



WINDOWS



An artist from Rajasthan gives final touches to Krishna idols ahead of Janmashtami festival, in Bengaluru, on Friday

Educationist PK Joshi appointed UPSC chief

New Delhi: Educationist Prof



Pradeep Kumar Joshi was on Friday appointed chairman of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC), that

conducts the civil services examination to select India's bureaucrats and diplomats among others, officials said. Joshi is currently a member in the Commission. He will succeed Arvind Saxena, who completes his term as UPSC chairman on Friday, officials said. Joshi, who was the chairman of both Chhattisgarh and Madhya Pradesh Public Service Commissions, joined the UPSC as member in May 2015. His tenure as the chairman of the UPSC will be till May 12, 2021, an official said. With his appointment as the chairman, there is a vacancy of a member in the UPSC. At present, Bhim Sain Bassi, Air Marshal A S Bhonsle (retired), Sujata Mehta, Manoj Soni, Smita Nagaraj, M Sathiyavathy Bharat Bhushan Vyas, T C A Anant and Rajiv Nayan Choubey are other members of the UPSC. The commission conducts the civil services examination annually in three stages preliminary, mains and interview to select officers of Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Police Service (IPS) and Indian Foreign Service (IFS) among others.

NATION



RHEA APPEARS BEFORE ED IN MONEY LAUNDERING CASE

P3

BUSINESS



BUSINESS SENTIMENT HITS ALL-TIME LOW SINCE 1991

P6



NEP USHERS IN 'NEW WORLD ORDER'

Kids learn faster in mother tongue: PM



New Delhi: Emphasizing the need to teach children in their mother tongue, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday said there is no dispute that students learn faster in the dialect they speak. He stressed that the new national education policy will usher a 'new world order' and will lay foundation of a "new India in 21st century".

"There is no dispute that children learn faster in their mother tongue. This is a major reason for NEP to include imparting of education in children's mother tongue at least till class 5," Modi said during his inaugural address at

the conclave on "Transformational Reforms in Higher Education under National Education Policy".

Stating that the NEP 2020 would usher in a 'new world order', the Prime Minister said: "It gives me immense pleasure to know that after the National Education Policy was released, there were no major protests from any part of the country, neither were there allegations of it having any bias." He said the policy was approved after brainstorming over it for four years.

Modi said that through NEP, India will transform

its students into global citizens who are rooted in their values. "In recent years, there have not been major changes in education and thus the values of curiosity and imagination were not given the thrust. Instead, we moved towards a herd community. The mapping of interest, ability, and demand was needed. We need to develop critical thinking and innovative thinking abilities in our youths. It will be possible if we have purpose, philosophy, and passion of education," he said.

Outlining the major shift in the education policy, Modi said, "In our ed-

ucation system the focus has been on 'What to Think' while the new Education Policy will emphasise on 'How to Think'." Modi said in the present world there is no shortage of information and content. The effort now is to emphasise on 'Inquiry, Discovery and Analytics' based methods for children to learn.

The conclave aimed to discuss several new initiatives introduced under the recently launched National Education Policy, the Prime Minister asked all stakeholders to discuss the ways to implement the new policy.

Air India flight crashes in Kerala

Pilot among 2 dead ■ 191 passengers on board

Kozhikode: Air India Express aircraft from Dubai to Kozhikode with 191 onboard crashed after overshooting the runway and going into the valley after landing at Karipur Airport. Two people, including the pilot, have lost their lives.

Fire tenders and ambulances have been rushed to the spot. The mishap took place at about 7.10 pm and the aircraft broke into two parts. According to initial reports, the pilot of the aircraft, Deepak Vasant Sathe, died in the mishap and the condition of the co-pilot is believed to be critical. The Cockpit and the front door of the flight were completely damaged.

Rajeev Jain, Additional DG Media, Civil Aviation Ministry said that no fire was reported at the time of



Pilot Deepak Vasant Sathe

landing. "There are 174 passengers, 10 infants, 2 pilots & 5 cabin crew onboard the aircraft. As per initial reports, rescue operations are on and passengers are being taken to hospital," he said.

The Directorate General of Civil Aviation (DGCA) has ordered a detailed inquiry into the matter.

"Deeply distressed to hear about the Air India Express tragedy at Kozhikode. Prayers are with the bereaved families and those

injured. We are ascertaining further details," said External Affairs Minister Subrahmanyam Jaishankar

Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan instructed the police and fire personnel to take urgent action in the wake of the plane crash at the Kozhikode International airport (CCJ) in Karipur. "Have also directed the officials to make necessary arrangements for rescue and medical support," he said.

CM launches electric vehicle policy

PURNA SINGH



New Delhi: The Kejriwal government has taken a big step to make Delhi free from pollution. On Friday, the Delhi government rolled out its electric vehicle policy in a bid to boost the economy and to make Delhi pollution free city. The Chief Minister said his government studied the electric vehicle policies across the world and consulted experts in the country to come up with the policy to offer subsidies and waive road tax and registration fee for electric vehicles. **Continued on Page 5**

US lifts curbs on global health travel

Asks citizens against visiting India, China

Washington: The US has lifted the highest level of its global health travel advisory for Americans due to the coronavirus pandemic and restored the previous country-specific system without changing the status of over 50 countries, including that of India and China.

The US state department issued the Level 4:

Do Not Travel advisory -- the highest level of travel advisory -- on March 19, urging American citizens not to travel overseas due to the coronavirus pandemic.

India remains on Level 4 of the travel advisory along with more than 50 countries, including China. This means that the US urges its citizens

not to travel to India due to the increasing coronavirus cases.

The state department, in its latest travel advisory on India issued on Thursday, said: "Do not travel to India due to COVID-19. Exercise increased caution in India due to crime and terrorism".

Continued on Page 5

'LET ITALY COMPENSATE FAMILIES OF FISHERMEN'

SC sets condition to close marines' case

New Delhi: The Supreme Court made it clear to the Centre on Friday that it would not pass any order on the plea seeking closure of cases against two Italian marines, accused of killing two Indian fishermen, without hearing the victims' families. A bench headed by Chief Justice S A Bobde allowed the Centre to file fresh plea making the victims' family members parties to its application for seeking closure of Italian Marines case.

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15 killed, 50 trapped in Kerala landslide

Thiruvananthapuram: Fifteen people have been killed and over 50 others are feared trapped following a massive landslide at a workers' settlement in a tea plantation in Rajakkad in Idukki district of Kerala in the early hours of Friday.

At least 16 people were rescued and rushed to the hospital, said Idukki District Collector H Dineshan, adding that heavy downpour and foggy climate in the area is hampering rescue operations.

"It is a major tragedy. It is a hilly terrain and some roads connecting to the settlement were washed away in torrential rain. We have sought the Air Force help for airlifting the injured but we were told it will be difficult in inclement weather," said State Revenue Minister E Chandrasekharan, adding a team of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) has arrived at the scene.

Local people said the area has been witnessing heavy rains over the last three days and power and communication networks in the area



were disrupted due to this. This delayed the rescue work. Since the mishap took place in the early hours, many of those affected were in deep slumber due to which they couldn't escape, they said.

"We have information that at least 84 people lived in the settlement. Most of them are from neighboring Tamil Nadu. And there was also a canteen to cater to their needs at the settle-

ment," said Parthasarathy, a social worker from the area.

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) has declared red alert in three districts, Kozhikode, Wayanad and Idukki, and orange alert in five other districts. Many rivers are in spate after heavy downpour and the irrigation department said shutters of some dams, including Idukki, will be opened if the wet condition continued.

Indian Coast Guard rescues 14 fishermen

Chennai: The Indian Coast Guard rescued a fishing vessel, saving 14 lives mid-sea, 88 nautical miles off Nagapattinam on Wednesday, according to a statement.

The fishermen, from Tuticorin who had set sail on the boat GN Sabari on August 4, were stranded due to rough weather caused by the southwest monsoon, and the vessel was drifting dangerously due to machinery breakdown. A merchant ship sighted the drifting vessel and the information was relayed to the Maritime Rescue Coordination Centre, Chennai, following which the Indian Coast Guard ship, Shaurya, was diverted to carry out a Search and Rescue (SAR) mission, much to the relief of the crew.



SII to make 100mn Covid vaccines for India

New Delhi: The Serum Institute of India (SII) said it has entered into a new partnership with international vaccine alliance Gavi and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to accelerate manufacturing and delivery of up to 100 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines for India as well as other low and middle-income countries (LMICs).

"The collaboration will provide upfront capital to SII to help them

Inks deal with Gavi and Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation



increase manufacturing capacity now so that, once a vaccine, or vac-

cines, gains regulatory approval and WHO pre-qualification, doses can

be produced at scale for distribution to India and LMICs as part of the

Gavi COVAX AMC mechanism as early as the first half of 2021," SII

said in a statement on Friday. The company has set an affordable ceiling price of USD 3 (around Rs 225) per dose, it added.

The funding will support at-risk manufacturing by SII for candidate vaccines from AstraZeneca and Novavax, which will be available for procurement if they are successful in attaining full licensure and WHO prequalification, the statement said.

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OCI card holders from US, UK, France can visit India

New Delhi: Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) card holders from the US, UK, German and France, with whom India has signed 'air bubble' arrangements, will be allowed to visit the country, the Home Ministry announced on Friday. Other foreigners from these countries have also been allowed to avail Indian visa facility for business, medical and employment purposes. According to a home ministry notification, Indian citizens have also been allowed to travel to these countries on any type of visa.

Womenia

Celebrate Handloom Day year-long

ASKARI JAFFER

Handlooms actually originated centuries ago and includes many crafty Indian Jamdani artists and its connoisseurs. All the revolution that we find in the handlooms fashion world today is inspired largely by objects of traditional and ancient design.

Recreating handloom fashion

Handlooms in India are extensively inspired by museums, ancient historical architectures, paintings, and carvings. Every detail of the textile, design, texture, and colour of Indian cultural history continues to be explored, studied and artisans are continuously guided to recreate it. The outcome for an Indian Designer like me and many others is immensely satisfying and it helps the handloom eco-system to set new trends in Handlooms innovation – recreating old fashion classics.

Since, beginning the essence of Jamdani has seen heart-warming transformation - following three metaphorical threads that overlay its sensuous surface: the art, the artisan, and the patron.

Weaving process and technique

In the weaving process, you will witness alteration of technique, the subtle changes in yarn or number of threads, elusive hint of a new colour, and diverse pattern and texture. You will find fresh appeal in Dhakai, Kota, Paithan, Kanchi, Banarasi, and a new hybrid genre that allows for complex patterns and designs never attempted on the Jamdani loom.

