



the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com



What went wrong for Balu?

NAVEENA GHANATE
■ HYDERABAD

Centenarians have survived Covid-19. Several high-profile persons infected with coronavirus, including those aged above 65 years with comorbidities, have beaten the dreaded virus. For instance, 77-year-old Amitabh Bachchan could defeat Covid-19. Yet, unfortunately 74-year-old S P Balasubrahmanyam succumbed to post Covid-19 complications. Noticeably, while most bigwigs in this category were not entirely in Intensive Care Unit (ICU), Balu was in ICU for 42 days.



and health declined further. The very next day he was put on ventilation.

According to a doctor at MGM, Balu was given plasma therapy as well as medications like remdesivir, steroids and drugs to prevent blood clots. Apart from ventilator support, doctors added another mechanical support system – extracorporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) the same day.

Doctors opine that it is an individual's immune response system that is important in curing any infection and age is not just the only factor.

"Age is one factor, but comorbidities and the severity of the infection are also important factors that we cannot ignore", said a doctor on condition of anonymity.

The fateful event...

HYDERABAD: Even as millions of Balu's fans are yet to come to terms with his departure, those in the know of how and why he contracted Covid-19 are blaming the organisers of the show that could have definitely waited. They say disregard of Covid-19 precautions by those behind the show was one of the main reasons why the legendary singer is no longer with us. He had participated in shootings continuously in July. According to singer Malavika, 'Samajavaragamana' SP Balu garu's episode was shot on July 30th with many singers like Hemachandra, Anudeep, Pranavi and Lipsika and on 31st with Karunya, Damini, Satya Yaminini, Vasa Pavani and Malavika.

"I planned to be an engineer. Then music turned the course of my life. I realised I should not plan and let things play out for me," Balu had said in an interview, suggesting the truth behind the proverb 'Man proposes, God disposes'. In a strange coincidence, his end too came in a similar manner, after his reassuring message to countless fans. In a video clip recorded soon after he was hospitalised, he said addressing his anxious fans: 'I have mild symptoms... I will return from hospital in two days. Nothing to worry'. But as fate would have it, the legendary singer succumbed to the pandemic.

KING OF MELODY GOES SILENT

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Celebrated playback singer S P Balasubrahmanyam, who held sway over millions of fans with his golden voice for over five decades, died on Friday at hospital here where he was treated for COVID-19 since last month, the hospital said.

The 74-year old singer, whose condition became extremely critical on Thursday, breathed his last at 1.04 pm, a statement from MGM Healthcare, where he was admitted on August 5 after testing positive for COVID-19, said.

However, the hospital said he had tested negative for COVID-19 on September 4.

A six-time national award winner, Balasubrahmanyam, who had sung over 40,000 songs, was also honoured with



Padma Shri in 2001 and Padma Bhushan in 2011. He is survived by wife, a son and a daughter. Announcing the death of SPB, as he was popularly known, his son and filmmaker S P Charan told reporters that his father's songs would live forever in the hearts of his fans. Charan thanked all those who had prayed for the recovery of his father and the doctors, nurses and the admin-

istrative staff of the hospital for their attempts to save him. A statement from MGM Healthcare said: "In a further setback this morning, despite maximal life support measures and the best efforts of the clinical team, his (Balasubrahmanyam's) condition deteriorated further and he suffered a cardio-respiratory arrest." With profound grief, we regret to inform that he

“With the unfortunate demise of Shri SP Balasubrahmanyam, our cultural world is a lot poorer. A household name across India, his melodious voice and music enthralled audiences for decades. In this hour of grief, my thoughts are with his family and admirers. Om Shanti.

— NARENDRA MODI, Prime Minister

“The void created by SPB death can never be filled. It was unfortunate that the best efforts put in by the doctors to save his life did not succeed, condolences to members of the bereaved family.

— K CHANDRASEKHAR RAO, Chief Minister

passed away at 13.04 hours," it said. The hospital extended its condolences to his family, friends and well wishers.

The hospital noted that from August 14 the singer was put on life support measures -ventilator and extracorporeal mem-

brane oxygenation support- in view of 'severe COVID-19 pneumonia.' He continued to be closely monitored by our multi-disciplinary team in the critical care unit. He tested negative for COVID-19 on September 4," it added.

'Two days' that turned eternal

PNS ■ CHENNAI

"I am perfectly alright... in two days I will be discharged and I will be home..." was what veteran playback singer S P Balasubrahmanyam said in his last public video message last month on his admission to a hospital after testing positive for coronavirus.

Fate had it otherwise and the singer died on Friday, after a grim 52-day battle for life though he was found negative for the virus early this month.

In a video clip, on his admission to the MGM Healthcare on August 5, Balasubrahmanyam, popularly known as SPB, said he had a little discomfort, chest congestion, cold and "on and off fever" for sometime.

"It's a mild, mild, very mild positive of corona, (doctors said) you can stay home and quarantine yourself and take medication," he had said.

SPB had said he chose to get admitted in hospital since the



family was concerned and also to take rest without disturbance and follow medication. He had expressed confidence that he would be back home in about two days and said "I am perfectly alright but for the cold. I am fine and I will be fine."

However, his health suffered a sudden setback and his condition turned critical on August 13, prompting the doctors to put him on life support, which continued till his end on Friday.

Last rites at farm house today

PNS ■ CHENNAI

The cremation of legendary playback singer SP Balasubrahmanyam, who passed away on Friday afternoon, will take place at his farmhouse in Red Hills on the outskirts of Chennai on Saturday.

Why Covid is life-threatening for some?

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

When two brothers fell critically ill with COVID-19 around the same time in March, their doctors were baffled. Both were young -- 29 and 31 years old -- and healthy. Yet within days they couldn't breathe on their own and, tragically, one of them died.

Two weeks later, when a second pair of Covid-stricken brothers, both in their 20s, also appeared in the Netherlands,

geneticists were called in to investigate. What they uncovered was a path leading from severe cases, genetic variations, and gender differences to a loss of immune function that may ultimately yield a new approach to treating thousands of coronavirus patients.

The common thread in the research is the lack of a substance called interferon that

helps orchestrate the body's defense against viral pathogens and can be infused to treat conditions such as infectious hepatitis. Now, increasing evidence suggests that some Covid-19 patients get very ill because of an impaired interferon response. Landmark studies published Thursday in the journal Science showed that insufficient interferon may lurk at a

dangerous turning point in SARS-CoV-2 infections.

"It looks like this virus has one big trick," said Shane Crotty, a professor in the Center for Infectious Disease and Vaccine Research at the La Jolla Institute for Immunology in California. "That big trick is to avoid the initial innate immune response for a significant period of time and, in particular, avoid an early type-1 interferon response."

Cong, Left stage protests in TS

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Left parties and Congress on Friday staged protests in Telangana as part of the nation-wide agitation against contentious farm bills passed by the Parliament. The CPI and CPI-M, their affiliated organisations, All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) and other farmers' bodies held a protest in Hyderabad.

Holding their respective party flags, dozens of activists participated in the protest held at Ayakaar Bhavan in the heart of the city. Raising slogans against the Centre and holding placards, the protesters including women sat in front of the Income Tax office.

Bihar polls in three phases from Oct 28

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Voting for Bihar assembly elections will be held in three phases on October 28, November 3 and November 7 in one of the biggest elections globally during the COVID-19 pandemic, followed by counting of votes on November 10, the Election Commission announced on Friday.

Announcing the poll schedule for the 243-member Bihar assembly, Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora said voting will begin as usual at 7 am but the period will be extended by one hour until 6 pm, except in the Left Wing Extremism-affected areas, so that COVID-19 patients can vote in the last hour of the day.



"The world has changed significantly since the last major election in our country, which was held for Delhi assembly, and the COVID-19 pandemic has forced a new normal in every aspect of our life.

"Bihar assembly polls will be one of the biggest elections globally to be held during prevailing COVID-19 situation," Arora said.

Bars, clubs opened in Telangana after six months

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana State government on Friday issued orders permitting reopening of bars with immediate effect under certain conditions after a gap of over six months. The orders issued by Chief Secretary Somesh Kumar permitted all bars, clubs, including those in tourism spots, to open and operate right away. The bars and clubs have remained shut since mid-March due to corona-induced lockdown.

KBR and 32 Urban forest parks to open today

HYDERABAD: Two days after the High Court nudged the state government over keeping the parks shut, the Telangana government clarified that the 'Parks belonging to local bodies and Forest department are no more under the prohibited list of activities'. P KBR National Park and 32 other Urban Forest Parks across the state will reopen from Saturday. Telangana government gave orders to Municipal, Forest and Panchayat departments to reopen parks as they're not prohibited in latest unlock rules. Meanwhile the Hyderabad Zoo Park will reopen on



October 6. Zoo officials are clearing up water stagnation during the rains and clean up the park thoroughly before reopening. Minister for Forests Indrakaran Reddy said that all urban forest parks will be available to the public from Saturday and urged the City and town dwellers are advised to take advantage the lung spaces.

Rakul Preet questioned for 4 hours

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Actor Rakul Preet Singh was questioned for four hours in Mumbai today in a drugs case linked to actor Sushant Singh Rajput's death. She was to be questioned by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) yesterday, but it was deferred to Friday after she claimed she had not received "the alleged summons".

"Rakul Preet Singh's statement was recorded by the SIT (special investigation team) today. It will be analysed and produced before court," NCB Director General Mutha Ashok Jain said.

TRS-MIM explore 'Delhi formula' to check BJP

L VENKAT RAM REDDY
■ HYDERABAD

The ruling TRS and its friendly party AIMM are learnt to have devised a 'joint strategy' to win the upcoming GHMC polls and to prevent BJP from polarising votes on religious lines.

Towards this end, the two parties are mulling the adoption of the 'Delhi Assembly elections formula' or the strategy that the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) successfully adopted, resulting in its resounding victory in the Delhi Assembly polls in February this year.

It may be mentioned here

that AAP had deliberately ignored anti-CAA protests at Shaheen Bagh and elsewhere in Delhi, and, by doing so, it successfully nixed BJP's plans to polarise voters on religious lines. Thus, AAP proved that sometimes it pays to be silent.

In a comparable situation, ever since Karimnagar MP Bandi Sanjay took over as BJP Telangana unit president in March this year, he has been trying hard to project TRS-AIMM friendship as an 'anti-Hindu' factor. Hardly a day passes without Sanjay attacking the 'friendship' between TRS and AIMM.

Honour killing in Hyd city sends shockwaves

■ Girl's parents conspire to kidnap, kill the newlyweds ■ Contract killers eliminate boy

DURGAPRASAD SUNKU
■ HYDERABAD

The boy, Hemanth, is from Vaishya community and the girl, Avanthi, from Reddy community. After being in love for eight years, they married on the sly on June 11th this year and decided to face their elders only after getting hold of the papers of their civil marriage from the registrar's office at Qutubullapur.

The newlyweds, in order to insulate themselves from trouble like the sensational 2018 honour killing of Pranay Kumar in Miryalaguda, had

even approached Cyberabad Police Commissioner VC Sajjanar, who directed the Chandanagar Police to counsel the parents since the boy and the girl were

major. Separately Avanthi had sought police protection from the Chandanagar Police during her initial days of wedded life.

In spite of all this, on Thursday night, contract killers, with help from relatives of the girl's parents, strangled and killed Hemanth on the outskirts of the city, triggering public outrage over yet another honour killing in the city. The worst part is that this time the killing took place despite prior intimation to the police of the inter-caste couple's threat perception.

GIRL'S CRY: WHEN WILL PEOPLE LEARN LESSONS?

Standing distraught on the premises of Osmania General Hospital, where her husband's body had been brought for post-mortem, ChintaAvanthi questions: "What type of love is it? What happened to Maruti Rao (main accused in the Miryalaguda honour killing case)? I thought people will learn at least from the experience of Maruthi Rao? Is this the way to



show love? My family has betrayed me.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:
Ashwin (Adhik) & Shukla Paksha
Panchangam

Tithi: Navami: 06:43 pm
Nakshatram: Purva Ashadha: 06:31 pm
Time to Avoid: (Bad time to start any important work)

Rahukalam: 10:37 am – 12:07 pm
Yamagandam: 03:06 pm – 04:36 pm

Variyam: 02:49 am – 04:29 am,
12:00 am – 05:31 am
07:38 am – 09:08 am

Gulika: 07:38 am – 09:08 am

Good Times: (to start any important work)
Amritakalam: 01:38 pm – 03:16 pm
Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:43 am – 12:31 pm

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Thunderstorm
Temp: 29/22
Humidity: 64%
Sunrise: 06:05 am
Sunset: 06:09 pm
Current Weather Conditions
Updated September 24, 2020 5:00 PM



In a recent study, Assistant Professor Guo Xu, at the University of California (Berkeley) has assessed the performance of Indian and British district offices during the 1918 influenza pandemic. For this he examined mortality records of 1,271 districts (towns) during 1910-25. He found that death rates in these towns were nearly equal in towns led by Indian and British district officers before and after the Spanish flu pandemic. However, districts manned by Indian officers reported 15 percent fewer deaths, as compared to their British counterparts. Additionally, lower mortality rates were not related to differences in the qualifications or experience of Indian officers. Furthermore, differences in mortality effects were not due to differences in hospital admissions, capacity, treatment success and expenditures during the pandemic

Covid 19: Importance of role-based tactics

The Indian and the British district officers handled their task in different ways. The British officers went about their tasks by relying on rules, while the Indian officers adapted rules to the role they were expected to discharge. The rule-based tactics are founded on the classical model proposed by German sociologist Mark Weber. In a 1953 study, Paul Appleby identified the following aspects of a rule-based approach - preferring "technique over purpose", always trying to find a "wholly scientific or technical and wholly right decision" and conceiving programme planning to be a "mechanical, merely technical, unvarying" activity. On the other hand, the role-based approach is found-

Furthermore, differences in mortality effects were not due to differences in hospital admissions, capacity, treatment success and expenditures during the pandemic years

ed on the assumption that events in real-life are unpredictable and district officers make decisions under conditions of uncertainty and instability. This is more so in black swan events (rare occurrences), such as pandemics. Past trends do not provide a reliable guide to the future. District officers have to manage the present as it unfolds or a cross the river by feeling the pebbles under one's feet. Crossing a river by feeling the stones under one's feet requires small solutions. Importantly, the touch of each stone provides feedback whether to place more weight on the stone or lift the leg and try to place the leg elsewhere. This is called the feedforward based on the information provided by the feedback. Role-based district officers used such constant feedback to monitor external forces and change tactics mid-way during anti-pandemic operations. The British district officers were schooled in the rational method of decision-making and lacked capabilities



DR. SAMEER SHARMA

to move forward by feeling the stones in the river. Thus, they were less successful in managing the 1918 flu-pandemic. If the feed-back-feedforward framework is so important in decision-making in uncertain and unstable environments, then

how to make it operational in practice of administration? In this book, planning theory for practitioners, Michael Brooks has developed the idea of "trial balloons". A trial balloon is an idea presented, or an action undertaken, for the express purpose of generating feedback. Under conditions of uncertainty and instability, rarely, if ever, the district officers know with certainty what the single best course of action is with regard to a particular problem. Trial balloon is an explicitly experimental method to deal with uncertain and unstable environments. While floating trial balloons, the district officer conceives each action as an experiment - as a means of getting more information about the effectiveness of a given course

of action. Decision-making then becomes a process of social experimentation where actions are tested and continuously assessed, against the possibilities and constraints of reality. In trial balloon tactics, district officers have to get involved in messy reality connected with dealing with people and politics. This depends on how well they understand the intricacies of the circumstances and what is their role in managing them. In order to understand the "messy" reality, the district officers have to keep their ears to the ground; develop a group with multidisciplinary skills as it is impossible for one person to unravel completely, understand a complex reality and know how future events are likely to unfold.

Following role-based tactics, district officers are able to respond to unforeseen changes that arise in the real world. The way to make decisions is to reduce the extent of analysis by examining only a limited number of alternatives. Here, issues are addressed individually by floating trial balloons, rather than in a holistic manner. No visionary goals are set and the objective is to give small solutions to what are large more complex problems. When new problems arise, these are addressed through a new round of trial balloons. In this way faster decision-making happens which is also more politically relevant and people-centred as it has a short-term focus. (Author has a PhD from the USA and a DLitt from Kanchi University. The article is based on his research and practice and views are personal)

Bihar polls...

Continued from Page 1

He also said special protocols have been readied for voters who are COVID-positive patients. Announcing the poll schedule at a press conference here, Arora said the number of phases for 243-member Bihar assembly polls has been reduced keeping in mind security arrangements and festive season, among other factors. Voting for the first phase on October 28 will cover 71 assembly constituencies, while the second-phase voting on November 3 will cover 94 seats. The third phase of voting on November 7 will cover 78 assembly seats. Counting of votes for all seats will take place on November 10. According to the Election Commission, 7 lakh hand sanitizers, 46 lakh masks, 6 lakh PPE kits, 6.7 lakh face shields and 23 lakh pairs of hand gloves have been arranged for Bihar polls. Besides, postal ballot facility will be provided wherever required and requested. Social distancing norms will need to be followed at public gatherings during the poll campaign. Arora further said anyone using social media for mischievous purposes, such as for flaring communal tension, during elections will have to face consequences, while hate speech will be also dealt with harshly by the Election Commission.

Rakul Preet questioned for 4 hours

Continued from Page 1

Actor Deepika Padukone will be questioned tomorrow. Her manager, Karishma Prakash, was interrogated today and she is likely to be called again. Karishma Prakash's questioning went on for much longer than Rakul Preet Singh's, which lasted four hours, sources said. The NCB questioned Rakul and Karishma Prakash about the contents of WhatsApp chat which allegedly indicated marijuana was bought for consumption.

