



# sunday pioneer



## PM unveils National Health Mission

● Roadmap ready to ensure Covid vaccine reaches everyone, says Modi in I-Day speech

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday unveiled an ambitious National Digital Health Mission under which every Indian will get a health ID that will ease access to medical services and also announced that the country has made plans for mass-producing COVID-19 vaccine once scientists give a green signal.

In his Independence Day address from the ramparts of

the Red Fort, the prime minister said the health ID will store every individual's medical records and the Mission will herald a new revolution in the health sector.

"From today, a major campaign is being launched in which technology will play a big role. The National Digital Health Mission is being launched today. This will bring a new revolution in India's health sector and it will help reduce problems in getting

treatment with the help of technology," he said.

"Every Indian will be given a health ID, which will work as each Indian's health account," Modi said, adding that it would ease problems faced by citizens in getting healthcare access.

The health ID will contain information about medical data, prescriptions and diagnostic reports and summaries of previous discharge from hospitals for ailments.

The Mission is expected to

bring efficiency and transparency in healthcare services in the country.

Modi said the country has prepared a roadmap to ensure that a COVID-19 vaccine reaches everyone in the shortest possible time.

He said three vaccine candidates are in different stages of trials in the country.

The prime minister said whenever there is talk of COVID-19, the question that comes to everyone's mind is -

when will a vaccine be ready. "I want to tell people, the talent of our scientists is like that of 'rishi munis' and they are working very hard in laboratories. Three vaccines are in various stages of testing. When scientists will give us the green signal, it will be produced on a mass scale and all preparations have been made for it," Modi said while addressing the nation on its 74th Independence Day.

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## Covid, rains dampen I-Day celebrations across state

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

For the first time in 73 years, Independence Day was celebrated on a low note across the state due to restrictions imposed following the Covid-19 pandemic.

Very few guests are invited for the State Government's flag hoisting programme held at the IGMC Stadium, Vijayawada. This is a marked departure from previous years, when thousand of schoolchildren used to participate in the celebrations and the political leaders used to conduct numerous flag hoisting programmes at various places across the state.

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## West Godavari village unveils statue of Col Santosh Babu

PNS ■ UNGUTURU

A bust of Col Santosh Babu was unveiled in Kaikaram village of West Godavari district to coincide with Independence Day on Saturday.

Sculptor Chandrasekhar of CS Silpakala Nilayam at Duvva in Tanuku mandal has sculpted the bust as a mark of tribute to the supreme sacrifice made by Col Santosh Babu.

The Colonel laid down his life defending the country's borders in Galwan Valley.

The bust was installed with the financial support from District Arya Vysya Association president Kona Srinivasa Rao. Srinivasa Rao along with his brother Hanuman Babu unveiled the statue.

The village already has statues of Mahatma Gandhi, Alluri Sitaramaraju, Potti Srimululu and Sir Arthur Cotton.

### TODAY

#### ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:  
Shravana & Krishna Paksha  
Panchangam

Tithi : Dwadashi: 01:50 pm

Nakshatram: Ardra: 07:03 am

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

Rahukalam: 05:03 pm - 06:37 pm

Yamagandam: 12:20 pm - 01:54 pm

Varjyam: 06:53 pm - 08:28 pm

Gulika: 03:28 pm - 05:03 pm

Good Time: (to start any important work)

Amritakalam: 04:22 am - 05:56 am

Ahijit Muhurtham: 11:55 am - 12:45 pm

#### VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Cloudy  
Temp: 27/24  
Humidity: 93%  
Sunrise: 05:59 am  
Sunset: 06:41 pm  
Current Weather Conditions  
Updated August 15, 2020 5:00 PM

## CM chants decentralisation mantra

● Jagan hopes to start work on Executive Capital soon, optimistic on SCS

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Asserting that his government firmly believed that decentralisation of administration was the right policy to heal the wounds inflicted upon Andhra Pradesh by bifurcation, Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy on Saturday said that soon, the foundation stone would be laid for the Executive Capital at Visakhapatnam, and for the Judicial Capital at Kurnool. "To ensure that we do not suffer more such wounds and that the three regions of the state flourish equally, we enacted the three capitals legislation. We will soon lay the foundation stone for the Executive Capital at Visakhapatnam and Judicial Capital in Kurnool," Jagan said.

The Chief Minister also tried to balance pragmatism and hope by saying that he does not foresee the Centre according Special Category Status (SCS) to Andhra Pradesh in the near future as it "is now not dependent on other parties", even as he hoped that the Central



Government would have a change of heart if not today, in the future, and accord SCS to the state in accordance with the promise made in Parliament. Addressing the ceremonial Independence Day function after unfurling the Tricolour at the IGMC Stadium in Vijayawada, the Chief Minister said his government was determined to achieve SCS for the state.

"The government at the Centre is now not dependent on other parties (for support), so we don't see it granting SCS

now. But, if not today, in the future with the blessings of God we hope the situation will change and the central government will have a change of heart and accord SCS for the future of the state," the Chief Minister said. He vowed to nevertheless continue to raise the demand strongly for SCS.

The Chief Minister said his 14-month rule so far gave a true meaning to the terms 'justice, liberty, equality, fraternity' as enshrined in the Preamble to the Constitution of India.

In line with the Directive Principles of State Policy and Article 38 (2) enshrined in the Constitution, the state government launched a gamut of welfare schemes with SCs, STs, BCs, minorities and economically-backward among the upper castes as the main base, to remove the economic and social disparities.

"By introducing the Village Secretariat system, which is a new chapter in decentralisation of administration, we have ensured Grama Swaraj as listed in the Directive Principles," the Chief Minister added.

He noted that the government doled out Rs 59,000 crore in the last 14 months to various sections under different welfare schemes.

As part of the measures to eliminate corruption, new initiatives like reverse tendering and judicial preview were launched while a review of the previous government's decisions resulted in an overall saving of Rs 4,000 crore to the exchequer, he added.

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## MS Dhoni calls it

# QUITS

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Two-time World Cup-winning former India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni retired from international cricket on Saturday, ending over one year of suspense and also an era during which his often unorthodox leadership and finishing skills became the stuff of legends.

"Thanks a lot for ur love and support throughout. From 1929hrs consider me as retired," Dhoni posted on his instagram handle.

The announcement came a day after he joined his Chennai Super kings teammates in Chennai ahead of this year's IPL in the UAE.

The 39-year-old's last outing in India colours was during the lost World Cup semi-final against New Zealand.

## Raina too retires from Intl cricket

**CHENNAI:** Suresh Raina, one of India's prolific white ball players in the last decade and a half announced his retirement from international cricket, following the footsteps of his favourite captain and mentor Mahendra Singh Dhoni. Raina's message came minutes after Dhoni told his million of fans "consider me retired" on his Instagram page.

One of the best runners between the wickets was run out following a hard-earned 50 in that tense game, shattering Indian hopes and leaving him in a state of disbelief.

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## Naidu: Rebuff attacks on institutions, Constitution

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Lamenting the increasing attacks on the democratic institutions and the Constitution, Leader of the Opposition N Chandrababu Naidu said that this amounts to a betrayal of not just an individual but the society as a whole.

Addressing the gathering after unfurling the National Flag at his residence, the former chief minister extended his Independence Day greetings to the people of the country and both the Telugu States.

The TDP chief said that our forefathers formulated the fundamental rights, directive principles of state policy, Constitution and well-founded democratic systems in India. Naidu said it would be every

Indian's responsibility to protect and preserve our democratic legacy if anybody tries to undermine this with their attacks on the Constitutional institutions and systems.

He said that if the democratic spirit was not upheld, we would become responsible for wasting the supreme sacrifices made by our forefathers.

He paid rich tributes to the Freedom Fighters and recalled the great sacrifices made by our forefathers to break the chains of slavery.

Naidu said that this was the day when the Indians achieved victory in their struggle for rights. He said, "Our freedom was the result of sacrifices made by many patriots. The true tribute to their sacrifices would be to preserve the democratic systems."



## Apex council meet likely on August 25

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Union Minister for Jal Sakti Gajendra Singh Shekhawat has directed officials of his department to make arrangements for the Apex Council meeting on August 25, if the date was agreeable to the Chief Ministers of Andhra Pradesh and Telangana to find a solution to water sharing disputes between the Telugu states.

While the Jal Sakti Minister is the ex-officio chairman of the Apex Council, which owed its existence to the AP Reorganisation Act, the Chief Ministers of both the Telugu states are its members.

After holding the maiden meeting in 2016, the Apex Council has not met again.

The forthcoming meeting was earlier scheduled to be held on August 5, but Telangana Chief Minister K Chandrababhan Rao found the date inconvenient and asked the authorities to convene the meeting after August 20.



However, his AP counterpart YS Jaganmohan Reddy has said that he was ready to attend whenever the meeting is convened.

During the past two months, the Telugu states are complaining against each other, especially after Jagan conceived the Rayalaseema Lift Irrigation Scheme diverting water from Srisailem project.

The Krishna and Godavari River Management Boards have asked the Telugu states to

## CWC urged to take call on unused Krishna waters

Krishna River Management Board secretary Harikesh Meena on Friday wrote to the Central Water Commission to decide the share of river water not utilised during the last water year.

In 2019-20, the government of AP used 647.435 tmc out of its share of 651.995 tmc ft, while the government of Telangana used only 278.33 tmc ft out of its share of 333.527 tmc ft. Also, another 50 tmc ft of water remained unused.

The government of Telangana urged the KRMB

submit detailed project reports of new projects conceived by both the states.

As per the directions of Jal

to allow it to use the unused share for irrigation and drinking water purposes in the early 2020. However, the government of AP objected to the request.

Both the states, quoting the Krishna Water Disputes Tribunal-I decisions, had written to the KRMB. A tripartite meeting was proposed to be held, but the engineers-in-chief of both the states had made clear their stand on the issue.

Meena in the letter urged the CWC to treat it as an inter-state river water sharing problem.

Sakti Ministry, the boards have asked Telugu states not to go ahead on these projects.

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## Record 57,381 Covid patients discharged in a day, says Centre

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The number of people in India who have recuperated from COVID-19 went past 18 lakh on Saturday with a record 57,381 patients discharged in 24 hours pushing the recovery rate to 71.61 per cent, according to the health ministry data.

India's 'test, track and treat' strategy has achieved another peak with 8,68,679 COVID-19 tests done in 24 hours taking the cumulative tests done till Friday to more than 2.85 crore, the ministry said. Twelve states and union territories have reported their recovery rates above the national average. In 30 states and UTs the COVID-19 recovery rate is more than 50 per cent, it highlighted.

## Godavari in spate, several islet villages inundated

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The swollen Godavari river has inundated several 'lanka' (island) villages in East and West Godavari districts of Andhra Pradesh on Saturday and severed road communication links even as the government deployed the State Disaster Response Force to handle any emergency.

Authorities raised the first warning signal as 11.21 lakh cusecs of floodwater reached the Sir Arthur Cotton Barrage at Dowaleswaram near Rajahmundry.

The entire floodwater was being discharged into the Bay of Bengal as the Cotton barrage was filled to the brim (2.93 tmc ft) by Saturday afternoon.

With copious rains in its



catchment, Godavari has been receiving heavy inflows since

Friday. The second warning is also expected by Sunday morn-

ing as the flood level may cross 13 lakh cusecs.

"We have alerted the authorities concerned to take all precautionary measures along the river course in view of the flood flow. Two teams of SDRF are positioned at Rajahmundry to attend to any eventuality while NDRF teams have also been kept on standby," AP Disaster Management Commissioner K Kanna Babu said.

He said that vulnerable people in the affected villages were being moved to safety in view of the rising flood.

He asked people not to travel in the river on boats nor go for bathing and swimming.

Devipatnam mandal in East Godavari district remained cut off due to the flood in Godavari.

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## Positivity rate crosses 10% mark, 8,732 cases

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh's Covid-19 infection positivity rate crossed the 10 per cent mark on Saturday as the states aggregate number of cases reached 2,81,817, with the addition of 8,732 infections in the last 24 hours.

The latest bulletin said after a cumulative 28,12,197 sample tests, the infection positivity rate touched 10.02 per cent, the highest so far.

The recovery rate also showed an improvement,

touching 67.82 per cent after 10,414 patients got cured, taking the gross to 1,91,117.

In the last 24 hours, 87 fresh coronavirus deaths were also reported in the state, taking the toll to 2,562.

The state now has 88,138 active Covid-19 cases, the bulletin added.

East Godavari district continued to report cases in four digits, adding 1,126 afresh, and inched closer to the 40,000 aggregate mark.

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# Talks are the only key to resolving TS-AP disputes

## 'ALL AND SUNDRY'

It is difficult to imagine that just one year ago, Chief Minister of Telangana K. Chandrashekhar Rao and his Andhra counterpart Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy were singing paeans for each other. They had raised hopes of ending the bitterness and opening a new chapter in relations between the two States. This conclusion has turned out to be hasty as Telangana and Andhra are back at their old game of squabbling over their share of river waters and other resources.

An impression gained ground after the bonhomie they displayed in the wake of

KCR's re-election and Jagan's maiden victory in May 2019 that they had decided to bury the past and amicably settle disputes between the two neighbours that share the same language and culture. They had inherited a legacy of disputes ranging from AP's claims of Rs. 70,000 crore towards settlement of fixed assets to intractable differences over sharing Krishna and Godavari waters.

This feeling was reinforced by Jagan's description of KCR as 'a good man'. It was a surreal moment when Chandrashekhar Rao hugged the young Jagan, son of late Y. S. Rajasekhara Reddy, who had done everything within his means to thwart creation of Telangana. Jagan too bent backwards to please KCR by handing over all the buildings

**All these elements are missing. KCR and Jagan are back to their pre-May 2019 positions, warring over water and power. They even skipped the Apex Council meeting convened by the Centre on August 5 as if to avoid a direct encounter**

under AP's control in Hyderabad to Telangana.

After the failure of two formal meetings, the leaders have emphatically proved that personal chemistry matters only to a limited extent. Resolving river water disputes requires vision besides consensus among political parties in each State. All these elements are missing. KCR and Jagan are back to their pre-May 2019 positions, warring over water and power. They even skipped the Apex Council meeting convened by the Centre on August 5 as if to avoid a direct encounter.

The Centre was alarmed by the flurry of mutual complaints. The trigger was the complaint that the Andhra Government had issued orders on May 5 to divert 10 tmcft of water daily from the Krishna river to Rayalaseema through a lift irrigation project and for expansion of the Pothireddypadu head regulator. Telangana complained that the RLIP would affect several lift irrigation projects besides drinking water supply to Hyderabad and many other districts.

AP's complaints were no less grave. They ranged from



**S NAGESH KUMAR**  
Former Resident Editor,  
The Hindu

Telangana changing the scope of the Kaleswaram lift irrigation project, taking up five new projects using 15.53 tmcft of water from Krishna, enhancing the capacity of existing projects, and generating power from Srisailem in violation of

the agreement to share the benefit in 50:50 ratio.

The crib list is illustrative. It cannot be comprehensive in a short piece because of the long history of acrimony over division of Krishna water amongst the three regions Andhra, Rayalaseema and Telangana and with neighbouring Karnataka. The Bachawat Tribunal's award allocating 811 out of 2,060 tmcft failed to satisfy AP and the Brijesh Kumar Tribunal refused to take a relook at allocation with other States.

Tribunal awards have left matters unresolved while the River Management Boards have become toothless wonders or just complaint boxes. Even the Apex Council comprising the two Chief Ministers and chaired by the Union Minister is unable to forge a compromise. Uma Bharati as

Union Minister for Water Resources had convened a meeting between then AP Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu and KCR, but it ended without result.