India's is surrounded by master weavers and over 70 per cent of



The National Handloom Day should be celebrated year-long, not for a day in a year. This will not only promote handlooms but also the weavers," — Gaurang Shah



and inventive, fabrics, and fashion pieces. In recent times, designers and weavers have expanded their legacy to a wider audience, highlighting their versatility, and inventive potential.

Innovations during COVID pandemic

During the COVID 19 Pandemic, handloom masks became a rage, and it also gave new revenue generation opportunities for handloom brands and weavers.

It is also important to promote, wear and expand the outreach of handlooms far and wide. To further this endeavour we have initiated interlace, a series that made its debut in New Delhi. This series which we had planned to take to other cities to tell the story of Jamdani by combining a rich array of mediums like film, poetry and experiential installations, to reveal a saga of connections and transformations. Because of Covid pandemic, we couldn't go forward with this tour, the aim of this initiative is to present India's rich Indian Jamdani history replete with fables and legends and explored the multicultural and deeply personal influences that make Jamdani one of the most exquisite creations of India's looms and also experienced the profound skill and sublime artistry with which the weaver continues its legacy. Post Covid pandemic interlace series will be touring to all major cities of India.

Likewise, sarees worn by Vidya Balan have left lasting impressions amongst women who love handlooms and sari innovations.

Indian Handlooms have got its due to present its splendour in period films too and Biopics such as the National Award-Winning Movie "Mahanati". A closer look at the line of costumes for Keerthy Suresh in Mahanati – and you will discover how integrated silks fabrics from different parts of India like Kanchipuram, Benares which were enhanced with Kota, Mangalgiri and block prints were beautifully handcrafted in our traditional jamdani looms by a dedicated team of more than 100 local artisans. These designs have garnered immense admiration from fashion consumers – it certainly left a great impact amongst several markets around the world.

Jamdani and handloom's journey

Jamdani Weaving of Handloom's journey is painstaking and takes months of some years of hard work.

Indian Jamdani Weaving holds tremendous potential as art. It has given birth to innumerable timeless

whom are women, who can weave any pattern, no matter how complex and yet, like true artists, they keep pushing their craft.

Sustainable fashion

The National handloom Day should be celebrated year long and not just for a day in a year, weaving should also be part of our national system of education.

So, what more needs to be done to bring change in terms of acceptance of handling and sustainable fashion in India? I believe handlooms are sustainable, and Indian Jamdani creations are timeless, and continue to have inventive appeal even today. That's why you will find a saree passed on to generations.

Handloom in movies

Movies, movie stars and fashion trendsetters like Sonam Kapoor, Kirron Kher, Vidya Balan certainly helped handlooms fashion wardrobe revival. To cite an example the saree Kirron Kher wore in 'India Got Talent' is among the most sought after she styled herself with traditional handwoven sarees.

Tackling everyday curly hair dilemmas

FOR ENVIABLE CURLY LOCKS, YOU NEED TO TAKE CARE OF THEM IN A PARTICULAR FASHION

SIDDHI JAIN

Curly hair is beautiful, loved by everyone and envied by those who don't have it. But, only someone who has curly hair can understand how high maintenance and unruly it can be, most times. Curly tresses tend to go through a lot of problems like hair fall, tangled hair, dryness and may lose shine easily if not cared for properly.

Given how delicate curly hair can be its treatment needs to be special too. Agnes Chen, National Technical Head from Streax Professional shares some tips on managing your curls daily and keeping them healthy and shiny forever.

Common curly hair problems:

- **Dryness:** If you over-wash your curly hair, it loses its natural moisture. Natural oil vanishes from the hair leaving the curls to look dry and frizzy.
- **Frizz:** Curly hair is way more prone to frizz than other hair textures. It is naturally dry since its spiral shaped DNA structure makes it difficult for the scalp's natural oils to slide down each strand and hydrate its lengths.
- **Messy Knots:** We have all been there, waking up with a bird's nest of tangles or trying to tug a brush through our hair after



showing, curly hair can be a knotty mess.

As curls are unique, you need to treat them exceptionally to maintain their beauty and charm. You might need to work a little extra for curls, but it is all worth it. Here are some guidelines to help you care for your curly locks.

1. Keep it clean and moisturised. Always use a shampoo and conditioner suitable for curly hair. Hair products made for curly hair understand the hair type and have elements to help it retain efficient moisture
2. Use the pads of your fingers to cleanse in a circular motion, it eliminates the frizz by blocking out any humidity or unhealthy moisture in the hair. Do not use your nails nor scrub too hard.
3. Always use leave-in cream if your curly hair gets frizzy and dry. Leave-in cream helps in

moisturising, maintaining, and making your curls look graceful. Curly texture hair tends to be dry, dull, and frizzy. Usage of serum prevents the hair from getting frizzy. It also provides moisture so your locks can have bounce and sheen.

4. The right way to dry curly hair. Most people dry their hair wrongly, causing dullness, frizzy, and tangled hair. Never dry your hair bending backwards. Always try to flip your head upside down and with the help of towel scrunch it so that the towel absorbs the water. While you scrunch your hair, it will take shape and help in form curls.
5. The thumb rule is to avoid brushing your hair when it is dry. Always use a wide-tooth comb and avoid using a fine-tooth comb and brushes as they open your curls.

74 women drape in sarees for online meet



Venila in ikat saree

Seventy four women across three continents draped in sarees, each of a distinct Indian weave, gathered for an online meeting hosted by the Global Sarees Pact, a five year old Facebook group, that promotes the wearing of sarees and weavers, in keeping with the COVID-19 times on the eve of National Handlooms Day.

The significance of 74 is the marking of 74 years since India became independent. In earlier years the group joined hands with the Telangana State Handloom Weavers Co-operative Society Limited to showcase new handloom motifs and designs in Sarees by walking the ramp to mark the occasion.

At the virtual meeting the saree enthusiasts decided to wear distinct handlooms from their wardrobe and use new as well as old photographs, to showcase the handlooms pan India on social media. The members hash tag-

ging the drapes as handloom day 1 handloom day 2 are to share the glory of Indian culture and traditional textiles by adding an explanatory note along with the photographs.

The online meeting was attended by select representatives of the Global Sarees Pact - it has nearly 15,000 spread across 15 countries - from around the world on the eve of National Handlooms Day.

"Sadly 2020 has turned out to be an agonizing year with weavers being challenged like never before. The spread of the novel corona virus has pushed them into turbulent times. There is no market for what they weave and things have come to such a pass that many looms have fallen silent," Tejdeep Kaur Menon, senior Administrator of the Group told the members while initiating the discussion.

She pointed out another unwelcome change is that for the modern Indian woman the saree is fast becoming a festive garment to be worn on special occasions. "What we need to do is to make it daily wear just as grandmothers and mothers did for decades," she said.

Veni La disclosed the train of weaves that Global Sarees started over the past year has showcased 74 distinct weaves and embroidery styles of India. "It is a meaningful portrayal of the evolution and the transformational journey of Indian weaves," she explained.

"Though ikkat is woven in some 35 villages in an around Pochampalli in Telangana a connoisseur will be able to spot a saree from one or other place based on the characteristic distinctions. The list of the unique and iconic weaves across India is unending," Tejdeep said.

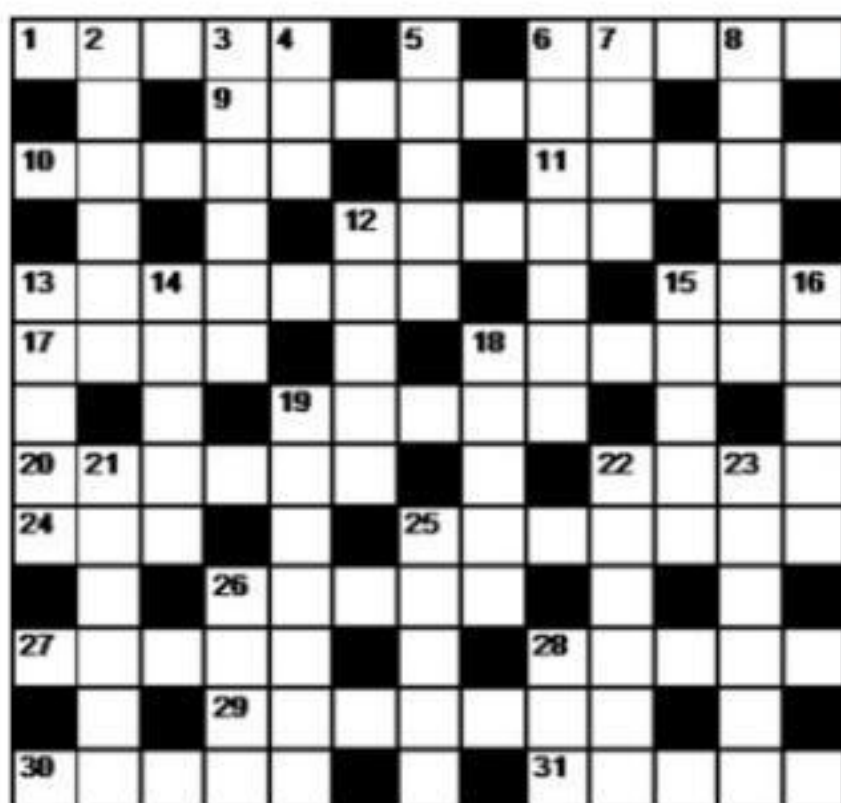
India is also home to several embroidery styles. The Parsigara saree is one such distinct tradition. When Parsis used to travel to China to barter tea some of the enterprising traders brought back a new genre of artistic embroidery which was very realistic in its depiction of flora and fauna. Legend has it that this was commissioned as a five and half metre saree.

Chikankari is only a generic name for a large number of traditional embroidery styles from Lucknow. It seems that it came to India as part of the culture of Persian nobles in the Mughal court and Noorjehan, the wife of Emperor Jehangir, is associated with its development and growth.

The distinct and more popular Chikankari stitches include tepchi, hool, zanzeera, bakhiya, phanda, bijli, rahet, jaali, murri, karan, Taj Mahal, bulbul and many more.



