



the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com

*LATE CITY VOL. 2 ISSUE 296
*Air Surcharge Extra if Applicable

AYODHYA CEREMONY TODAY

ANOTHER CORE BJP PROMISE FULFILLED UNDER MODI

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

For the BJP which was once forced to keep the "contentious" Ram temple issue aside to woo allies, the beginning of construction of a grand temple in Ayodhya is an ideological victory over its rivals with even many opposition leaders welcoming the development.

Incidentally, the ground-breaking ceremony by Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the temple's construction, in the presence of leading lights of Hindutva movement including RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat, will be conducted on Wednesday which coincides with the first anniversary of the annulment of Article 370, another key ideological plank for the saffron party.

It is only fitting, political watchers say, that Prime Minister Modi and Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath will be the main political presence at the ground-breaking event, as both are known for their uncompromising commitment to the



Hindutva cause.

Notably, Modi as a national office-bearer in the BJP played an important role in L K Advani's 'Ram Rath Yatra' in

1990 while Adityanath's late guru Mahant Avaidyanath headed the group of sadhus and Hindu organisations that was formed in 1984 to spear-

head the temple movement.

If the Supreme Court's verdict in November, 2019 in favour of building the temple at the site, where believers hold

'Temple symbol of struggle between genuine and pseudo secularism'

Former deputy prime minister, BJP patriarch and, above all, a key architect of the Ram temple whose rath yatra gave fillip and form to the Ram Janmabhoomi movement, L K Advani won't keep his date with history on Wednesday. The 95-year-old, who in 1990 charioted the Ram rath that made him the face of Hindutva politics and was instrumental in consolidating support for the BJP, said in his autobiography that the temple is a symbol of the 'struggle between genuine secularism and pseudo secularism'.



Full Story in page 4

that Lord Ram was born, put a legal closure to the historical dispute between Hindu and Muslim groups, the beginning of its construction is likely to further consolidate Hindutva sentiments.

"For us, the Ayodhya issue had ceased to be a political issue long back. It was always a matter of faith for us, and our manifestoes in all general elections underlined our commitment to build the temple and also scrap Article 370. But, of course, now that both promises have been fulfilled, we will talk

about them," a BJP leader said.

Though it was Vishwa Hindu Parishad under late Ashok Singhal which conceptualised the Ram Janmabhoomi movement in 1984 and began mobilising sadhus and Hindu groups nationwide, the issue gained political currency like never before after the then BJP president L K Advani started his 'Ram Rath Yatra' in 1990.



32 from Telugu States crack UPSC civils

NAMRATA SRIVASTAVA
■ HYDERABAD

A total of 829 candidates, including 32 from Telugu States, have cleared the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) Examination this year, paving the way for them to be selected for various posts of IAS, IPS, IRS, IFS etc.

The results of the Civil Service Examination, among the toughest in the country, were announced on Tuesday.

Over three lakh aspirants across the country had appeared for the preliminary Civil Services Examination held in June 2019. Based on the results of the written part in September and the interviews for personality tests



held during February-August, a total of 829 candidates qualified in the examinations.

For the first time, 78 candidates cleared UPSC under the newly introduced Economic Weaker Sections quota. In all, 11,845 candidates had qualified for the Mains held in various state capitals from

September 20 to 29, 2019. Pedditi Dhatri Reddy, with an all India rank of 46, topped from Telangana, followed by Katta Ravi Teja (77) and Manda Makarandu (110).

MEET THE TOPPERS

Pedditi Dhatri Reddy - rank 46

A graduate from IIT

Kharagpur (2015), Black Belt in Karate and a district level Bronze medalist, Dhatri always aspired to be a part of the Civil Service. "I always wanted to be a part of the Indian Police Service or Indian Administrative Service. In 2018, my first attempt at the UPSC exam, my ranking was 233.

Blow to Indian techies, Trump signs order on H-1B Visa

PNS ■ WASHINGTON

In a huge blow to Indian IT professionals eyeing the US job market, President Donald Trump on Monday signed an executive order preventing federal agencies from contracting or subcontracting foreign workers -- mainly those on H-1B visa -- from hiring.



India's testing rate is lower than others : WHO Chief Scientist

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Noting that lockdown was a temporary measure to contain the spread of coronavirus, a senior official of the World Health Organisation on Tuesday said India has a low testing rate when compared to some of the countries that are successfully trying to curb it.

The Chief Scientist of WHO, Soumya Swaminathan, in an interactive session through video conference said, as of now about 28 vaccine candidates for COVID-19 are under clinical trial, of which five are entering Phase-II and over 150 candidates are in pre-clinical trials across the globe.

"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.



Hyd central to global vaccine landscape: KTR

HYDERABAD: IT and Industries Minister KT Rama Rao on Tuesday visited the Genome Valley on the outskirts to gauge the stages of vaccines against Covid-19 being developed in the city. He met the leadership team of Bharat Biotech and Biological E Ltd to examine the status of their Covid-19 vaccine candidates and assured the state government's full support to the companies' ongoing efforts to develop a vaccine.

More pvt hospitals to lose licence to treat Covid patients

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The axe that has fallen on Deccan Hospital and Virinchi Hospital will not spare other private hospitals that are similarly fleeing Covid-19 patients in brazen disregard of the cap on treatment charges set by the state government. These hospitals will lose their licence to treat Covid-19 patients, once the committee comprising senior health officials gives its recommendations in the coming days.

GOVT ACTS ON VIRINCHI HOSPITAL

HYDERABAD: Close on the heels of cancelling the licence of Deccan Hospital to treat Covid-19 patients, the state government on Tuesday issued orders revoking the permission given to Virinchi Hospital, Banjara Hills for treating the virus. The order issued by the Director of Public Health and Family Welfare, Dr G Srinivas Rao, stated that Virinchi Hospital



will no longer be allowed to treat patients affected by coronavirus.



July exports reach almost last year's level: Goyal

8



BJP's two-pronged strategy for Telugu States

2

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:

Shravana & Shukla Paksha
Panchangam

Tithi: Dwitiya: 10:49 pm

Nakshatram: Dhanishtha: 09:30 am

Time to Avoid: (Bad time to start any important work)

Rahukalam: 12:21 pm - 01:57 pm

Yamagandam: 07:35 am - 09:11 am

Varjyam: 05:14 pm - 06:58 pm

Gulika: 10:46 am - 12:21 pm

Good Time: (to start any important work)

Amritakalam: 03:34 am - 05:17 am

Ahijit Muhurtham: NIL

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Cloudy

Temp: 28/22

Humidity: 82%

Sunrise: 05:56 am

Sunset: 06:47 pm

Current Weather Conditions

Updated august 4, 2020 5:00 PM

Centre to replicate TS-iPASS

L VENKAT RAM REDDY
■ HYDERABAD

After modelling two of its schemes after Rythu Bandhu and Mission Bhagiratha, the Centre is all set to replicate yet another initiative of the Telangana state government.

The Centre has decided to launch a fully-digital single-window approval system soon for setting up industries along the lines of the TS governments "TS-iPASS" (Telangana State Industrial Project Approval and Self-Certification System).

Official sources said that the Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry recently obtained all the details of TS-iPASS from the state government for launching nationwide its own system for industrial

Official sources said that the Union Ministry of Commerce and Industry recently obtained all the details of TS-iPASS from the state government for launching nationwide its own system for industrial approvals.

In November 2014, the Telangana Legislative Assembly passed TS-iPASS Act, 2014 for according time-bound clearances to industrial units proposed to be set up in the new State through a fully-digital single-window approval system.



Vivo pulls out of 2020 IPL

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Chinese mobile phone company Vivo has decided to pull out of the Indian Premier League's title sponsor for this year and is in talks with the BCCI for an 'amicable separation' amid rising Sino-India diplomatic tensions. The one year pullout

could be treated as a moratorium period and if the relations improve, BCCI may look at inking a fresh three-year deal with the company from 2021 to 2023 on revised terms. The IPL will be held in the UAE from September 19 to November 10 this year.

APNA HAATH JAGANAATH

Media makes its own room at Secretariat

K VENKATESHWARLU
■ HYDERABAD

Vexed with official apathy towards assigning them dedicated premises, media personnel on TS Secretariat beat on Tuesday completed setting up a 'media point' of their own, but not without leaving their sting: they pasted a flex on the wall of a nearby public toilet highlighting how the state government has neglected their pleas for the last one year. The

media point, raised entirely through self help, has come up in front of the main gate of BRKR Bhavan, ad hoc Secretariat premises.

Right from the time of shifting of the Old Secretariat blocks to BRKR Bhavan, media personnel on the Secretariat beat have had to fend for themselves, with hostile security personnel shooting them away, citing orders from officials who are never named.



Act, 2020, and the AP Capital Region Development Authority (Repeal) Act, 2020, immediately after Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan gave his assent to the related bills passed by the Assembly.

COVID-19 spread reported in new areas : Centre

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The coronavirus infection has spread to new areas in the country, but 82 per cent of the total cases are still limited to 10 states and Union Territories, the health ministry said on Tuesday. Addressing a press briefing, Union health secretary Rajesh Bhushan said 50 districts account for 66 per cent of the total caseload and the COVID-19 case fatality rate has progressively declined to 2.10 per cent, the lowest since the first lockdown was imposed on March 25.



Balladeer Vangapandu passes away

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Well known balladeer Vangapandu Prasada Rao passed away in the wee hours of Tuesday morning in Parvathipuram Pendhambondhapalli of Vizianagaram following a prolonged illness.

It's been a long-cherished dream of the BJP of a foothold in undivided Andhra Pradesh, which took a backseat when the party decided to focus on capturing power at the Centre first. Naturally, its plans to build the party organisation at the village level fell victim to political compulsions.

Time and again, the BJP had to redraw its approach to its political goals strategically in both AP and Telangana, especially after bifurcation.

The political situation in Telangana is considered entirely different from that of AP's. Considerable presence of Muslim minorities in Telangana enables the BJP to reach the Hindu masses in rural belts. Not that such politics is new; the party had been using this tactic even in undivided AP.

Religious polarisation in Telangana region has been the guiding force behind the

BJP's two-pronged strategy for Telugu States



PIN POINT

BJP, right from its earlier avatar of Jana Sangh.

Historically, the right wing had some presence in Telangana region even five decades ago, with the Jana Sangh winning Assembly seats.

Three decades ago, the BJP shot into the limelight by aligning with NT Rama Rao's Telugu Desam Party under the supervision of M. Venkaiah Naidu). The BJP backed NTR in his fight to get reinstated as the Chief Minister after the infamous coup.

This cemented a bond between the two parties, and the BJP gained politically. In the 1984 General Election, the BJP had an impressive win in Hanamakonda seat with the support of TDP. Its nominee C.Janga Reddy defeated the then Union minister PV

At this point of time, the BJP needs the YSRCP more; after all, it is still six seats short of a majority in the Rajya Sabha and Jagan can provide some of the numbers. This basically means that the BJP would prefer putting its expansion plans in AP on hold, for the moment.

Narasimha Rao. This was one of the only two seats won by the party that year, leading to BJP patriarch LK Advani famously saying that AP had contributed half of the party's strength at the national level.

Having tasted defeat in 1989 though it contested as an ally of the TDP, the BJP decided to move forward on its own then. The move paid off, and it wrested the Secunderabad LS seat on its own in the mid-term poll in 1991.

The 1998 mid-term polls

saw the BJP winning four LS seats. The 1999 elections saw the TDP, under N Chandrababu Naidu, approaching the BJP for an alliance and the pact paid off for both — the BJP won an unprecedented seven LS seats in undivided AP and the TDP 29.

The Vajpayee-led NDA government rode to power and the BJP found a good friend in Chandrababu Naidu. This again put its plans to expand its organisational footprint in



M D RATNA KUMAR
Senior Journalist

undivided AP on hold.

It was this friendship that influenced the BJP to put its resolution favouring bifurcation on the back burner.

The BJP top brass too felt that power at the Centre was more important than bifurcation of AP. In fact

Chandrababu Naidu warned the BJP not to take up the issue of bifurcation if it wanted the support of his 29 MPs.

Following this, the BJP left out the bifurcation issue from NDA agenda while continuing it in the party's agenda.

When the Congress gradually started favouring separate Telangana, the BJP followed, and soon enough, the two major political players at the national level competed with each other in favouring T-issue.

This was a radical departure from the strategy drawn by Venkaiah Naidu for expansion of the party in undivided AP. Venkaiah Naidu himself revealed this plan during the 1985 Assembly elections saying: "We would play the role of real opposition in the Assembly this time. By 1990 elections, BJP would emerge as

main opposition, and by 1995, we will be in a position to take the reins of power in AP".

However, circumstances at the national level forced Venkaiah Naidu to ally with the TDP and is said to have been the main reason for the lack of growth of the party in the undivided state.

It appears that the BJP has realised this fact and its leaders have draw separate plans to get the desired results in the two Telugu States.

The BJP firmly believes that any chance of success in Telangana depends on how well it polarises the people on religious lines.

For this, it has trained its guns at the AIMIM, believing that a majority of the Hindu voters would back anyone that takes on the "Muslim" party.

The BJP is unlikely to look for allies in Telangana, but rely

on religious polarisation to grow politically.

The situation is quite different in AP; the party has already struck an alliance with the Jana Sena of actor Pawan Kalyan. However, the latter has already at odds with his ally — making it clear that he does not agree with the Governor giving consent to Jagan's decision to go for three capitals.

Pawan Kalyan has also associated himself with the farmers of Amaravati who are demanding continuation of Amaravati as the only capital.

In this situation, the AP BJP has got a new president who undoubtedly will act according to the unfolding situation.

At this point of time, the BJP needs the YSRCP more; after all, it is still six seats short of a majority in the Rajya Sabha and Jagan can provide some of the numbers.

