

## Modi pushes for UN reforms

‘For how long will India be kept out of decision-making structures?’

Where is UN in fight against Covid?, asks PM at UNGA

**United Nations:** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday fervently pressed the U N General Assembly to speed up reforms of its processes and organs to reflect contemporary realities and reiterated India's case for a permanent membership of the Security Council demanding to know how long it would be “kept out of the decision-making structures” of the world body.

“The people of India have been waiting for a long time for the process for the re-

forms of the United Nations to get completed,” the Prime Minister said. “Today, people of India are concerned whether this reform-process will ever reach its logical conclusion,” he said.

To underscore the disconnect between the world body and contemporary realities, Modi pointed to the lack of UN leadership on the Covid-19 pandemic, the worst health crisis facing the world in more than 100 years. “Over the last 8 to 9 months, the whole world has been battling the pandemic of the coronavirus,” he said. “Where is the United Nations in this joint fight against the pandemic?”

Where is its effective response?” the Prime Minister asked.

The UN was criticized for “missing in action” in the early days of the pandemic and the Security Council, the world body's top decision-making body, was seen to have finally taken cognizance of the pandemic only in July adopting a resolution calling for cessation of all hostilities, months after the deadly pathogen had infected people all over the world.

“Reform in the responses, in the processes, and in the very character of the United Nations is the need of the hour,” Modi said.

Continued on Page 4

PM UNDERLINES THE RESPONSIBLE ROLE INDIA HAS PLAYED HISTORICALLY THROUGH CONTRIBUTIONS TO UN PEACEKEEPING EFFORTS RIGHT DOWN TO THE PRESENT TIME IN HELPING THE WORLD COMBAT COVID-19 PANDEMIC

## India walks out of UNGA protesting Imran's diatribe

Pak PM wants UN peacekeeping force sent to J&K

**United Nations:** The Indian delegate at the United Nations General Assembly session on Friday walked out in protest when Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan began attacking India in his speech at the high-level meeting. First Secretary Mijito Vinito,

who was sitting on the second seat in the first row of the Assembly chamber, stood up and left as soon as Khan turned on India by focusing on the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS). In a tweet, India's Permanent Representative to the

UN, T S Tirumurti decried Khan's attacks as “war-mongering and obfuscation”. Khan's pre-recorded speech was screened at the General Assembly chamber during the annual meeting stymied this year by the Covid-19 precautions. Continued on Page 4



## Tearful farewell to S P Balu

Legendary singer laid to rest with full state honours

**Chennai:** Legendary singer SP Balasubrahmanyam was laid to rest with a 24-gun salute by the Tamil Nadu police at his farmhouse in Tamarai-pakkam village in nearby Tiruvallur district on Saturday. His last rites took place in the presence of veteran director Bharathiraja, singer Mano and his family members.

After the singer's son S P Charan performed the funeral rites amid Vedic chants by priests, 24 police personnel gave a gun salute and later the body was lowered into a deep pit and buried.

With the policemen marching along, the body was brought on a bier to the designated burial spot from an enclosure earmarked for people to pay homage and perform rituals. The farm house teemed with his fans, well-wishers and celebrities for the funeral and about 500 police personnel were deployed to regulate the crowd.

The singer, praised as



Wife Savitri Balasubrahmanyam along with her son SP Charan mourns near the mortal remains of legendary playback singer SP Balasubrahmanyam during his funeral at his farmhouse in Tamarai-pakkam village on Saturday

“Padum Nila” (singing moon) and “Isai Megam” (music cloud) by his fans for his mellifluous voice tested positive for coronavirus and admitted to MGM Healthcare here on August 5 and he died on Friday.

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## Won't privatise water supply in Delhi: CM

Will improve like that in developed countries: Kejriwal

PURNA SINGH

**New Delhi:** Dismissing allegations of bid to privatise water supply in Delhi, Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) national convenor and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said on Saturday that his government will improve water supply like that in the developed countries.

The Chief Minister said some Opposition leaders are saying that the water supply in Delhi is being privatised. “This will never happen and I assure you. Delhi will have an excellent supply of water like that in developed countries. We will show by doing this,” he said. He said a plan is being made to provide 24-hour drinking water in the capital city. Un-

der this scheme, water will be provided 24 hours in every house in Delhi.

“The special thing is that there will be no need of water tank or any pump to provide water. Delhi government will adopt world class modern technology for this work.

To give additional water to Delhi, water can be taken from Himachal Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Uttar Pradesh,” he said. The supply system will be centralized and the waste or theft of water will be detected from the control room itself, he added.

Kejriwal said, “We are going to appoint a consultant to provide water through 24 hours of modern technology in Delhi. This consultant will arrange to fix the management of water and fix the responsibility of each drop of water. Continued on Page 4

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## BJP'S TEAM NADDA

## BJP replaces Ram Madhav, Muralidhar with new faces

Tejasvi Surya becomes Yuva Morcha chief, Mukul Roy promoted

**New Delhi:** In a major reshuffle, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) on Saturday replaced senior leaders of the party such as Ram Madhav, P Muralidhar Rao, Anil Jain, Saroj Pandey as general secretaries with new faces as party's office bearers. BJP president JP Nadra announced a new team of party's national office-bearers, which has an element of continuity as well as change.

The reorganisation comes ahead of the crucial Bihar Assembly elections 2020.

Taking to Twitter, Prime Minister Narendra Modi congratulated the new team and wrote, “Congratulations

Chhattisgarh MP Saroj Pandey has been replaced as general secretary by D Purandeswari — NT Rama Rao's daughter. Her appointment is an indication of BJP's attempts to consolidate itself in Andhra Pradesh



Tejasvi Surya

and best wishes to the new team. I am confident they will uphold the glorious tradition of our Party of serving the people of India selflessly and with dedication. May they work hard

to empower the poor and marginalised.”

Party leaders Mukul Roy and Bajajant Panda have been appointed as BJP's vice-presidents. They are among the 12 vice-presidents of the BJP. Other leaders who have been made vice presidents of the BJP are former chief minister Raman Singh, Vasundhara Raje, and Raghubar Das.

The list of eight general secretaries, crucial organisation position in the party as they are the link between state and central leadership, has five new faces with Bhupender Yadav, Arun Singh and Kailash Vijayvargiya being retained. Continued on Page 4

## DELHI AQI GETS BAD

**New Delhi:** In the capital Delhi, air quality remained ‘moderate’ on Saturday morning and forecast to reach ‘bad’ on Monday.

The air quality index (AQI) in Delhi at 16830 on Saturday

morning was 168, which falls in the ‘medium’ category. On Friday, it was 134.

Safar said an air quality watchdog of the Ministry of Earth Sciences, said that the dust coming from the arid re-

gions of the southwest has started to affect Delhi. He said that stubble burning has started in the fields in Amritsar, Punjab and neighbouring border areas and this is expected to affect the city's air quality.

## Deepika Padukone admits to drug chats

## Sara Ali Khan, Shraddha deny drug consumption

**Mumbai:** Three Bollywood actors, including Deepika Padukone, were questioned by the Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) on Saturday as part of its investigation into a drug case related to the death of Sushant Singh Rajput.

Padukone is among the dozen people from Bollywood who have been questioned by the agency in the past two weeks. Shraddha Kapoor and Sara Ali Khan were also questioned for hours by the NCB.

During her interrogation,



Bollywood actresses Deepika Padukone, Shraddha Kapoor and Sara Ali Khan at the NCB office in Mumbai on Saturday

Padukone accepted to drug chats with her manager Karishma Prakash. Both of them were interrogated together and they admitted to their 2017 WhatsApp chats. It is also being said the NCB officials are not satisfied with Deepika's replies. Padukone was questioned for more than five hours by the NCB. Sara Ali Khan had reached NCB's zonal office at around 1pm. Her name cropped up during the questioning of Rhea Chakraborty.

Continued on Page 4

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# Midnight lightning hits house at Shastripuram

Residents baffled as debris flew onto roofs of other houses due to impact of thunderbolt

ESA BIN ABDUL REHMAN

**Hyderabad:** In a freaky incident the residents of Shastripuram colony under Rajendranagar was baffled after lightning struck a house in their neighbourhood with a horrendous sound of thunderstorm during Friday night showers.

However, they heaved a sigh of relief knowing that no one has been hurt in the freaky incident barring a slight damage to a parapet wall atop the G+3 building that bore the brunt of lightning.

"It was around 2.20 or 2.30 am when we woke up on our beds hearing a dazzling sound of thunderbolt that soon took away the power supply in the entire area. My whole building shook for a moment. Summoning up our strength, we along with some other horrified



neighbours came out of houses but were surprised to see that a portion atop my building was hit by lightning resulting in damaging of the parapet wall. The debris of the wall, that was shattered due to lightning, was seen

scattered all the way down to the road," informed Mohammed Abdul Qader, whose building was hit by midnight lightning.

"LED bulbs, refrigerator and other appliances beside some decoration lamps in my G+3

building were damaged due to lightning. Electric wiring was damaged in the incident," he further explained.

"The sound caused such a terrible impact that all the stuff in the house was tossed from their instances for a moment besides shaking the houses slightly. Moreover, we were baffled after knowing that the debris of the parapet wall of the house that hit by the lightning, has flew onto roofs of other houses," said Syed Shoukat Ali, another resident.

However, no loss of human lives was caused in this incident that took place at the death of the night. There were some reports of shock and awe moments soon after the lightning but no one was hurt in the incident. Meanwhile no such incidents were reported from anywhere in Rajendranagar area.

## Inter-state buses to restart from Sep 29

HANS NEWS SERVICE

**Hyderabad:** The TSRTC would be starting the operation of buses to the States of Karnataka and Maharashtra from September 29.

The Telangana government had permitted TSRTC to restore inter-state bus services to Karnataka and Maharashtra. The buses would not be operated to Bengaluru given the high number of cases. The corporations of Karnataka and Maharashtra States will also restore their operation to Telangana.

The Important routes are Raichur, Bidar, Nanded, Mumbai, Pune, Gulbarga, Nagpur, Chandrapur etc.

## Woman found dead at her residence

HANS NEWS SERVICE

**Hyderabad:** A housewife, K Pratyusha (20), was found dead under mysterious circumstances at her residence in Malkajgiri on Saturday morning. According to police, the woman was found hanging at her residence on Saturday morning and she might have committed suicide on Friday night when her husband was not at home.

She was married to Ramesh Kumar two years ago and since then the couple have been living separately. However, the family members of Pratyusha have alleged that Ramesh used to harass his wife for additional dowry and was also addicted to bad habits.

They further alleged that he also used to abuse her physically and verbally due to which she was in a lot of stress and as she was unable to bear the pressure she took the extreme step. We have registered a case and the matter is being investigated. For now, the husband has been taken into custody and he is being questioned, if found guilty he will be remanded to judicial custody, said the police.

## Man gets 2 years in jail for harassing minor

HANS NEWS SERVICE

**Hyderabad:** A local court here on Saturday sentenced B Krishna for two years of rigorous imprisonment for harassing and misbehaving with a minor girl and also imposed a fine amount of Rs 1,000.

## Buyers paying for the fault of sellers

Problem is more for a plot which is sold and purchased several times and the last person who is holding the property is made to pay the tax

Hans News Service

**Hyderabad:** The property buyers are made to shell out more money in the form of 'open space tax', leaving the burden on the buyers of plots for the mistake of the sellers, who have to specify 10 per cent open space in the venture.

The buyers who have purchased plots in ventures where mandatory 10 per cent open space is not left are asked to pay a fee of 14 per cent of the market value of the plot. This provision is leaving the buyers to shell out huge money as they had taken up plots without seeing whether or not the seller has specified open space in the venture. The problem is more for a plot which is sold and purchased several times and the last person who is holding the property is made to pay the tax.

According to the officials there are 14,000 illegal ventures in the State including 3,982 in urban areas and 11,000 in rural areas. There are close to 15 lakh plots which are against the rules. As per the decision taken up by the government only those

plots would be registered which are regularised under the Layout Regularisation Scheme (LRS) by the government. Apart from the regularisation fee the authorities are also collecting 'pro rata open space charges' for the plots in the venture where 10 per cent of the open space is not left.

K Tirupati, a resident of Alair had a purchased road side plot admeasuring 315 sq yards. The market valuation of the plot was Rs 5,000 per sq yard and now Tirupat have to pay more than Rs 1 lakh for his plot including LRS fee and also the 14 per cent open space tax. He said that he had no idea of the rule and the realtor also did not talk of the rule. When he asked the realtor, he was told that the price of the plot was decreased keeping in mind the non-allocation of open space.

At some places the people who have made agreement with the realtors are cancelling them and waiting for the LRS deadline because this would ensure the realtor would be paying the open space tax if there is no specified open space in the venture.

While pronouncing the judgment the judge said that, the offence committed by the accused is punishable u/s 354D of IPC and Section 11, 12 of POCSO Act. The accused person in the year 2015 was following a minor girl aged 17 and kept on harassing her to marry him.

However, the girl kept on dodging the accused and also informed her parents about the issue. The girl's father then intervened and threatened the accused to stay away from his daughter, but still he did not mend his ways. On August 27, 2015 when the girl was waiting at the bus stop to return home, the accused followed her over there and started harassing her. Unable to bear the torture she tried to commit suicide on the spot by slitting her wrist. She was then rushed to the hospital and underwent treatment. Late the girl's father filed a police complaint and the accused was arrested and remanded to judicial custody, said the police.

## CII's 'travel again' bike rally today

HANS NEWS SERVICE

**Hyderabad:** Confederation of Indian Industry(CII), in association with Government of Telangana, is organising a "Travel Again:Bike Ride to Ananthagiri Hills" from Taramati Baradari, Hyderabad on Sunday. Tourism Minister V Srinivas Goud would flag off the bike rally that will start at Taramati Baradari and proceed to Ananthagiri Hills, Vikarabad and return at culmination, a journey of approximately 125 kms. The theme of the bike ride is 'Encouraging Weekend Getaways' with an aim to encourage weekend tourism hangouts so that people restart living these trends.