Many thought that with KCR and Jagan striking all the right chords, a solution to the vexatious river water disputes was round the corner. But they have escalated matters. Lessons have to be drawn from the past. Telugu Ganga, a project steered by N. T. Rama Rao, was severely castigated by YSR and other Congress leaders for carrying 15 tmcft of water to Chennai without fulfilling Rayalaseema's needs. It was extensively discussed within and outside the Assembly and NTR vilified before implementation. So was the construction of the controversial

Pothireddypadu head regulator on the Srisailem project.

Stoutly opposing it, P. Janardhan Reddy, Congress MLA, fought so hard against the Chief Minister of his own party, YSR, that the matter reached the Congress high command. A joke used to do the rounds that Congress president Sonia Gandhi even asked "who is this Pothireddy".

When Gujarat was separated from the bilingual Bombay State, it was not without bitterness and bloodshed. Sixty years later, both States are good neighbours, prosperous, and compete for investment in an atmosphere of cooperative federalism.

Andhra and Telangana would do well to emulate this spirit of healthy competition. They can begin by initiating meaningful dialogues, rather than allowing old disputes to fester. As it is, they are frittering away too much time and energy on building new capitals and Secretariat offices.

## 'COOL' RECORDS

■ India attained the world No. 1 ranking in Test cricket for the first time in 2009

■ As captain, Dhoni holds the record for longest unbeaten run in Tests from his debut with 11 (8 wins and 3 draws)

■ The wicket-keeper batsman bows out with 10,046 runs from 321 ODIs and 1,487 runs from 93 T20Is.

■ Dhoni is the first Indian wicket-keeper to amass more than 4,000 Test runs. He made 4,876 runs in 90 Tests with 6 hundreds and 33 fifties at an average of over 38.

■ Dhoni eclipsed Sourav Ganguly's record of most Test wins as captain with 27 to become India's most successful captain in the format

■ Dhoni's 148 off 123 balls against Pakistan in only his fifth ODI in Faisalabad in 2004 remains the fastest century scored by an Indian wicket-keeper, and fourth overall

■ With 788 dismissals in Test cricket, Dhoni is third on the all-time list behind Mark Boucher (998) and Adam Gilchrist (905)

■ But he is head-and-shoulders above of the rest with the most stumpings in international cricket with 178.

■ In ODIs, he was the fourth-most successful keeper with 407 dismissals but again leads the stumpings list with 107

■ In T20 Internationals, Dhoni leads with 87 dismissals with once again the most stumpings at 33

■ The one-day format was where Dhoni established himself as one of the greatest captains with 110 wins in 199 matches, the second most behind Australia's Ricky Ponting (165 wins in 230 matches).

■ The 183 not out that Dhoni smashed against Sri Lanka in 2005 is still the highest individual score by a wicket-keeper in ODI cricket

■ MS Dhoni is fourth on the list of batsmen with the most sixes in ODIs at 217. No other Indian has cleared the ropes as many times as he did in the format

■ On July 14 this year, Dhoni became the fourth Indian after Sachin Tendulkar, Sourav Ganguly and Rahul Dravid to score 10,000 ODI runs during the 2nd ODI against England at Lord's

His cool temperament has turned several hot encounters in India's favour. Under his captaincy India was crowned World Champions twice in different formats.

— AMITH SHAH



So sorry to hear that #msdhoni retired half an hour ago. A true giant of the game, India's finest wicketkeeper-batsman & a transformative captain, he left a stamp on Indian cricket that defined an era. March on, Dhoneji. There will be other peaks to climb.

— SHASHI THAROOR



# MSD FINISHES IT IN STYLE

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

It trembled after the tremor. But the cricket community soon got its act together. It had to, to remember, savour, cherish and exhaust its stock of superlatives of all manner to adorn Mahendra Singh Dhoni after the eternal enigma quietly walked into international sunset. He did so in the MSD way. The two-time

World Cup-winning captain kept everyone guessing about his retirement till the end but when he finally did, it left the cricket world overwhelmed with emotions.

Such was the impact he had had on his teammates like Suresh Raina that the southpaw chose to retire from international cricket on the same day. Batting great Sachin Tendulkar had broken a plethora of records but the elusive World Cup win only came at the fag end of his career and under Dhoni's leadership.

"Your contribution to Indian cricket has been immense," @msdhoni.

Your contribution to Indian cricket has been immense, @msdhoni. Winning the 2011 World Cup together has been the best moment of my life. Wishing you and your family all the very best for your 2nd innings.

— SACHIN TENDULKAR



Thank you for the magic #Dhoni\_

SMRITI ZIRANI



Nooooo!!! You've always known the best Thanks for the entertainment

— RANDEEP HOODA



From "India A" to "The India" our journey has been full of question marks, commas, blanks & exclamations. Now as you put a full stop to your chapter, I can tell u from experience that the new phase is as exciting and there's no limit to DRS here!!! Well played @msdhoni @BCCI

— GAUTAM GAMBHIR



Farewell Captain @msdhoni. Best wishes to all your future endeavours

— MOHANLAL



## The many highlights of Mahendra Singh Dhoni's glittering career

As Mahendra Singh Dhoni bids adieu to international cricket, here is a look at the career highlights of India's most successful captain, who led the country to two World Cup trophies.

**December 2004:** Dhoni makes his international debut against Bangladesh in an ODI at Chittagong.

**October 2005:** Promoted up the order to accelerate scoring, Dhoni smashes an unbeaten 183 off 145 balls, the then record of the highest individual score in ODI cricket in the second innings. Dhoni also wins

Man of the Series award after India's 3-0 triumph in the five-match rubber.

**December 2005:** Dhoni makes his Test debut against Sri Lanka in Chennai.

**September 2007:** Dhoni takes over the reins of ODI captaincy from Rahul Dravid.

**September 2007:** Dhoni equals Adam Gilchrist's international record for most dismissals (6) in an innings in ODIs. Dhoni also becomes captain of the Indian squad for the inaugural ICC World Twenty20 in South Africa. He leads a young Indian side to victory against Pakistan in the final. He takes the risk of picking an inexperienced pacer Joginder Sharma instead of Harbhajan Singh to bowl the last over that eventually pays off.

**August 2008:** Dhoni leads India to its first-ever bilateral ODI series



victory in Sri Lanka.

**November 2008:** Dhoni makes his debut as full-time Test captain of India during the fourth and final Test against Australia at Nagpur, replaces Anil Kumble who was injured in the third Test.

**November 2011:** The Indian Territorial Army confers the honorary rank of Lieutenant Colonel on Dhoni

## #ThankYouMahi trends on Twitter

Two-time World Cup-winning former Team India captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni announced his retirement from the international cricket on Saturday, ending over one year of suspense and also an era during which his often unorthodox leadership and finishing skills became the stuff of legends. "Thanks a lot for your love and support throughout.

From 1929hrs consider me as retired," Dhoni posted on his Instagram handle. As soon as the news spread, #ThankYouMahi started trending on Twitter with hundreds of Twitter users expressing their heartfelt thanks to the legendary cricketer and wished him luck for his future endeavours. MS Dhoni's fans and his Team Indian colleagues, who were left in utter

disbelief and shock over his sudden retirement, posted their messages on the micro-blogging platform using the #ThankYouMahi.

The announcement came a day after he joined his Chennai Super Kings teammates in Chennai ahead of this year's IPL in the UAE. The 39-year-old's last outing in India colours was during the lost World Cup semi-final against New

Zealand. One of the best runners between the wickets was run out following a hard-earned 50 in that tense game, shattering Indian hopes and leaving him in a state of disbelief. The reticent man from Ranchi will, however, go down as one of the finest to have played the game for India, turning up for the country in a whopping 350 ODIs, 90 Tests and 98 T20 Internationals.

## MS Dhoni calls it quits

Continued from Page 1

The reticent man from Ranchi will, however, go down as one of the finest to have played the game for India, turning up for the country in a whopping 350 ODIs, 90 Tests and 98 T20 Internationals.

The last leg of his career was, however, marred by a drop in form, prompting several critics to question his resolve to continue. But he nevertheless signs off as an ODI legend with 10,773 runs, averaging more than 50 despite battling between No.5 and 7 for a major chunk of his career.

In the Test format, Dhoni accumulated 4876 runs at an average of 38.09 and led India to more wins (27) than anyone else before him.

However, runs are not the

### Raina too retires from Intl cricket

"It was nothing but lovely playing with you, @mah7781. With my heart full of pride, I choose to join you in this journey. Thank you India. Jai Hind," Raina posted on his Instagram page. The 33-year-old is among the few who scored centuries across formats having played 18 Tests, 226 ODIs and 78 T20 Internationals with nearly 8000 international runs.

parameter on which Dhoni's career can be truly judged.

Considered a punter by some and a master strategist by several others, it was Dhoni's cap-

taincy, wondrous reading of match situations and the jaw-dropping hand-speed behind stumps that had the cricket world mesmerised.

A leader even after he gave up the official tag of the leader, Dhoni will be remembered as the nonconformist, who made risks look like well thought-out strategy.

Whether it was handing the ball to rookie Joginder Sharma in the final over of the 2007 World T20 or pushing himself ahead of man-in-form Yuvraj Singh in the 2011 50-over World Cup, Dhoni's instincts rarely failed him.

For the record, India lifted the trophy on both occasions, propelling him to cult status in a country which remains hopelessly in love with all things cricket.

## APJAC seeks Rs 50L ex gratia for govt staff victims to Covid

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

AP JAC Amaravati of Employees, Teachers, Workers and Retired Employees Associations sought an ex gratia of Rs 50 lakhs to the kin of those died of Covid, separate ward in hospitals, Help Desk in each district to employees and exemption of Covid duties to staff above 50 years of age.

APJAC Amaravati chairman Bopparaju Venkateswarlu said that they submitted a memorandum to Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy taking their issues to the notice of the government.

Venkateswarlu said that all

the State government employees are working hard in implementing various programmes of the government during the lockdown and also after lockdown despite Covid-19 threat to their lives. He said that since April 2020 many (more than 1,500) employees are affected with Coronavirus and a few (around 50) employees of all departments viz. revenue, police, panchayat raj, agriculture, education, village secretariats and APSEB died of Coronavirus while discharging their duties.

Venkateswarlu recalled that Jagan granted an ex gratia of Rs 50 lakh to a constable, who

died due to Corona in May 2020, though it was not covered under Covid Insurance Scheme. He said that the sudden demise of an employee in this pandemic situation will seriously affect the family of that employee, including the education of the children.

Hence, he appealed to Jagan to consider the ex gratia of Rs 50 lakh to the families of deceased employees, who died of Covid-19. He said that employees above 50 years of age may be exempted from Covid-19 duties, since they are vulnerable and most of the casualties are above 50 years of age only.

## NTPC Simhadri celebrates 74th I-Day

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Energizing growth and development, the NTPC Simhadri has celebrated 74th Independence Day. Despite Covid-19 restrictions, the spirit to celebrate could not be curbed.

Executive Director of NTPC Simhadri V Sudharshan Babu addressed employees and families through a live webcast to ensure minimum contact and maximum outreach. He expressed pride and contentment in the preventive measures being taken at the NTPC Simhadri for containment of the virus with the decision to procure 500 antigen testing kits, oxygen concentrators,



cylinders, oxymetres and thermal scanner among multiple other proactive measures.

Power Excel Awards, GM Meritorious Awards were given away and employee of the year selection was done on the occasion. The ceremony motivated employees to continue the culture of excellence and innovation in all their future endeavours.



# ‘Fruits of freedom should reach all’

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Fruits of freedom should reach the last man in society, said Speaker Tammineni Sitaram here on Saturday after hoisting the National Flag on the Assembly premises.

Addressing a gathering, the Speaker said that it was the happiest moment to celebrate the 74th Independence Day. “Everyone should strive to protect the spirit of the nation and the Constitution,” he said.

He exhorted people to face the Coronavirus pandemic with courage since it has become a threat to the mankind. Earlier, he received the guard of honour from the security staff of the Assembly.

## Govt striving for uplift of poor: CS



Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy interacts with Chief Secretary Nilam Sawhney and DGP Gautam Sawang at the Independence Day fete at the Indira Municipal Stadium in Vijayawada on Saturday (middle) Speaker Tammineni Sitaram reading a brochure at the I-Day programme (right) YSRCP honorary president YS Vijayamma and YS Bharati, YS Jaganmohan Reddy's wife, witness Independence Day celebrations sitting in a gallery

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The administration has been waging a relentless battle in containing the Coronavirus pandemic under leadership of CM YS Jaganmohan Reddy, said CS Nilam Sawhney. She hoisted the

National Flag on the premises of the Secretariat here on Saturday. Later, addressing the media, the Chief Secretary said that the nation is remembering the sacrifices of the freedom fighters while celebrating the Independence Day. She lauded the services of

medical and health personnel, police, sanitation, municipal, rural development and the revenue staff in curbing the pandemic. In spite of financial problems, the government is focusing on public health and education, she pointed out and vowed to work hard to serve

the people in the next four months of her tenure. Earlier, she received the guard of honour by the Secretariat security staff. Secretary of Services Sasibushan Kumar, Law Secretary G Manohar Reddy and other Secretariat employees were present.

# PM fulfilling Gandhi’s dreams: BJP State chief

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

There was rampant corruption during the Congress regime sans development, alleged BJP State president Somu Veeraj. The country was standing on par with developed nations after the BJP came to power, he asserted. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been striving not only for the all-round development of the country but also according importance for the welfare of the poor, he pointed out. Similarly, he has been giving importance to youth by providing skill development.

On the occasion of the 74th Independence Day, the BJP was coming up with a new agenda to benefit people, he disclosed. For the past six years, the Prime Minister has been realising the dreams of Mahatma Gandhi and called upon people to strive for the realisation of the dreams of freedom fighters.

Jana Sena Party president Pawan Kalyan hoisted the National Flag at the party office in Hyderabad. After saluting the Tri-colour flag, he garlanded the portraits of Mother India and Gandhiji. Jana Sena Political Affairs Committee (PAC) Chairman Nadendra Manohar, Telangana in-charge Sankar Goud, party leaders Shaik Riyaz, Y Nagesh, party president's political secretary P Hariprasad and others



AP Congress Committee president Sake Sailajanath recalled the sacrifices of freedom fighters and exhorted the GenNext to pay back to society in all possible manner as freedom has given them a chance to strive for the development of the country

Jana Sena Party president Pawan Kalyan, CPI State secretary K Ramakrishna hoisted the National Flag and recalled the services of freedom fighters on the occasion of 74th Independence Day fete

## 57,381 Covid patients discharged in a day, recovery rate 71.61 pc: Health ministry

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Delhi has the highest recovery rate of 89.87 per cent followed by Tamil Nadu at 81.62 per cent, Gujarat 77.53 per cent, Madhya Pradesh 74.70 per cent, West Bengal 73.25 per cent, Rajasthan 72.84 per cent, Telangana 72.72 per cent and Odisha 71.98 per cent.

With more patients recovering and being discharged from hospitals and home isolation, the total number of recoveries have surged to 18,08,936.

"The gap between the number of recovered patients and active COVID-19 cases has increased and crossed 11 lakh (11,40,716 today). This is a result of coordinated efforts of the Centre, state and UTs which has led to a continuous

increase in average daily recoveries," the ministry said.

There are 6,68,220 active COVID-19 cases, the actual caseload of the country, which is 26.45 per cent of the total cases. They are under active medical supervision, the health ministry said.

