DECCAN micle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA

VISAKHAPATNAM | WEDNESDAY | 5 AUGUST 2020



Rainfall: Trace Forecast: Drizzle. Max/Min temp. 34/27ºC



(+814)(+50,980)

18,55,238 38,972

covid19india.org

563

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS (+12)(+1.286)

(+9.747)(+67)

AP: 1,76,333 1,604

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

TS: 68,946



worldometers.info/

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari; Dakshinayana Tithi: Shravana Bahula Dwitiya till Star: Danistha till 9.31 am Varjyam: 5.15 pm to 6.59 pm Durmuhurtam: 11.57 am to

Rahukalam: 12 noon to 1.30 pm HIJRI CALENDAR

MOONRISE TOMORROW 7.56 PM

MOONSET TODAY 6.52 AM

Zulhijja 14,1441 AH **PRAYERS** Fajar: 5.50 am **Zohar:** 1.30 pm Asar: 4.45 pm Maghrib: 6.15 pm Isha: 8.15 pm **SUNSET TODAY 6.29 PM SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.37 AM**



You have to vacate the bed for a VVIP!

IN BRIEF REVOLUTIONARY

VANGAPANDU PASSES AWAY

V.K.L. GAYATRI | DC

Revolutionary writer, singer and lyricist, Vangapandu Prasad Rao, died at 77 wee hours of

Tuesday. He was a popular singer with his revolutionary songs influenced by Communism. He died of age-related illness at his residence in Parvathipuram of Vizianagaram district. He is survived by his daughter Usha and two sons.

Vangapandu wrote over 300 folk songs that depict the lives of various depressed communites in North Andhra and also tribals. His song 'Yem Pillado Yeldamoshtava Veldamostava, which was used without his permission in the Ram Charan starrer *Maga Dheera* created a big controversy, and finally the producers reached a compromise with him. Songs like *'Jajjanaka Janare*, 'Sarkaru Dawakhanuaku and 'Uttarandhra Palle Pilupu' made him most popular in both Telugu states. He was born in Pedda Bondapalli, Parvathipuram mandal in 1943.

■ Page 3: Vangapandu founded Jana Natya Mandali

NATION 4

Bihar for CBI probe in Sushant's death



DC CORRESPONDENT

In a significant shift in her

the Sur verdict

NEW DELHI, AUG. 4

present.

Court's

gation," she added.

tion in 1986.

WORLD 7

China accuses US of bullving over TikTok

SPORTS 8 **England take on Pak**

in Test from today



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H-1B out, Trump orders US to hire only Americans

Washington, Aug. 4: In a huge blow to Indian IT professionals eyeing the US job market, US President Donald Trump on Monday signed an executive order proporting fedtive order preventing federal agencies from contracting or subcontract-

ing foreign workers —
mainly those on H-1B visa
— from hiring.
The move came over a month after the Trump administration in June 23 suspended the H-1B visas along with other types of foreign work visas until the end of 2020 to protect American workers in a crucial election year. The new restrictions took effect from June 24.

The H1B visa, most sought-after among Indian IT professionals, is a non-immigrant visa that allows US companies to employ foreign workers in speciality occupations that require theoretical or technical expertise.

The technology companies depend on it to hire tens of thousands of employees each year from countries like India and China. "Today I am signing an executive order to ensure that the federal government lives by a very simple rule, higher American," Trump told reporters in the Oval Office of the White House before signing the order against hiring H1B visa holders for federal con-

Trump told reporters that his administration will not tolerate firing of

TRUMP: INDIA HAS **BIG PROBLEM IN STOPPING COVID**

Washington, Aug. 4: President Donald Trump has said that as compared to big countries, America is doing "very well" in the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic, while India is having a "tremendous problem" battling the disease and China is witnessing a "massive flare up" in infections.

testing positive for coronavirus infection in a day. China on Tuesday reported 36 new cases across the country, down from 43 the previous day. The country's Covid-19 cases crossed the 100-mark on July 29, for the first time in over three months, sparking the fear of a rebound.

■ Full report on Page 7

American job," said the

party's stand on the Ram Mandir, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Tuesday expressed the hope that Wednesday's bhoomi pujan at Ayodhya will be an occasion for

India's Covid-19 tally increased to 18,55,745 on Tuesday with 52,050 people

hardworking Americans in the pursuit of cheap for-eign labour. "As we speak, we're finalising the H-1B regulation so that no American workers be replaced ever again. H-1B should be used for top highly paid talent to create American jobs, not as inexpensive labour programmes and destroy

India crosses 19L, Pradhan positive

VINEETA PANDEY | DC NEW DELHI, AUG. 4

India went past 19-lakh mark in Coronavirus case tally, with the addition of over 50,000 new cases on Tuesday. Union Oil minister Dharmendra Pradhan and former Karnataka chief minister Siddaramaiah were the high-profile persons, who tested posi-

tive on Tuesday. Pradhan, who had met home minister Amit Shah, had got himself tested for Covid-19 and founded to be positive. He has been admitted to the hospital, where Shah is being

The country, which has been adding over 50,000 new cases since last few days, has topped the world in reporting new infections as the spread of the disease has slowed down in the United States

and Brazil. If this rate of new infections, India could cross 20-lakh figure on Thursday.

Health secretary Rajesh Bhushan has admitted that the virus has spread into new areas in the country — a development which, unless controlled, could lead to emergence of new hotspots for the virus.

The secretary, however, added that 82 per cent of the total Coronavirus cases continue remain limited to 10 states, while 50 districts account for 66 per cent of the total caseload of Covid-19.

Indian Council for Medical Research (ICMR) chief Dr Balram Bhargava on Tuesday said some mutation in the coronavirus has been noticed but it is very minor to make much of a differ-

"national unity, fraternity and cultural congregation". The Congress hasn't been invited to the Ayodh-ya ceremony on Wednesday where Prime Minister Narendra Modi and over 100 VIPs are expected to be Supreme November that a temple should be built on the disputed site in Ayodhya, the CWC passed a resolution that welcomed it. Congress chief spokesman Randeep Surjewala had said then the party was in favour of

Priyanka backs temple,

Kamal Nath credits Rajiv Gandhi for temple; Ayodhya spruced up for big day

wishes for era of unity

temple construction.
On Tuesday, Ms Vadra,
AICC general secretary in
charge of UP, tweeted: Simplicity, courage, restraint, sacrifice, commitment are the essence of the name Deenbandhu Rama. Ram is with everyone". "With the message and grace of Lord Ram and Mother Sita, the bhoomi pujan (will be) an occasion for national unity, frater-nity and cultural congre-

Former Madhya Pradesh CM Kamal Nath said the temple construction is "with the consent of every Indian". He also held a recital of the Hanuman Chalisa. Mr Nath noted it favourite Ram bhajans. was former PM Rajiv Gandhi who paved the way for the temple construc-

Congress MP Tewari posted several bhoomi*pujan*, including a video message where he sang Mahatma Gandhi's

Manish

For the BJP, the beginning of construction of a grand temple in Ayodhya is an ideological victory over its rivals with many Opposition leaders now welcoming the develop-

Meanwhile, police barricades, yellow banners,

walls with a fresh coat of paint and the sounds of bhajan mark parts of Ayodhya as the city awaits its big day on Wednesday when the first brick will be laid by Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the Ram temple. The event at the Ram Janmahhoomi will be attended by 175 peo-

ple who figure in a select guest list of seers and politicians.

fraternity and cultural congregation,"

Concerned over the spread of coronavirus, the authorities are encouraging others not to come to the temple town, asking them to mark the occasion by celebrating at their

The ground breaking ceremony will start at around 8 am and end at about 2 pm. The main "bhumi pulan" is expected to take place at 12.30 pm and the foundation stone will be laid at 12.40 pm.

The groundbreaking ceremony of the Ram temple will be telecast live.

HC orders 10-day status quo on 3-capitals proposal

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 4

The Andhra Pradesh High

Court has issued a status quo order on the implementation of the two acts dealing with setting up three capitals and repeal of CRDA until August 14, during its virtual hearing held here on Tuesday.

The High Court bench,

comprising justice Rakesh Kumar, justice A.V. Sesha Sai and justice M. Satyanarayana Murthy, heard the case and issued an order to maintain status quo on implementation of two Acts, the AP Decentralisation and Inclusive Development of All Regions and AP Capital Region Development Authority (Repeal). When the gov-Authority ernment pleader asked the court to give it 10 days on the issue, the court directed the government to file a counter-affidavit and posted the next date for a hearing in the case as August

14. It may be mentioned that the state government earlier passed the two Bills in the Assembly and sent them to the Council for passage. However, the council recommended the two bills for consideration by its select committee.

Subsequently, the government passed them again in the Assembly and sent them to the Council where it was adjourned sine die.

> ■ Page 2: Gov consulted experts before assent

Kits for students as schools re-open

Above: Workers decorate an area in the town of Ayodhya on

Tuesday ahead of the ground breaking ceremony of Ram

temple. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lay the founda-

tion stone for the temple, which was marred in decades of

SIMPLICITY, COURAGE, restraint, sacrifice,

commitment are the essence of the name

message and grace of Lord Ram and Mother Sita, the

bhoomi pujan (will be) an occasion for national unity,

Left: A model of the proposed Ram temple at Ayodhya. – PTI

Deenbandhu Rama. Ram is with everyone. With the

PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA, Congress leader

controversy and was a subject of protracted litigation.

MD ILYAS | DC VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 4

Continuing the spree of welfare schemes, Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy announced the implementation of the Jagananna Vidya Kanuka (JVK) scheme on the occasion of schools re-opening on September 5 which will give students bags, books, note books, shoes, socks and uniform cloth.

In a review meeting of the JVK and Nadu Nedu in Tadepalli on Tuesday,

Jagan directed officials to start JVK from September 5 without fail, enabling students to make good use

The government is bracing itself for the second phase of Nadu Nedu with the near-completion of first phase under which 15,000 schools have been revamped. He told officials to ready the 15,000 schools by Septem-ber 5 to welcome students.

■ Page 2: Hygiene is a must in kitchens, says Jagan

BORDER BACKLASH

Ambani or Adani may step in for 2020 IPL; Vivo likely to return next year

Chinese mobile firm Vivo exits 2020 IPL

MOSES KONDETY I DC HYDERABAD, AUG. 4

The Sino-India border conflict has led to a different board game. Irked by the rising anti-China sentiment in the country and the call to boycott its products post the June military confrontation in Galwan Valley, Chinese mobile phone company Vivo on Tuesday checkmated the Indian cricket board by backing out as title sponsor of the cash-rich Indian Premier League's 2020 season beginning in the UAE on September 19.

That leaves little time for the BCCI to float a tender and find an alternative. The cricket board has not

made any announcement yet, but insiders admit to itters in the Board even as they are sure that a suit able sponsor will be found within the short window. The BCCI has been

slammed on social media after the IPL Governing Council Council on Sunday announced that it was retaining all sponsors for the 2020 edition, a barrage that may have caused Vivo to look for the exit. The door is not entirely closed on the Chinese firm though, it could be back in 2021 and extend its tenure by an year, till 2023.

Vivo's five-year deal worth ₹2,199 crore signed in 2017 runs till the 2022 edition of IPL and fetches

• VIVO'S FIVE-year deal worth ₹2,199 crore signed in 2017 runs till the 2022 edition of IPL and fetches the BCCI ₹440 crore every year. However, unlike the hostility in Galwan Valley, Vivo's severance will be conflict-free.

• THE BCCI has opened channels to rope in shortterm sponsors. "Adani or Ambani could be in the mix," said an official

 Others say Gulf-based firms could also be in fray. Local companies can gain massive mileage out of the glitzy league as the tournament is being played in oil-rich UAE.

the BCCI ₹440 crore every year. However, unlike the hostility in Galwan Valley, and China.
The BCCI has opened Vivo's severance will be conflict-free, it is learnt. The BCCI and Vivo are likely to reach a harmo-

settlement and

resume their partnership subject to improvement of relations between India

channels to rope in short-term sponsors. "Adani or Ambani could be in the

mix," said an official with connections in the Board. 'Reliance Industries is such a big firm and has presence everywhere, from petrol to telecommunications to insurance. Similar is the stature of the Adani Group. One of them just might jump in," he added. Others say Gulf-based

firms could also be in fray. "With the tournament being played in oil-rich UAE, companies can gain massive mileage out of the glitzy league. I am sure they would be eyeing the event," another official

said.
All said, it's a game of Chinese checkers for now. Whoever said sports and politics don't mix

Leopard attacks cop, couple at Tirumala

AVINASH P. SUBRAMANYAM | DC TIRUPATI, AUG. 4

Tuesday.

A traffic cop and a local couple had a narrow escape when a leopard attacked them on the second ghat road of Tirumala on

Traffic constable, G. Murali, who claimed to have had a narrow esca-pe in the leopard attack, said that he was chased by a leopard when he was travelling to Tirumala from Tirupati on his two-wheeler on Tuesday. He informed his higher officials that he was coming to Tirumala on his two-wheeler when a leopard pounced upon him near the 4th ki-

lometre along the second

ghat road on Tuesday morning. He said that when the wild cat pounced on him and tried to catch his leg, he immediately accelerated his bike and managed to escape. One of his colleagues

and a local resident, who were tailing the traffic cop, also claimed to have sighted the leopard at the same spot. Meanwhile, in the evening, a local couple, coming to Tirumala on their bike, also claimed that a leopard had pounced on them, but they had a miraculous escape. Forest officials have

issued an advisory to locals and pilgrims to move cautiously while travelling along the twin ghat roads on bikes.

SHORT TAKES **BLAST IN ANOTHER PHARMA FIRM.**

4TH IN 100 DAYS

DC CORRESPONDENT VISAKHAPATNAM, AUG. 4

In yet another industrial accident in the Vizag region, the Vijayasri pharma company at Atchutapuram SEZ erupted in flames after a blast, triggering panic among the employees on Tuesday. Initial reports said there were no casualties in the

Local police said two motor-cycles were destroyed on the premises while the workers in the unit ran out for safety following the blast.

The staff members at the SEZ with the help of the fire services department, managed to douse the flames and bring the situation under control.

mishap is yet to be ascertained while the police are suspecting that excess pressure in a boiler might have been the reason for the accident.

It may be recalled that Vizag city witnessed four major industrial accidents since May 7 this year. The styrene vapour leakage from LG Polymers, hydrogensulphide pharma company, fire mishap at Visakha Solvents pharma company and crane collapse at Hindustan Shipyard Limited have claimed 26 lives and

caused injuries to over 500.
District collector V. Vinay
Chand said that they had
formed a team of experts to study the safety measures in the industries to prevent mishaps.

AUG. 8 FAPCCI TRAINING FOR **ENTREPRENEURS**

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 4

The Federation of Andhra Pradesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FAPCCI) is conducting a two-week online ent-repreneurship development programme (EDP) for youth from August 8.

FAPCCI programme executive Sk Sahabuddin said that the EDP is a structured training programme for two hours to promote small enterprises by tapping the talent among session will be held between 3 p.m. and 5 p.m. for two week from August 8. Interested persons may contact D.L. Hinduja (7670908388) or Sk. Sahabuddin (8309306291) for further details

HYGIENE IS A MUST SAYS JAGAN

From Page 1

Officials made a powerpoint presentation of the work done during the first phase. Jagan demanded the completion of work on time with no compromise on quality. Work should progress on time and the wall paintings should be pleasing to the eye and every classroom should have colourful furniture. The paintings should be lively, he said. The feedback from parents was good, officials said, adding that the admissions would be more than what was estimated for the upcoming academic year.

