporting on how pandemics form, why they spread, and how to stop them throughout her career. In addition to infectious disease, she also specialises in reporting on the science of complexity and social organisation. In 2010, she won the American Society for Microbiology Public Communication Award. Before becoming a journalist, she worked as a biomedical researcher.

- IANS

## What your zodiac sign says about your parenting style

PANDIT JAGANNATH GURUJI

A child's mind is like a garden and their thoughts are like seeds, as parents it is your prime responsibility to nurture their minds. Parenting is a tough task as it is, but different people have different approaches towards it, there is no one size fits all solution.

However, your zodiac sign can reveal a lot about your parenting style. Let's take a look at how people hailing from different zodiac signs take to parenting.

**Aries:** They believe in giving all the freedom to their kids, thereby making their offsprings ambitious and passionate. An Aries believes in imparting cultural values to the kids and promotes them to think bigger. If you are Aries, congratulations, for you are destined to be a Super Dad or Super Mom.

**Taurus:** They believe in giving their kids a lot of security and support. But giving security and support does not entail that they make the children dependent on them. In fact, by ensuring the same they make an attempt to shape a self dependent personality. They do not believe in leaving wealth for their children, instead, they make them worthy of creating their own wealth.

**Gemini:** If you are more of a friend with your child, they you belong to this zodiac sign. Parents hailing from this zodiac sign indulge in intense communication and give individual attention to their children. They do not let age come in the way of their proximity with their children.

**Cancer:** They believe in spending as much time as possible with their kids and also like to go out with them. Overall, they are very children oriented, and find their pleasure in their little ones. For instance, they like to prepare food for kids.

**Leo:** Parents belonging to this zodiac sign are very open minded and believe in making their children competitive in nature. They do not mind compromising with their own likings and interests and go all out to satisfy all needs of their kids.

**Virgo:** If you are a Virgo, you are most probably quite dominating as a parent. The Virgos make their kids bit introvert, silent and bookworm kinds. Though they love their children selflessly, they can be very strict at times.

**Libra:** A Libran would allow their children to do whatever they want and provide them with whatever they want. They are very kind and soft to kids. Further, they like to educate kids on moral values.

**Scorpio:** Do whatever you want to do, but make sure you are on the right path and deal with whatever comes your way, don't come to me for help - this is the approach of parents belonging to this zodiac sign. Their idea is to make the kids self dependent and give them utmost strength.

**Sagittarius:** They like to take their kids out for adventure and movies and impart them with good knowledge. They are the kinds who like to drop off and pick up their children from school. They tend to be kids with kids, giving them lot of attention and correcting wherever needed. They set good examples for children.

**Capricorn:** They are very practical and open minded, and bring up their children in good values and tradition. Their concept is to show all aspects of life to their kids, and let them choose their own path.

**Aquarius:** Expression of love towards kids comes naturally to them and hence they usually enjoy good relations with their offsprings. They are quite open-minded, and at times, they allow their kids to do wrong as well, so that they learn from their own mistakes. They share a great bond with their kids.

**Pisces:** They are great as motivating parents, who take good care of their kids' feelings and give them utmost support. They do not hesitate in going the extra mile for their children.

*(Pandit Jagannath Gururji is a renowned astrologer, prophetier & Philanthropist)*

## Indian cricket cannot wait endlessly

YAJURVINDRA SINGH

Preparations for India's premier cricket tournament, the Indian Premier League (IPL), are underway in full swing. The eight franchise teams seem to be doing a remarkable job as organising and executing the transportation, stay, and travel of their players and support staff must be quite an arduous task. To do so in the limited time they had is even more credible, as planning for a major tournament normally requires several months of brainstorming and preparations.

The players participating in the IPL are going through a novel experience. They need to travel clad in a protective suit and face gear, masked underneath, and their photographs have shown them as a team ready to embark on a journey to outer space rather than to the modern cities of the United Arab Emirates. This understandably is the only way that cricketers could be safely transported to finally make it to the first destination and that is to get them into the bio-secure bubble.

The difficult situation that each one of them will need to face would be six days of quarantine and mandatory isolation. To be confined all alone, with no interaction can be a very depressing experience for an extrovert person or one who enjoys the company of others. This will be the first of the mental ordeals that the cricketers and the support staff will need to confront.

Thereafter, they may feel better once they can mingle with their teammates, coaches and trainers, but restrictions for well over two months at a stretch could be frustrating for many. The mental aspect of how the cricketers will face



and absorb the on-field pressures as well as the off the field conditions could play a major role in how teams will fare in the IPL.

One feels, Mumbai Indians captain Rohit Sharma has been very sensible. He has taken his family with him and in doing so he has eliminated the loneliness that many others may confront as the tournament goes on.

The difficult task for the franchises, administrators and organisers will be to ensure that the 300 and more players and participants of the IPL 2020 pantomime do not err in anyway. Virat Kohli very rightly said recently that just one mistake could jeopardise the entire tournament.