This basically means that the BJP would prefer putting its expansion plans in AP on hold, for the moment.

State issues GO to appoint Lakshma Reddy as OSD

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The state government has appointed V Lakshma Reddy, director of animal husbandry department, who laid down office on July 31 on attaining the age of superannuation, as officer on special duty for a period of one year.

The officer on special duty will function as director of the animal husbandry department and as managing director of the Telangana state sheep and goat development corporation.

Lakshma Reddy on July 13 made an application to the state government to continue in the same positions. But he retired from service last month as no GO was issued by government in this regard.

Centre to replicate...

Continued from page 1

In June 2015, the state government formally launched TS-iPASS, which, inter alia, enables the applicants to obtain online approvals for industries within 15 days through self-certification mode.

The new online approval system proved to be a big success as Telangana State could garner investments worth over Rs 1.96 lakh crore in the five years since the launch of its TS-iPASS industrial policy. Of the 12,021 projects approved under the policy, 9,021 or 75 per cent have commenced operations and provided jobs to about 13.9 lakh people.

Under TS-iPASS, any new enterprise in manufacturing or services sector with an investment of more than Rs 200 crore will be approved within 15 days and all other proposals will be green-lit in 30 days. If all the approvals do not come through in that period, the company can consider the project deemed to have been approved and go ahead with its plans.

HYDERABAD BULLION RATES	
GOLD	
	₹ 56,810 (10 gm)
SILVER	₹ 200
	₹ 65,050 (1kg)
	₹ 350

CHICKEN RATES ₹/kg	
Dressed/With Skin	₹177
Without Skin	₹201
Broiler at Farm	₹122

EGG RATES ₹/100	
HYDERABAD	365
VIJAYAWADA	403
VISAKHAPATNAM	405
RETAIL PRICE	₹3.90

Direct selling of veggies a big hit amid Coronavirus pandemic

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Every disaster comes with an opportunity, for farmers as far as the supply of vegetables and fruits is concerned, a new standard in the post-Covid scenario would be the direct selling of farm produce to the consumers.

Enabled by technology, this trend might emerge as an alternative marketing channel for agricultural commodities.

As the state is hit by the Covid-19 and has been under the lockdown, several agriculture markers in the state are closed, while others are crowded without social distancing norms. This situation has forced growers to take the alternative route of marketing their produce by connecting directly to consumers.

Small farmers in Telangana are joining hands to take vegetables and fruits to the



Farmers selling vegetables at a colony in mobile rytu bazaar in Hyderabad

doorsteps of housing societies as big markets and agricultural markets are crowded.

With the spike in Coronavirus cases, people are not going out even to buy veg-

etables. Therefore, traders and farmers have been selling vegetables at the doorstep at affordable prices.

As crowded markets tend to increase the number of

Coronavirus cases, the officials have decentralised markets in towns and cities shifting some of them to sprawling grounds and vacant sites.

In fact, 20 mobile vehicles have been pressed into service from all the 12 rytu bazaars to sell vegetables in colonies and gated communities.

In Hyderabad city alone, 250 mobile rytu bazaars are selling fruits and vegetables in about 800 colonies.

Once the unlocking of lockdown has started, the markets have been located at their original places there by increasing the rush at the markets. Observing physical distance is not feasible in markets, also the people are not wearing masks, therefore the risk of contracting the virus is high. As Coronavirus has impacted the import of vegetables from other states, the prices of vegetables have skyrocketed.

Ayodhya ceremony today

Continued from page 1

This had followed the party's decision to come out openly in support of the temple's construction, where the Babri mosque stood at that time before being brought down by frenzied kar sevaks in 1992, in its national executive meeting in Palampur in 1989. Advani's Rath Yatra was also seen as a counter to the

Mandal politics aimed at reservation for Other Backward Groups unveiled by the V P Singh government in 1990.

Advani launched the famous 'Rath Yatra' from Somnath temple in Gujarat on September 25, 1990, drawing people in thousands as his chariot rolled through the country's heartland, at times triggering communal riots as

well, while the movement gained momentum.

Many 'kar sevaks' (religious volunteers) were killed in police firing in Ayodhya on October 30 as the Mulayam Singh Yadav-led government in Uttar Pradesh used force to stop them from reaching the disputed site.

Hindutva groups put the death toll at over 55 even as police said it was 17.

Media makes its own room at...

Continued from page 1

Some time back, when irked media persons approached the CS as well as the I&PR Commissioner, one of three places were to be finalised for setting up a dedicated official media point: second floor of BRKR Bhavan, ground floor of BRKR Bhavan or Adarsh Nagar MLA quarters. Nothing happened thereafter, ever after CM gave an assurance about locating media point at MLA Quarters.

India's testing rate is lower than others : WHO Chief Scientist

Continued from page 1

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.

Without adequate number of tests, fighting the virus is like 'fighting fire blindfolded,' she pointed out.

According to Swaminathan,

the number of tests being conducted is not adequate if the COVID-19 test positivity rate is above five per cent.

Governments need to constantly monitor the availability of beds, quarantine facilities, ICUs and oxygen supplies in district hospitals.

"So there is a set of 8 to 10 indicators that the government needs to keep a close watch on. And you can ramp up or ramp down based on what you are seeing on the ground," she said.

More pvt hospitals to lose...

Continued from page 1

Health Minister Eatala Rajender on Tuesday hinted at revocation of the licences of a few more private hospitals to treat corona patients. He made it clear that the government's intention was not to shut down private hospitals or reduce the number of dedicated Covid-19 beds in the State. "On many occasions, we urged private hospitals to avoid commercialising the Covid-19 pandemic. However, action has to be taken on hospitals which are brazenly defying our guidelines and price ceiling," he said.

A high-level committee that had been set up to look into the complaints received from

Govt acts on Virinchi Hospital

Continued from page 1

The order mentioned that the government has witnessed cases of Virinchi hospital overcharging and not following the rates fixed by the health authorities.

In June, the state government had capped the charges that private hospitals could collect from patients being treated for Covid-19.

Covid-19 patients and their relatives will make recommendations in a day or two. "It is becoming clear that many private hospitals are not following our price cap. They are

On Monday, the axe fell on Deccan Hospital after three Covid-19 patients lost their lives in the hospital, which had allegedly neglected them after collecting lakhs of rupees as advance.

"It has been observed that M/s Virinchi Hospital, Banjara Hills has been charging exorbitant rates, improper and surplus billing and not adhering to the guidelines' the order read.

also sending critical patients and those who can't pay anymore to Gandhi Hospital. Such practices should be avoided at any cost," Rajender said.

Hyd central to gobal...

Continued from page 1

The primary objective of the visit was to assess the challenges faced by the companies in the vaccine development process and the support that they require from the state government and the Centre.

A panel discussion on "The Vaccine Race: Balancing Science and Urgency" organised on the occasion was moderated by the Minister.

The delegation was led by KTR and Shakthi Nagappan, Director (Life Sciences & Pharma) and Chief Executive Officer, Hyderabad Pharma City.

AP HC stays 3 capitals...

Continued from page 1

The law gives shape to the YSR Congress government's plan of having three capitals for the state.

The petitioners, who have already filed a batch of writ petitions opposing the three capitals move, expressed fear that the government was likely to shift the capital from Amaravati and sought a stay on the two new Acts.

Balladeer Vangapandu passes...

Continued from page 1

He established Jana Natya Mandal in 1972 and was awarded Kalaratna Purashkar in 2017.

Vangapandu, known for multiple talents of composing, singing and dancing, inspired people through his folk songs.

Prominent people, including Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy, MP V Vijayasai Reddy and balladeer Gaddar consoled the death of Vangapandu.

COVID-19 spread reported...

Continued from page 1

"Coronavirus infection has spread to newer areas but 82 per cent of the total cases are still limited to 10 states and UTs in the country, whereas 50 districts today account for 66 per cent of the COVID-19 caseload in the country, he said.

Giving a break-up of the

mortality rate according to gender, the official said about 68 per cent of COVID-19 deaths were reported among male patients and 32 per cent among female patients in India.

In terms of age, he said 50 per cent of such deaths took place in the age group of 60 years and above.

"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 told reporters.

India's COVID-19 fatality rate has progressively declined to 2.10 per cent, the lowest since the first lockdown, Bhushan said.

32 from Telugu States crack UPSC civils

Continued from page 1

I didn't know what service I would be selected for; so, I took the exam again. I am currently training to be an IPS officer in Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel National Police Academy, Hyderabad," says the girl, who hails from Nalgonda.

Katta Ravi Teja - rank 77

Ravi, a graduate from IIT Delhi, has set his eyes on civil services from childhood. "It's a childhood dream come true. I am so happy and so are my parents. My father, who is a journalist, would tell me how IAS/IPS officers work towards making a better country for people, on the ground level.

Low participation rate in Telugu-speaking states

Going by the strength of students from various states who took the UPSC examination, the participation of both Telangana and Andhra Pradesh students has been very low.

Vivo pulls out of 2020 IPL

Continued from page 1

"Yes, the discussions are on between BCCI office-bearers (president Sourav Ganguly and secretary Jay Shah) with the representatives of the company. There is a possibility that Vivo will not be title sponsors for one year," a senior BCCI official told.

Chinese sponsorship became a bone of contention after the BCCI decided it would review the deals following the violent clashes between the armies of both the countries in eastern Ladakh. The clash, which led to the killing of 20 Indian soldiers, triggered public outrage and led to calls of boycotting Chinese companies and products.

Students experience disorders of ‘Lockdown Screen Time’

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The addiction to watching electronic gadgets, has reached the level of a syndrome and one in every four persons are suffering from the syndrome, say psychiatrists.

The youth are afflicted with the lockdown screen times. Because of the online classes, the lockdown screen times has a vice-like grip on the youth, students and children.

Closure of colleges, schools and other educational institutions has injected a sense of inertia among the students affecting their mental maturity. The screen times is adding fuel to the fire. As a result, several psychological disorders are cropping up among the students. Spike in cases, uncertainty over life returning to normalcy are driving the children to watch electronic gadgets like mobiles phones, laptops and tabs.



A Class X student from Chikkadapalli attends online classes from morning to evening. Later, she spends time with mobile phone watching videos. As she is spending time always with the mobile phone, her mother reprimanded her. In this backdrop, the girl grew impatient and exhibiting irate behaviour. Upon consulting doctor, the student said that "She feels like dying."

The reason is not far to seek: mother not allowing her to watch mobile.

According to psychiatrists, children below 18 years of age should remain aloof from screen time. Those who are below five years of age can watch electronic gadgets for up to an hour. Older children can be allowed to watch up to three hours daily to watch electronic gadgets. If the teenagers and youth spend more than 7 hours with mobile, they tend to develop psychological disorders.

Medical experts analyse that the youth are spending for more than 15 hours with

mobile phone during lockdown period. The problem of screen times can delay the developmental milestones among the children affecting their mental maturity.

It would also affect their communication skills too.

Changes in neurons present in the brain are bringing unexpected changes in behavioural patterns too.

The people are not responding to save those who are in danger, a quality which is making an exit among youngsters.

Love, compassion, sympathy and affection have become a casualty of the screen times.

According to senior psychiatrist Dr Samhita, the youth are advised to reduce the time spent with mobile phone and develop aptitude for music, games, working out, practising yoga and so on. They would aid mental growth and improve their reading skills.

CMO likely to be on 7th floor in new Sectt

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The proposed secretariat building is likely to have seven stories with the location of the Chief Minister's office in the seventh story.

It may be recalled that the Chennai-based architectural firm is preparing the plan for the Telangana secretariat.

Meanwhile, the pulling down of the existing secretariat building has reached its final phase. The demolition of J and L blocks of the secretariat will be through in a day or two. Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao has asked officials to get the revised plans ready in the mean time.

The CM reviewed the building plan twice so far with the Chennai architectural firm and suggested changes in the plan. The firm representatives are incorporating the changes suggested by the CM.

It was decided to locate the CMO on the seventh floor. Hitherto, the plan has only six

The demolition works of old Secretariat building has reached its final phase

floors and the total plinth area of the building will be six lakh square feet.

The plan prepared by architect Hafiz Contractor of Mumbai has only six floors.

But the CM is reported to have asked the Chennai-based firm to change the plan from six floors to seven floors. The plans designed so far have located the CMO in the sixth floor. The old secretariat buildings have a total plinth area of over 9 lakh sft. But the government of Telangana used only 4 lakh sft. As the number of floors has increased to seven the plinth area of the building will increase correspondingly to seven lakh sft.

‘CM KCR betraying TS to favor another state’

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

CLP Leader Bhatti Vikramarka expressed surprise over the Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao's decision to postpone Apex Council meeting. He said that he has never seen any Chief Minister who betrays his state to favour another state.

Speaking to the media here on Tuesday, Bhatti Vikramarka said, "We fought for a separate state for the betterment of lives but, attacks on dalits have increased drastically even after bifurcation.

Recently, a dalit farmer from Veluru village in Siddipet district committed suicide upset over that his land would be lost for the construction of Rythu Vedikas.

Later criticising the TRS government, Bhatti said, while the Coronavirus cases are increasing by the day, the



state government is dealing with it recklessly.

"Nowhere else, government focuses on construction and demolishing of buildings at the cost of public lives," he wondered.

Demanding the government to set up quarantine centres in villages and zonal centres, the CLP leader suggested the government to identify and take control of private hotels and other suitable places to change them to quarantine centres.

Bhatti said that he has never seen any CM who betrays his own state to favour another state.

Five arrested for stealing mobiles worth Rs 1.50 L

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Shamshabad Rural police arrested five employees of a courier service on charges of stealing mobile phones worth Rs 1.50 lakh in Rasheedguda here on Tuesday.

Hyderabad Hub, the courier company which has a tie-up with e-commerce sellers, deliver their products to customers across the city.

