

ANALYSIS 7
SOCIALIST IDEAS AND AN
INDIFFERENT WORKING CLASS

MONEY 8
DISCOMS' OUTSTANDING DUES
RISE 47% TO RS 1.33L CR IN JUNE

SPORTS 11
BAJRANG TIPS WRESTLERS TO
WIN 3-4 MEDALS AT OLYMPICS

VIJAYAWADA, MONDAY AUGUST 3, 2020; PAGES 12 & 3



the pioneer

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'I ALWAYS
WANTED TO BE
AN IAS OFFICER'

Page 9

AIIB IN DISCUSSION WITH INDIA FOR FINANCING HEALTH INFRA SCHEME

The Asian Infrastructure Investment Bank (AIIB) is in discussion with the Indian government for financing a USD 8-billion scheme for improving health infrastructure at the district level to make the country better prepared for the future healthcare challenges. The Beijing-based multilateral funding agency had earlier approved a financial assistance of USD 1.2 billion for India to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. "The Government of India has discussed about its ambitious scheme of strengthening the health infrastructure. It entails building health infrastructure in every district including upgrading of testing facilities with the ICMR," AIIB Vice President D J Pandian said.



CENTRE ASKS STATES, UTS TO ALLOW COVID PATIENTS USE SMARTPHONES

The Centre has written to all states and UTs stating that smartphones and tablet devices should be allowed for hospitalised Covid patients so that they can interact with family and friends through video conferencing, which would provide them psychological support. Though mobile phones are allowed in hospital wards, the missive was issued following some representation from the kin of patients alleging otherwise. DGHS in the Health Ministry Dr Rajiv Garg said appropriate protocols for disinfecting devices and allotting timeslots can be developed by the hospital concerned to facilitate contact between patients and their family.



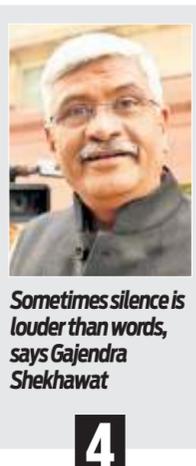
ICMR PLANS TO SET UP REGISTRY OF HOSPITALISED COVID-19 PATIENTS

A registry of hospitalised COVID-19 patients across the country is being mooted to collect real time data which will help improve treatment outcomes, analyse trends in the progression of the pandemic and calibrate response, officials said. The ICMR in collaboration with the Health Ministry and the AIIMS is planning to set up the National Clinical Registry which will help researchers and policy makers understand effectiveness of investigational therapies, adverse effects taking place and generate evidence for improving the treatment of COVID-19 patients.



IMD PLANS TO USE AI IN WEATHER FORECASTING

The India Meteorological Department is planning to use artificial intelligence in weather forecasting, especially for issuing nowcasts, which can help improve 3-6 hours prediction of extreme weather events, its Director General Mrunjoy Mohapatra said on Sunday. He said the use of artificial intelligence and machine learning is not as prevalent as it is in other fields and it is relatively new in the area of weather forecasting. The IMD has invited research groups who can study how AI can be used for improving weather forecasting and Ministry of Earth Sciences is evaluating their proposals, Mohapatra said.



Sometimes silence is louder than words, says Gajendra Shekhawat

4

State govt issues order replacing CRDA with AMRDA

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The State government has issued an order notifying the Amaravati Metropolitan Region Development Authority (AMRDA) in place of Capital Region Development Authority (CRDA). The government has issued the order stating that the entire CRDA jurisdiction comes under the purview of AMRDA.

An AMRDA Committee comprising 11 officers has been formed, while the Municipal Secretary will be the Vice-Chairman of the panel.

The Committee comprises the Chief Secretary of the Ministry of Finance, the AMRDA Commissioner, Guntur and Krishna District Collectors, the Director Town Planning and Deputy Transport Commissioners as members.

The government has



appointed P Lakshmi Narasimham as the Commissioner of AMRDA. According to the new notification issued by the government as CRDA-2020 repeal was approved by Governor Biswa Bushan Harichandan, the CRDA Bill, which was proposed earlier in 2014, would no longer exist. It may be recalled that the Governor on Friday gave assent to two crucial bills Andhra Pradesh Decentralisation and Inclusive Development of all Regions Bill and APCRDA Repeal Bill for developing of three capital cities. As for the proposal of the State government

- The government has appointed P Lakshmi Narasimham as the Commissioner of AMRDA
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Visakhapatnam will be developed as Executive Capital, Amaravati as Legislative Capital and Kurnool will be the Judicial Capital.

3 die while travelling to attend last rites of crane crash victim

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Tragedy struck a family for second time in 24 hours, as three persons were killed in an accident in Srikakulam district on Sunday while they were on their way to Visakhapatnam to attend the last rites of a relative, who was killed in crane crash at the Hindustan Shipyard Limited (HSL) on Saturday.

The car in which they were travelling rammied into a stationary truck at Kanchili in Srikakulam district. Nagamani (48), who was coming to Visakhapatnam to see for the last time her son-in-law P Bhaskar Rao died in the road accident, along with her daughter-in-law Lavanya (23) and driver Routu Dwaraka (23).

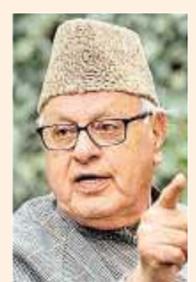
Police said the accident



occurred when the car rammied into the stationary truck from behind. Nagamani's sons Ishwar Rao and Rajasekhar and another daughter-in-law Pytli were injured and were initially shifted to the government hospital at Sompeta and later to Srikakulam. The condition of Ishwar Rao is stated

to be critical. The family had started from Kharagpur in West Bengal after learning that their son-in-law was killed in the crane crash at HSL. Eleven people were crushed to death when a giant crane came crashing down at HSL on Saturday.

3



Farooq Abdullah calls for probe into exodus of Kashmiri Pandits

5

JANA SENA TO RALLY BEHIND FARMERS Pawan demands YSRCP, TDP MLAs resignation

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Jana Sena Party chief Pawan Kalyan demanded that the YSRCP MLAs and TDP MLAs from Krishna and Guntur districts resign in support of farmers, who were left in the lurch, after giving their lands for the construction of capital city in Amaravati.

Pawan recalled the discussion he had with Prime Minister Narendra Modi on capital issue in 2014, and he reminded that the latter had reportedly said after Gujarat was bifurcated from Maharashtra, it took 25 years to construct capital city Gandhi Nagar.

Addressing the PAC meet-



ing attended by its Chairman Nadendla Manohar, PAC East and West Godavari districts in-charge K Nagababu and other party leaders on Sunday, Pawan observed a two-minute silence to mourn the death of 11 employees at Hindustan Shipyard in Vizag.

3

Dy Speaker, wife test positive for Covid-19

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Deputy Speaker Kona Raghupati and his wife were tested positive for Covid-19 on Sunday.

Raghupati released a selfie video in which he said that he was suffering from fever, hence, he and his wife went for Corona testing and were tested positive.



3

Two panels set up to probe Vizag crane crash

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Two committees have been set up to investigate the Visakhapatnam crane crash incident in which 11 people were killed at the Hindustan Shipyard Limited (HSL) in Visakhapatnam on Saturday. One committee was set up under the Director of Shipyard and another committee was established by the Department of Engineering, Andhra University. The two committees were given a deadline to submit a detailed report within a week.

Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy has directed officials to take immediate action in the case. The crane crash took place at HSL while conducting a massive crane trial killing 11

One committee was set up under the Director of Shipyard and another committee was established by the Department of Engineering, Andhra University

persons. Bodies have been retrieved in the rescue and relief operations.

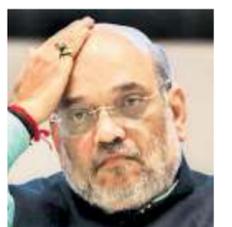
The deceased were identified as Venkat Rao, Chaitanya, Ramana, PV Ratnam, P Naga Devullu, Sattiraju, Shiva Kumar, Kakarla Prasad, Jagan and P Bhaskar.

3

Rs 50 lakh compensation to crane crash victims' kin

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Management of Hindustan Shipyard Limited (HSL) has announced that it will pay Rs 50 lakh compensation to the kin of the deceased in the crane crash accident in Visakhapatnam. It also assured to provide a job to one of the family members of the deceased. This comes after Minister for Tourism Avanti Srinivas and Gajuwaka MLA Tippla Nagi Reddy holding talks with HSL management as the family members and trade unions raised concern that justice should be rendered to the deceased.



Shah tests positive for Coronavirus

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday informed that he has tested positive for coronavirus and has been advised by the doctors to be admitted to the hospital. Taking to Twitter, Shah said that he underwent coronavirus test after getting the initial symptoms of the virus. He also appealed to people who have come in contact with him in the last few days to isolate themselves and get tested.

"On getting the initial symptoms of corona, I got the test done and the report has come positive. My health is fine, but I am being admitted to the hospital on the advice of doctors. I request all of you who have come in contact with me in the last few days, please isolate yourself and get your test done," Shah tweeted.

3

67 succumb to Covid-19 in State

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The death toll due to Covid-19 in the State rose to 1,474 with 67 more succumbing to the infection, health officials said on Sunday.

The State's tally of Covid-19 positive cases crossed the 1.58 lakh mark on Sunday with the

detection of 8,555 new infections. According to the Health Department's bulletin, the overall case tally reached 1,58,764.

While 11 people died in Krishna district, eight died in Guntur. East Godavari and Visakhapatnam districts accounted for seven deaths

each, Kurnool and Nellore districts six each. Five people died in Srikakulam, four in Prakasam, three each in Kadapa, Vizianagaram and Chittoor and two each in Anantapur and East Godavari districts.

Kurnool district remained the worst affected with 207 fatalities so far while East Godavari stands second with 179 deaths and Krishna third with 175 deaths.

3

Amitabh tests Covid-19 negative

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Megastar Amitabh Bachchan is heading home after testing Covid-19 negative, shared his son and actor Abhishek Bachchan on Sunday.

"@juniorbachchan my father, thankfully, has tested negative on his latest Covid-19 test and has been discharged from the hospital. He will now be at home and rest. Thank you all for all your prayers and wishes for him," Abhishek tweeted. Abhishek also

informed his fans that "I, Unfortunately due to some comorbidities remain Covid-19 positive and remain in hospital".

But he thanked all his well-wishers for "your continued wishes and prayers for my family. Very humbled and indebted. I'll beat this and come back healthier! Promise".



Covid Impact: Raksha Bandhan goes digital this year

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With travel restrictions and physical distancing becoming the new normal this year, traditional visits to our siblings for Rakhi this year are being substituted by virtual Rakhis sent online.

Major e-commerce sites have seen massive jump in the number of orders placed for rakhis and e-gifts given the restrictions and apprehensions about travel and social distancing.

Snapdeal saw rakhi orders jumping three-fold as more users have opted to buy or send Rakhis online. Adding to the trend, Snapdeal's shoppers moved to completely digital solutions for Raksha Bandhan



this year by choosing E-Gift cards as the topmost Rakhi gift. The platform witnessed a surge in the sale of digital gift cards two weeks before Raksha Bandhan. It logged an increase of 70 percent in the sale of these cards, vis-à-vis last year, the company announced in a statement.

Major e-commerce sites have seen massive jump in the number of orders placed for rakhis and e-gifts given the curbs and apprehensions about travel and social distancing

Last year, travel accessories like go-pro mounts, selfie sticks, and backpacks were widely picked as Raksha Bandhan gifts. Ethnic clothes were also widely bought as gifting. This year, as India continues to be cautious of the virus, digital gift cards saw a big boost in sales.

"The number of Rakhis sold this year exceeds the number of Rakhis sold in the last two years combined. This is pri-

marily due to the shoppers exercising caution and avoiding the festival linked travel," the company said.

Flipkart has also seen a sale of over 1,00,000 rakhis per day. Overall, the platform has seen 2x growth as compared to previous year in terms of units sold.

The North is the largest chunk in the pie, with almost 45 percent demand coming from the region, followed by

Eastern states with 25 percent share, the company said.

The top 10 cities generating demand are New Delhi, Bangalore, Patna, Mumbai, Hyderabad, Pune, Lucknow, Bhubaneswar, Kolkata and Gurgaon. Ferns N Petals has witnessed 100 growth in comparison to the previous rakhi seasons. It has received 10,000 rakhi and rakhi gift orders every day, total 300,000 orders till Saturday. There have been 400-600 orders per day for virtual gifts like Guitarist on Video Call, Personalized Video message, and celebrity video message. The company is anticipating to close this season at 1.5 million orders.

3

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham: Shrawana & Shukla Paksha

Panchangam

Tithi : Chaturdashi: 09:28 pm

Nakshatram: Purva Ashadha: 06:52 am

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

Rahukalam: 05:09 pm - 06:45 pm

Yamagandam: 12:22 pm - 01:57 pm

Variyam: 03:01 pm - 04:39 pm

Gulika: 03:33 pm - 05:09 am

Good Time: (to start any important work)

Amritakalam: 12:48 am - 02:25 am

Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:56 am - 12:47 pm

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Mostly cloudy

Temp: 34/27

Humidity: 67%

Sunrise: 05:56 am

Sunset: 06:48 pm

Current Weather Conditions Updated August 2, 2020 5:00 PM

TDP demands Health Emergency in State

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

TDP MLA Dola Bala Veeranjaneeya Swamy on Sunday expressed concern over the unchecked rise in Coronavirus cases and fatalities in the State in the face of continued negligence of the government in providing better treatment facilities. He demanded that the YSRCP government should declare Health Emergency immediately so as to according top priority that was required to rescue people from the pandemic.



He alleged that the government testing centres were not doing tests promptly and giving lame excuses to patients as they were asking people sometimes to go to private labs.

● TDP MLA Dola Bala Veeranjaneeya Swamy stated that there is an immediate need to increase beds, ventilators, ICUs and doctors to provide timely treatment to patients. He alleged that the government testing centres were not doing tests promptly and giving lame excuses to patients as they were asking people sometimes to go to private labs

● The TDP MLA lamented that lack of timely testing and delayed results was putting the lives of many people in danger. He urged the government to provide necessary funds and facilities to officials in order to speed up testing

● The TDP leader expressed surprise that the district-level officials were not answering to the phone calls of even the MLAs as they were unable to provide facilities for Coronavirus patients in the hospitals.

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speed up testing. Veeranjaneeya Swamy expressed surprise that the district-level officials were not answering to the phone calls of even the MLAs as they were unable to provide facilities

ities for Coronavirus patients in the hospitals. He rued a helpless situation has set in where the common public were coming to the MLAs even for recommendations for beds and test results. He opined that the government should understand the problems of patients and augment the facilities all over the State. Swamy urged the government to issue district-level health bulletins to make all information available to people on the availability of beds, hospitals, ventilators, testing labs and so on. He asserted that transparency was necessary for taking everybody along in the cause of defeating the invisible enemy.

CORONA EFFECT

Governor not to celebrate Raksha Bandhan, his b'day

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA



Governor Biswa Bushan Harichandan, whose birthday falls on August 3, has decided not to celebrate his birthday due to prevailing situation of Covid-19 pandemic in the State. The Governor has appealed to people not to come to the Raj Bhavan to wish him on his birthday.

He once again appealed to people of the State to take all precautions such as avoiding unnecessary travel by staying at home, maintaining social distance, wearing a face mask and washing hands with sanitiser or soap. He said the spread of the Coronavirus can be prevented only by following all the necessary protocols and practices as advised by the Central and State government authorities.

● In the wake of unprecedented situation created by the Covid-19 pandemic, it is decided to not to celebrate Raksha Bandhan at the Raj Bhavan. He conveyed greetings to people on the eve of Raksha Bandhan and appealed to them to stay at home and celebrate the festival duly following precautions

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In the wake of unprecedented situation created by the Covid-19 pandemic, it is decided to not to celebrate Raksha Bandhan at the Raj Bhavan on

Monday. He conveyed greetings to people on the eve of Raksha Bandhan and appealed

to them to stay at home and celebrate the festival duly following precautions.

Markets witness highest monthly jump since 2012

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Even as China is beating the retreat from Ladakh, the US has found an opportunity to take pot shots at it, saying the former's incursions were nothing but a test to ascertain as to how the rest of the world would react. Thus, acrimony continues between the US and China. The world has been watching moves from both sides with intense curiosity. Consequently, markets have witnessed the highest monthly jump since 2012. New York gold showed an upswing and finally closed at US \$ 1,976.10 (per ounce) while, silver followed suit and closed at \$ 24.47 (per ounce). Platinum and palladium also marched forward and closed at \$ 900 (per ounce) and \$ 1,973 (per ounce) respectively.

jewellery market. Both the precious metals moved within narrow limits due to prevailing divergent trend in the global markets. Standard gold (24 carats) zoomed by Rs.2,600 and closed at Rs.55,830 (per 10 gms). Ornamental gold too moved in tandem and was quoted in the range of Rs.51,160-51,260 on the closing day. Silver (0.999) too appreciated by Rs.3,950 and closed at Rs.65,000 (per kg). Considering the prevailing international scenario, the prices of precious metals are unlikely to relent in a near future.

COMMODITIES

The sentiment in principal wholesale commodity markets in the twin cities continued to remain strong. Rythu Bazars and the various commodity markets located in Begum Bazar, Kishangunj, Mukthargunj, Risala Abdullah, Mir Alam Mandi, Dilukhnagar, Kukatpally, Bowenpally and General Bazar are struggling to resume normal business activities.

During the week, common pulses such as tuar dal, masoor dal, moong dal and urad dal and commodities like chillies and garlic remained at moderate levels, while staple food grains and common edible oils recorded a marginal appreciation. Common vegetables such as cabbage, cauliflower, ribbed gourd, snake gourd, lady's finger, cucumber, potatoes, onions, tomatoes and French beans, along with leafy vegetables, recorded appreciation in the range of 15% to 32%.

The NECC wholesale egg-price in Hyderabad declined by Rs.15 and closed at Rs.335 (per 100). The highest price of Rs.450 was recorded at Burdwan and Midnapur, while Hospet recorded the lowest of Rs.315.

At home, despite the beginning of the festive season, there is no glitter in

Hyd airport gets UNICEF-funded mass fever screening system

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad's Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA) has received a UNICEF-funded a mass fever screening system to further enhance the efficacy of screening of passengers in view of Covid-19 pandemic, the airport operator announced on Sunday.



The Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, in coordination with the Asian Development Bank, has provided state-of-the-art thermal scanner funded by the UNICEF. The system will be used by the officials of the ministry at the airport. The new thermal scanner is a ceiling mounted mass fever screening system capable of scanning, detecting and tracking febrile persons with elevated skin temperature. The system automatically adjusts and adapts to the surrounding ambient temperature without any human intervention.

With its Intuitive User Interface and Dual-Displays (Day camera + Infra-red) it provides easy identification of passengers with elevated temperature, while simplifying operations and minimizing handling. The new thermal scanner imparts more control to the

Hyderabad Airport Health Organisation, along with the existing thermal scanners at the international arrivals, said GMR Hyderabad International Airport Limited (GHIAL).