Tejdeep Kaur Menon



SOLUTION TO AUGUST 7

CROSSWORD

Across

- 1 Indian state with Patna as its capital (5)
- 6 Fencing swords (5)
- 9 Hindu state of blessedness (7)
- 10 Flashy, ostentatious jewellery (5)
- 11 Aspersions (5)
- 12 Intense hatred (5)
- 13 Improve (7)
- 15 Designer Anna (3)
- 17 Object of worship (4)
- 18 Flower parts (6)
- 19 Relaxed (5)
- 20 Flag of nationality (6)
- 22 Clarified butter (4)
- 24 Regret (3)
- 25 Accumulates (7)
- 26 After that time (5)
- 27 Chews (5)
- 28 Heart chambers (5)
- 29 Initially (2,5)
- 30 Colloquially speaking massive blocks of ice

floating in the ocean (5)

- 31 It never rains, but it ____? (5)

Down

- 2 Away from the sea (6)
- 3 Happening every year (6)
- 4 Manipulate dishonestly (3)
- 5 Avoid or dodge (5)
- 6 Made certain (7)
- 7 Tree in the hand (4)
- 8 Scolding (6)
- 12 Area in an atlas (5)
- 13 Duck for down (5)
- 14 Stallion (5)
- 15 Hindu ascetic (5)
- 16 Man and Capri ? (5)
- 18 Quiet (5)
- 19 They are vain? (7)
- 21 Subtle variation (6)
- 22 Cave (6)
- 23 Weirder (6)
- 25 Bitter to taste (5)
- 26 Loot (4)
- 28 Viper - "sap" changed ? (3)

SUDOKU



SOLUTION TO AUGUST 7

NEWS ROUNDUP

Priyanka, Vidya, Janhvi, Dia go vocal for local on National Handloom Day

Bollywood actresses including Priyanka Chopra Jonas, Vidya Balan and Janhvi Kapoor went vocal for local, urging people to support Indian weavers, on the occasion of National Handloom Day on Friday. Vidya posted a few pictures in mustard silk saree on Instagram, and wrote: "Let us all resolve to support our weavers across the country in these difficult times by buying and wearing their beautiful creations in our everyday life and also help keep #India'sHandloomLegacy alive. Appreciate the labour of love." Priyanka posted a picture in a green saree, and wrote on Instagram Stories: "Indian handlooms are known to be unique and a work of craftsmanship. Let's lend our support to the weavers and artisans of the textile industry. #National-HandloomDay#Vocal4Handmade."

Janhvi shared an image of her most favourite handloom saree.

"Today is National Handloom Day! This is my most favourite and most special handloom saree. The weavers and artisans in our country are truly unmatched in skill and creativity- the best in the world! #vocal4handmade," she wrote.

Dia Mirza said she is proud of Indian heritage. "Our weavers need all our support and love! This #NationalHandloomDay let's celebrate the rich legacy of our Indian weaves and textiles. I am proud of this rich heritage of India and of our weavers who have kept our traditions alive. There is nothing like a handloom saree," she wrote along with an image in which she is dons the saree look. Earlier, Kangana Ranaut urged to "promote our own Indian organic fabric industries and preserve the planet" on Twitter, though a tweet by Team Kangana Ranaut on an unverified Twitter account.



Rlys to end colonial-era ‘Khalasi’ system, stops new appointments

New Delhi: The Railways is set to end a colonial-era practice of appointing “khalasis” or “bungalow peons” who worked at the residences of senior officials, following an order from the Railway Board barring any new appointment to the post. In an order, the Railway Board has said the issue regarding telephone attendant-cum-dak khalasis (TADKs) is under review.

“The issue regarding the appointment of TADK is under review in Railway Board. It has, therefore, been decided that any appointment of fresh face substitutes as TADK should not either be processed or made with immediate effect. “Further, all cases approved for such appointments since 1st July 2020 may be reviewed and position advised to Board. This may be complied with



strictly in all Railway establishments,” the order said. After joining the railways as temporary staff, TADKs become Group D staff following a screening process after a period of around three years. In the earlier days, officers posted in remote areas or working in the field during odd hours would be provided a TADK to ensure security for the family as well as do odd of-

ficial work like attend to phone calls or ferry files. These TADK staff would usually become ticket examiners, porters, mechanics for air-conditioned coaches and cooks in the running room. However, over the years, the role was relegated to that of domestic help and then to office peons, officials said. Amid complaints of abuse and ill treatment, the railways

had ordered a review of the post and in 2014, formed a joint secretary-level committee of nine members of the Railway Board to review the policy. TADK staff members, who have a minimum educational qualification of up to Class 8, are paid around Rs 20,000 to Rs 22,000 per month and given benefits akin to Group D staff of the railways.

SUSHANT SINGH RAJPUT CASE

Rhea appears before ED in money laundering case

Mumbai (PTI): Actor Rhea Chakraborty, accused of abetting suicide of actor Sushant Singh Rajput, appeared before the Enforcement Directorate (ED) here on Friday in connection with the money laundering case lodged by it. The 28-year-old arrived at the agency’s office in the Ballard Estate area here, accompanied by her brother Showik, shortly before noon. Her business manager who also worked for Rajput, Shruti Modi, also appeared before the agency soon after as she too was summoned. The statements of



Chakraborty and Modi were recorded under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), officials said. Rajput’s friend and roommate Siddharth Pithani has also been called by the ED to appear on Saturday in connection with this money laundering case that stems from a complaint filed by the actor’s father with the Bihar Police in connection with his death, they said. Pithani is stated to be out of Mumbai at present and he has said in various news channel interviews that he was present in the Bandra flat on June 14 when the

34-year-old actor hanged himself. The IT professional, stated to be living with Rajput for about an year, had earlier recorded his statement with the Mumbai Police as part of their accidental death report (ADR) probe in the case. It was not immediately clear if the agency questioned Showik as he left the agency office after a few hours. Chakraborty, accused by Rajput’s father of abetting his son’s suicide, had initially refused to appear before the agency citing her appeal pending before the Supreme Court.

Trump bans TikTok, WeChat

Washington: US President Donald Trump has announced sweeping restrictions against Chinese-owned social media giants TikTok and WeChat, his latest explosive move aimed at countering China’s rising global power.



Trump signed executive orders giving Americans 45 days to stop doing business with the Chinese platforms, effectively setting a deadline for a potential pressured sale of viral video sensation TikTok to Microsoft. The president cited national security concerns for the moves, which also threw into doubt the American operations of WeChat’s parent firm, Tencent, an uber-powerful player in the video gaming industry and one of the world’s richest companies. Trump has taken an increasingly heavy hammer to US relations with China, challenging it on trade, military and economic fronts, and Thursday’s effort provoked more outrage in Beijing. The new restrictions sent Tencent shares into a spin, with the issue tanking as much as 10 percent at one point in Hong Kong trade, wiping almost \$50 billion off its market capitalization. Other Asian markets also took note, with investors con-

cerned about increasingly bitter relations between the economic titans that some fear could lead to a renewal of their painful trade war. Officials from both sides are due to meet next Saturday to review a trade deal signed earlier this year. “TikTok automatically captures vast swaths of information from its users, including Internet and other network activity information such as location data and browsing and search histories,” Trump’s order said. Data could potentially be used by China to track the locations of federal employees and contractors, build dossiers on people for blackmail, and conduct corporate espionage, it alleged. Beijing slammed the move as “arbitrary political manipulation and suppression” and said it would come at the expense of American users and companies. Users of China’s Twitter-like Weibo platform said the move would cut off many Chinese living and studying abroad.

Be careful who you mess with: Sushant’s sis tweets

Numbai: Actor Sushant Singh Rajput’s sister Shweta Singh Kirti on Friday posted a cryptic quote on her social media platforms saying people should think about the consequences before messing up with someone. The post featured an image of Lord Shiva and read, “Someone said be careful

who you mess with because you don’t know who protects them in the spiritual world.” She captioned the picture with #justiceforsushant. Shweta shared the post hours before the late actor’s girlfriend, Rhea Chakraborty appeared in front of the Enforcement Directorate in connection

with the money laundering case lodged by it. Sushant’s untimely demise was followed by a high-profile investigation by Mumbai Police during which many big names from Bollywood, including filmmakers Sanjay Leela Bhansali and Aditya Chopra, recorded their statements.

Bihar seeks dismissal of Rhea Chakraborty’s plea

Patna: The Bihar government told the Supreme Court on Friday that Bollywood actress Rhea Chakraborty’s plea seeking transfer of the Patna FIR to Mumbai in actor Sushant Singh Rajput’s death case was “premature, misconceived and non-maintainable”, and

needed to be dismissed. The affidavit, filed in response to Chakraborty’s plea, said the director general of police, through the Bihar government, recommended the CBI probe given the sensitivity of the matter, interstate ramification and pres-

ence of most of the accused in Mumbai. The affidavit, filed by Patna Senior Superintendent of Police Upendra Sharma through advocate Keshav Mohan, said in criminal proceedings, the concept of jurisdiction cannot be applied like civil cases.

‘Spreading obscenity’: SC chides Kerala activist over semi-nude photo

New Delhi: Kerala activist Rehana Fathima’s request for protection from arrest over a controversial video of her children painting on her semi-nude body was rejected by the Supreme Court today. Calling it an act of “spreading obscenity”, the Supreme Court said: “Why do you do all this? You might be an activist (but) what kind of nonsense is this? It is obscenity you are spreading. It will leave a very bad taste in society”. The three-member bench led by Justice Arun Mishra also questioned: “What impression will growing children get from this act?” Rehana Fatima was charged with under the POCSO (Protection Of Children from Sexual Offences) and IT (Information

Technology) Act after a video emerged of her minor children - a 14-year-old-boy and eight-year-old girl painting on her semi-nude body. In her plea Ms Fathima said she had “intended to normalise the female form for her children and not allow distorted ideas of sexualisation to pervade their minds”. The activist, who made headlines for an attempt to enter Sabrimala temple in September 2018 (after the Supreme Court allowed women from traditionally-barred age groups of 10-50 to enter), approached the Supreme Court after the Kerala High Court denied her anticipatory bail. She had argued that the case against her violated her funda-

mental rights to life, liberty and dignity. In the petition filed before the top court on Monday, she also pointed out that she had fully co-operated in the investigation and her conduct had been exceptional. “Goddesses in Kerala are frequently depicted in idols and murals with bare breasts. When one prays at the temple the feeling is not of sexual arousal but one of divinity,” Ms Fathima, in her plea before the top court, had said. “(Does) female nudity (even when not visible) per se constitutes obscenity? (Can) children painting on their mother’s body can be concluded to be “sexual gratification” and “child abuse” under these stringent laws?” she asked.

Bhojpuri actor Anupama found dead in Mumbai

Mumbai: Bhojpuri film actress Anupama Pathak allegedly killed herself at her Mumbai home, police said on Friday. Anupama Pathak, 40, was found hanging at her rented flat in Mira Road area of the Mumbai Metropolitan Region on Sunday, police said. Ms Pathak, who was from Bihar, was seen in several Bhojpuri films and TV shows. A day before her death, she had shared a Facebook video and said that she felt cheated and was unable able to trust anyone. In the video, she spoke about not having friends who can be of help. She allegedly killed herself when her husband was not at home, police said, adding that a suicide note has been found.