Stressing that hygiene should be maintained in the kitchen which is important for the good health of students under Nada Nedu, Jagan examined the Jagananna Vidya Kanuka kit to be given to students on the re-opening day (September 5).

Instructing officials to provide clean drinking water to children in schools and for that purpose mineral water plants should be started. Maintenance is equally impor-

tant, he said. A school built in 1938 in Kankipadu panchayati of Krishna district, which was in a dilapidated condition and recommended for dismantling by the Parents' Committee, was taken up under Nada Nedu and now wears a new look which has won all round appreciation, officials said, displaying then and now (Nadu Nedu) pictures.

Pictures Ramachandrapuram mandal parishad school, Ontimitta mandal, andYSR Kadapa district and Gidijala judge high school were also shown to mark the difference after the

revamping. After completing the first phase, the remaining 31,073 under Nadu Nedu at a cost of Rs 7,700 crore,.14, 584 schools will be taken up in the second phase at an estimated cost of Rs 4,732 crore and the work in this phase should begin from January 14, 2021 and completed by June 2021.

Uniform check



Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy looks at school uniforms, bag, shoes and books at a review meeting on Nadu-Nedu at the CM's camp office on Tuesday. Minister A. Suresh is also seen.

CM wants industries to file safety compliance reports

Industrial Atlas showing location of industries, industrial parks planned

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 4

The AP government will launch special drives for ensuring safety measures at industries in the state, Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy stated at a review meeting in his camp office. The safety drive will be completed in the coming two to three months. A major component of the safety measures will be that industries will have to file safety compliance reports twice a year.

Officials at the meeting proposed that a New Industrial Safety Policy be brought out. The meeting decided to prepare an Industrial Atlas showing

GOVT IS SPENDING

₹350CR MONTHLY

D. SIVA RAMI REDDY | DC

ON COVID: MIN

KURNOOL AUG. 4

• THE CHIEF MINISTER said that there should be monitoring of industrial parks as well to see if they are following rules. The overseeing mechanism at these parks must be strong.

 He opined that Vizag gas leak could have been averted if inhibitors had been in place. The mishap took place as there was no supervision, he pointed out.

the location of industries and industrial parks in the state, categorising them into different safety

categories.
CM Jagan said the Atlas should be like a guide and ready reckoner for industrialists who want to start their units in the state. The industries will have to file a Safety Compliance Report twice in a year. The companies should also list

safety, besides subjecting themselves to third-party

The Chief Minister said that there should be monitoring of industrial parks as well to see if they are following rules. The overmechanism at parks must be seeing

He opined that Vizag gas leak could have been averted if inhibitors had took place as there was no supervision, he pointed

out. CM Jagan said, "In for-eign countries, there is penalty if a compliance report is not submitted. We should adopt such policies and those who neglect filing these reports should be sternly dealt with. Any death in the industrial sector must be compensated with an ex-gratia of ₹50 lakh. The proposed Industrial Safety Policy

should include such specifications," he underlined. Industries special chief secretary, K. Valavan,

Environment special chief secretary Nirab Prasad and other officials were among those who attended

Jagan should accept Naidu's challenge, hold polls: Yanamala

Opposition leader in Le-Health minister Alla Kalikrishna Srinivas said that the state govgislative Council Yanamala Ramakrishnudu on Tuesday said Chief Miniernment was spending ster Jagan Mohan Reddy ₹350 crore per month on should accept the challenge thrown by former chief minister N. Chandrmedical treatment of Covid-19 patients in the ababu Naidu and hold ele-"We are spending ₹500 ctions as a referendum on the three capitals. "The CM and his ministers are a day on providing a healthy diet to each patient afraid of facing polls beca-

because we regard their care as our paramount use of growing unpopularity of their government in the state," he observed. responsibility. There is no need for panic over steep rise in Coronavi-The former finance minrus cases as they are the ister reminded the Jagan result of a large number government of the ruin of medical tests being brought upon Muhammad Bin Tughluq after he shifted his capital from Delhi conducted in the state,' he observed. He along with finance to Daulatabad and from minister Buggana Raje-Daulatabad to Delhi. The move left the treasury of Tughluq empty and led to the ultimate collapse of

ndranath Reddy inter-acted with Covid-19 positive patients undergoing treatment in Covid hospitals in the district through video conference from Sunayana Auditorium in Kurnool city on Tuesday. Mr Srinivas enquired

about the facilities provided by the state government in Covid hospitals and quarantine cen-

said 2.31 lakh Covid-19 screening tests were conducted across the district and 19,976 people tested positive for the virus.

'Nine hospitals and 4,143 beds are available for virus patients in the district. Asymptomatic patients are getting treatment in home isolations as per directions of doctors," he explained.

Later, reviewing the situation with officials, he ordered them to give special focus to home isolation of infected people and get patients with chronic ailments admitted at any hospital with-

out delay. He also directed them to ensure that there would be no delay in 104 108 ambulances reaching the needy.

TD FILES CHEATING COMPLAINT AGAINST

YSRC MANGALAGIRI MLA ON 3 CAPITALS

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 4

Telugu Desam leaders have filed a cheating complaint against ruling party MLA from Mangalagi-ri, Alla Ramakrishna Reddy, over continuation of Amaravati as the capital of Andhra Pradesh state.

TD Tadepalli town president Jangala Sambasiva Rao and other leaders of Tadepalli and Mangalagiri pointed out in their complaint that Ramakrishna Reddy had during 2019 Assembly general elections assured on behalf of YSRC that Amaravati will remain the

pushed the state into a chaos in 14 months of his rule and the economists were predicting even worse days ahead. "Mr Jagan's proposal to set up judicial capital in Kurnool is nothing but cheating of Rayalaseema people as the AP High Court was

only capital of the state. But now, the YSRC, after coming to power, has cheated people by proposing the three capitals. The TD leaders said they had filed a case against Rama-krishna Reddy for cheating the people of his con-

Further, they said Ramakrishna Reddy, as part of his campaign, underlined that YSRC president and then opposition leader Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy had constructed a house in Tadepalli. This should be taken as proof that the capital would not be shifted from Amaravati, the MLA had stated.

as per the order of the President of India in consultation with the Supreme Court," he claimed.

He asked how the YSRC government could go ahead with shifting of the capital when Amaravati had been selected as per the laws and also devel-

People anxiously wait for HC decision on 3 capitals

Thursday, August 6, is turning out to be a major date for people of Andhra Pradesh with the AP High Court scheduled to hear petitions on Governor B i s w a b h u s a n Harichandan's decision on three capitals for the state and TD chief N. Chandrababu Naidu's ultimatum to the state government on the issue ending on the same day.

The Amaravati Capital Conservation Committee has filed a petition in the AP High Court on three capitals and APCRDA Act's repeal by YSRC government. There are 36 other petitions in the HC against the three capitals decision. The High Court on Monday ordered status quo on the gazette issued by the AP Governor on the issue of three capitals for Andhra Pradesh and rep-eal of APCRDA Act. On the day, the court also di-rected the Advocate General to file an affidavit about the legality of three capitals before postponing its next hearing to Thursday.
Telugu Desam, pro-Ama-

ravati leaders and Amaravati Capital Region farmers are hopeful about getting a positive response from the High Court on Thursday in favour of Amaravati being the capital.

CPI state secretary K.

Ramakrishna, Amaravati

THE RULING party leaders assert that people are fully supporting them in all the three regions of the state. Hence, there is no need for them to go for a fresh election by dis-

people have given power to YSRC for five years. They said they will respond to Mr Naidu's ultimatum after the end of his 48 hours' deadline.

solving the Assembly, as

JAC leaders Sunkara Padmasri, Gadde Anuradha, R.V. Swamy and others welcomed the status quo of HC. They point out that courts have pulled up the YSRC government for 65 times on various issues. But Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has refused to learn any lessons from them.

The leaders say they had pinned hopes on the AP Governor about doing justice to Amaravati by rejecting the bill or by sending it to the President of India. But their hopes had been shattered with the Governor giving his consent for the three capi-tals. The leaders say they are now hoping that the court would do justice on the issue.

On the other hand, endowments minister Vellampalli Srinivas Rao and other ruling party leaders have termed TD chief Chandrababu Naidu's 48hour deadline as political drama. They recall that TRS chief K. Chandrasek-har Rao had during Telangana movement submitted resignation as Union minister in support of separate Telangana and got public support. Likewise, they challenged Mr Naidu and TD MLAs to submit their resignations and seek a fresh election on the Amaravati issue if they were confident about public support Amaravati.

The ruling party leaders assert that people are fully supporting them in all the three regions of the state. Hence, there is no need for them to go for a fresh elec-tion by dissolving the Assembly, as people have given power to YSRC for five years. They said they will respond to Mr Naidu's ultimatum after the end of his 48 hours' deadline.

Sources say Telugu Desam is planning to launch an indefinite hunger strike in support of Amara-vati and against the decision of three capitals. It is also thinking about its legislators submitting their resignations on the

Leaders of all political parties, organisations and various sections of the society, apart from officials, are anxiously waiting for High Court's outcome on Amaravati peti-tions on Wednesday, as also the result of Mr Naidu's ultimatum on the

FRESH RUMOURS **ON GANTA JOINING YSRC**

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC

Rumours are once again making rounds about TD MLA and former minister, Ganta Srinivasa Rao, joining the ruling

The rumours gained strength after tourism and culture minister, Muttamsetti Srinivasa Rao (Avanti), reacted to them by issuing a statement that Ganta is eager to join YSRC only to shield himself from the banks which were out to seize his property, including his house and probably send him to jail if fraud was proved. "Ganta cannot live wit-

hout power. He always wants to stay in power, irrespective of party po litics," Avanti said. All his followers are involved in land grabbing for which two SITs have been appointed by two governments," he said and added that Ganta's background was briefed to Rajya Sabha member and north Andhra party in charge, V. Vijaysai Reddy time and again.

Senior leaders of the TD and close associates of Ganta denied all these rumours stating that they were created at the behest of YSRC leaders.

"If Ganta's joining on August 16 is true, why would Avanti issue a statement? Both leaders are playing games to mislead party workers and people. Both have tasted power and want to hold on to it at any cost," said a senior TD leader.

Another leader said if it were true then there would be two groups in YSRC in north coastal Andhra, one led by Ganta and the other by

Ruling party leader kills tribal woman DC CORRESPONDENT expressed his inability to

VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 4

In a shocking and cruel act, leader of the ruling party murdered a woman by mowing her down with his tractor in Sivapuram Thanda, Nakarikallu mandal, Guntur district. Nakarikallu

According to the police, YSRC leader, Bonamu-kkala Srinivas Reddy, gave a ₹3.80 lakh loan to Ramavath Mantri bai's (55) husband, Manthriya Naik, by hypothecation of their 2.75 acres land but they failed to repay the money. An angry Reddy killed her by driving his tractor over her. The incident took place on Mon-day and it came to light on Tuesday Addressing a press con-

ference at Guntur on Tuesday, Guntur rural SP, Vishal Gunni, said that the Narasaraopet DSP, M. Veera Reddy, immediately arrested the accused based on the complaint of Mantriya Naik and further investigation is being conducted. Naik hypothecated 2.75

acres of land for ₹3.80 lakhs of hand loan from Srinivasa Reddy two years ago but failed to repay the amount. Reddy went to the farmland of Naik and pressurised the couple to clear the loan Mantriya Naik

clear the debt and requested to set a value to their hypothecated land to clear the loan. Srinivasa Reddy said that the loan is equal to land value so they did not get anything in return.

The couple obstructed Srinivas Reddy who was riding a tractor and requested him to listen to their difficulties, but, angry over the obstruction, he drove the tractor over the couple, killing the woman. The locals shifted her to the government hospital at Narasaraopet but the doctors declared her brought dead. Reddy escaped from the spot and the police seized the tractor, regis tering a case.

Mr Gunni said that the police arrested the accused at his elder brother, Venkateswara Reddy's residence in Ramireddypeta in Narasaraopet town on Tuesday. The police registered a case under section 131/2020, 302 IPC, 3(2)v, SC/ST (POA) act.

Appealing to democratic-minded people to come forward in condemning the atrocities against the weaker sections. Andhra Pradesh Congress committee president Dr S. Sailajanath demanded an ex gratia amount of ₹50 lakh for the victim.

GOV CONSULTED EXPERTS BEFORE GIVING NOD

From Page 1

As the council had not taken any decision on the two Bills, the state government considered both Bills passed in the Council after 30 days and sent them to the Governor for his approval Governor Biswabhusan

Harichandan finally gave his assent to both Bills after holding talks with legal experts on July 31 and the state government too issued a gazette notification for both bills, making them acts on the same

However, this was challenged in the High

AYODHYA I TEMPLE BJP wants special pujans held at all Ram temples in state today Timing of Bhumi Pujan inauspicious: Almanac expert

VADREVU SRINIVAS | DC KAKINADA, AUG. 4

the dynasty, said Mr Ram-

akrishnudu and predicted

that the same fate would

befall Andhra Pradesh if

the people did not stop the

YSRC government from

that Mr Jagan already

shifting the capital. Mr Ramakrishnudu said

Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) state president Somu Veerraju has called upon people of Andhra Pradesh to celebrate "Ayodhya Deepavali" on Wednesday evening by lighting lamps at their homes and at all temples in the state to coincide with Bhumi Pujan for Lord Rama Temple at Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh on the day.

He told reporters here

that construction of Lord

Ram Temple in Ayodhya

will symbolise Indian cul-

ture. The entire world will

know why every village in

country has a

struct Ram Temple in Ayodhya, several changes had taken place in the country. Atal Bihari Vajpayee became the Prime Minister and conducted Pokhran tests. He also won the Kargil War with Pakistan. Now, the present Prime Minister Narendra Modi has abolished Article 370. All these good signs have appeared Rama Temple came onto

Ramalaya. He said as part of BJP's resolve to con-

after the issue of Lord the scene in the country, he maintained.

Mr Veerraju wanted the Bhumi Pujan for Lord Rama Temple in Ayodhya to be marked by people of

NOTED ALMANAC expert Hanumanthavajjula Subrahmanya Sarma says the timing of Bhumi Puja at Ayodhya is inauspicious, as Saturn and Mars are not favourably disposed towards Lagna (Libra).

 HE MAINTAINED that when any construction is taking place, the main astrological aspects should always be considered.

the state with special pujas and bhajans at their houses. On Wednesday evening, people should light lamps at homes and at all the temples, so that the entire scene looks like a Deepavali being celebrated. He, however, underlined that all Covid-19 pro-Ayodhya. tocols must be followed. Kakinada Lok

Sabha constituency presi-

dent Ch. Ramkumar said people are getting ready to perform special pujans in all the villages. People are voluntarily coming forward to participate in these pujans to mark their support for construction of the Ram Temple in

Meanwhile, noted almanac expert Hanumantha-Subrahmanya Sarma says the timing of Bhumi Pujan at Ayodhya is inauspicious, as Saturn are not disposed Mars favourably

towards Lagna (Libra). He maintained that when any construction is taking place, the main astrological aspects should always be considered. But the Muhurat of Ayodhya has not cleared Kalasa Chakra, Kurma Chakra, Sthala Chakra, Gruha Karnika Chakra, Kumbha Chakra and Gruharambha Vatsa Chakra. The timing is thus inauspicious, contends Subrahmanya Sarma.

