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# Only 4 on temple stage with PM

## Bhagwat, UP Gov, UP CM, Mahant Gopaldas to share podium with Modi during bhoomi puja; Uma to stay away from event

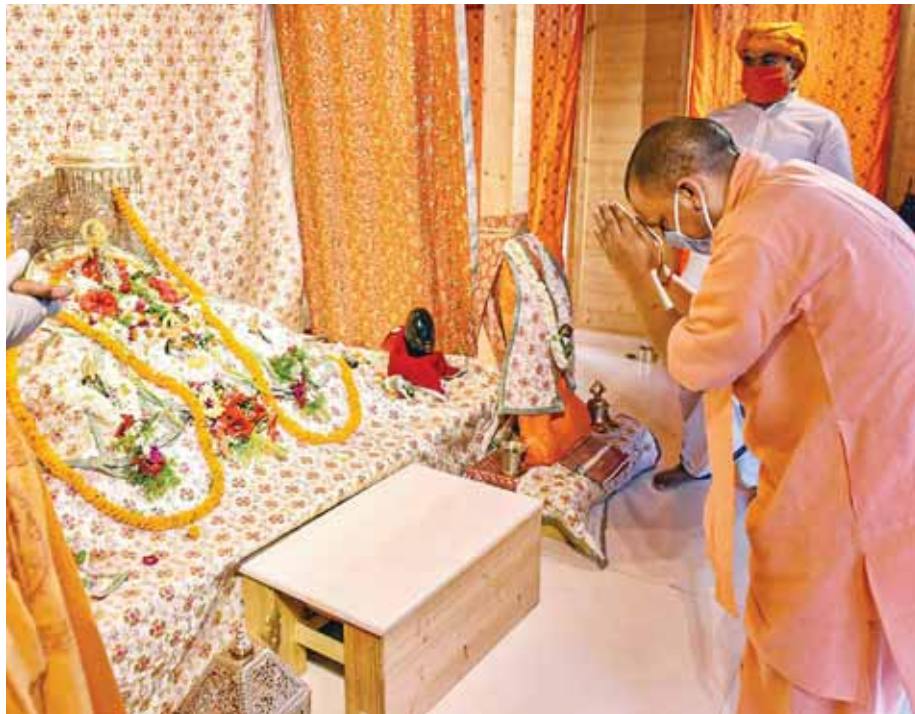
PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi will share the stage with just four more dignitaries — Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat, Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Mahant Nritya Gopaldas — at the grand Ram Temple foundation-stone laying ceremony at Ayodhya on August 5.

Even someone like Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, who is one of the tallest leaders from Uttar Pradesh and former Chief Minister of the State, will not be on the dais. Home Minister Amit Shah will not be able to make it due to Covid-19 infection, and veteran LK Advani and MM Joshi will have to watch the ceremony on video conference from Delhi itself. Both Joshi and Advani were reportedly advised by the organisers to not travel to Ayodhya due to their age related vulnerability to Covid-19.

Firebrand BJP leader Uma Bharti said she would, for the safety of the PM and other guests, stay away from the event and visit the site after everyone was gone. Incidentally, only a day ago she had declared she would take part in the ceremony.

The invitations are only for residents of Ayodhya. The first invite went to Iqbal Ansari, one



Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath offers prayers to Lord Ram during his visit to Ram Janmabhoomi premises to take stock of preparedness for the ground breaking ceremony of the Ram Mandir, in Ayodhya, on Monday PTI

of the Muslim litigants in the Ayodhya case. Padma Shri recipient Mohammad Sharif, another Muslim, honoured for cremating over 10,000 unclaimed bodies, has also been invited.

The invitation card mentions Prime Minister Narendra Modi and three more names,

indicating a vastly trimmed list in the time of Covid-19.

The invite also has an image of the idol of "Ram Lalla" or infant Lord Ram. Each invitation has a security code that will work only once; if the guest exits the venue they will not be allowed back in, according to Champat Rai of

the Ram Temple trust.

Invites have been sent to some 175 people for the elaborate "Bhoomi Pujan" organised on Wednesday in the middle of the nation's coronavirus fight.

Champat Rai said the invites were finalised only after they RSVP-ed on phone calls.

"We have the Covid situation, that's why we have kept social distancing in mind. We have personally called and apologised to many people. Age is a factor too. How will Advaniji (91) come at his age? So we have carefully prepared a list around these compulsions," he said.

On inviting the Muslim litigant, Rai said: "Celebrating an event does not mean someone else should feel bad. No one should be teased."

PM Modi is expected to establish a 40 kg silver brick for the symbolic start of the construction of a Ram Temple that has been central to the BJP's core agenda and election promises for decades.

According to news agency ANI, three prominent scholars of Astrology and Vyakaran left for Ayodhya from Kashi on Monday to participate and supervise in the rituals of the 'Bhoomi Pujan'.

The scholars are office-bearers of the Kashi Vidwat Parishad, an organisation of intellectuals and scholars of Veda, Astrology, Paninian, Sanskrit Grammar and Indian philosophy. The organisation represents Kashi. Three scholars, including the VHP vice-president Prof Ramchandra Pandey, member Prof Vinay Kumar Pandey and Prof Ramnarayan Dwivedi, the convener have left for Ayodhya.

# 'Sushant was disturbed at Disha's suicide link'

TN RAGHUNATHA ■ MUMBAI

The ongoing slugfest between the Bihar and Mumbai Police over the investigation into the Sushant Singh Rajput suicide case assumed a new dimension on Monday as Mumbai Police Commissioner Parambar Singh went on record saying that he was "emotionally disturbed" after his ex-manager Disha Salian's alleged suicide.

A day after Mumbai BJP general secretary and MLA Ameet Satam raised suspicions over Disha's alleged suicide and indirectly linked the development with the actor, the Mumbai Police chief came clean on the issue by saying that the late actor was "emotionally disturbed" to see his name being linked with Disha.

Disha allegedly committed suicide by falling from the 14th floor of a building in Malad in Mumbai on June 8.

Talking to mediapersons, the city police chief said, "When the actor saw his name being linked to Disha Salian's death in the social media, he was emotionally disturbed. He (Sushant) had met Disha Salian only once, he even asked his advocate who she was".

Singh said that the actor was acutely conscious about what was being published, appearing about him in both the media and social media.

"Sushant would Google search for articles and his name to find out what was being

## Mumbai top cop says late actor had met Disha for just once



written about him. He would also search for "painless death," "schizophrenia and bipolar disorder," the police chief said.

The Mumbai Police chief's clarification came after former Chief Minister and current Leader of Opposition Devendra Fadnavis tore into the Uddhav Thackeray dispensation for quarantining an IAS officer from Bihar who is in Mumbai to investigate the actor's suicide case.

"It is really very strange why the Maharashtra Government is coming under unnecessary suspicion by not allowing Bihar Police to perform their duties. Instead of solving the mystery of Sushant's death, such behavior will only result into huge public outcry and disbelief amongst the people about the investigation,"

Fadnavis said in two tweets.

Fadnavis charged that the Mumbai Police were adopting different yardsticks for police from different States and for different cases. "A medical team from Kerala visited Mumbai, UP Police came to investigate Vikas Dubey case, a team from the Bihar Police is already working in Mumbai since 4 days but none of them were quarantined then why only an SP rank officer is treated differently?," the senior BJP leader asked.

## ED questions Sushant's CA in money laundering case against Rhea

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Monday questioned Sandeep Sridhar, Chartered Accountant of deceased Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput, in connection with a money laundering case against his girlfriend actress Rhea Chakraborty and others.

The ED registered the case under Prevention of Money Laundering Act last week after taking cognisance of a Bihar Police FIR against Chakraborty, her family members and others under the Indian Penal Code Sections relating to cheating, theft, criminal breach of trust and abetment to suicide. The Patna Police had registered its case following a complaint from Rajput's father Krishna Kumar Singh.

Sources said Sridhar appeared before the agency's office in Mumbai for questioning.

Sridhar was earlier questioned by the Mumbai Police at his apartment in Mumbai on June 14.

Sridhar was questioned by the ED officials about the banking transactions between Rajput and Chakraborty, the sources further said.

# DCGI allows trial of Oxford vaccine on 1,600 Indians

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a major development, the Drugs Controller General of India (DCGI) has given nod to Pune-based Serum Institute of India (SII) for conducting phase II and III clinical trials of Oxford University-AstraZeneca vaccine against Covid-19 in the country.

The drug regulator has allowed the trial on 1,600 participants in India in over 20 selected trial sites. Now, SII can start the process to begin the trials, said the Union Health Ministry in a statement here.

The DCGI approved SII's revised protocol to start the human trials on Sunday, a day after subject expert committee (SEC) of the DCGI gave its nod to the SII proposal.

"The DCGI has granted permission for phase 2 and 3 clinical trials of vaccine candidate named Covishield after it was found that the subject expert committee that went



through the data and protocol submitted for the trial was satisfied with the results," it said.

On July 20, the initial trial results for the vaccine candidate, Covishield, which were made public by Oxford University had shown promising results. The preliminary trial results published in *The Lancet* said the vaccine candidate was safe and induced immune reaction against SARS-CoV-2, which causes Covid-19, and protect healthy people from infection.

"As soon as they (DCGI) grant permission, we will begin trials for the vaccine in India. We will soon start manufacturing it," Adar Poonawalla, CEO, SII, had said.

# India pips USA, Brazil in daily virus cases

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India on Monday piped the USA and Brazil to record the highest daily rise in coronavirus cases in the world. This was the first time that India's daily spike was the highest in the world.

While India recorded 52,783 cases, the USA reported 49,038 and Brazil reported

24,801 cases. This was after many weeks that the USA's caseload came below 50,000 marks and Brazil listed below 30,000 cases.

In terms of mortality, India was again ahead of both the USA and Brazil, but Mexico recorded the highest number of death on Monday. India recorded 758 deaths, the USA



A medic wearing PPE kit collects sample from a woman for Covid-19 rapid antigen testing, in Kolkata, on Monday PTI

## Mexico registers highest number of deaths

467, Brazil 514 whereas Mexico listed 784 deaths.

Meanwhile, Dr Tedros Ghebreyesus, Director-General, World Health Organisation (WHO) has said the number of cases globally has increased more than 5-fold to 17.5 million and the number of deaths has more than tripled to 6,80,000 since WHO's emergency committee on Covid last met 3 months ago.

## Covid-19 IN INDIA

### TOTAL

CASES: 18,55,238

DEATHS: 38,972

RECOVERED: 12,29,329

ACTIVE: 5,86,500



STATES	TOTAL CASES	DEATHS	RECOVERED
Maharashtra	4,50,196	15,842	2,87,030
Tamil Nadu	2,63,222	4,241	2,02,283
Andhra Pradesh	1,66,586	1,537	88,672
Karnataka	1,39,571	2,594	62,500
Delhi	1,38,482	4,021	1,24,254
Uttar Pradesh	97,362	1,778	55,393
West Bengal	78,232	1,731	54,818
Telangana	67,660	551	48,609
Gujarat	64,684	2,504	47,663
Bihar	59,567	336	38,508
Rajasthan	45,555	719	32,051
Assam	45,276	109	32,385
Haryana	37,173	440	30,470
Odisha	36,297	248	23,074
Madhya Pradesh	34,285	900	24,099
Kerala	26,873	85	15,278

# State's recovery rate drops to 35.50% as active cases skyrocket

## Tally reaches 13,500 as 618 fresh cases surface

PNS ■ RANCHI:

Jharkhand's Covid recovery rate dropped to 35.50 per cent on Monday as 618 fresh cases of infection surfaced in state and only 112 patients recovered, government data stated.

State's recovery rate has nosedived from the fourth highest in country to half as much as the national average over a span of five weeks. The national Covid recovery rate, as per government data, was 64.43 per cent on Monday.

The Covid tally in State jumped to 13,500 on Monday, while the number of active cases stood at 8581, a bulletin released by the National Health Mission (NHM) stated. As per the bulletin, the number of

Covid recoveries in Jharkhand, was nearly half of the number of active cases. As many as 4795 Covid patients have recovered from the infection in Jharkhand so far.

Ranchi, the worst-affected district in Jharkhand, reported the highest number of fresh Covid cases among all districts on Monday. As per the NHM bulletin, the number of active cases in Ranchi reached 1706 on Monday as 130 fresh cases surfaced in the district. There were 1512 active cases in East Singhbhum, the second worst-hit district in state.

The Covid toll in Jharkhand reached 125 as three more patients, all from East Singhbhum, lost their battle against the infection on Monday, health officials said.



A health worker collects samples from a person for COVID-19 test during Unlock 3.0 in Ranchi on Monday Vinay Murmu | Pioneer

With 37 casualties, East Singhbhum has reported highest number of Covid deaths in state. Ranchi has reported 25

casualties so far.

The state government ran a special Covid testing drive during which it tested nearly

50,000 people in three days, health officials said. The health department had set a target of conducting 1 lakh tests from

July 31 to August 2.

The health department is likely to retest chief minister Hemant Soren and his family on Tuesday, sources said. Several politicians in Jharkhand have come under Covid scanner in the past one month and many of them were found infected. State drinking water and sanitation minister Mithilesh Thakur and Jharkhand Mukti Morcha's (JMM) Tundi legislator Mathura Mahto were found Covid-positive last month. Besides, Ranchi MLA CP Singh, former Urban Development Minister of Jharkhand, is also undergoing treatment for Covid infection.

The government has so far collected samples of 3.5 lakh people and tested 3.39 lakh of them. Around 2.4 lakh people have been put in home quarantine across Jharkhand and nearly 6000 have been sent to institutional quarantine, highlights government data.

# Afghan troops retake prison after 29 killed in ISIS attack on jail

AP ■ JALALABAD

Afghan forces retook a prison in the country's east on Monday afternoon, following an hours-long gunbattle a day after the facility was targeted by ISIS militants in an attack that killed 29 people. The prison is believed to hold hundreds of ISIS members.

The attack highlighted the challenges ahead for Afghanistan, even as US and NATO forces begin to withdraw following a US-Taliban peace deal struck earlier this year.

Afghan Defense Ministry spokesman Fawad Aman said the prison in Jalalabad, the capital of Nangarhar province, located some 115 kilometres east of Kabul, was taken back

in the afternoon — 24 hours after it came under attack. The fighting had also left at least 50 wounded, he said.

Even as Afghan troops retook the prison, ISIS militants continued to fire on Afghan security forces from a nearby neighborhood. Sporadic gunfire rang out from nearby residential buildings in central Jalalabad, an area of high security near the provincial Governor's office.

As security forces swept through the prison, they found the bodies of two Taliban prisoners apparently killed by the Islamic State group, showing the tensions between the two militant factions battling each other in eastern Afghanistan.

Detailed report on Pg



# Covid-19: 5 deaths in 24 hours stun Jamshedpur

PNS ■ JAMSHEDPUR

Amid the fervour of Raksha Bandhan in steel city, COVID cases in the East Singhbhum district took a surge, with total number of Coronavirus positive cases crossing 2100 mark and total number of deaths due to the deadly virus to 50 during the past 24 hours here. In the last 24 hours five persons died of coronavirus.

On Monday morning five persons died due to coronavirus at Tata Main Hospital till the afternoon making the

deaths to half-century mark, spreading shivers among the district health department and administration.

Those died today include a 77-year-old woman who was a resident of Mango locality, a 86-year-old of Rajendra Nagar in Sakchi, a 47-year-old man of Jugsalai, a 64-year-old woman of Shastrinagar in Kadma and a 76-year-old man, also a resident of Bhatia Bustee in Kadma.

Except for the 47-year-old Jugsalai resident, all the four deceased had other ailments. The 86-year-old man who was

from Rajendra Nagar in Sakchi was also diagnosed with dengue.

Expressing concern over the growing number of Covid cases in the city, East Singhbhum civil surgeon Rajendra Jha despite the district administration making all efforts, the people are not adhering to the rules of wearing masks and maintaining social distance.

"People are not



taking the virus seriously. Markets are flooded with people. If the people continue to evade following the norms of maintaining social distance and wearing masks, then the number of Covid cases may increase further," said Jha.

The Kolhan Division which was under green zone, came under

coronavirus map with two persons testing positive at Chakulia, under East Singhbhum

district on May 12. Several other persons tested positive have travel history from Maharashtra, Delhi, Gurugram and Chennai.

With bed occupancy reaching cent percent in most of the COVID hospitals in the city, the administration is converting school and college campuses as new health centres.

Presently, the coronavirus patients are undergoing treatment at three hospitals, Tata

Main Hospital, Tata Motors Hospital and MGM Medical College Hospital. As bed availability in the three hospitals reaches almost 100 percent the administration is prompted for carrying out inspection for other hospitals.

The Deputy Commissioner has also appealed to the people of the district to strictly follow the rules of social distancing. Even a slight negligence can hit many people in corona. He advised people to strictly adhere to physical distance and essentially use masks and sanitizers.

## FIR against BJP MLA in Palamu

PNS ■ DALTONGANJ

A case under various sections of IPC and SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities Act 2015 has been registered against the BJP Panki MLA Shashi Bhushan Mehta, said sources.

The case has been lodged on the written complaint of the BDO Panki P Murmu who is now transferred and has moved out bag and baggage from Panki.

Sources said Murmu along with other BDOs of the state was transferred on July 31 and this outgoing BDO the same night lodged the case against the MLA Mehta.

SDPO Lesliganj Anup Kumar Baraik confirming this registration of the complaint of BDO Murmu as FIR under sections of the IPC and sections of SC/ST Prevention of Atrocities Act said "I am not the investigating officer of this case but

the SDPO Sadar Sandip Kumar Gupta has been made the IO of this case."

Baraik said sections of IPC namely 341, 342, 323, 353, 506 , 34 and section 3 (1) (F) of the SC/ ST Prevention of Atrocities Act 2015 have been invoked against the MLA.

SP Palamu Ajay Linda said, "There was a written complaint lodged by the outgoing BDO Panki Murmu against the MLA and the police lodged this FIR. The content of the complaint will be professionally and transparently investigated."

Panki MLA Shashi Bhushan Mehta said there is no issue from his side as he just tried to make this BDO understand that he is duty bound to take MLA's phone calls and he is expected to act within the parameters of government's various guidelines and rules.

The MLA said, "I had given calls to the BDO on July 30 to know what the matter was

about the sealing of a medicine shop in this time of Covid 19 and the BDO just ignored my calls and did not respond."

Sources said the BDO in his complaint has alleged that the MLA came and sat in his vehicle when he was on way to Daltonganj for an official meeting in Daltonganj and there the MLA, as alleged by the BDO in his complaint, used unconstitutional words against him.

Mehta on the other hand said when he was in his vehicle to remind the BDO that he needs to improve his style of functioning and when the BDO became regretful of his behaviour he just went his way and there is nothing more.

SDPO Baraik said the BDO has this vehicle episode in his written complaint against the MLA.

Political forces opposite to Mehta are out-fanning this episode, said sources.

## PMAY-G in the new Union Territories

BY N R BHANUMURTHY

One of the flagship and most successful rural development programmes of the Government of India is the Pradhan Mantri Awaas Yojana – Grameen (PMAY-G). Based on secondary information as well as with the field level study that we had done at National Institute of Public Finance and Policy (NIPFP), it is evident that the scheme has brought in a transformational change to a large extent to the lives of rural people.

With the close institutional convergence of PMAY-G with other flagship schemes of the government, such as MGN-REGS, Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM), Pradhan Mantri Ujjwala Yojana and with other state level development schemes, it is not surprising that our investigation corroborate that the beneficiaries are receiving both tangible and intangible benefits from the scheme.

The scheme has successfully addressed the unforeseen challenges which were encountered as also the issues of scale, quality through its architecture and it appears that the country could easily achieve the

'Housing for All' by 2022 as planned. But for this there is a need to focus on state/regional issues to improve the overall progress of the scheme at the regional level. Here we briefly look at how far the program is implemented in the newly formed Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh especially when they are soon completing one year of becoming the UTs.

It may be noted from AwaasSoft MIS on the MoRD website, the latest information suggests (as on 29th July 2020) that in the UT of Jammu & Kashmir, major progress appears to have happened during the last one year. If one looks at sanctioned beneficiaries for 2019-20 (42,778), with all the changes in the region and with some disturbances in few districts, it is important to highlight that nearly 86% of the sanctioned with verified accounts have been provided with the 1st installment (37038).

Much more important is for the year 2020-21, despite facing the Covid-19 situation and subsequent lockdown, the UT could geotag over two-thirds of the registered beneficiaries (10719 out of 16562

houses), which is the most critical stage in ensuring smooth fund-flow to the beneficiary account.

And within less than two months of unlocking in the rural areas, over one-fourth of the targeted houses have been registered (16,562 out of 62,851 houses).

This is at par with the performances of better implementing states in the country. In the case of UT of Ladakh, against the target of 1,229 houses, till date the UT has completed 1,203 houses with a completion rate of as high as 98%, which is comparable with some of the larger states with much more deep institutional set up . And right now, UT of Ladakh has even exhausted the wait-listed beneficiaries.

One important aspect that may need to be highlighted is that the PMAY(G) also has an in-built structure to ensure the ownership among women. The secondary data that is available with respect to gender-wise distribution of sanctioned houses suggest that nearly 84% of sanctioned houses are either in the name of women or in joint ownership in Jammu & Kashmir, quite high compared to other states. However, in the

case of Ladakh, it is only about 65%.

With respect to financial progress, again the secondary data suggests a utilization ratio of about 117.84% for the year 2019-20, and this could be due to some of the backlogs in the previous years. Nevertheless, this suggests that there is a sharp pick-up in the construction activity in 2019-20 compared to previous years. Even in 2020-21, the utilization ratio is about 26.81% within the two months when the lockdown was ended in the middle of May 2020.

However, there are few concerns with respect to overall implementation of the scheme in the UTs, which may be largely due to the specific constraints that the UTs face like intermittent internet connectivity.

The gap analysis for the last two years shows that there are gaps in terms of release of instalments to the beneficiaries. And this could be for a couple of reasons - the delay in the inspection of progress by the designated functionaries across different stages of construction and the other is the difficulties in uploading the geo-tagged pictures especially due to net-

work issues (only 2G is available in the region).

In terms of speed, while our earlier study has shown that, on an average among larger states, it was taking only about 114 days to complete a PMAY(G) house, given the terrain as well as network issues, it could be taking longer time in these two new UTs.

However, as compared to the past, especially during 2017 and 2018, based on the completion rate in 2019-20 as well as the financial progress one could suggest a substantial decline in the number of days needed for completion, which suggests that an agile mode of house construction is being undertaken in the UTs.

Overall, while there is a significant progress (both physical and financial) in both the UTs in terms of implementation, more need to be done especially in speeding up the construction activity to bring these UTs at par with other better performing states.

(The writer is the Vice Chancellor, BASE University, Bengaluru and the views expressed in the article are personal.)