According to the police, on Saturday, Koteswar Reddy, the security in-charge of the company lodged a complaint alleging that several costly mobile phones were missing from the company's godown.

Police detained Mohammed Mujamith, a resident of Ramanthapur, who works in the company. Based on his confession, officials arrested M Anil, T Prashanth, K Babu and Shiva, also employees of the company for helping him in disposing the material.

LPG or diesel-run crematoria to bring down cost to Rs 1500

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) has intensified measures to set up diesel and Liquefied petroleum gas (LPG)-run crematoria requisitioning equipment from Uttar Pradesh and Haryana. The first of such crematorium machine will reach here on August 7.

The new machines would solve the problem of cremation of those who died of Covid-19. Such crematoria are already in vogue in Uttar Pradesh and Haryana.

The machine will be installed in the identified site and the crematorium will become functional by the month-end.

There is a plan to introduce 12 such crematoria in two months, the GHMC officials said.

The new equipment will ensure faster cremation of



bodies and the cremation expenses would come down to Rs 1,500 per body. Moreover, the cremation will take place in an eco-friendly manner.

The crematorium will be set up under a shed which is 60 feet long and 30 feet wide.

To cremate one body, a LPG cylinder will be consumed or

20 litres of diesel. It would take 90 minutes for the first body to be cremated. Subsequently, the time comes down to 60 minutes and then to 45 minutes.

The cost of the crematorium is Rs 45,69,000. The other expenses like erection of the shed and other expenses would be Rs 45 lakh.



Somesh tells collectors to implement e-office in dists

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

As per the directions of the Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar IAS on Tuesday held a meeting with the district collectors and took stock of the progress achieved in identification of lands for special food processing zones, e-office, Palle Prkruthi Vanams, Urban Tree Parks, identification of street Vendors, construction of Rythu Vedikas, management of Covid-19 treatment and maintenance of revenue records.

Referring to Palle Prkruthi Vanams, the Chief Secretary said that all the gram panchayats and habitations should have atleast one palle prkruthi vanam, in accordance with the vision of the Chief Minister. Similarly every ward in the urban local body

should have a tree park.

Chief Secretary asked the collectors to regularly review with the municipal commissioners on the work of identification of street vendors in their urban local bodies to ensure that all deserving street vendors are enumerated. In order to ensure more transparency in governance, the collectors were also told to implement e-office in their respective districts.

Principal Secretary of MA&UD Arvind Kumar, Principal Secretary of IT Jayesh Ranjan, Principal Secretary of GAD Vikas Raj, Secretary of PR&RD Sandeep Kumar Sultania, Secretary of Medical and Family Welfare Syed Ali Murtaza Rizvi, Commissioner of PR&RD Raghunandan Rao, Senior Consultant of Finance Sri Siva Shankar also attended the meeting.

TS records 1285 new Covid cases, 12 deaths

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana has reported 1,286 new Covid-19 infections and 12 deaths on Monday which has taken the overall fatality toll to 563 and the cumulative number of positive cases in the state to 68,946.

The state reached a significant milestone in terms of Covid-19 testing with authorities managing to complete five lakh Covid-19 tests, since the outbreak of the pandemic.

Between Sunday and Monday, the health department conducted 13,787 Covid-19 tests, taking the

overall number of samples tested so far to 5,01,025, while results of 919 more swab samples are still pending.

As many as 1066 persons have recovered by Monday night, pushing the overall number of recoveries in the State to 49,675 with a recovery rate of 72 per cent while the countrywide recovery rate is at 65.77 per cent.

At present, the total number of active Covid-19 cases in the state is 18,708 out of which 11,935 persons are under home

isolation.

The Covid-19 positive cases reported from districts include nine from Adilabad, 38 from Bhadrachalam, 391 from areas under GHMC, 22 from Jagtial, eight from Jangaon, six from Bhupalpally, 55 from Gadwal, six from Kamareddy, 101 from Karimnagar, 41 from Khammam, three from Komarambheem Asifabad, 39

from Mahabubnagar, 27 from Mahabubabad, 21 from Mancherla, seven from Medak, 72 from Medchal Malkajgiri, five from Mulugu, 29 from Nagarkurnool, 29 from Nalgonda, four from Narayanpet, four from Nirmal, 59 from Nizamabad, 59 from Peddapally, zero from Siricilla, 121 from Rangareddy, 15 from Sangareddy, 14 from Siddipet, 23 from Suryapet, 17 from Vikarabad, 14 from Wanaparthy, 11 from Warangal Rural, 63 from Warangal Urban and three positive cases from Yadadri Bhongir.

CPI leader Rajaiah dies of Covid

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Senior CPI(M) leader and former MLA in Telangana, Sunnam Rajaiah, who is known for his simplicity, died of Covid-19.

Following the announcement of his demise, condolences began pouring in from across political divide. He was 62.

Rajaiah, who represented Bhadrachalam in the Legislative Assembly thrice (1999, 2004 and 2014), died while being shifted to a hos-



pital in Vijayawada late on Monday night, CPI (M) sources said here on Tuesday. He is survived by wife and four children, they said.

Rajaiah, who is remembered for taking up the cause of tribals, led a simple life.

There were occasions when

he was spotted coming to the state assembly in an autorickshaw or a two-wheeler. Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, former CPI General Secretary S Sudhakar Reddy and several other political party leaders condoled the demise of Rajaiah.

Expressing grief over the demise of Rajaiah, Sudhakar Reddy said the departed leader was a dedicated Communist who remained committed to the party in spite of various hurdles.

Yongster attacked by group of men

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A 25-year-old man was attacked allegedly by a group of persons at Tappachabutra in the city on Monday night. Mohd Shoaib, a resident of Sarwarnagar was in the house when two persons called him to discuss some issue and took on the main road. "There they attacked him with a sharp weapon resulting in bleeding wounds," said police. The man was rushed to hospital where he is undergoing treatment. The police learnt there was some issue between Shoaib and others over tying of a banner at a public place two days ago and it could have resulted in the attack on him.

In a separate incident, one person was injured when he was attacked by his friends following a brawl at Afzalgunj. The man who is yet to be identified had a quarrel with two persons a little away from Osmania Dental Hospital where he was attacked with a blade and stone. The victim was shifted to hospital and is undergoing treatment. The Afzalgunj police booked a case and are investigating.

Water quality of lakes goes from bad to worse

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Instead of lending scenic beauty to the city, several tanks with garbage piled up them have become virtual breeding grounds for mosquitoes.

The latest study by the Telangana State Pollution Control Board reveals that the tanks and ponds in and around the city are polluted with discharge of domestic and industrial effluents into them.

Compared to the last year, there is abnormal increase in coliform and other harmful bacteria in the tanks this year.

Since the atmospheric conditions are conducive for the growth of mosquito larvae, the mosquitoes are increasing in the city. As such the threat of outbreak of viral diseases like dengue and malaria is looming large.

The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) appears to have failed to take remedial measures to cleanse the polluted lakes, tanks and ponds in the city. Discharge of domestic and industrial wastes and answering the calls of nature in the tanks have contributed to the growth of faecal col-



iform in the tanks.

The PCB study reveals that on the whole the bacteria

presence in these tanks has increased.

Under favourable atmos-


pheric conditions, the larvae of mosquitoes are multiplying in these tanks.

There is an increase in the mosquito menace in the nearby areas of Pragati Tank, Amber Tank, Kapra Tank, Pedda Tank, Sai Tank, Durgam Cheruvu, Nalla Cheruvu and Lakshminarayana Tanks and other areas of the city.

Of the 1400 million litres of effluent water only 50 per cent is being treated before release of it into River Musi. The rest of the effluent water is being discharged into the river untreated.

IPE extends PGDM application date till August 16

HYDERABAD: Institute of Public Enterprise which has invited applications for the PGDM programmes class of 2020 has extended the last date for receiving filled in applications in the first phase to August 16. IPE offers programs in Post Graduate Diploma in Management – General, PGDM – Banking, Insurance and Financial Services, PGDM – Marketing Management, PGDM – International Business, PGDM – Human Resource Management and Executive PGDM.

<div>GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA</div>															
REVENUE (LA) DEPARTMENT															
FORM VII															
(SEE SUB-RULE(1) OF RULE-25 AND SECTION-19(1) OF THE ACT-30/2013)															
OR															
COLLECTOR/JOINT COLLECTOR / SPECIAL COLLECTOR (LA)/ SDC (LA)															
DECLARATION															
Gazette No. HYD-112 No.A/203/ 2019						Dated:- 04-08-2020. Dated:- 03-08-2020.									
Whereas it appears to the Government of Telangana/Special Collector, LA & Commissioner, GHMC, Hyderabad that a total of 1116.17 Sq. Yards of land is required in the Shaheer-E-Hyderabad Village, Bahadurpura Mandal of Hyderabad District., for public purpose, namely Proposed 80 ft road widening from Himmathpura to Fatheedarwaza, Chandulal Baradari Junction.															
Therefore, it is notified that for the above said project in the Shaheer-E-Hyderabad Village, Bahadurpura Mandal of Hyderabad District, land measuring more or less 1116.17 Sq. Yards of Standard measurement, whose detail description is as following, is proposed for acquisition:															
RIGHT SIDE															
Sl. No.	TS No.	Block	Ward	Type of Land	Area under acquisition as per sub-Division Record Sq. Yds	Name of Owner/ Interest Person with property No. as per requisition	Boundaries			Trees		Structures			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14		
1	22/2	I	234	Owners Patta Land	20.44	Ayesha Sultana 20-7-635/2	Open Land	Lane	Part of owner land	Part of owner land	--	--	G+1		
2	66/2 67/2 58/2	O 234 234	--	Govt/ Owners Patta Land	3.27 23.48 11.02 37.77	Sayed Rafiq Uddin Ahmed 20-4-360 & 362	Part of owner land	Road	Part of owner land	Part of owner land	--	--	G+1		
3	61/2	K	234	Owners Patta Land	93.50	Abraham Ibrahim 20-4-407/9	Part of owner land	Road	Part of owner land	Lane	--	--	Ground Floor		
4	88/2	D	235	--	6 Temple Endowment Land	17.65	Shaik Afzal 19-2-517/3	Part of owner land	Road	Part of owner land	Lane	--	Ground Floor		
5	74/3	D	235	Owners Patta Land	9.46	M. Panduranga Rao 19-2-517/1/A	Part of owner land	Road	Part of owner land	Open Land	--	--	Ground Floor		
6	74/2	D	235	Owners Patta Land	12.33	Mohd. Mohiuddin 19-2-517	Part of owner land	Road	Part of owner land	Part of owner land	--	--	Ground Floor		
7	21/2 20/2	I 234 --	--	Govt/ Owners Patta Land	17.17 16.16 33.33	Mohd. Hameeduddin 20-7-638/1	Part of owner land	Road	Part of owner land	Grove Yard	--	--	G+1 & Open Place		
8	21/3	I	234	--	GVN Land	17.33	Gulam Begum 20-7-638	Part of owner land	Open Place	Road	Part of owner land	--	Open Place		
9	24	I	234	Owners Patta Land	21.82	Jilani Begum 20-7-634	Part of owner land	Road	Part of owner land	Lane	--	--	Ground Floor		
10	23/2 25/2 26/2 27/2	I 234 234 234	--	Patta land Patta land Patta land	7.13 7.13 14.57 31.01 59.84	Mohd. Abdul Aziz 20-7-630/3	Part of owner land	Road	Part of owner land	Part of owner land	--	--	Ground Floor		
11	35/2	K	234	Owners Patta Land	52.62	LR Rahim Nawab 20-4-419,420,421	Part of owner land	Road	Lane	Part of owner land	--	--	Ground Floor		
12	19/2	I	234	--	Govt/ Owners Patta Land	36.33	Mohd. Ahmad Ali 20-7-640/1/2	Part of owner land	Road	Part of owner land	Lane	--	G+1		
13	38/2	E	235	Owners Patta Land	75.75	Salehunnissa 19-2-407/A	Part of owner land	Road	Part of owner land	Lane	--	--	Ground Floor		
14	80/2	D	235	Owners Patta Land	51.72	Sofia Begum 19-2-530	Part of owner land	Road	Open Land	Road	--	--	G+1		
15	32/4	E	235	Owners Patta Land	84.79	Mohd. Abdul Raheem 19-2-408	Part of owner land	Road	Part of owner land	Part of owner land	--	--	G+1		
16	32/3	E	235	Owners Patta Land	25.00	Mohd. Mohiuddin Ghori 19-2-410	Part of owner land	Open Land	Road	Road	--	--	G+2		
17	43/2	E	235	Owners Patta Land	67.27	1. Sheikh Amradd Hussain 2. Sheikh Mohd. Hussain 19-2-404	Part of owner land	Road	Road	Part of owner land	--	--	G+1		
18	58/2	O	234	Owners Patta Land	46.66	Safia Begum 20-4-355 to 358	Part of owner land	Road	Part of owner land	Part of owner land	--	--	G+2		
19	55/2	P	234	Owners Patta Land	15.55	Khalaim Utha Shaik 20-4-274	Part of owner land	Open Land	Open Land	--	--	--	Ground Floor		
20	33/2	P	234	Owners Patta Land	2.77	Gaib Bin Amiry 20-4-267	Part of owner land	Lane	Road	Part of owner land	--	--	G+1		
21	58/2	P	234	Owners Patta Land	86.00	Mubeshara Begum 20-4-253	Part of owner land	Road	Open Land	Road	--	--	G+1		
22	58/2	P	234	Owners Patta Land	35.11	M.A. Rasheed Khan 20-4-254	Part of owner land	Road	Road	Part of owner land	--	--	G+2		
23	31/2	O	234	Owners Patta Land	36.55	Zubeer Qureshi 20-4-376/1	Part of owner land	Road	Road	Part of owner land	--	--	G+1		
24	74/4	D	235	Owners Patta Land	10.61	Sheik Afzal 19-2-517/1/A	Part of owner land	Road	19-2-517/1 517/1A	--	--	--	Ground Floor		
25	32/2	E	235	--	Patta Land	99.75	Mohd. Abdul Nayeem 19-2-408	Part of owner land	Road	Lane	Part of owner land	--	G+1		
26	72/7 74/5	D 235 335	--	Owners Patta Land	15.73 50.49 66.22	Nayeem Siddique 19-2-544	--	19-544 19-548	Road	Part of owner land	--	--	G+2		
Total					1116.17										
This Declaration is made after hearing of objections of persons interested and due enquiry as provided U/s 15 of the Act No. 30/2013. The number of families likely be resettled due to Land Acquisition is -Nil-															
Mines of coal, iron-stone, slate or other minerals lying under the said land or any particular portion of the said land, except such parts of the mines and minerals which may be required to be dug or remove&or used during the construction phase of the project for the purpose of which the land is being acquired, are not needed.															
SPL. Dy. Collector, LA, GHMC, Hyderabad								SPECIAL COLLECTOR (L.A.), & COMMISSIONER, GHMC, HYDERABAD							
DIPR R.O. No.454/LAPP/Advt/Pub/2020-21															



Big day for Ayodhya, BJP, outsiders not welcome

PNS ■ AYODHYA

Police barricades, yellow banners, walls with a fresh coat of paint and the sounds of bhajan mark parts of Ayodhya as the city awaits its big day Wednesday, when the first brick will be laid for the Ram temple.