He said construction of Rama Temple has been a long-pending issue. Hence,

most auspicious moment is fixed for its construction. He advised the Union government as well as Uttar Pradesh government to change the time, if pos-

almanac expert reminded that when in 2014, the then AP Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu performed Bhumi Pujan for AP's capital at Amaravati, he had cautioned Mr Naidu about the Muhurat being inauspi-cious. Now, not only has the capital been not completed, Amaravati farmers too are facing hardships, Subrahmanya

MAN GETS DEATH FOR RAPE. **MURDER OF MINOR**

DC CORRESPONDENT VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 4

The accused in the rape and murder of a seven-year-old at Gollapudi in the Bhavanipuram police station limits in Vijayawada on November 19 last year was sentenced to death on Tuesday by the Vth additional district cum special judge for trial of offences under POCSO Act.

The accused, Barlapudi Pentiah, was arrested within 24 hours of the crime was committed. The impetus given to investigation of crimes against women and children by Disha initiatives in the state such as setting up of Disha police stations, forensic labs and special courts helped speed up conviction of the accused.

The scientific investigation by Vijayawada city police supported by DNA analysis created a strong and fool-proof case for prosecution. The investigation was completed and the chargesheet filed swiftly in line with Disha initiatives The trial was also conducted swiftly and completed by March, however, case was reserved for judgment when lockdown was announced.

This is the 18th conviction in a rape case under the POCSO Act achieved by the state police since Disha Bill was passed in the AP Assembly in December, 2019.

DGP Goutam Sawang appreciated the professional competence displayed by the Vijayawada city police in the scientific investigation and said that this conviction would serve as a message that those guilty of crime against women and children would not be spared and act as a deterrent to all such predators.

COVID INFECTED **WOMAN DELIVERS HEALTHY BABY** DC CORRESPONDENT

TIRUPATI, AUG. 4

A Covid-19 infected pregnant woman gave birth to a healthy boy in a 108 ambulance while being shifted to a government hospital in Tirupati. The delivery took place when the ambulance was on the highway near Satyavedu in Chittoor district

The 23-year-old woman is a native of B.C. Colony in Satyavedu. She was confirmed as Coronavirus positive on Monday and was admitted at the Community Health Centre (CHC) in Satyavedu. She went into labour the same night.

"Unfortunately, our gynaecologist and two nurses, who attended on her, had also tested positive for Covid-19 on Tuesday. Hence, we referred the pregnant woman to Ruia Hospital," Dr Ch. Ramesh, medical officer of Satyavedu CHC told Deccan Chronicle.

While on way to the hospital, the pregnant woman went into labour. Ambulance attendant T. Subbalakshmi asked the driver to stop the vehicle and made arrangements for delivery of the baby inside the vehicle. "Both mother and baby have been shifted to the hospital in Tirupati in the same ambulance. The baby boy has been allowed to be with the mother in the Covid-19 isolation ward since he has to be breastfed," Dr Ramesh said.

SPEED UP PATTAS TO TRIBALS IN AGENCIES

DC CORRESPONDENT CHINTAPALLE

(VISAKHAPATNAM), AUG. 4

Senior official and principal secretary in the chief minister's office Praveen Prakash asked the local forest and revenue officials to speed up the process of distribution of pattas to the tribal farmers under Recognition of Forest Rights Act. 2006. The lands are under cultivation under the aegis of Vanarakshsna Samithi.

The senior officer on Tuesday trekked for over two km braving the rain to Siripuram in Peda Barada panchayat in Chintapalle man-

dal of Visakhapatnam district. He interacted with the farmers and enquired about the farming and the yield during his hour-long discussions. He told the officials to issue the pattas to the farmers cultivating coffee under VSS and to the next of the kin in case of

death of the farmer. Enquiring about the number of pattas given in Siripuram village so far, Praveen Prakash should be supplied with silver oak saplings and coffee plants. He later visited the Kandulagadi forest lands under Chintapalle panchayats.

AP registers 9,747 new Covid cases, 67 deaths

State has carried out 40,732 tests per million population

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 4

Andhra Pradesh has registered 9,747 new Covid-19 cases taking the total number of cases to 1,76,333. 67 deaths took the death toll to 1,604 in the last 24 hours. The state health

department issued the Covid-19 bulletin here on Tuesday reporting that out of 64,147 samples tested, 9,747 people have been tested Covid-19 positive. Out of 21,75,070 samples tested so far in the state, 95,625 infected patients have been discharged after recovery while 79,104 patients are undergoing treatment in various hospitals.

Among new infections, East Godavari continues to lead with 1,371 cases followed by 1,325 in Anantapur, 1,016 in Kurnool, 940 in Guntur, 863 in Visakhapatnam, 765 in Kadapa, 612 in West Godavari, 591 in Vizianagaram, 557 in Nellore, 537 in Srikakulam, 526 in Chittoor, 420 in Krishna and 224 in Prakasam.

With regard to active cases, East Godavari has been worst hit with 10,558 cases, followed by 9,870 in Visakhapatnam, 8,909 in Kurnool, 7,727 in Anantapur, 7,113 in Guntur, 5,655 in West Godavari, 5,650 in Chittoor, 5,460 in Kadapa, 5,319 in Nellore, 3,705 in Vizianagaram, 3,613 in Srikakulam, 2,766 in Prakasam and 2,759 in Krishna.

The recovery rate of coronavirus-infected patients in the course of treatment appears to be good in East Godavari as 13,939 patients have been discharged, followed by 11,568 in Kurnool, 10,944 in Anantapur, 10,545 in Guntur, 8,640 in West 7,097 5,293 Godavari, Chittoor. in Krishna, 5,058 in Visakhapatnam, 4,844 in



An artist paints masks awareness images on Bandar road in Vijayawada on Tuesday.

- C. NARAYANA RAO

TWO PRAKASAM LEGISLATORS TEST COVID POSITIVE

DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE, AUG. 4

Two legislators from Prakasam district tested positive for the coronavirus on Monday and the information sur-

faced on Tuesday. One of them represents a constituency from the western parts

Kadapa, 3,997 in Nellore,

3,697 in Prakasam, 2,457

in West Godavari, 2,461

from other states and 434 from other countries.

With regard to deaths,

Guntur has registered

12, followed by nine in

Krishna, eight in Kurnool, seven each in Chittoor, East Godavari

and Nellore, six each in

Anantapur

of Prakasam district. He had been to Tirumala along with his family on August 1 and had darshan on August 2. His wife is also infected and both of them are undergoing treatment at a private hospital in Ongole. His grandson was also infected a few weeks back and he was recov-

Visakhapatnam,

in Prakasam,

Vizianagaram and West

Godavari. Kurnool has the highest number of

deaths so far with 218,

followed by 188 in East

Godavari, 187 in Krishna, 163 in Guntur,

131 in Visakhapatnam, 130 in Anantapur, 127 in

Chittoor, 111in West

Godavari,

Srikakulam,

and

92 78

ered after treatment in the same private hospital at Ongole. The other legislator

represents a coastal constituency in Prakasam district. He is undergoing treatment at a corpohospital Hyderabad. His family members are also being tested, sources said.

Prakasam, 66 Vizianagaram, 64 Nellore and 49 in Kadapa. AP has carried out 40,732 tests per million population and registered a Covid-19 positive rate of 8.11, while Maharashtra has continued to register the high est positive rate at 19.56 and Telangana is at

In Prakasam district,

224 new cases have been reported, taking the total number of cases to 6,541. In Nellore district, 557

new cases have been reported of 3,365 samples tested, taking the total number of cases to In Chittoor district, 104

new cases have been reported between 9 am and 7 pm on Tuesday, taking the total number to 12,978. Among new cases, 53 from Tirupati, 24 from Madanapalli, five from Renigunta, Ramachandrapuram, two cases each from four mandals and one case each from nine mandals. In addition to it, two more from other districts have also been

reported.
State health authorities have discharged 6,953

Vangapandu founded Gang-rape victim tests Jana Natya Mandali Covid-19 positive

Influenced by Naxalite movement, Vangapandu founded the Jana Natya Mandali, a cultural wing of the People's War Group in 1972. Later, he was popular after he wore a black blanket with turban, as Uttarandhra Gaddar.

During Samaikhyandhra Poratam, he participated in activities across the present state of Pradesh. Vangapandu Recently. also wrote and sung a song on Covid-19. He was awarded by the state government with Kalaprapoorna felicita-

The Communist Party of India, Marxist (CPM)

During Samaikhyandhra Poratam, he participated in activities across the present state of Andhra Pradesh. Recently, Vangapandu also wrote and sung a song on Covid-19. He was awarded by the state government with the Kalaprapoorna felicita-

expressed condolences on Vangapandu Prasada Rao's death. Vangapandu's photograph was garlanded in the CPM office and rich tributes paid. Srinivas said Vangapandu enlightened the people with his songs and dances and was a

DC CORRESPONDENT KURNOOL, AUG. 4

The gang rape of a tribal woman by three youths at Jamminagar tanda near Velugodu in Atmakur constituency sent shock waves among the police, even as the rape victim tested Covid-19 positive.

A woman constable who accompanied the rape victim was also quarantined. Two accused youths were produced before the court on Tuesday, said Atmakur DSP, Venkata Rao.

The Velugodu sub inspector, who was under a cloud for not registering the case as a gang rape after receiving the complaint, was relieved of his duties and sent to VR, the DSP The Velugodu police station staff who moved with the rape victim who is now Covid-19 positive are fearful of having con-

tracted the virus.

Mr Rao said that the police booked a case against the accused on the same day under IPC Section 324 and 354A, based on the complaint. But on Monday, after conducting enquiry and based on some evidence, they added gang and Section 376D in this matter, stated the DSP. Three youths in their late twenties raped a 48-

year-old Lambada woman in front of her husband Jamminagar tanda in Velugodu mandal on July 31 in the early hours but it came to light on Monday after

the police took the accused into custody. According to Mr Rao, a 53-year-old tribal man from

Jamminagar tanda was working on a road bridge which was under construction as a watchman for the past few months. He along with his wife were liv-

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MULTIPLE VACANCIES

People told to rush to hospital

PATHRI RAJASEKHAR |

NELLORE, AUG. 4

With the number of deaths because breathlessness on the rise in the recent past, district authorities are appealing to the people to get admitted to Covid hospitals if they are suffering from two or three symptoms such as breathlessness and low oxygen levels.

Speaking to *Deccan* Chronicle, joint collector (Development) N. Prabhakar Reddy said the new slogan is "two

death due to drop in blood oxygen levels. He said people need not wait for Covid test for admission in hospital if their oxygen levels are less than 94 per cent.

The joint collector has appealed to the people to keep pulse oximeters at home to check oxygen levels in the blood at regular intervals. living

Those Nellore city may rush to designated Covid hospitals such as Government General Hospital or Narayana

out of three" to save General Hospital for people from sudden treatment, he suggest-

Those suffering from diabetes, kidney ailments or undergoing dialysis and people above 60 years of age should react immediately if they find any changes in their health

Attributing most of the fatalities to admission of patients in hospitals at eleventh hour, Mr Prabhakar Reddy advised people against self-medication.

Those who sense anything wrong with their health may contact 104 for ambulance to rush to hospital. 'We have instructed

the village and ward volunteers to visit all the 50 houses allotted to them on a daily basis to record the temperature and oxygen level in people and shift those in need of immediate medical attention to hospital," the joint collector noted.

According to him, those in need of a Covid test can go to the near-Urban Health Centre or Sanjeevani bus visiting their area

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Travels 88130-3 80530-44313 (W/2021/AT000225)

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Officer booked for sexual harassment

DC CORRESPONDENT ANANTAPUR, AUG. 4

The police booked a case against the agriculture joint director Habib Bhasha under the Nirbhaya Act fol-lowing a complaint by women employees from the office of the joint director of

agriculture.

The CCS DSP E.

Srinivasulu and his team
went to the joint director's office on Monday as part of an investigation based on a complaint by the women employees. The victims had complained with the SP and complaint was forwarded to town police, and CCS DSP E. Srinivasulu was deputed to probe the case.

Police said that the case was registered against the joint director Habib Bhasha. The police team recorded statements from

the victims in the office.
Sources said the official fled following the case and police teams were in search of the official to investigate the case. Meanwhile, the higher authorities sent transfer orders of the joint director

Habib Bhasha to Chittoor district as deputy director on Monday. Though a statement of suspension of the agriculture joint director was

issued, the higher authorities issued transfer orders of the official.

KAKINADA GGH IS NOW COVID CENTRE

DC CORRESPONDENT KAKINADA, AUG. 4

All out-patient (OP) and inpatient services except those related to gynaecology, paediatrics and cancer have been cancelled at the Government General Hospital, Kakinada, as it has been designated state Covid-19 hospital.

GGH superintendent Dr

M. Raghavendra Rao said that in view of increasing Covid-19 positive cases, the state government had taken the decision to dedicate all the wards in the hospital, except gynaecology, paediatrics and cancer, to the treatment of Coronavirus patients. Non-covid patients are advised to visit Aarogyasri accredited hospitals in the district.

VELIGONDA 1ST TUNNEL WORKS BY OCTOBER

DC CORRESPONDENT NELLORE, AUG. 4

The state government has taken steps to expedite the first tunnel by October this year.

Prakasam district collector Pola Bhaskar has disclosed while inspecting Gottipadia - Kakarla link canal works at Sairam Nagar in Ardhaveedu mandal on Tuesday. The Special Commissioner of Rehabilitation, T. Babu Rao was also present with the collector.

they had given instructions to the engineers to stick to the schedule assigned by the government to realise the proj-

WANTED knowledgeable Person, English thorough, typing for the post of PROJECT COORDINATORS Salary per experience & knowledge

works of the Veligonda project to complete them

The collector said that

Claiming that they have given a better package for the displaced compared to other projects, he said that they had deposited ₹2 crore in the accounts of 16 displaced towards a onetime settlement. Mr Bhaskar also point-

ed to tenders called to build houses to rehabilitate the displaced. In his address, Mr Babu Rao credited the Chief Minister.

Please respond immediately anytime to Call: 98481 85652 I, REJVANA BEGAM, (Existing name of Spouse as per change of next of kir

of No: 2612709Y, Rank: L/Hav SHAIK MOHAMMAD ALI, (Name of the Husband resident of #38-30-222/1, Hussainagar Marripalem, Visakhapatnam, Andhra name from REJVANA BEGAM (Existin name of Spouse as per change of nex MOHEMMED REJVANA BEGUN (Proposed / Adopted new name) vide affidavit dated 03-08-2020 (Date of the affidavit in DD /MM /YYYY format) before





Applications are invited for GIS Specialist, Research Associate and Research Assistant on purely temporary and contractual basis. The application can be downloaded from institute's website and filled application may be sent to recruitmentdtcp@ spav.ac.in on or before 14.08.2020. For further details regarding qualifications, remuneration etc, please refer the SPA Vijay awada website www.spav.ac.in.



VINDA VISAKHAPATNAM METROPOLITAN REGION DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY **PUBLIC NOTICE**

Rc. No. 11025/370/2019 (e-959560), Dt. 02-08-2020

Sri V. Venkata Srinivas Rao has applied to VMRDA for Change of land use from Agricultural use to Commercial use to an extent of 12195.67 sq.mts., covered in Sy.No.s 11-1B-1-A & 12-1A of Gandigundam Village, Anandapuram Mandal, Visakhapatnam District.