This is a major responsibility on the shoulders of each person who enters the scary bio-bubble. Once there, they are engulfed in a world of their own. Maybe a few tips from India's famous actress Shilpa Shetty would have been useful. After all, she did win the famous UK reality show 'Celebrity Big Brother' and hosted the popular Indian show 'Bigg Boss'. This is where housemates or contestants are isolated

in a house to compete and survive till the end to aspire to be the winner.

The art of surviving and the mental constraints that arise in such a situation is what could be the differential factor in one's performance on the field as well. The winners of this contest would be just the right people to consult and learn from.

While the hustle and bustle of the IPL is underway, August 17 was earmarked to be the date for the Supreme Court to give a ruling/ final verdict on some major issues that were put up to them by the BCCI. Once again, the highest court of India did not bring it up for hearing, leaving the cricket administration in a state of complete uncertainty.

Cricket in India is a religion and is followed by millions. The Supreme Court over the last four years has dilly-dallied in making a firm decision on the way Indian cricket should be administered/governed. They did give a judgment in 2018, but it is yet to be implemented fully and completely. This has given opportunities to administrators at all the centres to interpret and run their organisations in

whichever way they feel.

Cricket is just not only a sport but also a huge business in India. Time has come when it needs to be operated in a professional manner with complete transparency. The delay in issuing a final verdict by the Supreme Court is creating an atmosphere in the Indian cricket diaspora that if not curtailed quickly it could lead to complete mayhem. Many of the cricket associations around the country are running them as their personal fiefdom and many who did so earlier are back in the driving seat.

The BCCI, the controlling body, is itself in a state of uncertainty with both their president and secretary having to operate even after their official tenures have expired. The irony of it is that not a single cricket related committee has been put in place apart from the Apex Council and selection committee and the Cricket Advisory Committee that chooses the selectors.

The Covid-19 pandemic has hit the Indian domestic cricket in a major way. Normal club tournaments and the build-up to the first-class season have all gone awry. Cricket has come to a standstill and the uncertainty of getting it started is worrying.

The task of creating a bio-bubble for domestic cricket would need a herculean effort. The Indian government has tried many methods for curtailing and eradicating the deadly virus but with very little success.

Cricket in India cannot wait endlessly. One wonders as to how it will make it rear its head once again.

*(Yajurvindra Singh is a former Test cricketer. Views expressed are personal)*



# 'Be Indian, Buy Indian will boost local consumption'

SANJEEV SHARMA

"I strongly believe in Be Indian and Buy Indian, and I think each one should make a conscious decision to buy products made in our country," said **Gautam Hari Singhania**, Chairman and Managing Director, Raymond Limited, India's largest textile and apparel brand. In an interview, Singhania said India is a very large economy with 1.3 billion people. "While the world looks at us as a market, I think we should look within for our products which are best in the world," he added. We need to come up with something more suitable for our country that will empower us to give the much needed boost to our economy, he said.

**Excerpts:**

**What has been the impact of Covid-19 pandemic on the textile and apparel industry in India?**

Given the discretionary nature of the textile and apparel industry, the pandemic has affected us. With the lockdown, all factories were shut and demand came to a standstill. In this backdrop, the Indian textiles industry accounting for roughly 14 per cent of the total industrial output and a key contributor to the economic activity has also been adversely impacted from the uncertainties of global demand as well as subdued domestic demand. However, barring the intermittent black swan event like Covid pandemic, we are equally hopeful for bouncing back to growth as soon as the pandemic curve witnesses an arrest in the near future.

**What is the strategy that Raymond has adopted to face this situation?**

At Raymond, we are challenging all costs and have also implemented restructuring to ensure efficiencies. In line with the prevailing market conditions, the company has undertaken the process of cost rationalisation and various cost control measures related to sales and marketing, manpower, rentals and others to minimise the impact on business due to the pandemic.

**What is your take on the Atmanirbhar Bharat campaign?**

I strongly believe in Be Indian and Buy Indian, and I think each one should make a conscious decision to buy products made



The government needs to proactively assess the situation and eliminate the bottlenecks in manufacturing. India has a massive employable workforce and there is a dire need for self-sufficiency in various industries to bring down trade deficit.

- **Gautam Singhania**, CMD, Raymond



in our country. India is a very large economy with 1.3 billion people. Whilst the world looks at us as a market, I think we look inside for our products which are best amongst the world. I am sure we can get out of pandemic together stronger. Strong initiatives being taken by Central Government and the confidence building driven by Prime Minister's "Atmanirbhar" policy initiatives continue to ignite hope for an earlier than envisaged revival of our economy.

**What does it mean for brands like Raymond?**

We have always seen that, the stronger brand gets much stronger and the weaker one goes wayside. I always look at this as an opportunity. In our endeavour to battle the Covid-19 pandemic, Raymond has launched an exhaustive range of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) offerings.

We are using our garmenting facilities in Bengaluru to manufacture PPE products (including masks and suits) which are currently being supplied to government, hospitals and other institutions. I am sure Raymond will come out much stronger by end of this.

