



the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com

ANALYSIS 7
PACIFIER IN THE
INDO-PACIFIC**MONEY 8**
'CENTRE USED GST COMPENSATION
CESS ELSEWHERE, VIOLATED LAW'**SPORTS 11**
DC THUMP
CSK

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.

Balu tested positive for coronavirus on August 5 and decided to get admitted after suffering from fever, cold and chest congestion. He was shifted to ICU on August 13 after his oxygen saturation dropped



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.

2

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 Yaminii, Vasa Pavani and Malavika.

2

"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 administrative 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 passed

“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



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

membrane 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.

2

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."

2

Farmers block roads during 'Bharat bandh'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Farmers shouted slogans and blocked roads in several parts of the country on Friday, protesting against the three agri-marketing Bills passed recently by Parliament.

The most widespread protests were in Punjab and Haryana, but demonstrations were also reported from Uttar Pradesh, West Bengal, Kerala, Karnataka and Telangana as part of the Bharat bandh call given by several farmer unions.

Over 30 organisations had given a separate Punjab bandh call, leading to farmers blocking roads and traders shutting shops and vegetable markets for the day.

2

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.

Revulsion after 'dishonour' killing of young man in Hyd

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 majors. 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.



2

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 Miryalagudahonour 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.

2

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.

2

GMR to sell 51% stake in K-SEZ to Aurobindo

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

GMR Infrastructure Ltd on Friday announced signing of definitive agreements for the sale of entire 51 per cent equity owned by its wholly owned subsidiary GMR SEZ and Port Holding Ltd (GSPHL) in Kakinada SEZ Ltd to Aurobindo Realty and Infrastructure Pvt Ltd.

As part of the proposed transfer of stake of KSEZ, the 100 per cent equity stake of Kakinada Gateway Port Ltd held by KSEZ would also be transferred to Aurobindo Realty, a press release from the infra major said.

Total consideration for the

sale of equity stake as well as the sub-debt in KSEZ is Rs 2,610 crore.

Out of the total consideration, Rs 1,600 crore would be received on the closing date and balance Rs 1,010 crore would be received in next 2 to 3 years which is contingent upon certain agreed milestones, it said.

KSEZ is engaged in the business of implementation of a port based multi-product special economic zone project at Kakinada, East Godavari District, Andhra Pradesh and KGPL has the concession granted by the state government to set up a greenfield commercial port in Kona Village in the district.

Mystery over death of 100s of migratory birds

Pesticide-laced grains or contaminated fish may have led to their death, believe locals

SUMIT ONKA
■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Hundreds of migratory birds that migrate from Siberia to this region have been found dead in and around Chellamnaduvalasa village in Vizianagaram district.

Both locals and officials suspect that the birds died after consuming pesticide-laced grains and contaminated fish and snails from the farms and fields.

Upset with the death of the winged guests, the locals alerted officials of the veterinary department to take up

measures to protect the thousands of migratory birds.

The locals said that every year, thousands of birds from Siberia arrive in their village in the last week of June to lay eggs and hatch them. The birds start reverse migration from their village in between November and December along with their little ones. This has been the norm since centuries.

The locals never harm the birds; in fact they protect the winged guests from poachers and have punished those people for harming the

Siberian birds in the past. Tourists from parts of Vizag also visit the village for a glimpse of the winged guests during November.

VP Naidu, a native of Chellamnaduvalasa village and who has been protecting the birds for past few decades, observed that more than 300 birds were found lifeless near the trees and other places in the village this migratory season. He said that some birds died around two weeks ago while some more birds died a few days ago.



A vet examines the dead birds in Vizianagaram on Thursday.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:

Ashwin (Adhik) & Shukla Paksha

Panchangam

Tithi: Dashami: 06:59 pm

Nakshatram: Uttara Ashadha: 07:25 pm

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

Rahukalam: 09:08 am – 10:37 am

Yamagandam: 01:36 pm – 03:06 pm

Variyam: 11:39 pm – 01:21 am, 12:00 am – 05:31 am

Gulika: 06:09 am – 07:38 am

Good Time: (to start any important work)

Amritakalam: 12:47 pm – 02:27 pm

Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:43 am – 12:31 pm

VUJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Thunderstorm

Temp: 28/24

Humidity: 90%

Sunrise: 06:05 am

Sunset: 06:08 pm

Current Weather Conditions

Updated September 25, 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

years. 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)

Over 2 lakh cases pending in AP HC, confirms Centre

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad has said that there are 2,03,024 cases pending in AP High Court, and 5,82,069 cases in the lower courts in the state as on September 17, 2020. Replying to a question raised by Rajya Sabha Member from AP Parimal Nathwani, Prasad said that that after the announcement of the nationwide lockdown, directions were issued time to time by the respective High Courts to the subordinate courts under their administrative jurisdiction for hearing of urgent civil and criminal matters in virtual or physical mode depending on local conditions. A new software patch and court user manual has been



recently developed for Covid-19 management, Prasad said. This tool has been developed to help in smart scheduling all cases to effectively manage overcrowding in courts. During the period of lockdown and thereafter, from

March 24, 2020 to September 13, 2020, the district and subordinate courts across the country have disposed of 15,32,334 cases, said the Minister. He also stated that videoconferencing facility has been

enabled between 3,240 court complexes and 1,272 corresponding jails across India. Nathwani wanted to know about the pendency of the cases in the lower courts and the Andhra Pradesh High Court and whether Covid-19 pandemic caused or impacted increase in the pendency cases and the steps taken or being taken by Government to reduce the pendency. To another question from Nathwani regarding the total number of rural courts set up in the country and in Andhra Pradesh during each of the last three years, and also the current year, Prasad replied that 42 Gram Nyayalayas or Rural Courts were notified in AP in 2020, and none in previous three years.

Rakul Preet...

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 tomorrow. Karishma Prakash's questioning went on for much longer than Rakul Preet Singh's, sources said. The NCB questioned Rakul and Karishma Prakash about the contents of WhatsApp chats.

What went wrong...