Ayodhya is decked up for the bhoomi puja that will be attended at the Ram Janmabhoomi by 175 people, who figure in a select guest list of seers and politicians topped by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Concerned over the spread of coronavirus, the authorities are encouraging others not to come to the temple town, asking them to mark the occasion by celebrating at their homes. The groundbreaking ceremony will be tele-

Concerned over the spread of coronavirus, the authorities are encouraging others not to come to the temple town, asking them to mark the occasion by celebrating at their homes. The groundbreaking ceremony will be telecast live.

cast live. Roads leading to Ayodhya display hoardings with the picture of the proposed Ram temple and of Ram Lalla, the infant Ram, the deity now housed in a makeshift temple.

Around the town's Hanumangarhi area named after a well-known temple which Modi will visit on Wednesday both police sirens and bhajans in praise of Ram are heard.

Most of the shops in the locality wear a new look, with

their fronts painted in bright yellow. A large number of policemen were deployed there on Tuesday. Some sat in the sweet shops, waiting for their next instructions. Roads leading into the area are barricaded. Yards of yellow cloth and marigold garlands were being hung on poles.

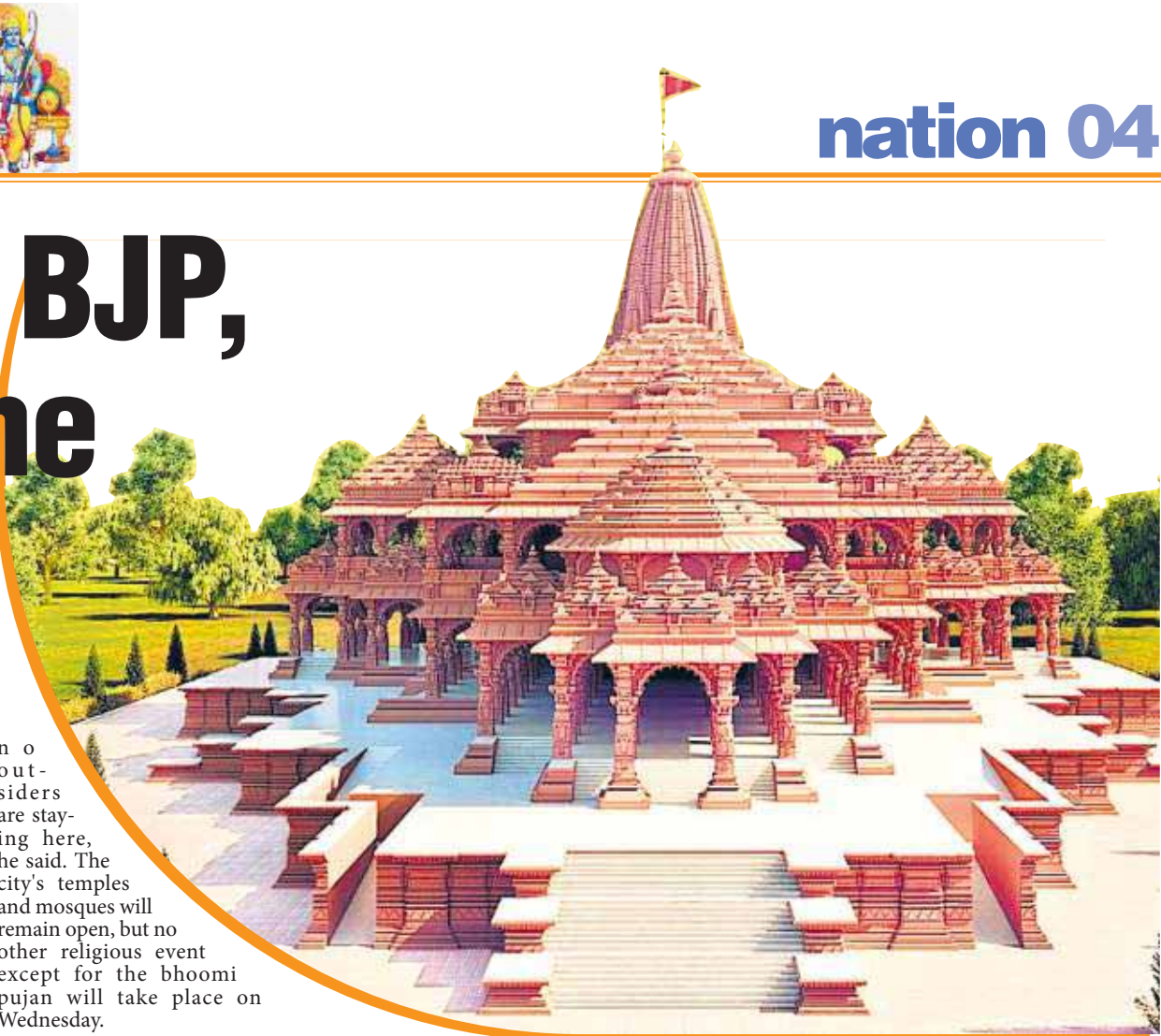
Even on the day before the event, security checks on vehicles heading to Ayodhya begin from adjoining Barabanki district itself on the Lucknow-Ayodhya road.

Policemen take down details, including mobile numbers of the travellers.

Senior Superintendent of Police Deepak Kumar said the focus of the force is on maintaining the COVID-19 protocol.

So we are not going to allow any outsider to enter Ayodhya city, he said. Prohibitory orders are also in force and not more than four people will be allowed to gather. The markets and shops will remain open but with strict adherence to the COVID protocol, he said. Outsiders will be stopped from entering the city, but Ayodhya residents will be allowed in if they produce any identification document.

We are also carrying out random checks on people living in Ayodhya to ensure that



Temple symbolises struggle between genuine' and pseudo' secularism: Advani

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

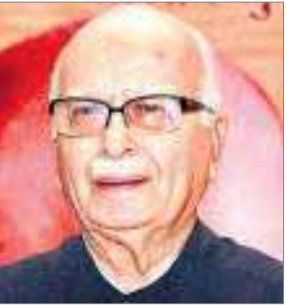
Former deputy prime minister, BJP patriarch and, above all, a key architect of the Ram temple whose rath yatra' gave fillip and form to the Ram Janmabhoomi movement, L K Advani won't keep his date with history on Wednesday.

The 95-year-old, who in 1990 charioted the Ram rath' that made him the face of Hindutva politics and was instrumental in consolidating support for the BJP, said in his autobiography that the temple is a symbol of the "struggle between genuine secularism and pseudo secularism".

Advani won't be in Ayodhya for the bhumi poojan' of the temple because of his age. In his 2008 autobiography My Country, My Life, he expressed the hope that it would write a new chapter in national integration.

In his book, he linked the Ram temple being built where a large section of devout Hindus believes is where Ram was born to the Somnath temple in Gujarat where he started his rath yatra' from.

The Somnath temple, which was looted and destroyed sever-



The Somnath temple, which was looted and destroyed several times before being reconstructed under the supervision of Sardar Patel in 1951, was a testimony of India's determination to erase the history of bigoted alien attacks and regain its lost cultural treasure, Advani said in his book

The plan was to end the yatra' in Ayodhya after passing through Gujarat, Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Uttar Pradesh. But it ended prematurely at Samastipur in Bihar on October 23, 1990 with Advani's arrest.

He was arrested on the orders of then Bihar chief minister and Janta Dal leader Lalu Prasad Yadav and kept in detention at an irrigation department bungalow in Massanjore near Dumka, which is now in Jharkhand.

Slogans of Jai Shri Ram, Saugandh Ram ki Khate Hain Mandir Wahin Banayenge and Jo Hindu Hit Ki Baat Karega Wahi Desh Pe Raj Karega followed the yatra' wherever it passed, leading to communal polarisation and

tension, and riots in some places.

Advani countered the reports, writing in his book that the recurring theme in his speeches was of a positive approach to religious faith and Ram bhakti se lok shakti jagrut ho sakti hai (worship of Ram can awaken the strength of people).

Underlining that the Ayodhya movement was the continuation of the spirit of Somnath, Advani wrote that it is important to know the history of the Somnath temple to understand the movement for a Ram temple. The Somnath temple, he said, stands as a sobering reminder that a weak nation that cannot defend itself against external attacks stands to lose its cultural heritage also besides political freedom.



Prominent Muslims to grace temple ceremony

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

In a gesture of reconciliation, two prominent Muslims who lived through deadly riots following the razing of a mosque in northern India in 1992 plan to attend the foundation-laying ceremony for a Hindu temple on Wednesday on the same site, they said.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, whose Hindu nationalist party has been leading the demand for a temple there dedicated to the god-king Ram, is expected to be the chief guest at the event in Ayodhya town.

Construction was made possible by a verdict late last year from the Supreme Court of India awarding the disput-

ed site to the Hindus, and the planned visit by the two well-known Muslims underscored an easing of animosity between followers of the two religious faiths in one of Hindu-majority India's most communally sensitive regions.

"Whatever happened are things of the past," said Iqbal Ansari, one of the Muslim litigants. "I've been invited and I think it's the wish of Lord Ram and I am going to attend it."

Mohammad Sharif, another Muslim honoured with one of India's highest civilian awards for doing the last rites of unclaimed bodies since the riots, told Reuters he too had got an invitation and was keen to be there.

Will contribute two months' salary, silver brick for Ram temple: Raj Min



JAIPUR: Rajasthan Transport Minister Pratap Singh Khachariyawas said he would contribute his two months' salary and a silver brick for the construction of a Ram temple in Ayodhya. He said the "bhoomi puja" of the temple on Wednesday "will be like Diwali all over". "I will give two months' salary and a silver brick for the construction of Ram temple, the minister said. He also called upon the

people to contribute for the construction of the temple. "It (the 'bhoomi puja' ceremony) will be like Diwali all over and there should be Diwali inside us too," he said.

Prohibitory order imposed in K'taka

BENGALURU: Prohibitory orders have been imposed at several places in Karnataka aimed at maintaining law and order in the state, in view of the groundbreaking ceremony of the Ram temple in Ayodhya on Wednesday. Places where prohibitory orders under section 144 of the CrPC (banning assembly of four or more people) have been imposed include Kalaburagi, Kodagu, Dharwad and Mangaluru. Karnataka Home Minister Basavaraj Bommai on Tuesday reviewed the security preparedness ahead of the 'bhoomi puja' in Ayodhya tomorrow with senior home department and police officials. In a video statement released after the meeting, Bommai said district administrations- Deputy Commissioners and Superintendents of Police- depending on the local situation have been given the powers to impose section 144.



Rawat asks people to light diyas at home to mark bhoomi puja



DEHRADUN: Uttarakhand Chief Minister Trivendra Singh Rawat said Tuesday the groundbreaking ceremony of Ram temple in Ayodhya will be a "red-letter day" in the country's history and urged people to celebrate it by lighting diyas at home. "Several battles were fought and hundreds of people sacrificed their lives for the construction of the Ram temple in Ayodhya. It will be a red-letter day in the history of India when Prime Minister Narendra Modi lays the foundation stone for it tomorrow," Rawat said in a message. "My appeal to people is to celebrate the golden occasion like Deepawali by lighting diyas at their homes," he added.

BJP leader seeks renaming of Delhi's Babar Road to 5, August Marg

NEW DELHI: A day before the groundbreaking ceremony for the Ram Temple in Ayodhya, former Union minister and BJP leader Vijay Goel on Tuesday demanded that the Babar Road in Bengali market here be renamed as 5, August Marg. Goel, the former Delhi BJP president, said he has written to Union Home Minister Amit Shah and the New Delhi Municipal Council (NDMC) urging to rename the road. "Babar was an invader who attacked Hindustan and demolished Ram Temple in Ayodhya. The prime minister is going to perform groundbreaking ceremony for a grand temple in Ayodhya Wednesday. At such a time, it will be an appropriate move to rename Babar Road as 5, August Marg," Goel said in a press conference.



We're overjoyed, but making sure it doesn't become Jamaat 2.0: VHP



AYODHYA: The VHP Tuesday said the bhoomi puja ceremony for a Ram temple in Ayodhya is a rare moment that comes once in several lifetimes and that they are overjoyed, but are making sure the event does not become a coronavirus hotspot. Vishva Hindu Parishad national working president Alok Kumar also rejected questions about the muhūrta of the event, saying the

"best advice" has been taken including from the Head of the Jyotish Department of the Banaras Hindu University on timing of the ceremony. "It is something which comes once in several lifetimes, the finest moment, and we are overjoyed.