**Shoppers are still wary of visiting retail stores. There is a shift towards digital, is apparel becoming part of the trend?**

While some products have moved towards digital, I don't think textile as a category can move totally towards digital. I think today digital for the textile industry will be less than 1 per cent and I'm sure as things open up of which we are seeing greens shoots, customers will come back to the store very quickly. Having said that, at Raymond we have accelerated our pace of digital adoption and will be moving our channel and trade partners extensively onto digital platforms for trade bookings

and other related activities. Our new digital infrastructure and omni-channel capabilities give us the competitive advantage to have a unified view of our inventory and will service our consumers across the length and breadth of the country. As the fashion industry is going 'Phygital', Raymond is committed to create delightful consumer experiences both in the online and offline world. As Indian economy is gradually opening up, we have started re-opening our stores and 1000 plus Raymond stores are now open for business. It's also heartening to see that our loyal consumers are waiting for our shops to resume business.

**What are your expectations from the festival and wedding season?**

By end of September, things should pick up and I am very bullish on the same. With the onset of the Pooja season in the East and we are hopeful the demand will come in from there and I am sure we will see the benefits of the same.

**How will the fashion industry reorient itself to the changed dynamics post Covid and how is Raymond participating in the rejig?**

The market is changing and the world is changing and I am sure, water will find its own level. Having said that Raymond has launched an exhaustive range of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) offerings. We are using our garmenting facilities in Bengaluru to manufacture PPE products (including masks and suits) which are currently being supplied to government, hospitals and other institutions. Additionally, our FMCG business was quick to respond and launched a slew of personal hygiene products as well as skin friendly hand sanitizers and

cleansers as a part of Raymond Care initiative.

**Raymond is advocating Be Indian, Buy India. What does that translate into for consumers?**

I believe, Be Indian Buy Indian will help revive local consumption. Governments across the world are coming up with innovative measures to revive consumption, for instance, if you consider in UK, the government was paying for a percentage of people who went out to restaurants. It was their way to kick-start their economy. We need to come up with something more suitable for our country that will empower us to give the much needed boost to our economy. For instance, it is imperative for India to continue to host IPL matches on its soil to give fillip to economy and sentiments of people of India as we are coming out of the impact of the pandemic. India can certainly handle such a high-profile sporting event, if UAE can.

**How will it boost employment and manufacturing?**

The government needs to proactively assess the situation and eliminate the bottlenecks in manufacturing. India has a massive employable workforce and there is a dire need for self-sufficiency in various industries to bring down trade deficit. In an economy like India, we need a robust manufacturing sector. The need for creating a robust manufacturing sector is critical. India must create one million jobs per month to capitalise on the demographic divide and manufacturing is the only activity that can provide livelihood opportunities to a huge chunk of the population outside of agriculture. (IANS)

## BUCKING COVID BLUES

# Hyundai looks to cross yrly domestic growth threshold

Healthy off-take in the up-country market segment a long with robust response for new offerings has reinforced India's image as one of the most attractive markets for automobile major Hyundai.

Accordingly, the company expects to cross the year-on-year domestic threshold in August, while maintaining strong sequential growth momentum. HML's Director Sales and Marketing Tarun Garg cited the healthy response for SUV Creta along with initiatives like car subscription and 'Click-to-Buy' as trigger for growth.

"We are hopeful that sales momentum will continue in August and even record growth on sequential and YoY basis. However, it must be noted that sales during July to September last year was not very healthy," Garg said.

"There has been a good response to new offerings, plus, there were two major festivals this month. The Up-country markets like Punjab, Jharkhand, Haryana and MP have performed much better than urban centres. This may be due to lower number of cases and growth in crop remuneration."

Besides, he pointed out that Covid triggered shift from public transport to personal mobility options and the low automobile ownership in India as the other major reasons for healthy sales pickup.

Last month, the auto major's domestic sales volume reached 98 per cent of July 2019 level. The company's domestic sales accounted for 38,200 units, while it exported another 3,100 units. Overall, the auto major reported cumulative sales of 41,300 units during July 2020.

Recently, the company launched 'Intelligent Manual Transmission, Elantra diesel BS6, Venue iMT, New Verna, 2020 Tucson'. The SUV Creta's second generation was launched in March. Even as sales' prospect seem promising, Garg cautioned against an



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element of uncertainty surrounding the pandemic's progression.

"We still don't know how things will pan-out in the long run. There is an upside regarding the vaccine as well as a downside regarding predictions of a second wave," he explained.

"We believe that a cure will be found and that India's growth prospects remain unscathed. There is a good enough room to grow in the country."

On the fuel mix, he said that currently HML offers diesel fuelled cars from entry to premium level and that the engine option will remain.

"We believe that customers should have a wider choice. Our sales (data) shows that diesel option has a substantial share in some of our leading SUVs," he said.

Furthermore, he revealed that the company is offering new services, technologies and products to buck the trend.