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.

The fateful event...

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'."

100s of migratory ...

Continued from Page 1

Probably, for the first time, hundreds of birds have died in the village and most of the birds are suffering from some illnesses, Naidu said. Sensing something was wrong, Naidu and his team met officials of the veterinary department to find the cause behind the mysterious death of the Siberian birds and to save the remaining. Veterinary officials visited the village and conducted post mortem on the birds.

Last rites

Continued from Page 1

The final rites will be held with full honours extended by the Tamil Nadu State government. The mortal remains of SP Balu or SPB, as he is fondly called, were shifted to his residence in Mahalingapuram in Chennai, a few hours after he was pronounced dead at the MGM Healthcare.

Farmers block...

Continued from Page 1

The bandh in the state appeared to be near total. Hundreds of farmers — on foot, two-wheelers and tractor-trolleys — were stopped at Delhi's border with Uttar Pradesh as they tried to press ahead into the national capital, their agitation disrupting traffic in Noida and Ghaziabad. Stopped from entering the city, the farmers staged 'panchayats' at the road blockades where they were addressed by Bhartiya Kisan Union office-bearers.

Why Covid...

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. Sucharita advised the new pass outs to be innovative in



273 probationary S-Is pass from police training college

PNS ■ ANANTAPUR

As many as 273 probationary police sub-inspectors have completed training and passed out of the Police Training College (PTC) in Anantapur on Friday. "Police should always be available to people with their services. They should always be a step ahead in maintaining law and order and women's protection," said state Home Minister Mekhatoti Sucharita, presiding over the passing out ceremony. She said every woman should receive justice when she approaches police with a problem. Sucharita advised the new pass outs to be innovative in

cracking crime, with new thinking and making use of technology. "You should not see police job as a profession, but as a service to the people. You should engage in friendly policing," said the state Home Minister. She said the government is injecting young blood into the police department, giving details about new recruitment into the department in 2020. According to Sucharita, five Indian Police Service (IPS) officials have been allocated to the AP cadre, even as 25 DSPs have also completed their training. Likewise, 1,591 constables have also successfully completed their training. "At the village level, we are

striving to deliver police services for every family. We have allocated women police officers to protect women in every village," she said. The minister said Disha app, a women's protection initiative, has been downloaded 11 lakh times until now. "We will not allow crimes against SC, ST and BC minorities and deal land encroachment crimes with an iron fist," she said. Spandana initiative received 87,000 complaints, out of which 80 per cent have been solved, said the minister. Detailing other initiatives of the state government, Sucharita said forensic labs are being planned in Amaravati, Tirupati and Visakhapatnam.

Girl's cry: When will...

Continued from Page 1

Who gave them the right to kill him? They could have killed me. What did my husband do?" Wailing the next moment, she continued: "In just a few hours, my whole life has turned ups-ide down. I have lost the love of my life and I must live with this loss 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.

ately 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.

Honour killing in Hyd city sends shockwaves

Continued from Page 1

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. 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 Kistaig-udem of Sanga Reddy district. On Friday, the Cyberabad Police booked 18 people, including Avanthi's parents

DonthireddyLaxma Reddy and his wife Donthireddy Archana, in the murder case, and arrested 14. 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. DCP, Madhapur said: "At about 2-30 hours nder Reddy, Santhoth 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 Gopalanpally 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. (Hemanth was

then strangled at about 7-30 pm). 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 Murali Krishna and his wife Lakshmi Rani." Based on a complaint, the Gachibowli Police booked a case and apprehended the accused. Investigations revealed that the prime accused, GuduruYugender Reddy, hired MinpurBuchi Yadav, Krishna and Mohammad Pasha.

VIJAYAWADA BULLION RATES	
GOLD	
₹ 52,370 (10 gm)	
₹ 500	
SILVER	
₹ 59,300 (1kg)	
₹ 2300	
CHICKEN RATES ₹/kg	
Dressed/With Skin	₹191
Without Skin	₹217
Broiler at Farm	₹132
EGG RATES ₹/100	
VIJAYAWADA	510
HYDERABAD	490
VISAKHAPATNAM	515
RETAIL PRICE	₹5.01

Double infection treatment tricky: Doctors

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

There is "no standard protocol" for treatment of patients who have contracted a double infection of Covid-19 and dengue, and a very "finely balanced" approach is needed to tackle both the ailments at once, experts said on Thursday. Delhi Deputy Chief Minister Manish Sisodia who was shifted to LNJP Hospital on Wednesday for Covid-19 treatment, has now tested positive for dengue, perhaps the first prominent personality in the city to have been diagnosed with both infections. Medical Director of Rajiv Gandhi Super Speciality Hospital (RGSSH) Dr BL Sherwal said, both the diseases have no specific treatment, which makes it even difficult

for treating doctors of such patients. "Both Covid-19 and dengue need symptomatic treatment and in some aspects the treatment is kind of contradictory and tricky. In Covid-19, we inject heparin drug subcutaneously which ultimately reaches the bloodstream, and this is done to prevent embolism in these patients which can prove fatal," he said. Embolism is sudden blocking of an artery which can obstruct flow of oxygen, and that is why some patients get complications even after treatment, the doctor said. RGSSH is a dedicated Covid-19 facility run by the Delhi government. "In dengue, on the other hand, platelets infusion is needed in cases where its count has



fallen to dangerously low level. So, it's kind of opposite. And, therefore, we can't inject heparin if a Covid-19 patient has dengue too," Sherwal said. So, for a treating doctor or it is like "walking a tightrope" and a very "finely balanced

approach" is needed, he said. Sources at LNJP Hospital said there is no standard protocol" for treatment of double infection of Covid-19 and dengue, and treatment is "patient-specific". "The patient's age, condition,

co-morbidities and other factors are taken into account for treatment of both the ailments," a source said. Asked if there are any side effects of treatments in cases of a "double infection", the source said, "any treatment can have a side effect, but the treating doctor decides the methodology for it". A dengue patient, if his or her platelets level falls dangerously below the normal level, needs external platelets infusion. A normal platelets level is considered in the range of 1.5-4.5 lakh, according to doctors. "If a patient needs plasma for Covid-19 treatment, he can be administered that, and if he needs platelets that too can be infused. The treating doctor will decide the course of treatment," the source said.