Will not go for mosque inauguration: Adityanath

New Delhi: The Samajwadi Party on Friday sought an apology from Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath over his remark that he would not attend the inauguration of the mosque to be built in Ayodhya, replacing the demolished Babri Masjid. In an interview to a television channel Thursday, Adityanath said he couldn’t go for the mosque inauguration “as a yogi and as a Hindu”. Reacting to the remark, the opposition SP said he should seek an apology from the people of the state. When contacted, a UP Congress spokesperson, however, refused to comment on the chief minister’s remarks over the mosque. “If you ask me as a chief minister, I have no problem with any belief, religion or community. If you ask me as a yogi, I will definitely not go because as a Hindu I have the right to express my



‘upasana vidhi’ (way of worship) and act accordingly,” Adityanath had said. “I am neither ‘vaadi or ‘prati-vadi’ (petitioner nor respondent). That is why neither will I be invited, nor will I go. I know, I won’t be getting any such invitation,” he said. “The day they invite me, secularism of many will be in danger. That’s why I want that their secularism should not be in danger and I continue to silently work to ensure that everyone benefits from government scheme with-

out any discrimination,” he said. He claimed that the Congress never wanted a solution to the dispute. “They wanted the dispute to continue for their political benefit.” “Attending roza-iftar with a skull cap is not secularism. People also know that this is drama. People know the reality,” the CM said. SP spokesperson Pawan Pandey criticised Adityanath over his remarks, charging that he has violated the oath he took while assuming charge as the chief minister. “He is the CM of the entire state, and not only of the Hindu community. Whatever the population of Hindus and Muslims in the state, he is the CM of all. This language of the CM lacks dignity,” he said. “He should seek an apology from the people for this,” Pandey said.

5 feared to be buried alive in Karnataka hill landslide

Madikeri (IANS): Five persons, including a head priest, are feared to have been buried alive after a house collapsed due to a landslide in Karnataka’s Brahmagiri hill, police said on Friday. “The five missing persons are feared to have been buried alive, as the house in which they were staying collapsed in the landslide on the sloppy hill due to heavy rains and gusty winds,” Madikeri Deputy Superintendent of Police Dinesh Kumar told IANS. Brahmagiri hill is about 300 km southwest of state capital Bengaluru. Search and rescue operations by the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF) were hampered due to incessant rains, poor visibility and the road in the hill blocked by boulders and mounds of mud after the landslide. “The landslide has buried the house on the sloppy hill under debris so deep, leaving no trace of its existence. A 12-member NDRF team is trying to clear the road for deploying a JCB machine for removing the debris,” Kumar said.

Besides Talakaveri temple head priest Narayan Achar and his wife Shanta, his brother and two temple employees were staying in the house when torrential rains and heavy winds caused the landslide on Wednesday night. Ruling BJP legislator from the Madikeri Assembly segment, K.G. Bopaiah said the octogenarian priest was advised recently to shift from the house to the quarters in the temple on the foothills, as heavy rains and flooding were forecast, he continued to stay, while his assistant priest residing in the adjacent house shifted to the temple premises. “We fear all the five would have been buried alive in the debris of the collapsed house after the landslide as there is no sign of both the houses on the sloppy hill,” Bopaiah told IANS. With the southwest monsoon intensifying, heavy and widespread rains have been lashing the coastal, central and southern parts of the state since August 3, causing flash floods, inundating low-lying areas and disrupting normal life.

Lucknow (IANS): Nearly a month after Kanpur’s notorious gangster Vikas Dubey was put down in an encounter, an audio clip of a conversation between slain circle officer Devendra Mishra and Kanpur SP (Rural) Brijesh Srivastava has gone viral on the social media. They were part of the team that was ambushed and butchered by Dubey’s men a week before his death. The audio clip could spell trouble for the then Station Officer (SO) of Chaubeypur police station Vinay Tiwari and former Kanpur SSP Anant Deo Tiwari. Questions have been raised over the nexus between police officers and Dubey’s gang ever since the July 2 massacre in Bikru village. Vinay Tiwari has been arrested for his complicity with the slain gangster while Anant Deo Tiwari has been shifted to another district after the Bikru massacre. In the phone conversation, that apparently took place just before the police raided Dubey’s premises on the night of July 2 that led to the death of eight po-

Audio clip exposes cops-mafia nexus minutes before Bikru ambush



licemen, including slain circle officer, Devendra Mishra, himself, can be heard telling Srivastava that the SO (Vinay Tiwari) is saying the raid will start only after the CO (Mishra) reaches the spot. Mishra is also heard making allegations against “former SSP Tiwari” (in an apparent reference to Anant Deo Tiwari) -- saying that he took Rs 5 lakh from the SO after a gambling racket was busted by Mishra and dropped all inquiries against the SO. At the start of the five-minute clip, the SP can be heard saying that a large deployment of police would be required in the village

and Mishra says that the deployment should not be a problem. “The SO is saying that he would go for the raid only after I reach there. So, I am going,” Mishra says. SP Rural tells Mishra that “You should not worry. I will take care of these people very soon and am preparing a list of all that he is doing. The SSP might have asked him to make the arrest. Use your mind and take the force of two-three police stations as we have a great chance of catching him (Vikas Dubey).” The circle officer who lost his life in the encounter, then says,

Rape-accused bishop gets bail with conditions

Kottayam: A trial court in Kottayam on Friday granted bail to Bishop Franco Mulakkal, accused of raping a nun in Kerala, with stringent conditions and directed him to be present on the dates of hearing of the case. The Additional Sessions Court had cancelled the bail granted to the Bishop on July 13 for failing to appear for the trial and issued a Non Bailable Warrant against him. Mulakkal was present in the Court on Friday when it considered the matter. Granting bail, the Court directed him not to leave the state till the chargesheet is read out to him on August 13 and to be present court on the dates of hearing of the case. The Court also directed him to offer fresh sureties and bail bonds. On July 13, Mulakkal’s counsel had informed the court that his client could not appear as he had been in self quarantine due to his primary contact with a COVID-19 infected person. The next day, the former Jalandhar Bishop had tested positive for coronavirus.

Abolition of handloom board an implausible act

The government of India issued a Gazette notification (No.1/13/2017-DCHL/Coordn/AIHB, Dt.27th July, 2020) which notifies abolition of All India Handloom Board. Handloom weavers are facing a severe livelihood crisis. Primarily, despite highly rated skills and widely appreciated products, income flows have been an issue for families dependent on handloom weaving. Corona pandemic and lockdown have been severe on these families, across India. Previously, they were hit by demonetisation and GST imposition on handloom products. Annual handloom budget allocations have been reducing over years. Currently, these families have been looking for succour from governments in these hard times. They were disappointed that the Atma Nirbhar package did not include them directly. It does not even refer to them, even though their contribution to GDP and national economy, in terms of wealth creation, employment and environmental conservation has been immense for decades. In these circumstances, it is

very unfortunate that the All India Handloom Board has been abolished by the government of India. This is gross injustice to lakhs of handloom families. Further, this was announced on the eve of National Handloom Day (August 7) on which date handloom weavers and crores of handloom product consumers celebrate the heritage, skill, art and livelihoods. It was the current Prime Minister who declared this date as National Handloom Day. This board was set up to advise the government in formulation of the overall development programme in the handloom sector given its importance from socio-economic, cultural and artistic perspective. This board was set up with the following specific objectives: to meet the needs of the country progressively from the handloom sector; to make handlooms an effective instrument of reducing unemployment and under-employment and achieving higher standard of living of weavers; to preserve and further promote the craft heritage of our handlooms; to devise strategies for expanding markets of handlooms within the country and abroad; to take steps for effective coordination of the developmental efforts of the various State governments/Union Territories in this sector; and to review the progress of development of handloom sector from time to time. The reason given in the gazette is

that this abolition is part of “Minimum Government and Maximum Governance”, a leaner government machinery and the need for systematic rationalisation of government bodies. This argument looks specious, because in the past several years, meetings of All India Handloom Board have been few. Leaner government machinery cannot be translated into ‘clean’ everything that enables connection between people and government. Handloom sector turnover is a whopping Rs 1,00,000 crore, far above many of the industrial sectors such as cement and agrochemicals. Neglect of the handloom sector in the policy making circles is because they do not have representatives who can visit government offices with suits and suitcases. All India Handloom Board is the only institutional interface between government and handloom weavers. Expenditure on this board is hardly Rs 1,00,000 per year. One would wonder what made the managers of “Minimum Government and Maximum Governance” programme to pick up to reduce their expenditure, where no expenditure has been happening. AIHB meetings did not happen over the past few years. This is nothing but missing the woods for the trees. There are many government institutions, where public money is spent without any result for the people.



RSS implements its evil designs in name of God

DR K NARAYANA

“Why do you unnecessarily raise this issue and strengthen their hands?” was the question posed to me by a senior journalist friend, while we were sitting for a TV debate on the Ram Temple issue. I had already made it clear that by going for the Shilanyas at Ayodhya, Prime Minister Narendra Modi had violated the Preamble of the Indian Constitution. A number of Indians in the country and abroad rang me up and sought clarification about my statement. Vexed with the continuous calls, I had to put my phone in silent mode.

Modi’s game plan is to use Ram and Ram’s arrow for his political gains. All the while, the Rastriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSS) is threatening minorities and cowering them down into submission by all possible means. Their aim is to corner secular parties into an uncomfortable position and thus block their voice on economic problems facing the country. Leaders like Priyanka Gandhi were driven into self-defense and issue statements favourable to their strategy.

If August 15 is the day we had attained Independence, August 5 will hereafter be noted as the day when the Indian Constitution is enchaind. Whichever political formation is in power, it has to function within the purview of the Constitution. But this is not being adhered to the present ruling dispensation, willfully. By winning a majority, Narendra Modi may claim that 137 crore Indians wish that he should rule this nation. That does not imply that his party should paint all the people of this country in saffron colour. This is how the RSS is driving events to suit their agenda. This was not the stated aim of the BJP when it had won power. The RSS had engineered Modi to take sides and go for the Shilanyas. There was no mention of the Temple Construction Trust. When the Balaji Temple in Hyderabad was funded by the Birlas, it was called not by the name of God, but as Birla Mandir. Many people are still unsure which deity is enshrined at the Hyderabad temple. Now Modi will be the deity by whose name the Ayodhya Temple will be popular.