"Our initiatives like 'Click-to-Buy' has enabled us to be much better prepared and to become agile to deal with any situation," he added.

"Around 3,000 subscriptions have been received for the leasing model. All in all, from online buying to easy finance options, we are trying our best to make it convenient for the customer to go ahead and make the purchase."

QUIZ NO.  
137

## HANS BIZ QUIZ

**Theme: "The Apple of investors' eye"**

1. Apple made Wall Street history after its share price topped the level needed to exceed a \$2 trillion market capitalisation on 19 August 2020. In December 2019, which company became the world's first company to achieve the milestone of \$2 trillion market capitalisation?

- a) GE b) Saudi Aramco  
c) PetroChina d) Nestle

2. The Cupertino, California-based iPhone-making company's business has proven surprisingly resilient to the pandemic. Apple Inc became the first US company to surpass \$2 trillion market capitalisation. Which of the below became the first publicly traded US company to reach a \$1 trillion market cap in August 2018?

- a) Apple b) Google  
c) ExxonMobil d) Microsoft

3. Apple Inc is now the most valuable company in the world with a market capitalisation of \$2.02 trillion. Apple had surpassed the GDP of which of the below set of countries?

- a) Argentina, Switzerland, Korea, Mexico, Italy, South Africa  
b) Brazil, Russia, Indonesia, UAE, Thailand, Saudi Arabia  
c) Canada, Spain, Netherlands, Sweden, Singapore, Vietnam  
d) All of the above

4. Apple's stock shares have risen more than 120 per cent in the past year. How much did the stock gain from in 2020 (Jan-Aug) during the Covid-19 pandemic?

- a) 27% b) 41% c) 58% d) 74%

5. Apple's stock price has averaged a weekly gain of 3.5% since the beginning of June and doubled since March 2020. Apple is eleven times the size of the oil company, which Apple topped in 2011 to become the US's most valuable company?

- a) Walmart b) Intel  
c) Chevron Corporation d) Exxon Mobil

6. Apple is among the top gainers during the pandemic, which further boosted demand for connectivity, home entertainment and e-commerce. However, a \$2-trillion valuation means that Apple's stock investors are now willing to pay twice as much for the same earnings outlook. What

was Apple's market cap when Tim Cook took over on August 24, 2011?

- a) \$264.7 billion  
b) \$348.8 billion  
c) \$524.6 billion  
d) \$618.3 billion



7. Apple's current PE ratio is 35.20. What is Apple's Forward Price-To-Earnings, which is the company's highest multiple in more than a decade?

- a) 18 times b) 21 times  
c) 32 times d) 46 times

8. To launch Apple's first 5G iPhone this fall, and to release new phone upgrades, apps soon that can run with the faster 5G wireless speeds are challenges that lie ahead. Apple's investors will get three additional shares at the end of August as part of a 4-for-1 stock split. When did the previous stock split take place?

- a) 7-for-1 b) 5-for-1  
c) 4-for-1 d) 2-for-1

9. Apple Inc has continuously hosted one of the largest cash piles among US companies. Apple bought back over \$360bn shares in the past eight years, by far the most of any company, and also paid a \$0.82 cash dividend in August 2020. How much free cash does Apple Inc have in its bank?

- a) \$192.8 billion b) \$317.02 billion  
c) \$843.04 billion d) \$1.06 trillion

10. From April through June, even as Apple shuttered many of its retail stores because of the Covid-19, yet its every major product line saw year-over-year growth in every part of the world. Many of Apple's products were useful during the lockdown and quarantine amid the ongoing pandemic. Which product's sales were up over 31% y-o-y?

- a) Apple Watch b) iPad  
c) AirPods d) iPhone

The Hans Biz Quiz has been compiled by **Sunil Dhavala**, CEO, The Third Umpire Media. He had held senior management roles at Bertelsmann, NGC, Fox Broadcasting, Star TV and others. He is an alumnus of Indian Institute of Foreign Trade

KEY

1B 2A 3D 4C 5D 6B 7C 8A 9A 10B

# Clamour for stimulus grows as GDP to shrink

It is estimated that India's economy likely to contract between 17-30% in Q1

ROHIT VAID

The economic impact of Covid-19 on India's GDP is expected to be anywhere in between 17 per cent and 30 per cent during Q1FY21.

According to leading economists, the measures to curb the pandemic heavily dented manufacturing, services and other sectors apart from agriculture during the quarter. The country had observed mobility restrictions as mandated under the lockdown measures for the better part of the first quarter of FY21. It was only on June 1 that partial unlock measures were implemented.

However, a contraction at this scale has not been witnessed since the quarterly series began in the late 1990s.

In financial parlance, a GDP contraction not only indicates the economy's movement towards a recession, but also underlines the reduction in purchasing power along with lower taxes for the government, higher defaults on debt and falling Capex spends.