## BJP revamp to make a mark in AP, TS

Continued from P1

Aruna told media that her focus would on strengthening the party from grassroots level and she would be working at the ground level and would try to rope in all those who want to migrate from TRS to BJP.

Telangana also has a majority of BC population, it has made Dr Laxman head its national Morcha. The party feels that this would help in enlisting the support of BCs which is a significant community in the state.

In the case of Andhra Pradesh, too, the BC voters are divided between the TDP, Congress and YSRCP. At present, the BCs are in a state of confusion. Speaking to The Hans India, a senior BJP leader from Andhra Pradesh said, the leaders from the community are looking for a better viable alternative to TDP and

YSRCP. The BJP wants to fill this vacuum. That responsibility has been given to the state president Somu Veeraj. Purandeswari apart from being the daughter of NT Rama Rao is anti-TDP. The BJP wants to move closer to the Kamma community and feel that she may be helpful in achieving this goal. She has been made one of the general secretaries.

Satya Kumar, who got a second term as general secretary, said that the national party had given due recognition to the leaders from both the Telugu states. He said his focus would be on exposing the omissions and commissions of the state government and take the central schemes into every nook and corner of the Telugu states. He said he would also make best use of social media.

## TS requests Centre for allocation of 11 LMT of urea for Rabi

A total of 18.30 LMT of fertilisers allocated to TS for Rabi

HANS NEWS SERVICE

**Hyderabad:** The State Agriculture Minister, S Niranjan Reddy said that the State government has requested the Centre to allocate 11 lakh metric tonnes of urea, for the next Rabi (Yasangi) agriculture season.

He said on Saturday, the Centre has allocated 10 lakh metric tonnes of urea to the State for the ensuing Rabi agriculture season. The allocation was based on the usage of 8 lakh metric tonnes of urea in the correspond agriculture season last year.

However, the State Agriculture Department has predicted an increase of 30 per cent in the extent of cultivation in the next Rabi season. This was due to the improved irrigation facilities and pro-agriculture policies of the State government, he added.

Niranjan Reddy said that farmers have cultivated crops in an extent of 53.82 lakh acres during the previous Rabi season. And, the highest usage of urea had gone to the cultivation of



paddy, maize and horticulture crops. Out of 8 lakh metric tonnes of urea allocated by the Centre the State had utilised 7.63 lakh metric tonnes during the last Rabi season, he said. The Agriculture Minister said that the usage of urea will be more during Rabi than in Kharif (rainy) agriculture season.

Against this backdrop, Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Rao has directed to place a requisition for the allocation of 11 lakh

metric tonnes of urea for the ensuing Rabi, he said.

He said that the Centre has allocated a total of 18.30 lakh metric tonnes of fertilizers for the ensuing Rabi season. The Centre has assured to supply the allocated supply fertilizers, besides, to extend cooperation in providing additional requirements if any for Telangana, he said.

## Deepika Padukone admits to drug chats

Continued from P1

Sara's statement was recorded for around four-and-a-half hours. She left the NCB office around 5.30 pm. Sara was Rajput's co-star in "Kedarnath" film. Shraddha Kapoor had reached the NCB's zonal office around 12pm to record her statement in the drugs probe. She left around 5.55pm, after nearly six hours, an official said.

While the two were quizzed about their equation with Sushant Singh Rajput and the drugs probe, Sara Ali Khan and Shraddha Kapoor have allegedly denied all claims related to drug consumption. The anti-drugs agency arrested Rhea Chakraborty on September 8 for the allegedly procuring drugs for Rajput. Her brother Showik has also been arrested along with dozens of others.

Rajput was found dead at his Mumbai residence on June 14.

## India walks out of UNGA protesting Imran's diatribe

Continued from P1

A new element tucked into Khan's 34-minute speech, more than a third of which was devoted to India, was a call for the Security Council to send its peacekeeping force to Kashmir by drawing a parallel to East Timor, now known as Timor-Leste.

"The Security Council must prevent a disaster conflict (in Kashmir) and secure the implementation of its own resolutions, as it did in the case of East Timor," Khan said.

The Security Council authorised international intervention and sent peacekeepers in the aftermath of the Indonesian invasion of the former Portuguese colony, but a parallel would require such a force to clear Pakistanis in Kashmir in de-

fiance of its resolution demanding their withdrawal.

Khan also declared a thinly veiled support for the attacks on India by the militants. "The government and the people of Pakistan are committed to standing by and supporting the Kashmiri brothers and sisters in their legitimate struggle for self-determination," he said.

In his tweet, Tirumurti said, "PM of Pakistan's statement a new diplomatic low at 75th UN General Assembly. Another litany of vicious falsehood, personal attacks, war-mongering and obfuscation of Pakistan's persecution of its own minorities and of its cross-border terrorism. Befitting Right of Reply awaits."

## Modi pushes for UN reforms

Continued from P1

While making the case for India, the Prime Minister underlined the responsible role it has played historically through contributions to UN peacekeeping efforts right down to the present time in helping the world combat the pandemic.

"Even during these very difficult times of the raging pandemic, the pharmaceutical industry of India has sent essential medicines to more than 150 countries," he said.

"As the largest vaccine producing country of the world, I want to give one more assurance to the global community today. India's vaccine production and delivery capacity will be used to help all humanity in fighting this crisis," he added.

## Fresh tender notification for new Sectt issued

Continued from P1

Top official sources said that Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Rao has reportedly identified some anomalies in the conditions prescribed in the tender form. Sources said that KCR has changed a small portion of design of the giant secretariat building so that the new complex will have better elevation without any increase in the estimated cost.

As per the new schedule in the revised tender notification, the prospective bidders will have to submit tender papers between September 30 and October 13. The technical bids will be opened on October 13 evening and the price bids will be finalized on October 16.

## Not even 2 yrs old, super kid Aadith makes it to WBR

The prodigy from Nizamabad, has won several other similar awards for identifying vehicles from shadows, complex colour patterns, sounds of animals, birds, as many as 71 picture objects, parts of the body

HANS NEWS SERVICE

**Hyderabad:** Super kid Aadith Vishwanath Gourishetty from Karimnagar makes it to World Book of Record for being an extraordinary child with sharp memory.

Adith can identify and recognise various countries' flags, car logos, continents, deities, colours, animals, professions, body parts, English alphabets, shapes, electronic home appliances, fruits and vegetables at a tender age of just one year nine months.

The digital certificate was presented to the wonder kid in the first week of September. This was informed by Santosh Shukla, Supreme Court Advocate (president, World Book of Records).

World Book of Records (WBR) is one of the leading organisations in international certification of world records. It recognizes talent and capabilities in



world records through international certification.

On being recognised by World Book of Records, (Kids edition),

Aadith was congratulated by Virendra Sharma (MP, England), Dr. Diwakar Sukul (Chairman, World Book of Records, London),

Santosh Shukla (President, World Book of Records) and other dignitaries.

Aadith, son of Arun Sai and

Snehitha, has also been awarded earlier with India Book of Records, Telugu Book of Records, Certificates of National Records for identifying vehicles from shadows, complex colour patterns, sounds of animals, birds, as many as 71 picture objects, parts of the body.

He has by now recognised 272 pictorials from 17 categories and rightly earned the titles of "super kid" and "The Mnemonist Wonder Kid".

Aadith can solve alphabet and shape puzzles with utter ease that leaves everyone in awe. His amazing feat helped him secure a name in the World Book of Records for his extraordinary memory of recognizing a wide range of objects. This little munchkin has added a smile to the faces of his family members, and is a reminder to the world that no age is small to dream and achieve big.

## Heavy rain lashes TS

Continued from P1

In Khammam, inflows into the streams and tanks were increasing. Irrigation officials lifted two gates at Taliperu medium irrigation project in Cherla mandal to discharge 2,480 cusecs of water to avoid submergence of low-lying areas.

A few parts of both Kumram Bheem Asifabad and Mancherial districts saw light to moderate rain on Friday night. Standing cotton and maize crops were damaged due to the showers, causing losses to farmers. Two women died after thunderbolt struck them. Local streams were flooded due to the downpours in several places. Irrigation projects such as Sripada Yellampalli and Kumram Bheem, Rally Vagu

and Neelwai received copious inflows.

On Friday evening, Vashaka Bharati (40), a resident of Ityala village in Dahegaon mandal and Powar Lalita Bai (35), a native of Kishannaik Thanda in Jainoor mandal in Kumram Bheem Asifabad district, were killed as they were struck by thunderbolt, when they were engaged in farm activities. An ox of a farmer also died in the similar mishap reported at Marthadi village in Bejjur mandal.

According to IMD officials, the highest rainfall of 10 cm was received in Siddipet district, followed by Kondukur (6.5 cm) in Ranga Reddy district. In the GHMC area, Madhapur received 5.2 cm of rainfall.



# New regional parties set to enter political fray ahead of 'Bihar dangal'

**Patna(IANS):** As the Election Commission announced the dates for the Bihar assembly elections, it seems to be a direct fight between the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) and the RJD-led Opposition Grand Alliance (Mahagathbandhan). However, in these elections several rookie parties and groupings will also be in the political fray.

One such grouping is the Left which had to be content with very few seats in the previous elections. Many other outfits will also come before the voters after having fought previous elections in alliance

with other parties. These include the Vikassheel Insaan Party (VIP), Janata Dal (Rashtrawadi), Jantantrik Vikas Party (JVP) and others.

Former MP Pappu Yadav's Jan Adhikar Party (JAP) has announced it will contest on 150 seats. It is no secret that Yadav, a former RJD leader, has carved his own political space in many regions of Bihar. Speculation is rife that he will benefit from the hard work done in the last five years in some regions.

Pappu Yadav said Bihar is frustrated with the ruling party and the Opposition and was looking for an alternative political narrative offered by



him.

JVP Chief Anil Kumar has also announced he will field party candidates on 150 seats. The party is considered strong in Buxar, Bhojpur and Rohtas districts.

Kumar said the development which has been claimed to have been done in Bihar has been exposed during the ongoing corona pandemic and such fake development promises were known to the people.

Former MP Ranjan Yadav, who has worked with RJD President Lalu Prasad Yadav in the past, is also in the electoral fray contesting on a Janata Dal (Rashtrawadi) ticket in these elections. Party

workers showed their strength on Friday, taking to the streets in protest against the Farm Bills passed by Parliament.

Janata Dal (Rashtrawadi) Convenor Ashfaq Rahman said his party is contesting as a constituent of the Union Democratic Alliance (UDA) which gives people an alternative political choice.

The performance of the Left-centric parties is also not considered to be better in Bihar. In the last elections, the Left parties had to be content with only three seats. However, in this election the Left is set to enter the political arena aligning with the Opposition Grand Alliance.



## Central Govt betrayed farmers: Sachin Pilot

**New Delhi:** Accusing the central government of betraying farmers, former Rajastan deputy chief minister Sachin Pilot on Saturday asked how will the Centre pacify farmers about the farm bills when it failed to convince its own minister over it. He demanded that the Centre withdraw the three bills in the interest of farmers. "The central government should admit its mistake and withdraw the bills. The way the bills were passed... pushed in the Rajya Sabha was undemocratic. Therefore dissenting voices are emerging in the country today," Pilot said in a video message.

## JEYARAJ, BENNIKS 'KILLED' IN CUSTODY

# CBI files chargesheet against 9

**Chennai/New Delhi (IANS):** The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) on Saturday filed a chargesheet against nine then officials of the Tamil Nadu Police in connection with two cases it registered over the custodial deaths of father-son duo P. Jeyaraj and J. Benniks.

A CBI spokesperson R.K. Gaur said in Delhi that the agency filed the chargesheet against 9 then police officials namely -- S. Sridhar, then Inspector and SHO, K. Balakrishnan, then SI, P. Raghuganesh, then SI, AS. Murugan, then HC, A. Samadurai, then HC, AM. Muthuraja, then Constable, S. Chelladurai, then Constable, X. Thomas Francis, then Constable and S. Veilumuthu, then Constable -- all of Sathankulam Police Station in Tamil Nadu.



He said that the agency filed the chargesheet in a Madurai court under several sections of the Indian Penal Code.

According to the CBI official one accused, then a Sub Inspector, died during investigation.

The CBI registered two cases on July 7 related to the allegations of custodial death of the father-son duo of traders in Tamil Nadu's Kovilpatti on the request of the Tamil Nadu government and further notification by the

Centre.

After registering the case, a CBI team camped continuously at Madurai and worked on the cases even through the Covid-19 pandemic. A CBI official linked to the probe said that nine members of the CBI team in Madurai investigating the case also tested positive for Covid-19.

"The CBI investigation revealed that the father-son duo were arrested in the evening of June 19 and allegedly tortured at the Sathankulam Police Station by the accused in the evening as well as in the intervening night, consequent to which both of them succumbed to the injuries and died in the intervening night of June 22-23," Gaur said.

## Ukraine plane crash toll rises to 26

**Moscow:** Searchers combing the area where a Ukrainian military aircraft crashed found two more bodies on Saturday, bringing the death toll to 26. One person survived. The plane, a twin-turboprop Antonov-26 belonging to the Ukrainian air force, was carrying a crew of seven and 20 cadets of a military aviation school when it crashed and burst into flames Friday night while coming in for landing at the airport in Chuhuiv, about 400 kilometers (250 miles) east of the capital Kyiv.

Two people initially survived the crash, but one later died in a hospital. No cause for the crash has been determined. Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy declared Saturday to be a day of mourning for the crash victims and ordered that flights of An-26 planes be halted pending investigation of the crash cause. Zelen-



skiy, who visited the crash area on Saturday, called for a full assessment of the condition of the country's military equipment and said he wanted an official report on the crash by Oct. 25. The An-26 is a transport plane used by both military and civilian operators. Nearly 1,400 of the planes were manufactured from 1969 to 1986, according to the company's website. The age of the plane that crashed Friday was not immediately reported. An An-26 chartered by a contractor for the World Food Program crashed on Aug. 22 while taking off from Juba in South Sudan, killing seven people.