Hardik Patel announces Rs 21,000 donation for Ram temple

AHMEDABAD: Gujarat Congress leader Hardik Patel on Tuesday announced that he and his family will donate Rs 21,000 for the construction of Ram temple at Ayodhya in UP. In a statement here, the newly-appointed working president of the Gujarat Congress said though he has "immense faith" in religion, he is not a "radical", and hoped the temple would usher in 'Ram Rajya' in India. The statement came on the eve of the 'bhoomi puja' ceremony for the temple at Ayodhya, an event to be attended by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, other leaders and religious figures. "Lord Shri Ram's temple is coming up in Ayodhya. Me and my family have faith in God and that is why we have decided to donate Rs 21,000 for the construction of Ram temple.



BJP to give away 5 lakh laddoo packets in MP

PNS ■ INDORE

With an eye on the upcoming by- polls, the ruling BJP in Madhya Pradesh announced that it would celebrate the ground-breaking ceremony of the Ram temple in Ayodhya by distributing nearly five lakh packets of laddoos in Sanver SC reserved constituency in Indore district.

However, alleging political gains behind the move, the opposition Congress has demanded that the district administration prevent the BJP from doing so in light of the COVID-19 situation in

the state.

"We will celebrate the foundation-laying ceremony for the Ram Temple in Ayodhya in a grand manner and as part of it, we will organise religious programmes in all 252 villages of Sanver constituency and distribute five lakh packets of laddoos," the BJP's Indore district unit president Rajesh Sonkar said.

Each and every house in the constituency will be covered in the distribution programme, which will be conducted by following all COVID-19 protocols, he claimed.

Ram temple will deeply connect Indian society to its roots: Vaidya

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With the Sangh's decades-long ideological pursuit of a Ram temple in Ayodhya being realised, the RSS joint general secretary Manmohan Vaidya said Tuesday that the temple will deeply connect the Indian society to its cultural roots to prosper economically and expand culturally as a model to guide humanity.

Projecting Ram temple as a "symbol of Bharat's glorious past", Vaidya said this temple will guide humanity to live together in harmony, peace and prosperity in this ethnic, religious and culturally diverse world.

Referring to Dr Rajendra Prasad's speech on restoration of Somnath temple, Vaidya said the country's first president had stated that the construction of Somnath temple would be deemed complete only when as a nation India acquires those high level of cultural values in social and national life and the econom-



ic prosperity which it once had.

"Same thing applies here with Ram Mandir. Besides being a holy shrine, it will become epitome of cultural values and economic prosperity," Vaidya said.

Saying that the construction of the temple will be a "landmark moment" in Indian history, Vaidya added, "Ram temple will help us get deeply connected to our cultural roots to prosper economically and expand culturally as a model to guide humanity to live together in harmony, peace and prosper-

ity in this ethnic, religious, culturally diverse world."

Vaidya has been putting forth the views of RSS on Ram temple. He has said it should not be seen as a political issue but as a matter of faith for the Indian society at large.

Construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya has been central to the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh's ideology, figures prominently in its idea of a "Hindu Rashtra" and is seen as a symbol of cultural nationalism.

Though the Vishwa Hindu



Parishad and the BJP, both members of the larger saffron family, had been at the forefront of the Ram temple movement, it was the Sangh, as the ideological fountainhead of the family, that remained the guiding force in the struggle.

RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat's name being imprinted on the invitation for the 'bhoomi puja' ceremony along with Prime Minister Narendra Modi, as the guest of honour establishes the significance of the saffron organisation in the movement.



SHORT READS



No flight ops at Kolkata airport on revised total lockdown days

KOLKATA: Authorities of Netaji Subhas Chandra Bose International Airport Tuesday announced that flight operations at the airport will remain suspended on all the revised seven days of total lockdown in West Bengal this month starting from August 5. The airport had suspended flight operations on July 25 and 29 due to total lockdown announced by the state government. "As per the state government order dated 03.08.2020, flight operations at #KolkataAirport will remain suspended on the revised lockdown days: 5th, 8th, 20th, 21st, 27th, 28th & 31st August 2020," the Kolkata airport said in a tweet. The West Bengal government had earlier decided to impose a biweekly complete lockdown in the state to break the chain of COVID-19 transmission. The West Bengal government on Monday announced changes for the fourth time in the complete lockdown dates in August and took all Sundays - a popular marketing day out of the purview of the restrictions. As per the new changes the Lockdown will be enforced on August 20, 21, 27 and 28, instead of August 16, 17, 23 and 24 as announced earlier, the government order said.

Raj ACB arrests police officer in bribery case

BIKANER: The Anti Corruption Bureau (ACB) of Rajasthan has arrested the additional superintendent of police of Ganganagar district in a case of graft for allegedly demanding Rs two lakh bribe, official sources said here. The arrest took place on Monday night, the sources in the ACB said, adding that a middleman has also been held from the Srikanpur area. "Accused Additional SP Amrit Jeengar had demanded a bribe of Rs two lakh to settle a case. After verification of the complaint, the accused official was caught from his official residence late last night," a source said. A senior ACB official in Jaipur said Jeengar's house in Jodhpur has been seized and the matter is being probed.

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

NEW DELHI: The CBI on Tuesday conducted searches at 11 locations in Jammu and Kashmir, including at the residential premises of the then CEOs of Patnitop Development Authority, for alleged land encroachment in the tourist area in Udhampur district, officials said. The searches are spread at 11 locations including Jammu, Udhampur and Kathua districts at the offices and residential premises of public servants including former CEOs, Patnitop Development Authority--KK Gupta, MA Malik and SM Sahni they said. The CBI had conducted a preliminary enquiry on the directions of the Jammu and Kashmir High Court following which an FIR has been registered, they said.

Sushant's death case to be handed over to CBI: Nitish

PNS ■ PATNA

In an important development in the actor Sushant Singh Rajput's death case, the Bihar government on Tuesday decided to recommend a CBI inquiry into death by suicide case of the Bollywood star on a request from his father. Chief Minister Nitish Kumar said on being informed by state Director General of Police Gupteshwar Pandey about his talk with the late actor's father K K Singh seeking an inquiry by the central investigating agency into the matter, he told the DGP to get a proposal ready immediately and send it to the state government. "The state government will formally recommend the case to be handed over to the CBI today itself after completing all the procedures and formalities", the CM said.

The development comes a day before the Supreme Court is slated to hear a petition of Rajput's rumoured girlfriend Rhea Chakraborty, an accused in the FIR filed in Patna, seeking transfer of the case to Mumbai, where an investigation in the matter is already on.



The state governments of Bihar and Maharashtra have already filed separate caveats in the top court seeking to be heard before any order is passed on Chakraborty's plea. The father of the late actor has also filed a caveat in the apex court.

A close associate of the Bihar CM said, that Rajput's father made a plea for the CBI inquiry citing hurdles created by the Mumbai police to the investigating team of the Patna police to prevent fair probe.

After a series of complaints against the Mumbai police for not cooperating with the four-member Patna police probe team, the acrimony between Maharashtra and Bihar police over jurisdictional issues escalat-



ed after an IPS officer, who had landed in Mumbai on Sunday for leading the SIT probe in the case, was quarantined under the COVID-19 regulations in force in the city. The development was deplored by the Bihar chief minister who termed it "inappropriate and forcible".

Bihar police chief Gupteshwar Pandey has said that they have lodged a formal protest with the Mumbai municipal authorities over the "forcible quarantine" of Vinay Tiwari who was on official duty. Regarding decision to hand over the inquiry to the federal agency, Kumar said, "I have been saying that the state government will recommend a CBI probe if the father (Sushant's father) asks for it.

Maharashtra slams CBI probe recommendation

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The ruling NCP and Congress in Maharashtra on Tuesday slammed the Bihar government for recommending a CBI probe into the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput, saying the move encroaches upon rights of the state government and helps the BJP in "destruction" of Constitution. Maharashtra minister and NCP national spokesperson Nawab Malik said the Nitish Kumar government was probably trying to divert attention from its 'failure' in combating COVID-19 by recommending a CBI probe. Hours earlier, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar said in Patna that his government had made the recommendation after the deceased actor's father made a request.

IRS officer Pradeep Singh tops civil services exam 2019

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

IRS officer Pradeep Singh tops the list of 829 candidates who have qualified for the prestigious civil services, including the IAS, the IPS and the IFS, the Union Public Service Commission announced on Tuesday. The top three rank holders -- Singh, Jatin Kishore and Pratibha Verma -- are serving officers. Singh is a resident of Haryana, while Kishore hails from Delhi and Verma from Uttar Pradesh.

"It is like a dream come true. It is a pleasant surprise for me. I always wanted to be an IAS officer. I would like to work for the deprived sections of society," Singh said.

Twenty-nine-year-old Singh, a 2019-batch Indian Revenue Service (customs and central excise) officer, is undergoing probation at the National Academy of Customs, Indirect Taxes and Narcotics (NACIN) in Faridabad. He said his main emphasis would be on improving education and farm sectors as he has become part of the most sought-after Indian Administrative Service. "I have opted for my home



"It is like a dream come true. It is a pleasant surprise for me. I always wanted to be an IAS officer. I would like to work for the deprived sections of society," Pradeep Singh said

state Haryana as the preferred cadre state for the IAS. I am happy that I will now get the chance to work for my state," said Singh, who had taken leave to prepare for the examination. Second-rank holder Kishore is a 2018-batch officer of Indian Economic Service (IES) and currently posted as Assistant Director in the Ministry of Rural Development here. "It was my second attempt in the civil services examination. I am happy to have got second rank," he said.

Kishore, aged 26, said education and environment would be his focused areas. He is a native of Delhi.

Verma, an officer of Indian Revenue Service (Income Tax), said she wanted to become an

IAS officer since her childhood. "I was inspired by the way IAS officers act as the first responder at the time of any crisis. They are always on the frontline at the time of difficult situation. That is why I decided to prepare again for the exam (after getting selected in the IRS)," she said.

Verma had got 489 rank in the civil services exam 2018.

"I would like to work for women empowerment and children-related issues, especially in my home state Uttar Pradesh," she said. Verma, who hails from Sultanpur in UP, said her parents played an important role in motivating her for the civil services.

Covid-19 tally rises to 18,55,745 in India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's COVID-19 tally increased to 18,55,745 with 52,050 people testing positive for coronavirus infection in a day, while the recoveries crossed the 12-lakh mark on Tuesday, according to the Union Health Ministry data. The death toll due to COVID-19 climbed to 38,938 with 803 fresh fatalities being reported in 24-hours, the data updated at 8 am showed.

A total of 12,30,509 people have recovered, while there are 5,86,298 active cases of coronavirus infection in the country presently. The recovery rate among COVID-19 patients has risen to 66.31 per cent, while the fatality rate has further dropped



to 2.10 pc, the data stated. The total number of confirmed cases also includes foreigners. This is the sixth consecutive day that COVID-19 cases have increased by more than 50,000. A cumulative total of 2,08,64,750 samples have been tested up to August 2 with 6,61,892 samples being tested on Monday, the highest done in a day so far, scientist and media coordinator at ICMR, Dr Lokesh Sharma, said.

Curfew in Kashmir ahead of first anniversary of revocation of Article 370

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

A curfew was imposed across the valley on Tuesday as authorities apprehended violent protests in view of plans by separatists and Pakistan-sponsored groups to observe August 5, the first anniversary of revocation of Jammu and Kashmir's special status, as black day. Police and CRPF personnel were deployed in strength across the valley to ensure that the plans of the separatists to disturb peace did not succeed, officials said. They said police vehicles, fitted with public address systems, went around localities announcing imposition of strict curfew for two days. "People are requested not to violate the law and stay indoors," the police said.

Barricades have been set up at



hundreds of places in Kashmir, including Srinagar city, to regulate movement of essential services and emergencies while concertina wires have been also been laid, the officials said.

The authorities had announced on Monday that the curfew would be imposed in Srinagar and other parts of the valley in view of the inputs

about violent protests endangering public life and property as the separatist and Pakistan-sponsored groups were planning to observe August 5 as a "Black Day". An order issued by Srinagar district magistrate Shahid Iqbal Choudhary said any such mass gathering would also be detrimental to efforts related to COVID containment.

Plea for taking law test from home; HC seeks Centre, NLU consortium stand

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi High Court Tuesday asked the Centre and the Consortium of National Law Universities (NLU) to reply to a law graduate's plea challenging the requirement of physical appearing at exam centre for the Common Law Admission Test (CLAT) 2020 amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

Justice Jayant Nath asked the central government to inform the court whether it would be permissible to hold such an exam at physical centres in view of the prevailing pandemic.

The court issued notices to the central government and the



NLU, seeking their stand by August 10 on the petition which has sought that the online CLAT exams be allowed to be undertaken from home.

CLAT is a centralised exam for admissions to bachelors and masters courses in law in 22 NLUs in the country and is conducted by the consortium.

Provide PPE, face masks to people in old age homes: SC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Tuesday said pension to elderly persons should be disbursed on time and those living in old age homes across the country be provided with personal protective equipment (PPE), sanitisers and face masks during the persisting COVID-19 pandemic.

The elderly are suffering and steps should be taken by the administration to attend to them whenever any request is made, the top court said. The authorities should ensure timely disbursement of pension to them and the elderly in old age homes be provided PPE kits, the top court said.

A bench headed by Justice Ashok Bhushan said this while hearing a plea filed by former Union minister and senior advocate Ashwani Kumar who said that at the time of the pandem-



ic, it is necessary that pension to elderly reaches them on time.

Kumar told the top court that crores of elderly people are living alone and appropriate direction should be issued that pension reaches to those, who are already identified and eligible for it, on time.