The RGIA continues to handle the international relief flights under the government of India's largest offshore evacuation programme of Vande Bharat Mission (VBM). All international arrival passengers and airline crew undergo mandatory health screening by the airport health officers to identify symptomatic passengers to contain the spread of Covid-19 and provide necessary medical assistance to such passengers.

"We are thankful to the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare in having this modern equipment installed at the

Hyderabad International Airport. We are grateful to the sponsors ADB and UNICEF for this humane gesture. With this facility, it makes the task of the health officials who serve at the airport more easy," said Pradeep Panicker, CEO, GHIAL.

"The new top-end mass fever scanner at Hyderabad International Airport enhances our efficiency multi-fold. With the help of the intuitive technology we are able to screen passengers effectively. The system alerts us if any passenger is found with high temperature, without disturbing passenger movement and throughput," said Anuradha Medoju, Senior Regional Director, Andhra Pradesh and Telangana, Health and Family Welfare.

MLA Vamshi welcomes three capitals move

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA



Gannavaram MLA Vallabhaneni Vamsi welcomed three capitals decision for the uniform development of all regions and opined that the government is not in a position to spend one lakh crore funds on Amaravati establishment.

He further stated that centralisation of the development was the cause for the Telangana movement and bifurcation of the united Andhra Pradesh. Hence, repetition of the same can be avoided with three capitals, which would develop all regions in the State.

Vamsi termed the demand of opposition TDP of seeking fresh Assembly elections on the Amaravati issue as unnecessary. He said that if the TDP links Gannavaram by-

election with Amaravati issue as a referendum then he is ready to resign to the MLA post and will face a fresh election. He said that he is ready to accept the bypolls as a referendum on the Amaravati issue. He said that earlier also he informed his readiness for by-election to Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy and affirmed that he is prepared to face a bypoll at any time.

Mondelez launches Rakhi campaign

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Mondelez India launched their latest campaign #CloserThisRakhi. The company will further add sparkle to the festivities through e-Commerce exclusive chocolate gift boxes, blurring geographical boundaries and bringing siblings closer and stronger together.

Commenting on the latest Rakhi campaign, Anil Viswanathan, Director, said, "Over the years, Mondelez India has come to be an intrinsic part of festivals in the country with Cadbury celebrations redefining the joy of gifting. This year, too, in spite of the challenging times, we will continue to inspire India to celebrate with their friends and family. With the focus on spreading happiness and banking on the proposition of 'Kuch Achha Ho Jaaye, Kuch Meetha Ho Jaaye', the new campaign #CloserThisRakhi aims to drive positivity and remind people to bond with their loved ones and cherish every sweet moment possible. The relationship between siblings is rather a special one and like every year, we aim to instill the same joyfulness this Raksha Bandhan and further strengthen the jovial connection between a brother and a sister."



Sravana Pournami Garuda Seva

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

The monthly Porunami Garuda Seva will be conducted at Lord Venkateshwara temple in Tirumala on August 3 in the auspicious month of Sravana. Keeping in view of the existing circumstances due to Covid-19, the Sravana Masa Pournami Garuda Vahana Seva will be conducted in Ekantam at Ranganayakula Mandapam on Monday.

As part of it, the Vishesha Samarpana and Samarpana on Garuda Vahanam at Ranganayakula Mandapam will be conducted between 3 pm and 5pm, followed by Garuda Vahana Seva between 5 pm and 6 pm.

BCG linked with slower Covid-19 growth

IANS ■ NEW YORK

Adding to the growing evidence that early BCG vaccination may be helpful in taming the Covid-19 spread, scientists now claim that countries with mandatory BCG vaccination until at least the year 2000 tended to exhibit slower infection and death rates during the first 30 days of the outbreak.

By applying a statistical model based on their findings, the researchers further estimated that only 468 people would likely have died from Covid-19 in the US as of March 29 - which is 19 per cent of the actual figure of 2,467 deaths by that date - if the US had instituted mandatory BCG vaccination several decades ago. Martha Berg, the study's



lead author from University of Michigan (U-M) and colleagues focused on changes in the growth rates of Covid-19 cases and deaths, while controlling for variables including diagnostic test availability, median age, per capita GDP, population size and density, net migration rate, and various

cultural differences such as individualism. Their findings suggest that national policies for universal BCG vaccination can be effective in the fight against Covid-19 - an association that merits clinical investigation. "Available evidence demonstrates that BCG vaccination,

typically given at birth or during childhood to prevent tuberculosis, can also help strengthen immunity against various other infectious diseases - perhaps including Covid-19," the authors wrote in a paper published in the journal Science Advances.

To reach this conclusion, Berg and colleagues analyzed the day-by-day rate of increase of confirmed cases in 135 countries and deaths in 134 countries in the first 30-day period of each country's outbreak.

Mandatory BCG vaccination correlated with a flattening of the curve in the spread of Covid-19, the analysis showed. However, the authors caution that their results do not portray BCG as a "magic bullet."

HC UPADHYAY ■ HYDERABAD

Chanakya has said: 'If you are faced with several enemies, tackle the strongest one first.' Considering the present scenario, wherein the country has been challenged by communal forces, extremist elements, terrorists and crest-fallen pigmy opposition leaders, besides of course COVID-19 pandemic and China and Pakistan on borders, when we apply the philosophy of Chanakya, at any rate Jihadis and anti-national elements pose greater threat than all other enemies.

Recent chest-beating by the leader of former Razakars' party in a bid to become junior Mohammad Ali Jinnah, lashed out at the Prime Minister for the latter's proposed participation in the foundation ceremony of Ram Mandir at Ayodhya. He was chorused by his cronies declaring their resolve to reconstruct the erstwhile so-called Babri Masjid at the same place. Such outbursts

Jihadis and traitors are more dangerous than Chinese-Pakis!

make their nasty intentions abundantly clear. However, luckily for them, as backlash the heavy hammer of Hindutva forces has not yet fallen on them because the Hindus are counting the sins of the modern-day Shishupals.

These internal enemies of the country swear by the Constitution day in and day out, but have never bothered to read the chapter on the duties of a citizen which is also a part and parcel of the Constitution. Unfortunately, the government of the day is taking the evil designs of these anti-national forces lightly. The official statement that the new Ram Mandir will be open to people of 'all faiths' makes no sense because if other faiths believed in Lord Ram, where is the need to have a Prophet or

a Saviour? The ground realities cannot be ignored and we must take note of the fact that the very foundation of 1400-year-old Islam and 2000-year-old Christianity is the utter contempt and total disregard for Lord Ram, who existed some 7,000 years ago. Their venom engulfs everything that is Hindu and they have never concealed their intentions.

Coming to the principles of democracy, even a school student knows that it is the system wherein the wish of majority prevails over minority and that has to be honoured. By taking shelter under the deceitfully inserted 42nd Constitutional amendment, no one can claim that since passing of the said Amendment overnight a majority of countrymen have become 'secular' of their likings. Therefore, let

The great paradox of the country is that with the help of enhanced military might and favourable world opinion, the country can bravely face the external threats, be it from Pakistan, Nepal or China

the subversive forces of different colours be not under the impression that by taking shelter under this 1976 amendment, they can block the majority wish from prevailing over the minority.

The great paradox of the country is that with the help of enhanced military might and favourable world opinion, the country can bravely face the external threats, be it from Pakistan, Nepal or China; but the greater danger is from the foes within and any patchwork in this regard will do more harm than resolving the problem.

Indeed, the lasting solution to this problem is in scraping the two contentious words namely 'secular' and 'socialist' from the preamble and unequivocally declaring therein that Bharat is a Hindu Rashtra. There is no need to be cowed down by the anti-Hindu forces by whatever name, label or flag they are known. Needless to say that this is the need of the hour if the proposed Ram Mandir in Ayodhya and other places of Hindu worship besides the Hindu themselves are to be saved from barbaric forces, such a bold decision has to be

taken at the right earnest. If we miss the bus now, our future generations would have a valid ground to blame us.

US Supreme Court restricts entry of worshippers

The Supreme Court of the United States has restricted the entry of more than 50 worshippers at a time in churches. In its judgment dated July 24, it dismissed an appeal filed by Calvary Chapel Dayton Valley (Church), requesting the Court to increase the limit of participants in the church, synagogue or mosque. The appeal was preferred against the order of the Governor of the Nevada, along with the averment that all the precautions shall be complied strictly, including social distancing order. The Court rejected this plea observing: "...But churches, synagogues, and mosques are banned from admitting more than 50 worshippers-no matter how large

the building, how distant the individuals, how many wear masks, no matter the precautions at all. In Nevada, it seems, it is better to be in entertainment than religion."

All India Bar Examination postponed

Due to the current situation of COVID-19 pandemic, the All India Bar Examination (AIBE), which was to be held on 16th August, is now deferred until the next date, to be decided by the Monitoring Committee of the Bar Council of India, headed by a former Judge of the Supreme Court of India. The Bar Council of India, in its resolution dated July 29, said that the last date to apply for AIBE has been extended to August 31 and the examination date shall be notified later.

Cartel to bring economy to knees!

Fraudsters are leaving no

Fears of Covid victims' kin allayed

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The family members, including relatives, showing reluctance to perform last rites to those died of Coronavirus forcing the municipal staff to perform last rites as orphans. Hence, government officials and legislators are participating in the funerals to allay fears of people.

It may be recalled that Kurnool MLA Hafeez Khan took part in funeral of a Covid victim on Saturday, and on Sunday, Guntur Joint Collector AS Dinesh Kumar joined in the funeral procession of a person in Guntur, who died of Corona. He pointed out that infection would be present only for six to seven hours in the body and there is no harm in performing the last rites to the sealed body but sadly family members showing reluctance to give respectable adieu, which is very sad.



A 57-year-old man of Challapalli in Krishna district died of Coronavirus, while undergoing treatment at the Covid hospital in Guntur but the family members and relatives showed reluctance to perform final rites. Therefore, officials convinced them and Joint

Collector Dinesh Kumar participated in the funeral, along with relatives, on Sunday to clear stigma about performing last rites to the Corona victims. Dinesh Kumar said that the medical staff would hand over the packed body after applying hypo sodium chlorite with

- Guntur Joint Collector participates in Covid victims' last rites
- Joint Collector AS Dinesh Kumar appealed to the kith and kin of those who died of Corona to give respectable adieu as the virus will not spread six to seven hours after death

leak proof cover, hence, people can perform funeral by wearing PPE without any hesitation.

He said that the virus will not spread if they view the face of the body covered in transparent safety cover without opening the plastic shield as the virus will not spread from the corpse after six to seven hours.

He said that rejection of the family members to take bodies to their native places is creat-

ing troubles to perform last rites and said that the relatives should take bodies to their native places without any fear and should perform funerals with respect at burial grounds. He appealed to people to show humanity by allowing last rites in the burial grounds and graveyards in the villages.

He said that the administration has taken special initiative to perform funeral or burial with the support of Amma Charitable Trust and other NGOs in Guntur city to the bodies on the reluctance of family members. He said that these NGOs will perform funerals or burial following their customs with the consent of the relatives within 48 hours. He said that last rites to the unidentified bodies also would be performed after completion of revenue and police inquiry within 48 hours.

Vizag has become a haven for land grabbers: Yanamala

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Opposition leader in Legislative Council Yanamala Ramakrishnu on Sunday made a scathing attack on the YSRCP government saying that there was zero development in all the three regions-Rayalaseema, Coastal and north Coastal Andhra- in the past 14 months of its regime. He demanded that Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy explain why he could not usher in a single development project in any of these regions since coming to power in 2019.

Ramakrishnu said it was like the devil quoting the scriptures when the Chief Minister was speaking of development of all the three regions in the name of trifurcation of capitals. He pointed out that MedTech Zone and FinTech Valley projects were destroyed in Visakhapatnam. Over Rs 70,000 crore Adani Data Centre was driven away from north Coastal Andhra. The same was the fate of Lulu Group's multi-crore project. The YSRCP rule has reduced the Port City into a haven of land grabbers and property offenders with the ordinary public feeling unsafe and insecure.

He alleged that even in Rayalaseema, the YSRCP gangsters used pistols to threaten the managements of solar power plants. "In Prakasam district, Rs 25,000 crore paper and pulp industry has gone back. From this, it was clear



■ Yanamala Ramakrishnu deplored that the ruling party leaders made it a habit to destroy the statues of NTR, foundation stones laid by the TDP rule, houses constructed in the past and also to tear capital dream to three pieces

■ "The regional development authorities were a good concept to develop people in specific regions but even this was being misused. Jagan destroyed Amaravati Capital Region Development Authority though it would benefit all 13 districts. At the same time, the CM promoted Pulivendula Area Development Authority to benefit people of just his Assembly constituency," the TDP leader lamented

how Jagan was running a destructive but not a development regime. The Chief Minister was using three capitals as a political gimmick for his selfish and personal agenda. Violence, demolitions and destruction were the foundation on which the Chief Minister was building his empire," he pointed out.

He deplored that the ruling party leaders made it a habit to destroy the statues of NTR, foundation stones laid by the TDP rule, houses constructed in the past and also

to tear capital dream to three pieces.

"The regional development authorities were a good concept to develop people in specific regions but even this was being misused. Jagan destroyed Amaravati Capital Region Development Authority though it would benefit all 13 districts. At the same time, the Chief Minister promoted Pulivendula Area Development Authority to benefit people of just his Assembly constituency," he lamented.

67 more succumb to Covid across State

Continued from Page 1

During the last 24 hours ending 9 am on Sunday, 6,272 people recovered from Covid-19, taking the total number of recoveries to 82,886. The number of active cases stands at 74,404. The State conducted 52,834 Covid tests during the last 24 hours. This includes 19,155 rapid antigen tests. With this the State has so far conducted 20,65,407 tests.

Pawan demands YSRCP, TDP MLAs resignation

Continued from Page 1

He blamed the YSRCP government for unable to handle the Corona crisis as more number of cases are being reported everyday and in order to overcome the failure of containing Covid, the government has bought the capital issue to divert the attention of people.

He reminded that the JSP has no involvement in the

TDP schemes though it had sailed with the latter in 2014 and took both TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu and Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy to task for the plight of farmers. Both the leaders left farmers in the lurch for their selfish motives, he alleged. Hence, both the YSRCP and the TDP are answerable to the farmers, he said.

Jagan could not have taken a decision to form three capi-

als if the then Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu did not delay the construction of capital city in Amaravati.

He further stated that people involved in land scams in Amaravati shall be punished and justice will be rendered to farmers. But the Amaravati capital issue will not be resolved soon, hence, farmers should gird up their loins to fight a long battle, he predicted.

Raksha Bandhan goes digital this year

Continued from Page 1

"More and more customers are shopping online than before, in order to maintain social distancing. With this shift in buying behaviour, we have witnessed a huge surge in customers who want rakhis to be delivered in other countries like the US, followed by the UK, Singapore, UAE and a couple of other countries," informed Manish Saini, COO, e-commerce, Ferns N Petals.

Remdesivir wins over HCQ, but researchers smell a rat

NAVEENA GHANATE ■ HYDERABAD

The initial expectations around HCQ as cure for Covid-19 is dying down as several frontline warriors, especially doctors have stopped taking it as prophylaxis.

A government doctor in TS said, "I took an initial dose of HCQ. But studies have been revealing that it is interacting with remdesivir which is a reserve treatment for moderate cases of Covid-19. Since then I stopped. I have been extremely careful and never touched my face shield or mask, changed glove multiple times".

However, a group of researchers in Indian Journal of Medical Ethics (IJME) pointed out that the two drugs are showing similar impact, but there is a push for expensive Remdesivir. Dr Amit Dang, founder and CEO of the Telangana-based MarksMan Healthcare and his colleague Dr Vallish BN along with Dr Sumit Dang of the from University of Kentucky in the July-September issue of the IJME wrote an article on "Hydroxychloroquine and Remdesivir (RDV) in Covid-19: A critical analysis of recent events"

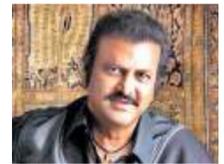
They allege political affiliations have come into play between remdesivir and HCQ. They write, "While the widespread (mostly unsupervised)



use of HCQ for other indications may have contributed to these unequal levels of scrutiny, confounders such as political affiliation, profiteering, and other conflicts of interest cannot be ruled out at this stage, with the available evidence and information".

The researchers state that HCQ is being more closely scrutinised when compared to the lighter treatment given to RDV.

The article says, "Analysis of various studies available at present does not prove a clear and conclusive efficacy benefit for either RDV or HCQ in clinical trials. It appears that a subtle push is being given to RDV, the safety of which is not adequately established; while HCQ is being subtly snubbed, despite both drugs having similar efficacy patterns. This appears to be in contravention of the basic ethical principles of beneficence, non-maleficence, autonomy and justice."



4 detained for barging into actor's farmhouse

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Pahadishareef police on Sunday took four persons into custody for having barged into the premises of actor M Mohan Babu's farmhouse at Jalpally on the outskirts of the city on Saturday and hurled out threats to the family members that they would not spare them.

Around 4 pm on Saturday, a group of youngsters had entered into the premises in a car and went around, even as the actor's family was inside the house. Anxious family members informed the police. On receiving information, the Pahadishareef Police reached the spot and took up investigation. Based on the footage from surveillance cameras in the surrounding areas, four youngsters, who are residents of Durga Nagar in Mailardavpally, were traced with the help of the Innova vehicle bearing registration number AP 31 AN 0004.

"Their identities are being verified. No arrests have been made yet. Their call data records too are being examined to check if it was just for fun or had any malicious intention," police said.

Increase hospitals, not crematoriums: Congress

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) Treasurer Gudur Narayana Reddy expressed deep concern over reports of State Government setting up five new LPG-based crematoria in Hyderabad in view of rising number of Coronavirus cases in the twin cities of Hyderabad and Secunderabad.

As per media reports, the LPG-fuelled crematoria are likely to be installed at Hindu cremation grounds in the Charminar, Khairatabad, Secunderabad, Uppal and Kukatpally zones in the next 15 days with each having a capacity of cremating 12 bodies every day.

"The Covid-19 death toll in Telangana, as being shown in official Media Bulletin never exceeded 15 on any given day. If the official figures are genuine, then why the State Government is making arrangements to cremate 60 more bodies in addition to the existing crematoria. Are the authorities expecting the situation to worsen further or are



they hiding an already worsened condition from the people?" he asked.

"Governments which do not establish hospitals for common people, end up building crematoria. Chief Minister K Chandrababu Naidu will be remembered in history as the leader who did nothing to save people's lives, but made arrangements for their last rites. KCR government has wasted a lot of precious time to prevent the spread of Coronavirus. It miserably failed to trace and test the suspects," he alleged.

3 die while travelling to attend last rites of crane crash victim

Continued from Page 1

Four regular employees of HSL and seven contract workers were among the deceased. Bhaskar Rao (35) was working for Lead Engineers, which was one of the two firms hired by Greenfield Company, to which HSL had outsourced the crane operations.