## Weekend lockdown imposed again in Jodhpur

**Jodhpur:** A weekend lockdown began in Jodhpur on Saturday to check the spread of the novel coronavirus amid a sudden spike in fresh infections and deaths.

Police and civic officials took out marches in parts of the desert city to sensitize people about the prevailing situation and request them to stay indoors.

District Magistrate Indrajeet Singh said, "We have taken this decision (to impose lockdown) considering the spurt in infections in the city. We expect people to adhere to it. If they do not understand the seriousness of the situation now, it will be too late."

The city has reported close to 1,200 cases in the past two days,



leading to huge pressure on its healthcare infrastructure. More than 150 people have died due to COVID-19 in the city this month. The lockdown will remain in force till Monday early morning. Essential services are exempt from the restrictions. Students appearing in various examinations will also be allowed to move.

This is the second-weekend lockdown to be imposed in the city after the first one in early August.

## Recoveries surpass 48.4 lakh, 93,420 cured in a single day

**New Delhi:** The total number of recoveries from COVID-19 surged to 48,49,584 on Saturday with 93,420 patients recuperating from the disease in a day which is more than the number of fresh cases recorded during the same period, the union health ministry said.

With the recovery rate rising to 82.14 percent, the ministry said India has maintained its top global ranking in total recoveries with such high successive single-day numbers.

"As India records more recoveries than new cases, the gap between recovered and active cases is continuously widening. The recoveries are more than five times the active cases of coronavirus infection," it said. The recovered cases exceed active cases (9,60,969) by nearly 39 lakh.

"This has also ensured that active cases account for merely 16.28 percent of the total case-load. This has sustained on its steady declining path," the ministry said.

## US moves to restrict stay of Chinese scribes to 90 days

**Washington:** The Trump Administration is seeking to restrict the stay of journalists from China in the US to just 90 days with the provision of another extension for a similar duration, according

to a federal notification. The move came amidst worsening of bilateral ties over a range of issues like the coronavirus pandemic, trade, Beijing's increasing grip on Hong Kong and alleged human rights abuses against minorities in the Xinjiang province. The proposal of the Department of Homeland Security is part of the fixed time limit on visas of students, researchers and foreign journalists in the US.

# Dharma Productions executive producer Kshitij Ravi arrested

**NEITHER CONSUME DRUGS NOR PROMOTE IT: KARAN JOHAR**

**Mumbai:** Filmmaker Karan Johar issued a statement debunking the media reports alleging that narcotics were consumed at one of his house parties, calling the claims "baseless and false".

Meanwhile, NCB has arrested Dharma Productions executive producer Kshitij Ravi Prasad. He was quizzed by the NCB for nearly 24 hours in connection with its probe into the drugs case related to the death of actor Sushant Singh Rajput.

In a lengthy statement shared on Instagram, the filmmaker said neither he consumes narcotics nor does he promote usage of any such substance.

Johar's response came after an old video from a star-studded party at his residence resurfaced on social media, amid Narcotics Control Bureau's (NCB) drugs probe in connection with actor Sushant Singh Rajput's death. In the short clip, first posted by the filmmaker on Instagram last year, actors Shahid Kapoor, Deepika Padukone, Ranbir Kapoor, Varun Dhawan, Arjun Kapoor, Malaika Arora, Vicky Kaushal among others can be seen partying together. It is being alleged that drugs were consumed by several top film personalities at this party.

Siromani Akali Dal (SAD) leader Manjinder Singh Sirsa in a tweet has claimed that Narcotics Control Bureau (NCB) is set to summon Johar soon in the drug-related case.



Bollywood actresses Deepika Padukone, Shraddha Kapoor, Sara Ali Khan arrive at NCB for questioning in a drug case related to late actor Sushant Singh Rajput's death, in Mumbai on Saturday



## Police warn car-chasing 'paparazzi' of action

**Mumbai (IANS):** The Mumbai Police on Saturday warned media vehicles against pursuing vehicles of celebs who are being summoned for the drugs probe by the Narcotics Control Bureau.

In a stern statement, Deputy Commissioner of Police (Zone I) Sangram Singh Nishandar said that Sep. 26), the police observed several media vehicles "chasing" people called for the NCB inquiry.

"This afternoon, we saw some mediapersons chasing the vehicles from the rear, front, sides, getting off their vehicles, posing great risk to themselves, the people in the vehicles and also the common per-

sons. We will not tolerate this anymore," said Nishandar.

He warned the media against chasing any vehicles henceforth but if anyone was found violating it, he threatened to seize the vehicles and take action against the drivers of those vehicles. In the past couple of months, since the probe into the death case of the Bollywood actor Sushant Singh Rajput, there have been many such 'road chases' by some media-vehicles. They included celebs like Rhea Chakraborty, Deepika Padukone, Sara Ali Khan, Shraddha Kapoor and several others leading in connection with the drug angle probe into the Sushant case.

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# Amid row over attacks on temples, cops step up vigil

- Police have already asked the religious heads all over the State to arrange CC cameras at temples, mosques and churches
- In some districts, police are visiting places of worship to suggest security measures to managements as well as locals
- In some sensitive spots, police personnel have been deployed to guard the places

**Amaravati:** The state government has ordered the police to secure all places of worship to avoid any untoward incident, especially in the light of the Antarvedi Sri Lakshmi Narasimha Swamy temple chariot blaze, at a time when religious politics is raging in the state.

The police department has already initiated the process of asking priests and religious heads across the state to be vigilant and fix surveillance cameras in churches, temples and mosques.

In Prakasam and West Godavari districts, like all others, the police visited temples, churches and mosques, suggesting safety measures to the clergy as well as locals.

A Prakasam district police official said the department is keeping 24x7 vigil at all places of worship in the district.

A couple of policemen were seen securing a Lord Hanuman temple at Parchur village, another temple at Komarole, a mosque in Kandukur town and a Telugu Baptist Church in Pamuru.

Similar scenes were seen in Epurupalem, PC Palli, Kanigi and other places in the district.

Meanwhile, Prakasam superintendent of police Siddharth Kaushal has warned hate mongers that the police are keeping a strict vigil to thwart any opportunity for vested interests to exploit the situation.

“We are taking it very seriously on the ground. We are ensuring that no opportunity is given and everything is attended to promptly on ground, responded to promptly and no opportunity is given to exploit this situation,” Kaushal said.

He said police are also monitoring social media to look for troublemakers.

## Pawan concerned over plight of Tallaproduddur

**Mangalagiri:** Jana Sena president Pawan Kalyan demanded here on Saturday that the officials and the people's representatives must take immediate measures to protect the villagers of Tallaproduddur which was in the limits of submersion area of Gandikota reservoir in Jammalamadugu constituency of Kadapa district. He said in a statement here that Jana Sena general secretary Bolisetty Satya brought to his notice the appeal by SC colony people seeking protection as reservoir water is inundating their colony. He has studied the details given by the colony residents and deputed the local Jana Sena leaders for observing things at ground-level who informed him that the situation is grim.

“The people of the colony unequivocally stated that they didn't move from their village as they were yet to receive compensation.

Since they have no financial affordability to take houses on rent in other areas, where will they move under these circumstances? The aged people, infants and pregnant women are spending their time in huts with fear of floodwater,” he said.

## Deepika Padukone admits to drug chats

*Continued from P1*

Sara's statement was recorded for around four-and-a-half hours. She left the NCB office around 5.30 pm. Sara was Rajput's co-star in 'Kedarnath' film.

Shraddha Kapoor had reached the NCB's zonal office around 12pm to record her statement in the drugs probe. She left around 5.55pm, after nearly six hours, an official said. While the two were quizzed about their equation with Sushant Singh Rajput and the drugs probe, Sara Ali Khan and Shraddha Kapoor have allegedly denied all claims related to drug consumption.

The anti-drugs agency arrested Rhea Chakraborty on September 8 for the allegedly procuring drugs for Rajput. Her brother Showik has also been arrested along with dozens of others.

Rajput was found dead at his Mumbai residence on June 14.



Police personnel guarding the Telugu Baptist Sangham Church at Pamur in Prakasam district

## Annaram temple told to rectify security lapses

Intelligence Security Wing official Arun Bose holds a review on the security with temple officials, police and fire dept officials

HANS NEWS SERVICE

**Rajamahendravaram:** Intelligence Security Wing (ISW) has directed the management of Sri Veera Venkata Satyanarayana Swamy temple, Annaram, to tighten the security for the shrine. ISW SP Arun Bose, on the directions of state intelligence wing, reviewed the current security arrangements in the temple recently.

He advised the temple management to provide door and hand detectors at East and West rajagopurams immediately.

He also asked them to train guards on the usage of security gadgets. New fire extinguishers are also to be installed in place of old ones and new TVs with big screens have to be arranged immediately.

Participating in the review meeting, Peddapuram DSP Srinivasa Rao said the temple management was advised to arrange scanners at tollgate to scan the luggage and also 102 high quality CC cameras at important places.



Tuni fire department officer Rama Krishnam Raju said the department submitted a report related to some security lapses.

Special Security Force inspector Y V Kesava Ram said some hundis have no locks and the devotees are taking mobile phones into the temple which should be stopped.

Armed Reserve DSP Appa Rao said lapses can be found with human checking. Later, temple executive officer V Trinadh Rao said tenders were invited for quality CC cameras.

“We are drawing up a list of suspects who might want to capitalise on a provocation. We are keeping a close watch, taking everything very seriously on the ground,” he asserted.

Besides vigilance, the police de-

partment is also engaging in community activities to foster brotherhood among people.

“We are trying to sort of bring together communities, mitigate the negative atmosphere. We will build it up,” he said about Sadhb-

havana, a programme for peace and harmony.

As part of Sadhbavana, police interacted with Imams in Chirala town and people associated with a temple at TV Palli and other places. (IANS)

## Retest for Covid-hit Eamcet aspirants on Oct 7

HANS NEWS SERVICE

**Amaravathi:** Education minister Audimulapu Suresh said here on Saturday that the candidates who could not appear for the AP Engineering Agricultural and Medical Common Entrance Test (APEamcet) since they tested positive for Covid-19 may appear for a re-exam on October 7.

The APEamcet concluded on Friday. While 84.38 per cent of candidates in the engineering stream appeared, 86.52 per cent in the medical and agriculture stream appeared for the exam. The minister said that in

Education Minister says while 84.38% candidates appeared for engineering stream, 86.52% attended in medical and agriculture stream in Eamcet

the engineering stream, 12 candidates would appear for the re-test, nine in medical, and six who registered for APICET would take the test.

On admissions to the IITs, he said that a special common entrance test (CET) would be conducted in November first or second week. The three-hour exam would have two sections

and 50 marks each will be allotted for science and maths.

The results of AP Integrated Common Entrance Test (APICET) were also announced on Friday night. A total of 49,890 out of 51,991 (78.65 per cent) candidates cleared the exam.

The pass percentage was the highest in Vizianagaram district with 88.84 per cent of males and 88.09 per cent of females passing the exam. Anantapur had the lowest pass percentage, as 69.78 per cent of females and 71.48 per cent of males cleared the test.

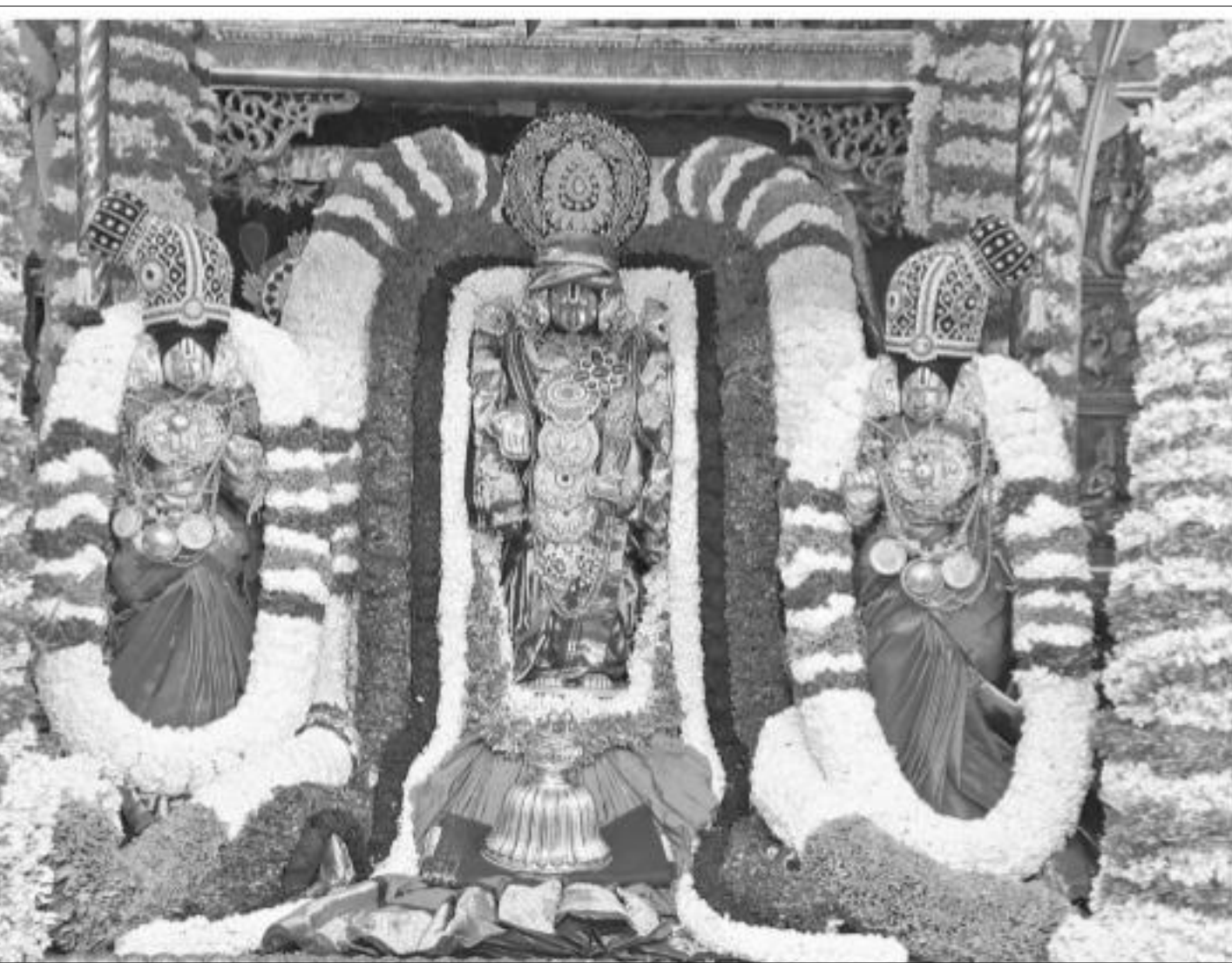
## BJP replaces Ram Madhav, Muralidhar with new faces

*Continued from P1*

Chhattisgarh MP Saroj Pandey has been replaced as general secretary by D Purandeswari – NT Rama Rao's daughter. Her appointment is an indication of BJP's attempts to consolidate itself in Andhra Pradesh.