"We estimate a contraction of 17 per cent in Q1FY21 GDP as a direct result of lockdown, supply side constraints, and low to nil activity in non-essential manufacturing and services. While a robust growth in agriculture during this period is going to provide some cushion to the GDP growth, it will be insufficient to substitute the downfall arising out of the contraction caused in the manufacturing and services sector," said Sunil Kumar Sinha, Principal Economist, India Ratings & Research. "Local or regional



The measures to curb the pandemic heavily dented manufacturing, services and other sectors apart from agriculture during April-June period, say economists

or weekend lockdowns and health related concerns of the general public are continuing to act as hindrances towards normalcy of economic activity and the eventual sustainability of growth. Given the evolving situation, there is an urgent need to prop-up demand in the economy which had been languishing from even before the Covid-19 related lockdown, otherwise supply side measures announced so far will soon run into difficulty due to lack of demand," Sinha added. India's FY20 GDP had declined to 4.2 per cent from 6.1 per cent in FY19, the slowest in the last 11 years.

On a sequential basis, the quarterly growth rate has progressively declined from 5.2 per cent in Q1 of 2019-20 to 4.4 per cent in Q2, 4.1 per cent in Q3 and 3.1 per cent in the last quarter of 2019-20. "With domestic economy se-

verely disrupted due to the nationwide lockdown, the contraction in Q1 can be as high as 30 per cent," said Sankar Chakraborty, Group CEO, Acute Ratings & Research.

"However, it's not a very conducive environment to forecast economic output. There are far too many uncertainties that will continue to play out in the next few months. A second outbreak may make it far worse, while on the other hand, positive government actions may make it better in the short term. It may just be fair to say that we will see one of the worst years in this century with contraction not less than 10 per cent. A serious economic revival should commence from next year," Chakraborty added. According to Madhavi Arora, Lead Economist, FX and Rates, Edelweiss Securities: "We expect 1Q GDP to

contract 18.1 per cent YoY on account of extended lockdown in April-May, weak domestic demand and supply disruptions emanating from both domestic and global front. Core gross value added (GVA) would likely be extremely sluggish, depicting private sector's fragile state. As the economy exited the lockdown, domestic activity has gradually firmed up, but it is coming off a depressed base, and looks partly pent up and appears to have stabilised now after having seen a V-shaped rebound."

On its part, ICRA pegged the contraction in Indian GDP and the GVA at basic prices in year-on-year (YoY) terms in Q1 FY2021 at around 25 per cent each. "In addition to lower raw material prices, pared down employee costs and other cost-cutting measures appear to have protected the margins of various listed companies as compared to our earlier expectations of the impact of the lockdown on profitability," said Aditi Nayar, Principal Economist, ICRA.

"However, the cost-cutting measures would depress revenues and margins of other producers, including the MSMEs, for many of which data may be available with a lag at best, and may not, therefore, get captured in the initial estimates of the CSO for Q1FY21. Overall, we expect the manufacturing GVA to contract by 40-45 per cent in Q1FY21," Nayar added.

The National Statistical Office (NSO) is slated to release the first quarter Real GDP or Gross Domestic Product (GDP) at Constant (2011-12) Prices for the year 2020-21 on Monday.

# RBI debt recast plans evoke mixed feelings

The loan restructuring package announced by the Reserve Bank of India evoked mixed reactions from experts in the financial sector, as some found it helpful for the tourism industry, while others described the guidelines of the scheme as 'restrictive' to the NBFCs.

Tourism Finance Corporation of India MD and CEO Anirban Chakraborty said hotels and the hospitality sector are under the MSME segment in the loan restructuring framework of RBI.

The emergency credit line extended to the borrowers is a good measure to help the sector sustain for the next two years,



he said at a webinar organised by Enqube Collaborations on Friday.

Chakraborty said 70 per cent of TFCI's

portfolio is with the MSME sector and this credit line with the government guarantee will help the industry.

According to him, tourism and hospitality, one of the worst-hit sectors due to the Covid-19 pandemic, is expected to bounce back in the third or fourth quarter of the current fiscal.

Srei Infrastructure Finance vice chairman Sunil Kanoria said the RBI restructuring package is somewhat restrictive and not a workable solution. "I have a contrarian view of the RBI guidelines. These are restrictive and

not workable. The guidelines should have been left to the lenders and borrowers, which would have been better," he said.

Regarding the NBFCs, Kanoria said this sector is deprived of availing of the moratorium on repayments of loans taken from the banks.

"Though we are extending the moratorium to our customers, we are not getting the same benefit from banks so there is a mismatch on the liability side," he added.

Union Bank of India Executive Director B Mishra said that Covid-19 has led to behavioural changes on the part of the government, regulator, bankers and borrowers.



# Raina pulls out of IPL, back in India

**New Delhi (IANS):** One more Chennai Super Kings player has tested positive for COVID-19, taking the count of the positive-tested members of the three-time IPL champion team to 13, including two unnamed players, sources in the UAE told IANS on Saturday.

