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BHOPAL, WEDNESDAY AUGUST 5, 2020; PAGES 12-13

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Surge of elation on bhoomi puja eve

Ayodhya decked up, PM to lay foundation of Ram Mandir at 12.44-12.45 pm

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■
AYODHYA

The temple town of Ayodhya has been fortified and decked up like never before, painted all over in yellow hue, for the "bhoomi puja" for the construction of Ram Temple at the Ram Janmabhoomi Complex. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lay the foundation stone on Wednesday.

The foundation stone function will start at 12.30 pm and the shila (stone) will be laid between 12.44 and 12.45 pm after offering prayers to Lord Ganesh, Chhambhai Rai, general secretary of the Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust told this reporter.

The PM will lay a 40-kg silver brick to symbolise the start of construction of the Ram Temple that is core to the ruling BJP's ideology and poll promises. A campaign for the temple marked the rise of the party to the national spotlight in the 1990s.

Rai said that religious functions like different pujas have started. These include Ramarchan Puja, where prayers are held to invite all major gods and goddesses who consider Lord Ram as their Ishth (the god of worship). Vedic saing are conducting the prayers facing Ram Lalla on his temporary seat, Rai said.

A total of 21 priests from Varanasi, Ayodhya, and Prayagraj started the ritual of Bhoomi Puja by organising Gauri Ganesh Puja at the Bhoomi Puja site on the Ram Janmabhoomi premises. Priests are also performing puja at the Hanumanagarhi and Ram ki chavni temples and aarti at the

Saryu ghat in the evening. On Tuesday morning, Ramacharya puja along with dhawaj and Nisan puja of Lord Hanuman were performed at the Hanumanagarhi temple. Except for the priests of the temples, none was allowed to attend these pujas due to Covid pandemic.

Pandit Kalikram handed over a green colour dress along with a religious flag to the head priest of the Ram Lalla temple Acharya Satendra Das, which Ram Lalla will wear on Wednesday. Ram Lalla will wear a yellow dress on Thursday.

Pandit Kalikram has been presenting the dresses for the idols for the last two years. He will also light diyas at almost all the temples of Ayodhya in the evening of August 5.

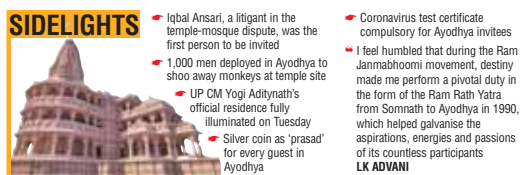
The city has been turned into a fortress with barricades put up across the main thoroughfare of Ayodhya - particularly those lanes which connect the city to Ram Janmabhoomi Complex. The jawans of the paramilitary force are deployed around the city.

The shops are closed. The road side eateries have downed their shutters, but the local residents are not complaining. "Our movements have been restricted for two days but we are not complaining. This is an indicator of good things to come. We will have our own Ram Temple after almost five centuries. And for that why will we complain," Dilip Maurya, who owns Maurya Tea Stall near Chantaghar, said.

There is an air of festivity around Ayodhya. Religious songs or the chanting of Sunderkand wafts through the air as one drives through the empty roads of Ayodhya.



Devotees light lamps on Deepotsav at Ramghat on the eve of bhoomi puja of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya on Tuesday. PTI



Devotees light lamps on Deepotsav at Ramghat on the eve of bhoomi puja of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya on Tuesday. PTI

SIDELIGHTS

- Iqbal Ansari, a filigian in the temple-mosque dispute, was the first person to be invited
- 1,000 men deployed in Ayodhya to shoo away monkeys at temple site
- UP CM Yogi Adityanath's official residence fully illuminated on Tuesday
- Silver coin as 'prasad' for every guest in Ayodhya
- Coronavirus test certificate compulsory for Ayodhya invitees
- I feel humbled that during the Ram Janmabhoomi movement, destiny made me perform a pivotal duty in the form of the Ram Rath Yatra from Sonmath to Ayodhya in 1990, which helped galvanise the aspirations, energies and passions of its countless participants

LP ADVANI

Not invited, Advani recalls his role in temple movement

PNS ■
NEW DELHI

Recalled the "pivotal duty" he performed in carrying out the Ram Rath Yatra from Sonmath to Ayodhya in 1990.

A day before Prime Minister Narendra Modi lays the foundation stone for a Ram temple in Ayodhya, Advani said in a statement it is his belief that the Ram Mandir will represent India as a strong, prosperous, peaceful and harmonious nation with justice for all and exclusion of none to truly usher in "Ram Rajya, the epitome of good governance".

Foundation stone was laid in 1989; on August 5 just construction will start: VHP

PNS ■
LUCKNOW

Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) president Alok Kumar has claimed the foundation stone for the construction of a grand Ram Temple at the birthplace of Lord Shri Ram was laid way back in 1989, and on August 5 just the construction work will start.

Without taking any names, he said the construction of the temple was embroiled in the hurdles created by various governments, the manipulations by political forces and the long delays in the courts.

"It is after about 31 years that the construction of the temple shall now begin in the presence of Prime Minister Narendra Modi on August 5.

We hope that in about three years' time, the devotees may be able to worship Ram Lalla in the sanctum sanctorum of the grand temple," Kumar said in a statement issued here.

CBI probe into Sushant death, proposes Bihar

PTI ■ PATNA/MUMBAI

The Bihar Government on Tuesday recommended a CBI enquiry into actor Sushant Singh Rajput's death case, CBI Minister Nitish Kumar said, a move contested by Rhea Chakraborty's lawyer, who insisted the State had no jurisdiction to make such a recommendation.

As Patna and Mumbai Police were locked in a bitter turf war over who had the mandate of law to investigate the sensational death of Rajput, Nitish earlier said his Government will recommend handing over the case to the central probe agency after the actor's father gave his consent.

The PM will fly from New Delhi at 0935 hours on Wednesday morning by a special LAI air service and will reach Lucknow at 1035 hrs.

KK Singh, Rajput's father, had on July 25 lodged a police complaint against Chakraborty, a budding actor and his son's rumoured girlfriend, of abetting his suicide, keeping him in wrongful confinement and defrauding him of crores of rupees.

"The actor's father spoke to the DGP and gave his consent for a CBI probe. Since he had lodged an FIR with Bihar police, we could not have recommended a CBI enquiry. Now that he has consented, I have asked the DGP to complete all formalities today and the Government will send its recommendation today itself," Nitish had told journalists.

Rhea Chakraborty's lawyer Satishman Shinde, meanwhile, called into question the Bihar government's decision. "There cannot be transfer of a case which had no legal basis to begin with for the Bihar police to get involved," he said.

Aaditya slams 'dirty politics', says he has no role in case

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

A mild indirect insinuations were made at him by the BJP-led Opposition on issues relating to actor Sushant Singh Rajput's alleged suicide, Maharashtra's influential Minister Shri. Disha Thackeray on Tuesday slammed opponents for indulging in "dirty politics" and "malicious" and his family, and categorically said he has nothing to do with Sushant's suicide.

Aaditya's statement came on a day when Maharashtra's former Chief Minister and BJP's Rajya Sabha member Narayan Rane alleged that the actor and his ex-manager Disha Salian were "murdered". So much so that Rane claimed that Disha was "raped" and "murdered". He also alleged both the incidents were linked.

Breaking his silence over the allegations linking him to Sushant's suicide made against him over the past several days by the BJP leaders without naming him, 30-year-old Aaditya, who is the son of Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray, issued a statement in Marathi on his twitter handle, denying his role in matters relating to the actor's suicide and said his political opponents were desperately indulging in "dirty politics".

CAPSULE

PAK INCLUDES J&K IN NEW POLITICAL MAP

Islamabad: On the eve of the first anniversary of the revocation of the contentious Article 370 and Article 35A, Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan unveiled a new political map which includes the UT of J&K as part of Pakistan on Tuesday. Khan has decided to present the new political map at the United Nations as well. The Imran Khan cabinet approved the new map in which the complete Jammu & Kashmir is shown integrated with Pakistan. The illegal map shows J&K as "Indian illegally occupied J&K — disputed territory — final status to be decided in line with relevant UNSC resolutions." Thereby cocking a snook at the Govt of India.

COURT DISMISSES BAIL IN IB OFFICER MURDER CASE

New Delhi: A Delhi court Tuesday dismissed the bail plea of a man arrested in the case of IB official Ankit Sharma's murder during the northeast Delhi riots in February, saying he and others had been allegedly "instigated on communal lines" by suspended AAP Councillor Tahir Hussain due to which they were "lying charged to attack all and sundry from the other community".



Protem Speaker of the State Assembly and BJP MLA Rameshwar Sharma along with party workers lights lamps on the eve of the bhoomi puja for Ram Temple in Ayodhya, in Bhopal on Tuesday. Pioneer photo

Trump bans hiring of H1B visa holders, blow to Indians

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

In another huge blow to Indian IT professionals, evening the US job market, President Donald Trump has signed an executive order asking federal agencies to hire American and preventing them from contracting or subcontracting foreign workers, mainly those with H-1B visas.

The move came over a month after the Trump administration on June 23 suspended the H-1B visas along with other types of foreign work visas to protect American workers in a crucial election year. The H-1B visa, among Indian IT professionals, is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise.

STATES	TOTAL CASES	DEATHS	RECOVERED
Maharashtra	4,57,956	16,142	2,99,356
Tamil Nadu	2,68,285	4,349	2,08,784
Andhra Pradesh	1,76,333	1,604	95,625
Karnataka	1,45,830	2,704	69,272
Delhi	1,39,156	4,033	1,25,226
Uttar Pradesh	1,00,310	1,817	57,271
West Bengal	80,984	1,785	56,884
Telangana	68,946	563	49,675
Gujarat	65,704	2,529	48,561
Bihar	62,031	349	40,760
Assam	48,162	115	33,429
Rajasthan	46,679	731	32,832
Haryana	37,796	448	31,226
Odisha	37,681	258	24,483
Madhya Pradesh	35,082	912	25,414
Kerala	27,956	88	16,299

42-yr-old man who consumed sanitiser in place of liquor dies

STAFF REPORTER ■
BHOPAL

A 42-year-old man, who had consumed sanitiser after he failed to get liquor, died while undergoing treatment at JP hospital on Tuesday. The deceased lived behind JP hospital and used to work at parking of the hospital.

According to the police, Maan Singh reported illness and was rushed to hospital where he died during treatment.

The deceased used to work with the parking space at the JP hospital and used to live behind the hospital where he consumed sanitiser after he failed to get liquor. The deceased was heavily addicted to liquor and took sanitiser after he failed to bear the urge for liquor. The sanitiser proved fatal for deceased which he consumed. The details of sanitiser are yet to be investigated.

Continued on Page 3

4 die as heavy rain batters Mumbai, more in store

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

At least four persons were killed, as heavy rain battered Mumbai and surrounding satellite cities and towns, inundating the low-lying areas and paralysing the road and rail services in the country's commercial Capital.

An intense flooding in low-lying areas across the metropolis, a major landslide on the Western Express Highway, two house crashes, at least 100 tree falls and scores of incidents of electric short-circuits crippled the lives of Mumbaiers and their counterparts in the neighbouring Thane, Navi Mumbai and areas coming under the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR).

Such was the intensity of rain that last night Mumbai could be gauged from the fact that Island city of Mumbai recorded 25.2 cm while the suburbs registered 26.8 cm of rain in the past 24 hours.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has forecast spells of more heavy to very heavy rainfall in Mumbai and surrounding areas over the next



Commuters waded through a waterlogged street during heavy rain in Mumbai on Tuesday. AP

24 hours. It has also forecast a high tide with a swell of 3.98 metres on early Wednesday.

While the services on sections of suburban sector came to their grinding halt or trains crawled on the main Western and Central Railway networks, while the Harbour Line remained paralysed between Kurla and Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Terminus

(CSMT). After the crash of two houses at Santa Cruz in north-west Mumbai, a woman Rekha M Kakade and her 18-month-old infant daughter Jahnavi were washed away in a swollen nullah.

Her second daughter Shivanya was rescued safely, while a third daughter is still missing.

They said Kallukettia Purayil Ijas has been missing since 2016 and they believe that he had left the country with his wife to Afghanistan. In July 2016, a parent from Kasargod had lodged a police complaint, stating that his 30-year-old son Abdul Rashid was missing along with his wife Aiysha (Sonia Sebastian) and their child for almost two months after they had gone to Mumbai.

Detailed report on P8

Covid-19 IN INDIA

TOTAL CASES: 19,06,121
DEATHS: 39,818
RECOVERED: 12,80,284
ACTIVE: 5,85,570



Delhi sees lowest daily spike, deaths

New Delhi: Delhi recorded 674 fresh Covid-19 infections and 12 deaths due to the disease in the last 24 hours, its lowest number of single-day fatalities in many weeks.

As the coronavirus situation in the national Capital seemed to be improving, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said the "Delhi model" in tackling the pandemic is being talked about everywhere.

In a tweet, he also said, the number of active cases in the city has now fallen below the 10,000-mark and Delhi is now at "14th position" in the country in terms of active cases.

According to a health department bulletin on Tuesday, 674 fresh coronavirus cases took Delhi's infection tally to 1,39,156, while the death toll from the disease climbed to 4,033 with 12 fatalities.

Dharmendra Pradhan tests Covid positive

New Delhi: Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan on Tuesday tested positive for coronavirus and has been admitted to Medanta Hospital.

In a tweet, Pradhan said he has been admitted to hospital after testing positive of Covid-19. Pradhan, 51, had developed Covid-like symptoms on Monday and was tested on Tuesday.

"After seeing symptoms of Covid-19, I got tested. The report has come positive," he tweeted.

"On the advice of doctors, I have been admitted to hospital and I am healthy."

Sources said Pradhan had last week met Home Minister Amit Shah, who was admitted to Medanta on Sunday after testing positive of coronavirus. His staff too had earlier tested positive and has been isolation since.

Pradhan is one of the several high-profile names to have tested positive.

Kerala doc among ISIS fidayeen in Af jail attack

Kabul/New Delhi: Of the 11 ISIS suicide bombers involved in the Afghanistan prison break terror attack that left 39 people dead on Monday, one was a doctor from Kerala.

The ISIS suicide bomber has been identified as Kallukettia Purayil Ijas, a physician and resident of Kasargod in Kerala.

Friends in the small town where Ijaz had his ancestral home in Kasargod in Kerala identified him from the picture.

Webinar to be milestone for Atmanirbhar MP: CM



STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan has said that the webinars to be held from August 7 to 11 will prove to be a milestone in the ongoing preparations in the State for the road map being made for Atmanirbhar Madhya Pradesh.

Youth must also be linked with each webinar to prepare a road map by getting the views and suggestions of subject experts, senior officers, economists as regard to the infrastructure, employment, health, education, economy and good governance in Madhya Pradesh under the direction of NITI Aayog.

Along with this, field officers like Collectors, Commissioners and senior administrative officers posted in the capital besides ministers should give practical suggestions from their experiences.

The public will be apprised of the road map. The road map will be implemented in the next three years. Chouhan was holding discussions with Chief Secretary Shri Iqbal Singh Bains and senior officials

through video conference from Chirayu Hospital. Chief Minister Shri Chouhan will inaugurate the webinar on August 7.

The Chief Minister held a discussion with Additional Chief Secretaries Mohammad Saleman, S.N. Mishra, Rajesh Rajoura and ICP Kesri regarding the preparations for the webinar to be organized for four days in connection with the roadmap to be implemented in the state.

Chouhan said that points decided for discussions in separate groups, invitation for participation to experts, task for the inclusion of the necessary topics before preparation of the road map for implementation should be systematically completed.

Chief Minister Chouhan said that the discussion in the webinar should be meaningful, there should be full participation of the Department of Public Service Management and various sessions of the webinar should be conducted according to the points set by the Institute of Good Governance.

Chief Secretary Iqbal Singh Bains said that the preparations for the webinar are almost complete. Invitations have been sent to the delegates. The outline of the sessions is being finalized in consultation with the NITI Aayog.

Points decided for discussions in separate groups, invitation for participation to experts, task for the inclusion of the necessary topics before preparation of the road map for implementation should be systematically completed

Efforts are being made that representatives of national institutes based in Bhopal and Indore should also attend the webinar. Principal Secretary to the Chief Minister Manish Rastogi informed that efforts have been made to ensure participation of representatives of Indian Institute of Management Bangalore and other prestigious institutions.

The four additional chief secretaries, in charge of the webinar gave a sector wise briefing of the work done and suggestions received for the road map of Atmanirbhar Madhya Pradesh.

Along with the priorities of Chief Minister Chouhan, suggestions received in the brain-storming held in previous years will also be discussed in the webinar.

SECT college holds online Rakhi making workshop

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

On the occasion of Raksha Bandhan a lot of events were organised online. In the same series SECT College of B.Ed organised few competitions and a workshop online on Tuesday.

Rakhi making workshop and competition, followed with mehndi competition were conducted online by SECT College of Professional Education, Misrod. In this workshop, Suprieti Chaturvedi first taught the students how to make rakhi and the design of mehndi, followed by competitions.

To celebrate the essence of brother-sister bond, this workshop focused on creatively enhancing the rakhi making skills of the artists and readers.

The children enthusiastically participated in the workshop and learned to make beautiful and different rakhis.

First and second year students participated in the competitions. In Rakhi competition, first prize was given to first year student Kalyani and second prize to Pooja Verma and second year student Richa Shukla got first prize and Suman Gupta got second prize.

Under this series, first year students participated in Mehndi competition. Nivedita Sharma was given first prize, Priya Tomar was given second and third prize was given to Sangeta Patel, while first year Richa Mehra got first prize, second prize was given to Pooja Verma and third prize was given to Richa Saxena.

Vaijayanthi Subramanian launches book 'Love Letters with Spelling Mistakes'

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Bengaluru based author Vaijayanthi Subramanian recently launched her book 'Love Letters with Spelling Mistakes' which is a collection of short stories that talk about 8 stories of women with education, talents, viewed as advantages, in urban India facing challenges.

'Love Letters with Spelling Mistakes' is a story of a budding psychiatrist who is a survivor of child abuse unable to handle a child abuser as a patient due to her abuse and zero tolerance towards child abuse.

These stories show you glimpses of life that you do not see, but want to take a look behind the curtains and tables.

It revolves around the women's lives in a society



where they face infinity unvoiced challenges in India. The book did ring out the nuances of their silences throughout.

'Silence of Indian women begins their journey to womanhood. Being a country where a woman has multilingual experiences, the choice of a language for self-expression could cause confused silence. All

these challenges are dealt with in my book in the form of 8 short stories.'

It not only shows the present situation of women but also tries to trigger those weak points which have kept women silent for years, said Vaijayanthi Subramanian. Women usually face a lot of hurdles and trouble, so as we read this book we will get to know the issues relating to those hurdles or problems and we can determine the way how they tackle those circumstances.

The stories are filled with emotions and easy to understand in language. The books let you meet some strong characters who will leave you pondering about the situation. The author has tried to touch all the sensitive issues and dealt it in the most interesting way.

State tourism board launches 'Buffer Mein Safar' campaign

To attract tourists to national parks, wildlife

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Madhya Pradesh Tourism Board Launched 'Buffer Mein Safar' campaign for all the wildlife lovers. The campaign aims to attract more tourists to the National Parks and wildlife sanctuaries of Madhya Pradesh. The National Parks holds such a fierce, unshakable fascination that they are ready to host the tourist with all the safety guidelines.

During the monsoon months from July to September the core area of the forests are closed but the buffer areas of the forest remains open for exploration. The campaign title

#BufferMeinSafar itself highlights that the wildlife of Madhya Pradesh will offer activities in its buffer areas including Wildlife Safaris, Bird Watching etc. Besides the thrill of spotting various species in the buffer zones, the different hues of green cover is a feast to the eyes.

These activities enthrall the tourist towards the beautiful wildlife of Madhya Pradesh. MP Tourism looks forward to boost morale and bring back the confidence in the tourism sector by offering tour packages to the tourists that are specially designed keeping in mind travel, stay and excursion for prevention during pandemic. In order to facilitate smooth travel, the board has come up with short road itin-

eraries mainly for 2-3 nights and solves the boredom of a weekend from the neighbouring States with all safety measures that are required at the destination.

Madhya Pradesh has numerous wildlife destinations with 6 Tiger reserves-Bandhavgarh, Kanha, Pench, Panna, Satpura and Nagarjuna, 11 National Parks & 24 Wildlife sanctuaries such as Ratapani Wildlife Sanctuary and Chambal Ghadiyal Sanctuary. Madhya Pradesh has re-gained the tag of being "The Tiger State of the Country" by having maximum Tiger count (526) in the State. The roar of Tigers has increased in the dense and beautiful forests of Madhya Pradesh.



Madhya Pradesh State Congress President Kamal Nath performs rituals as he offers prayers during Hanuman Chalisa recital organised for the peace and prosperity in the State, at his residence in Bhopal on Tuesday

60-yr-old man dies under mysterious circumstances

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

A 60-year-old man died under mysterious circumstances at kitchen of Mahashivi Ved Vignay Vidyapeeth on Monday. Misrod police have started investigation. Deceased was staff of the institute.

The deceased, identified as Bhawani Singh Lodhi was rushed to the hospital where he was declared dead. Police were informed and the deceased was poisoned or he died of cardiac arrest would be investigated.

Police said that the deceased hailed from Gopalpur Raizen and used to live at the

institute. Presently he was assigned to do the dishes.

In the initial investigations, no visible injury marks were found over the body of the deceased. The circumstantial evidences suggest that the deceased died of cardiac arrest but police investigation would reveal the reason behind the death. The other staff the institute would be questioned in the further investigation which could help in revealing the reason behind the death.

In the morning on Monday he was found in an unconscious state and later declared dead by doctors. A case under section 174 of the CrPC was

registered.

Meanwhile, a 48-year-old man, who was injured after he met accident on July 24 died while undergoing treatment on Monday.

According to the police, the deceased Vijay Maskole died while undergoing treatment. He was a resident of Karond and met accident near RGPV college.

After the preliminary investigation the body was sent for the post mortem and a case under section 174 of the CrPC. The errand driver escaped the spot and would be searched during the further investigation.



Workers busy in sanitizing exercise machines and equipment on the eve of re-opening of gyms, after some ease in the restrictions in the Unlocked-3.0, in Bhopal on Tuesday

19-yr-old Covid positive undertrial who fled from hospital nabbed

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Khajuri police arrested 19-year-old under trial prisoner who escaped from Hamidia hospital on Sunday night, accused was brought to treatment after testing positive of Covid-19 from Raizen at Hamidia hospital during which he fled.

After the accused escaped from the hospital police stations and patrolling parties were alerted and search for intensified by the police. The accused was traced by Khajuri police and arrested on Tuesday.

The under trial prisoner Babu Lodhi was detained on the charges of murder by Raizen police.

He escaped from the



Hamidia hospital when he was brought for treatment after testing positive for Covid-19.

Police said that the accused was brought from Raizen and was arrested under murder charges and his charge sheet was yet to be produced.

Few days ago, he fell ill and was tested positive for Covid-19 after which he was referred to Hamidia hospital for treatment after orders were issued by Magistrate but the prisoner

tricked the police at the hospital and escaped.

At the hospital when he was not found on duty security, policeman and staff started search for him at hospital premises as well as nearby areas but he was not found and they approached Koh-e-Fiza police station to report the incident and based on the complaint police have registered a case.

The police checked the CCTV footages of cameras installed in the premises and nearby area.

Details during the period his remained absconding would be investigated.