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The fact that erasing goodwill and peace between communities will lead to disaster. They many succeed in giving a false sense of security to the majority community by crushing the minorities, but they should realise that they are playing with fire. When the constitutional justice is denied, violence will be the recourse. Majoritarianism and minoritarianism cannot be equated to ruling and opposition politics. The ruling and opposition political formations are vital for the healthy functioning of a democracy. Destabilising, sidelining and destroying the opposition might give temporary benefits, but we should not forget the fact that the RSS is driving the country to disaster with its agenda. Healthy political tactics are not unusual in a democracy. But these devious methods will corrode not only politics, but the socio-cultural life also and its adverse impact on the economy also cannot be ignored. And the Ayodhya affair had set the ignition. This two-pronged attack on democracy and societal goodwill will have lasting adverse impact. But unfortunately, the BJP-RSS team is running at breakneck speed to implement their devious communal agenda.

Many intellectuals express worry that while the secular opposition had become silent, the Communists are being ignored. This is true to a large extent. 18 years ago, LK Advani, with his Rath Yatra and the demolition of the Babri Masjid at Ayodhya was its planned culmination. Comrade C Rajeswara Rao, the then General Secretary of the Communist Party of India (CPI), the leader of Telangana Armed Struggle and anti-feudal struggles had gone to Ayodhya with 10,000 Red Shirt Volunteers. They declared that the demolition can take place only over their dead bodies. Mulayam Singh Yadav was the Chief Minister of Uttar Pradesh then. Lalu Prasad Yadav, the then Chief Minister of Bihar had blocked the way for the RSS rally.

But today, Mamata Banerji and Kejriwal had raised white flags, confining themselves to issuing press statements. The Godi media is trying to suppress dissenting voices. The protests raised by Communists is being distorted and projected in bad light by the Godi media which is under RSS control. They are resorting to terror, blackmailing and open threats. Many liberals, on sensing the danger of being shown in poor light are tight lipped. Whether you are heard and noticed or not, we should resist and raise our dissenting voice. We should continue to resist. Only by doing this, we can ensure a better future for the people of our country.

(The writer is national secretary, Communist Party of India. Views expressed are personal)

Failing bureaucracy calls for PM’s attention

IN MY OPINION

V RAMU SARMA

This article is not aimed at criticising any individual or any single political party or any government. It is only an attempt to analyse how a transformation has taken place in the outlook of the political executive and administrative wings of the government.

It is an effort to tell the society as to why we are seeing so much of unrest in the society. Why people have become helpless and voiceless. It is an attempt to explain why the time of the judiciary is getting more and more consumed in correcting the decisions taken by the political executive. Why so many PILs are being filed against the governments whether it be in Telangana or Andhra Pradesh or any other State for that matter. This is leading to greater suffering of the common man as he has to wait for justice for years together.

Litigations pertaining to government decisions were not seen in such high proportions in the past. Why? The country has a qualified, well-trained bureaucracy which constitutes the permanent and professional part of the executive organ of the government. Still why is it that they are not able to ensure that the litigations are minimal? On the other hand, of late we have seen that the courts have been summoning top officials whether it is the Chief Secretary or the DGPs.

Where does the fault lie? The Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy expressed his concern over the increasing number of litigations which was even hindering implementation of certain welfare schemes. Why are States witnessing such situations? Is there a void between the bureaucracy and the political executive or do the governments feel that the bureaucracy should act only as implementing agencies and not as the eyes and ears of the government and as think tanks?

Let’s start with understanding the role of bureaucracy. The civil servants, as they are called, are professionally trained, supposed to be neutral and permanent officers. They are supposed to be the people who implement the policies decided by the political ex-

ecutive. They are the people who run the administration under the leadership of the ruling political party.

The members of the bureaucracy are not supposed to be directly involved in politics. They, being permanent employees, are expected to carry out the assignments given to them in a politically neutral manner whichever party may come to power.

Policies can be amended by any government but should not be dumped totally. But the reverse is happening more so in States. Why is it so? It is the bureaucracy which plays a major, nay, main role in drafting the Bills, Acts and law but then why are they being dubbed as useless once the government changes? Why are they being questioned by the judiciary?

The officials assist the government of the day with necessary data and analysis, the rule position, the legal validity and the impact of such proposals on the society. Sometimes they even suggest alternative policies explaining the merits and demerits of the proposed policies or Acts. But then why so many litigations? Are they failing in calling a spade a spade?

They are also supposed to maintain good public relations by establishing contacts with the general public and act as a bridge between the government and the people. They are trained to understand the requirements of the society and communicate the same to the government.

In the past, departments like Directorate of Audio Visual and Publicity at the Centre and the Information and Public Relations Department in the States had a major role to play in popularising various schemes introduced by the government. They used to have special vans equipped with audio visual equipment and teams of cultural troupes which visited villages and explained to the people about the schemes and its benefits and got feedback from the beneficiaries. Now all that has become part of history. The disconnect between the people and the administration started from here.

The district administration headed by District Collectors are busier in holding video conferences and attending several meetings and do not have enough time to go into the field and have no time for the common man. In the past, if there was any such problem with the bureaucracy, the political leaders from gram sarpanch to the Minister were



It is the bureaucracy which plays a major, nay, main role in drafting the Bills, Acts and law but then why are they being dubbed as useless once the government changes? Why are they being questioned by the judiciary? The officials assist the government of the day with necessary data and analysis, the rule position, the legal validity and the impact of such proposals on the society. Sometimes they even suggest alternative policies explaining the merits and demerits of the proposed policies or Acts. But then why so many litigations? Are they failing in calling a spade a spade? They are also supposed to maintain good public relations by establishing contacts with the general public and act as a bridge between the government and the people. They are trained to understand the requirements of the society and communicate the same to the government

available for the redressing the grievances of the people. But slowly, even a disconnect between the political leaders and their voters has begun.

Though the political parties, national or regional call themselves as democratic by nature, all of them have become highly centralised. No member of their party can speak freely. They cannot express their opinion directly either on the party platform or

any other forum. They are not supposed to deviate from the dotted line given by the party’s top leadership.

The language of politicians has also crossed all barriers. Even people at the level of Chief Ministers and presidents of political parties are using cuss words both on the floor of the House and outside claiming that it is the local slang. This seems to be becoming a trend in all par-

ties. In fact, some leaders are even taking objection that the print media does not publish the words as they use during the media conferences against their political opponents.

This disease has even spread to the so-called disciplined saffron party. We are seeing this in the two Telugu States as well and this has resulted in Telugu which is known as the Italian of the East losing its beauty and flavour.

Another trend has begun. Appointing retired bureaucrats and intellectuals as advisors to the State government. It would have been advantageous for the government’s if the services and experience and expertise of these officers was used in drafting better policies and programmes. But unfortunately, they are turning out either to be ornamental pieces or voice of the political executive instead of being the think tank behind the policies of the government. There have been many occasions when they themselves had taken up the responsibility of becoming the spokespersons of the government.

No wonder recently Mahima Datla, at a conference anchored by the TS Minister for IT, K T Rama Rao, commented that the ‘Bureaucratic Cholesterol’ was hampering the speedy progress of the industry. Similarly, the high courts in TS and AP had also made certain adverse remarks against the top officials. Certainly, all this calls for a review of the role and relationship between the administration and the political executive. Let’s hope the honourable Prime Minister would focus his attention on this and take the first step in establishing Ram Rajya in the country.

Murmu’s appointment as CAG a welcome move

On the first anniversary of the abrogation of Article 370, Girish Chandra Murmu, the first Lieutenant Governor (LG) of the Union Territory of Jammu and Kashmir resigned from the post of LG, which is no lesser than a shock for all. Now, former Union Minister and BJP leader Manoj Sinha will be the new L.G of Jammu and Kashmir. Murmu was promoted to the post of new CAG in Delhi as was speculated earlier, which is a welcome move. Manoj Sinha was not given any ministerial berth as he lost his Ghazipur seat to BSP’s Afzal Ansari.

Sanjana Soni, Hyderabad

Hope CBI will solve Sushant Singh suicide case

In a big jolt to the Maharashtra government and the Mumbai police, Sushant Singh’s case goes to the CBI, which is taking a new turn every day. However, the Mumbai police can continue their investigation as the CBI has taken the case from the Bihar police, not from the Mumbai police. It had become a game of power tussle between Maharashtra and Bihar, now I hope that the CBI will solve the case and truth will prevail.

Ashwini Parmar, Warangal

LETTERS

Sameer Sharma’s death a huge loss to entertainment industry



The year 2020 has proved to be an ill-fated year for Bollywood amid the coronavirus epidemic. Apart from veteran stars like Irrfan Khan, Rishi Kapoor, Sushant Singh Rajput, Saroj Khan, Jagdeep, Ranjan Sehgal and Aashutosh Bhakre, many big personalities from the film and TV industry left us this year. Meanwhile, another bad news we received from the film-TV industry. ‘Yeh Rishtey Hain Pyaar Ke’ actor Sameer Sharma allegedly committed suicide at his home in Mumbai. The actor, who was featured in many shows - Jyoti, Kahaani Ghar Ghar Kii, Left Right Left, Iss Pyaar Ko Kya Naam Doon - Ek Baar Phir etc - was found hanging in his apartment in Malad West. Earlier, the actor went through a major health ailment but recovered and even got back to acting. His untimely demise comes as a huge shock, as the industry is still reeling under the death of Sushant Singh Rajput. He will be greatly missed. Condolences to his fans, followers and loved ones!

Noor Ahmad, Hyderabad

Voters are changemakers

This refers to your editorial ‘Wily leaders, pen pushers stifle democracy’ (August 7). It is a rare, incisive but necessary insight into what is ailing and crippling our democracy. If pen pushers are now running most of governments, it is because leaders are either incapable or they are hand in glove with the wily leaders to circumvent the system to make an easy flight of funds through dubious transactions. No wonder one sees, every road is dug up, periodically, and consistently for doing some work or the other. The contractor lobby is thriving on this nexus. Pen pushers are busy making a highly complex set of regulations which is far beyond the capacity of the average person to understand. They are so well designed to save their skins as well. No wonder governments change but the plight of people remains the same. Pen Pushers are permanent and so are wily leaders, only the party changes but crafty leaders remain the same. Actual wheel lies with the voters who need to be more prudent and wiser while voting. Voters need to be exercising franchise more wisely and with discretion, irrespective of their caste and community considerations. Only then a qualitative change will come.

Ashok Goswami, Mumbai

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'Involve industries to hone skills in youth'

- Says partnering the industries with technical education will go a long way ushering in a win-win situation for both the entrepreneurs and the youth by ensuring skilled personnel to industries
- Launches Sri City job portal on the occasion

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Tirupati: To boost up the skill development among youth, the industries in the state would be made a partner with the institutions offering technical education like ITI and polytechnic courses, said Finance and Planning Minister Buggana Rajendranath Reddy.

