

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


OPINION 6
TURNING LIABILITY
TO ASSET
WORLD 8
UK LAWMAKERS URGE SANCTIONS
OVER HONG KONG POLICE VIOLENCE
AVENUES 10
TIPS TO ACE
CLAT 2020
DHONI IS ONE
OF A KIND:
ROHIT
12 SPORT

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Surge of elation on bhoomi puja eve

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

BISWAJEET BANERJEE ■
 AYODHYA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The city has been turned into a fortress with barricades put up across the main thoroughfare of Ayodhya - particularly those lanes which connect the city to Ram Janmabhoomi Complex. The jawans of the paramilitary force are deployed around the city. The shops are closed. The road side eateries have downed their shutters, but the local residents are not complaining.

"Our movements have been restricted for two days but we are not complaining. This is an indicator of good things to come. We will have our own Ram Temple after almost five centuries. And for that why will we complain," Dilip Maurya, who owns Maurya Tea Stall near Ghatgahar, said.

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



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

SIDELIGHTS

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

Not invited, Advani recalls his role in temple movement

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Not invited to attend the Ram Mandir bhoomi puja ceremony in Ayodhya on Wednesday, the architect of the Ram temple movement and veteran BJP leader LK Advani said in a statement it is his belief that the Ram Mandir will represent India as a strong, prosperous, peaceful and harmonious nation with justice for all and exclusion of none to truly usher in "Ram Rajya, the epitome of good governance."

Claiming that it was a historic and emotional day for him and for all Indians, Advani recalled the "pivotal

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

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

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

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

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

Without taking any names, he said the construction of the temple was embroiled in the hurdles created by various

Modi to stay for 3 hours, to pray at Ram Lalla temple

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will be in Ayodhya for over 3 hours on Wednesday, and for the first time offer prayers at the Ram Lalla temple and Hanumanagarhi after becoming the PM of the country in 2014.

Though Modi had visited erstwhile Faizabad district, now rechristened as Ayodhya by the Yogi Adityanath Government, he never went to these temples to avoid any controversy.

Modi will also be the first Prime Minister to visit Ram Janmabhoomi Complex. Earlier, Jawaharlal Nehru and Indira Gandhi had come to Faizabad but did not offer prayers at RJB Complex.

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

CBI probe into Sushant death, proposes Bihar

PTI ■ PATNA/MUMBAI

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

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

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

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

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

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

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

CAPSULE

PAK INCLUDES J&K IN NEW POLITICAL MAP

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

COURT DISMISSES BAIL IN IB OFFICER MURDER CASE

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

Trump bans hiring of H1B visa holders, blow to Indians

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

In another huge blow to Indian IT professionals eyeing the US job market, President Donald Trump has 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 came over a month after the Trump administration on June 23 suspended the H-1B visas along with other types of foreign work visas until the end of 2020 to protect American workers in a crucial election year.

The H-1B visa, most sought-after among Indian IT professionals, is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in speciality occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise. The technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China.

"Today I am signing an executive order to ensure that



the federal government lives by a very simple rule, hire American," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office of the White House on Monday before signing the order against hiring H-1B visa holders for federal contracts.

Trump told reporters that his administration will not tolerate firing of hardworking Americans in the pursuit of cheap foreign labour.

"As we speak, we're finalising the H-1B regulation so that no American workers are replaced ever again. H-1B should be used for top highly paid talent to create American jobs, not as inexpensive labour

programmes and destroy American jobs," said Trump, who was surrounded across the Cabinet Room table with individuals campaigning against job outsourcing.

Prominent among them were Sara Blackwell, founder and president of Florida-based Protect US Workers organisation; Jonathan Hicks, a software engineer in the Tennessee Valley Authority; and Kevin Lynn, founder of Pennsylvania-based US Tech Workers.

The H-1B visa has an annual numerical limit cap of 65,000 visas each fiscal year as mandated by the Congress.

Amid India-China row, Vivo likely to quit as 2020 IPL title sponsors

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Chinese mobile phone company Vivo is likely to pull out as the IPL'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. The IPL will be held in the UAE from September 19 to November 10 this year.

"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 PTI.

Chinese sponsorship became a bone of contention after the BCCI declared it would review the deals following the violent clashes between the armies of the two countries.

4 die as heavy rain batters Mumbai, more in store

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

Shivaji Maharaj Terminus (CSMT).

After the crash of two houses at Santa Cruz in northwest Mumbai, a woman Rekha M Kakade and her 18-month-old infant daughter Jahnavi were washed away in a swollen nullah. Her second daughter Shivanya was rescued safely, while a third daughter is still missing.

Five from Chhattisgarh crack IAS exam

STAFF REPORTER ■ RAIPUR

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

According to the results, the five who made it to IAS are Simi Karan (31st rank), Umesh Prasad Gupta (162nd), Suthaan (209th), Ayush Khare (267) and



Yogesh Kumar Patel (434th rank).

Jitendra Yadav (370th rank) has been retained as an IPS officer. He is presently posted with the Chandrakhuri Police Training Academy.



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

The Chief Minister through a series of tweets congratulated all of them.

Greeting them and their families, Baghel said they had brought laurel to the state. Their success is the result of hard work and dedication and guidance of the teachers, he said.

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

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

Smart work is better than hard work to achieve a target, she emphasised. Time man-

agement for studies is important.

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

She studied daily for 10-12 hours. On her future plans, her focus would be empowering the women.

Simi's father D.N. Karan is the General Manager, Finance

Department, in the Bhilai Steel Plant. Her mother is a teacher with DPS, Risali, Durg.

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

8 deaths, over 10k Covid cases

STAFF REPORTER ■

RAIPUR

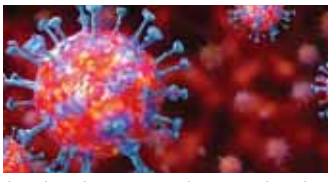
Eight people died due to Covid-19 in Chhattisgarh as the total number of coronavirus affected people crossed the 10,000 mark on Tuesday.

A total of 280 fresh cases were detected in various districts on Tuesday while 357 were discharged from various hospitals, officials said.

Raipur continues to be the hotspot, with 106 of the 280 new patients found in the capital city.

A 50-year-old woman from Gudiyaari in Raipur was admitted at Dr BR Ambedkar Memorial Hospital on Monday. She was Covid positive and died the same day, the officials said.

A 69-year-old man from Mahoba Bazar locality in Raipur was admitted in AIIMS Raipur on July 31. He was suffering from kidney disorder, diabetes and high blood pressure and was also



detected Covid positive. He died on Monday.

A 90-year-old woman prisoner from the Central Jail Bilaspur was brought dead at CIMS Bilaspur and tested Covid positive, the officials said.

A 58-year-old man from Bilaspur who had pneumonia in both lungs and respiratory distress was admitted in a private hospital. He was Covid positive and died on Tuesday.

A 71-year-old man from Bilaspur who had cardiac disease, diabetes and respiratory distress was admitted in a

Bilaspur private hospital. He was Covid positive and died on Monday, the officials said.

A 75-year-old man from Surguja district who had diabetes and high blood pressure was admitted in AIIMS Raipur due to fever and breathlessness on July 24. He died on Monday and tested Covid positive.

A 35-year-old man from Raipur was admitted in AIIMS Raipur after developing breathlessness on July 31. He tested Covid positive and died on Monday.

A 48-year-old man from

Sant Ravidas Nagar in Durg was found Covid positive and was admitted in AIIMS Raipur on August 1. He had tuberculosis and died on Monday, the officials added.

So far 69 people have fallen victim to Covid in Chhattisgarh.

Of the fresh 280 corona positive patients, 108 were from Raipur district, 42 from Durg, 37 from Bastar, 25 each from Balamrupur and Kondagaon, 9 from Surgapur, 6 from Raigarh, 5 each from Rajnandgaon and Mahasamund, 4 each from Bilaspur and Kanker, 2 each from Kabirdham, Baladabazar, Janjig-Champa and Korea, and 1 each from Dhamtari, Jashpur, Narayanpur and Bijapur.

As per official information, so far 10,109 persons have been detected Covid positive in the state, of which 7,613 were discharged while currently there are 2,427 active Covid patients.

CM to transfer ₹1.65 cr to cow dung sellers today

STAFF REPORTER ■

RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel will on August 5 inaugurate the process of payment into the bank accounts of cow dung sellers under the Godhan Nyay Yojana.

Baghel will pay tribute to Karma, who the Maoists killed in 2013 when he was the Leader of Opposition, at 3 pm by garlanding his picture.

At 3.15 pm, the Chief Minister will inaugurate the payment process of cow dung procurement and interact with the beneficiaries of Godhan Nyay Yojana via video.

The first instalment of payment for cow dung procured between July 20 and August 1 will be made through cooperative bank. In all, 4,140 gaushalas have procured nearly 82,711 quintals of dung.

The government is making efforts to maximize the reach of the benefits under



this scheme.

The beneficiaries include 38 percent women, 48 percent from OBC category, 39 percent Scheduled Tribe members, 8 percent Dalits and 5 percent from the general category.

The next payment for dung procurement will be on August 15.