The aides who helped him would also be searched and nabbed.

IN BRIEF

413 MASK BANKS SET UP UNDER CAMPAIGN
Bhopal: As many as 413 banks have already been set up till now under the Ek Mask-Anek Zindagi campaign, being conducted to protect people from the infection of corona virus. The mask banks have been set up in cooperation of voluntary organizations, public representatives and citizens of the state. Minister for Urban Development and Housing Bhupendra Singh has told to make the campaign successful with the active participation of all sections of the society. He further mentioned that mask is the most simple and low cost mean for protection from corona infection. Singh stated that the pace of the campaign should be accelerated in cooperation of people in those urban bodies, where it is being conducted with slow pace. Under the campaign, more than one lakh 30,000 masks have been donated by various organizations and citizens. Out of these, about one lakh 15,000 masks have already been distributed in Indore city itself. 16 thousand masks have been donated by the donors. As many as 600 self-help groups are participating in this campaign. Better works are being carried out in Indore and Ujjain divisions. The campaign is being run in all the urban bodies.

FURSYS COMBINES QUALITY, DESIGN IN FURNITURE
Bhopal: Fursys combines the highest quality and functionality of office furniture with modern design and innovative technology. Its products include new motion height adjustable desk, office chairs, conference tables and workstations. With a wide product range for all zones and areas of the office living space, Fursys office furniture offers versatile and individual design possibilities. Exceptional functionality define the product line offered by Fursys. Its modern design creates elegance and expresses the corporate culture and the growing personal style. Fursys highlights the office as an area for communication, and its design stands for clear decisions. Prices are available on request on website- <http://www.indoinnovations.com>.

Heavy rainfall witnessed in many parts of State

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Big relief came in the form of heavy downpour witnessed in the evening after dark dense clouds during the day in the State capital on Tuesday; several regions have received heavy rainfall in the past 24 hours in the State.

Most of the parts of Jabalpur division recorded rainfall in the past 24 hours while many places in Shahdol, Bhopal, Hoshangabad and Ujjain divisions also reported

rainfall. Sagor, Rewa, Chambal and Gwalior were others divisions which recorded rainfall.

During the day on Tuesday heavy rainfall was reported in which Chhindwara recorded 3 cm, Indore recorded 2.3 cm, Guna recorded 1 cm, Damoh recorded 2.3 cm while Bhopal and Hoshangabad also witnessed rainfall.

Under the favorable weather conditions, there is a possibility of normal monsoon conditions in east Madhya Pradesh and western Madhya Pradesh

during the next 48 hours.

Rainfall and thunderstorms and lightning is likely to be witnessed in the next 24 hours.

Madhya Pradesh had witnessed normal monsoon conditions during the last hours. Heavy rainfall has been witnessed in Hatpalya 12cm and Udayanagar 7.5 cm, Khandwa 7.2 cm Barwaha 6.5 cm, Tendulkhedra 9 cm and Patan 7 cm districts.

The heavy rainfall conditions would be witnessed in

State in the next 24 as warning has been issued by Met department for Rewa, Sidhi, Singrauli, Umaria, Jabalpur, Katni, Mandla, Seoni, Balaghat, Laxat, Laxat, Sagor, Ujjain, Dewas, Damoh, Raigarh, Neemuch, Mandasaur, Mandasaur, Gwalior, Ashoka Nagar, Shivpuri, Sheopur Kala districts.

The pattern of weather conditions would prevail for the next 3-4 days and later intensity of rainfall would reduce.

3-day training prog in NDPS Act held

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

Three-day training on "Drug Identification and Financial Research under NDPS Act" was conducted by Police Training School Ujjain, in the training officers of the level of Deputy Superintendent of Police from all the districts of the State and 200 sub-inspectors of P.T.S participated in the training.

In this three-day workshop, FSL Rau Indore Smita Panchal, Deputy Commissioner Income Tax

The webinar was concluded by Additional Director General of Police Training Anuradha Shankar who shared his experiences with all the trainees

Indore, Amit Soni, Additional Superintendent of Police Narcotic Indore Dilip Soni and Commissioner Income Tax Department Delhi Prafulla Prishit gave their respective lectures.

The legal provisions regarding PIT NDPS were introduced by ADPO Mandasaur Nitesh Krishnan. The webinar was inaugurated by Special Director General of Police Training, Aruna Mohan Rao. On the second day of the training, the special guest Deputy Inspector General of

Police, Anjana Tiwari, P.T.S Ujjain shared all the necessary guidelines and courses to all the trainees through the webinar.

The webinar was concluded by Additional Director General of Police Training Anuradha Shankar who shared his experiences with all the trainees. Assistant Inspector General of Police (Training) Police Headquarters, Bhopal, Nimisha Pandey, Shakuntala Kumar, Deputy Superintendent of Police NK Malaviya, CL I Rekha Verma and all CLI staff were also present in the webinar.

Second virtual Cabinet meeting held in State

₹59.89 crore for digitization of land records approved

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

The second virtual meeting of the Cabinet was held on Tuesday under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Shri Singh Chouhan. Ministers joined the meeting of the Cabinet through video conferencing from various places.

The Cabinet took a decision to issue administrative approval to an estimated amount of ₹59.89 crore for the digitization of land records in



Madhya Pradesh under the Digital India Land Records Modernization Programme of Government of India.

In addition to the amount of ₹25.80 crore available for digitization, maximum amount of ₹15 crore will be used from the available fund in e-district project run by the Public Service Management Department for additional expenditure of ₹34.09 crore.

The interest received from the total amount of States share in the bank account of Madhya Pradesh Land Records Management Committee which is around ₹8 crore will

be used under DILRMP Project.

Under the DILRMP project, the amount of interest received from the total amount of the Centres share of about ₹11.09 crore will be utilized by getting approval from the Government of India or if permission is not granted for its use, the budgetary provision of ₹5 crore in the financial year 2022-23 of the said amount and ₹5.50 crore in the year 2023-24 will be added and the State Government will bear the expenses.

Presentation of two departments The Department of Public Health and Family Welfare and Food, Civil Supplies and Consumer Protection brief the Cabinet with information and progress of its important schemes.

Higher edu Minister visits varsity of Ujjain

PNS ■ UJJAIN

After having been shoulder to shoulder with responsibility of the Minister of Higher Education in the Government of Madhya Pradesh, Dr. Mohan Yadav has started efforts to restore the glory of Ujjain, the place of education of Lord Krishna messenger of teacher, student tradition.

On Tuesday, Yadav visited the University of Ujjain and met all the professors and scholars of the university including Vice-Chancellor Dr. Balakrishna Sharma. During visit he instructed the university professors and administrative officials to make a plan to upgrade aiming for betterment and excellence of the university.

Minister Yadav said that he studied at the Vikram University. He is the responsibility of all of us, including him, to work for making the

future of the university glorious.

He said that all of us have to make efforts to transform Vikram University into Central University. The efforts should be made to make it at the top in the State and in the country and these efforts have to be made by every person of the university and holistic approach is important.

The framing of the New Education Policy was done and has been implemented and there is a need to start new courses in the university which are capable of giving employment.

Due to the failure of examinations due to corona virus, he said to give general promotion to the students, but the students will get the numbers only on the basis of their previous exams.

Thought and Innovation" was also released on the occasion.

SBIKS varsity organises 2-day online lecture

STAFF REPORTER ■ BHOPAL

A two-day online lecture was organized by the Sanskrit Department of Sanchi Buddhist-Indian Knowledge Studies University (SBIKS) that concluded on Tuesday.

On the first day of the lecture organized on the topic "Gurukul Tradition: Exploring the Model Education System", Vice-Chancellor of Swamivivekananda Yoganusandhan University, Bengaluru was present as the keynote speaker. Ramchandra Bhatt said that the first step of Gurukul education is matrilinal.

The Vice-Chancellor of Maharaja Veer Vikram University, Agartala, Tripura, present as the chief guest on this occasion. Satyadev Poddar presented the great tradition of

Sanskrit literature to the audience. The programme was headed by Aditya Kumar Tripathi, Registrar of Sanchi University.

Tripathi in his address highlighted the utility of Sanskrit language in the creation of self-reliant India.

On Tuesday, Dinesh Kamat, All India Sanskrit Mantri of Sanskrit Bharati, gave the keynote address on the topic of Sanskrit utility in the current perspective. In his lecture, Kamat gave detailed information about the online Sanskrit address classes being run by Sanskrit Bharati in India and abroad.

The Vice-Chancellor of Himachal Central University, present as the Chief Guest in the lecture Kuldip Agnihotri also emphasized the policy of teaching contemporary sub-

jects in Sanskrit in schools and colleges. Shri Shekhar Shukla, Vice-Chancellor of Sanchi University and Principal Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Water and Food, presented a detailed introduction to the Sanskrit knowledge tradition.

The director of the programme, Vishwa Bandhu, thanked the audience and briefed about the courses offered by Sanchi University to facilitate mutual communication in Sanskrit.

Vishwa Bandhu, Professor of Sanskrit Department of Sanchi Buddhist-Indian Knowledge Studies University, said that "Sanskrit Week" is organized by combining three days before Sanskrit Day and three days before Day of Business. The lectures can be viewed as recordings on the YouTube channel.

BRAUSS holds national conference on Covid-19

PNS ■ MHOW

Four day Virtual National Conference from August 4 to 7, 2020 on the topic "Covid-19: Emerging Challenges and Dimensions of Management" is organised at B.R. Ambedkar University of Social Sciences, Mhow. Delivering the Key Note Address Prof. Sangeeta Jain, Director, Institute of Management Studies, Indore, said that the current global epidemic has provided new opportunities for every person and society and nation along with new challenges in all fields.

There are new challenges and opportunities in the field of management also. We currently require adaptability, innovation, flexibility, sustainable management arrangements in the field of management. She further added that we have to adopt new strategies, practical and technical skills and professional skills for setting up new paradigms of management in the current

changing scenario.

Chief Guest Anup Swaroop, Vice-Chancellor of Jagran Lakecity University, Bhopal said in his address that the current epidemic has affected the global economy. In addition to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, strengthening of sustainable and responsible organizations is essential for the development of economy. Even though unemployment have been increased in many areas, new possibilities and opportunities have also emerged and the field of virtual marketing has also expanded during this period.

Social security is a huge responsibility, so organizations need to show compassion and sensitivity towards their human resources.

Delivering the Presidential address, Prof. Asha Shukla, Hon'ble Vice-Chancellor of the University said that "Taking the challenges during the Pandemic as opportunities the

University has organised various academic activities during the Covid-19 period. The outbreak of Covid-19 has a significant impact on the entire economy including the global economic downturn, disruption of trade supply chain and logistics.

Prof. R.K. Shukla, Coordinator of the Webinar said that due to Covid-19, extensive changes have come to the fore in various social, economic and especially academic fields. New possibilities and dimensions are visible in the field of management. Along with new employment opportunities in public and private sectors, new skills are also required.

Prof. Kishore John, Dean while offering vote of thanks said that the need of the hour is to expand new dimensions of management. New strategies have to be introduced to empower human resources. The Programme was conducted by Bharat Bhatt.

HOCH TRAGEDY

Capt instructs officers to finish off matter within two days

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Maintaining that hooch tragedy is a sheer murder, Punjab Chief Minister Capt Amarinder Singh on Tuesday said that instructions have been issued to the Police and Excise Departments to "finish off" the entire matter and arrest all guilty within two days.

Asserting that he would finish the liquor mafia in the State, Capt Amarinder made it clear that no one, whether a politician or a public servant, will be spared if found complicit in the hooch deaths.

"Nobody will be allowed to get away with killing people with the poison called spurious liquor. I have put the entire force of the Punjab Police to crack down on the mafia," said Capt Amarinder, in a three-minute video message.

Some unscrupulous elements took advantage of the police focus on battling the COVID-19 pandemic to satiate their greed at the cost of the lives of Punjabis," said the

Chief Minister, adding that while the State Government was busy battling COVID-19, which has claimed 449 lives in the State so far, the liquor mafia seized the opportunity to play with the lives of our people.

"This is sheer murder and the killers will not get away with it," declared Capt Amarinder while referring to the death of 111 people — including 83 from Tarn Taran, 15 from Amritsar, and 13 from Batala — due to spurious liquor.

"They knew this could kill and yet they supplied or sold the poison to innocent people. They deserve no mercy," said Capt Amarinder, adding that his government stands with the families of the deceased in their hour of grief and he will leave no stone unturned to ensure justice for them.

Castigating the opposition for exploiting the tragedy for their petty political interests, the Chief Minister said that this is not the time to play politics but to stand by the



Government in its efforts to eliminate the mafia that is indulging in such acts.

He played the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) over its dharnas against the hooch tragedy, and asked how this would help in battling the mafia or supporting the bereaved families.

The Chief Minister pointed out that such tragedies have been taking place through the years across states, under different political dispensations.

"Mafias and criminals do not have any political affiliation, their only interest is to earn money by hook or by crook," he said, noting that 2019 had seen three hooch tragedies, all in the BJP-ruled states of Assam, Uttar Pradesh, and Uttarakhand, claiming 168, 97 and 30 lives.

PSHRC seeks report from CS, DGP

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Taking suo motu cognizance of the more than 100 deaths due to spurious liquor in state's three districts, the Punjab State Human Rights Commission (PSHRC) has sought report from the state Chief Secretary and the Director General of Police on or before the next date of hearing, that is September 7.

The Commission, comprising of PSHRC chairperson Justice Iqbal Ahmed Ansari, and members Ashutosh Mohanta and Avinash Kaur, took suo motu cognizance of the news items published in all leading daily regarding deaths due to spurious liquor.

The Bench observed that perusal of reports has revealed that spurious liquor has claimed 112 lives in Amritsar, Tarn Taran, Batala (Gurdaspur district) and Punjab Government has ordered a magisterial probe.

Five from Chhattisgarh crack IAS

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

Five candidates were on Tuesday declared selected for the Indian Administrative Service (IAS) from Chhattisgarh while another retained his place in the Indian Police Service (IPS), earning high praise from Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel.

According to the results, the five who made it to IAS are Simi Karan (31st rank), Unesh Prasad Gupta (162nd), Sushant (209th), Ayush Khare (267) and Yogesh Kumar Patel (434th rank).

Itendra Yadav (370th rank) has been retained as an IPS officer. He is presently



Simi Karan, B.Tech (Electrical) from IIT, Mumbai, gave the entire credit for her success in her very first attempt to the support and motivation extended by her parents.

Smart work is better than hard work to achieve a target, she emphasized.

Time management for studies is important.

She said she began preparing for UPSC along with final year IIT and returned home (Bilaspur) after in May 2019. After the prelims, she went for three months coaching in Delhi. That helped to clear the main examination.

She studied daily for 10-12 hours. On her future plans, her

focus would be empowering the women.

Simi's father D.N. Karan is the General Manager, Finance Department, in the Bhilai Steel Plant. Her mother is a teacher with DPS, Bilaspur.

Itendra Yadav, a resident of village Pakargaon near Pathalgaoon block in Jashpur district, is a former student of Navodaya School. He earned a degree as a veterinary doctor from Ghent.

In his first attempt he was selected for the Indian Revenue Service (IRS).

The second time he improved his rank to get into IPS. In his third attempt, he retained the IPS ranking.

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Haryana's Covid-19 recovery rate improves to 82.62%

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

The recovery rate among COVID-19 patients in Haryana on Tuesday was recorded at 82.62 percent, while the death toll climbed to 448 with eight people succumbing to the disease in a 24-hour span.

The contagion of the Covid-19 in Haryana is continuing to surge with the patient count in the State hitting the 7,796 figure mark on Tuesday. The State Health department reported 623 new cases of the disease on the day.

The authorities discharged 756 patients of the disease from different hospitals of the State on the day after their



recovery from the disease. A total of 31, 226 patients have so far recovered from the disease.

The recovery rate of Covid-19 in Haryana is now at 82.62 per cent.

The Health authorities have so far collected swab samples of 6.71 lakh suspected patients for Covid-19 test.



Faridabad, 180 patients were discharged from hospitals after their recovery from Covid-19 on Tuesday. Similarly 115 patients were discharged in Gurugram while 95 in Rohtak and 80 in Rewari. The doubling rate of Haryana's Covid-19 cases reported to 26 on Tuesday.

As per report, there were 6122 active cases in the State while the positivity rate was at 5.68 percent. The fatality rate was at 1.19 per cent.

According to a Health department bulletin, out of eight, three fatalities were reported in Sirsa while in Fatehabad, Kurukshetra, Rohtak, Haryana and Faridabad.

208 new cases, five deaths reported in Uttarakhand

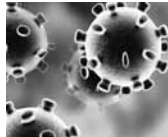
PNS ■ DEHRADUN

The number of novel Coronavirus (Covid-19) affected patients in Uttarakhand surged past 8000 in figure mark on Tuesday with the state health department reporting 208 new cases of the disease.

The state now has 8008 patients of Covid-19. Five patients of the disease were reported dead to the day which lifted the death toll to 95 in the state. On a positive note, 309 patients of the disease were discharged from different hospitals of the state on Tuesday.

A total of 4847 patients have so far recovered from the disease. The recovery rate of the disease in Uttarakhand is now at 60.53 percent and the doubling rate is 31.31 days. Out of the total samples tested, 69 per cent have tested positive for the disease.

Three deaths (80 yr old male, 55 year old female and a 52 year old male) were reported from Sushila Tiwari Government hospital Haridwar while a 56 year old male expired at Government Doon Medical College (GDMC) hospital. One death was reported



from HIHT Jollygrant Dehradun on the day.

The authorities reported 63 patients from Udhm Singh Nagar, 48 in Dehradun, 32 in Pithoragarh, 23 in Haridwar, 10 each in Champawat and Nainital, eight in Uttarakashi, six in Pauri, three each at Almora and Tehri and one in Chamoli district on Tuesday.

The health department discharged 125 patients with 589 active cases while Dehradun is in fourth position with 410 active patients of Covid-19. Pithoragarh has 104, Uttarakashi 75, Almora 65, Champawat 59, Pauri 39, Bageshwar 38, Tehri 23, Chamoli 16 and Rudrapur 12 active cases each of Covid-19. The surge of patients has forced the administration to set up 343 containment zones to prevent the spread of disease. In Haridwar district alone 301 containment zones have been set up. Udhm Singh Nagar district has 28, Dehradun 10, Uttarakashi three and Champawat has one such zone.



active cases with 815 cases followed by Udhm Singh Nagar district which has 783 active cases.

Nainital is in third position with 589 active cases while Dehradun is in fourth position with 410 active patients of Covid-19. Pithoragarh has 104, Uttarakashi 75, Almora 65, Champawat 59, Pauri 39, Bageshwar 38, Tehri 23, Chamoli 16 and Rudrapur 12 active cases each of Covid-19. The surge of patients has forced the administration to set up 343 containment zones to prevent the spread of disease. In Haridwar district alone 301 containment zones have been set up. Udhm Singh Nagar district has 28, Dehradun 10, Uttarakashi three and Champawat has one such zone.

AIIMS Rishikesh to start plasma therapy

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

In a significant development in the treatment of Covid-19 patients, the All India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS) Rishikesh has announced that it has started Convalescent Plasma Therapy technique to treat the disease. The doctors of the premier institute have collected three units of plasma with 589 active cases while Dehradun is in fourth position with 410 active patients of Covid-19. Pithoragarh has 104, Uttarakashi 75, Almora 65, Champawat 59, Pauri 39, Bageshwar 38, Tehri 23, Chamoli 16 and Rudrapur 12 active cases each of Covid-19. The surge of patients has forced the administration to set up 343 containment zones to prevent the spread of disease. In Haridwar district alone 301 containment zones have been set up. Udhm Singh Nagar district has 28, Dehradun 10, Uttarakashi three and Champawat has one such zone.

The plasma would now be used in the treatment of the Covid-19 patients.

Incidentally AIIMS Rishikesh is the first institute in Uttarakhand to use plasma therapy technique in the treatment of Covid-19.

The Director of AIIMS Rishikesh, Ravi Kant said that when a person becomes infected with any microbe, his immune system produces antibodies to fight against the invading microbe.

He said that these antibodies increase their numbers as the patient recovers from the that antibodies produced in a person who has recovered from corona when injected in a Covid-19 patient neutralize the active virus and help in speedy recovery.

More teeth to Covid task force after docs complain of overburden

Trauma centre, dentistry staff roped in

SAURAV ROY ■ RANCHI

The administration at Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) has retained the existing team of Covid task force, but allowed involvement of manpower from other departments in a bid to ease the pressure on task force members — a development that comes close on the heels of the task force's plea seeking relief from their responsibilities citing overburden and stress.

"We have been allowed to involve staff of trauma centre for different works of the Covid ward," said coordinator of Covid task force, Dr. Prabhat Kumar. "Staff from dentistry wing will be involved in supervision works related to Covid care now," he added.

Kumar had shot a letter to RIMS acting director Dr. Manju Gari on Sunday seeking a break for the members of the



task force, who were allegedly overburdened with work and under stress due to tight shifts and pressure of dealing with the rapidly rising number of patients.

In the letter, Kumar had stated that the team believed of its responsibilities as the members were facing "stress and strain".

However, on Tuesday, Kumar said that the task force members were satisfied with RIMS administration's decision of allowing involvement of more hands in dealing with Covid cases.

"The team will remain the same. But we will get help from staff in other departments. All the task force members have also been given self-responsibilities, which will ensure accountability and not put



added pressure on any one member," he said.

Members of the task force said that they did not face any difficulty in treating patients till end of June. However, cases started coming in July and managing the Covid ward became a challenging task. "We needed additional manpower. The team that dealt with 30 cases a day cannot deal with 150 cases a day without reinforcement," Kumar said.

All the 100 beds at RIMS Covid ward were occupied on Tuesday, while several patients were sent to other Covid care centres due to shortage of beds at RIMS, doctors said.

A 10-member Covid-19 task force at RIMS was constituted to manage the Covid ward of the premiere state-run hospital back in March.

42-year-old man...

From Page 1

After the preliminary investigation the body was sent for post mortem. The police have registered a case under section 174 of the CrPc and have started further investigation. Meanwhile a 15-year-old youth drowned at Ghoda Pachad dam when he had gone for fishing at the dam on Tuesday.

The deceased, identified as Om Prakash had gone for fishing during which he slipped into deep water and later drowned.

Police said that the deceased was a resident of Korka area and came to the dam in the morning and later drowned in the dam.

After the preliminary investigation the body was sent for the post mortem.

Sieff Financial Services Limited
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NOTICE
Pursuant to the provisions of Regulations 29 under Regulation 47 of the SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosures Requirements) Regulations, 2015, Notice is hereby given that a meeting of Board of Directors of the Company will be held on Saturday, the 8th August, 2020 to take on record the Unaudited Financial Results of the Company for the quarter ended on 30.6.2020. The information contained in this notice is also available on the website of the stock exchange as well as on the website of the company.

By Order of the Board:
For Sieff Financial Services Limited
Place: New Delhi (Madhu Vrat Kaushik)
Date: 04.08.2020 (Rishi)
CIN: L65999GJ1999PLC0207614

Crisis in Punjab Cong after MP, Raj

Punjab Congress chief Sunil Jakhar has written to party president Sonia Gandhi seeking action against 2 RS members for flaying State Govt over hooch tragedy



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, internal wrangling within the Congress has now surfaced in Punjab.

Punjab Congress chief Sunil Jakhar on Tuesday said he has written to party president Sonia Gandhi seeking immediate action for anti-party activities against two RS members attacking its own Government over the tragic hooch incident.