Dy Speaker, wife test positive for Covid-19

Continued from Page 1

He said that doctors suggested him for home quarantine. Therefore, he and his wife would be in home quarantine for a week. He exuded confidence that he will recover from Corona and asked leaders, supporters, followers and people to follow Corona protocol to containing the pandemic.

2 panels set up to probe Vizag crane crash

Continued from Page 1

Out of the 10 deceased four belong to HSL, including a supervisor, three from MS Greenfield, two among them were Lead Engineering Company employees, and one person is an employee of Squad Seven Company, according to Visakhapatnam District Collector Vinay Chand. According to sources, there were at least 16 persons working at the accident site in the shipyard when the giant crane came crashing down. Tourism Minister Avanthi Srinivas has directed officials to ensure necessary treatment for the injured workers.

Discontinuing M Phil might not do much damage

NAMRATA SRIVASTAVA ■ HYDERABAD

The Union Human Resource Development (HRD) Ministry decided to discontinue the two-year M Phil from all Universities across the nation last month. Students will now be allowed to take admission in PhD directly after post-graduation or a four-year undergraduate degree with research. Since the course was discontinued by many Universities already, the University lecturers feel that MPhil doesn't serve much purpose and scrapping it would save one year of the students.

Former Dean of Sarojini Naidu School of Arts and Communication Prof Vinod Pavarala said "Masters of Philosophy had some utility for a long time, as people who had completed that would get a job in college. But, for the last seven to eight years it has lost value as most PhD courses have introduced mandatory course work for the research, for around one-and-a-half year. This serves the same purpose as the MPhil. Also, now you need a PhD to become have a job at college. So, in today's scenario, MPhil has become redundant."

Many also opine that discontinuing MPhil will also discourage duplicity and plagiarism of research work. Shreyas Dwivedi, Research Assistant from Jawaharlal Nehru



University opines, "MPhil is basically a waste of time for the students. Many students, who are not serious about research and apply at the Universities only for the monetary benefits of being a PhD scholar, actually use their MPhil work, add a point or two and present it as their PhD work. The PhD research is actually an in depth study of an issue which provide some solution at the end. In 2018, there were approximately 30,000 PhD awarded in India, in various fields. If none of these PhDs were practical enough to be put to use to solve issues in the country, they hold no value at all. I believe, scrapping MPhil will give chance to serious researchers and also reduce the load of the lecturers."

Adding to the same, Prof S Ramachandram, Vice Chancellor of Osmania University, states, "I think it's a good thing the Ministry decided to discontinue the course as it served no purpose. It's just an interim programme for research students."

TITA reaches out to 'software Sharadha'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

"You give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. You teach him to fish and you give him an occupation that will feed him for a lifetime. Thus goes the Chinese adage."

Software professionals industry body Telangana Information Technology Association (TITA) president Sundep Kumar Makthala has implemented the same with respect to Sharadha, the IT professional who turned into a vegetable vendor after losing her job at software company Virtusa due to the Coronavirus crisis, by enrolling her for a technical course in artificial intelligence and also presenting her with a laptop to do the learning.

TITA president, after learning about her precarious financial position, wanted to extend her some financial assistance. However, after learning about technical prowess and her intent to slug it out, it had



decided to give her free training in artificial intelligence through the training module TITA is offering in association with University of Texas at Dallas (UTD), one of the top universities in the US. TITA also decided to give her a laptop that will allow her to undergo the certificate course in artificial intelligence from her home and while continuing to support her family by

selling vegetables. "Sharadha's story is inspiring in these Covid times where job losses are not uncommon. However, she took things in her stride and went on to work with the resources at hand. In doing this, she has sent a message that tough times do not last but tough people do. We interacted with her and learnt that she is willing to hone her technical skills. She is one who relies on

hardwork alone. We thought a course in artificial intelligence will be of more help in the current situations. The laptop will allow her to pursue the course while continuing to work at home," said TITA Global President Sundep Kumar Makthala about the decision to offer her an opportunity to pursue a course with an international certification and a laptop free to her.

Commenting on the crisis in the IT industry, Makthala said the industry is not immune to the changes happening globally. However, the IT professionals should learn to cope with the job scenarios and should not lose heart. They should use the current times to hone their existing skills or learn new skills, which will enhance their employability in times to come. TITA has been working on this front to drive home the need for learning new skills constantly. Last year, there was an incident where one techie Harini lost her life and that has shook many in the industry.

Makthala said youngsters should look at entrepreneurship as well and not just look for a placement. Artificial intelligence, cyber security, blockchain technologies are the current flavor and promise to provide job opportunities, he said. TITA Spokesperson Venkata Vanam, TITA Sports Secretary Ronith Banda, Iliyas, Harika participated.

Krishna projects continue to receive good inflows

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

While the outflows from Almatti and Narayanpur projects in Karnataka have come down drastically, the week-long rainfall of 54.2 mm and 10.3 mm rainfall in the catchment areas of major rivers in the State has helped maintain fairly good inflows into the State's reservoirs and projects both on Krishna and Godavari rivers.

On Sunday the inflows into Almatti were 11,158 cusecs and outflows were mere 1,922 cusecs. Similarly inflows into Narayanpur were 67 cusecs and outflows were 4,878 cusecs. At the Priyadarshini Jurala Project (PJP) the inflows were impressive in the range of 14,000-15,500 cusecs and outflows were 12,212 cusecs. The PJP is catering to Nettempadu



and Bhima lift irrigation project, powerhouse, the left, right and parallel canals.

At Srisaillam in the downstream, water level in the reservoir is 851.60 feet against an FRL of 885 feet. The inflows are 29,573 cusecs and outflows are 46,793 cusecs. As a result Nagarjuna Sagar is receiving 35,568 cusecs of inflows and

outflows of 2,560 cusecs. The water level in Sagar is 549.80 feet compared to the Full Reservoir level (FRL) of 590 feet.

While almost all the projects on river Godavari have satisfactory storage of water, the inflows are less compared to that of projects on river Krishna.

Union Health Ministry issues revised guidelines for international arrivals

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Union health ministry on Sunday issued a set of revised guidelines for international arrivals which will come into effect from August 8.

According to the guidelines, all travellers would need to give an undertaking on the online portal www.newdelhiairport.in that they would undergo mandatory quarantine for 14 days, that is, seven days paid institutional quarantine at their own cost, followed by seven days isolation at home with self-monitoring of health.

"Only for compelling reasons/cases of human distress such as pregnancy, death in family, serious illness and parent(s) with children of the age of 10 years or below, home quarantine may be permitted for 14 days," the ministry said.

"If they wish to seek such exemption, they shall apply on the online portal at least 72 hours before boarding. The decision taken by the government as communicated on the portal will be final," it said.

The travellers can also seek



exemption from institutional quarantine by submitting a negative RT-PCR test report on arrival. This test should have been conducted within 96 hours prior to undertaking the journey. The test report should be uploaded on the portal for consideration, the guidelines stated.

"Each passenger shall also submit a declaration with respect to authenticity of the report and will be liable for criminal prosecution, if found otherwise. The test report could also be produced upon

arrival at the point of entry at airport in India," it said.

Before boarding the plane or ship, the guidelines said the dos and don'ts shall be provided along with the tickets to travellers by the agencies concerned.

All passengers shall also be advised to download Arogya Setu application on their mobile devices, it said.

The guidelines also said that at the time of boarding the plane or ship, only asymptomatic travellers will be allowed to board after thermal screening.

"Each passenger shall also submit a declaration with respect to authenticity of the report and will be liable for criminal prosecution, if found otherwise. The test report could also be produced upon arrival at airport in India," it said

"Passengers arriving through the land borders will also have to undergo the same protocol as above, and only those who are asymptomatic will be enabled to cross the border into India," it added.

Suitable precautionary measures such as environmental sanitation and disinfection shall be ensured at the airports and during boarding; and at the airports, all possible measures to ensure social distancing to be ensured, it said.

During travel, those who had not filled in self-declara-

tion forms on the portal shall fill the same in duplicate in the flight and ship, and a copy of the same will be given to Health and Immigration officials present at the airport/seaport/land port, the guidelines said. "Alternatively, such travellers may submit a self-declaration form on the online portal at arriving airport/seaport/land port as per the directions of the concerned authorities, if such facility is available," it said.

The guidelines further said suitable announcements about COVID-19, including precautionary measures to be followed, shall be made at airports or ports and in flights/ships and during transit. "While on board the flight or ship, required precautions such as wearing of masks, environmental hygiene, respiratory hygiene, hand hygiene are to be observed by airline/ship staff, crew and all passengers," it said.

On arrival, the guidelines said deboarding should be done ensuring social distancing.



Bihar flood situation worsens, 53.67 lakh people affected

PNS ■ PATNA

The flood situation in Bihar worsened on Sunday as water from overflowing rivers inundated fresh areas, while a total of 53.67 lakh people across 14 districts were affected, the Disaster Management Department said here.

No fresh casualty was reported and the number of people who died in flood-related incidents stood at 13.

The number of people affected by the deluge has gone up by 4.62 lakh since Saturday, though that of the district remained at 14, the department said in a bulletin.

The number of panchayats hit by the calamity, howev-

er, rose to 1,059 from 1,043 on the previous day.

It said that an embankment of Tirthut canal breached in the early hours of Sunday inundating at least a dozen villages in Mural block of Muzaffarpur district. Two National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) teams have been deployed at the site.

With 16.89 lakh flood-affected people, Muzaffarpur is the worst-hit district, followed by 12.40 lakh people in Darbhanga and 8.09 lakh in East Champaran.

More than half of the affected populace live in Muzaffarpur and Darbhanga districts.

SHORT READS



Rhino calf separated from mother rescued in Assam

GUWAHATI: A new born rhino, separated from his mother, has been rescued by forest guards in the Kaziranga National Park amid the floods in Assam, a forest spokesperson said. The three-day or four-day old rhino calf was rescued from Mohpora village in the Kaziranga range area this morning, he said. The baby rhino has been taken to a rescue centre at the Centre for Wildlife Rehabilitation and Conservation at Panbari area of the Park.

6 undertrials escape from juvenile home in Noida, 5 held

NOIDA (UP): Six undertrials lodged at the COVID-19 isolation ward of a juvenile home in Noida escaped from the facility, police said on Sunday. While five of them were later apprehended, one is absconding, they said. The juveniles were brought to the facility recently and had been lodged at the isolation centre in view of the COVID-19 outbreak. They tried to escape on the intervening night of Friday and Saturday, the police said. As a precautionary measure, all new inmates brought to the juvenile home are lodged at the isolation ward, which has been set up within the campus, for some days, according to officials. The juveniles had "folded the iron sheet of a gate" to sneak out of the facility, located in Phase 2 police station area, the officials said. "Three of them were held in no time. Of the three who did manage to escape, two have been apprehended and one is still absconding." Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police, Central Noida, Ankur Aggarwal said.

5% reservation for more backward classes in R'than judicial service

PNS ■ JAIPUR

The Rajasthan government has approved five per cent reservation to the more backward classes, including Gurjars, in the state judicial service, according to a statement. The government has amended the Rajasthan Judicial Service Rules, 2010, through the state cabinet on the initiative by Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot to provide five per cent reservation in place of one per cent, an official statement said. Candidates belonging to the more backward classes have



been demanding amendment in the judicial service rules for a long time so that they can get five per cent reservation in the state judicial service instead of one per cent. The more backward classes include Gurjars, Raika-Rabari, Gadiya-Lohars, Banjara and Gadariya.

Punjab liquor tragedy survivors troubled by low vision

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

I have not been able to see properly ever since I drank spurious liquor, says Tilak Raj, one of the survivors of the Punjab hooch tragedy that has killed 98 till Sunday.

The tragedy has been unfolding since Wednesday evening and has claimed 75 lives in Punjab's Tarn Taran, 12 in Amritsar and 11 in Gurdaspur's Batala.

Tilak Raj, a contractual employee of the Batala Municipal Corporation, says he felt uneasy after drinking spurious liquor, which he had bought for Rs 60 from Triveni Chauhan and Darshana Rani, alias Faujan, outside the Hathi Gate locality in



Batala. Both accused have already been arrested by police. "After I drank it, I was not able to see properly and felt uneasiness," says Tilak Raj.

He survived as his family immediately took him to the doctor.

"Now, I am feeling slightly better but my vision has not

improved and I am feeling giddy," says 50-year-old Tilak Raj.

Another Batala survivor, Ajay Kumar, says he started shivering after consuming spurious liquor.

"I am still feeling weakness," says 32-year-old Kumar, who is admitted to the local civil hospital. Kumar blamed both Triveni and Darshana for the supply of spurious liquor.

Many Batala residents alleged that illicit liquor was being openly sold in the Hathi Gate locality but no action was taken by the authorities.

Another survivor in Amritsar's Muchhal village said he felt uneasiness after drinking spurious liquor. He said he could not see properly after consuming it. According to a top excise offi-

cial, though the reports of the chemical analysis of the material seized in police raids were yet to come, a superficial check showed that the material was denatured spirit, generally used in the paint or hardware industry.

Meanwhile, some families of the deceased in Amritsar flayed police for not taking any action against those indulging in the illegal liquor trade.

Charan Kaur, who lost her 65-year-old husband to spurious liquor in Amritsar's Muchhal, said accused Balwinder Kaur had been selling liquor for more than two decades in the village.

Whenever police would come, she would hide liquor or throw it away, said Kaur.

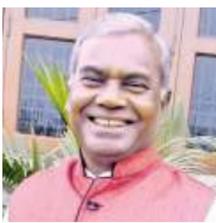
Ram temple to foster brotherhood and harmony: Temple trust member

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The decades-long movement for building a Ram temple in Ayodhya may have been marked by political and, at times, social discord, but the beginning of its construction from August 5 will foster in society "brotherhood and harmony", the values associated with Lord Ram, Shri Ram Janmabhoomi Teertha Kshetra Trust member Kameshwar Chaupal said on Sunday.

The trust, formed by the central government following the Supreme Court's ruling in November last in favour of building the temple at the site, has invited Prime Minister Narendra Modi to lay the foundation stone of the Ram temple on August 5.

"This will also be a foundation stone of Ram Rajya in the country. Ram's life encapsu-



lates the values of social harmony and brotherhood. The temple will foster these values in our society," Chaupal said.

Chaupal, a key figure of the Ram Janmabhoomi movement and a Dalit member of the trust, told PTI that the BJP politically benefited from the movement because the party associated itself with it and even "sacrificed" its four governments, including in Uttar Pradesh, for the sake of the temple.

The Congress government at the Centre had dismissed four BJP-ruled state governments in 1992 following the demolition of Babri mosque during a "kar seva" led by Hinduva organisations.

"Our movement never barred any political party from joining it. It was like the gushing water of the Ganges, with some collecting its sacred water and some not despite the river flowing near their door," he said, in an apparent reference to parties like the Congress.

Chaupal, who was associated with the Vishwa Hindu Parishad and later became a BJP lawmaker in Bihar, shot into limelight in 1989 after he was chosen to launch the temple's 'shilanyas', a gesture apparently aimed at sending out a message of social inclusiveness of the movement.

Morari Bapu's followers pledge Rs 1 cr for Ram temple

PNS ■ GHAZIABAD

Ghaziabad and NCR based adherents of spiritual preacher Morari Bapu, who is renowned for his discourse on Ramcharitmanas, would contribute around Rs 1 crore for the construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya.

The temple's foundation stone is scheduled to be laid on August 5. The amount would be deposited online in the name of his trust Chitrakoot Dham located in Gujarat, poet and convener of Ram Katha in Ghaziabad Raj Kaushik told PTI on Sunday.

Five days ago, Bapu had urged the listeners during his online Ram Katha discourse to contribute money towards the Ram temple construction in Ayodhya.

Bihar Police to probe suicide of Rajput's former manager

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Bihar Police team, which is in Mumbai to investigate a case related Sushant Singh Rajput's death, will also probe the alleged suicide of his former manager Disha Salian, and if needed also record the statements of those Bollywood personalities, who were earlier questioned by their Mumbai counterparts, officials said on Sunday.

Patna City Superintendent of Police (SP), Vinay Tiwari, on Sunday reached Mumbai to supervise the probe being conducted by the four-member team from the Bihar capital.

Rajput, 34, was found hanging at his apartment in suburban Bandra on June 14.

Mumbai Police, who are probing the death case, has so far recorded statements of



nearly 40 people, including those from Rajput's family, his cook and people from the film industry that include filmmaker Mahesh Bhatt, film critic Rajeev Masand, director-producer Sanjay Leela Bhansali and filmmaker Aditya Chopra.

The Bihar Police team is probing a separate abetment to suicide case on the basis of a complaint filed by the late

actor's father in Patna.

Inspector General of Police (Patna zone) Sanjay Singh, said, "We are going to investigate the suicide case of Sushant Singh Rajput's former manager Disha Salian, and will also question his friend and creative content manager Siddharth Pithani, who was staying with the actor for the past one year."

"Our officials are visiting all possible places related to this case. They had also visited Rajput's residence and recreated the scene. In the coming days, more people are likely to be questioned in the case," he said. Salian, 28, allegedly committed suicide by jumping from the high-rise building in Malad area here on June 8.

Earlier Pithani had sent an e-mail to the Mumbai Police, alleging that family members of the late Bollywood star pressured him to give a statement against actress Rhea Chakraborty, an official said.

On Tuesday, Rajput's father Krishna Kumar Singh (74) had lodged a complaint in Patna against Chakraborty and six others, including her family members, for alleged abetment to suicide.

Skill training by Delhi police comes as a ray of hope for young girls amid lockdown

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

For Manisha, who wanted to become a medical professional but could not continue her studies owing to financial problems at home, a skill training programme launched by Delhi police has come as a timely opportunity to fulfil not only her passion but also support her family during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The e-Yuva Skill Training Programme, which was launched on July 24 as an online course, has seen the maximum enrolment from girls. Of the 60 people enrolled, nearly 40 are girls, who are either pursuing their studies or are school dropouts. About 10 first-time offenders have also enrolled for the programme, Delhi police officials said.

"Though I'm an arts student, I was always interested in pursuing my career in the medical field. Due to financial problems, I could not continue my studies. When I got to know



about the training course, it gave me a ray of hope," said Manisha, 17.

She said the training will help her find employment and fund her studies. After the three-month course, she hopes to work as a general duty assistant to nursing staff.

Manisha lives with her five-member family in Punjabi Basti in Central Delhi. Her father worked in a factory but lost his job during lockdown.

"We had to depend on relatives for financial help. After the lockdown was lifted, my father did try to find employment but failed, so he took an auto-rickshaw on rent. He pays Rs. 400 to the owner daily but he hardly gets any ride these days," she said.

Deputy Commissioner of Police (Central) Sanjay Bhatia said the programme aims to channelise the energy of youth, including girls, so that they are

"Though I'm an arts student, I was always interested in pursuing my career in the medical field. Due to financial problems, I could not continue my studies. When I got to know about the training course, it gave me a ray of hope," said Manisha

gainfully employed. "After completion of their course, all the candidates will be required to qualify an exam after which they will be eligible for employment in the health sector. The fee for the examination will be taken care of by the police department," he added. The programme initially began in March but had

to be discontinued because of the lockdown. It was relaunched as an online course last week by Delhi police in coordination with Star Education Training Institute Private Limited. Officials said they have tied up with firms in the healthcare sector for placement of the candidates.