Under this scheme, maximum quantity of dung was procured in Raipur, Durg, Rajnandgaon, Dhamtari and Balod districts.

Godhan Nyay Yojana is

the first of its kind scheme in the country under which cow dung is bought from cattle owners and farmers at ₹2 per kg. This will be turned into the eco-friendly vermi compost.

At 3.35 pm, Chief Minister will inaugurate the Shaheed Mahendra Karma Tenduapatta Sangraha Samajik Suraksha Yojana and deliver the inaugural address.

Tourism Department officials will give presentation on Ram Van Gaman Path at 3.50 pm.

In case of death due to accident additional financial aid ₹2 lakh will be provided. In case of permanent disability, ₹2 lakh will be provided and in case of partial disability ₹1 lakh will be sanctioned.

As promised in the Congress party election manifesto, the tendupatta collection wage rate has been increased from ₹2,500 per standard sack to ₹4,000 standard sack.

Elderly woman trampled to death by elephant

STAFF REPORTER ■

KORBA

A 55-year-old woman was killed by a wild elephant in Chhattisgarh's Surgapur district, a Forest Department official said on Tuesday.

Kiuli Bai was returning home from a paddy field on Monday evening when she was attacked by a tusker near Jhinga village in the Pratapur Forest Range, Divisional Forest Officer (Surgapur) J.R. Bhagat said.

Surgapur is located 174 km away from Raipur.

While other women with her managed to escape, the elephant caught hold of the victim with its trunk and slammed her on the

ground, killing her on the spot, the official said.

Forest and police personnel sent the body for post-mortem.

The deceased woman's kin were provided an instant relief of ₹25,000 while the remaining compensation of ₹5.75 lakh will be released after formalities are completed, the official said.

Villagers have been warned that a herd of 13 elephants has been roaming in the area since the last couple of days, Bhagat added.

Several incidents of human-elephant conflict have been reported in the past from northern Chhattisgarh, comprising Surguja, Surgapur, Korba, Raigarh, Jashpur, Balamrupur and Korea districts.

BJP to hold religious rituals, hoist saffron flag

STAFF REPORTER ■

RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh BJP President Vishnudeo Sai said on Tuesday that party workers will hold religious rituals and hoist saffron flags on their houses when the foundation stone for a grand Ram temple is laid in Ayodhya on Wednesday.

In the evening, everyone will light lamps to make the day a memorable one.

In a statement, Sai described Wednesday's event as the victory of the



aspirations of crores of Hindus and the end of slavery of thousands of years.

Recalling all the leaders involved in the Ram temple movement, Sai said it is due to their continuous efforts that the matter was kept alive. He particularly thanked former Deputy Prime Minister L.K. Advani.

Leader of Opposition in the state assembly Dhanamal Kaushik said Chhattisgarh is the maternal home of Lord Ram and so it is an important festival. He appealed to all citizens to light lamps on the occasion.

NMDC sees rise in iron ore production, sales

STAFF REPORTER ■

HYDERABAD/RAIPUR

NMDC Ltd, India's largest iron ore producer and a diversified Navaratna PSU, recorded a sharp rise in overall production and sales in July 2020, compared to July 2019, the company said on Tuesday.

During this period, despite the uncertain situation due to Covid-19, NMDC has achieved excellent physical performance through its continual push towards higher volumes.

This saw a production of 2.19 million tonnes (MT) and sales of 2.57 MT, growing by 13 percent and 7 percent over the corresponding period last year respectively.

In July 2020, the Chhattisgarh projects registered a production of

1.56 MT as compared to the 1.16 MT in July last year, an increase of 35 percent in production.

NMDC Ltd also achieved a record in July 2020 by selling 1.90 MT of iron ore in July 2020, against 1.60 MT in July 2019 - this is 20 percent more.

Sumit Deb, Chairman-cum-Managing Director of NMDC, said: "The last few months have been quite challenging for the entire industry due to the pandemic, impacting the performance of all major producers."

However, this challenge was treated as an opportunity by us to accelerate our efforts towards stabilizing the production and continuously improving our production processes. Going forward NMDC will strive to maximize cost efficiencies to improve its bottom-line."

'Sita ki Rasoi', Lakshman 'Gufa' to be beautified

STAFF REPORTER ■

RAIPUR

'Sita ki Rasoi' and a cave used by brothers Lord Ram and Lakshman are among the places visited by the hero of Ramayana while in exile in Chhattisgarh which are being developed now as tourist destinations.

The Sitamadi-Harchauki of Korea district and Ramgarh area of Surguja are going to get a facelift.

Ramgarh is known for one of the oldest 'natyshalas' of the world where Mahakavi Kalidas created his masterpiece 'Meghdootam'.

During his exile, Lord Ram entered present day Chhattisgarh via Korea district. Sitamadi-Harchauki in Janakpur area in Bharatpur Tehsil is believed to be his first stop.

A cave in Sitamadi-Harchauka area near Mavai



river has 17 rooms and is also known as 'Sita ki Rasoi'. There is a stone in the cave which is

This place is known as 'Harchauka (Rasoi or Kitchen).

Lord Ram reached 'Sitamadi-Ghagra' on the bank of Rapa river. Later, he travelled from Ghagra to Kitadola and then to Ramgarh hill in Surguja district, situated on the Ambikapur-Bilaspur, and also known as Ramgiri.

During his exile, Lord Ram spent some days here with his wife Sita and brother Lakshman. This is why these caves are known by their names in folk tales such as Jogimara, Sita Bengra and Lakshman Gufa.

Development of all the places connected to Lord Ram's exile in Chhattisgarh as pilgrim-tourist destination is an ambitious project of Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel.

The government has identified 75 places related to Lord Ram's exile.

believed to have footprints of Lord Ram. It also houses a Shivaling.

RT-PCR testing begins at Ambikapur Medical College

STAFF REPORTER ■

AMBIKAPUR

The RT-PCR Covid testing began at the Government Medical College at Ambikapur on Tuesday, officials said.

On Monday the RT-PCR testing started at the Bilaspur Medical College.

As per official information, the Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) had recently permitted three government high-level BSL-2 labs at the Medical Colleges in Bilaspur, Ambikapur and Rajnandgaon to begin RT-PCR testing.

Very soon, the testing will begin at the



Rajnandgaon Medical College, officials said.

For effective detection and control of coronavirus, the Chhattisgarh government is stressing on more and more testing for which

the required technical and manpower are being continuously upgraded, officials said.

Initially, only 100 samples will be tested at the Bilaspur and Ambikapur

Medical Colleges.

Currently, RT-PCR testing is happening at AIIMS Raipur, Dr BR Ambedkar Memorial Hospital Raipur and the Jagdalpur and Raigarh government Medical Colleges.

To cover more patients, True-Nat and rapid antigen kits are also being used. As per official information, by Monday 9,800 people have been detected as Covid positive in Chhattisgarh. Of these, 2,256 were discharged while currently there are 2,483 active Covid patients.

Also, 61 persons have lost their lives due to the deadly virus.

Fake medicines, supplies among major Covid cybercrimes in Asia

New Delhi ■

IANIS

Online sale of fake medical supplies, drugs and personal protective equipment, and exploitation of teleconference tools are the major Covid-19 cybercrime trends in Asia, said Interpol in a report released on Tuesday.

The 'Covid-19 Cybercrime Analysis Report - August 2020', which assesses the impact of the coronavirus pandemic on cybercrime, also stated, "Circulation of fake news and misinformation related to Covid-19 has been reported by most ASP (Asia and South Pacific) member countries."

It also pointed out that major challenge in Asia was lack of cyber-security awareness and 'hygiene'.

The assessment of the impact of Covid-19 on cybercrime has shown a significant target shift from individuals and small businesses to major corporations, governments and critical infrastructure, it

said.

The report also stated that as organisations and businesses are rapidly deploying remote systems and networks to support staff working from home, cybercriminals are taking advantage of increased security vulnerabilities to steal data, generate profits and cause disruption.

In one four-month period (January to April) some 907,000 spam messages, 737 incidents related to malware and 48,000 malicious URLs - all related to Covid-19 - were detected by one of Interpol's private sector partners.

"Cybercriminals are developing and boosting their attacks at an alarming pace, exploiting the fear and uncertainty caused by the unstable social and economic situation created by Covid-19," Interpol Secretary General Jurgen Stock said in a statement.

"The increased online dependency for people around the world, is also



creating new opportunities, with many businesses and individuals not ensuring their cyber defences are up to date. The report's findings again underline the need for closer public-private sector cooperation if we are to effectively tackle the

threat Covid-19 also poses to our cyber health," he said.

Interpol stated that the threat actors have revised their usual online scams and phishing schemes.

By deploying Covid-19-themed phishing emails, often

impersonating government and health authorities, cybercriminals entice victims into providing their personal data and downloading malicious content.

"Around two-thirds of member countries which

responded to the global cybercrime survey reported a significant use of Covid-19 themes for phishing and online fraud since the outbreak," the report said.

It also stated that cybercriminals are increasingly using disruptive malware against critical infrastructure and healthcare institutions, due to the potential for high impact and financial benefit.

In the first two weeks of April, there was a spike in ransomware attacks by multiple threat groups which had been relatively dormant for the past few months.