The Finance Minister on Friday addressed a meeting of the representative of the industries in Sri City and also inspected some of the



Finance Minister Buggana Rajendranath Reddy inspecting a thermal company in Sri City on Friday

units in the industrial area. Partnering the industries with technical education would go a long way ushering in a win-win situation for both the entrepreneurs and the youth by ensuring skilled personnel to industries and avoid the youth

going outside in search of suitable jobs for living, he averred.

If the industries ensure apprenticeship to youth, the young generation could avail education and also skill development, he pointed out. "As our Chief Minister who himself an entrepreneur is fully aware the

difficulties of industries, he is keen on creating a congenial environment for the industries in the state to accelerate industrial growth," the minister said portending arrival of more and more industries to the state following the government decision to give priority to industries.

On the occasion, the minister launched the Sri City Job portal. Andhra Pradesh State Skill Development Corporation (APSSDC) CEO and Managing Director Arja Srikanth said the government decided to link up education with skill development to enhance the employability of youth and added that more than 3,000, who availed skill development courses through APSSDC got placement in the industries in Sri City.

The APSSDC has plans to start more and more skill development programmes for youth adding more to array of courses which he said are sure to add to the industry's growth in the state.

Sri City MD Ravindra Sanna

Reddy said 187 industries from 27 countries were located in Sri City providing employment to 50,000.

Recalling the inauguration of Sri City by late chief minister Y S Rajasekhara Reddy in 2008, he said Sri City was making rapid strides without any single mishap so far adding to the industrial growth of the state. He wanted to retain the Sri City in one district while taking up the reorganisation of districts. He lauded the Collector Dr Narayan Bharath Gupta for prompt measure to check the spread of corona and also for facilitating the employees and workers from outside returning home.

The representatives of industrial units that industry requires special skills in welding, and advised that the curriculum needs to be strengthened right from ITI level to the engineering level. Satyavedu MLA Admulam and Special Chief Secretary (Finance) S S Ravat also spoke.

Further bring down mortality rate: AP CM

- In a review on Covid, Jagan Mohan Reddy notes that State's positivity and mortality rates are far lower than national average
- Directs officials to see that 104 and 14410 call centres function effectively

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Amaravati: The Covid-19 positivity rate in the state has been less than the national average while the mortality rate has been far less than the national average and the government is extensively carrying out the tests, more so, in containment clusters.

During a review meeting on Covid-19 here on Friday, Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy said that about 85 to 90 per cent of the tests are being conducted in the containment areas. The call centres, 104 and 14410, should function effectively and the officials should monitor the helpline performance regularly.

In order to further reduce the mortality rate, the Chief Minister enquired about the steps being taken to which the officials said that for people with severe respiratory problems five to 10 beds are available at Primary Health Centre (PCH)

level adding that clinical protocol is being strictly followed all over. Patients with fever and low oxygen levels are being immediately admitted to hospitals. If the problems aggravate, the patient is being shifted to Covid hospitals, the officials said.

While the national average of positivity is 8.87 per cent, the state average has been 8.56 per cent, Karnataka 9.88 per cent, Tamil Nadu 9.26 per cent, Maharashtra 19.36 and in Delhi it is 12.75 per cent. When it comes to mortality rate, the national average is 2.07 per cent while the state average is 0.89 per cent while Karnataka recorded 1.85 per cent and Maharashtra 3.52 per cent. The tests per million were recorded at 43,059 in the districts of Srikakulam, Kurnool, Kadapa, Krishna, Nellore, West Godavari and Chittoor, tests conducted were more than the state average.



TVVMC calls for low key Ganesh fete in pilgrim city

- Tirupati Varasidhi Vinayaka Mahotsava Committee convener Samanchi Srinivas says the committee will only install 2 feet high clay idols duly following Covid restrictions and devoid of pandals, sound systems and gathering of devotees on August 22, the day of Vinaka Chavithi
- Asks people to dissolve the clay idols in a simple ceremony in house only

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Tirupati: Keeping in view the pandemic Covid-19, Tirupati Varasidhi Vinayaka Mahotsava Committee (TVVMC) decided not to conduct the public celebration of Vinayaka Chavithi festival and also the mass immersion of Ganesh idols this year in the city.

TVVMC which met here on Friday wanted the public to celebrate Ganesh Chaturthi fete in their homes with small clay idols avoiding any social gatherings and dissolve the idols in



Tirupati Varasidhi Vinayaka Mahotsava Committee convener Samanchi Srinivas speaking to media in Tirupati on Friday

the home itself. Committee convener Samanchi Srinivas, speaking to media, said as there was no let up in the rapid increase of Covid cases in the pilgrim city, where the total cases crossed 7,000 revealing severity of the pandemic in the city, the Committee decided against mass

celebration of the fete. However, the festival will be observed on a low key at all Vinayaka temples in the city where only 2 feet high clay idols would be installed duly following Covid restrictions and devoid of pandals, sound systems and gathering of devotees on August 22, the day of Vinaka Chavithi. The public following social distance can offer pujas to the idols installed at the shrines

and later in the evening, the idols will be dissolved in a simple ceremony on their premises, he explained.

The Committee since two decades has been spearheading the celebration of Vinayaka Chavithi on a massive scale but this time it was compelled to suspend the mass celebrations in the city, Srinivas said making it clear that there will be no mass immersion of idols in Vinayaka Sagar tank this time.

He urged the public to cooperate for the celebration of the festival in homes devoid of any fanfare, keeping in view the severity of pandemic in the city to ensure the safety of denizens. Committee members Gopinath Reddy and others were present.



Deputy Chief Minister Amzath Basha inaugurating IDBP at AIMS Academy in Kadapa city on Friday.

Adopt latest technology methods in edu sector: Dy CM

HANS NEWS SERVICE

Kadapa: Deputy Chief Minister Amzath Basha has stressed the need for adopting latest technology methods as per the drastic changes occurring in education sector.

Speaking after inaugurating 'Interactive Digital Board Panel' (IDBP) at AIMS Academy here on Friday, the minister said there were revolutionary changes occurring in education sector and the government was also adopting the technologies in view of promoting qualitative education by setting up digital classrooms.

He appreciated the AIMS management of their initiative in bringing IDBP in the interest of students. He advised the students to download IDBP app as it was useful for them in many matters. AIMS Academy CEO Dr Ahmad Basha and others were present.

SembCorp donates hematology analysers worth ₹25L for tests

Nellore: SembCorp Energy India has donated

hematology analysers worth Rs 25 lakh for conducting blood tests in hospitals. They handed over the equipment to District Collector K V N Chakradhar Babu on Friday. Company CSR head DR Prabhakar Varma formally handed over 9 machines each costing around Rs 2.80 lakh and said they were supporting the Covid services in the district. The Collector said this equipment avoids delays in covid testing results and timely treatment to patients. Hematology machines would help the technicians to speed the resulting process. He appealed to corporate bodies and industrial units to support the activities. He also said recovered patients come forward to donate plasma for saving others.

NATIONAL HANDLOOM DAY

'Govt spent ₹636 cr for weavers' welfare'

Amaravati: Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy took to Twitter to greet weavers on the National Handloom Day, stating that Andhra Pradesh is one of the most important states in the handloom industry, with the second-largest concentration of weavers in India. "We are proud of our weaver community and are making every effort to preserve the rich textile heritage of the state. YSR Nethanna Nestham has provided annual assistance of Rs 24,000 to all eligible weaver families for two consecutive years, positively impacting the lives of all the weavers, especially during the Covid-19 induced lockdown," he said in a post. As promised during his Praja Sankalpa Yatra, the Chief Minister launched Nethanna Nestham on December 21, to provide financial assistance of Rs 24,000 per year to weavers having a loom and successfully done in for two consecutive years. Under the scheme, every eligible weaver who has a loom in the house received Rs 24,000 incentive benefiting 81,783 families accounting for nearly Rs 200 crore per year. Despite the coronavirus outbreak in the state, the state government didn't back out on the implementation of welfare schemes and for the second year in a row, Nethanna Nestham was given on June 20, which is six months before the actual deadline.

Minor precautions enough to combat Covid-19: Collector

Chittoor: District collector Dr N B Gupta strongly felt that minor precautions at grass-root level or initial stage would certainly be helpful for reducing death rate of COVID-19 pandemic. All efforts should be mooted to bring the mortality of corona positive cases to zero per cent for which the concerned volunteers, ward secretaries, Tahsildars and MPDOs should owe the responsibility to combat the COVID-19, he stressed.

Addressing the doctors, MPDOs, and Tahsildars meet in video conference held at the Collectorate on Friday,

he cautioned that volunteers, ANMs, ward secretaries should keep a special watch at villages on the back-drop of hiking the corona cases in rural population.

"Door to door campaign should be taken as mandatory for tracing the contacts of COVID-19. If anybody is found with respiratory problem, immediate action should be initiated," he added. He made it clear the results of Covid suspects would be mailed to the concerned doctor, volunteer, ward secretary, MPDO and Tahsildar for immediate follow up.

2,869 Gandikota displaced to get relief

Kadapa: The district administration has intensified efforts to store 20 tmcft of water in Gandikota Reservoir following directions from the government. As part of it, District Collector Ch Harikiran along with Joint Collector M Gouthami, Jammalamadugu RDO Nagananna conducted Grama Sabha in Tallaprodatturu on Friday. He said the government has decided to provide water to 80,000 acres for agriculture operations in the current kharif season. He said 2,869 families were displaced

in Tallaprodatturu and disclosed that compensation will be paid in two types, Rs 7 lakh will be paid to those, who wanted to construct house in government layout in Bhogapuram and Sugamanchipalle villages, and Rs 10 lakh paid to those who does not want to construct house in layout. He said 5 cents of land will be provided to each family in government layout.

The Collector said the displaced families can use any one of the option and vacate the village before October 15.

118 couples take part in online Kalyanotsava Seva

Tirumala: The online Kalyanotsava Seva commenced at Sri Venkateswara Swamy temple at Tirumala on Friday with 118 couples taking part in the Arjita Seva. The online bookings commenced on August 6 and TTD enabled the bookings for on-line performance of fete from August 7 till 31. On Friday, 118 devotees, who booked in online for Kalyanotsavam followed the instructions by Archakas of Tirumala, sitting right at their homes and participated in the holy event which was telecast live by the SVBC. Earlier, the Archakas submitted the Gotra Namas of devotees before the commencement of Kalyanotsavam. The Grihastha devotees will be sent Prasadam including one Uttarium, one blouse piece, Akshintalu and Sugar candy packet by India post. The devotees who desire to participate in the online Kalyanotsavam can book the ticket, a day in advance till 11.59 pm.