Focus on effective treatment in hospitals, supervised home isolation, use of non-invasive oxygen support, improved services of the ambulances for ferrying patients for prompt and timely treatment, upgradation of clinical management skills of doctors treating COVID-19 patients have in tandem resulted in seamless efficient patient management, it said.

"This has ensured that India's Case Fatality Rate (CFR) is maintained below

the global average. It is on a continuous positive slide and currently stands at 1.94 per cent," the ministry said.

Graded and evolving response has resulted in a testing strategy that steadily widened the testing net in the country. To keep up with this strategy, the testing lab network is being continuously strengthened which now consists of 1,465 labs of which 968 are in the government sector and 497 private.

India's COVID-19 tally reached 25,26,192 on Saturday with a spike of 65,002 cases, while the death-toll climbed to 49,036 with 996 people succumbing to the disease in 24 hours, the health ministry data updated on Saturday 8 am showed.

## Covid, rains dampen I-Day celebrations across state

Continued from Page 1

The pandemic has dampened the spirit of the Independence Day celebrations after physical distancing protocols were put in place and permissions granted to only a few people's representatives and higher officials.

There were no march past or cultural programmes which used to enthral the audiences resembling the freedom struggle in this Independence Day celebrations.

The festive mood in colleges and universities during the Independence Day celebrations was also washed out with the continuous closure of education institu-

tions from March 24.

The Indira Gandhi Municipal Corporation stadium where the AP's official Independence Day celebration was held on Saturday wore a deserted look due to Covid protocol and further the ground turned muddy as result of incessant drizzle.

Earlier, children used to come out on to the streets and enjoyed the ID celebrations holding the Tricolour, wearing colourful dresses. Sweets were distributed to children during the celebrations.

This Independence Day restricted people to sending greetings over social media. Sweet shops which used to have roaring business wore a deserted look.

## Godavari in spate, several islet villages inundated

Continued from Page 1

The Chakalapalem causeway in P Gannavaram constituency got inundated, cutting off the road network to many lanka villages. Vynataya, the Godavari's tributary, is also in spate, adding to the misery in the Konaseema area.

Downstream in West Godavari district, the river has been flowing over the Kotturu causeway, disrupting road communication to the island villages.

The floodwater also entered the spillway channel at the Polavaram project site, hampering the construction work.

Meanwhile, the State Disaster Management Authority said heavy to very heavy rainfall was likely at isolated places in Visakhapatnam, East and West Godavari districts in the next 48 hours under the influence of a well-marked low-pressure area over the northwest Bay of Bengal and associated upper level cyclonic circulation.

Light to moderate to heavy rain has been forecast for many districts in the state till August 19.

The SDMA said a fresh low-pressure area was likely to form over north Bay of Bengal around August 19.

# Kesineni Nani invites Gadkari for Kanakadurga flyover inauguration

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada TDP MP Kesineni Srinivas (Nani) addressed a letter to Union Minister for Transport Nitin Gadkari inviting him for the inauguration of Kanakadurga flyover, which was nearing

completion.

He stated that Kanakadurga flyover was the dream of the people of Vijayawada since two decades. He recalled that the flyover foundation was laid by Gadkari.

"Your endeavour to devel-

op infrastructure as a means of inclusive and all-pervasive development is unmatched, without which this could not have been possible. On behalf of the people of Vijayawada, I express my heartiest gratitude to you for your unrelenting support and coopera-

tion," he stated in the letter.

"Kanakadurga flyover is a jewel in the crown of Vijayawada and a landmark for our historic city and it would be an honour for the people of Vijayawada, if this flyover is inaugurated by you," he appealed.

## Apex council meet likely on August 25

Continued from Page 1

However, there has been no positive response, and both the States insist that they could not possibly furnish DPRs when there are no new projects conceived at all. Following a letter by Shekhawat — asking AP not to go ahead with tender process for Rayalaseema LI

Scheme and Telangana not to go ahead with the projects conceived on River Godavari — both the Chief Ministers took a serious view of the matter. In this backdrop, convening the second Apex Council meeting has assumed significance. To discuss the problems of the management boards of Rivers Krishna and

Godavari, the advisor to Jal Sakti Ministry Vedire Sriram is going to hold a meeting with chairmen of the two boards in Hyderabad on August 17. The meeting would also discuss Bachawat Tribunal, Brajesh Kumar Tribunal and allocations to projects and tries to bring consensus on irrigation projects of Telugu states.

# CM chants decentralisation mantra

Continued from Page 1

"Fruits of the schemes and initiatives we launched now will be fully available only after 10-20 years. These are not election schemes but those that are aimed at a better socio-economic and political transformation of the people of the state," Jagan summed up.

The Chief Minister said that untouchability still prevails in a different form by sneaking into the field of education.

"Untouchability has come in a different form with vested interests opposing children of the weaker sections to study in English medium fearing that they will have a level playing field with their kin who are sent to corporate schools. While the average illiteracy rate is 33 per cent, in SCs it is 36 per cent and in STs it is 51.2 per cent which is a matter of concern.

"The fruits of the reforms in the education sector we are now implementing will be clearly visible in 10 to 20 years from now as the curriculum includes skill development, English medium apart, and will bring out the youngsters ready to face the 'competitive world,' Jagan said. "In the true spirit of the Constitution we are providing opportunities to all and are ensuring social justice and our Navaratnalu are being implemented to uplift the weaker sections in an unprecedented manner, despite financial constraints," he said.

Listing out the welfare schemes, Jagan said that his government has brought in Amma Vodi, YSR Cheyutha, YSR Asara and 50 percent reservation in nominated posts besides Disha Act for the economic, social and political empowerment of women. "Rythu Bharosa, house

sites to 30 lakh families, Vahana Mitra, Pension Kanuka, zero interest loans, Law Nestham, Nethanna Nestham, Matsyakara Bharosa, Aarogyasri, Arogya Asara, Vasathi Devena, Vidya Devena, Chethodu, Kapu Nestham, Goru Mudha, Kanti Velugu, Nadu Nedu in schools and hospitals and others have been drafted to erase inequalities prevailing in the society," Jagan said.

He said that the YSRCP government has provided opportunities to weaker sections and women in temple committees, nominated posts, nominated contract works have shaken up the outsourcing system by doing away with middlemen and commissions. "The composition of the State Cabinet also stands as a shining example of social justice. We have brought in transparent and corruption free governance and introduced Reverse

Tendering, Judicial Preview and Direct Benefit Transfer system during the 14 months in our office and have spent Rs 46,000 crores towards welfare schemes. As corruption decays the system the reforms in the form of Reverse Tendering and Judicial Preview have benefited the State Rs 4,000 crore," the Chief Minister said.

In the times of Covid-19, the people of the State salute the frontline warriors — from doctors to nurses, technicians, sanitary workers, Asha workers and others — for their service, Jagan said.

He said that medicare has taken a big leap now after it was neglected. "We have made Aarogyasri vibrant by developing infrastructure like more number of ambulance vehicles and improving facilities and extending its scope, covering more number of ailments.

# Bharata Ratna for Pingali Venkayya sought

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Geetha Madhurya, great-granddaughter of Pingali Venkayya, was sore for not giving recognition to the National Flag designer. She lamented that present generation is not aware about Pingali Venkayya and his greatness, which is very sad.

She sought the government to

create awareness about the National Flag designer. She hoisted the National Flag during the 74th Independence Day celebrations conducted under the aegis of Amrutha Hastham near Dharna Chowk at Gandhinagar here on Saturday. She sought the government to confer Bharata Ratna on Venkayya recognising his services. Geetha recalled that Pingali

Venkayya was a famous freedom fighter and brought pride to Andhra Pradesh by designing the National Flag. She said Venkayya gave away all his assets during the freedom struggle and ignited a burning desire for freedom among the masses during his time. She recalled that he was an agriculturist, geologist and also an educationist besides freedom fighter.



## Youth from Krishna dist gets Star India Award

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Young entrepreneur from the State Vangapandu Venkata Nagaraju has been selected for Indian Star Award-2020. Nagaraju hails from Pamarru mandal in Krishna district and has been selected for Star India Award presented by Star Book of Records located in Bareilly of Uttar Pradesh.

He finished his graduation in Aerospace engineering and accomplished his master's degree also in the same field from RWTH Aachen University in Germany. He has provided industry partnerships in the field of industrial robotics automation to educational institutions and research centres.

## CJ says 5,241 cases resolved during lockdown

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

High Court Chief Justice Jitendra Kumar Maheswari said that they have been conducting virtual court sessions that is the first of its kind in the country during the Covid pandemic. He informed that during the pandemic from March 26 till date, 5,241 cases have been resolved.

Earlier, he unfurled the tricolour flag to mark the 74th Independence Day celebrations on the court premises here on Saturday. Addressing the gathering, he said that August 15 is a memorable day in the history of the country as country attained independence with the sacrifices of freedom fighters and one should salute to them. Judicial system plays a key role in the protection of fundamental rights of the people, he said.

He said that courts were proactive in providing justice to

the poor. He said the Andhra Pradesh High Court was serving as an inspiration despite the difficult situation caused by Corona and appreciated the court staff and lawyers for their cooperation.

He called upon the people to rededicate themselves and recalled the quotation of Swami Vivekananda "Every citizen should be responsible for the development of the country." He appreciated the fair, impartial and independent approach in resolving cases.

Advocate General Shriram Subramaniam, Andhra Pradesh Bar Council chairman Ganta Rama Rao and High Court Advocates Association secretary JUMV Prasad addressed the gathering. Later, the Chief Justice felicitated employees, who rendered exceptional service in the prevention of Covid-19.

# Feel presence of Lord among devotees: TTD AEO

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

Employees should feel the presence of the Lord among devotees as part of their service to Lord Venkateshwara and offer them the best possible services, said TTD additional executive officer AV Dharmareddy. Unfurling the National Flag on the occasion of 74th Independence Day celebrations at the Gokulam Rest House, he appealed to TTD employees to offer services to pilgrims with devotion.

He lauded the employees of all departments for their contributions in eradicating middlemen in the realm of accommodation, Srivari darshan, Prasadam facilities extended to pilgrims.

He said the SVBC channel of TTD is providing spiritual



delight to devotees by live telecasting programmes like Dhanwantari Maha Mantram and Veda Parayanam.

Almost seven crore devotees are participating in the Sundara Kanda and Virata Parva parayanams being telecast live by SVBC from the

Nada Niranjanam platform every day, he said.

He also lauded that all TTD officials, particularly during the Covid-19 restrictions, had worked in perfect coordination and cooperation and serving the devotees with utmost dedication

# RINL joins nation in celebrating I-Day

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The RINL-Vizag Steel Plant joined the nation in celebrating the 74th Independence Day with zeal at Ukkunagaram. PK Rath, CMD, RINL, unfurled the National Flag, took the salute and inspected the guard of honour accorded by the CISF Jawans at the Trishna Grounds in the township.

Addressing the employees and their family members on the occasion, Rath conveyed his greetings to all. Paying tributes to the brave souls of the country, who sacrificed their lives for freedom, Rath stressed the need to reaffirm commitment to make the country an enviable nation with an ever growing economy and a

vibrant democracy. Speaking about the Covid 19 pandemic, he expressed his gratitude to the RINL's medical staff and sanitary workers describing them as 'Covid Warriors'. He requested the Vizag Steel fraternity not to be panic and strictly observe guidelines as given by the government from time to time.

He said that though the world economy is impacted by the pandemic and lockdowns for which steel industry is no exception, but the initiatives taken by the Centre like the Rs 20 lakh crore package and structural reforms in coal and mineral mining sectors will definitely lead to a self-reliant India through maximisation and optimisation of natural resources.



# I-Day event at Red Fort scaled down, many seats remain empty

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Red Fort lawns that remain filled to the brim on Independence Day, saw many vacant seats this year with the attendees wearing masks and maintaining social distancing, displaying an image of the "new normal" in times of the coronavirus pandemic.

The Independence Day event at the historic Red Fort, where prime minister unfurls the tricolour and delivers a speech to the nation, was scaled down this year. Around 4,000 invites, a quarter of the usual, were issued to officers, diplomats, local leaders and others.

Still, a number of seats across all enclosures remained empty. A security official said they expected that a few seats would remain empty considering the COVID-19 situation.

The number of invitees was



**"The number of invitees was one-fourth the normal. Still, lesser number of people turned up. Adequate arrangements were made to ensure physical distancing and masks, sanitisers and gloves provided to all the attendees," he said**

one-fourth the normal. Still, lesser number of people turned up. Adequate arrangements were made to ensure physical distancing and masks, sanitisers and gloves provided to all the attendees," he said.

A kit containing a mask, a small bottle of hand sanitiser and a pair of gloves were kept on all chairs which were positioned at a distance of 6 feet to

maintain the prescribed distance. A hand towel was kept on the back rest of the chairs along with the programme pamphlet. School children, who would attend the event dressed in the colours of the national flag, were missing this time. Instead, 500 NCC cadets were invited to the event.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who would often ven-

ture among the schoolchildren and shake hands with them at the end of the event, said, "Today, our children are not here with us. The pandemic has halted all of us." Colourful carpets in enclosure and aisles contrast seating and walking areas, and posters bearing social distancing norms messages like 'keep six ft distance', 'wear a mask', dot the venue.



## MP govt to develop Ramayan Circuit: CM

PNS ■ BHOPAL

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Shivrang Singh Chouhan on Saturday said the government will develop Ram Van Gaman Path and Ramayan Circuit in the state to boost tourism. He was speaking at the state-level Independence Day function after unfurling the national flag at the Motilal Nehru Stadium here. "We will develop Ram Gaman Path, Ramayan Circuit, Amarkantak Circuit, Tirthankar Circuit, Maa Narmada Parikrama, etc, so that tourism

activities can be developed in the state. This will also generate employment," Chouhan said.

The Ram Van Gaman Path project seeks to retrace the route believed to have been taken by Lord Ram on his way to the exile. It is proposed to be constructed from Chitrakoot to Amarkantak. "River Narmada is the lifeline of Madhya Pradesh. Narmada Expressway will be developed in the areas along this river. Industrial clusters will also be developed along the route to make the state prosperous," he added.

## 'Must do all it takes to preserve basic principles of the country'

PNS ■ KOLKATA

People must do all it takes to preserve the basic principles on which this country was founded, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee said on the occasion of 74th Independence Day on Saturday. The Independence Day celebrations were subdued in West Bengal due to the COVID-19 situation.

"Happy Independence Day to all my brothers and sisters. We salute all those who sacrificed their lives to make the dream of a 'free nation' come true. Our freedom was hard-earned, and we must do all it takes to preserve the basic principles on which this country was founded," she said in a Twitter post.

Banerjee unfurled the Tricolour and inspected the guard of honour of various contingents of the West Bengal Police at the state function held on Red Road in Kolkata.

Only a few ministers and



government officials were present on the occasion.

She felicitated 25 frontline workers who recovered from COVID-19 and rejoined duty.

A song composed by Banerjee -- 'Corona chole jabe ekin, COVID joddhader mone rekho' (Coronavirus will be defeated one day, but remember the COVID-19 warriors) - was played on the background during the felicitation.

The Transport Department's 'Save Drive Save Life' tableau dis-

## In a first, women CRPF personnel deployed for security duties in Srinagar

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

For the first time, women personnel of the CRPF were deployed for security duties on Independence Day in Lal Chowk and adjoining areas of the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir.

Dressed in the camouflage combat uniform, the gun-toting women personnel of the paramilitary force were deployed in the Kothibagh police station area, mainly comprising the commercial hub of Lal Chowk and surrounding areas.

"We are from the 232 Battalion of CRPF. We have been in law and order as well as security related duties before... So this is nothing new for us," a woman constable of the CRPF, deployed at Lambert Lane on Residency Road, said.