Notice is hereby given that the draft will be taken into consideration after expiry of fifteen (15) days from the date of publication of the notification in the Andhra Pradesh Gazette and that any objections or suggestions which may be received from any person with respect thereto before expiry of the said period will be considered by the Government. Objections or suggestions relating thereto should be addressed in

riting to the Metropolitan Commissioner, VMRDA, Visakhapatnam. Development Modification Reasons for modification Address of Signature Plan proposals suggested Objection/ the Applicant Suggestion Sd/- Metropolitan Commissioner, VMRDA

SUNDARAKANDA PARAYANAM AT TIRUMALA BY 200 VEDA PUNDITS DC CORRESPONDENT TTD completed the relief to humanity from Sundarakanda the Covid-19 pandemic, first phase (Prathama

TIRUPATI, AUG. 4

The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD), which took up the holy crusade Sundarakanda

is going to take up another major leap by involving 200 Veda pundits to conduct the Parayanam at Tirumala on Thursday. It may be noted that Parayanam to bring

Parayanam is being conducted daily at the Nada Niranjanam platform at Tirumala by Veda pundits since the last two months and is also being telecasted live by the SVBC.

Sarga) Parayanam on July 7 and nearly 200 pundits recited the Parayanam Tirumala. As a followup, now 227 slokas will

SHORT TAKES

BREAKTHROUGH ELUDES TALKS WITH CHINA

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, AUG. 4

The fifth Corps Commanders level talks between India and China on Sunday seems to have been unable to achieve any breakthrough on further disengagement in Pangong Tso and other friction areas.

Though government is yet to come out with any formal statement on the meeting, indications are that China has shown reluctance to move out of the finger areas in the Pangong Tso. China claims that it was always present in the finger area.

There have been series of meetings of India's top security brass at various levels in national capital to discuss the outcome of the fifth Corps Commanders level talks and the further way out. There are chances that India may now try high level of diplomatic contacts to try to resolve the military stand-off which has

now entered the fourth month. Chinese are occupying finger 5 area in the Pangong Tso and are still continuing to hold the ridges in the finger 4 area. During the initial phase of disengagement, Chinese troops had vacated the banks of Pangong Tso lake in finger 4 area on July 9 and gone back to finger 5. But Chinese troops between finger 5 and finger 8, which India claims is its terri-

BHUSHAN **REFUSES TO TENDER APOLOGY**

PARMOD KUMAR | DC NEW DELHI, AUG. 4

Activist-lawver Prashant Bhushan on Tuesday refused to tender apology in an 11-year old contempt case for alleging misconduct against Justice S.H. Kapadia for being part of a forest bench that had decided the Niyamgiri mining lease in favour of Sterlite Industries - a subsidiary of Vedanta.

Bhushan had in 2009 an interview to *Tehelka* magazine said that Justice Kapadia should not have been on the bench as he was holding shares of Sterlite Industries. Justice Kapadia went on to

become Chief Justice of India. Refusing to apologise in a 2009 case, Bhushan in a statement before a three judge bench headed by Justice Arun Mishra, affirmed his "unreserved" support and faith in the judiciary particularly the Supreme Court. "I have used the word corruption in a wide sense meaning lack of propriety. I did not mean only financial corruption or deriving any pecuniary advantage.", Bhushan said in his statement to the court on Tuesday.

However, he has said, "If what I have said caused hurt to any of them or to their families in any way, I regret the

The SC in a brief order uploaded on its website said that the "Explanation/apology submitted by Prashant Bhushan and Tarun Tejpal have not been received so far. In case we do not accept the explanation/ apology, we will

75-YEAR-OLD WOMAN RAPED IN KERALA

GILVESTER ASSARY I DC THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, AUG. 4

A 75-year old woman was raped and serious injuries were inflicted on her by unidentified assailants in Ernakulam district of Kerala.

The gruesome incident took place in Puthenkurish, about 20 km from Kochi. Three persons including a woman have been taken into custody for questioning. A case has been registered and some of the suspected culprits are on police radar.

According to doctors, the woman is suffering from memory loss. She was subjected to the heinous crime at another person's house. The survivor suffered injuries to her internal organs following which an emergency surgery was carried out at the Kolenchery Medical College Hospital. The police said that the injuries have been caused by sharp edged weapons. Forensic experts are examining the scene of crime. The police said that because of her memory problem, the survivor has given different versions. Statements of the family members, relatives and neighbors have been recorded. The cops have also questioned some people in the area on the basis of these statements.

Ayodhya awaits a new beginning today

Priests feel after the Ram Temple is complete, city will have more opportunities and development

temple here is all decked up for the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi who will be in the city for the bhoomi pujan of Ram temple on Wednesday.

As soon as the prime minister reaches Ayodhya on Wednesday, he will first go to this temple as it is believed that before visiting Lord Ram one should pay their respects to Lord Hanuman.

The priests in the temple are disheartened that they will not be able to meet Modi due to the protocols in place against coron-

"At the temple, all of us had made a lot of preparations to present a gada (mace), mukut (crown), silver brick, stole and a turban to the prime minister. But, this will not be possible now due to Covid-19 protocol. Our plan to give him the gifts now stands cancelled," said Hanuman Garhi Mahant Raju Das.

The chief minister visited the temple on Monday. Now the prime minister will pray on Wednesday but all priests will remain at a distance and no one will be allowed near him. Modi is likely to stay here for 5-7 minutes," he said.

He said that all preparations for Modi's visit are almost complete and the *bhoomi pujan* will be historic for the city of Ayodhya.

Ayodnya.
About this temple,
Mahant said, "When Lord
Ram returned to Ayodhya
after conquering Ravana,
he gave this place to Hanuman ji to live, so its called Hanuman Garhi or Hanuman Kot. From here, it is believed that Lord Hanuman used to protect

He said that construction of the Ram temple will start a new era for Ayodhya city which has witnessed many "tense moments" in the past.

"Not only us, all Rambhakts are happy with the new beginning. It is not just due to religious reasons, but the people here are happy to feel that their city will now have more opportunities and development," the Mahant

Police barricades, yellow banners, walls with a fresh coat of paint and the sounds of bhajan mark parts of Ayodhya as the city awaits its big day Wednesday, when the first brick will be laid for the Ram temple

Ayodhya is decked up for the "bhumi pujan" that will be attended at the Ram Janmabhoomi by 175 people who figure in a select guest list of seers and politicians topped by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The ceremony shall start at around 8 am and end at about 2 pm. The main *bhumi pujan* is expected to take place at 12.30 pm and the foundation stone will be laid at 12.40 pm. - *PTI*



A priest perform religious rituals at Hanuman Garhi temple, ahead of a groundbreaking ceremony of the Ram temple in Ayodhya. As soon as the Prime Minister reaches Ayodhya on Wednesday, he will first go to Hanuman Garhi temple. - AP

Sena: Covid will

The Saamana editorial

said that the responsibility

of security arrangements

in Ayodhya was with the

Home ministry, but it is

Shah tested coronavirus

"Coronavirus has spread

in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh

and the entire country.

This crisis, too, will fade away with the blessings of Lord Ram," it said.

The responsibility of

security arrangements in

Ayodhya was with the

Home ministry, but it is unfortunate that Home Minister Amit Shah tested

coronavirus positive, it

Despite the presence of the Prime Minister, the

RSS chief. Uttar Pradesh

Chief Minister and others.

the ceremony will be lack-

lustre without Shah, the

It said Shah participated

in a public event in Delhi last Saturday and attended

the cabinet meeting last

social distancing norms,

and has asked those who

came in his contact in the

past few days to isolate

themselves and get tested

The entire Council of

ministers needs to be iso-

lated, if the home minister

Shah is close to Modi but

nothing will happen to the

prime minister and the

home minister due the

blessings of Lord Ram, it said. - PTI

is saying this, it said.

observing

weanesaay

for coronavirus.

unfortunate that

Home Minister Amit

now disappear

Mumbai, Aug. 4: The Covid-19 crisis in the

country will disappear

with the blessings of Lord Ram, the Shiv Sena said

on Tuesday, and pointed out that veterans like L.K.

Advani and Murli Manohar Joshi won't be

present in Ayodhya for the

temple 'bhoomi pujan' cer-

An editorial in the party

mouthpiece Saamana took a dig at the August 5

ceremony being held amid

rising cases of coronavirus in the country.

"There is no other gold-

en moment like the one

when Prime Minister

Modi performs the bhoo-

mi pujan at Ayodhya," the

but will disappear with

Lord Ram's blessings," it

Advani and Joshi, key leaders associated with

the Ram temple construc-

tion campaign, will wit-

ness the ceremony via

video conferencing from

Delhi, the editorial noted.

They were advised not to

view of their age and the

outbreak of Covid-19 in

Uma Bharti, another prominent leader attached

to the campaign, will also

not be present at the cere-

mony and will instead

watch it "from the banks

of the Sarayu river through the eyes of her

There is excitement in

the country in view of the

bhoomi pujan ceremony,

mind", the Sena said.

the Sena said.

Ayodhya, it said.

the ceremony in

"Coronavirus is there,

emony.

Sena šaid.

added.

attend

K'TAKA SCHOLAR WHO SUGGESTED **DATE GETS**

Belagavi, Aug. 4: A Sanskrit scholar here, among the astrologers reportedly consulted for fixing auspicious date for the ground-breaking cerement for Boar temple. mony for Ram temple construction at Ayodhya, has complained of receiving threat calls following which he has been provid-

THREAT CALLS

ed security by police. N. R. Vijayendra Sharma alleged he had been receiving telephone calls regarding fixing the auspicious

A police constable had been posted at the 75-yearold's residence here following a complaint he lodged with police in this district headquarters town in north Karnataka. Police on Tuesday said

they were looking into the complaint. Sharma said earlier this

week that Swamy Govind Dev Giriji, a member of the Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust, had approached him regarding fixing muhurat for the ground- breaking ceremo-

Sharma, who was associated with Ramjanma Bhoomi movement for many years, said he had suggested four dates (July 29, July 31, August 1 and August 5) as the most auspicious days for performing Bhumi Pujan since all those days fall in Shravana month accord-

ing to the Hindu calendar. On August 5, the auspicious time for the event will be between 8 a.m. and 12 noon, he said. - *PTI*

Advani believes temple will usher in 'Ram Rajya'

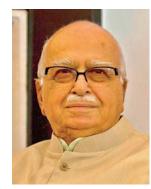
DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, AUG 4

BJP veteran L.K. Advani, who played a pivotal role in the Ramianambhoomi movement and undertook the Ram Rath Yatra, which also brought the BJP into the national political scene, on the eve of foundation laying cere-mony of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya, on Tuesday said it will be a historical and emotional day not only for him but for all Indian when Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lay the foundation.

Mr Advani, 92, who will not be attending the ceremony, even though Shri Ramjanambhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust claims he was invited but advised not to attend due to his age, said the construction of the temple after the decisive verdict of the Supreme Court last year is beginning in "an environment of tranquility" and will "go a long way in strengthening the bond

between Indians. Mr Advani said a grand Ram Mandir was a dream close to his heart and was also a desire and mission of the BJP.

He expressed his grati-tude to saints, leaders and people in India and the world over who made "valuable contributions and sacrifices in the Ramjanambhoomi move-



L. K. Advani

Advani said a grand Ram Mandir was a dream close to his heart and was also a desire and mission of the BJP.

Noting that Lord Ram occupies an esteemed place in India's culture and civilisational heritage and is embodiment of grace, dignity and decorum, the BJP veteran said it is his belief that the will Indians to imbibe his virtues.

The former deputy prime minister also said that he believes that Ram Mandir will represent India as a "strong, prosperous, peaceful and harmonious nation with justice for all and exclusion of none so that we can truly usher in Ram Rajya, the epitome of good gover-

PRIEST OF RAVAN TEMPLE SAYS HE WILL DISTRIBUTE SWEETS TODAY

of Ram temple in Ayodhya will deeply

connect Indian

cultural roots to

economically and

a model to guide

expand culturally as

MANMOHAN VAIDYA, SR. RSS FUNCTIONARY

now the "basic Hindutva is

coat on the canvas

subscribing to its

various shades may

future as socialism

and secularism are

be vying for power in

no longer the pivot of politics

GOVINDACHARYA.

EX-RSS IDEOLOGUE

of polity" and political parties

society to its

prosper

humanity

Ayodhya, Aug. 4: Nearly 650 km from Ayodhya, a priest of a temple dedicated to demon king Ravan is eagerly awaiting the groundbreaking ceremo-ny of the Ram temple. Tucked away in Gautam

Buddh Nagar's Bisrakh area is a temple dedicated to Ravan, the dark figure in the epic Ramayana who was killed by Lord

Mahant Ramdas of the Ravan temple said he will distribute sweets after the conclusion of the 'bhoomi poojan' ceremony in the temple town of Ayodhya on August 5.

am very happy that the bhoomi pujan for the temple of Lord Ram is taking place in Ayodhya. After the ceremony, I will distribute ladoos and celebrate the happy moment. The bhoomi poojan for the temple of Lord Ram in Ayodhya is indeed a very good development. I am happy as a grand temple will be built there," he

Mahant Ramdas said, "If Ravan was not there, then no one would have known about Shri Ram. And in the absence of Lord Ram, no one would have known anything about Ravan'

According to local folklore, Bisrakh is the birthplace of Ravan and, "we call it the Ravan Janambhoomi," the priest

Describing Ravan as a knowledgeable person and an expert in many fields, he said, after abducting Sita, he kept her at Ashok Vatika, and did not take her to his palace.

"Apart from this, he posted women to guard Sita. If Lord Ram is called maryaadaa purshottam (the person who upheld dignity), then I think Ravan also to some extent can be considered as a person who upheld dignity (of people in aspects)," he said.

The temple in Bisrakh has idols of Lord Shiva, Parvati and Kuber.

"The temple does not close even during the night. Devotees coming here offer prayers to Lord Sniva, Kuber Ravan. Around 20 per cent of devotees who come here worship Ravan," according to Mahant Ramdas.

According to Ramayana, Ravan abducts Lord Ram's wife Sita and takes her to his kingdom of Lanka, where he keeps her in captivity in Ashok Vatika. Later, Lord Ram, with the support of 'vanara' King Sugriv and his army of 'vanars', attacks Lanka, kills Ravan, and rescues

Bihar for CBI probe into Sushant's death

NAYEAR AZAD | DC

Bihar government on Tuesday recommended a CBI probe into the death of Sushant Singh Rajput after the deceased actor's father K.K. Singh made a formal request regarding

"The state government recommended a CBI probe into the death of Sushant Singh Rajput after his father spoke to the DGP", Bihar CM Nitish Kumar said. The move comes amid

ongoing tussle over the jurisdictional issue between Maharashtra and Bihar police. The CM and DGP Gupteshwar Pandey had earlier expressed displeasure over the mistreatment of Patna police who have been sent to Mumbai to probe the case.

Vinay officer Tiwary who had landed in Mumbai on Sunday to supervise the ongoing investigation by Bihar police was forcibly placed under home quarantine by the BMC authorities. The development was termed as 'inappropriate"

"unfortunate" by the CM. 'They are not respond-

ing to our repeated mes sages and phone calls. In announced that they will not let us work there. I have not seen this kind of non-cooperation in my entire career", the DGP While backing Nitish

Kumar's recommendation to hand over Sushant Singh Rajput's death case to the CBI Bihar DGP also said that the state police would lodge a formal protest with the BMC authorities over placing IPS officer under forcible home quarantine.

The alleged mistreatment of the Bihar police team in Mumbai had snowballed into a politi-cal controversy. The issue was also raised by political leaders including BJP MLA and the late actor's cousin Neeraj Singh in the assembly on Monday.