7,073 cases, 8,695 recoveries recorded

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh added 7,073 new cases of Covid-19 taking the overall tally to 6,61,458 on Friday. The latest bulletin said the total recoveries touched 5,88,169 after 8,695 were discharged in 24 hours ending 9 am on Friday. Also, 48 fatalities were reported in 24 hours, increasing the overall toll to 5,606. Chittoor and Prakasam reported eight fresh casualties each while Anantapur saw six. Krishna and West Godavari added five more deaths each to



their tally. East Godavari continued with the regulation 1,000- plus new daily cases as its gross went up to 92,173. SPS Nellore district crossed the 50,000 cases mark, adding 459 in 24 hours. West Godavari reported 931, Prakasam 806 and Chittoor 713 new cases, the bulletin said.

CAPSULE

88,484 to attend Polycet on Sunday

VIJAYAWADA: The common entrance test for admission into polytechnic courses will be held on Sunday in which 88,484 candidates will be appearing in 388 centres across the state, disclosed Special Commissioner for State Technical Education department MM Naik. He said in a statement here on Friday that the test will be conducted between 11 am and 1 pm. Candidates will not be allowed into the centres after 11 am. They should bring hall ticket, pen, HB/2B pencil, along with mask, gloves, sanitiser and water bottle. Candidates will be allowed into the examination hall only after thermal scanning. The seating will be arranged as per the Covid-19 guidelines at all the centres. He said that PPE kits will be supplied to the candidates, who are suffering from Coronavirus. Candidates should fill the Covid-19 declaration form, he said and advised them to download the new hall tickets and Covid-19 declaration form from the website <https://polycetap.nic.in>.

AP EAMCET-2020 RESULTS LIKELY ON OCT 6

VIJAYAWADA: In all, 30,959 candidates appeared for the EAMCET examination on the final and concluding day at 154 various centres in both the sessions in the state. The week-long EAMCET examinations concluded peacefully at all the centres, including three centres in Hyderabad, said EAMCET convener Dr V Ravindra here on Friday. Speaking to The Pioneer, Dr Ravindra said that the EAMCET-2020 results are likely to be announced on October 6 or 8. In all 1,85,946 candidates applied for Engineering EAMCET while 1,56,899 candidates appeared for the exams held in nine sessions starting from September 17. About 29,047 candidates were absent for the exam while the present percentage was 84.38 per cent, said the convener and added that this includes the three exam centres allocated in Hyderabad. For the EAMCET (agriculture) as many as 87,652 candidates registered while 75,834 candidates appeared for the examinations during the five sessions in various exam centres in 13 district across Andhra Pradesh and three exam centres in Hyderabad.

AP, TS Ministers put on a 'energised' performance

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Energy Balineni Srinivas Reddy gave a strong retort to Telangana Finance Minister T Harish Rao on Friday for stating that the YSRCP government had succumbed to the conditions of Prime Minister Narendra Modi government just for Rs 4,000 crore and decided to install metres for agriculture power connections.

The minister said that the Jagan government was maintaining friendly relationship with the Centre in the best interest of the state, unlike blow-hot-blow-cold attitude of the Telangana government.

"It is true that we have decided to install metres for agriculture power connections to get additional funds of Rs 4,000 crore from the Centre. This money will not go into our pockets but will be used for the development of the state. Harish Rao should remember that," Balineni reminded.

He pointed out that unlike the TRS governments, which supports the Centre on one day and fights with it the other day, the Jagan government was looking at long-time friendly relationship with the Centre for the development of the state.



Balineni Srinivas Reddy, Minister for Energy, addresses the media (file photo)

Minister for Power Balineni Srinivas Reddy pointed out that unlike the TRS governments, which supports the Centre on one day and fights with it the other day, the Jagan government was looking at long-time friendly relationship with the Centre for the development of the state.

"We shall not go back on our stand that the free power supply scheme would continue for another 30 years," the minister asserted.

Balineni made it clear that though the State government was following the Centre's condition on installation of metres to farm pump sets, it did not mean it was compromising on extending free power to the farmers.

"We shall not go back on our

Govt will safeguard farmers' interests with MSP, says CM

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy directed officials to pay Minimum Support Price (MSP) for farm produce being procured through Rythu Bharosa Kendra (RBKs) in order to safeguard interests of farmers.

Officials were given a target to procure 62 lakh metric tonnes of paddy against the total production of 93.61 lakh metric tonnes in kharif season.

During a review meeting here on Friday, the Chief Minister asserted that RBKs will be serving as Paddy Procurement Centres in near future. He instructed officials to display the MSP of each crop at RBKs and educate farmers on the crops that need to be avoided and ways to maximize the yield for more profits.

The State government has procured maize, jowar, onion, tomato, banana and tobacco during the previous rabi season by spending Rs 3,200 crore.



Similarly, this year, the Chief Minister gave a fiat to officials to purchase Rs 3,300 crore worth crops in kharif through the market intervention fund and help the farmers.

He asked the Joint Collectors to take responsibility in educating farmers on the government initiatives. Farmers should be told in advance about procurement at RBKs and local MLAs should also be involved.

He directed the Marketing Department (Markfed) to purchase 30 per cent of the crops in the villages and provide marketing facilities for the remaining 70

Officially were given a target to procure 62 lakh metric tonnes of paddy against the total production of 93.61 lakh metric tonnes in kharif season

per cent. He directed officials to prepare crop plans and to focus on e-Marketing platforms and to integrate the purchase centres and agents data in the outer market to e-Marketing platforms.

He told officials to promote sortex variety of rice and also keep the broken rice for value addition. He directed officials to increase the CCI purchase centres to ensure proper marketing for the crops and to safeguard the farmers from incurring losses.