HYDERABAD BULLION RATES	
GOLD	
₹ 52,370 (10 gm)	
SILVER	
₹ 59,300 (1kg)	
₹ 2300	
CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG	
Dressed/With Skin	₹180
Without Skin	₹205
Broiler at Farm	₹124
EGG RATES ₹/100	
HYDERABAD	490
VIJAYAWADA	510
VISAKHAPATNAM	515
RETAIL PRICE (IN HYDERABAD)	₹5.9

COVID-19 EFFECT

Rising prices take a toll on middle class, poor families

K VENKATESHWARLU
■ HYDERABAD

Inflation is often considered as an economic villain. By definition, inflation refers to the general rise in the price level in an economy. An increase in inflation leads to a fall in the purchasing power of a currency as the commodities and prices gets dearer. In simple words, we would be able to purchase only fewer items for the same money. The impact would be far greater when rising inflation is accompanied with a stagnant output. In such a scenario, the economy would be facing the situation of 'stagflation'. The Covid-19 pandemic took a toll on the people across the world and has turned peoples' lives upside down. The lockdowns imposed to contain the spread of the virus further worsened the woes of nations across the world. The impact of the virus was such that many



people have lost their jobs. This development is leading to 'stagflation' not only in Telangana but across the nation. The earnings of common people are decreasing but their expenditure is increasing due to the indiscriminate hike in prices of essential goods. However, not only the prices of essential goods but also other goods are increasing indiscriminately during these testing times. The prices of goods have

increased from 10 per cent to 75 per cent. The prices of rice, dal, oils and other essentials have increased indiscriminately in the open market. Groundnut seeds prices have been increased from Rs 100 to nearly Rs 200 per kg and ground nut oil price reached to Rs 170 per kg. The prices of eggs, chicken and meat increased indiscriminately. The price of egg reached all-time high with the price of a single egg now costs Rs 6. The prices of electronic goods, especially,

computers have increased up to 50 per cent. The people are forced to purchase computers/laptops, cell phones and other electronic gadgets come what may as the online classes have begun. They are also paying school fees on time though their salaries are not regular. Even the private teachers are not getting salaries properly; however, they were forced to teach online classes using hi-fi gadgets. Many poor and middle class families are facing severe troubles due to loss of jobs and decreased salaries. Besides these, many families are severely disturbed due to Coronavirus impact. A Professor from the Department of Economics in Osmania University on condition of anonymity opined that the governments have to control the increased prices of the various goods or else many families would face further devastation in their life.

Maoists call for Bandh on Sept 28

PNS ■ WARANGAL

The CPI (Maoist) Party Telangana State Committee has called for Telangana bandh in protest against the killing of naxals in police encounters at different parts in the state in September month. A statement by the party state committee spokesman Jagan here on Friday has alleged that and in erstwhile Adilabad district were fake. The Maoist leader demanded a judicial probe into the encounters and punishment to the policemen involved in the encounters. The eight Maoists who died in encounters at Chennapuram, Kadamba, Pusuguppa and Devarlagudem were arrested by police.

What went wrong for Balu?

Continued from Page 1

The singer was responsive and his vital parameters were satisfactory, but his clinical condition warranted an extended stay in the ICU. Doctors opine that prolonged stay in ICU gives very mild hope of survival. Apart from damaged lungs, the late singer reportedly had co-morbid conditions like blood sugar and complications related to obesity. ECMO is a specialized heart-lung bypass machine that is used when the lungs cannot function themselves. A doctor said, "ECMO is the next stage after ventilator and is almost like artificial lungs and heart. Research suggests that the chances of survival of older patients above 65 years on ECMO is less than 30 per cent. Generally ECMO courses are around five days and in

very rare cases it goes upto 30 days. Long-term ECMO support increases the chances of complications." Towards the end August, Balu underwent passive physiotherapy and later "actively participated in physiotherapy". He was fully awake and responsive during that phase. Doctors pointed that it was 'passive physiotherapy' -- done by a third party like a machine -- and so his responses does not mean he was talking, but were possibly his gestures. During physiotherapy, Balu was kept in a prone position to improve oxygenation. Another senior doctor, on condition of anonymity, said, "It is always up and down when someone has a pulmonary infection. It was sort of expected for someone who has been in critical care for so long. Multiple factors come into play, leading to cardiac arrest."

The fateful...

Continued from Page 1

What followed the shooting spree was that almost all the participants of the TV show, including Balu, tested positive. In her video message earlier, Malavika stated, "In fact, Balu garu messaged me on August 1, saying I am very tired, I have been shooting for 4 days continuously. Don't forget my age." On August 5, Balu tested positive and got admitted to hospital. For, he was 74 years old and had underlying comorbidities. Coronavirus is known to spread through aerosols and doctors have warned time and again that it can spread when you speak, sing, laugh loudly or are in a closed room. Since it appears on hindsight that the possible source of infection was the event, questions are now being raised over why the organisers of the programme chose to disregard Covid-19 precautions.

Bars, clubs...

Continued from Page 1

However, the state government has set certain conditions for the managements of these bars. They have to follow Covid-19 norms for businesses such as establishment of non-touch infrared thermometers, or thermal screening at the entrance, proper queue management and ensuring hygienic conditions, crowd management in parking lots, provision of hand sanitizers, and wearing of masks by bar/club staff and crew. However, the order bars gatherings, musical events and dance floors. Deep-cleaning and sanitization of entire bar premises has to be done twice a day every day. Seats must be sanitized before the customer occupies it. The bars must have proper ventilation. However Permit room (A4) shops will remain closed until further orders.

TRS-MIM explore 'Delhi formu...

Continued from Page 1

Early this month, Bandi made inflammatory comments when he visited the Old City, saying "If a hand rises on a Hindu in Old City, a hand will be chopped off in the New City." Bandi then continued: "Hindus in the Old City are in fear. They are worried if they will be alive or not. I visited the whole of Old City recently. I gave the Hindus the assurance that I am with them. I asked them to boldly fight." TRS and AIMIM view Bandi's tour of the Old City and his incendiary remarks as a calculated attempt to polarise votes on religious lines in view of the upcoming GHMC polls scheduled for February 2021. So, TRS and AIMIM, unlike in the past, are now reconciled to 'fighting' each other in mock aggression during the GHMC polls, thus showing no signs of any 'friendly contest' between the two. That is, the

TRS wants to project itself as 'a soft Hindutva party' for the GHMC polls by 'taking on' the MIM in the Old City. The just-concluded Assembly session, which witnessed surprising exchange of fireworks between TRS and AIMIM, was a precursor to this joint strategy. AIMIM floor leader in Assembly Akbaruddin Owaisi, known for showering praises on the TRS government and Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao almost on every occasion in the House, took a different stand all of a sudden, and attacked the TRS government. He lashed out at the TRS government on Corona issue. Akbar also attacked the TRS government for introducing a resolution in the House seeking Bharat Ratna for former Prime Minister late PV Narasimha Rao. He even staged a walkout from the House on both these issues, which was never witnessed during the past six years.

Why Covid is...

Continued from Page 1

The work highlights the potential for interferon-based therapies to enlarge a slowly accumulating range of Covid-19 treatments. These include Gilead Sciences Inc.'s remdesivir and convalescent plasma, a component of the blood of recovered patients that may contain beneficial immune factors. These treatments provide limited benefit and are typically used in very sick, hospitalized patients. The possibility that interferon may help some people is enticing because it appears most efficacious in the early stages of infection, when life-threatening respiratory failure could still be averted. Dozens of studies of interferon treatment are now recruiting Covid-19 patients. "We think timing may be essential because it's only in the very early phase one can really battle the virus particles and defend against infection,"

said Alexander Hoischen, head of the genomic technologies and immuno-genomics group at Radboud University Medical Center in Nijmegen that analyzed the DNA of the two sets of brothers. Being male, elderly, and having underlying medical conditions can all raise patients' risk of life-threatening Covid-19. But even within these groups, disease severity varies widely. Scientists have speculated other factors influence susceptibility, including pre-existing levels of inflammation and immunity, the amount of virus that starts an infection, and patients' genetic makeup. Interferon's role represents a new nexus in Covid-19's complex interaction with the human immune system. Many patients suffer their worst complications because of an immune overreaction sometimes called a cytokine storm, and may benefit from dexamethasone, a cheap generic that calms these storms.

Cong, Left ...

Continued from Page 1

Terming the new farm legislations as 'anti-farmer' they demanded their immediate revocation. Senior Congress leader V. Hanumanth Rao also participated in the protest. He said the new laws will hit hard Indian farmers. The Congress party also organised protests across the state. Party leaders and workers participated in the sit-in at district and Assembly constituency headquarters. The party also held a candle-light rally last night at Ambekar Statue near Tank Bund. Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) also staged a sit-in at Ambekar Statue to protest against what it called draconian legislation. Ruling Telangana Rashtra Samithi (TRS) is also opposing the new farm legislations but its protest was confined to the Parliament.

Honour killing in Hyd city sends shockwaves

Continued from Page 1

After being invited for 'talks' between the families with the couple in tow, Hemanth was whisked away and eliminated in a premeditated manner at a secluded spot in Kistaigudem village of Sanga Reddy district. On Friday, the Cyberabad Police booked 18 members, including Avanthi's parents DonthireddyLaxma Reddy and his wife Donthireddy Archana, in the murder case, and arrested 14 members. The family members of the girl had hired contract killers to get rid of both Hemanth and Avanthi, investigations revealed. The contract killers were promised a sum of Rs 10 lakh for their mission and given Rs 1 lakh

in advance. Giving the sequence of events M Venkateshwarlu, DCP Madhapur said: "At about 2-30 hours her (Avanthi's) relative A. Ranjith Reddy, his wife Spandana, Rakesh Reddy, Vijayender Reddy, Santho Reddy, Swapna, K. Sandeep Reddy, G. Yugender Reddy, Rajitha, Saheb Patan (driver) and some others came in three cars to the couple's house at TNGOs Colony, Gachibowli. They asked the couple to come to their house at Lingampally to discuss the matter. On the way, at Gopanapally X Road, they turned the car towards ORR, instead of proceeding towards Lingampally. On that, the couple got afraid and they jumped from the car and started to run towards Lingampally. Meantime

Yugender Reddy (maternal uncle) and some others who had been tailing them in another car overpowered Hemanth and kidnapped him. Meanwhile, Ranjith Reddy, Rakesh Reddy, Vijayender Reddy, Rajitha, Spandana, Swapna and Santosh Reddy, travelling in the other two cars, tried to catch her. Avanthi had to run for her life till she met her father-in-law Murali Krishna and his wife Lakshmi Rani."

for my entire life. No one can fill the gap. I want justice to be done. I did not want this to happen to my family. They made this happen. Everyone should be punished as per law." Chinta Yoga Hemanth, 28-year-old graduate in B Sc Chemistry, had fallen in love with ChintaAvanthi Reddy, 23-year-old engineering graduate. Their families live in the same colony at Chandanagar, with their residences some 150 meters apart. Although they got married without their parents' consent, they were hopeful that they would ultimately accept them in future. After marriage, Hemanth started his own contract business. The couple's dreams of years and years of wedded bliss were

shattered with the murder of Hemanth on Thursday. Matters took a turn for the worse, after Avanthi's parents, DonthireddyLaxma Reddy, 54, and his wife Donthireddy Archana, lodged a complaint with the Chandanagar Police stating that their daughter was 'missing', pointed an accusing finger at Hemanth, and used their clout to harass the boy's parents. Speaking to The Pioneer, Hemanth's father Murali Krishna said: "After Avanthi's family filed a missing complaint with the ChandanagarPolice, the police asked us to come to the station for questioning. Continuously they called me to police station every day and made me to stay there from morning to evening."

TELANGANA STATE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES LTD.
HACA Bypass, Near Public Garden, Manapally, Hyderabad-500 084.

TSTS invites bids for following: Tender Call Notice for Procurement of Desktops and Laptops Computers for Forest Department, Telangana.

Tender Ref. No: TSTS/HWP/1/FOREST/030/2020 Dt: 25/09/2020
Bid Calling Date: 25-09-2020. **Last date for receipt of clarifications:** 29-09-2020. **Bid closing date:** 05-10-2020 on e-procurement website. **Contact details:** Manager (HWP1) - bvr Rao-tsts-ts@telangana.gov.in, D. Ramamohan Rao - drmr Rao-tsts@telangana.gov.in. For further details please visit www.tsts.telangana.gov.in and www.eprocurement.telangana.gov.in. **Contact Phone Nos:** 9963029403 and 9963029415. **R.O.No:** 348-PPCL-AGENCY/ADVT/1/2020-21 **IL MANAGING DIRECTOR**

GREATER HYDERABAD MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

NIT No.: 38/RJNR/CIRCLE-11/CRZ/GHMC/2020-21, Date: 25.09.2020
Scope of the Work: Maintenance of various types of toilets by safai Karmachari's in Rajendranagar Circle-11 Chennarayana, GHMC. **Estimate Amount (Rs. in Lakhs):** Sealed Proposals, **Start Date/ Last date & time for receipts of Bids:** From 12:00 P.M. 25.09.2020 @ 12:00 P.M. Date: 28.09.2020 @ 02:00 P.M. - 30.09.2020 @ 12:00 P.M. **Officer Name, Address and Cell No:** Sri B. Narandar Goud EE, Circle-11 RJNR Chennarayana Zone, GHMC, Cell. 9589930376
EXECUTIVE ENGINEER, RJNR C-11 CHANNARAYANA ZONE, GHMC
R.O. No.: 5261-PP-CL-ADVT/1/2020-21

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA
ROADS AND BUILDINGS DEPARTMENT
"e" - PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE

***e* NIT No. 10/ENG/CR/MCD/EE/R/IDEE/GA/EE/2020, Dated: 24-09-2020**
1. Online tenders are invited on "e" procurement platform in Siddipet District under Non-Plan (MDR) 2020-21. (ii) Seven (7) road works under Non-plan (MDR) for 1st Call. 2. Tenderers can download the tender schedules from e-market place i.e. "tender.telangana.gov.in". The last date of receipt of tenders is 05.10.2020 upto 3.30 PM for road work. 3. Further details can be seen at e-procurement market place i.e. "tender.telangana.gov.in".
For Engineer in Chief (R&B) State Roads & CRN
R.O.No.: 529-PP-CL-AGENCY/ADVT/1/2020-21

Despite ICMR downplay, docs believe plasma therapy viable

NAVEENA GHANATE
■ HYDERABAD

Notwithstanding ICMR's study stating that convalescent plasma therapy failed to benefit patients, doctors continue to believe that that plasma is a viable treatment option.

Despite several researches proving that plasma therapy's efficacy is minimal in moderate and severe Covid patients, the doctors still believe that it is proving helpful in the treatment. Several doctors in the city-based hospitals have confirmed that the plasma therapy is continuing in the hospitals. Each day several Covid survivors are sharing their experiences of plasma donation and the need for plasma-donors has been coming from all corners.

Dr A Sahithi who donated plasma said, "The patient for whom I donated plasma survived and was recently discharged. If this is a ray of hope,



we can try as everything is currently in trails, there is no definitive medicine. I donated even before the ICMR's trails questioned the efficacy."

In fact large number of doctors themselves have went ahead and donated plasma in Telangana. Dr K Mahesh, President of Healthcare Reforms Doctors Association (HRDA)

said, "Plasma therapy is going on in almost all the hospitals in state and physicians are advising. There is currently no effective treatment for Covid, we are living in a hope and studies are going. Convalescent plasma is another option that gives a hope for critical patients. Just like remdesivir, fabiflu where there is no direct

evidence that it is effective, plasma is also an option. If you see the treatment protocol of AIIMS, they leave it to physician and the convalescent treatment is advised."

HRDA itself coordinated 30 donations. Even on Thursday, ICMR said in a statement, "ICMR's randomised clinical trial on convalescent plasma therapy contributed to the global evidence around the utility of it in reducing mortality of Covid patients and preventing progression from moderate to severe stage of the disease."

Tollywood celebrities MM Keeravani and his son Kala Bhairava have donated plasma twice. Donation of plasma will take about 45 to 60 minutes while giving it to patient takes about two hours. However, not all are eligible to donate plasma.

Dr Nirupama, Pulmonologist at city-based hospital said, "There is a group of patients

who benefited from plasma therapy. Covid in itself is a new disease and all efforts and treatment are directed for patient improvement. Before writing off the efficacy of plasma therapy in handling Covid, more scientific evidence and multi-centric trials are still needed. Till we do not have any definitive treatment or vaccine, It is one of the available supportive ways to fight with Covid as it generates antibodies against the virus"

There are certain rules for plasma donation apart from testing negative twice for Covid. Dr Nirupama added, "Not all people can donate plasma.

Women who have been pregnant in the past, people with co-morbidities like hypertension, blood pressure, heart and kidney-related ailments, cancer patients cannot donate plasma. Presence of antibody titers is most important to donate plasma."

Criminal cases against public representatives delay trial

Forum urges Governor to make process faster

DURGA PRASAD SUNKU
■ HYDERABAD

Keeping in view of delay in criminal cases pertaining to public representatives in Telangana, the Forum for Good Governance (FGG) requested the Governor to intervene and make the process speedy by appointing government pleader and creating the special team to pursue the case.

Secretary of FGG Padmanabha Reddy said, "The special court which was formed to deal these type of cases is understaffed and police laxity in pursuing the case and ensuring the conviction is attained."

There are more than 300 cases pending against MLAs and MPs, out of it only 118 cases are transferred to special court and balance cases are yet to be transferred.

The FGG urged the state Governor Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan for immediate



appointment of government pleader and their supporting staff. They also urged to create special team to bring the witness and pursue the cases and regular monitoring of cases by DGP.

After several representations from FGG, a full time Judge was appointed, said Padmanabha Reddy adding that no permanent public prosecutor and supporting staff is posted yet, with the result the special court which was established two years ago is non-functional.

Finding fault with the police department and their negli-

gence, Padmanabha Reddy said, "There is no police assistance and co-operation for prosecution of the cases. The judge of special court reported that the police inspectors are not attending the court nor producing the witness."

The FGG cited that there is too much interference by politicians in transfer of police personnel. To save their skin and expecting rewards from the politicians, the police will drag their feet and may not co-operate or take interest in successful prosecution of the case against a politician, more so if the accused belongs to ruling party.

Padmanabha Reddy further requested to ensure that the Supreme Court directions of establishing special courts for trial of criminal cases relating to elected MLAs and MPs and further directed to dispose off the cases within one year to state government should be implemented strictly.

Covid tally crosses 1.80L-mark in state

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana has added 2,381 new Covid cases, pushing the state's tally to 1,81,627, officials said on Friday.