Law enforcement investigations show the majority of attackers estimated quite accurately the maximum amount of ransom they could demand from the targeted organisations, the report stated.

It also stated that the deployment of data harvesting malware such as Remote Access Trojan, info stealers, spyware and banking Trojans

by cybercriminals is on the rise.

Using Covid-19 related information as a lure, threat actors infiltrate systems to compromise networks, steal data, divert money and build botnets.

Taking advantage of the increased demand for medical supplies and information on Covid-19, there has been a significant increase of cybercriminals registering domain names containing keywords, such as 'coronavirus' or 'Covid'.

These fraudulent websites underpin a wide variety of malicious activities including C2 servers, malware deployment and phishing.

From February to March 2020, a 569 per cent growth in malicious registrations, including malware and phishing and a 788 per cent growth in high-risk registrations were detected and reported to Interpol by a private sector partner.

Increasing amount of misinformation and fake news is spreading rapidly

among the public, the Interpol cautioned.

Unverified information, inadequately understood threats, and conspiracy theories have contributed to anxiety in communities and in some cases, facilitated the execution of cyberattacks.

Nearly 30 per cent of countries which responded to the global cybercrime survey confirmed the circulation of false information related to Covid-19.

"Within a one-month period, one country reported 290 postings with the majority containing concealed malware," the report stated.

There are also reports of misinformation being linked to the illegal trade of fraudulent medical commodities.

Other cases of misinformation involved scams via mobile text-messages containing 'too good to be true' offers such as free food, special benefits, or large discounts in supermarkets.

Crisis in Punjab Cong after MP, Raj

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



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

After Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan, internal wrangling within the Congress has now surfaced in Punjab. Punjab Congress chief Sunil Jakhar on Tuesday said he has written to party president Sonia Gandhi seeking immediate action for anti-party activities against the party's two Rajya Sabha MPs Pratap Singh Bajwa and Shamsheer Singh Dullu who have gone to town attacking its own Government over the tragic hooch incident.

Both Bajwa and Dullu have petitioned the a special Governor demanding a CBI and ED probe into the hooch tragedy and directly blamed Chief Minister Capt. Amarinder Singh for turning a blind eye to the alert they had sounded earlier. Jakhar described the attack of the two MPs on their own government as a 'copy-paste job' of what happened in Rajasthan in January when in the wake of 107 infant deaths there, Sachin Pilot had flayed his own government that added

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

Congress' chief spokesman Randeep Surjewala on Tuesday maintained that the only condition for talks with the dissenting Rajasthan MLAs is that they leave the BJP's 'suraksha chakra' (protection). "Innocent kids are being killed, gang rapes are taking place, people are being beaten up in Gurugram. There is no police available for them, but 1,000 policemen are deployed for the security of 19 upset MLAs. The legislators should first give up the Haryana police's security, and friendship and hospitality of the BJP, return home and only then will the dialogue take place," said Surjewala on the sidelines

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

Rajasthan chief minister Ashok Gehlot, who earlier served harsh words against his former Deputy CM, struck a softer note saying he would welcome his deputy back and other dissident MLAs as well if the party's high command forgives them (dissenting MLAs), I will hug them. I have no prestige point," Gehlot said while talking to the media outside a Jaipur hotel, where the MLAs were to be shifted ahead of the assembly session from August 14.

Gehlot has also rejected the claim of dissident Congress MLAs that their work was not being done. The rift in the State Congress came to the fore before they can cause any serious damage. Enough is enough now and he has demanded serious action against them from the party president," Jakhar said.

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

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

Other leaders who reached out to Pilot then were former Union Minister P Chidambaram and powerful party functionary Ahmed Patel. "None, perhaps in the history of Congress might have received so much of pamper as Sachin Pilot received in terms of about 20 senior leaders including Rahul and Priyanka asking him to pacify. We will try again ahead of the Assembly session," Surjewala said.

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

₹455 crore loan for JNU infra development

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

JNU Vice Chancellor Jagdish Kumar Mamidala said the funds allotted will be used for the construction of a vast range of infrastructure-related projects on campus. "The funds allotted by HEFA shall be utilised for the construction of hostels for students and research centres of Engineering and Atal Bihari Vajpayee School of Management & Entrepreneurship, Trans-Disciplinary Academic Research, Advanced Animal Research Facility," Mamidala said in a University Press statement.

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

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



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

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

"The Special Centre for E-learning shall impart education by offering online degree programs to many such students who could not be admitted to JNU. These students can benefit from the expertise of JNU faculty," the statement added. The news for the first time in the news for the wrong reasons, the JNU has over 8,000 students who are accommodated in 18 hostels with one even for married students.

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CBI on Tuesday conducted searches at 11 locations including Jammu, Udhampur and Kathua Districts of Jammu and Kashmir at the offices and residential premises of public servants involved in the land grab case. Earlier, a Preliminary Enquiry was conducted by the CBI on the investigation of a case, registered on the allegations of large scale illegal construction/encroachment of land in the location of Patnitop area of Udhampur District.

In its case, the CBI has accused 74 persons including eight public servants and 66 proprietors of hotels, resorts taking any action thereon. A Preliminary Enquiry was conducted by the CBI on the directions of the High Court of J&K in the matter.

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

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

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

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

The three former CEOs of PDA accused in the case are MM Malik, Additional Transport Commissioner of Jammu Rakesh Kumar Srangal, Joint Transport Commissioner Raman Kumar Kesar, Deputy Commissioner of Sales Tax Ramesh Singh and Inspectors Amresh Jasrotia and Zaheer Abbas.

Bihar polls: EC seeks parties' opinion by Aug 11



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

Application invited by Aug 31

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



(SSCW) are being considered and all of them have been instructed to submit their application forms, option certificate and other related documents to Army headquarters not later than August 31, it stated. Specimen formats and detailed checklists have been included in the administrative instructions in order to facilitate correct documentation, the Army said adding the selection board will be scheduled immediately after receipt and verification of applications.

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

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

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

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

Singhvi favours comprehensive, aggressive policy against China

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

Covid-19 virus more virulent to males compared to female



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

"About 37 per cent of

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

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

The study has been published in the European Heart Journal.

Sharp spike in Covid-19 cases likely in coming days

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

Almost 50,000 Covid-19 cases are being reported daily over the past few days. However, the cases are all set to be on the higher side as more tests means detection of more cases, indicated Union Health secretary Rajesh Bhushan while addressing a press briefing.

He said that presently 28 states and UTs are performing more than 140 Covid-19 tests per day. The rate of testing per lakh or per million population as the parameter defined by the WHO.

However, as the remaining seven States are yet to improve their testing capacity, the officials do not rule out more cases once they too enhance their test rate. "A total of 28 states and UTs are conducting more than 140 COVID-19 tests per day per million population. India is successfully trying to curb the rate of testing per lakh or per million, what is the test positivity rate," she said in an interactive session through video conference.

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

More than 2 crore Covid-19 tests have been conducted, including more than 6.6 lakh tests in the last 24 hours. Recovered cases are now double of the active cases. In fact, Soumya Swaminathan, WHO's chief scientist at a video conference at Geneva too expressed concerns that India has a low testing rate when compared to some of the countries that are successfully trying to curb it.

"In India as a whole, the testing rates are much lower compared to some of the countries, who have done well like Germany, Taiwan, South Korea, Japan. Even the United States is testing a huge number of people. So we need to have some benchmark and every public health department needs to have benchmarks on what is the rate of testing per lakh or per million, what is the test positivity rate," she said in an interactive session through video conference.

More than 18K desi ventilators supplied within 2 months

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

Union Health Secretary Rajesh Bhushan on Tuesday also said that funds from PM Cares fund were utilised to procure about 30,000 ventilators worth ₹2,000 crore.

An order for 30,000 ventilators has been placed with Bharat Electronics Limited (BEL). Bhushan said adding that Scannray provides tech support to BEL. Further orders of 13,500 ventilators from Andhra Pradesh MedTech Zone (AMTZ) and 10,000 ventilators from AgVa have been placed by the Union Health Ministry.



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

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

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

RAM TEMPLE BHOOMI PUJAN

Corona test certificate mandatory for invitees

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

Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teertha Kshetra Trust chairman Shri Ram Chandra Prasad said the temple was taken as a precautionary measure due to the coronavirus situation in the country. "Only those who have medical certificates and have been tested negative for coronavirus will be allowed entry for the 'bhumi puja' on Wednesday," he said.

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

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

Silver coin for every guest

IAS ■ AYODHYA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

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

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

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

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

He said "the police were

tearing down the hoardings of the government will not cause any hindrance to those who will celebrate this ceremony," Ghosh said.

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

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

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

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

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

Majority of these leaders

continue to remain in a 'state of shock' and find it difficult to stomach the fact that the ruling National Conference, instead of consolidating its base the Bharatiya Janta Party is also facing resistance for failing to come up to the expectations of the people in the last one year.

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

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

In the absence of the elected government in office the 'trickle down' government

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

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

Speaking to The Pioneer, a senior IAS officer, Rishi Kant Singh, who is holding the charge of Power Development Department and Spokesman of Jammu and Kashmir govern-

ment said, "in the last one year several flagship projects have been completed and work is going on to complete the remaining projects to ensure their timely completion."