In addition to the 13, CSK fans got another shocker as all-rounder Suresh Raina pulled out of the 13th edition of the IPL citing personal reasons, the team CEO KS Viswanathan announced on CSK twitter handle on Saturday morning.

The IPL franchise informed on Saturday morning that Raina has returned to India for "personal reasons".

"Suresh Raina has returned to India for personal reasons and will be unavailable for the remainder of the IPL season," CSK CEO K.S. Viswanathan was quoted as saying on the official Twitter handle on the Chennai-based franchise. "Chennai Super Kings offers complete support to Suresh and his family during this time."

On Friday, 12 squad members had tested positive, but it is still not clear how many of those are players or members of the coaching or the support staff. The development has raised a big question mark against the start of 13th edition of the IPL that is scheduled to start on September 19.

Just when fans were trying to grasp the development, reports came in that one more CSK player has tested positive. "One

## 13th CSK member tests Covid positive



more player tested positive. His name is not known, but I was told that one more player has tested positive. This is becoming scary here in the UAE. Other teams are also a little worried now," sources told IANS.

While CSK CEO KS Viswanathan tweeted about Raina, he did not say anything about the number of squad members who have tested positive. The CSK has not issued any statement either.

The IPL, which is generally

held in the summer in India, had to be postponed due to the coronavirus crisis.

It is now scheduled to be held between September 19 and November 10 in the UAE, but the BCCI has now announced the schedule of the matches.

Besides the CSK tweet, the real reason for Raina's return is not immediately known. The left-hander retired from international cricket along with former India captain and his friend, CSK skipper MS Dhoni, on August 15.

The BCCI has so far not issued any statement vis-a-vis CSK members testing positive.

Raina recently announced his retirement from international cricket, brining an end to a career spanning 13 years in which he represented India in 18 Tests, 226 ODIs and 78 T20Is.

The 33-year-old has so far played 193 games for CSK in which he has accumulated more than 5,000 runs at a strike rate of above 137. Besides, he has also picked 25 wickets.

## CHESS OLYMPIAD

# No action against Armenia for walking out of quarters against India

**Chennai (IANS):** World chess body FIDE will not take any action against the Armenian team that walked out of the Online Olympiad quarter-finals against India in a non-sportive manner as its appeal against the victory of Indian Nihal Sarin over Haik M Martirosyan was dismissed, said an official.

India advanced to the semi-finals and will play Poland.

"I can confirm that no further disciplinary actions are being considered at this point," FIDE's Chief Communications Officer David Llada told IANS. He said the quarter-finals is a knockout event, so the withdrawal does not impact other teams.

The quarter-finals consist of a knockout duel of two matches and an Armageddon game.

During the first quarter-final match, Sarin was pitted against Martirosyan. When the Armenian was to make his 69th move, it seems he lost internet connectivity and thus lost out on time.

The Armenian team then appealed, saying that the net connectivity was good and it was the problem with the Chess.com server.

"As a leader of a 3-time Olympic champion I feel very dissatisfied with FIDE's decision to reject our just appeal. In our match against India, Haik Martirosyan lost on time due to disconnection from http://chess.com. We proved that



our connection was stable (sic)," tweeted Armenian player Levon Aronian.

"It was a problem with access to http://chess.com, not on our side. All we asked for was to continue that game from the same position and same time. Is it too much to ask?" he wondered.

Chess players had said continuing the game from the same position and same time could not be allowed as the players would have analysed the position in depth with the help of computers.

One option was to start a fresh game.

FIDE had laid down strong rules for players, including a ban from playing in the next round even if their internet connectivity is lost for two minutes or less.

"We understand the frustration experienced by the Armenian players, but we have followed the same criteria we followed in previous rounds -- like when Vidit (Santosh Gujrathi) and Koneru (Humpy) lost their games in their match against Mongolia," Llada added.

Apart from these two Indian players, Divya Deshmukh too lost a game as she was disconnected from www.chess.com server.

Deciding on Armenian's team's appeal, the FIDE's appeals committee discussed the event regulations in detail with the team captains. As per the regulations, the quality and stability of the of internet connection is the sole responsibility of the players.

## Want all para-athletes to be treated as sports persons: Joshi

**New Delhi (IANS):** With para badminton all set to make its debut at the Paralympics in Tokyo next year, India's Manasi Joshi is super stoked and is ensuring to keep her spirits high working towards ticking off one of her bucket lists -- 'running'.

In a recent Instagram 24-hour live relay with International Paralympic Committee (IPC) as part of #WaitForTheGreats campaign to the Tokyo 2020 Paralympics, Joshi spoke her heart out about her journey, aspirations and road map to the Games next year.

"When in 2014 we came to know that badminton is making its debut at the Tokyo 2020 Paralympic Games, we all were very, very thrilled and enthusiastic. I think it's a great chance for the sport, and badminton is a very inclusive sport," said Joshi, who has an uphill task to book her ticket to the Games but is confident of making the cut. She was in Mumbai recently, solely to get her prosthetics 'running' ready.