'Dial your EO' programme tomorrow

Tirumala: The monthly Dial your EO programme by TTD Executive Officer Anil Kumar Singhal will be held on August 9 between 9 am and 10 am at the Conference Hall in TTD Administrative Building, Tirupati. Devotees can directly interact with EO on phone no 0877-2263261 and present their suggestions and issues if any for a solution.

Nellore registers 941 fresh Covid cases

Nellore: The district reported 941 positive cases in the last 24 hours and with this the total tally of cases touched 12,165. Around 5,976 persons recovered and discharged from Covid hospitals/Care Centres and 6,189 cases are active. Joint Collector (Development) Dr N Prabhakar Reddy said the medical teams have collected 4,649 samples on Friday. The district administration has extended restrictions on the trading activities in the district headquarters for containing the spread of virus. The Collector said all shops will remain open between 6 am to 1 pm in the city till Aug 23. The decision has been taken after interacting with the traders who came forward voluntarily to support the administration, he added.

SII to make 100mn Covid vaccines for India

Continued from P1

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, via its Strategic Investment Fund, will provide at-risk funding of USD 150 million to Gavi, which will be used to support the SII to manufacture the potential vaccine candidates and for future procurement of vaccines for low- and middle-income countries via Gavi's COVAX Advance Market Commitment (AMC), the statement said.

"In an attempt to make our fight against COVID-19 stronger and all-embracing; SII has partnered with Gavi and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to advance the manufacturing and delivery of up to 100 million doses of future COVID vaccines for India and low- and middle-income countries in 2021," Serum Institute of India CEO Adar Poonawalla said. Through this association, SII seeks to ramp up constant efforts to save the lives of millions of people from this dreadful disease, he added. The Serum Institute has a long history of partnerships with Gavi and pharmaceutical companies to manufacture vaccines that protect against meningitis, severe diarrhoea, pneumonia and measles, the statement said.

US lifts curbs on global health travel

Continued from P1

The Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has issued a Level 3 (avoid non-essential travel) Travel Health Notice for India due to COVID-19, it said.

Travellers to India may experience border closures, airport closures, travel prohibitions, stay at home orders, business closures and other emergency conditions within India due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it said.

Assistant Secretary of State for Consular Affairs Carl Risch told reporters during a conference call that the State Department, in close coordination with the CDC, has lifted the Global Level 4 Health Advisory and has returned to the previous system of country-specific levels of travel advice, with levels from 1 to 4 depending on country-specific conditions.

Among other countries which have been put on Level 4 of travel, advisory include Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Russia, Mexico, Egypt, and Brazil.

'Let Italy compensate families of fishermen'

Continued from P1

When the bench insisted that adequate compensation should be paid to the family members of the victims, Mehta said the Centre will ensure that maximum compensation is given to them. Solicitor General Tushar Mehta informed the bench, also comprising Justices A S Bopanna and V Ramasubramanian, that Italy has assured the Indian government that it would prosecute the Marines. On July 3, the Centre moved the top court seeking closure of judicial proceedings against the two Italian marines accused of killing Indian fishermen, off the Kerala coast. The Centre said it has accepted the recent ruling of the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA) at the Hague which held that India is entitled to get compensation in the case but not prosecute the marines due to official immunity enjoyed by them.

CM LAUNCHES E-VEHICLE POLICY

Continued from P1

"We have issued a notification for the electric vehicle policy today... This electric vehicle policy is the country's most progressive policy and most probably is one of the good policies in the entire world," Arvind Kejriwal said in a press conference.

"The policy has two objectives. First, to boost Delhi's economy after the coronavirus pandemic. Second, to significantly reduce the pollution level and contribute to sustainable development," Kejriwal added. The policy would help generate jobs in large numbers - driving, sell-

ing, financing, charging points, etc, he added.

The AAP government, he said, would introduce financial incentives for people buying e-vehicles. For two-wheelers, auto-rickshaws, e-rickshaws and freight vehicles, there will be incentives up to Rs 30,000 and for cars, it will up to Rs 150,000. "These incentives are over and above already existing incentives for e-vehicles under the central government," he said.

The Delhi government will also provide a scrapping incentive, the first in the country, for replacing the fuel-

based vehicle with e-vehicle. Interest on loans for the purchase of e-vehicles for commercial activities will be waived and e-vehicles will be exempted from registration fees and road tax, he said.

Kejriwal said the electric vehicle policy will be valid for three years and will be reviewed from time to time. A state electric vehicle (EV) fund will be set up to bear all expenses related to the policy and an EV board will be set up which will be chaired by the state transport minister.

"An EV cell will be set up to ensure implementation of the policy... We hope, in the

next five years, five lakh new e-vehicles will be registered in Delhi." The Delhi Cabinet had approved the Delhi Electric Vehicle (EV) Policy, 2019, last year with an aim to reduce air pollution by offering subsidies and waiving road tax and registration fee for electric vehicles bought in the national capital.

Delhi has 83,730 electric vehicles out of over 11 million vehicles registered in the city. Of the 83,730 registered EVs, a mammoth 75,567 are e-rickshaws. There are only 908 private electric cars and 3,703 e-two-wheelers in Delhi.

Central prison reels under Covid impact

Rajamahendravaram: As many as 213 inmates of central prison here have been tested Covid positive out of 1,675 inmates in the jail. The fast spreading of the deadly viral disease causing panic among prison population. The prison is overcrowded with 1,600 inmates, including those in remand as against its capacity of 1,300 prisoners. Speaking to The Hans India, prison superintendent S Raja Rao said that the prisoners that were tested positive were being kept in isolation in the prison and were being provided with quality medical aid. One doctor in the prison also was infected with corona.



FOREX (buy rates in ₹)

US Dollar	79.43	South	
Euro	93.06	African Rand	4.89
UAE Dirham	22.44	Hong Kong Dollar	11.12
Thai Baht	2.76	Japanese Yen	0.82
British Pound	102.09	New Zealand Dollar	52.37
Australian Dollar	56.76	Saudi Riyal	21.98
Canadian Dollar	58.95	Swedish Krona	9.89
Swiss Franc	85.32	Singapore Dollar	57.38

DELHI SATURDAY 8 AUGUST 2020

BIZ BRIEFS

M&M Q1 net profit falls 94%

Hyderabad: Homegrown diversified group Mahindra & Mahindra on Friday reported 94 per cent decline in consolidated profit at Rs 54.64 crore for June quarter 2020, adversely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic. The company had posted a profit after tax of Rs 894.11 crore in the same period last fiscal, M&M said. Revenue from operations during the quarter under review stood at Rs 16,321.34 crore as against Rs 26,041.02 crore in the year-ago period, down 37 per cent, it added. The automotive segment posted a revenue of Rs 6,508.6 crore in the first quarter, down from Rs 13,547.84 crore in the same period a year ago, the company said. Farm equipment segment's revenue was Rs 4,906.92 crore as against Rs 6,077.9 crore in the same quarter last fiscal. Revenue from financial services stood at Rs 3,031.69 crore as compared to Rs 2,822.03 crore in first quarter last year.

Asus ROG's new product

Hyderabad: Taiwanese tech giant Asus Republic of Gamers (ROG) launched Zephyrus G14. Powered by the latest AMD Ryzen 9 4900HS processor with up to 8 cores and 16 threads offering power packed performance, it comes with customised intelligent cooling system, up to an RTX 2060 MaxQ GPU from NVIDIA and up to an UHD resolution Pantone validated 100 per cent sRGB color accurate display to captivate users. ASUS India also ramped up the AMD portfolio by adding ZenBook 14, VivoBook S 14, VivoBook Ultra K15, VivoBook Ultra 14/15, VivoBook Flip14 and Zephyrus G15 to it. Arnold Su, Business Head, Consumer & Gaming PC, System Business Group, Asus India, said, "We are also building our AMD portfolio with thin & light consumer notebooks with the objective to deliver intelligent edge solutions that enhance work and life experiences."

Business sentiment hits all-time low since 1991

NCAER's Business Confidence Index fell to 46.4 in June quarter, down 62% from a year ago

New Delhi: NCAER's Business Confidence Index (BCI), an indicator of the business sentiment across the Indian industry, stood at 46.4 in the first quarter of 2020-21, a drop of 40.1 per cent from its level of 77.4 in the previous quarter.

It fell 62 per cent in the June 2020 quarter on a year-on-year (y-o-y) basis, the lowest since 1991, according to a survey by the National Council of Applied Economic Research (NCAER).

"This is the lowest that the BCI has ever fallen in the history of 113 Rounds of the NCAER Business Expectations Survey (BES)," the think-tank said on Friday.

The decline of 40.1 per cent in the BCI came on the back of a 30.4 per cent quarter-on-quarter decline in the BCI in April 2020. NCAER said the BCI tracks the business sentiments of around 600 Indian companies to compute the composite index.

The NCAER survey elicits responses from firms across six cities to assess business sentiments in the four regions of India: Delhi-NCR represents the north; Mumbai and Pune, the west; Kolkata, the east; and Bengaluru and Chennai represent the south, it said.

The BES has been carried out on a quarterly basis since 1991 by NCAER. The think-tank said the latest, 113th Round of the BES, was carried out in June 2020, when the country had started slowly opening up after more than two months of lockdown due to the coronavirus pandemic, following which, the spread of the disease accelerated.

BCI tracks the business sentiments of around 600 Indian companies to compute the composite index

According to the survey findings, the proportion of respondents expecting that "overall economic conditions will improve in the next six months" fell 9 percentage points, from 26.1 per cent to 17.1 per cent between the fourth quarter of FY20 and the first quarter of FY21.

The proportion of respondents expecting that "financial position of firms will improve in the next six months" decreased 7.7 percentage points, from 27.5 per cent in the March 2020 quarter to 19.8 per cent in the June 2020 quarter, NCAER said. "There was an across-the-board decline in sentiments on a q-o-q basis in Q1: 2020-21 for all five sectors that the BES covers," NCAER said.

The BCI for the consumer durables sector fell 38.2 per cent, for the consumer non-durables sector by 41.4 per cent, for the intermediate goods sector by 60.3 per cent, for the capital goods sector by 30.7 per cent, and for the services sector by 35.2 per cent.

Further, the BCI for private limited companies fell 34.8 per cent in the first quarter of 2020-21 from the previous quarter, while the BCI for public limited companies dropped a much greater 47.4 per cent. The BCI for partnerships/individually-owned companies plunged by an even larger 48.3 per cent.