## Dr Indranil Manna new VC of BIT Mesra



PNS ■ RANCHI

Dr. Indranil Manna, Professor, Metallurgical and Materials Engineering Department, IIT Kharagpur, was appointed as the Vice Chancellor of Birla Institute of Technology, Mesra on Monday. Dr. Manna is a Ph.D in Engineering from IIT, Kharagpur, M.Tech. in Physical Metallurgy from IIT, Kharagpur and B.E. Metallurgy from Calcutta University. He is also a recipient of the Premchand Roychand scholarship (PRS), Applied Physics (Metallurgy) from Calcutta University.

Dr Manna joined IIT, Kharagpur in 1985 as Lecturer and rose to the position of Full Professor in 2003 and HAG Professor in 2009. He continued in this position till he joined CSIR-CGRI as Director in March 2010. Thereafter, he also had a distinguished tenure as Director of IIT, Kanpur from 2012-2017. He has contributed over 250 journal publications, collected over 6000 citations, supervised 25 PhD theses and conducted multiple high value sponsored projects at IIT-Kharagpur.

## 600 samples collected in Rapid Antigen Covid-19 test camp

PNS ■ HAZARIBAG

Seven new positive cases came to light from Barkagaon block out of 130 samples collected on Monday. Total 335 patients have been discharged after their full recovery. One person died in isolation ward of the town area. Total 14 deaths have been recorded in the district.

The seven persons, who were found positive in Barkagaon block, are from different villages of the block. In the town area six camps were conducted by health department 600 persons participated and gave samples. Maximum samples came negative.

HMCH Superintendent Sanjay Sinha said that now active positive cases have reached 535, whereas 335 patients have been discharged from the hospital after their recovery.

Sinha said that by the order of district administration the health department employees have conducted the Rapid Antigen Covid test camp on six different places of the town as well as on block headquarters on Sunday.

He said that 13906 samples were taken, out of them 9017 resulted as negative and 802 positive till date. 69 persons were tested in private labs and all found positive.

A patient, who was admitted in the isolation ward, died on Sunday. Sinha said that they have sent his sample to the testing room. The report has not come, so it is not possible to say that he was positive or negative. Now total death in the district was reached to 14.

## Olympic Association to felicitate sports winners on National Sports Day

PNS ■ BOKARO

The district Olympic Association decided to felicitate sports persons who have made their mark in international and national sports.

Bipin Kumar Singh the president of the district Olympic Association said, "We have planned to felicitate sports persons on who won medals in different sports on international and the national level."

"Sports play a vital role in making children as well as a person strong from inside while inculcating the importance of maintaining a fit and sound body. It helps in the development of focus and concentration, in-turn assists during studies," he said.

"A well-played game has the power of instilling such values like self-motivating spirit, discipline, leadership, taking ownership of success as well as failures," added Bipin.

**Bipin Kumar Singh the president of the district Olympic Association said, "We have planned to felicitate sports persons on who won medals in different sports on international and the national level."**

"We are also at work for the inclusive development of sports and sports persons in the district. Along with a blueprint of the development plans a delegation of our association will meet with the Deputy Commissioner Bokaro on the issue very soon," he added.

The decision has been taken in a meeting held at association's officer at Sector 3 in Bokaro Steel City. Beside others Ram Laxhan Mistri, Mahender Prasad, Sanjeev Singh, Ashu Bhatia, Sucheta Chatterjee, Ranvijay Ojha, Rajeev Singh were present in the meeting.

## Social activist celebrates Rakhi with less privileged Distributes sanitizers and masks as gifts

PNS ■ JAMSHEDPUR

Social Pappu Sardar celebrated the festival of Rakhi by spreading cheer among those less privileged. He also distributed sanitizers and masks as gifts to her sisters.

Sardar, who has been celebrating actress Madhuri Dixit's birthday religiously for years today celebrated Rakhi with the differently abled at Jamshedpur-based Cheshire Home. In view of coronavirus, he was physically not present there but he arranged sweets, gifts and food for the inmates.

Pappu said, "In view of the virus he maintained social distancing norms. I made sure to wear a mask while my sisters tied me rakhi."

He celebrated 'rakhi' at the home. Several women including from Muslim community



also came to tie scared thread of bonding. In total 105 sisters from different communities like Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, Christians tied him rakhi. In view of the growing Corona infection this year the numbers were less but love was the same.

Pappu said that when he first met Madhuri Dixit, Madhuri made him realise the most unbreakable relationship between brother and sister and gave him the status of her brother.

From morning to evening, following all the rules to protect against corona, many women and women of different caste and religion tied her rakhi to reach her shop in Sakchi. All the sisters received masks and sanitizers along as gifts. Both the hands of Pappu Sardar were filled with rakhis.

Last year, 329 sisters had tied rakhi. Her soul sister Kinnar Mahi, who came to tie Rakhi to Pappu, said that she has been tying Rakhi to Pappu Sardar for the last 10 years.

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## Plantation in Daru block under Harit Kranti Yojana MLA, villagers plant 7,000 saplings in 37.7 acres

PNS ■ HAZARIBAG

Under the leadership of Hazaribag legislator Manish Jaiswal BJP workers with local villagers have planted the seven thousand sapling under Harit Gram Yojana in two days. The villagers planted the trees in 37.7 acres of land in the different panchayat of the block.

Jaiswal inaugurated the plantation programme in the Kharika panchayat of the block. In the panchayat the villagers planted the trees in five acres of land. The MLA distributed 4147 plants of Amrapali , 2800 sagwan and other types of plants to the villagers. All the villagers planted the saplings in



two days in the different vil-

lages.

On this occasion Jaiswal

said that through this plan the villagers can earn more money and save the environment of the

areas. The yojana was started by the State government in the name of Nadi Yojana.

This will be helpful to provide employment to such labourers, who came from different states in the Corona period to their native villages. He further said that they will also provide the employment opportunity to the migrant labourers. Through this yojana the livelihood of the migrant labourers runs smoothly.

The BDO of Daru block Ratan Kumar Barnwal said that on the block level they have prepared the list of the migrant labourers and are trying the best to provide them employment. He assured the villagers that the local administration will always be with them in solving the problems of the migrant labourers and general villagers.



# Stress, lack of sleep force Covid doctors seek relief from job

Letter addressed to RIMS Director

PNS ■ RANCHI

Stress and lack of sleep coupled with 24x7 duty have left the doctors of Covid-19 task force at Rajendra Institute of Medical Sciences (RIMS) with no option but to think of stepping down, members of the task force said on Monday.

Coordinator of the task force, Dr. Prabhat Kumar has addressed a letter to RIMS' acting director Dr. Manju Gari requesting her to relieve the

members of Covid task force from their responsibilities. "We tried our best to manage all aspects in the management of Covid patients. It gave a lot of mental and physical stress and strain to us," the letter, a copy of which is in possession of The Pioneer, read.

The 10-member task force has been treating all Covid patients at RIMS for four months without any break. These doctors have to arrange for beds soon after the test reports arrive every night, and also stay alert 24x7 to address exigencies.

Covid-19 task force at



A view of RIMS Emergency entry Pioneer photo

RIMS was constituted to manage the Covid ward of the premiere state-run hospital back in March. The idea behind constituting this team was to have a group of expert doctors who could not only treat patients but also ensure safety standards in Covid wards. The ward has around 100 beds.

"We have written a letter to the director seeking relief from

this job. We are under a lot of stress," said Dr. Kumar, who has been heading the Covid task force since the day it was constituted.

A senior member of the task force, requesting anonymity said, "The count of Covid patients is increasing every day, and we do not have enough beds. Managing so many patients with limited resources, and also facing criticism for our work is taking a toll on our mental health."

Another member of the task force said that they were not getting appreciation for

their efforts despite risking their own health for serving Covid patients. "The task force is blamed for every lapse, but never appreciated for the good work," she said.

Covid cases across Jharkhand, and Ranchi in particular, have been on the rise since June. As per government data, there were at least 1624 active Covid cases in Ranchi by the time this report was filed. Besides treating Covid patients in Ranchi, RIMS has also been treating patients from other districts in Jharkhand. The Covid tally in Jharkhand was 12882 on Monday afternoon.

## INBRIEF

### LORD RAM RESIDES IN HEARTS: SAHAY

Former Union Minister Subodh Kant Sahay released a video stating some facts that are the precursor to the construction of the Mandir of Maryada Purshottam Ram in Ayodhya. He said he played a key role in getting various political leaders, Vishwa Hindu Parishad, scholars and members of the minority community to the table as the Home Minister initiated by V.P.Singh led the government and taken forward by Chandrashekhar and Narsimha Rao. He stated that in 1992 Narsimha Rao called him to take the matter forward. Sahay stated that he initiated meetings with all the stakeholders and their efforts led to the formation of Dharam Sansad. He shared some interesting anecdotes which can be seen in the video. He further stated that the Mandir of Maryada Purshottam Ram is an issue of faith and one should not politicise it.



### PARITOSH KUMAR IS NEW BOI ZM

Paritosh Kumar took charge on Saturday as Zonal Manager and Deputy General Manager of Bank of India (BoI), Ranchi Zone. It is to be noted that BoI is the leading bank of the State and performs important responsibilities in public interest. For this reason, the task of carrying it forward and taking everyone along is to be done by Kumar. Given his background, it is believed that he will discharge this responsibility even more effectively. He was born here, grew up and started his professional career as a clerk of Bank of India in Ranchi itself. The journey from a simple clerk of the Bank of India, Ranchi Zone to the Zonal Manager of Ranchi Zone of this bank is quite inspiring.

### 5 DEFEAT COVID-19 AT DEVKAMAL

Five of the first batch of Covid positive but asymptomatic patients, who stayed at Aamantran banquet hall for 10 days, was discharged as they reported negative for the disease. The patients including Jitendra Pandey, Naven Sharma, Rajendra Prasad, Milan Kumar and Uday Kumar Singh were under treatment and supervision of Devkamal Hospital, informed Dr Anant Sinha of the Hospital.



### RPF PLAYS BIG ROLE DURING LOCKDOWN

RPF (Railway Protection Force) working with the South Eastern Railway personnel have played a significant role in providing security of rail travellers as well as in guarding the railway property and its vital installations. During lockdown, in the wake of COVID-10 pandemic, RPF personnel of this railway has conducted surprise drives and has imposed and realised fine and recovered railway property and other valuable goods worth Rs.85.66 lakh during the period from April 1 to June 30, 2020.

## Yoga teacher gets threat call, Marandi demands security

PNS ■ RANCHI

Rafia Naaz, a Yoga teacher from Doranda area, is once again on target of radical members from her community for following her passion. She has been regularly receiving threat calls since April this year and when she approached the top police echelon the senior police officer refused to entertain her complaint, said the teacher.

Rafia, who teaches yoga for a living and considers yoga to be beyond religion, has been targeted for daring to teach Yoga despite being a Muslim. Rafia Naz came into public focus after photos of her doing yoga with Baba Ramdev went viral on social media in 2017. The radicals from her community started targeting her and even making threat calls on her mobile. The then BJP government headed by Raghuraj Das looking into the complaint of Naaz decided to provide her security. Two armed police personnel round the clock used to guard her.

However, this year after regime change in the State her security was withdrawn in March. She said, "After withdrawal of security in March, the threat calls, which I used to get increased. The radicals used to use all types of abusive languages." She further said, "After the withdrawal of security fearing threat on my life I approached senior police officers including DGP, SSP and others but none of them enter-



Bharatiya Janta Party legislative party leader Babulal Marandi during a press conference in Ranchi on Monday. Yoga teacher Rafia Naaz is also seen in the picture Pioneer photo

tained my complaint." The Yoga teacher claimed, "I had written several mails to top police officers including DGP, SSP and even to officers at Chief Minister's Secretariat but none of them even bothered to reply to my mail."

The yoga teacher said, "As all doors were closed for me I had no other alternative but to approach BJP legislative party leader Babulal Marandi. Naaz tied Rakhi to Marandi and sought help from him in connection."

BJP leader Marandi raising the issue said that the State Government's lack of help and cooperation in this connection indicates that the government wants that in Jharkhand another woman become Malala Yousafzai. Malala is a Pakistani activist for female education and the youngest Nobel Prize laureate was shot by a Pakistani Taliban gunman in an assassination attempt in retaliation for her activism.

Marandi said, "The State should be proud of Rafia Naaz as despite threats from radicals she continued her passion. The State government has failed to provide security to her at the same time behaviour of some police officers towards Rafia is shocking." Marandi said that he has even written a letter to the Chief Minister demanding security for the young yoga teacher. The former chief minister said that if the State government is unable to provide security to Naaz then they should give in written.

Marandi said that he has sent the copy of his letter to the CM to the Prime Minister and Union Home Minister.

Marandi said, "As his letter to the Chief Minister with copy to Prime Minister and Union Home Minister is now on public domain Rafia Naaz faces more threat to her life. In such a situation it is the duty of the state government to provide security to the yoga teacher."

### Marandi making a mountain out of a molehill: Congress

Ranchi: JPCC spokespersons Alok Kumar Dubey and Dr. Rajesh Gupta Chhotu have said that it is surprising that when the world has gone topsy turvy due to Covid 19 Babulal Marandi is making a mountain out of a molehill. "God forbid if any incident happens with a yoga teacher then Babulal Marandi will be directly responsible. The government is concerned about every resident, not for just one person. The truth is that their agenda is something else and Babulal ji is feeling shy to say it," they said.

They said that the Director General of Police of the state is working sensitively in all adverse circumstances and it would not be appropriate to accuse him of personal interest. "Right now all educational institutions, coaching institutes, gyms, yoga institutes are all closed, permission to spread sensation cannot be given to Babulal ji. He seems to be worried about the safety of his close ones," said the duo.

"The government led by Chief Minister Hemant Soren is concerned about the safety of every citizen of the State and all steps are being taken in this direction. Ever since Babulal Marandi joined the Bharatiya Janata Party, he has been talking about communal and political polarisation. Marandi, who has become irrelevant to the politics of Jharkhand, is only talking about such nonsense to remain in the media," they said.

## Deoghar temple opened for devotees



Administrations and Baba Baidyanath Temple Board committee members outside Baidyanath temple after the temple was opened for all according to the order of the Supreme Court on the occasion of the fifth Somwari Mela festival and Poonima of the month of Sawan, on Monday Pioneer photo

PNS ■ RANCHI

The famous Baidyanathdharm temple in Deoghar district was thrown open for devotees on the concluding of the holy month of Sharavan on the instruction of the Supreme Court.

The temple was closed by the State government to prevent spread of Covid-19 virus. The government order was challenged by BJP's Godda MP Nishikant Dubey who filed a PIL before Jharkhand High Court for the reopening of the Baidyanathdharm temple and Basukinath temple in Dumka district.

However, the division bench of Chief Justice Dr. Ravi Ranjan and Justice Sujit Narayan Prasad of Jharkhand High Court in its decision given on July 3 declined permission for Shrawani Mela in Deoghar.

The court was convinced with the logic of Jharkhand government that there will be mass gathering during fair and this will increase chance of community transfer of Covid 19 virus. However, the court directed the government to make arrangements and develop modalities for virtual darshan.

But Dubey moved Supreme Court against decision of Jharkhand government and the High Court.

The Supreme Court in its ruling advised the State government to make necessary arrangements to allow devotees to visit temple to perform

prayer. Abiding by the Supreme Court's ruling the State government issued a notification in this regard.

Lakhs of devotees across the world visit Deoghar to offer prayers. Besides, an equal number of devotees throng at Basukinath temple for prayers; one of the important shrines of Lord Shiva situated in Dumka district about 60 km from Deoghar district.

Deoghar district administration made elaborate arrangements to ensure that physical distancing is maintained and there should not be excessive gathering on the temple premise.

Around 100 devotees; all local residents of Deoghar were allowed to visit the temple when the sanctum-sanctorum was opened at 4 AM.

One of the temple priests Chhotelal Jha presided over the Sarkari Puja for around 45 minutes. After that selected devotees were taken inside temple.

"All of them underwent thermal screening and physical distancing was maintained. Entire temple was sanitized before the temple was opened. On an average each devotee was given around 30 second for prayer. The morning prayer continued till 7.35 AM," said an official of Deoghar district administration.

Even if today was the end of the Holy month of Sharavan as per the tradition the religious fair at this temple continues till Bhadra month.

## Low key Durga Puja celebrations this year

PNS ■ RANCHI

The Ranchi District Durga Puja Committee (RDDPC), the apex body of Durga puja celebration in the Capital has plans to make Durga Puja celebration a simple affair due to the coronavirus pandemic. Compared to huge pandals, which used to be the attraction of Capital city, this year's pandals will be smaller in size and will remain closed for public to avoid transmission of the virus.

The Ranchi District Durga Puja Committee (RDDPC), under which more than 250 big and small puja committees come from Ranchi district, has also decided on measures to host a low-key celebration this year.

Munchun Rai, president of the committee, said, "It has been agreed that no committee will allow visitors inside the pandals. However, keeping with the tradition, only priests will carry out the rituals. The pandals will not be extravagant this year and will be just



An idol of Goddess Durga File Photo

enough to carry out the rituals." Rai further said, "The idol of Goddess Durga will be from one foot to four feet so that only a handful of persons can lift the idols keeping social distancing in mind." As the Puja

Committees have decided not to host big puja pandals, none of the puja committees will take contribution (Chanda) from traders and businessmen.

It has also been decided that many puja committees, which organize fairs alongside their pandals to draw crowds, will refrain from doing so this year. "No vendors, rides and other makeshift shops will be allowed around the pandal premises. While visitors will not be allowed, revellers will not be allowed to offer pushpanjali," said Ashok Purohit, another Durga Puja Committee member.

However, the puja committee has decided to keep all the rituals as usual so that the tradition is maintained. Meanwhile, the residents have welcomed the puja committee

decision to hold small puja pandals. Mahesh Gupta, a resident of Mahavir Chowk said, "With the Covid 19 cases fast spreading and the infection is also likely to go up in coming months the Ranchi District Durga Puja Committee (RDDPC), to observe puja at a small level is welcome step. In the present situation it is always advisable to keep social distancing."

Meanwhile, the Ranchi District Durga Puja Committee (RDDPC), has decided to felicitate volunteers, who participated at Ram Mandir Andolan on Tuesday. Rai said, "We are going to felicitate around 15 kar sewaks who participated at Ram Mandir Andolan."

The entire Capital has been decorated as huge cutouts of Lord Rama and Hanuman have been installed. Also the entire City will be decorated with Mahavir flags to mark the occasion. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lay the foundation of grand Lord Ram temple at Ayodhya on August 5.

## Face print masks become latest fashion accessory

DIVYA MODI ■ RANCHI

As face masks have become an essential part of everyday life especially for those stepping out of their homes, Ranchiites can be seen sporting a variety of them. From delicate embroidery with embellishments to hand painted ones with cartoon characters and tribal art forms, these face masks are not just a safety equipment but have become a fashion statement as well.

Denizens across all age groups are now opting for the fancier options as against the boring surgical and N95 masks. And the latest in trend are the face printed masks which have a print or a photograph of the person wearing it making him or her easier to recognize.

The style after travelling to several cities globally has finally made its way to Ranchi where photo lab owners are capitalising on the same.



Best Photo Lab saw a picture of these customized masks on Whatsapp and has been making them since the beginning of June. "In a mask it is very difficult to recognise the person but in these customers can get the lower part of their face printed on it. Initially we started it as an experiment but the response received has been

great. People can either get their passport size pictures or get one clicked here at the studio itself. Made from cotton, these masks are absolutely washable."

Modi further stated that apart from these people are also getting their portraits printed on the masks. Companies have also opted to get their logo



printed on this essential accessory to give their staff members which is also serving a dual purpose of safety as well as branding in these tough times. The double layered masks which can be made in an hour's time are available at a price of Rs 100 and the studio has about 50 to 60 customers visiting for it on a regular basis.

"Apart from the face printed masks, people are also coming to get a parent printed on

masks. Cartoon characters, nature, skeletons and ever catchy one liners are other popular options.

With people coming out less often, the footfall is not very great but we are keeping with the changing times. Banks and other organizations are also getting their logos printed. Customers can get their masks made for Rs 50 at our studio. The chemicals used for printing do not have an odour and

"In a mask it is very difficult to recognise the person but in these customers can get the lower part of their face printed on it. Initially we started it as an experiment but the response received has been great. People can either get their passport size pictures or get one clicked here at the studio itself. Made from cotton, these masks are absolutely washable"

the masks made of cotton can be washed and reused unlike the surgical ones which need to be disposed of after every use," said Monu Kumar Mathur owner of Kodak Express in Ranchi,

## RRD develops shipment facility at Namkum



Newly built Namkum Goods Shed of Ranchi Rail Division with all facilities Pioneer photo

PNS ■ RANCHI

In bid to facilitate the loading and unloading of goods at trains Ranchi Rail Division developed Namkum Goods Sheds with necessary facilities.

In an attempt to increase shipment a multi-dimensional 'Business Development Unit' has been formed to increase shipments across the Indian Railways and attract businessmen. Under this, a multi-dimensional 'Business Development Unit' was formed in Ranchi Rail Division, whose main task is also to develop goods sheds located on the board in a limited time as per the suggestions of businessmen.

The development of the Goods Shed will facilitate the businessmen to do loading and unloading in a limited time said Ranchi Divisional Railway Manager (DRM), Neeraj Ambastha. He discussed with businessmen through video conferencing and in accordance with the suggestions received from businessmen and efforts of 'Business Development Unit', Namkum Goods Shed of Ranchi Rail Division was developed with necessary facilities in record time. Under which construction of approach road for Goods Shed, loading and

unloading of Goods Shed was fixed, electricity arrangement was made on the lines of Airport, water system, toilet facility, restroom for laborers and for businessmen a chamber was constructed.

With the construction of all these facilities, now businessmen will have more facilities in loading and unloading, said Ambastha.

Members of the Business Development Unit sat down with the Jharkhand Chamber of Commerce to get suggestions from businessmen. Speaking about importance of the Business Development Unit the DRM said that with the formation of this unit, a new and easy platform will be available to the people of the trade and industry sector and from time to time the members of the unit will meet businessmen, entrepreneurs and small and middle class promoters, so that they can give their suggestions and problems to the railways without difficulty, he added.

Work was done by Senior Divisional Commercial Manager, Avnish, Senior Divisional Mechanical Engineer, Senior Divisional Finance Manager, Shantanu Mukherjee under the direction of Divisional Railway Manager, Neeraj Ambastha.

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# Gyms, yoga centres to reopen with new dos and don'ts



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

From maintaining a distance of six feet to using a visor rather than a mask, from following respiratory etiquette to a strict no to kids and elderly persons with co-morbidities, the Union Health Ministry on Monday outlined the dos and don'ts for gyms and yoga centres ahead of their reopening from August 5.

Come Wednesday, it will be a new normal at gyms and yoga centres when these institutes will reopen as a part of the third phase of easing of lockdown in the country.

The Union Health Ministry's guidelines maintain that elderly people above 65 years, people with comorbidities, pregnant women and children below the age of 10 years should not use gymnasiums or yoga institutes in closed spaces.

Also, yoga institutes and

gymnasiums located in Covid-19 containment zones shall not be permitted to open.