"I always have a bucket list that I ensure to fulfil and add new ones. This time, it's to get me into running. I believe that will help me train better to move around the court. So, my prosthetics needed some fixing," said Joshi, as she eagerly waits to return to the court that is off limits since the COVID-19 induced lockdown in March.

"I have started to feel rusty, and I think I need some time to regain my form and get back to the top. Since lockdown, I trained at home by doing some wall practice. I have also been working on my fitness," added Joshi.

Joshi, who lost her left leg in an accident in 2011, grabbed headlines by winning the World Championships in Basel, Switzerland, last year. But her pet event - SL3 singles is not included in the Paralympics. The only way she can qualify now is through the tough women's doubles and mixed doubles categories.

## ENG VS PAK FIRST T20I

# Banton fires before rain forces no result

**Manchester (IANS):** Tom Banton hit a brilliant half century before rain caused the first T20I between England and Pakistan to be abandoned even before the completion of the first innings at the Old Trafford. Opening the batting in the absence of Jason Roy -- who has been ruled out of the series with a side strain -- Banton on Friday evening smashed five sixes during his 42-ball 71-run knock which put England in a strong position despite a slow start.

Put into bat, England did not have a great start as they lost opener Jonny Bairstow in the very first over. Dawid Malan, who came in next, did try to steady the ship with Banton and slowly and cautiously took forward the England innings. After seven overs, England had just 40 runs on the board, but Banton switched gears following the introduction of Shadab Khan. Banton and Malan took the team's total to 71 before the latter was run out after a mix-up in the 10th over.

Skipper Eoin Morgan, who



came to bat at number 4, scored some boundaries as he joined Banton in accelerating the innings. During the course of the partnership, the 21-year-old opener moved to his maiden T20I fifty and the hosts looked all set for a big total.

However, they lost wickets in a flurry and were 131/6 in 16.1 overs when rain came in. The weather didn't relent for long enough at any stage for the players to return to the field, leaving the match to finish without any result.

The two teams will now lock horns in the second T20I to be played at the same venue on Sunday.

**Brief scores:** England 131/6 in 16.1 overs (Tom Banton 72, Dawid Malan 23; Imad Wasim 2/31)

# Khel Ratna awardees to receive 25L, 15L for Arjuna awardees

**New Delhi (IANS):** Union Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju on Saturday announced an enhancement in the prize money in four of the seven categories of the National Sports Awards.

Rijiju made this announcement on the occasion of the 115th birth anniversary of hockey legend Dhyan Chand, which is also celebrated as National Sports Day.

The prize money for the Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna Award has been increased to Rs 25 lakh from the previous amount of Rs 7.5 lakh; Arjuna Award has been enhanced to Rs 15 lakh from Rs 5 lakh; the Dhronacharya (Lifetime) awardees, who were earlier given Rs 5 lakh will now be given Rs 15 lakh as cash prize; while Dhronacharya (Regular) will be given Rs 10 lakh instead of Rs 5 lakh per awardee. Dhyan Chand awardees will be given Rs 10 lakh instead of Rs 5 lakh.

Speaking about the decision, Rijiju said, "The prize money for the Sports Awards was last reviewed in 2008. These amounts should be reviewed once every 10

years at least. If professionals in every field have seen an enhancement in their earnings, why not our sportspersons?"

A total of 74 awards are being given in seven categories this year in a virtual ceremony because of the Covid-19 pandemic.

"The performance of our athletes in the international level has become better. When our players perform better, they have to be recognised and rewarded. If the government doesn't recognise their achievements, it will discourage every budding sporting talent we have in India," Rijiju said earlier in the day.

"So, compared to the previous years, the performances of the Indian athletes have gone up considerably and as a result, the number of award winners has also gone up," he added.

The sports ministry had earlier announced Rani Rampal, Vinesh Phogat, Manika Batra, Rohit Sharma and Mariyappan Thangavelu as five Rajiv Gandhi Khel Ratna winners and 27 other sportspersons for the Arjuna Award.

## IISM receives Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puruskar

**Mumbai (IANS):** International Institute of Sports Management (IISM), a sports management venture founded by former India cricketer Nilesch Kulkarni, was on Saturday bestowed with the prestigious Rashtriya Khel Protsahan Puruskar by President Ram Nath Kovind for its outstanding work in the sports promotion and development.

Kulkarni received the award at a virtual ceremony at Mantralaya on behalf of the IISM. The National Sports Awards 2020 ceremony was held virtually for the first time in the history with the President attending the event from the Rashtrapati Bhawan due to COVID-19 pandemic.

On receiving the award, Kulkarni said "It is a matter of immense pride for IISM to

be recognised for its contribution in sports management. Our first-of-its-kind initiative in sports management in India is gaining popularity."

"This award will go a long way in making us strive to equip students with professional skills to lead meaningful careers in the sports industry."

IISM, a pioneering initiative in the sports management education, was founded by Kulkarni -- who played three Tests and 10 ODIs -- 10 years ago along with his wife Rasika.