However, Ram Madhav, P Muralidhar Rao, Saroj Pandey and Anil Jain have been replaced with new faces. Dushyant Kumar Gautam, D Purandareswari, C T Ravi, Tarun Chugh and Dilip Saikia are new choices as general secretaries.

Former Maharashtra minister Pankaja Munde has also been named secretary of the BJP. Pankaja is the daughter of former Union minister Gopinath Munde. Vinod



Lord Malayappa Swamy on Sarvabhupala vahanam on the eight-day of Brahmotsavams at Tirumala on Saturday. The nine-day Utsavams will come conclude on Sunday.

## Lord blesses devout on Sarvabhupala vahanam

HANS NEWS SERVICE

**Tirumala:** Lord Malayappa and His consorts seated elegantly on Sarvabhupala vahanam blessed the devotees on the penultimate day of the Brahmotsavams on Saturday.

The deities adorned with dazzling ornaments atop flower decked vahanam feasted the

eyes of devotees.

Due to Covid-19, the TTD conducting the annual Brahmotsavams in Ekantham with no devotees' participation resulting in the cancellation of Rathotsavam being held on the eighth day and also Swarna Rathotsavam (Golden Chariot) on the sixth day of this year annual Brahmotsavams.

Instead of the two Rathotsavams, the TTD observed Sarvabhupala Vahanam in the shrine following the temple practice.

In the evening, Aswa Vahanam was observed in which the deity atop the vahanam in the form of Kalki, the 10th Avatar of Hindu God Visnu.

The nine-day religious celebrations will come to an end with Chakra Snanam on Sunday.

TTD Trust Board chairman Y V Subba Reddy, EO Anil Kumar Singhal, board members and others were also present.

## Botcha accuses Naidu of playing cheap politics

HANS NEWS SERVICE

**Amaravati:** Minister for municipal administration Botcha Satyanarayana came down heavily on TDP president N Chandrababu Naidu for trying to create a wedge among people in the name of caste and religion for political gains.

Speaking to the media at the party central office at Tadepalli here on Saturday, he said Naidu has been following the BJP agenda and thus trying to create communal disputes. The minister said there was no benefit to the state or to the public with the agitations of Naidu and suggested him to go for public mandate instead. The entire state had witnessed the Chief Minister's visit to Tirumala and his taking part in the religious activities with fervour and respect towards the traditions.

Naidu has been opposing the development of the north Andhra region and objecting to Visakhapatnam being executive capital, while the Chief Minister is aiming to develop all the three regions equally, he said.

He dared Naidu to reveal the real reason behind opposing Visakhapatnam as executive capital. During the TDP term, Naidu ignored north Andhra but he tried to give away the most expensive lands to the Lulu and Adani groups.

He said that the development of Visakhapatnam took place during Y S Rajasekhara Reddy time and criticised TDP leaders for spreading false propaganda on investments coming to Visakhapatnam.

## Purandeswari elevated as BJP nat'l Gen Secy

HANS NEWS SERVICE

**Amaravati:** Daggubati Purandeswari has been appointed general secretary of BJP in the latest national office-bearers list announced by the party president J P Nadda here on Saturday taking everyone by surprise.

Purandeswari's elevation from BJP Mahila Morcha Prabhari (in-charge) comes at a crucial time in Andhra Pradesh politics where the BJP is trying to put up a spirited fight against the ruling YSRCP as well as TDP.

Among the other Telugus of prominence from AP, Ram Madhav, general secretary, is replaced and G V L Narasimha Rao has been dropped as the spokesperson of the party.

Nadda sprang a few surprises in the new team of national office-bearers that he announced on Saturday.

The surprises were specially dished out in the context of picking leaders from Andhra Pradesh. The new list of party functionaries at the national level has an element of continuity as well as change.

The list of eight general secretaries, crucial organisation positions in the party as they are the link between state and Central leadership, has five new faces with Bhupender Yadav, Arun Singh and Kailash Vijayvargiya being retained. Purandeswari is one among those elevated to such a crucial position.



- The promotion comes at a time when the party is trying to emerge as an alternative to YSRCP and TDP in the state
- In a surprise development, GVL Narasimha Rao finds no place in the list of new office bearers

In another significant move pertaining to Andhra Pradesh, Satya Kumar has been retained as the national secretary of the party. Satya Kumar had in the past worked as the OSD of M Venkaiah Naidu prior to the latter's elevation as the Vice-President.

The party has also expanded its list of spokespersons to 23, with MP Anil Baluni being elevated as the chief spokesperson and retaining its media head.

But the most notable omission from the list of spokespersons is G V L Narasimha Rao, who failed to find a place this time.

## India walks out of UNGA protesting Imran's diatribe

*Continued from P1*

A new element tucked into Khan's 34-minute speech, more than a third of which was devoted to India, was a call for the Security Council to send its peacekeeping force to Kashmir by drawing a parallel to East Timor, now known as Timor-Leste. “The Security Council must prevent a disaster conflict (in Kashmir) and secure the implementation of its own resolutions, as it did in the case of East Timor,” Khan said.

The Security Council authorised international intervention and sent peacekeepers in the aftermath of the Indonesian invasion of the former Portuguese colony, but a parallel would require such a force to clear Pakistanis in Kashmir in defiance of its resolution demanding their withdrawal.

Khan also declared a thinly veiled support for the attacks on India by the militants. “The government and the people of Pakistan are committed to standing by and supporting the Kashmiri brothers and sisters in their legitimate struggle for self-determination,” he said.

In his tweet, Tirumurti said, “PM of Pakistan's statement a new diplomatic low at 75th UN General Assembly. Another litany of vicious falsehood, personal attacks, warmongering and obfuscation of Pakistan's persecution of its own minorities and of its cross-border terrorism. Be fitting Right of Reply awaits.”

## Won't privatise water supply in Delhi: CM

*Continued from P1*

At the same time, the Delhi government will also be made aware of the modern technology of water distribution.”

The Chief Minister said, “930 million (93 crore) gallons of water is produced daily in Delhi. Delhi has a population of about 2 crores, that is, for every person, whether rich or poor, around 176 litres of water is produced. This includes industrial, field swimming pools, farming, domestic water and other uses of water. We have to increase the availability of water now.”



# A question of faith should have been handled sensitively



Since time immemorial, offering silk clothes to the presiding deities at Temples in Andhra Pradesh during important and major temples has been a tradition followed strictly in accordance with the rules. But in the recent incident, Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy following the tradition offered silk clothes on the auspicious occasion of Garuda Vahana Seva during the Annual Brahmotsavam at the Tirumala Temple without signing the faith declaration form which hurt the sentiments of the believers.

But what irked BJP members is the failure on the part of Chief Minister, belonging to another faith, not signing faith declaration form which is mandatory before entering the temple. By allowing him to enter the sanctum sanctorum, the temple authorities failing to ensure its compliance without any doubt also committed a serious lapse. However, the manner in which both the state BJP chief and the minister in the state cabinet locked in heated exchanges was not only in poor taste but also unwarranted on this solemn occasion.

The fact of the matter that despite protests over spate of conversions taking place in the state and in particular at the hill shrine at Tirumala, the new government is doing nothing to curb the activities has prompted BJP to express its anguish over chief minister breaking the protocol and

entering the sanctum sanctorum revered by millions of Hindus. In addition, protests by Hindu organisations over recent incidents of temple chariot catching fire at Antarvedi and desecration of idols at other temples across the state not evoking proper response from the government has led to Telangana state BJP questioning Jagan Mohan Reddy for not signing the mandatory faith declaration form in existence in this hill shrine since the early 19th century.

Due to this, questions were raised about this government not only turning a blind eye to the happenings despite bringing it to its notice but also shows lack of apathy when it comes to hurting the sentiments of Hindus. As BJP's demand that chief minister Jagan Mohan Reddy ought to have signed the faith declaration before entering Tirumala Temple but did not so is a lapse, the minister Kodali Venkateshwara Rao coming out in defence of chief minister feigning ignorance of the age-old practice is inexcusable.

Unfortunately, the issue snowballed into a controversy after the minister instead of finding out the facts came out saying that there is no such system in practice at Tirumala. Not stopping at this, the minister provoked needlessly by dragging Prime Minister into the episode and started making bizarre comparisons which set the ball rolling to more ex-

changes between BJP and the minister.

Thus, as it is abundantly clear that the minister had committed a breach to help Chief Minister override prevailing rules for entering into the sanctum sanctorum of the temple. Summing up, the minister must get the facts right before giving replies because it is well-known that in many temples across the country, non-Hindus are strictly prohibited to enter the temple premises. Even the late Indira Gandhi as Prime Minister was denied entry into the Lord Jaganath temple at Puri in Odisha.

Though the chief minister Jagan Mohan Reddy attired in temple dress and entered the sanctum sanctorum, yet not signing the faith declaration was a lapse for which the BJP state leadership has raised a pertinent question. But the minister Kodali Venkateshwara Rao prolonged the matter by coming out with inconsistent replies laced with "ridiculous and irrelevant remarks like "votes polled by BJP is less than NOTA in 2019 polls" and "dragging Narendra Modi and Amit Shah" which were not only insipid, insidious but smacks of arrogance. It is high time, men in official positions follow protocol strictly to set a good example to others instead of been sulky hurting the sentiments of followers of a particular faith.

K R Srinivasan, Secunderabad

## Does God have a religion?



The dictionary meanings for 'Belief' (n) - is an acceptance that something exists or is true .especially one without proof; The word 'Custom' means - a traditional and widely accepted way of behaving or doing something that is specific to a particular society, place, or time and the 'sentiment'-means "a view or opinion that is held or expressed". All these words could give diverse meanings according to the perception. Further, they are more nonfigurative like 'God' and it is impossible to achieve consensus

Your edit "Needless controversy" (THI, 23/09/2020) rightly represented the origin of the customary declaration by a Non-Hindu devotee that intends to offer his prayers to Lord Venkateshwara at Tirumala. This Bruce's code imposition and its relinquishment was a bad past (1842-43). The custom to offer silk robes on the eve of Brahmotsavams has been introduced by the then chief minister N T Rama Rao in 1983 and the successive chief ministers have continued to honour the same by paying a visit to the holy shrine on that holy ritual.

The present chief minister of Andhra Pradesh Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy also did the same thing and offered the divine silk robes despite the cacophony of a small portion of people. The print and electronic media has given undue importance to this customary event and tried in a sedulous manner to hijack the emotions of one section of people. These type of controversies have also raised in past and may arise in the future therefore it is an indispensable responsibility on Hindu seers and sages to gratify that "Hinduism is not a religion it is a way of life "by binning this type of parochial rules.

Before going to peep into this pointless gridlock, we need to know the meaning of belief, custom, and sentiment. The dictionary meanings for 'Belief' (n) - is an acceptance that something exists or is true .especially one without proof; The word 'Custom' means - a traditional and widely accepted way of behaving or doing something that is specific to a particular society, place, or time and the 'sentiment'-means "a view or opinion that is held or expressed". All these words could give diverse meanings according to the per-

ception. Further, they are more nonfigurative like 'God' and it is impossible to achieve consensus. Interestingly, all the spiritually related things are also more abstract than concrete that will prompt many queries without convincing answers. It is a well-known thing that in our country, which is multiracial spirituality, has many spheres and diversified pathways for rendering prayers. Some other tribe is also there called, as atheists, they do not believe the existence of the god, and the cre-

ation is nothing due to evolution. For them, science is the super creator. Therefore, it is the prerogative of an individual to follow his conscience and the others have no right to interfere.

The political outfits that are making these types of futile efforts should have to know the apt remark of Lord Buddha "We may have different religions, different languages, different coloured skin, but we belong to one human race". It seems that the opposition parties in Andhra Pradesh have no

right cause to fight with the present YSRCP government. The acts of wrongdoers have become an agenda for the opposition. They have forgotten the sacred duty of an organization while the state is passing through an impasse of the pandemic. Thanks to them, instead of creating awareness about the Covid-19 and its propagation to the public they have staged protests with a crowd of people that is quite against the Covid-19 rules. It has become a food source for many such as the people that are enjoying power, for opposition leaders, and for renounced sages also. The political leaders and spiritual leaders made this situation murkier with their loose tongues and with irrational acts.

Your edit has given the right advice to end this deadlock by repealing the same, which has become a hurdle for non-Hindus for the holy darshan of lord of seven hills and contradicting the dictum of Rumi "The lovers of God have no religion but God alone". Yes, the time has ripened for cancelling Bruce's code on the advice of agama Shastra pundits and other head seers of the state. It is proved that once again the common person has no curiosity about this kind of hullabaloo because the pandemic made their life more nebulous and messy.