However, on Tuesday after the CM announced his decision to recommend a CBI inquiry into the case, leader of the Opposition Tejashwi Yadav claimed that his party RJD was the first to raise the issue forcefully in the assembly and said that "a court-monitored CBI probe would be betPak's map has J&K, Ladakh & parts of Guj KUMARASWAMI | DC NEW DELHI, AUG. 4

after Pakistan unveiled a new political map that laid claim to Indian territory in Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) and Ladakh union territories as well as parts of the Indian state of Gujarat, India rejected it and termed it "an exercise in political absurdity", adding that these "ridiculous assertions have neither legal validity nor international credibility". India said Islamabad's

move "confirms the realitv of Pakistan's obsession with territorial aggrandisement supported by crossborder terrorism".

The move announced by Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan on Tuesday comes on the eve of the anniversary on August 5 of India revoking Article 370 that had granted special status to the erstwhile state of Jammu

and Kashmir. So far Pakistan had stopped short of calling Kashmir as part of its territory officially and had always pushed for a UNmandated plebiscite.

But strangely, while the demand for a plebiscite will continue on the part of Islamabad, Pakistan gone ahead and

Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan comes on the eve of the first anniversary on August 5 of India revoking Article 370.

The new map would

of Pakistan after being

now be the "official map"

approved by the Pakistani federal cabinet. declared that J&K is part of Pakistan along with some portions of Ladakh

to the North and Gujarat to the West. The move is being seen as an attempt to provoke India.

Recently,

Himalayan neighbour Nepal had also gone ahead and unveiled a new map that showed that showed portions of territory in India's Uttarakhand State - Limpiyadhura, Kalapani and Lipu Lekh - as part of Nepal. New Delhi had objected to that move as well.

Pakistan's move also comes amid ongoing talks between India and China for military de-escalation in the Ladakh sector, with Beijing laying claim to portions of land there and backing it up with attempts at military coer-

In a statement, the MEA

Tension runs high in J&K on 1st anniv of scrapping Art. 370

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC SRINAGAR, AUG. 4

The local police and Central armed police forces on Tuesday imposed a curfew in Jammu and Kashmir's summer capital Srinagar whereas strict security restrictions are in force elsewhere in the Valley, a day before the first anniversary of the abrogation of Article 370 and bifurcation of the state.

The security in the remaining parts of J&K including winter capital Jammu has been beefed up further, reports received here said.

As tensions run high, contingents

said, "We have seen a socalled 'political map' of Pakistan that has been released by Prime Minister Imran Khan. This is an exercise in political absurdity, laying untenable claims to territories in the Indian State of Gujarat and our Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and of Ladakh. These ridiculous asser-

deployed at the residences of various political leaders belonging to both mainstream and separatist camps to thwart possible attempts by them to organise protests. The police also took several political activists into preventive custody.

Among them is PDP's Rouf Bhat who had announced at a press conference here on Monday that the party will observe August 5 as "black day" and that a demonstration will be held in Srinagar to mark the anniversary of the "unconstitutional measures" taken on this day last year.

The authorities said that

tions have neither legal validity nor international credibility. In fact, this new effort only confirms obsession with territorial aggrandisement supported by cross-border terrorism.'

According to Pakistani media reports, Imran Khan — while addressing the country along with his

Srinagar will remain under curfew also on Wednesday. Srinagar's DC Shahid Iqbal Choudhary had claimed on Monday that SSP concerned has report SSP concerned has reported that a series of inputs received by the police suggest that separatists and Pakistan sponsored groups are planning to observe August 5 as a 'black day' and, therefore, there is apprehension of "violent actions and protests" which could "endanger public life and

He said that such an activity could also defeat the purpose of imposing lockdown to stem the spread of Coronavirus.

Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi — said that the new map would now be the "official map" of Pakistan after being approved by the Pakistani federal cabinet and would be the one used in schools and colleges.

reportedly stakes claim to Siachen to the North and Sir Creek to the West as well.

IRS OFFICER PRADEEP TOPS UPSC EXAM

New Delhi, Aug. 4: IRS officer Pradeep Singh tops the list of 829 candidates who have qualified for the prestigious civil services, including the IAS, the IPS and the IFS, the Union Public Service Commission announced on Tuesday.

The top three rank holders -Singh, Jatin Kishore and Pratibha Verma — are serving officers. Singh is a resident of Haryana, while Kishore hails from Delhi and Verma from Uttar Pradesh.

"It is like a dream come true. It is a pleasant surprise for me. I always wanted to be an IAS officer. I would like to work for the deprived sections of society," Singh said on phone from his home in Sonipat.

Singh, 29, a 2019-batch Indian Revenue Service (customs and central excise) officer, is undergoing probation at the National Academy of Customs, Indirect Taxes and Narcotics in Faridabad.

He said his main emphasis would be on improving education and farm sectors as he has become part of the most sought-after IAS. "I have opted for my home state Haryana as the preferred cadre state for the IAS. I am happy that I will now get the chance to work for my state, said Singh, who had taken leave to prepare for the examination.

Second-rank holder Kishore is a 2018-batch officer of Indian Economic Service and currently posted as Assistant Director in the Ministry of Rural Development here. It was my second attempt in the civil services examination. I am happy to have got second rank, he said. Kishore, 26, said education and environment would be his focused areas. He

is a native of Delhi. Verma, an officer of Indian Revenue Service (Income Tax), said she wanted to become an IAS officer since her childhood. "I was inspired by the way IAS officers act as the first responder at the time of any crisis. They are always on the frontline at the time of difficult situation. That is why I decided to prepare again for

Kerala not to opt for sero survey for now

Experts say their focus, priority is on identifying the cases

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC THIRUVANANTHAPURAM,

Kerala does not seem to be keen on going for extensive antibody testing among the population including in areas where large Covid-19 clusters have emerged.

Experts leading the fight against the virus said that at present their focus and priority is on identifying the cases. With Kerala having negative factors on its side like high population of elderly, 20 per cent population with diabetes, 33 per cent with hypertension, the state cannot afford to slacken its disease control activities.

Moreover, they said that the number of cases in which the source of infection is not known is just

between 1 and 2 per cent. "Maybe at a later stage the state can think of sero surveillance study to find out whether herd immunity has set in or not. Instead of antibody testing what we now require urgently is scaling up antigen and RT PCR testing to identify the cases," a doctor who is part of the Covid management team of the government said on the condition of the

anonymity. At least 50 to 60 per cent people should develop antibody to have herd

immunity set in. Though the government had distributed 10,000 antibody testing kits to each district for a survey, the exercise was stopped mid-way. However, medical organisations have a

different take on the issue. "It is high time antibody testing started in Kerala. Not only antibody test the state should also do epidemiological survey of antibody tests," said IMA

Entire Kashmir now 'red zone'

CLASSIFICATION OF

districts has been done

the Covid-19 situation

with top officials.

the order stated.

after a detailed review of

red/containment zone

with a 500-metre buffer,

It said the classification

of districts has been done

after a detailed review of the Covid-19 situation

with top officials, and it

will be reviewed periodi-

The review included the

recent spike in new cases

in view of the movement

of people to J&K and

On Tuesday, Jammu and

Kashmir recorded 390

Covid-19 cases, taking the total number of infections

Ten fatalities in the last

24 hours pushed the death

toll from the disease to

417, officials said. They said all the 10

deaths were reported from Kashmir Valley.

situation quite

attracting

between districts.

Jammu, **Aug. 4:** The Jammu and Kashmir government has classified the districts into red, orange and green zones depending on the severity of Covid-19 spread in the areas and declared the entire Kashmir region, except Bandipora, as a

The categorisation has been done to implement restrictions after August 5, when the current phase of lockdown in the union territory ends, according to an order issued by the chairperson of the State

Executive Committee. The order declared all districts of Kashmir, except Bandipora, and Ramban district Jammu as red zones. Kathua. Samba. Bandipora, Udhampur, Poonch, Rajouri and Jammu districts are in orange zone and Doda and Kishtwar

are in green zone. The Lakhanpur containment zone on the national highway will be a

state secretary

Kerala had reported the Gopikrishnan. first case of Covid-19 on He said Kerala should January 30, which was also the first positive take a cue from Dharavi patient in the country. During the first two and Delhi where extensive testing was carried out. stages, Kerala managed The existing testing rate in Kerala is not satisfactory. Even the sentinel surremarkably vey being carried out global attention and acclaim. Till May 4, there among vulnerable groups were only 419 cases and three deaths. However, like health care professionals and law enforcing within three months the agencies is not enough. The results are taking a cases have gone up to 26,873 and 84 deaths.

Significantly, Kerala has succeeded in keeping the mortality rate at 0.3 which is one of the lowest in the country (national average 2.41). Cases started increasing with the arrival of Keralities especially from hotspots like Gulf coun-tries, US, Russia and Che-nnai, Mumbai and Delhi.

During this period, 7 lakh people arrived in Kerala including 2 lakh from abroad and 4 lakh from other states. Among those who returned to Kerala, over 3,000 tested positive for Covid-19.

Though the government put in place mechanisms for testing at the airports, quarantine and surveillance, the local transmission could not be controlled effectively.

"We wanted to restrict local people from getting infected from those coming from abroad or other states. Our expectation was that if we can keep contact positivity less than 30 per cent then we could manage. But it started increasing by the day. It is between 60 and 70 per cent now," Dr B. Ekbal, chairman of Kerala's High Level Expert Committee on Covid Control,

told a webinar recently. In its attempt to check the increasing number of cases, the government on Monday took a decision that has triggered a major controversy. The government took away activities like contact tracing, declaration of containment zones, surveillance of people under quarantine from health workers and gave it to the police personnel.

The state unit of IMA, Kerala Government Medical Officers Association and various other health organisations demanded reconsider the decision.

ANTI-CAA STIR RESUMES AFTER 5 MONTHS

MANOJ ANAND | DC

After the gap of nearly five months, the anti-Citizenship Amendment Act protests have started resurfacing with All Assam Students Union holding a protest march in eastern Assam's Dibrugarh in which hundreds of students took part.

The protest which came close on the heels of Union home ministry seeking three additional months to frame the CAA rules, started with a rally from Chowkidinghee and passed through all the major roads of the town proceeding towards the residence of Minister Sarbananda Sonowal in Lakhi Nagar area of Dibrugarh beside the Mancotta road.

All the motorcycles stopped just beside the Chief Minister's residence and the Aasu activists raised slogans against the Citizenship

As in the beginning of March, anti-CAA rallies were put on hold across the state due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the protest caught everyone by surprise and security personnel scrambled and threw a protective ring around the Chief Minister's residence in Dibrugarh.

"Our protest against the Citizenship Amendment Act has resumed. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic we had put our agitation on hold since the beginning of March. Now, it will be back in full force. As we have said before, Assam will not shoulder the burden of a single Bangladeshi entering the state after 1971, be it Hindu or Muslim," Aasu Dibrugarh district general secretary Sankor

Architect of modern Indian theatre, Alkazi, passes away

DC CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, AUG. 4

Theatre doyen and legendary teacher Ebrahim Alkazi died on Tuesday afternoon after suffering a heart attack, his son said. He was 94.

Alkazi, who was the longest serving director of the National School of Drama, produced plays such as Girish Karnad's Tughlaq and Dharamvir Bharati's Andha Yug. He mentored generations of including Naseeruddin Shah and Om Puri.

"Dad died at 2.45 pm after a massive heart attack. He was admitted to the Escorts hospital the day before yesterday," his son Feisal Alkazi said.

Reacting to the death, Bollywood actor Nawazuddin Siddiqui wrote on Twitter, "The true architect of the Modern Indian Theatre. The Doyen who possessed the extreme knowledge in all the aspects of Art. The magician who nurtured many greats of



theatre. May your brightest spark from the heaven keep us enlightening." While at NSD, Alkazi

trained actors like Naseeruddin Shah, Om Puri, Rohini Hattangadi, Surekha Sikri and Pankaj Kapoor, all of whom made it in Bollywood.

Alkazi is best remembered for the important advance he made in scenographic thanks to his extensive re-search before he produced a play. He is also remembered for his love of art, being a collector and for founding the Art Heritage Gallery in Delhi.

He was awarded the Padma Shri (1966), the Padma Bhushan (1991), and Padma Vibhushan in

TWO INDIANS KIDNAPPED IN 2018 FROM AFGHANISTAN RELEASED

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, AUG. 4

Two Indian nationals have been released from captivity in Afghanistan and returned home to India on Tuesday, the Indian government has

The two Indian nationals released on July 31 were among a group of seven Indian engineers of a company working in Afghanistan's northern Baghlan province who were abducted in May, 2018, reportedly by the Taliban who apparently mistook them for government employees.

Of those seven Indian nationals, six are now free, New Delhi said, thanking Afghan government for its "constant and unwavering support in secur-ing the release of the Indians".

One Indian national had been freed in March last year while according to media reports, three others had been freed in October last

In a statement the MEA said, "Two Indian nationals, who were released from captivity in Afghanistan on July 31, returned to India on Tuesday."

FINANCIAL

Chronicle

VISAKHAPATNAM | WEDNESDAY | 5 AUGUST 2020

INDICATORS 2.03 Nifty 50 11,095.25 1.87 S&P 5003 3,296.97 0.07 Dollar (₹) 75.04 -0.03 Pound Sterling (₹) 97.99 0.22 Euro (₹) 88.43 -0.13 Gold (10gm)* (₹) 54,830▲97 0.17 Brent crude (\$/bbl)* 44.40 IN 10-Yr bond yield 5.833 -0.004 US 10-Yr T-bill yield* 0.515 -0.048 * As of 9:30 PM IST

Adani, Suraksha, Sunteck submit **EOI for HDIL**

Adani Properties, Suraksha Asset Reconstruction and Sunteck Realty are among six players which have shown ini-tial interest to acquire debtladen HDIL through the insolvency resolution process, according to a regulatory filing. International Asset Reconstruction Company, N S Software and Harsha Vardhan Reddy have also submitted the EOI, but they were found ineli-



■ Reserve Bank clears appointment

Insider Jagdishan to head HDFC Bk

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, AUG, 4

Private lender HDFC Bank on Tuesday announced that Sashidhar Jagdishan would be its new manage ing director and chief executive officer for a period of three years from his date of taking charge i.e. October 27. The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has cleared the appointment, the bank informed the

Jagdishan replaces Aditya Puri, the high profile banker who led the bank since inception and retires on October 26.

Jagdishan is currently the group head of finance, human resources, legal & secretarial, administration, infrastructure, corporate communications, corporate social responsibility and the strategic change agent of the bank.

Investors cheered the move, sending HDFC Bank's shares up as much as 6 per cent after the news broke out, pushing the broader stock markets higher. The stock closed the day 4 per cent up. HDFC Bank is now the third most valued listed entity in India with a market cap of Rs 6.1 lakh crore after RIL and TCS.

"A meeting of the board of directors of the bank will be convened in due course inter alia to approve the appointment of Mr. Sashidhar Jagdishan as the Managing Director & CEO of the bank, in place of Mr. Aditya Puri, who is due to



retire as Managing Director of the bank on October 26, 2020," said HDFC Bank in a statement

"He (Jagdishan) has played a critical role in supporting the growth tra-jectory of the bank. He has led the finance function and played a pivotal role in aligning the organisation in achieving the strategic objectives over the years." the statement said.

Raamdeo Agrawal, chairman, Motilal Oswal Finan-Services Sashidhar has tremendous opportunity to build on the lead the bank has taken in last two decades and remain an example and envy of every single banker in India."

Shyamala Gopinath, chairperson, HDFC Bank, said, "Sashi brings to the table a rare combination of IQ and EQ. Given his understanding of the business, coupled with a strong people connect, we're confident that he'll take the bank to the next level.' "He understands the

ethos,

culture

which has made it what it is. Given our inherent strengths and now Sashi's leadership, I believe that the best of the bank is yet to come," said Aditya Puri, MD, HDFC Bank.