Yogic kriyas are to be avoided or planned in open spaces. Users to be put in batches and allocated staggered timings to avoid overcrowding of people while entering and exiting the fitness centre.

Each batch could have a gap of 15-30 minutes in between to keep rush at bay and facilitate cleaning and disinfecting process, the release stated. "Those having oxygen saturation level below 95 percent should not be allowed to exercise," as per the guidelines.

"Individuals must maintain a minimum distance of 6 feet as far as feasible," it says adding that wearing of masks and face covers is mandatory, however, those may cause breathing difficulties during exercising, therefore, the government said that people can

## 'Remote patient monitoring system' developed to keep tabs on covid patients

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Researchers at IIT-Madras' Healthcare Technology Innovation Centre (HTIC) and Helyxon, a healthcare startup, have developed an AI-backed remote patient monitoring system for Covid-19 to keep tabs on critical parameters like temperature, oxygen saturation, respiratory rate and heart rate.

Equipped with geo-fencing tracking alerts, the OXY2 can keep a tab on the patient's vital parameters and inform the medical staff about any aberration.

Costing between ₹2,500 to ₹10,000 depending on configuration, the device has already found usage among 2,000 patients in public and private hospitals, and at homes, with another 5,000 devices in the

use a visor as a preventive measure.

Frequent hand washing and using hand sanitisers have been emphasised besides a strict practice of "respiratory etiquettes" have been advised as per the guidelines.

pipeline.

"The device is completely self-contained, portable, wireless and can be clipped on to patient's finger and data is streamed to a mobile phone or central monitoring system.

"The temperature is measured at the armpit and blood oxygen level, and other parameters at the finger itself. The device is reusable and has a lifetime of over a year," said

Prof. Mohanasankar Sivaprakasam, Healthcare Technology Innovation Centre (HTIC), IIT Madras.

The core technology was validated by a year-long multi-centric study at various Chennai-based medical institutions for the accuracy and performance with reference to current standards.

The scientist said that specific to Covid, the reduction of

close contact with patients by doctors and nurses, savings in PPE and monitoring equipment was found to be a significant advantage by hospitals.

Based on the clinical inputs, the team engineered this device in response to demand for low cost, simple and easy to use devices for monitoring patients anywhere at hospital or home.

Commenting on the product, Mr. Vijai Shankar Raja, founder and managing director of Helyxon said, "It is more than a monitoring device.

"Based on feedback from doctors and hospital management, deployment of OXY2 reduces overall load, stress and anxiety in the healthcare system, saves hospital beds for severe cases, and increases confidence for patients at home."

plan fitness activities keeping the floor area of 4m2 per person. Equipment and machines should be placed at a distance of 6 feet. Utilisation of outdoor space, if any, has been encouraged.

The institutes have also

## HRD Ministry comes up with new alternative academic calendar for classes 6 to 8

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

HRD Ministry on Monday announced a new alternative academic calendar for classes 6 to 8 which is a continuation of the previous 4-week calendar.

The Calendar contains detailed guidelines for teachers on the use of technology & social media tools to impart education while the students are at home. It further aims to empower our students, teachers, school principals & parents with positive ways to deal with #Covid19 via online teaching-learning resources and achieve the best possible learning outcomes.

The academic calendar consists of subject-wise directives for eight weeks and detailed guidelines on using social media tools and tech-



nology for education is a reference for teachers to continue teaching during the Covid-19 pandemic.

HRD minister Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank had released the academic calendar for the primary classes of 1 to 5.

The academic calendar for the upper-primary classes was developed by the National

Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT).

"Alternative Academic Calendar for upper primary stage (Classes VI to VIII) for four weeks was released earlier. I have launched the academic calendar for the next eight weeks today," Pokhriyal said on twitter after announcing the calendar.

## TENSION ALONG LAC

# CSG to review outcome of fifth round of Corps Commander-level talks

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With China stalling a pull back and India insisting on a complete disengagement from "friction points" at the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Ladakh, the all-powerful China Study Group (CSG) on Tuesday will review the outcome of the fifth round of Corps Commander level talks that were held on Sunday. The CSG comprises top brass of the defence, external affairs and home ministries besides the National Security Advisor (NSA).

The military-level talks between Lt General Harinder Singh and Major General Liu Lin at Moldo near the LAC in Chushul, Ladakh, on Sunday, lasted more than 10 hours after starting at 11.00 am. While an official statement is yet to come, sources said here on Monday that India asked China to step up the withdrawal of its troops from the Pangong Tso (lake).

In fact, the CSG in its meeting last week also favoured complete disengagement by China as a major confidence building measure to defuse tension. The government may give details of the latest round of Corps Commander talks to end the 10-week-old impasse at the LAC after the crucial CSG session on Tuesday, sources added.

The CSG was set up in 1976 by the Cabinet Committee on Security (CCS) to advise on policy issues relating to China and includes top secretaries and military and intelligence officials. It was initially headed by the Foreign Secretary.

Though appreciating the position that China has substantially reduced and withdrawn its troops from Galwan valley, Gogra and Hot Springs, the Indian security establishment is, however, concerned that the Chinese troops have not withdrawn from the contentious Pangong Tso. In fact, the first face-off took place at this place on May 5 when the Chinese intruded more than five km into India and obstructed an Indian army patrol. It led to exchange of blows.

Since then, the Chinese bolstered its troop strength there forcing India to take preventive steps to thwart any major challenge, sources said adding as per the latest satellite photographs of the Pangong Tso the Chinese have not gone back though agreed upon in the last round of Commander-level talks.

The Chinese continue to occupy positions in depth on slopes along 'Finger 5' and on slopes extending towards 'Finger 8.' India maintains the LAC is at Finger 8. Mountain spurs are called Finger. However, China is



## Govt releases draft Defence Production and Export Promotion Policy, 2020

### Its purpose is to place India among leading countries in defence, aerospace sectors

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Giving a fillip to defence manufacturing in the country with the focus on 'Atmanirbhar' (self-reliance), the Government on Monday came out with a draft Defence Production and Export Promotion Policy (DPEPP) 2020. The main objective is to achieve a turnover of more than ₹1,75,000 crore (25 Billion dollar) including ₹35,000-crore worth of exports in aerospace by 2025.

Giving details of the draft of the policy, now in public domain for inviting suggestions, officials said the main focus is on providing a framework to position India amongst the leading countries of the world in defence and aerospace sectors.

The DPEPP 2020 is envisaged as an overarching guiding document of the defence ministry to provide a focused, structured and significant thrust to defence production

capabilities of the country for self-reliance and exports.

Besides achieving a turnover of ₹1,75,000 Crores, the policy also aims to develop a dynamic, robust and competitive defence industry, including aerospace and naval shipbuilding industry to cater to the needs of armed forces with quality products.

Moreover, the document focuses on efforts to reduce dependence on imports by giving a push to Make in India through initiatives like domestic design and development. Also to promote export of defence products and become part of the global defence value chains, the draft said.

The policy brings out multiple strategies under the following focus areas like procurement reforms, indigenization, support to MSMEs/Startups, optimise resource allocation, investment promotion, FDI and ease of doing business amongst others.

India and China have been engaged in discussions through established military and diplomatic channels to address the prevailing situation along the LAC.

The engagement (July 14) was consistent with the consensus reached between the Special Representatives of India and China earlier, on July 5, to discuss complete disengagement.

The Senior Commanders reviewed the progress on implementation of the first phase of disengagement and discussed further steps to ensure complete disengagement. The two sides remain committed to the objective of complete disengagement. This process is intricate and requires constant verification. They are taking it forward through regular meetings at diplomatic and military level.

## MHA invites feedback on criminal laws from public, stakeholders

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

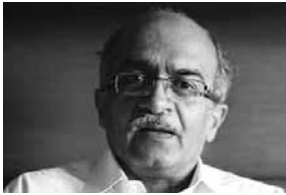
Union Home Ministry on Monday invited suggestions from subject experts and all stakeholders for the incorporation or amendments in criminal laws. The Committee for Reforms in Criminal Laws, a joint forum organised by Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) and National Law University, Delhi, has opened a separate page on their website for the public to make suggestions regarding various criminal laws including Indian Penal Code (IPC) and CrPC.

"National Level Committee for Reforms in Criminal Laws set up by MHA has been inviting professionals, functionaries

and stakeholders involved with Indian criminal justice system to submit their suggestions," said MHA. The Committee for Reforms in Criminal Laws is created to recommend reforms in a principled, affective, and efficient manner which ensures safety and security of the individual, the community and the nation, said the statement.

NLU Vice Chancellor Prof Ranbir Singh is the Chairperson of the Committee. Other members are NLU Registrar Prof GS Bajpai, Prof Balraj Chauhan, Vice Chancellor of Jabalpur Law University, noted lawyer Mahesh Jethmalani and former judge GP Thareja.

## Expression of opinion cannot constitute contempt of court: Prashant Bhushan to SC



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The expression of opinion, "however outspoken, disagreeable or unpalatable to some", cannot constitute contempt of court, activist lawyer Prashant Bhushan said on Monday in his reply to a show cause notice issued by the Supreme Court.

The top court on July 22 issued notice to Bhushan for hearing on August 5 the criminal contempt proceedings initiated against him for his two alleged derogatory tweets against the judiciary, observing his statements prima facie

"brought the administration of justice in disrepute".

In a 142-page reply affidavit filed through lawyer Kamini Jaiswal, the activist lawyer has referred to several apex court judgements, speeches of former and serving judges on contempt of court and the "stifling of dissent" in a democracy and his views on judicial actions in some cases.

Bhushan also stood by his two tweets.

"The respondent (Bhushan) states that expression of his opinion however outspoken, disagreeable or however unpalatable to some, cannot constitute contempt of court. This proposition has been laid down by several judgments of the Supreme Court and in foreign jurisdictions such as Britain, USA and Canada," he submitted.



President Ram Nath Kovind celebrates Raksha Bandhan with nurses of the Trained Nurses' Association of India, Military Nursing Service and President's Estate Clinic

PTI

## Declare locust attack as national disaster: Gehlot to PM

PTI ■ JAIPUR

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, demanding that the locust menace affecting many States of the country be declared a national disaster, according to a statement on Monday.

In the letter, Gehlot said the locust outbreak was an international problem and the Centre should coordinate will all affected countries to tackle the menace, the statement said.

The Chief Minister said that it would be appropriate to declare the locust menace as national disaster due to possible damage to crops of kharif and rabi crops, and the weak economic condition of farmers and states due to the novel coronavirus pandemic.

It will further strengthen the capacity of states to deal with locust outbreaks, the chief minister said.

Gehlot informed Modi that locusts had started coming in Rajasthan from April 11 and 32 out of the 33 districts had been affected.

In addition to Rajasthan, locust attacks have been reported in

Gujarat, Madhya Pradesh,



Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh and Maharashtra.

This has become a multi-state problem, he said in the letter.

Locust outbreaks have been seen on such a large scale in the country after several decades. In such a situation, declaring this problem as a national disaster will be in the interest of all the affected states and the farmers, Gehlot said.

Locust swarms were controlled quite effectively by the joint efforts of the Centre, Locust Warning Organisation and the state government, but still the farmers lost about Rs 1,000 in rabi crops, he said.

In 2019-20, about 6.70 lakh hectares in 12 districts of

Rajasthan was affected by locust. In 2020-21, locust control has been done in about 3.83 lakh hectares so far, Gehlot said.

According to the earlier estimates of the Food and Agriculture Organization, the locust outbreak arrived early in the state and is expected to be much higher this year, the statement said.

In such a situation, the Centre should take appropriate steps in time, he added.

Gehlot underlined that the locust outbreak was an international problem and they must be stopped at their point of origin in order to check the origin of new locust groups.

## IMD issues red alert for extremely heavy rain for Mumbai

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Rain lashed Mumbai on Monday as the monsoon system active over the Arabian Sea strengthened and the weather department sounded a red alert that it will get intense in the metropolis and its suburbs during the next two days.

Though Mumbai had been receiving intermittent rainfall, forecasting agencies said this would be the second spell of heavy rainfall this monsoon after a gap of a fortnight.

Mumbaikars are advised to avoid going out on August 4 and 5, said private forecaster Skymet Weather, adding that the intensity will start decreasing from August 6.

On the east coast, the India

Meteorological Department's Odisha centre said a low-pressure area was developing over north Bay of Bengal under the

## The flood situation in Assam improved on Monday as the water receded from many areas, though one more person lost his life in the deluge

influence of a cyclonic circulation over Gangetic West Bengal and another one over northeast Bay of Bengal. It will bring heavy rainfall to several parts of the State between Tuesday and Thursday.

The IMD advised fishermen to not venture deep into the Bay of Bengal till August 6 as surface winds with speeds up to 50 kmph will make the sea conditions very rough.

The low-pressure area is likely to trigger heavy rainfall and thunderstorms in parts of Madhya Pradesh, too, where the monsoon activity has remained subdued so far.

In north India, a sultry weather prevailed in Delhi, Punjab and Haryana as the axis of the monsoon trough, which was active over the region last week, shifted southwards.

The trough is now passing Ganganagar and Pilani in Rajasthan, through Gwalior in Madhya Pradesh and Banda in Uttar Pradesh, towards

Beharampur in West Bengal and Mizoram and Meghalaya.

Under its influence, several areas in Rajasthan were lashed by rain since Sunday. Jaipur, Tonk, Bhilwara and Pilani recorded 34.8, 7, 2 and 3.1 mm rainfall, respectively, in the past 24 hours till Monday evening, according to the local meteorological centre.

Several areas in the State reported waterlogging. In Jaipur, a car got stuck on a flooded road. Locals rescued the driver and the other occupants of the car.

More than 800 villages in 15 districts have been inundated in Uttar Pradesh due to swelling of Sarayu and Rapti rivers, state minister Anil Rajbhar said.

He said embankments had been breached in Gonda,

Azamgarh and efforts were on to seal them. As many as 188 medical teams and 16 disaster response and provincial constabulary teams have been deployed for rescue operations.

The flood situation in Assam improved on Monday as the water receded from many areas, though one more person lost his life in the deluge.

This year, floods and landslides have damaged roads and other infrastructure at several places and claimed 136 lives in Assam, according to official estimates.

The number of flood-hit people decreased by 4.65 lakh since Sunday but around 3.89 lakh people in 17 districts are still affected, the Assam government said in a bulletin.

# Nothing to worry, will be discharged soon: BSY

**Bengaluru:** Allaying fears about his health after testing Covid positive, an upbeat Karnataka Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa on Monday assured people that there was “nothing to worry about” and he would be discharged from the hospital soon.

“There is nothing to worry about. I will be discharged soon and start work,” said Yediyurappa in Kannada in a video message played in all the local news channels across the state.

Yediyurappa, 77, and his daughter B.Y. Padmavati who also tested positive, are under treatment at a private hospital here though they are asymptomatic with mild symptoms of the virus.

Assuring the people that he was doing fine, the Chief Minister said doctors had conducted required tests and observed no complications.

“I will recover soon. I am in touch with all officials since Sunday to ensure that the government works are not affected. I also spoke to senior officials earlier in

the day,” he said.

Yediyurappa also thanked BJP President J.P. Nadda, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman, former Prime Minister and JD-S supremo H.D. Deve Gowda, his son and former Chief Minister H.D.

## Karnataka Guv tests negative after recent meeting with CM

**IANS ■ BENGALURU**

**K**arnataka Governor Vajubhai Vala has tested negative for coronavirus, three days after meeting Chief Minister B.S. Yediyurappa who was diagnosed positive on Sunday, an official said on Monday. “The Governor has undergone a corona antigen test and tested negative,” said a communique from the Raj Bhavan.

The Chief Minister, along with Home Minister Basavaraju Bommai, had called on the

Kumaraswamy, opposition Congress leader Siddaramaih and seers of mutts for praying for his speedy recovery.

He also urged people to wear masks and maintain social distancing to prevent the spread of the disease.

Governor last week to discuss the Covid situation in the state and measures being taken to contain the pandemic spread.

“The Governor’s ADC and Personal Secretary Tejas Bhatti have also undergone antigen tests, and were found to be negative,” the communique said.

Yediyurappa, 77, and daughter B.Y. Padmavati who also tested positive, are under treatment at a private hospital though they are asymptomatic with mild symptoms.

In a related development, state Home Minister Basavar Bommai and new Bengaluru City Police Commissioner Kamal Pant have

decided to undergo self-quarantine, as they in contact with Yediyurappa on Friday and Saturday.

**IANS**

## Yediyurappa’s six staffers test positive for coronavirus

**IANS ■ BENGALURU**

**S**ix persons, including a woman working at the official residence of Karnataka Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa here, also tested positive for coronavirus, an official said on Monday.

“As Yediyurappa and his daughter Padmavati tested positive, all staffers and others at his official residence and home-office are being tested as primary and secondary contacts. Of them 6, including a gunman, cook, maid, driver, housekeeper and a policeman on security duty tested positive so far,” an offi-

cial of the chief minister’s office told IANS.

Yediyurappa’s official residence ‘Cauvery’ and the adjacent home-office ‘Krishna’ are located on Kumara Krupa road in the high security area of the city centre.

The asymptomatic chief minister and daughter are under treatment at the privately-run Manipal Hospital in the city’s eastern suburb.

“A team of doctors and nurses from the state-run hospital rushed to Yediyurappa’s residence and home office to test the staff and those frequenting the places on duty.

## Now budget-friendly snacks available at Cochin airport

**UNKUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI**

**D**ays of the coffee and tea shops in the country’s airports charging exorbitant rates for the hot beverages are over thanks to an initiative by a lawyer based in Kerala’s Thrissur city.

Shaji Kodankandathu, a lawyer by profession who is also a social activist had taken up the cudgels for the general public in this regard. Shaji asked the Cochin International Airport Authority of India Ltd (CIAL) Airport about the reason behind the unbelievable prices charged by the shops for tea and coffee. “A cup of coffee costs ₹200/- while a cup of tea costs ₹150/- and there is no justification for these prices. The airport authorities could not give any convincing reply to me questions,” Shaji told The Pioneer.

He said he had to give up meals and even snacks while waiting to catch flights after the security check in. “I am not that rich to spend ₹500 for a cup of coffee and a banana fry. Its only because of time constraint that I travel by flight and the authorities should not squeeze me,” he said.

When Shaji failed to get any response from the Airport Authority of India, he

# Kerala reports 962 infections on Mon

**KUMAR CHELLAPPAN ■ KOCHI**

**A**s 962 new persons were diagnosed with Covid-19 on Monday, Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan gave a piece of his mind to all including Health Minister KK Shylaja over the ever increasing number of pandemic cases in the State.

Monday saw two persons succumbing to Covid-19 in Kerala. The Chief Minister was upset over the increase in the number of patients in the State which had declared that Covid curve has been flattened.

“Initially all of us were working with dedication and commitment. But that was lost midway and a sense of complacency has set in. All of us are equally responsible for the present situation as we threw caution to wind. We were carried away by the praise showered on us by other countries which were competing against each other to wax eloquence on us,” said Vijayan as minister Shylaja and other officials sat grim faced.

Out of the 962 persons tested pos-

itive on Monday, 801 contracted the pandemic through local transmission, he said. “There were 55 expatriates and 85 persons from other States who tested positive today while 40 patients could not furnish details of the source from where they contracted the disease,” said Vijayan.

The only positive news from the field was the number of persons who made recovery from the ailment. “815 persons got cured on Monday. Thiruvananthapuram continued to be the city with highest number of Covid-19 patients (205) followed by Ernakulam (106) and Alappuzha (101),” he said.

The number of hotspots shot up to 506 while the Chief Minister said he had entrusted the covid-19 management to the State Police who would take stringent measures to eliminate the pandemic.

The responsibility of marking the containment zones too have been handed over to the State Police. The Chief Minister said the police has been asked to mark and monitor the containment zones.

## Art 370 abrogation gives hope to deprived members: Valmiki community prez

**MOHIT KANDHARI ■ JAMMU**

**A**fter scoring 92 percent marks in his class 12th examinations, Inderjit Singh Gill, has now set his eyes on the prestigious UPSC examinations to realise his dream of becoming an IAS officer. Since childhood he had tutored his mind to crack the prestigious examination at all costs.

Inderjit is not the only one who is nurturing dreams of making it big in life.

Eklavya, currently working as office assistant in the Central University Jammu is also preparing to crack an entrance examination for the post of J&K Bank associate.

After discontinuing her studies in 2016, another bright student from the Valmiki community, Radhika Gill is planning to take an admission in the government degree college to pursue her graduation studies.

These youngsters represent the fourth generation of the Valmiki community living in Jammu since 1957.

After the Abrogation of



Inderjit Singh Gill (L), Eklavya (M) and Domicile certificate of Radhika Gill (R)

Article 370 and 35-A last year they claimed all the doors closed by the successive State Governments have been thrown open by the BJP led Narendra Modi Government in one go.

“We have seen difficult times in the past, my father was working as a sweeper when i was a kid. He worked hard and rose to the level of supervisor in Jammu Municipal Corporation. Now, I want to become an IAS officer and make my parents, my community proud”, Inderjit Singh told The Pioneer.

Inderjit, is currently living with his parents and three other siblings in Valmiki colony in Gandhi Nagar area of Jammu.

Radhika told The Pioneer, “I

discontinued my studies after passing class 12 examination. There was no future for us when Article 370 was there. Now it has been abrogated and i have already received my Domicile certificate, she added. “I can apply for government jobs as per my qualification and also pursue higher studies”.

Eklavya told The Pioneer, “after my graduation I started working as office Assistant in the Central University Jammu. Now i have applied for a J&K Bank post and also filing forms for other posts advertised by the J&k government to try my luck. I feel empowered now”, he added.

There are around 13 colonies in Jammu district alone but none

of them have been regularised by the government till date.

President of the Valmiki Community in Jammu, Garu Bhatti told The Pioneer, “the decision of the BJP government to Abrogate Article 370 and 35-A has infused new lease of life among the deprived members of the community”.

He said, “an estimated number of 150-200 youth are studying in different graduate and post graduate courses in Jammu and Kashmir and now with the issuance of Domicile certificates they can all compete in the competitive examinations and secure their berth”. Previously, despite acquiring degrees majority of youth could not apply for a government job or take admission in the professional degree courses.

In 1957, the then Prime Minister of Jammu and Kashmir Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad had decided to bring in Safai karamcharis (sweepers) from other States.

# Didi Govt opposes new education policy, forms panel

**SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA**

**O**pposing the new education policy (NEP) introduced by the Central Government on grounds that the State was not consulted and the issue was not discussed in Parliament before giving clearance, Bengal Government has formed a six-member committee to ponder over the new scheme and table its own report.

Contradicting Prime Minister Narendra Modi’s assertion that the new education was discussed and debated over the last five years at various levels before being introduced, Bengal Education Minister Partho Chatterjee on Monday said “though the Prime Minister

claimed that the new education policy was discussed extensively at various levels neither the issue was discussed in Parliament nor the State Government was taken into confidence ...particularly when education is in concurrent list.”