Not only the common person but also the whole country is wriggling out to become stronger physically, economically, and emotionally. Therefore, the political outfits should have to think with ample discretion that when the country beleaguered by various problems; they are not supposed to indulge in such acts that could bring the sand to the beach.

E Gajendra Nath Reddy, Gajwel

## WAS HOSPITALISATION OF SPB NEEDED?

SP Balasubrahmanyam announced in social media on August 5 that he has very mild symptoms of covid and in spite of doctors' advice to be at home and take medicines, he preferred hospitalisation for better nursing and monitoring. Thereafter it is known to all how best the treatment was going on and SPB's healing response from time to time through media.

At one time, SPB was tested negative and was likely to be discharged soon. Despite round-the-clock attentive treatment by expert medical staff, how a less symptomatic and from recovery stage, he suddenly became extremely critical with failure of some of vital organs that led to his end is really a puzzling question to the common people.

Had he not taken admission in hospital, probably he would have saved his life like many other corona virus patients. It is understood that more and more care and administering excessive medication would be harmful and dangerous. Unfortunately, we have lost a celebrated and legendary singer.

S Sai Tejaswi, S Sai Mani Deepika, Kothagudem

### The voice of India deserves Bharat Ratna

To miss Dr S P Balasubrahmanyam is a tragic blow to music lovers in general and cinema music lovers in particular. It is hard to believe, but a reality. The legendary Balu is no more. Balu stole everyone's heart with timbre of his voice. It was unbelievable how he ruled the cinema music world for few decades. One cannot imagine the southern movie industry without him. He has almost contributed in every branch of the cinema industry.

He is a text book for the upcoming singers. He encouraged young singers and brought hidden talent into limelight through his TV programmes in the last decade. Young singers should learn the patience, constant smile, humour and pleasant communication from him.

It is not easy to sing in different languages in that too a huge quantum in a day. We should all be proud to have Guinness Record in his name for most number of songs recorded in a single day. He is a bridge between the old and modern cinema music. Few generations loved him and accepted him as the singer of their choice.

Padmabhushan and Padma Sri, number of Doctorates, prizes, awards, felicitations are just not compatible when compared to the talent and authority that Dr S.P.Balu possess. He lives on through his songs and he will always remain in the

hearts of every Telugu speaking music lover. Dr S P Balu will remain the voice of India, but his songs belong to the entire world that embraced him and to all those who are filled with hope and optimism for the future, whenever they listen to his melodies. He deserves the Bharat Ratna and let us hope that the Government of India will not disappoint all of us. May his soul rest in peace.

Dr M Venkata Ramana, Khammam

### A lover of Telugu language

Music lovers especially Balu garu fans were busy since his admission into hospital some fifty days ago in conducting prayers for his quick recovery but we lost a legendary singer to God. It is not a hyperbole that many of us start our day with the mellifluous devotion submitted by S.P.Balu to God through his songs.

From vivacious numbers to brilliant myriad emotions, Balasubrahmanyam was the omnipresent playback singer in Telugu films for five decades. Teluguites in particular branded for their passion for cinema, enjoyed his honeyed film songs of top stars of yesteryears and others of present time. His excelling as a voice over artist, actor and film producer showcased him a multifaceted personality.

The film "Mithunam" brought his acting skills to the fore as the best character artiste. under his role as a host, Telugu TV Channel ETV became a household for the production of best singers. Through his usual mantra stressing on correct accent, he never missed a prospect to electrify the nascent singers, especially children, to pronounce Telugu words fittingly, thus many talented came to the fore. We are grateful to you Balu garu forever.

Raju Kolluru, Kakinada.

### His voice matched every hero

The cruel hand of fate in the shape of Covid virus laid on beloved Balu stole him from amidst us. Despite the best medical aid provided by the doctors he did not come out of ICU and reached god's abode from the hospital bed. His death created void impossible to fill, all families feel that they lost one of their family members, such is the bond they had with singer Balu.

To elaborate his achievements, it requires reams of papers as his canvas is so wide and many news papers and electronic channels gave exhaustive information about his cine singing career. Balu who epitomised melody and sweetness in music whose voice touched millions of hearts all over South India even across India also

and outside for nearly half a century.

Over a period of time his voice matured and his voice effortlessly captured varied human emotions and feeling and 'navarasas' overflowed in his golden voice. He is a multifaceted genius and more than that he is a genial man. He took 'Paaduta teeyaga' serial of ETV to the epic heights which paved way for chiseling the voices of many budding singers.

The early exist of Ghantasala at the age of 54 gave him chance to sing to the then top stars NTR and ANR which established him as a complete singer erasing the stamp that his voice suits only Krishna, Chiranjeevi and other comedy artists. He had the gift and capacity to grab the opportunities that came to him in his long singing career. Lastly Balu as a mortal may not be there but Balu singer will live forever. His place in Telugu music world



is registered firmly next to divine voiced Ghantasala. 'May his soul be blessed with 'Uttama Loka'.

Rama Krishna M, Kakinada

### The immortal SPB

S.P. Balasubrahmanyam was affectionately known as SPB or Balu. He was a singer par excellence. Spontaneous outpourings of praise for him showed people's love and admiration for him. Bliss was it to listen to his songs; we grew up listening to songs by him and another legendary singer K J Yesudas; SPB's career spanned over 55 years. Endowed with a rich melodious voice, SPB held generations spellbound. As a playback singer, SPB made his debut with the song Aayiram Nilave Vaa in an MGR starrer and instantly became a household name on the strength of his mesmerizing voice. There had been no looking back since then.

A multilingual singer, he sang over 42,000 songs, a prodigious achievement for a singer - far fewer would make a singer immensely popular - and stirred the inner recesses of our hearts.

He sang a variety of songs; all his songs were great hits; he sang most of our all-time favourite songs - Nilave Vaa Sellathe Vaa, Mannil Indha Kadhalandri, Ithu Oru Ponmaalai Pozhudhu and Illamai Ithu Ithu are to name a few.

In an interview SPB revealed how music maestro Ilaiyaraaja experimented with his voice and made him do vocal cord exercises. In another the world-class singer revealed how he had a penchant for ice-water and ice-cream. He lent a 'personal inflection' to the songs and lifted them to a higher plane.

As a singer of extraordinary versatility, he modulated his voice to suit the popular heroes on the screen and even different characters played by the same actors. He did not formally learn Carnatic music; still he compared with the best in Carnatic music. His personal qualities such as sim-

plicity, humility and generosity endeared him to everyone. His songs and humanity have immortalised him. We hail Paadum Nila SPB as the uncrowned king of music, and deservedly so.

G David Milton, Maruthancode, Tamil Nadu

### 40,000 songs in 16 languages

The news of the unexpected demise of legendary playback singer S P Balasubrahmanyam has left Indians shattered and shell-shocked. He has left the world leaving behind an envied and unsurpassed legacy behind him. Having been established as one among the enduring playback singers of South-Indian film industry, he has been the heartthrob of millions of people who are fond of music and songs. Many of his songs can surpass the time and language. He also gave an exceptionally brilliant performance as an actor in a few movies. Many of his songs will reverberate throughout the existence of human life. He had almost 40,000 songs to his

credit. He had a lion's share of his songs in Telugu, Tamil and Kannada. He is no more. But he will live in our memories with his enchanting and unforgettable songs. His death during this corona pandemic has created much pain and sorrow among his fans since they are unable to pay their last respect to him.

He holds the world record in the Guinness Book of World Record for having sung the most number of song recordings by any singer. His most remarkable and breathtaking performance was brought out when he recorded 21 songs in Kannada in a single day from 9 am to 9 pm on 8 February 1981. The oncoming generations will certainly cherish his scintillating contributions towards the South Indian music and film, and many of his spectacular performances will be lasting forever. Let us pray for his soul to rest in peace.

Prabhakaran Vallath, Vatakara, Kerala

### The legacy will live on

In the passing away of SP Balasubrahmanyam, the world of music has lost an iconic playback singer, a talented actor and a fine human being. With a record 40,000 songs in 16 languages in his kitty, SPB carved a special niche for himself bagging six national awards, besides being decorated with the Padma Shri in 2001 and the Padma Bhushan in 2011. Blessed with a divine voice, his lilting melodies transcended borders and stole the hearts of millions of music aficionados. SPB may be no more but his legacy lives on.

N J Ravi Chander, Bengaluru

### A multi-talented marvel

I met SP Balasubrahmanyam a few years ago in Bhimavaram and he answered to my question in a soft and gentle manner. He mastered the concepts of melody, rhythm and a matching style of tones of all actors. SPB's vocal card is a blend of smooth flow of PB Srinivas and stentorian voice of Ghantasala. The film industry thought that there would be a big void with the exit of Ghantasala.

But SPB, imbining the spirit of his predecessor and great musicians of platinum age by dint of great perseverance and hard work proved his mettle by giving his voice in the form songs to A Nageswara Rao and N T Rama Rao and also comedians like Allu Ramalingaiah and Rajababu and others. SPB is accredited not only with film songs, but also quite number of devotional songs. His singing career spanned for more than half century is recorded with spotless remark. He has no adversaries in any quarter. Movie world shedding tears today had not offered songs to this

soulful singer for the past few years. SPB's oeuvre deserves a place with golden letters in the history of Telugu tinsel world next to Ghantasala.

Dr NSR Murthy, Secunderabad

### A great human being

In 2008 year, I received a prize from S.P. Balu. He was an excellent Host. It was a 5 day-event conducted by an Arts Association. He even invited us to his room and treated us excellently. He joked around that he would snatch away our prizes, push us and eat us up. He gave us sweets and chocolates. We laughed a lot, relaxed and felt comfortable. He had no airs or ego. All five days, he was friendly, jovial and comfort giving.

P N Sreelekha, Secunderabad

### A student of music till the last

The world of music has lost legendary multilingual singer SPB fondly called "Balu" is no more. May his soul rest in peace. What a journey whose first Tamil Cinema Song from the 1969 film "Hotel Ramba" was never released. The singer confessed that in spite of best effort he could not trace the recorded song. Since then, there was no looking back. Strangely, we are told he learnt Carnatic music after he entered the singing profession. Though he has left the music world, his songs would stay forever. May his soul rest in peace.

N Nagarajan, Hyderabad

### Musical magician

It is really painful that the greatest singer IS P Bala Subrahmanyam has succumbed to the effect of corona virus after fighting against the virus for around 50 days. SP Balu, as he is popularly called by millions of music fans throughout the world is a very humble and simple singer, actor, music director, dubbing artiste who motivated young generation towards learning fine arts especially pleasant music. He has shown to the world that he is still a music student at the age of 74 even after singing more than 40,000 songs in different languages and composing music for more than 50 movies. His respects to elders and Telugu language is flawless and honest as seen in his thousands of music programmes held throughout the world. After Ghantasala maastaru, SPB has certainly kept up the Telugu music momentum at a good pace and now it is very difficult to get the gap filled. SPB is a master magician who has conquered the hearts of both masses and classes in the Indian cine music industry.

Katuru Durga Prasad Rao, Hyderabad



YAJURVINDRA SINGH

The Indian Premier League (IPL) has had a wonderful start. This was just the entertainment for the bored and isolated Indians locked down in their homes for the last few months due to the Covid-19 pandemic. An evening of a 'live' episode of cricket drama saw 20 crore viewers watching the opening match of the tournament. This number will escalate as the people following the games get more information and a better insight into the teams and players involved.

The diversity where people and places are concerned in modern India has now extended in such a way that a cricketer follower's loyalty to one's hometown is not the only criteria to cheer a team. The IPL has made cricket into a family drama where the young and the old have their own thoughts and views. This is solely because the T20 format has so many variants and uncertainties that predicting a result or performance is like a game of dice. This is what makes the shortest version of the game exciting and mesmerising.

Cricket has always been a sport that one has associated with one "that is played a lot between the ears". These six inches make the difference. The traditional game of cricket is a



slow five-day affair in which one has time to implement or construct one's strategy. A batsman of the calibre of Sachin Tendulkar could decide not to play a cover drive and still make a double century and a bowler like Glenn McGrath or James Anderson could pester a batsman the whole day bowling outside the off stump to frustrate him into finally succumbing to the plot. The great Sunil Gavaskar, Rahul Dravid, or the present-day patient executioner Cheteshwar Pujara's strategy of grinding the bowlers and then gradually getting the better

of them was possible because of the way they could mentally tune themselves to the traditional format of the game.

The T20, on the other hand, has made the task of the bowler and the batsman far more difficult, as the time that one had earlier to plan and execute has now shortened significantly. Although teams now have cricket as well as mental coaches and analysts as part of the entourage, the initial IPL matches in the UAE have shown that cricketers need far more training in the development of their

thought and mental process.

Earlier, one never acknowledged the importance of the mental aspect of the game, as patience and self-restraint carried one through one's problematic phase. This, unfortunately, is not possible in the T20 format today as the cricketer does not get enough time to re-evaluate and deliver.

A good example of this was Mayank Agarwal, when he played a gem of an innings and brought his team to the brink of victory. With just one run to get off three balls and him batting on 89, he was caught off a full toss to the only fielder placed deep in the cover boundary. It was unpardonable. His mind was all set to make a grand finish rather than ensuring a certain victory, which he could have achieved quite easily. One feels sorry to put the entire blame on him, as the team would not have been in such a position had it not been for his efforts. But in the end, the result is what counted. He failed mentally to finish the task.

All eight participating teams depend a lot on their foreign and Indian international players. However, the differential factor between winning and losing at most times has been the performance of the young Indian domestic players. They are the weak link in a star-studded franchise and the ones who can be vulnerable mentally.