The Andheri-based institute offers professional courses for under-graduate and post-graduate students and explores uncharted avenues of sports management education in the country.

## Lyon kick off Ligue 1 campaign with 4-1 win over Dijon

**Paris (IANS):** Memphis Depay scored a hat-trick as Lyon registered a 4-1 win over Dijon at home in their opening game of the 2020-2021 French Ligue 1 season.

The Dutch striker on Friday levelled the score from a penalty

in the 39th minute after Aurelien Scheidler set up an early lead for the visitors just 14 minutes into the game. Dijon's central defender Wesley Lauoto scored an own goal in the 45th minute, after which Depay was on target again

to help Rudi Garcia's side overturn the game at 3-1 before the break, reports Xinhua news agency.

The 26-year-old has been linked with Spanish giants Barcelona after his compatriot

Ronald Koeman was appointed as the head coach at the Camp Nou earlier this month. The former Dutch boss is reportedly keen on bringing his countryman to the Catalan team.

Depay didn't rule out the pos-

sibility of a departure but insisted that his focus now was on Lyon. "I can dream of big clubs but I'm looking to do my best here," Depay said after the match. The Dutchman completed the hat-trick in the 66th minute through a second penalty of the game, adding his tally in the French club to 57 goals in 139 appearances since arriving

in 2017 from Manchester United. Lyon's French playmaker Houssem Aouar was absent from the match after testing positive for COVID-19 ahead of the clash. Garcia's side reached the last four of the European Champions League last week in Lisbon where they lost to eventual winner Bayern Munich 3-0 in the semifinals.

# Indian hockey is moving in right direction: Khel Ratna Rani

**Bengaluru (IANS):** Indian women's hockey captain Rani Rampal, who was on Saturday conferred with the prestigious Khel Ratna Award, has said that she feels overwhelmed that women's hockey in the country is getting equal importance as that of the men.

Rani has become the first Indian women's hockey player to receive the prestigious Khel Ratna award. She is only the third hockey player after Dhanraj Pillay and Sardar Singh to receive the highest award for sporting excellence.

"Over the past one week, since my name was officially announced for the Khel Ratna Award, I have been reflecting back on my journey so far and it makes me feel overwhelmed that women's hockey gets equal importance as the men's team and a women's player being recognised with the highest award definitely goes to show the sport is



moving in the right direction," said Rani.

She further said that a lot has changed over the past decade in Indian hockey.

"From when I started to now, many things have changed for the good in women's hockey. Back when I began playing, women's team played very few tourna-

ments," said the Indian captain.

"We mostly played major events like Commonwealth Games and the Asian Games but now the scenario has changed so much. Hockey India and the management ensure we play tournaments round the year which has contributed tremendously towards our performance improving over the years and has also helped popularise women's hockey," she added.

While Rani was conferred with the Khel Ratna Award, Akashdeep Singh received the Arjuna Award in a virtual ceremony. Both are currently part of the on-going national coaching camp at SAI Bengaluru campus.

"I thank everyone who has been part of my journey so far. I have been very fortunate to play for my country along with some of the greatest players in the sport. I also thank Hockey India and SAI for

their support and ensuring we are provided with the best facilities to train," said Akashdeep.

Congratulating the winners, Gyanendra Ningombam, Hockey India Officiating President said, "On behalf of Hockey India, I congratulate Ramesh Pathania for winning the Dhronacharya award (lifetime achievement), Rani for winning the Khel Ratna Award, Akashdeep Singh and Deepika Thakur for winning the Arjuna award. I also congratulate Jude Felix for winning the Dhronacharya award and Ajit Singh for winning the Dhyan Chand life-time achievement award."

Hockey India Secretary General Rajinder Singh too congratulated the awardees. "I am very happy that a women's player has been recognised with the Khel Ratna award for the very first time in the history of the sport.

## Rijiju pays tribute to Dhyan Chand on National Sports Day

**New Delhi (IANS):** Union Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju on Saturday morning paid a floral tribute to the statue of Dhyan Chand on the occasion of the hockey legend's 115th birth anniversary at the Major Dhyan Chand Stadium in the national capital. This day is also commemorated as the National Sports Day every year.

Rijiju was joined by other dignitaries during the ceremony and he also took time to address a Khelo India e-pathshala at the stadium. "Today is a very important day for all of us, especially the sporting fraternity. Major Dhyan Chand's three consecutive gold medals for India and his exemplary skills and determination makes every In-



dian proud," said Rijiju.

"On the occasion of this National Sports Day, the government confers the awards and I would like to congratulate all the award winners for the accolades and honours they have brought to India," he added.

Asked why the number of sports awardees this year has increased significantly, with 74 awards being given in seven categories, the Sports Minister said, "The performance of our athletes in the international level has become better. When our players perform better, they have to be recognised and rewarded. If the government doesn't recognise their achievements, it will discourage every budding sporting talent we have in India."