A number of serious questions have been raised in the aftermath of the central declaration he said, adding “questions are being raised as to why Madhyamik (Class X) board exam has been done away with in the new scheme of things, why Bengal was not represented in the central advisory team that proposed such a sea change in the national education system and why there is such a vehement trend towards centralization in the new system.”

Informing that the State Government had formed its own committee which would discuss the worth of the new system and submit a report, Chatterjee who earlier called the NEP a “copy paste” of the western and American model said the report would then be sent to the Centre.

“We have formed a team of advisors which will review the NEP and submit a report to the State Government which will then consider sending it to the Centre,” Chatterjee said. The report is to be submitted by August 15.

The team comprises Trinamool Congress MP Professor Sougato Roy, Jadavpur University Vice Chancellor Suranjan Das, Rabindrabharati Univeristy Vice

Chancellor Sabyasachi Basu Roychowdhury, educationist veteran educationists Pabitra Sarkar and Nrsinghaprasad Bhaduri and State syllabus committee chief Avik Majumdar.

Apart from this the Government will also consult various academic associations like Calcutta University Teachers Association (CUTA), Jadavpur University Teachers’ Association (JUTA) etc. Besides “private individuals and other institutions may also send in their views by August 15,” Chatterjee said.

According to inside reports though the State Government sees central encroachment in the NEP it is willing to gauge the general view as the “BJP Government has

very cleverly cloaked dirty fangs of the NEP by some velvety cover like credit banking system etc.

According to a JUTA member “what seems to get lost from the vision amid the hype is the element of dangerous centralization in terms of original research ... one wonders whether critical evaluation would be allowed by the National Research Foundation ever.”

In fact the JUTA said “the NEP 2020 seeks to replace the inclusive, democratic, progressive, idea of India by a narrow, sectarian, and bigoted notion, driven by the compulsion to propagate the divisive ideology of a particular political party... It has set back education in India by at least a century.”

**PNS ■ JAMMU**

**T**he whereabouts of an Indian Army jawan,who went missing late Sunday evening from near Kulgam, could not be traced in the last 24 hours by the joint teams of security forces combing the area inch by inch across South Kashmir districts.

He was currently visiting home on account of Eid holidays.

The day-long searches conducted in the South Kashmir belt of Kulgam, Shopian and Anantnag could not yield desired results.Meanwhile, the family members had issued a passionate appeal to the suspected abductors to release their son without causing any harm to him.

According to a statement issued by the Indian Army, “Rifleman Shakir Manzoor of 162 Battalion (TA), is missing since 17:00hrs yesterday. His aban-

doned burnt car has been found near Kulgam. It is suspected that the soldier has been abducted by terrorists. Search op in progress”.

The burnt car, which belonged to Manzoor, was found from Rambhama area of neighbouring Kulgam district.

In May 2017, a young, unarmed army officer was kidnapped by terrorists when he was attending a family wedding in Shopian. The bullet-riddled body of Lieutenant Ummer Fayaz was recovered the next day 30 km from the wedding venue.

The 22-year-old had joined the Rajputana Rifles five months before. He was believed to be the first Kashmiri officer to be murdered while on leave in his home state since 1991.

In June 2018, another soldier Aurangzeb, who went home to Poonch for Eid, was abducted and killed.

## Another UP Min test +ve

**Lucknow:** Uttar Pradesh Jal Shakti Minister Mahendra Singh has tested positive for COVID-19, hours after the State BJP President Swatantra Dev Singh and two other legislators were confirmed to have contracted the virus.

Apart from Mahendra Singh, eight other state ministers -- Yogendra Upadhaya, Devendra Pratap Singh, Rajendra Pratap Singh, Dharam Singh Saini, Chetan Chauhan, Upendra Tiwari,

Raghuraj Singh and Jai Pratap Singh -- have tested positive and are undergoing treatment.

Cabinet Minister Kamal Rani Varun, who tested positive for coronavirus last month, died on Sunday at the Sanjay Gandhi Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences (SGPGIMS) in Lucknow.

The families of two more Ministers, Satish Mahana and Brijesh Pathak, have also been infected with the virus. **IANS**

## Raksha Bandhan brings cheer back to markets in Agra

**IANS ■ AGRA**

**R**aksha Bandhan brought some cheer back to markets in Agra as people ventured out of their homes to buy sweets and gifts for relatives and sisters. Shopkeepers reported brisk sale of ‘rakhis’ early Monday and flower garlands for special pujas. “Tempo is high right now, more so because of the Ayudhya festivities beginning today,” said priest of the Sri Mathuradheesh temple Pandit Nandan Shrotriya.

“Though the scare of Covid-19 is writ large everywhere, still people are now moving out and thronging the markets. More roadways buses are ferrying people to their homes in rural areas. Though

restrictions are in place, many people have chosen to visit Govardhan and Vrindavan, in groups, in their private vehicles,” said Jugul Kishor Pandit.

However, with 29 fresh cases, Agra’s Covid-19 tally has risen to 1,870, with 100 deaths. The principal of the SN Medical College Dr Sanjay Kala and half-a-dozen staff reported positive on Sunday evening. Kala has been home quarantined. The number of active cases is 292.

Mathura reported 32 fresh cases in the last 24 hours, with Mainpuri (20), Firozabad (26), Etah (18), Kasganj (5). The health department has started screening people in mohallas and crowded locations in the interior of the city.

## Curfew in Srinagar on August 4, 5

**Jammu:** Ahead of the first anniversary of Abrogation of Article 370, 35-A, the District Magistrate of Srinagar has decided to impose strict curfew restrictions on August 4th and 5th of August with immediate effect to prevent violent protests.

According to the order signed by the District Magistrate, Srinagar, “Superintendent of Police, Srinagar has reported that a series of inputs have been received suggesting that separatist and Pakistan sponsored groups are planning to observe August 5, 2020 as ‘Black day’, therein apprehensions of violation action or protests are not ruled out.There are specific inputs about violent protests endangering public life and property”.

“Complete restrictions on public movement under Section 144 to be in place”, the order stated. Medical emergencies and movement of staff on Covid-19 duty with pass/valid cards shall be exempted from above restrictions, the District Magistrate order said.

**PNS**

## J&K: Total crosses 22k mark with 590 new cases

**PIONEER NEWS SERVICE ■ JAMMU**

**T**he total number of coronavirus positive cases Monday crossed 22,000 mark while 11 patients died taking the total death toll due to Covid-19 to 407 in Jammu & Kashmir.

According to the media bulletin, out of 590 new positive cases, 157 were reported from Jammu division and 433 from Kashmir division, taking the total number of positive cases in Jammu and Kashmir to 22,006.

Also 11 Covid-19 deaths have been reported; 02 from

Jammu division and 9 from Kashmir Division.

Moreover, 905 more Covid-19 patients have recovered and discharged from various hospitals, 160 from Jammu Division and 745 from Kashmir Division.

According to the daily Media Bulletin, out of 22006 positive cases, 7567 are Active Positive, 14032 have recovered and 407 have died; 30 in Jammu division and 377 in Kashmir division.

The Bulletin further said that out of 662941 test results available, 640935 samples have been tested as negative till August 3, 2020.

## Covid patients shifted to hospital in garbage vehicle in Andhra

**Amaravati:** In a shocking incident, three Covid-19 patients were allegedly shifted to a hospital in a garbage vehicle in Andhra Pradesh’s Vizianagaram district.

A video, which shows three persons boarding the trolley in Nellimarla town, has gone viral on social media, prompting the authorities to order a probe.

The incident reportedly occurred on Saturday when an ambulance did not reach to shift three members of a family to the hospital.

They had undergone Covid-19 tests on Wednesday and it was on Friday that they were found positive. Locals alerted 108 ambulance and requested that they be shifted to hospital. However, the ambulance did not reach the location, forcing the residents to arrange a trolley from Nellimarla Nagar Panchayat.

Local officials ordered a probe into the incident. Primary Health Centre medical officer Gayatri Devi said the ambulance was sent immediately after learning about the patients from volunteers but before the vehicle could reach there the local residents mobilized a trolley from the municipal body.

Nellimarla Nagar

**Local officials ordered a probe into the incident. Primary Health Centre medical officer Gayatri Devi said the ambulance was sent immediately after learning about the patients from volunteers but before the vehicle could reach there the local residents mobilized a trolley from the municipal body**

Panchayat Commissioner J.R. Appala Naidu said the vehicle was being used to carry Sodium Hypochlorite and other items for burying the Covid-19 victims.

Vizianagaram District Medical and Health Officer Dr Ramana Kumari said she had ordered a probe into the incident. Former chief minister N. Chandrababu Naidu said he was appalled over the treatment meted out to the patients. “Appalling! Three Covid-19 patients in BC Colony, Jarjapupeta in Vizianagaram Dist were taken to the hospital in a garbage vehicle,” the Telugu Desam Party (TDP) chief tweeted.

“Don’t know about coronavirus, but the helpless patients might contract other dangerous diseases. Why are they not being treated like humans?” Naidu asked. **IANS**

## K’taka sees slight drop in daily cases at 4,752

**Bengaluru:** After logging more than 5,000 Covid-19 cases a day for the past several days, Karnataka saw a drop in infections with 4,752 new cases in the last 24 hours, raising the state’s tally to 1.39 lakh, said a health official on Monday.

Similarly,Bengaluru has also witnessed lesser number of cases with 1,497 infections as compared to 2,000 cases on a daily basis.

With the new infections, the city’s tally breached 60,000 mark to settle at 60,998, out of which 36,290 are active.

Among other places, Mysuru accounted for 372 infections, followed by Ballari (305), Bagalkote (209), Dhwarwad (191), Kalaburagi (170), Koppal (157) and Shivamogga (155) among others.

98 more patients have succumbed to the virus, raising the state’s toll to 2,594.

However, on a positive note, record 4,776 more patients have been discharged in the last 24 hours, 2,693 in Bengaluru Urban alone, raising the total number of recoveries to 62,500.

Of the 1.39 lakh cases in the southern state, 74,469 are active. **IANS**

## Tripura BJP MLA defies quarantine orders

## Agartala: Ruling BJP MLA in Tripura and former State Health Minister Sudip Roy Barman on Monday defied orders to go into quarantine after visiting a Covid Care Centre (CCC) and distributing fruits among the Covid patients here on Sunday.

Barman in reply to the West Tripura District Magistrate (DM) Sandeep Mahatme’s letter, said: “Some vested interested persons are trying to put me intentionally in the quarantine centre so that I can easily come in contact with others who have tested positive for the coronavirus, which could be hazardous to my health.”

He also wrote that he had neither clinically or otherwise tested positive for COVID-19, nor was he a symptomatic or asymptomatic patient.

The BJP MLA told the media that an FIR was registered against him on Monday.

Barman became the Health and Family Welfare, Information Technology and Science and Technology Minister after the BJP-led alliance government came to power in Tripura in March 2018. **IANS**



# A long haul

As talks for pullback continue, they are just a diversion as it isn't easy for China to give up Pangong Tso



As the Chinese are reluctant to significantly pull back from Pangong Tso, fortifying their positions around it, and making concessional retreats at other sites just to keep talks going, India should be prepared for the long haul. And though a Siachenisation at the heights would mean a waste of man and resources on both sides, China seems to be preparing for a stakeout this winter at least. For all the diplomacy around eastern Ladakh, it is just a diversionary tactic as the Chinese will not forfeit what they have gained in Pangong Lake and Depsang areas. That's because this geographical wedge between Gilgit-Baltistan in the west (Pakistan-occupied Kashmir), where China is heavily invested in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), and Aksai Chin in the east, is an irritant to its regional supremacy, strategically and economically. And it wants an unhindered run of the highway from Xinjiang to Tibet, 179 km of which is under Indian shadow. So far, its contiguous hold on Central Asia, Pakistan and beyond was a low-cost, undemanding exercise, playing as it did on smartly interpreting its version of the Line of Actual Control (LAC) on the ground. As it is unmarked and fluidic, it has justified its salami slicing to perceptual differences and pre-empted counter-attacks by heaving down with military presence and developing border infrastructure, the scale of which has held India back from a robust counter-challenge for years. But now that we have ramped up our border infrastructure, China is extremely uncomfortable about the proximity of the Daulat Beg Oldie (DBO) road to sensitive areas and strategic highways to the north of the Karakoram Pass. And as Galwan has shown, our troops are more than capable of bloodying noses in high altitude warfare. So China simply won't give up the spurs it has now because it doesn't want to compromise its edge in the Karakoram. Already, it has browbeaten India at the talks table by calling for a buffer zone, which means our forces cannot patrol up to the points they used to because of the Chinese insistence on a no man's land. This would allow it to build resources on its side unmonitored and reverse any disengagement move made so far at short notice. This clause also makes Indian vigilance difficult besides burdening soldiers with knife-edge preparedness at all times. China is hoping that it will be able to renegotiate the status quo at Pangong Tso by wearing out our troops and patience, particularly during a long, hard winter. If anything, the "push and extract" policy might continue even as nominal concessions are made to show that it is committed to the dialogue process. The People's Liberation Army (PLA) cannot be written off simply because it has had a history of winter offensives, be it the occupation of Tibet or the incursion of 1962.

For China, the loss of troops at Galwan is a loss of face. And the fact that it has maintained somewhat of a radio silence on casualties means that it will strike back. Right now, tainted by the Wuhan virus, China may have stretched itself too thin in using the pandemic to reshape its imperial dream of colonising the world. But it won't acknowledge India's neo-assertiveness by withdrawing. Instead, it will consolidate, given that it will be the only economy to register growth, even if it is as low as one per cent, and will bet big on fighting for Asian pride against a US-dominated West. Despite the US opposition, it has already got aggressive in the South China Sea, claiming islands, setting up bases and enveloping South and Southeast Asians with its transactional economic largesse and debt-trapping. Many have given in to the bullying but India hasn't. Besides, with the US using us as its proxy, we will increasingly become a pawn in the game of two big powers for world domination. If China loses its stakes in India, the second biggest Asian power, how would it be able to convince other Asian nations to go with its hegemonic vision? So there will be need-based engagement all right but coercion will be constant. India may not match up to its economic and military might as yet and while it develops self-sufficiencies of its own, it has to take on a partnering role with both Western and regional countries. It can challenge China in the Indian Ocean region, get more active in the Quad initiative with US and Japan and use its international goodwill as a nation that respects "rule-based order" to build a case against China's aggressive tactics. And it must now confront the boundary question, insist on marking the LAC. For years of denial and yielding to the Chinese template of working around the boundary dispute have only left us with trade dependencies and a deficit. Today, it is eastern Ladakh but if the territorial push in Bhutan is any indication, China may very well expand its claim lines in Arunachal Pradesh now, just to stretch us beyond our extremities. We should be wary of the fact that the PLA, which has been pitching tents, building roads and marking territories since 2013 and which directly takes orders from Chinese President Xi Jinping himself, may lie low but not go silent.

## All wasn't lost

Chennai techie finds Pragyan, the rover on-board Chandrayaan-2, intact while assessing NASA images



In some good news for India, which is grappling with the twin woes of an ailing economy and the deepening Coronavirus crisis, a Chennai-based techie has claimed that the rover onboard Chandrayaan-2, the Indian Space Research Organisation's (ISRO's) moon mission, is intact on the lunar surface and had even moved a few metres. India's second mission to the moon had ended in disaster as a last-minute software glitch led to the Vikram lander crash-landing on the lunar surface, just 500 metres short of touchdown. Yes, we were ambitious to land on the dark side of the moon, which bigger space-faring nations have not attempted, but the rover's presence is reassurance that while we need to refine our efforts, they have all not gone to waste. And ISRO needs to follow through the Chandrayaan series in mission mode.

Since the failure of the Chandrayaan-2 last year, things have not gone too well for ISRO, with its GISAT-1 launch being mysteriously called off on March 4, a day before take-off citing an ambiguous "technical reason." Plus, the space agency, which had a very busy schedule for this year — with around two dozen launches, including Aditya, India's first solar probe — is having trouble keeping its commitments. Due to the pandemic playing spoilsport, ISRO, too, had to go into a lockdown mode. India's ambitious human space flight programme Gaganyaan, is in trouble because the astronaut training of the four test pilots of the Indian Air Force has been stopped. Besides over 100 manufacturing units in the private sector, that are contracted to manufacture components for ISRO's missions, are shut and the work of producing rockets, satellites and scientific instrumentation is on hold right now. But what is most encouraging is that the rover was found by a Chennai techie, Shanmuga Subramanian, from NASA's images. He had earlier helped NASA find the debris of the Vikram lander, earning him plaudits from the space agency and the gratitude of an embarrassed ISRO. His persistence should be a reason for inducting him and others like him in our space-faring projects. Space nerds should be identified from school and encouraged. It was difficult to detect the rover because it was on the South Pole of the Moon, which is not always well-lit and was missed by the NASA flyby on November 11 possibly for this reason. Not just this, it seems that the rover uploaded commands to the lander, which could not relay them back. Is some data stored there? But with the Vikram lander going silent, we will never know. Whether this translates into any gains for ISRO, only time will tell. But for now, there is something to cheer about in the Indian space community.

# Checkmating China

If Trump can be persuaded to see the Baloch quest and Iran as potential allies that could take the Makran coast away from China, it would put a powerful brake on the latter's ambitions



SANDHYA JAIN

Indian analysts seem indifferent to the threat of India losing the railway line from Iran's Chabahar port to Afghanistan and Central Asia and suggest that New Delhi should focus on ties with Arab countries that provide energy security and jobs to millions of Indians. The view that India must choose between the Sunni Arab world and Shia Iran is myopic and contrary to established Indian diplomacy. Certainly, lakhs of Indian Muslims annually visit Saudi Arabia for hajj/umra but the lockdown imposed in March revealed that thousands of citizens visit Karbala and Najaf that are sacred to the Shias. Many work in Iran. Indeed, Commander Kulbhushan Jadhav (ret'd) is believed to have been abducted from Chabahar and pushed across the border into Pakistan.

The stalemate in India-Iran ties is due to US sanctions that cover countries engaging with Tehran commercially. India secured an exemption for the Chabahar port, which may not cover the railway, and stopped buying the light Iranian crude suited to its refineries after the six-month grace period ended. The freeze on its oil revenues seriously hurt Iran's economy, forcing it to seek ways to end its economic and diplomatic trauma.

Tehran moved cautiously, leaking "news" about a \$400 billion deal with China, which seemed credible given Beijing's huge investments across the globe. An unverified 18-page document gave the details of a 25-year Iran-China agreement that Chinese President Xi Jinping had proposed during a visit to Iran in January 2016. It mentioned a \$280 billion investment in Iran's oil and gas industry and \$120 billion across various sectors. Beijing would receive crude oil and gas at discounted prices for 25 years.

New Delhi was alarmed at the possibility of China funding the railway and depriving India of its coveted alternate route to Afghanistan and Central Asia, bypassing Pakistan. Envoy Gaddam Dharmendra rushed to meet Iranian Speaker Bagher Ghalibaf and Vice Minister of Roads and President of the Railways, Mohsen Pourseyed Aghaei, to salvage the Chabahar-Zahedan (and possibly Zarang) line. Also at stake is a free trade zone to serve the landlocked Central Asian states. Further, the Farzad-B gas field was discovered by ONGC Videsh in 2012 but its development has been



stuck in wrangling over Iran's desire for two pipelines as opposed to India's insistence on a single pipeline. This is purely a commercial dispute and Tehran needs to be reasonable.

But for Chabahar and related projects, India will have to pioneer some deft diplomacy to break the deadlock between Washington and Tehran or sacrifice its regional ambitions forever. It is no secret that Islamabad is now firmly in Beijing's sphere of influence; its deafening silence on the treatment of Uyghurs in Xinjiang and refusal to bring its citizens back from Wuhan after the pandemic in order to save China's face leave no scope for doubt on this score. India did not blame China but rushed to bring its students back from Wuhan; now, the Chinese aggression in Ladakh has dramatically altered the situation.

An independent Balochistan offers a way out. At the time of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979, American scholar Selig Harrison had the prescience to realise that the turmoil in Kabul would bring Pakistan's Baloch problem to the forefront (*In Afghanistan's Shadow: Baluch Nationalism and Soviet Temptations*, 1980). Till his death in 2016, Harrison urged

Washington to support Baloch independence in pursuit of its own interests in the region but successive administrations from Nixon-Kissinger remained invested in Islamabad.

Now, the China-Pakistan axis has eroded Washington's relationship with its non-NATO ally, Baloch resistance to Islamabad's unceasing atrocities and resentment against the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) that encroaches upon their land and resources give America an opening. For, Balochistan is the geostrategic region without which Pakistan is just a landlocked landmass, of no use even to the Army that controls it.

As Italian scholar Valeria F Piacentini observed in 1945, Balochistan is at the crossroads of two "axes", east-west and north-south, of three macro-regions: Asia, Africa and the Mediterranean basin. It forms the hinge between the Indian sub-continent, Central Asia and the Euro-Asiatic steppes and the Iranian plateau; as also the link between regions that gravitate towards the Indian Ocean and its western "sea routes", the Persian Gulf and the Red Sea.

This is why London want-

ed Balochistan to be part of Pakistan and nudged MA Jinnah after the Khan of Kalat proved obdurate. Balochistan was annexed in 1948. The CIA-MI6 operated from Balochistan to overthrow the then Iranian Prime Minister M Mossadegh after he nationalised the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. Washington used Balochistan for its proxy war against Soviet forces in Afghanistan and opened war against the Taliban.

Gwadar Port, China's big prize and *raison d'être* for the CPEC, belongs to Balochistan. Chabahar is part of the same Makran coastline. If US President Donald Trump can be persuaded to see the Baloch quest and Iran as potential allies, that could take the entire Makran coast away from China (depriving it also of the military base it is building in Jiواني peninsula off Gwadar). It would put a powerful brake on China's relentless acquisition of ports and bases across the Indian Ocean littoral.

Iran is a catch for Beijing because like Pakistan, it can join the Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) by land and sea, giving it access to staggering geostrategic space. Tehran could link Beijing with Ankara, which offers access to the

Mediterranean Sea and the nations of North Africa, Central Europe and Europe that comprise its littoral. The Mediterranean Sea opens into the Atlantic Ocean via the Strait of Gibraltar; this could bring Beijing closer to Washington than ever envisaged by the State Department or Pentagon. Beijing in Chabahar would also have access to the Arabian Sea, Strait of Hormuz and Sea of Oman, besides a shortcut to its military base in Djibouti. A US-friendly Balochistan and Iran would end this dream run.

Interestingly, in June 2020, Moscow arrested Valery Mitko, president, Arctic Academy of Sciences, for allegedly giving China information about submarine detection, a reflection of Moscow's anger at Chinese ambitions in the Arctic region. Washington has also arrested citizens in prestigious institutions working covertly for China. It should investigate whether the tales of Russian interference in the 2016 and 2020 presidential elections originated from "friends" in institutions that received lavish Chinese funding. Perhaps Russian President Vladimir Putin has signalled as much.