The state also reported 10 fatalities during the last 24 hours, taking the death toll to 1,080. The fatality rate in the state stands 0.59 per cent against the national average of 1.58 per cent. The daily count shows a spike in both Greater Hyderabad and the districts.

GHMC reported 386 new cases against 308 the previous

day. Rangareddy district was at the second place with 227 new cases followed by Medchal Malkajgiri (193), Nalgonda (132), Karimnagar (119), Bhadrachalam Kothagudem (97) Siddipet (86), Khammam (84), Warangal Urban (83) and Suryapet (78).

A total of 2,021 people have recovered from the virus during the last 24 hours. With this the cumulative recoveries in the state rose to 1,50,160. According to bulletin, 57,621 tests were conducted during the last 24 hours.



Durgam Cheruvu cable bridge opened for traffic

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The much-hyped cable bridge across the ancient Durgam Cheruvu Lake at Madhapur, which entails a four-lane elevated corridor from road number 45, was finally inaugurated on Friday evening.

State Minister for Municipal Administration and Urban Development KT Rama Rao, Union Minister of State for Home Affairs G Kishan Reddy, Telangana Principal Secretary

Arvind Kumar and others were present for the event.

The project undertaken by the GHMC under SRDP stands as world's largest span concrete deck extradosed cable stayed bridge, the GHMC said. The project involved meticulous planning and coordination with various international accredited firms from US, Europe, Russia and Hong Kong and keeping in view the Make in India campaign, the bridge was purely designed

and constructed under EPC mode by L&T-HCLC, the civic body said.

Army symphony band to popularise cable bridge

During the launch, Arvind Kumar said that the coveted 'Army Ceremonial and Symphony Band' of the Indian Army will be performing live from 5.30 pm on Saturday on the bridge to commemorate the opening of the cable stayed bridge across the Durgam Cheruvu.

CRIMINAL MISCONDUCT

ACB gets nod to book former tahsildar

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The state government on Friday accorded permission to the ACB to book a case of criminal misconduct against suspended Keesara Tahsildar Nagaraj, who was arrested in the Rs.1.10 crore bribe case a few weeks ago.

The government has asked the ACB to book a case on the basis of the probe conducted by the Vigilance and Enforcement department on the criminal misconduct, conspiracy and abuse of official position by Nagaraj and causing pecuniary losses by corrupt and illegal means to one K Dharma Reddy. The ACB has already booked a case under the Prevention of Corruption Act apart from invoking charges pertaining to conspiracy, cheating, falsification of records and using fake documents as genuine and arrested Nagaraj, Village Revenue Assistant Bongu Sairaj, and two realtors Ch Srinath Yadav and K Anji Reddy after conducting a raid at a guest house in Kapra, a few weeks ago.



2 malls fined Rs 27L for unauthorised ads

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Enforcement, Vigilance and Disaster Management (EVDM) wing of Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) on Friday penalised two malls on Friday for raising advertisement banners illegally.

While Sharat City Capital Mall in Miyapur was slapped with Rs 17 lakh, Manjeera Mall in Kukatpally was penalised with Rs 10 lakh.

The EVDM wing was acting on complaints raised by activist Vinay Vangala who sought action against the mall for illegal advertisements. For the 17 unauthorised advertisements put up by the mall, the EV&DM wing penalised it with 17 lakhs. The mall was in violation of erecting an unauthorised advertisement element above 15 feet height

from the ground level. Several netizens on social media are posting pictures of malls and places which are violating the advertising rules.

As per GHMC, the penalties levied through social media is only a minuscule percentage of the total penalties levied.

Director of EV&DM Viswajit Kampati said in a tweet, "The proportion of penalties levied through social media to total penalties levied is 1.9 per cent.

The present penalties pertaining to GO 68 have come into effect recently and hence citizens are proactively pointing them out. The EV&DM is one of the very few government systems which is enabling citizen participation in a transparent and accountable manner".

IN BRIEF

Hyd takes part in unique shoe strike for global climate action

Hyderabad has been a proud participant in the Global Climate Action on Friday at Osman Sagar, by donating shoes tagged with messages. The Global Climate Strike, an annual event spearheaded by Swedish teen climate change activist Greta Thunberg to speak against the inaction of governments and leaders in containing climate change, has changed in form this time in view of Covid pandemic. Instead of people storming into the streets, the strike saw shoes sent by protesters to represent them. All the shoes thus gathered will be put at one place with personal messages to the government. Vanita Khatter of CFH said "We have received more than 1200 shoes with support messages to protect the environment. Shoes have been collected from citizens across the city and represent people of all ages from toddlers to grand-moms, from migrant workers to tribals."

Dr Suryanarayana nominated to NMC board as member

Senior surgical oncologist Dr. G Suryanarayana Raju has been nominated as member of Medical Assessment and Rating Board of the National Medical Commission (NMC), which has replaced the Medical Council of India (MCI). The NMC replaced the MCI from Thursday and the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare established four Autonomous Boards under NMC including Under-Graduate Medical Education Board, Post-Graduate Medical Education Board, Medical Assessment and Rating Board and Ethics and Medical Registration Board. Credited for establishing and heading the Surgical Oncology department at Nizam's Institute of Medical Sciences (NIMS), Dr. Raju has more than 32 years of experience. After retiring from NIMS, the senior cancer specialist established ASVINS Speciality Hospital located at Rajbhavan Road.

Students unhappy with private varsities in state

NAMRATA SRIVASTAVA
■ HYDERABAD

Several students in the state are not happy with the way new private universities, including Anurag University, Malla Reddy University and Mahindra University. They state that these universities stray away from the idea of Telangana Government's promise of free education to all, and thus shall not be allowed to function.

Talking about the issue, T Nagaraju, State Secretary of SFI shares, "The government is trying to discourage poor students from going for higher education. The fees being charged in the private university is very high. I think in its election manifesto the TRS had said that it would provide free education to everyone from KG to PG. I am not sure how they can be achieved by bringing in private universities." He adds, "Instead of

concentrating too much on private universities, Telangana government should fill the 2,000 vacant faculty and non-teaching posts in various state universities. We request the government to concentrate on state universities and develop more facilities there. The state government has brought the poor students of the state away from education. They do not care if unemployment and education opportunities for the poor are declining."

According to Sohail Uddin, General Secretary of NSUI, the students who have availed the scholarship from the Telangana government haven't received any thing in the last one year. "Several students are waiting for the dues from the last many years. In such scenario, the colleges ask the student to pay and ask them to apply for reimbursement. However, in 2019-20 no student received a rupee as reimbursement."

INDEFINITE STRIKE

Swiggy: Officials interfere to help resolve dispute

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Indefinite strike by Swiggy delivery executives has entered the eleventh day on Friday in Hyderabad.

The delivery executives continue to prevent pick-up of orders from high volume restaurants in some parts of the city.

However, looking at the distress of food delivery workers, the Joint Commissioner of Labour has agreed to mediate between the workers and company.

Labour Commissioner has fixed joint meeting at Samkshema Bhavan on Saturday. Swiggy management has been asked to attend the meeting to resolve the issue. Salauddin National General Secretary Indian Federation of App Based Transport Workers (IFAT) will also be attending the meeting.

Officials' negligence leaves RTC buses in bad shape

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A healthy public transport system can help in the sustainable development of any city hugely. However, the Telangana authorities, looking over the TSRTC have been neglecting the public buses for ages, resulting in the poor quality of vehicles on road as well as financial crisis for the transport corporation.

According to a recent RTI filed by a transport activist and an advocate for better buses in Hyderabad, Sai Ratnam Chaitanya, at least 1,375 RTC buses on road have clocked more than 10 lakh kilometers. Of these, 249 buses have done

more than 15 lakh kilometers and 62 buses have completed 17 lakh kilometers. "I had an idea about the bad state of TSRTC, however the reply from the authorities confirmed my doubts. At least 2,111 buses running on Telangana roads are more than 10 years old, and about 603 are older than 15 years."

Talking about the average age a bus, Ratnam shares that every state has their own definition about what is the age of an old vehicle. "In Telangana, a public bus is old when either it has completed 15 lakh kilometers of ride or was bought 15 years back. We have buses surpassing both the criteria run-



ning on the roads. These buses need more maintenance and can break down easily, their fuel consumption is also more compared to new vehicles."

According to the RTI,

Telangana has added no new RTC buses to their fleet after FY 2015-2016. They got six new buses in 2015-2016. In 2014-2015 the state got two city ordinary, one metro express, 45

metro deluxe and 80 metro luxury buses.

The Greater Hyderabad Zone had 3,811 buses in FY 2014-2015. This includes inter-city buses like Super Luxury and Rajadhani. However, there has been a steady decline in the fleet since then.

Giving insight about the issue, Prashanth Bachu an Urban Transport Specialist shares, "There is very little or no attention to the bus services. There are at least 30 lakh people relying on TSRTC for commuting each day. However, there hasn't been any new buses for at least five years. Also, the corporation is financially in a bad state."

40-yr-old man murdered after drunken brawl

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

An unidentified man was murdered by a group of persons at Attapur on Thursday.

According to the police, the person, aged around 40 years might have been killed during a brawl. The assailants are suspected to have had attacked him with a boulder on his head, killing him on the spot.

Passers-by noticed the body and informed the Rajendranagar police who shifted the body to OGH for autopsy.

SPB's melodious voice will echo forever

■ SP Balasubrahmanyam, a singer par excellence who aced vocal ranges, captivated millions of hearts

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Sripathi Panditaradhyula Balasubrahmanyam, popularly known by the magical three letters 'SPB', belonged to a rare breed of playback singers whose golden voice cast a spell over generations. The mesmerising voice of Balasubrahmanyam, who died aged 74 at a hospital here after being treated for Covid-19, endeared him to millions of fans as he strode like a colossus in the film and stage music world with numerous hits in 16 languages, more dominantly in South Indian films - Tamil and his mother tongue Telugu.

Quite unassuming despite his unparalleled achievements, including countless national and state awards and the coveted Padma Shri and Padma Bhushan, he worked with generations of music composers, crooning a staggering 40,000 plus songs during his enviable over five decade career.

An extraordinary singer, who was influenced by veteran Mohammed Rafi, SPB stamped his class in thousands of evergreen songs, evoking various emotions, be it joy, romance or pathos and later also took to acting in some films. Living and breathing music aptly fitted him as the gifted singer said a couple of years ago that he was recording a song every day, even over 50 years after he made his debut in 1966, besides being associated with several reality shows on TV.

The evergreen song 'Ayiram Nilave Vaa' (come thousand moons) from

MGR starrer Tamil flick 'Adimaipen' catapulted him to fame in 1969 and there had been no looking back for SPB since then. He carved out a niche for himself after entering the field when the then veterans like T M Soundararajan (TMS) and P B Srinivas were ruling the roost.

For someone with no formal training in classical music, the heights SPB scaled were not something that even well trained singers could touch. Born on June 4, 1946, in Nellore in neighbouring Andhra Pradesh, the film world was never in the mind of SPB, also fondly called 'Balu' by many of his friends such as

was never my desire to enter the film industry. I wanted to become a gazetted rank engineer which could fetch Rs 250 salary, a jeep with a chauffeur in the 1960s," he had repeatedly said over the years.

It was renowned playback singer S Janaki who first spotted his talent when he took part in a music competition while pursuing engineering (AMIE) in Chennai and told him he will have a bright future in the film industry if he gave it a shot.

In 1966, his career began with Telugu and Kannada songs with S P

Kothandapani, whom SPB regarded as his guru, giving him the opportunity His debut song in Tamil "Athanothu Ippadi Irundhu" a duet song with L R Easwari in a movie titled 'Hotel Rambha' never saw the light of the day. Undeterred, he continued to try for opportunities and his entry in the Tamil film industry happened with 'Shanthi Nilayam' and 'Adimaipen', both of which hit screens at the same time in 1969. He bagged the best playback singer award from the Tamil Nadu government for songs in both

Adimaipen and Shanthi Nilayam. SPB went on to sing under music directors spanning generations from Kodhandapani, M S Viswanathan, Ilayaraja, A R Rahman and Deva and pairing female artists like P Susheela, S Janaki, Vaani

Jayaram and Chitra, among others, and won six national awards. He could whistle, mimic any sound or voice and had the uncanny ability to seamlessly blend stammer, laughter, cough or give a voice form to any emotion in songs. SPB's sister Sailaja and his son Charan are also well known playback singers.



Maestro's regret: Not seeing his children grow up

PNS ■ BENGALURU

"I missed watching my children grow up," celebrated playback singer S P Balasubrahmanyam once said as he opened up on regrets in his life. As he entered the 50th year of his career in 2015, SPB, as he is fondly called, counted Telugu movie 'Sankarabharanam' and 1981 hit 'Ek Duj Ke Liye' as films that were the turning points of his singing journey.

Balasubrahmanyam had said he regretted not watching his kids grow up due to his busy schedules, but termed his professional journey as "amazing". "It is amazing. I don't know how I lasted so long. I am not a trained singer. At this age, I am getting work and I am able to deliver, Balasubrahmanyam had said in an interview.

"I missed watching my children grow up. I dedicated (to singing) all my 49 years (in the year 2015). On an average, I am working 11 hours every day. I missed my children growing," he had said. The singer, who got his first break in the 1966 Telugu film 'Sri Sri Sri Maryada Raamanna', had felt every day is a turning point because his passion and sincere approach towards work and his dedication kept him going. "If I have to report (for recording of songs) at 5 o'clock, I rush come what may. I prepare myself. I never go to the microphone until I am sure of it. Whether small or big directors, I will do justice, he had said.



A household name in TS, AP

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Legendary singer SP Balasubrahmanyam, who died in Chennai on Friday, is a household name in his native Andhra Pradesh and its sibling Telangana, having enthralled music lovers for more than five decades. It's not an exaggeration to say that people wake up in the morning listening to the mellifluous devotional songs rendered by Balasubrahmanyam and played in temples across the length and breadth

states every day besides enjoying his songs of various genres. Born as Sripati Panditaradhyula Balasubrahmanyam at Nellore in coastal Andhra Pradesh, Balu or 'Balu garu', as he is respectfully called by his millions of fans, has been a colossus in the Telugu film industry. He had lent his voice to scores of film actors since 1967 when he made his debut as a playback singer in the Telugu film 'Sri Sri Sri Maryada Ramanna'.

From peppy numbers to songs

reflecting myriad emotions, Balasubrahmanyam was the ubiquitous playback singer in Telugu films since the 1960s. Balu sang for generations of film actors in Telugu from legendary N T Rama Rao and Akkineni Nageswara Rao to the present generation of stars.

Telugus, known for their love for cinema, grew up enjoying his songs in films of top-ranking stars, including Sobhan Babu, Krishna in the 1970s

and 1980s, Chiranjeevi, Nagarjuna, Balakrishna, Venkatesh and others since 1980s and 1990s, Mahesh Babu, Allu Arjun and others of present times.

Despite not being a trained singer in Carnatic music, SPB gained international fame and won awards with the iconic Telugu film 'Sankarabharanam' released in 1980. He has bagged numerous awards and honours in the Telugu land during his distinguished career. SPB has sung several Christian devotional songs as well

in Telugu which have been popular among the faithful. He has not only been a singer but a multi-faceted personality, excelling as a voice over artist, actor and film producer.

The superstar who lent his voice to Balu

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

While there are countless actors who benefited by lip-synching to the flawless renditions of legendary playback singer SP Balasubrahmanyam, one superstar holds the rare distinction of having lent his voice to the singer-par-excellence. True to his humble nature, SPB acknowledged this fact in all humility.

The renowned singer, who rendered over 40,000 songs in at least 17 languages, including Hindi, gave his voice to many an established star as well as upcoming actors and transformed them into superstars with his golden voice. But he remained indebted to a Kannada superstar who lent his voice to SPB in a Kannada film.

The legendary singer got an opportunity to act in the Kannada film Muddina Mava, which was a remake of the Telugu movie Mavagaru.

As per the screenplay, there

was a song and dance sequence in the film. Naturally, the film crew expected Balu to sing, but he refused saying that it would not be proper for him to do both - sing and dance.

The filmmakers then approached Kannada superstar and another legendary singer Dr Raj Kumar through his son Sivaraj Kumar, who conveyed SPB's wish to his father that the doyen wanted him to lend his voice for a song.

Dr Raj Kumar was glad to have the opportunity and rendered the song 'Dipavali Ananda Leelavali' which was picturised on the lead actor, lead actress, SBP and host of dancers. Humble to the core, Balasubrahmanyam always maintained that he was fortunate to have Dr Raj Kumar sing for him. While Dr Raj Kumar may have lent his voice to SPB, there are legions of actors who owe their careers to the singer. SPB very often would say that he got the opportunity to sing



in at least 17 languages since the music composers had given him the chance to do so, out of their love and affection for him.

Fast learner
SP Balasubrahmanyam was a quick learner, otherwise it would not be possible for him to sing at least 15 songs a day, while commuting from one

studio to the other. Famous music director duo Lakshminikant Pyarelal would often advise upcoming singers to take a cue from SPB, who got the nuances behind each composition very quickly indeed.

Playful & mischievous
Dr S Janaki, who sang many

songs with Dr Balasubrahmanyam, would recall how mischievous he was. She would say that Balu would preempt her by performing one music feat or the other which she would want to employ. She also said that he would play pranks to distract other singers, but all in jest. Interestingly, both S Janaki and SPB never had any training in classical music.

Wish not fulfilled
In an interview to a television channel, Balu expressed the desire to have a painless death by passing away while in sleep.

Agonised by criticism
Responding to criticism that he was depriving upcoming singers opportunities, Balu would rather painfully say that he did not deploy his henchmen at airports, railway stations and bus stations to turn away any aspiring singer who would want to make a mark in the film industry.

When Balasubrahmanyam tuned a number on Covid, its deadly effects

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Ironically, before he tested positive for Coronavirus, singer S P Balasubrahmanyam composed music and sung a Tamil song to create awareness about the deadly pathogen with the lyrics brimming with confidence that mankind would eventually win over the pandemic.

"I composed this number. Let us listen to this... it is not more musical, it is more lyrical," he had said months ago in his foreword to the song, penned by renowned lyricist Vairamuthu. Popularly known as 'SPB', he had in the three-minute plus video post urged his fans to pay attention to the depth and import of the words and act accordingly to help prevent the virus spread.