She said they do not feel any lesser than their male colleagues as they all undergo the same training.

The women CRPF personnel had arrived in the Valley as part



of security arrangements for the Amarnath yatra, which was cancelled at the last moment in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Meanwhile, stringent security arrangements were made in and around Srinagar city for Independence Day celebrations in the wake of militant attack in Naugam area on Friday that left two police personnel dead and another injured.

Security forces had sealed all entry points leading towards Sher-e-Kashmir Cricket Stadium, officials said.

Police and other security personnel were deployed on high rise buildings in many places of the city to keep a hawk-eye vigil on any suspicious movement, they said.

The perimeter area around security installations across the valley, including army camps, was sealed immediately after the Naugam attack on Friday.

The officials said all necessary steps were taken to prevent the militants from carrying out any further attacks aimed at disrupting the Independence Day celebrations.



## Nitish Kumar rues 'uninformed criticisms'

PNS ■ PATNA

Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar on Saturday expressed distress over "uninformed criticisms" faced by his government and stressed on the need to apprise people of the abysmal condition the state was in before he took over so that they had a better idea of his accomplishments.

Addressing the Independence Day celebrations at the historic Gandhi Maidan, for the last time before he seeks re-election for the fourth consecutive term, Kumar spoke at length about the strides made by

his government, besides unveiling populist measures like new vacancies for teachers and extending the EPF facility to those already in service.

"It has become a fashion these days to tweet anything while sitting at home, without having any idea of what has been achieved," he said towards the end of his speech, which lasted well beyond an hour. His outburst came in the backdrop of a sustained social media campaign, especially over his government's handling of the COVID-19 pandemic and the social and economic crises that have arisen in its wake.

## C'garh CM announces scheme for school students

PNS ■ RAIPUR

Chhattisgarh Chief Minister Bhupesh Baghel on Saturday announced to launch a special scheme under which school students will be able to learn in their respective localities in view of the suspension of classes due to the coronavirus outbreak.

Addressing people during Independence Day celebration at Police Parade ground here, Baghel said Gandhian thinking of serving humanity and Nehruvian institutions and infrastructures enabled his government to fight against Coronavirus. After hoisting the Nation Flag, Baghel received the guard of honour from the joint parade of various security forces. "The online education platform 'Padhai Tunhar Duar' scheme launched by the state government earlier during the lockdown yielded better results and around 22 lakh children are getting its benefit," he said.

"Taking the initiative further, we are now starting the 'Padhai Tuhar Para' scheme to teach chil-



dren with the help of community in their localities and villages," the chief minister said.

Besides, a Bluetooth-based programme 'Bultu Ke Bol' will be introduced for providing study materials to students in remote areas who do not have access to internet facility, he said.

Highlighting various measures taken by his government in the battle against COVID-19, Baghel said 37 health centres are being constructed while 30 hospitals, 3,383 beds, 517 ICU beds, 479 ventilators have been provided for the treatment of patients.

A total of 155 isolation centres

have been developed in the districts where about 10,000 beds are available.

"The testing facility, which has reached 6,500 per day, will be enhanced to 10,000 per day. At present, 1,900 health and wellness centres are there in the state and the target is to increase them to 3,100 by the next year," he said. "Gandhian thinking of serving humanity and Nehruvian institutions and infrastructures enabled us to fight against Coronavirus. Following their footsteps, we succeeded in saving the economy during the coronavirus-induced lockdown," he said.

## Aaditya pledges support to 1,000 coaches during covid pandemic

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Mumbai District Football Association President Aaditya Thackeray has pledged to help 1,000 coaches who have been affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.

"@AUTC Thackeray pledges to support coaches across India. He handed over the first box of supplies to AIFC Director @DineshNair74. AIFC extends our gratitude towards him on behalf of all the coaches," the Association of Indian Football Coaches said in a tweet.

Aaditya is the son of Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray and also a Cabinet Minister in the state government. He is also an office bearer of the Western India Football Association (WIFA), which governs football activities in Maharashtra. In response, Aaditya said, "Happy to my bit @DineshNair74 for our coaches across."

## Maha govt made 29.50 lakh farmers debt-free: Thackeray

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Maharashtra government has made around 29.50 lakh farmers in the state debt-free by depositing Rs 18,980 crore into their bank accounts, Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray said on Saturday. Thackeray was speaking after hoisting the national flag at Mantralaya (state secretariat) in south Mumbai on the occasion of 74th Independence Day.

He also said that the government will focus on farmers and working class as it tries to transform Maharashtra into a welfare state. Stating that the government has started the process of unlocking the state "cautiously in a staggered manner", Thackeray also noted that Maharashtra has increased COVID-19 tests on a "big scale".

Around 29.50 lakh farmers have been made debt-free by depositing Rs 18,980 crore into their bank accounts under the Mahatma Jyotirao Phule Shetkari Karjमुक्ति Yojana," he said in his speech.



He said the government also procured 418.8 quintal cotton, highest in the last 10 years.

The chief minister observed that schools could not be reopened in the state due to the COVID-19 threat, but the government took steps to see education is being imparted to students through Google Classroom initiative. "Maharashtra has become the first state to take such a step in the country," he added.

Thackeray said that around 66,300 industrial units have resumed operations after the government set in motion the

process of unlocking. He said more than 16 lakh workers have returned to their workplaces.

"The government has signed MoUs worth around Rs 16,000 crore with investors from 12 countries and more agreements worth Rs 8,000 crore will be inked," Thackeray said.

"The government also launched 'Mahajobs' portal to ensure that locals, Marathi people get employment," he added.

Thackeray said the government will lay stress on providing proper healthcare facilities in both the urban and remote areas in the state.

## Will not open schools unless fully convinced: Kejriwal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Saturday said that the Delhi government will not open schools unless it is "fully convinced" about the improved COVID-19 situation in the city.

Delivering his Independence Day speech at Delhi Secretariat, Kejriwal said the COVID-19 situation in the national capital is under control as compared to what it was two months back and thanked all the stakeholders, including the central government, 'corona warriors' and different organisations.

The chief minister said the safety and the health of school children are very important to the AAP government.

"I meet people and get messages from them asking not to open schools. I want to assure



them that we care about their children as much as they do. Unless fully convinced, we are not going to open the schools," he said.

Kejriwal said Delhi "gave the model" of home isolation and plasma therapy concept to the country in the fight against the virus. He said that efforts are being made to bring Delhi's economy back on track.

## Rijiju launches nation-wide Fit India Youth Clubs to promote fitness

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju on the occasion of the 74th Independence Day launched the Fit India Youth Club, an initiative to promote fitness across the country. The Fit India Youth Club, a part of the Fit India Movement envisioned by PM Narendra, endeavours to harness the power of youth to create mass awareness about the importance of fitness, across the country.

The Fit India Youth Clubs bring together fitness and voluntarism in a unique way in which 75 lakh volunteers of Nehru Yuva Kendra Sangathan and National Service Scheme, along with Scouts and Guides, NCC and other youth organisations will come together to register in every block in the country.



According to a Sports Authority of India (SAI) media release, under the aegis of a district unit, each member of the club will motivate people from the community to take up fitness activities of 30 to 60 minutes in his or her daily routine.

Additionally, the clubs will organise and encourage schools

and local bodies to organise one community fitness programme every quarter.

Speaking about the initiative, Rijiju said, "Only a fit citizen can contribute adequately to his or her country and help fellow citizens in their times of need."

"India is a country of 1.3 billion people, and we have 75 lakh

**"India is a country of 1.3 billion people, and we have 75 lakh youth volunteers already, and that number will go up to 1 crore very soon"**

youth volunteers already, and that number will go up to 1 crore very soon." Rijiju is confident that 1 crore volunteer can motivate at least 30 crore fellow citizens.

"I am sure that these 1 crore volunteers can motivate at least 30 crore Indians in every nook and corner of India to take up fitness activities regularly."

## Like Quit India campaign needed against Covid: Rupani

PNS ■ GANDHINAGAR

Gujarat Chief Minister Vijay Rupani on Saturday called for a mass awareness campaign on the lines of the Quit India Movement against the British in order to drive out coronavirus from the state and the country.

Speaking at the Independence Day function at Swarnim Park in Gandhinagar, he said that while the pandemic had slowed down the pace of development in the state, his government was committed to make up for it.

"To achieve independence and drive out the British, the entire country resonated with the slogan of Quit India. As a result, the British left the country and we got freedom.

### SHORT READS



#### Yogi Adityanath remembers freedom fighters on I-Day

**LUCKNOW:** Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath remembered Mahatma Gandhi and other freedom fighters who sacrificed their lives for the country's independence on the occasion of the 74th Independence Day on Saturday. In his fourth Independence Day speech, the chief minister also lauded health workers and security personnel for their work during the coronavirus pandemic. Dressed in a saffron robe and turban, and wearing a white mask in view of the pandemic, Adityanath unfurled the national flag at the Vidhan Bhavan here ahead of his address to the people of the state.



#### No Covid patient will be deprived of treatment in Odisha

**BHUBANESWAR:** Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Pattnaik on Saturday said no COVID-19 patient in the state will be deprived of treatment due to lack of money as the government has taken concrete steps to provide all facilities free of cost. In his address to the people after unfurling the national flag at the Exhibition Ground here on the occasion of the 74th Independence Day, the chief minister said his government is working with a mission to provide the best treatment to people afflicted with the dreaded virus. He was confident that the war against the coronavirus pandemic will be won soon. In view of the Covid outbreak, Independence Day was celebrated across the state sans large gatherings, parade and march-past.



#### Guj HC launches e-services for filing cases, knowing status

**AHMEDABAD:** The Chief Justice of Gujarat High Court on Saturday launched two new e-services to facilitate e-filing of cases and getting to know their status for lawyers, litigants and public. Chief Justice Vikram Nath launched new e-filing and "EmailMyCaseStatus" services on the occasion of 74th Independence Day, and also directed to start five exclusive counters for physical case filing amid the COVID-19 pandemic, a release stated. The e-filing software, developed by the eCommittee of the Supreme Court, will be implemented for the Gujarat High Court from Saturday onwards, it was stated.



Likewise, let's start a mass awareness campaign to free the country and Gujarat of coronavirus," he said.

Rupani also spoke about the initiatives taken by his government to help people tide over the current crisis.

"It is our strength that despite earthquake, flood, cyclone, Gujarat and its people have changed crises into opportunities. Our development arc has slowed, but we are committed to make it up," he said.





# Modi delivers strong message to China, Pak

Day speech, emphasised on making the country self-reliant and announced several initiatives like national digital health mission and mass production of COVID-19 vaccine once it is approved by scientists. In his seventh consecutive address

**"From LoC to LAC, anyone who casts an eye on the sovereignty of the country, the armed forces have responded in the language they understand," Modi said in his 86-minute speech at the ceremony held observing all COVID-19 protocols amid the presence of a large number of dignitaries including foreign diplomats**

trally-administered Jammu and Kashmir after the ongoing delimitation exercise is over and stated that a new era of development has begun in the union territory after Article 370 was scrapped a year ago.

Dressed in his customary 'kurta pyjama' and safa, the prime minister used the occasion to put across a stern message to China and Pakistan without naming them, and asserted that India is fighting terrorism and expansionism with determination.

"From LoC (Line of Control) to LAC (Line of

Actual Control), anyone who casts an eye on the sovereignty of the country, the armed forces have responded in the language they understand," Modi said in his 86-minute speech at the ceremony held observing all COVID-19 protocols amid the presence of a large number of dignitaries including foreign diplomats.

His comments came in the midst of India's bitter border row with China along the LAC in eastern Ladakh. The tension escalated manifold after 20 Indian soldiers were killed in a violent clash in

Galwan Valley on June 15. The Chinese side also suffered casualties but it is yet to give out the details

"The world saw in Ladakh what our brave soldiers, the country can do for this resolve (to maintain our sovereignty). From the Red Fort, I salute all those brave soldiers who have staked their lives for the motherland," Modi added.

On foreign policy issues, Modi said that today neighbours are not only those with whom India shares its geographical boundaries but also those with whom "our hearts meet". He said that India was making all efforts to deepen ties with all countries in the extended neighbourhood.

Making a mention of the ground-breaking ceremony for the Ram temple in Ayodhya 10 days back, Modi said the centuries-old issue has been resolved peacefully.

## NEP will play important role in making India self-reliant: Modi

Education has a crucial role to play in making India self-reliant and prosperous and the new National Education Policy has been introduced with this objective, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Saturday.

Addressing the nation on India's 74th Independence Day from the ramparts of the Red Fort, the prime minister said the NEP seeks to strengthen research and innovation in the country to help it progress in a competitive world. "Education has an important

role to play in making India self-reliant, happy and prosperous. With this objective, we have been able to give the country a new education policy after over three decades," Modi said.

"This will shape the India of the 21st century. We will soon have citizens who shape a new India, ones who are global citizens but know and understand their roots. The new education policy also focuses on research and development to make India a key research and development destination for the world," he said. "The policy lays



special emphasis on the National Research Foundation because innovation is important for the country's progress. Only when we strengthen innovation and research will our country remain competitive and move ahead. The more innovation is strengthened in the country the more progress it will make in a competitive world," he added.

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday delivered a strong message to China and Pakistan against challenging India's sovereignty in his Independence

## Special campaign to reduce pollution in 100 selected cities

Prime Minister Narendra Modi said on Saturday that a special campaign was being worked out to reduce pollution in 100 selected cities of the country.

Addressing the nation from the ramparts of the Red Fort on India's 74th Independence Day, Modi referred to the National Clean Air Programme (NCAP), which was launched in 2019, said the campaign will be with a "holistic approach".

"A special campaign with a holistic approach is also being worked out to reduce pollution in 100 selected cities of the country," he said. The NCAP was launched by the MOEFCC on January 10 last year as a time-bound national-level strategy to address the air pollution problem across the country in a comprehensive manner.

In its endeavour to implement the NCAP, the Centre had also constituted a steering



committee in April last year which comprises chief secretaries of over 20 states and union territories, including Delhi and Jammu and Kashmir, as its members.

A spokesperson from the environment ministry said there was no new programme on air pollution but the Prime Minister was referring to the NCAP launched last year.

## All villages to be connected with optical fibre in 1000 days

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday announced that the project to connect India's over six lakh villages with optical fibre network will be completed in the next 1,000 days. Besides, a high speed internet connectivity via submarine optical fibre cable will be extended to Lakshadweep in this period, he said.

He pointed out that only five dozen panchayats in the country were connected with optical fibre cable by 2014, the year his government came to power for the first time. In the last five years, 1.5 lakh village panchayats have been connected with optical fibre cable, Modi said.

He also announced that a new policy on cyber security will be unveiled shortly, saying the nation's dependence on the cyber world has increased in the changed circumstances, an apparent reference to the upheavals



brought in by the COVID-19 pandemic, and that this has spawned its own dangers to development and economy. He said the country is witnessing expansion of roads and internet at unprecedented and rapid speed, from the peaks of Himalayas to islands in the Indian Ocean. "In the next 1,000 days, all villages in the country will be connected with optical fibre," he said, adding Lakshadweep too would be connected with submarine optical fibre cable within this period.

## Modi's speech inspirational, reflects resolve for self-reliant India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Hailing Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Independence Day speech as "inspiring", BJP leaders on Saturday said it reflected his resolve to build an all-inclusive and stronger self-reliant India. In his Independence Day speech from the ramparts of the Red Fort, the prime minister said the call for an 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' has captured the imagination of the people and become a "mantra" for everyone.