Speaking about his appointment Jagdishan said, "I fully recognise that Mr. Puri's are huge shoes to fill....I'll leave no stone unturned to carry forward the rich legacy."

Widely known as Sashi, Jagdishan has an overall experience of 30 years, 24 of which he spent in HDFC Bank. He joined the bank in 1996 as a manager in the function. He became business headfinance in 1999 and was appointed as chief financial officer in 2008 and played a critical role in supporting the bank's growth trajectory.

Jagdishan holds a master's degree in 'economics of money, banking & finance' from the University of Sheffield, UK.

Prior to HDFC Bank, he had a 3 year stint with Deutsche Bank, Mumbai.

₹500-cr net worth must to sell petrol and diesel

New Delhi, Aug. 4: The government on Tues-day said any entity with a net worth of at least Rs 500 crore is eligible for obtaining the liberalised licence to sell petrol and diesel to retail and bulk con-

sumers. Clarifying on the November 2019 liber-alised fuel licensing regime, the Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas said any entity with a net worth of Rs 250 crore can get a licence to retail petrol and diesel to either bulk or retail consumers. For those seeking authorisation for both retail and bulk should have a minimum net worth of Rs 500 crore at the time

of application. Last year, the Centre had relaxed norms for retailing auto fuels, allowing non-oil companies to venture into the business, a move that could help private and foreign firms to enter the world's fastest-grow-

ing market. Prior to that, a company had to invest Rs 2,000 crore in either hydrocarbon exploration and production, refining, pipelines or liquefied natural gas terminals to obtain a fuel retailing licence.

The ministry said applications may be submitted directly to the ministry. "For retail authorisation, the entity is required to set up at least 100 retail outlets," it said.

Mkt rebounds on short covering

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD

The equity market rebounded by around 2 per market cent after a 4 per cent fall in the last four sessions, on short covering, supported by abundant liquidity.

The Sensex gained 748.31 points, or 2.03 per cent, closing at 37,687.91 while the Nifty-50 closed 203.65 points, or 1.94 per cent, at 11.095.25 "The key highlight of the day's trade was huge

in Reliance gains Industries and HDFC Bank and good investor participation in the broader market, with smart money finding its way into select midcaps across sectors," said a broker. Industries Reliance

gained 7.10 per cent after a sharp fall in previous ses-



sions while another index heavyweight HDFC Bank gained 3.94 per cent after the bank informed stock exchanges about RBI's approval of Sashidhar Jagdishan, an insider, as MD & CEO of the bank for a period of three years.

Gains in Nifty were largely contributed by RIL and HDFC Bank, together contributing almost 160 points out of the 204-point gain on the index.

The BSE Mid-cap index gained 1.02 per cent and

gained 1.23 per cent. The Nifty Bank index gained 1.97 per cent as other private bank shares also recovered from the

previous day's losses. Shrikant Chouhan, executive VP, technical research, Kotak Securities said, "Reliance Industries stock contributed more than 50 per cent to the overall rise in the Nifty and the balance was supported by financial stocks. The Nifty opened higher on the back of exceptional strength in the US market. We believe the up-move is nothing more than a pull-

back to the recent decline. Foreign portfolio investors were net buyers of equities worth Rs 703.74 crore while the domestic institutions were net sellers by Rs 665.69 crore.

Coal mining: Neighbours need govt nod

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, AUG. 4

In a move that will check easy investments from China and Pakistan, the government has clarified that entities of a country sharing land border with India will have to invest in coal mining activities under the government

route. "It is further clarified that any FDI in commercial coal mining is subject to Applicable Laws including the Press Note 3 of 2020 issued by the Central Government," the government said in a commu-

niqué. According to this Press Note, "an entity of a country, which shares a land border with India or where the beneficial owner of an

investment into India is situated in or is a citizen of any such country, can invest only under the government route". The Press Note was issued in April as the government wanted to curb opportunistic acquisitions and takeovers of domestic companies by investors from neighbouring countries in the backdrop of the pandemic.

Further, a citizen of Pakistan or an entity incorporated in Pakistan can invest only under the government route in sectors/activities other than defence, space, atomic energy and sectors/activi-ties prohibited for foreign investment," the statement said. The government has also issued a corrigendum to the tender document in

this regard.

coal mines for commercial purposes was launched in June and is still underway. In order to attract overseas investments, Direct Investment (FDI) Policy, 2017 was also amended to permit 100 per cent FDI under the automatic route in coal mining activities, including associated processing infrastructure, for sale of coal, subject to the provisions of Coal Mines (Special Provisions) Act, 2015 and the Mines and Minerals (Development Regulation) Act, 1957.

The auction process of

However, the government wants to scrutinise the investments arising out of neighbouring countries, including Pakistan and China, in coal mining activities as well.



Chronicle

Repression, mistrust rule Valley 1 yr later

t is exactly one year this day that the Centre ended the special constitutional status of Jammu and Kashmir, and created two Union Territories in place of the former state. This meant that New Delhi thought that the people of the state could not be trusted, and that their dignified existence within a democratic India spelt danger to India. The corollary of this perverse understanding was that people had to be brought to heel. In no other state of the Union have citizens been quelled before and subjected to an existence that rivals the worst practices of single-party or military dictatorships. To suppress the living norms of the people, in J&K, around 40,000 addition-

al soldiers were brought in to supplement the half a million already present; nearly 7,000 people, including nine-year old children, were placed in detention; even second and third-tier politicians were thrown into jail (other than those of BJP); representative government ended; all phones and the Internet were shut; Section 144 CrPC was imposed across Kashmir Valley for months together; even doctors reporting to hospitals for duty were thrashed at barriers by police and security; educational institutions shut shop; newspapers were forced to carry only government briefings (propaganda), the writing of editorial opinion ceased and was replaced by tracts on gardening, philosophy and morality; journalists had to report to police stations and a coordination mechanism established between the information department and security department; industry and business collapsed; unemployment soared. All this went on for eight months before the Coronavirus-related lockdown. Thus, Kashmir has been locked down for one whole year now.

J&K has been through a secessionist movement, it has seen terrorist vio-

lence. Still, in the past 70 years, no government at the Centre has taken the step that the Modi government has. This is fundamentally because they had no doubt that, at its core, the Muslim-majority Kashmir valley was dominated by a firm middle ground in spite of the so-called lures of extremism promoted by a neighboring country. It is this which led Atal Behari Vajpayee, a former PM from the BJP party, to declare that he would interact with the people of the Valley on the basis of "insaniyat, jambhuriyat, and Kashmiriyat" (humanity, democracy, and the Kashmiri ethos). In contrast, the present regime appears to believe that in the country's only Muslimmajority state, although at the time of Partition it had refused to join

Pakistan, the entire populace is untrustworthy.
The terms on which Kashmir's Hindu Maharaja had acceded to India were enshrined as Article 370 of the Constitution by the Constituent Assembly itself. It was akin to a treaty that formed part of the building block of the Union of India, but the Modi government dismantled it in legally questionable ways. Today the middle ground in Kashmir is gone. None of the reasons for ending J&K's constitutional status has proved valid. Terrorism is on the rise, the economy is devastated. We are in a dangerously uncertain situation with China now openly colluding with Pakistan on Kashmir, border trouble erupting in Ladakh, and the people of the valley being in a disturbed state.

What's special about NEP?

Tamil Nadu could be intriguing to many. Particularly when every political party jumps into the fray to discuss educational reform or when Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami says that he cannot allow the proposed teaching of three languages, defying his ally, the BJP.

For a clear understanding, one needs to remember that language and education are intertwined with politics in Tamil Nadu, always. The state's unique two-language policy, stipulating the teaching of English and Tamil alone in schools, was affirmed through an Assembly resolution on January 23, 1968, by the first DMK chief minister C.N. Annadurai and reaffirmed on November 13, 1986, when M.G. Ramachandran was at the helm.

Every education policy has been shaped by politics. Many a custom that prevented subaltern communities from pursuing higher education was removed through orders and moves to deny opportunities for the margin-

alised people were fought through political action.

That a proposal by C. Rajagopalachari in 1953 to introduce a "hereditary education policy" cost him his premiership and his successor K. Kamaraj earned the sobriquet "Father of Education (*Kalvi Thanthai*)" for opening more schools is an example of people's awareness on education and their expectations from political leaders. Earlier, Rajagopalchari had lost his

premiership when he tried to introduce Hindi in secondary schools Politicians of the day cannot ignore the perception that learning Hindi in school does not help much. Also people wonder what's so great about the NEP that only aspires to achieve a GER of 50 per cent in 2035 when Tamil Nadu is just short of 0.7 per cent now.

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Men in The Castle and J&K's metamorphosis



fatuous record from Islamabad, through nameless bureaucrats, seemingly eliminating the it certainly is. And yet, it could be out of need for elected representatives. Kafka's novel is set a satirical verof Franz Kafka's in unending winter and incomplete and allegorical most scenes are dark, The novel, The Castle. In eight Castle days, between January 18 unreachable and the proand January 25, 2020, as many as 36 Union ministagonist, eerily, is a mysterious character identified ters visited 60 locations in simply as "K", an outsider 12 districts of Jammu and seeking acceptance. With Kashmir and addressed 100 public meetings while Kafkaesque efficiency, our bureaucrats in The Castle inaugurating 210 public have managed not to hold projects, probably deliverelections, even to panchaying lengthy monologues to ats. This of course underscores the absurd impor-tance of having grievance rigged audiences. And yes, grievance boxes have been boxes in every panchayat placed in each and every in Jammu and Kashmir. panchayat in Jammu and Kashmir. Taken together, To prompt a wink-wink reaction from Washington, they represent the core of the Chinese might be well advised take a few pages of New Delhi's new relationship with the erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir in this silver-lined playbook's refinement of democracy the year since Article 370 and upholding of human was abrogated. These are also probably going to be rights, to apply to the among the talking points Uighurs, for instance. Needless to say, the achievements of the year of future choreographed visits of foreign diplomats to mark the colossal develgone by are unparalleled.

Jammu and Kashmir. The real story, however is quite the opposite. The only politicians who have free but securityenveloped run of Jammu and Kashmir are the Central ministers, politicians from New Delhi, some of whose official portfolios are much longer than their names but mean little in the new Jammu and Kashmir. Not the local politicians, even the more mildly offensive in the eyes of New Delhi like Saifuddin Soz, who just the other day impotently peered through concertina wiring to wiggle his finger to demonstrate the complete freedom of his movement. And yes, New Delhi, hereinafter to be referred to as "The Castle", now controls Jammu and Kashmir in exactly the same way as Pakistan controls Occupied Kashmir,

opment strides taken in

even to panchayats

political space, there is a erstwhile bureaucracy

ism operations, The Castle appears on top of that beast; in the seven months they have culled as many separatist, why not? terrorist recruits as they did in almost all of the previous year. And yet, despite this everyday demonstration of efficiency, The Castle has been unable to address the alienation and disaffection of the village that lies below, buried deep in the icy drifts in the aftermath of the crude and surgical killing of Article 370. To the nearly 700 companies of paramilitary forces, comprising CRPF, SSB, ITBP and over a hundred companies of the better-Narendra primed Rashtriya Rifles, the supply of cannon fodder seems limitless, visible in the new recruits to militancy, some of vintages as recent as three or four

days. Internally, in terms of

In terms of counter-terror-

With Kafkaesque efficiency, our bureaucrats in Delhi have managed not to hold elections in J&K,

vacuum and nothing else. and the tentative voices of mainstream politicians from Kashmir, who stand discredited and acknowledge as much, are heavy with humiliation and distress, indicating an aversion to take up any meaningful political activ ity in this setting, like characters in search of an absurd author who can squeeze electoral sympathy out of their plight. The separatist voices have shrunk to less than disarrayed whispers. In this scenario, government-ordained politicians can posit no role, not even as comic relief. In this terrible space lurks the risk of radical ideologies, and possibly worse. On August 5 there will be plenty of evidence of continued motivation from across the border when the Nishan-e-Pakistan is conferred on Syed Ali Shah Geelani to the drumbeat of Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan's visit to PoK, in the form of webinars, Twitterstorms, social media events. And, yes, at least one university named after the

Kafka died leaving his last novel hanging midsentence, unfinished. Several endings thus become plausible. The parallels are uncanny elsewhere as well outside the artificial microcosm of Kashmir, where the larger plots have begun writing themselves, somewhat to our chagrin. From the East to the West our recent neighbourhood initiative, which began with Prime Minister Modi's impromptu inviting of all the leaders to his swearing-in in May 2014, seems to have arrived at a critical and enigmatic phase. The drawbridge is going up, a moat of self-imposed absurdity completes the separation. In Bangladesh,

which we helped liberate, our envoy continues to find difficulty getting an audience with Sheikh Hasina amid protests against our Minister for pushing both the NRC and the CAA, inimical Bangladesh, and capable of

driving Bangladesh firmly into the Chinese embrace. It is a squabble a day scene with Nepal now. As we get turfed out of Afghanistan and diplomatically booted out of Iran, there is more likely than not a congruence of both tactical and strategic intent involving a range of countries, espe cially in the Muslim world more aligned with the Chinese and Pakistanis, than with New Delhi. Just because most of the Gulf and Arab nations have not spoken up about the depredations around these contentious issues does not mean they do not have a clear view or are not watching with concern the goings-on. Any reprieve that we may have got through Covid-19 on the CAA, and even on Kashmir, is temporary and illusory. The EU remains phlegmatic and focused on its key goals where the lack of various freedoms in Kashmir are concerned. It is not going to change its mind or vote. Joe Biden, should he come up trumps, has already been conferred the Hilal-e Pakistan for his yeoman service for promoting friendship with Pakistan. One year after August 5, 2019, the intransigent military arrival of the Chinese in our part of Ladakh, however helplessly the folks in The Castle spin it with Rafales and so on, is the clearest indication that the world as we wished to know it is no longer the same. At the centre of the faultlines of that new world is a word beginning with K. Which ending do you think waits to write

The writer is the author of Adrift: A True Story of Survival at Sea and Anatomy of an Abduction. He writes, among other things, on diplomacy, security, strategic affairs and foreign policy.

itself for our K?

GOOD SHOW

At a time when private doctors are overcharging Coronavirus-infected patients to provide healthcare in parts of AP, it is highly encouraging and uplifting that retired doctors are offering their services to fight the pandemic (Retd. docs to serve Covid-19 patients, Aug. 4). Certainly, it is an opportune time to pool all resources to defeat the pandemic

> Dr C. Ghanshyam Visakhapatnam

A BLACK MARK

Instead of treating Coronavirus patients as a challenge and as their moral duty, the doctors' refusal is deplorable (Refusing treatment to Covid-19 patients is violation of law, DC, Aug. 4). They should behave in a humane manner.

Jagannadham Chowdari

SERVICE RECORD

For two years' apprentice service, two notional increments were given to apprentice teachers by then Chief Minister Y.S. Rajasekhar Reddy. They were cred ited from the end of two-year period by then Chief Minister K. Rosaiah. Now, apprentice teachers have to update manual service registers into electronic form. A deadline has been given, but before that I request Chief Minister Y.S. Jagan Mohan Reddy to see to it that the error is corrected.

Veeraganta Bhaskar Rao

50 YEARS AGO IN **Chronicle**

PM says ban on Naxalites not possible

NEW DELHI, August 3 Prime Minister Indira Gandhi today reaffirmed in the Rajya Sabha that the Government was determined to deal 'sternly' with the problems posed by the Naxalites in West Bengal.