The song that begins with

'Corona, Corona,' goes on to explain that though the virus was pretty small in size, smaller than an atom, it was deadly like an atom bomb and it infected people stealthily. The rendition by Balasubrahmanyam, who died on Friday at a hospital here days after testing negative for the virus, also attached importance to avoiding physical contact, following hygiene and

other aspects aimed at avoiding the pathogen.

The 74-year old singer switched to a higher pitch while singing verses laced with confidence that human race would annihilate coronavirus and emerge victorious and the song ended on that note. SPB later tested positive for coronavirus, but even then he was confident he would recover.



SHORT READS



Revoke ban on onion export: Maha Minister tells Centre

Aurangabad: Maharashtra Horticulture Minister Sandipan Bhumre has urged the Centre to withdraw the ban on onion export. He has made this demand in a letter written to Union Agriculture Minister Narendra Singh Tomar. The letter says that in order to avoid the loss of onion producing farmers, the central government must revoke the ban imposed on this kitchen staple," an official release said on Thursday. "In the letter, the minister urged Tomar to revoke the ban saying that the farmers are facing problems due to the government's unexpected decision," it added. The decision to ban export of onions is unjust. The Centre recently banned the export of all varieties of onions, a move aimed at increasing availability and curbing prices.



Security forces defuse 4 landmines in Jharkhand

Medininagar (Jharkhand): Security forces on Friday defused four landmines allegedly planted by Naxalites on a road in Jharkhand's Palamu district, police said. The Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs), weighing 12-15 kg each, were laid on a road near Mansuria village in Manatu police station area, Superintendent of Police, Sanjeev Kumar, said. The landmines were laid to inflict casualties on the security forces. Investigation is on to find out which Naxalite outfit was behind it," the officer told PTI. Manatu area borders Chatra district and Bihar's Gaya, where Maoists have a strong presence, he added.

BJP workers stage dharna to protest filing of case

Aligarh (UP): BJP workers staged a dharna at a police station in the old city area here to protest lodging of a case of sexual harassment against office bearers of the party's Minority and Ahila Morcha, a police official said on Friday. Heated exchanges took place between the BJP workers and policemen posted at the station but senior police officers prevented the situation from escalating, the official said. "The incident took place late on Thursday night when news trickled in that a former lady office bearer of the BJP Mahila Morcha had filed a case of sexual harassment against some party office bearers at the Delhi Gate police station," the official said. Shortly afterwards, BJP workers in large numbers led by former Mayor Shakuntla Bharti and city BJP president Vivek Saraswat and a host of other senior city BJP leaders arrived at the spot and asked why the office bearers have been booked "without any verification," the police official said.

Modi accuses Oppn of 'using farmers shoulders to fire'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday accused the Opposition of "misleading" farmers and "using their shoulders to fire" at his government over the farm bills for selfish political interests, and asserted that for the first time in decades, the Centre has framed laws that will benefit farmers and workers.

Addressing BJP leaders and workers on the 104th birth anniversary of the party's ideologue Deendayal Upadhyay, Modi launched a powerful defence of farm as well as labour bills, saying the reforms brought in the agriculture sector will benefit the small and marginal farmers the most as 85 out of 100 farmers fall in this category.

The three farm bills -- the Farmer's Produce Trade and Commerce (Promotion and Facilitation) Bill, 2020, the Farmers (Empowerment and Protection) Agreement of Price



Many governments came to power in states and at the Centre in the name of farmers and workers, but what did they get nothing, he said

Assurance and Farm Services Bill, 2020 and the Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill, 2020-- and the labour bills were passed by Parliament

during the recent monsoon session.

Amid vehement protests by the Congress and other opposition parties against these bills, Modi hit out at them, saying many governments came to power in states and at the Centre over the decades in the name of farmers and workers, "but what did they get nothing; just a web of promises that neither the farmers understood nor the workers." "The farmers were entwined in laws that prevented them from selling their produce at prices that they

wanted; consequently, even though the produce went up their income did not go up," he said, adding those who always "lied" to farmers are now "shooting from their shoulders" and misleading them. Asserting that the small and marginal farmers are "happiest today", the Prime Minister said, "for the first time, they have got an alternative to bargain for the price of their produce. The tradition earlier was to sell in 'mandis'. If he thinks he will benefit by selling there, he will sell there. If he thinks the benefit is more outside, he will sell outside." The Opposition, farmers and many farmer organisations have been protesting against the proposed reforms in the agriculture sector by the Modi government, dubbing these measures as "anti-farmers".

Speaking of the working class, he said his government has brought labour codes to bring workers out of the complex web of dozens of laws.

Is coronavirus pandemic over now?: Raut on Bihar poll dates

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut on Friday asked if it was appropriate to conduct assembly elections in Bihar amid the prevailing coronavirus situation in the country.

Talking to reporters, Raut said the pandemic has given rise to an "unprecedented" situation. "Is coronavirus pandemic over now? Is the situation right for elections?" he asked.

The Election Commission on Friday announced dates for the Bihar assembly elections, which will be held in three phases-- on October 28,



November 3 and November 7 while the counting of votes will take place on November 10.

Raut said the issue of passage of farm sector bills in the Parliament will have no impact on the elections in Bihar as the

state votes "only on the basis of caste and religion". Replying to a question if actor Sushant Singh Rajput's death will become an election issue in Bihar, the Shiv Sena MP alleged, "The government there does not have any issues related to development or governance to speak about." "What happened to the CBI probe in Sushant case? The Bihar DGP has now resigned and will be contesting assembly polls," Raut claimed. He said film cities should come up in all states. "With the abrogation of Article 370, a film city should also be set up in Kashmir valley," he said.

Call on bypolls on Sept 29: CEC

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Election Commission will take a call on bypolls to one Lok Sabha and 64 assembly seats on September 29 after going through inputs provided by poll officials and chief secretaries of the states concerned, Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora said on Friday.

Responding to questions on the issue during a press conference to announce the schedule for Bihar assembly elections, Arora said EC Secretary General Umesh Sinha will issue a press release of the schedule the same evening based on the decision taken at the poll watchdog.

Earlier, the EC had said in a statement that Bihar elections and the bypolls will be held around the same time.

Arora said when the EC had decided on holding the bypolls along with Bihar elections then it had no inclination towards some states sending representations to raise issues related to the bypolls. He said most of the representations were received in the last one week and the commission will have to discuss the inputs before taking a final call.

CAG disputes Gujarat govt's claim

PNS ■ GANDHINAGAR

The Comptroller and Auditor General of India (CAG) on Friday said the Gujarat government's claim that there was no chemical contamination of drinking water anywhere in the state was "not correct".

In its report tabled in the state Assembly, the CAG cited laboratory reports and mentioned that over 20,000 out of 1.30 lakh samples, that is 15 per cent, "failed the chemical examination conducted by government laboratories in 2015-16". The report further stated that a similar trend of contamination was found in tests conducted in subsequent years. The CAG's performance audit report on 'Rural drinking water supply programme in Gujarat' for the

The report further stated that a similar trend of contamination was found in tests conducted in subsequent years

financial year 2017-18 was tabled on Friday, the last day of the state Assemblys Monsoon session. The CAG noted that presence of certain chemicals in drinking water above prescribed limit causes major diseases. Arsenic causes cancer, fluoride causes fluorosis, nitrate hampers the blood's capacity to transport oxygen resulting in brain damage, iron causes hemochromatosis.

Cong terms Farm Bills as 'conspiracy'

PNS ■ JAIPUR

The Congress on Friday termed the agriculture-related bills introduced by the Centre as a "disgusting conspiracy" against the farmers of the country and said it stands firm with them in support of the Bharat Bandh call.

At a press conference here, Congress' chief spokesperson Randeep Surjewala described the farm legislations as "black laws".

"The Modi government through three black laws has launched a brutal attack on farmers, farm labourers and their livelihoods," Surjewala said on Friday.

He said the bills are a "disgusting conspiracy" against the farmers and barns in the



country. Surjewala said the country has been attacked by the coronavirus, and by China on the border while "Modi ji has targeted the barns in India".

He further said, "Today, farmers and farm labourers have called for a Bharat Bandh across the country and under the leadership of Rahul Gandhi and Sonia Gandhi, the Congress Party stands firm with them."

Condition of Sisodia better now: Official

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The condition of Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia, who is battling a double infection of COVID-19 and dengue, is better now, an official from his office said on Friday.

Sisodia is undergoing treatment at Max Hospital, Saket, where he was moved on Thursday evening from the Delhi government-run LNJP Hospital due to his "falling" blood platelet count and low oxygen level. He is admitted to the ICU of the private hospital in south Delhi. "His condition is better now," said an official from the deputy chief minister's office.

Sisodia had tested positive for COVID-19 on September 14.

Delhi govt: Retest all symptomatic patients

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Delhi government has asked all districts to retest all symptomatic patients, who have tested negative for COVID-19 on rapid antigen test, using the more reliable RT-PCR method, after it found the process was not followed in over 1,400 cases.

"Total 1,437 antigen negative symptomatic who have not undergone RT-PCR. Kindly ensure that this is made NIL from today i.e. from today onwards there should be no antigen negative symptomatic case who is not tested for RT-PCR," read a directive by Special Secretary (Health and Family Welfare) Udit Prakash Rai to all districts. The directive was issued on Thursday. According to the government, Northwest district had the maximum 870 cases where symptomatic antigen negatives were not followed up with an RT-PCR test by Wednesday. In Southwest district, 258 symptomatic per-



sons were not tested using the RT-PCR method after testing negative in rapid antigen tests.

The Delhi government is working out modalities to ramp up RT-PCR testing, officials said Wednesday, a week after the high court suggested increasing the capacity to maximum as rapid antigen tests were found to be accurate in only 60 per cent cases.

Yet, the number of RT-PCR tests has not shown an increase with the figures hovering around the 10,000 mark.

On September 17, the number of RT-PCR tests conducted stood at 9,564. The next day, it was 11,203. The number of tests conducted on September 19, 20, 21, 22, 23 stood at 10,681, 11,322, 8828, 9,459 and 10,359, respectively.

Farmers outfits protest 'anti-farmer' policies

PNS ■ BENGALURU

Farmers in Karnataka staged demonstrations across the state on Friday as part of a 'bandh' call given by several outfits to protest the 'anti-farmer' policies of the central and state governments. A large number of ryots from various parts of the state flocked to the state capital to take part in the protests against the amendments to the Agricultural Produce Marketing Committee Act and the Karnataka Land Reforms Act.

Amendment to APMC Act would allow farmers to sell their produce directly to any purchaser outside APMC or in other APMCs. The agitators blocked highways and staged road rakes in many places affecting the traffic flow.

Terming the amendments as 'anti-farmer', they alleged that some people in power brought them to convert their black money into white. A group of farmers blocked the busy Tumakuru road near

Yashwantpur in the city and engaged in sloganeering against the recent amendments. As the police arrived at the spot to clear the blockade,



Amendment to APMC Act would allow farmers to sell their produce directly to any purchaser outside APMC or in other APMCs

the farmers courted arrest and were taken away in buses.

Demonstrations were also held in other districts, including Mysuru and Davangere.

In Mangaluru, workers of Congress, other non-BJP parties and farmers' outfits gath-

ered at the Nanthoor circle in the morning and staged the blockade. A large number of police personnel were deployed at major junctions to avert any chock-a-block.

Peasant leader Kuruburu Shanthakumar, who is among those leading the agitation, said all the highways to Bengaluru will be blocked.

He said more than 34 outfits have come together to stage agitations across the city.

Shanthakumar alleged that the government did not take the farmers into confidence while bringing amendments to the law pertaining to the agriculture sector.

Farmers hit the streets in Kerala against Centre

PNS ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Farmers under the aegis of the All India Kisan Sabha (AIKS) staged widespread protests in Kerala on Friday against the Farm Bills passed recently in Parliament, alleging that the new legislations will hand over the country's agriculture sector to corporate giants.

Senior CPI(M) leader and Vice President of AIKS, S Ramachandran Pillai launched the protest in front of the Raj Bhavan here and said the new agri bills will turn farmers into labourers of corporate giants.

"The central government has passed laws that will turn all farmers into labourers dependent on giant corporates.

Their aim is to hand over the agriculture sector to the

corporates. Through this move, our agricultural land, the production and sale of farm produce will be taken over by corporates. We are selling our agriculture sector to corporate giants," Pillai alleged.

Noting that over 60 per cent population in the country were farmers, he said the Centre was not ready to take proactive steps to protect the majority.

Hitting out at the central government, the AIKS leader said it was 'privatising' everything in the country, including the Defense and Space sectors besides the Public Sector.

The CPI(M) also said the Narendra Modi government 'bulldozed' 3 farm bills through the Parliament, violating all parliamentary procedures.

Panel to include Bodo villages in BTR

PNS ■ GUWAHATI

The Assam government has constituted a four-member committee to include Bodo-majority villages in the Bodoland Territorial Region (BTR) and exclude non-Bodo settlements from it, as per the Bodo Accord signed on January 27, senior minister Himanta Biswa Sarma said on Friday.

The panel, headed by former chief secretary P P Verma, will take a decision after reviewing applications from villages bordering the four BTR districts for inclusion of settlements with majority Bodo population in the region and exclusion of those with majority non-Bodo population from it, the minister told reporters. "It will also advise the government on increasing

the existing 40 seats in the Bodoland Territorial Council (BTC) to 60 in the BTR, besides reorganising the constituencies," he said.

Apart from Verma, BTAD administrator Rajesh Prasad, Jayanta Basumatary of the All Bodo Students' Union (ABSU) and Dalim Gayan, representing the non-Bodos, are members of the committee, the minister said. Governor Jagdish Mukhi had earlier given approval for constituting the committee and renaming BTC as BTR, comprising Kokrajhar, Baksa, Chirang and Udalguri districts, Sarma said. Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal and Union Home Minister Amit Shah had recently held discussions on the speedy implementation of the Bodo Accord and steps are being taken to ensure all the clauses



are implemented in a time-bound manner, he said.

The state government will initiate steps next month to implement Bodo as the associate official language of Assam and create the Bodo-Kachari Welfare Territorial Council for Bodos living outside the BTR, the minister said.

The Assam government and the Centre has also held discussions on the implementation of other clauses of the Bodo

Accord and those will be announced as and when the decisions are finalised, he said.

On elections to the BTC, which had to be deferred due to the COVID-19 outbreak, Sarma said the Health Department has made it clear that it is not safe to conduct the polls till November 30.

The chief minister will soon call an all-party meeting to review the situation, he said.

"We are following the Bihar elections and a decision will be taken based on the Bihar experience," the minister said.

The elections to the 40-member BTC, earlier scheduled to be held on April 4, was kept in abeyance due to the COVID-19 outbreak and the council is currently administered under the supervision of the governor, after its term ended on April 27.

Canadian auto workers extend Ford contract

PNS ■ DETROIT

The union that represents Canadian auto workers has extended its contract with Ford beyond an 11:59 pm deadline, a sign that progress is being made toward an agreement.

The Unifor union has scheduled a news conference for 10 am Tuesday to discuss the talks.

It picked Ford as a potential strike target on Sept. 8.

Union President Jerry Dias said in a statement late Monday that the bargaining committee is willing to work through the night to get a fair contract and avoid a strike at Ford's Canadian factories.

Darjeeling's Longview tea estate to reopen

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Longview Tea Garden in West Bengal's Darjeeling district will resume its operations from Wednesday after the management of the estate has agreed to clear dues of its workers, an official said.

The management of the garden, which employs around 1,200 workers, had declared suspension of work at the estate on August 21 over some labour-related issues, he said.

Additional labour commissioner of north Bengal Md Rizwan said a tripartite meeting among the representatives of the management, members of three trade unions and the government officials



was held on Monday to resolve the issues. "The garden will reopen from tomorrow and the management has agreed to pay all the dues of the workers, which include bonus for last fiscal, salaries and wages of the employees and workers amounting to around Rs 80 lakh," he said.

The dues will have to be paid by the management by October 7, he said.

DNA samples of 3 men killed in Shopian

PNS ■ SRINAGAR,

The DNA samples of three men who were killed in an alleged fake encounter with the Army in Jammu and Kashmir's Shopian district in July have matched with their families from Rajouri, a senior police officer said on Friday. Asked whether the three men were indeed labourers, as claimed by their families, and not involved in militant activities, he said it is a matter of further investigation. On July 18, the Army had claimed three militants were killed in Amshipura village in the higher reaches of south Kashmir's Shopian. The police also launched an investigation.

Pandemic powerplay

Nitish Kumar's stock is low without the BJP's heft. Can Lalu's RJD still make a difference as leader of the Opp bloc?



The Bihar Assembly elections, right in the middle of the pandemic, will be the greatest logistical and public health challenge and if successful, could become a template of how a mass participatory process could be initiated without risking the virus. So yes, the new election code has new rules, including virtual campaigning, spread out schedule, longer voting hours, more polling booths, quarantined centres so that even the COVID-positive can vote and an unprecedented stock of preventive gear. The biggest challenge will be to ensure that the electoral process doesn't become a super-spreader event. For the Election Commission, it is a big test, considering more State elections are to follow in rapid succession under the shadow of the pandemic. For Chief Minister and Janata Dal (United) leader Nitish Kumar, it is time to convince him that he is still good enough to deliver, his personal stock having taken a beating. For the Opposition and Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) supremo Lalu Prasad Yadav, it is a chance to prove that his sons have it in them to continue his political movement robustly and more importantly, that he is still a leader who matters in reshaping discourse. Let's take Nitish, who is under attack for his patchy response to the pandemic, poor flood management and mishandling of returnee migrants, a new constituency that is being courted by all parties. He may coast to victory in alliance with the BJP but the latter, while acknowledging him as the chief ministerial candidate, is still as ambitious about becoming the voters' first choice and having its own man in the future. It hasn't helped that Nitish has lost out in ratings to his Uttar Pradesh counterpart Yogi Adityanath in crisis management, the appreciation damagingly coming from his own people. The labourers, students and teachers are most peeved with him. Besides, unlike his initial years, he has stagnated and has nothing to show as a deliverer. The row over farm Bills may not have that much of an economic resonance in Bihar as the Government procurement here is low. Besides, it was the first State in India to have scrapped the Agriculture Produce Market Committee Act in 2006 and pave the way for the private sector to get involved in procurement of agricultural produce. But he cannot ignore the political consequences simply because Bihar's farmers haven't benefitted after the APMC was dismantled. The markets suffered a loss of fee revenue, there was no major private investment in the State's agricultural sector and the smaller farmers continue to depend on trader cartels for buys as there is no guaranteed price mechanism. If anything, Bihar shows how taking down a regulatory framework hastily without necessary checks and balances can hurt the small and marginal farmers even more. The Opposition could use this for its campaign pitch. Politically though, Nitish has already neutralised the Lok Janshakti Party (LJP), whose leader Chirag Paswan was attacking him almost every day, by inducting Hindustani Awam Morcha (HAM) founder and his protégé Jitan Ram Manjhi, into his fold. The Dalit vote is now consolidated under the NDA umbrella. According to the 2011 census, the Scheduled Castes are 15 per cent of Bihar's population. The Mahadalits constitute nearly 16 per cent and though cultivated by Nitish, were beginning to swerve towards the RJD, which has the core traditional votes of the Muslims and Yadavs. Manjhi could return the Dalit swing in his favour. This would bring Nitish the numbers he needs to stay relevant.