"A very spirited and inspiring speech by PM Narendra Modi ji on the 74th Independence Day from the ramparts of the Red Fort. PM Modi ji's speech reflects his vision, mission and resolve to

build an all-inclusive and stronger Aatmanirbhar Bharat," said BJP president J P Nadda, who posted a series of tweets.

Echoing similar sentiments, former BJP president and Union Home Minister Amit Shah termed the speech exemplary and said "it clearly reflects his unwavering commitment and resolve towards a strong and self-reliant India".

"Today, on the occasion of Independence Day, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's address reinforces the resolve of a self-reliant India. There may be challenges in this resolution, but there is the ability to solve all the problems within this country," senior BJP leader and Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said in a tweet in Hindi.



**DRDO-developed anti-drone system deployed near Red Fort**

## By 2022, India must be aatmanirbhar in every sense of the word: Vice-Prez

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

On this Independence Day, every Indian, especially the youth, must resolve to be at the forefront to fight attempts by forces that try to create dissensions among the people, Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu said on Saturday.

In a Facebook post to mark the 74th Independence Day, he said for India to achieve new heights of development and prosperity, every citizen, including people in public life, must perform their duty.

"As we approach the 75th anniversary of Independence, it is time for an objective introspection. At this juncture, we



must ask ourselves what we aspire to achieve as a nation by 2022," Naidu observed.

"By 2022, India must be aatmanirbhar (self-reliant) in every sense of the word. We all must work with renewed vigour and determination to

eradicate poverty, end social and gender discrimination and eliminate corruption," he said.

The vice president said India needs a cultural renaissance and a refreshing flowering of literature and artistic expression in its national languages.

"As the country moves forward with renewed determination and the tremendous energy of 130 crore people to transform and build a 'new India', we are confident of regaining our past glory and becoming an ideal parliamentary democracy," he said.

"On this Independence Day, let us also remember with gratitude the countless men and women whose sacrifices brought us freedom. We must always be grateful to them for their selfless efforts -- the fruits of which are being reaped by us now as citizens of a sovereign and vibrant parliamentary democracy," Naidu said.

## Shah unfurls tricolour at home; extends Independence day greetings to countrymen

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah extended his greetings to the countrymen on the occasion of Independence Day on Saturday and said the dream of the freedom fighters of an independent, strong and self-sufficient India has been realised by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

After unfurling the national flag at his residence here, Shah said on one hand, the Modi government has provided the poor and deprived sections of the society with housing, power and health insurance, while on the other hand, India has emerged as a powerful nation.

"Today we are very proud



who contributed to the country's freedom with their valour and sacrifice. He also paid respects to those brave men and women, who made the supreme sacrifice for the cause of India's unity, integrity and security.

"On this Independence Day, come, let us pledge to fulfil Prime Minister Narendra Modi's dream of an 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' and contribute to India achieving newer feats by adopting as much 'Make in India' products. Happy Independence Day," he said.

On Friday, Shah was released from a hospital, where he was undergoing treatment for the coronavirus. Currently, he is in home isolation.

## Pranab continues to be on ventilator support: Hospital

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The condition of former president Pranab Mukherjee remained unchanged on Saturday and he continued to be on ventilator support, doctors attending on him said. They said his vital and clinical parameters are stable and are being closely monitored by a team of specialists. He was admitted to the Army's Research and Referral Hospital, he was operated upon for the removal of a clot in the brain. He had also tested positive for COVID-19. "The condition of Pranab Mukherjee vital and clinical parameters remain stable and are being closely monitored by a team of specialists," the hospital said in a statement.

## Nepal PM calls up Modi to greet India on Independence Day

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Nepalese counterpart K P Sharma Oli held a telephonic conversation on Saturday during which the two leaders expressed "mutual solidarity" amid efforts being made to minimise the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in the two countries.

Oli called up the Indian prime minister to greet his government and the people of India on the country's 74th Independence Day, and also offered congratulations on its recent election as a non-permanent member of the UN Security Council, an official statement said.

Modi offered India's continued support to Nepal in its fight against the pandemic and recalled the civilisational and cultural links that the two countries share, it said.

"The leaders expressed mutu-



al solidarity in the context of the efforts being made to minimise the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic in both countries. Prime minister offered India's continued support to Nepal in this regard," the statement said.

Modi also thanked Oli for telephone call.

The talk between the two leaders comes amid a strain in ties after the Himalayan nation came up with a new political map in May, claiming some territories that belong to India.

## Why are people sitting in power scared of naming China, asks Congress

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Congress on Saturday asked why those sitting in power are scared of naming China which has entered Indian territory, and said every Congress worker and every Indian is proud of the armed forces.

Talking to reporters after Prime Minister Narendra Modi's address, Congress chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala also said all Indians should ask the government this Independence Day what it was doing to protect the country and push China back.

In his speech from the ramparts of the Red Fort, the prime minister said India's soldiers had given a fitting reply to those who had challenged the country's sovereignty, from 'LoC to LAC'. Modi, who did not name China, added that the whole country is united in protecting the sovereignty of the country.

"Each and every Congress worker and all 130 crore Indians



are proud of our armed forces and have full faith in them. We salute the armed forces for giving China an apt reply every time there has been an attack. But what about those who are sitting in power. Why are they scared of mentioning China's name?" Surjewala asked.

"At a time when China has entered Indian territory, every Indian needs to ask the government what it is doing to push China back and protect the country. On this Independence Day they should ask this. That is the true sense of democra-

cy," the Congress leader added. He said it is important to question the government on whether it believes in the mandate of the people and if there is freedom to speak freely in the country.

"Does our government believe in democracy? Does our government believe in public opinion. Do we have the freedom to speak, think, to travel, to wear what we like, to earn our livelihood or has that been curbed," Surjewala said.

The foundation of an 'Aatmanirbhar Bharat' (self-

**"At a time when China has entered Indian territory, every Indian needs to ask the government what it is doing to push China back and protect the country. On this Independence Day they should ask this. That is the true sense of democracy," the Congress leader added**

reliant India), he said, was laid by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel and our freedom fighters.

"But a government which is selling public sector undertakings, handing over railways and airports to private players and attacking everything from LIC to FCI, will that government be able to keep the freedom of this country safe. It is the duty of the government and every citizen to keep the freedom of the country safe," he added.

## Punjab CM says prepared to handle threat from Pak, China

PNS ■ MOHALI

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh on Saturday called for readiness to combat the border threat from Pakistan and China.

With tensions at the borders continuing, India will have to be prepared to deal with any eventuality, said the CM in his Independence Day address here. Warning of a continued threat from neighbouring countries, Singh said Punjab will always be at the forefront of fighting the enemy at the borders.

While Pakistan continued to resort to firing every day, China, on the other hand, talks about friendship but remains a danger to the nation, said Singh while recalling the recent attack on Indian soldiers by the Chinese forces in Ladakh.

India has always given Pakistan a befitting response,

which is the only way to deal with them, he said, adding that China also needs to be handled with the same iron hand.

On this occasion, the CM also recalled the contributions of the millions of Indians to the freedom struggle and said Punjabis had always been at the forefront of every battle.

The Cellular Jail referred to as 'Kala Pani' (in Andaman and Nicobar Islands) have the names of tens of hundreds of Punjabis etched in immortality, he said according to an official release.

Even though the Independence Day celebrations this year were a low-key affair due to the coronavirus pandemic, this was the time to remember the sacrifices of all those who had made freedom possible, said the CM.

It was also the time to salute the defence forces guarding the nation's borders from the enemy, he added.





CAPSULE



**Gammon India net loss narrows to Rs 135 cr in March qtr**

**NEW DELHI:** Gammon India on Friday reported narrowing of its consolidated loss to Rs 134.96 crore for the quarter ended March 2020. The company had a consolidated net loss of Rs 526.33 crore for the corresponding quarter of the previous fiscal, it said in a regulatory filing. Its total consolidated income during the quarter under review declined to Rs 115.50 crore as against Rs 218.68 crore in the year-ago period. Total expenses declined to Rs 253.92 crore from Rs 445.43 crore in the year-ago period. For the full fiscal (2019-20), the company saw its consolidated net loss narrowing to Rs 630.79 crore. It had reported a consolidated net loss of Rs 1,296.44 crore in FY 2018-19.



**United Breweries posts Q1 net loss of Rs 114.50 cr**

**NEW DELHI:** Beer maker United Breweries Ltd on Friday reported a consolidated net loss of Rs 114.50 crore for the first quarter ended June 30, on account of decline in sales due to the pandemic. The company had posted a net profit of Rs 164.69 crore during the April-June quarter of the previous fiscal, United Breweries Ltd (UBL) said in a regulatory filing. Its revenue from operations slipped 73.17 per cent to Rs 1,262.82 crore during the quarter under review, as against Rs 4,708.42 crore in the corresponding period previous fiscal. UBL's total expenses declined 68.21 per cent to Rs 1,416.43 crore in Q1 FY21, compared to Rs 4,456.25 crore a year ago. According to the company, "its peak season was adversely affected by the pandemic" as the COVID-19 lockdown led to complete closure of all outlets.



**Google partners CWC for flood forecasting**

**NEW DELHI:** Google in association with the Central Water Commission (CWC) has taken flood forecasting initiative over the past several months, and sent numerous public alerts to people in impacted regions across the country. These alerts provide timely, updated, and critical information that can help users make informed decisions on their safety, and that of their families and friends, Google said. Any user in the affected region having an Android smartphone with location services enabled will receive these alerts, it added. Various parts of the country, including Assam and Bihar, are grappling with floods. "We are currently issuing these notifications in English, Hindi, and Bengali, depending on the device language and location of users," Google said.

# Faceless assessment to start with I-T Dept restructuring

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As The Faceless Assessment Scheme, 2019 kicks off, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has stipulated that all communications from the department to the taxpayer, assessee, third-party will be in the name of the National e-Assessment Center (NeAC) and no communication of any nature such as above will be made by any of the Regional e-Assessment Centres (ReACs) across 20 cities in the country.

The Income Tax Department has embarked on the journey of Faceless Tax Administration. The Faceless Assessment Scheme, 2019 has been announced by the Central Government. Further, the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) has notified the National e-Assessment Centre (NeAC) in Delhi and various Regional e-Assessment Centres (ReACs) across 20 cities in the country for implementation of the Scheme.

The CBDT has now given the detailed guidelines for the implementation of the Scheme and role of residual charges in this regard.

On the functions of the faceless hierarchy, the guidelines say that the NeAC/ReACs hierarchy will be tasked with management of Faceless Assessment proceedings and will be broadly responsible for functions.

All these functions will be through electronic means for which the NeAC will be the gateway and will function as



## FM TO TAX OFFICIALS Responsibilities have grown with faceless approach

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has told tax officials that the responsibilities of the Income Tax Department have increased with the new faceless approach for appeals and assessments, sources said.

Sitharaman said that the department is setting an example for the world in the use of technology for delivery of better services to the taxpayers.

According to sources, she met IT officials on Friday and thanked them for their tireless efforts during the last two months to make the vision of

the Prime Minister a reality by bringing in the faceless assessment system in a short time. She told them to work with the same zeal and dedication to make the faceless appeal system an equal success.

Expressing her appreciation for the officers and staff of the Income Tax Department, she said that now the department has to serve the taxpayers with much higher standards to meet the commitments made in the taxpayers charter with the motto of "Transparent Taxation - Honouring The Honest".

such for all the flow of information. The officers and the staff in the ReACs will perform

the functions relating to the assessment and verification function under the Income

Tax Act, but all communications from the department to the taxpayer/assessee/third-party for the purposes of the Act will be in the name of the NeAC. No communication of any nature such as above will be made by any of the ReACs.

The functions of the NeAC, ReACs [Assessment Unit (AU), Verification Unit (VU), Review Unit (RU) and Technical Unit (TU)] have been delineated in detail separately by the NeAC in consultation with the Board.

The Assessment proceedings u/s 143, 144, 148 read with 143(2)/142(1) will be done by the AU, verification related to assessment by the VU, verification related to centralized dissemination of information by the Directorate of Systems, by the VUs, review of draft orders by the RU, technical support by the TU and passing and dispatch of the final orders by the NeAC.

On the functions of the field formations outside the NeAC/ReACs hierarchy, the guidelines state that the Principal Chief Commissioner of Income Tax will be the cadre controlling authorities for all the officers and staff in their area of jurisdiction in respect of all field formations including ReACs, central charges, international tax and transfer pricing charges, investigation directorate, exemption charges.

The field formations outside the NeAC/ReACs Hierarchy will perform the functions in faceless manner to the extent possible.

# GoM veers around levying 3% GST on sale of old gold

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A panel of state finance ministers on Friday veered around a proposal to levy 3 per cent GST on sale of old gold and jewellery to check tax evasion, Kerala Finance Minister Thomas Isaac said.

The Group of Ministers (GoM) also decided to implement e-way bill for transportation of gold within the states, but implementing it for inter-state movement was not considered feasible.

The panel also decided to make it mandatory for gold and jewellery shops to generate e-invoice for every purchase and sale transaction.

Bihar Deputy Chief Minister Sushil Modi said the GoM reached a consensus on letting states decide whether to have e-way bill for intra-state movement of gold.

"It was decided that if any state wants to implement e-way bill for gold, they can do so for intra- or within the state transportation," he told PTI.

Modi, who also holds the finance portfolio, said while Kerala and Karnataka wanted



e-way bill for inter-state movement of goods, Gujarat and Bihar felt it was not practical and feasible.

The GoM, comprising finance ministers of Kerala, Bihar, Gujarat, Punjab, Karnataka and West Bengal, set up to examine feasibility of implementation of e-way bill for movement of gold and precious stones met via video conferencing.

Isaac said the GoM arrived at a consensus on bringing sale of old gold within the GST ambit under reverse charge mechanism (RCM).

"It was decided that sale of

old gold will attract GST at 3 per cent under RCM. The officers' committee will now work on the modalities," Isaac said.

Isaac said this would put a check on tax evasion as currently most of the smuggled gold is sold as old jewellery to evade GST.

Under RCM, the buyer would be liable to collect and deposit the GST with the government.

Isaac further said the GoM has decided to start e-invoicing for jewellery traders which will help track down the end-user of gold.

# Trump orders TikTok to sell US assets

PNS ■ WASHINGTON

President Donald Trump on Friday gave the Chinese company ByteDance 90 days to divest itself of any assets used to support the popular TikTok app in the United States.

Trump's executive order said there is "credible evidence that leads me to believe that ByteDance ... might take action that threatens to impair the national security of the United States."

Trump last week ordered sweeping but vague bans on dealings with the Chinese owners of TikTok and the messaging app WeChat, saying they are a threat to US national security, foreign policy and the economy.

It remains unclear what the TikTok orders mean for the app's 100 million US users, many of them teenagers or young adults who use it to post and watch short-form videos.

Trump on Friday also ordered ByteDance to divest itself of "any data obtained or derived" from TikTok users in the U.S.

Microsoft is in talks to buy parts of TikTok.

White House press secretary Kayleigh McEnany defended Trump's earlier



TikTok and WeChat orders Thursday, telling reporters he was exercising his emergency authority under a 1977 law enabling the president to regulate international commerce to address unusual threats.

"The administration is committed to protecting the American people from all cyber threats and these apps collect significant amounts of private data on users," said McEnany, adding that the Chinese government can access and use such data.

TikTok said it spent nearly a year trying to engage in "good faith" with the US government to address these concerns.

"What we encountered instead was that the Administration paid no attention to facts, dictated terms of an agreement without going through standard legal processes, and tried to insert itself into negotiations between private businesses," the company's statement said.