Senior advocate V Mohana, appearing for the Centre, told the bench that states are already making efforts in this regard and this is not an adversarial issue.

When Mohana sought one week to file reply on the plea, Kumar opposed it and said urgent actions are needed in this matter. The petitioner also raised the issue of the need to provide face masks, sanitisers and PPE to the elder people to protect them from the deadly virus.

The bench also dealt with another application which has sought direction for treatment of elderly for coronavirus without any discrimination.

Smog tower installation project in Delhi

SC asks Centre to start work soon

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Tuesday asked the Centre to "start at the earliest" the work for installation of smog tower at Anand Vihar in east Delhi, which is aimed at helping in combating air pollution.

A bench headed by Justice Arun Mishra was informed by Solicitor General Tushar Mehta that setting up of the smog tower, a structure designed as large-scale air purifier to reduce air pollution, would take 10 months and the authorities would be unable to curtail this time limit. "It is ok but the work should start at the earliest," the bench said. The apex court asked Mehta to apprise it on August 10 about the time frame and also when the work for installation of the smog tower can be started.

Book reveals daring exploits of Indian spymasters

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A new book gives a peep into the heroic covert operations carried by India's external spy agency Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) and thereby narrates a gripping account of what actually happens behind the grey walls of the secret society.

The book, titled "RAW: A History of India's Covert Operations", also gives a detailed account of real spies and reveals hitherto unknown aspects of their life, trauma and temptation, triumphs and setbacks in executing each of their "Mission Impossible". It is written by investigative journalist and author Yatish Yadav. RAW, whose founder was



legendary spymaster Rameshwar Nath Kao, was established in 1968 to satisfy the need for increased intelligence that was identified during the 1962 Sino-Indian Border War and during the Indo-Pakistan War of 1965.

"The idea behind the book is to do a deep dive into the unanswered questions sur-

rounding the spy agency - its operatives, and put forward some the significant role that it played and its impact on national security and long-term secret diplomacy.

"While writing it, I came across a number of these brave shadowy warriors and developed a close connection with each of them and I hope it does justice to their stories of valour and sacrifices," said the author.

Mughal-e-Azam' screenplay enters Oscars library to mark 60th anniversary

PNS ■ LONDON

Indian cinema classic "Mughal-e-Azam" celebrates its 60th anniversary this week with director K Asif's son Akbar Asif presenting the screenplay of the film to the Oscars library in Hollywood. Akbar Asif, the UK-based son of the late director, said he presented the screenplay to the Academy Awards to mark the big anniversary of his father's historical epic starring Prithviraj Kapoor, Dilip Kumar and Madhubala, which falls on Wednesday.

Three versions of the legendary screenplay in Hindi, Roman text and English translation are now available at the Margaret Herrick Library, a world-renowned reference and research collection of the Academy devoted to the history and development of the motion picture as an art form and an industry. "The journey of



"I hope future generations can learn and get inspired by the work of my late father and his incredible team of writers. I want to humbly thank the Academy Awards for accepting the screenplay," he said

Mughal-e-Azam' started with words from the greatest writing team ever assembled in Hindi cinema and I thought the best way to honour them was to permanently preserve their screenplay in the world's most renowned film library," said

Akbar Asif, a businessman based in London. "I hope future generations can learn and get inspired by the work of my late father and his incredible team of writers. I want to humbly thank the Academy Awards for accepting the screenplay," he said.

India 'Flying Blind' on Corona data, say experts

Amit Shah, the man leading India's fight against Covid-19 and Prime Minister Narendra Modi's top lieutenant, has been among government leaders touting the country's low death rate as a success story.

In late June, Mr Shah said India had seen much fewer deaths from the virus than the global average and other nations like the U.S., Brazil and the U.K. That showed a "country like India, even when compared to developed countries, has fought this fight very well," he told New Delhi-based Asian News International in an interview.

Officially India's death rate is nearly 20 times lower than the U.S., even though it has the world's fastest growing epidemic and the third highest number of total cases -- now including Amit Shah, who confirmed on Sunday that he was hospitalised with the virus. But independent experts are warning India has failed to properly record fatalities, and say



better data collection is needed if the country is going to get a handle on the epidemic.

"The problem is a mix of poor data culture and a bloated, corrupt bureaucracy," said Steve H. Hanke, professor of Applied Economics and the founder and co-director of the Johns Hopkins Institute for Applied Economics, Global Health, and the Study of Business Enterprise at the Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, pointing to a report

by the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace.

"Missing or low-quality data are always a major problem when attempting to form public policy in the health -- or any other -- field," he said. "It's equivalent to the pilot of an aircraft flying blind." The country of 1.3 billion has more than 1.8 million confirmed infections and close to 40,000 deaths, according to the most recent data from the Johns Hopkins University. Its mortality per

"Missing or low-quality data are always a major problem when attempting to form public policy in the health -- or any other -- field," he said

100,000 is about 2.82 compared to 47.33 in the U.S and 44.92 in Brazil, the data shows.

Unregistered Deaths

Bloomberg contacted officials in the capital New Delhi, the financial hub Mumbai and the southern industrial center of Chennai to obtain data for total deaths in each month from March to July for 2019 and 2020. Figures from Chennai showed overall deaths this year were higher than last year, with a spike in June, while Mumbai provided two

different data sets that couldn't be compared. Multiple calls to municipal corporation officials in Delhi yielded no data.

India's death registration data was patchy even before the virus struck. The vast majority of deaths, especially in rural villages, take place at home and routinely go unregistered. For others the cause of death listed is often anodyne -- old age or heart attack. Experts believe that only between 20%-30% of all deaths in India are properly medically certified.

The pandemic has stretched the country's already ramshackle health infrastructure to near breaking point, highlighting every fault-line that already existed. Data collection is a prime example. Covid-19 data from the federal and state governments is either without any breakdown of gender and age -- crucial when assessing the impact of disease -- or lacking comparisons with deaths recorded over similar periods in previous years.

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 centrastage. 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 hardline 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 *jannabhoomi*. 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, cow 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.

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 (AIBEA), 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. This clearly 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”



SOUNDBITE

In this profession (cinema), you are only as good as last project. Some films 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
—Antonio Guterres



Hindutva is now the basic coat on the canvas of polity and political parties subscribing to its various shades may be vying 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.



som. 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 wilt 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
Maruthancode

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 spared 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 meatier 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 scion — 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 conclave 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 sides. 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

POINTCOUNTERPOINT



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 other 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 State 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 wo/men 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 *raison 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

“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 energisation 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 dif-

ficult, 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 a 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 ideologues 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 fixated on the romantic-emotive. 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 action 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 *Doordarshan*. 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 tea for about half 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 Osian’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. That was received by veteran filmmaker Goutam Ghose, for his Bengali film *Abar Aranye* (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 and the poor people always gratefully remember whatever little I have done for them. It has happened many times that during my visit to my constituency, 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 don’t recall all 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 this, 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 his designated 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, nehi pehchane 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 arts 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)

CAPSULE



ITC's Bhadrachalam facility gets 'GreenCo Platinum+' rating

NEW DELHI: ITC on Tuesday said its paperboards and specialty papers business integrated facility at Bhadrachalam, Telangana, has been conferred the 'GreenCo Platinum+' rating by CII Green Business Centre, as part of the Green Company rating system. The 'GreenCo Platinum+' rating is given to industries for demonstrating leadership and commitment towards environment conservation by CII with a comprehensive framework that evaluates performance of green features of companies on 10 broad green parameters. These parameters include energy efficiency, renewable energy, water conservation, waste management, material conservation, green supply chain, among others.



Rupee settles 3 paise down at 75.04 against USD

NEW DELHI: The rupee pared some of its initial losses and settled 3 paise down at 75.04 (provisional) against the US dollar on Tuesday, even as domestic equity market was trading with significant gains. The rupee opened weak at 75.13 at the interbank forex market, then pared some of its early losses to settle at 75.04, down 3 paise over its previous close of 75.01 against greenback. The domestic unit witnessed an intra-day high of 74.85 and a low of 75.17 against the American currency. Forex traders said, while positive equity market and foreign fund inflows supported the rupee, factors like weak Asian currencies and rising Covid cases dragged down the local unit. The dollar index, which gauges greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, fell 0.08 per cent to 93.46.



Lupin gets USFDA nod for generic diabetes drug

NEW DELHI: Drug maker Lupin on Tuesday said it has received approval from the US health regulator to market a generic diabetes drug in America. The Mumbai-based company has received a tentative approval from the USFDA for its Empagliflozin tablets, in strengths of 10 mg and 25 mg, Lupin said in a statement. The product is a generic version of Boehringer Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals, Inc's Jardiance tablets which are indicated as an adjunct to diet and exercise to improve glycemic control in adults with type 2 diabetes mellitus. As per IOVIA MAT March 2020 data, the drug had an annual sales of around USD 4,368 million in the US.

Farm sector to cushion virus impact on economy: FinMin

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The worst seems to be over and the agriculture sector will provide a cushion for the coronavirus-hit economy this fiscal as there are prospects of good monsoon, finance ministry said in a report on Tuesday.

India is well on the path of recovery from a trough in April, ably supported by proactive Government and Central Bank policies, the Macroeconomic Report for July, released by the Economic Affairs Department said.

"With India unlocking, the worst seems to be over for the economy as high-frequency indicators recovered in June 2020 from unprecedented troughs in April; however, risks on account of rising COVID-19 cases and intermittent State lockdowns remain," it said.

It further noted that the rise in Covid cases and subsequent intermittent lockdowns make the recovery prospects



fragile and called for constant and dynamic monitoring. Pinning hopes on the farm sector, the report said, agriculture is set to cushion the shock of the Covid pandemic on the Indian economy in 2020-21.

"With the forecast of a normal monsoon at 102 per cent of long-period average (LPA), agriculture, which contributes about 15 per cent of total gross value added, is set to cushion the shock of Covid pandemic

on the Indian economy in 2020-21," it said.

Timely and proactive exemptions from Covid-induced lockdowns to the sector facilitated uninterrupted harvesting of rabi crops and enhanced sowing of kharif crops, it said, adding, a record procurement of wheat has enabled a flow of around Rs 75,000 crore to the farmers which will boost private consumption in rural areas.

"Since September, 2019, the terms of trade has moved 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.

July exports reach almost last year's level: Goyal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Showing signs of significant improvement, the country's exports in July have reached almost the level of the corresponding month last year, Commerce and Industry Minister Piyush Goyal said on Tuesday.

He said several indicators are reflecting that the economic activities are reviving in the country.

"Our exports have almost reached last year's July level, with nearly 90 per cent of our export of July 2019 having come back. And, in fact if we were to remove the oil related exports, where we are largely a small value adder... we are 95 per cent plus on the revival of our exports," he said.

The minister added that the country "today is in a mood" to not only bring back economic activity but also become self-reliant, improve the quality and competitive pricing of products. Officially the export numbers for the month of July would be released by the commerce ministry during mid-August.



World shares mixed after Asian mkt track Wall St rally

PNS ■ SINGAPORE

Shares were mixed in early European trading on Tuesday after a strong day of gains in Asia, while US futures edged lower.

Benchmarks slipped in London and Frankfurt on Tuesday but rose in Paris, Tokyo and Hong Kong.

Investors appeared to be shrugging off surging coronavirus caseloads in dozens of countries after the S&P 500 started off August by closing within 3% of the record high it set in February.

According to the World Health Organization's tally, there were nearly 18 million confirmed coronavirus cases as of Tuesday, up from 10.2 million at the beginning of July, as outbreaks expanded or revived in many regions.

Such tallies are thought to vastly understate the number of actual cases due to limits of testing and other issues.

Germany's DAX lost 0.6% to 12,572.29 while in London, the FTSE 100 edged 0.3% lower to 6,017.13. The CAC 40 in Paris was 0.1% higher at 4,879.84.

The future contract for the S&P 500 fell 0.3% while the future for the Dow lost 0.2%.

The continued spread of the coronavirus is raising worries that the economy could backslide again, snuffing out recent budding improvements.

But overnight, the S&P 500 added another 0.7% onto its four-month winning streak, closing within 3% of the record high it set in February, at 3,294.61.



Sensex rallies 748 points; RIL, HDFC Bank sparkle

MUMBAI: omestic equity benchmark Sensex soared 748 points on Tuesday, led by massive buying in index majors Reliance Industries and HDFC Bank amid heavy foreign fund inflows and a positive trend in global equities.

The BSE Sensex settled 748.31 points or 2.03 per cent higher 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 around 7 per cent.

HDFC Bank jumped nearly 4 per cent after the

RBI approved the appointment of Sashidhar Jagdishan as Managing Director and CEO of the bank for a period of three years.

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

On the other hand, Tech Mahindra, IndusInd Bank, HCL Tech, UltraTech Cement and Infosys were among the laggards.

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.

demic Big Tech has remained almost immune to such concerns on expectations that it can continue to grow.

Listed cos may approach Sebi to resolve grievances against proxy advisors

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Listed companies may approach Sebi to resolve grievances against proxy advisors, who advise shareholders on corporate governance issues and assist them with voting recommendation, the market regulator said on Tuesday.

This will be applicable from September 1, according to a Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi) circular.

The regulator noted that

proxy advisors, over the past few years, have played a key role in enabling shareholders to effectively participate in corporate governance decisions

Proxy advisors provide advice to institutional investors or shareholders of a listed entity, in relation to exercise of their rights in the company includ-

ing voting recommendation on agenda items.

However, due to the inherent nature of the work, it is probable that proxy advisors and listed entities may have different views on any agenda item of the listed entity leading to grievances, Sebi said.

"In order to facilitate resolution of such grievances of list-



ed entities against Sebi registered proxy advisors, the listed entities may approach Sebi," the regulator added.