Officials informed that 10 types of crops are being procured in kharif and also established 3,000 centres for purchasing paddy. With the help of CM-app, the entire process of crop procurement and marketing is being monitored.

Justice Shyamprasad invaluable Judge: CJ

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Justice Shyamprasad extended exemplary service to the judiciary by delivering judgments with the highest values, says Chief Justice Jitendra Kumar Maheswari while felicitating the judge on his superannuation here on Friday.

Chief Justice JK Maheswari said Justice Shyamprasad delivered judgments which would be treated as lessons to the future

generations. He wished a happy retirement life for the judge. Assistant solicitor general of India Harinath who participated through video conference, AP Bar Council president Ganta Rama Rao, secretary JMU Prasad, high court public prosecutor Srinivas Reddy, and others also complimented the services of the retiring judge.

Justice Shyamprasad thanked everyone who attended the felicitation programme.



Chief Justice Jitendra Kumar Maheswari felicitates Justice Shyamprasad on his superannuation in Vijayawada on Friday



Priests perform puja to Malayappa Swamy who blesses devotees as Kesava Murthy on Suryaprabha Vahanam during Brahmotsavams in Tirumala on Friday

Kesava Murthy blesses devotees on Suryaprabha Vahanam

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

On the seventh day of ongoing annual Brahmotsavams at Tirumala on Friday, Sri Malayappa Swamy as Kesava Murthy blessed the devotees on Surya Prabha vahanam. Legend says that the Sun God, the key architect of life

is dragged by seven horses with Anura as his charioteer. Sun God is symbolically represented for blessing with good health. It is the common belief that the darshan of Surya Prabha Vahanam would provide long life to devotees and also provide relief to them from all illness-

es. TTD Chairman YV Subba Reddy, TTD EO Anil Kumar Singhal, Board members Ananta, Siva Kumar, Govind Hari, DP Anantha, Sekhar Reddy, Dr Nischitha, Prasanthi Reddy, Additional EO AV Dharma Reddy, CVSO Gopinath Jatti and others were present.

Padma exhorts women to avail benefits of schemes

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Mahila Commission chairperson Vasireddy Padma exhorted women to make use of the welfare programmes being implemented by the government headed.

She was the chief guest at the nutrition programme in Kesarapalli village of Gannavaram mandal held under the aegis of the Department of Women Development and Child Welfare here on Friday as part of the month-long celebrations in which the pregnant women and children would be provided with nutrition kits under YSR Sampurna Poshana programme.

Padma distributed nutrition kits to 25 pregnant women at Kesarapalli. Addressing the gathering, she lauded the activities of Anganwadi centres in creating



a healthy society with healthy babies and their role in containing malnutrition, infant and maternal mortality rate.

The chairperson went around the exhibition organised in the village on nutritive recipes made with millets and pulses. Director of Mahila Commission R Suez, project director of Krishna district Uma Rani, Gannavaram CDPO Venkatalakshmi and MPDO of Gannavaram mandal took part in the programme.

Left parties protest against farm bills

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

Hundreds of CPM and CPI workers across the state staged protests against the Centre for introducing farm bills and accused it of being anti-farmer and in favour of business corporations.

"The farm bills will cause injustice to farmers. Though many political parties opposed their passage, the government still passed them forcibly," said senior Communist Party leader Gorla Ramakrishna.

He said that earlier when people used to hoard agriculture produce to manipulate market prices, the government used to raid such hoarders to bring order and protect the farmers.

However, he said these farm bills will create massive asymmetry, pitting ordinary farmers against corporate giants armed with the wherewithal, cold storage, transportation facilities and others to literally rule the market. The Left leader said that a farmer always strives to sell his produce and repay the debts he has incurred while cultivating the crops.

"A farmer does not have infrastructure to even store his produce for even 10 days. He will be in a hurry to repay his debts. With these new bills, all

"The farm bills will cause injustice to farmers. Though many political parties opposed their passage, the government still passed them forcibly," said senior Communist Party leader Gorla Ramakrishna

the powers will now go into the hands of middlemen and corporates," said Ramakrishna. He said the corporates can easily move massive amounts of farm produce from state to state to cash in on market uncertainties. "A real farmer will not benefit with these bills. Not only a farmer, even a buyer will suffer as the middlemen and corporates will create artificial shortage of farm produce to make a killing," the CPM leader observed.

Importantly, Ramakrishna alleged that middlemen and other market forces, who used to stealthily hoard farm produce until now which do it legitimately with these bills allowing them.

"Before the introduction of these bills, hoarders used to illegally store farm produce with fear, which will now get legitimised. Now all the people with financial muscle will do it



Left party leaders and workers raise slogans against the Centre for introducing farm bills during a protest in Vijayawada on Friday

deliberately. Ordinary farmers and buyers will be the losers," he lamented. The senior leader said CPM started resisting these bills right from the time they were proposed.

Farm bills aside, Ramakrishna has also expressed his displeasure on Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his policies which according to him are benefiting the rich corporates and cronies.

"Especially during the Coronavirus time, we have seen how a person rose up in the billionaire rankings. What does it show? See how the fuel prices have increased. It is our anguish that this government is not caring for the farmers

and the common man," he said. He disapproved of the farm bills, saying that corporate companies, foreign entities and others will take advantage of the privileges they accord them.

He said the country will have to contend with corporate farming in the future when small farmers will be forced to give up their profession for large corporates to emerge and carry out corporate farming. "Nowadays labourers are increasing. There is no truth in the claims made by some people that labourers are not available. What will happen to the farmer who gives up agriculture? He is becoming a labourer," he said.

Elaborate arrangement for Civils Prelims

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) is conducting Civil Services (Preliminary) examinations-2020 on October 4 (Sunday) in two sessions, i.e., forenoon session from 9.30 am to 11.30 am and afternoon session from 2.30 p.m to 4.30 p.m.

Disclosing this in a press note issued here on Friday, Praveen Prakash, Principal Secretary to the Government of Andhra Pradesh, said in the State, the Civil Services (Preliminary) Examinations -2020 would be conducted at four centres viz, Tirupati, Visakhapatnam, Vijayawada and Anantapur in 68 venues.