# Hit by rising iron ore pellet exports, steel makers seek PM's intervention

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Kolkata, Aug 14 (PTI) Secondary steel makers have sought Prime Minister Narendra Modi's intervention to resolve the issue of their raw material shortages due to surging exports of iron ore pellet to China, which, they term, is against the idea of Atmanirbhar Bharat or self-reliant India.

India's export of iron-ore to the neighbouring country during the first six months of the current fiscal was at 20 million tonne, an eight-year high, while the domestic secondary steel producers are facing a dearth of raw materials and rising prices of it, officials said on Friday.

The West Bengal Sponge Iron Manufacturers' Association had on Thursday written a letter to the prime minister to address the issue of increasing export of the raw material for the secondary steel products, an official of the industry body said.

"The association would draw your kind attention towards a massive increase in export of iron pellets with the sole purpose to get benefit from nil export duty," the let-



ter said. "Exporters are taking advantage of the drawback in the government's regulation. There is a 30 per cent export duty on iron ore but nothing is levied for shipment of pellets.

"They are converting iron ore fines to pellets and delivering it to China," the official said.

The iron ore pellet prices have shot up after the neighbouring country started importing the product in a big way, he claimed.

The price of iron ore pellet has increased from Rs 4,600 per tonne in April to Rs 7,600 per tonne in August this year, the industry sources said.

Recently, state-run NMDC

Ltd had hiked the iron-ore price by Rs 300 per tonne.

The secondary steel makers are facing a double whammy of sluggish demand in the wake of the coronavirus pandemic and shortage of key raw materials, the official said.

"The secondary steel industry is bleeding throughout India. We, at West Bengal, are most sufferers as there is no iron ore at our home state and have import dependency for coking coal. We are facing falling prices of steel and rising prices of iron ore due to mine closure for auction and massive increase in export of iron pellets," the association's president Shankarlal Agarwal said.

# Industry leaders hail PM's Digital Health Mission

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Industry leaders on Saturday said India's self-reliance will determine how high and strong the country's flag of freedom flies, and also welcomed Prime Minister Narendra Modi's announcement of National Digital Health Mission in his Independence Day speech.

In a tweet, Adani Group Chairman Gautam Adani said,

"Every Independence Day is a tribute to millions of sacrifices that earned us the freedom to be born and raised in a free country full of opportunities. From now on, our Atmanirbharta will determine how high and strong the flag of freedom flies. Happy



#IndependenceDay." Welcoming the National Digital Health Mission, Biocon CMD Kiran Mazumdar Shaw said it gives India's healthcare sector a digital backbone and it is vital to make a difference to India's healthcare sector. Deloitte India Partner and

Lifesciences and Healthcare Industry Leader Charu Sehgal said the mission can be a very significant development in moving India's healthcare system to the next level. "Most importantly, this will improve access by providing a big boost to consultation through telemedicine with specialist doctors for patients in smaller towns and remote locations," Sehgal stated.

# Stocks drift on Wall Street following latest run at record

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Wall Street is drifting on Friday after a report showed that sales for US retailers strengthened again last month, but by less than economists expected.

The S&P 500 was virtually unchanged in afternoon trading after earlier flipping between small gains and losses. The market is taking a pause after nearly erasing the last of the steep losses caused by the coronavirus pandemic. In each of the last two days,

the index made a brief run above its record closing high, which was set in February, only to fade in the afternoon. It's now 0.3 per cent below the record. The Dow Jones Industrial Average was up 41 points, or 0.1 per cent, at 27,937, as of 12:27 pm Eastern time, while the Nasdaq composite dipped 0.3 per cent.

Consumer spending is the main locomotive for the US economy, and Friday's report on trends for U.S. retailers showed some more improvement, though with caveats.

# 'Jio-RCom spectrum sharing deal not connected with AGR liability'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Reliance Jio's four-year-old telecom spectrum sharing deal with Reliance Communications (RCom) is not connected with the latter's past statutory dues that pertain to the period prior to 2016 when Jio wasn't even in operation, sources close to the company said.

A Supreme Court bench had on Friday sought to know why Reliance Jio Infocomm Ltd (RJIL) must not pay adjusted gross revenue (AGR) dues of Reliance Communications since it has been using the lat-



ter's spectrum since 2016.

A source, refusing to be quoted as the matter is sub-

judice, said RJIL in April 2016 entered into a pact to share a part of the spectrum held by

RCom and its unit Reliance Telecom Ltd (RTL).

The shared spectrum was limited to the 800 MHz band and was strictly in accordance with the Department of Telecom's (DoT) spectrum sharing guidelines. RCom's 2G, 3G and 4G spectrum in 1,800 MHz band are not being shared.

The AGR dues of RCom and RTL are in no manner connected with this shared spectrum, the source said, adding that the AGR has been paid by both RCom/RTL and RJIL on the revenue generated from the shared spectrum.

The AGR dues related to 2G/3G business of RCom/RTL which it was carrying out prior to 2016, the time when RJIL was not even operational, the source said. Not just RJIL, even Airtel had bought Aircel's 4G airwaves in the 2,300 MHz band and Videocon's 4G spectrum in the 1,800 MHz band through the spectrum trading route in 2016.

The source said the quantum of spectrum used by RJIL is around 38 per cent of the total spectrum currently held by RCom. RCom continues to hold spectrum in 900 MHz band, 1,800 MHz band, and

2100 MHz, which is not being shared with RJIL.

Over 85 per cent of the value of the shared spectrum has been already fully paid and realised by the government.

Moreover, the right to use 85 per cent of the shared spectrum value is expiring in July 2021.

Both RJIL and RCom continue to discharge in full their statutory liabilities in respect of revenue from the shared spectrum. Further, both the firms continue to pay additional spectrum usage charges to the government towards the spectrum sharing arrangement, sources added.



# When death is work

Their work is anything but ordinary, ensuring that man is sent on his final journey with dignity and respect. But COVID-19 changed all this and while the rest of the world is scared of this virus, these men continue to work for long hours risking themselves. SHALINI SAKSENA catches up with some of the warriors who face death every day



Mohammad Shamim and his co-worker prepare to lower the body at the Jadid Qabrastan Ahle Islam, ITO as family members wearing PPE kits look on; Pappu and Harendra incinerate a COVID-19 body at the electronic crematorium at Nigambodh Ghat, New Delhi



Photos: Ranjan Dimri/The Pioneer

## Staring at mortality everyday

Fear is a state of mind that can be overcome, say the two staffers Harendra and Pappu at the Nigambodh electric crematorium in New Delhi. For the duo, while the last four months have been tough given the risk they take every day when it comes to handling the bodies of the COVID-19 patients that come to the *ghat* but the dead need a proper send off even if the bags in which they come wrapped in can't be opened as per the Government guidelines.

"How will we do our work if we get scared and fear the virus? We stare at death all the time. Yes, the Coronavirus has put fear in the minds of the people but not in mine. I was a bit apprehensive but then I had to move past that fast. I got rid of it by burning it with the COVID-19 bodies. The dead coming to the ghat needed a proper send-off. How would that have got that if we shirked our work or decided not to do it?" 55-year-old Harendra asks who hails from Balia, in Uttar Pradesh.

He had come to the Capital in 1990 on the behest of his father-in-law with a promise of a job. For many years he worked making calendars with God and Goddess. But the work took toll on his health and decided to work elsewhere. This is when his brother-in-law told him about working at the crematorium.

"I took this job because it was safer. At the calendar making, I was ending up inhaling fumes and it affected my health. I have two sons and had to think about them decided to work elsewhere. That is how I ended up here. I like this job. Yes, some people give us strange looks and think that what we do is weird, but each person on earth has been chosen to do certain kind of work. This is what I have been chosen to do," Harendra says who stays with his family in Rohini and commutes on his bike.

He gets ₹16,000 as salary. "Besides this, sometimes people give us ₹100 or ₹200. But sometimes, there are people who are so poor that they can't afford a proper cremation for their loved one. In

INITIALLY, I WAS SCARED. I HAVE A MOTHER, WIFE AND THREE CHILDREN. WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THEM IF I TEST POSITIVE OR IF THEY DO? BUT NOW, WE HAVE LEARNT TO LIVE WITH THE VIRUS AND THE FEAR. I HAVE DONE THE SAME — PAPPU



Pappu and Harendra

that case, a few of us at the crematorium pitch and do the needful. Just because a person is poor doesn't mean that their dead need to be discarded," Harendra tells you.

For a long time, the duo continued to work without PPE kits. "We protected ourselves with what we had — a mask. There are some days when we end up with no PPEs. But I don't let that scare. I am doing God's work and I believe that He will protect me. Death is the only thing that is certain when we are born. Why should one fear it? We are born, we will all die. That is the truth," Harendra says.

For thirty-nine-year-old Pappu, fear was very real. "I was scared and didn't want to touch the COVID-19 bodies that came initially. The scare was what if I spread the disease to my family. I have a mother, wife and three small children. What will happen to them if I test positive or if they test posi-

itive? But humans are resilient. We have learnt to live with the virus and the fear that comes with it. I have done the same," Pappu says who is paid ₹12,000 as salary.

There is a silver lining that involves his work, he says. Last week he had got to know that his name had been nominated for an honour for this service during the lockdown period. However, he tells you that he has not got any letter stating the same. "It is good enough for me to know at least my name was nominated," he says, who has kept soap and an antiseptic solution at the ghat. I take a bath here before I leave for home. Once I reach home, I take a bath once again," Pappu says.

"Yes, the work that I do is risky, but how many people are honoured for their work by the President himself? I am lucky that I have been chosen for this honour," Pappu says.

## 'I had to quarantine myself to protect my family'

He used to drive a taxi in the Capital. However, a few years back, he had to take a tough call when his father who used to be the caretaker at the Jadid Qabrastan Ahle Islam in ITO, could no longer carry out his duties due to old age — whether he wanted to step into his father's shoes. Meet Mohammad Shamim, the present caretaker who has till now buried over 550 people in the 50-acres of the graveyard since the outbreak of COVID-19.

His wife was not happy with his decision and did try to persuade him otherwise given that they have four school-going daughters. But Shamim was adamant. "I just felt that this was the right thing to do. We are third generation caretakers. Mere dada karte the, phir mere valid aur ab main. When my father became too old to do the work himself I had a choice. But I felt it was my calling. Not everyone gets the opportunity to ensure that man on his final journey is sent with dignity and respect that he deserves. I like the work that I do. It brings me peace. Every person deserves a send-off; I am just glad that I have been chosen to do so," Shamim says.

He tells you that the *qabrastan* where he works belongs to a private committee and he is paid ₹100 for each body that he helps bury. But for the COVID-19 bodies, he is paid ₹1000 per day. Though the amount is not much, he says but he gets by since there is other work that he does at the graveyard.

While his committee doesn't provide PPE kits, it was much later that some journalists, some hospitals and even actor Vidya Balan after coming to know that Shamim was burying the dead with no PPE kit provided him with the necessary cover. But he tells you that it is not easy to wear the kit from 9 am in the morning till late evening.

"The doctors and staff working in the hospital have better, they work in an air-conditioned environ-



Mohammad Shamim

ment. My work entails me to be out the whole day in the blazing sun. It is not easy to wear the kit, the two masks, gloves and a face shield and that too with dignity and respect for the dead. I did what I had to do for my family and did my work. I ensured that the grave was dug to specification of three feet. I ensured that the body was lowered according to the specifications; I would then place a stone on the body and then the soil to finally cover the grave properly. Sometimes, there are people who don't want to touch the body and don't know what to do. In that case, I do the work for

them while the *maulvi* reads the," the 38-year old says.

For the COVID-19 bodies, he tells you there is a different protocol altogether. One can't remove the bag in which they come in, nor can one clothe them or wash them before burying. "In such a scenario, we have to ensure that the other rituals are followed to a T," Shamim tells you.

Though, it has been tough going but now that the deaths have reduced, he is thankful to God for his mercy. But he is unhappy with the way the administration has treated him. "We are a private committee. When I was told that I would be getting bodies from Government hospital, I told them I needed extra benefit. But they declined and said it was the Government's decision. The least they could have done was provide us with health insurance. But no, there is nothing for us. Here we are risking our lives; we are warriors too. Has anyone besides a half a dozen people done anything for those who are giving the dead their due? No. But it will not stop me from doing my work. Now, I just pray to God that I never get to see what I have seen in the last four months ever in my life again," Shamim says.

## Risky & tough, but work has to be done

While many of us are still staying indoors in order to protect ourselves from the pandemic that has claimed 6.98 lakh lives globally, there are some people who are putting their lives and their families at risk as they ferry COVID-19 patients to hospitals or the dead from the mortuary to the cremation grounds or graveyards. Mohammad Shamim, Harendra and Pappu are not the only ones who are putting their lives at risk.

Abhishek Sharma and his driver partner Anmol Sharma, the two ambulance and hearse drivers have been working for long hours as well.

Abhishek who has been driving the

ambulance for the last two years tells you that unlike those working at the crematoriums and graveyards, who didn't have PPEs to begin with, they had it a bit better and were provided the kits by their employers.

"There was no way that we would have been able to do our job properly and not succumb to the virus if we were not wearing the PPEs. Our employer, Rana Ambulance Services, gives this to us. The only problem is that we have to wear it from the time our duty starts till it ends. Sometimes, we get a breather for an hour or so, and we take it off," Abhishek says.

Like Shamim, he too, has quarantined himself from his family. I have a one-year-old



Deepak and Abhishek Sharma

can't risk my family. Once I am home, I retire into one room, away from my family. I don't want to give up my job even though their risks involved. It gives me a sense of pride that I am doing what others may consider too risky. For this I am willing to pay price — staying away from my baby and my friends keeping their distance due to the nature of my work — is a very small price that I am willing to pay," the 27-year-old who gets ₹15,000 as salary tells you.

His work, he tells you depends on the calls he gets from his employer who has tied-up with various hospitals in Delhi-NCR. "Sometimes, we drive the ambulance, sometimes the hearse. It also, depends on

our duty and shift. Our partners keep changing. Most days it is Anmol, Deepak and me. Sometimes, the duty changes," the Class XII pass out says.

Anmol Sharma, a Class XII pass out as well, came to know about this job from a friend who is also an ambulance driver and liked the job profile and applied for the same. He has now been with the company for a year-and-a-half. While, he has not quarantined himself, he ensures that he takes bath before he meets anyone. He even washes his clothes himself.

"I don't want anyone in my family to wash my clothes. What if I was carrying the virus? I drive COVID-19 positive people and

dead bodies of people with the disease. I like my job and don't want to give it up. But that doesn't mean that I won't protect my family, Sharma says.

Unlike Abhishek, his friends have not given up on him and don't have a problem with the work that he does. "My friends and family are fine with my job. They probably feel and think the way I do. This work brings me a sense of peace and joy. I like doing what I do. Yes, the work is tough and there are risks involved. But somebody has to get it done. Imagine what will happen if we refuse to do what we do? What will the families of the dead or the patients do?," Sharma asks. "This is where I come in," he says.







THE ONLY DIFFERENCE BETWEEN  
THE SAINT AND THE SINNER IS  
THAT EVERY SAINT HAS A PAST,  
AND EVERY SINNER HAS A FUTURE  
— OSCAR WILDE

Vijayawada, August 16, 2020

tarot 8



YOUR  
WEEK  
AHEAD



MADHU KOTIYA



**ARIES** March 21-April 19

This week your stamina and energy will be good. However, if you do face health challenges, then, follow a naturopathic or a homeopathic approach in your health regime. Childbirth for those who are due is on the cards. On the work front, things may not happen as per your expectations. If you are not happy with your job or are facing problems at work, know that there is a lot that you can do to improve your current environment. For one, try to adopt a positive mindset before making any decision. Others may oppose you, but that should not deter you from moving forward, as you have choices available. It's a loving time for you in your relationship. You and your partner will connect well.