Several candidates PTI spoke to said they find the classes very extremely useful, though some of them rued that have access to only one smartphone at their home.

Sameer Bhati, from Star Education Training Institute, said 50 candidates are attending the classes and they are trying to arrange learning equipment for 10 others.

The classes are held in two batches from Monday to Friday. Aarti Rajput, who couldn't pursue education after class 10 owing to financial issues, said she joined the course to become financially independent and support her family.

Sometimes silence is louder than words, says Gajendra Shekhawat

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The "silence" of senior BJP leader Vasundhara Raje Scindia on the political developments in Rajasthan can be a "strategy", her party colleague and Union Minister Gajendra Shekhawat said on Sunday.

In an interview to PTI, Shekhawat, who has been accused by Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot of trying to topple his government, also alleged that it was the Congress leader who had orchestrated the political "drama" in the state to target his rivals in the party and outside.

"He has been unable to digest that I defeated his son in Lok Sabha elections and is trying everything against me, by hook or by crook to avenge his defeat," said Shekhawat, who represents Jodhpur and had defeated Vaibhav Gehlot in the 2019 Lok Sabha election by more than 2.74 lakh votes.

Underlining that the BJP has nothing to do with the politi-



cal crisis in Rajasthan, Shekhawat maintained that it is the fallout of the infighting in the Congress involving Gehlot and his former deputy Sachin Pilot. "With this ongoing drama in the state, he (Gehlot) wants to eliminate Sachin (Pilot) and others from the party. He is blaming the BJP for this entire crisis and trying to tarnish the image of its leadership," Shekhawat said.

When asked about former

chief minister Vasundhara Raje Scindia being largely silent on the issue, Shekhawat said, "Well Vasundhara's silence can be a strategy and sometimes silence is louder than words." When the Gehlot-Pilot feud spilled into the open, Raje, a two-time chief minister, maintained a conspicuous silence though all other BJP leaders from the state were speaking on the issue and attacking the Congress.

SHORT READS



'My good fortune that Ram temple will be built in my lifetime'

NEW DELHI: BJP ally and Lok Janshakti Party president Chirag Paswan said on Sunday that it is his "good fortune" that Ram temple is going to be constructed in Ayodhya in his lifetime. Paswan also described himself as a "descendant" of Shabri who, he claimed, belonged to a deprived section of society. "As a descendant of mother Shabri, who hailed from a deprived section, was a disciple of saint Matang and was an ardent devotee of Shri Ram, it is my good fortune that the temple is being constructed again in my lifetime," he said in a tweet. According to the epic Ramayan, Shabri had offered berries already tested by her to Lord Ram during his stay in the forest and he accepted her offerings with affection. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lay the foundation stone of the temple at a ceremony in Ayodhya on August 5.

Sacred soil, river water from Karnataka sent for Ram temple

BENGALURU: The Karnataka unit of Vishwa Hindu Parishad (VHP) on Sunday said water from various rivers and soil from religious places in Karnataka have been sent for the construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh. The groundbreaking ceremony for construction of the temple would take place on August 5 and Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been invited to the event. "We have sent the water and soil from all the rivers and religious places in the state. It will be used for sanctifying the temple site," VHP Prachar Pramukh Basavaraj said. According to him, Suttur Math seer Shivaratri Deshikendra sent water from Cauvery and Kapila. Dharmasthala Manjunatha Dharmadhikari Veerendra Heggade sent water from Netravati river while Sringeri Shankaracharya Sri Bharati Tirtha collected water from Tunga, Bhadravati.

TN Guv Purohit tests positive for COVID-19

CHENNAI: Tamil Nadu Governor Banwarilal Purohit has tested positive for COVID-19, but advised home isolation since his infection was mild, a city-based private hospital said on Sunday. The 80-year old Purohit was on self-isolation since July 29 after three people in the Raj Bhavan tested positive for the coronavirus. A bulletin issued by the Kauvery Hospital where the Governor underwent further tests on Sunday said he has been advised home isolation and a medical team would monitor him. Purohit "tested positive for COVID-19," hospital Executive Director Dr Aravindan Selvaraj said in the bulletin.

'NEP misses fundamental goal of human development'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Sunday said the new National Education Policy misses the fundamental goal of human development and expansion of knowledge, noting that it is high on "catchwords" and "verbosity" but lacks critical finances and a coherent roadmap for implementation.

It alleged that the policy has circumvented parliamentary oversight and there has been no discussion with the academia except the RSS.

Congress leaders MM Pallam Raju, Rajeev Gowda and Randeep Surjewala said the NEP seeks to create a digital divide between the poor and the rich as it promotes privatisation of public education and "this will lead to it going out of reach of



"The National Education Policy 2020, which aimed to pave the way for transformational reforms in school and higher education, is high on catchwords, gloss, appearance and verbosity yet lacks a coherent implementation roadmap and strategy, clearly defined milestones and the critical finances necessary to execute this grand vision," they said in a joint statement

the middle class and the disadvantaged in the society".

They also questioned the government's intent in raising spending on education to 6 per cent of the GDP, saying the same has fallen from 4.14 per cent of GDP in 2014 to 3.2 per cent currently under the Modi government and is likely to fall further

due to cuts in outlays on account of resource crunch due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

"The National Education Policy 2020, which aimed to pave the way for transformational reforms in school and higher education, is high on catchwords, gloss, appearance and verbosity yet lacks a coherent

implementation roadmap and strategy, clearly defined milestones and the critical finances necessary to execute this grand vision," they said in a joint statement.

"All in all, the NEP 2020 misses the fundamental goal of human development and expansion of knowledge," they said.

Farooq Abdullah calls for probe into exodus of Kashmiri Pandits

PNS ■ JAMMU

Former Jammu and Kashmir chief minister Farooq Abdullah on Sunday demanded a probe by retired Supreme Court judges into the exodus of Kashmiri Pandits from the valley in early 1990s.

Replying to questions during a webinar, Abdullah said he was of the firm belief that Kashmir is incomplete without Kashmiri Pandits and that he would support any mechanism to bring them back honourably.

Nearly 60,000 Kashmiri Pandit families are registered as migrants after the onset of militancy in the Kashmir Valley in early 1990s.

Abdullah, a member of Lok Sabha and president of the National Conference, chose to blame then former Governor Jagmohan for the exodus and said that he "took them away" on the false promise of ensuring



their return within three months.

During the webinar hosted by Jammu-based Epilogue News Network on the theme, "Discerning old order delineating new order - a year after neutralization of Article 370 and abrogation of Article 35 A", Abdullah was asked whether he would support a genocide bill being floated by the Panun Kashmir, a Kashmiri Pandit organisation demanding a separate homeland for the migrants.

He said he would have to go into the details of the bill first.

Abdullah, a three-time chief minister, said, "A sincere and honest judge of Supreme Court, retired judge of Supreme Court, a team of judges...let them investigate and come out with their report. It will clear many minds around the globe, among the younger Kashmiri Pandits, that it was not Kashmiri Muslims who threw them out. There are still many Kashmiri Pandits who never left and they are living here."

The National Conference leader narrated many instances where Muslims had stood by the Pandit community since 1947 and said "do you think we were happy when they (Kashmiri Pandits) were taken away," he said, adding "we always believe that Kashmir is never going to be complete unless the Hindu brethren come back and live in peace with all of us".

HRD Minister clears the air on NEP

PNS ■ CHENNAI

The Centre will not impose any language on any state through the new National Education Policy (NEP) 2020, Union Minister for Education Ramesh Pokhriyal Nishank said on Sunday.

Nishank's clarification, through a tweet in Tamil, comes in the backdrop of opposition to NEP in Tamil Nadu on the grounds that the policy allegedly imposed Hindi and Sanskrit. In his tweet to former Union Minister from the state Pon Radhakrishnan, Nishank said he was looking forward to the guidance of the ex-central minister in implementing NEP in Tamil Nadu. "I once



again like to insist that the Central government will not impose any language on any state," he said. The M K Stalin-led DMK and many opposition parties in Tamil Nadu have opposed NEP and want a review of the sweeping reforms it has proposed.

Indira Rasoi Yojana to start in Rajasthan from Aug 20

PNS ■ JAIPUR

Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot directed officials on Sunday to start the Indira Rasoi Yojana in urban areas of Rajasthan from August 20. Reviewing the preparations for the scheme, named after former prime minister Indira Gandhi, Gehlot said the state government would spend Rs 100 crore per year on it. He said the poor would get quality nutritious food for just Rs 8.

The chief minister said the scheme should be implemented with the spirit of public service, transparency and public participation so that it becomes an example in the direction of providing food security to the poor in the country. Gehlot directed that participation of service-



oriented institutions and voluntary organisations should be ensured in the operation of the scheme. He has instructed the district collectors to select such institutions as soon as possible. The chief minister also directed to constitute a committee at

the state and district levels to ensure the quality of food.

Urban Development Minister Shanti Dhariwal, who participated through video conference in the meeting, said the state government would give a grant of Rs 12 per plate.

Providing equal opportunities to women a priority: Haryana CM

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Haryana Chief Minister Manohar Lal Khattar on Sunday spelled out the initiatives taken by his government for the empowerment of women, saying providing equal opportunities to them was a priority.

The CM said this during a webinar attended by women belonging to various fields. The participants included teachers, sarpanches, students and those involved in self-help groups.

During the interaction, Khattar was asked a question on women safety by Archana Chaudhary from Karnal's



Shamgarh village, who said he has been living in California for five years and driving a truck there.

He said the government has been laying a lot of emphasis on women's education and providing them equal opportunities to progress.

NGT panel recommends reworking 1994 water pact to revive Yamuna

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal-appointed Yamuna Monitoring Committee has recommended revisiting the 1994 water sharing agreement between Uttarakhand, Himachal Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Delhi to ensure environmental flow in the river throughout the year.

The two-member panel, comprising retired NGT expert member B S Sajwan and former Delhi Chief Secretary Shailaja Chandra, made the recommendation on the basis of a draft report on "E-flow for the Delhi stretch of the river".

The environmental flow requirement is the "acceptable flow regime required to maintain the river in reasonable condition or predetermined state".

"The Ministry of Jal Shakti, Upper Yamuna River Board and the riparian states of Uttarakhand, Himachal



Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh, Haryana and Delhi rework the 1994 water sharing agreement to permit release of the recommended E-flow at Hathnikund Barrage," the panel said.

The report prepared by the National Institute of Hydrology, Roorkee, recommended that 23 cumec water be released in Yamuna from the Hathnikund Barrage in Haryana's Yamuna Nagar district instead of 10 cumec in

January and February for sustaining downstream ecosystems.

The barrage regulates the flow of the river for irrigation in Haryana and Uttar Pradesh through Western and Eastern Yamuna Canals, and municipal water supply to Delhi.

The report said 26 cumec, 29 cumec, 34 cumec and 44 cumec water should be released in the river in March, April, May and June, respectively.

Yogi announces financial aid for treatment of Anupam Shyam

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has announced an assistance of Rs 20 lakh for treatment of actor Anupam Shyam, who is admitted to the Intensive Care Unit of a Mumbai hospital after being diagnosed with kidney infection.

The 62-year-old actor, known for his work on the TV show "Mann Ki Awaaz: Pratigya" and in films like "Slumdog Millionaire" and "Bandit Queen", was undergoing dialysis at Apex Kidney Care in the north Mumbai suburb of Malad. But he was shifted to Lifeline Hospital in Goregaon on July 27 after he collapsed during dialysis.

His last screen appearance was on the show "Krishna Chali London", which ended in June.

Union Minister observes fast as BJP seeks to step up pressure on Kerala govt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister V Muraleedharan on Sunday observed a day-long fast at his residence here demanding the resignation of Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan over the gold smuggling case.

The fast was part of intensifying the BJP's protests against the Kerala government over the recent gold smuggling involving diplomatic baggage.

The Minister of state for External Affairs and Parliamentary Affairs alleged the chief minister had allowed his office to be used by those who indulged in "anti-national activities and betrayed the nation."

"The Chief Minister has betrayed the country by giving away his office to those who indulged in anti-national activities. He must resign. The NIA took up the case after the Customs report that the accused persons have terror



links," Muraleedharan said. The fast was inaugurated by BJP national general secretary P Muralidhar Rao.

The Kerala government has faced criticism after reports emerged that the former IT secretary M Sivashankar had close links with a few accused in the case.

The National Investigation Agency and the Customs department are investigating the gold smuggling through diplomatic baggage which came to the Thiruvananthapuram International Airport

addressed to the UAE Consulate. The probe agencies have arrested four, including two former employees of the consulate.

On July 5, the customs seized around 30 kg of gold worth Rs 15 crore. So far, sleuths have arrested three, including two former employees of UAE consulate Swapna Suresh and Sarith and six more on Sunday.

One more person is yet to be arrested. The probe agencies have named at least 15 persons. Amid demands by the BJP and the Congress for Vijayan's resignation, the state government had earlier suspended senior IAS officer Sivashankar as his name cropped up along with Swapna Suresh and the NIA and the Customs have already questioned him for over 23 hours on multiple occasions.

However, they are yet to name Sivashankar officially in any of the matters related to the case.

DU meeting likely over 4 subjects' syllabus

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi University is likely to hold a key meeting this week to decide on the syllabus of four courses, as the online classes are slated to begin from August 10.

Teachers have said the syllabus of four courses-- Political Science, Sociology, History and English-- for the third and the fifth semesters was yet to be finalised. They had expressed apprehensions about how they would be able to start the classes.

A row had erupted over the syllabus of these subjects last year, with a right-wing teachers' outfit alleging that the curriculum was "pro-Left".

The syllabus of the four courses for the first semester was referred back by the executive council to the departments. It had submitted the revised syllabus to the oversight committee, which had passed the syllabus of the first semester.

"We are holding a meeting either on Monday or Tuesday," professor Maharaj Pandit,

chairman of the oversight committee on syllabi, said.

"The registrar is looking into the issue. We have circulated it among the deans so we should be able to reach a consensus," Pandit said.

Professors of English and Political Science departments said they had sent reminders to the oversight committee regarding the approval of the syllabi.

A professor from the English department, requesting anonymity, said they had sent the syllabus and have sent reminders to the committee regarding the approval.

He hoped that the committee would approve the syllabi before August 10.

"We are writing to them to approve the syllabi. More than a month ago we had sent the syllabi," Veena Kukreja, head of Political Science department, said.

"There was a letter from the university to send the syllabi for approval of the oversight committee. I think it should be done before August 10," she added.

UP Minister Kamal Rani Verma dies of COVID-19

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Uttar Pradesh Minister Kamal Rani Varun, the only woman cabinet minister in the state, died of COVID-19 at a hospital here on Sunday. She was 62.

The Technical Education minister, who tested positive for COVID-19 on July 18 and is the first minister in the state to succumb to the disease, breathed her last at the Sanjay Gandhi Postgraduate Institute of Medical Sciences (SGPIMS).

She had comorbidities, including diabetes, hypertension and hyperthyroidism, a senior doctor at the hospital said. Kamal Rani, who is survived by her daughter, was cremated at the Bhairo Ghat crematorium here in accordance with COVID-19 protocols. "A guard of honour was given as soon as her body reached Bhairo Ghat crematorium," District Magistrate Dr Brahmedeo Ram Tiwari said.

Chenab rail bridge in J&K to be ready by next year

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The world's highest railway bridge over river Chenab in Jammu and Kashmir will be ready by next year, and will connect the valley with the rest of India by train for the first time by 2022, officials said on Sunday.

The bridge, which has a central span of 467 metres, is being built at a height of 359 metres from the bed level. The height of Qutab Minar in Delhi is 72 metres and that of the Eiffel Tower in Paris is 324 metres.

"This is the tallest railway bridge in the world and the maximum designed wind speed for the bridge is 266 kmph," a senior government official said.

The construction work of the bridge was accelerated in the last one year under the direct supervision of the top echelons of the central government, the official said.

According to the plans, Kashmir will be connected with train by December 2022.



The bridge is being built at a height of 359 metres from the bed level. The height of Qutab Minar in Delhi is 72 metres and that of the Eiffel Tower in Paris is 324 metres

The Udhampur-Katra (25 Km) section, Banihal-Quazigund (18 Km) section and Quazigund-Baramulla (118Km) section have already been commissioned.

The last remaining section, the 111 km Katra-Banihal section is currently under execution. It is targeted for completion in December 2022. The 126 km out of 174 km of tunnels on this section has already been completed.

There has been a greater push in the last one year for implementation of various projects under the Rs 80,068 crore

Prime Minister's Development Package (PMDP) announced on November 7, 2015, the official said.

The package is meant for strengthening socio-economic infrastructure and balanced regional development of Jammu and Kashmir.

The programme touches practically every sector and provides for massive investments in basic infrastructure, another official said.

After the reorganisation of Jammu and Kashmir in August 2019, the Union Territory of Jammu and

Kashmir was left with 54 projects under the PMDP with an outlay of Rs 58,627 crore.

A total of nine projects with an outlay of Rs 21,441 crore were transferred to the UT of Ladakh.

"The work in the PMDP since June 2018 and particularly in the last one year has been the rapid and unprecedented," the official said.

The number of completed projects and substantially completed projects has correspondingly shot up from seven in June 2018 to 17 in July 2020.

Kerala gold case: NIA arrests six more people

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Investigation Agency (NIA) has arrested six more people and conducted searches at six places in connection with the Kerala gold smuggling case, an official said on Sunday.

The agency has so far arrested 10 people in the case of smuggling of gold through diplomatic baggage addressed to the UAE consulate in Kerala capital Thiruvananthapuram.

On July 30, two accused - Jalal A M of Ernakulam and Said Alavi E of Malappuram - were arrested for conspiring with the arrested accused Ramees K T, an NIA spokesperson said.

On July 31, two more accused, Mohammed Shafi P and Abdu P T, both residents of Malappuram, were arrested in the case, he said.

On August 1, the NIA arrested two more persons - Ernakulam-residents Muhammad Ali Ebrahim and Muhammad Ali.