The Collector and District Magistrate of the district concerned would function as co-ordinating supervisor for the examination. Senior IAS officers were appointed as observers, i.e., two officers each for Visakhapatnam and Vijayawada and one officer each for Anantapur and Tirupati centres. As many as 30,199 candidates are appearing for the exam, he added.

Govt for industry-aligned skilled workforce: Minister

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh State Skill Development Corporation (APSSDC) signed the Memorandum of Understandings (MoUs) with three companies to introduce skill development courses across the state.

The programme was executed through a video conference here on Friday. Speaking on the occasion, Minister for Industries Mekapati Goutham Reddy said that the government's aim is to establish Skill University and Skill Colleges, one in each in the Lok Sabha constituency and Centres of Excellence (CoE) in the state, to strengthen the skill ecosystem and create an industry-aligned skilled workforce.

The three MoUs signed by the APSSDC with Dalmia Bharat Foundation (DBF), NSE Academy and National Research Development Corporation (NRDC) for partnerships with the Skill Colleges to drive sector-specific and industry-aligned courses

The minister and Challa Madhusudhan Reddy, Chairman, APSSDC, G Anantha Ramu, Special Chief Secretary, Vishal Bharadwaj,



The Andhra Pradesh State Skill Development Corporation has signed three MoUs with Dalmia Bharat Foundation (DBF), NSE Academy and National Research Development Corporation (NRDC) for partnerships with the Skill Colleges to drive sector-specific and industry-aligned courses

CEO, DBF, Abhilash Misra, CEO, National Stock Exchange (NSE) Academy, and others participated in the programme.

The DBF would set up a CoE in the construction sector at RGUKT, Idupulapaya in Kadapa District. Through this partnership, the DBF will set up and operate the CoE, design and develop courses and curriculum, undertake training programmes, conduct ToTs, provide OJTs, conduct industrial training and visits, and conduct faculty development pro-

grammes with its commitment towards creating industry-aligned courses in the construction sector. The DBF would bring along other industry partners related to the construction sector.

National Stock Exchange (NSE) Academy through the partnership will provide industry-aligned courses, curriculum, TOTs, training delivery, guest lectures, industrial training and visits, certification in BFSI sector across the skill colleges.

Village Squads to guard places of worship

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Krishna district police formed Grama Raksha Dalams (Village Defence Squads) for guarding the places of worship, be it temple, mosque, churches, or others, as the district has taken a step forward, which may soon be emulated by other districts of the state.

Every village in the district will have at least 10 volunteers. They will guard during the

night and report any suspicious activity, said Deputy Superintendent of Police K Dharmendra.

He said that the squads were formed after the Antardevi incident. The DSP said that the squads have been formed based on the village's population and that interested youth will be recruited. So far, in the district, the police formed 503 Raksha Dalams.

YSRCP failed to complete Polavaram, alleges TDP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The TDP demanded that Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy explain the reason behind the YSRCP government's failure to complete the Polavaram project.

TDP leader Devineni Umamaheswara Rao on Friday accused the Jaganmohan Reddy government of covering up its inefficiency and failure to complete the Polavaram project by blaming the previous TDP regime even 16 months after coming to power. He demanded that Jaganmohan Reddy explain why his government could com-

plete just 0.63 per cent works though the TDP had finished 70.83 per cent works.

Addressing a press conference here on Friday, he asserted that the TDP's determined efforts helped to make the Central Technical Advisory Committee to approve Rs 55,548 crore for the project. He claimed when Naidu was at the helm he had reviewed Polavaram every Monday and went to Delhi to convince the Union Jal Shakti Ministry and Central Water Commission to get approval for the Polavaram estimates.

But now, the YSRCP ineffi-



ciency led to reduction of these funds to just Rs 47,728 crore, he lamented. He further stated that in a project in which a Guinness record was achieved earlier, the

present regime has got the distinction of having slowed down Polavaram to a sluggish pace.

He stated that neither the Chief Minister nor the minister

Jagan made many promises to people during elections that he would persuade the Centre's to get funds and projects for Andhra Pradesh if he was given more MPs but despite having 22 MPs in the Lok Sabha and six MPs in the Rajya Sabha, he was not able to get the Rs 5,741 crore for pending funds towards Polavaram works, alleged TDP leader Devineni Umamaheswara Rao

concerned can talk how much concrete has been put into the dam since their party came to power.

He said that Jagan made many promises to people during elections that he would persuade the Centre's to get funds and projects for Andhra Pradesh if he was

given more MPs but despite having 22 MPs in the Lok Sabha and six MPs in the Rajya Sabha, he was not able to get the Rs 5,741 crore for pending funds towards Polavaram works. He alleged that the YSRCP has been destroying the Polavaram project for its political and selfish interests.

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

music maestro Ilayaraja. "It 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 "Athanodu 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 Suseela, 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 Lakshmikanth 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.



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.

Delhi court directs police to lodge FIR

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A court has directed Delhi Police to register an FIR on a complaint over a morphed video of Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal allegedly singing an obscene song, saying its tone and manner lowers his reputation and addresses the public in an abusive manner. Metropolitan Magistrate Kishor Kumar directed the SHO of Paschim Vihar Police Station to lodge an FIR on the basis of the complaint filed by an advocate within one week.

The complaint filed by advocate Amit Sahni, claimed that after the result of Delhi Vidhan Sabha Election, a video was uploaded on Youtube in which Kejriwal has been shown singing an obscene song.

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 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

₹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 TIWARYABHINAV 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, Sardharsheer 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.