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

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

Till June 2018 before the BJP-PDP alliance got collapsed only 26 percent of the total fund was utilised. At present around 49 percent i.e. Rs 28,768 crore has been utilised. The total package was worth 80,000 crores.

Rs 58,627 crore was allocated for the Union Territory of J&K. A total of 63 infrastruc-

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

In the last one year the government also approved resumption of issuing of certificates to West Pakistani refugees, Valmiki Community, Gorkhas, earlier considered as non state subjects and were deprived of their citizenship rights.

During the period the government also approved reservation benefits to people living along the international border (IB) in Jammu and Kashmir.

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

The government made the amendments in Jammu and Kashmir Reservation Rules, providing reservation for 1,083 people residing in 508 villages along the IB, in direct recruitments, professional institutions and post-graduate courses. Another senior IAS officer, currently holding the charge of Agriculture, Animal and Sheep Husbandry department, Navin Choudhary told The Pioneer, "while preparing for the Investors' meet we finalised sector wise policy framework of different departments to attract investment in Jammu and Kashmir. He said, "in the wake of Covid-19 pandemic the investors meet could not be organised but the policy environment shortages were addressed."

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

pened due to the lean structure of the government. "Compared to the previous set up the decision making process is faster in the new dispensation".

Sharing a report card of his own department Navin Choudhary said, "around 10,50 lakh farmers have been enrolled for Kisan Credit Card scheme in Jammu and Kashmir". Out of this 4 lakh cards were distributed during special drives in the recent weeks. He said, due to prevailing circumstances centering around Covid-19 pandemic, we are focusing on strengthening the primary sector in Jammu and Kashmir. The manufacturing and the services sector has taken a major hit so in order to protect the economy and small farmers we are extending them financial services and opening the doors for them to sustain themselves instead of getting into the trap of local money lenders.

Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan called off his media interaction in the last minute

curfew of the pandemic and left the hospitals for home, things are becoming worse in the State. All 14 districts saw more persons affected with the coronavirus through local transmission. There were 71 persons who could not attend the hospital from where they got infected. Three persons lost their lives during the last 24 hours.

108 die, 5,603 new cases in TN

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

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

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

While the State had 56, 698 active cases on Monday, the numbers came down to 55, 152 by Tuesday evening, said the bulletin issued by the Government of Tamil Nadu.

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

The situation in Chennai showed some improvement as the number of persons tested positive for the pandemic came down to 1,023. There is a strong feeling that situation in Chennai is gradually improving. But the same could not be said about the three neighbouring districts of the Metropolis, Chengalpattu (248), Kanchipuram (220) and Thiruvallur (358) remained areas of concern similar to Virudhunagar in south (424).

Gold smuggling: NIA takes 2 more persons in custody

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ CHENNAI

A source in the National Investigation Agency (NIA) probing the gold smuggling scam in Kerala told *The Pioneer* that investigation is moving in the right direction and speed and more powerful people would be taken into custody soon. "It is slow process, but it is not possible to take cases like this take place. Whatever information we have collected is capable to take us to the doorsteps of the powerful and mighty," said the official.

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

Meanwhile, the agency handed over the case diary and other docu-

ments related to the arrest of Swapna Suresh and Sandeep Nair, the kingpins of the gold smuggling scam, to the court hearing their bail application. "The court has asked us to ensure that there is sufficient proof so that we could slap the UAPA charge against the accused. We handed over the materials for the consideration of the court and the court has granted bail under which we could bring them under the UAPA (Unlawful Activities Prevention Act)," said Jaishankar V Nair, lawyer representing the agency in this case.

Interestingly, the Kerala Police does not ignore the anonymous exam investigation. The general feeling is that the State's police force is under orders from its top bosses not to help the NIA but even to deride the probe. The allegation that Swapna Suresh and Sarith could escape from Kerala to Bangalore (from where the NIA arrested them) could be the tacit support of the Kerala Police.

UPSC results: Pradeep Singh tops exam

PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

results of 11 candidates have been withheld.

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

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

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

1,083 infected in Kerala

KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI

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

Though 1,021 persons were cured of the pandemic and left the hospitals for home, things are becoming worse in the State. All 14 districts saw more persons affected with the coronavirus through local transmission. There were 71 persons who could not attend the hospital from where they got infected. Three persons lost their lives during the last 24 hours.

Chief Minister Pinarayi

Vijayan called off his media interaction in the last minute curfew of the pandemic and left the hospitals for home, things are becoming worse in the State. All 14 districts saw more persons affected with the coronavirus through local transmission. There were 71 persons who could not attend the hospital from where they got infected. Three persons lost their lives during the last 24 hours.

Those who infected with the virus on Tuesday include 16 health workers and 35 javans of the ITBP station at Alappuzha. The data also saw the hospitalization of 1,241 patients. There are 509 hotspots in the State.

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

PRADEEP SAXENA ■ ALIGARH

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

A woman arrived at Gandhi Park police station in Aligarh district on Monday evening. She told the police that she was married to a young man Aamir, resident of Uttar Pradesh who was killed in a murder case. "Bulandshahr on June 1. On July 1, a month after her marriage, she came to her maternal home in Aligarh. After which, on July 17, she reached back to her in-laws.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU

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

Topping the charts from Jammu region, Abhishek Augustya, secured AIR 38. He comes from the family of POJK refugees currently settled in the border belt of RS Pura.

Abhishek is currently undergoing training at the Shimla and border areas of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh Academy of Audit and Accounts. He has secured AIR 268 in UPSC 2018.

Three other candidates from Jammu, Sunny Gupta secured AIR (148), Dev Abhiot (177) and Parth Gupta 240. Speaking to The Pioneer over the telephone from Shimla, Abhishek Augustya credited his success to the overall support extended by his family and close friends who motivated him throughout the long journey. Abhishek's father is lecturer in government higher secondary school in Sai close to Indo-Pak border and his mother is a teacher in a private school. His sister is pursuing PG in surgery from GMC Jammu.

An alumni of National Institute of Technology, Srinagar, Abhishek completed his schooling from DAV school

RS Pura and Higher secondary from Govt Boys school, RS Pura. After completing his Computer engineering he went to New Delhi to prepare for UPSC examinations. After failing in the first three attempts he cracked the exam last year securing 68th rank and this year he improved his ranking and made it to the top 50. Two other candidates who made it to the list Dr Asrar Ahmad Kitchloo (248) and Asif Yusuf Tantray (328), come from distant areas of Bhaderwah and Kulgam.

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

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

NORTHERN RAILWAY NOTICE INVITING TENDER	
Name of work and its location	30-Electrification of T-20-21-23 General Electrification of T-20-21-23 Installed at Gate No. 2A, 2B, 2C & 2D Railway Board New Delhi.
Approx cost of the work in	Rs. 15.87 lacs
Address of the office	Sr. Divt. Electr. Engineer/General, New Delhi.
Earnest Money	Rs. 13000.00
Date & time of submission	31.08.2020, 12.00 hrs.
Opening of tender	31.08.2020, 12.00 hrs.
Website & notice board	www.irps.gov.in S. Divt. Electr. Engineer/General, New Delhi.

NORTHERN RAILWAY TENDER NOTICE	
The Dy. Chief Engineer/Const.-I, Northern Railway, State Entry Road, New Delhi for and on behalf of President of India invites Open tender under Single Packet System for the work noted below:	
Name of work and its location	Hiring of 02 (Two) Nos. Non-AC Vehicle such as "Jeep, Gypsy, Tata Sumo type of vehicle" on monthly basis for a period of 03 (Three) months for the officers working in the unit of Dy. Chief Engineer/Construction-I, Northern Railway, State Entry Road, New Delhi (Second Call)
Completion period of the work	36 (Thirty six) months from the date of issue of Letter of Acceptance
Approximate cost of work	₹32.94 Lakh (Rupees Thirty Two Lakh & Ninety Four Thousand only)
Earnest Money amount (to be deposited only)	₹5,00,000/- (Rupees Fifty Five Thousand Nine Hundred only)
Tenders may be submitted up to 11.30 hrs. on 28.08.2020 on submission of (REPS) website (i.e. www.irps.gov.in). The bidders can e-tender and only participate in the e-tender, the tender will be opened at 11.30 hrs. on 28.08.2020.	
Detailed Tender Notice: The detailed e-tender notice is available on Northern Railway website (i.e. www.nri.in/nri/railways.gov.in). Above tenders document will be available on (REPS) website (i.e. www.irps.gov.in) from 07.08.2020 to 28.08.2020. All other terms and conditions in respect of above tenders are given in tender document. The detailed tender notice also can be seen on the Notice Board of the above office.	
No.	220-AC/11162N/VE/ER dated: 04.08.2020
SERVING CUSTOMERS WITH A SMILE	

SEARCH FOR MISSING

General public is hereby informed that one male named **Deepak Kumar Sharma, S/o: Kailash Sharma, R/o T-13/3991, 1st Floor, Bajaj Nagar, Delhi. Age: 23 years. Height: 5'8". Complexion: Shallow. Face: Long. Built: Medium, wearing Dark Blue colour Capri and Maroon colour T-Shirt and Sleeper in feet,** has been missing from his house since 22.07.2020. In this regard a DD NO. 50-A, dated 23.07.2020 has been lodged at P.S. Patel Nagar, New Delhi