The market watchdog will examine the matter for non-compliance by proxy advisors with the provisions of the code of conduct specified under Research Analyst Regulations and the procedural guidelines for proxy advisors.

On Monday, the regulator came out with procedural guidelines for such advisors.

H-1B VISA WOES

US' new executive order based on misperceptions: Nasscom

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Industry body Nasscom on Tuesday said US President Donald Trump's executive order against hiring H-1B visa holders for federal contracts "appears to have been made based on misperceptions, and misinformation".

In a statement, Nasscom said that as the world opens up post COVID-19 pandemic-induced lockdowns, it is important for the US to be able to access talent critical to the recovery phase.

Measures that restrict access to talent will slowdown the recovery phase of the US economy, jobs, innovation, and research and development, it cautioned.

US President Trump on Monday signed an executive order asking federal agencies to hire Americans, and preventing them from contracting or subcontracting foreign workers, mainly those with H-1B visas.

The move is expected to be a setback to Indian IT professionals eyeing the US job market.

Earlier on June 23, the Trump administration had suspended H-1B visas along with other types of foreign



work visas until the end of 2020 to protect American workers in the crucial election year.

The H1B visa, most sought-after among Indian techies, is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in specialty occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise.

"President Trump's executive order on 'Aligning Federal Contracting and Hiring Practices with the Interests of American Workers' appears to have been made based on misperceptions, and misinformation," Nasscom said.

A part of the executive order focuses on federal contracting, and part of the order focuses on the H-1B visa program in

general, it said.

"Both elements of the Executive Order mandate reviews, reports, and development of policy and practice and recommendations rather than mandating any immediate changes," it added.

Nasscom noted that the order comes at a time when there is a "huge shortage" of STEM (science, technology, engineering, and mathematics) skills in the US, that workers on short-term non-immigrant visas like H-1B and L-1 help bridge. The industry association pointed out that unemployment rate for computer occupations (those most common amongst H-1B visa holders) declined from 3 per cent in January 2020 to 2.5 per cent in May 2020.

21 startups are unicorns valued over \$1bn: Study

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India is home to 21 unicorns, or startups with over USD 1 billion in valuation each, and 40 more of such companies have been founded overseas by people of Indian origin, a report said on Tuesday.

Amid talk of regulating investments from the northern neighbour, the study found that three Chinese investors have backed 11 of the Indian unicorns.

With the 21 unicorns collectively valued at USD 73.2 billion, India is the fourth biggest in terms of unicorns, behind the US, China and the UK, as per the Hurun Global Unicorn List.

The number of Indian unicorns is just a tenth of China's 227, it said, adding China has only 16 businesses started outside the country by its diaspora as against the 40 in India. The valuation of the



unicorns founded globally by Indians is USD 99.6 billion, led by the fintech Robinhood at USD 8.5 billion.

"Of the 61 unicorns founded by Indians, a massive two-thirds are based outside of India, predominantly Silicon Valley in the USA, whilst only 21 are based in India," Hurun Report chairman and chief researcher Rupert Hoogewerf said. He added that the founders of these 40 unicorns need to be recognized as much as someone like Google's chief executive Sundar Pichai and Microsoft's Satya Nadella.

The research pegged the overall number of unicorns at 586 across the world in 29 countries and 145 cities.

KPIT Tech says worst is over after 21% fall in Q1 net profit

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The 21 per cent decline in net profit to Rs 24.22 crore in the June 2020 quarter was on the expected lines as clients cut back on spends during the coronavirus pandemic and the "worst is over for the company", small-sized tech player KPIT Technologies said on Tuesday.

The Pune-headquartered company's co-founder and chief executive, Kishor Patil, said the ongoing September quarter will be "flattish" and things will improve from the December 2020 quarter onward both from the revenue and profitability perspectives.



"The worst is over for us. There was a fall in revenue that affected the profits. We have signed two large deals in the past four months and I am confident of the future," Patil said.

He said a few clients chose to defer technology spends because of the COVID-19 pandemic's impact on their businesses that led to a decline in

revenue to Rs 492.7 crore from the preceding March quarter's Rs 556.28 crore and the year-ago period's Rs 505.7 crore. The company announced its earnings for the quarter on Monday.

Patil had guided towards a 15 per cent decline in revenue and has performed better than that. He said that despite the revenue decline, it has been able to hold on to the operating margins that came at 13.4 per cent.

From the third and fourth quarters, it is aiming to drive up the profit margins through levers including higher offshoring of work, he said, pointing to a higher proportion of work coming to India.

Passenger entities urge relief pkg for school bus operators

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Private passenger transport operators' bodies BOCI and SBOA on Tuesday urged the Maharashtra government to provide relief package, including waivers in taxes, extension on moratorium on interest and deferment of motor insurance to the coronavirus pandemic-impacted school bus operators.

Claiming that over 50,000 school buses and around 1.5 lakh bus staffers are currently in financial distress, the Bus and Car Operators Confederation of India (BOCI) and the School Bus Owner Association (SBOA) in a joint release also warned that if these measures are not provided immediately most of the

operators might go out of the business.

"With the entire school curriculums moving online, bus owners are burdened with taxes, insurance, maintenance, EMIs and parking charges, among others, due to which they are forced to lay off their staff, as they are not being paid by schools or parents," said the release.

It added that the sector has made several representations to the authorities in the transport department, the state's ministries and to Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray to draw their attention to multitudes of issues faced by the sector and have urged urgent action to alleviate their pain.



Thousands of women employees who accompany school buses to take care of school children have also been rendered jobless by the lockdown and are struggling with the most difficult phase of their lives, it said.

The association has requested the government on bus staffers' salaries for the entire lockdown period, waiver of taxes, deferment of motor insurance, extensions of moratorium and waiver of interest, among others.

Besides, it has also sought increasing the age limit of school buses for operating in Mumbai to 20 years from 8 years at present and to 20 years from 15 years in other areas of Maharashtra, parking facilities for school buses, GST input credit benefits and banning of illegal private vans plying as school buses.

"We are staring at a bleak situation as the schools are closed for many months, whereas in Maharashtra, new academic year commences from April for ICSE and state board classes commences from June and bus fees is collected accordingly," SBOA President Anil Garg.

He added that simultaneously, bus owners have not received the transportation

fees for the academic year ending May 2020. Due to the outbreak of the COVID-19 crisis and followed by repeated extension of lockdown, many schools have started their classes online and schools have refused to pay bus owners saying that parents are not paying fees for buses as they are not using the bus service, said Garg.

This situation has led to thousands of bus operators being jobless as there is nothing that we can do to retain our staff. Over two lakh people in the state are already dependent on these buses for their livelihoods and many owners have taken loans to buy buses and haven't been able to pay their loan instalments, he said.

JSPL July output rises to 7.40 LT, sales at 7.62 LT

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

JSPL on Tuesday said its July steel sales and output increased as compared to the year-ago period with Managing Director V R Sharma noting that India Inc is getting back to normalcy.

"India Inc is getting back to normalcy, as companies can mend supply chains, getting more workers back on the job, resulting in the increased domestic steel demand. Thanks to the Government's efforts to reboot the economy by announcing the stimulus package," Sharma said.

He made the remarks in a

press release issued by Jindal Steel and Power Ltd (JSPL) sharing improved production and sales numbers for July.

JSPL's consolidated crude steel output rose 13 per cent to 7.40 LT in July from 6.56 LT in the same month last year.

During the month under review, the company's consolidated sales also improved to 7.62 LT, up 25 per cent from 6.11 LT in July 2019.

As Prime Minister Narendra Modi said new opportunities always emerge during challenging times, JSPL followed the same path and successfully overcame the challenges, Sharma said.

Snapchat testing new feature to take on TikTok

Photo-messaging app Snapchat has started testing a new feature that lets users set their Snaps with music, similar to what Chinese short-video making app TikTok offers.

Snap, the parent com-

pany of Snapchat, has inked music rights deals with several major companies, including Warner Music Group, Universal Music Publishing Group and Merlin, reports CNET.

The new feature will let user's friends send 'Snaps' with music and one will be able to view

the album art, song title and name of the artist.

In addition, there will also be a 'Play This Song' option that opens a web view to Linkfire so one can listen to the full song on a streaming platform like Spotify, Apple Music and SoundCloud. The new feature is set to roll out to this fall in the US

as well as Canada and Australia.

Instagram has also rolled out its TikTok-like clone functionality called Reels, that is available in India in the testing phase.

Google-owned YouTube is working on a TikTok rival called Shorts, to be introduced

by the end of this year.

Meanwhile, Microsoft has confirmed it is in talks to acquire the operations of video-sharing platform TikTok in the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand markets following a conversation between Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella and President Donald Trump.



Apple may launch new iPhone 12 lineup in 2 stages

Apple has confirmed that the launch of the iPhone 12 will be delayed due to "temporarily constrained" supply chain and now a new report claims that the launch will be split into two stages.

The Cupertino based tech giant is planning to launch four different models of the iPhone 12 later this year, sporting 5.4-inch, 6.1-inch, and 6.7-inch OLED screens. However, Apple may launch two 6.1-inch iPhone 12 followed by the 5.4-inch and 6.7-inch models at a later date, reports *DigiTimes*.

The 6.1-inch models

will be available first as suppliers have begun to ship SLP (substrate-like PCB) mainboards for them. Whereas, the SLP for the other two models will start shipping by suppliers starting late August.

The 6.7-inch and 6.1-inch model will be higher-end devices with triple-lens cameras, while the 5.4 and 6.1-inch models will be lower-end iPhones with dual-lens cameras and a more affordable

price tag.

All four iPhone models are expected to feature OLED displays and 5G support, as famed Apple analyst Ming-Chi Kuo previously claimed.

This would not be the first time Apple had spaced out an iPhone launch. In 2018, the iPhone 8 was launched in September and the iPhone X in November.



Existing Sony PS4 controller not to work with PS5 games

The Japanese consumer electronics giant Sony has confirmed that its existing PS4 controller will not work with PS5 games. "We believe that PS5 games should take advantage of the new capabilities and features we're bringing to the platform, including the features of DualSense wireless controller," the company said in a statement.

A PS5 owner will need to buy additional controllers to play PS5 games, much like how PS3 controllers didn't work on the PS4.

Meanwhile, any PlayStation officially licensed third-party controllers will work with PS4 games on the PS5.

Sony has not listed the supported games, but the company does confirm that officially licensed racing wheels, arcade sticks, and flight sticks will work with PS5 games and supported PS4 games.

In addition, the company also confirmed that PlayStation Camera will work with PS5 for playing supported PS VR games.

The PS5 will feature a custom eight-core AMD Zen 2 CPU clocked at 3.5GHz and a custom GPU based on AMD's RDNA 2 architecture hardware that promises 10.28 teraflops and 36 compute units clocked at 2.23GHz.

It will also have 16GB of GDDR6 RAM and a custom 825GB SSD.

The PS5 will also feature 4K Blu-ray drive and will still support discs, but those games will still require installation to the internal SSD.



Nokia to set up robotics lab at IISc for 5G research

Finnish telecom gear maker Nokia on Tuesday announced a collaboration with the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) in Bengaluru to establish a network robotics laboratory for research on socially relevant use cases based on 5G and emerging technologies.

The Nokia Centre of Excellence (CoE) for Networked Robotics will promote interdisciplinary research involving robotics, advanced communication technologies and Artificial Intelligence (AI) to develop use cases across areas like emergency management, agriculture and industrial automation, the company said.

The centre will promote engagement and cooperation between academia, start-ups and

industry ecosystem partners in research and development of use cases.

The centre supports and aligns with the government's initiatives of Start-up India.

The Nokia CoE will be available to the IISc community and its ecosystem partners for advanced research projects involving designing next-generation networks and applications of Artificial Intelligence for solving pertinent social problems.

"Collaboration with a global technology leader, Nokia, will go a long way in helping our students to gain knowledge and insights and make significant contributions to the development of innovative and societally relevant 5G use cases," Professor G Rangarajan, Director, IISc, said in a statement.

Xiaomi launches affordable Redmi 9 Prime in India

Expanding its Redmi series, Chinese smartphone maker Xiaomi on Tuesday launched Redmi 9 Prime in India at a starting price of Rs 9,999 (4GB+64GB variant).

The 4GB+128GB storage option will be available for Rs 11,999 in four colours — space blue, mint green, matte black and sunrise flare — from August 17.

The smartphone features a 6.53-inch full-HD+ display with 19.5:9 aspect ratio, 394ppi pixel density, and 400nits brightness.

The device is powered by an octa-core MediaTek Helio G80 processor, which is backed by Mali-G52 GPU.

The smartphone has a quad rear camera setup that includes a 13MP primary image sensor, 8MP secondary image sensor, a 5MP macro shooter and a 2MP depth sensor.

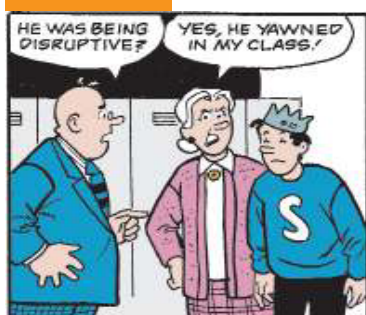
For selfies, there is an 8MP camera sensor at the front. The Redmi 9 Prime packs a 5020mAh battery that supports 18W fast charging and comes bundled with a 10W charger.

There is also a rear-mounted fingerprint sensor, a 3.5mm audio jack, and a USB Type-C port. It even comes with P2i coating, free phone case, and TUV certification.