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

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



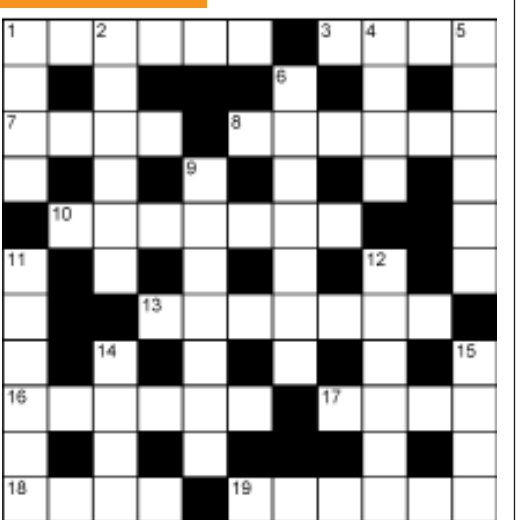
REALITY CHECK



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

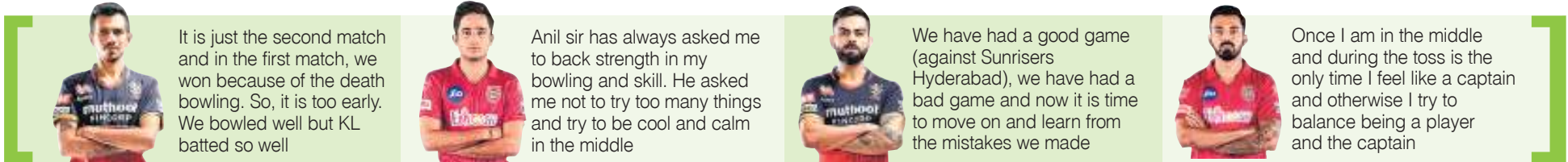


SUDOKU



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.



PTI ■ DUBAI

Young Prithvi Shaw struck a fluent half-century and shared a 94-run opening stand with Shikhar Dhawan to guide Delhi Capitals to 175 for three against Chennai Super Kings in an Indian Premier League match here on Friday.

Shaw made 64 off 43 balls in the company of Dhawan (35 off 27 balls, 3 fours, 1 six) to provide a superb start to DC's innings after being put into bat.

The duo started slowly, scoring just 36 runs of the first six overs of powerplay before opening up to stitch 94 runs for the opening wicket in 10.4 overs.

Shaw got into his stride, hitting two consecutive boundaries off Deepak Chahar.

The Mumbai youngster didn't appear to rush things and played some attractive shots.

Once CSK skipper Mahendra Singh Dhoni introduced the spin duo of Piyush Chawla and Ravindra Jadeja in the seventh over, both Shaw and Dhawan went on the offensive.

Chawla, who was taken apart by Sanju Samson in their previous game against Rajasthan Royals, came in for some rough treatment as did Jadeja who went wicketless in his four overs (0/44).

Dhawan after playing second fiddle for a while, joined the party and hit a couple of attractive boundaries and slogged Jadeja's first ball for a six over mid-wicket.

The DC openers hammered 58 in the next 4.4 overs after the slow start.

Chawla broke the dangerous-looking partnership by removing both Dhawan and Shaw in consecutive overs.

Rishabh Pant (37 not out, 25 balls) and captain Shreyas

DC thump CSK

Delhi Capitals 175/3 (20 overs); CSK 131/7 (20 overs)



MS Dhoni stumped out Prithvi Shaw during Delhi Capitals innings

IPLT20.com

Iyer (26, 22 balls) pushed the scoreboard along before the latter was caught by a diving Dhoni off Sam Curran as CSK managed to pull things back.

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

Iyer achieves unique record

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Shreyas Iyer, who was shanded the captaincy of Delhi Capitals in 2018, on Friday surpassed Gautam Gambhir and became the second most capped captain of the franchise.

Iyer's side on Friday played their second game of IPL 2020 against Chennai Super. This is

Iyer's 26th game as Delhi Capitals' captain. The 25-year-old is now just behind Virendra Sehwa who has played 52 IPL matches for Delhi as captain.

Iyer was one of the players retained by the franchise in 2018. On April 25, 2018, the management of the Delhi Capitals announced Iyer as the new captain of the

team, replacing Gautam Gambhir. The franchise has had 11 captains so far.

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.

KKR, SRH hunt first win

PTI ■ ABU DHABI

Skipper Dinesh Karthik's tactical Snous will once again be put to test when Kolkata Knight Riders take on a depleted Sunrisers Hyderabad in their second IPL fixture on Saturday.

Much was expected from a revamped Kolkata Knight Riders set-up but it seemed Karthik did not learn from his past mistakes and made some inexplicable decisions that led to their complete capitulation against Mumbai Indians.

Once again, the batting position of their biggest hitter Andre Russell became the talking point in their 49-run loss to Mumbai Indians.

The Jamaican, who was their highest run-getter last season with 510 runs from 249 deliveries and

the tournament's highest strike rate of 204.81, was seen at No 6 but by then the task had become extremely difficult.

World Cup winning captain Eoin Morgan, who was roped in to bolster the wobbly middle order, also could not do much as the asking rate had shot past 13 by the time he came to bat at No 5.

In bowling too, there was a tactical blunder by holding back their ace spinner Sunil Narine till the last over of power play.



against R o y a l

On a day, their biggest buy Pat Cummins failed miserably, Narine was given a go only when his IPL 'bunny' Rohit Sharma was well set. It really defied logic to see such a defensive strategy by a team now coached by Kiwi great Brendon McCullum who is known for his aggressive mindset.

Known to put up a balanced side on the park, Hyderabad lacked strength and experience in their middle-order, failing miserably

MATCHES	17
KOLKATA KNIGHT RIDERS	10
SUNRISERS HYDERABAD	07
Stats: Faisel Features	

Challengers Bangalore.

Needing just 43 runs from last five overs, SRH lost their last seven wickets for 32 runs to lose the game by 10 runs.

If that was not enough, injury to their all-rounder Mitchell Marsh has compounded their misery.

Skipper David Warner, after being run out in an unfortunate manner at the non-striker's end, will be keen to get into the act, while it remains to be seen whether Kane Williamson has recovered from his injury to bolster the batting department.

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.

Gavaskar's 'misinterpreted' comment on Kohli-Anushka creates controversy

Dubai: Sunil Gavaskar on Friday found himself in the midst of a controversy for a comment on India skipper Virat Kohli and his wife Anushka Sharma but the legendary batsman asserted that his remarks, construed as sexist, were misinterpreted.