The super performance of one of India's rising stars for Royal Challengers Bangalore, Devdutt Padikkal who, quite understandably, was nervous playing his first IPL match and for him to get over his nerves showed his resilience. Nerves played an enormous part in the dismissal of Chennai's Ruturaj Gaekwad, and he was out stumped by yards on the very first ball he faced in the game against Rajasthan Royals.

Similarly, Yashasvi Jaiswal, the young exciting talent from Mumbai representing Rajasthan, was a victim of his mental approach, not due to a lack of cricketing skills. Both youngsters are prime examples of players who need to be coached to become stronger mentally, as one knows that they have the capabilities vis-a-vis cricketing skill.

On the other hand, bowlers have even more difficult task due to the field restrictions. The seasoned bowlers are now mature enough to take the ups and downs they confront every time they bowl in a T20 match. But one still gets frustrated watching some of them not using their mind astutely. The thought of buying a wicket, as performances are calculated on the basis of wickets taken rather than on the runs conceded, could be one of the factors impacting in their thought process.

One feels the bowlers, especially the youngsters, need to go through many sessions of mental coaching. The T20 is predominantly a batsman's game, and depression and failure affects young bowlers, and that is quite disturbing. A bowler needs to adapt to the conditions very quickly in a T20 match as he has just four overs to bowl, which he usually does in two spells. In these few overs, getting the perfect length, speed and direction is quite a difficult task, especially for a young debutant.

However, bowlers do have their moments of success as well, even when they have faltered in execution. The other day, two rank punishable full tosses by Delhi Capitals' Marcus Stoinis off his last two balls of an over against Kings XI Punjab got him two wickets to make him into a hero. He, too, had faltered mentally, but ended up on the winning side. This element of luck will put him in a positive frame of mind whereas both batsmen who got out will need counselling.

This is where the famous quote by the great tennis player Martina Navratilova is so appropriate: "Every game in life is actually played on a six inches ground - the space between the two ears."

(Yajurvindra Singh is a former Test cricketer. Views expressed are personal)



# Terrorism and proxy wars in South Asia

ASHIS RAY

Let me begin by saying that even after 30 years there's no guarantee as yet of a durable ceasefire in the civil war in Afghanistan.

In Sri Lanka, the Tamil Tigers indulged in violent extremism for decades, which included the assassination of a former and would-be Indian Prime Minister, Rajiv Gandhi. I have experienced both situations first-hand; and do not for a moment underestimate their seriousness.

In this instance, though, I would like to restrict myself to India-Pakistan circumstances, as relations between these two neighbours are today at rock-bottom.

The 1971 Indo-Pak war was a watershed in ties between the two nations. On June 27, 1972, on the eve of his departure for Simla for talks with the Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, the Pakistani President Zulfikar Ali Bhutto in a broadcast on Radio Pakistan said: "The war we have lost was not of our making. I had warned against it but my warning fell on deaf ears of a power drunk Junta. They recklessly plunged our people into the war and involved us in an intolerable surrender which lost us half our country."

It took seven years and a coup d'etat for the Pakistani army to reassert itself; and with its recapture of power began a policy of trying to avenge 1971, not by war, but by chipping away at India with a proxy war.

In 1983, the National Conference party in Jammu and Kashmir won a second landslide victory in state elections. But their leader and chief minister, Dr Farooq Abdullah, fell out with Indira Gandhi, who used her constitutional levers to dismiss his government the following year.

When Dr Abdullah subsequently patched up with Indira Gandhi, many of his supporters disapproved of the reconciliation. Thus, when fresh elections took place in Jammu and Kashmir in 1987, a significant segment of the National Conference's traditional voters turned against them. The outcome, though, did not reflect this. In other words, it is widely believed the results were rigged. The parties that suffered went on to constitute the separatist All Party Hurriyat Conference.

In February 1989, Soviet troops withdrew from Afghanistan. People in Indian-controlled Kashmir were inflicted a view that if Pakistan could have defeated the Soviet Union, Indian soldiers would be no match for their Pakistani counterparts in the event of an invasion by the Pakistani army.

Thus, even pro-India Kashmiris became nervous and felt it was better to be on the right side of such a war than the wrong one. It is in this fertile atmosphere of alienation and fear that an uprising occurred in August 1989 in Indian-controlled Kashmir.

During the 1988 to 1992 presidency of George Bush Senior, the United States administration placed Pakistan on a preliminary watch list of countries potentially sponsoring terrorism, without designating it as a state sponsor of terrorism as such. So, I asked a senior American diplomat posted in Islamabad what persuaded President Bush to issue such a caution. He replied, the President had "credible evidence" to do so. I probed the diplomat further. He revealed US satellites had picked up movement of Pakistani army trucks delivering weapons close to the Line of Control with India in Kashmir. The weapons had been supplied by western countries to Pakistan for distribution to the Afghan Mujahideen. Instead, they were diverted to Kashmir. That, I believe, was the genesis of a proxy war, which has included the audacious assault on Mumbai in November 2008. As recently as the killing of Indian para-military personnel in Pulwama in Kashmir in 2019, the Jaish-e-Mohammad released a video saying it carried out the attack. It's possible that since 1989 Indian agencies have retaliated and therefore been behind incidents in Pakistan. I recall one in Karachi in the 1990s where I suspected this could be the case. But in 1997, Inder Gujral as the Indian External Affairs Minister announced his doctrine for cordial relations with India's neighbours. Together with this, came instructions to Indian espionage organisations to cut back on covert operations. Consequently, for a lengthy period thereafter India exercised considerable restraint.

Whether such activities have resumed under Narendra Modi, I can't certify one way or the other. The truth is I don't know. But what I am confident about is this: that Kulbhushan Jadhav, allegedly an Indian spy apprehended inside Pakistan, could not possibly have had the capability to single-handedly destabilise Balochistan.

During negotiations at the Simla summit, Bhutto floated the idea of the Line of Control in Kashmir being converted into a "Line of Peace". General Pervez Musharraf's formula in 2006 was broadly along similar lines. But Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's government ultimately found it difficult to trust a man who was instrumental for the Kargil intrusion in 1999. Basically, there's

a trust deficit between the Indian establishment and the Pakistani military. Only by bridging this shortfall can there be any meaningful forward movement.

There's an appreciation among Pakistan-watchers in India that the main political parties in Pakistan are not disinclined towards peacefully resolving differences between the two nations. This is also true among progressive parties in India. It was also the outlook of the otherwise anti-Pakistan Bharatiya Janata Party under Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee.

It appears to be the belief in the power structure in Pakistan that militancy in Indian-controlled Kashmir is justified. I beg to differ. As the European Commission has echoed, where there's an opportunity to enter office through the ballot box, violence is unjustified.

The Election Commission of India has ensured free and fair elections in Jammu and Kashmir since the 1990s. In India's north-eastern states, separatist parties have fought elections and formed governments, like the Scottish National Party. Sinn Fein is a member of a ruling coalition in Northern Ireland. Therefore, the legitimacy of separatist forces in Jammu and Kashmir can best be established by proving they indeed enjoy majority support.

The one and only opinion survey carried out on both sides of the Line of Control in Kashmir -- by King's College London and Chatham House in 2010 -- 44 per cent of people in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir wanted independence as opposed to 43 per cent in Indian-controlled Jammu and Kashmir. Merely 2 per cent of people in Indian-controlled Jammu and Kashmir wanted to join Pakistan, compared to only 1 per cent of people in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir.

Such figures may have changed in recent years. But India and Pakistan are obliged to sorting out their disputes under the Simla Agreement, which states "the two countries are resolved to settle their differences by peaceful means through bilateral negotiations". This Agreement is registered as a Treaty with the United Nations under Article 102 of the UN Charter. So, are terrorism and proxy wars a threat to peace and stability in South Asia? They certainly are. And the sooner they are dispensed with, the better it will be for the region.

(Ashis Ray is an author. This was his speech at a webinar organised by the London Institute of South Asia. The views expressed are personal)

## Is NITI Aayog doing its job right?

Was it a correct decision to scrap Planning Commission?

FATIMA HASAN

When the Parliament held its monsoon session from September 14 amidst the Covid crisis, many bills have been passed despite opposition boycott and protests. The bills passed include The Indian Institutes of Information Technology Laws (Amendment) Bill; The Essential Commodities (Amendment) Bill; The Banking Regulation (Amendment) Bill; The Companies (Amendment) Bill; The National Forensic Sciences University Bill; The Rashtriya Raksha University Bill and The Taxation and Other Laws (Relaxation and Amendment of Certain Provisions) Bill and the Farm Bills.

Criticism by opposition in Parliament when the sessions are underway is an usual occurrence. But this time, the opposition in Rajya Sabha--the House of States--was up in arms against the passage of the bills, particularly the farm bills. The opposition contention is that the farm bills are against the interests of the farmers and farm workers.

Incidentally, States like Kerala, Telangana, West Bengal, Jharkhand, Maharashtra, Chhattisgarh, Rajasthan and Punjab opposed the Farm Bills. The Union Territory, which opposed these bills, is Puducherry. These States have, in the past, supported various bills brought by the NDA government.

When we look at the bills being criticised by the States -- electricity, farm and labour bills-- they in a way pertain to the financial distribution between the States and the Centre. Thus, in this backdrop, the think tank Niti Aayog assumes significance as it is the body to decide on the financial relations between the States and the Centre.

To foster cooperative federalism through structured support initiatives and mechanisms with the States on a continuous basis, recognising that strong States make a strong nation, the Niti Aayog was established by the NDA government in 2015. The Chief Ministers of the States and UTs are its members. The Niti Aayog replaced the Planning Commission which was the centralised body to achieve greater federalism with the inclusion of States' CMs in it.

Keeping this in mind, let us analyse how far the States are correct in their contention that the labour bills, farm bills and electricity bill will cut into the States' powers. In June last year, the government decided to condense 44 existing labour laws into four codes. The move was expected to help foreign companies do business in India -- a process that was crucial in view of the economic downturn.

The codes involved social security, occupational safety, health and working conditions and industrial relations. One of the codes, the Code on Wages Bill, 2019, has already been passed. Union Labour Minister Santosh Gangwar said they will provide a "safe environment" for workers. "Social security benefits have also been added. This will be in sync with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's resolve for universal social security."

The government claims that these bills will bring in reforms to ensure easier compliance with labour

standards worldwide. This, in turn, will help bring in foreign investment. The bills make it easier to lay off workers and put restrictions on their right to protest.

The Industrial Relations Code Bill allows companies with up to 300 workers to lay off people without the State government's approval. The proposed bill on health and occupational safety helps only those working in factories, mines and docks and hence it is not universal in nature, contend the labour unions.

The farm bills make it easier for farmers to sell their produce directly to private buyers and enter into a contract with private companies. The government hopes private sector investments will stimulate growth. The government also says the monopoly of APMC mandis will end but they will not be shut down and that the Minimum Support Price (MSP) -- the price at which the government buys farm produce -- will not be scrapped.

The new laws give farmers additional choices to sell their produce anywhere in the country, in contrast to the earlier situation where inter-state trade was not allowed. But the State governments stand to lose their part of income from tax revenues as trade move out from State or private domain [the middlemen] directly to the farmers.

Whereas, talking about the electricity bills, on April 17, the Union Government issued a draft proposal for the amendment of Electricity Act 2003, in the form of draft Electricity Act (Amendment) Bill 2020, inviting comments from stakeholders within 21 days.

The draft bill aims to establish an Electricity Contract Enforcement Authority (ECEA) that will have the power of a civil court to settle disputes between power generation companies (gencos) and distribution companies (discoms). According to the draft, ECEA will have sole authority to adjudicate matters related to specific performance of contracts related to purchase or sale of power.

Several States, including Telangana, Maharashtra and Chhattisgarh, have alleged that the amendments will take away the autonomy of State-owned Discoms and State electricity regulators. This will, in turn, take away all their regulatory power and take a toll on the Discoms finances. The opposition parties say that the bill overrides and dominates the State Government's responsibility in the administration of generation, transmission and distribution of electricity. Lack of consultations indicates the failure of democracy.

The Niti Aayog, as it was established for promotion of federalism, should actually be involved in deliberations on every legislation which seeks to change the Center-State financial relations. The Union government should take inputs from the members of Niti Aayog, especially in matters concerning the financial distribution. On the other hand, from time to time, the Chief Ministers also have to suggest ways in which the States' share can be increased for raising more finances. The Union government should strengthen federalism by trying to bridge the gaps between advanced and backward States.





## 71% millennials ready to travel within India

Millennials likely to become the key driver of tourism revival: Survey

Even as the Covid-19 pandemic continues to impact travel and tourism sector in the country, 71 per cent millennials are willing to travel within the country in the next six months, as per a survey.

Millennials are likely to become the key driver of tourism revival with 71 per cent respondents in the category saying they are willing to explore 'Incredible India' in the next six months due to various international travel restrictions, according to BOTT (Business of Travel Trade) Travel Sentiment Tracker. The online survey was conducted over a period of three weeks in September, with over 6,000 millennials participating, a statement said.

Millennials, also known as Generation Y, are generally considered to be those born during 1980s to mid-1990s. The survey revealed that contrary to perception, millennials are very much interested in exploring 'Incredible India' more than ever, provided they are given hassle-free seamless travel experiences.

About 42 per cent millennials said they find lack of proper information on Covid-19 restrictions a major challenge while planning a holiday within India, while 38 per cent felt there is not enough credible travel information on unique destinations, it observed. "Millennials today form a very important chunk of the travellers. The fact that 71 per cent of them are keen on exploring India in the coming months is an extremely positive sign for the growth of domestic tourism in our country," Indian Association of Tour Operators President Pronab Sarkar said.

"States must come forward and try to come out with policies and campaigns to attract this segment of travellers," he added.

The survey found that millennials are much more likely to go on trips and holidays if they are actively offered tailor-made, hassle-free seamless travel experiences with proper communication. The survey revealed that about 21 per cent of millennials said their decision on choosing holiday destination would be based on seeing tourism campaigns of respective States and union territories.