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

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

SHO P.S. Patel Nagar, New Delhi

SEARCH FOR MISSING

General public is hereby informed that two boys namely (1) Yashpal Singh @ Suraj, S/o: Ajay Kumar, R/o 157C JG-II, Vikas Puri, New Delhi. Age: 19 years, Height: 5'10", Complexion: Wheatish, Face: Round, Built: Strong, and (2) Harsh Kumar @ Nona, S/o: Late Shyam Kumar, R/o 157 C, JG-II, Vikas Puri, New Delhi. Age: 14 years, Height: 5'2", Complexion: Fair, Face: Oval, Built: Fat, both has been missing with Silver colour Honda Access Scooty No. DL45BR7277 since 16.07.2020 from their house. In this regard a FIR No. 538/20 U/S 363 IPC, dated 20.07.2020, has been registered at P.S. Vikas Puri, New Delhi

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

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

SHO P.S. Vikas Puri, New Delhi

After Ayodhya

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



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

So what after Ayodhya? Is it the culmination of temple politics or will it be milked further electorally? Or will it spur a demand for more reclamations at Kashi and Mathura? At one time, hardliners would have been enthusiastic but the BJP's ideological anchor, the RSS, is itself cautious about continuing the temple issue beyond the *Ram janmabhoomi*. In fact, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat has categorically said that there are no plans for either Kashi or Mathura, that the RSS does not get into agitations and that the Ram temple was an exception. Having won a massive mandate, the BJP had to address its core constituency and has delivered a promise made many years ago and which at one time seemed just manifesto material. But both the RSS and the BJP are also realist about consolidating power. While the nation heaved a collective sigh of relief at the resolution of the Ayodhya dispute, there is undoubtedly a sense of fatigue about continuing politics in the name of Ram. There are much bigger concerns in the post-pandemic world to tackle, the bleak economy and restarting the nation once again. Even Ayodhya wants to get back to normal, hoping the temple will accelerate the local economy. Besides, the BJP's image has already taken a beating courtesy hate crimes, 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 raja* 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 Non-Performing Assets (NPA) ratio of scheduled commercial banks (SCBs) could rise up to 14.7 per cent by March 2021 from the current 8.5 per cent in March 2020. This piece of news was followed up by former RBI Governor Urjit Patel's shocking revelation that the central bank wanted to be tough against the loan defaulters but the Government wanted him to "go soft", which eventually forced him to resign. A series of happenings in the banking sector in recent times has made everyone doubt the character and intentions of the current Government to recapitalise public sector banks (PSBs).

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

On the one hand, the Government is trying to infuse private capital into the PSBs and on the other, it is forcing both the State Bank of India (SBI) and Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) to bail out failed private sector banks such as Yes Bank. The statements and actions of the Government appear to contradict each other. A comparison of the BSE PSU bank index of India (SBI) 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 ₹4,545 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 ₹5.6 lakh crore due to frauds in the last six years (FY 2014-15 to 2019-20). Since July 19, 1969, when 14 banks were nationalised, they have been contributing immensely to build credit lines for the marginalised sectors like agriculture. The National Credit Council, in its meeting held in July 1968, emphasised that commercial banks should finance priority sectors like agriculture and small-scale industries.

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

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

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

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

Merely privatising the PSBs will get us nowhere. Along with this move, the need is for sector-specific reforms. In his book, *What the Economy Needs*, Now, Rajan has suggested that privatisation be just one element of the overall reform process. It should not become the foremost plank in banking sector reform and is fraught with adverse consequences.

To put it simply, Rajan is of the view that "simple" solutions like privatising PSBs may be no panacea. Consolidation and privatisation of PSBs can have little to do with setting Indian banking

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

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

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

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

SOUNDBITE

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

Actor — Sharman Joshi



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

UN Chief — António Guterres



Hindutva is now the basic coat on the canvas of polity and political parties subscribing to its various shades, as well as being 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, a 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 bloss-



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

G David Milton Maruthanocod

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 PMOs 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 Kamraj. 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 madder roles within the party and in Congress-ruled States. The politically-savvy old guard managed to block all attempts to bring a non-Gandhi to the helm of the party and bring back Sonia when Rahul resigned last August. Rahul himself criticised the old guard in the May 25 Congress Working Committee meeting.

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

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

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

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

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

POINT COUNTERPOINT



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

—PUNJAB CHIEF MINISTER

AMARINDER SINGH

Miles to go in J&K

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



PRAMOD JAIN

During the last one year, Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) has seen many far-reaching changes. On August 5, 2019, the Parliament revoked Articles 35A and 370 of the Indian Constitution and reorganised J&K through an Act of Parliament, carving J&K as well as Ladakh as Union Territories (UTs) out of the erstwhile State. The J&K Constitution became inoperative, all Central laws now extend to J&K and many State laws are inoperative. The 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 localisation — 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 women in the State services; they need encouragement, exposure and training. Post-1990, the J&K Police managed to get enormous authority, manpower, infrastructure and funds. But they need to adequately attend to maintaining law and order, crime management and public safety. This should 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-citizen, 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. The 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 enervation of the administrative structure and agency, coupled with enforcing accountability and productivity, especially at the cutting edge levels, will reduce citizens' trust deficit, enhance social capital and mainstream the marginalised population — the processes of social engineering necessary for inclusive development.

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

The newly-empowered Panchayati Raj Institutions (PRIs) and municipal bodies must not be seen as the Government's departmental appendages or field units, as the officers tend to be seen, but as separate *loci* of power. Better functioning bodies must be given additional responsibilities and funds so as to build their stake in local area development. A new and revamped grievance redress mechanism (complaints registering methodology) needs to be put in place so that people can raise their voice about all that is unwanted or unacceptable. The old practice of officers holding regular camps in villages and at the *tehsil* headquarters needs to be strengthened and institutionalised. All complaint 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 a judge in his own cause; there would be no arbitrariness in decisions taken by public authorities. The celebrated historian and author, Niall Ferguson, avers that the decline in the rule of law is a major factor contributing to the degeneration of nations.

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

Political party development: Though the timing of the electoral event is the sole discretion of the Election Commission of India, election to the State Assembly is the logical next step. Since political parties are 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 ideologies with a grip over the political economy and public policy issues, those who can link up the macro and micro, and devise vision, mission, strategy and plan of action to establish a bottom-up interface with the voters, especially the younger ones.

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

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

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

The kingmaker with the heart of a king

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



SANTANU GANGULY

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

So I conveyed the message to the organisers. But to my surprise, they informed me that the Samajwadi Party leader and Rajya Sabha member was not to 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 political

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

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

Those moments spent with Amar Singh, while waiting for Arvind Kejriwal to arrive, turned out to be very memorable. I got the opportunity to talk to the veteran politician, industrialist, the close friend of Bollywood royalty Amitabh Bachchan and the kingmaker of Indian politics over very close of 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



harshest 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 Osiatis. 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 Gautam 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 the people who 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 to the auditorium 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, "Krun, nahi pelhane ji" (Don't 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 deep knowledge 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)



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)

AFGHAN PRISON ATTACK

Kerala doctor among ISIS suicide bombers

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

Official sources told IANS that the ISIS suicide bomber has been identified as Kallukettiyil Purayil Jias, a physician and resident of Kasargod in Kerala.

On Sunday evening, as per official sources in Kabul, 11 ISIS terrorists stormed the Jalalabad prison to break free their cadres, killing 39 people. In a fierce gun-battle which lasted for almost 24 hours, the Afghan security forces killed all the 11 attackers.

Jias, according to the National Intelligence Agency (NIA) which has been investigating his case, went to Afghanistan to join the Islamic State's Khurasan Province branch of Daesh, the global Islamist terror group, in 2016. As per the NIA, Jias was in the case, Jias had gone to Afghanistan along with his pregnant wife Refaella. While Jias at the time was 33 years old, his wife was 26. Sources said Refaella and their child are in the custody of Afghan authorities.



The July 2016, a parent from Kasargod had lodged a police complaint, stating that his 30-year-old son Abdul Rashid was missing along with his wife Ayisha (Sonia Sebastian) and child for almost two months after they had gone to Mumbai. Around the same time, 14 other cases of missing people, including Jias, were registered by their parents and relatives in the police station of the same area. Preliminary investigation revealed that the missing persons had left India to join the ISIS.

During the investigation by Kerala Police, the role of 29-year-old Yasmeen Mohammad Zahid, a resident of Batla House in Jamia Nagar, New Delhi, but originally from Sitamarhi district in Bihar, as a co-conspirator of Abdul Rashid was revealed.

She was arrested on August 1, 2016, after she got intercepted at the Indira Gandhi International Airport in New Delhi while attempting to flee India for Afghanistan along with her child.

As per the Kerala police, Yasmeen was actively aiding Abdul Rashid in his activities, including raising funds to support the ISIS. The case was handed over to the NIA after she was arrested.