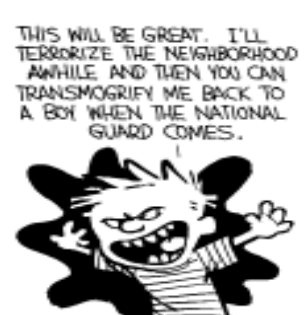


FUN

ARCHIE



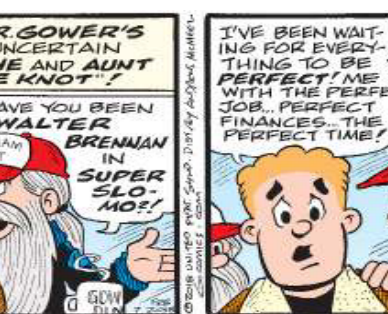
CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



ACROSS

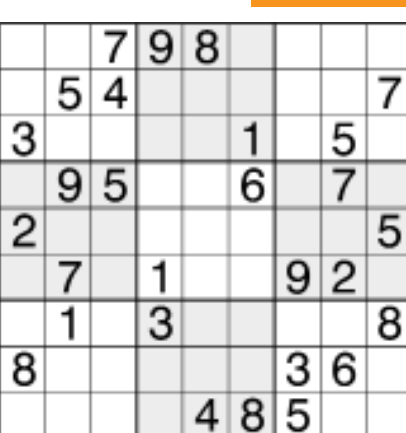
- Speaks very quietly
- A builder follows these when building a house
- The backbone
- Athens is the capital city of this country
- Fewer
- You see with these
- The large country just north of the USA
- Weary
- Near
- Young people

DOWN

- A huge sea mammal
- A six-legged creature
- Shove
- Lift up
- Food that looks like lots of worms
- A daily publication
- A small dish under a cup
- Garden soil
- A nut from an oak tree
- A worshipped statue



SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution								
2	8	4	9	3	1	5	6	7
6	3	7	4	8	5	1	9	2
9	1	5	6	2	7	4	3	8
4	5	6	3	7	8	2	1	9
3	7	2	1	4	9	8	5	6
8	9	1	2	5	6	7	4	3
7	2	9	5	1	3	6	8	4
1	6	8	7	9	4	3	2	5
5	4	3	8	6	2	9	7	1

Rules

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

Nani urges people to DONATE PLASMA TO SAVE LIVES

In a bid to speed up COVID-19 recovery, doctors have been asking patients who recovered from the virus to donate their plasma to people that are fighting it. Taking the request forward, Tollywood actor Nani shared a video urging people to donate their plasma to save more lives. The actor said that to be in a position to help save someone's life is a beautiful gift and one must use it. He shared that 500 ml of one's plasma with COVID 19 antibodies can save the lives of two patients battling the virus. He added that the same amount of donated plasma will be formed back in the donor's body within two days and so there's nothing to lose from this tiny act of kindness. "There is no bigger satisfaction than being able to help than receive," the actor said. The actor informed his viewers that Cyberabad Police came up with a COVID Control Room wing with the number 9490617440, to which interested people can reach out to, to donate their plasma. With no vaccine or specific cure discovered by scientists against the virus yet, doctors have been trying plasma therapy that mostly yielded positive results. According to reports, the plasma extracted from recovered persons contains anti-bodies of the virus that have the potential to fight COVID19. Once transfused to a patient, these antibodies help him or her recover, believe many doctors. With not many who had recovered from the virus coming forward to donate plasma, doctors, celebrities, and others have been making efforts to encourage these patients to do their bit to save lives.



Director Teja tests positive for COVID

Barely a week after acclaimed-filmmaker SS Rajamouli and his family revealed that they tested positive for COVID-19 with mild symptoms, filmmaker Teja, who has given hit films like *Nuvvu Nenu*, *Chitram*, and *Nijam*, has tested positive for the novel Coronavirus. From what we could gather, the director has self-quarantined himself at home and has been following necessary precautions as per the doctor's advice. The director, who is currently shooting for a web series, developed symptoms recently and decided to get himself tested. After testing positive and isolating himself, he requested people who came in contact with him in the last few days, to get checked immediately. There are speculations that some of his family members have also tested positive for the virus but there's no confirmation on that yet. After he shared this news, fans of the beloved director expressed concern and wished him a speedy recovery. Teja's last directorial venture, *Sita*, which featured Bellamkonda Srinivas and Kajal Aggarwal in the lead roles, garnered good response from both, the audiences and critics. He is said to



THERE ARE SPECULATIONS THAT SOME OF HIS FAMILY MEMBERS HAVE ALSO TESTED POSITIVE FOR THE VIRUS

be currently holding talks with some of the top actors of the industry for his upcoming film.



KGF: Chapter 2 to resume shoot on Aug 15

To all the fans awaiting news on the sequel to *KGF* called *KGF: Chapter 2*, here's some: The executive producer of the film has confirmed that the shoot of the film will resume from August 15 amid the ongoing Coronavirus pandemic. In his latest interaction with a newspaper, executive producer Karthik Gowda opened up about the shooting plans for *KGF: Chapter 2*, which is being directed by Prashant Neel, which stars actor Yash in the lead. Karthik said that strict guidelines will be issued and followed on the sets of the film, and all technicians will be camped temporarily at a hotel near the set, with nobody being allowed to venture out until the shooting concludes. The producer added that the team, which has completed 90 per cent of the shoot, is left with only some major fight sequences and a few scenes. Makers of the film are said to be coming up with a huge set at Minerva Mills, where the first part of the remaining schedule will take place. The first glimpse of Sanjay Dutt's character from the film was recently released, much to the excitement of

fans. The Khalnayak star will be seen playing the primary antagonist 'Adheera' which was only teased in the first part. On Sanjay Dutt's character and having him on board, Yash told a leading daily that when *KGF: Chapter 1* was being filmed, they had their own inhibitions and restricted themselves. "But with this kind of success on our side, we are going all out to make the second part. We now know people are keenly looking forward to the second part and we can deliver it without any reservations. We've reserved the best for chapter 2," he had said. *KGF: Chapter 2* also stars Raveena Tandon essaying the role of former Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi.

RAKUL PREET SINGH misses being goofy on the sets

Actress Rakul Preet Singh wants to go back to work as she misses being goofy on the sets. Rakul took to her Instagram stories, where she shared two clips of herself from her photo-shoots. In the first video, Rakul is seen wearing a black lacy dress paired with black boots and a bag. On the clip, she wrote: "Miss being goofy on set". In the other video, the actress is seen posing in a stunning midnight blue ruffled long gown. She completed her look with a messy bun and a beautiful diamond neck piece. "And then miss being poised and elegant," she wrote on the second clip. Coming up for Rakul Preet is a rom-com co-starring Arjun Kapoor. She will also be seen in Kamal Haasan's ambitious upcoming film *Indian 2*, which co-stars Kajal Aggarwal and Siddharth.

‘His songs kept revolutionary tides alive’

Popular folk and revolutionary singer from UttarAndhra, Vangapandu Prasad Rao breathed his last in the wee hours of Tuesday. Born in 1943 in Parvathipuram village of Pedabindapalli of Vizianagaram district, his death due to a heart attack brought about the end of an era in the Telugu states. Better known as the 'Gaddar' of UttarAndhra, 77-year-old, in a span of three decades, wrote and crooned over 300 songs through which he empowered many, earning himself thousands of fans. His lyrics were powerful enough to stir a sense of revolution in any heart. One of his most famous songs has to be *Yem Pillado Yeldam Vastava...*, a part of which was used in Ram Charan's *Magadheera*. This forced Vangapandu to protest at Geetha Arts office for using his lines without his knowledge. The revolutionary's death came as a shock to several writers of Srikakulam district including Nalli Dharma Rao who said that the rights of the downtrodden sections were protected and highlighted with his writings and songs. His songs not only "reflected the agony and aspirations of oppressed classes", but also kept the revolutionary tides alive in the Telugu state. Born into a lower middle class family, Vangapandu has struggled to make ends meet. Coexistence with values is said to be ideal. In the year 1972, along with Telangana Gaddar, Vangapandu established 'Jana Naatyamandal'. In 2017, the previous TDP government



has awarded him 'Kala Ratna' award. Janasena party chief and Tollywood actor Pawan Kalyan expressed his condolences over the death of the singer. In a statement released later Tuesday afternoon, the statement said that he was an actor paid his tribute with a heavy heart. He said that was associated with the revolutionary singer for two decades. "When I worked with him for the Republic in 2009, I was fascinated by his thoughts on the downtrodden and backward classes. He was also one of the revolutionary leaders who wholeheartedly welcomed the emergence of Janasena. I still remember the time when he expressed his solidarity with me during

my visit to Uttaranchal as part of the campaign," the actor said in the statement. Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy mourned the demise of Vangapandu and said he was saddened to learn the poet is no more. He said that Vangapandu was close to him and has led the North Andhra movement from the forefront with his inspirational songs. He conveyed his condolences to the bereaved family. Deputy Chief Minister (Revenue) Dharmana Krishna Das also condoled the demise of Vangapandu and described him as par excellence in folk lyrics. TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu mourned the demise of Vangapandu Prasad Rao and said the revolutionary

writer and people's poet has inspired generations with folk songs, reflecting the agony and aspirations of oppressed classes. His demise has left a void in Telugu literary field, he said. Gaddar and other ballad singers also mourned the demise of the poet.

Most Read NEWS

Detained 'drug smuggler' cat escapes high-security prison

A cat detained at Sri Lanka's main prison while allegedly trying to smuggle drugs and cell phone SIM cards has escaped, media reports said Tuesday. The feline was detected by jail intelligence officials on Saturday at the high-security Welikada Prison, a police official said. He said nearly two grams of heroin, two SIM cards and a memory chip were found in a small plastic bag tied around the cat's neck. But it escaped on Sunday from a prison room where it was kept, the Aruna newspaper said. There was no immediate comment from prison authorities. The prison had reported an increase in incidents of people throwing small packets of drugs, cell phones and phone chargers over the walls in recent weeks. Sri Lanka is battling a major drug problem with some anti-narcotics detectives also implicated in selling confiscated drugs. Police last week seized an eagle allegedly used by drug traffickers to distribute narcotics in a suburb of Colombo.



Iceland broadcasts screams to relieve Covid-19 stress

Iceland is marketing itself as the "perfect place to let your frustrations out" as it channels the power of "scream therapy". People struggling with the events of this year are being invited to let off steam by recording their screams and having them played over a loudspeaker in a remote part of the country. Seven speakers are being set up around the country for the campaign and participants can choose locations such as the peak of Festarfjall in Reykjanes Peninsula and Skogafoss waterfall. Iceland's tourist board has set up a website for the project. It says: "You've been through a lot this year and it looks like you need the perfect place to let your frustrations out. Somewhere big, vast and untouched. It looks like you need Iceland." Scream therapy became popular in the 1970s as a way of relieving stress and anxiety. Psychotherapist Zoe Aston said: "The events of this year mean most of us have experienced increased feelings of frustrations, fear, loneliness, anger or guilt, and we have all coped in different ways."



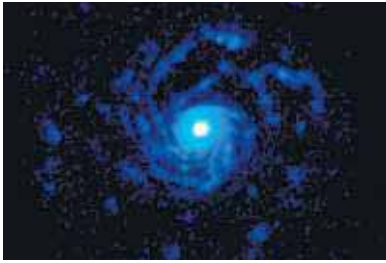
Early Mars was covered in ice rather than flowing rivers

Mars may once have been covered in ice sheets like those in the Arctic, rather than flowing rivers, according to a new study. When the valleys that cross across Mars's surface were spotted and further explored, they led to hope that rivers once flowed across its surface. That helped contribute to the idea that the planet was once wet and warm, with rainfall and oceans. But the water that previously existed on the planet might actually have been there in a similar way to the ice that formed similar channels in the Canadian Arctic Archipelago. That could actually be more helpful to any alien life that might once have lived on the ancient Mars, the researchers say, since the ice sheets would offer protection, allowing the water underneath to stay stable as well as serving as a barrier against the solar radiation that is thought to have once bombarded the Martian surface. Researchers examined thousands of Martian valleys, which allowed them to generate detailed information on their construction. They then compared those channels found on Mars's surface with those channels, helping to understand what conditions might have given rise to them.



Mysterious structures found extending out of strange star

Mysterious, huge spiral structures, extending out of a young star, have been spotted by astronomers. The "complex set of spiral arms" reaches out 1,000 times the distance between the Earth and the Sun, and could shed new light on how planets are born. The unexplained spirals were seen coming out of a young variable star, known as RU Lupi, which is thought to be producing new worlds, and has become known as a "planet factory" as a result. Most images of those planet-forming discs have shown them as a neat collection of gas and dust, with rings and gaps that suggest new planets are being born there. When astronomers first looked at RU Lupi's collection of dust, it looked the same, with a relatively neat organisation that appeared to be forming new worlds. But studies of the gas rather than the dust in the disc that surrounds it appears to show that the process of forming those planets is much more complex, and less neatly arranged, than previously thought. The complicated web of gas looks something like a miniature galaxy, researchers said.



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 Morecambe and Wise 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 double acts 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 blokes 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

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).

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.

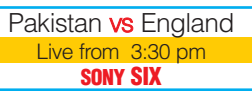
"When you play after a long gap there is bound to be some sort of nervousness but that is natural. As soon as the players step on the field, it will go away," Misbah said. "The players are fresh and anxiously waiting for the series to begin."

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

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 Azam, Abid 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.



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 (T20 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 of them, as captains, like to listen."

"When your 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 India pacer Ashish 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.

Starc 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."

Starc 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 progressions on that," he said.

"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.

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 - 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 challeng-



ing 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 is remarkable and we all at DC are 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.

To our Delhi Capitals fans, I would like to stress on how

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."

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 T20 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 showpiece event being postponed last month due to the global health crisis, the two cricket boards decided to postpone it. "Together with @windiescricket, we have agreed to postpone the Twenty20 series originally scheduled for Queensland in October," Cricket Australia said in a tweet. "Serving as warm-ups for the ICC T20 World Cup, the series will now coincide with the rescheduled T20 World Cup in Australia, in either 2021 or 2022."

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.