Both Bajwa and Dullu have petitioned the Punjab Governor demanding a CBI and ED probe into the hooch tragedy and directly blamed Chief Minister Capt. Amarinder Singh for turning a blind eye to the alert they had sounded earlier.

Jakhar described the attack of the two MPs on their own government as a 'copy-paste job' of what happened in Rajasthan in January when in the wake of 107 infant deaths there, Sachin Pilot had flayed his own government that added

to his rift with Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot.

"Had action been taken against Pilot then itself, what is happening today in Rajasthan could have been avoided," Jakhar said.

Pointing out that Bajwa and Dullu had been engaging in anti-party activities and were in touch with BJP for quite some time by talking against their own party and targeting the Amarinder Singh government, Jakhar said their attacks had increased after the Chief Minister announced his decision to contest the 2022 elections.

"It is time to stem the rot and save the Congress from the petty machinations of the likes of Bajwa and Dullu, who have no shame in biting the hand that feeds them," Jakhar said.

Jakhar in his letter to Sonia sought strict action against the two MPs who were "disgracefully exploiting" a tragedy to further their own political ambitions and interests. Asserting that the actions of the duo could not be tolerated any longer, the Punjab Congress

Talks option open if Pilot camp leaves Khattar's hospitality, says Congress

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With the Rajasthan Assembly session scheduled next week, the Congress is making attempts to hold talks with the rebel MLAs of the Sachin Pilot camp on the condition that they leave the hospitality of Manohar Lal Khattar-led BJP Government in Haryana.

Congress' chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala on Tuesday maintained that the only condition for talks with the dissenting Rajasthan MLAs is that they leave the BJP's "suraksha chakra" (protection).

"Innocent kids are being killed, gang rapes are taking place, people are being beaten up in Gurugram. There is no police available for them, but 1,000 policemen are deployed for the security of 19 upset MLAs. The legislators should first give up the Haryana police's security, and friendship and hospitality of the BJP, return home and only then will the dialogue take place," said Surjewala on the sidelines

of party briefing. The Congress has accused the BJP of making attempts to topple the Ashok Gehlot-led Congress government in Rajasthan by luring Pilot and a few dissident MLAs who have been camping at a hotel in Haryana arranged by the BJP.

Rajasthan chief minister Ashok Gehlot, who earlier used harsh words against his former Deputy CM, struck a softer note saying he would welcome his deputy back and other dissident MLAs as well if the party's high command forgave them.

Other leaders who received the command from former Union Minister P Chidambaram and powerful party functionary Ahmed Patel.

"None, perhaps in the history of Congress might have received so much of pampers as Sachin Pilot received in terms of about 20 senior leaders including Rahul and Priyanka asking him to pacify. We will try again ahead of the Assembly session," Surjewala said.

when Pilot and 18 other MLAs rebelled against the Gehlot government a month earlier. Gehlot has accused Pilot of trying to topple the Government and in between Gehlot had to do the rounds of Governor, Prime Minister and even wrote to President of India.

Amid internal rift at its peak for two weeks last month, senior Congress leaders including Rahul Gandhi and Priyanka Gandhi tried their best to ask Pilot not to aggravate the crisis and get back to the party fold.

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"None, perhaps in the history of Congress might have received so much of pampers as Sachin Pilot received in terms of about 20 senior leaders including Rahul and Priyanka asking him to pacify. We will try again ahead of the Assembly session," Surjewala said.

before they can cause any serious damage. Enough is enough now and he has demanded serious action against them from the party president," Jakhar said.

Jakhar described the action of the two MPs to approach the Governor as a manifestation of their desperate desire to grab the high seat of power by hook or by crook.

₹455 crore loan for JNU infra development

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Giving a big boost to its infrastructure development, the Centre has disbursed to the Jawahar Nehru University (JNU) a loan of ₹455 crore from the Higher Education Funding Agency (HEFA) for construction of new academic buildings, hostels, research centres and installation of an integrated and unified Enterprise Resource Planning System.

JNU Vice Chancellor Jagdish Kumar Mamidala said that funds allotted will be used for the construction of a vast range of infrastructure-related projects on campus.

"The funds allotted by HEFA shall be utilised for the construction of hostels for students and researchers of School of Engineering and Technology, Vajpayee School of Management & Entrepreneurship, Trans-Disciplinary Academic Research, Advanced Animal Research Facility..." Mamidala said in a University Press statement.

He further said that the Advanced Instrumentation Research Facility, incubation centre for start-up companies, special care centre for E-learning and a lecture hall complex will be set up, among other works.

The statement further added that the unified and integrated Enterprise Resource Planning system will help in ensuring that all academic and administrative processes can be



JNU has over 8K students who are accommodated in 18 hostels with one even for married students

conducted online in an integrated manner.

Additionally, the University also mentioned that the Special Centre for E-learning would benefit approximately 1.1 lakh candidates on an average who fail to secure admission at the central varsity every year.

"The Special Centre for E-learning shall impart education by offering online degree programs to many such students who could not be admitted to JNU. These students can benefit from the expertise of JNU faculty," the statement added.

Often in the news for all the wrong reasons, the JNU has over 8,000 students who are accommodated in 18 hostels with one even for married students.

Despite the students' unrest, the University received a record 1,35,462 applications, which is 22% higher than last year, for admission to various courses this year. In 2019, the university had received 1,08,982 applications for admissions to several undergraduate, postgraduate, MPhil and PhD courses.

Patnitop land grab case: CBI searches at 11 locations in J&K

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI on Tuesday conducted searches at 11 locations including Jammu, Udhampur and Kathua Districts of Jammu and Kashmir at the offices and residential premises of public servants including three former CEOs of Patnitop Development Authority (PDA) in an ongoing investigation of a case, registered on the allegations of large scale illegal construction/encroachment of land in the tourist location of Patnitop area of Udhampur District.

In its case, the CBI has accused 74 persons including eight public servants and 66 proprietors of hotels, resorts and guest houses. Earlier, a CBI action despatch was conducted by the CBI on the directions of the High Court of J&K in the matter.

"It was alleged that the public servants having dominion/jurisdiction over land in Patnitop, in conspiracy with the Owners/Proprietors of the Hotels/Guest Houses/Resorts, etc. had allowed illegal construction/illegal use of the said land in violation of law, leading to loss to the Government."

The FIR said in a statement that many Hotels/Guest Houses were constructed without any permission and were not registered with PDA. It was also alleged that officials did not take any action despite being aware of such encroachment. In some cases, no compounding fee was allegedly deposited by the Hotels, the agency alleged in the FIR.

The searches were conducted at the offices and residential premises of the three former CEOs of PDA and officers of the Transport Department and Sales Tax Department which led to the recovery of incriminating documents, huge investment in Fixed Deposits and immovable properties among others, officials said, adding further investigation is continuing.

They said accused will soon be summoned for questioning and separate departmental cases will be registered after verification of the seized documents relating to assets.

The three former CEOs of PDA accused in the case are SM Sahni, KK Gupta and Dr Malik. Additional Transport Commissioner of Jammu Rakesh Kumar Srangal, Joint Transport Commissioner Raman Kumar Kesar, Deputy Commissioner of Sales Tax Recovery Rajinder Singh and Inspectors Amresh Jasrota and Zaher Abbas.

Bihar polls: EC seeks parties' opinion by Aug 11



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Despite a growing demand to postpone the upcoming Assembly polls in Bihar due to the coronavirus pandemic and floods, the Election Commission (EC) has asked national and regional political parties to suggest their inputs by August 11 on how to conduct election campaigns and public meetings in the State in view of the crisis.

In a letter addressed to presidents and general secretaries of recognised political parties — both state and national — the EC stated "response from many parties is still awaited". Amid the ongoing pandemic situation, "the Commission has directed that some more time may be given to the political parties who have not sent their suggestions". Earlier, the poll body had sought their views and suggestions by July 31.

The term of the current assembly ends on November 29 and a new assembly has to be constituted before that. Presently, 13 districts are reeling under severe floods while the pandemic is expected to peak by October and November.

Several parties of Bihar have demanded that the polls be deferred.

Army to start process of screening women officers for Permanent Commission soon

Application invited by Aug 31

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Army will soon start the process of screening women officers for giving them Permanent Commission (PC). It will convene a special Selection Board for this purpose and all women officers wanting to opt for PC will have to submit relevant documents by August 31.

Towards this end, detailed administrative instructions have been issued to all affected women officers for submission of applications for consideration by the board, the Army said in a statement on Tuesday.

Women officers who have joined the Indian Army through the Women Special Entry Scheme (WSES) and Short Service Commission Women



(SSCW) are being considered and all of them have been instructed to submit their application forms, option certificate and other related documents to Army headquarters not later than August 31, it stated.

Specimen formats and detailed checklists have been included in the administrative instructions in order to facilitate correct documentation, the Army said adding the selection board will be scheduled immediately after receipt and verification of applications.

On July 23, the Defence Ministry issued a Government Sanction Letter specifying grant of PC to women officers in all streams in which they presently serve -

Army Air Defence (AAD), Signals, Engineers, Army Aviation, Electronics and Mechanical Engineers (EME), Army Service Corps (ASC), Army Ordnance Corps (AOC) and Intelligence Corps in addition to the existing streams of Judge and Advocate General (JAG) and Army Educational Corps (AEC).

The orders follow the Supreme Court verdict in February in which it directed the government that women officers in the Army be granted PC and command postings in all services other than combat. More than 300 women officers are likely to benefit from the new order.

Due to the prevailing restrictions imposed in view of the COVID situation, multiple means of dissemination of instructions have been adopted to ensure that these documents reach all affected women officers on priority, the statement added.

Singhvi favours comprehensive, aggressive policy against China

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In the backdrop of confrontation at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh, India has to go in for a comprehensive and aggressive policy on China, Congress leader Abhishek Singhvi has said. He also advocated a three-pronged shift in the strategy to deal with the eastern neighbour.

Airing these views in a seminar recently, Singhvi was in favour of the three-pronged strategy including New Delhi investing in building military capability, increasing diplomatic heft by aligning with like-minded groupings such as Quad and inflicting economic injury to China.

A webinar organised by Law and Society Alliance, a think-tank, and Defence Catalyst, a national security and strategic affairs platform here, Singhvi said India and its polity has to grow

beyond local party politics to signal in single-minded, focused, and unified response to the China challenge.

He also called for a change in the mindset of the Indian bureaucracy and diplomats in providing strong, deft and resolute handling of the Chinese challenge on all fronts, be it geopolitical, economic or military.

"India and China are two swords in one scabbard called Asia. There has to be forced respectability between the two. In the real world, while respect and outward likeability consequences of fear. The need is to generate fear about India in China. Only this is going to set the equilibrium between the two giants," the Congress leader said.

Strongly proposing that India should work towards leveraging its ties with Tibet and Taiwan, he said the divinity and glory of His Holiness

the Dalai Lama needs to be given the right place that he deserves in India, and New Delhi must unhesitatingly enhance diplomatic relations with Taiwan.

World Uyghur Congress director for China Affairs Ihsat H. Kokbore, in his presentation, highlighted the alleged human rights abuses by China on the minority Uighur community in East Turkestan. He said in 2014, Tibetans organised an event on persecuted communities of China. "Out of many leaders, only I was able to attend while all others were not allowed," he added.

Recalling the intolerable human rights violations on him and his family, Ihsat said because he was outspoken against the Communist regime in China, his family was broken, his brother killed in 2004, his sister arrested in 2014 and his father died of shock.

Amity researchers develop prototype of cost-effective, multi-mode portable ventilator for Covid-19 patients

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A team of Research Scholars & Scientists from Amity University's ASET Design Centre has developed the prototype of a cost-effective, multi-mode portable ventilator specifically designed for Covid-19 patients.

Some of the salient features of this smart ventilator are volume and pressure control in accordance with the age of the patient; The ventilator offers a feature to adjust the breath volume supply to the patient according to their age. On the advice of the medical experts, the operator just needs to select the required age and the ventilator will supply the necessary volume and pressure of the breathing air automatically to the patient, the University said in a statement.

Also, the ventilator can be rapidly deployed to any location as the majority of the parts can be 3D Printed and assembled locally. It is priced at under ₹10,000.

Covid-19 virus more virulent to males compared to female



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Covid-19 virus seems to be more virulent to males when compared to their female counterparts. Sample this: About 68 per cent of deaths due to virus is reported among male patients and 32 per cent among female patients in India, said the Union Health Ministry while sharing the details of the profile of the Covid-19 patients. Also, 50 per cent of the total Covid-19 deaths reported in India so far are among people aged above 60, said Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan at a press briefing here.

"About 37 per cent of

COVID-19 deaths in India took place in the age group of 45 to 60 years, while 11 per cent of deaths were recorded in the age group of 26 to 44 years," he said.

According to a study involving thousands of patients from Europe, men have higher concentrations of angiotensin-converting enzyme 2 (ACE2), an enzyme that enables the SARS-CoV-2 virus infect healthy cells in their blood, than women and this may probably help explain why men are more vulnerable to Covid-19 than women.

The study has been published in the European Heart Journal.

Sharp spike in Covid-19 cases likely in coming days

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid increasing efforts for ramping up the Covid-19 test capacity across the country, the Government on Tuesday indicated a further sharp surge in the infection in the coming days with case-laden already set to cross the 19-lakh mark on Tuesday.

Almost 50,000 Covid-19 cases are being reported daily over the past few days.

However, the cases are all set to be on the higher side as more tests means detection of more cases, indicated Union Health secretary Rajesh Bhushan while addressing a press briefing.

He said that presently 28 states and UTs are performing more than 140 Covid-19 tests per day, while 19 states are successfully trying to curb it.

"In India as a whole, the testing rates are much lower compared to some of the countries, who have done well like Germany, Taiwan, South Korea, Japan."

Even the United States is testing a huge number of people. "So we need to have some benchmark and every public health department needs to have benchmarks on what is the rate of testing per lakh or per million, what is the test positivity rate," she said in an interactive session through video conference.

have a Covid-19 positivity rate of less than 10 per cent, while India's positivity rate as on date is 8.89 per cent. Many states have increased their testing capacity, both RT-PCR & Rapid Antigen tests. Goa, Delhi, Tripura, and Tamil Nadu have increased their testing capacity, said Bhushan.

More than 2 crore Covid-19 tests have been conducted, including more than 6.6 lakh tests in the last 24 hours. Recovered cases are now double of the active cases.

In fact, Soumya Swaminathan, WHO's chief scientist at a video conference at Geneva too expressed concerns that India has a low testing rate when compared to some of the countries that are successfully trying to curb it.

"In India as a whole, the testing rates are much lower compared to some of the countries, who have done well like Germany, Taiwan, South Korea, Japan."

More than 18K desi ventilators supplied within 2 months

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Imported till May, ventilators manufactured within the country are now meeting the domestic demand with the Union Health Ministry stating that in less than 2 months more than 18,000 Make-in-India ventilators have been supplied to the States/UTs /Central Govt Hospitals/DRDO facility.

Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan on Tuesday also said that funds from PM Cares fund were utilised to procure about 50,000 ventilators worth ₹2.00 crore.

An order for 30,000 ventilators has been placed with Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL). Bhushan said adding that Scannray provides tech support to the Union Health Ministry.

In response to a question about the rejection of A/Ga ventilators, Bhushan said that these devices of a different make were rejected in Mumbai. He further clarified that the ventilators in question were donated to BMC-run hospitals and other healthcare facilities in Maharashtra by an NGO.



Bhushan said that only 0.27 per cent of total active cases in India are on ventilator support across the country

Stating that export of ventilators will not impact the domestic supply, Bhushan said that only 0.27 per cent of total active cases in India are on ventilator support across the country. "About 18,000 ventilators have reached states," he said.

In response to a question about the rejection of A/Ga ventilators, Bhushan clarified that these devices of a different make were rejected in Mumbai. He further clarified that the ventilators in question were donated to BMC-run hospitals and other healthcare facilities in Maharashtra by an NGO.

RAM TEMPLE BHOOMI PUJAN

Corona test certificate mandatory for invitees

Lucknow: All invitees to the August 5 foundation stone-laying function for the new Ram temple in Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh will have to carry a mandatory coronavirus-negative certificate, one of the organisers said on Tuesday.

Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teertha Kshetra Trust, Ram Temple Secretary Champat Rai said that the step was taken as a precautionary measure due to the coronavirus situation in the country. "Only those who have a medical certificate that says they have tested negative for coronavirus will be allowed entry for the 'bhumi puja' on Wednesday," he said.

Deputy Chief Minister Keshav Maurya, who is among the invitees, said on Tuesday that he would get his corona test done as required.

Health officials, meanwhile, said that they were fully prepared to test VIPs scheduled to halt briefly in state capital Lucknow while en route to Ayodhya for the religious ceremony. Rashtriya Swamsevak Sangh chief Mohan Bhagwat is in Lucknow for a few hours and is scheduled to proceed to Ayodhya in the evening. Bhagwat is staying at the Saraswati Shishu Mandir where a posse of police has been deployed.

Silver coin for every guest

IANS ■ AYODHYA

Every guest who is invited to the 'bhumi puja' ceremony for the grand Ram temple in Ayodhya on Wednesday, will be gifted a silver coin as 'prasad'.

The silver coin, on one side, has the image of Ram Darbar which includes Lord Ram, Sita, Lakshman and Hanuman and on the other side is the insignia of trust.

The guests will also be

given a box of 'laddoos' and a photograph of Ram Darbar.

According to sources, over 1.25 lakh laddoos, called 'Raghupati' laddoos will be distributed to guests, residents of Ayodhya and others on August 5.

All the guests who are coming from other districts or state, have been asked to reach Ayodhya by Tuesday evening because the borders of the district will be sealed in the evening.

A total of 175 people have been invited to the Sri Ram Temple Trust for bhumi puja, including about 135 saints who will come from different parts of the country. There is a code on every invitation card, which is designed for security.

Former Deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani, Dr. Murli Manohar Joshi and former Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Kalyan Singh will not be attending the ceremony.

Allow followers to celebrate on bhoomi puja day: BJP to TMC

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Even as Bengal Government changed its bi-weekly lockdown dates beginning Wednesday which coincides with the ground-breaking ceremony at Ram Janmabhoomi site in Ayodhya, State BJP president Dlip Ghosh on Tuesday warned the Mamata Banerjee Government against committing excesses on the followers of Lord Rama who would celebrate it in their own manner.

"Though the BJP has not kept its own programme on Wednesday we have reports that many followers of Lord Rama would celebrate the day that is coming after 500 years

of struggle... I will expect that the Government will not cause any hindrance to those who will celebrate this ceremony," Ghosh said.

On reports that the billboards in favour of the celebrations were being torn down by the police at Kharagpur town Ghosh said "any excess perpetrated on the Ram Bhaktas (followers of Lord Rama) will be dealt with accordingly," wondering "why the Government does not take cognizance of lockdown violations in areas dominated by certain communities and why it clamps down heavily on the Hindus when they celebrate their festivals."

He said "the police were

tearing down the hoardings put up by the followers of Lord Rama in Kharagpur. This is an atrocity committed on the Hindus who want to celebrate the occasion peacefully. The people are watching and they will take appropriate decision at an appropriate time if the Government tries to play mischief here."

Warning that the Trinamool Congress will have to bear heavy prices for its misadventures on Wednesday he invoked an oft repeated slogan in the Hindi heartland saying, "Jo humse takrayega, hum usko jayeega (anyone who confronts us will be blown into smithereens)."

J&K mainstream parties face difficulty in branding image post Art 370 abrogation

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Post Abrogation of Article 370 and reorganisation of the erstwhile State of Jammu & Kashmir into two Union Territories the majority of Kashmir based mainstream political leaders, belonging to the National Conference (NC), Peoples Democratic Party (PDP) and the Congress party are still struggling to resurrect their image in the eyes of their supporters.

Though some of them including PDP Chief Mehbooba Mufti are still under detention but all those who are out are 'purportedly' avoiding attending political functions due to growing 'mistrust' between them and their followers. So far only Omar Abdullah has gone public with his political stance, while ignoring a divide within his own party.

Majority of these leaders

continue to remain in a 'state of shock' and find it difficult to stomach the fact that the ruling dispensation in New Delhi has 'abrogated' the Article 370 and stopped paying attention to their brand of politics.

Ironically, the vacuum created by these mainstream players is yet to be filled by any significant player in the Kashmir valley.

Former Ministers and a couple of ex-legislators had joined hands together and founded Jammu and Kashmir Apni party under the leadership of Syed Atish Bukhari but even they have failed to establish their foothold in the valley in the absence of any mass contact programme. They have only restricted their activity to meeting central BJP leaders and Union Ministers and addressing a political rally to highlight their grievances. They are yet to hold a public convention to demonstrate their

strength to their political adversaries. These events could not be held due to Covid-19 pandemic. In Jammu region, instead of consolidating the base the Bharatiya Janata Party is also facing resistance for failing to come up to the expectations of the people in the last one year.

On the other hand the common masses, in both the regions, are yet to come out of the hangover of experiencing a 'roller coaster' ride.

On its part, the Union Territory administration is claiming they are working round the clock to bring back the derailed political process on track and embark on the road to prosperity.

In the absence of the elected government in office the 'trimmed' down government machinery is not working effectively and efficiently to ensure timely completion of flagship developmental projects on

ground zero.

On the security front the joint teams of security forces have been tracking down hide-outs of terrorists and neutralising them to create a conducive atmosphere for initiating the stalled political process in the region.

Under the leadership of Lt-Governor Girish Chandra Murmu, "the period was utilised by the top bureaucrats to formulate structured policies for different sectors to ensure ease of business". To promote e-governance the entire government machinery has been augmented to reach out to the masses. At present at least 27 different services have been extended to speed up public delivery mechanisms.

Speaking to The Pioneer, a senior IAS officer, Rohit Kumar, "the period was utilised by the top bureaucrats to formulate structured policies for different sectors to ensure ease of business". To promote e-governance the entire government machinery has been augmented to reach out to the masses. At present at least 27 different services have been extended to speed up public delivery mechanisms.

ment said, "in the last one year several flagship projects have been completed and work is going on a large number of long-term projects to ensure their timely completion."

He said, "506 languishing projects costing Rs. 665 crores stand completed while 963 projects costing Rs. 2256 crores are scheduled for completion by March, 2021".

According to official sources, the pace of work on different projects sanctioned under the Prime Minister's Development Package has been expedited.

Till June 2018 before the BJP-PDP alliance got collapsed total fund was utilised. At present around 49 percent i.e. Rs 28,768 crore has been utilised.

The total package was worth 80,000 crore. Out of this Rs 58,627 crore was allocated for the Union Territory of J&K. A total of 63 infrastructure

development projects were to be built up in Jammu and Kashmir under the Prime Minister's Development Package (PMDP). Between November 2015 and October 2019, only 18 projects were completed.

In the last one year the government also approved reservation benefits to people living along the international border (IB) in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Social Welfare Department had recently notified reservation rules for people residing within 0 to 6 km of International Border (IB), after amending Jammu and Kashmir Reservation Act-2005.

The government made the amendments in Jammu and Kashmir Reservation Rules, providing reservation to the people residing in 508 villages along the IB, in direct recruitments, professional institutions and post-graduate courses. Another senior IAS officer, currently holding the charge of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry and Fisheries Department, Navin Choudhary told The Pioneer, "while preparing for the Investors' meet we finalised sector wise policy framework of different departments to attract investment in Jammu and Kashmir. He said, "in the wake of Covid-19 pandemic the investors meet could not be organised but the policy environment shortages were addressed."