Kohli had a bad day in office on Thursday when he led Royal Challengers Bangalore against Kings XI Punjab. He dropped two catches of rival skipper KL Rahul and managed only a run off five balls in chase.

While Kohli was still at crease, Gavaskar said 'India captain is keen to improve and he knows that he can do so only by practicing more and more'. He then added that 'during the lockdown Kohli faced only Anushka's bowling and it is showing that it did not help much'.

Gavaskar was speaking in Hindi when he made the comment.

However, the comment did not go down well with Kohli and Anushka's fans and some even demanded his sacking from *Star Sports* commentary panel, lashing out at him on social media.

Reacting to it, Anushka also issued a statement on her *Instagram* page and said that Gavaskar's message was "distasteful". She was livid that her name was unnecessarily mentioned by a respected personality like him.

She wrote, "That, Mr Gavaskar, your message is distasteful in your mind to use to comment on my husband's performance from last night or are your words only relevant if you use my name in the process?"

"I am sure over the years you have respected the private lives of every cricketer while commenting on the game. Don't you think you should have equal amount of respect for me and us?"

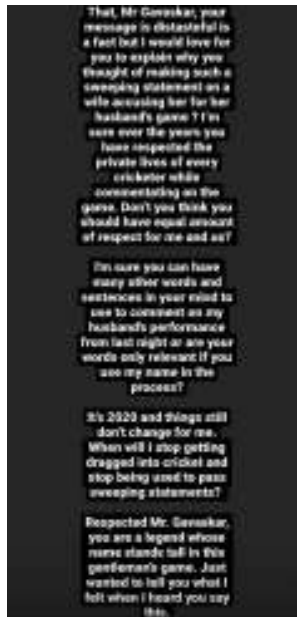
"I am sure you can have many words and sentences in your mind to use to comment on my husband's performance from last night or are your words only relevant if you use my name in the process?"

.....Respected Mr Gavaskar, you are a legend whose name stands tall in this gentleman's game. Just wanted to tell you what I felt when I heard you say this."

Gavaskar though said his comments were not understood in right context.

The remark according to Gavaskar was in reference to a video clip where Kohli and Anushka were seen enjoying some tennis ball cricket in their compound.

"Firstly, I would like to say, where am I blaming her, I'm not blaming her. I am only saying that the video showed she was bowling to Virat. Virat has only



played that much bowling in this lockdown period," Gavaskar told *India Today*.

"It is tennis ball fun game that people have to pass time during the lockdown, so that's all, so where am I blaming her for Virat's failures?"

Gavaskar also rubbished allegations on social media that he made a "sexist comment".

"I'm the one who has always batted for wives going with husbands on tours. I am the one who has always said that like a normal guy going to office for a 9-5 job, when he comes back home, he comes back to his wife, similarly why can't cricketers have their wives with them," Gavaskar said.

He also tried to explain his comment.

"As you can hear from the commentary, Aakash was talking about the fact there has been very little chance for any proper practice in the lockdown, for everybody..."

.....That has actually shown in rustiness of some of the players in their first matches. Rohit (Sharma) didn't strike the ball well, now in the second match he has got runs, MSD (Mahendra Singh Dhoni) didn't strike the ball well in the first match."

.....Anushka was bowling to him, so that's what I said, that's the only bowling, I have not used any other word. She was bowling to him, that's all, where am I blaming her, where I am being sexist in this."

"I'm just stating what was seen on the video which was maybe recorded by somebody in the neighbouring buildings and put up and that's the only thing I'm doing, but the point I'm making trying to make is that there was no practice for anybody including Virat in the lockdown. "...I have not been sexist, if somebody has interpreted it, what can I do," Gavaskar said.

DUGOUT



KXIP captain KL Rahul and pacer Mohammed Shami pose for photo after Punjab's 97-run win over RCB

IPL/Twitter

KOHLI FINED ₹12 LAKH

RCB captain Virat Kohli has been fined ₹12 lakh after his team maintained a slow over-rate during their IPL match against Kings XI Punjab in Dubai on Thursday. "As it was his team's first offence of the season under the IPL's Code of Conduct relating to minimum over-rate offences, Mr Kohli was fined ₹12 lakh," the IPL said in a release.

VIRAT TAKES BLAME FOR DROPPING KL

RCB captain Virat Kohli took the blame for his team's 97-run thrashing by KXIP. Without hesitation, Kohli took the blame for dropping Punjab's skipper KL Rahul twice, which contributed significantly to their defeat. Kohli felt had he not dropped two catches off the blade of Rahul, who remained unbeaten on 132, KXIP would not have been able to go past the 200-run mark. "I have to stand in front and take the brunt of it, not the best day in the office, couple of important chances of KL when he was set and that cost us 35-40 runs at a later stage. "Maybe if we restricted them to 180 we wouldn't have been under pressure from ball one of the chase," said Kohli.

ALWAYS BACK YOUR STRENGTHS

KXIP's young spinner Ravi Bishnoi says head coach Anil Kumble has advised him to always stay calm and back his skills as a bowler. The 20-year-old Bishnoi snared three wickets in an emphatic 97-run win over RCB. "Anil sir has always asked me to back strength in my bowling and skill. He asked me not to try too many things and try to be cool and calm in the middle," Bishnoi said.









KL WASN'T 'FEELING IN CONTROL'

KXIP captain KL Rahul, who made a scintillating century (unbeaten 132 off 69 balls) against RCB, said he was lacking in confidence heading into the team's second IPL fixture. "I have actually been not so confident (hitting it this well). I had a chat with Maxi (Glenn Maxwell) yesterday (Wednesday), he said how are you feeling, I said that I am not feeling completely in control of my batting, he said you must be joking, you are hitting really well," Rahul said. After Rahul starred with the bat, KXIP bowlers put a disciplined performance to bundle out RCB for 109 in 17 overs. "It's as complete a team performance as it can get. We had few different plans going into this game. "We knew RCB have a power packed batting line up and we had to get 2-3 wickets up front and that also meant putting runs on the board, we know what these guys can do if they get set. The analyst, coaches and the management will be happy."