The NIA investigation revealed that Yasmeen "was highly influenced and radicalised with the pro-jihad ideology" and recruited the main accused Abdul Rashid. She "compelled her husband to divorce her and upon her compulsion, her husband pronounced third talaq in the month of Ramadan, 2015. Immediately after the third talaq, she had left her place of work at Kollam and gone to the house of Jias at Kasargod for attending the secret, pro-ISIS classes conducted by Abdul Rashid," the NIA chargesheet said.

The NIA investigation revealed that Abdul Rashid, Yasmeen and others were involved in activities to further the objectives of the ISIS in Kerala and other places of India. Fifteen people, including Jias, had fled the country to join the terror group in Nangarhar province in Afghanistan. Though the NATO and Afghan forces claim to have killed most ISIS members in Nangarhar, sources said many escaped from the region. In the chargesheet, the NIA listed Jias, a resident of Hamsa Sagar, Thekperum, near the government hospital in Padana, Kasargod, as an accused and absconder in the case. IANS

UK lawmakers urge sanctions over Hong Kong police violence

London: British lawmakers investigating rights violations by Hong Kong police have urged the UK Government to sanction the city's leader for allowing "excessive police violence" toward humanitarian workers helping those injured in pro-democracy protests.

Tuesday's report from the bipartisan All Party Parliamentary Group on Hong Kong said first aid workers, as well as doctors and nurses, have been subjected to intimidation, threats, physical violence and arrests during months-long clashes between police and protesters that began in the city last year.

"The Hong Kong Police Force's treatment of humanitarian aid workers and their interference within hospitals have resulted in injured protesters not receiving the required medical care at any time or at all," the report said.

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



"clearly a systematic and quite deliberate" change that aligned more with policing in mainland China.

The report's authors said they drew their conclusions after receiving over 1,000 pieces of written evidence and hearing many firsthand experiences from witnesses.

It called for Britain to urgently impose sanctions on Hong Kong leader Carrie Lam and the city's police commissioner.

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

Lankans to vote in parliamentary election today

Colombo: Sri Lankans will vote in the twice-postponed parliamentary election on Wednesday with the powerful Rajapaksa family-run party expected to gain control of the assembly that could allow them to amend the Constitution to restore presidential powers.

Over 16 million people are eligible to vote to elect 196 out of a total of 225 lawmakers for the next five years. Twenty-nine others will be named from a national list according to the number of votes received by each party.

The counting would take place only on the following morning - a departure from the practice of counting the ballots from 8 pm on the election night. President Gotabaya Rajapaksa has hopes for a two-thirds majority for the Sri Lanka People's Party (SLPP) in the general election so that he can amend the Constitution to restore presidential powers curbed by a 2015 constitution. Rajapaksa is the brother-in-law of former president Mahinda Rajapaksa, who is seeking reelection as prime minister, is assured of a sweeping victory as the main opposition is badly divided. PTI

China accuses US of 'outright bullying' over TikTok

Beijing: China accused the United States on Tuesday of "bullying" over popular video app TikTok, after President Donald Trump ramped up pressure for its US operations to be sold to an American company.

In the latest diplomatic spat between the world's two biggest economies, Beijing hit back after Trump gave TikTok six weeks to arrange a sale of its US operations - and said that his government wanted a financial benefit from the deal.

"This goes against the principles of the market economy and the (World Trade Organization's) principles of openness, transparency and non-discrimination," said foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin.

The app has been under federal security scrutiny, and Trump said that Microsoft was

in talks to buy TikTok. He has given ByteDance until mid-September to strike a deal, a tactic that is almost unheard of.

"It's got to be an American company... it's got to be owned here," Trump said on Monday. "We don't want to have any problem with security."

The US and China have clashed over various fronts recently, essentially barring Chinese telecoms company Huawei from the US market and waging a global campaign to isolate the company over national security concerns.

Beijing slammed the latest move as a "political manipulation," Wang told a regular press briefing Tuesday. "The US, without providing any evidence, has been using an abused concept of national security... unjustifiably suppressing certain non-US companies."

Malaysia police raid AI Jazeera's office, seize 2 computers

AP ■ KUALA LUMPUR

News broadcaster Al Jazeera said Malaysian police raided its Kuala Lumpur office Tuesday, calling it a "troubling escalation" in a government crackdown on media freedom.

Police opened an investigation last month into an Al Jazeera documentary on the treatment of undocumented migrants after officials complained it was inaccurate and biased. Seven Al Jazeera staff members have been grilled by police as part of the probe for alleged sedition, defamation and violating the Communications and Multimedia Act.

Al Jazeera, a Qatari-state owned broadcaster, said in a statement that police seized two computers during Tuesday's raid, which it called "an attack on press freedom as a whole." It urged Malaysian authorities to cease the criminal investigation. AFP

Pak court appoints 3 senior lawyers as amici curiae in Jadhav's case

Islamabad: A top Pakistani court has named three senior lawyers as amici curiae in the case of Kulbhushan Jadhav as it ordered the Pakistan government to provide a "reasonable" death-row prisoner.

Jadhav, the 50-year-old retired Indian Navy officer, was sentenced to death by a Pakistani military court on charges of espionage and terrorism in April 2017.

India approached the International Court of Justice against Pakistan for denial of consular access to Jadhav and challenging the death sentence.

The Hague-based ICJ ruled in July 2019 that Pakistan must undertake an "effective review and reconsideration" of the conviction and sentence of Jadhav and also to grant consular access to India without further delay.

A two-member bench of the Islamabad High Court (IHC) comprising Chief Justice

Athar Minallah and Justice Mianul Hassan Aurangzeb appointed the three lawyers on Monday as it held a hearing of the petition filed by the Pakistan government to appoint a lawyer to the military court.

"We feel that in order to ensure the effectiveness of the review and reconsideration of the conviction and sentence of Commander Jadhav, a reasonable opportunity ought to be extended to the latter and the Government of India to arrange legal representation and to file a petition."

"We, therefore, at this stage restrain ourselves from appointing a counsel on behalf of Commander Jadhav and advise the Government of Pakistan to extend an opportunity to Jadhav and the Government of India for arranging legal representation in terms of Article 32(1)(c) of the constitution and in accordance with the applicable law the court order said. PTI

ed," the court said in its order.

The Pakistan government in its petition has claimed that Jadhav refused to file a review petition or an application to reconsider the verdict against him by the military court.

"We feel that in order to ensure the effectiveness of the review and reconsideration of the conviction and sentence of Commander Jadhav, a reasonable opportunity ought to be extended to the latter and the Government of India to arrange legal representation and to file a petition."

"We, therefore, at this stage restrain ourselves from appointing a counsel on behalf of Commander Jadhav and advise the Government of Pakistan to extend an opportunity to Jadhav and the Government of India for arranging legal representation in terms of Article 32(1)(c) of the constitution and in accordance with the applicable law the court order said. PTI

UK suspends digital visa processing tool amid allegations of racism

London: The UK government on Tuesday said that it will be suspending the use of a digital tool to process visas amid a legal challenge that claimed it amounted to "racism" as the computer algorithm discriminated against applicants on the basis of nationality by design.

The Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants (JCWI) and digital rights group Foxglove, which had initiated the Judicial Review challenge against the system in the High Court in London in June, celebrated the suspension of the artificial intelligence (AI) based system.

"We have been reviewing how the visa application streaming tool operates and will be redesigning our process to make them even more secure and robust," a UK Home Office spokesperson said.

"We do not accept the allegations Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants made in their Judicial Review claim because it lacks evidence and is still ongoing it would not be appropriate for the department to comment any further," the spokesperson said.

From Friday, the current Streaming Tool will no longer be used with a redesign expected to be in place in a few months' time by autumn.

In the interim period, the Home Office said the streaming or sifting of the "overwhelming majority" of visa applications received by the UK will be done by person-centric attributes, such as evidence of previous travel, and nationality will not be taken into account.

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

MOULIN COMMERCIAL LIMITED					
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Reg. Off: 1, Anand Grand, Aya Nagar, M.G. Road, New Delhi - 47					
Corp. Off: 11A, Park Road, Tower - B, Golf Course Road, Sector-54, Gurgaon-122002, Haryana, India					
Extract of Standalone Financial Results for the Quarter and year ended on 31st March, 2020					
Particular	Quarter ended on 31.03.2020	Year ended on 31.03.2020	Quarter ended on 31.03.2019	Year ended on 31.03.2019	Amount in Lacs
Total Income from Operations (net)	26.31	89.13	20.75	66.97	
Net Profit/(Loss) for the period (before tax, Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	(0.51)	6.82	(2.40)	15.31	
Net Profit/(Loss) for the period (before tax after Exceptional and/or Extraordinary items)	(0.51)	6.82	(2.40)	15.31	
Net Profit/(Loss) for the period	(0.38)	4.70	(2.05)	11.05	
Total Comprehensive Income for the period (comprising Profit/(Loss) for the period (after tax) and other comprehensive income (after tax)					
Paid-up equity share capital (Face value Rs. 10 per share)	57.30	57.30	57.30	57.30	
Reserves (including revaluation reserves as shown in the Balance Sheet of previous Year)					
Earnings per share (after extraordinary items) (of Rs. 10/- each)	(0.01)	0.82	(0.36)	1.93	
Diluted earnings per share (after extraordinary items) (of Rs. 10/- each)	(0.01)	0.82	(0.36)	1.93	
Notes: The above is an extract of the detailed form of the Standalone results for the three months and year ended on 31st March, 2020 filed with the Stock Exchanges under Regulation 33 of SEBI (Listing and Other Disclosure Requirements) Regulations, 2015. The full form of Standalone Financial Results for the three months and year ended on 31st March, 2020 are available on the Stock Exchange website and the Company's website.					
For Moulin Commercial Limited (Ashish Gupta) Managing Director DIN: 00159090					
Dated: 31st July 2020 Place: Delhi					

Netanyahu warns Hezbollah after Israeli strike in Syria

Jerusalem: Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu on Tuesday warned the Lebanese militant Hezbollah group and others after Israeli forces said they thwarted an infiltration attempt from Syria by suspected militants.