Where does it leave Lalu then? The Akhilesh Yadav-led Samajwadi Party (SP) announced that it will not contest and support all RJD candidates instead. Lalu still has the drawing power but he is not on the ground to smoothen wrinkles in the grand alliance of like-minded parties. And that could work to the RJD's detriment. The problem with the Opposition bloc members is that they would only end up dividing the non-NDA vote if they do not form a strategic partnership. At the same time, they become aggressive about bargaining for seats in return for staying together and that reduces the seat quota for the RJD. A reduced number of seats for the RJD only helps the BJP to manipulate numbers in its favour and keep the former in check. The Lok Sabha election results are proof of this undercutting. The RJD could go it alone but that would be self-defeatist considering some of its allies are already questioning the leadership of Tejashwi Yadav in public. The youth are particularly not taken in by the dynastic entitlement of Lalu's sons, who wage their own ego battles in the public sphere than inspire confidence. Tejashwi and Tej Pratap need to be on the same page. Or at least use their father's wisdom. Tejashwi, so far, has appeared more interested in pursuing his individual ambition, grooming his yes men and running down senior leaders of the caste movement as deadwood. The arrogance cost the RJD its dependable associations with the Left and the Congress. Besides, with the BJP waiting to splinter unhappy parties, the Opposition bloc is caught in a cleft stick at the moment. The Left parties may look down and out but they are holding on to their traditional pockets. Perhaps if they had effectively used former Jawaharlal Nehru University Students' Union (JNUSU) president Kanhaiya Kumar as the change-making candidate, they could have become a key fringe player. The Congress is gasping for breath and though it won't harm the RJD, another poor performance could see it losing more members to the BJP. The tide of discontent is there against Nitish but without Lalu at the helm, can the Opposition ride it?

Environmental damage

Without plastics and polymers, we might not have been able to face COVID. But it is time to start worrying about the environment



As Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora announced the dates for the Bihar Assembly elections, he also detailed the precautions being taken to conduct them. The fact is that the entire electoral process is a crowded one, and in a densely populated State like Bihar, almost guaranteed to be so, no matter what rules and regulations are put in place. So the Election Commission is deploying millions of masks and gloves and thousands of litres of hand sanitiser across booths to protect voters, booth officials and security personnel. Given that thousands of voters will touch every voting machine, each will be provided with a single disposable glove. But while the health and safety of our voters is paramount, there is another concern. That is the mountains of trash that will be generated as a result of these precautions. Given that several State Governments had declared a war on single-use plastics over the past few years, it is especially ironic that single-use plastic gloves will be needed to keep democracy alive. In fact, it is one of the side effects of the pandemic that huge volumes of non-recyclable, non-biodegradable trash have been generated.

There is little doubt that COVID warriors in intensive care wards need plastic personal protective equipment. Even surgical masks worn by millions are for the large part non-biodegradable. As more cities get back to work across the world and humanity learns to live with the virus and new protocols, both the Government and citizens must ponder over medical waste management and disposal. One immediate change that millions can adopt is to move to using washable cloth masks instead of polymer-based masks. While such polymer masks will be essential in hospital wards, in regular daily use cloth masks are quite effective at protecting others and more comfortable as well. Protocols for the reuse of protective kits and other plastic equipment should also be put in place, whether that involves washing or ultraviolet sanitisation. We must look at newer incineration technologies. We might be coming to terms with the pandemic, even if we have paid a terrible price in deaths and with the economy. However, we should not make the environmental costs so dramatic as well. We will be undoing all that we

opinion

Rescue package

We need a supportive policy regime so that banks can lend more and there is a rigorous monitoring of end-use of credit



SC PANDEY

It sounds pretty heartless to worry about the economy and livelihoods and appear less concerned with peoples' lives. It is difficult to weigh in golden balance whether lives or livelihoods are more important.

On December 31, 2019, China first told the World Health Organisation (WHO) that 41 patients in Wuhan had contracted a mysterious pneumonia not amenable to conventional treatment. Beginning January 23, first the city of Wuhan, then the entire Hubei province and then some other cities were locked down. The unprecedented quarantine was imposed on 50 million people across 15 cities.

After a 6.8 per cent contraction in January-March 2020 quarter, China's economy recorded 3.2 per cent growth in April-June 2020. China is the first major economy to return to growth after the pandemic.

For us, the pandemic is an imported calamity. The main gateways to India have been worst affected. Major democracies, including India, have failed to emulate the ruthless measures taken by China (and could be taken by China alone) to contain the damage. Maybe there is more than what meets the eye here.

With confirmed infections of over 50 lakh, albeit with a somewhat modest case fatality ratio of 1.64 per cent and a significantly high 78 per cent recovery rate, the first peak is not in sight at the national level although there is significant disruption of economic activity. Individual estimates vary widely with observers' biases as expected because the pandemic has fooled all forecasting tools. A general sense is that we face stagnation if not outright contraction in economic growth in the current year.

The GDP at current market prices was ₹45.51 lakh crore, ₹49.18 lakh crore and ₹38.08 lakh crore during April-June 2018, April-June 2019 and April-June 2020, respectively. The GDP at 2011-12 prices was ₹26.89 lakh crore during April-June 2020, compared to ₹35.35 lakh crore during April-June 2019. This is the direct effect of the lockdown that was in force for almost two out of three months in the first quarter. Experts are divided as to how the GDP is going to behave in the ensuing quarters due to the impact



of the pandemic on jobs and incomes.

Another way to analyse the economic impact of the pandemic is to look at GST collections which indicate the quantum of documented sales of goods and services. Monthly GST collections during April-August have been ₹32,172 crore, ₹62,151 crore, ₹90,917 crore, ₹87,422 crore and ₹86,449 crore. In August 2019, GST collection was ₹98,202 crore, so, obviously we are far away from reaching pre-lockdown levels of spending and registering a decent growth on that level. The shortfall from August 2019 GST collection is 12 per cent in August 2020. Obviously, GST collections would not measure the impact of the pandemic on the informal economy where undocumented sales take place on *kutchha* bills.

The first quarter GDP contraction affected almost all sectors. The only sector that posted positive growth (3.4 per cent) was agriculture, with bumper Rabi crops. High-contact sectors like tourism and hospitality are very badly affected.

Past years' trends show that the GDP is almost equally divided in the four quarters with some increase in the last quarter. In 2017-18, the contribution of the four quarters was 23.4, 24.4, 25.3 and 26.9 per cent for quarters one, two, three and four. In 2018-19, it was 24.24.5, 25.4 and 26.1 per cent. In 2019-20, it was 24.2, 24.2, 25.4 and 26.2 per cent. This year's quarterly GDP trends are going to be abnormal.

“MAJOR ECONOMIES ARE SURVIVING ON PEOPLE BUYING THINGS THAT THEY DON'T REALLY NEED AND LIVING ON BORROWED FUNDS. IT IS A PARADOX THAT THE RICHEST COUNTRIES ARE ALSO THE MOST INDEBTED COUNTRIES. NEW ASPIRATIONAL NEEDS ARE FELT OR CREATED AND FINANCE IS ARRANGED BY BORROWING”



SOUND BITE

We will review progress on the economic recovery in each Budget update, but I expect phase one to remain in place until the unemployment rate is comfortably back under six per cent.

Australian Treasurer
—Josh Frydenberg



While the economy has been doing better than expected, I think there's a downside risk to that if there is no further fiscal support.

Federal Reserve Chairman
—Jerome Powell



The malafide intent that drives the Pakistani deep state is in total contradiction to the objectives and principles that we all have gathered to promote in this temple of human rights.

First Secretary, MEA
—Vimash Aryan



Russia will in no way build its policy on the basis of taking into account these aggressive demands that have no legal force.

Foreign Minister
—Sergei Lavrov



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

China plays Nepal

Sir — The local authorities of Lapcha-Limi region in Humla have alleged that China has constructed nine buildings one kilometre inside the territory of Nepal. Lapcha-Limi is of great strategic importance to Nepal as Kailash Mansarovar can be clearly seen from this point. This sort of expansionist move isn't the first by China. Earlier in June this year, the Nepal Government had complained that China was using road construction in Tibet to occupy its land. While Nepal is protesting against the encroachment, maybe it should also ponder on its move of releasing a new political map that claimed Kalapani, Limpiyadhura and Lipulekh of Uttarakhand as part of its sovereign territory, ostensibly at China's behest.

Rahul Chouhan
Ujjain

Lost game

Sir — The Minister of State for External Affairs, V Muraleedharan, provided details of the Prime Minister's visits abroad since 2015, including their outcome. According to the details furnished, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has visited 58

countries since 2015 and a total expenditure of ₹517 crore was incurred on them. He visited US, Russia and China five times each and made multiple trips to other countries like Singapore, Germany, France, Sri Lanka and the United Arab Emirates.

To what extent did these visits help India with its bilateral, regional and global issues? Today, India is facing multiple terror-

ial challenges from three of its neighbouring countries — China, Nepal and Pakistan. The finding by the Comptroller and Auditor-General of India (CAG) that French aerospace major Dassault Aviation and European missile maker MBDA have defaulted on offset clauses of the Rafale deal puts a question mark on the Government's negotiation capabilities. The same amount

should have been put to better use elsewhere.

Bhagwan Thadani
Mumbai

Honour offset clause

Sir — The Comptroller and Auditor-General of India (CAG) has slammed French firms Dassault Aviation and MBDA — the main companies in the



Bollywood to "name and shame" selective actresses who might have consumed drugs in little quantities. The way NCB is handling the case casts serious doubts on its independence and integrity. And never before has a death been so repugnantly used as a weapon to fight political battles.

G David Milton
Maruthancode

Diverting public attention

The rising numbers of COVID-19 cases, a dented economy and tension around the borders do not seem to concern us as much as the alleged seamer side of life in Bollywood. The Narcotics Control Board's (NCB) probe into the drug use in Bollywood has captured the imagination of the nation so much so that it appears to have become the be-all-and-end-all of our lives. The information gathered during its "grilling" of celebrities, leaked to select media, has now become the staple diet of television drama.

The idiot box is now a voyeur's delight; it wallows on prying into the private lives of screen idols. Breathless reporters heighten the drama by their delivery of the story in a frenzy of excitement. The "arrivals" of actresses at the NCB office in the morning and their "departures" in the evening are marked by hustle and bustle as if they are earth-shattering events.

What started as a probe into actor Sushant Singh Rajput's demise and the circumstances surrounding it has meandered its way into a fishing expedition in

₹59,000 crore contract for 36 Rafale fighter jets — for their failure to transfer advanced technology to India. As per the deal, the French firms are required to plough back 50 per cent of the contract value to India as offsets or re-investments.

India, being the world's second-largest arms importer, suffers from shortages of critical weapon platforms. The Government should ensure that foreign vendors aren't allowed to view Indian contracts as easy cash cows.

N Sadhasiva Reddy
Bengaluru

Disturbing numbers

Sir — According to the 2018 annual report of the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), 33,356 rape cases were reported across the country, or an average of 91 rapes a day. The numbers are disturbing and the legislative reforms haven't been of much help. Our society needs to re-awaken and more serious reforms should be undertaken.

Urvi Jain
Ujjain

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Save Bollywood from ‘gutterisation’

The entire process of turning actors into marketing agents for selling certain political ideologies must stop after Kangana Ranaut



ANURAG TIWARY

ABHINAV JHA

The Government’s recent decision to set up the country’s “most beautiful” and “biggest” film city in Noida, Uttar Pradesh, has to be read in its wider socio-political context. An attempt to decentralise Bollywood, negate Mumbai as the entertainment capital of this country and control the dissemination of art and creativity is under way. The timing couldn’t be any better. The debate over nepotism, drug use and the proliferation of the so-called “mafia” of film-makers in Mumbai, amid the controversy surrounding Sushant Singh Rajput’s (SSR’s) untimely death, has changed the way we, as an audience, look at Bollywood today. The Hindi film industry is allegedly ruled by a bunch of oligarchs and dynasts who are extremely arrogant, egotistical and self-absorbed in their attitude towards “outsiders.”

Globally, the entertainment industry runs on a nonpareil image that it builds for itself. The insider-outsider debate in Bollywood has tainted the larger than life image of actors and film-makers and has brought the good, bad, and ugly side of the industry out in the open. How much of it is true remains to be seen. However, interestingly, Kangana Ranaut has emerged as the unflinching face of the rebellion against power, albeit in a highly uncouth manner.

Resultantly, it has so happened that much of this controversy has led to a debate between the far-Right and the Left-of-Centre political ideologies. In their attempts at winning the hearts of the urban middle-class, political parties have paved the way for a radical overhauling of cinema, art, and artists. This will be done by creating parallel power structures within the entertainment industry that will be backed by the State. We see that happening almost ostentatiously in the SSR-Rhea-Kangana drama. We have also seen that as a gradual development since the NDA Government came to power.

The likes of Anupam Kher, Paresh Rawal and Madhur Bhandarkar, among many others, have been used to lend their voice to debates on nationalism and religion. However, the nexus between Bollywood and politicians isn’t a new phenomenon. Great politicians understand that politics alone will not get their messages to the masses. So, both the groups have, historically, looked after each other. Film personalities help politicians in their campaigns and similarly, politicians help failed actors become administrators in the name of “cultural diplomacy.” It is almost like a rule. However, what the Kangana saga has revealed is that there is an attempt to forge a parallel entertainment industry which will act as the mouthpiece of Right-wing political parties and the Government. This group will help in disseminating what is known as “fringe cultural nationalism.” The mechanism is simple, involving shifting of power structures and bringing the industry within the control of the State. For the services of such actors, the Government will either provide them with security sponsored from public money or citizenship in case you are Akshay Kumar.

What is ignored during this entire debate is that the democratisation of cinema originally meant the production and promotion of diverse ideas previously not permitted within the industry. It also meant that for an “outsider”, there would be “lower barriers to entry” without any particular pedigree. It meant experimentation with alternative modes of artistic expression and creativity. It meant due recognition for films and works of expression that display counter-culture. Diversified cinema and artistic creativity were the major goals behind the demands for democratising the industry.

The present developments pose a threat to all stakeholders, including the audience, who are the primary and the majority stakeholders in artistic expression. The emergence of newbie politicians, who are regarded as pariah actors, will serve the purposes of disseminating Right-wing nationalism and will do no good to creativity and art. Actors, on the other hand, will lose creative autonomy and will be burdened with social responsibility. Films that challenge majoritarianism or films that are against an idea imposed by the State will not be permitted to go on the floors. Existing norms on censorship will change and become worse than what they already are. Discretion will be exercised almost freely. Turning artists into marketing agents for selling a certain political ideology must stop after motormouth Kangana Ranaut. Jaya Bachchan’s “save the industry” from “gutterisation” remark in Rajya Sabha last week should act as a clarion call and must force prospective cine-goers and film-makers to do some introspection.

(Anurag is from the National Law University and Abhinav is a student of law, Amity University)

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

INHONE LOCKDOWN MEIN BAS ANUSHKA KI BOWLING KI PRACTICE KI HAIN (VIRAT HAS ONLY TRAINED AGAINST ANUSHKA’S BOWLING DURING THE LOCKDOWN).
—FORMER CRICKETER
SUNIL GAVASKAR



OVER THE YEARS YOU HAVE RESPECTED THE PRIVATE LIVES OF EVERY CRICKETER. SHOULDN’T YOU HAVE AN EQUAL AMOUNT OF RESPECT FOR ME AND US?
—ACTOR
ANUSHKA SHARMA

Pacifier in the Indo-Pacific

Germany’s return to realpolitik augurs well for India as it emerges as a pivot of the aggressive counter-balancing act in the region together with the US, Japan and Australia



SANDEEP KUMAR DUBEY

Even as the world is grappling with the COVID-19 pandemic, geopolitics is undergoing a seismic shift. The Indo-Pacific region, which accounts for almost 40 per cent of the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP), has emerged as the epicentre of the “New Great Game,” especially between the US and China, for influence. The rule-based international order is being contested in the Indo-Pacific reportedly by none other than a UN Security Council (UNSC) member, the People’s Republic of China (PRC). Speaking at the Munich Security Conference on February 14, the German Federal President Frank-Walter Steinmeier said, “...(China) is selective in accepting international law only where it does not run counter to its own interests. Its actions in the South China Sea are unsettling the neighbours in the region.”

Beijing’s constant hammering on the existing global order has caused alarm in the US and among its allies. Compared to China, India has been endorsing the prevalence of a rule-based world order in the Indo-Pacific region. Delineating New Delhi’s vision for the region, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his speech at the Shangri-La Dialogue on June 1, 2018, said, “India stands for an open and stable international trade regime. We will also support a rule-based, open, balanced and stable trade environment in the Indo-Pacific Region...”

Re-ordering the world: After the collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991, what emerged was a unipolar world order dominated by the US. It was believed that post-1991, the emergence of the US as the sole world power would expedite the restoration of global peace, security and stability and strengthen Pax Americana.