Indicating the stronger mea-

sures would be taken to remedy the situation which was inherited Mrs. Gandhi said the Government was ""gravely concerned" and the 'specific attacks on educational institutions. I am not mitigating it.

Vijay Sai Reddy

Rafales to boost India's bargain strength with China, Pakistan

afale jets touching Indian soil are most welcome. The literal meaning of "Rafale" in French meaning of Transaction is a "gust of wind" and "burst

As the meaning suggests, the winds are blowing in favour of India and fire is bursting towards the infiltrators. Five Rafale fighter jets (the first batch in the deal of 36) landing in Ambala is a welcome step when there is imminent threat to our sovereignty from our neighbours.

In 2001, the Government of India placed an order for Rafale jets which are multi-role combat aircraft for the Indian Air Force. Due to the Narendra Modi government's untiring efforts, the jets became part of our air force

after 19 long years.

When Mr Modi visited France in 2015, the government eased the complicated rules and arrested the red-tapism generally prevalent in the defence sector. Finally, we got our first batch of jets at a crucial time when the country is facing aggression and tough times.

I appreciate the agreement signed in September 2016 between India and France namely the inter-governmental agreement (IGA) for the acquisition of 36 fighter jets, a deal worth ₹60,000

Out of the 36 Rafale aircraft, 30 will be

fighter jets and six will be trainers. The jets could be purchased only because PM Narendra Modi took the right decision to get these aircraft through an inter-governmental agreement with France, after the long-pending procurement process.

I do not want to go into the details of the political criticism of this deal. To me a price cap cannot be put on defending our country's sovereignty and the independence of our people.

To my party, there can be no compromise on saving our frontiers and our citizens from flagrant violation of our independence. This is the time to rally behind Mr Modi and his efforts to keep India safe and to send a bold and united message to our neighbours that India is not a country to be trifled with and we will protect our country and its frontiers at any cost.

The French-made Rafales are India's first major acquisition of fighter planes in 23 years, since the Sukhoi jets were imported from Russia. It is a proud moment for all Indians.

Modernising our air force will enhance our bargaining power with our neighbours and send across a strong signal that we are bargaining from a position of strength and will not hesitate to show our might if our borders are violated.

There will not be any Balakot kind of strikes or intrusions since we have sent a strong message with these jets. The moment these steel birds landed on Indian soil. Pakistan was rattled as was evident from its set of complaints

reported in the Pakistani media. Had India had this capability during the aerial encounter with Pakistan last year, many Pakistani F-16s would have

been destroyed.

The ability to strike air-to-air targets from up to 150 km away and safely hit land targets 300 km within enemy territory, make India's Rafales some of the deadliest fighter jets flying in the

The arrival of the Rafales could not have been more timely. With Chinese slow to de-escalate at the borders, our airforce cannot make a more emphatic statement. As per IAF experts, Rafale holds major superiority over J20 in terms of engine, combat capabilities, higher weapon load, battle experience and lethal missile power. "Rafale is far superior to the J-20, the Chengdu fighter of China. Even though it's believed to be a 5th generation fighter it is probably at best a 3.5 generation aircraft. It's got a third-generation engine as we have in the Sukhoi," said Air Marshal R Nambiar (retd), who flight-tested the Rafale fighter jets for India.

It is a well-known fact that the Rafale jets we have received are more powerful than China's J-20s, Pakistan's JF-17's or Pakistan's F16. The touchdown of Rafale combat aircraft in India is the beginning of a new era in our military history

The Rafale is a twin jet fighter aircraft able to operate as air-to-air fighters and air-to-ground fighters. They can carry advanced weaponry like air to air MCA missiles, long-range meteor missiles, air to ground Hammer missiles, laser guided bombs, non guided classic bombs and scalp long range missiles can penetrate deep inside enemy territory. Rafale can climb up to 60,000 feet per minute during a combat whereas a J-20 can climb up to 59,842.52 feet per minute and a JF-17 has a climbing speed of 59,000 feet per minute. With regard to experience in warfare, Rafale was used widely in war missions in Afghanistan, Libya and Syria. The J-20 and JF-17 have had no such experience.

The state-of-the-art 4.5 Generation Rafale jet can reach almost double the speed of sound, with a top speed of 1.8 Mach. With its multi-role capabilities. including electronic warfare, air defence, ground support and in-depth strikes Rafale can also carry more fuel and weapons than the J20. The jets

come with one of the most advanced Meteor air-to-air missiles

Two F16s need to combine together to counter-challenge a single Rafale in the air. Indian aircraft need not cross the LoC and surgical strikes can be done from deep within Indian soil only. The aircraft can take out the enemy aircraft from a range of more than 100 kms. The aircraft supplied to India are more sophisticated than the ones Egypt or France are using now.

This kind of sophisticated infrastructure is essential for Indian forces in these challenging times. Not only they strengthen the military power of India but also change India's position in the South Asia.

It is a well-known fact that a powerful country cannot be taken lightly by its neighbours. In this critical time, with the world facing a life-threatening health crisis, it is indeed sad that certain countries actually feel the need to launch full-fledged warfare where precious Indian lives were lost. India can-

not allow this to happen. Hence, I welcome the Rafales wholeheartedly. I hope the remaining "birds of steel" will land as soon as possible.

The writer is a YSRCP MP, its parliamentary party leader and national general secretary SHORT TAKES

WORK RESUMES TO REBUILD CHURCH DESTROYED ON 9/11

New York, Aug. 4: After a three year halt due to financial problems, work resumed on Monday on a Greek Orthodox church being built to replace one destroyed in the attack on the World Trade Center on

September. 11, 2001. Archbishop Elpidophoros, the leader of the Greek Orthodox church in America, stood on a balcony on the unfinished church and used holy water and sprigs of basil to bless the construction of the St. Nicholas Greek Orthodox Church and National Shrine at the World Trade Centre.

"We have heard the voice of the Lord and we are rebuilding our church," he said. Gov. Andrew Cuomo, who

was there to see work resume, said the continuing reconstruction is more proof of New Yorkers' persistence to rise from the ashes of the ter-ror attacks. "This St. Nicholas is going to be more splendid and more inviting than the St. before," he said.

RAJAPAKSA BROS HOPE TO WIN MAJORITY IN POLLS

Colombo, Aug. 4: Sri Lankans head to the polls today with the ruling Rajapaksa brothers looking for a super-majority in parliament to change the constitution and unravel democratic safeguards. Political observers say the siblings —

renowned for their ruthless crushing of Tamil separatist rebels to end a decades-old conflict in 2009 — want to end presidential term limits, bring the judiciary and police under their direct control, and extend their dynastic power to a new

generation.
The Rajapaksa political dynasty, a long-time force in Sri Lanka, dramatically stormed back to power in November when former defence secretary Gotabaya, 71, was elected president. Gotabaya a former army officer dubbed "The Terminator" by his own family - won comfortably running on a law-and-order ticket while capitalising on government infighting. -AFP

ISAIAS LASHES US EAST COAST WITH WINDS, RAINS

Myrtle Beach, Aug. 4: Hurricane Isaias slammed into North Carolina bringing lifethreatening storm surges and leaving more than 3,50,000 homes without power, as the US eastern seaboard battened down for flash floods and destructive winds.

Packing sustained winds of 85 miles per hour (around 140 kilometers per hour), the Category 1 hurricane made landfall in the southern part of the state on Monday just before midnight (0400 GMT), the National Hurricane Center said.

Seawater flowed into streets on the border between the Carolinas, leaving locals to wade through the flooded areas as rain and strong winds whipped the palm trees.

Three hours after reaching the coast, Isaias was downgraded to a Tropical Storm, the National, Hurricane Center (NHC) said on Tuesday. It is forecast to track northeast, with gusts reaching hurricane force on the mid-Atlantic coast Tuesday, which the NHC said could down trees and cause more blackouts.

GOLDEN GLOBES VOTERS HIT WITH ANTITRUST SUIT

Los Angeles Aug. 4: The exclusive group of film journalists that awards the Golden Globes was accused on Monday of sabotaging non-members while gorging on lavish perks and unparalleled access to

Hollywood stars.
An antitrust lawsuit filed against the Hollywood Foreign Press Association said the organisation illegally monopolized entertainment reporting in Los Angeles while creating near-impossible barriers to entry for new members.

"All year long, HFPA members enjoy all-expenses-paid trips to film festivals around the world where the studios treat them lavishly and accommodate their every desire," said the suit brought by Norwegian journalist Kjersti Flaa.

"Qualified applicants for admission to the HFPA are virtually always rejected because the majority of its 87 members are unwilling to share or dilute the enormous economic benefits they receive as members,

2 massive explosions rock Beirut

Beirut, Aug. 4: A massive explosion shook Lebanon's capital Beirut on Tuesday wounding a number people and causing widespread damage.
The afternoon blast

shook several parts of the capital and thick smoke billowed from the city centre. Residents reported windows being blown out and a false ceilings dropping.

The explosion appeared to be centred around Beirut's port and caused wide scale destruction and shattered windows miles

An Associated Press photographer near Beirut's port witnessed people wounded on the ground and widespread destruction in central Beirut, Some local TV stations reported the blast was at Beirut's port inside an area where firecrackers were stored.



A large cloud rises into the air after two explosions rocked the Lebanese capital Beirut on Tuesday. The blasts, which rattled buildings and broke window glass, were felt in several parts of the city.

Trump rails as Nevada opts for mail-in ballots

US Prez has claimed mail ballots would lead to voter fraud

4: Nevada lawmakers passed a bill on Sunday that would add the state to a growing list of US states that will mail mative restaurable to the state of the state o active voters ballots ahead of the November election amid

Coronavirus pandemic. The bill now heads to Gov. Steve Sisolak, a Democrat. If he signs it as expected, Nevada will join seven states that plan on automatically sending voters mail ballots, including California and Vermont, which moved earlier this summer to adopt automatic mail ballot policies.

President Donald Trump called the bill's passage "an illegal late night coup" in a tweet on Monday morning. He accused Sisolak of accused Sisolak of exploiting Covid-19 to ensure votes in Nevada would favor Democrats.

'Nevada's clubhouse Governor made it impossible for Republicans to win the state. Post Office could never handle the Traffic of Mail-In Votes without preparation ... See you in court!" Former US Senate Majority Lea-der Harry Reid applauded the lawmakers'decision and called Trump's comments desperate.

"He's lying about our state leaders and threat-ening a bogus lawsuit simply because Democrats made it easier for people to vote," Reid said in a statement. Trump has claimed the mail ballots would lead to fraud and compromise the integrity of the election.

The consensus among experts is that all forms of voter fraud are rare.

MUGHAL-E-AZAM

SCREENPLAY FOR

OSCAR LIBRARY

London, Aug. 4: Indian

cinema classic *Mughal-e-Azam* celebrates its

60th anniversary this

week with director K.

Asif's son Akbar Asif

presenting the screen-

play of the film to the

Akbar Asif, the UK-

based son of the late

director, said he present-

ed the screenplay to the

Academy Awards to

mark the big anniver-

sary of his father's historical epic starring Prithviraj Kapoor, Dilip Kumar and Madhubala,

falls

Three versions of the

legendary screenplay — in Hindi, Roman text

and English translation

the Margaret Herrick

renowned reference and

research collection of

the Academy devoted to

the history and develop-ment of the motion pic-

ture as an art form and

an industry.

are now available at

Oscars Hollywood.

which Wednesday.

library

US doing well against virus, India has huge problem: Don

Washington, Aug. 4: President Donald Trump has said that as compared to big countries, America is doing "very well" in the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic, while India is having a "tremendous problem" battling the disease and China is witnessing a "massive flare up" in infections.

India's Covid-19 tally increased to 18,55,745 on Tuesday with 52,050 people testing positive for coronavirus infection in a day. China on Tuesday reported 36 new cases across the country, down from 43 the previous day. The country's

Nevada Secretary of State

Barbara Cegavske told

lawmakers on Friday that

she wasn't aware of any

fraud in the June pri-

led all active voters absen-

tee ballots and only ope-

ned a limited number of polling places to prevent the spread of Coron-

Limited polling places

in Reno and Las Vegas resulted in lines of up to eight hours. In the June

primary, all Nevada coun-

ties had one polling place except for Clark County,

which had three in the Las Vegas area. The bill requires at least 140 pol-

ling places throughout

the state in November,

including 100 in Clark

County, which had 179 in

November 2018

the No

wnen Nevada mai

Covid-19 cases crossed the 100-mark on July 29, for the first time in over three months, sparking the fear

"I think we're doing very well. I think that we have done as well as any nation. If you really look, if you take a look at what's going on, especially now with all these flare ups and nations that they were talking about," Trump told reporters at a news conference here on Monday.

As such, compared to larger countries, the US is doing much better in the fight against the Coron-

avirus, he said. "Don't forget, we're much bigger than

— other than India and China. China is having a massive flare up right now. India has a tremendous problem. Other countries have problems," he said in response to a question.

"And I noticed that in the news, in the evening news, I never read about that. In any news, I don't read about the other countries. You're starting to see that other countries are having very big flare ups, countries that thought they were over it, like we thought we might be over in Florida." — PTI

Trump avoids praising Lewis

Washington, Aug. 4: US Lewis?" Jonathan Swan of President Donald Trump the Axios media outlet said he doesn't know how history will remember civil rights activist John Lewis, but that "he chose not to come to my inauguration." in an interview with US media.

A longtime Democratic congressman, Lewis died on July 17, then received rare honors in Washington and was praised by key figures of both major parties for his life-long fight for

the Axios media outlet asked Trump in the interview aired on Monday. "I don't know, I really

don't know," the president answered. "I don't know John Lewis, he chose not to

come to my inauguration." Lewis clashed with Trump on multiple occasions — as well as boycotting his swearing-in ceremony, Lewis cited Russian interference in the 2016 election equality. to question his legitimacy and warned US democracy will remember John to question his legitimacy and warned US democracy was under threat. -AFP

PIO researcher killed in US

Houston, Aug. 4: A 43-year-old Indian-origin woman researcher in the US was killed while she was out jogging and police have initiated a homicide investigation, according to media reports.

According to the police, Sarmistha Sen, who was based in Plano city in the state of Texas, was randomly attacked and killed while jogging on August 1

near the Chisholm Trail Park. Her body was found lying in the creek-area near Legacy Drive and Marchman Way by a passer-by, according reports.

Sen, a mother of two sons, was a pharmacist and researcher who studied molecular biology and worked with cancer patients, reports said. According to the 3400 Dallasnews.com, a person Drive.

of interest in the case has been arrested on a burglary charge.

He was identified on Monday as 29-year old Bakari Abiona Moncrief, and is in custody at the Collin County jail, the report said. Police say around the same time of the murder, someone broke into a house nearby on the 3400 block of Michael

SAND, RESCUED **FROM ISLAND** Wellington, Aug. 4: Th-

3 WRITE SOS ON

ree men have been rescued from a tiny Pacific island after writing a giant SOS sign in the sand that was spotted from above, authorities

The men had been missing in the Micronesia archipelago for nearly three days when their distress signal was spotted on Sunday on uninhabited Pikelot Island by searchers on Australian and US aircraft, the Australian defense department said on

The men had apparently set out from Pulawat atoll in a 7-meter (23foot) boat on July 30 and had intended to travel about 43 kilometers (27 miles) to Pulap atoll when they sailed off course and ran out of fuel, the department said. Searchers in Guam asked for

Australian help.

The military ship, Canberra, which was returning to Australia from exercises in Hawaii, diverted to the area and joined forces with US searchers from Guam. The men were found about 190 kilometers 118 miles) from where

China accuses US of bullying over TikTok

Beijing, Aug. 4: China accused the United States on Tuesday of "outright bullying" over popular video app TikTok, after President Donald Trump ramped up pressure for its US operations to be sold to an American com-

pany.