About 41 per cent of the respondents said they would like to spend somewhere between Rs 1-2 lakh on their holidays, followed by 30 per cent of them who have a budget of Rs 50,000-Rs 1 lakh, and 17 per cent are ready to spend more than Rs 2 lakh on vacations. Millennials also seem to have a wide range of destinations where they would want to holiday, the survey said. Around 22 per cent millennials surveyed said they would like to go to beach destinations, while 21 per cent of them would prefer wildlife parks and sanctuaries.

About 20 per cent respondents said they would like to go to plush hotels and resorts and hills or adventure destinations. While 10 per cent respondents said they would like to visit historical destinations, 7 per cent said they would opt for religious places, the survey said.



The online survey was conducted over a period of three weeks in September, with over 6,000 millennials participating

# Time for MSMEs to go for economies of scale

Lowering regulatory burdens will help businesses achieve the elixir of 'creating scale'



Indian businesses suffer from the vicious cycle of not being able to formalise due to the complexity of the regulatory regime and, therefore, lacking access to credit and thereby remaining small, are unable to achieve economies of scale



TAPONEEL MUKHERJEE

As the Indian economy deals with the economic impact of the corona induced slowdown, an opportunity to make constructive changes to the economic policies has arisen.

India needs a long hard look at ways to deregulate the economy and businesses. Deregulation pertains to not just the legal frameworks at play but the overarching tax, law and business frameworks that drive business decisions and policies. Changes that can help reduce the regulatory burdens and hindrances to business will help businesses in India achieve the elixir of 'creating scale' to help them take advantage of economies of scale.

In a recent article, Paula Mariwala refers to the fact that if Adam Smith or Napoleon who referred to England as 'a nation of shopkeepers' were to stereotype India, they would arguably refer to us as 'a nation of entrepreneurs'. The article further goes on to state that 80 per cent of Indians find livelihoods in the informal sector. The two biggest takeaways from the article are both the importance of small businesses to the Indian economy and the need to help support small businesses. While a lot is written and said about helping SMEs and MSMEs, the critical point that needs attention is how to assist businesses in India to scale to a larger size. Taking advantage of the concept of 'economies of scale' is probably the most significant need for companies across the spectrum in India. While lack of access to credit has been a large contributing factor to the hindrances faced by small businesses in India, a more effective and less complicated regulatory regime is equally important, if not more.

A closer look at the issue will show that a lack of access to credit and complex regulatory ecosystem that hampers the growth of small businesses are closely interlinked. As has been off-repeated, Indian businesses suffer from the vicious cycle of not being able to formalise due to the complexity of the regulatory regime and, therefore, lacking access to credit and thereby remaining small are unable to achieve economies of scale. Essentially, the inability to achieve scale today inhibits the ability to achieve scale in the future. Therefore, the critical question is how does the government turn

this vicious cycle to a virtuous one in which small businesses are incentivised to formalise, access credit more easily, achieve scale and generate returns and get the ever-important tax revenue that is needed? Essentially, when making policy changes, one question that policymakers must keep in mind is whether the policy change will assist small businesses to achieve scale. While achieving 'economies of scale' cannot be the only determinant of policy decisions, it must surely be a major one.

For instance, for smaller businesses the concept of 'job work' whereby a larger business out-sources some of its work to a smaller unit or a small unit out-sources parts of the product creation to another small unit sounds routine but is of prime importance. Job work allows for economies of scale through specialisation. As India moves ahead, especially intending to boost manufacturing, the ability of small businesses to achieve scale will be driven through their ability to specialise that will allow them to scale and add technology. In this case, compliances around concepts such as 'job work' must get more attention in terms of ease and compliance burdens on

businesses. While the concept of jobwork and related regulation at the surface seems standard, a searching look on how Indian small businesses will grow will reveal the importance of rules around concepts such as jobwork. As mentioned earlier, scale is needed for businesses to thrive as the classic economic theory dictates. It is only after a threshold of scale is achieved that businesses can start enjoying the fruits of lower costs, greater profits, formalisation and access to credit, thereby further boosting growth. Indian SMEs have historically struggled for scale and the concomitant advantages that scale brings.

Therefore, as India emerges from the economic slowdown, significant attention must be paid towards the need of businesses to achieve scale. Capital flows, job creation and demand creation are all factors that revolve around the success and scalability of millions of businesses in India.

Policy creation and changes that keep a close eye on assisting Indian businesses to scale amongst other factors will have a significant contribution to putting the wheels back on India's growth story.



## Silver Lake invests ₹7,500 cr in Reliance Retail

Reliance Retail gets IL's retail arm receives Rs 7,500 cr from Silver Lake for 1.75% stake sale Billionaire Mukesh Ambani's Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL) on Saturday said it has received Rs 7,500 crore from US private equity firm Silver Lake Partners, which has picked up 1.75 per cent stake in its retail arm.

Earlier, on September 9, RIL had announced that Silver Lake would invest Rs 7,500 crore into its arm Reliance Retail Ventures Ltd (RRVL). RRVL has received "the subscription amount of Rs 7,500 crore from SLP Rainbow Holdings Pte Ltd (Silver Lake)", RIL said.

Following the allotment of equity stake, "SLP Rainbow Holdings holds 1.75 per cent of the fully diluted equity share capital" of RRVL, it said. This investment had valued RRVL at a pre-money equity value of Rs 4.21 lakh crore. This is the second billion-dollar investment by Silver Lake in a Reliance Industries subsidiary after the \$1.35 billion investment in Jio Platforms announced earlier this year. With more than \$60 billion in combined assets under management and committed capital and a focus on the world's great tech and tech-enabled opportunities, Silver Lake is the global leader in large-scale technology investing. Its other investments have included Airbnb, Alibaba, Alphabet's Verily and Waymo units, Dell Technologies, Twitter and numerous other global technology leaders.

Late last month, Reliance acquired the retail and logistics businesses of Future Group for Rs 24,713 crore to boost its retail vertical. Silver Lake was the first US private equity firm to invest in Jio after tech giant Facebook took a 9.99 per cent stake in the company for Rs 43,573.62 crore. Silver Lake bought 2.08 per cent in Jio in two tranches for a total of Rs 10,202.55 crore.

# RBI likely to retain key lending rates

Experts cite elevated inflation level as a key determinant for a pause in policy easing

ROHIT VAID

Persistently high inflation fanned in part due to supply side disruptions along with seasonal factors will deter the Reserve Bank to administer a dose of lending rate cut during the upcoming monetary policy review.

In a poll conducted by IANS, economist and industry experts cited elevated inflation level as a key determinant for a pause in policy easing. Notably, the expected move comes at a time when industrial output is at historic low due to the Covid-19 pandemic. A policy easing, if administered, would have theoretically allowed commercial banks to reduce their lending rates thereby helping both consumers and the industry to get cheaper finance.

Subsequently, the increased money flow in the hands of consumers would have helped to boost demand, and for the industry provided a higher flow of capital investment on the back of lower cost. Nonetheless, retail inflation has been at an elevated level during July-August. "In view of the retail inflation being higher than RBI's comfort zone for two consecutive quarters in the past and likelihood of it remaining in excess of 6 per cent in July-September as well, no rate cut is expected in the upcoming policy review," said Sunil Kumar Sinha, Principal Economist, India Ratings & Research.

"But RBI will continue to maintain its accommodative policy stance to signal that policy rates are not going to go up either." Lately, data showed that India's August retail inflation stood at an elevated level. The retail or consumer price index stood at 6.69 per cent in August. It had



The RBI's Monetary Policy Committee is expected to release its resolution on the monetary policy after their meet from September 29 to October 1, 2020. Apex bank's accommodative stance is likely to persist in the face of the ongoing economic contraction

risen to 6.73 per cent in July.

As per the data, retail inflation level has reached the upper limit of the medium-term CPI inflation target of 4 per cent. The target is set within a band of +/- 2 per cent. "Given the elevated CPI inflation, we expect an extended pause from the MPC," said Aditi Nayar, Principal Economist, ICRA.

The RBI's MPC (Monetary Policy Committee) is expected to release its resolution on the monetary policy after their meet from September 29 to October 1, 2020. "We believe that MPC will continue to hold the interest rates in the near term

given the continuing inflationary concerns," said Suman Chowdhury Chief Analytical Officer at Acuite Ratings and Research. However, the accommodative stance is likely to persist in the face of the ongoing economic contraction.

Besides inflation, other economic indicators, showed decline in production and in essence revival of economic growth due to localised lockdowns, supply chain disruptions and lack of labour supply.

"Our inflation trajectory suggests that technically the next opportune time to cut may not come before end-3QFY21," said Madhavi Arora, Lead Economist, FX

and Rates for Edelweiss Securities.

"However, the modest reduction in July and August CPI inflation will provide some comfort for the RBI. We maintain the depth of ongoing fall in demand is not yet reflected accurately in inflation, and as it starts to percolate in data and as supply normalise progressively, headline CPI inflation will likely moderate towards 4 per cent by end-CY20, admittedly also helped by base effect."

The August datapoint further showed that India's consumer food price index had eased a bit to 9.05 per cent against 9.27 per cent reported for July 2020.

On its part, Brickwork Ratings said: "We expect inflation to remain below 6 per cent in Q3FY21 as food inflation is likely to lower in the wake of abundant harvests."

"The pandemic is still evolving, and credit offtake, even at a low rate of interest, looks sticky. With uncertainty regarding the pandemic loom ing large, the RBI may not provide a GDP forecast for FY21 in the upcoming MPC meeting. As in the previous statements, the RBI may continue to talk about economic contraction without quantifying the magnitude."

Last month, the MPC of the central bank decided to retain its key short-term lending rate to curb the rise in inflation, and stabilise the general economic environment. Even though it retained the repo rate -- or short-term lending rate for commercial banks, at 4 per cent, the MPC agreed to maintain the growth-oriented accommodative stance.

Likewise, the reverse repo rate stood unchanged at 3.35 per cent, and the marginal standing facility (MSF) rate and the 'Bank Rate' at 4.25 per cent.

## RUPEE APPRECIATION

## Rate cut decision, US stimulus likely constraints in short term

Caution over the upcoming monetary policy review along with a strong US dollar is expected to check the appreciation in Indian rupee during the short-term. Notably, a likely US fiscal stimulus package combined with caution over the upcoming monetary policy review slated for October 1 may limit the rise in the US-DINR spot.

"The strength in dollar index, foreign fund outflows could weigh Rupee for next few weeks going ahead," said Devarsh Vakil, Deputy Head of Retail Research at HDFC Securities. Dollar continues to gain



as concerns about rising Covid-19 cases inducing a slowdown in the global economic recovery weigh on stock markets and emerging currencies, in turn benefiting the oversold dollar. "Recently, a comment by a senior US Fed official on the need for

more US fiscal stimulus added "further fuel to the fire. In near term, dollar and the safe haven yen are likely to outperform," he said.

According to Sajal Gupta, Head, Forex and Rates, Edelweiss Securities: "Rupee closed at 73.60 after a roller coaster week but remained stable to strong on expected Reliance Retail deal pipeline."

"Other developments such as RBI again mopping-up \$3 billion in the previous week, S&P affirming India's ratings with a word of caution on future growth outlook are expected curtail the appreciation, how-

ever, rupee may strengthen toward 73 in coming days within a range of 73.90 to 73.20." Besides, market will keep an eye out for the pan-ultimate monetary policy re view for the calendar year 2020 which is slated for October 1. Last week, the rupee strengthened to Rs 73.60 against a greenback. "Rupee can be in range of 73.25-74.10 as the dollar index keeps has strong support near \$94-94.20, and some upside possibly towards \$95-95.40 shall keep rupee appreciation at check," said Jateen Trivedi, Senior Research Analyst (Commodity & Currency) at LKP Securities.

QUIZ NO. 141

## HANS BIZ QUIZ

Theme: 'Consolidation of Insurance Companies'

1. Which Life Insurance Company was re-named as Exide Life Insurance Co. Ltd in 2014 after Exide Industries acquired 100 per cent of the equity capital of the company?  
a) IDBI Federal Life Insurance Co. Ltd.  
b) ING Vysya Life Insurance Co. Ltd.  
c) Sahara India Life Insurance Co. Ltd.  
d) PNB MetLife India Insurance Co. Ltd.

c) Canara HSBC Oriental Bank of Commerce Life Insurance Co. Ltd.  
d) Aviva Life Insurance Co. India Ltd.



2. In 2013, DLF exited from the life insurance business by selling its stake in DLF Pramerica Life Insurance for an estimated Rs 300 crore. What is the DLF Pramerica Life Insurance known as now?  
a) Mitsui Sumitomo Life Insurance Company  
b) Pramerica Life Insurance Company  
c) Future Generali India Life Insurance Company  
d) DHFL Pramerica Life Insurance Company

3. In 2015, Religare Enterprises (Ranbaxy Group) exited which amongst insurance companies by selling its entire stake to Bennett Coleman & Company (Times Group) which led to the rebranding of the company?  
a) Aegon Life Insurance Company Co. Ltd.  
b) Star Union Dai-ichi Life Insurance Co. Ltd.  
c) IndiaFirst Life Insurance Co. Ltd.  
d) Edelweiss Tokio Life Insurance Co. Ltd.

4. Larsen & Toubro has exited the general and health insurance space by selling its entire stake in L&T General Insurance. Which of the below acquired L&T General Insurance for Rs 551 crore and merged with its existing insurance brand.  
a) ICICI Lombard General Insurance Company Ltd.  
b) IFCCO Tokio General Insurance Company Ltd.  
c) HDFC ERGO General Insurance Company Ltd.  
d) Tata AIG General Insurance Company Ltd.

5. In 2020, Paytm entered the general insurance business. Which insurance company did Paytm acquire for Rs 568 crore?  
a) Kotak Mahindra General Insurance Company Limited  
b) Raheja QBE General Insurance Company Limited  
c) Liberty General Insurance Company Limited  
d) Reliance General Insurance Company Ltd

6. Which Life Insurance company had to rechristen its brand following the exit of American International Group from the JV with the Hong Kong-based insurer partner?  
a) Tata AIG Life Insurance  
b) Max New York Life Insurance Co. Ltd.