He said, "we had no tourism policy, Horticulture policy and now we have policy documents of 22 sectors in place". He said all this hap-

pened due to the lean structure of the government. "Compared to the previous set up the decision making has been little faster."

Sharing a report card of his own department Navin Choudhary said, "around 10,50 lakh farmers have been enrolled for Kisan Credit Card scheme in Jammu and Kashmir. The 135 out of 135 cards were distributed during special drives in the recent weeks. He said, due to prevailing circumstances centering around Covid-19 pandemic, we are focusing on strengthening the primary sector in Jammu and Kashmir. The manufacturing and the services sector has taken a major hit so in order to protect the economy and small farmers we are extending them financial services and opening the doors for them to sustain themselves instead of getting into the trap of local money lenders."

108 die, 5,603 new cases in TN

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

Though Tamil Nadu lost 108 of its citizens to Covid-19 and 5,603 new persons testing positive for the pandemic on Tuesday, the day had some encouraging news too.

Across the State, 6,501 persons were discharged from hospitals and left for their homes getting cured of Covid-19. Till date a total of 2,08 lakh persons have been cured of the pandemic.

While the State had 1,083 active cases on Monday, the numbers came down to 55, 152 by Tuesday evening, said the bulletin issued by the Government of Tamil Nadu.

The 125 laboratories across the State tested 52,955 persons on Tuesday, establishing Tamil Nadu's lead over all other States in testing maximum number of persons.

The situation in Chennai showed some improvement as the number of persons tested positive for the pandemic came down to 1,023. There is a strong feeling that situation in Chennai is gradually improving. But the same could not be said about the three neighboring districts of the Metropolitan Chennai (245), Kanchipuram (220) and Thiruvallur (358) remained areas of concern similar to Virudhunagar in south (424).

Gold smuggling: NIA takes 2 more persons in custody

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

A source in the National Investigation Agency (NIA) probing the gold smuggling scam in Kerala told The Pioneer that investigation is moving in the right direction and speed and more powerful people would be taken into custody soon. "It is a slow process but it is how probes like this cases take place. Whatever information we have collected is capable to take us to the doorsteps of the powerful and mighty," said the official.

The NIA on Tuesday took into custody two persons from Malappuram district who are involved in distributing the smuggled gold to the end users and diverting the money to terrorist organizations. Shafeeq and Sharafuddin were arrested based on the details furnished by T K Rameez who has been arrested earlier by the NIA.

Meanwhile, the agency handed over the case diary and other documents

related to the arrest of Swapna Suresh and Sandeep Nair, the kingpins of the smuggling operation, to the special court for speedy trial.

"The court has asked us to ensure that there is sufficient proof so that we could slap the UAPA charge against the accused. We handed over the materials for the consideration of the court and there are sufficient grounds under which we can place them under the UAPA (Unlawful Activities Prevention Act)," said Jaishankar V Nair, lawyer representing the agency in this case.

Interestingly, the Kerala Police does not figure anywhere in the investigation. The general feeling is that the State's police force is under orders from its top bosses not to help the NIA but even to derail the probe. The allegation that Swapna Suresh and Sandeep Nair could escape from Kerala to Bangalore (from where the NIA arrested them) because of the support of the Kerala Police.

UPSC results: Pradeep Singh tops exam

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

Already in the Indian Revenue Service, Pradeep Singh from Haryana has topped the 2019 UPSC Civil Services Examination while Pratibha Verma from Uttar Pradesh made it to the top among the women candidates. There are a total of 19 women candidates in the first 50 rankers.

The Union Public Service Commission on Tuesday declared the results of the Civil Services Examination 2019 which includes for the first time a 10 percent quota for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) as one of the various categories like General and reserved categories. Out of the total of 927 vacancies, 78 candidates have made it under EWS.

According to the results declared by UPSC this year, 829 candidates have been selected for the various services, including 66 who have been provisionally recommended. The

results of 11 candidates have been withheld.

The results are on the basis of the written examination held in September 2019 and the interviews for a personality test held between February and August 2020 and in between suspended during the lockdown.

The 10% EWS was implemented for the first time this year, with 78 candidates selected under that category. Apart from 304 successful candidates in the general category, there were 251 from Other Backward Classes, 129 from Scheduled Castes and 67 from Scheduled Tribes.

The successful candidates will join the Indian Administrative Service, Indian Foreign Service, Indian Police Service and Central Services Group A and B, in accordance with their merit list. There were a total of 927 vacancies reported by the government. These services, says a UPSC statement.

1,083 infected in Kerala

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

More than 1,000 new persons tested positive for Covid-19 in Kerala on Tuesday. A release by the Government of Kerala said the State saw 1,083 new persons getting diagnosed with Covid-19 on Tuesday. Out of this, 902 persons contracted the pandemic through local transmission.

Though 1,021 persons were cured of the pandemic and left the hospitals for home, things are becoming worse in the State. All 14 districts saw more persons getting afflicted with the coronavirus through local transmission. There were 71 persons who could not pinpoint the source from where they got infected. Three persons lost their lives

during the last 24 hours, Thiruvananthapuram had 232 new patients, 237 of them were contracted through local transmission. Similarly, in Ernakulam where 135 persons were diagnosed with the disease, 122 were affected because of local transmission.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan called off his media interaction in the last minute though it was announced that he would be briefing the media about the Covid update.

Those who infected with the virus on Tuesday include 16 health workers and 35 jawans of the ITBP station at Alappuzha. The day also saw the hospitalisation of 1,341 patients. There are 509 hotspots in the State.

Varisha murder case: Girl who was deemed dead and family buried her, comes alive

PRADEEP SAXENA ■ ALIGARH

A new twist has emerged in the Varisha murder case. Recently, after identifying the dead body found in a trolley bag in Ghaziabad as family preference, it was buried by the family members and the trolley bag was sent to jail for murder. But, now Varisha has returned alive. She herself reached Aligarh's Gandhi Park station and told about the whole episode. Bulandshahr police has taken her to Aligarh police in their custody.

A woman arrived at Gandhi Park police station in Aligarh district on Monday evening. She told the police that she was married to a young man named, resident of Upar Kot area of ?Bulandshahr on June 1. On July 1, a month after her marriage, she came to her maternal home in Aligarh. After which, on July 17, she reached back to her in-laws.

It is alleged that upon arriving at the in-laws house, the accused in-laws snatched her jewelry and accused her maternal side of stealing the jewelry. On opposing she was beaten up by her husband on July 22. Due to this, she left her in-laws house in the afternoon of 23 July.

However, she did not go to her maternal home and went to

the Bhanbh police station in Noida, where she worked before marriage. When she came to know that her maternal side had identified the body of a young woman as her body and cremated her, she reached the police station and told the whole truth.

After which the Aligarh Police informed the Bulandshahr police about the case. After which there was a stir in Bulandshahr and Ghaziabad police. Bulandshahr police handed over the victim to Bulandshahr police. Now she will be presented in court on Tuesday. Also, the police has taken her mother from Aligarh as well.

On June 1, Varisha's was married to Aamir Khan, a resident of Mohalla Uparkot in Nagar Kotwali area of ?Bulandshahr district. But, on July 23, after about 53 days of marriage, Varisha went missing under suspicious circumstances. In the case, her husband had reported missing in Nagar Kotwali.

On July 27, four days after Varisha's disappearance, the body of an unknown woman was found in a trolley bag in New Hindon area of ?Sahibabad police station area of ?Ghaziabad.

2 girls among 16 from J&K, Ladakh crack UPSC exam

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

Sixteen candidates including two girls, belonging to the Shimla and border areas of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh on Tuesday cracked the prestigious civil services examination-2019 with flying colors.

Topping the charts from Jammu region, Abhishek Augustus, secured AIR 268 in UPSC 2018.

He comes from the family of POJK refugees currently settled in the border belt of RS Pura. Abhishek is currently undergoing training at the Shimla and border areas of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh Academy of Audit and Accounts. He had secured AIR 268 in UPSC 2018.

Three other candidates from Jammu, Sunny Gupta secured AIR (148), Dev Abhi (177) and Parth Gupta 240.

Speaking to The Pioneer over the telephone from Shimla, Abhishek Augustus credited his success to the overall support extended by his family and close friends who motivated him throughout the long journey. Abhishek's father is a lecturer in government higher secondary school in Sai close to Indo-Pak border and his mother is a teacher in a private school. His sister is pursuing PG in surgery from GMC Jammu.

Dr Asrar, son of a doctor and a teacher, is in his third attempt. He considered Shah Faesal, topper from Kashmir valley, as his first role model along with other successful candidates from the erstwhile Doda district namely Dr. Schirish Asgar, Vimash Aryan and Abhishek Sharma. Sharing mantra of his success, Dr Asrar Kitchloo said, to crack UPSC examination the aspiring candidates should log out of the social media platforms and maintain consistency in their studies.

Several other successful candidates hailed from remote areas and made it to the final list of successful candidates by sheer dint of hard work. Instead of attending coaching classes of established institutions, the majority of these students preferred self study and focused on their goal from the very beginning.

NORTHERN RAILWAY
NOTICE INVITING TENDER
Name of work and its location: 20-Elect-06-T-20-21-E3
Compendium: AMC of Johnson make lift installed at Gate No. 2A, 2B, 2C & 2D Railway Board New Delhi.

Approx cost of the work in Rs.	15.87 lacs
Address of the office	Sr. Divl. Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi.
Earnest Money	Rs. 31600.00
Date & time of submission	31.08.2020, 12.00 Hrs.
Time for tender	09.00 hrs. to 2.00 hrs.
Opening of tender	31.08.2020, 12.00 Hrs.
Website & notice board	www.irps.gov.in & Sr. Divl. Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi.

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE 16/08/2020

NORTHERN RAILWAY
TENDER NOTICE
The Dy. Chief Engineer/Const., Northern Railway, State Entry Road, New Delhi for the on behalf of President of India invites Open e-tender under Single Package System for the work noted as:-

Hiring of 02 (Two) Nos. Non-AC Vehicle such as "Jeep, Gypsy, Tata Sumo type" on a monthly basis for a period of 03 (Three) years for the officers working in the unit of Dy. Chief Engineer/Construction, Northern Railway, State Entry Road, New Delhi (Second Call)

Completion period of the work	36 (Thirty Six) months from the date of issue of Letter of Acceptance
Approximate cost of work	₹22.94 Lakh (Rupees Twenty Two Lakh & Ninety Four Thousand only)
Earnest Money amount (To be deposited only)	₹5,000/- (Rupees Sixty Five Thousand Nine Hundred only)

Time for tender: Bidders may be updated upto 11.30 hrs. on 28.08.2020 on submission of REPLY website i.e. www.irps.gov.in. The bidders can e-tender and participate in the e-tender, the tender will be opened at 02.09.2020 at 12.00 hrs.

Detailed Tender Notice: The detailed e-tender notice is available on Northern Railway website i.e. www.nri.in/indianrailways.gov.in. Above tenders document will be available on REPLY website i.e. www.irps.gov.in from 07.08.2020 to 28.08.2020. All other terms and conditions in respect of above tenders are given in tender document. The detailed tender notice also can be seen on the Northern Railway of the above office.

No.: 220-AC/11162NH/ESR Dated: 04.08.2020 170020

SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE

SEARCH FOR MISSING

General public is hereby informed that one male namely **Deepak Kumar Sharma, S/o: Kailash Sharma, R/o T-113/3991, 1st Floor, Baljeet Nagar, Delhi. Age: 23 years, Height: 5'8", Complexion: Shallow, Face: Long, Build: Medium, wearing Dark Blue colour Capri and Maroon colour T-Shirt and Sleeper in feet, has been missing from his house since 22.07.2020. In this regard a DD NO. 50-A, dated 23.07.2020 has been lodged at P.S. Patel Nagar, New Delhi**

Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out the male but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about him please inform undersigned.

Website: http://cbl.nic.in
E-mail: cbl@cbl.nic.in
Fax: 011-24368639
Ph. No.: 011-24368638, 24368641
DP/236/CD/2020 Ph.: 011-25872637, 25874034

SHO P.S. Patel Nagar, New Delhi

SEARCH FOR MISSING

General public is hereby informed that two boys namely (1) **Yashpal Singh @ Suraj, S/o: Ajay Kumar, R/o 157C JG-II, Vikas Puri, New Delhi. Age: 19 years, Height: 5'10", Complexion: Wheatish, Face: Round, Build: Strong, and (2) **Harsh Kumar @ Nona, S/o: Late Shyam Kumar, R/o 157C JG-II, Vikas Puri, New Delhi. Age: 14 years, Height: 5'2", Complexion: Fair, Face: Oval, Build: Fat, both has been missing with Silver colour Honda Access Scooty No. DL45BR727 since 16.07.2020 from their house. In this regard a FIR No. 538/20 U/S 363 IPC, dated 20.07.2020, has been registered at P.S. Vikas Puri, New Delhi****

Sincere efforts have been made by the local police to trace out the boys but no clue has come to light so far. If any one having any information about them please inform undersigned.

Website: http://cbl.nic.in
E-mail: cbl@cbl.nic.in
Fax: 011-24368639
Ph. No.: 011-24368638, 24368641
DP/162/WD/2020 Ph.: 011-25551213, 8750871131

SHO P.S. Vikas Puri, New Delhi

After Ayodhya

As the foundation stone is laid for the temple, we must not let triumphalism get the better of Lord Ram's *dharma*



Years of politics and the clash of "isms" have actually overlooked the cultural consciousness and the civilisational ethos that Lord Ram represents. Revered variously as *Maryada Purushottam*, Sri Ramchandra Raja of Ayodhya or the *Imam-e-Hind*, he has, beyond being a central figure of the Hindu pantheon, been an anchor of the Indic way of life and the way it should be lived. As Swami Vivekananda said, "he is an embodiment of truth, morality and ideals." The God-king of Ayodhya, who set an example of what social order should be and how it should be conducted, is, therefore, more of a human construct, one we could model ourselves after easily. And he was a selfless leader of people, putting them first. His wars were on principle of the right over wrong; he could have converted all the *rakshasas* into his own clan after killing Ravana but he chose not to. Simply because he respected his limits and that of others and believed in upholding the sense of righteousness. It is this vision that pervades our collective consciousness and regardless of whether a temple at his birthplace was demolished and a mosque built in its place, which in turn was overrun, the fact is Ayodhya is unanimously believed to have been the place where he was born. In that sense, it is our existential fountainhead. He is a belief and emotion so strong that restoring his birthplace is not about historical corrections but a return to the truth as it should be seen and practised. To that extent the *bhoomi puja*, or the foundation-stone laying ceremony at the site, is not just a milestone, it is an edict on what *dharma* should be. It should not be about Hindu triumphalism but about upholding values exactly the way he would have wanted. Lord Ram was a pluralist, not an isolationist. Celebrating him shouldn't be about symbolism, for majoritarian might is measured by grace, not by muscularity of an imposition. But that is a tall order in today's show and tell politics. What began as a mass movement to reclaim the site, launched by the BJP in 1989 to chart an alternative political path, gained massive traction once the then party supremo LK Advani began a Rathayatra from Gujarat. Although he couldn't complete the yatra, it aroused passions across the country and paved the way for the party's ascendancy to political power. And in the process, religiosity overtook secularism as an electoral agenda. Only social justice forces in the shape of VP Singh, Mulayam Singh Yadav and Lalu Prasad Yadav held out. But that led to polarisation and Ram became less of a guiding visionary with his neo-disciples becoming more like avengers of historical insult. Hinduism became Hindutva. In fact, the Congress, too, was taken in by the Hindutva wave with Rajiv Gandhi himself allowing the opening of the Babri Masjid gates and "shilanyas" prayers to be held inside for fear of losing the Hindu vote. This opened the floodgates for the right-wing fringe like the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) and the Bajrang Dal to claim political centrality. That's when the temple became more than a symbolism, a runaway cause to justify everything from a majoritarian perspective. Rajiv Gandhi had grossly misjudged that the mosque, too, could co-exist. That was not to be. Advani had merely sought a balanced discourse where Hinduism could be defined not by exclusion, revisionism and minority appeasement but as an inclusive philosophy of national life. One that translated into the reasoned prime ministership of Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Unfortunately, today he and many seniors have been benched, not even consulted or properly invited to temple affairs. Meanwhile, the headline extremism and otherisation of non-Hindus have become the centrifugal force of the BJP one that has been condoned by a tacit electorate, which returned the Narendra Modi Government with a brute majority. One that has the silent approval of the Opposition, which has fallen in line, swept aside by the tide of identity politics.

So what after Ayodhya? Is it the culmination of temple politics or will it be milked further electorally? Or will it spur a demand for more reclamations at Kashi and Mathura? At one time, hardliners would have been enthusiastic but the BJP's ideological anchor, the RSS, is itself cautious about continuing the temple issue beyond the Ram *janmabhoomi*. In fact, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat has categorically said that there are no plans for either Kashi or Mathura, that the RSS does not get into agitations and that the Ram temple was an exception. Having won a massive mandate, the BJP had to address its core constituency and has delivered a promise made many years ago and which at one time seemed just manifesto material. But both the RSS and the BJP are also realist about consolidating power. While the nation heaved a collective sigh of relief at the resolution of the Ayodhya dispute, there is undoubtedly a sense of fatigue about continuing politics in the name of Ram. There are much bigger concerns in the post-pandemic world to tackle, the bleak economy and restarting the nation once again. Even Ayodhya wants to get back to normal, hoping the temple will accelerate the local economy. Besides, the BJP's image has already taken a beating courtesy hate crimes, mob vigilantism and the anti-citizenship law protests and it wouldn't want to create new faultlines or give ammunition to others to do so. Ram *rajya* may be ideal but the BJP has got to get real.

Forlorn hopes

Wholesale dispatches for the auto industry are climbing back to 2019 levels. Is this a good sign or a false dawn?



When reports from the automotive industry came early in August, they were reassuringly positive. The country's largest carmaker, Maruti-Suzuki, said that wholesale dispatches to dealers were up by one per cent from July 2019. The country's second-largest carmaker, Hyundai Motor India, registered a decline of two per cent for domestic dispatches. While both carmakers have showed a considerable decline in exports, other producers, too, displayed a relatively healthy number of wholesale dispatches for July 2020 compared to July 2019. Even two-wheeler companies, Hero Motocorp, Honda and TVS, showed considerable numbers in July 2020, almost matching July 2019 numbers and importantly climbing significantly over sales in June 2020. And in a sign that the rural economy is picking up, tractor sales for July 2020 continued to surpass expectations, showing double-digit growth for all leading manufacturers.

However, there are some signs that things have not all returned to normal. Commercial vehicle sales are still muted, with transporters still having excess capacity. With educational institutions and public transportation services limited, there has been almost no offtake of buses in the past four months. One must draw attention to the difference between wholesale and actual retail sales; the latter are yet to recover. While most manufacturers have managed to get their production in order, thanks to special permissions even in lockdown zones, retail sales have been hit as dealerships have had to stay closed on days when cities, districts and even whole States endured lockdowns. What must also be remembered is that the entire automotive industry was suffering in 2019. Sales had been muted as the economy was still sputtering. In fact, last year, sales were down sharply from 2018. One should wait and watch to see how actual retail sales in the months of August and September pan out. These are historically weak months leading up to the bonanza of the last three months of the year, the so-called "festive season." And while it is encouraging to see that auto manufacturers have managed to get their houses back in order, much more needs to be done for the entire economy to get back on track after the Wuhan virus derailed all hopes of growth. These might be green shoots but they may not be enough to ensure that the plant called the economy grows big and strong by 2021.

opinion 06

Turning liability to asset

Merely privatising the PSBs will get us nowhere. Along with this move, the Government must bring sector-specific reforms. And they must come quick



GOURAV VALLABH

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) in its Financial Stability Report released on July 24 warned that the Gross Non-Performing Assets (GNPA) ratio of scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) could rise up to 14.7 per cent by March 2021 from the current 8.5 per cent in March 2020. This piece of news was followed up by former RBI Governor Urjit Patel's shocking revelation that the central bank wanted to be tough against the loan defaulters but the Government wanted him to "go soft", which eventually forced him to resign. A series of happenings in the banking sector in recent times has made everyone doubt the character and intentions of the current Government to recapitalise public sector banks (PSBs).

Recently, the All India Bank Employees Association (AIBE), too, released a list of 2,426 borrower accounts that have been categorised as "willful defaulters" with dues amounting to ₹1,47,350 crore to the banking system. It also mentioned that such huge amounts are being technically written off by the NDA Government. Moreover, recently, the Union Government announced that only five PSBs would continue to exist and that the rest of the unmerged banks would be sold off to private bidders in the name of recapitalisation. Only last year, the Government had merged 10 State-owned banks into four, creating a handful of larger banks in the process.

On the one hand, the Government is trying to infuse private capital into the PSBs and on the other, it is forcing both the State Bank of India (SBI) and Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) to bail out failed private sector banks such as Yes Bank. The statements and actions of the Government appear to contradict each other. A comparison of the BSE PSU bank index *vis-a-vis* BSE Sensex from 2014 to 2020 reveals that the former has seen no growth in the last six years while the latter has seen a steady rise. The BSE PSU bank index has instead fallen by 2.63 per cent, while the overall index has grown approximately by 11 per cent on a CAGR basis. The CAGR, which reflects that investors are not happy with the way the PSBs have been functioning.

On the one hand, the Government is pushing for a technical write-off of bad loans, on the



other, it has failed to investigate or punish the willful defaulters. This is evident from the fact that SBI has been recovering less than one per cent of its write-offs each year. As per reports, SBI's technical write-off of bad loans in the last eight years amounted to ₹1.23 lakh crore, while recovery from bad debts during the same period was less than ₹9,000 crore, which is less than one per cent of the collection efficiency every year.

Around 84,545 fraud cases — involving about ₹1.85 lakh crore — were reported by scheduled commercial banks and select FIs during 2019-20 as per RBI in an RTI response. This takes the total loss to ₹3.6 lakh crore due to frauds in the last six years (FY 2014-15 to 2019-20). Since July 19, 1969, when 14 banks were nationalised, they have been contributing immensely to build credit lines for the marginalised sectors like agriculture. The National Credit Council, in its meeting held in July 1968, emphasised that commercial banks should finance priority sectors like agriculture and small-scale industries.

Over the years, the priority sector lending norms have seen major changes and have, in fact, evolved with a greater focus on those segments that have traditionally been neglected from accessing credit. Thus,

THE GOVERNMENT MUST COME UP WITH A WHITE PAPER THAT MUST BE PREPARED IN CONSULTATION WITH ECONOMISTS, FORMER FINANCE MINISTERS AND RBI GOVERNORS. THE WHITE PAPER SHOULD INCLUDE DIVESTMENT PLANS FOR PSBs. A THOROUGH INVESTIGATION INTO THE DIVESTMENT PROCESS, TOO, IS A MUST

it has become a handy tool to address the problem of financial exclusion.

In the latest report of its Internal Working Group to review agricultural credit, the RBI said that the impact of the institutional framework put in place has largely leveraged formal credit to the agriculture sector. From ₹37.71 billion in 1981 (approximately 16 per cent of the agricultural GDP in 1980-81), the SCBs' outstanding advances to agriculture and allied activities have grown significantly to ₹13,694.56 billion in 2017-18, which formed approximately 16 per cent of total bank credit i.e., ₹86,254.25 billion and approximately 51 per cent of agriculture and allied GVA at current prices.