(The author is a senior journalist. Views are personal)

## SOUNDBITE

Swami Swarupanand had warned that August 5 was inauspicious for the stone-laying of Ram temple. This date has been fixed in accordance with Modi's convenience.



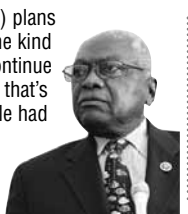
Congress leader —Digvijaya Singh

It's (*Gunjan Saxena: The Kargil Girl*) my film, too. Everyone has a right to their opinion, but people are spitting fire against one another. The flak is unfair.



Actor —Angad Bedi

I believe that he (Trump) plans to install himself in some kind of emergency way to continue to hold onto office. And that's why the American people had better wake up.



Top Democrat leader —Whip James Clyburn

While people boycott Chinese products, cellphone makers in China will continue as title sponsors of the IPL. No wonder China is thumbing its nose at us.



NC leader —Omar Abdullah

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Liquor deaths

Sir — It is unfortunate that more than 85 people died and many others were taken ill due to the consumption of spurious liquor in Punjab. The sale of illicit liquor is a thriving business not only in Punjab but in many parts of the country. In fact, India remains one among the countries with the highest number of alcohol-related deaths. And whenever such a tragedy unfolds, Governments react by imposing a ban on the sale of liquor. They fail to either bring tighter regulations or crack down on dens, which operate without a licence as they fulfil a demand while making huge profits.

People take to illicit liquor as they cannot afford to buy licensed brands. Spurious liquor does not attract taxes or duties and, thus, comes cheap. The Punjab Government must set a precedent by constituting a Special Investigation Team which must track down all bootleggers in the State. The Union Government, too, must come up with a multi-pronged plan to curb the sale and consumption of toxic alcohol.

Ramesh G Jethwani  
Bengaluru

### Plain truths about Rafale

Before the arrival of the Rafale jets, their acquisition process went through many twists and turns. It was in 2000, during the initial years of NDA-I, when the Indian Air Force (IAF) initiated a proposal for the acquisition of 126 Mirage 2000-Is from Dassault Aviation (DA) for induction from 2004-05 onwards. According to the CAG, the Defence Procurement Board (DPB) discarded the proposal after protracted deliberations till 2004. When the UPA Government came to power, it issued a Request for Proposal for the acquisition of 126 advanced versions of MMRCA in 2007. As per the delivery terms, 18 aircraft were to be supplied in flyaway condition and the balance 108 were to be manufactured by HAL. The RFP was withdrawn based on a report by the Ministry of Defence, which reportedly carried out a statement saying that "the price bid of DA was non-compliant as it was incomplete and not in the prescribed format" yet again. And the NDA-II Government signed an Inter-Governmental Agreement (IGA) in 2016 for 36 fighter jets at a price aligned to the earlier "incomplete" offer. Delivery of the first batch of 18 Rafale aircraft was to be completed within 53 months and the balance 18 within 67 months from the date of signing of the IGA. The agreement put a lid on the original proposal to manufacture 108 Rafale warplanes by HAL.

Exactly two decades into the process, the ruling Government has landed on the indigenous builder now



to meet the initially projected requirement. The Air Chief Marshal has now confirmed that an order for another 83 Light Combat Aircraft (LCA), Tejas MK IA, from HAL was being fast-tracked. In a nutshell, IAF initiated a proposal for 126 Mirage 2000-II from DA in 2000 and the Ministry is still preparing to place an order for 83 Tejas MK IA with HAL in 2020. During the intervening 20 years, India has acquired just five Rafale fighter jets out of the 36 ordered and that, too, at a phenomenal cost. Yet, the irony is that confirmed jingoists hit the streets in jubilation on the arrival of the foreign-made Rafales but found no reason to applaud the Tejas, the indigenously designed and built Light Combat Aircraft.

Haridasan Rajan  
Kozhikode

### Education revamp

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "New curriculum" (July 31).

The new National Education Policy (NEP) promises a transformational shift, infusing an element of joy and purpose in learning. The new guidelines, if

implemented, will offer students a flexible academic journey where they can pick and choose instead of remaining confined to set patterns. The

loftier goals are to mainstream about two crore out-of-school children. Before and after 1947, matriculation was the requirement for entrance to higher education in colleges. Then, 10+2 streams brought more changes but NEP, 2020, promises the much-needed reforms. Though challenges remain, the new NEP can be a game-changer as it promises to bestow flexibility, improve the skills of the students and grant more autonomy to educational institutions.

Abhijit Roy  
Jamshedpur

### Exercise in futility

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "New curriculum" (July 31). NEP, 2020, is an exercise in futility. It wasn't debated in Parliament. Increasing the tenure of undergraduate courses makes no sense as postgraduate programmes have been watered down. The only redeemable feature is that it does not disturb the three-language formula system.

Ratnapriya  
Via email

Send your feedback to: [letterstopioneer@gmail.com](mailto:letterstopioneer@gmail.com)



FIRST COLUMN

# Of slavery and history

Judging people for the past is a distraction from the business at hand, which is to clear up the ghastly heritage of racism that slavery has left



GWYNNE DYER

Assessing the people of America’s past by today’s standards would compel us to cast the majority of our heroes as villains.” That seemed to be the line taken by Senator Tom Cotton of Arkansas in his opinion piece for *The New York Times*. It caused great outrage, the Opinion Editor had to resign and Cotton was roundly abused for “defending slavery.” He probably deserved that. What he actually said was that the “Founding Fathers” of the US saw slavery as the “necessary evil upon which the Union was built.” That would sound all right in a classroom, if you then explained that otherwise the slave-owning southern states would not have agreed to a federation of all 13 colonies.

It sounded less well coming out of the mouth of a senator who wants to ban federal funding for a project to improve the teaching of the history of slavery in American schools. Senator Cotton is one of President Donald Trump’s loyal soldiers, trying to whip up a white racial panic and consolidate the boss’s “base.” But that’s not the point. The point is that I changed one word in that quote, and that it wasn’t Cotton who said it. It was Nigerian journalist and novelist Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani, and what she actually said, in an opinion piece for the *BBC*, was this: “Assessing the people of Africa’s past by today’s standards would compel us to cast the majority of our heroes as villains.”

She was talking specifically about her great-grandfather, Nwaubani Ogogo Oriaku, who was a widely respected trader in tobacco, palm oil, and slaves in south-eastern Nigeria in the early 20th century. The Atlantic slave trade had been banned by the European empires a century before but slavery was still a flourishing domestic business in Nigeria and many other African countries. Her great-grandfather became famous by defying the British colonial authorities, who were trying to stamp out slavery within Nigeria. They had confiscated some of his slaves and he marched right up and demanded them back, waving a trading licence that dated back to the previous century.

They were taken aback, apologised and returned his slaves. Indeed, they were so impressed by his boldness and self-confidence that they subsequently appointed him “paramount chief” of his region. So he became a local hero in his own day and is still a hero to Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani’s family. Slavery was normal in most pre-modern societies, including almost all the kingdoms and ethnic groups of sub-Saharan Africa. Africans had sold slaves north to various Islamic empires in the Middle East for centuries before Europeans showed up on the coast in ships. They were just another set of customers buying in the same market.

Most enslaved Africans didn’t travel more than a few hundred kilometres from home, of course. It is estimated that in the 18th century, one-third of the people in what is now Senegal were slaves who belonged to other Senegalese. But the ones who were sold to foreigners probably suffered even more.

Historians believe that around one-fifth of the ten million Africans transported to the Americas over more than three centuries died on board ships. The fatalities among the estimated 17 million African slaves sold to Arab traders and forced to walk across the Sahara or carried around the India Ocean in ships during ten centuries were probably just as high. What awaited the survivors when they arrived was pretty appalling too.

But Adaobi Tricia Nwaubani is right. The past is a different country and it’s pointless to judge people by standards they would not even comprehend. Judging people for past history is a distraction from the business at hand, which is to clear up the ghastly heritage of racism that slavery has left in America.

It is noteworthy that there is no comparable heritage of guilt and racism in the African countries that sold the slaves. Everybody, slaves and masters, was from the same group, and everybody was involved one way or another. We used to do it, now we don’t, end of story. Why is it so different in the European countries, and above all in the US? My guess is that it’s because slavery, uniquely in the world, had completely died out in Europe by a thousand years ago. When 16th-century Europeans reached West Africa, it was quite new to them.

They took to slave-owning readily enough but they had no traditional framework in which to think about it. Nwaubani Ogogo Oriaku didn’t need to justify owning slaves by telling himself they were inferior. He’d bought them fair and square. What’s the problem? Whereas American plantation owners had to come up with bizarre racial fantasies to explain to themselves why it was right to own other people — and their great-great-grandchildren are still struggling with those fantasies today.

(Gwynne Dyer’s new book is ‘Growing Pains: The Future of Democracy and Work.’)

NONE OF THE ILLICIT LIQUOR (DEATH) CASES FROM THE LAST FEW MONTHS HAVE BEEN SOLVED BY THE PUNJAB POLICE. —DELHI CHIEF MINISTER ARVIND KEJRIWAL

POINT COUNTERPOINT



WHY DON’T YOU ASK YOUR PUNJAB UNIT FOR DATA AND FIGURES FIRST AND THEN COMMENT ON OUR WORKING. —PUNJAB CHIEF MINISTER AMARINDER SINGH

# In the name of God

The BJP has already made the construction of the Ram temple a political issue that will hold good for 2024. Ayodhya city has been painted in saffron hues



BISWAJEET BANERJEE

The innocuous-sounding statement of the General Secretary of the Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust, Champat Rai, that the construction of the Ram temple, whose foundation will be laid by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on August 5, will be completed within three-and-a-half-years, has political overtones which no one can miss.

“We will try to complete the construction by three years but we have six months extra in case we fail to meet the deadline because of any eventuality. But, mark my words, the temple will be ready with its pristine grandeur by the end of 2023 or early 2024,” Rai had said when announcing that Modi would be the chief guest of the ground-breaking ceremony for the Ram temple’s construction.

For those who need it to be spelled out, the timing of the completion of the temple is crucial — end of 2023 or early 2024. The Lok Sabha elections are expected by March 2024. This means that the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) would again use the Ram temple to play the Hindutva card and propel the party towards victory. This time the BJP will go to the masses saying “*jo kaha, woh kiya* (we did what we said we would do).” The common refrain of BJP leaders and campaigners will be, “We promised the people that the Ram temple would be built in Ayodhya and we fulfilled that promise.” I would not be surprised if the party takes a miniaturised model of the Ram temple across villages or puts up such models before the Model Code of Conduct comes into play in every gram Sabha. The process has already begun as the Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) has asked for funds from the people for temple construction. The VHP has set a target of reaching over 10 crore families in five lakh villages across India with an appeal to donate at least ₹100 voluntarily for the temple’s construction. It is set to start from Uttar Pradesh (UP) and will then spread out across the country.

The VHP’s plan does not end here. The Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust, the temple trust which is entrusted with the task of constructing a temple at the Ram Janmabhoomi Complex, in collaboration with the VHP, plans to kick-start the ‘Akhand Bharat Week’ after the *bhoomi puja* (ground-breaking ceremony). The week will be celebrated from August 16 to August 23 when the Parishad volunteers will go to the villages and tell the masses about the Ram Mandir construction and how this temple will ensure the “*akhandata*” (integrity) of the country.

The BJP has always used the temple issue to meet its political aims. It has always found a mention in its election manifesto, whose nomenclature has changed with the passage of time. The BJP election manifesto is now called ‘*Sankalp Patra*’. After the famous Rath Yatra carried out by Lal Krishna Advani along with Pramod Mahajan in 1989 from Somnath to Ayodhya, with Narendra Modi accompanying the yatra from Somnath till the border of Gujarat, the BJP saw the potential of the issue to propel the party to great political power.

When the yatra was stopped in Samastipur in Bihar by the then Lalu Prasad Government and Advani was arrested, the whole of India was drenched in the spirit of Hindutva. The rath was stopped on October 23, 1990. This set off a string

“FOR THOSE WHO NEED IT TO BE SPELLED OUT, THE TIMING OF THE COMPLETION OF THE TEMPLE IS CRUCIAL — END OF 2023 OR EARLY 2024. THE LOK SABHA ELECTIONS ARE EXPECTED BY MARCH 2024. THIS MEANS THAT THE BHARATIYA JANATA PARTY WOULD AGAIN USE THE RAM TEMPLE TO PLAY THE HINDUTVA CARD AND PROPEL THE PARTY TOWARDS VICTORY”



of events that shaped the country’s politics in years to come. Advani’s arrest triggered massive protests across the country, sparking communal riots across several towns, especially in north India. Hundreds of *Kar Sevaks* (voluntary workers) marched towards Ayodhya to liberate the Ram Janmabhoomi. Exactly a week after Advani’s Rath Yatra was stopped — on October 30 — as many as 28 *Kar Sevaks* were killed in police firing while trying to storm the Babri Masjid. Even before the *Kar Sevaks* had entered Ayodhya, then Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Mulayam Singh Yadav had claimed that “*parinda bhi par nahi maar sakta* (not even a bird can enter there).” Mulayam Singh still justifies the police action.

The events that unfolded then only benefited the BJP as its political clout grew exponentially and it grabbed the opportunity with both hands. In the 1991 election, for the first time the party gave the slogan of “*Mandir wahin banayenge* (we will build the temple there only)” but it was only in 1996, that for the first time, the BJP mentioned the Ram Mandir in its manifesto.

The party reiterated its commitment to facilitate the construction of a magnificent Ram temple at the *Janmasthan* (birthplace) in Ayodhya after coming to power as “this is the dream of millions of people in our land. The concept of Ram lies at the core of their consciousness.”

The words remained the same in manifesto after manifesto and in 2019 it said: “We reiterate our stand on the Ram Mandir. We will explore all possibilities within the framework of the Constitution and make all necessary efforts to facilitate the expeditious

construction of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya.”

That commitment was fulfilled in November 2019 when the Supreme Court paved the way for the construction of the Ram temple in Ayodhya and allowed the construction of a mosque, which incidentally will come up 30 kilometres away from the complex where the original mosque stood.

With the completion of one aim, the BJP has already got ammunition for the elections — which is powerful and emotive. And the subsidiary props can come from more communal pitches like cow vigilantism and the anti-citizenship law protests. Emotion is a very important quotient for winning or losing elections in a democracy. Corruption, religion, nationalism, caste *et al* are some of the issues which have an emotive appeal and can unite people in no time. This is not limited to India only. Even in the US, the slogan “America First” did wonders for Donald Trump. Similarly, in 2019, Balakot supplied the required emotive quotient in the form of nationalism and the BJP and Modi swept the Lok Sabha polls. The BJP has already made the construction of the Ram temple a political issue. Ayodhya city has been painted in saffron hues. Students of the arts faculty of Saket Degree College have drawn pictures of Ram, Laxman and characters of the *Ramayana* on the walls around the city — not even leaving the walls of the Sulabh Shauchalaya toilet complex.

In the backdrop of the COVID-19 guidelines, people have been asked not to go to the Ram Janmabhoomi site where the main function will be held. But the BJP has plans to put up LED screens all across Ayodhya so that peo-

ple can witness the ground-breaking ceremony and watch the Prime Minister lay the foundation stone of the temple on August 5. They argue that it is natural for people to want to witness this historic moment at the Ram Janmabhoomi Complex but because of COVID-19 guidelines they cannot be allowed entry there, hence they can watch it on big screens near their *mohallas* (localities).

The VHP has done its part and has asked people across India to decorate their homes, *mohallas* and *mandirs* and watch the live telecast of the grand ceremony together while singing *bhajans* (hymns). Milind Parande, Secretary General of the VHP, had issued a statement saying that the live telecasts should be accessible to the community on big screens or at auditoria. “People should decorate their houses, neighbourhoods, villages, markets, monasteries, gurdwaras and *ashrams* and distribute *prasad* and also light lamps after sunset,” the VHP leader had said in that statement. “Use all means of publicity to make this grand programme available to more and more people in society,” he had further said. The paraphernalia is ready. The BJP and its right-wing organisations are all set to milk the situation for political gains. The Unlock 3.0 guidelines may have asked people to desist from organising religious functions but the BJP Government and the party are ready for such a big event. After all, it is all politics. And an investment made today will hold good later. One wonders if COVID-19 management could be pursued with such intent. Lord Ram would have wanted that.

(The writer is Executive Director, News, Lucknow edition)

# No more a matter of public interest

We must act against those misusing PIL, which is considered the most important tool in delivering speedy justice to the underprivileged and the poor



J GOPIKRISHNAN

The seeds of the Public Interest Litigation (PIL) germinated in India during the time of Justice Krishna Iyer in 1976 and subsequently in 1979, when the inhuman conditions of 50,000 undertrial prisoners led to their release. The idea that emerged in a movement that was steered by Justice PN Bhagwati was to ensure speedy justice as a fundamental right, which was never within the reach of the poor and the underprivileged.

From being a potent weapon meant to check the failures of the legislature and the executive, the PIL slowly and steadily became a domain

to nurture and pursue private interests. It offered a political theatre for guerrilla warfare in a layered style. It soon became the Frankenstein’s monster that could make the legislature and the executive shiver. And this year, the PIL industry wants to achieve its final goal and that is to dictate terms to the Supreme Court (SC) of India.

There has been so much degeneration that Justice Arijit Pasayat underscored that the ‘P’ in PIL stands for politics, *paisa*, publicity or private interest. This position has been adequately reiterated by the SC in the Ashok Kumar Pandey case. However, the litany of frivolous petitions over a period of time has become so big that PIL activists have started issuing integrity certificates to serving and retired judges and bureaucrats.

“Why is your shirt not buttoned and why are your collars open?” the Chief Justice of India (CJI) asked a PIL lawyer in the ongoing proceedings in Court No 1, following the murder of eight policemen on duty and the subsequent encounter of

Uttar Pradesh’s (UP) notorious gangster Vikas Dubey and his associates by the police.

The single-member commission of enquiry appointed by the Government of UP was undone following certain PILs filed before the apex court. This was done even after the SC has ruled in the Bharati Tamang and State of West Bengal Vs CPDR cases that a PIL for seeking a commission of enquiry is maintainable only in exceptional circumstances.

It was further qualified in the Zahira Habibulla Sheikh and Common Cause Vs Union of India case that such “exceptional circumstances”, justifying a relief-seeking court-appointed enquiry, arise only where deficiency in a probe is visible or there is *prima facie* evidence of abuse of power, which casts any doubt on the independence of the commission. The SC further held that even in such cases, a third party can seek remedy through a PIL only when the allegations of such abuse of power or deficiency in enquiry are

borne out of records, as laid down in the Rajiv Ranjan Singh Lalan case.

However, the PIL action continued. The first round was followed by objections to the appointment of a particular retired judge of the Supreme Court even after the CJI cleared the name. The “bias” of the retired bureaucrat in the commission was mocked. The Special Investigation Team (SIT) constituted by the State under the Additional Chief Secretary was challenged. Value and virtue certificates from an invisible, point-based human rights curriculum were exchanged and exhibited before the Bench.

How far should the court go to satisfy the petitioners — especially when they have no track record of representing the public at large in any matters of grave concern — and those who attack the reputation of retired judges, whose contribution to the legal system for decades is in the public domain?

How did the apex court deal with such frivolous petitions in the past? In the Mathews Nedumpara case, the

SC in 2019 initiated *suo motu* contempt proceedings and, after taking into consideration the objectionable conduct of the petitioner, including his acts of filing frivolous petitions, sentenced him to three months’ jail and a suspension of the sentence if he undertook that he would never browbeat a judge. He was additionally barred from practising before the SC for one year.

Further in the case of Suraz India Trust v Union of India, the court ruled that the petitioner be precluded from filing any case in public interest before any court in this country and imposed a penalty of ₹25 lakh.

When one thought that the SC-appointed commission would finally get to work on why the mockery of rule of law in the gory death of policemen should not be repeated, another bunch of petitions was filed, this time based on a media article. The PILs again questioned the integrity of a commission that collectively brings to the table 150 plus years of service to the nation.

Should these petitions and their

consequent dismissal, as bland as it may appear, soaked in the semantics of apology, not be considered one more assault on the mutilated bodies of the policemen who died on duty?

Keeping aside differences on political or ideological leanings, misgivings or otherwise concerning the judiciary, the police force and the graver grouse we have developed towards the criminal justice system, we need to pause and introspect.

The commission is expected, as per the terms of reference, to enquire into the nexus between the criminals and the police/establishment and make suggestions to ensure such events do not recur in the future.

How long do we wait for the commission to function and make appropriate recommendations to fix a broken system? A system in which a history-sheeter with more than 60 heinous offences was out on bail.

A system in which “insiders” appeared to have tipped off the criminals. A system in which there is no speedy trial or regular hearings. A system in which the criminals run a

racket from within the jails. A system in which the families of policemen murdered are looking at a long and hard road to justice. A system in which endless aspirations for the idea of justice are only soaked in the body of hope. Just because hope is the only feeling stronger than fear and it is with that hope that we look up to Court No 1 to dispense justice now.

It is time to move beyond simple dismissals and imposition of costs. In spite of settled laws, the tyranny of frivolous petitions is not just obstructing the functioning of the apex court by eating up precious time and resources but is mocking at the very idea of justice. It is time to ensure that just because the highest court has opened its doors to justice, it cannot be converted into a platform for enabling the agenda of one particular section of activist lawyers. It is time to act against those misusing the PIL, which is considered the most important tool in delivering speedy justice to the underprivileged.

(The writer is a Special Correspondent of The Pioneer)



# ISIS storm prison in Af, 29 killed

AP ■ JALALABAD

Afghan forces retook a prison in the country's east on Monday afternoon, following an hours-long gunbattle a day after the facility was targeted by ISIS in an attack that killed 29 people. The prison is believed to hold hundreds of ISIS members.

The attack highlighted the challenges ahead for Afghanistan, even as US and NATO forces begin to withdraw following a US-Taliban peace deal struck earlier this year.

Afghan Defence Ministry spokesman Fawad Aman said the prison in Jalalabad, the capital of Nangarhar province, located some 115 kilometers (70 miles) east of Kabul, was taken back in the afternoon — 24 hours after it came under attack. The fighting had also left at least 50 wounded, he said.

Even as Afghan troops retook the prison, IS militants continued to fire on Afghan security forces from a nearby neighborhood. Sporadic gun-fire rang out from nearby residential buildings in central Jalalabad, an area of high security near the provincial governor's office.

As security forces swept



An Afghan security person stands guard near a prison after an attack in the city of Jalalabad, east of Kabul, Afghanistan, on Monday

through the prison, they found the bodies of two Taliban prisoners apparently killed by the Islamic State group, showing the tensions between the two militant factions battling each other in eastern Afghanistan.

The 29 dead included civilians, prisoners, guards and Afghan security forces, said Attaullah Khogyani, the provincial governor's spokesman.

After the fighting was over, Afghan forces held up a black IS banner captured during the battle. From behind windows

with bars, several Taliban prisoners peeked out at reporters and media crews at the scene.