AAP, L-G collide

Nullifying the Delhi govt order on appointing independent lawyers for riots cases seems to be aimed at influencing courts



If the Delhi Police, being an elite law-keeping force in the country, is so sure about the impartiality and professionalism of its conduct during the city riots in February, why does it want its own public prosecutors to fight related cases in court? Or why is the Lt Governor, Anil Bajjal, as the Centre's representative, locking horns yet again with the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP)-led Delhi Government on an issue of propriety? This time Bajjal has overturned the Delhi Cabinet's decision that had disbanded the panel of lawyers suggested by the Delhi Police from arguing in the Supreme Court and the High Court

in the interest of a fair probe. Not only this, he has invoked Article 239AA(4) of the Constitution and referred the dispute to the President. Under the said Article, the Delhi Government is bound to follow the L-G's orders. The AAP Government, which has time and again insisted that the Delhi Police is not under its purview and did not oppose it or the Home Ministry to which it reports despite public criticism during the riots, rightly exercised its prerogative to suggest a transparent analysis of events. It argued that since the courts had already raised serious questions on the investigations done by the Delhi Police in the riots case and during students' protests, the lawyers shouldn't be pro-Government. So against the Delhi Police's proposal to appoint six senior lawyers, including Solicitor General Tushar Mehta and ASG Aman Lekhi, as special counsel in the High Court and Supreme Court in 85 cases related to the riots and the anti-Citizenship (Amendment) Act protests, the Delhi Government wanted to field lawyer Rahul Mehra and his team. Does this mean that the Centre is trying to dictate the course of the trial, investigation and public perception? Or is it trying to justify the crackdown on the protesters and label them as seditious? For under no circumstance should the prosecution be linked to one of the parties that is under investigation. Of course, the BJP has launched a counter-charge, saying the AAP was trying to save its MLA Tahir Hussein, who has been booked for instigating the riots. But there have been far too much evidence and reports that show how instead of pursuing the rioters, the Delhi Police has been harassing victims, activists and acting in a partisan manner. Meanwhile, politicians who incited mobs were neither charged nor arrested. One cannot ignore the judiciary either, which has called out the non-action or the programmed action of the police. Earlier, none other than the Supreme Court had observed that the riots in Delhi could have been prevented if the police had the independence to act. The Bench used strong words: "Unfortunately things have happened, the problem is the total lack of independence of the police." And on Friday, the Delhi High Court asked Special Commissioner of Police Praveer Ranjan to explain the "necessity" of issuing a letter to chiefs of probe teams, which said that arrests of "some Hindu youth" from riot-hit areas had led to a "degree of resentment among the Hindu community." Justice Suresh Kumar Kait also asked him to place before the High Court "five such letters" issued by him or his predecessor as the CrPC does not mandate such instructions and reminded that senior officers can just guide their teams but not influence the facts.

The February riots were the worst that Delhi has seen since the targeted killing of Sikhs in 1984. It brought out a rabid kind of communal sentiments and embarrassingly happened when US President Donald Trump was on his first visit to India, thereby drawing international attention. But then COVID-19 happened and steamrolled all such concerns. Yet, given the sensitivity involved and the excesses of brutality, it is of utmost importance that the rule of law is upheld and the judiciary allowed to function independently. Already perceived to be acting under executive pressure, ever since the Narendra Modi Government came to power and emasculated institutional powers, the judiciary should not appear to be "guided" in the riots case. Anyway, the line between fact and fiction has blurred with too many ground truths held back from the public domain. And disproportionately, the Government narrative of stereotyping the riots as another volatile expression of communal angst has been gaining ground. The Delhi Police is capable of conducting a sound probe but appears to be under pressure to "manage" a certain narrative so that courts have very little to deliberate on. Certainly, nothing could be a bigger travesty of justice. And if the Delhi Police looks toothless, one would dread to imagine what happens in the State police forces of Uttar Pradesh and Haryana, where the ruling party sentiment will sit in judgment on the right to protest.

Hate crime, again

Cow vigilantes beat up a young man suspecting he was transporting beef. Only he wasn't



It is official. India has a major law and order problem on its hands as communal conflicts are rising and are being settled outside the justice system. Hate Crime Watch documented 254 criminal attacks targeting religious minorities between January 2009 and October 2018, which killed 91 people and injured 579 others. And to worsen matters, our police force is inefficient, ineffective and distressingly complicit in most crimes and atrocities that are committed on religious minorities, Scheduled Castes, tribes, backward classes and the underprivileged. The most recent example of this

chilling indifference and perversion of the law comes from Gurugram where a group of five cow vigilantes beat up a young man with a hammer in the presence of policemen on the suspicion of transporting beef. Later, it turned out that it was buffalo meat that the young man was transporting at the behest of his boss, who has been in the business for 50 years. For now, the victim, who was beaten within an inch of his life, is alive, but who is to say what will happen tomorrow? This incident is a throwback to the Dadri lynching case of 2015 when one Mohammad Akhlaq was killed by cow vigilantes in Uttar Pradesh for allegedly slaughtering a cow and consuming its meat. The Gurugram incident, that occurred on the eve of Eid al-Adha, which is colloquially known as "Bakri Eid", shows that it was pre-planned and pre-meditated as the cow vigilantes were out to create trouble or even spark off communal disturbance. Just like the Dadri case, the police was faster at sending the meat to a lab for testing than taking the half-dead victim to the hospital or catching any of the suspects. This also reminds one of the Alwar policemen, who delayed rushing another lynching case victim, Rakbar Khan, to the hospital and were reluctant to take action against the guilty cow vigilantes despite video evidence.

It is obvious that emboldened by political patronage and police inaction, cow vigilantes, basically criminals posing themselves as wingmen of Hindutva, are no longer afraid of the proverbial long arm of the law and don't hesitate to violate it with impunity. What else can explain the fact that assaulters continued to beat the young man even after dragging him to his village with the police watching in silence? In fact, so brazen and fearless were the men that they turned on the cops themselves when they finally deigned to intervene. This loss of respect for the law and the guarantee of protection for a "majoritarian cause" are the reasons why there has been a surge in kangaroo courts across the country over the last two months. The vigilantes dispense instant justice for what they call "theft" and "selling beef." This latest incident not only shows how cow vigilantism is on the rise again in India but that the politics of otherisation is set to be the new pandemic.

opinion

Seeds of conflict

Turkish nationalism could only emerge at the expense of Muslim identity. For the Greeks, by contrast, religion continued to be a decisive factor in shaping their national identity



PRIYADARSHI DUTTA

Edwin A Grosvenor (1845-1936), an American historian and author, who for some years lived and taught in Constantinople — as Istanbul was still called in the late 19th century — found that the Turks regarded Aya Sofia (Hagia Sophia) with "pride of conquest than affection." The exquisite cathedral was still functioning as a mosque when Grosvenor wrote the history of the Ottoman capital in two volumes, *Constantinople* (1895). Nevertheless, since the end of the Crimean War (1854-56), its ground floor and the gallery were thrown open to the visitors for payment of a fee. The Christian characteristics of the cathedral were so pronounced that "its structural form has always resisted the requirements of Moslem ritual."

The Turks, being conscious that "though the mosque is theirs, it is not of them", had to import two distinctive symbols connected with the pulpit. The first was a pair of silken flags, "significant of victory of Islam over its parent faiths, Judaism and Christianity." Second, every Friday, when its Sheikh (*imam*) climbed the steep pulpit steps to preach, he held in his right hand an unsheathed sword, indicative of the manner in which the Hagia Sophia was conquered. "So, would the Moslem forget the long past of the church?" asked Grosvenor. "He cannot, for the flags and sword are there" (*Constantinople*, Vol-II, Pg, 543)

It is speculative whether the flags and sword would be reintroduced in Hagia Sophia, which was recently reverted to a mosque. Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan, however, did not re-claim Hagia Sophia for Islam in a manner reminiscent of Sultan Mehmed II in 1453 AD. Erdogan achieved his end through a presidential decree, published in the official gazette on July 10. He has, thus, clothed himself in the role of "Gazette Ghazi."

Mustafa Kemal Pasha, former President of Turkey, was also known as a "Ghazi" (vanquisher of infidels) for 14 long years before he adopted his last name Ataturk in 1935. This title was conferred upon him by the new Turkish National Assembly in September 1921, at the height of the Greco-Turkish War (1919-1922) that he led as the Field Marshal. To many of his countrymen, especially those who never saw him, the title conjured a glamourised image.

Once, when Kemal Pasha "Ghazi", as biographer Patrick Kinross informs, was visiting a mountainous village in Turkey, he found that an artist had drawn his portrait from imagination on



a wall. It was that of a formidable warrior, with sweeping moustaches and a seven-foot long sword. The villagers, however, were shocked to discover a clean-shaven Ghazi in European style summer suit, a sports shirt open at the neck and a Panama hat. So great was their disbelief that they barely managed to clap as the Ghazi walked past his imaginary portrait. The conqueror was wearing the costume of the infidel (*Ataturk: The Rebirth of a Nation*, Pg, 414).

More than his western attire, Kemal's westernising policy was likely to scandalise his countrymen, who had been direct subjects of the Caliphate for 400 years. However, it was much less than what we might assume. Kemal, by sheer force of his personality, no less than the weight of his achievements, was able to ramrod secularisation in matters of State policy and national life of Turkey. He abolished the Caliphate, eliminated religious courts, abolished the fez cap, discouraged veil for women, suppressed religious brotherhood, closed sacred tombs as places of worship, declared the Gregorian calendar as a national calendar, replaced Sharia with a new civil code law, introduced Latin alphabets in place of Arabic for writing Turkish and made the adoption of the last name

mandatory (himself took up Ataturk) among others.

Even the name of the republic viz, Turkey (which citizens called *Türkiye*), clearly revealed its European origin. The term Turk, profoundly connected with Islam, had originally been given by the Europeans in the 11th century. Whether the modernisation of Turkey could have been achieved without brazen westernisation is a matter of opinion. However, through these measures, Ataturk built up a Turkish identity founded on language and territory but delinked from religion. "In the imperial society of Ottomans, the ethnic term Turk was little used and then chiefly in a derogatory sense" says Bernard Lewis, "to designate Turcoman nomads or later ignorant and uncouth Turkish speaking peasants of Anatolian villages. To apply it to an Ottoman gentleman of Constantinople would have been an insult" (*The Emergence of Modern Turkey*, Pg 1-2). Until the 19th century, the Turks had thought of themselves purely as Muslims. Turkish nationalism could only emerge at the expense of Muslim identity. Ataturk's republic, however, was one-party rule. Therefore, he could enforce his policies without any organised opposition. He

did not banish religion from the republic but controlled its institutions, clergy and instructions through State apparatus.

For the Greeks, by contrast, religion continued to be a decisive factor in shaping their national identity. The Lausanne Convention on the compulsory exchange of population between Greece and Turkey (January 30, 1923) defined a Greek as one belonging to "Greek Orthodox religion" and Turk as "Moslem" without any reference to a person's mother tongue. Greece's democratic Constitution (2001) begins counter-intuitively "in the name of Holy and Consubstantial and Indivisible Trinity" rather than Solon, Clisthenes, Themistocles and Pericles.

The reason for the indissoluble bond between Eastern Orthodox Christianity and Greek identity is two-fold. First, during the Byzantine era (mid-fourth to mid-15th century AD) orthodox religion cemented spiritual and national unity of the Greeks. The Hellenic past of the Greeks witnessed conflict of philosophy and religion as well as extreme political disunity. Second, under the Ottoman rule (mid-15th century to 19th century), the Church formed the nucleus of the Greek nation. Under the millat system, the Greek patriarch based in Constantinople also acted as the

secular head of the Roum millet (Roman nation) comprising all Christian subjects in the Ottoman empire. It, thus, functioned as a State within the Empire, whose influence continued to increase as Ottoman power declined *vis-à-vis* Europe.

The pioneer of the Greek War of Independence (1821-29) was Germanos, the Archbishop of Patras, who on April 4, 1821, proclaimed the insurrection against the Turks. Several high dignitaries of the Orthodox Church, including Patriarch of Constantinople Gregory IV himself, suffered martyrdom. Thus, Church and Greek independence somehow got interconnected from the beginning. This is a legacy that even 21st century Greece continues to respect. However, the Church and the State were separate even during the Byzantine Empire, with no scope for conflict between the Emperor and the Patriarch, unlike between the Pope and the monarchs in Latin Christendom. The same continues to be true in the republic of Greece, where the Church has no role in statecraft. Turkey, meanwhile, has dented its own image by reversion of Hagia Sophia into a mosque.

(The writer is an author and independent researcher. The views expressed herein are personal.)

SOUNDBITE

I welcome the construction of the Ram temple in Ayodhya. The construction of the temple is being carried out with the consent of every Indian. It's possible only in India.



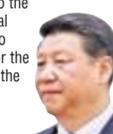
Congress leader —Kamal Nath

Even though a lot of horrible things are being said about me on the electronic media, I refrain from commenting on the advice of my lawyer as the matter is sub judice.



Actor —Rhea Chakraborty

I attach great importance to the development of China-Nepal relations and I am willing to work with Nepal to push for the continued advancement of the bilateral relationship.



Chinese President —Xi Jinping

He's (Dhoni) lost a bit of fitness and there are younger players coming through the system. He's past his best really and he would be the right judge for that.



Former India all-rounder —Roger Binny

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

NEP idealistic

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "New curriculum" (July 31). Coming after a gap of 34 years, the new educational policy unveiled by the Government is still idealistic. But it is timely considering that in a post-COVID-19 world, the educational pattern will undergo a sea change. The proposed shift in the existing (10+2) system to (5+3+3+4) will lead to the overall development of children. Vast changes will ensure universal access to school education, focus on early childhood care and education, restructure the school curriculum and pedagogy, reform the assessment system and invest in teacher training. All of this will significantly transform the educational system.

Yet NEP's success depends on the finer details. It is up to the Government to create an atmosphere, infrastructure and teaching resources for the smooth phasing of this transition stage. And it must ensure transparency and accountability. But most importantly, it must bring out an action plan for a pan-India implementation,

NEP: Challenge lies in implementation

This refers to the editorial, "New curriculum" (July 31). The first thing that strikes the eye is the proposed Higher Education Commission of India that dispenses with every other autonomous regulator in the sector. Notwithstanding its unconvincing proclivity for ideological ascendancy on education *per se*, the BJP, in the National Education Policy (NEP), 2020, has but added frills to the 1986 education policy without altering the main motif. The continuity is welcome.

In doing away with rigid separations between arts, commerce and sciences; curricular and extra-curricular activities; vocational and academic streams, the reshaped policy is akin to converting overnight medical clinics to multi-speciality hospitals. Students can now select subjects across streams. This would exponentially drive additional infrastructure, be it of funds, quantity, variety or quality of faculty. Taken together, the management of such involved matrix of matching each course to resources would need first-rate pro-



fessional administration. Our education spend is to be boosted. Our enduring incapacity to improve our healthcare spend has been mercilessly exposed by COVID-19. One hopes the Government has the will to fund two major social sectors simultaneously.

R Narayanan Navi Mumbai

Game-changer jets

Sir — The induction of five Rafale jets will boost the Indian Air Force (IAF)'s airpower and military prowess. The procurement of the jets is a very significant development for India,

which is in the midst of a bitter military standoff with China in eastern Ladakh and heightened tensions with Pakistan along the LoC.

Technical experts claim that the supersonic Rafale can be used for ground and sea attacks and can undertake electronic warfare, air defence, ground support and in-depth strikes. The biggest asset, however, is its

weapon carrying capability and air-to-air missile feature. Being claimed as the most potent aircraft in South Asia, the flight is equipped with scalp long-range missile and can hit a target more than 300 km away. It can also detect threats well in advance and neutralise them.

However, in the context of the border confrontation with China, so long as Beijing refuses

to restore status quo ante along the LAC, the Rafales should be used as a bargaining chip or as a contingency tactic. But in the changed security environment, India needs to fast-track the procurement of the subsequent batches of the jets. Unfortunately, the political system is always more concerned about accusations of scandals regarding arms purchases than what they mean for security.

N Sadhasiva Reddy Bengaluru

Where we lag behind

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "New curriculum" (July 31). The NEP offers a lot of hope but the Government must simultaneously work on improving the quality of teaching and research. It must also improve its funding structure. Due to the lack of opportunities, researchers prefer moving abroad to pursue PhD. We need to give them job offers and financial security.

Rati Agrawal Via email

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

A search for some answers

One wonders if people are suffering more from being infected by Corona or from almost driving themselves over the edge by the fear of the virus



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

One is living almost cocooned in an equilateral triangle. One arm of the triangle is the terrifying COVID-19 situation, the second arm of the triangle is an economy in a tailspin, with little understanding of how deep the dive is going to be or how it can be brought under control. The third arm of the triangle is made of the travails and trials of an ordinary life. The COVID age — for want of a better phrase — that the world is currently passing through, is known to have just as much of an impact on the psyche and lifestyles of people as the Coronavirus has on the human body. How long can one survive in a bottomless pit of anxiety is a question to which there can be no definitive answers. Even history is silent on this very vital issue of human endurance.

One wonders if people are actually suffering more from being infected by the virus or from almost driving themselves over the edge by the fear of being infected by COVID-19. The governance process itself seems to be in a trial and error mode with a hands-on situation. A few weeks ago, a locality of a major district of an important State was claimed to have no place in the listing of containment zones issued by the District Commissioner's Office. Yet, when the police department was contacted, they claimed it was still in the containment zone. Similarly, a Chief Minister asked the people to come out in large numbers and promote the economy. He said the weekly bazaars and hotels would open and much, much more lay ahead. The Lieutenant-Governor negated the instruction and the hapless citizens struggled to understand what the content of Unlocked 3.0 was.

There are millions of questions about the virus that remain unanswered. To what extent is surface transmission of the disease real? Do the envelopes received in the mail pose a risk? One former director of a major national medical institute says he keeps the mail and packages in the sun, for a while, before opening them. He didn't have an answer on what to do when it rains. A doctor from England advised the use of gloves while opening envelopes received through an agency, or at least sanitising the hands after opening the mail. However, the World Health Organisation (WHO), in an advisory says that it is safe to receive a package from any area where COVID-19 has been reported. So, who does one believe in a situation like this?

Then there is the case of newspapers. Epidemiologists say newspapers are safe while others have their doubts. It is difficult to identify which is an authoritative source of information in so many aspects of the so-called COVID-era. And then, what happens to currency notes? The packaging of the kitchen ingredients which any household would need? Or the milk packets brought from the dairy?

As noted above, one side of the triangle is that of one being currently caught up in the actual experience of acquiring the Coronavirus infection. The other side of the triangle is the kind of collateral experience when trying to live a normal life through a pandemic. Even if one forgets about the vaccines, the high and mighty of the medical profession are still not unanimous on the nature, extent and the reality of the actual infection.

If one is not clear there, one can only keep washing hands, sanitising surfaces, not go out of the house beyond a certain point and hope for the best. Therein comes the third arm of the triangle. The ways of earning, while staying at home, (the ordinary life) are limited by class and profession. The circulation of the service class is so large and unstructured that contact tracing can sometimes become like trying to put together a ten thousand-piece puzzle.

Add to it the travails of real life. The other realities don't disappear because the COVID-era is in focus. Where does one find a safe dentist? In the rainy season one will contract cold because of change in weather. How does one find out whether it is the first stage of the Coronavirus or an overheated imagination? One of the estimates says that over 16 lakh Indians have fallen ill in the last three months of the pandemic from the Coronavirus. Is there any figure available of how many people fell ill from diseases other than the Coronavirus, in the same period?