The Israeli military announced late Monday that it had struck targets in Syria after the militants tried to plant explosives in the Israeli-controlled Golan Heights.

Israel struck the four suspects, who were believed to have been killed. Netanyahu, who toured a military base on Tuesday, said Israel would not hesitate to take further action.

"We hit a cell and now we hit the dispatchers. We will do what is necessary in order to defend ourselves. I suggest to all of them, including Hezbollah,

to consider this," he said.

The incident came amid heightened tension on Israel's northern frontier following a recent Israeli airstrike that killed a Hezbollah fighter in Syria and anticipation that the militant Lebanese group would retaliate.

Following the airstrike, the Israeli-controlled Golan Heights was hit by explosives fired from Syria and Israel responded by attacking Syrian military positions and beefing up its forces in the area.

Last week, Israel also said it thwarted an infiltration attempt from Lebanon by Hezbollah militants, setting off one of the heaviest exchanges of fire along the volatile Israel-Lebanon frontier since 2006 war between the bitter enemies. AP

Man beaten with bats over face mask dispute in Paris suburb

AP ■ PARIS

A resident of a Paris suburb was beaten with baseball bats because he asked a fellow laundromat patron to wear a face mask - a requirement in all indoor public places in France to fight resurgent coronavirus infections.

Surveillance video of the attack published Tuesday by Le Parisien newspaper shows two people with bats and two others attacking a masked man inside the laundry facility then fleeing with him face down on the floor.

The victim, identified only as Augustin, told BFM television that he was beaten because he had asked one of the attackers to wear a face mask when he entered the laundromat in the town of Soisy-sous-Montmorency north of Paris.

Virus created largest disruption of education in history, affecting 1.6 bn students, says Guterres

United Nations: The COVID-19 pandemic has created the largest disruption of education in history, affecting nearly 1.6 billion students in all countries and continents and an additional 23.8 million children and youth could drop out or not have access to school next year due to the pandemic's economic impact alone, the UN Secretary-General's policy brief on education said.

"Education is the key to personal development and the future of societies. It unlocks opportunities and narrows inequalities. It is the bedrock of informed, tolerant societies, and a primary driver of sustainable development. The COVID-19 pandemic has led to the largest disruption of education ever," Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in a video statement launching

his policy brief on 'Education and COVID-19' on Tuesday.

He said that in mid-July, schools were closed in more than 160 countries, affecting over 1 billion students and at least 40 million children worldwide have missed out on school years in their critical pre-adolescent years.

The policy brief said that the pandemic has exacerbated education disparities and learning losses due to prolonged school closures threatened to erase progress made in erasing inequalities, not least for girls and young women.

"Some 23.8 million additional children and youth (from pre-primary to tertiary) could drop out or not have access to school next year due to the pandemic's economic impact alone," the brief said. PTI

SYMBOLIC POSSESSION NOTICE

ICI Home Finance
Branch Office: ICI Bank Ltd, 3rd Floor, Plot No-23, New Rohtak Road, Karol Bagh, Delhi-110005

The undersigned being the Authorized Officer of ICI Bank Limited under the Securitization, Reconstruction of Financial Assets and Enforcement of Security Interest Act, 2002 and in exercise of the powers conferred under section 13 (12) read with Rule 3 of the Security Interest (Enforcement) Rules 2002, issued demand notices upon the borrowers mentioned below, to repay the amount mentioned in the notice within 60 days from the date of receipt of the said notice.

Sl. No.	Name of the Borrower/Loan Account Number	Description of Property/ Date of Symbolic Possession	Date of Demand Notice/ Amount on Demand (Notice Rs.)	Name of Branch
1.	Ajay Dixi/ Rupesh Dixi/ LBNEL0000448771/ LBNEL00004350148	DDA Built Up Flat No. C-13/F, 2nd Floor, Munirka, Delhi/ July 29, 2020	February 22, 2020/ Rs. 27,58,222/-	Delhi/ Ncr
2.	Devakantika Swarni/ LBNEL00004071475/ LBNEL00004123592	Flat No-04, Ground Floor, Tower Victoria, Block-B, Grand Omaze, Situated At Plot No-01.02.03, Sector-93B, Noida, Uttar Pradesh/ July 30, 2020	February 22, 2020/ Rs. 57,23,264/-	Delhi/ Ncr

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

Date: 05-08-2020
Place: Delhi/Ncr
Authorized Officer
ICI Home Finance Company Limited

PUBLIC NOTICE

This is for the information of general public that my client Kishan Chand Sio Sh. Anant Ram Plot No. 19, Block-A, Hastnagar, Uttam Nagar, New Delhi-110059 have divorced his Son Sumit Kumar & his wife Deepika Mehra from all his movable and immovable properties with immediate effect and severed all relations. Anybody dealing with them in any manner whatsoever will be doing so at his/her own risk & responsibility.

Mohinder Dhawan (Advocate)
Bar Room-3, Civil Side Tia Hazari, Delhi-54

PUBLIC NOTICE

I, Gunika Rishi wife Late Chandra Singh no D-51 Jhansi Colony, Delhi-110056 do hereby announce that I have severed all relations and ties with my son Mr. Rishi Shukla and daughter-in-law namely Mrs. Anshu D. Hemchandra on account of their conduct and behaviour with me. I have divorced them and as such am one dealing with them shall deal with them at his/her own costs, risks, and consequences and I shall not be liable for any of act/omission of my son and daughter in law in any manner whatsoever. Hereby my son or his wife will have no share or right or title or interest in any of my immovable or movable properties. Sd/-
Delhi
Dated 29/07/2020
HEMANT GUPTA

Metro Railway, Kolkata
Kolkata's Pride
ZONAL CONTRACT FOR ZONE 5
Principal Chief Engineer, Metro Railway, Metro Rail Bhavan, 33/1, J. L. Nehru Road, Kolkata - 700071 for and on behalf of the President of India invites Tender Notice for e-tendering for the following work:
Name of work : Zone No. 5, i.e., Zonal Contract for up-keep of structures in RTS Box, overhead structures, stations & allied service buildings, fire hydrants, pipeline works etc. from Km.07714 to Km.16718 between stations KCCN (E) to KMUK (In) including KMUK yard and car shed, up-keepment of buildings and structures, water pipeline structures, water treatment plant at Bangalore at 8.8 km from station Park. Officers' Flats at 20, Chowringhee Road, 6, Ramesh Mitra Road & 200X, S. P. Mukherjee Road, Officers' Rest House and Officers' Club at Tollygunge, Staff Quarters at 98, ATM Road, Tollygunge 'A', 'B' & 'C' Block, 47, DPS Road, 24A, DPS Road, Fire Station, Tollygunge, RPF Barrack at Tollygunge and Tapan Sinha Memorial Hospital along with water treatment installations, fire hydrants, pipeline work etc. of Metro Railway, Kolkata. **Tender Value :** ₹ 4,57,13,744.63 (approx.). **Cost of Tender Document :** Nil. **Earnest Money :** ₹ 3,78,000/- **Completion Period :** The contract shall be in force up to 30.06.2022. **Date of Closing :** 26.08.2020 at 12.00 hrs. The Tender Document and other details can be obtained from the website www.reps.gov.in. The bidding for the tender is to be submitted only through e-tendering on above website. Manual offers are not allowed except in the tender and any manual offer, if received, shall not be accepted and will be summarily rejected.

Abridged e-Tender Notice No. : CIVIL-2337-2020 (Open)
FASTER SAFER SMOOTHER CLEANER

China, WHO in talks on plans to trace virus origin

Beijing: China and the World Health Organisation are discussing plans to trace the origin of the coronavirus outbreak following a visit to the country by two experts from the UN Agency, the foreign ministry said on Tuesday.

Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin told reporters the experts conducted "preparatory consultations on scientific research cooperation in virus tracing" during their two-week stay, which ended Sunday.