That is, the post-World War-II international order shaped and maintained by the US employing its overwhelming might. However, instead of growing in strength, Pax Americana has been fraying since the collapse of the Soviet Union. The strategic space ceded in the Indo-Pacific by the US, thanks to its “America First” policy, has been occupied by regional powers, thus turning it into a multi-polar region and the centre of a major geopolitical tussle for dominance. The fear among the world powers is that if the rules of the international order are disobeyed and disowned, the already fragile global form might collapse. What would happen next? A chaos resulting out of world disorder? Or a global re-order leading to resuscitation of peace and security?

Wary of the consequences that might ensue, India has been championing for a world based on a new global security architecture supported by multi-lateralism and mutual cooperation. During his recent visit to Russia, in a meeting of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation on September 4, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh declared New Delhi is committed to this as it will “be open, transparent, inclusive, rules-based and anchored in international laws.” Earlier in May, in his address to the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) countries, Modi had appealed, “In the post-Corona world, we need a new template of globalisation, based on fairness, equality, and humanity. We need international institutions that are more representative of today’s world.”

GIVEN THE EXPANSIONIST AGENDA OF CHINA IN THE INDO-PACIFIC AND BEYOND, COUNTRIES IN THE REGION ARE FORMING A STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP TO CONTAIN IT. THE SUCCESS OF THE ALLIANCE, HOWEVER, DEPENDS ON HOW INDIA RESPONDS TO THE EMERGING GEOPOLITICS IN THE REGION. CAN NEW DELHI PLAY A PIVOTAL ROLE IN ARRESTING BEIJING’S GROWING INFLUENCE IN THE REGION? DOES ITS GEOGRAPHIC POSITION ALLOW FOR THAT?

Indo-US partnership: In recent years, India has come strategically closer to the US and its allies to contain China through diplomatic and military means. The Indian Navy’s participation in the Malabar naval exercise led by the US Navy is one such example of the growing partnership between the two nations.

But it has not come to terms with the “America First” policy. Unlike Washington DC, New Delhi has been a proponent of multi-lateralism to promote peace and security in the Indo-Pacific and beyond. And that is why it is treading a fine line in the region by not squarely aligning with the US in its balancing act, making no explicit reference to China and opposing Australia’s entry into the Malabar naval exercise.

However, amid the growing border tension with China, India may “aggressively” pursue the Indo-Pacific balancing act together with the US, Japan and Australia. Though so far New Delhi has opposed Australia’s entry into the Malabar exercise, it might consider inviting it to the next one. This would strengthen the Quad (the US, India, Australia and Japan strategic partnership) further and probably make it anti-China. In 2015, Japan had already been elevated as a permanent member of the Malabar exercise group.

China as a sea power: In his book *Prisoners of Geography*, Tim Marshall notes, “Until now China has never been a naval power...and it was rarely ideologically expansive...It was always a land power with a lot of land and a lot of people.” However, Beijing now harbours ambitions of becoming a global power and setting the international rules on its own terms. To fulfil its ambitions, it simply follows in the US’ footsteps to gain control over the seas.

It has already taken measures to dominate the South China Sea (SCS) and the Indian Ocean. Beijing is already making efforts to set up an Air Defence Identification Zone in the SCS and develop a Blue Water navy to defend its sea controls. Tim Marshall further adds, “China...intends to become a two ocean power (Pacific and Indian). To achieve this, China is investing in deep-water ports in Myanmar, Bangladesh, Pakistan and Sri Lanka...”

The great American naval strategist of the 19th century, Alfred Mahan, once said, “Whoever rules the waves, rules the world.” His naval strategy finds supreme place in China pursuing its strategic ends. Just like other global powers, Beijing, too is Mahanian, probably with Maoist tactics. China is expanding its sea controls in a piecemeal manner, mouthful by mouthful, a typical Maoist strategy to wipe out enemy forces one by one. Mao asserted, “In war, battles can only be fought one by one and the enemy forces can only be destroyed one by one.” Tacticisation of strategy is doomed to fail against China’s well-designed strategy of piecemeal expansion in the Indo-Pacific region. Only a coherent grand containment strategy can counter Beijing’s expansionism in the region.

India as the pivot State: Given the expansionist agenda of China in the Indo-Pacific and beyond, countries in the region are forming a strategic partnership to contain it. The success of the alliance, however, depends on how India responds to the emerging geopolitics in the region. Can New Delhi play a pivotal role in arresting Beijing’s growing influence? Does its geographic position allow for that?

Quoting naval strategist Alfred Mahan, Robert Kaplan writes in his book *The Revenge of Geography*, “Mahan thought that instead of the Heartland of Eurasia being the geographical pivot of empires, it was conversely the Indian and Pacific oceans that constituted the hinges of geopolitical destiny.” Mahan sees India’s location in the centre of the Indian Ocean littoral, with the Himalayas protecting its rear flanks, as critical for the seaward penetration of China, adds Kaplan. This explains precisely the strategic significance of India’s geography in regional geopolitics, making it a pivot of the Indo-Pacific. Kaplan has rightly predicted, “As the US and China become great power rivals, the direction in which India tilts could determine the course of geopolitics in Eurasia in the 21st century. India, in other words, looms as the ultimate pivot State.”

Germany’s return to realpolitik: On July 1, Germany took charge of the presidency of the Council of the European Union (EU). In September it articulated its strategy on the region through a document titled “Policy guidelines for the Indo-Pacific region.” In his statement, German Foreign Minister Heiko Maas declared: “We are sending a clear message today, the Indo-Pacific region is a priority of German foreign policy...We want to help shape that order, so that it is based on rules and international cooperation, not on the law of the strong. That is why we have intensified cooperation with those countries that share our democratic and liberal values.” In fact, this is indicative of Germany’s return to a realpolitik approach towards its foreign and security policies from its so-called “moral politics” and “political escapism.”

This augurs well for India, as both nations believe in a multi-lateralist approach to foreign policy and international politics. Just like Germany, multi-lateralism is key to transforming India into a global power. Their beliefs in democratic and liberal values make them natural allies and together they can play a vital role in ensuring peace and security in the Indo-Pacific region.

(The writer is a policy commentator)

India needs another Vidyasagar now

Just two years ago, a tribal boy was killed in Karmatar because he wished to marry a widow. Has anything really changed in modern India?



GOVIND BHATTACHARJEE

On September 26, 200 years ago, an extraordinary personality was born in a village in south West Bengal. By the standards of his time, why, even by today’s standards, Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar was unique in every respect. As Rabindranath Tagore once said, “One wonders how God, in the process of producing 40 million Bengalis, produced a man.”

The 19th century Bengali society was in an advanced state of decay brought about by a lethal cocktail of superstition, depravity and exploitation, being trapped inside a complex hierarchy of castes and sub-castes embedded within each other. One half of the society — women — was excluded from education and economic activities, being confined to homes where they had no voice. They were treated as intellectually and morally inferior, and hence unworthy of education. Superstition proclaimed that a girl’s education would inevitably beget her widowhood. Her best contribution to society was to become one of the countless wives of Kulin Brahmins, whose main aim was collecting handsome dowries from multiple marriages — one had as many as 156 wives as per records. She would be lucky to enjoy her absentee husband’s company a few nights a year. She would attain salvation by burning on the same funeral pyre with her husband, who was 50-60 years older than her. Through the efforts of Raja Rammohan Roy (1772-1838), the horrendous practice of Sati was abolished in 1829, nine years after Vidyasagar’s birth.

Child marriage was the order of the day. Girls were married before attaining puberty in a custom called *gouridan*. Born into a Kulin Brahmin family, Vidyasagar himself was married at the age of 14 to a girl eight years old. Bankimchandra, who was born 18 years after Vidyasagar, was married at 11 to a girl only five years old. Female infanticide was also the order of the day. Female foetuses would be destroyed brutally through what was called “*ghat murder*.” These monstrosities still exist in many pockets in rural India despite all the laws we have in our books.

Women had no right to property or inheritance. Once they became widows, a lifetime of misery awaited them. They were forced to a single stringent vegetarian meal a day to rob them of their sexuality, youth and beauty. Sexual exploitation by relatives and termination of unwanted pregnancies leading to death were not only common but met with society’s tacit approval. Legal abolition of sati did not end women’s miseries. The daily privations, insults and misery of existence forced many to join the brothels that were there to sustain the perverted *Babu* culture of Bengal. In 1853, the population of sex workers in Kolkata was 12,419 and by 1867 it touched over 30,000. And 90 per cent of them, according to the *Amritabazar Patrika*, were widows. By a crude estimate, the sex worker population increased from about five to nearly 10 per cent of Kolkata’s population over this period.

This, then, was the society Vidyasagar was born into, and this was the society he had sought to reform. He did so with a gusto and a fearlessness we have not seen in any other personality ever since. To fight the orthodox society steeped in deep superstition and ruled by the semi-literate Brahmins, Vidyasagar knew he would have to beat his adversaries at their own game. So, in January and October 1855, he wrote his two famous treatises on the *Marriage of Hindu Widows*, drawing upon the *Sutras* (literary compositions) and the *Sastras* (scriptures) to establish his logical argument that there was no prohibition on remarriage of widows in the *Sastras*.

Rather the *Parashara Samhita* sanctioned widow remarriage: “Women are at liberty to marry again if their husbands are insane, dead, have renounced the family or are impotent or outcasts.” About 2,000 copies of the first book were sold in the first week itself, followed by 3,000 and then a third reprint of 10,000 copies got sold out too. But the sales figures did not indicate society’s response. He was heaped with criticism, insults, motives, ridicule and even threatened with death.

The Hindu Widows’ Remarriage Act was finally passed on July 26, 1856 and the reform did not remain limited to Bengal alone. In 1864, Jyotiba Phule succeeded in persuading a Saraswat Brahmin widow to remarry. In 1866, Vishnu Shastri Pandit translated Vidyasagar’s book on widow remarriage into Marathi. But passing of the statute was only the first of the many obstacles. Vidyasagar personally presided over the first remarriage of a widow, Kalimati, with Srishchandra Vidyaratna, and then many others at his own expense, in the process gathering significant personal debt.

He even got his only son, Narayanchandra, married to a widow, Bhavasundari. Not many have the courage to practise what they preach. As he wrote to his brother: “Remarriage of widows is the noblest deed of my life. I don’t think I shall be able to accomplish a greater one, ever. I have sacrificed everything for this cause and won’t mind even laying down my life for it.”

He was also propagating women’s education. In 1849, he set up the Calcutta Female School along with Drinkwater Bethune for educating the girl child. In 1856, appointed Special Inspector of Schools, he established 30 schools exclusively for girls. Between 1857 and 1858, when the Mutiny was ravaging the country, he was fighting a different kind of battle, opening 35 girls’ schools all over Bengal.

After widow remarriage, it was the turn of polygamy. In 1857, he orchestrated a petition to the Government with 25,000 signatures for the prohibition of polygamy among Kulin Brahmins. The Mutiny postponed any action on this petition but in 1866, he inspired another petition, this time with 21,000 signatures. The Government, reluctant to interfere in Indian customs, refused to take any legislative measure, instead allowing time and education to bring an end to the practice.

In 1871 and 1873, he wrote two brilliant critiques on polygamy, arguing that it was not sanctioned by the sacred texts, but was opposed by five eminent scholars, led by his friend Taranath Tarkavachaspati of Calcutta Sanskrit College. Outlawing polygamy among Hindus, however, had to wait till 1955, eight years after Independence, through the Hindu Marriage Act. As regards child marriage, the Indian Penal Code, 1860, had fixed the age of consent to 10 years for girls, which was raised successively to 12 (1891), 14 (1925), 16 (1940) and 18 (2013). The Child Marriage Restraint Act, 1929, also known as the Sarda Act, fixed the age of marriage at 14 for girls and 18 for boys, that was later raised to 18 and 21 respectively in 1978. This has since been repealed and replaced by the Prohibition of Child Marriage Act, 2006.

In 1873, disgusted with the so-called *bhadralok* society, Vidyasagar went to live with the Santhals at Karmatar, a sleepy hamlet about 20 km from the district headquarters of Jamtara now in Jharkhand, where he would spend the last 18 years of his life till his death in 1891. There he set up a girls’ school and a night school for adults on the premises of his house, which he called Nandan Kanan. The house today lies in shambles.

The irony is that though in this village 24 tribal child widows were remarried by Vidyasagar, just two years ago, a tribal boy was killed in Karmatar because he wished to marry a widow. Has anything really changed in modern India?

Sati was abolished only in name. Countless satis continue to get burnt in 21st century India, though not on pyres. Countless brides get burnt to death in their nuptial homes for dowries, the faces and minds of countless more are scarred forever by acid attacks inflicted by spurned lovers and others. Scores of girls are murdered in “honour-killings” in rural India for marrying into another caste or community, by defying their families’ dictats.

Sati has actually metamorphosed into another form that is equally brutal and vicious. It is not about burning a woman. It is about denying her the choice to decide the course of her life. She is continued to be treated as morally and intellectually inferior to men, as she was 200 years ago. We need another Ram Mohan Roy and a Vidyasagar now, more than ever.

(The author is a retired Director-General from the Office of the CAG)

SHORT READS



Dr Reddy's launches generic drug in US market

New Delhi: Drug major Dr Reddy's Laboratories on Friday said it has launched generic version of Precedex injection, used for sedation purposes in patients, in the US market. The Hyderabad-based company's Dexmedetomidine Hydrochloride in 0.9 per cent Sodium Chloride injection is the generic version of Hospira Inc's Precedex injection. "We are pleased to bring this important generic product to market, making it affordable - and readily available - for patients," Dr Reddy's Laboratories Chief Executive Officer North America Generics Marc Kikuchi said in a statement. The company's ability to adequately supply Dexmedetomidine is important for patients as it is on the FDA's Drug Shortage list, he added.



Vakrangee gets RBI nod to set up Bharat Bill Payment unit

New Delhi: Vakrangee Ltd on Friday said the Reserve Bank has granted in-principle approval to set up Bharat Bill Payment Operating Unit (BBPOU) to handle payment services related to bills. Vakrangee (VL) has received in-principle authorisation to set up and operate BBPOU under the Payment and Settlement Systems Act, 2007 from the Reserve Bank of India (RBI), it said in a release. The company offers banking, insurance, money transfer services, e-commerce, e-governance and other digital services on behalf of its partner banks, insurers, government agencies, e-commerce players among others through its branches mostly located in rural and semi-urban areas. "Vakrangee can now directly handle payment and aggregation of payment services relating to bills under the scope of BBPS," the company said.

Lupin launches generic Divalproex Sodium ER tablets

NEW DELHI: Drug firm Lupin on Tuesday said it has launched generic Divalproex Sodium extended-release tablets used for treatment of various conditions, including manic episodes associated with bipolar disorder, in the American market. The company has unched Divalproex Sodium extended-release (ER) tablets USP, in the strengths of 250 mg and 500 mg, having received an approval earlier from the United States Food and Drug Administration (USFDA), Lupin said in a statement. The product will be manufactured at the company's Nagpur facility, it added. The company's tablet is generic version of AbbVie Inc's Depakote extended-release tablets in the same strengths, Lupin said. According to IOVIA MAT July 2020 data, Divalproex Sodium extended-release tablets USP had annual sales of approximately \$130m.

'Centre used GST compensation cess elsewhere, violated law'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The CAG has found that the Union government in the very first two years of the GST implementation wrongly retained Rs 47,272 crore of GST compensation cess that was meant to be used specifically to compensate states for loss of revenue.

In its audit report of government accounts, the Comptroller and Auditor General (CAG) flagged that the amount was to be credited to the non-lapsable GST Compensation Cess collection fund for payment to states for loss of revenue due to implementation of GST since 2017, but the government did not do so, and thus violated the GST law.

"The GST Compensation Cess Act, 2017 provides for levy of cess for the purpose of providing compensation to the states for loss of revenue arising due to implementation of GST for a period specified in the Act," CAG said.

As per the Act and the accounting procedure, the entire cess collected during the



The CAG flagged that the amount was to be credited to the non-lapsable GST Compensation Cess collection fund

year is required to be credited to a non-lapsable Fund (the GST Compensation Cess Fund) which shall form part of the Public Account and shall be used for the purpose mentioned i.e., for providing compensation to states for loss of revenue. CAG said out of the

Rs 62,612 crore GST Compensation Cess collected in 2017-18, Rs 56,146 crore was transferred to the non-lapsable fund.

In the following year (2018-19), Rs 54,275 crore out of Rs 95,081 crore collected was transferred to the fund.

The short transfer in 2017-18 was Rs 6,466 crore and in 2018-19 it was Rs 40,806 crore, CAG said adding the Centre used this money for "other purposes" which "led to an overstatement of revenue receipts and understatement of fiscal deficit for the year". The short-crediting was a

violation of the GST Compensation Cess Act, 2017.

The issue of compensation cess is driving a wedge between the Centre and states at the GST Council - the highest decision making body of the GST regime that had subsumed 17 different central and state taxes such as excise duty and VAT.

States have not been paid their promised compensation for letting go their powers to levy taxes on goods and services since last fiscal. The Centre says a slowdown in the economy has meant that not enough money is being collected by way of cess that is levied on luxury and sin goods.

The Centre has asked states to borrow for meeting the revenue shortfall. States ruled by Congress, Left, TMC and AAP have opposed the move completely arguing that the Centre should borrow and provide to states, since states have given majority of their taxation powers to the Centre under GST regime introduced in July 2017.



Strides Pharma gets USFDA nod

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Drug firm Strides Pharma Science on Tuesday said its subsidiary, Strides Pharma Global Pte Ltd, has received approval from the US health regulator for Butalbital, Acetaminophen, and Caffeine tablets, used to treat tension headache.

The approved product is bioequivalent and therapeutically equivalent to the Reference Listed Drug (RLD), Butalbital, Acetaminophen, and Caffeine tablets USP in the strengths of 50 mg/325 mg/40 mg from the United States Food and Drug Administration (USFDA), Strides Pharma Science said in a regulatory filing.

'Not forcing anyone to invest in small-caps'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Sebi chief Ajay Tyagi on Tuesday said the markets regulator is not forcing anyone to invest in small-caps and investment should always be in the interest of investors amid new portfolio allocation rules for multi-cap mutual fund schemes.

He further said multi-cap mutual fund schemes should be "true to label".