During the same period, the number of unemployed rose by 10 crore. Even milk registered a lower availability by 30 per cent. One of the news channels ran a random survey, where 11 per cent of those surveyed were found to be suffering from mild depression and another six per cent from depression. Reportedly, in a Parliamentary Committee proceeding, there has been reference to an addition of 12 crore to the number of people who have, further, sunk below the poverty line. The auto sector has registered loss of jobs to the tune of 30 per cent and the retail sector up to 60 per cent.

More statistics can be quoted. The relevant part is at least to ask whether the Coronavirus is the bigger malaise or the collateral damage done by it? For a solution in either case, a scientific method and its comprehensiveness will be the acid test. (The writer is a well-known management consultant)

LAKHS OF PEOPLE SACRIFICED FOR THE RAM TEMPLE CONSTRUCTION. **BHOOMI PUJAN** WILL BE HELD ON AUGUST 5. THE PRIME MINISTER WILL TAKE PART IN IT. —INTERNATIONAL JOINT GENERAL SECRETARY, VHP
SURENDRA KUMAR JAIN

POINTCOUNTERPOINT



ATTENDING **BHOOMI PUJAN** IN OFFICIAL CAPACITY WILL BE A VIOLATION OF THE PM'S CONSTITUTIONAL OATH AS SECULARISM IS PART OF THE CONSTITUTION. —AIMIM CHIEF
ASADUDDIN OWAISI

Own the hybrid war

The armed forces must set the tone for tech-based warfare and create a roadmap so that they can reach 'Military 4.5' quickly and guide the industry rather than be dictated by it



PJS PANU

The modern military is increasingly becoming technology-reliant and, therefore, industry-dependent. Hybrid warfare — the current flavour of war-fighting — is fast transforming into a technology-based, non-contact, ambiguous and transitory model. The rapidity of change comes from exponential growth in every facet of human life, largely fuelled by computers, generating competition between man and machine as well as combined man-machine teams. Bursts of concentrated technology innovation periods like these — so productive, so game-changing — move into an entirely new category: Industrial revolution.

The military has been constrained to follow and adapt to what technology and the industry provide through these cycles. Throughout revolutions historically, the industry has been just a level ahead of the military. Today we are deep into Industrial Revolution 4.0, marked by data and machine learning (ML). For the military, that means moving our industrial platforms and war machines to be run by Artificial Intelligence (AI) engines. The current security dynamics dictate that the military must do that, albeit with caution, to finally pull a half-level ahead of the industry.

The armed forces must set the tone for technology-based warfare and create the roadmap so that they can reach 'Military 4.5' as quickly as possible and guide the industry rather than be dictated by it. This is a call for the military fraternity and their counterparts in the industry. If a country is inferior in technology, by inference, it would be inferior in national security.

Facing an adversary with better technology, you are that much weaker, more porous and behind the curve. If you are vulnerable, you are also exploitable by nations that are high on research and development and innovation. That advantage extends well beyond military might to the negotiating table, to diplomatic efforts, to trade and financial markets. Overall, security is driven by accelerating technological prowess. For example, China feels comfortable, as it projects and flexes its muscles, leveraging technology and military power in tandem.

Moving the military to 4.5 will represent a major hurdling of significant obstacles i.e. our cultural aversion to swift change. Right now, we have yet to fully subsume the elements of Industrial Revolution 4.0. We're frankly closer to 3.5. But who better to determine what is needed and put forth to the industry than the armed forces, the tip of the spear. We need the industry to deliver today on the most promising technologies of tomorrow.

Neo-Nanotechnology: Light, small and fast, nanotechnology and miniaturised components offer the military some obvious benefits in terms of portability, protection and connection. But it needs to go further. We need the military version — neo-nanotech — that's even smaller, refined for reliable performance, and rugged and hardened enough to withstand the rigorous demands of field operations.

Human augmentation to match the machine: As systems become more networked and the machines get smarter, the sheer speed and connectivity will challenge the human beings they are meant to serve. They will need to keep up. Fast and capable, these systems will easily outstrip their operators unless some augmentation technology pairs with the person to prevent fatigue, circumvent relatively slower thinking and fuels a better decision-making cycle. This intelligent augmentation is crucial to controllable autonomous applications. For context, consider the modern-day flight deck, which relies on human input to set up a flight plan. But

FACING AN ADVERSARY WITH BETTER TECHNOLOGY, YOU ARE THAT MUCH WEAKER, MORE POROUS AND BEHIND THE CURVE. IF YOU ARE VULNERABLE, YOU ARE ALSO EXPLOITABLE BY NATIONS THAT ARE HIGH ON RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION. THAT ADVANTAGE EXTENDS WELL BEYOND MILITARY MIGHT TO THE NEGOTIATING TABLE, TO DIPLOMATIC EFFORTS, TO TRADE AND FINANCIAL MARKETS. OVERALL, SECURITY IS DRIVEN BY ACCELERATING TECHNOLOGICAL PROWESS



the execution of that flight is now undertaken by the onboard flight computer, a machine. Why? Humans are now the weakest link in the chain, vulnerable to lapses in attention, fatigue, even informational, psychological, biological and chemical warfare. Autonomous systems are much more impervious to such influences.

True network-centric operations: When target acquisition and robotics are brought together, we will have nearly achieved the Industrial Revolution for Military 4.5. Call it C5ISR-STAR2 (Command, Control, Communications, Computers, Cyber, Intelligence and Information — Surveillance, Target Acquisition, Reconnaissance and Robotics). It is a substantial name for a substantial capability, a networked battlefield where decentralised, robotic-initiated decision-making would be the norm. The Command, Control and Surveillance would largely be linked through space. These assets in space would need protection. How that is achieved is another race.

Imagine, for example, that humans pre-programme a satellite to identify targets in a certain area. AI can enable them to set the parameters by which the target would be eliminated autonomously — the system would designate the weapon for doing so and take action if the criteria fits. In another situation, humans might serve as the final confirmation before the autonomous system locks on to a target for action. Another step forward would be to designate pre-sanctioned targets, to be engaged on appearance.

The Internet of Military Things (IoMT): Network-centric operations won't happen without the fusion of smaller, smarter sensors, network connectivity, signal intelligence devices, aircraft, UAVs and so on. A secure, private network is the core layer to communicating this data. That will require scalable satellite connectivity for narrowband applications plus fibre and microwave links to

support broadband applications. These would ultimately connect millions of devices and sensors operating ubiquitously and support data transfer. AI would play a critical role, enabling the IoMT to transition from mostly telemetry and sensing to complete autonomous action guided by rules defined by individual countries.

Computer networks are efficient, desirable tools as they can move massive machine data simultaneously to multiple subscribers. This can also turn disastrous if disruption is caused through technology limitations, an incident driven by adversarial action or a simple human error. The military has this challenge — it needs its machines and networks secured and protected against these possibilities. High assurances and strong protection tools will need to be delivered by the industry. Call it military-grade secrecy; security protocols would need to be well-defined.

Secure Chips, Quantum Technology and IP concealment (ie, no IP Address) would essentially form this baseline. None of the above will be possible if the industry cannot pin down the fundamental, base-layer PME (Power, Materials, and Electronics) capabilities. Military superiority will come from innovations that can deliver lighter, more sustainable power, perhaps delivered through nuclear, renewables or rechargeable through motion.

It will come from lighter, stronger, self-healing materials designed to maximize survivability for the war-fighter and bear up under temperatures that span the extremes of heat and cold.

It will come from next generation electronics that are tiny, light and programmable. It will come from developing the technological mechanisms that make it possible for humans and machines to partner in powerful new ways. PME would expand the possibilities for a single fighting machine to perform operations in all three spheres — air,

ground and water — with almost equal efficiency and sustainability. The AI engines would enable them to be networked as swarms and self-assign targets between machines. Networks will make it possible to build H-M2M-H (Human-Machine to Machine Human) interfaces to bring battles to be planned, regulated and controlled from manned war rooms, yet fought by machines in the field. The groundwork has clearly been laid. We have data, advanced computing, new materials and engineering methods that are translating into the fastest evolution of physical systems in human history.

We can process data in seconds and run experiment after experiment based on the evolving results. Even small companies can better innovate at scale because it's cheaper and faster to do so. There are simply no excuses for failure.

If the industry can deliver on this considerable potential, the military can deliver and fulfil its prime directive: Ensuring national security that underpins all else. We can do it while preserving human life and outsourcing the truly dangerous jobs to robotics and autonomous systems. Military 4.5 is not a holistic war-fighting solution but a concept to guide the industry to push the envelope beyond 4.0.

For all actors, elements of war-fighting (ethical, unethical and ambiguous) are coming together in a new technology-enabled paradigm — hybrid war — that will challenge us to be more thoughtful. The Grey Zone is expanding, stitching non-State and State actors as legitimate participants of the hybrid war. The conventional battles are subsiding the sub-conventional. Technology is the common denominator but it needs ethical military guidance along the way.

(The writer is a military veteran and former Deputy Chief of Integrated Defence Staff of India. He raised the Defence Space Agency, Defence Cyber Agency and Special Operations Division.)

Socialist ideas and an indifferent working class

Complex political and cultural ideas that stem from upper and middle-class discourses often mean little to the working class looking for upward mobility



NADEEM PARACHA

An acquaintance associated with an advertising firm once related a rather telling anecdote. Two years ago, his firm prepared a campaign for a food company owned by a gentleman from Faisalabad. The owner of the company was a self-made man who, decades ago, had begun his career as a worker in a factory after arriving as a teenager from a village.

He had passed his matriculate exams but because of his family's deteriorating economic situation, he could not attend college. However, this did

not stop him from diligently working his way up. From a factory worker, he became a foreman and then, years later, with some money borrowed from a friend, he first set up a grocery store and then a small food company. The business was a success and by 2006, he was a rich man.

The campaign that the advertising firm presented to him was based on phrases and antics popularised by archetypal Punjabi films. After the firm was done presenting, the owner began giving his feedback. He told the agency's executives that he would never want to use the campaign.

He then explained: "For years, Punjabis like me have been struggling to eliminate this image of us as people who look and do things like Sultan Rahi in Punjabi films." The businessman was disappointed that a group of educated executives from Karachi could not visualise his company as a modern entity as they would do for a multinational.

This was a case of how superficially sometimes members of urban middle-classes perceive people from humbler backgrounds. The advertising executives had been told by "insiders" in the company about the owner's rural origins. So, in a bid to appeal to this aspect of his personality, they assumed that Punjabi films were accurate depictions of the province's rural life and, therefore, such imagery would suffice to get the owner's approval.

In the early 1990s, Imran Aslam, playwright and former editor of an English daily where I worked as a reporter, told me that when he was a young man and "experimenting" with communism, there used to be a trend among communists from well-to-do middle-class families to "prove their socialist credentials" by taking up "working class vocations".

Imran said that he once joined a group of labourers working at a construction site but the workers simply

refused to let him work. This was not because his presence threatened them. In fact, according to Imran, it actually amused them no end. They just could not figure out why a person with a good education, spacious home and the potential to bag a lucrative job would leave all of it to lift bricks with a group of men who would rather have a good education, spacious homes and the potential to bag lucrative jobs.

According to Imran, his young, idealistic self had sketched a romanticised picture of how working class people think. He believed they would be pleased to see a member of a more prosperous class join them in doing what they did for a living. Imran said that, eventually, some of the labourers told him that one day they would like their children to have the kind of life he had before he arrived at the construction site. Imran went back home.

In 2015, at that year's Karachi Literature Festival that I attended as a speaker, I bumped into a relative of

the late communist leader Hasan Nasir. Nasir, who hailed from an aristocratic family in India, was associated with the Communist Party of Pakistan. He was arrested by the Ayub Khan dictatorship in 1960, tortured and killed. His relative is married to one of my mother's cousins. He (the relative) told me that Nasir was arrested from a shanty town in Karachi. When I asked him if he was hiding there, the relative smiled and said, "No, he was living there." He said that Nasir was constantly at odds with his privileged background and made sure he challenged it by residing in areas where working-class people lived, in their huts and tiny apartments.

As I showed my appreciation, the relative smiled again and said, "But they (the poor) always treated him differently. He was never accepted as one of their own. All they were interested in was whether he could get them better jobs or a better education for their children. All else they understood as

just talk by a young man." This is interesting because, as a student leader, during my involvement in a campaign for a political party for the 1988 elections, I remember that when we used to visit low-income areas, the people there would nod, smile and applaud the fiery speeches that the party's younger cadres delivered. But they were far more interested to meet the candidate and talk to him about whether he was capable of providing them jobs or schools, or how the candidate planned to resolve the area's infrastructural issues.

Finally, one day, I asked the candidate how he was able to engage with the voters in such areas where our revolutionary speeches about solidarity with the poor were failing to attract similar traction. He replied: "They dream about becoming what you are. They don't want to see another them. They want to see themselves becoming you, or at least believe that their children can. That's what I

promise them. Things and tools to better their lot."

In his 1937 book, *The Road to Wigan Pier*, George Orwell writes about his experiences living as a socialist among coal miners and factory workers. According to Orwell, the poor were simply interested in improving their lives with better pay and conditions. They had no interest in the theoretical aspects of any ideology. Orwell believed that the reason the socialists failed to fully engage with the workers was because the socialists bring with them people who preach complex political and cultural ideas that have everything to do with upper and middle-class discourses and nothing to do with the realities and aspirations of the working-classes. In some cases, this may also mean using ideological rationales to keep the poor from even thinking about any upward mobility because that would be "beneficial to capitalism." (Courtesy: Dawn)

CAPSULE



Bengal takes Rs 1,022-cr loan from Centre

KOLKATA: West Bengal has taken a Rs 1,022-crore transition loan from the Centre to help its power distribution company tide over liquidity stress amid the Covid-19 pandemic. The loan is part of the central government's Rs 90,000-crore 'Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan' package to assist stressed distribution companies. The WBSEDCL has been facing financial woes with minuscule collections in April and May resulting in an over Rs 2,000-crore shortfall, officials said. With a consumer base of about two crore, WBSEDCL caters to the entire state except Kolkata and a part of its adjoining districts. "We have taken a Rs 1,022-crore loan to clear dues of various Central and state entities," Minister Sobhondeb Chattopadhyay said.



FPIs net buyers for 2nd month in Jul; invest Rs 3,301 cr

NEW DELHI: Foreign portfolio investors (FPI) remained net buyers for the second consecutive month in July by pumping in Rs 3,301 crore in Indian markets amid hopes of a coronavirus vaccine. According to the depositories data, a net sum of Rs 7,563 crore was invested in equities while Rs 4,262 crore were withdrawn by FPIs between July 1-31. The net investment during the month stood at Rs 3,301 crore. In the previous month, FPIs put in a net Rs 24,053 crore in Indian markets. Some factors that led to investment in July include surge in markets which provided FPIs good profit booking opportunity, improvement in sentiment on the back of rising hopes of a coronavirus vaccine, said Himanshu Srivastava, associate director - manager research, Morningstar India.



Lupin recalls 35,928 bottles of antibiotic drug

NEW DELHI: Drug major Lupin is recalling 35,928 bottles of a generic antibiotic drug in the US market following unfavourable result in retention samples, the US health regulator said in a report. As per the latest Enforcement Report of the US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA), the Mumbai-based company is recalling Cefdinir for oral suspension USP, 250 mg/5mL, packaged in 60 ml bottles. The lot has been manufactured at Lupin's Mandideep (Madhya Pradesh) manufacturing facility, and then supplied to company's Baltimore-based arm, Lupin Pharmaceuticals, Inc, which has initiated the country wide recall on July 2.

Discoms' outstanding dues rise 47% to Rs 1.33L cr in June

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Power producers' total outstanding dues owed by distribution firms rose over 47 per cent year-on-year to Rs 1.33 lakh crore in June 2020, reflecting stress in the sector.

Distribution companies (discoms) owed a total of Rs 90,655 crore to power generation firms in June 2019, according to portal PRAAPTI (Payment Ratification And Analysis in Power procurement for bringing Transparency in Invoicing of generators).

The portal was launched in May 2018 to bring in transparency in power purchase transactions between the generators and discoms.

In June 2020, the total overdue amount, which was not cleared even after 60 days of grace period offered by generators, stood at Rs 1,20,041 crore, as against Rs 72,362 crore in the year-ago period.

According to the latest data on the portal, total outstanding dues in June has increased over the previous month. In



May 2020, the total dues of discoms stood at Rs 1,26,963 crore. The overdue amount in June 2020 also increased from Rs 1,13,869 crore in May 2020.

Power producers give 60 days to discoms for paying bills for the supply of electricity. After that, outstanding dues become overdue and generators charge penal interest on that in most cases.

In order to give relief to power generation companies (gencos), the Centre enforced a payment security mechanism from August 1, 2019. Under this mechanism, dis-

coms are required to open letters of credit for getting power supply.

The central government had given some breachers to discoms for paying dues to power generating companies (gencos) in view of COVID-19-induced lockdown. The government had also waived the penal charges for late payment of dues in the directive.

In May, the government announced Rs 90,000 crore liquidity infusion for discoms under which these utilities would get loan at economical rates from Power Finance

Corporation and REC Ltd. This was an initiative of the government to help gencos to remain afloat. The government reportedly is in the process to increase liquidity infusion package to Rs 1.25 lakh crore after it received requests from some states in this regard.

Discoms in Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Jammu & Kashmir, Telangana, Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu account for the major portion of dues to power gencos, the data showed.

Overdues of independent power producers amount to 34.78 per cent of the total overdue of Rs 1,20,041 crore of discoms in June. The proportion of central PSU gencos in the overdue was 36.58 per cent.

Among the central public sector power generators, NTPC alone has an overdue amount of Rs 19,298.77 crore on discoms, followed by NLC India at Rs 6,280.76 crore, Damodar Valley Corporation at Rs 5,570.99 crore, NHPC at Rs 3,518.97 crore and THDC India at Rs 2,551.32 crore.

RBI's MPC meets next week amid urgency to revive growth

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank's rate-setting Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) will meet next week to decide on the policy stance amid the urgency to revive the coronavirus-hit economy and increased demand for one-time loan restructuring by industry chambers.

Experts are, however, divided over the possibility of another rate cut by the RBI in its forthcoming policy arguing that one-time loan restructuring was more essential at this juncture to tide over the COVID-19 situation.



The MPC, headed by RBI Governor, is scheduled to meet for three days beginning August 4 and announce its decision on August 6.

The central bank has been taking steps proactively to limit the damage to the economy caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns. It is to be noted here that a fast-changing macroeconomic environment and the deteriorating outlook for growth necessitated "off-cycle meetings" of the MPC - first in March and then again

RBI policy, cos' earnings to decide market course

NEW DELHI: The domestic equity market in this coming week will be driven by a host of key developments like RBI monetary policy, macro-economic data release and corporate earnings, analysts said.

At the start of the week, the market will also take cues from July auto sales numbers which signal a recovery in the sector hit hard by COVID-19.

With most parts of the country in unlock phase, the automobile industry

has performed better in July over the previous month in terms of sales and is now marching towards normalcy in terms of production as well.

On the macro data front, market participants will be keenly awaiting PMI manufacturing and services sector numbers that are scheduled to be released in the first half of the week.