The attack began Sunday, when an Islamic State suicide bomber drove a car laden with explosives up to the prison's main gate, detonating the bomb. Islamic State militants opened fire on the prison's guards and poured in through the breach.

The IS affiliate in Afghanistan, known as IS in Khorasan province and headquartered in Nangarhar

province, later claimed responsibility for the attack.

However, some of the 1,500 prisoners there escaped during the fighting. Khogyani said about 1,000 prisoners who earlier escaped had been found by security forces across the city. It wasn't immediately clear if any prisoners were still at large.

The attack came a day after authorities said Afghan special forces killed a senior Islamic State commander near Jalalabad. Several hundred prisoners in Jalalabad are believed to be Islamic State members.

The fighting ended after the final attackers, holed up in the nearby residential complex, were killed, said Aman, the defense ministry's spokesman. He said 10 IS attackers were also killed in the operation and that the assailants killed five prisoners, including two members of the rival Taliban, before the raid ended.

While the Islamic State group has seen its so-called caliphate stretching across Iraq and Syria eliminated after a yearslong campaign, the group has continued fighting in Afghanistan. The extremists also have battled the Taliban in the country, whom the U.S.

overthrew following the 2001 American-led invasion after the Sept. 11 attacks.

The Taliban's political spokesman, Suhail Shaheen, told The Associated Press that his group was not involved in the Jalalabad attack. The U.S. struck a peace deal with the Taliban in February. A second, crucial round of negotiations between the Taliban and the political leadership in Kabul has yet to start.

The Taliban had declared a three-day cease-fire starting last Friday for the major Muslim holiday of Eid al-Adha. The cease-fire expired at 12 a.m. Monday, though it wasn't immediately clear if it would be extended as the U.S. pushes for an early start to intra-Afghan negotiations that have repeatedly been delayed since Washington signed the peace deal with the Taliban.

"We have a cease-fire and are not involved in any of these attacks anywhere in the country," Shaheen said.

The Taliban also had denied being involved in a suicide bombing in eastern Logar province late Thursday that killed at least nine people and wounded 40.

# WHO: There may never be Covid-19 'silver bullet'

Virus has killed nearly 6,90,000 people, at least 18.1 mn infected

AFP ■ GENEVA

The World Health Organization (WHO) warned on Monday that there might never be a "silver bullet" for the new coronavirus, despite the rush to discover effective vaccines.

The WHO urged governments and citizens to focus on doing the known basics, such as testing, contact tracing, maintaining physical distance and wearing a mask in order to suppress the pandemic, which has upended normal life around the globe and triggered a devastating economic crisis.

"We all hope to have a number of effective vaccines that can help prevent people from infection," WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus told a virtual press conference.

"However, there's no silver bullet at the moment — and

there might never be."

"For now, stopping outbreaks comes down to the basics of public health and disease control."

"Do it all," he urged.

The novel coronavirus has killed nearly 6,90,000 people and infected at least 18.1 million since the outbreak emerged in Wuhan in China last December, according to a tally from official sources compiled by AFP.

## CHINA MISSION

The WHO began pressing China in early May to invite in its experts to help investigate the animal origins of Covid-19.

The UN health agency sent an epidemiologist and an animal health specialist to Beijing on July 10 to lay the groundwork for a probe aimed at identifying how the virus entered the human species.

Their scoping mission is now complete, said Tedros.

"The WHO advance team that travelled to China has now concluded their mission to lay the groundwork for further

joint efforts to identify the virus origins," he said.

"WHO and Chinese experts have drafted the terms of reference for the studies and programme of work for an international team, led by WHO. "The international team will include leading scientists and researchers from China and around the world."

"Epidemiological studies will begin in Wuhan to identify the potential source of infection of the early cases."

"Evidence and hypotheses generated through this work will lay the ground for further, longer-term studies."

The pair have not yet returned to the WHO's Geneva headquarters for a debriefing. Scientists believe the killer virus jumped from animals to humans, possibly from a market in the city of Wuhan selling exotic animals for meat.

Chinese officials said early in the outbreak that the virus may have spread from a market in the city, which sold live and wild animals, but no further confirmation of that has been revealed.

# Trump criticises Birx over virus remarks

AP ■ WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump said White House coronavirus task force leader Dr Deborah Birx hurt the Trump administration when she said widespread virus infections in urban and rural America mark a "new phase" for the pandemic.

It was a rare rebuke of Birx. Trump accused her of taking "the bait" by responding to House Speaker Nancy Pelosi

who told ABC's "This Week" that she had lost confidence in Birx because Trump appointed her and the president has been spreading disinformation about the virus.

Trump, in a tweet on Monday, described Birx's response to Pelosi as "pathetic."

On CNN's "State of the Union", Birx said her comments are driven by data and that she would stake her 40-year career on using data to implement programmes to save lives.

# US virus 'extraordinarily widespread': WH Experts

AGENCIES ■ WASHINGTON

The United States is in a new phase of the novel coronavirus outbreak with infections "extraordinarily widespread" in rural areas as well as cities, White House coronavirus experts said on Sunday.

Coronavirus cases continue to surge in some parts of the country and the public health officials are trying to work with governors to tailor responses for each state.

"We are in a new phase," said Dr. Deborah Birx. "What

we are seeing today is different from March and April. It is extraordinarily widespread" in rural as well as urban areas.

"To everybody who lives in a rural area: You are not immune or protected from this virus," Birx said on CNN's "State of the Union."

Birx, the White House task force coordinator, said people living in multigenerational households in an area that is experiencing an outbreak should wear masks inside the home to protect the elderly or those with underlying condi-

tions. Admiral Brett Giroir, an assistant Health and Human Services secretary, continued to stress the importance of wearing masks.

"If we don't do that, and if we don't limit the indoor crowded spaces, the virus will continue to run," he said on NBC's "Meet the Press."

"We are very concerned and this is a very serious point."

The coronavirus, which first appeared in China, has infected 4.6 million people in the United States and killed more than 155,000 Americans,

according to a Reuters tally.

Birx said federal officials have been working on individual reports for each state examining community trends and hospital records. "Each of these responses have to be dramatically tailored," she said.

She said what she witnessed as she visited 14 states over the last three weeks gave her cause for concern.

"As I traveled around the country, I saw all of America moving," Birx said. "If you have chosen to go on vacation into a hot spot, you really need

to come back and protect those with comorbidities and assume you're infected."

If people wear masks and avoid crowds, Giroir said, it gives the same outcome as a complete shutdown.

"That's why we're going to all the states, we're on local radio, we give specific instructions to every governor by county, what they need to do when we start - when those counties start tipping yellow, because that's the time when you have to stamp it down," he said.

# Outbreak hits Norway cruise ship, could spread along coast

AP ■ COPENHAGEN

A Norwegian cruise ship line halted all trips and apologised on Monday for procedural errors after an outbreak of coronavirus on one ship infected at least 5 passengers and 36 crew. Health authorities fear the ship also could have spread the virus to dozens of towns and villages along Norway's western coast.

The infections on the MS Roald Amundsen raise new questions about safety on all cruise ships during a pandemic even as the devastated cruise ship industry is pressing to resume sailings after chaotically shutting down in March.

The Hurtigruten cruise line was one of the first companies to resume sailing after the pandemic hit, starting cruises to Norway out of northern Germany in June with a single ship, then adding cruises in July to the Arctic archipelago of Svalbard.

The 41 people on the MS Roald Amundsen who tested positive have been admitted to the University Hospital of North Norway in Tromsø, north of



Norwegian cruise ship MS Roald Amundsen moored in Tromsø, Norway, on Monday

the Arctic Circle, where the ship currently is docked.

"A preliminary evaluation shows that there has been a failure in several of our internal procedures," Hurtigruten CEO Daniel Skjeldam said in a statement. He added the company that sails along Norway's picturesque coast between Bergen in the south and Kirkenes in the north is "now in the process of a full review of all procedures."

It has contacted passengers who had been on the MS Roald Amundsen for its July

17-24 and July 25-31 trips from Bergen to of Svalbard, which is known for its polar bears. The ship had 209 guests on the first voyage and 178 guests on the second. All other crew tested negative.

But since the cruise line often acts like a local ferry, traveling from port to port along Norway's western coast, the virus may not have been contained onboard. Some passengers disembarked along the route and may have spread the virus to their local communities.

# Oli, Prachanda talks remain inconclusive; both agree to meet again today for parleys

PTI ■ KATHMANDU

Nepal's Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli and the ruling party's executive chairman Pushpa Kamal Dahal 'Prachanda' on Monday held informal consultations for two hours to sort out their differences, but the talks remained inconclusive, party sources said.

The two leaders held a marathon three-hour long meeting on Sunday but failed to agree on a power-sharing deal.

"Sunday's talks were positive and on Monday also the talks were held in the same direction," a party leader close to the Prime Minister said.

During Monday's meeting, Prime Minister Oli was accompanied by his close confidante Subash Nembang, who has been working as a mediator to resolve the differences between the two warring factions.

Prachanda was accompanied by senior leader and former Prime Minister Jhala Nath Khanal.

As the Standing Committee meeting has been postponed indefinitely, the two leaders were making efforts to decide a fresh date for the meeting of the party's 45-member powerful body, sources said.

Prime Minister Oli postponed the crucial

Standing Committee meeting on July 28 for the ninth time.

While Oli stood for calling the Secretariat meeting to resolve the differences, Prachanda said that it would be inappropriate to call the Secretariat meeting as the Standing Committee meeting that was put off on July 28 is yet to be over, My Republica newspaper reported.

"The meeting between the two top leaders of the NCP ended inconclusive as both the sides stood adamant in their demands," the paper said. Citing party insiders, the paper said that Prime Minister Oli wants the Secretariat meeting to resolve the key issues of intra-party dispute as he now commands a majority in the nine-member body after Vice Chairman Gautam stood in his favour.

Prachanda, who is backed by Madhav Nepal, believes that the Standing Committee could take decisions favourable to him as their faction commands a comfortable majority, the paper said.

Gautam had proposed that Oli be allowed to stay as prime minister for the remaining term of the House of Representatives (HoR), that is, two-and-a-half years, and chairman of the party until the unity general convention that Oli has proposed to hold by mid-December.

# SpaceX capsule and NASA crew make 1st splashdown in 45 yrs

CAPE CANAVERAL, Fla.: Two NASA astronauts returned to Earth on Sunday in a dramatic, retro-style splashdown, their capsule parachuting into the Gulf of Mexico to close out an unprecedented test flight by Elon Musk's SpaceX company.

It was the first splashdown by U.S. astronauts in 45 years, with the first commercially built and operated spacecraft to carry people to and from orbit. The return marks the way for another SpaceX crew launch as early as next month and possible tourist flights next year.

Test pilots Doug Hurley and Bob Behnken arrived back on Earth in their SpaceX Dragon capsule named Endeavour, less than a day after departing the International Space Station and two months after blasting off from Florida.

**Public Works Department Government Resolution Number CAT-2017/C.R.8/Building-2, Dated 12th April, 2017 FORM-1**

**Government of Maharashtra**  
**Public Works Department**  
**North Mumbai (P.W.) Division, Andheri**  
**Telephone No. 02226231964**  
**E- Tender Notice No. 3 (2020-2021.)**

E-mail address:- **northmumbai.ee@mahapwd.com** **Telephone/Fax Number 26231964/26205788**

E-Tender for the following work in B-1 Form is invited via online e-tendering system from Registered / Non Registered Contractor of Eligible Class by the Executive Engineer, North Mumbai (P.W.) Division, Andheri (w), Mumbai-58 in behalf of Government of Maharashtra. Tender Documents are downloaded from Government of Maharashtra portal **https://mahatenders.gov.in & www.mahapwd.com**. Right to select or reject is reserved by The Superintending Engineer, Mumbai (P.W) Circle, Mumbai & Executive Engineer, North Mumbai (P.W.) Division, Andheri (w), Mumbai-58. Tender with condition is never accepted.

Sr.No.	Name of Work	Estimated Cost
1.	Construction, repairs and modification of the Police firing range at Horseshoe valley, Bhatwadi, Ghatkopar (W) Mumbai. (Phase-I- Ch. 100 m to 225 m, Phase II- Ch. 0 m to 100 m) Completion of Balance work, including Electrical Work.	Rs. 9,37,50,740/-

The Superintending Engineer, Mumbai (P.W) Circle, Mumbai & Executive Engineer, North Mumbai (P.W.) Division, Andheri (w), Mumbai-58. Reserves right to accept or reject any tender without assigning any reason. The Conditional tender will not be acceptable.

Note: - Any changes in the scope / conditions and any other information in the Tender document will be intimated on the same web site.

**E- Tender Submission Date - 07/08/2020 to 31/08/2020**

**Pre-Bid Date -19/08/2020** at 12.00 pm in the office of the Chief Engineer, Mumbai (P.W) Region, Mumbai, 4th floor, Bandhakam Bhavan, 25, Marzban Road, Fort, Mumbai-400 001

**E-Tender Opening Date- 01/09/2020. at 15.00 Hrs.**

**sd/-**  
**Executive Engineer,**  
**North Mumbai (P.W.) Division,**  
**Andheri (West), Mumbai**

**DGIPR/2020/2021/458**

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**E-AUCTION SALE NOTICE**

REGIONAL OFFICE: Jawahar Market, Model Town, Rohtak – 124 001(HR)  
PUBLIC NOTICE FOR E-AUCTION FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

**PUBLIC NOTICE FOR E-AUCTION FOR SALE OF IMMOVABLE / MOVABLE PROPERTIES**  
**LAST DATE & TIME OF SUBMISSION OF DOCUMENTS Online on or before 03.09.2020 upto 5:00 PM**

E-auction Sale Notice for sale of Movable/Immovable Assets under the Securitization and Reconstruction of Financial Assests and Enforcement of Security Interest Act,2002 read with provision to Rule 8 (6) & 6(2) of the security Interest ( Enforcement) Rules,2002. Notice is hereby given to the public in general and in particular to the Borrower (s) and Guarantor (s) that the below described immovable/Movable property mortgaged/charged to the Secured Creditor, the constructive/physical possession of which has been taken by the Authorized Officer of Central Bank of India, will be sold on "As is where is", "As is what is",and "What ever there is basis".

DESCRIPTION OF IMMOVABLE/ MOVABLE PROPERTY/IES					
Branch/ Type of Account	Name of Account/ Owner of Property	Details of Property	Reserve price Rs.	EMD Rs.	Bid Increase Amount
Bahadurgarh/ Cent Trade	M/s. Ram Electric Co. (Prop. Mrs. Shanti Singhal W/o Mr. Jai Bhagwan Singhal) Mr. Jai Bhagwan Singhal (Guarantor) Kothi No. 20, Road No. 23 East Punjabi Bagh New Delhi 110076.	Equitable Mortgage of Commercial Property bearing shop No. 2151/2 measuring 45 Sq. Yards situated at Chah Indara, Dr. H C Sen Road, Kauria Pul, bhagirath Place, New Delhi – 110 006, vide registered Sale Deed No. 5133, Book No. 1 Volume 7609 Page 72-78 dated 15.09.1997 registered with Sub Registrar I,New Delhi in the name of Smt. Shanti Singhal W/o Sh. Jai Bhagwan Singhal resident of Kothi No. 20, Road No. 23, East Punjabi Bagh, New Delhi – 110 076. Bounded as: East :Gali, West :Property No. 2152, North :Property No. 2165, South :Gali	58.82 lacs	5.89 lac	0.20 Lac

**E-AUCTION DATE:  
04.09.2020  
E-AUCTION TIME  
2:00 PM TO 4:00 PM**

TERMS & CONDITIONS: The e-Auction is being held on "As is where is & As is what is Basis." 1. To the best of knowledge and information of the Authorized Officer, there is no encumbrance on the property. However, the intending bidders should make their own independent inquiries regarding the encumbrances, title of property put on auction and claims/ rights/ dues/ effecting the property, prior to submitting their bid. The e-Auction advertisement does not constitute and will not be deemed to constitute any commitment or any representation of the bank. The property is being sold with all the existing and future encumbrances whether known or unknown to the bank. The Authorized Officer/Secured Creditor shall not be responsible in any way for any third party claims/ rights/ dues. 2. It shall be the responsibility of the bidders to inspect and satisfy themselves about the asset and specification before submitting the bid. 3. The interested bidders shall submit their EMD through Web Portal: <https://www.mstcecommerce.com> (the user ID & Password can be obtained free of cost by registering name with <https://www.mstcecommerce.com>) through Login ID & Password. The EMD shall be payable through RTGS / NEFT in the account through portal or Account No. 1268172955, Name of the A/C.: REGIONAL OFFICE ACCOUNT, Name of the Beneficiary: AUTHORISED OFFICER, IFSC Code: CBIN0280394. Please note that the Banker Cheque / Demand draft shall be submitted to Branch Office through RTGS/ NEFT ( Online ) on or before 03.09.2020 on or before 5:00 PM. For further information please contact at Branch Office Bahadurgarh (9813526993) & Authorised Officer (8930501766), Regional Office, Rohtak (8901508220 Recovery). For more details visit the bank website [www.centralbankofindia.co.in](http://www.centralbankofindia.co.in).

**STATUTORY NOTICE UNDER SARFAESI ACT,2002 READ WITH RULE 6.7.8 & 9 OF THE SECURITIES INTEREST (ENFORCEMENT) RULES 2002**

Borrower/s Guarantor/s are requested to participate & Co-operate for processing of proposed sale auction so that we may receive maximum sale proceeds. If you have any interested buyer for the above mentioned property/ies your buyer is entitled to put the bid for purchase of the property/ies as per the terms of auctions.

**Date: 03.08.2020  
Place : Rohtak**

**Authorised Officer  
CENTRAL BANK OF INDIA**

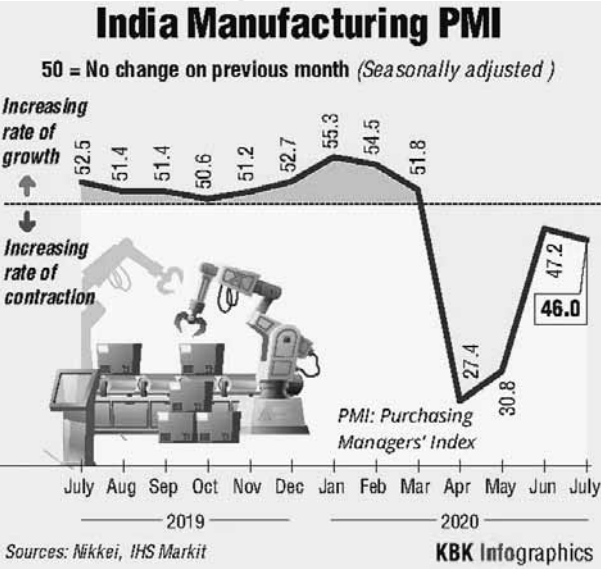


# Manufacturing contracts for 4th month

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India's manufacturing sector activity contracted at a slightly faster pace in July as demand conditions remained subdued amid prolonged closures, following which firms reduced both staff numbers as well as purchasing activity, a monthly survey said on Monday.

The headline seasonally adjusted IHS Markit India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) stood at 46 in July, down from 47.2 in June. This is the fourth straight month of contraction for the Indian manufacturing sector. In April, the index had slipped into contraction mode, after remaining in the growth territory for 32 consecutive months. In PMI parlance, a print above 50 means expansion, while a score below that denotes contraction.



"Latest PMI data from

Indian manufacturers shed more light on the state of eco-

nomie conditions in one of the countries worst affected by the Covid-19 pandemic," said Eliot Kerr, Economist at IHS Markit.

The survey results showed a re-acceleration of declines in the key indices of output and new orders, undermining the trend towards stabilisation seen over the past two months, Kerr said. He further noted that "anecdotal evidence indicated that firms were struggling to obtain work, with some of their clients remaining in lockdown, suggesting that we won't see a pick-up in activity until infection rates are quelled and restrictions can be further removed."

As per the survey, output contracted at a slightly faster pace than in June as demand conditions remained subdued with some businesses still closed amid lockdown exten-

sions.

Moreover, export orders also witnessed a decline. Survey participants commented that international clients were hesitant to place orders while the duration of the pandemic remained uncertain.

Deteriorating demand conditions led Indian manufacturers to continue cutting staff numbers during July. On the cost front, manufacturers reported another decrease in input prices during July, the survey said adding that subdued demand for most goods more than offset the inflationary effects of shortages in some raw materials, the survey said.

However, despite the ongoing negative impact of COVID-19, sentiment towards future activity improved for the second month running, the survey said.

# Markets extend losses to 4th day as risk-off mood prevails

## RIL, BANK STOCKS BLEED

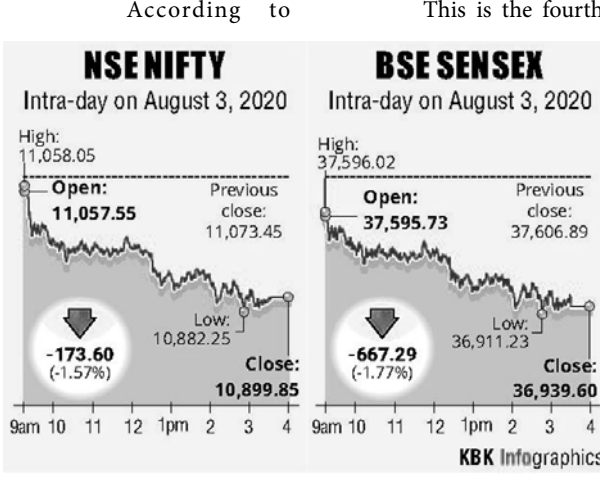
PTI ■ MUMBAI

The Sensex crashed 667 points while the Nifty closed below the 10,900-mark on Monday as investors remained in selling mode for the fourth straight session amid frothy valuations and mounting Covid-19 cases.

A depreciating rupee and grim macroeconomic data further sapped risk appetite, traders said. The 30-share BSE Sensex, which opened in the red, stayed in the negative zone throughout the session to close at 36,939.60, down 667.29 points or 1.77 per cent. Similarly, the NSE Nifty tumbled 181.85 points or 1.64 per cent to end at 10,891.60.

The Sensex has now lost 1,553.35 points in four days, while the Nifty has shed 408.95 points. Kotak Bank was the top loser in the Sensex pack in Monday's session, slumping 4.41 per cent, followed by IndusInd Bank, Axis Bank, ONGC, HDFC Bank, Bajaj Auto and Reliance Industries (RIL).

Only six index constituents closed with gains -- Titan, Tata Steel, SBI, L&T, HCL Tech and PowerGrid, spurring up to 3.15 per cent.



traders, massive selling in index majors RIL and HDFC duo dragged the key indices lower.

Further, foreign fund outflows and concerns over the unabated rise in Covid-19 cases across the world kept investors on edge, they added.

The rupee too sank 20 paise and settled below the 75 per US dollar mark.

On the macro front, India's manufacturing sector activity contracted at a slightly faster pace in July as demand conditions remained subdued, PMI data showed.

The headline seasonally adjusted IHS Markit India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) stood at 46 in July, down from 47.2 in June.

straight month of contraction for the Indian manufacturing sector.