Their talks touched on research in the areas of population, environment, molecules, animal traceability and transmission routes of the coronavirus, Wang said. PTI

PUBLIC NOTICE

(Be it known to all and everybody that SMT. KIRAN BHATT, Wife Late Shri Jagdish Chandra Rishi House No.101, F/7, First Floor, Lane No.5, Krishna Nagar, Sanjaypuri Enclave, New Delhi-110029, do hereby relinquish, declare and break all her social, financial or any kind of relation from her ex-daughter-in-law Swati Batra (before marriage) Swati Gupta (D/o late Dr. Asish Gupta) and her son/daughter (son/My grandson) Master Aditya Dev Batra alias Dev Batra (Minor DOB: 02/03/2007). It is hereby declared that Swati Batra alias Swati Gupta and her Master Son Aditya Dev Batra alias Dev Batra shall have no relations whatsoever with my family and my son Deepak Batra. My Family shall not be responsible for any kind of act done by Swati Batra alias Swati Gupta and her minor son Aditya Dev Batra. Kiran Batra email: kiranbatra3@gmail.com)

Deepak Agnihotri (Advocate)

CHITTARANJAN LOGOMOTIVE WORKS

OPEN e-RA

No. COS/CR/PUB/Tender-20/0162 Date: 31/07/2020. The following e-Tenders can be accessed under the link www.reps.gov.in. Offers for such e-Tender can be submitted only electronically by accessing the link www.reps.gov.in - login - e-Tender Stores/Supply Vendors may also contact the following officials to obtain clarification regarding particular tender or IREPS related information if any. Sd/- C.M. / H.O. C.L.W. Chittaranjan, 0341-2525594 or SMM/CON/HQ, 0341-2535631. Sl. No./Tender No.; Brief Description of Item; Qty; Earnest Money Deposit; Opening and Closing Date & Time (IST); [1]; 91209224; Zs. Cu. Stamping Type Resistance Ring for Shaft Mounted Scheme-I Rotor, Drg. No.: SKEL-4738 AH1, Spec. No.: DSKO/08/10/SPEC/0962/Rev-2, STR No.: -CLW/TM/17700/34634 nos.; 2000000; 26/08/2020 at 11:00 am. OFFICE ADDRESS: Dy. CMM-HQ/CLW/Chittaranjan, 9163340711. OR SMM/G, 9163340704. Principal Chief Materials Manager PNC. Chittaranjan CLW Chittaranjan Ltd. e-mail: chittaranjan@chittaranjan.com

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

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

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

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

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

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

TAKE THE LEGAL CAREER PATH

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



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

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

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

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

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

Legal reasoning: The passages may relate to fact situations or scenarios involving legal matters, public policy questions or moral philosophical enquiries. One will benefit from a general awareness of contemporary legal and moral issues to better apply general principles or propositions to the given fact scenarios. The best part is that the preparation for Current Affairs and Legal Reasoning go hand in hand. Read about the socio legal issues prevalent in the country. One should also expect Principle Fact based questions in their CLAT 2020.

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

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

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

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

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

The writer is National Product Head Law, Pratham Test Prep

QUOTE OF THE DAY

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

— Maria Montessori

Drug discovery science

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

Duration: One year full-time

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

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

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

Free online crash course

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

A different approach to education

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The writer is President of Narayan Seva Sansthan

CHANGE IS CONSTANT

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

The COVID-19 pandemic has turned out to be the most significant disruptive event witnessed by this generation. From mainstreaming remote working, cutting global travel to a comprehensive digital shift, the outbreak has changed the way businesses are conducted. This transformational effect is not momentary; it is significant and is here to stay.

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

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

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

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



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

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

analyse them and use this information intelligently to reach out to the target audience. Tracking pattern of consumer behavior, tracking online traffic patterns, analysing consumer sentiment to understand that content distributed on social media should not be totally promotional in nature as it kills consumer interest. Your content must be knowledge and awareness-based. It must engage consumers emotionally rather than blatantly promoting your product.

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

The writer is Founder & Chairman ICA Edu Skills

AAP all set to launch job portal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

The Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)

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

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

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

Scindia School signs MoU with NYIF

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

worldwide.

The programme aims to train the next generation scholars and leaders globally. The G2020 and Young Finance Scholar programmes aim to nurture emerging and future change-makers globally to address, identify, and implement innovative solutions for business, financial, and sustainable development challenges.

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

Meritnation students shine

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

According to Class XII CBSE results, 54 per cent students secured over 95 per cent marks in Maths. 60 per cent students scored more than 95 in Physics and 68 per cent in Chemistry. The students are enrolled in premium courses.

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

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

says PANKAJ MUTHE



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

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

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

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

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

BE ANALYTICAL

tributed to a sharp increase of 45 per cent in the total jobs related to data science. Selecting data science as a career option has a lot of scope and will remain so in the near future.

Besides retail, data science has made extensive impacts on other fields like healthcare as well. Take the case where new drugs are discovered constantly and there is an opportunity to ensure better care for patients too. All these are made possible by churning out huge volumes of data through electronic medical records, billing, clinical systems, data from wearables and drawing actionable insights from aggregated patients' data.

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

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

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

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

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

SKILLS & ROLE

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

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

So, those who are considering

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

REMUNERATION

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

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

The writer is APAC Academic Program Manager, Qlik

'Innovations can help businesses'

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

educational paradigm.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

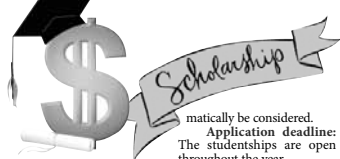
Also, since such projects are often large and complex, students are forced to work in groups, encouraging even the most silent of the lot to speak and work collectively with conflicting personalities to find mutual

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

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

Project-based learning effectively bridges the gap between theoretical and practical education.

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



atically be considered.
Application deadline: The scholarships are open throughout the year.

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

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

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

How to apply: Those meeting the criteria will auto-

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

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

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

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

Application deadline: It is October 31, 2020.

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING AT LOTSA BUSINESS SOLUTION
Location: Lucknow
Stipend: ₹8,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/4685793
Application deadline: August 10, 2020

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

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

AUTOCAD DESIGNING AT INVENT GRID INDIA
Location: Bhubaneswar
Stipend: ₹5,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/4685796
Application deadline: August 9, 2020

TECHNICAL SUPPORT AT RESTOLABS
Location: Work From Home
Stipend: ₹3,000-₹12,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/4685782
Deadline: August 12, 2020

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT (SALES) AT JINACTUS CONSULTING
Location: Work From Home
Stipend: ₹8,000-₹13,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/4685783
Deadline: August 12, 2020

IOS APP DEVELOPMENT AT VAWSUM
Location: Work From Home
Stipend: ₹7,000-₹14,000 per month
Link: internshala.com/i/4685784
Deadline: August 12, 2020

STUDY ABROAD

'Commitment to a holistic learning approach'

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

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



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

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

particular one of the best destinations to consider today.

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

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

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

IN BRIEF

PARENTS INVOLVEMENT IN ACADEMICS HELPFUL

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

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

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

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

ONLINE LEARNING MODULES FOR LITTLE LEARNERS

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

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

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

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

SMART INDIA HACKATHON 2020

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

This year, due to the

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

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

PAK SET FOR ENGLISH TEST

IANIS ■ 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 duos of Test cricket has known. Why



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SQUADS:

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

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

We're very well prepared: Azhar

IANIS ■ LONDON

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Our fast bowling attack is inexperienced but you have seen their talent and how they have bowled in the last few series. I think of myself as very lucky as a captain that we got bowlers like these who can threaten any team in Test cricket. You can't buy experience, that comes with playing matches but there is a lot of capability there. "Our batting experience is better. There is Shan Masood, Asad Shafiq and I have all played a lot. Babar Azam has gained a lot of experience now. As a team our combination is pretty good."

Dhoni is one of a kind: Rohit

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's prolific opener Rohit Sharma feels Mahendra Singh Dhoni is "one of a kind", playing down recent comparisons of his leadership style and composure with the two-time World Cup-winning former captain. In a Super Over podcast, out-of-favour India batsman Suresh Raina called Rohit the "next MS Dhoni for the Indian cricket team".

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

"Yes, I heard about that comment from Suresh Raina," Rohit said in a Twitter video he posted in reply to a fan question.

"MS Dhoni is one of a kind and nobody can be like him and I believe comparisons should not be made like

that, every individual is different and has his strengths and weaknesses."

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

Rohit has also led India to title wins at the Nidahas Trophy (T20I format) in Sri Lanka and the Asia Cup (50 overs) in 2018 while standing in for Virat Kohli.

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

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

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



Agarwal must have learnt a lot from NZ tour'

IANIS ■ NEW DELHI

Former Indian opener Ashish Nehra feels pacing 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.

गोधन न्याय योजना

के तहत खरीदे गए गोबर का पहला भुगतान

प्रदेश के हर गोबर विक्रेता का बैंक में खुलेगा खाता

छत्तीसगढ़ सरकार की महत्वाकांक्षी 'गोधन न्याय योजना' के तहत गोबर विक्रेता को बैंक के माध्यम से होगा भुगतान

82000 किंचितल से अधिक गोबर की हो चुकी है खरीदी

गोबर बिक्री की राशि 1.65 करोड़ रु. का पहला भुगतान सीधे विक्रेताओं के बैंक खाते में

शासन द्वारा तैयार किए गये कुल 4023 गौठानों में गोबर खरीदी प्रारम्भ

फिजिकल डिस्टेंसिंग अपनाएं तात्कालिक- कोरोना को दूर भगाएं

गोधन न्याय योजना बनेगी वरदान, पशुपालकों के चेहरे पर लाएगी मुस्कान

छत्तीसगढ़ है तैयार, कोरोना की होगी हार