Merely privatising the PSBs will get us nowhere. Along with this move, the need is for sector-specific reforms. In his book, *What the Economy Needs*, Now, Rajan has suggested that privatisation be just one element of the overall reform process. It should not become the foremost plank in banking sector reform and is fraught with adverse consequences. To put it simply, Rajan is of the view that "simple" solutions like privatising PSBs may be no panacea. Consolidation and privatisation of PSBs can have little to do with setting Indian banking

right as these actions may be necessary but will not be sufficient by a long chalk.

The Government should clarify its approach to steer the PSBs out of the crisis. It should come up with a white paper that must be prepared in consultation with top economists, former Finance Ministers and RBI Governors among others. The white paper should include divestment plans for PSBs. A thorough investigation into the divestment process, too, is a must. Further, steps must be taken to ensure utmost transparency in the valuation of brand, network and the value for the number of accounts created over the last 51 years through significant brand-building.

The Government also needs to clarify the future of bank employees. The challenge is also for it to continue providing cheap agricultural credit to the farmers once the entire banking sector becomes driven by the private sector. No doubt, the state of the PSBs has been of great concern to a common citizen of our country. The country needs them to perform better. Delayed recognition of the inevitable has haunted India's financial sector. Reforms must come quick.

(The writer is professor of finance and national spokesperson of the Congress. Views expressed are personal)

SOUNDBITE

In this profession (cinema), you are only as good as your last project. Some films don't turn out the way you expect them to.

Actor — Sharman Joshi



The decisions that Governments take now will have lasting impact on hundreds of millions of young people, and on the development prospects of countries for decades to come.

UN Chief — António Guterres



Hindutva is now the basic coat on the canvas of polity and political parties subscribing to its various shades, as well as being for power in future as socialism and secularism are no longer the pivot of politics.

Former RSS ideologue — KN Govindacharya



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Better late than never

Sir — PV Narasimha Rao should be remembered for being a tactful Prime Minister, who handled a peculiar situation that developed in the country when an uncontrolled gathering pulled down the disputed structure at Ayodhya on December 6, 1992, paving the way for the ultimate foundation stone-laying ceremony for a grand Ram temple today.

He will also be remembered for successfully running a minority Government for a full five-year term and paving the way for a new era of economic reforms. It is indeed regrettable that like many other Congress veterans, he was not only sidelined by his own party but even insulted after his death. The Congress still refuses to look beyond the Gandhis.

Though a bit late, the present ruling Government has done well to honour forgotten national heroes such as Rao and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel. The real tribute, however, will be when Rao is honoured with the highest civilian award of Bharat Ratna. He deserves the maxi-

COVID-19 fallout on children

Data collated so far show that children are less affected clinically by COVID-19 than adults; they are not completely immune to SAR-CoV-2; are only less susceptible to contracting the virus and developing severe disease from it; and they can be carriers but are far less likely to spread the contagion than adults. However, the Coronavirus pandemic affects children less in terms of health but its impact on their lives and growth is incalculably immense. It has turned their world upside down; has exacerbated the problems already faced by them due to poverty, malnutrition, regressive cultural values and practices, poor parenting and physical abuse. The pandemic has caused a decline in economic activity, fall in household incomes and has forced millions of families to subsist on reduced daily intake of food. Deprived of adequate nourishment, children suffer stunted physical and cognitive growth. Governments must arrange to provide food to children who used to get mid-day meals in schools. Children are creative, inquisitive and agile; they need classrooms and playgrounds to grow up and blossom.



They are at an impressionable age; they are profoundly affected by what happens to them and around them. The pandemic makes it a ceaseless struggle between their resilience and vulnerability to cope with its impact. It is important to ensure that children don't will and come to think of themselves as the "lost generation." Their protection, health and well-being must be the world's priority.

G David Milton Maruthancho

mum recognition.

Madhu Agrawal Delhi

Change for good

Sir — Once again, the Prime Minister's Office intervened at

the right time to help the common man. This time, it has brought an end to the practice of eateries charging exorbitant prices for snacks and beverages at the Kochi airport. The snacks and beverages sold at food outlets at the airport burnt a hole in the passengers' pocket as a

heavy amount was charged.

The PMO's intervention has brought the prices down to tea and snacks being sold at ₹15 and coffee at ₹20. Earlier, people had to shell out ₹100 for a cup of tea and a minimum of ₹200 for snacks. Other airports across the country must take cue and slash

prices of refreshments.

M Pradyu Kannur

Trust Govt hospitals

Sir — With the Coronavirus having breached the 1.8 million mark, it has spread none. Even Bollywood celebrities, as well as many of our leaders, have been hit by the virus. Union Home Minister Amit Shah is the latest one to have contracted the disease and has been hospitalised in one of the best and costliest private hospitals in the country. Several other Ministers at the Centre as well as in States have contracted the virus. Shockingly, most of them were treated and continue to be admitted in private hospitals. To the contrary, when an average person falls sick, he/she prefers reaching out to a Government hospital as private ones are unaffordable. Our administrators must start trusting the Government facilities.

Rishi Via email

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

The Congress must decide

The party needs leadership, direction, revival, a new narrative and unity. Maybe even a non-Gandhi at the helm, soon



KALYANI SHANKAR

For the first time since Sonia Gandhi took over as the Congress president after the resignation of Rahul Gandhi last August, the rift between the "old guard" loyal to Sonia and Team Rahul has come out in the open. The reason for this is simple. Both the senior and younger leaders are frustrated with the *status quo* in the party when it sorely needs to revive, with a strong leadership at the helm. However, this "old guard" versus "young Turks" fight in the Congress is not new. It was there even during Indira Gandhi's days when she split the party in 1969, pushing out the syndicate led by the then Congress president K Kamaraj. The syndicate thought that they could manipulate Indira but she proved to be a shrewd politician and emerged stronger despite the split. After she won the Bangladesh war, politically she reached her zenith. Later, when the Congress party split in 1978, Congress (Indira) emerged as the real Congress.

When Rajiv Gandhi succeeded Indira in 1984 after her assassination, he was surrounded by his own coterie. But he also kept some of the senior leaders close to him. Since Rajiv was a politically strong leader with over 400 Congress MPs backing him, the feud between the seniors and younger leaders was muted.

Later, after Rajiv's assassination, a section of the old guard brought Sonia into the party in 1988. They were loyal to her while she also depended on them for support and guidance as she was a political greenhorn. It was a big task to guide such an old party as the Congress. Things went smoothly for years and over time Sonia tightened her grip on the party.

However, the fight between the old guard and the young leaders began when she promoted her son. While the senior leaders were apprehensive about their future, Rahul's team was getting impatient to get greater roles within the party and in Congress-ruled States. The politically-savvy old guard managed to block all attempts to bring a non-Gandhi to the helm of the party and bring back Sonia when Rahul resigned last August. Rahul himself criticised the old guard in the May 25 Congress Working Committee meeting.

Now, with the departure of Jyotiraditya Scindia in March and rebellion by Sachin Pilot — two of the closest aides of the Gandhi son — Team Rahul is further agitated. The fact that the newly-elected MP Rajiv Satav, said to be close to Rahul, was bold enough to be critical of the old guard and the UPA-2, says a lot about the divide within the party. It was only after senior leaders like Anand Sharma, Manish Tiwari, Milind Deora and so on retorted strongly that Satav withdrew his remarks about UPA-2.

Sonia and Rahul are not like Indira and Rajiv. Leading a weakened Congress is different from leading a politically-strong party. The departure of two young and charismatic leaders like Scindia and Pilot in the last four months and the loss of Madhya Pradesh and a wobbling Rajasthan have weakened the leadership further. Younger leaders from Team Rahul like Milind Deora and Jitin Prasada are likely to leave soon.

The immediate urgency in the party is the leadership vacuum. If Rahul wants to come back as the party chief, he should do so at the earliest. The "Bring Rahul" chant has already begun. Fortunately for the Gandhis there is no challenge to Rahul. However, if he does not want to come back, Rahul should make it clear now.

Dissent in the Congress is also not new as it functioned as an umbrella party providing space for all kinds of opinions. But discussing differences within the party forum and publicly airing grievance are two different things. The generational divide in the Congress goes much beyond and if no corrective measures are taken, it will affect the revival of the party.

Can this issue be resolved? It is indeed tricky, as both camps are not willing to wait. With both Sonia and Rahul helplessly watching the fight and with a leadership crisis plaguing the party, they need some quick and out-of-the-box thinking. As the old guard says, now is the time for introspection and correction. The party should have a convective like it did in Pachmarhi and Shimla.

Former Minister Salman Khurshid has put the present crisis in perspective. In an article, he sums up, "The loss of promising young leaders, irrespective of the reason, is indeed unfortunate and sad. But the young, who feel we, the older generation, are not giving way, must not forget that there are even younger ones waiting on the sidelines. The crisis is not about young and old but about those who want to leave and those who are determined not to abandon the ship in stormy weather."

The erosion has begun in the party like it happened before Sonia took over in 1998. The Gandhis should realise that 2020 is not 1998. Also, the family has proved that they are not vote catchers now. The party needs leadership, direction, revival, a new narrative and unity. Maybe even a non-Gandhi at the helm, soon. But it needs to decide fast as time and tide wait for none.

(The writer is a senior journalist)

IT IS A BIG TRAGEDY. IT COULDN'T HAVE HAPPENED WITHOUT THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE GOVERNMENT AND THE POLICE. THAT IS WHY NO ACTION IS BEING TAKEN.

—CONGRESS RAJYA SABHA MP
 SHAMSHER DULLO

POINT COUNTERPOINT



I ASSURE YOU AS THE CHIEF MINISTER THAT NO ONE WILL BE SPARED AND THE GUILTY WILL BE PUNISHED TO ENSURE JUSTICE.

—PUNJAB CHIEF MINISTER
 AMARINDER SINGH

Miles to go in J&K

Politically, the revocation of Articles 35A and 370 marks the fulfilment of the BJP's poll promise but emotional integration may take more time and requires imaginative handling by all stakeholders



PRAMOD JAIN

During the last one year, Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) has seen many far-reaching changes.

On August 5, 2019, the Parliament revoked Articles 35A and 370 of the Indian Constitution and reorganised J&K through an Act of Parliament, carving J&K as well as Ladakh as Union Territories (UTs) out of the erstwhile State. The J&K Constitution became inoperative, all Central laws now extend to J&K and many State laws are inoperative. The major changes included the abolition of the bicameral legislature and its replacement by a unicameral arrangement and reduction in the life of the Assembly from six to five years. There is now only one flag in J&K i.e. the Tricolour. Though politically, the revocation of Articles 35A and 370 marks the fulfilment of the BJP's long-held election promise, emotional integration may take more time and requires imaginative and sustained handling by various primary and secondary stakeholders.

Institution-building for good governance: Good governance is predicated upon a reasonably robust institutional framework in terms of both structure and agency. While a lot has been done in terms of the structure, the agency needs due attention, keeping the long-term horizons in view.

J&K never had direct British rule or the Indian Civil Service (ICS). The All India Services (AIS) were extended to it as late as the 1960s and have not yet bloomed in the real sense. Till recently 50 per cent local induction — especially when the services are themselves recruited on a very narrow, limited-to-J&K base — was a regressive policy that has been done away with. For administrative integration and for higher standards of public administration, the UT should have 100 per cent direct recruit AIS officers. Fortunately, the IAS, IPS and IFS cadres have been reviewed and are being expanded shortly. There are quite a few bright women in the State services; they need encouragement, exposure and training. Post-1990, the J&K Police managed to get enormous authority, manpower, infrastructure and funds. But they need to adequately attend to maintaining law and order, crime management and normal policing. This must be done in a manner that is transparent and ensures public access as well as accountability at various levels of the civil set-up.

Civic engagement: To build a progressive and modern UT, the focus must be on strengthening, even re-doing, from the perspective of the user-citizens, the institutions of governance so that they speedily and professionally respond to public issues, people's problems and local needs. Civic engagement and public outreach programmes like "Back to Villages", devolution of more powers including control over staff, functions and funds to the elected municipal and panchayat bodies, block development councils (BDCs) et al are indeed welcome steps. Giving good monthly honoraria to all, having life insurance and providing the protocol equivalence of District Magistrate to all the BDC Chairmen will boost their morale and motivate others to join public life, thereby strengthening the local democratic institutions. However, the new initiatives must be supplemented by a "Back to Basics" programme in every department, both in the UT secretariat and in the field, so as to attend to the basic but forgotten/ignored/diluted aspects pertaining to the very reason *d'être* of governance.

At the core of this approach lies the need for an enhanced civic engagement and to afford an opportunity to the enlightened citizens, especially urban, to relate to and become a part of the system, thereby enhancing the "ownership" of the

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 INCLUSIVE DEVELOPMENT BASED ON CIVIC ENGAGEMENT HAS TO BE A GENUINELY PARTICIPATORY EXERCISE, IN WHICH ALL DELEGATED RESPONSIBILITY IS DISCHARGED BY THE ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES; ALL DECISION-MAKING HAS TO BE THEIRS. THE TRADITIONAL, BUREAUCRATIC AND TECHNOCRATIC APPROACH, JOKINGLY CALLED 'YOU PARTICIPATE, I DECIDE,' HAS TO BE REPLACED BY A PRO-PEOPLE ORIENTATION IN THE GOVERNMENT MACHINERY, ESPECIALLY IN THE STATE RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND PANCHAYATI RAJ DEPARTMENT AND IN THE URBAN DEVELOPMENT DEPARTMENT.”



Government-funded schemes and projects. This enervation of the administrative structure and agency, coupled with enforcing accountability and productivity, especially at the cutting edge levels, will reduce citizens' trust deficit, enhance social capital and mainstream the marginalised population — the processes of social engineering necessary for inclusive development.

People as stakeholders: Inclusive development based on civic engagement has to be a genuinely participatory exercise, in which all delegated responsibility is discharged by the elected representatives; all decision-making has to be theirs. The traditional, bureaucratic and technocratic approach, jokingly called "you participate, I decide," has to be replaced by a pro-people orientation in the government machinery, especially in the State Rural Development and Panchayati Raj Department and in the Urban Development Department, besides others having a significant public contact.

The newly-empowered Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and municipal bodies must not be seen as the Government's departmental appendages or field units, as the officers tend to be seen, but as separate *loci* of power. Better functioning bodies must be given additional responsibilities and funds so as to build their stake in local area development. A new and revamped grievance redress mechanism (complaints registering methodology) needs to be put in place so that people can raise their voice about all that is unwanted or unacceptable. The old practice of officers holding regular camps in villages and at the *tehsil* headquarters needs to be strengthened and institutionalised. All vacant seats in panchayats, BDCs and other bodies must be filled up through early elections. Now that the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments have been extended to J&K, bringing about positive changes is both imperative and logical. The statutory post of the ombudsman for the PRIs also needs to be filled up early.

Restoring basic services: Connected with the above is the task of restoring basic services like 4G, which will go a long way to assuage the grievances of the younger generation and help businesses. Essential services like high-speed internet, power and water supply must keep pace with the citizens' expectations. While there is a marked improvement in the supply of quality electricity in the twin capitals and major towns, similar improvement is yet to be registered with regard to rural areas. People often complain that every wind and rainstorm leads to a power breakdown. Better power and water supply and other managerial issues must be tackled with the people's participation, taking PRIs on board, with the Divisional Commissioners and District Development Commissioners playing the key role of coordination and monitoring.

Strengthening the rule of law: The rule of law is a basic ingredient of a democratic system, free society and a market-led economy. It postulates that all citizens are equal before law, none is above the law, none can be condemned unheard, none can be a judge in his own cause; there would be no arbitrariness in decisions taken by public authorities. The celebrated historian and author, Niall Ferguson, avers that the decline in the rule of law is a major factor contributing to the degeneration of nations.

In almost every Assembly session in J&K, there have been acrimonious debates, *inter alia*, on the alleged backdoor appointments, political bigwigs being asked to recommend names for selection of candidates, appointments through relaxation of rules and so on. In this backdrop, the rule of law needs to be strengthened and re-established, wherever required, in the day-to-day working of the administration at various levels, and it needs to be visible. The task may require training and re-training the decision-makers, their intensive monitoring and introduction of checks and balances as well as giving punishments for wrongdoing. It is indeed difficult, though not impossible.

Political party development: Though the timing of the electoral event is the sole discretion of the Election Commission of India, election to the State Assembly is the logical next step. Since political parties are necessary part of the electoral and democracy-building processes, they need to come out of their current, self-imposed hibernation. All parties need also to seriously go in for "political party development." They should groom ideologies with a grip over the political economy and public policy issues, those who can link up the macro and micro, and devise vision, mission, strategy and plan of action to establish a bottom-up interface with the voters, especially the younger ones.

All parties perhaps need a new pedagogy and communication approach, through social media platforms, emails and text messages. They also need to strengthen the governance institutions because people's political behaviour is always influenced by the institutions, political and administrative. Collectively all of them have a responsibility to ensure that democracy delivers, and delivers to the satisfaction of the electorate at large.

Limitation of stereotypes: It has been seen that J&K-related stereotypes don't generally capture the essence of all that is good, bad and ugly, and only strengthen the archetypal discourse fixed on the romantic-empire. The need of the hour is a broad spectrum of new, bold, long-term and sustainable policy initiatives and their time-bound, effective and professional implementation. Lieutenant-Governor GC Murmu will do well to nudge political parties to resume political activity sooner than later. He is already consolidating on the work done by the Union Ministries and the UT administration but the efforts need to be speeded up and expanded as early as possible. There cannot be a trust deficit for long.

(The writer is a retired IAS officer of the J&K cadre)

The kingmaker with the heart of a king

Now that Amar Singh is no longer with us, I am sure he will be remembered by the ordinary people as long as they live for his kindness



SANTANU GANGULY

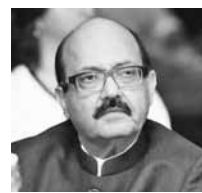
It was August 2018 and I was curating a Bengali Film Festival in Delhi. National Award-winning actress Rituparna Sengupta was one of the guests at the festival. While heading towards her hotel from the airport, she told me, "I have invited Amar Singh for the opening ceremony."

So I conveyed the message to the organisers. But to my surprise, they informed me that the Samajwadi Party leader and Rajya Sabha member could not be accommodated as the festival got support from the Chief Minister of Delhi, Arvind Kejriwal. The Chief Minister's Office had clearly mentioned that as per established protocol, no other polit-

ical persona from any other political party could be present at the function. It was a very peculiar situation and the organisers were very tense as they did not want to offend the Chief Minister.

So, the moment Amar Singh arrived, I took him to the conference room, since the opening ceremony was yet to begin. I made him comfortable, gave him a cup of tea and set up an interview with *Doodardashan*. My intention was to let the Chief Minister arrive and take his seat on the stage before seating Amar Singh in the front row among the audience.

Those moments spent with Amar Singh, while waiting for Arvind Kejriwal to arrive, turned out to be very memorable. I got the opportunity to talk to the veteran politician, industrialist, the close friend of Bollywood royalty Amitabh Bachchan and the kingmaker of Indian politics over very close and set up an hour. I call him kingmaker, because of the way he saved the Manmohan Singh Government in a floor test in Parliament. Even his



harsh critics will have to agree that he had been blessed with exceptional floor management skills in Parliament.

During our chat, I was amazed to hear him speak fluent Bengali. Then he claimed himself to be a Bengali at heart and began talking about his school and college days in Kolkata, the time, the memories, the culture, the people and, of course, the politics.

It was then that I reminded him of his great contribution to the Cinefan: Asian Film Festival, 2003.

This was before Cinefan was merged with Osián's. Aruna Vasudev had a hard time organising the festival as she got very nominal Government and corporate support. So she had approached Amar Singh on the recommendation of Vasant Sathe. At that time, Amar Singh gave us the ₹1 lakh we needed as the cash award for the Best Film voted by the audience. I was so grateful to him that I filled up a letter to him and he said that Amar Singh Goutam Gote, for his Bengali film *Abar Aranya* (In the forest, again). As Amar Singh was very busy with some political engagement, he requested Vasant Sathe to present the award.

After listening to my tale, Amar Singh just smiled and said, "You know the ordinary people are the poor people always gratefully remember whatever little I have done for them. It has happened many times that during my visit to my constituents, many people come along with their children and ask them to touch my feet. They tell their children that 'he is your grandfather. He did our *Kanyadaan*. Without his help our

marriage would not have been possible.' Frankly speaking I don't even remember the occasion or I personally do not recall the people, but they remember my help. I think my purpose in life is solved." After a small pause, he continued, "But whatever I have done for rich people... no one ever thinks about those efforts." I could see the sadness on Amar Singh's face when he said that.

During the course of our conversation, I discovered that he was an avid reader and had an amazing collection of books in his personal library. After learning this fact, I requested him to visit the book store next door before going to the auditorium. He readily agreed and chose a good amount of books, mostly on history and politics. The store employees panicked as they did not have the facility to take payments through a credit or debit card and the bill was a whopping ₹20,000. Unfazed by Amar Singh just murmured "Oh! That's not a big amount", and took out the money from the pocket of his kurta and gave it to them.

Meanwhile, Kejriwal arrived and the opening ceremony of the film festival began. So we proceeded inside the auditorium. Amar Singh got up, he ignited seat and everything went smoothly.

After the ceremony, when Kejriwal got off the stage to leave, Amar Singh just got up and with folded hands said to him in Hindi, "Kyun, nahi pehchanen ji? (Didn't you recognise me?)" Kejriwal, with his popular and charming smile, quickly held Amar Singh's hands and exchanged greetings very cordially.

Anyway, at the end of the day, all of us were discussing Amar Singh's sad acknowledgement of the fact that the ordinary people remembered his good deeds but the rich never remembered his kindness. Somehow, to this day, I can't forget the sad, hurt face of Amar Singh. Now that he is no longer with us, I am sure he will be remembered by the ordinary people as long as they live.

(The author is a Delhi-based film festival curator, director, producer and freelance writer)

FOREIGN EYE



GIVING WINGS TO CREATIVITY

The Coronavirus pandemic has reconfigured the home as a site of creativity, one glimpsed through webcams and headphones. The format will surely vanish when art venues reopen around the world. But for some women musicians this year, before and during the lockdown, the domestic space has offered artistic liberation at odds with the home's reputation as a place of constraint for women.

(The Guardian editorial)

Kerala doctor among ISIS suicide bombers

As per the NIA chargesheet in the case, Ijas had gone to Afghanistan along with his pregnant wife Reffeala. While Ijas at the time was 33 years old, his wife was 26. Sources said Reffeala and their child are in the



In July 2016, a parent from Kasargod had lodged a police complaint, stating that his 30-year-old son Abdul Rashid was missing along with his wife Ayisha (Sonia Sebastian) and child for almost two months after they had gone to Mumbai.

Around the same time, 14 other cases of missing people, including Ijas, were registered by their parents and relatives in the police station of the same area. Preliminary inves-

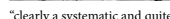
She was arrested on August 1, 2016, after she got intercepted at the Indira Gandhi

The NIA investigation revealed that Yasmeen "was highly influenced and radicalised with the pro-jihad

chargesheet, the NIA listed Jais, a resident of Hamsa Sagar, Thekkepuram, near the government hospital in Padanangal, Kasargod, as an accused and absconder in the case. **IANS**

London: British lawmakers

Lawmaker Alistair Carmichael, who co-chairs the parliamentary group, said the violence was "not the actions of a few rogue officers" and was



The semi-autonomous city has seen its most violent anti-government protests in the past year, as demonstrations against a proposed law that would allow suspects to be extradited to China grew into a much wider protest movement.

Rajapaksa hopes for a two-thirds majority for the Sri Lanka People's Party (SLPP) in the general election so that he can amend the Constitution to restore presidential powers curbed by a 2015 constitutional change. His older brother and former president Mahinda Rajapaksa, who is seeking reelection as prime minister, is assured of a sweeping victory as the main Opposition is badly divided.