"As virus cases continued to rise and with the uncertainty regarding rate actions by the RBI, markets succumbed to the momentum slowdown visible in the last couple of trading sessions. Losses were led by financials.

# COVID-19 FALLOUT

## Fiscal deficit may rise 6.8% of GDP

**New Delhi:** With economic disruptions set for a long haul due to Covid-19 pandemic, India could see its fiscal deficit this year to balloon to over 6.8 per cent of Gross Domestic Product, brokerages analysing the first quarter deficit numbers have said.

The Contoller General of Accounts on Friday said that country's fiscal deficit has expanded to 83 per cent of Budget Estimate in the April-June quarter primarily due to lower tax collection and higher expenditure for Covid-19 relief. According to a report on Indian economy by Emkay Global Financial Services, low economic activity and lower tax collections coupled with expanded expenditure in schemes like Mahatma Gandhi Rural Employment Guarantee Act, PM-KISAN and extension of Pradhan Mantri Garib Kalyan Yojana till November, 2020 has created a scenario where the deficit would widen.

The current expansion (in deficit), the brokerage said, is primarily due to low economic activity in the last two months (e-way bill 7 per cent lower than last year in June-end) and an extension of the tax filing deadline to Aug'20.

"Capital spending has surged 40% due to ways and means advances for FCI (high procurement) and road spending (base effect due to low spending in Q1FY19 due to elections); excluding these two, spending has declined by 4%," Emkay has said in its report.

The fiscal deficit is the total amount by which the government's expenses for a year exceeds its revenues.

The concern on the deficit comes from the trend witnessed in the first quarter of current fiscal. Lower net revenue receipts and elevated expenditure has pushed the fiscal deficit to 83 per cent of budget estimate in the three month period of April-May.

# Govt needs to have control over sale of margarine, Gadkari writes to PM

**New Delhi:** Concerned over the rise in use of margarine in hotels and restaurants, Union Minister Nitin Gadkari has raised the issue with PM Narendra Modi and suggested that the Govt needs to have control over the sale of margarine as it is adversely affecting health of the people and causing financial loss to dairy farmers. "Gadkari had recently written to PM Narendra

Modi regarding the matter." Taking immediate cognisance of the demand, the Prime Minister's Office directed the FSSAI which immediately issued clarification, directives and future course of action to control the use of the margarine in edible items," according to an official release.

Margarine has a negative impact on human health due to the presence of large amounts

of trans fat in it. Its use has increased significantly in hotels and restaurants." This is affecting adversely the health of the people and the sale of the butter made from the cow milk, fetching financial loss to the farmers. The Govt needs to have control over the sale of margarine," the Minister for Road Transport and Highways and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) said.

## Gold rises by ₹185, silver jumps ₹1,672

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices rose by ₹185 to ₹54,678 per 10 gram in the national capital on Monday amid rupee depreciation, according to HDFC Securities.

In the previous trade, the yellow metal had closed at ₹54,493 per 10 gram. Silver also jumped ₹1,672 to ₹66,742 per kg from ₹65,070 per kg in the previous trade.

## Microsoft: Will continue discussions to buy TikTok in US after Nadela-Trump talks

PTI ■ NEW YORK

Technology giant Microsoft has said it will continue talks to purchase the popular Chinese-owned video-sharing app TikTok's American business after its India-born CEO Satya Nadella and President Donald Trump had a conversation.

The statement from Microsoft came days after Trump said that he could use the emergency economic pow-

ers or an executive order to ban TikTok in the US over national security issues. Redmond-headquartered Microsoft, in a statement on Sunday, said that following a conversation between Nadella and Trump, it is prepared to continue discussions to explore a purchase of TikTok in the US. "Microsoft fully appreciates the importance of addressing the President's concerns. It is committed to acquiring TikTok subject to a complete security

review and providing proper economic benefits to the US, including the US Treasury," the statement said. Microsoft will move quickly to pursue discussions with TikTok's parent company ByteDance in a matter of weeks and will complete these discussions in any event by Sep 15, it said. "During this process, Microsoft looks forward to continuing dialogue with the United States Govt, including with the President," the company said.

## Stocks up on signs of industrial recovery, eyes on US talks

AP ■ TOKYO

Global shares edged up on Monday as investors weighed risks from rising coronavirus cases against evidence of a recovery in industrial activity in China and Europe.

U.S. Secretary of State Mike Pompeo's weekend comments that President Donald Trump plans to take action on a what he sees as a broad array of national security risks presented by software connected to the Chinese Communist Party caused market jitters in Asia.

Pompeo's remarks followed reports that Microsoft is in advanced talks to buy the U.S. Operations of TikTok, which is owned by the Chinese company ByteDance and is seen as a source of national security and censorship concerns by the Trump administration.

Market sentiment improved in European trading after so-called PMI surveys of industry showed activity in the sector picked up markedly in July as lockdowns continued to ease.

Starting off the session on a weak note, the domestic unit swung between a high of 74.88 and a low of 75.03. It finally ended at 75.01, registering a loss of 20 paise against the greenback. The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, rose 0.11 per cent to 93.45. Forex traders attributed the rupee fall to a host of reasons like stronger dollar, muted domestic equities and rising Covid-19 cases dragged the local unit down.

On the domestic equity market front, the BSE Sensex plunged 667.29 points or 1.77 per cent to end at 36,939.60; while the NSE Nifty slumped 181.85 points or 1.64 per cent to settle at 10,891.60.

Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, fell 0.64 per cent to USD 43.24 per barrel.

Foreign institutional investors bought shares worth ₹7,818.49 crore on Monday, exchange data showed.

Meanwhile, the number of cases around the world linked to Covid-19 has crossed 1.80 crore and in India, the number of infections has topped 18-lakh mark.

## Jewellery & Gem Virtual Exhibition on Aug 19-20

**New Delhi:** Informa Markets in India, formerly UBM India, in association with Jewellery NET, will hold its debut "Jewellery & Gem Virtual Exhibition" on August 19-20. The virtual show will see participation from Maharashtra, Delhi, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Telangana, UP, J&K, Karnataka, West Bengal. Yogesh Mudras, MD of Informa Markets, said, "The show will be a leading-edge web-based platform that will ensure a grand display of luxury, variety of jewellery, insights, markets trends and networking opportunities all configured through the touch of a fingertip.

**SEARCH OF MISSING/KIDNAPPED**

General public is hereby informed that one boy (depicted in the photo), **Named:** Md. Sakeel, **S/o:** Md. Wasil, **R/o:** VPO Madarganj, Distt. Arhriya, Bihar, **Aged:** 15 years, has been missing/ kidnapped from main bazar, Pahar Ganj, Delhi since 04.02.2013. **A case vide FIR No. 31/13 u/s 363 IPC, Dated 04.02.2013, has been registered at P.S. Pahar Ganj, Delhi.** His physical description is as under:  
**Height:** 4'6", **Complexion:** Wheatish, **Face:** Round, **Physique/ Build:** Thin, **Clothing:** Yellow Colour Sweater and Jeans Pant. Any person is having any information/clue about this missing/ kidnapped boy, may inform SHO, Pahar Ganj, Delhi at **E-mail: cbc@cbi.gov.in** or **website : http://cbi.nic.in** **Fax No.: 011-23011334, Tele No. :011-24368638 or 24368641**



**Md. Sakeel**

**S.H.O**  
**P.S. Pahar Ganj, Delhi**  
**Ph.: 011-23524746, 23520787**

DP/231/CD/2020.

**PSPCL Punjab State Power Corporation Limited**

Regd. Office PSEB Head Office, The Mall Patiala-147001  
Corporate Identity No. U40109PB2010SGC033813  
Mobile No. 096461-22955, 096461-11033,  
e-mail: po.pspcl@gmail.com  
e-tendering page: https://eproc.punjab.gov.in.nicgep/app.

**Tender Notice :- QQ-2311/PO-P**

<b>Tender Specification No.</b>	QQ-2311/PO- Poles
<b>Short Description</b>	Design, Manufacturer, Testing before dispatch & Delivery of 10,000 nos. 11KV, 400 Amp Air Break (AB) switches against PSPCL Tender Enquiry QQ -2311/PO-P
<b>Start date for down loading of Specification / tender documents from</b>	Date of uploading of tender
<b>Last date for downloading of Specification/ tender documents from</b>	31-08-2020 (upto 11:30 AM)
<b>Last date for Bid submission</b>	31-08-2020 (upto 11:30 AM)
<b>Bid Opening date</b>	03-09-2020 (11:30 AM)
<b>Tender Document Cost.</b>	NIL
<b>EMD</b>	As specified in the specification
<b>Payment Mode.</b>	Online (via e-payment gateway of GEPNIC)

For detailed NIT & Tender specification please refer to <http://eproc.punjab.gov.in.nicgep/app>.  
**Note:** It is informed that in case tender process is not completed due to any reason, no corrigendum will be published in newspaper. Details regarding corrigendum may be seen on official PSPCL website [www.pspcl.in](http://www.pspcl.in)

**Chief Purchase Officer/MM,**  
**For CE/MM, PSPCL, Patiala,**

C 248/2020 RO 58767/2020 Dt. 03-08-2020

## Chandan Kumar Mondol takes charge as Director (Commercial) at NTPC

**New Delhi:** Mondol has been with NTPC for over 35 years and has held several key leadership positions across multiple business units.

Mondol joined NTPC as 9th Batch Executive Trainee (ET) in 1984. He has vast experience and comprehensive knowledge of the power sector and has worked in both power plant and corporate functions. He started off his journey with the project execution and commissioning of 3X500 MW units at Ramagundam and 4X210 MW units at Kahalgaon.

Mondol as a strategic planner has led several initiatives at NTPC. In 1998, Shri Mondol joined Corporate Commercial where he worked towards developing commercial & marketing strategies, execution of domestic and international Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs), formulation of Tariff Regulations with CERC, participation in Ultra Mega Power Plant (UMPP) bidding, etc.

Mondol was also associated with the Government of India where he represented NTPC for the formulation of various policies and statutes including the Electricity Act 2003, the National Electricity Policy, the Tariff Policy and the Competitive Bidding Guidelines.

He joined Corporate Planning in 2012 as head of Strategic Planning Division and was also responsible for periodic review of Business Plan,



Organisational Restructuring, identifying risks of the company and its mitigation through comprehensive Enterprise Risk Management Policies etc. Shri Mondol took charge as Business Unit Head (BUH) of Khargone in March 2015 and was responsible for execution of 1320 MW Green Field Power Project involving land acquisition, Right of Use, Right of Way, R&R plan, Project Planning & Construction, Boundary Management with the local administration, State Government and other statutory authorities.

Before his appointment as Director (Commercial), he has worked as RED-WR1, RED (DBF & Hydro), ED (PP&M) and ED (Commercial).

**बिहार राज्य भवन निर्माण निगम,लि० पटना**  
(बिहार सरकार का उपक्रम)  
**राष्ट्रीय स्पर्द्धा ई-निविदा आमंत्रण सूचना सं०-23/2020-21**

1. विद्यापतिराजा का पदनाम एवं पता

2. निविदा आमंत्रण की तिथि

3. निविदा कागजात प्राप्त (डाउनलोड) करने की अंतिम तिथि एवं समय

4. निविदा जमा (अपलोड) करने की अंतिम तिथि एवं समय

5. निविदा बिदाई का स्थान

6. भी-बीड मॉडलिंग की तिथि, समय एवं स्थान

7. निविदा खोलने की तिथि एवं समय (टैकनीकल बीड)

8. निविदा खोलने की तिथि एवं समय (फिनाल बीड)

9. निविदा वैधता की तिथि कार्य का विवरण

- मुख्य महाप्रबंधक, बिहार राज्य भवन निर्माण निगम लि०, अस्पताल रोड, शास्त्रीनगर, पटना-800023

- दिनांक: 31.07.2020

- दिनांक: 14.08.2020 से 03.09.2020 के 15:00 बजे तक।

- दिनांक: 04.09.2020 के 15:00 बजे तक।

- केवल वेबसाईट [www.eproc.bihar.gov.in](http://www.eproc.bihar.gov.in) पर

- दिनांक: 20.08.2020 को 04:00 बजे अपरारंभमुख्य महाप्रबंधक,बिहार राज्य भवन निर्माण निगम लि०, अस्पताल रोड, शास्त्रीनगर, पटना-23

- दिनांक: 05.09.2020 को 15:00 बजे।

- तकनीकी मूल्यांकन के बाद।

- : 120 दिन

क्र	जिला का नाम	कार्य का नाम	प्रभावित राशि (अनुमानित एवं गैर अनुमानित) (रु० में)	अग्रदान की राशि (रु० में)	परिणाम विवरण का मूल्य (अप्रत्यक्षीय) (रु० में)	Bid Processing Fee	कार्य सम्पत्ति की अवधि (माह में)	रूप महाप्रबंधक का नाम
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	पटना	पटना जिला के पालीगाँव, बिक्रम, बेलौरी, वनियाँवाँ, एवं घोवरवी प्रखंडों अन्तर्गत बिहार राज्य सक्की प्रसंकरण एवं विपणन सहकारी संघ लि० के लिए प्राथमिक सक्की उत्पादक सहकारी समिति(PVCS) में सिविल संरचना निर्माण कार्य। (5 प्रखंडों में)	221000000.00	4420000.00	10,000/-	5,700/-	6 (छ)	पटना
2	नालन्दा	नालन्दा जिला के राजगीर, नमालीसा, वेग, करायाखुसराय, एवं हिलसा प्रखंडों अन्तर्गत बिहार राज्य सक्की प्रसंकरण एवं विपणन सहकारी संघ लि० के लिए प्राथमिक सक्की उत्पादक सहकारी समिति(PVCS) में सिविल संरचना निर्माण कार्य। (5 प्रखंडों में)	221000000.00	4420000.00	10,000/-	5,700/-	6 (छ)	पटना
3	पूर्वी चम्पारण	पूर्वी चम्पारण जिला के केवरीया, सुगौली, महादुर्ग, महरी, हरनौदी, घोडासहन, अरौरा एवं संगामपुर प्रखंडों अन्तर्गत बिहार राज्य सक्की प्रसंकरण एवं विपणन सहकारी संघ लि० के लिए प्राथमिक सक्की उत्पादक सहकारी समिति(PVCS) में सिविल संरचना निर्माण कार्य। (8 प्रखंडों में)	354000000.00	7080000.00	10,000/-	17,700/-	6 (छ)	मुजफ्फरपुर

11. कोई भी संवेदक को केन्द्रीय/राज्य सरकार/सार्वजनिक क्षेत्रों में निविदात हो अथवा अन्तर्राष्ट्रीय/राष्ट्रीय स्तर के हों, निविदा में भाग ले सकते हैं परन्तु कार्य का लेटर आफ एक्सेप्टेंस प्राप्त होने के बाद भवन निर्माण विभाग में समुचित श्रेणी में निबन्धन कराना अनिवार्य होगा।

12. निविदा केवल ई-निविदा पद्धति के अनुसार वेबसाइट ([www.eproc.bihar.gov.in](http://www.eproc.bihar.gov.in)) पर निष्पादित किया जाएगा। ई-निविदा प्रक्रिया से संबंधित जानकारी, सहायता कक्ष, प्रथम तल्ला प्लॉट नं०-एम/22, रोड नं०-25 श्री कृष्णा नगर, बैक ऑफ इंडिया कम्पाउण्ड, पटना-800001 पटना दूरभाष संख्या 9939035696, 0612-2523006 से प्राप्त किया जा सकता है।  
विस्तृत जानकारी के लिए [state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar](http://state.bihar.gov.in/prdbihar) पर देखा जा सकता है।

मुख्य महाप्रबंधक,  
बिहार राज्य भवन निर्माण निगम लि०, पटना

PR. No. 004488 (NI NI) 2020-21

नोवल कोरोना के संबंध में विस्तृत जानकारी एवं सहयोग हेतु  Toll Free No.: **104** पर संपर्क कर सकते हैं।

खाव सामग्री-संबंधी किसी तरह की जानकारी अथवा सुझाव हेतु दूरभाष संख्या 0612-2217636 पर संपर्क किया जा सकता है।







**DOCYARD**  
DR ROHAN SEQUERIA

Consultant General  
Medicine

**JASLOK HOSPITAL AND  
RESEARCH CENTRE**



## Let's get checked

The human body is a complex machine. It is a network of different organs, bones, muscles, and systems. Owing to the fact that the functioning of the human body is multi-faceted, one needs to ensure regular health check-ups.

In case there is any disorder, it can be detected at an early stage and eliminated as soon as possible before it reaches a dangerous and incurable stage or starts to affect the other parts of the body.

Most people are more concerned about their outward appearance. If they look good and are robust from outside, they consider themselves to be healthy. However, you never know what's happening inside. You won't even get to know about some grave underlying disease till it turns into someone serious and leaves a great impact on your health.

**Basic health check-ups need to be regular**

As we start growing old, our body becomes home to numerous diseases. Health issues and problems start as early as when you are in your 20s and 30s. Some of the most common check-ups that need to be conducted are checking blood pressure levels, twice a year dental check-ups and cleaning, cholesterol and level of glucose, and regular blood tests. It is important that you consult a doctor to get regular check-ups and screenings and if you're a woman to get a yearly pap smear.

**The older you are the more you need to be checked regularly**

Once you step into your 40s, in addition to all the tests which are required at the age of 20, you need to check for some age related and genetic diseases like diabetes, blood pressure and cholesterol tests. Women especially need once a year gynaecological tests like mammograms and pap smears. In addition, they also get menopause which also might need a doctor's visit. And as you get into your 50's and 60's you need to check at least once a year Bone Density Scan, stool occult blood test and tests for visual and hearing impairment.

Here are some reason why regular check-ups can help you.

**Awareness of personal health:** Regular appointments with your doctor can keep you aware of your body's health. This awareness will enable you to take better care of yourself and take the correct lifestyle measures to maintain your overall health.

**Prevention of serious conditions:** By going for regular check-ups, your doctor will be able to catch early signs of potential illnesses and take corrective measures. It can also allow your doctor to catch any changes to your body which may be indicative of a medical condition. This way, you will be able to treat the condition before it escalates.

**Encourages healthy habits:** You will be encouraged to maintain healthy practices. Such practices include a good diet, regular exercise, and stress management. Without regular health appointments, there is less motivation to maintain your general health, so healthy habits that maintain your cholesterol, BMI, and stress levels will be neglected.

**Keeps your body in good shape:** In addition to encouraging you to maintain healthy lifestyle habits, regular check-ups will also help keep your body at its best. This is because your doctor will provide suggestions to keep your body in its best shape. As a result, you will feel fit, healthy, and energised.

**Maintains a strong immune system:** Individuals who go for regular health check-ups are less likely to get sick. This is because they maintain healthy habits that facilitates a strong immune system.

**Cost saving:** Some people avoid going for check-ups because they believe that it is too expensive. In reality, it can be significantly cost-saving in the long-run. This is because check-ups reduce the risk of developing more severe illnesses that are more costly to treat. It can also prevent the need for expensive and risky surgeries.

**SUMMERCoolERS**

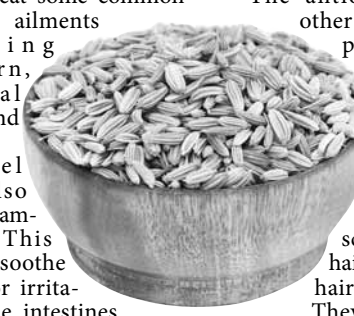
**FENNEL SEEDS:** Fennel seeds are pale green or brown in colour. They are highly aromatic and flavourful herbs used in cookery. They are used to treat some common digestive ailments including heartburn, intestinal gas and bloating.

Fennel seeds also reduce inflammation. This may help soothe swelling or irritation in the intestines and improve digestion.

Some people eat fennel seeds as mouth fresheners. Chewing fennel seeds can also help in getting rid of bad breath as they increase the production of saliva thereby washing out the bacteria. They also help to relieve morning sickness.

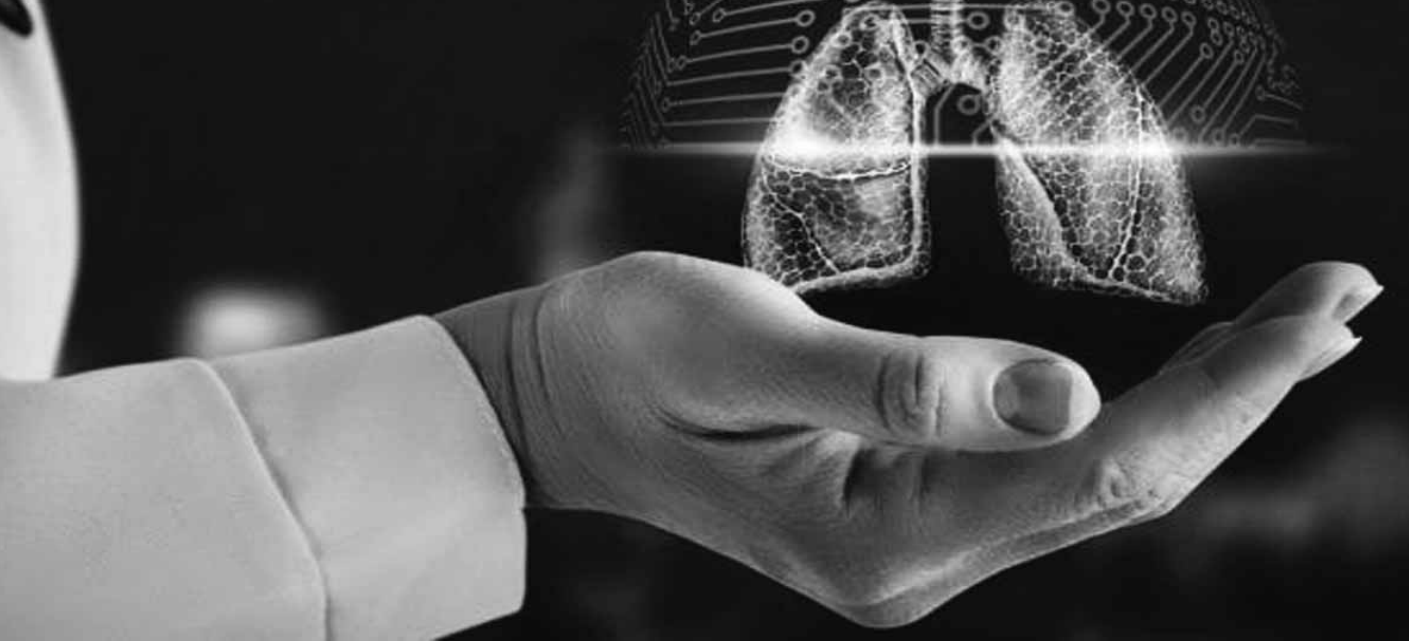
The antioxidants and other antimicrobial properties in fennel seeds help treat a host of hair ailments. Some of these include dandruff, scalp itchiness, hair breakage and hair fall.