On the earnings side, Bharti Airtel, Tata Steel, Lupin, Titan, Voltas Apollo Tyres, Canara Bank, Adani Power and M&M, among others, will announce their quarterly numbers during the week.

In May 2020, SBI's research report 'Ecowrap' said with the 115 basis points (bps) reduction in repo beginning February, banks have already transmitted 72 bps to the customers on fresh loans in the interregnum which is perhaps a milestone in terms of the fastest policy rate transmission in India. Large banks have transmitted as much as 85 basis points. "...we believe an

August rate cut is unlikely," it said. It believes the MPC could now well debate what further unconventional policy measures could be resorted to in the current circumstances to ensure financial stability is continued to be addressed.

However, several experts, including from banks, have opined the RBI may go for yet another reduction in repo rate of at least 25 bps on August 6.

MSME gives nod for scheme for 'agarbatti' production

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

MSME Minister Nitin Gadkari has approved an employment generation programme proposed by Khadi and Village Industries Commission to make India self-reliant in agarbatti production.

The programme named 'Khadi Agarbatti Atmanirbhar Mission' aims at creating employment for unemployed and migrant workers in different parts of the country while increasing domestic agarbatti production substantially, the MSME Ministry said.

"The proposal was submitted to the Ministry of MSME for approval last month. The pilot project will be launched soon and on full-fledged implementation of the project, thousands of jobs will be created in the agarbatti industry," the ministry said. The programme aims at handholding artisans and supporting the local agarbatti industry. The current consumption of agarbatti in the country is approximately 1,490 MT per day but local production is just 760 MT.

There is a huge gap between the demand and the supply and hence, immense scope for job creation, said the ministry. Under the scheme, KVIC will



provide automatic agarbatti making machines and powder mixing machines to the artisans through the successful private agarbatti manufacturers who will sign the agreement as business partners.

KVIC has decided to procure only locally-made machines by Indian manufacturers. The Centre earlier took two major decisions by placing the agarbatti item from "free trade to 'restricted' trade in the import policy and enhancing the import duty from 10 per cent to 25 per cent on 'round bamboo sticks' used for manufacturing of agarbatti for the benefit of the domestic industry.

KVIC Chairman Vinai Kumar Saxena said the two

decisions of the central government created a huge employment opportunity in the agarbatti industry. "In order to encash the huge employment generation opportunity, the KVIC designed a programme namely 'Khadi Agarbatti Atmanirbhar Mission' and submitted to the Ministry of MSME for approval," Saxena said.

KVIC will provide 25 per cent subsidy on the cost of the machines and recover the remaining 75 per cent of the cost from the artisans in easy instalments every month.

Under the scheme, the business partner will provide raw material to artisans for making agarbatti and pay them wages on job work basis.

Akshaya Patra raises \$950,000 in US

PNS ■ HOUSTON

An Indian nonprofit organisation Akshaya Patra has raised USD 950,000 through a virtual event hosted by its Texas chapter in the US to feed mid-day meals to school children in India.

The event, Virtual Gala - Technology for Change, was attended by over 1,000 businesses, non-profits, government officials and philanthropic leaders from around the world, supporting the organisation's dual mission of addressing childhood hunger and promoting education for underserved children in India. The Texas gala, hosted by the cities of Austin, Dallas and Houston, was held on July 25. The evening celebrated volunteers and chapter teams from Austin, Dallas, and Houston who continue to work towards alleviating classroom hunger.

The event included conversation with Narayana Murthy, co-founder of software giant Infosys, by Siva Sivaram, president of Western Digital, who was recently appointed Chairman of Akshaya Patra Foundation USA along with Vice Chairman Srivatsan Rajan.

6 of 10 most valued companies lose Rs 1.38 lakh crore

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Six of the 10 most valued companies witnessed a combined erosion of Rs 1,38,839.83 crore in their market valuation last week with Reliance Industries and HDFC Bank emerging as major losers.

During the last week, Sensex fell 522.01 points or 1.36 per cent.

The market valuation of Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) plunged by Rs 50,239.78 crore to Rs 13,10,323.21 crore.

HDFC Bank's valuation tanked Rs 46,374.63 crore to Rs 5,67,877.74 crore.

The market capitalisation of ICICI Bank eroded by Rs 22,631.74 crore to Rs 2,24,659.85 crore and that of HDFC dipped Rs 10,078.06 crore to Rs 3,09,254.09 crore.

ITC's valuation declined by Rs 6,815.12 crore to Rs 2,38,660.74 crore and that of Bharti Airtel dipped Rs 2,700.5



crore to Rs 3,02,701.60 crore.

In contrast, the market valuation of Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) jumped Rs 47,054.91 crore to Rs 8,56,463.05 crore.

Infosys added Rs 18,591.83 crore to its valuation that stood at Rs 4,11,554.51 crore while Kotak Mahindra Bank's m-cap rose by Rs 3,481.72 crore to Rs 2,70,600.52 crore.

In the ranking, RIL retained the number one position followed by TCS, HDFC Bank, HUL, Infosys, HDFC, Bharti Airtel, Kotak Mahindra Bank, ITC and ICICI Bank in that order.

Sebi to set up virtual museum of securities market

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Regulator Sebi is planning to set up a virtual museum of securities market to highlight achievements and milestones in the Indian capital market.

In a notice, Sebi has invited Expression of Interest (EOI) from agencies to develop the virtual museum.

The museum is intended to be a visual online organised collection of history of evolution, achievements and milestones in the Indian securities market over the decades in terms of market infrastructure, regulation and enforcement, among others, Sebi said.

The achievements will be told through photos, videos, articles, media clippings, interactive display like quiz, paintings, drawings, diagrams, graphs, newspaper articles, transcripts of interviews and numerical databases, among others.

Trai poses more questions to Airtel, Voda Idea on priority plans; seeks explanation

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Not satisfied with responses submitted by Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea on priority plans, regulator Trai has shot off additional "technical" queries to both the telcos and asked them to explain their stand on August 4, a source said.

The Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) wants the two companies to substantiate their claims that the contentious priority offerings, which are under the regulator's lens, have neither deteriorated experience of other network users nor violated any norms.



Another source said that Bharti Airtel has been asked over two dozen questions, including if limits for data speeds have been set for platinum and non-platinum users, and about the levels of throughput for platinum users.

Trai sent out fresh set of questions to both Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea on July 31, and the operators have been asked to respond to the questions on August 4.

Emails sent to Bharti Airtel and Vodafone Idea did not

elicit a response. Trai has said it is desirable that points raised in the questionnaire be covered in a presentation scheduled on the issue on the same day. The regulator has asked the companies to back their claims via data, the source said.

A Trai official said that the previous responses received from companies were "vague" and gave no real assurance to address regulator's concerns over whether network preference to specific customers resulted in deterioration of services for other non-premium subscribers.

Indian steel market showing signs of recovery: Aditya Mittal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian steel market has started showing signs of recovery after being hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent lockdowns, ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India Chairman Aditya Mittal has said.

Aditya, son of steel baron LN Mittal, said that operations at ArcelorMittal Nippon Steel India's (formerly Essar Steel) Hazira plant in Gujarat are running at full capacity.

He said that the COVID-19 pandemic severely disrupted domestic demand, in



particular during the month of April; however, there is a recovery visible in the market.

"We are seeing the domestic market recover and that's

a reason why our operations are running at full capacity (at Hazira in Gujarat)," he told PTI on a query pertaining to the domestic demand.

Aditya Mittal, who is also president and CFO of parent company ArcelorMittal, was appointed chairman of AM/NS India, while Dilip Oommen was appointed as the CEO.

ArcelorMittal posted a net loss of USD 559 million for the second quarter ended June 30, 2020 amid COVID-19 disruptions and termed the quarter as the most difficult period in its history.

GOQii plans expansion to Japan, SE Asia by yr-end

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Healthcare platform GOQii is planning to expand its operations to international markets like the UK, Japan and Southeast Asian countries, talking its smart wearables and ecosystem of offerings to these countries, by the end of the year, a top company official said.



The company, which has launched two new devices featuring temperature monitor and integrated pulse oximeter in the past few

weeks, said it has seen a massive jump in sales amid the COVID-19 pandemic.

"...there are plans to go outside of India, and we are talking and looking at Southeast Asia, UK and Japan.

Our key goal was to focus on India... International markets, we are hoping to (enter by) end of the year because we are waiting for the lockdowns and travel restrictions to get over," GOQii CEO Vishal Gondal told PTI.

He added that COVID-19 is bringing in a long-term change in people.

PE investment in warehousing segment falls 92%

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Private equity (PE) investment in warehousing and industrial space segment plunged 92 per cent to USD 102 million (around Rs 750 crore) during the first six months of this year as investors turned cautious because of COVID-19 pandemic, according to Colliers International.

Investment and leasing activity are likely to remain muted over the next year due to slower decision-making by investors because of the pandemic, but the long-term outlook for the segment remains promising, Colliers International said in a report.

PE Investment in India's industrial and warehousing



segment fell to USD 102 million in January-June from USD 1,250 million (about Rs 9,300 crore) in the year-ago period, the consultant's data showed.

"Since 2017, the sector has attracted investment inflows of

Rs 27,800 crore (USD 3.7 billion). Between 2017 and H1 2020, the sector garnered a considerable 17 per cent share of total private equity real estate investment," the report said.

The consultant noted that the industrial and warehousing sector has attracted significant investor interest since 2017 owing to the reforms introduced by the government.

These reforms include implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) regime, accordance of infrastructure status to the sector, creation of logistics park policy and development of multimodal infrastructure, among others.

"The warehousing sector that was characterized by fragmented sheds and godowns in the past is now becoming more organized, buoyed by the government policies," Colliers said.

To capitalize on the growth potential of the reorganized segment, the sector has attract-

ed significant investor interest. "This segment's share of total private equity real estate investment in India has been increasing year-on-year since 2017, signifying the increasing attractiveness," the report said.

During 2019 through H1 2020, the industrial and warehousing segment garnered the third highest share of PE investments after office and retail.

The investment capital came from foreign investors such as the Abu Dhabi Investment Authority, Canada Pension Plan Investment Board (CPPIB), Ivanhoe Cambridge, Ascendas and Blackstone among others.

"Investment activity may be muted for the next one year

due to slower decision-making by investors because of the ongoing pandemic.

"However, we expect the inflow from both foreign and domestic funds to grow over the next 2-3 years as existing participants expand their portfolio and new players enter the market," the report said.

The consultant expects the warehousing segment to bounce back quicker than other segments of real estate, driven by robust demand from e-commerce and other consumer-led occupiers. US-based Colliers International is a leading global real estate services and investment management company. It has operations in 68 countries, with 14,000 workforce.

Celebrating

With everybody, including celebrities promising and advocating staying at home as much as possible during the pandemic, they're definitely stumped over not being able to meet their siblings to celebrate Raksha Bandhan. But they thank the internet for keeping them going, finds *The Pioneer's* RACHEL DAMMALA, while talking to them about their plans.

RAKSHA BANDHAN

from miles away

It's Raksha Bandhan, a festival that celebrates the bond of siblinghood. Sisters tie a rakhi around the wrists of their brothers by symbolically sharing with them the responsibility of their care and protection

and receiving a gift in return. The festival, which is the first of the several festivals to come in the second half of the year, usually has brothers and sisters, moving even across the globe, to visit their siblings to celebrate the day. This year, however, since peo-

ple have been asked to travel only when necessary, moving cities or even across cities is a big no-no. But everybody's sure putting in their best efforts to make their siblings smile. Here's how our dear celebrities are making their siblings' day.



PRIYADARSHI

The actor's Rakshabandhan this year is quiet but definitely happening. "My sister, Nagaja and I, although live in the same city, aren't going to meet for safety reasons. She'd probably send me a Rakhi. I'll connect with, wish and celebrate her via a phone or video call," shares the *Pelli Chooopulu* star about his plans.



MANNARA CHOPRA

This actress, who made us all fall for her in the film *Seetha*, is staying at home, safe with her family in Delhi. "My sister's with us too. We'd be having a sweet celebration at home. We don't have a brother, we're enough for each other. Our parents brought us up teaching us that we don't need to look for a guy to get us out of trouble. We love, respect, and protect each other, and this year's celebrations will be inside the safety of our home," the *Zid* actress says of her bond with her sister.

NANDINI REDDY

The director of *Ala Modalaindi* and *Oh! Baby* fame says her younger brother has been busy now that restaurants in the city have opened up. But that won't stop her from celebrating Raksha Bandhan. "We'll probably follow the tradition via a video call and talk our hearts out from our homes, staying safe indoors and protecting each other that way," says Nandini Reddy.

SEJAL KUMAR

The YouTube personality and video blogger with millions of subscribers and fans will miss her brothers this year, who're away from the country. "We will have the traditional Rakhi ceremony over a video call with both my brothers who're currently living abroad. I'm going to miss them this year, but we hope to meet soon," Sejal Kumar tells us.



THIRUVEER RUSK RAGHU

The actor who wowed fans and critics alike with his performances in *George Reddy*, *Palasa* and *Sin*, is grateful he's staying with his sister at his home around this time, unlike most people who miss meeting their siblings in person this year. "We're under the same roof currently, so we'll be celebrating it like we do every year — the traditional tying of the Rakhi and gifting," shares Thiruveer.

The actor, author, and director, who's a household name now, has strictly been following rules laid by the government, to stay indoors, but will still connect with his sister who's studying in Ohio, via a video call. Raghuram shares, "She has something planned for the day. I'm looking forward to it, I miss her, but will stay home and definitely not go anywhere."

'I always wanted to be an IAS officer'



More and more women are taking up sports as a career choice, thanks to several women winning and making the country proud at several championships. One such sportswoman that many girls look up to is Indian cricketer *Mithali Raj*. The star talks about her journey, playing for passion, qualifying for the World Cup and more, finds **K RAMYA SREE**

Women have emerged to be the frontrunners of India's success at the Olympics, Commonwealth Games and World Championships across all sports. Andhra Pradesh and Telangana have been at the center of all the action contributing to the maximum number of women World Champions. To celebrate these champions and inspire a generation of sports lovers, *Star Sports 1 Telugu* now presents a brand-new show *Girl Power-Sarileru Manakevaru* that will feature the tales of such women champions through a special series dedicated to our sportswomen.

Mithali Raj who has paved a path where no cricketer has gone before spoke about the challenges in women's cricket on the launch day. In a career that spanned 20 years, Mithali Raj is the highest ODI run-scorer in the world with 6,808 runs. She also holds records for the highest number of centuries, maximum ODIs played, and the player to play for the longest time for the Indian team. She is the only player to have played in more than 200 ODIs in the world. She is also the first player from India (both male and female) to score 2,000 runs in T20Is.

Right from the beginning of her career, Mithali chalked out her goals and pursued them. Speaking about her career choices and goals, the cricketer said, "Honestly cricket happened to me. It didn't come by choice. I

didn't choose to get into cricket. You can see, my teammates, those who have different stories, played with their brothers and some of them were inspired by their brothers. They played in the streets. But for me it was nothing like that. My dad took me to the academy and I was straight away into a full-fledged academy for girls. I was too young to make a choice. If at that time somebody could ask a 10-year-old Mithali, 'what you want to become, I would have said that I wanted to become an IAS officer'. Not a sports person, not a dancer. I always felt I had it in me to be an IAS officer."

Mithali Raj has faced many challenges in her career. The Indian women's team has gained immense popularity in the last few years. Playing for India since 1999, she has seen the shift in perception and support for Women's cricket. She was a part of the team when it transitioned from WCI to BCCI.

Speaking about the challenges involved in women's cricket, she said, "Women's cricket came under BCCI at the time of 2006-07. I feel if it had happened five years before that, it would have been better. Many talented players at that time, because of lack of money and financial instability through this game, had to shift to different fields. After turning 23-24, parents ask 'what is next?' So, as a woman cricketer what can you tell parents? 'I don't earn money, I am playing for passion?' Nobody's going to like it. If BCCI happened to us earlier, they would have added

an extended career and we would have more pool of players in women's cricket."

Mithali is the only Indian player (both male and female) to have captained in more than one World Cup final, doing it in 2005 and 2017. The next world cup is scheduled in 2021. So how is she preparing for the World Cup? "In 2013, when India hosted the world cup, we didn't even qualify for the super six stage. I was hurt and quite disappointed. I thought 'let me give it a try in the 2017 World Cup'. Then I really worked hard for the World Cup. As a player, as a captain, I did a lot of homework. I thought, when we were in the finals, if we win the finals, then I will retire. After playing for so many years, probably I had everything, except that one World Cup. So, we were the runners up in 2017 and now I think, in 2021, I'm going to give it another try, hopefully with everybody's wishes and God's blessings, should be able to crack it."

The show marks also the debut of Rashmi Gautam who rose to fame with comedy show

Jabardasth. She will anchor her first programme in sports through the show. Rashmi will be seen in conversation with female sporting legends from Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.



Most Read NEWS

Man loses penis, has new one built on his arm



A man from the UK, who lost his penis to a severe blood infection, has become the world's first to have a new one built on his arm. Malcolm McDonald, a mechanic by profession, suffered a long-term perineum infection in 2014 that turned into sepsis to turn his fingers, toes, and genitals black. The infection becomes so severe after a point that he lost his manhood, according to The Sun. For a while, he found it very difficult to cope with the tragedy. He turned into a recluse and began drinking heavily. Malcolm said he felt a 'shadow of a man' for two years after losing his penis. 'I knew deep down it was gone and I was going to lose it, then one day it just dropped off on to the floor. Because I had been through the devastation of knowing I was going to lose it, I just picked it up and put it in the bin,' he said. 'My life really fell apart because I had no self-confidence. I drank too much. I didn't see family and friends - I just didn't want to have to face up to it,' he added. But then, Malcolm found a phallus expert who once created a 'bionic penis' for a person who was born without one. Professor David Ralph of London's University College Hospital told Malcolm about the so-called 'penis master'. Ralph told Malcolm that an arm-graft procedure needed to be done.

Man wakes up finding cobra inside his jeans!



In a spine chilling incident, a cobra made its way to a man's pants while he was sleeping. After coming to know about the situation he kept standing for seven hours so that the snake could be retrieved. Fortunately enough, the poisonous reptile did not bite the man. According to a report published in Times Now, the incident took place in Sikandarpur village in Uttar Pradesh's Mirzapur. A man named Lovekesh Kumar was sleeping with other labourers after dinner. The group of labourers had been at the site for installing some electricity poles and wires. On coming to know that the venomous reptile had slithered in his pants, Lovekesh stood at a spot for seven hours, while the locals managed to find a snake catcher. In a few hours, locals, police, snake catcher all had come to the place of the incident. The video of the rescue operation has been shared by a user on Twitter. In the clip, one can see the snake catcher cutting the man's pants so that the snake can perhaps make its way out. Captioning the over two minutes long video, Koushik Dutta said, 'cobra snake enters young man jeans pant while sleeping man stands for 7 hours holding a pillar at Mirzapur up.'