"This goes against the principles of the market economy and the (World Trade Organisation's) principles of openness, transparency and non-discrimination," said foreign ministry spokesman Wang Wenbin.

A day earlier, President Trump gave TikTok six weeks to sell its US operations, in the latest escalation to an ongoing politi-cal and trade battle between Washington and The app has been under

formal investigation on US national security gro-unds, because it collects large amounts of personal data on users and is legally bound to share it

under formal investigation on US national security grounds, because it collects large amounts of personal data on users and is legally bound to share it with authorities in Beijing if they demand it.

press briefing on Tuesday: "The US, with-out providing any evidence, has been using an abused concept of national security... unjustifiably suppressing certain non-US companies." He said the national security grounds for the US's clampdown on Chinese firms "does not hold water", adding that the companies conduct their business activities in accordance with international rules and US laws.

"But the US is cracking down on them on trumped-up charges. This is political manipulatiwith authorities in on," said Wang, who war-Beijing if they demand it. But Wang told a regular on," said Wang, who war-ned the US not to "open Pandora's box". -AFP

US finds possible Covid treatment

Washington, Aug. 4: Scientists in the US have found a potential theratreatment for SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes Covid-19, and other Coronaviruses. Pathogenic Coronav-

iruses are a major threat to global public health, as shown by the SARS-CoV, MERS-CoV, and the newly emerged SARS-CoV-2.

The study, published in the journal Science Translational Medicine, has found that small molecule protease inhibitors show potency against human Coronaviruses. These Coronavirus 3C-

like proteases, known as 3CLpro, are strong therapeutic targets because they play vital roles in coronavirus replication, the researchers said. "Vaccine developments and treatments are the biggest targets in Covid-19 research, and treatment is really key," said Kveong-Ok Chang, a fessor at Kansas State they said.

THE STUDY, published in the journal **Science Translational** Medicine, has found that small molecule protease inhibitors show potency against human Coronaviruses.

University in the US.

"This paper describes protease inhibitors tar-geting Coronavirus 3CLpro, which is a wellknown therapeutic target," Chang said. The study demonstrates that this series of optimised Coronavirus 3CLpro inhibitors blocked replication of the human coronaviruses MERS-CoV and SARS-CoV-2 in cultured cells and in a mouse model for MERS, the researchers said.

These findings suggest that this series of compounds should be investigated further as a potential therapeutic for human Coronavirus infectioi

Chad slows down internet to combat 'hate speech'

N'djamena, Aug. 4: Chad says it has cut back the speed of the internet to crimp the spread of messages "inciting hate" on social media.

Government spokesman Mahamat Zene Cherif said late Monday that a 'temporary measure" to slow the internet was introduced on July 22 because of "the dissemination of messages inciting hate and division." The measure will be lifted soon, said Cherif, who is also communications min-

But telecoms officials, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the restrictions had been triggered by a video showing a Chadian military officer in a dispute with two young mechanics.

The images, which are dated July 14, show him opening fire on one of

U.S. 'CLOUD' SUPREMACY HAS EUROPE WORRIED OVER DATA Paris, Aug. 4: Europe is ouncing deals with US tech sitting on a wealth of data

that is the 21st equivalent of a precious metal mine during the gold rush. But instead of exploiting it themselves Europeans may be allowing American tech giants to gain control of all the excavation equipment, some experts say, pointing to a flurry of

players for cloud services. Renault, Orange, Deut-sche Bank, and Lufthansa recently plumped for Google Cloud. Volkswagen signed up with Amazon Web Services. The French health ministry chose Microsoft to house its research data.

them at point-blank range, before being attacked with a knife.

A statement by the public prosecutor said one of the mechanics "died of his wounds" while the officer was hospitalised and "will be prosecuted after he has recovered."

The video is still circulating on Facebook and WhatsApp, and some users have touched on the ethnic background of the soldier, pointing out that he is from the same community as President Idriss Deby Itno, who seized power in 1990. -AFP

NUCLEAR | HISTORY

There are about 1,36,700 survivors of the atom bomb attacks in Japan

Hibakusha make last plea to scrap N-bombs

Tokyo, Aug. 4: As Japan marks 75 years since the devastating attacks on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the last generation of nuclear bomb survivors are working to ensure their message lives on after them.

The "hibakusha" — literally "person affected by the bomb" — have for decades been a powerful voice calling for the abolition of muleon weapons. tion of nuclear weapons. There are an estimated

whom were infants or unborn children at the time of the attacks.

The average age of a survivor now is a little over 83, according to Japan's health ministry, lending an urgency as they share their testimonies and call for a ban on nuclear weapons.

"What we hibakusha are saying is we can't repeat (a nuclear attack)," 88year-old Terumi Tanaka,

Nagasaki bombing, said ahead of the anniver-

'To this end, we have to let people know what we experienced, for them to hear the facts." Tanaka was 13 when the bomb hit his hometown.

The attack on Nagasaki killed 74,000 people and came three days after a first bomb devastated the city of Hiroshima, killing 1,40,000.

his life sharing his experience, hoping that explaining the horrors of nuclear weapons will convince people to support a ban. But he recognises that the community of those

who lived through the attacks is shrinking, and their message will have to be passed on by others in the decades to come.

"We will all pass away, eventually," he said. - AFP



A security guard pays respects in front of the cenotaph for the atomic bombing victims near Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum in Hiroshima, western Japan.







SHORT TAKES

Red card for coughing on field

Zurich: A football player who deliberately coughs close to another player or match official can be issued a red card. The International Football Association Board, the game's lawmaker, updated its guidelines while the pandemic perse-

A referee can only red card a player when they are certain the cough is intentional. A yellow card is also optional. The new rule falls under "using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or ges-

IFAB said in a statement: "As with all offenses, the referee has to make a judgment about the true nature of the offense. "If it were clearly accidental, then the referee would not take action nor if the 'cough' took place with a large distance

between the players. "However, where it is close enough to be clearly offensive, then the referee can take action," the statemen from IFAB

World Cup winner Iker calls it a day

Madrd: Spain's World Cup-winning goalkeeper Iker Casillas announced his retirement on Tuesday, after being sidelined for more than a year with a heart problem.

Casillas, 39, also won the European Championship twice with his country in a trophyladen career which included more than 700 games for Real Madrid

"Today is both one of the most important and most difficult days of my sporting life, the time to say goodbye has arrived," he said on Twitter. Casillas joined Portuguese side Porto in 2015 after a tearful departure from Madrid but suffered a heart attack in May last year.

He played 167 times for the national team, winning trophies in 2008, 2010, 2012 in a golden age for Spanish football. He lifted five Spanish league titles and the Champions League on three occasions during his time at the Santiago Bernabeu. — AP

Brazil football sides ignore rules

Sao Paulo: Both teams in the Sao Paulo state league final this week are accused of wilfully ignoring health recommendations to stop the Coronavirus. **Defending Sao Paulo state** champion Corinthians refused on Monday to be tested again, while archrival Palmeiras was criticised for releasing players and staffers to go home after matches. The first leg of the state final is on Wednesday, and the second on Saturday. The Covid-19 protocols of the Sao Paulo football body are the same ones being applied to the

Brazilian championship. — AP

LINES DRAWN FOR IPL

Tests, quarantine, bio-bubble part of plan

the UAE.

New Delhi, Aug. 4: Indian players and support staff will have to return negative for Covid-19 at least five times before they start training in the UAE and subsequently will be tested every fifth day during the IPL, according to a draft

prepared by the BCCI.
A BCCI official said that all Indian players and support staff will have to undergo two Covid-19 RT-PCR tests, 24 hours apart, a week before joining the 14-day quarantine period with their respective teams in India.

If any individual tests positive, he will go into a 14-day quarantine. After the quarantine, he will be

Manchester, Aug. 4: Pakistan captain Azhar

Ali is confident Babar

Azam will show he is one

of the world's leading

batsmen in the Test series

has a fine career Test

average of 45.12 from 26 matches heading into the first of a three-match

campaign against England at Old Trafford

But his figures during

the past two years suggest he is approaching the

Babar's five Test hun-

dreds have all come since

the start of 2018, during

which time he has scored

1,375 runs in 15 matches

at a hugely impressive

Babar is top of the glob-

al Twenty20 batting rank-

ings, third in the one-day

standings and sixth in the

Azhar, asked if the

England series would see Babar join Australia's

Steve Smith and India's Virat Kohli in the top

bracket of Test batsmen,

told British media: "I

think he is right up there

already.
"People are thinking and talking about it. He is

just hungry for runs and I

think if he keeps doing that he will be up there

"His performances have

improved massively in

Test matches over the last

for quite a long time.

he added.

prime of his career.

average of 65.47.

Test list.

The 25-year-old Babar

against England.

on Wednesday.

Indian players and support staff will have to undergo two Covid-19 RT-PCR tests, 24 hours apart, a week before joining the 14-day quarantine period with their respective teams in India.

The players and support staff

required to undergo two more Covid-19 RT-PCR tests within a space of 24 hours and if they come negative, that person will be cleared to fly to UAE for

the IPL. "Following their arrival in the UAE, the players and support staff will have to return at least three negative tests dur-

ing a week's quarantine and if they are negative, they can enter the bio-

bubble and start training. "There could be minor changes to this protocol depending on the feedback from the teams but there will not be any compromise on players and team officials' safety," the official said.

During the first week in the UAE, the players and team officials will not be allowed to meet each other in the hotel and they can only do so after they test

will be tested on Day 1, Day 3

and Day 6 of their quarantine in

Teams have been told to not

Families will not be allowed to

fly out bef-ore August 20.

meet anyone outside bio-

to enter the bio-bubble and start training. "All overseas players and support staff also

He (Azam) is right up there already. He is a

very important player

for us but I would like

him to be free from any

pressure and just enjoy

— AZHAR ALI

on star batsman

Babar Azam

Live on TV

FIRST TEST

England vs Pakistan

from 3.30 pm

on Sony Six

meant he was unable to

bowl in England's victory

over the West Indies at

the Manchester ground

last week, which sealed a

2-1 series victory. He was selected as a specialist batsman for that

match, with England

dropping Zak Crawley

from their top order to

make room for an extra

Stokes bowled in the

Manchester nets on Monday but rain cut

short his planned stint on

Tuesday. "We still need to know a

bit more about where Ben

is at," Root said at his pre-

he wasn't able to bowl

outside so we'll probably

wait on that tonight and

make a decision in the

'Because of the weather

match press conference.

bowler.

Pakistan captain

his game.

negative thrice, following

which they will be cleared

need to undergo two Covid-19 RT-PCR tests before flying to UAE and can only fly if the tests are negative. If not, then the same 14-day quarantine period and two negative tests to be able to fly to the UAE," said the official.

The players and support staff will be tested on Day 1, Day 3 and Day 6 of their quarantine in the UAE and after clearing that, they will be tested every fifth day during the event.

Over and above the BCCI testing protocol, the teams can do more tests on their own and additional tests may also be conducted under the rules put in place by the UAE govern-

WINDIES TOUR OF AUSTRALIA

Melbourne, Aug. 4: Cricket Australia on Tuesday said it has put on hold a three-game T20I series against the West Indies which was sched-

uled to be held in October. Matches of the the T20 series were slated to be held in Townsville, Cairns and the Gold Coast on October 4, 6 and 9

warm-up series ahead of the T20 World Cup but with the showpiece event being postponed last month due to the global health crisis, the two cricket boards decided to

"Together with @windiescricket, we have agreed to postpone the Twenty20 series originally scheduled for Queensland in October," Cricket Australia said in a tweet.

September 19

> Cricket Australia put on hold a threeagainst the West **Indies which was** scheduled to be

POSTPONED

respectively.
It was supposed to be a

postpone it.

"Serving as warm-ups for the ICC T20 World Cup, the series will now coincide with the rescheduled T20 World Cup in Australia, in either 2021

Top players from both the countries will now take part in the rescheduled 13th IPL, which will be held in the UAE from November 10.

Tennis legend Roger Federer takes a selfie with budding Italian tennis players Vittoria (13) and Carola (11). A video of two girls playing tennis on a rooftop in Italy had gone viral during the early lockdown phase in April. Three months later, while the girls were being interviewed on the terrace, Federer made an entry, surprising them. The 20-time Grand Slam champion exchanged rallies with the delighted girls on the rooftop, took them out for lunch and also got them enrolled for a week-long training at the

Rooftop tennis? Roger that!

WOMEN'S | TENNIS

Rafael Nadal Academy in Mallorca, Spain.

Pliskova makes winning return

Tour-level tennis resumed after a five-month enforced break on Monday, and players at the Palermo Ladies Open had to handle their own towels and not shake hands of opponents.

The strict rules because of the Coronavirus included no showers on site, and no autographs or photos with fans. Players in the singles main draw come from 16 European coun-

tries and Argentina.. A limited number of fans were allowed into the 1,500seat stadium court.

They watched sixth-seeded Donna Vekic of Croatia beat Arantxa Rus of the Netherlands 6-1, 6-2 in windy conditions in the first official match — for men or women - since

early March.
Vekic sealed a place in the second round on her second match point.

Vekic will next face Italian teenager Elisabetta Cocciaretto, who beat Polona Hercog of Slovenia 7-6 (1), 6-3 for her first victory over a player ranked in the top 50.

Vekic is hoping to compete in the U.S. Open, where she reached the quarterfinals last year, and the French Open as well as

"Things are changing every week so I think we just have to take it week by week and try to adapt as best as we can, and hope to

After a five-month hitaus, the women's tour-level tennis resumed at the **Palermo Ladies Open with strict** protocols in places post the Pandemic.

The players had to handle their own set of towels, not allowed to shower and are no shake hands with their opponents amidst other rules in the tournament.

play as much as we can,"

Vekic said. Laura Siegemund of Germany also eased through in straight sets, Irina-Camelia beating Begu of Romania 6-3, 6-4. It was harder for Sara

Errani, the only previous champion in in the draw. The 2012 winner took nearly three hours to secure a 7-1-6, 6-4 success over Sorana Cirstea.

The Italian next faces Kristna Pliskova who upest third-seeded Maria Sakkari 6-4, 6-4.

Another Italian, Jasmine Paolini rallied from a set and a break down to beat Daria Kasatkina of Russia 5-7, 6-4, 6-4.

-AP

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Paksitan captain Azhar Ali looks on during a nets session at the Old Trafford in Manchester, England, on Tuesday. Azhar, anxious not to pile too much pressure on scored just two hundreds each in 18 Tests since the

Ali confident of Babar show

to Babar, said he wanted the batsman to relax and play his natural game.

"He is a very important player for us but I would like him to be free from any pressure and just enjoy his game," said the

year or so. Firstly, he was performing really well in Pakistan could also do white-ball cricket and people thought he was only a white-ball player with runs from Azhar, who knows English conbut he took on that chalditions well from his time lenge and played with a lot of freedom and flair," with Somerset, and Asad Shafiq.

The two batsmen have

veteran pair of Misbahul-Haq, now Pakistan's coach, and Younis Khan

ENG DELAY DECISION ON Meanwhile, England are

allrounder at Old Trafford.

retired in 2017.

set to delay a decision on the bowling fitness of Ben Stokes before naming their final XI to play Pakistan in the first Test Stokes'

quad injury tain added.

morning (Wednesday). "Ben being able to do everything he can do is huge for this team and it shows how pivotal he is, but if he's not fit there are a number of ways we can go," the England capheld in October.





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