The regulator, earlier this month, directed multi-cap funds to invest at least 25 per cent of their corpus each in large-cap stocks, mid-caps and small-cap stocks. This raised concerns among the mutual fund industry and fund managers estimated that the move would result into Rs 30,000-40,000 crore moving out of large-cap to mid-cap and small-cap companies.

Earlier, there was no restriction on the exposure such funds needed to make in large, mid and small-cap stocks and therefore majority of the multi-cap funds have run with a large-cap bias. "Multi-cap form should be as per their name. We are not forcing any-



The regulator directed multi-cap funds to invest at least 25% of their corpus each in large-cap stocks

one to invest in these caps (small-cap, mid-cap) and investment should be in the interest of investors," Tyagi said while addressing industry body Amfi's 25th annual general meeting. According to him, improper categorization of mutual fund schemes will lead to confusion and mis-selling. "Schemes not true to label will create confusion in the minds of investors," Tyagi said.

Daimler to strengthen dealership network

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Daimler India (Commercial Vehicle), a subsidiary of Stuttgart-based Daimler, has plans to expand dealership network to over 250 outlets by this year-end, a top official has said.

The dealership network would increase by 10 per cent this year cutting down the distance between dealerships from the existing 160 km to 120 km. "We are steadily expanding our dealer network to ensure that all customers have easy access to our products and services," the company's vice-president (marketing and sales) Rajaram Krishnam urthy said.

"That is a commitment we made to BharatBenz buyers from the beginning, and we



Last month, BharatBenz showed double digit sales compared to August 2019

will continue to honour it," he said. Early this year, Daimler India sold one lakh Bharat Benz trucks in the country. The company's managing director Satyakam Arya said, "Last month, BharatBenz showed double digit sales compared to August 2019.

TVS Motor launches Apache RTR

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

TVS Motor Company on Tuesday launched a new variant of TVS Apache RTR 200 4V motorcycle equipped with a new braking technology, Super-Moto ABS, priced at Rs 1,23,500 (ex-showroom Delhi). The motorcycle will offer single-channel ABS function, giving it formidable stopping power and superior braking control coupled with the fun of sliding around the race track, the company said in a statement. TVS Apache RTR 200 4V is powered by a 197.75 cc single-cylinder, 4-stroke engine delivering power of 20.5 PS of power at 8,500 RPM. It is enabled with Race Tuned-Fuel injection 'RT-Fi' technology.

India Ratings maintains negative outlook

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) on Friday said it has maintained a negative outlook on transport and energy infrastructure for second half of the current financial year.

It said the negative outlook stems from likely low demand in the sectors.

"India Ratings and Research (Ind-Ra) has maintained a negative outlook on energy and transport infrastructure for 2HPY21, stemming from a likely low demand, driven by low thermal plant load factor and subdued wind generations, and the resultant impact on coverage metrics," the rating agency said in a statement. The agency has also maintained a negative outlook on the roads and airport sectors.

It said toll collections rebound was strong at around



90 per cent of pre-COVID-19 levels in the first 15 days of September 2020, exceeding Ind-Ra's April 2020 expectations. "Nevertheless, possible regional lockdowns, a surge in COVID-19 infections, travel restrictions, people behavioural changes and a weaker economic recovery are threats to further growth," Ind-Ra said. The airport sector was impaired by almost nil operations in the first quarter of 2020-21 and restrained passenger movements, it said. The

It said negative outlook stems from likely low demand in the sectors. It also maintained a negative outlook on roads and airport sectors

agency added that the short-term risks to traffic recovery cloud the sector prospects but the long-term potential is intact, given the protected returns for airports and a long concession framework for others. Liquidity would be an important rating consideration for airports, the agency said. About energy infrastructure projects, it said it expects the effect of liquidity enhancement on distribution companies (discoms) to be temporary,

and payables from discoms are likely to increase slightly by the end of 2020-21 year-on-year. It added that the weak operating profiles of most discoms continue to be drag on the sector. On toll road projects, it maintained a negative outlook and said India's toll roads' V-shaped recovery was comparable to geographies such as China. In the first 15 days of September 2020, toll collections touched 90 per cent of the average in the previous financial year. "The recovery in toll roads has been swifter than Ind-Ra's original expectation. However, projects have displayed a varied trend of revenue recovery due to individual corridor-specific dynamics," it added. The agency also said commercial traffic contributes 75-80 per cent to the toll collections and the balance is from passenger vehicles.

PSBs get more retail credit inquiries than private banks

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The state-run lenders are seeing faster pick up in retail credit inquiries than their private counterparts on quicker reopening of branch network, a report by a credit information company (CIC) said on Tuesday.

Despite the inroads done by digital alternatives, through which lenders are receiving inquiries and even disbursing loans online, branch offices continue to play an important role, Transunion Cibil said in the report.

The lenders get in touch with CICs while doing diligence on every credit proposal, which triggers inquiries.

It can be noted that many analysts have said that a large share of the incremental credit demand is coming from the more aggressive private sector lenders who also have larger capital buffers.

"Public (sector) lenders saw the biggest rebound in



Inquiries from over a dozen state-run lenders for the two months were at 102 per cent of the same observed in January-February

inquiries in July and August 2020, most likely because they were early in recommencing operations than their private and NBFC (non-bank finance companies) counterparts," the report by Cibil said.

Inquiries from over a dozen state-run lenders for the two months were at 102 per cent of the same observed in January-February this year and 118 per cent of that in the same period a year ago, it said.

The same numbers for the private sector lenders were at 70 per cent and 78 per cent, respectively, while for NBFCs

and housing finance companies, inquiries were much lower at 51 per cent of the pre-COVID period in January-February and 57 per cent of the levels observed in July-August last year. At a system-wide level, inquiry volumes rebounded in July-August, but were still lower than the pre-COVID period, the report said, adding that as of August 2020, the inquiries were at the same level as during April 2018. It also said that a lot of demand seen in July-August was pent-up loan demand which had been affected due to the coronavirus-induced lockdowns.

Vodafone wins arbitration against India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Vodafone has won the arbitration case against India over Rs 20,000 crore retrospective tax dispute, according to sources. The Hague Court ruled that the conduct of the Indian tax department is in breach of fair and equitable treatment, the sources added. Vodafone has won the arbitration against India on the issue of retrospective tax case of Rs 20,000 crore, they said.

GJEPC to hold virtual biz meet with UK buyers

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Gem and Jewellery Export Promotion Council (GJEPC) on Friday said it is organising India Global Connect, an exclusive virtual business meet between Indian manufacturers and retailers or buyers from the UK, next week to boost exports to the European nation.

The India Global Connect conference will provide a platform to explore opportunities, understand business needs and help further the trade between India and the UK in



gems and jewellery sector, GJEPC said in a statement.

"The pandemic has forced us to look for innovative ways to reach out to the global business fraternity, and India Global Connect is one such endeavour where manufacturers, exporters and

importers have an opportunity to gain crucial market insights to further enhance their business," GJEPC Chairman Colin Shah said. "India's USD 35 billion gem and jewellery export industry has the wherewithal to deliver client-specific products to every major world market. I am confident that the India Global Connect virtual platform will open up new avenues and deepen knowledge sharing between the two trade partners," he added.

VW launches digitally integrated service outlets

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Volkswagen Passenger Cars India on Friday announced the launch of its digitally integrated service outlets for pre-owned cars. With the launch of Das WeltAuto (DWA) Excellence Centres, the company aims to strengthen its one-

stop solution to buy, sell or exchange certified pre-owned cars. Through these Centres, customers can avail a bouquet of features, including professional car evaluation, special finance offer, unique accessory packages and hassle-free transfer, the company said in a statement. To begin with, the

company has launched DWA Excellence Centres in Coimbatore, Hyderabad, Bengaluru, Cochin and Thrissur. The company said it aims to offer a digitally enabled, professionally managed, value for money proposition to customers looking for individual mobility options.



Flipkart, Amazon strengthen furniture offerings

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

E-commerce giants Flipkart and Amazon have expanded the number of sellers on their platforms and ramped up selection in the furniture category as they gear up to compete in the upcoming festive season.

Walmart-owned Flipkart said it has more than doubled the number of sellers in furniture category on the marketplace since last year to over 10,000 sellers across the country, and increased its selection to over 3.5 lakh products to meet consumers' evolving demand.

These sellers, including small and micro furniture manufacturers, have been onboarded from various furniture clusters across Churu, Ratangad, Sardharshaher in Rajasthan,

Jabalpur, Indore in MP and Saharanpur in Bihar, Flipkart said in a statement.

Amazon India Director (Large Appliances and Furniture) Suchit Subhas said over the last year, Amazon.in has enabled thousands of small sellers in the furniture category to get online and access a nationwide customer base.

He added that these include furniture sellers from several artisanal hubs of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh that are known for their unique furniture designs across the world.

"We have launched a 'Quality Verified' program that aims to educate and help sellers improve quality of their products by developing standardized product, packaging and catalog improvement guide-



lines based on industry best practices that will help sellers offer a great shopping experience to customers," he noted.

Flipkart said COVID-19 pandemic has catalysed new demand patterns across products categories, including furniture, as people spend more time at home.

With consumers now investing more in creating their own comfortable space at home, there is a notable increase in the demand for ergonomic furniture across furniture segments, it said.

While metro cities accounted for a large percentage of this demand before the pandemic,

Walmart-owned Flipkart said it has more than doubled the number of sellers in furniture category on the marketplace

an increasing number of consumers from tier-2 and tier-3 markets are purchasing furniture online since the lockdown and now, with the festive season approaching, Flipkart aims to offer customers a one-stop destination for furniture shopping, it added.

Flipkart has also expanded its work from home (WFH) furniture seller count with brands such as Wipro and Featherlite by over 30 per cent.

ACC okays overhaul of SAIL's board

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) has approved the restructuring of SAIL's board, the steel ministry said in a statement on Friday.

The restructuring of the board will bring in greater efficiency, and decentralisation in the company, it said.

"The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved the restructuring of the board of SAIL. The 4 posts of CEOs of SAIL's integrated steel plants are to be elevated as functional directors by designating them as directors-in-charge of Bokaro, Rourkela, Bhilai and one director-in-



charge jointly for Burnpur and Durgapur steel plants," the statement said.

The restructuring also involves merging the functions and duties of the post of Director (Raw Materials and Logistics) and that of Director (Projects), and Business Planning) with the post of Director (Technical) and its consequent re-designation as Director (Technical, Projects and Raw Materials).

ADAH SHARMA'S IMMUTABLE RELATIONSHIP WITH HYD

Fans can't help lose their minds over Tollywood's Adah Sharma in her masala films — her portrayal of the latest fashion trends or even setting some of them, her vibrant hair colours, contribution to the society, and her deep affection for her pet 'Radha'. But something that even professing fans don't know much about, is her extreme endearment towards the tinsel town that is Hyderabad. Abode to Tollywood, one of the biggest film industries in India for both the Telugu states, Hyderabad helped her make a name for herself, says Adah in her chat with *The Pioneer's* SHIKHA DUGGAL. Read on to find more reasons that make the actress fall for the city every day



Gifting her with the sterling joy of a debut film, it got her a lot of appreciation and recognition for the work she does. This urban area is not just one of the pedestals that augmented her name in the history of Tollywood cinema as one of the most loved actresses but also instilled a deep thought in her that 'work is in progress' and is strengthening her to climb higher in life. Born in the well-known 'mayanagri ke sheher' — Bombay, now known as Mumbai, she never lost love for the city she works in — Hyderabad.

She was never complacent about it neither irked by minute things of commuting. When questioned about one of the many things she loves about the city, Adah says she admires the netizens' utmost regard for cinema and how they consider it to be an equally religious podium of displaying art. "I feel blessed to be working for Telugu cinema in Hyderabad. I got to be part of some successful films for years now and it's my pleasure to be serving as an agent who can inspire the audiences through my piece of art because talking about cinema lovers from the South, they really look into the intricate details of a movie which in turn helps us also grow into promising artists," expresses Adah.

Every now and then, she has given herself opportu-

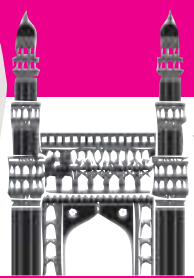
nities to reconnect here and believe in the notion that there's much more that the city can offer her and kept moving forward. By following one of the simplest yet profound mantras for framing a recalled relationship with this city, Adah says she always identifies all the good things about the place, except for the one contentious thought that's been lingering in her mind these days — public health issues.

Known for her honesty and holding her ground, Hyderabad felt like love at first sight for her which gave her a balanced life and helped her build a good networking system amongst A-listers from the world of Tollywood cinema. Sharing more about it, she says, "I am intoxicated with the people of this town. They give me immense love, make me feel

relevant, notice my great deal of work and the impression is such that they linger in my thoughts. They radiate warmth to an extent that it can captivate you."

Considering the metropolitan of Hyderabad a pure wanderlust and a magnet attracting many visitors takes her back to the fondest memory she has reminisced here, "I fondly remember when I once visited a multiplex theatre in Hyderabad and the way fans went out of their way amid the roaring crowd to meet me was so humbling. Fans make us who we are, their reactions are very genuine. They make edits for us, pen down poems or love letters, sketch, all to attain one post of appreciation."

Work is indeed a major part of the charming actress and she thinks the talent exchange between the two film industries having nothing to do with northern or southern ends and it should only reflect quality talent. "Hyderabad to me is all about my crazy fans who encourage me to do more experimental films and shower with me immense love. They instil a new passion in me every day to continue to wake up, go to the set, and live It'sdream of being an 'adakaara'. Its not necessary for me to have a permanent residence to call it a home, a home is where I feel welcome and a sense of belonging, and Hyderabad is that place for me. A fact about me that proves my strong association with Hyderabad is that I am known as a Telugu actress," Adah signs off.



HYDERABOND



Viewer-related content is essential

YouTube is arguably a space where one has seen one of the most dynamic changes in people's mindsets. At a time when not many viewed it as a suitable platform to promote, educate, and market, Play Info Pvt Ltd, began to make hay even before the sun shone. The director talks to us about their timely decisions, their out-of-the-box content, the future being digital, and more.

Until as recently as a couple of years ago, no prominent achiever from across the spectrum fancied

YouTube, as many felt it wasn't attractive enough to be used as a promotional or educational tool. Today, the transformation is such that appearing on the ever-vibrant media platform is the in-thing and is patronised by just about everyone.

In keeping with the market dynamics, this has resulted in the emergence of several players, who have established YouTube platforms much to the delight of every Youtuber in town. A survivor in the highly competitive field has been Suman Network, Suman Network, which is the flagship brand of Play Even Info Pvt Ltd., today, ranks amongst the most popular Telugu digital media platforms. "One needs to produce the right content to survive in the ever-growing digital world," avers Suman, Managing Director of Suman TV Network.

To keep in line with the market demands and viewer expectation, the network is branching out by foraying into several new genres, despite it already having around 100 YouTube channels. The immediate plans are to expand the platform base with district-specific YouTube channels to cater to the local demands, which, according to him, is



Suman

where there is a dearth of quality content. There will be exclusive independent slots for health, employment opportunities, personality development, and astrology. There is an increasing demand for technology reviews and videos of personality development, cookery, and interviews of inspirational role-models, which all enjoy loyal patronage.

The industry compels every promoter to introduce innovations and new features almost at regular intervals. Towards this in addition to the e-commerce platform that has been launched, Suman Network will be on more platforms like YouTube where content creators can upload their videos. "The future is digital. As it

is the most patronised medium, visibility, and an out-of-the-box, but viewer-related content is essential," states the 44-year-old from Naidupeta, echoing the sentiments of the segment's major players. He knows the compulsions and expectations of the people having learnt the basics as an individual YouTuber in 2015. It goes without saying that picking the right topic and

making timely videos is the key to survival. It is important to create quality content, especially the kind that will reach the audience on a particular day. According to data, farmer and spiritual-centric channels are the most viewed in south India. For every digital media platform, advertisements would be the primary revenue model and this, to a significant extent, will determine the acceptance levels on the YouTube platform. According to estimates, the turnover of Suman Network in the previous fiscal was around Rs 15 crores, thanks to the viewership it enjoys in India, the United States, Dubai and Singapore, and wherever there is a sizeable presence of Telugu population.

Rakul, Deepika's manager Karishma join NCB probe in drug case

A day after skipping the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB), Bollywood actor Rakul Preet Singh deposited before the drug law enforcement agency in a drug case related to the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput.

Bollywood actor Deepika Padukone manager Karishma Prakash also deposited before the agency for questioning.

According to the NCB officials, Rakul was first to arrive at the NCB office followed by Karishma.

The development comes two days after the NCB summoned Deepika, Rakul, Shraddha Kapoor, Sara Ali Khan and others.

On Thursday, NCB recorded the statement of Sushant's former manager Shruti Modi and fashion designer Simone Khambatta.

NCB sources said that they all have been summoned after their names surfaced in WhatsApp chats accessed by the NCB and during the questioning of late Bollywood star Sushant Singh Rajput's girlfriend Rhea Chakraborty.

The source said that these celebrities will be questioned about how and from whom they procured drugs and whether they were meant for personal consumption or for someone else.

The source further said that while probing the link of the Kwan Talent Management Agency in the



case, Deepika's chats with Karishma surfaced. Karishma handled Deepika's account at Kwan till 2017. According to an NCB official, the names of Sara and Shraddha came up in two drug cases registered by the agency.

The official said that the NCB is presently investigating two separate cases which revolve around the drug cartel that is active in the tinsel town. The first case was reg-



istered on the directions of the top brass of the NCB after the Enforcement Directorate (ED) forwarded a brief note on Rhea and her brother Showik's WhatsApp chats.

In its FIR number 15, the NCB claimed, "Analysis of WhatsApp chats of Rhea Chakraborty with other entities reflect the angle of conspiracy and abetment in possession, sale, purchase, consumption, transportation

and usage of substances covered under the NDPS Act."

In the second case (FIR number 16), the NCB has so far arrested 19 persons, including Rhea and Showik.

The NCB has also recorded the statements of Kwan CEO Dhruv Chitgopekar, producer Madhu Mantena Varma and Sushant's talent manager Jaya Saha.

Sushant was found dead in his Bandra apartment on June 14.