GAUTI CRITICIZES KOHLI'S CAPTAINCY

Former Indian batsman Gautam Gambhir criticized Virat Kohli's captaincy in the loss against the KXIP, particularly for bowling part-timer 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

All Bayern do is win trophies

Martínez delivers emotional extra-time Super Cup for Bavarians



Bayern Munich players celebrate with the UEFA Super Cup trophy

AP

AP ■ BUDAPEST

Javi Martínez is Bayern Munich's Mr Super Cup.

Seven years after scoring an extra-time goal to help Bayern win its last UEFA Super Cup, Martínez netted the winner in the 104th minute on Thursday as the German club beat Sevilla 2-1 in the European curtain raiser in a stadium partially filled with fans.

Martínez rose above a crowd of players to head in the rebound when Sevilla goalkeeper

er Yassine Bounou parried David Alaba's speculative shot.

Bayern midfielder Thomas Müller hailed Martínez as "Mr Super Cup," recalling the 2013 goal which sent a game against Chelsea to a penalty shootout which Bayern won.

It could be one of Martínez's last games for Bayern after eight years and eight Bundesliga titles. Chairman Karl-Heinz Rummenigge told German media last month that the versatile defensive player was seeking to leave.

"When I play in a Bayern shirt I want to give everything, 100%, and I showed that today," Martínez told *Sky*, leaving a question about his future open.

Playing extra time was far from ideal for either team in a season which has started later than normal and will have a more congested calendar amid the coronavirus pandemic. For both Bayern and Sevilla it was the start of a run of four games in 11 days and came barely a month after Bayern beat Paris Saint-Germain in the Champions League final.

Europa League champion Sevilla took an early lead when David Alaba fouled Ivan Rakitic and Lucas Ocampos converted the 13th-minute penalty. Champions League winner Bayern leveled when Leon Goretzka hammered in a ball expertly cued up for him by Lewandowski in the 34th.

Bayern was largely in control of the second half but saw two goals ruled out — one for offside, one for a shove by Lewandowski — and needed Neuer to save Yousef En-Nesyri's shot on the counterattack in the 87th minute.



leomessi | I was getting the idea but today I entered the locker room and I dropped the real chip. How hard it will be to not keep sharing the day to day with you, both on the courts and on the outside. We're going to miss them so much. It was many years, many mattes, meals, dinners... Many things you will never forget, every day together. It's gonna be weird seeing you wearing another shirt and much more facing you. You deserved to be fired like what you are: one of the most important players in club history, getting important things both in group and individually. And not to get kicked out like they did. But the truth is that at this point I'm no longer surprised. Wish you all the best in this new challenge. I love you so much, I love you so much. See you soon, mate.

Lionel Messi posted a photo of himself with Luis Suárez on Instagram with a message expressing his sadness for his friend's departure and his anger at how the club transferred him to Atlético Madrid

Liverpool to play Arsenal twice next week

AP ■ LONDON

Liverpool teenager Curtis Jones scored twice in a 7-2 victory over Lincoln in the League Cup, and defending champion Manchester City edged past Bournemouth 2-1.

Liverpool advanced to a fourth-round meeting next Thursday with Arsenal, which also plays at Anfield in the Premier League on Monday.

Phil Foden's late goal secured City's progress to a match next week with Burnley.

The 19-year-old Jones scored Liverpool's third and fourth goals before halftime, cutting in from the left on both occasions to curl in right-footed shots, and was the visitors' main creative force in midfield.

Jones also won the free kick from which Xherdan Shaqiri whipped in the opener for his first goal in over nine months.

Takumi Minamino continued his promising start to the season with a first-time shot in the 18th minute.

All of Liverpool's four first-half goals were scored from at least 20 yards.

Eighteen seconds after the break Minamino added another, stabbing in Harvey Elliott's



Takumi Minamino celebrates with his Liverpool teammates after scoring

AP

smothered effort.

Marko Grujic scored his first for the club almost five years after joining, and Divock Origi wrapped up the rout in the 89th with his ninth goal in 12 League Cup matches. Tayo Edun and Lewis Montsma had made it 5-1 and 6-2 by scoring for third-tier side Lincoln.

SPURS AWARDED BYE

Tottenham have been awarded a bye into the fourth round of the League Cup after their tie with Leyton Orient was called off on Tuesday following a spate of coronavirus cases at

the League Two club.

Fourth-tier Orient tried to rearrange the game but League Cup rules mean that they must forfeit the tie, allowing Spurs to go through to play Chelsea.

Spurs will now prepare for four games in eight days, starting with the visit of Newcastle on Sunday.

Jose Mourinho's men then host Chelsea on Tuesday, host Maccabi Haifa in Europa League qualifying on Thursday and travel to Manchester United a week on Sunday.

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 enthralled 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 *Apathbandavudu*. 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.



1946 - 2020

SPB'S HIDDEN HAND IN VISHY ANAND'S CAREER GROWTH

Not many know that famed playback singer S.P. Balasubrahmanyam, had played an indirect role in the career growth of former World Chess Champion Grandmaster Vishwanathan Anand during his school days. "Really sad to hear about the passing away of such a great yet simple person. He was my first sponsor! He sponsored our team Chennai Colts (then Madras Colts) in the national team championship in 1983. One of the nicest persons I have met. His music gave us such joy #RIPSPB," Anand said in a tweet expressing grief on the demise of the famed singer. "It was a team chess championship held in then Bombay (now Mumbai). Anand won the board prize and qualified for the National B championship and from there he went to National A. After that his career went up and up," International Master and one of the Madras Colts team members, T.S.Ravi, told IANS.

tollywood

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 #SPBalasubrahmanyam 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, #SPBalasubrahmanyam 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 Balasubrahmanyam 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 lord, 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 #SPBalasubrahmanyam 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"