They also contain nitrites, compounds known to lower blood pressure levels. The fiber content in them also help in lowering the cholesterol levels.



Lung cancer is the biggest cause of cancer related deaths in the world.

**DR SHUBHAM GARG** tells you symptoms to look out for and tips that can help keep the disease at bay



Lung cancer is usually a neglected entity in the universe of Cancer management in India. It is not one of the first diagnosis in the mind of the primary doctors, neither is it a top priority in the cancer treatment centers. Even when we talk about awareness, we restrict ourselves to breast and gynecological cancers in women and to head and neck cancers in men but conveniently forget lung cancers

One of the main reasons for this step-motherly treatment towards lung cancer is usually the dismal prognosis associated with it. Once the diagnosis of lung cancer is confirmed, everybody, including the treating doctors, condemn the patient to a life span of under a year and feel that there is not much point treating such patients.

It is a fact that lung cancer is the biggest cause of cancer related deaths in the world. In fact, in 2018, 1.8 million deaths across the globe were attributable to lung cancer alone. In India alone, 60,000 patients died due to lung cancer in in that year.

But sometimes we have to read between the lines to understand the statistics.

It is important to understand that the large number of deaths that are associated with lung cancer are because they are usually detected in advanced stages. This can make a huge difference to survival rates in patients of lung cancer. Early stage lung cancer, if treated diligently and for its complete duration, has a survival rate of more than five years in most cases. However, a stage four lung cancer patient will not be able

## TAKE A DEEP BREATH



to survive more than an average of six-eight months.

So, it is important for us to understand the causative factors and early signs and symptoms of lung cancer to detect it early and also realise what is the best possible treatment for it.

**Causes:**

- Cigarette smoking is the biggest cause of lung cancer. Its smoke contains more than 4,000 chemicals, most of which have been identified as causing cancer agents. A person who smokes more than one pack of cigarettes every day has a 20-25 times greater risk of developing lung cancer than a non-smoker.
- Passive smoking, or second-hand smoke, can be another big cause of lung cancer.
- Air pollution from motor vehicles, factories, and other sources also contribute to incidences of lung cancer, and many experts believe that prolonged exposure to polluted air is similar to prolonged exposure to passive smoking possess risk of developing lung cancer.
- Chemical exposure: Accidental or Occupational exposure to asbestos or radon also increases the risk of lung cancer. Asbestos is a commonly associated with cement industry.
- Lung diseases, such as tuberculosis (TB) and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), also create a risk for lung cancer. A person with COPD is at four to six times greater risk of lung cancer and this is when there no exposure to cigarette smoking.

**Symptoms to look out for:**

- Cough
- Difficulty in breathing
- Spitting or coughing blood
- Chest pain
- Hoarseness or problems of swallowing.

**Prevention & screening for**

**early detection**

Prevention is primarily focused on smoking cessation. Smokers who wish to quit obtain benefit from many different strategies, including nicotine replacement therapy with patch or gum, counseling, and support groups. Smokers who do not wish to quit, but are told that they must, often will relapse if they can ever quit at all.

The US Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) has recently recommended and amplified the following recommendations regarding screening:

Adults between 55 and 77 years of age with a history of at least 30 pack years of cigarette smoking, either currently smoking, or who have quit in the past 15 years, and who have discussed the risks and benefits of CT screening with the ordering physician and have undergone documented smoking cessation counseling should undergo annual low-dose CT scan screening.

Such testing has shown that the risk of fatality from lung cancer is reduced by 15 per cent -20 vis-a-vis those receiving only an annual chest X-ray.

Remember, it is in our hands to prevent and detect lung cancer. The later the lung cancer is detected, the worse is the prognosis, shorter the survival and less effective the treatment. Hence, be alert and if you feel that your body could be showing any signs of a lung discomfort, consult your doctor today to preempt any chances of developing a fatal disease.

The writer is Senior Consultant, Surgical Oncology, Max Super Speciality Hospital, Patparganj/Vaishali

**CUT THE OIL**

Monsoon and skin problems go hand-in-hand. The most common of them is oily skin.

**DR MONICA KAPOOR** shares tips that can help beat the woes

Monsoons are here and oily skin is a part and parcel of the rains. More so, because of the changing weather. There are many reasons for oily skin. Sebaceous glands produce sebum to keep your skin soft and moisturised. When too much sebum is produced, skin appears oily and this can also lead to acne and other skin problems.

Hormones and genetics are the main factors for oily skin. As sebaceous glands mature with age, sebum production increases on the skin layer, and the higher the androgens present in the body, the more sebum is funnelled through the pores. This sebum sits on the surface of the skin layer and makes it oily. When excess of these oils get trapped in the pores and combine with dead skin cells and bacteria, it gives rise to pimples and blackheads.

There are many skin care tips you should follow for oily skin during this monsoon:

- To control excess oil from the skin is to cleanse it and keep it clean at all times. Cleanse your face twice or thrice daily to rid it of all the accumulated dirt and oil build-up which leads to clogged pores, acne and other problems.
- Use serums only when you want to tackle different skin problems. If your skin feels dehydrated, then use a hydrating serum in your skincare routine; for brightening and anti-ageing effect, use a serum with brightening and anti-ageing properties.
- Exfoliate oily skin once or twice a week.
- Oily skin needs regular moisturising and hydration. Exposure of skin of moisture will only further encourage the sebaceous glands to produce more oil to compensate. Hence apply an oil-free, non-comedogenic, water-based moisturiser regularly on your skin.
- While doing makeup, always use a primer, it aids in keeping sebum under control. It also keeps your makeup on for a longer time.
- Use an alcohol-free toner almost every day. Using a toner daily will help in eliminating excess oil and banishing dirt from your skin.
- Use a basic mask or a peel once a week on your skin. Best face mask for oily skin is one that contains charcoal or moroccan clay that keeps skin calm and clear.
- Layering on sunscreen is an essential part of the day time oily skin care routine in this season. Always use a mineral-based product which contains Zinc or Titanium Dioxide that absorbs oil from the skin.
- Never sleep with your makeup on. This will clog pores and increase other skin problems.
- Use a face mask regularly. Apply it at least two or three times in a week. Use a mask that contains kaolin and bentonite clay as it helps absorb excess oil.

The writer is a celebrity cosmetologist & director, The Cosmetic Club

**DadiKaKehna**

*If you are spending most of your time studying or working on computer, then dry, itchy eyes and headaches are common. ROSHNI DEVI shares home remedies that can help relieve the pain*



With online classes and work from home becoming the new normal, the screen time has increased manifold for both adults and children. This often result in increased eye strain thereby resulting in headaches.

Not only this, dry and itchy eyes are also no exception, more so because of the changing weather. Here are a few home remedies that will help relax your eyes and headaches.


First, while working on laptop/computer, one should take breaks every 20 minutes. This will give your eyes the much needed relax and will eliminate the risk of headache.

Second, blink often. While working/studying on the the devices, we often forget to blink, this increases the pressure on the eyes and can lead to dry and itchy eyes.

Also the changing weather acts as a catalyst to increase dryness in eyes.

Third, splash your eyes with cold water atleast two-three times a day.

Fourth, use ice packs. Ice will help reduce the discomfort and eliminate headaches. Take two ice cubes, wrap them in a towel and place them on your eyes for around 10 to 15 mins. Repeat it daily.



## Homoeopathy can help

Boosting immunity is the preliminary shield in the battle against COVID-19. DR PRATIP BANERJI tells you how homoeopathy can help prevent the contagion

The outbreak and spread of COVID-19 has left most of us panic-stricken. And the pandemic has wrecked havoc across the world. COVID-19 is a viral infection and humans have no natural immunity to viruses. The research community is perplexed because of its ever-evolving mutations.

Currently, the conventional treatment of Covid 19 infection is being done with some anti-viral medicines and antibiotics. While these anti-viral medicines were found to have had some effect on SARS and MERS infections earlier, which were caused by similar viruses, so far there is no definite information that they are having an effect on COVID-19 cases.

Boosting immunity is exactly what is required in the battle against this disease- to prevent, as well as help sick patients recover from this contagion.

This is where homeopathy has a distinct advantage, and can be deployed to effectively combat the pandemic. Historically, homoeopathy has an excellent track record in the treatment of epidemics/pandemics.



**SLIMLINE**

A 58-year-old woman was successfully treated and cured with a Benign lesion of the pancreas at SRM Medical College Hospital and Research Centre (SRM MCHRC) in Kattankulathur.

Radha (name changed) came to SRM MCHRC with complaints of abdominal pain for two weeks. She had no other symptoms. However, she was Diabetic and was on treatment for the same for the last two years.

Evaluations such as MRCP, CT Abdomen and Endoscopic Ultrasound were performed on her and she was diagnosed having a cystic lesion of the pancreas. She underwent surgery recently, and a large cyst of 10x11x7 cm was noted over the distal aspect of the pancreas.

Histopathological examination of the excised mass revealed a mucinous cystadenoma of the pancreas. This patient had a benign tumour which was diagnosed promptly early and removed successfully. Her quality of life post-procedure remains good, and she continues treatment for her diabetes alone.



# GENOA RETAIN SERIE A PLACE

AP ■ ROME

Genoa secured safety on the final day of the longest-ever Serie A season, while Lecce dropped down to the second division.

Genoa beat Hellas Verona 3-0 to finish four points ahead of Lecce and ensure a 14th consecutive season in the top Italian league on Sunday.

Lecce lost 4-3 to Parma, Brescia and Spal had already been mathematically relegated.

### LONGEST SEASON

The coronavirus-delayed season ended almost 12 months after it started on Aug. 24, 2019.

“The longest season in history ends today, in our country’s most difficult year in recent memory,” said Vincenzo Spadafora, Italy’s sports minister. At the start of the lockdown in March, Italy was the epicenter of the pandemic in Europe and has now registered more than 35,000 deaths from COVID-19.

“During those weeks we really thought that the season should be stopped,” Spadafora said.

“But thanks to the series of precautions we took and the seriousness of the protocols put in place by the Italian soccer federation, the season was not only able to restart but also be completed.”

Due to the virus, the season was suspended for more than three months between March and June.

Juventus sealed a record-extending ninth straight title last weekend.



Genoa players celebrate at the end of the match with coach Davide Nicola after a serie A football match between Lecce and Parma

## Talent is not the problem in our country, says Chhetri

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

Birthday boy and iconic Indian football team captain Sunil Chhetri on Monday said talent is not the problem in the country and all stakeholders need to ensure that the next crop of players are well looked after.

“Talent is not the problem here. We could have plenty of Olympic gold medals. I know how hard the AIFF works to get a bigger pool of players. It is very important to give the young talented players the right food, training and so on. When all this is done, it can be a monumental growth,” Chhetri, who turned 36 on Monday, said during the E-Delhi summit organised by Football Delhi to celebrate the occasion of his birthday.

All India Football Federation (AIFF) President Praful Patel lauded the Government of Odisha for setting an example of how a state government can help sports thrive in a particular region.

“I think states like Odisha need to be commended. They have actively supported every sport. That is something that other state governments should follow too,” Patel said.

Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju, AFC General Secretary Dato Windsor John, Jagdish Mitra, Chief Strategic Officer, Tech Mahindra, Football Delhi President Shaji Prabhakaran were also present in the virtual meet, as was talismanic captain Chhetri.

Patel, during the discussion highlighted the progress that the All India Football Federation has made forward together over the last decade.



“We have come a long way. Globally FIFA now acknowledges that Indian football has to be supported and strengthened for the sport to grow in the region. FIFA and AFC have made it clear that football has to be commercially viable and it has to support the overall ecosystem around it,” he opined.

“That is why it is important to professionalise the sport. The I-League was the first step towards that. Now, the ISL has taken it further and made more additions to Indian football.”

Sports Minister Rijiju lauded the AIFF for bringing FIFA events to India (2017 FIFA U-17 World Cup and the 2021 FIFA U-17 Women’s World Cup).

“I complement AIFF for engaging with FIFA to bring this tournament. With such tournaments being hosted in India we will have a brilliant situation where the sport will further mature,” he said. “We will ensure that the U-17 Women’s World Cup is one of the most successful FIFA events in India.”

## India get easy draw in Thomas & Uber Cup final

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India have been handed relatively easy draws in the twice rescheduled Thomas and Uber Cup Finals slated to be held from October 3 to 11 in Aarhus, Denmark.

The Indian men’s team has been placed in Group C alongside 2016 champions Denmark, Germany and Algeria, while the women’s side has been clubbed with 14-time winners China, France and Germany in group D in the draw which was staged at BWF headquarters in Kuala Lumpur on Monday.

Both the men’s and women’s team are seeded fifth in the tournament, according to the BWF release.

Indonesia, 13-time former champions, and six-time former winner Japan will headline as the top seeds for the Thomas Cup and Uber Cup respectively.

The prestigious event was originally scheduled to be held from May 16-24 but was postponed to August 15-23 before finally rescheduling it in October due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

No tournament has

been possible since BWF had shut down their World Tour and other sanctioned tournaments following the completion of the All-England in March due to the global health crisis.

BWF Chief Operating Officer Stuart Borrie said: “We acknowledge the many disruptions this year to our calendar but we would like to assure you that the BWF continues to monitor the ongoing developments surrounding COVID-19 and to plan for a safe return to international badminton.

“We trust everyone within the badminton community is keeping safe and well and preparing for the return to international competition.”

In Thomas and Uber Cup Final, the top two teams in each group at the end of the group stage will make it to the knock-out round.

The Indian men’s and women’s teams had failed to reach the knockout stage in the last edition in 2018.

The Indian women’s team had lost to champion China in the semifinal stage in the 2016 edition of Uber Cup. They also reached the semifinal in the 2014 New Delhi edition.

## Ramandeep inspiration for young players: Arshdeep



PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Indian junior men’s hockey team core probable Arshdeep Singh wants to take a leaf out of senior player Ramandeep Singh’s book on how to manage injuries in his bid to seal a place in the national side.

The 19-year-old Singh missed out on the Six-Nation Championship in Spain last year due to a knee injury. He is inspired by the way Indian men’s hockey team forward Ramandeep has dealt with injuries in his international career.

“It was really disappointing to miss out on the Six-Nation Championship

in Spain last year. However, I have realized that injuries will be a part and parcel of any sportsperson’s career. I look up to the way Ramandeep Singh has dealt with injuries in his career,” Singh said.

“He (Ramandeep) is an inspiration for all young hockey players in India. One needs a lot of determination to come back from injuries and now I know how important it is to ensure that I keep checking on how my body is reacting in every situation,” said the young forward in a Hockey India release.

Singh, who has attended several junior men’s

national coaching camps, said he has been focussing on his fitness in the last few months.

“The last few months have been a huge challenge for all of us. However, I have taken the time to focus on my fitness. I know I am close to receiving an opportunity to play for Indian junior men’s team in the near future and I don’t want to miss the chance due to an injury.

“I have been practicing yoga to become mentally stronger as well. I have to be absolutely ready to grab my opportunities whenever they are presented to me,” said Singh.

Talking about his future goals, Singh said there is nothing bigger than playing for the country.

“Playing for senior team is always going to be my biggest goal. However, I have to first perform at the junior level and get recognized as a skilful player. I will keep working towards my goal in whichever way I can.

“I am sure one day I will walk out on the pitch with the senior Indian team. I will work very hard to ensure that I get a chance to contribute to India’s famous victories in the future.”

## Swann criticises selectors for dropping Broad



PTI ■ LONDON

Former off-spinner Graeme Swann has slammed selectors for splitting England’s most successful new-ball pairing of Stuart Broad and James Anderson during the recently-concluded Test series against the West Indies, saying “you don’t discard blokes with 500 Test wickets lightly”.

England paid the price for dumping Broad in the first Test as they lost by four wickets at Southampton. With Jofra Archer missing the second Test due to a bio-secure breach, Broad returned to take six wickets as England bounced back with a 113-run win.

In the third Test, Broad was awarded the man of the match after he took 10 wickets to cross the 500-wicket mark and also scored a crucial

62 with the bat as England sealed the series with a 269-run win.

The experienced Anderson, on the other hand, was included in the first Test but rested in the second match before finally joining his long-time partner Broad in the third Test.

“How stupid did it look to break up England’s most successful bowling partnership of all-time when we lost that first Test match?” Swann, who has taken 255 wickets in 60 Tests, was quoted as saying by *‘Mirror:Ca.UK’*.

“Jimmy and Broady have formed one of the most -successful bowling double acts Test cricket has known. Why would you want to chuck it out before its sell-by date? I 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,” Swann said.

Broad and Anderson have captured 1,090 wickets between them, with 895 of those scalps coming in the 117 Tests they have played together.

“Jimmy and Broady go -together like Morecambe and Wise or Bonnie and Clyde,” Swann said.

Swann, a three-time Ashes winner, added that England should not mess with the two experienced bowlers and give them an equal opportunity to try and make it to the 2021 Ashes in Australia.

“You can’t put a price on a bowler who runs in with the same passion and ability to make things happen in the 80th or 90th over of the day as the first,” the 41-year-old said.

## Trott appointed Poms batting coach



PTI ■ LONDON

Former batsman Jonathan Trott has been appointed England’s batting coach for the upcoming three-Test series against Pakistan, starting Wednesday.

The 39-year-old, who scored 3835 runs in 52 Tests between 2009-2015 for England, will be joined by former New Zealand spinner Jeetan Patel and Warwickshire seamer Graeme Welch, the ‘BBC’ reported.

Trott, who played 68 ODIs and seven T20 matches, has scored 18,662 runs in first class cricket.

England and Pakistan will lock horns in a three-match Test series starting Wednesday at the Old Trafford in Manchester, followed by the next two games in the Ageas Bowl in Southampton. England won the recently-concluded three-Test series, that mark the resumption of international cricket, against West Indies 2-1.



## Pak may play two spinners in 1st Test

PTI ■ KARACHI

Pakistan’s head coach and chief selector Misbah-ul-Haq has not ruled out the possibility of playing two spinners in the first Test against England which begins from Wednesday at Old Trafford.

“We have looked at the West Indies series and we have seen that at Manchester and Southampton conditions are different and we are seeing some dry conditions and help for spinners and reverse swing,” Misbah said during a media interaction on Monday.

Misbah also felt that the top order of both teams would play a decisive role in the series as bowling of both teams was top class. “England’s batting has struggled in these conditions. It will be a match between how the top order of both teams perform. If you can cross 300 in the first

innings your chances of winning are around 75 percent.”

Misbah said that not playing at Lord’s and Oval, the two happy hunting grounds for Pakistan on previous tours, would not really matter as the pitches and conditions in Manchester and Southampton could help the visitors.

He conceded that playing the right combination in the Test would be a decisive and important factor in the first match.

“I think I am pretty much satisfied with the preparations, we assembled after three months and started from zero. It has been a wonderful experience, we require such camps before a major series.

“This period was important for team bonding and preparations, creating match scenarios and good thing is the team is in good shape and looking forward to the series.”

## Azhar, Babar aim to make progress in rankings

PTI ■ DUBAI

Skipper Azhar Ali and his Deputy Babar Azam will be aiming to move up the ladder in the ICC Test rankings when Pakistan take on England in the three-match series starting on Wednesday.

According to latest rankings, Azhar, presently 27th among batsmen, will be hoping to regain the form that lifted him to a career-best sixth in December 2016, while Babar will be hoping to progress from a career-best aggregate of 800 rating points.

Babar is currently sixth after having occupied a career-high fifth place in February. Asad



Shafiq (18th) and Shan Masood (33rd) are other Pakistan batsmen to have enjoyed higher rankings in the past but will have to contend with a sharp bowling attack in order to move up again.

In the bowling department, pacer Mohammad Abbas (13th) and experienced leg-spinner Yasir Shah (24th), who have in the past, been ranked third and first, respectively, and left-arm fast bowler Shaheen Afridi (32nd) are other Pakistan players to watch.

For England, Stokes displaced West Indies captain Jason Holder from the top of the all-rounders’ list during their last series and formerly top-ranked Broad rose to third position in the bowlers’ list, currently led by Australia fast bowler Pat Cummins. Stokes is also England’s top-ranked batsman in fourth position, with cap-

## Woakes happy being away from the spotlight

PTI ■ MANCHESTER

Pacer Chris Woakes on Monday is happy staying away from the spotlight and says he just wants to churn out match-winning performances for England.

Woakes’ performances often go unnoticed as the likes of Stuart Broad, James Anderson and Jofra Archer steal the spotlight.

“I honestly really don’t mind. I’m not one for being centre of attention,” Woakes was quoted as saying by ‘Sky Sports’.

“Don’t get me wrong, I want to go out on the field and perform

and I want to make match-winning performances for England but it really doesn’t bother me if I’m first choice to write about or not, to be brutally honest,” he added.

The 31-year-old, who has 106 wickets from 35 Tests, feels while he can’t join compatriots James Anderson and Broad in the 500 wickets elite club, he still has a lot to offer.

“My stats have been mentioned and they’re very good in England, I want to keep working on those, keep improving on

them and making them as good as they can be,” Woakes said.

“At my age and where I am now at 31, it’s unlikely that I’m going to go on and get 500 Test wickets like Jimmy and Broady but I still want to go on and get as many as I can individually.

“I still feel like I can provide really good services to England for many more years to come so I’m happy with how it works and as long as I continue to be able to represent England then I’ll be

happy,” Woakes added.

England are in a unique situation with all their pacers fit to play resulting in an intense competition between the speedsters to start the match.

“It’s not an easy team to just be cemented in. My record in England is brilliant, I’m obviously pleased with that.

“I want to keep getting better and improving myself and every time I get the opportunity to play for England, whether it is home or away, I’m giving 110 per cent and trying to do my best for the team,” Woakes said.

## Ind not to take part in women’s world squash C’ship

PTI ■ CHENNAI

India on Monday pulled out of the Women’s World Team Squash Championship scheduled to be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia from December 15 to 20 due to “lack of preparation time” and “uncertainties” about travelling amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

SRFI secretary general and former national coach Cyrus Poncha said the decision was taken after consulting with the top players.

“Due to uncertainties regarding guidelines for the safe travel of our athletes and staff for national & international tournaments (yet to be obtained from the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports (MYAS) & Sports Authority of India (SAI)), coupled with lack of preparation time and match readiness of athletes, and after consulting our top players, the SRFI has decided to withdraw from the championship” he said in a press release.

The WSF and Squash Rackets Federation of India (SRFI) have been constantly monitoring the scenario arising out of

the global health crisis.

Considering the August 15 deadline, the SRFI had requested the WSF for an extension for registration which was not given, the release said.

“The SRFI is also waiting for guidelines from the Ministry of Youth Affairs & Sports (MYAS) & Sports Authority of India (SAI) for international participation with top priority being safety and security of the players and staff for any international event,” it said.

The coronavirus case count continues to rise in the country with Mumbai, Delhi and Chennai — all major squash centres — badly hit by the virus, making resumption of training difficult.

“As the situation develops and improves, SRFI in consultation with the Sports Ministry and SAI will take necessary steps for resuming sport in the country in compliance with the SOPs that would be brought out along with any further development required for squash,” the governing body said.