7. Health insurance sector in India is growing at 26 per cent CAGR due to high medical inflation with disease burden witnessing a steady rise in the country. In 2019, HDFC ERGO bought which health insurance company for Rs 1,347 crore to become India's second-largest standalone private health insurance company with a gross written premium of Rs 12,000 crore?  
a) Star Health and Allied Insurance Company Ltd.  
b) Apollo Munich Health Insurance Company Ltd.  
c) Religare Health Insurance Company Ltd.  
d) Max Bupa Health Insurance Company Ltd.

8. Which healthcare chain has bought out the stake from TTK Group from 'Cigna TTK Health Insurance company' in 2019, and what is the health insurance company known as now after TTK's exit?  
a) Indraprastha Cigna Health Insurance Company Ltd.  
b) Cigna Narayana Hrudayalaya Health Insurance Company Ltd.  
c) ManipalCigna Health Insurance Company Ltd.  
d) KIMS Cigna Health Insurance Company Ltd.

9. Which health insurance company's name has been changed to 'Care Health Insurance Ltd' in August 2020, after the acquisition of 72 per cent stake in the company by private equity fund, Kedaara Capital?  
a) Royal Sundaram  
b) Bajaj Allianz  
c) Cholamandalam  
d) Religare

10. Liberty Videocon General Insurance, a joint venture between Liberty Mutual and Videocon Group, was rechristened as 'Liberty General Insurance Co Ltd' in March 2018, after the cash-strapped Videocon Industries exited the business. Which of the below bought the stake from Videocon which is fighting a bankruptcy case at the NCLT?  
a) Axis Bank  
b) India Bulls and Policybazaar.com  
c) Yes Bank  
d) DP Jindal and Enam Securities

The Hans Biz Quiz has been compiled by **Sunil Dhavala**, CEO, The Third Umpire Media. He had held senior management roles at Bertelsmann, NGC, Fox Broadcasting, Star TV and others. He is an alumnus of Indian Institute of Foreign Trade

KEY

1B 2D 3A 4C 5B 6A 7B 8C 9D 10D



# CSK batsmen need to have glucose: Sehwaag

**Dubai(IANS):** Former Indian cricketer Virender Sehwaag feels Chennai Super Kings (CSK) batsmen have not been able to play freely and score quickly so far in the 13th Indian Premier League (IPL) edition and thus they need to have "glucose" to add intensity to their game.

"Chennai ke batsman simply not getting going. Glucose chadwaake aana padege next match se batting karne. (CSK batsmen are not getting going. They need to have glucose when they come out to bat in the next match)," Sehwaag said in a tweet on Saturday.

On Friday, MS Dhoni-led side suffered their second defeat of the tournament, losing by 44 runs against Delhi Capitals. Chasing 176, the Men in Yellow could only muster 131/7 in their allotted 20 overs at the Dubai International Cricket Stadium.

CSK have a six-day break before their next outing and the skipper said that the imminent return of Ambati Rayudu for their next game against Sunrisers Hyderabad would help their team balance.

## Today's fixture

**Rajasthan Royals vs Kings XI Punjab at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium at 7.30 pm**



## Trying to play along the ground: Prithvi Shaw

**Dubai (IANS):** Prithvi Shaw's 64 off 43 balls helped Delhi Capitals set up a 44-run win over Chennai Super Kings here on Friday. Shaw hit nine fours and a six and was adjudged the Man of the Match for his performance.

"In the start you have to see how the wicket is, playing along the ground is more important. I was striking the ball well last year as well, but I was making silly mistakes," he said in the post-match presentation ceremony.

Shaw managed just five runs in his previous match. He was dismissed while trying a big shot off Mohammed Shami in the previous match and ended up getting caught at mid-on. He said that he tried to keep the ball down more often this time, something he says he is trying to do this season, which helped him build a long innings.



"This year I am going to try and play my strokes but more along the ground. I would like to see the highlights of my knock and see what I did well to get to the 50. We had a bit of a slow start in the powerplay and but we knew if we didn't lose a wicket in the powerplay it will go well later," he said.



## du Plessis holds Orange Cap, Rabada gets Purple

**Dubai(IANS):** Hard-hitting batsman Faf du Plessis of Chennai Super Kings (CSK) and Delhi Capitals (DC) speedster Kagiso Rabada hold the Orange and Purple Caps respectively.

These running caps are presented to the leading run scorer and wicket-taker, and keep changing hands throughout the duration of the tournament.

South African du Plessis has so far scored 173 runs in three games for the CSK and sits at the top of the charts in the list of leading run scorers. Against Delhi on Friday, the former Proteas skipper scored 43 runs from 35 balls, but was unable to find support from his teammates as his team lost the match by 44 runs.

KXIP captain KL Rahul (153 runs in two games) and his teammate and opener Mayank Agarwal (115 runs in two games) are the next top scorers at present.

In the bowlers' list, Rabada has scalped five wickets in two matches and was instrumental in both wins for the Shreyas Iyer-led side. Against CSK, he started off with a brilliant over and then went on to finish the match by removing both MS Dhoni and Ravindra Jadeja in the final over.

CSK pacer Sam Curran (five wickets in three games) and KXIP speedster Mohammad Shami (four wickets in two games) are the next two top wicket-takers.



## KXIP VS RAJASTHAN ROYALS

# Rahul will be key wicket: Buttler

**Sharjah (IANS):** Rajasthan Royals will be looking to make it two out of two when they face Kings XI Punjab in their next IPL encounter and wicketkeeper-batsman Jos Buttler is expecting a tough fight from the KL Rahul side at the Sharjah Cricket Stadium on Sunday.

Buttler, who had missed the first game, said his team came out with a great performance against Chennai Super Kings in their opening Indian Premier League 2020 encounter on Tuesday. "Great to get a win on the board, the team played fantastically well in the first game. It was an outstanding batting performance and a fantastic bowling performance in tough bowling conditions," said Buttler as per a release shared by the Royals.

"I am really excited to play my first game, it was great to be back in training with the boys. There's

a great vibe around the team, so I'm really looking forward to taking the field. The atmosphere and energy around the squad is fantastic. Obviously, (there's) lots of confidence after that first game," he added. The England batsman also hailed Rahul who scored a brilliant 132 not out against Royal Challengers Bangalore, a game which Kings XI won by 97 runs.

"The training has been very energetic, guys are lively and enjoying each other's company. So yeah (it's a) good atmosphere around (and we are) expecting a really tough match against Kings XI," said Buttler. "Obviously a fantastic team, KL Rahul was in exceptional form the other night against RCB, so he will be a key wicket as always and I think we'll see another potentially high-scoring game at Sharjah with small boundaries and the dew factor coming in," he added.

## You always were a winner Dean Jones, says Brett Lee

**New Delh (IANS):** Ex-Australia speedster Brett Lee has paid a rich tribute to Dean Jones, saying the former batsman was always a winner.

On Thursday afternoon, Jones -- who was part of the Star Sports commentary panel for the 13th Indian Premier League (IPL) edition being held in the United Arab Emirates (UAE) -- died in a Mumbai hotel after suffering a cardiac arrest.

"I love this video of Dean Jones. Absolutely sums up who he was a person. Deano, myself and Scott Styris trying to keep busy a few days ago in lockdown. Life isn't

fair sometimes. You always were a winner Deano. Miss you," Lee wrote on Friday along with a video he shared on Twitter in which he, Jones and Styris are seen playing golf in the hotel lobby.

According to reports, when Jones collapsed in the lobby of the hotel after suffering the cardiac arrest, Lee desperately tried to revive him.

"Daily Mail Australia understands Jones collapsed in the lobby of the hotel as he entered with former fast bowler Brett Lee, who desperately tried to revive him with CPR," wrote the newspaper on its website.

## PV Sindhu to present web series titled 'The A-Game'

**New Delhi (IANS):** After the success of their first two digital media properties, 'Double Trouble' and 'The Finish Line', Baseline Ventures is back with its third series titled 'The A-Game'. The show will be presented by Olympic silver medallist PV Sindhu and would feature five athletes across episodes.

"I would like to congratulate Baseline on conceptualising shows that allow athletes to go back in time and relive those monumental moments that shaped their careers," said Sindhu as per a media release.

"I am honoured to present their latest show called 'The A-Game' which will take a deep dive into how elite athletes think and react in high pressure situations," she added.

The series will document five Indian athletes who brought out their a-game at



very important moments in the history of Indian sport.

Each episode will capture the narrative of a particular athlete's a-game moment through pictures, video footage and stories from the athlete, and help the audience relate to how they brought out their a-game at crucial moments.

## Badminton 2020 season to be completed in Jan 2021: BWF

**Kuala Lumpur (IANS):** The Badminton World Federation (BWF) has announced the Asian leg of the adjusted World Tour 2020 will take place in Bangkok in January next year, which means the 2020 season will now end in 2021.

The BWF said that due to challenges in securing all logistical arrangements for players and participants, staging the Asian leg in November as originally planned, was no longer a viable option.

It further said that Thailand had been selected as the host, following a feasibility study by BWF, Badminton Association of Thailand in collaboration with the Government of Thailand, to ensure all parties can provide a safe Covid-19 framework to stage the three tournaments. It will feature two Super 1,000 Asia Open, culminating with the World Tour Finals.

## CSK 'little bit muddled' at the moment: Fleming

**Dubai (PTI):** Chennai Super Kings head coach Stephen Fleming has admitted that his side were "a little bit muddled" at the moment and they need a clearer strategy going ahead after suffering two losses in three matches in the Indian Premier League.

Fleming also rued the missing of some key players that he said has affected the team combination.

"Well, we're a bit muddled at the moment. We're missing some key players, and we're trying to find a balance that allows us to be competitive. We're looking to develop a personality based on the wickets that we're facing," Fleming said.

"Each wicket has been completely different, and our batting is without Rayudu, (Suresh) Raina etc. We're trying to find a way or a combination and how to use players. We've learned a massive amount over three days," he added. Three-time champion CSK could not get going during the run chase against DC, and when asked why Sam Curran or



Ravindra Jadeja was not promoted up the batting order, Fleming said they had used the same tactic in the last couple of games.

"We have almost got too many batting options at the moment, so that's why I say we were a little bit muddled with what we're sending out, so we just need to be a little bit clearer with what we're doing, and perhaps what we're missing is a bigger contribution at the top," he said. "It's a lot of

question marks and a lot of soul-searching from coaching point of view and strategy point of view, but we're trying to find combinations where we get the best players at right times. To keep shunting the order all over the place is not really our style, but we've had a go at it and we'll review how it's gone."

Spin bowling has been traditionally CSK's strength but struggling at the moment, prompting

Fleming to say it was an area of concern.

"Yeah, it's an area of concern, because it's been such a strength for CSK, and you've got to think that the style of play that we've developed over the last 12 years is heavily based on spin. So what we're trying to do is find a different personality."

"Spin still plays a part, and we've played on three different grounds, so each game has been different conditions. We're struggling to adjust to find the pace and the style to bowl through the middle, and that, in the last two games in particular, has been an area where we haven't done so well. So from a strength to an area of concern, we need to rectify that."

Asked about the possible team combination in the upcoming matches, Fleming said, "All bets are on the table at the moment as we try to find a way. We are looking forward to playing a number of games here (in Dubai), we were interested in how this pitch played, and get conditions right so we can get right combination."

## Important to stay motivated without events, says Lakra

**Bengaluru(IANS):** Indian men's hockey team defender Birendra Lakra believes it's important for the side to stay motivated when there are no competitions around amid the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic.

"This situation is something no one would have faced before but as athletes we need to have a positive outlook and it is important to remain motivated," Lakra said.

"When I was injured, it used to bother me a lot that I couldn't do most of the things I could have normally done, I was dependent on someone else. Also watching my teammates play matches and I couldn't, it was difficult. But that phase has helped me face the challenges during lockdown," the 30-



year-old added. With global hockey resuming with the FIH Hockey Pro League start-

ing earlier this week, Lakra is optimistic about the team's future.

"Personally, I feel it's great that we could return to national camp. Thanks to Hockey India, we are probably one of the few sports in the country who are able to begin sports activities and ensure our preparations for Olympics are not too hampered," explained the experienced defender.

"Though there is no competition in the upcoming months, it was very important to return to camp so that we could start slow, not rush into getting back to form. It was important to do this in order to avoid any injuries because we were restarting after a long gap," he added.

## World TT announces 2021 events

**New Delhi (IANS):** World Table Tennis (WTT) has announced the first half of the 2021 WTT calendar, including three separate "Hubs" to be staged in the Middle East, China and Europe.

According to the calendar, the first Hub will be staged between March 17 and April 3 next year in the Middle East, followed by those in China from April 13 to May 16 and in Europe from May 27 to June 20.

"The Hubs will showcase the new WTT event structure and the China Hub will feature the very first Grand Smash, the top tier in professional table tennis," WTT said in a statement on Friday.

It said that the proposed Hub



format would create the best possible environment for WTT events to be held, ensure better logistics for meeting Covid-19 health and safety guidelines and a manageable travel schedule for players.

Following the three Hubs, the WTT calendar will take a break to accommodate the postponed Tokyo Olympic Games to be held between July 23 and August 8. After the Olympic Games, the

WTT hopes to return to a modified calendar of events.

The WTT Champions Series will also see players battling for prize money and ranking points in their attempt to reach the WTT Cup Finals.

"2021 is a landmark year for the sport and we remain committed to offering our fans, both old and new, the opportunity to watch world-class table tennis that is refreshed, re-energised and redefined," said Stephen Duckitt, WTT Event Strategy Director.

The WTT event structure features Grand Smash, WTT Cup Finals, WTT Champions, WTT Star Contender and WTT Contender.