AP ■ KUALA LUMPUR

0

The Streaming Tool is said to have used a traffic-light system to grade every entry visa application to the UK since 2015. **PT**

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Jerusalem: Israeli Prime

to consider this," he said.

heaviest exchanges of fire along the volatile Israel-Lebanon frontier since a 2006 war between the bitter enemies. **AN**

AP ■ PARIS

that he was beaten because he had asked one of the attackers to don a mask when he entered the laundromat in the town of Soisy-sous-Montmorency north of Paris.

United Nations: The COVID-

sustainable development. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to the largest disruption of education ever," Secretary General Antonio Guterres said in a video statement launching

(from pre-primary to tertiary) could drop out or not have access to school next year due to the pandemic's economic impact alone," the brief said. **PTI**

Page: 6/10

PUBLIC NOTICE
This is for the information of persons

for any of act/conduct of my son or daughter in law in any manner whatsoever. Henceforth my son or his wife will have share or right or title or interest in any of immovable or movable properties.

 Springer

work etc. of Metro Railway, Kolkata (approx.). **Cost of Tender Deposit:** ₹ 3,78,600/-. **Completion Period:** 30.06.2022. **Date of Closing:** 20.06.2022. **Document and other details:**

re-tendering for the following work:

Tender Value : ₹ 4,57,13,744.63
Document : Nil. **Earnest Money :**
The contract shall be in force upto
08.2020 at 12.00 hrs. The Tender
may be obtained from the website

research cooperation on virus tracing" during their two-week stay, which ended Sunday. Their talks touched on

RDSO/08/EL/SPEC/0062/Rev-
2, STR No.: -CLW/TM/17700;
34643 nos.; 2000000;26/08/2020
at 11:00 am. OFFICE
ADDRESS: Dy. CMM.

Sensex snaps 4-day losing streak with 748-point leap

RIL, HDFC BANK LEAD CHARGE

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmarks made an emphatic comeback on Tuesday after four straight sessions of losses as market heavyweights Reliance Industries and HDFC Bank saw robust buying amid firm global cues.

The BSE Sensex soared 748.31 points or 2.03 per cent to close at 37,687.91, while the NSE Nifty rallied 203.65 points or 1.87 per cent to 11,095.25.

Reliance Industries was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, surging 7.10 per cent, after reports said the company was close to inking a deal to acquire the retail assets of Future Group.

HDFC Bank jumped 3.94 per cent after the RBI approved the appointment of insider Sashidhar Jagdishan as the next

MD and CEO of the bank. He will take over from Aditya Puri in October this year.

Maruti, Axis Bank, HDFC, ICICI Bank and Bajaj Finance also finished with gains.

On the other hand, Tech Mahindra, Infosys, ITC, HCL Tech, UltraTech Cement and Infosys were among the laggards, shedding up to 2.75 per cent.

According to traders, stock-specific action in index-heavyweights drove the markets higher.

Further, strong foreign fund inflows and positive cues from global markets cheered investors.

Exchange data showed that foreign institutional investors purchased equities worth ₹ 8,814.49 crore on a net basis on Monday. "Reliance led the day's show for the bulls and we saw support in late afternoon trade from key players like HDFC Bank and Maruti as Mcap to GDP rose to around 78 per cent."

"Key highlight of today's trade was good participation in the broader market with smart money finding its way into select midcaps across sectors," said S Ranganathan, Head of Research at LKP Securities.

BSE energy, finance, realty, banks, auto, healthcare and metal indices rallied up to 5.60 per cent, while IT and tech ended in the red.

Broader BSE mid-cap and small-cap indices jumped up to 1.25 per cent.

Asian markets closed higher, tracking gains in Wall Street following better US manufacturing data.

Stock exchanges in Europe were also trading on a positive note as equally weighted indices shrugged off escalating US-China tensions and rising coronavirus cases.

Global oil benchmark Brent crude was trading 1.61 per cent lower at USD 43.44 per barrel.

Coronavirus fallout a rising risk for Indian ABS, says Moody's

AINS ■ NEW DELHI

The fallout of the coronavirus pandemic is raising risks for Indian asset-backed securities, rating agency Moody's Investors Service said on Tuesday. However, the agency said that recent structural changes and the credit enhancement build-up has partially offset the growing credit challenges.

"The high take-up of coronavirus-related payment moratoriums and the economic downturn triggered by the pandemic are disrupting the cash flow of ABS transactions and as a result, are raising liquidity risks," Dipankar Rustagi, a Moody's Assistant Vice President and Analyst, said in a statement.

Accordingly, for Indian auto ABS that Moody's rates, and are mostly backed by commercial vehicles, 70-100

per cent of underlying loans are currently on payment moratoriums, as are 55-65 per cent of loans in Indian micro, small and midsize enterprise (MSME) loan ABS.

Meanwhile, the economic downturn is increasing risks for borrowers and consequently likely to trigger a deterioration in asset quality at least through the remainder of the year, Rustagi said.

Specifically, slowing growth is dampening demand for freight transport for commercial vehicle operators, while also weighing on the earnings and profitability of most MSMEs. As per the statement, a further risk lies in the financial deterioration evident at many Indian financial institutions that sponsor ABS deals, since the credit quality of Indian ABS is dependent on sponsors' ongoing servicing of securitised portfolios.

Minimum ₹500 or net worth must for licence to sell petrol, diesel to retail, bulk users

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Government on Tuesday said any entity with a net worth of at least ₹500 crore is eligible for obtaining the liberalised licence to sell petrol and diesel to retail and bulk consumers.

Clarifying on the November 2019 liberalised fuel licensing regime, the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas said any entity with a net worth of ₹250 crore can get a licence to retail petrol and diesel to either bulk or retail consumers. For those seeking authorisation for both retail and bulk must have a minimum net worth of ₹500 crore at the time of application, it said in a statement.

Last year, the Government had relaxed norms for retailing of auto fuels, allowing companies to venture into the business — a move that could help private and foreign firms to enter the world's fastest-growing market.

Prior to that, a company had to invest ₹2,000 crore in

either hydrocarbon exploration and production, refining, pipelines or liquefied natural gas (LNG) terminals to obtain a fuel retailing licence in India.

In the statement, the ministry said the government had on November 8, 2019, notified simplified guidelines for grant of authorisation for bulk and retail marketing of motor spirit (petrol) and high-speed diesel (diesel).

"The simplified guidelines aim at increasing private sector participation in the marketing of petrol and diesel," it said. "An entity desirous of seeking authorisation for either retail or bulk must have a minimum net worth of ₹250 crore at the time of making an application — ₹500 crore in case of authorisation for both retail and bulk."

Applications, it said, may be submitted in the prescribed form directly to the ministry.

"For retail authorisation, the entity is required to set up at least 100 retail outlets," the statement said adding that the new policy has opened up the marketing sector of petroleum

products by removing the strict conditions applicable earlier.

The other requirements as per the November 2019 notification include the need for companies to install facilities for marketing of at least one new generation alternative fuel, such as CNG, LNG and biofuels, or electric vehicle charging within three years of the start of operations.

The retailers will necessarily have to set up five per cent of the total outlets in rural areas within five years.

The new policy liberalises fuel retailing by increasing private sector participation, including foreign players. "It will also encourage dispensing of alternate fuels and augmentation of retail network in remote areas and ensure higher levels of customer service," the statement added.

The Central Government had last set fuel marketing conditions in 2002 and the November 2019 change was based on the recommendation of a high-level expert committee.

GDP seen contracting, NITI Aayog suggests ways to boost demand

AINS ■ MUMBAI

With the economy going through a slowdown, the NITI Aayog is of the view that India's GDP may contract around 5.1 per cent in the current fiscal.

In a recent presentation to Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Finance Ministry, it has suggested ways to boost demand, specifically in the key sectors of automobiles and real estate.

As per NITI Aayog, the long-awaited scrappage policy should be brought in to help the automobile sector. It has also recommended removal of cess on automobiles.

In a bid to revive demand in the realty sector, it has suggested reinstatement of the subvention scheme which was disallowed last year.

Further, the think tank has also recommended the Government spending as private expenditure and investment

is likely to take a backseat in the current scenario.

NITI Aayog, in its presentation, also noted that manufacturing sector growth and capacity utilisation was severely low before the nationwide lockdown was implemented.

Among several other recommendations, the think tank also recently suggested the creation of a Duk Bazar — postal bank — by merging the regional rural banks, among other

It has also suggested easier norms for granting bank license

recommendations to the government. The NITI Aayog has suggested the over 1.5 lakh post offices in the country should be made outlets for the proposed Duk Bank, sources said.

Further, it has also suggested easier norms for granting bank licenses. In another major recommendation, it has suggested privatisation of three banks — Punjab & Sind Bank, COO Bank and the Bank of Maharashtra, said people in the know.

Worst seems to be over, farm sector to finish Covid impact on economy: FinMin report

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The worst seems to be over in favour of agriculture and has reinforced rural demand. This has manifested in an increase in rural core inflation between March and June 2020. As a result, the push for growth in coming months appears to be pitched in rural India," it said.

Pointing at the recent landmark reforms announced in agricultural sector, it said the deregulated and liberalized the agricultural sector, further, empower the farmers to become a bigger and more stable participant in India's growth journey.

Talking about some parameters showing improvement, the report said, contraction in industrial activity, measured by Index of Industrial Production (IIP) and eight core industries, has eased in May as compared to April. Industrial output increased across all sectors and sub-sectors within IIP in May as against April.

Signs of further recovery were witnessed in June with India's Manufacturing PMI improving from 30.8 in May 2020 to 47.2 in June 2020 with output and new orders contracting at much softer rates than seen in April and May, it said. Services PMI recovered from 12.6 in May 2020 to 33.7 in June 2020, owing to some stabilization in output levels with around 59 per cent of firms reporting no change in output, 4 per cent reporting growth and 37 per cent reporting reduction since May, it added. There was also an uptick in infrastructure and construction activities in the unlocking phase, it said, adding, contraction in production of finished domestic steel recovered from 41 per cent in May to 31.1 per cent in June 2020.

"Since September, 2019, the terms of trade in favour of agriculture and has reinforced rural demand. This has manifested in an increase in rural core inflation between March and June 2020. As a result, the push for growth in coming months appears to be pitched in rural India," it said.

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Maruti Suzuki's Nexa 3rd largest retailer of passenger cars

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Maruti Suzuki's premium retail brand Nexa has become the third largest retailer of passenger cars in the country and currently has a market share of 11 per cent, according to a senior executive. Nexa contributes more than 20 per cent of Maruti Suzuki's annual volumes, grossing over 30,000 units per month even in this downturn.

"Today, Nexa is the third largest retail automobile channel with a market share of 10-11 per cent."

At present, Nexa contributes close to 20 per cent of our overall sales. With Nexa, we are able to attract modern urban consumers," Maruti Suzuki Executive Director for Marketing and Sales Shashank Srivastava told PTI. Maruti Suzuki has a 51 per cent share in the domestic passenger car market. Since the launch with the sold brand S-Cross, Nexa now sells five premium models of Maruti.

Nexa started operations in July 2016. In October 2016, it rolled in the Baleno, the premium mini SUV, which was followed by Ignis, a hatchback in January 2017. In April 2017, it launched the premium sedan Ciaz and in August 2019 the XL6, a crossover MPV, was rolled out.

At present, there are 370 Nexa showrooms across 200 cities. "Nexa marks the first initiative by a car maker here to go beyond selling cars by creating a new format of retail experience."

In these five years, Nexa, with its intelligent brand associations and unique customer experiences, has delighted over 1.1 million customers as it completed five years in July.

In just four years and two months, the brand grossed up 1 million customers in September 2019 and by July 2020, added 1 lakh more customers to take the total customer family to 1.1 million.

CIL's fuel allocation under spot e-auction scheme drops by 7% in April-June

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

CIL's coal allocation under spot e-auction scheme registered 7.1 per cent decline to 6.89 million tonne in April-June this fiscal, in the wake of slump in fuel demand due to Covid-19 induced lockdown.

Coal India Ltd (CIL) had allocated 7.42 million tonne (MT) of coal in the year-to-date period, according to Government data.

However, the coal allocated by the PSU in June increased to 3.68 MT, compared to 2.07 MT in the corresponding month of 2019-20, it said.

Coal distribution through e-auction was introduced with a view to provide access to coal for such buyers who are not able to source the dry fuel through the available institutional mechanism, as per the information available on CIL website.

The purpose of e-auction is to provide equal opportunity to all intending buyers for purchasing coal through single window service.

Coal India accounts for over 80 per cent of domestic coal output.

CIL's coal allocation under spot e-auction scheme had declined to 29.83 MT in 2019-20, over 34.34 MT allocated in 2018-19.

NMDC produces 2.19 Mn tone Iron ore in July

Hyderabad: NMDC Limited produced 2.19 million tonnes and sold 2.57 million tonnes of iron ore in July. During this period, despite the current uncertain situation due to Covid-19, NMDC has been able to achieve excellent physical performance through its continual push towards higher volumes which saw production of 2.19 MT and sales 2.57 MT that grew by 13 per cent and 7% over the corresponding period last year respectively, a press release from the country's largest iron ore miner said.

Tesit Deb, Chairman-Cum-Managing Director of NMDC said the last few months have been quite challenging for the entire industry due to the COVID-19 pandemic situation impacting the performance of all major producers. "However this challenge was treated as an opportunity by us to accelerate our efforts towards stabilizing the production and continuously improving our production processes. Going forward NMDC will strive to maximize cost efficiencies to improve its bottom-line," Deb said. PTI

Q1FY21 securitisation volumes substantially down to ₹7,500 crore

AINS ■ NEW DELHI

The coronavirus-induced economic turbulence has subdued India's Q1FY21 securitisation volumes substantially to ₹7,500 crore, said domestic rating agency ICRA.

On a year-on-year basis, the Q1FY21 volumes fell from ₹50,300 crore in Q1FY 2020. Such a drop in the volumes, is primarily attributable to the disruptions caused by the Covid-19 pandemic, said the rating agency.

"The nationwide lockdown severely impacted the income generation capability of large number of borrowers. This led to retail borrowers, who have been the backbone of the fresh securitisation transactions given the possible deterioration in the loan repaying capability of retail borrowers," ICRA said in a statement.

"ICRA's loan moratorium policy, though provided relief to retail borrowers, was detrimental to securitisation market as investors stayed away from pools with irregular cash flows in the initial months."

Furthermore, the rating agency said that funding requirements for non-banking financial companies' and housing finance companies' also declined during this quarter due to lower demand from the borrowers and the increased credit risk of the total volume rather than disbursements.

"Though the securitisation volumes were significantly lower during Q1FY2021, the market saw an uptick in volume during 2020. More than two-third of the total volumes in Q1FY2021 were completed in June 2020," Abhishek Daffria, Vice President and Head - Structured Finance Ratings at ICRA said in the statement. "We expect the overall volume to see further increase in the coming quarters supported by the improvement in collections being seen across asset classes that would restore investor confidence. The traction will also be supported by NBFCs who have already recommended disbursements, albeit lower amounts at present, and would utilize securitisation of their pooled assets as a funding tool."

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PIERONE AGO EXTRACTS LIMITED
Regd Office: Chhoti Nehar, Malakpur, Patankot 145025
Tel: 0185 234532-34
Website: www.pioneerago.co.in
Email: compliance@pioneerago.co.in
Telephone: 91-185-234532-34
CIN: L15319PB1999PLC012975

Notice is hereby given pursuant to Regulation 29 read with Regulation 47 of SEBI (Listing Obligations and Disclosures) Regulations, 2015 that a meeting of the Board of directors of the Company is scheduled to be held on Wednesday, August 12, 2020, at Chhoti Nehar, Malakpur, Patankot, Punjab, India, to consider the unaudited financial results of the Company for the quarter June 30, 2020.

Nexa is further given that Trading Window has already been closed and shall remain closed till August 13, 2020 pursuant to the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Prohibition of Insider Trading) Regulations, 2015.

The Notice of the Board meeting is available on the website of the Company at www.pioneerago.co.in and also on the website of BSE & LSE, i.e. www.bseindia.com.

By Order of the Board
For Pioneer Agro Extracts Limited
Place: Patankot
Date: 04/08/2020
Company Secretary & Compliance Officer

NORTHERN RAILWAY
NOTICE INVITING TENDER
30-EST-16/T-2020-21-43
Name of Work and its location: Removing and commissioning of submersible pumps over Delhi Division.
Approx cost of the works in Rs. 31.59 lacs
Address of the office: Sr. Civil Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi
Earnest Money: Rs. 63000.00
Date & time of submission of tender: 31.08.2020, 12.00 hrs.
Opening of tender: 01.09.2020, 12.00 hrs.
Website & notice board: www.nrepa.gov.in & Sr. Civil Elect. Engineer/General, New Delhi
Serving Customers With A Smile

SEARCH FOR MISSING BOY
General public is hereby informed that one Boy Name: Monty, S/o: Purnan Chand, R/o: E-171, J.J. Colony, Shakurpur, Delhi. Age: 14 years, Height: 3'5", Complexion: Wheatish, Face: Long with zig-zag teeth, Identification: Tattoo of 'Monty' and 'E-171 Shakurpur, Delhi' on right hand, Wearing: Unknown, has been missing since 02.10.2018 from the area of P.S. Subhash Place, Delhi.
In this regard a FIR No. 150/19, U/s 363 IPC dated 14.05.2019 has been lodged at P.S. Subhash Place, Delhi.
Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this Boy but no clue has come to light so far.
Any person having any information or clue about this Boy kindly inform to the following.
E-Mail: cic@cbi.gov.in SHO
Website: cbi.nic.in
P.S. Subhash Place, Delhi.
Ph. 011-24368638, 24368641 DP/278/NW/2020

RAJASTHAN STATE ROAD TRANSPORT CORPORATION
Head Office, Parkashan Marg, Chomu House, Jaipur
Ref. No.: F3/ST/ITC/MC/2020 Date: 28/07/2020
NIT for Selection of Issuer/Acquirer Financial Institution led consortium for Digital Farm Collection using NCMC at RSRTC.
Rajasthan State Road Transport Corporation (RSRTC), Jaipur invite bids from eligible bidders who have necessary qualifications and experience to carry out the work of Selection of Issuer/Acquirer Financial Institution led consortium for Digital Farm Collection using NCMC in a time bound manner. Details of the tender notification and eligibility criteria can be seen in the NIT exhibited on website <https://rajasthan.gov.in> or www.sppa.rajasthan.gov.in and our website www.rajsrtc.gov.in from 28th July 2020 till 28th August 2020. Bidders who are interested in bidding can download the RFP from aforesaid website from 28th July 2020 onward.
TENDERS - RT/2020/10/0800117
Rs. 5000/- (INR 5000/-) Advt. No. 63/2020-21 By General Manager (IT)

APPEAL FOR IDENTIFICATION
General public is hereby informed that an unidentified dead body of a male named Unknown, S/o: Unknown, R/o: Unknown, was found on 28.07.2020 at Halderpur Water Treatment Plant, Delhi. In this regard DD No. 11A dated 28.07.2020 has been lodged at Police Station, K.N. Katju Marg, Delhi. Dead Body has been preserved at BSA Hospital Mortuary. Identification of unidentified dead body of male is as under:
Name: Unknown, Age: 30-35 Years, Height: 5'8", Complexion: Wheatish, Face: Round, Built: Normal, Wearing: Multi Color Check Shirt, Grey Color Pant.
If anyone have any information or clue about this male deceased may kindly be inform undersigned.
SHO
Police Station, K.N. Katju Marg, Delhi
DP/273/RD/2020 Ph.: 011-27571162, 8750870327

SEARCH FOR MISSING PERSON
General public is hereby informed that one person Name: Sunil Chawla, S/o Ram Kishan Chawla, R/o B 272 Majlis Park, Gali No. 3, Adarsh Nagar, Delhi. Age: 42 years, Height: 5'5", Face: Round, Complexion: Shallow, Built: Strong, Wearing: Black T-shirt & Pant has been missing since 27.07.2020.
In this regard a DD No. 105A dated 27.07.2020 has been lodged at P.S. Adarsh Nagar, Delhi.
Sincere efforts have been made by local police to trace out information about this person but no clue has come to light so far. Any person having any information or clue about this person kindly inform to the following.
E-Mail: cic@cbi.gov.in SHO
Website: <http://cbi.nic.in> P.S. Adarsh Nagar, Delhi.
Fax: 011-24368639 Ph. 011-27495198, 8750870233
Ph. 011-24368638, 24368641 DP/280/NW/2020

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE
Branch Office: ICICI Bank Ltd. 3rd Floor, Plot No. 23, Shaal Tower, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi-110005

Whereas The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICICI Bank Limited under the Securitisation, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under Section 13(1) of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules, 2002 issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

And whereas The borrower failed to repay the amount, notice is hereby given to the borrower and the public in general that the undersigned has taken symbolic possession of the property described herein below in exercise of powers conferred on him/ her under Section 13(1) of the said Act read with Rule 8 of the said rules on the below-mentioned details. The borrower in particular and the public in general is hereby cautioned not to deal with the property and any dealings with the property will be subject to the charge of ICICI Bank Limited.

Sr. No.	Name of the Borrower/ Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount in Demand (Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Bharat Bhushan Arora/ Haryana Bala Arora/ LBDEL00001902250	D-54, Entire First Floor, Saket, New Delhi/ July 29, 2020	November 30, 2019/ Rs. 37,57,842/-	Delhi/ Ncr
2.	Chander/ Wadhwa/ Vandana Wadhwa/ LBDEL00000798874	Plot No. E-022, Second Floor, Preet Vihar, New Delhi/ July 29, 2020	January 30, 2020/ Rs. 13,94,722/-	Delhi/ Ncr
3.	Om Prakash Kukreja/ Pustika Puri/ LBF0000001153128	Shop No. G-19, W-2, Vasthal, Sec-1, Ghaziabad, (Adjoining Area of 624 Sq Ft Super Area Enclosed With Additional 905 Sq Ft Super Area Open Space Surrounding This Unit/ July 29, 2020	January 30, 2020/ Rs. 12,24,774/-	Delhi/ Ncr
4.	Sandeep Bhargava/ Jyoti Bhargava/ LBNO000001930242	Apartment No. 1903, Tower- 10, "Clarks Boulevard", Situated At Plot No. 003, Sector-10, Noida/ July 30, 2020	July 31, 2018/ Rs. 14,26,141/-	Delhi/ Ncr
5.	Mintu Bhalla/ Aarti Bhalla/ LBNO000001673477	Plot No-26 Block-A Sector-47 Gautam Budh Nagar Noida Uttar Pradesh/ July 30, 2020	December 31, 2019/ Rs. 74,82,484/-	Delhi/ Ncr
6.	K Sanjeev Kumar/ Sonia John/ LBBS000004120390	Freehold Built Up Entire Fourth Floor With Roof Rights Of Property No. 8-24 With Open Parking Space On 8th Floor, Bagdola Dwarika Sector 8, New Delhi/ July 30, 2020	October 31, 2019/ Rs. 70,93,088/-	Delhi/ Ncr

The above-mentioned borrower(s) guarantor(s) are hereby given a 30 day notice to repay the amount, else the mortgaged properties will be sold on the expiry of 30 days from the date of publication of this Notice, as per the provisions under the Rules 8 and 9 of Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002.