**Lucky number** 20  
**Lucky colour** Mauve  
**Lucky day** Monday



**LEO** July 23-Aug 22

You might face some health challenges. Worrying unnecessarily is not going to help. Even in the face of serious problems, you need to hold your ground. A positive attitude will give you the motivation to do the right thing for your health. If the situation requires you to take medical tests, then go out and get them done from a trusted practitioner. Money is likely to come your way. Some of you may get surprised with an increase in your current pay or getting a promotion. This may be due to all the hard work you have put in, winning over all the challenges faced and accomplishing your goals. It's love for you this week. Positive emotional energy will be created between you and your partner, which will leave you feeling good about yourself and life in general.

**Lucky number** 3  
**Lucky colour** Pink  
**Lucky day** Sunday



**SAGITTARIUS** Nov 22-Dec 21

On the health front, the period has negatives in store for you. Those suffering from heart ailments and Blood Pressure may experience a major upheaval in health, which will shake you up. This has the potential to affect you spiritually, mentally and physically. So pay attention to what you are doing for your body. Stay positive and calm about the situation. Stress and anxiety with something relating to work are likely to affect you now. You tend to fear about the outcome of your career in the future. Crisis of employment, finances could be faced by some of you. Stay as adaptable and flexible to deal with it. This may be an emotional time in your relationship. Things are not what they appear to be. Take a break if you need it. Treat your partner as your friend.

**Lucky number** 19  
**Lucky colour** White  
**Lucky day** Tuesday



**TAURUS** April 20-May 20

You will be required to balance your health efforts with your personal and professional responsibilities. You are moving into a phase wherein you need to be patient and alert as you need to juggle between all aspects of your life. Be sure you are taking time out for your healing and relaxation. This is a very promising time for you in your career. Your mental abilities and intelligence is your great strength. You will finally be acknowledged for your efforts by others and be successful in achieving your goals. The success will instil immense confidence in your abilities. Ensure that you don't become arrogant due to this. The great time of love and solidarity is on the cards. Your relationship will strengthen more and some of you are likely to get into a stage of future commitment.

**Lucky number** 18  
**Lucky colour** Silver  
**Lucky day** Wednesday



**VIRGO** Aug 23-Sep 22

An increase in your health and vitality is seen. Those dealing with serious illness, a new and improved healing modality will come into your life. You are generous and have concern for others, but don't compromise on the health front. Nourish your body and mind. This is a good time to gather information on nutrition and exercise. Challenges and opposition might be faced this week, especially on the financial front. If you are not keeping track of your finances, and expenditures, it is likely that your budget may cross the limit. This is a time when you will feel that your long-term committed relationship has come a full circle. As a result, there is a sense of closure and fulfilment of what you desired. More love and gratitude will keep your good fortune going.

**Lucky number** 14  
**Lucky colour** Green  
**Lucky day** Thursday



**CAPRICORN** Dec 22-Jan 19

On the health front, you need to pay close attention to your emotions. There are chances that you are not at best when dealing with challenges. If you have found out that you have an ailment or are just awaiting test results then, instead of becoming negative get help by talking to someone. There may be information that you don't know about. On the work front, some of you have accomplished a lot of your goals and have attained great material wealth in the process. You may be financially stable at the moment. Some of you may have a hard time at your workplace. This may be due to your inflexible attitude wherein you are resistant to change your way of working. In your relationships, you should be clear about what you want and what your hopes and dreams are.

**Lucky number** 8  
**Lucky colour** Magenta  
**Lucky day** Friday



**GEMINI** May 21-June 20

Your health is good this week. You are in a stronger position now and can control what happens around you. Any efforts that you put towards the improvement of your health right now will bear fruit. The only thing that you need to be careful about is to attempt to try alternative ways to treat and deal with health challenges, if any. You need to pull up your sleeves on the career front. Some of you are going to experience a new beginning. Those looking for employment will be hired into a new position, which will test yours. Be on your toes and keep working hard. This can be a period of chaos and uncertainty in terms of a relationship. Believe in making a solid foundation, whether it is love or marital life.

**Lucky number** 17  
**Lucky colour** Green  
**Lucky day** Saturday



**LIBRA** Sep 23-Oct 22

When it comes to health, patience is the key. The expensive tests and diagnose system that have to undertake may cause a big hole in the pocket. If your health has been out of balance, then you need to act with greater foresight and wisdom. If you are awaiting test results, don't jump to conclusions and panic. Wait it out with courage. On the career front, a raise in your pay or a better position may come to you at this time. Some of you also feel a sense of accomplishment as you have been able to attain your goals after setbacks. You may find that others look up to you for guidance even before you are called upon to head a project or oversee a particular activity. If you are committed, you will move to the next level.

**Lucky number** 6  
**Lucky colour** Purple  
**Lucky day** Friday



**AQUARIUS** Jan 20-Feb 18

Your vitality is quite strong. This is an excellent time to make changes in your fitness plan as you will make more progress than imagined. You need to take care of channelling this energy in the right manner. Acting on an impulse of any sort may create health problems for you. Professionally, you are filled with analytical energies, how you speak your mind and conduct yourself is important at your workplace. You may find yourself in conflict and disagreeing with others. Choose your battles wisely rather than picking upon every disagreement. Don't let any emotional hurt of the past affect your relationship with your beloved. Know that there is a lot of love in your life and you must appreciate it otherwise it will slip away.

**Lucky number** 13  
**Lucky colour** Brown  
**Lucky day** Saturday



**CANCER** June 21-July 22

You need to keep your balance in every way. Those facing health challenges, know that things will get better. You are in a strong and stable frame of mind, wherein you know what you should do at this time. You may be faced with a dilemma or a situation at your workplace which requires immediate action or decision. It may be of importance and many options are available to you. However, you should analyse all the available information first before you finally come to a conclusion. Emotional as you are, you are filled with forceful energy which some people find abrasive. Beware the impulse to be too forceful. Your mother or a mother-like figure may interfere in your relationship, whether she means to or not.

**Lucky number** 12  
**Lucky colour** Peach  
**Lucky day** Tuesday



**SCORPIO** Oct 23-Nov 21

If you feel that something is amiss with your body, then you need to pay attention to your concerns. This is not the time to panic and to feel that you can't do anything about it. Trust your intuition and look for other ways for help. Take care of yourself with proper diet, rest and exercise. On the career front, the end of one thing to begin with new is indicated. Things may not be going as per your expectations at this time. Some of you may have faced or are facing challenges with something related to your work. You need to take a breather from the chaos around you because challenges will return as soon as you are ready to face them. This is a phase wherein you have an opportunity to improve your relationship with your partner.

**Lucky number** 15  
**Lucky colour** Sky Blue  
**Lucky day** Thursday



**PISCES** Feb 19-March 20

On the health front, your efforts are likely to bear fruit. You are in a position to control what happens around you. Another plus point is that you can take a long term view of things and look into the future. This will not only help you to improve your present health situation but also lay a strong foundation for it to be robust in the future as well. What you do at your workplace has consequences. You might be faced with a dilemma and a decision to make. Try to behave as reasonable as you can and consider what others want before you make a choice. It is a time of change on the relationship front. If you are committed and are experiencing problems with your partner then have an honest discussion so that each of you can work on changing certain aspects to keep it going.

**Lucky number** 11  
**Lucky colour** Beige  
**Lucky day** Sunday

Madhu Kotiya is a tarot card reader, spiritual healer, and Founder, MShezaim Institute of Tarot and Divination. Contact details: madhu@indiatarot.com, www.indiatarot.com, M: 9873283331



**ASTROTURF**  
BHARAT BHUSHAN PADMADEO

# Change for a better future

The world is subject to continued change. Every moment, energy dynamics of the cosmos keeps varying widely, and with related bearing on life cycle on earth. The callings of every moment, thus, keeps changing. We are witness to continued change in the societal dynamics, confronting us with fresh challenges, also unfolding fresh opportunities. Accordingly, we need to keep pace with the ongoing change — intelligently combat the challenges and try to grab opportunities arising. Otherwise, we may be left behind in the run of time. The irony, however, is that ordinarily, we remain fixated to our dream perceptions, habits and attitudes. So, we try to resist change, carrying assumed fear of its future ramifications.

We also need to be conscious about changing ourselves at individual level. For, we are born with an inherent urge to evolve, expand our vision in order to visualise things in the right perspective. Accordingly, articulate ways and means to work towards a better tomorrow. This, however, would not be forthcoming unless we identify and acknowledge our individualistic limitations — mental and emotional, habits and attitudes — and

address them through fresh educative inputs. Also identify our indwelling potential, hone it and then make the most out of it.

Many a times, we remain unaware of our inlaid potential, and so it remains untapped. A couple of years back a young lad came seeking guidance on his career prospects. He was advised to take up media related work as his strength point was communicative abilities and flair for language. He immediately retorted: "Sir, you have read me wrong. My language skill is not good and I wish to go for a managerial assignment. So, I am trying to get into a business school to acquire the necessary skill set required." I could make out that his preconditioned mind is not able to digest my advice. I then suggested: "Well, it is your prerogative what profession to opt for. But in any discipline, you will need language skill to conduct well. Together with your preparations for next entrance test for admission into a business school, why not work on your language skills also." That got registered in his mind. He immediately joined a media organisation as an intern, with the intent to improve his language skill. Within three months, the young man realised



that he could write well, and soon after got into journalism.

A couple of years back, a gentleman in his early forties came seeking guidance on two issues: "Sir, my domestic atmosphere is not good. Suggest me some *pujas* so that our family life improves. What is my growth potential in the present job?"

In so far as your wish to improve domestic atmosphere is concerned, you need to work upon your attitude, playing spoil sport with you so far. *Pujas* conducted by pundits can't bring about any change. "Is it possible to change my inborn nature?" He asked. "Remember, human beings enjoy the exclusive privilege to guide their actions by choice and discrimination. Your discriminatory ability helps you identify and acknowledge inherent infirmities. Following which, you can make a conscientious choice to bring about the desired change through fresh educative inputs." I responded.

About your career prospect, I see a change coming around 2019-20 under unforeseen circumstances. Better be on the lookout for alternative options available so that you land up in the right place. Otherwise, you may have to leave your job in a state of desperation. He again countered: "I am very comfortable

in my present organisation. My seniors appreciate my work, and I have been growing. Why should I think of moving away from such a comfortable work atmosphere?" "Well, time ahead will prove. The problem with you is your stubbornness and the wish to live on own exclusive terms. But the world doesn't always move to anybody's asking." I responded. No wonder, during the ongoing pandemic, his company became bankrupt, and he is without job. Having thus been proven right, he has again sought guidance.

Let us now look at the man's astrological pointers to his personality trends. Both the luminaries the Sun and Moon are in fixed signs making him stubborn. Mars in the 4th house conjunct Moon makes him irritable, in fact, 'My way or high way' is his attitude. Mercury placed adverse to Neptune holds the key to his insensible judgment. The result is there to see. The man's indwelling potential too is immense. It is still not late to address his inherent infirmities. Following which, his life may turn into a pleasant experience.

The writer is an astrologer, vastu consultant and spiritual counsellor. Connect with him at Tel: 91-11-9818037273/9871037272 Email: bharatbhushanpadmadeo@gmail.com



# the pioneer agenda

FROM THE INSIDE

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I think today women are very scared to celebrate themselves, because then they just get labeled  
- Charlize Theron



The COVID-19 pandemic has completely transformed how businesses carry out their day-to-day tasks, writes DINESH SHARMA, as he explains how digital transformation in corporate firms can support the work culture and team collaboration during this period



# DIGITAL BE THE WAY FORWARD

The whole world celebrated 2020 with a bang and everyone had exciting plans for their personal and professional endeavour. Came March 2020, Covid-19 changed life for everyone starting with a sudden complete lockdown forcing everyone stay at home but ensuring that they work from home and deliver the best despite pandemic and challenges of operating from home.

While every business had a "so called" Business Continuity or Disaster Recovery plan in place but Covid-19 lockdown was the father of all. A situation never happened, never thought about in 100 years. Everyone was sitting at home trying to figure out how to maintain sanity of working while at home connecting with colleagues, vendors, suppliers, employees, manager etc.

## WHAT IS DIGITISATION

In the current pandemic scenario, it means every business process of an organisation requires immediate conversion to digital mode to stay in business. Say for example, if banking transaction were done through visiting banks, in Covid-19 situation banking transactions needs to be done using net-banking. Or if the business was preparing invoices physically and sending it by courier to clients, during covid lockdown all invoices required to be prepared using digital solution, digital signature and sending it through emails. Take another example, if business meetings with clients, vendors, internal team which were happening physically, come pandemic, physical meetings are no more an option, so use of digital meeting options is only way out.

## HOW TO GO ABOUT DIGITISATION

That's an interesting topic. Struggling with lockdown, the CEO gives target to all business heads and CIO to digitise everything. That can be really disastrous. I would also like to caution here that digitisation has to be done in very systematic and gradual way. It is just not possible to digitise everything by approving a financial budget and giving mandate to all functions. Many companies burn their fingers losing lot of money, efforts and drive due to failed digitisation attempts. One must start with non-critical processes, function and implementation also to be done only for one or two division to start with instead of going across. Companies also make the mistake of building software in-house. Now, that's a terrible mistake. Now-a-days there are many good Enterprise Product SaaS companies having products very much in line of specific business need which comes at almost at 5% of cost of building in-house. In addition, Enterprise Product companies are very focussed and come with best practices, innovative solutions, state-of-art technology, seamless product support and feature upgrades which is not possible for in building in-house or making tailor made product. It's important to be very careful while selecting technology partner so one can do a reference check from existing client and ensure security certification (like ISO). It definitely helps in building trust.

While it is always good to subscribe to readily available SaaS solutions in the market, however, just to test the waters, there are free tools available for basic digital solutions which allow users to get a feel of the solution and whether it would really solve the problem. Many a times, a lot of businesses purchase a technology solution or build solutions, however, they end up not using the solution



THE WHOLE CONCEPT OF DIGITISATION HAS TO BE IMBIBED INTO THE DNA OF THE ORGANISATION AND SHOULD BE EMBRACED ACROSS. IF SENIOR MANAGEMENT DOES NOT GET ACCUSTOMED TO DIGITAL PLATFORMS AND EXPECTS THE WHOLE ORGANISATION TO ADOPT DIGITAL PLATFORMS TO PERFORM OFFICE WORK, IT WILL BE HIGHLY INEFFICIENT AND INEFFECTIVE



either due to the choice of wrong partner, not been able to spend enough time in scoping the technology solution or clear intent issue which means resistance to change.

## WHY TECHNOLOGY FAILS

Some businesses use technology firms to build customised solutions like Invoicing Solution, CRM Solutions, Contract Management Solution which comes with its own perils like you end up spending 20 times money and ultimately realising the product which got build has taken into consideration an idealistic scenario with advance level of digitisation. Life does not really move that way. It is critical that a strategic initiative group should be formed for digitisation purposes with clear agenda, roadmap and responsibilities fixed. At times it happens that Strategy and Innovation along with CIO decides on one technology for a business function which do not take into account real life situation resulting in complete waste of money spent.

## MANAGING STAKEHOLDERS INTERNALLY

Digitisation & Technology deployment in business can not be done by one person. Taking all stakeholders on-board and ensuring the product meets expectation makes a lot of difference. In any business, normally CIO, CFO, Business Head and Strategy & Innovation Head are relevant stakeholders for a high level decision making process. Once the business decides to go for technology solution, the real stakeholders are business users, technology team to ensure that the product is in line with business expectation and it gets installed within the organisation without any major change management. The whole process has to be coordinated and require acceptance from all stakeholder.