Man washes cash to remove Covid traces, suffers loss

The COVID-19 scare still continues to loom over the people. Every single day, items are sanitized or kept in quarantine in order to remove the infection on their surfaces. Many also try to wash it off with the help of water. While some can still survive after being drenched, for some it is the end of the road. The latter took place for a person living in Seoul in South Korea. According to The Associated Press, a person whose gender is unspecified had put around 50,000 won (around Rs 3137) into a washing machine. This was done to make sure the notes were 'disinfected' from the coronavirus infection. The amount of money that was given to him or she was basically condolence money given by relatives and friends during a family funeral. However, the results were not desirable. Most of the notes looked extremely damaged after one spin therefore they were unusable. Then, the person reached out to the Bank of Korea to help her out. Due to the 'considerable' damage caused to the wad of cash, it became impossible for the bank to exchange it for the newer notes. Bank official Seo June Woun told the news agency that the 50,000-won bill was exchanged at the half value of 507. However, they do not know the exact amount that was 'laundered' in the washing machine. The damage is considered to be severe.

This restaurant sells Corona-themed dishes



In the wake of the novel Coronavirus pandemic, a restaurant in Jodhpur has introduced two corona-themed dishes as part of its menu. Vedic, a vegetarian restaurant that serves traditional Rajasthani and North Indian cuisine, is also selling Covid Curry and Mask Naan. Yes, you read that right. In a post on Twitter, Vedic tweeted pictures of the two preparations. Naans were made in the shape of face masks. Covid Curry is basically a gravy dish with a rich sauce and koftas made in the shape of the deadly virus. Vedic, in their post, said that the aim of introducing the two particular dishes is to spread awareness about the novel coronavirus. 'Overcome the fear of corona with world's first ever invented in corona pandemic. Covid Curry served with Mask Naan. We are super proud of being world's first inventor of this unique concept. The motto behind this dish is to bring awareness about #corona,' Vedic said in the caption of their post. Pictures of the dishes went viral on Twitter as netizens shared funny reactions. In April, a shop in Kolkata made headlines for selling coronavirus-shaped sweets, labeled as Corona Sandesh. India has recorded over 17 lakh novel coronavirus cases so far. The death toll has surged past 37,000 in the country.

14 DELIVERS 14

Auba's brace help Arsenal sink Chelsea in FA Cup final

AP ■ LONDON

The only time Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang looked uncertain was when it came to collecting the FA Cup. Two goals from the forward had turned around the final for Arsenal, sealing a 2-1 victory over Chelsea on Saturday in the first cup final to be staged without fans. The coronavirus restrictions also meant there was no Prince William at Wembley Stadium to hand over the silverware in the

royal box. So Aubameyang had to pick up the cup himself on the field as captain. Taking the base as well, no wonder Aubameyang dropped it. 'I saw him walking with the bottom bit attached,' Arsenal defender Rob Holding said, 'and I was like, 'You need to take that off!'' The cup was soon raised aloft, with gold streamer showering the Arsenal squad in a mostly-empty 90,000-capacity stadium after the 139th final of the world's oldest football competition.

'He needs more experience with trophies, we can get him more used to that,' Arsenal manager Mikel Arteta said. 'He knows what I think about him. I want to build the squad around him. I think he wants to stay and it is just about getting the deal done.' That is no certainty, with Aubameyang yet to commit to staying beyond the end of his contract next year. 'I am really not thinking about this,' he said. Winning the record-extending 14th FA Cup does at least

give Arsenal a spot in the Europa League, after missing out on qualifying through the Premier League after an eighth-place finish. 'The journey has been long,' Aubameyang said. 'But today we enjoy it.' A competition that began on August 9, 2019, featuring teams from ninth and 10th tiers, ended later than it had ever done before - two months after the final was scheduled. Never before had the FA Cup final been staged in August. And never before without fans.



We are going ahead with women's IPL on time: Ganguly

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

BCCI president Sourav Ganguly on Sunday said the Women's IPL or the Challenger series, as it is better known, is "very much on", ending speculation about the parent body not having a plan for Harmanpreet Kaur and her team. The men's IPL will be held between September 19 and November 8 or 10 (final date yet to be locked in) in the UAE due to the surge in COVID-19 cases in India. The women's IPL will also be fit in to the schedule, according to the BCCI chief. 'I can confirm to you that the women's IPL is very much on and we do have a plan in place for the national team also,' Ganguly told PTI ahead of the IPL Governing Council meeting later on Sunday. The BCCI president, who is awaiting a Supreme Court verdict on waiver of the cooling off period to continue in the position, did not divulge details but another senior official privy to the development said that women's Challenger will be held during the last phase of IPL like last year. 'The women's Challenger series is likely to be held between November 1-10 and there could be a camp before that,' the source said. The former India captain also said that the centrally contracted women players will have a camp which has been delayed due to the prevailing situation in the country. 'We couldn't have exposed any of our cricketers - be it male or female to health risk. It would have been dangerous,' Ganguly said. 'The NCA also remained shut because of COVID-19. But we have a plan in place and we will have a camp for women, I can tell you that,' he added.

Eng beats Ireland by 4 wickets

AP ■ SOUTHAMPTON

Opener Jonny Bairstow smashed 82 off 41 balls as England beat Ireland by four wickets in the second one-day international to take an unassailable 2-0 series lead. England overcame a middle-order wobble to finish on 216-6 in 32.3 overs in reply to Ireland's 212-9 at the Rose Bowl on Saturday. After Adil Rashid had taken 3-34 to reach 150 ODI wickets, Bairstow equaled the record for the fastest 50 in this format by an Englishman off 21 balls. Bairstow, Eoin Morgan and Moeen Ali were dismissed as England lurched from 131-3 to 137-6, before an unbroken 79-run stand between Sam Billings and David Willey helped the hosts to their target with more than 17 overs to spare. The pair had been the stand-out performers in Thursday's opener and came to the rescue here, Billings finishing on 46 not out while Willey followed up his 2-48 with an unbeaten 47 in the evening sunshine. Earlier, Ireland overcame another poor start after winning the toss and being reduced to 91-6 before Curtis Campher led the recovery. Campher, in only his



Trying to fit the best XI in white ball format: Morgan

IAN ■ SOUTHAMPTON

England captain Eoin Morgan hailed the depth in his squad after they beat Ireland by four wickets at the Ageas Bowl in Southampton to claim a 2-0 lead in the three-match series. England are playing with a side that has none of the players from the Test team that played the West Indies

in a three-Test series in July. 'We have a lot of guys who can change the match with the bat at the top of the order, they have the potential. These guys take the game away from the opposition,' said Morgan in the post-match presentation ceremony. 'I was going to bat at 4 and then we changed it. I am more than happy to give guys opportu-

second ODI, scored an 87-ball 68 with eight fours before being dismissed by seamer Saqib Mahmood (2-45). Campher shared two key partnerships late in the innings - a seventh-wicket 60-run stand with Simi Singh (25) and 56 runs for the eighth wicket with Andy McBrine (24). Players again took a knee to support Black Lives Matter before the game. The three-match series, which is being played with no fans present, marks the start of the ICC Cricket World Cup Super League. The third ODI is on Tuesday.

IPL can't be selection criteria for MS: Nehra

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Mahendra Singh Dhoni at this year's IPL can be a talking point but the tournament cannot be a selection trial for the enigmatic former India captain, reckons former pacer Ashish Nehra. Dhoni has retired from Test cricket and has not played for India in the limited overs format since last year's World Cup, where India ended semifinals. His comeback and retirement has been a matter of intense speculation. His much-awaited comeback is expected to be with Chennai Super Kings at the upcoming IPL, set to be held in the UAE from September 19. 'For me, MS Dhoni's game never came down,' Nehra said on Star Sports' show 'Cricket Connected'. 'He knows how to run the team, he knows how to push youngsters forward and all these things I don't need to repeat again and again but I don't think this IPL makes any difference in MS Dhoni's stature or his aura as a player,' added the 41-year-old Nehra, who played 17 Tests and 120 ODIs. 'I don't think a tournament like the IPL should be MS



Dhoni's selection criteria, it's probably just a talking point.' 'As far as MS Dhoni's international career I don't think this IPL has anything to do with it. If you're a selector, you're a captain, you're a coach and MS Dhoni...if he is ready to play, he will be my number one name on the list,' he said. The former left-arm pacer said players will have to behave responsibly during the IPL to avoid protocol breaches like that by England's Jofra Archer during the recently concluded England-West Indies series.

Rahane won't mind family's absence in UAE

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Ajinkya Rahane would want his wife and daughter to be around during the IPL in the UAE but mindful of the risk it poses amid the COVID-19 pandemic, he wouldn't have an issue if the BCCI bars players' families from the event. The IPL is all set to be played from September 19 to November 8 in the UAE, a move forced by the rising COVID-19 cases in India. Rahane, who has changed base to Delhi Capitals from Rajasthan Royals, said health should be top priority. 'As an individual, you take COVID-19 situation aside, you would want your family to travel with you, but because of this situation, safety is important, safety of your wife, family and daughter, obviously safety of your teammates is really important,' Rahane told India Today's show 'Inspiration'. 'Right now, I feel first health and then cricket is really important. We had a good 4-5 months with our family (during the lockdown)'. 'As I said, safety of our family, safety of our players and safety of each and every individual is important. The decision is completely up to the franchises and the BCCI. 'But as I said, there is still corona around, you got to think about each and every individual, think about your



family especially about my wife and daughter. Safety is really important,' he said. Rahane moved to Delhi Capitals in the lead up to the upcoming IPL edition and the 32-year-old right-hander said he is looking forward to working with the 'exciting bunch of players' and head coach Ricky Ponting. 'I am really excited to play for Delhi Capitals. I got an opportunity. Last year when I was playing for Hampshire, Delhi Capitals asked me if I was interested in playing for them. 'I took my time and I thought it's an opportunity for me to learn something new. To take my game forward, to take my T20 game forward,' he said.

Kyrgios won't play US Open

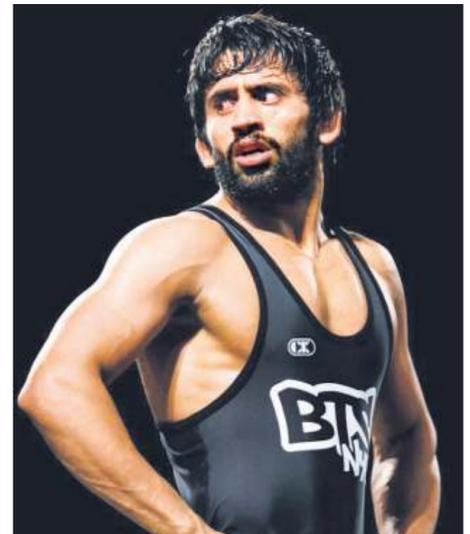
AP ■ SYDNEY

Nick Kyrgios has withdrawn from the US Open because of concerns over the coronavirus and in honor of the 'hundreds and thousands of Americans' who have died from COVID-19. Kyrgios said in an Instagram post on Sunday that he had no problem with the United States Tennis Association proceeding with its plans to hold the tournament from August 31 to September 13. But he cited health and safety concerns amid the coronavirus pandemic as he joined fellow Australian and world No. 1 Ash Barty in opting out of the Flushing Meadows Grand Slam tournament. 'I will not be playing this year at the US Open. It hurts me at my core not to be out there competing in one of the sport's greatest arenas, Arthur Ashe Stadium,' Kyrgios said in the video. 'But I'm sitting out for the people, for my Aussies, for the hundreds and thousands of Americans that have lost their lives, for all of you. It's my decision.' 'We can rebuild our sport and the economy,' Kyrgios adds, 'but we can never recover lives lost.' Kyrgios also criticised players who have continued to play exhibition tournaments in the past several months, chastising them for 'dancing on tables, money grabbing your way around Europe, trying to make a quick buck hosting an exhibition.' There have been a number of exhibition events held, the most high-profile one organised by No. 1-ranked Novak Djokovic. It was held in several countries and photographs of spectators at the events showed poor social distancing.

Bajrang tips wrestlers to win 3-4 medals at Olympics

IAN ■ MUMBAI

Asian Games Gold medalist Bajrang Punia is confident of Indian wrestlers performing well and winning medals at the Tokyo Olympics next year. The star grappler believes India's performances at the World Championship shows they are in good form. 'I think we will win three to four medals from wrestling in the Tokyo Olympics. The World Championship is a tougher tournament than the Olympics but we performed well there. So I think Indian wrestlers are in top form which makes them strong contenders for a medal haul in Tokyo,' Punia said during the 17th episode of budding international padder Mudit Dani's online live chat show 'In The Spotlight' on Saturday night. The Olympic Games, which were initially scheduled to take place in 2020, have been postponed by a year due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Along with Punia (Bronze, 65kg), Deepak Punia (Silver, 86kg), Vinesh Phogat (Bronze, 53kg) and Ravi Kumar Dahiya (Bronze, 57kg) also won medals at the 2019 World Wrestling Championship in



Kazakhstan and secured an Olympic berth in the process. During a freewheeling chat with Dani, 26-year-old Punia said he would have lived a normal village life if he had not pursued wrestling. He also rated his first World Wrestling Championship medal as the most memorable accolade of his career so far. The Haryana boy had an impressive outing at the 2013 World Championship where he won bronze at the age of 19. The online live Instagram chat series 'In The Spotlight', that 21-year-old Dani has

begun with the sole purpose of delivering inspiration to other young athletes and fans, has seen champion athletes like Abhinav Bindra, Leander Paes, PV Sindhu, Sathyan Gnanasekaran and Union Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju participate, among others. Talking about the competition in his current weight category 65kg, Punia said: 'I feel 65kg is the toughest category in the world. There is no wrestler who has successively won world championship titles or Olympic gold medals. There is always a new champion in every edition. There are strong wrestlers in this category who can beat anyone on their day.' The grappler further praised government and sports federations for organising events such as Khelo India. It has provided a much-needed platform for young athletes to showcase their talent. 'The way we have been organising events at the grass-root level such as Khelo India, a lot of youngsters are getting much-needed support from it which was not there earlier. And if they keep getting this kind of support, not only in wrestling, India will win medals in every sport at the Olympics,' he concluded.

'IT IS NOT THE FILM INDUSTRY BUT THE FILM THAT MATTERS TO ME'

Aditi Rao Hydari has appeared in several South Indian films over the past couple of years but her release count in Bollywood has been rather low. The actress insists says it is not the language or film industry, but the film that matters most to her.

"More than often I am told that now I am focusing on my career in South and have left Mumbai. But I have not gone anywhere. Scripts and opportunities took me everywhere. Why should I say no to a film if the story is exciting? I think we are a generation of actors for whom the length of the role does not matter but substance does," said Aditi.

In Telugu, the actress was last in *Antariksham 9000 KMPH*. Around 2018, where Aditi had two Bollywood releases in sup-

porting roles, has done five films down South, across Tamil, Telugu and Malayalam languages.

Her upcoming Hindi film is *The Girl On A Train*, starring Parineeti Chopra, while she has two Tamil and one Telugu film lined up for release.

"I look for something in which I am artistically challenged while trying out something new. For instance, look at my role in the film *Padmaavat*. When Sanjay (Leela Bhansali) sir called me, he told me that among all the four characters in the film, my role would be the smallest. "But he promise you, the story will be incomplete without your character," he added. Eventually, when I started receiving good words for the character of Mehrunisa, I was happy. For me, the impact of my character matters," she claimed.



Agent Sai Srinivasa Athreya to be a trilogy

In some good news for film buffs and fans, the makers of *Agent Sai Srinivasa Athreya* are set to make it a trilogy, by taking up more such mysterious cases. News about the Telugu Sherlock Holmes movie was announced on the birthday of film producer Rahul Yadav Nakka.

The film that was both a box office hit and appreciated by critics, will soon begin shooting the second part of the trilogy soon. The wait is

until director Swaroop RSJ finishes shooting his current film.

Meanwhile, the film is going to be remade in Hindi, Tamil and Malayalam soon. Kannada remake rights too, are soon to be bought. Apart from this, Japanese dubbed version of the film will grace the theaters on 11th of September. Notably no Telugu film in recent times was remade in so many languages which is a big achievement.

Dil Raju wins 'dils' online



Hours after Bollywood actor Sonu Sood announced on Twitter that three orphaned kids whose parents died in Yadadri district of Telangana would be his responsibility, Tollywood producer Dil Raju offered to adopt the trio.

Sonu Sood saw the plight of the children via a tweet and immediately said he'd take care of them. Following this, state Panchayat Raj Minister Errabelli Dayakar Rao, who came to know about the children's plight, got their details from ruling TRS MLA Gongidi Sunita Mahender Reddy, in whose constituency

their village Atmakur is located.

Meanwhile, it is said that film producer Dil Raju had called up the minister and offered to take care of these children. Dil Raju said the children would be adopted and taken care of through the 'Ma Palle' Charitable Trust established by his family.



T-town inspires fans to take up #GreenIndiaChallenge

The most recent installment of the #GreenIndiaChallenge was started by Rajya Sabha MP Joginapalli Santosh Kumar and there has been no stopping celebrities and commoners since then. Every day has several celebrities accepting the challenge and planting saplings and nominating their friends, colleagues, and fans to do the same.

Music director Jeevan Babu accepted the challenge on Sunday and planted saplings at his residence. He said that everyone must plant trees so as to be able to have enough greenery and oxygen left for future generations. He further nominated Rahul Sipliganj, composer Arun Chiliveru among others to take up the challenge and nominate others too.

Comedian Ali too accepted the challenge by the Rajya Sabha MP and nominated others to do the same.

Mallesham fame actress Ananya Nagalla too planted saplings in a park at Jubilee Hills as part of the challenge nominated by Dinesh Teja, and asked her colleagues, fans, and family to take up the initiative and spread it further.



Uppena's Nee Kallu Neeli Samudram... MARKS ANOTHER MILESTONE

When everybody thought 50 million views was a great feat, *Nee Kallu Neeli Samudram* song has now attained an incredible accomplishment. The melodious romantic song from *Uppena* has breached 100 million views. *Nee Kallu* song has been continuing to mesmerize music lovers for last few months and it helped a lot in hiking prospects on the film. It's Javed Ali's vocals that makes the Qawwali song worth listening again and again. Vaishnav Tej and Krithi Shetty made good impression on debut with their charismatic expressions. Lyrics for the song are penned by Shreemani and Raqueeb Alam.

'KAITHI' TO BE SCREENED AT IIFT IN TORONTO

Kollywood actor Karthi's *Kaithi* (*Khaidi* in Telugu) directed by Lokesh Kanagaraj and produced by SR Prakash Babu, SR Prabhu, Thiruppur Vivek under DreamWarrior Pictures,

has scored a blockbuster attaining a cult status among the audiences.

Fans of the Angry Hero were overjoyed upon learning that the film 'Kaithi' has been selected for screening at the International Indian Film Festival which will be held in Toronto from

August 9th to August 15th, 2020. *Kaithi* will be screened on August 12th from 6:00 PM onwards. Elated makers of the film expressed their happiness about *Kaithi* being selected for official screening at IIFTT and thanked the entire team of *Kaithi*.