Date: 05-08-2020
Place: Delhi/ Ncr
Authorized Officer
ICICI Bank Limited

The final dates for the Common Law Admission Test 2020 (CLAT) have been declared and will be conducted on August 22, 2020. The exam is an aptitude-based exam where the intent is to test the student's interest towards law and not their knowledge of law. A degree in law has got huge popularity since many decades, and the reason which makes it a favourable choice for students is primarily that the course is neutral to all the streams whether commerce or engineering. Further, it has huge scope in terms of career and respect in the society.

Keeping this intent in mind, the CLAT consortium has come up with a new pattern wherein they also plan to extensively test the student's reading and comprehending skills as they feel that these skills are imperative for the budding law aspirants. Hence, the approach that was best suited for the old pattern of CLAT, may not be the same for CLAT 2020.

CLAT comprises five sections, namely English Language, Current Affairs, including General Knowledge, Logical Reasoning, Logical Reasoning and Quantitative Techniques, each section requiring a different approach. However, one thing that stays uniform throughout the five sections is your Reading and Comprehension skills.

Section wise strategy
It is recommended that one should develop a reading habit. Read editorials and newspapers daily and focus more on burning Socio Legal issues among other things from reputed media houses. If that is something you have not been doing already, it is recommended to create a depository of the important editorial articles from the last one year and go through them thoroughly. It will definitely help you at this stage.

There'll be a lot of passages this year, (up to 450 words each) so one must develop a habit of sitting, reading and solving problems for more than 2 hours a stretch. Go through the sample papers and analyse the type of questions that are asked in these exams. Also don't forget to go through the previous year papers. Though there is a new pattern this year, the previous years question papers will help you to understand the basic concepts and the approach to such an exam. This has also been reiterated by the CLAT consortium in their notifications/tweets.

Current affairs: As per the CLAT website, the passages will be derived from news, journalistic sources and other non-fiction writing. The questions may include an examination of legal information or knowledge discussed in or related to the passage,

TAKE THE LEGAL CAREER PATH

With only two weeks left for CLAT, it is time for students to pull up their socks. AMANDEEP RAJGOTRA tells students how to prepare for the new pattern and ace the exam



but would not require any additional knowledge of the law beyond the passage. To understand the topics and kinds of questions important for the exams, one should go through the previous year papers. Identify the topics on which questions are asked. Read editorials/opinions on burning socio-legal news that took place between May 2019 to present.

English language: Practice reading comprehensions on a daily basis and make sure you are used to solving reading comprehension questions at a stretch because you'll have to do the same while appearing for the exam. Practice solving Reading Comprehension on screen to replicate the experience that you'll face in the exam.

Quantitative techniques: As per the official website, "Quantitative Techniques section of the UG-CLAT 2020 will include short sets of facts or propositions, graphs, or other pictorial, pictorial or diagrammatic representations of numerical information, followed by a series of questions." The best way to solve this section is through practise. The more

Practise reading comprehensions on a daily basis and make sure you are used to solving reading comprehension questions at a stretch because you'll have to do the same while appearing for the exam. Practise solving Reading Comprehension on screen to replicate the experience that you'll face in the exam

you practice, the better you'll get.

Logical reasoning: One should expect Verbal Reasoning questions dominating the section. As per the official website there'll be multiple short paragraphs based on which questions would be asked. If you are good at critical reasoning, you'll have a great advantage.

Legal reasoning: The passages may relate to fact situations or scenarios involving legal matters, public policy questions or moral philosophical enquiries. One will benefit from a general awareness of contemporary legal and moral issues to better apply general principles or propositions to the given fact scenarios.

The best part is that the preparation for Current Affairs and Legal Reasoning go hand in hand. Read about the socio legal issues prevalent in the country. One should also expect Principle fact based questions in their CLAT 2020.

It is clearly mentioned on the official website that through the paragraph, one would have to identify and infer the rules and principles

set out in the passage and apply such rules and principles to various fact situations. So, make sure you are conceptually clear when it comes to Torts, Contract, Criminal Law or The Indian Constitution.

The ideal way to practice questions and assess your preparation is through the help of Mock Tests. Prepare for all these sections and attempt as many mocks as possible. One should analyse their mocks post their attempt.

One must identify the grey areas as soon as possible. Identify your strong and weak subjects. Don't categorise a subject as your strong or weak based on how much you enjoy studying it, but on the basis of how much you score in them. The sample size should be good to determine this and should not be based on just a mock or two.

Once identified, allocate more time to your weak areas without totally avoiding your strong sections. Just follow the above mentioned and stay positive. All the best!

The writer is National Product Head Law, Pratham Test Prep

QUOTE OF THE DAY

Our care of the child should be governed, not by the desire to make him learn things, but by the endeavor always to keep burning within him that light which is called intelligence.

— Maria Montessori

Drug discovery science

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The University of Sheffield, UK invites applications for MSc Drug Discovery Science course starting in September 2021. The course will help the students to find out how scientists discover chemical candidates for new pharmaceuticals. Students will learn how to meet the pharmaceutical industry's increasing demands for drugs that can treat illnesses safely and more effectively, overcome antibiotic resistance, and be produced at a lower financial and environmental cost.

This course covers the drug discovery and design techniques used in the pharmaceutical industry. Students will learn study topics such as pharmacology, toxicology and genomics as they learn how drug-like molecules to treat

specific diseases are identified, characterised and optimised for potential clinical trials.

Students' training will cover the fundamental chemistry and biology of protein interactions, their role in disease and how drugs affect the human body.

Duration: One year full-time

Eligibility: A 2:1 honours degree, or equivalent in chemistry, biology, pharmacy or another relevant subject. Applicants with relevant work experience and good academic potential are also encouraged to apply.

Overall IELTS score of 6.5 with a minimum of 6.0 in each component, or equivalent.

How to apply: Log on to <https://www.sheffield.ac.uk/posgraduate/taught/courses/2020/drug-discovery-science-msc>.

Free online crash course

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Edvizo, an IIT alumnus startup, has initiated a free online crash course in an attempt to serve more students amid the lockdown and ease them to deliver a final touch to their preparation for the forthcoming JEE-Advanced 2020. IIT-JEE Top rankers intend to utilize their best time by helping out the budding aspirants to crack the entrance exams for 40 days long. The last date to apply for the opportunity is August 6, 2020.

Ravi Nishant Founder Edvizo said: "The initiative will help young students who are at the crucial juncture of their lives in Class XII when regular

classes and coaching initiatives usually defer their aspirations being put off due to the lockdown. This will help mitigate the impact that institute closures may have on students & learning process. This will also ensure that students can study from the safety of their own homes, and there is a continuity in their study schedule at the last moment."

The registered students will get 125 hours of training, spanning all the four key subjects—physics, chemistry and mathematics. The classes will be held from 5 pm to 9 pm every day except Sunday. Students will be provided recordings of all classes for better revision.

A different approach to education

In these unprecedented time, technology and digitisation will play an enormous role in making learning for the differently-abled more accessible and inclusive, says PRASHANT AGARWAL

While the world has been speaking of the sudden break and the challenges that COVID-19 has put forth for various sectors, one can sense a major impact of this on the education and skilling sector which had most of its functionalities congregating with face-to-face interactions. Touching is believing, what was once a necessity has slowly shifted to strictly being driven by digitisation in the education sector.

Career choices and opportunities are now integrated through online platforms where one such example is virtual trainings and internships which are being implemented by leading companies across the globe. However, while many institutions and organisations have developed and integrated technology in their regular functionalities, what do we see as a scope for the differently abled and how do they fit the bill in these challenging times within the mainstream career opportunities.

Before COVID-19 where the focus to impart education for the differently abled was through art and therapy, a lot has changed since then. There has been a shift where the differently abled were first considered to be restricted with the jobs they were recruited in and the career opportunities were also limited. However, with technology in place and post COVID-19 nature of changes in the entire foundation



of functionality newer opportunities have been cropping up for the differently abled to explore.

Adaptive technologies that would help the differently abled in all senses have been implemented by multiple organisations such as On-screen boards, text-to-speech synthesizers, magnification applications, screen readers, electronic pointing devices, alternative keyboards, computers with visual output and voice output and many more. The Government also has laid various training and skilling programs exploring Digital Literacy for the differently abled under the PMKVY Scheme by introducing Skill Council for Persons with Disability (SCPWD). The organisation was incepted with a

National Vision of skilling Persons with Disability and offering them meaningful industry relevant skill based training.

EdTech applications: Content accessibility plays an important role in imparting knowledge and skilling the differently abled. Content that is easily accessible through applications that are developed to be user friendly have proven to be great sources of education. Institutions both in urban and rural areas can utilise the bandwidth connectivity and impart skill trainings through online platforms and content that can be easily delivered through videos, online lectures and various applications.

E-libraries: While most of the content that is available online

curriculum that is up-to-date as per industry standards is a must. E-libraries and their access with added text to speech technology can help the differently abled students to access their curriculum from anywhere.

Knowledge mobility: While many companies have been adopting ways through which they can contribute to the social cause of imparting education to the differently abled, it is suggested that they must offer affordable smartphones to students studying in rural areas. This would accelerate affordable smartphone ownership, and strengthening supply of contextualised and engaging content directly to students.

In these unprecedented times, technology and digitisation will play an enormous role in making learning for the differently abled more accessible and inclusive. However, technology can alone not achieve these aspects unless there is a positive participation and communication across all stakeholders to equally contribute for making learning more accessible through effective and efficient delivery channels. With strong emphasis on technical education, the National Education Policy also suggested that the new school curriculum should involve vocational and technical education from class VI.

The writer is President of Narayan Seva Sansthan

CHANGE IS CONSTANT

Organisations that will embrace the digital transformation quickly and more comprehensively are more likely to survive as compared to those who are resistant, says DR NARENDRA SHYAMSUKHA

The COVID-19 pandemic has turned out to be the most significant disruptive event witnessed by this generation. From mainstreaming remote working, cutting global travel to a comprehensive digital shift, the outbreak has changed the way businesses are executed. This transformation is momentary; it is significant and is here to stay.

One of the most notable elements of this transformation is the way organisations have been forced to embrace digital marketing to be able to survive the crisis. As traditional marketing strategies stand curtailed due to the pandemic, businesses have moved quickly to embrace digital marketing and transform the way they attract and engage customers and clients.

As people stay indoors, malls and roads stand deserted there has been a shift to a space where businesses and customers interact less physically and more through the online route. Digital services providers will tell you how there has been a surge in organisations seeking to create new websites or update existing ones, creating elaborate social media campaigns and launching new e-commerce channels. Truth be told, organisations that embrace this transformation quickly and more comprehensively are the ones that are more likely to survive as compared to those who are resistant to change.

Here are some more changing phases of entrepreneurship that are adjusting to the new normal:

The age of webinars: As live conferences and face to face engagement activities take a backseat, organisations are working out new ways to engage with customers. Webinars have emerged



as a very popular way of achieving digital thought leadership and getting quality leads. At the same time, customer engagement is also taking place with these digital discussions. That's why there is a sea of webinars everywhere to spread the message. Even when the crisis ebbs, people are likely to continue to conduct a part of their thought-leadership events through webinars as more and more people realise that they serve the same purpose as a fraction of the cost. Webinars that have now filled the gap of traditional conferences are likely to become a mainstream marketing strategy in the new normal.

Increased usage of data analytics: In a digital age, data analytics has always been a valuable proposition. However, as organisations increase their digital presence, the importance of creating useful databases has only increased. With more people spending longer time on social media, their chances of seeing ads on such platforms or coming in touch with content marketing blogs are greater. To create valuable databases,

analyse them and use this information intelligently to reach out to the target audience. Tracking pattern of consumer behavior, tracking online traffic patterns, analysing which content retains the customer, and getting a break up of which products are enticing what type of customers are essential elements of data analytics that organisations need to use more to boost their online sales.

Content is the king: Businesses must focus on expanding social media presence by creating intelligent and attractive content. With the shift from outbound marketing to inbound marketing, it becomes essential to engage consumers in subjects they might find interesting. However, it is important to understand that content distributed on social media should not be totally promotional in nature as it kills consumer interest. Your content must be knowledge and awareness-based. It must engage consumers emotionally rather than blatantly promoting your product.

The writer is Founder & Chairman, ICA Edu Skills

AAP all set to launch job portal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi minister Gopal Rai on Sunday said the AAP Government will launch a special programme to generate more employment opportunities in the city. A move aimed at reviving the Capital's economy, which was affected due to the lockdown.

The labour and employment minister told PTI that as part of the special programme, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal will launch a job portal in the next few days, where the companies looking to hire and job seekers can register themselves.

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)

Government will soon come out with a slew of reforms to revive the national Capital's economy, which has been adversely affected due to the Coronavirus-induced lockdown, he said, adding that many migrant workers have moved out of Delhi and several people have lost their jobs due to the shutdown.

"We have decided to aggressively run a special programme to generate more employment opportunities."

After the launch of the portal, people will not need to apply for jobs at several places. The government will ensure that maximum applicants get employment," Rai said.

Scindia School signs MoU with NYIF

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Scindia School and the New York Institute of Finance (NYIF), a global leader in professional training for financial services and related industries, have entered into an agreement.

As per the agreement NYIF will annually allocate two full scholarships of 100 per cent tuition fee waiver for their G2020 & Young Finance Scholar Programmes (one for a high school student and the other for a middle school student). NYIF will also deliver in-demand skills-based training, and organise relevant webinars for students and teachers.

Commenting on the same, Dr Madhav Deo Saraswat, Principal, Scindia School,

said: "We are delighted to be collaborating with NYIF to launch innovative and industry-relevant programmes. The NYIF program, is more future-focused with a flexible curriculum, teaching leadership skills in the latest emerging and disruptive technologies. In my view, this unique programme for school education and it offers all our students the opportunity to develop both the technological skill sets and business mind-set they will need to thrive in tomorrow's workplace."

NYIF is 100 years old international professional training company dedicated to financial and business education. They provide the highest standards of training, certificates, and cross-border learning programs to individuals and enterprise clients

worldwide.

The programme aims to train the next generation scholars and leaders globally. The G2020 and Young Finance Scholar programmes aim to nurture emerging and future change-makers globally to address, the challenges of the 21st century such as business, financial, and sustainable development challenges.

The 'G2020 Young Finance Scholar (YFS)' International Programme is a tailor-made academic enrichment and long-term leadership-training programme for talented 15-18 year olds (senior school) and YFS — middle school for talented 11-14-year-old young scholars. The fees being waived for the programme — middle school: \$1850 & senior school: \$2100.

Meritnation students shine

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

According to Class XII CBSE results, 54 per cent students secured over 95 per cent marks in Maths. 60 per cent students scored more than 95 in Physics and these numbers were 67 per cent and 66 per cent for Chemistry and Biology respectively.

While for the Class X results, 68 per cent of students have scored over 95 per cent in Mathematics and so on.

The demand for data science experts continues to grow and employers are investing time and money in them. Becoming one is worth the effort opening lucrative options, says PANKAJ MUTHE



An enormous explosion of data has been generated and retained by modern businesses across the globe. With every action that is being taken, whether data is being created, shared or discarded, a massive pile of information is getting generated and accumulated every second of the day.

More and more enterprises are tapping the benefits of big data and unlocking the potential for their business. They are eagerly building their data capabilities to capture the opportunity that looms just over the horizon.

The COVID-19 outbreak is further driving an intelligent use of data that can help businesses find better solutions across sectors be it healthcare, logistics, or banking — to fight the on-going pandemic. With this, the value of the data scientist will increase as they will be the ones turning this dormant data into meaningful insights.

SCOPE Data scientists can also be referred to as modern-day superheroes, but most are still unaware of their value in an organisation. In one of the surveys last year, it was revealed that around 97,000 data analytics job posts are unoccupied in India due to a lack of skilled professionals.

The use of data analytics in almost every industry has con-

BE ANALYTICAL

tributed to a sharp increase of 45 per cent in the total jobs related to data science. Selecting data science as a career option has a lot of scope and will remain so in the near future. Besides retail, data science has made extensive impacts on other fields like healthcare as well. Take the case where new drugs are discovered constantly and there is an opportunity to ensure better care for patients too. All these are made possible by churning out huge volumes of data through electronic medical records, billing, clinical systems, data from wearables and drawing actionable insights from aggregated patients' data.

Another field that can truly benefit from data science is education. With technology like smartphones and laptops becoming an integral part of the education system, data science can help create better opportunities to help students learn and enhance their knowledge in a constructive manner.

Banking and finance is another sector that needs data science to improve their financial products and make themselves relevant to more customers. The industry leverages data science applications

With technology becoming an integral part of the education system, data science can help create better opportunities to help students learn and enhance their knowledge in a constructive manner

to generate information about risk modeling, fraud detection, customer life-time value, customer segmentation and real-time predictive analysis, among other things.

Since data science is helping meet the trials and tribulations of the increasing demand and sustainable future, the opportunities for data scientists to come up with a wide range of solutions for meeting the challenges across multiple sectors.

SKILLS & ROLE

There are different roles for a Data Scientist this includes Data Researcher, Data Developers, Business Analyst, BI Analyst, System Administrator, Data Modeler and Data Architect. To qualify for these roles, the skills and education required are largely universal.

A master's degree in computer studies, economics, finance, business studies, statistics, and mathematics is certainly an advantage. However, new-age employers are eager to integrate such requirements with relevant skills and real-world experience.

So, those who are considering

a career as data science must be proficient in excel and have a good practical knowledge of statistics, mathematics, data mining, correlation and predictive analysis. They should also have basic knowledge of scripting languages like SQL, Python, Java, R and the confidence of working with BI tools. However, if a data scientist is familiar with other the database systems like MySQL and Hive, it can be an additional advantage.

REMUNERATION

A data scientist role is definitely lucrative in India. Glassdoor had listed the average data scientist salary between ₹10 lakh to ₹20 lakh annually.

In India, since the demand for data science expertise continues to grow and employers are investing significant time and money in data scientists, becoming one is worth every effort one makes. That said, the most important thing will be to start focusing on acquiring the right skillsets and taking into consideration the specifics of the data science landscape in India.

The writer is APAC Academic Program Manager, Qlik

'Innovations can help businesses'

Technology is a vast area and if used efficiently it can be lucrative and help in achieving the set business goals, says SANJEEV JAIN

In today's time, technology is an essential life hack for every business, big or small. Technology has become an integral part of every business and the evolution of technology significantly impacts every sector. It makes life easier and faster; the daily tasks can be accomplished in a lesser time. One of the greatest opportunities for all entrepreneurs, innovators, start-up owners, IT sectors professionals, is digital transformation. It helps in using technology to transform every aspect of your business, and this further helps in the growth of the business. Technology is a vast area and if used efficiently, it can be lucrative and help in achieving the set business goals. Here is a compilation of various aspects of a business where technology plays a vital role.



Sanjeev Jain
Founder-MD, Technology Never Sleeps
Networking Solutions Pvt Ltd

Moderates Time: One of the most important benefits of using technology is that it can reduce the time consumption for a specific task. When used efficiently, technology can simplify the most complicated, abundant, and difficult work and organise the outcome effectively. In order to run smooth business operations technology plays a vital role, it can reduce the burden of an employee by contributing to petty things like setting reminders or calculations etc. This not only saves time but frees people to spend time on more creative aspects of business like strategy, product development, collaboration, marketing and sales.

Income and turnover: Technology has the ability to build and sustain engagement for any brand which can help in business growth by attracting the right customer base. It helps in reaching millions of people within a few seconds something that was never possible before. Technology can assist in multiplying the growth and turnover of the business by creating a platform through which businesses can help customers with their problems. It helps in creating new opportunities by allowing businesses to use unique ideas to add value and set a benchmark in the competitive market.

Output: With the help of technology, productivity surges and helps in getting good outcomes for business. Technology increases the productivity of a business, no matter the size. Technology helps in getting more work done without increasing manpower providing scalability. Also, technology is helpful in generating more queries for any business and thereby helping business generate more revenue.

Efficiency: Technology can be relied upon to complete the work which otherwise requires accuracy. It eases various tasks like manufacturing, marketing and finance and helps in preventing errors. Important data/information can be stored and be password protected, this information can have ease of remote access.

Insights: Technology helps in creating precise and significant insights for business. It helps in storing and calculating large amounts of data which collates all the information in one place. Technology also helps people to upgrade their skills and knowledge which can be used to enhance their performance at work. It helps in gathering important insights which add value to the business.

Today's age is one of cut-throat competition and challenges lurking around every corner. In such a demanding environment, the old-school model of rote-learning that results in negligible ability to implement knowledge is widely becoming inadequate to prepare students for a 21st-century world of complex enigmas.

When it comes to creating a generation that is adaptive, innovative and future-ready, education is the primary driver. Technology is disrupting and transforming both professional and personal landscape at an unprecedented pace. Herein, the responsibility of equipping students with the tools to deal with these developments lands on the shoulders of instructors across the

educational paradigm.

Contrary to the conventional methods of teaching, project-based learning (PBL) is a collaborative and application-driven approach. It uses real-world situations as vehicles to facilitate enhanced learning and a spirit of inquiry, while also integrating academic subjects across the curriculum.

These projects are different from the regular, short-term projects that are undertaken after a course ends, for instance, as a tool to revise the course components. On the contrary, these projects drive the primary framework of curriculum and course instruction.

Within PBL, as this approach is often referred to, students can further use any medium viable for their research - field trips,

MIND IT

presentations, exploring various materials, creating 3D models, experiments, and many more.

Students engage in such a project for an extended period, depending on their coursework - ranging up to an entire semester - working on finding innovative solutions to a complex question around a real-world problem. Ultimately, they demonstrate the skill learning through a report, a presentation or an actual product at the end of the project cycle.

Not only does this model inculcate deep knowledge about the subject in the students,

but it also unleashes a hoard of soft skills like communication, team-building, collaboration and creativity in them.

There have been numerous researches over the years on the impact of project-based learning approach on the learning outcomes, students' and teachers' motivation, skill-building and general attitude towards learning (Strobel & van Barnevel, 2009).

The PBL encourages students to become independent workers, critical thinkers and problem-solvers. It urges students to form questions of their own, developing a sense of ownership of their learning process and

outcome. Teachers, in this ecosystem, function as facilitators rather than instructors, moving away from the overworked chalk and talk pedagogy.

Connecting real-world situations to academics is perhaps one of the biggest benefits of project-based learning, pushing students to learn from trial and error and succeed based on their interpretations and logical decisions. This helps them form the professional world since these techniques are what will eventually be used by them at their workplaces.

Also, since such projects are often large and complex, students are forced to work in groups, encouraging even the most silent of the lot to speak up collectively with conflicting personalities to find mutual

accord, learning how to defuse tensions in a diverse team. This not only has a high impact on their interpersonal skills, but it also introduces them to specialisation, optimal allocation of resources and delegation, concepts prominent in the material world.

The market need for skilled workers necessitated the shift from classical models of blackboard teaching, and project-based learning does just that - simulating real-world problems to prepare students for progress by developing a balanced and diverse approach, as an individual as well as a team member. Project-based learning effectively bridges the gap between theoretical and practical education.

The writer is Dr Jitin Chandra, Director of Indian Institute of Art and Design



The new University of Adelaide Higher Education International is now available on offer and provides a reduction of 25 per cent of the tuition fee. The studentships are open to citizens of any country (except Australia and New Zealand).

Eligibility: Must: Either be an alumni (graduate) of an AQF-recognised Australian Higher Education institution or (b) have recently successfully completed an AQF-recognised Higher Education institution prior to commencing your degree at the University of Adelaide; Have a University of Adelaide offer of admission (full offer or conditional offer) as a full-fee-paying, international student; Complete the acceptance process as outlined in your offer of admission.