Another important thing is digitisation should also be done based on level of readiness. Say for example, if you plan for digitisation of invoicing function, it's ideal and simple to remove print, sign and despatch steps. So you can make invoice as per normal process, use any of digital signing functionality using Digital Signature (Dongle) or Aadhar Sign feature to sign and email the Invoice from your official email ID. This is very basic process but will help the organisation reduce at least five days of time and cost of despatch and invoice printing to zero and improve collection time.

## GLOBAL TRENDS

Globally, digitisation and using technology solution has been a way of life. For example, while in India many businesses still do not use technology for invoicing, contract management, CRM and business operations work-flow, in countries like US, UK, Europe and Australia, the level of digitisation has been very high. The reason for this is high cost labour, availability of

skilled labour, value for technology and long term business vision. Globally, businesses go for ready SaaS products for CRM, Contract Management Software, HRM Software and ERP unless the business is fairly big and has complex processes, which require specialised technology solution. Even for those companies, they first start with basic level of technology solution and gradually move to moderate and advance level automation.

## COVID PANDEMIC ACCELERATED THE DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION JOURNEY

The COVID-19 pandemic has completely transformed how businesses carry out their day-to-day tasks. Every aspect of business is getting digitised and digital channels have become the sole media of communication for some. Every business was seemingly forced to accelerate itself as the digital strategy was still a part of the corporate world that had the potential to become a primary in the future. Businesses that were already thriving seemed to have seamlessly converted their channels of communication online after a point of time, yet most businesses are still struggling to keep up with the pace. Digital workplace has become the new normal.

This digital transformation in the coronal era caused businesses in almost all industries to leap over several hurdles in a short time. It demanded business owners familiarise themselves with the digital world as quickly as possible and forced them and their employees to learn new skills on an alien medium. This ongoing process has led to several changes in the work culture and team collaboration of businesses.

## QUICK DIGITISATION FOR MAXIMUM INSTANT GAINS

It is important for businesses to make sure that the working of the business can continue smoothly. So certain ready solution which are useful for key business function and easy to deploy can work really wonders. For example, board meeting management software having video-conference facility in-built, provide several benefits to the company and help it to flawlessly communicating amongst one another. Using these services could prove useful to companies in these uncertain times and can also allow people to support other upcoming businesses. Same solution can be used to conduct senior management meeting or collaborative meeting with stakeholders from multiple businesses across geographies. These solutions can be customised according to the company's specific needs, which can further improve the efficiency of the business.

Similarly, concerning the issue of physical documents and digital documents, digitising the paperwork is unavoidable. Replacing physical documents has been an issue for a while now,

however, this is the perfect time for companies to shift to electronic documents. Using digital documents also help reduce the spread of covid and ensure a safer working environment.

To improve efficiency in this aspect as well, companies can use solutions such as Contract Lifecycle Management (CLM) as they can be customised to fit the business and can greatly improve the working of the business by alerting the business for any risks in the contract. A CLM software allows an organisation to manage all its contracts on cloud and easily communicate with all its stakeholders in one place. Such software are not only necessary in this coronal era, but can improve productivity and profitability of a business.

Digitisation of businesses has significant positive outcomes for businesses. Digital businesses empower employees through transparency, learning opportunities, and open communication. If the communication channels are well organised and are familiarised with the workforce, it can allow everyone involved in the company to be informed about the decision with just one click.

Unlike the usage of emails as we did pre-corona, a communication channel allow information to be without any disruption. Employees can be anywhere in terms of location but they can collaborate and discuss using meeting tools like Zoom, Microsoft Team or Google Meet. The concept of office is slowly fading away. The cost elements have changed and spending is more into digital assets like software solution for business function, cloud storage, cyber security, data protection insurance cost is being replaced for earlier cost elements such as infrastructure costs, rental, office maintenance cost, travel cost etc.

Usage of the previously mentioned services involving board meeting management can also ensure that all members are kept up to date with the workings of the business. Moreover, to replace the informal interactions that took place in the workplace, workers can virtually talk in the middle of meetings to discuss their achievements and how they have been adjusting to the world after the pandemic. Since they are not in the physical workplace, they can also take breaks to interact with their family, which could ease their mental stress in between meetings.

The whole concept of digitisation has to be imbibed into the DNA of the organisation and should be embraced across. If senior management does not get accustomed to digital platforms and expects the whole organisation to adopt digital platforms to perform office work, it will be highly inefficient and ineffective. If businesses are successfully able to implement these changes and utilise this digital transformation, it can help them improve team collaboration and support the work culture.

The writer is CEO & Founder, Volody







# Forget Chai, it's monsoon

# cocktail hours



With Unlock 3.0 gaining momentum, gatherings with friends and socialising in limited numbers is a welcome relief. After months of sheltering, keep spirits high with these refreshing cocktails to top the list of hosts amongst your crew.

## Lime Mojito



### WHAT YOU NEED:

- 1 Parts Absolut Lime
- 1 Lime Juice
- Simple Syrup
- Soda Water
- 1 Mint Leaf
- 1 Wedge Lime
- Crushed Ice

### HOW TO MIX

- Fill a highball glass with crushed ice. Add Absolut Lime, lime juice and simple syrup. Muddle. Top up with soda water.
- Garnish with a mint leaf and a lime wedge.

## Jameson Spicy Hot Toddy



### WHAT YOU NEED:

- 1 part Jameson Irish Whiskey
- 3 parts water
- 0.25 parts Honey
- 0.5 parts Lemon
- 0.5 parts Sriracha
- Ginger, sliced

### HOW TO MIX

- Add water, honey, sriracha, and sliced ginger pieces to a small saucepan and bring to a low simmer and stir to combine. Let simmer for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally. Add Jameson and lemon juice and simmer for an additional 3 minutes. Pour into mugs and add a lemon slice and garnish with a thin ginger slice.

## Monkey 47 Gin Julep



### WHAT YOU NEED:

- 5 cl Monkey 47 Schwarzwald Dry Gin
- 1 cl simple syrup
- 5 mint leaves

### HOW TO MIX

- Muddle all ingredients, shake it with ice cubes and double-strain into a silver mug filled with crushed ice.
- Garnish it with a mint leave.

## DELECTABLE FOODSCAPES:

# GET FAMILIAR WITH SOUTH AFRICA'S INDIGENOUS CUISINE



Food is invariably a universal connector — however, experiencing and sharing in the food of a different land is a very personal experience.

As early merchants and travellers navigated the globe, they not only bought back home goods and ideas, but also recipes, spices and edible ingredients, which they then customized and further cultivated.

Interestingly, South Africa's delicious signature dish — the Bunny Chow (also simply known as the 'bunny'), has Indian origins. The dish consists of a hollowed-out loaf of white bread filled with meat or vegetable curry. This dish, though rare in India, is extremely popular with the locals of the Rainbow Nation. In fact, each year in September the 'Bunny Chow

Barometer', which attracts numerous entrants from across the Durban Metro region to compete for the title of top bunny maker, is held in Durban.

Other delicacies include, traditional African food cooked over an open fire or in a three-legged pot (or potjie), morogo (type of wild spinach), chakalaka (a spicy relish served alongside a main course), and the ubiquitous boerewors roll (a variety of spicy sausage).

Vegetarians will find a wide range of appetizing food options such as veg bobotie (a national dish of South Africa, which is a delicious mixture of curried vegetables, spices, fruits and nuts with a creamy golden topping, that add to its complex flavor), pampoenkoekie (light, fluffy and literally melt in your mouth pumpkin fritters) and pap tart (Pap, also known as



mieliepap, is the Afrikaans word for porridge, typically prepared with corn-maize).

Before the coronavirus pandemic resulted in shutting down of borders, South African food trails were hugely popular among visitors. In South Africa, a typical food trail would include a few must-have experiences like wine tasting, Bunny Chow sampling, coffee tasting at a local roaster, walking

tours of food gardens, visits to ethical butcheries, spice shops and quaint chocolate factories.

Since a significant number of Indian travellers are vegetarian, South Africa offers a vegetarian adaption/variation to nearly every local South African dish, whether it is Bunny Chow or the traditional braai — this resonates well with Indian travellers on food trails.

With the rise of halal consciousness, the destination has also increased efforts to make restaurants across the food trail halal friendly. Wine, and wine trails in particular, have also become an enormous part of the South African experience.

We can't wait for borders to open, and for us to have an authentic South African dining experience!



# Bold, beautiful and decisive!



Jeevitha and Rajasekhhar on their wedding day in 1991

Her roles in *Thalambralu*, *Ahuthi*, *Ankusham* and other films endeared her to audiences in the Telugu states and made her a household name. Jeevitha Rajasekhhar soon became known for her homely look. But behind the homely appearance is a person with nerves of steel, as the world soon realised. Her involvement with Dr Rajasekhhar was the talk of the town during the 1980s, especially in the Telugu and Tamil film fraternities. In a free-wheeling conversation with **THE PIONEER**, she speaks to **K RAMYA SREE** about her childhood, her dream of becoming a doctor, marriage, movies, parenting, and more...



## Star student...

I was a studious child. I was the topper in my school and the head girl as well. I also played cricket and represented my school. I used to participate in everything. I was quite eloquent as well and would give speeches in my school on all occasions. We used to live in a rented house and I and my siblings used to steal mangoes from the tree in my house owner's garden. Whenever I see a mango tree, I always remember those days.

## Born in AP, brought up in Chennai...

I was born in Tadepalligudem of West Godavari district. My father, Ramanadham, was a health inspector working with the government of undivided Andhra Pradesh. Because of his work he had to move around different districts, hence, all the four siblings along with my mom, Shakuntala Devi, shifted to Chennai for our education to live with our grandparents. My grandfather used to work with the late NT Rama Rao *garu*, so they lived in Chennai. Later, my father too shifted to Chennai and got into film production and my elder sister too started acting in movies.

## I used to feel I'm not beautiful...

I was not passionate about acting in my childhood. I always used to feel that my elder and younger sisters were the good looking ones and that I wasn't beautiful or attractive. I was more into education.

## When I was stopped by T Rajendar *garu*...

When I was in Class 8 or 9, filmmaker T Rajendar *garu* saw me while I was walking to my friend's place near Vani Mahal. He stopped me on the road and asked about my whereabouts, interests, and where I lived. He asked me if I was interested in acting. I didn't respond then. The next day when I told this in my school, my teachers got excited and asked me why I didn't say yes. I didn't know how successful a filmmaker T Rajendar *garu* was then. After I finished my +1, I was surprised to see him at my home along with his assistant. He told my parents it would be nice if I act in his upcoming film. My parents left the choice to me. That's how I ended up in films. It was a shocker to me. I never thought I would act.

## Meeting Rajasekhhar *garu*...

In one of my Tamil films, Rajasekhhar *garu* was one of the heroes. That's when I first saw him. I heard he was a doctor and that naturally carried a kind of respect towards him. We shot for one day and the next day he disappeared.

## Wanted to be a doctor...

I always wanted to be a doctor as a child. I took up BiPC in my 11th standard. Five days into the course, we were taken to the lab for our practicals. We were asked to pin a cockroach for dissection. I ran from the lab and landed in my principal's room and started crying. I told her I couldn't dissect the cockroach and pleaded with her to shift my group. I ended up doing commerce. But as a child, I was very passionate about becoming a doctor. God is great I got married to a doctor.

## Signed 10 films before 1st one-hit screens...

There were other reasons for me to choose acting as my full-time career. My father produced a film and we lost a lot of money on it. We were going through a rough patch then. Funding our education too became difficult for my father. I

Three days later, he was replaced by another actor. *Thalambralu* happened right after this film. When I met him on the sets, I asked why he quit the other film. The director and producer of the Tamil film asked Rajasekhhar *garu* how he found me. He said, she is homely and might not suit the character. So the director replaced him instead of me in the film (laughs). Rajasekhhar *garu* and I became good friends during the making of *Thalambralu*, later our friendship grew and we fell in love.

## Living with in-laws before marriage...

We had a lot of issues from Rajasekhhar *garu*'s family. His mom didn't approve of our marriage. She agreed to him acting on one condition that he shouldn't get married to an actress. He comes from a well-read family of doctors, lawyers, and engineers at home. Since Rajasekhhar *garu* didn't want to go against his mother, we waited for quite a long time before

moment in my life.

## Our relationship was the talk of the town...

Our relationship was quite open. It was a shocker for the entire industry back then as we would roam together and I would accompany Rajasekhhar *garu* on all his trips. During interviews when people asked him if he would marry me, he would say that he would marry somebody his parents approved. That shocked everybody. My mother was a little apprehensive then because of Rajasekhhar's answers. I convinced my mom that even if I don't marry him, we would end up remaining good friends and I have thought over it and taken the decision. Now, when I think about it, I feel I was quite bold.

## I believe in friendly parenting...

I am a very friendly mother. I don't believe in strict parenting. We should compare our mindset with our children



Jeevitha and family with Prime Minister Narendra Modi

used to be the last person to pay my fee in the class. To make some money to help my family, I took up acting. Since I was introduced by T Rajendar, I was signed by other production houses for 10 other films before his movie was even released.

we tied the knot. He struggled a lot to convince his mother. He even met some other girls as his mother wanted. During such a phase, he met with a major accident during the making of *Magadu*. His parents were out of town then. I stayed with him in the hospital. By the time his parents got back, the surgery was done. Everything changed within this one month and his parents started liking me. They took me to their house directly from the hospital and I started living with my in-laws even before my marriage. At the same time, I lost my father. After staying with his parents for almost a year, we got married in 1991. My marriage remains the most emotional

when you are at their age. Right from education to clothing to food, you have to think about them from their point of view. Unless they experience, they will not learn. Of course there are some things they should not experience. One should build a friendly relationship with one's children to make them understand that some things are wrong and are better avoided. If you build a vacuum where they feel your parents don't understand you, they start hiding stuff from you. I strongly believe we should create a friendly space where they can discuss and share anything and everything with us. I would love to give this advice to all the parents out there.

## Debut in Telugu...

After one year or so of my debut in Tamil, I got an offer for *Thalambralu* in Telugu. MS Reddy *garu* and Shyam Prasad *garu* saw my photograph on a magazine cover in Tamil and called me for an audition. MS Reddy *garu* gave me full-page dialogue and asked me if I can read Telugu language. Later, I signed *Thalambralu* and it was a big hit back then. Many films came my way in Telugu after that one after the other. I worked with Rajasekhhar *garu* in *Thalambralu* and also in the next 10 to 15 films. Of these, eight movies ran for over 100 days. Two or three years before my wedding in 1991, I stopped acting.

## Returning to Bathula Jatka Bandi...

After a very long time, I put on some makeup again for *Bathuku Jatka Bandi* in Zee Telugu. I did that show for a year and never thought it would gain so much popularity not only in the Telugu states but abroad as well. Even after quitting the show, I got a lot of calls from viewers seeking my counsel. When we went to the US while I was doing the show, I had people telling me to do the show there. Also, I took up this show as a challenge to share with at least a fraction of the people what life is. Of late, trolling has increased for these shows after similar shows started on other channels. It became a big joke then and that's one of the reasons I quit. I read a lot of comments where people call the show fake or we are paying people to sit and share a scripted story. NO! That's not true. Whosoever is passing such comments, through this medium, I request them all to come to the shoot, watch the entire episode to understand that it is real. I'm ready to face any challenge to prove what we are doing is right and there is nothing called fake or a created story.



With daughters Shivani, mother-in-law, Shivatika, and husband Rajasekhhar