WOMEN MORE PRONE TO UNCONTROLLED DIABETES: STUDY

Traditionally, women play the role of caregivers in India when it comes to families and their health. More often than not, this means that they prioritise the health of their loved ones over their own. When it comes to diabetes in women, a new study shows higher incidence of diabetes in women — as compared to men.

A study by BeatO, a digital health platform for diabetes management, indicates that women tend to have higher blood sugar levels or poorer control than men, by almost eight percent. As per the platform, this can be attributed to gender roles in a household, inequitable access to resources and even lack of time to cater to their wellbeing.

While Type 2 diabetes is more frequently diagnosed at a younger age and lower body mass index in men; the most prominent risk factor is obesity, which is more common in women. BeatO's study shows that women (especially above 40 years of age) on their plat-

form tend to have higher BMI, with average BMI for women being 27.5, versus that of men being 26.

The study also indicates that for women above the age of 40 years, almost 67 per cent of the population is obese and overweight, whereas, for men, this number is 59 per cent. Healthcare experts suggest that reduced physical activity and obesity fasten the onset of diabetes in genetically predisposed people.

It is also interesting to note that while there is awareness amongst women about diabetes and the impact of nutrition and lifestyle on their health, there is a minimalistic effort into the management of the condition.

The current study states that women tend to ignore regular monitoring and self-management, (they

monitor approximately 25 per cent lesser than men). It is also noticed that participation of women on health platforms like BeatO, which enable self-management of the condition - is only 26 per cent compared to men (74 per cent).

Uncontrolled diabetes also poses risks for other complications including cardiovascular disease, kidney disease and neuropathy. Although both genders are at-risk for heart disease, it has a greater impact on women's heart health than men.

Dr Minal Mohit Vohra, Consultant Endocrinologist on the platform, shared, "While the occurrence of diabetes in both men and women do not have any clear disparities, factors such as obesity, lifestyle, high blood pressure and even hormonal changes contribute to the onset of diabetes. Women are more susceptible to complications arising from un-

controlled blood-sugar levels, especially when it comes to cardiac health. Further, women are also more prone to unique complications of uncontrolled sugar levels, such as vaginal and oral yeast infections along with the increased risk of urinary tract infection. Women in menopause also face high blood sugar and weight given, due to changes in hormones."

Studies also show that more than half of women with PCOS develop Type 2 diabetes by the age of 40. This is because PCOS may cause insulin resistance that results in elevated blood sugar levels and increases the risk of developing diabetes.

This brings forth the burgeoning need for women to earnestly manage their health regularly, especially when evidence suggests that that lifestyle conditions affect women more strongly than men. A conscientious decision by them to better manage their lifestyle with balanced food and exercise can be key to controlling diabetes.

A STUDY BY BEATO, A DIGITAL HEALTH PLATFORM FOR DIABETES MANAGEMENT, INDICATES THAT WOMEN TEND TO HAVE HIGHER BLOOD SUGAR LEVELS OR POORER CONTROL THAN MEN, BY ALMOST EIGHT PERCENT. AS PER THE PLATFORM, THIS CAN BE ATTRIBUTED TO GENDER ROLES IN A HOUSEHOLD, INEQUITABLE ACCESS TO RESOURCES AND EVEN LACK OF TIME TO CATER TO THEIR WELLBEING.

FUN

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



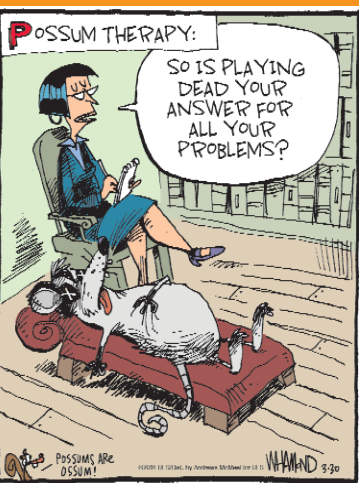
NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



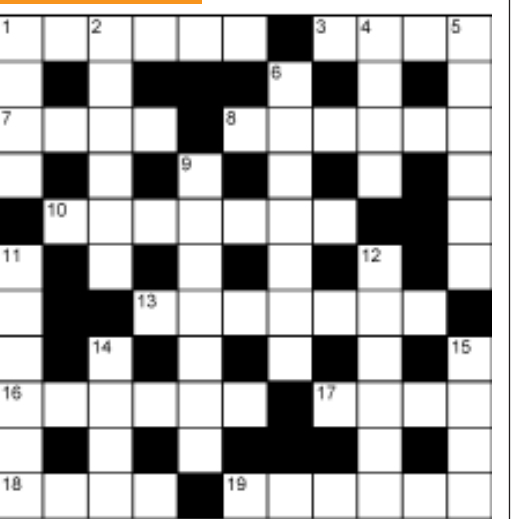
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- Meat from a sheep
- Talk in a friendly way
- A sewed joint
- Wound someone
- Envious
- A green gemstone
- Cunning
- Moist
- Border
- Jail

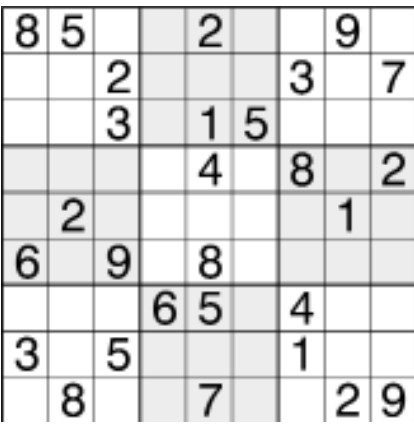
DOWN

- A face disguise
- Go on a journey
- Drag along
- Three times four
- Ask

- A region's weather conditions
- Save from danger
- Forever
- A long sharp animal tooth
- Twirl around



SUDOKU



Rules

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

A VOICE that enthralled generations

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a career spanning more than five decades, SP Balasubrahmanyam has recorded over 40,000 songs in 16 Indian languages, evoking various emotions, be it joy, romance or pathos enthralling the connoisseurs and common people alike through his mellifluous voice. Born Sripathi Panditaradhya Balasubrahmanyam on June 4, 1946, in Nellore, he is associated with some of the most iconic film songs in his native tongue Telugu, Tamil, Hindi, Malayalam, Kannada and Hindi, collaborating with some of the most well-known music composers in the business like MS Viswanathan, Ilaiyaraaja, KV Mahadevan, Hamsalekha, AR Rahman, Deva, Raj-Koti, Bappi Lahari, SA Rajkumar, Raj-Koti and Devi Sri Prasad. A glance at his journey:

JANAKI'S PUSH



Balu never harboured dreams of becoming a singer. After taking a break from engineering in due to health issues in '60s, he started participating in music shows for fun in home town Nellore. During one of his performances in Gudur, singer Janaki, impressed by his singing, asked him to try his hand at playback singing. A perplexed Balu had a smile for it, saying that he didn't learn music. "Even I don't know music but I'm singing", she had famously told him. She later confided in him that his voice is special and if he tunes it according to music, he can have a bright future. So, in a sense, it was

she who sowed the seed of singing in him and that he can depend on music for livelihood.

KODANDAPANI'S BREAK



He later started visiting music directors in Madras while simultaneously pursuing studies. While most composers lauded his singing abilities, he couldn't get his first break, prompting him to discontinue his efforts after two years. During a contest conducted by Andhra Social Cultural Association in Madras, he sang a non-film song. Upcoming music director Kodandapani saw a spark in the youngster and in the same auditorium asked if him if he would sing playback. Balu initially refused but after knowing the credentials of the composer, he agreed to visit him next day. Turns out, he couldn't land a song but the composer asked him to stay in touch as he has other films lined up. Balu didn't leave his address, keen on not bothering the composer. Kodandapani, however, was keen on making him sing. He located Balu in a college after 18 months and made him sing a duet with P Susheela called *Emi Ee Vintha Moham* for Sri Sri Maryada Ramanna (1967). After getting to know about the new singer in town and his potential, producer MS Reddy made Balu sing for his dubbing movie Kalachakram, starring MGR. The singer got a single card for the album. Release-wise too, it took precedence as it released two months prior to the release of Sri Sri Maryada

Ramanna.

Soon he became busy with Telugu movie songs. Looking back, SPB, who is influenced by veteran Mohammed Rafi, in an interview said that his evolution as a playback singer was largely due to Telugu music director Sathyam. It was the Telugu movie Sankarabharanam that made the nation turn towards SPB. Directed by K Viswanath with music scored by KV Mahadevan, the film turned out to be a box-office smash. He rendered as many as nine songs, including *Dorakuna Ituvanti Seva* and *Samaja vara gamana* in the musical drama. He even got his first National Film Award for Best Male Playback singer.

ASSOCIATION WITH ILAIYARAJA



The mid 1970s saw the entry of music director Ilaiyaraaja who later became a major force in Tamil and Telugu industries. The two — SPB and Ilaiyaraaja — had known each other even before the latter became a music director. The 1980s saw the trio — Ilaiyaraaja, SPB and S Janaki — recording a large number of songs and most of them became great hits in both Tamil and Telugu. It is a dif-

ferent matter that Ilaiyaraaja and SPB had some difference of opinion on the royalty issue. As per law Ilaiyaraaja had demanded that SPB pay him royalty for singing his songs on stage performances. The two patched up soon.

A MULTI-FACETED TALENT

Apart from singing, SPB has also dubbed for several leading artists in Tamil and Telugu movies. For Kamal Haasan he was the default voice for several of Tamil dubbed movies into Telugu. He had dubbed for Ben Kingsley in the Telugu dubbing of English movie Gandhi. He lent his voice for Suman in acclaimed films like *Annamayya* and *Sri Ramadasu*. Besides composing music, he also dabbled in acting, from doing cameos to full-fledged roles. Some of his memorable roles include the ones he played in *Pavitrabandam*, *Premikudu*, *Aaro Pranam* and *Mithunam*. For about 20 years, he also hosted the immensely popular music show *Padutha Theeyaga* on ETV, program of which launched the careers of many a singer.

Film music aside, he was also associated with singing devotional numbers like *Namashivaya* and album *Shivashaktam* which are immensely popular

among devotees.

He attributed his success to God, saying that he probably had a connection to his previous births since he had even sung classical compositions, which he neither understood nor was trained for. "I love my life. If possible I don't want to die. I have a passion for life," he had said once while speaking about his spiritual inclinations.



HE ADVISED ME NOT TO GET TRAPPED WITH COMMERCIAL CINEMA: CHIRU

FOR MEGASTAR CHIRANJEEVI, an era has come to end with the passing away of SPB. "When the world of music wondered who would succeed the legendary Ghantasala garu, Shri Balu emerged as one of the brightest stars. His melodious voice transcended linguistic, cultural boundaries and enchanted audiences across India alike for decades. There can never be another SPB. Only he must be born to fill his vacuum," a devastated Chiru posted on his social media pages. The actor says that his association with Balu extended beyond work. "I shared close ties with his family as we used to live a stone's throw away from each other in Chennai. We would often meet. From the beginning of my career, he has been very cordial towards me and I would address him fondly as Annaya. As I realized his standing over years, I used to address him with 'meeru'. He later told me not to distance him by addressing him as 'meeru'," Chiru recalled. Balu also had some pearls of wisdom for the megastar. "He told me not to limit myself to commercial cinema as there was an actor inside me. Maybe it was the reason that drove me to act in films like *Swayam Krushi*, *Rudraveena* and *Apathibandavudu*. He once said that I was one of the few actors who would reel out right expressions to the songs sung by him. I considered it as a great award," Chiru noted, adding that the singer deserves a lion's share of credit for his successful run as an actor.

FOR MOHAN BABU, friendship with Balu goes back to their school days in Sri Kalahasthi. "Our friendship continued in Chennai as well. He was a regular to all the functions of my educational institution in Tirupati," the actor said. Stating that Balu's death is a personal loss to him, the actor recalls an incident that has always featured in their conversations over years. "During the times when I worked as an assistant director in Chennai, I had borrowed Rs 100 from him but didn't pay him back. Till recent times, he reminded me of the debt and used to crack jokes for the interest that I owe him," Mohan Babu said in a statement.

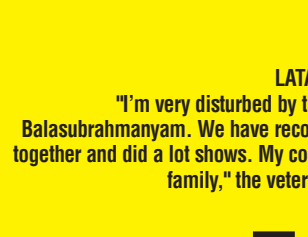


Twitter talk

MAMATA BANERJEE
"Grieved to hear of the passing of a true legend of music, S P Balasubrahmanyam. His golden voice will be remembered for generations. Condolences to his family, many admirers and colleagues in the music industry."



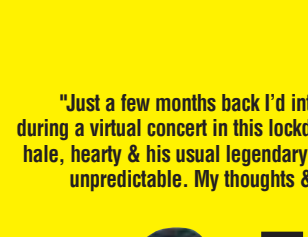
RAMNATH KOVIND
"In the passing of music legend SP Balasubrahmanyam Indian music has lost one of its most melodious voices. Called 'Paadum Nila' or 'Singing Moon' by his countless fans, he was honoured with Padma Bhushan and many National Awards. Condolences to his family, friends and admirers."



LATA MANGESHKAR
"I'm very disturbed by the demise of SP Balasubrahmanyam. We have recorded many songs together and did a lot shows. My condolences to his family," the veteran singer wrote.



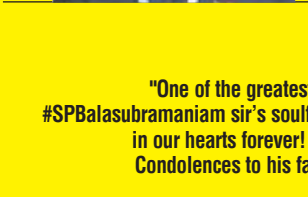
SALMAN KHAN
"Heartbroken to hear about #SPBalasubrahmanyam sir... you will forever live on in your undisputed legacy of music! condolence to the family #RIP. Lucky to have had him dub for me... Give his voice to my performances in my first Telugu and Kannada film... SP Balasubrahmanyam will be missed truly...my heartfelt condolences & prayers to the family..."



AKSHAY KUMAR
"Just a few months back I'd interacted with him during a virtual concert in this lockdown...he seemed hale, hearty & his usual legendary self...life is truly unpredictable. My thoughts & prayers with his family."



VVS LAXMAN
"Extremely saddened to hear about the demise of #SPBalasubramanyam garu. My deepest condolences to his family. His voice will always remain etched in our hearts. Om Shanti!"



GAUTAM GAMBHIR
"One of the greatest singers of all time, #SPBalasubramaniam sir's soulful voice will remain in our hearts forever! He is irreplaceable. Condolences to his family & loved ones."



Tributes galore

Venkatesh:
"Extremely sad to hear the news of SP Balasubramaniam Garu's passing. We have lost a legend today. I've had the privilege to work with him in some of my best movies like *Prema* and *Pavitra Bandham*. Your legacy will live on Sir! My heartfelt condolences to the family. RIP (sic)."

Nagarjuna:
"As the memories and conversations with Balu Garu come flooding back so do the tears... I still remember the call I got from him after my film *Annamayya*. He was such an unsaid integral part of my life... hide him loud, hide him carefully (sic)."

Pawan Kalyan:
"He mesmerized the music lovers by signing a

live on. Heartfelt condolences and strength to the family (sic)."

Jr NTR:
"Indian Music has lost its favourite son. Devastated! In a Legendary career spanning over five decades, Padma Bhushan S.P Balasubrahmanyam Garu has breathed life into over 40,000 songs. As long as music exists in this universe, you will live on sir (sic)."

SS Rajamouli:
"The impact of his songs will transcend generations. Many Tamil and Kannada friends would never believe that he was a Telugu. They would argue among themselves, saying that he belongs to their language. He holds the rare distinction of being called as 'mavadu'. He lorded over the music worlds of Telugu, Tamil and Kannada languages for decades and I



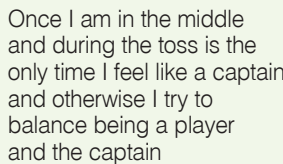
wide variety of songs cutting across film industries. He is a singer who invoked the soul of the song and gave life to the lyric. His affection towards Telugu language and thirst to get the pronunciation right devoid of errors is ideal for the singers of younger generations to emulate. Despite his fame, he had a down-to-earth personality."

Mahesh Babu:
"Unable to process the fact that #SPBalasubramaniam garu is no more. Nothing will ever come close to that soulful voice of his. Rest in peace sir. Your legacy will

don't think anyone has achieved such a feat."

Ravi Teja:
"Shri. S. P. Balasubrahmanyam Garu is an integral part of every Indian household. His voice and his contribution to music will always remain eternal. To the legend who gave us songs for every human emotion Rest in peace sir. You will forever be missed (sic)."









Ramya Krishna:
"Someone so special can never be forgotten, may his soul rest in peace my deepest condolences to the family...#ripspb sir"



MOTION PICTURE



Former Indian batsman Gautam Gambhir criticized Virat Kohli's captaincy in the loss against the KXIP, particularly for bowling part-time Shivam Dube in the final 20th over. Speaking on *ESPNcricinfo's* analysis show *T20 Time Out*, Gambhir said that he would have bowled any of the specialist death bowlers in the last over. "I know Shivam bowled really well in his first two overs. Yes, you would be tempted to give him a third over, but not the last over. When KL Rahul is already set and batting on 100+, you are walking on the edge, because that can happen. I would have Navdeep Saini or Dale Steyn bowling the last over, even though Steyn is not the best death bowler. But I would have given the last over to the best bowler of the team," Gambhir said.

POINTS TABLE							
			P	W	L	NRR	PTS
1		KXIP	2	1	1	+2.425	2
2		MI	2	1	1	+0.993	2
3		RR	1	1	0	+0.800	2
4		DC	1	1	0	+0.000	2
5		CSK	2	1	1	-0.145	2
6		RCB	2	1	1	-2.175	2
7		SRH	1	0	1	-0.500	0
8		KKR	1	0	1	-2.450	0

IPLT20.com

CSK players also paid tribute to veteran singer S P Balasubrahmanyam and former Australian cricketer Dean Jones by wearing black armbands.

Iyer, who is the youngest captain in this year's IPL, so far has been successful skipper for the Delhi Capitals. In 2019, Iyer also led Delhi Capitals to the playoffs of the season where they lost against MS Dhoni's Chennai Super Kings.

SRH bowling has always been impressive and it seems the think tank may bring in Mohammed Nabi to bowl alongside his fellow mate Rashid Khan while Bhuvneshwar Kumar will spearhead the pace attack.

their tie with Leyton Orient was called off on Tuesday following a spate of coronavirus cases at