The university's preferred accredited English language tests are: IELTS, TOEFL, Pearson Test of English. Students without the required level of English will need to satisfactorily complete an intensive programme of English language before being admitted. The university can arrange an appropriate English language programme, Academic English (PEP) pathway.

How to apply: Those meeting the criteria will auto-

matically be considered. **Application deadline:** The studentships are open throughout the year.

Application for an International award for an MBA degree programme at the University of Essex in the UK. The educational award is available for students from all around the globe.

Eligibility: Students who are applying to the full-time MBA programme. It is not available to students applying to part-time or degree apprenticeship programmes. This scholarship can be held in conjunction with an Essex MBA Deans Award offered at less than 50% of the course fee-only, it cannot be held in conjunction with an Essex MBA Deans Award valued at 50% of the course fee or more. It cannot be held in conjunction with other University of Essex scholarships including the Alumni Loyalty Discount. Must accept their offer of an Award within two weeks of an offer being made.

Language Requirement: If English is not your first language, you should provide evidence of English language ability: IELTS, TOEFL, or other acceptable proof.

How to apply: Applicants taking admission in the Master degree programme at the university will be automatically considered.

Application deadline: It is October 31, 2020.

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING AT LOTSA BUSINESS SOLUTION

Location: Lucknow
Stipend: ₹8,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/4685793
Application deadline: August 10, 2020

WEB DEVELOPMENT AT JERONONE TECHNOLOGIES

Location: Chandigarh, Mohali
Stipend: ₹20,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/4685794
Application deadline: August 10, 2020

TEACHING (ROBOTICS) AT KIDI ROBOTICS

Location: Ranchi, Dhanbad, Kolkata
Stipend: ₹8,000-₹15,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/4685795
Application deadline: August 15, 2020

AUTOCAD DESIGNING AT INVENT GRID INDIA

Location: Bhubaneswar
Stipend: ₹5,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/4685796
Application deadline: August 9, 2020

TECHNICAL SUPPORT AT RESTOLABS

Location: Work From Home
Stipend: ₹8,000-₹12,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/4685782
Deadline: August 12, 2020

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT (SALES) AT JINACTUS CONSULTING

Location: Work From Home
Stipend: ₹8,000-₹13,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/4685784
Deadline: August 12, 2020

IOS APP DEVELOPMENT AT VAWSUM

Location: Work From Home
Stipend: ₹7,000-₹14,000 per month
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Deadline: August 12, 2020

STUDY ABROAD

'Commitment to a holistic learning approach'

Studying in France offers a good return on investment for higher education making it the best destination, says ASHLEY FERNANDES

France plays an important and pivotal role in the European construct. Brexit has not

impacted France, in fact in many ways it has helped France emerge as a coveted destination.

Education is no exception. The return on investment on French higher education is one of the best in the world. As for COVID-19, although the full impact is yet to be assessed, it seems it has helped higher education transition to a more digitised proposition.

From this perspective, emlyon business school has been pioneering globalisation, digitalisation and hybrid education. COVID-19 is a black swan disruptive type of event that can crystallise innovation and help in the emergence of a new value model for the benefit of students. If you add to this, the incredible French cultural scene and art de vivre, you have the *je ne sais quoi* that makes France in general and Lyon in

particular one of the best destinations to consider today.

At emlyon business school, we were extremely swift in our response to the coronavirus pandemic, and quickly set up a crisis centre to help students, teachers, staff and other stakeholders. In the midst of the crisis, we went beyond the usual scope and released an emergency fund of 200,000 Euro (the biggest emergency fund released by a French B-School) in support of our students. We also increased the response of the wellness centre we had launched years back as part of our commitment to a holistic approach (financial, emotional, intellectual, social) and well-being of our community.

The French Ambassador has also recently emphasised the overall strong Indo-French bilateral cooperation and the French attractiveness in the fields of research and higher education. A significant testimony to this strengthening relationship is the 50 per cent increase in scholarships for the academic year which translates to ₹10 crore (₹1.3 million).

The writer is country head, India, emlyon business school, France

IN BRIEF

PARENTS INVOLVEMENT IN ACADEMICS HELPFUL

Indian parents and students are mutually helping each other with daily chores and academics during the lockdown, as revealed by the latest Brainly survey. And, the students over Brainly seem to be loving it! The responses received from 2,138 participants show exciting trends.

To begin with, a whopping 87.5% of Brainly users say they help their parents in daily chores during the lockdown. Besides, 85.1% of students have learned new skills from their parents while at home. Not having to commute to school for education is definitely giving ample time to students to partake in other

activities. It is helping them learn new skills as well. The contribution of online learning platforms in enabling learning from home cannot be ignored in achieving this. The other aspect to it is that with additional time in hand, now almost 82.3% of students spend extra time with their parents.

Indian parents are increasingly getting involved in the academics of their children. 85.2% of Brainly users find their parent's involvement in their learning as helpful. Approximately three-fourth of Brainly users at 74.1% admitted enjoying learning from home with the help of their parents.

ONLINE LEARNING MODULES FOR LITTLE LEARNERS

The KinderPass is a launching multiple online learning modules for kids aged between three-six years and above. With an objective to make the parents understand how early stage learning lays the foundation for later learning, it has come up with its first online learning programme — KinderRead —

carefully arranged programme in five levels, it is a methodology for teaching young children to read and spell words and develop the preschoolers into confident readers using a play-based synthetic phonics approach.

Sumedha Khooche, co-founder, KinderPass said: "The recently launched

National Education Policy 2020 regarding early child care and education reinforces that young brains learn best through play and activity. Taking cue from these recommendations, the online learning modules launched at KinderPass are flexible, multi-faceted, multi-level, play-based and activity-based."

SMART INDIA HACKATHON 2020

The Smart India Hackathon (SIH) is an initiative that provides students a platform to solve some of the pressing problems we face in our daily lives. It is conducted every year since 2017 in two formats — SIH Software and SIH Hardware Editions.

This year, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the SIH software edition is being conducted online. For this purpose, SP Mandali's principal LN Welingkar Institute of Management Development and Research (WeSchool) has been selected as one of the nodal centres. Total 35 teams having 210 participants will compete

against seven problem statements from three organisations — CDK Global, MathWorks and MXORG. Each problem statement has a winning amount of ₹1 lakh. WeSchool will present We-Inspiration awards each of prize money ₹25,000 to two teams.

PAK SET FOR ENGLISH TEST

We're very well prepared: Azhar

IAN S ■ MANCHESTER

England will be wary of the unpredictable Pakistan side when the two teams clash in the first Test of the three-match series at the Old Trafford beginning Wednesday.

This will be the visitors' first appearance in an international match since coronavirus stoppage while for the hosts, they will look to bring their form and confidence over from the recently-concluded three-Test series against West Indies.

In the World Test Championship (WTC) points table, England moved up to third position following a 2-1 series win over Jason Holder's troops. The hosts have a chance to leapfrog Australia to second place, while Pakistan can overtake New Zealand to fourth position.

For this series, England have named the same squad that clinched them the Wisden Trophy and it will once be interesting to see what will be their bowling combination for the first Test.

A lot has been said about veteran fast-bowlers Stuart Broad and James Anderson playing together. They started just one of three matches in the last series together and showed in the final Test why they remain England's best bet in home conditions.

"Jimmy and Broady go together like Monty and John, or Bonnie and Clyde," former England spinner Graeme Swann was quoted as saying by mirror.co.uk.

"They have formed one of the most successful bowling duos of Test cricket has known. Why



PAKISTAN-ENGLAND IN TESTS				
Venue	Tests	Eng won	Pak won	Drawn
In Eng	53	23	12	18
In Pak	24	2	4	18
In UAE	6	-	5	1
Total	83	25	21	37

HIGHEST INNINGS TOTALS	
England in England: 589-8 dec in 152.2 overs at Manchester 2016	
England in Pakistan: 546-8 dec in 189. overs at Faisalabad 1983-84	
Pakistan in England: 708 in 220.3 overs at The Oval 1987	
Pakistan in Pakistan: 636-8 dec in 156.2 overs at Lahore 2005-06	

LOWEST INNINGS TOTALS:	
England in England: 130 in 59.3 overs at The Oval 1954	
England in Pakistan: 130 in 79.2 overs at Lahore 1987-88	
Pakistan in England: 72 in 39.3 overs at Birmingham 2010	
Pakistan in Pakistan: 158 in 70 overs at Karachi 2000-01	
England's lowest total against Pakistan is 72 in 36.1 overs at Abu Dhabi in 2012	

would you want to chuck it out before its sell-by date?" can understand the attraction of 90mph pace, and both Jofra and Woody are huge assets. But I'm sorry, you don't discard bales with 500 Test wickets lightly," he added.

Not to forget talismanic all-rounder Ben Stokes, who recently displaced West Indies captain Jason Holder from the top of the ICC all-rounders' list. He will once again

have a huge say in the outcome of the series.

As for the visitors, they lack proper match practice going into the first Test but head coach Misbah-ul-Haq has stated players have done well to acclimatise themselves with the tough English conditions.

"When you play after a long gap there is bound to be some sort of nervousness but that is natural. As soon as the players step on the field, it will go away," Misbah said. "The players are fresh and anxiously waiting for the series to begin."

Pakistan will also be pinning their hopes on young fast-bowling duo Shaheen Afridi and Naseem Shah to shine in the bowler-friend-

ly conditions of England. Not to forget they could also unleash spinners at the Old Trafford.

"We will keep an eye on the pitch and the weather conditions, today and tomorrow, before taking a decision on whether to play two spinners or not," Misbah said. "It is a possibility and an encouraging sign for us."

"The pitch and weather conditions might be favouring us at the moment but you still have to execute your plans properly to win," he added.

Pakistan will also take confidence from the fact that they have done well in the last two Test series in the England. The 2018 series ended in a 1-1 draw while the 2016 series also ended with both teams sharing spoils after the conclusion of four-Test series (2-2).

SQUADS:
England: Joe Root (C), James Anderson, Jofra Archer, Dominic Bess, Stuart Broad, Rory Burns, Jos Buttler, Zak Crawley, Sam Curran, Ollie Pope, Dom Sibley, Ben Stokes, Chris Woakes, Mark Wood, James Bracey, Ben Foakes, Jack Leach, Dan Lawrence

Pakistan: Azhar Ali (C), Babar Ali, Asad Shafiq, Faheem Ashraf, Fawad Alam, Imam ul haq, Imran Khan, Kashif Bhatti, Mohammad Abbas, Mohammad Rizwan, Naseem Shah, Sarfaraz Ahmed, Shadab Khan, Shaheen Shah Afridi, Shan Masood, Sohail Khan, Usman Shinwari, Wahab Riaz, Yasir Shah.

IAN S ■ LONDON

Pakistan Test captain Azhar Ali said that the players are raring to go after their long break enforced by the coronavirus pandemic. Pakistan take on England in a three-match Test series starting on Wednesday. This will be followed by a three-match T20I series and the team has been in the country since late June.

"All players are excited to play the series. COVID-19 is there and for the moment we have to carry on with it," Azhar told reporters on the eve of the first Test which will be played at Old Trafford.

"We are lucky that we will be playing cricket which is what we love most. A lot of talk is going on about cricket happening in these tough times but I feel that the best thing is that we wanted to play and we are now getting to that. Credit to ECB (England) and Wales Cricket Board) and PCB (Pakistan Cricket Board) for arranging this series."

"We have prepared very well with whatever facilities we had with us. I have ensured that no player gets left behind and gets frustrated. We enjoyed the camp a lot."

Azhar said the team is motivated by the Test performances in recent years in England. Pakistan have not lost a Test series in England since 2010.

"Challenges is something you have to take as a cricketer and England tours are always difficult with or without Covid. But we have performed well in our last few series here and that is a big source of motivation. We will be looking to repeat and upstage that," he said.

The 35-year-old admitted that the visitors' "new battery" of inexperienced but is confident of them performing well considering the talent that they have.

"Our fast bowling attack is inexperienced but you have seen their talent and how they have bowled in the last few series. I think of myself as very lucky as a captain that we got bowlers like these who can threaten any team in Test cricket. You can't buy experience, that comes with playing. In the last few series, there is a lot of capability there."

"Our batting experience is better. There is Shan Masood, Asad Shafiq and I have all played a lot. Babar Azam has gained a lot of experience now. As a team our combination is pretty good."



Dhoni is one of a kind: Rohit

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's prolific opener Rohit Sharma feels Mahendra Singh Dhoni is "one of a kind," playing down recent comparisons of his leadership style and composure with the two-time World Cup-winning former captain.

In a Super Over podcast, out-of-favour India batsman Suresh Raina called Rohit the "next MS Dhoni for the Indian cricket team".

Rohit, who is the vice-captain of India's limited overs teams and also leads Mumbai Indians in the IPL, reacted to his leadership style being likened to Dhoni.

"Yes, I heard about that comment from Suresh Raina," Rohit said in a twitter video he posted in reply to a fan question. "MS Dhoni is one of a kind and nobody can be like him and I believe comparisons should not be made like that, every individual is different and has his strengths and weaknesses."

Raina is impressed with Rohit's record of leading Mumbai Indians to a record four IPL title triumphs, one more than Dhoni at Chennai Super Kings.

Rohit has also led India to title wins at the Nidahas Trophy (T20I format) in Sri Lanka and the



Asia Cup (50 overs) in 2018 while standing in for Virat Kohli.

Overall, he has led India in 10 ODIs and 19 T20Is, winning eight and 15 of them respectively.

"I have seen him, he is calm, he likes to listen...I have played under him when we won the Asia Cup in Bangladesh," Raina had said.

"MS Dhoni was brilliant. He (Rohit) has won more (IPL) trophies than MS, but they both are very similar. Both to them, as captains, like to listen."

When you captain is listening, you can solve a lot of problems, you can solve the mental aspects of the players. So in my book, they both are wonderful,"

Agarwal must have learnt a lot from NZ tour'

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

Former Indian pacer Fashish Nehra feels opening batsman Mayank Agarwal has shown a lot of promise in the initial days of his international career and will only get better and score a lot of runs in the days to come.

Agarwal has so far played 11 Tests for India in which he has scored 974 runs, including three hundreds and four half-centuries.

"He (Agarwal) has done really well in domestic games and India-A and that's how he got his chance. He is not somebody who has been playing domestic cricket for one or two years and suddenly he comes to the scene. He has scored a lot of runs and I am sure with time he will get better and better," Nehra said while speaking on Star Sports' Cricket Connected show.

The 29-year-old however wasn't able to perform to his potential on the New Zealand tour. In the two-Test series which India lost 0-2, he could manage scores of 34, 58, 7 and 3.

However, Nehra said New Zealand is the "most difficult" place to bat in the world and that's why after playing there, Agarwal would have gathered a lot of experience.

"It takes time and New Zealand is not an easy place. With my experience, for batters, the most difficult place on this planet when it comes to cricket-playing nations is New Zealand. New Zealand has always been tough, so Mayank Agarwal, I am sure has learnt a lot from the New Zealand tour," said the former left-arm pacer.



Starc does not regret missing IPL

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Left-arm Australian pacer Mitchell Starc doesn't regret giving the IPL a miss this year, saying he is comfortable training for the upcoming summer season.

Sarc had pulled out of the lucrative T20 event to focus on the T20 World Cup in Australia which was postponed last month due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

"I know hindsight is a wonderful thing and now the IPL is on at a different time but no, I wouldn't change it," the 30-year-old, who played for Royal Challengers Bangalore for two years, was quoted as saying by Cricket.Com.Au.



"I'm happy to spend that time when the blokes are at the IPL in September I'll be getting ready for a summer."

"The IPL will be around next year and if I feel the urge or people want me around I'll definitely consider it, but as of this year, I'm very comfortable with the decisions I've made."

Sarc was bought by Kolkata Knight Riders in the 2018 IPL auction but was ruled out of the season due to an injury and was eventually released in November.

The lanky pacer is currently training with his NSW state teammates and waiting for a confirmation for Australia's white-ball tour of the UK.

"It's still very much up in the air which is the way of the world at the moment. It's changing day by day. We're having weekly meetings about the challenges of the tour and where this all sits. We've got another one on Thursday to see if there's any progression on that."

All the players are preparing to play and planning to go. It's now up to Cricket Australia and the government on both sides as to whether we jump on that plane. In terms of the cricket, we'll just get ready for the series."

Australia's tour of England comprising three T20s and as many ODIs is scheduled to begin on September 4, pending clearance.

Aus-WI postpone T20 series

PTI ■ MELBOURNE

Cricket Australia on Tuesday said it has put on hold a three-game T20I series against the West Indies which was scheduled to be held in October.

Matches of the T20I series were slated to be held in Townsville, Cairns and the Gold Coast on October 4, 6 and 9 respectively.

It was supposed to be a warm-up series ahead of the T20 World Cup but with the show-piece event being postponed last month due to the global health crisis, the two T20I boards decided to postpone it.

Together with @windiescricket, we have agreed to postpone the Twenty20 series originally scheduled for Queensland in October from September 19 to November 10.

"Serving as warm-ups for the ICC T20 World Cup, the series will now coincide with the scheduled T20 World Cup in Australia in either 2021 or 2022."

Top players from both the countries will now take part in the rescheduled 13th IPL, which will be held in the UAE from September 19 to November 10.

Australia's ODI series against Zimbabwe, which was scheduled to begin on Sunday, has already been postponed.

Australia's next assignment is a limited-overs tour of England in early September but it remains to be seen if it actually goes ahead.

Africa indefinitely postponed their tour of West Indies in September as their players will be busy with the IPL.

West Indies were hoping to host South Africa for either two Tests or 5 T20Is in September.

Tennis resumes with no handshakes

AP ■ PALERMO

Tour-level tennis resumed after a five-month enforced break on Monday, and players at the Palermo Ladies Open had to handle their own towels and not shake hands of opponents.

The strict rules because of the coronavirus included no showers on site, no autographs or photos with fans. Players in the singles main draw came from 16 European countries and Argentina.

A limited number of fans were allowed into the 1,500-seat stadium court and had to follow social distancing measures. They watched sixth-seeded Donna Vekic of Croatia beat Arantxa Rus of the Netherlands 6-1, 6-2 in windy conditions in the first official match for men or women - since early March.

"I'm definitely happy I didn't forget how to play tennis, how to play matches, how to win," Vekic said in a video conference.

"It's a huge relief so I'm really happy right now. It was definitely a bit

strange. I was really nervous yesterday, even more today, but after the first few games I just kind of relaxed and I was focused."

Vekic sealed a place in the second round on her second match point, breaking for the sixth time in the match when Rus hit a forehand winner.

Vekic will next face Italian teenager Elisabetta Cocciaretto, who beat Polona Herczeg of Slovenia 7-6 (1), 6-3 for her first victory over a player ranked in the top 50.

Beyond this week Vekic has little idea if her break could change as the pandemic continues to affect events worldwide. Vekic is hoping to compete in the U.S. Open, where she reached the quarterfinals last year, and the French Open as well as Rome.

"Things are changing every week so I think we just have to take it week by week and try to adapt as best as we can, and hope to play as much as we can," Vekic said.

"The uncertainty gives everyone a lot of anxiety." The U.S. Open is

scheduled to begin Aug. 31, and the French Open from Sept. 27.

Laura Siegemund of Germany also eased through in straight sets, beating Irina-Camelia Begu of Romania 6-3, 6-4.

Siegemund next faces either fourth-seeded Anett Kontaveit or Patricia Maria Tig.

It was harder for Sara Errani, the only previous champion in the draw. The 2012 winner took nearly three hours to secure a 7-5, 1-6, 6-4 success over Sorana Cirstea of Romania.

The Italian next faces Kristyna Pliskova or third-seeded Maria Sakkari.

A third Italian is also through to the second round after Jasmine Paolini rallied from a set and a break down to beat Daria Kasatkina of Russia 5-7, 6-4, 6-4.

Casillas ends his playing days



AP ■ MADRID

Former Spain and Real Madrid goalkeeper Iker Casillas officially announced the end of his playing days on Tuesday, more than a year after his last match.

The 39-year-old Casillas was with Portuguese club Porto but hadn't played competitively since a heart attack in May last year. "What is important is the path you travel and the people who accompany you, not the destination to which it takes you," Casillas said on Twitter.

"With hard work, you will always arrive where you want. I

can say, without a doubt, that it has been the path and the destination that I've always dreamed about." Casillas said announcing his retirement was one of the "hardest" and "most difficult" days of his career.

His contract with Porto ended after the team defeated Benfica last weekend to win the Portuguese Cup. He didn't play but celebrated with his teammates and lifted the trophy.

Casillas joined Porto in 2015 after helping Real Madrid win five Spanish league titles and three Champions League trophies. He also helped Spain win one World Cup and two European Championships.

Real Madrid called Casillas "one of the biggest legends of our club and of world football" and "the best goalkeeper in the history of Real Madrid and Spanish football."

"Today one of the most important footballers in our 118 years of history calls it a day as a professional player, a player we love and admire, a goalkeeper who has made the Real Madrid legacy bigger with his work and exemplary behavior both on and off the pitch," Real Madrid said in a statement.

"He was formed here and defended our shirt for 25 years, becoming one of our most emblematic captains of all time."

DC welcome decision to conduct IPL in UAE

Captain Shreyas Iyer and Co-Owner Parth Jindal believe the team will miss its fans, but can make it a season to remember

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Looking forward to the new season of the Indian Premier League with excitement, JSW and GMR co-owned franchise Delhi Capitals on Monday welcomed the IPL Governing Council's decision to organize the 13th edition of the IPL in the United Arab Emirates, owing to the COVID-19 situation in India. The tournament will be held between September 19 and November 10, and across 3 venues in the UAE - Dubai, Sharjah and Abu Dhabi.

Speaking on the commencement of the new season, team co-owner and Chairman Mr. Parth Jindal said, "There is no doubt that the news of the IPL taking place has come as a breath of fresh air for all of us. The fact that the IPL is going to be conducted amidst such challenging times is another testament to the BCCI and to IPL's global standing as one of the top leagues amongst all sports in the world."

The number of people who have expressed delight in bringing the best out of our fans is looking forward to giving it our all for our fans to bring the trophy to Delhi this season. IPL truly has the power



to lift the morale of our country as we fight the COVID pandemic and I for one am delighted that IPL 2020 is being conducted."

In our Delhi Capitals fans, I would like to stress on the important your support is going to be for our team, even though you will not be able to make it to the stadiums this year it will be our endeavor to keep you engaged remotely throughout the tournament in the best and most innovative way possible. Do keep the love and support coming in from the safety of your homes, I can assure you it's going to go a long way in bringing the best out of our players."

Dhiraj Malhotra, CEO, Delhi Capitals, said he believes the upcoming edition will be

a significant one. "It's never an easy decision to have to host an Indian Premier League outside India. However, given the current circumstances, I believe this is going to be a very significant edition of the tournament, not just for the league, but the sport of cricket itself."

The UAE has played host to some IPL matches earlier, and I'm sure that experience will come in handy, even though the challenges will be very different this time around. I'm confident all measures will be taken for 100% safe conduct of the tournament," he said.

Shreyas Iyer, who captained the side to a creditable third place in the league in a memorable 2019 said, "In the challenging times that our world is going through, there's no doubt that the news of the IPL happening is one of the best things we've all heard in a long time."

We're definitely going to miss our Delhi fans in the stadium, they were a crucial part of our success last year. I can't wait to assemble with my teammates soon, especially those who are new to the Delhi Capitals side, and give our very best in making the upcoming season a truly memorable one."