Also, also the BES' Political Confidence Index fell from 73.7 in January-March 2020 period to 63.1 in the first quarter of 2020-21, falling by 14.4 per cent on a q-o-q basis and by 50.1 per cent on a year-on-year basis. (PTI)

Kia unveils India-made Sonet for global mkts

To be made at Anantapur plant in AP, the compact SUV will be launched in India next month

Hyderabad: South Korean automaker Kia Motors Corporation on Friday globally unveiled its sub four meter compact SUV Sonet which it plans to launch in India next month.

The model would be manufactured at company's plant in Anantapur district in Andhra Pradesh. In addition to selling in India, it will be exported to other markets.

Sonet, which is Kia's third product in India after Seltos and Carnival, will compete with the likes of Hyundai Venue, Maruti Vitara Brezza, Tata Nexon and Mahindra XUV300 in the domestic market.

"With its aggressive and modern design language, fun-to-drive dynamics, and Kia's latest high-tech features, the Sonet puts an exclamation point on our ambition to make Kia the brand of choice, especially among millennial and Gen Z consumers," said Ho Sung Song, President and CEO, Kia Motors Corporation.

The model fills a need in the growing SUV market, in India and further afield, and will attract a wider number of consumers to the Kia brand, he added.

Kia Motors India MD and CEO Kookhyun Shim said that after the success of the Seltos and Carnival, the company is confident that it will revolutionise another market segment in India with Sonet by addressing the unmet needs and aspirations of customers.

BHEL begins civil works at 660-MW power plant

Hyderabad: State-owned engineering firm BHEL on Friday said it has commenced civil works at 660-MW Sagardighi supercritical thermal power project in West Bengal.

Following the strategic completion of pre-engineering activities for the project beforehand, ground breaking has begun on zero date itself, a BHEL statement said.

This is a major achievement as conventionally it takes a few months after the zero date to initiate civil works on-site, the company said. Valued at approximately Rs 3,500 crore, the turnkey order for Sagardighi Thermal Power Project Extension Unit-5 was won by BHEL against stiff international competitive bidding.

The order for the project located at Manigram village in Murshidabad district of West Bengal was placed on BHEL by West Bengal Power Development Corporation (WBPDC). The notice to proceed was issued after obtaining the necessary approvals like environmental clearances.

Pandemic woes subdue stock markets

Mumbai: Rising Covid-19 cases, along with the uncertainty surrounding global growth, subdued the Indian equity market on Friday.

Consequently, both the main indices ended on a flat note. However, broader market indices like the BSE Mid Cap and Small Cap gained more, thereby outperforming both the Sensex and the Nifty. Index-wise, the NSE Nifty50 closed at 11,214.05, down by 13.90 points, or 0.12 per cent, from its previous close. The Sensex closed at 38,040.57, higher by 15.12 points or 0.04 per cent from the previous close of 38,025.45.

US bans Chinese apps TikTok, Wechat

Washington: US President Donald Trump has signed executive orders banning TikTok and WeChat, terming the popular Chinese apps a threat to the country's national security and economy. The ban comes into effect in 45 days, Trump said in two separate executive orders signed on Thursday. India was the first country to ban TikTok and WeChat, citing national security concerns. India has banned as many as 106 Chinese apps, a move welcomed by both the Trump administration and US lawmakers.

"The United States must take aggressive action against the owners of TikTok to protect our national security," Trump said

US President Donald Trump has signed executive orders banning the two popular apps

in his executive order. In his next executive order he said the country must take 'aggressive action' against WeChat to protect America's national security. In a communique to the Congress, Trump said the spread in the United States of

REAL CORNER

Covid-19 hits real estate sentiment hard in April-June

Stakeholders remain pessimistic for 6 months: Survey

The sentiments in the country's real estate sector hit an all-time low during April-June due to the Covid-19 pandemic and remain pessimistic for the next six months even as stakeholders see slight improvement, according to a survey.

According to 25th survey by property consultant Knight Frank and industry bodies Ficci and Naredco, the current sentiment index fell to 22 in April-June from 31 in the previous quarter. "The current sentiment is recorded to be at the lowest," Knight Frank

Ark Group bets on tier-2 cities

Launches Ark Mukunda project in Suryapet

As its plans to foray into tier-2 cities, Hyderabad-based Ark Group launched Ark Mukunda residential project in Suryapet in Telangana. The project comprises apartments that are equipped with innovative features including smart locks. Speaking at the launch, Gummi Ram Reddy, Chairman and Managing Director, Ark Group, said: "Towns like Suryapet are bustling with hopes and aspirations. Millennials are looking for budget-friendly properties in this area. As large companies, we wish to make deeper inroads into the State and reach out with a wider project portfolio." He further said that Ark Group is now keen on taking up premium

Realty sector hails debt recast move

Real estate bodies say the step will give a breather to cash-starved builders facing liquidity issues

Real estate industry hailed the RBI's decision to allow loan restructuring window for corporates, saying it will provide a breather to cash-starved builders who are facing liquidity issues due to low sales in view of Covid-19 pandemic.

The RBI on Thursday announced a loan restructuring window for corporates following bankers and industry demand. The restructuring will be allowed as per the prudential framework issued on June 7, 2019.

"The Covid-19 resolution framework announcement which aids not just one time restructuring but allows banks and borrowers to come up with a resolution plan to come out of this pandemic together," Credai Chairman Jaxay Shah said. The move of bringing in K V Kamath to head a committee to advise on the financial parameters needed to be kept/maintained across sectors for borrowers who apply for this resolution recasting loan plan shall help in detailing very sound guidelines to aid the industry growth, he added.

Naredco president Niranjan Hiranandani said: "A positive step by Reserve Bank of India to pay heed to India Inc's long pending demand of one-time restructuring of loans without classifying them as NPAs

– Naredco president Niranjan Hiranandani

A positive step by Reserve Bank of India to pay heed to India Inc's long pending demand of one-time restructuring of loans without classifying them as NPAs

CMD Shishir Baijal said: "The loan resolution plan, which allows for payment moratorium of up to 2 years, for corporate and personal borrowers should provide a breather to stressed real estate developers and individual borrowers in the housing segment alike."

"We look forward to the recommendations of the Kamath Committee on the details for the real estate segment," he said.

Sanjay Dutt, MD & CEO, Tata Realty and Infrastructure, said he was expecting some more support during these troubled times. "Although the recent RBI monetary policy continues to provide some short term relief to the real estate sector, the introduction of some special initiatives for developers and homebuyers would have been ideal", he added.

Dutt hoped that the government addresses some of the much-needed requirements of the real estate sector like the single-window clearance mechanism and granting of industry status. Additionally, revolutionary measures such as the prospective 100 per cent FDI policy for investment in completed projects would prove to be highly beneficial in overcoming the liquidity crisis caused by the pandemic, he added.

Omaxe CEO Mohit Goel said the decision to constitute an expert committee under eminent banker KV Kamath to recommend financial parameters, along with the sector-specific benchmark for resolution plans is a welcome step.

The announcement by RBI to facilitate the NHB with the liquidity of Rs 5000 crore will enable it to lend more in the housing sector and boost demand, said Aarti Khanna, founder and CEO, AskCred.

Nitesh Kumar, MD & CEO, Emami Realty, said: "Real Estate is struggling with COVID-19 crisis and poor demand. We were hoping for a further cut but due to food inflation and rise in fuel prices RBI has taken a pause."

Naredco West President Rajan Bandekar said: "The RBI has approved a long pending demand of the real estate sector to allow one-time restructuring of loans. This will boost the much-needed liquidity and streamline stressed assets in the real estate sector."



A man wearing a mask as a precaution against the coronavirus pedals his rickshaw during heavy rainfall in Kochi, Kerala.

Goa to start administering Remdesivir

Panaji (IANS): Goa's Health Ministry on Friday received 1,008 vials of Remdesivir from pharma major Cipla. Remdesivir is an anti-viral drug which is administered to Covid-19 patients and results in faster recovery, state Health Minister Vishwajit Rane said. "This anti-viral drug will be beneficial in suppressing the viral replication of SARS-CoV-2, the coronavirus that causes COVID-19. Uncontrollable viral replication is often responsible for tissue damage and deaths in patients infected with the virus," Rane said in a statement. The minister also said that the anti-viral drug will be administered to moderately and severely ill patients suffering from COVID-19 and would help to suppress the viral replication of SARS-CoV-2.

Mathura bans entry of outsiders

Mathura (IANS): The Mathura administration has banned the entry of outsiders in the district for three days between August 11 and 13 when Janmashtami celebrations will take place. This has been done in view of the prevailing pandemic. Mathura SP (crime) Radhey Shyam Rai said that a plan has been prepared to put restrictions on public entry in the district for three days. The SP said 39 barriers will be placed at the inter-state borders that the district shares with Rajasthan and Haryana and other districts including Agra, Aligarh, Hathras and Noida.

Tests mandatory in Germany

Berlin (IANS): Starting Saturday, travellers from high-risk areas will have to undergo a mandatory COVID-19 test upon their arrival in Germany, Minister of Health Jens Spahn said. "I am very aware that it is an encroachment on the freedom of the individual," Xinhua news agency quoted Spahn as saying on Thursday. However, he considered this interference to be "reasonable" with regard to the responsibility for others. Spahn said that the intention behind the tests for travellers from areas with high COVID-19 case numbers was intended to "play it safe." The debate about compulsory testing on re-entry into Germany started about two weeks ago when the number of daily COVID-19 cases picked up again. On Thursday, the Robert Koch Institute (RKI) registered more than 1,000 new COVID-19 infections within 24 hours in Germany for the first time in three months. New infections increased by 1,045 within one day to 213,067 on Thursday while the number of coronavirus-related deaths spiked by seven to 9,175, according to the RKI.

New rules for intl arrivals from today

New Delhi: The revised guidelines issued by the Union health ministry on Sunday for international arrivals will be effective from Saturday. As per the new guidelines, passengers flying to India can skip institutional quarantine if they submit COVID-19 negative test reports. According to the guidelines, this test should have been conducted within 96 hours prior to undertaking the journey. 'The travellers can also seek exemption from institutional quarantine by submitting a negative RT-PCR test report on arrival. This test should have been conducted within 96 hours prior to undertaking the journey. The test report should be uploaded on the portal www.newdelhiairport.in for consideration,' the guidelines stated. As of now, all international passengers had to undergo mandatory seven days institutional quarantine at their own cost, followed by seven days isolation at home.

Ohio Governor tests positive

Washington (IANS): Ohio Governor Mike DeWine announced that he had tested positive for the novel coronavirus, just hours ahead of President Donald Trump's planned visit to the state. "As part of the standard protocol to greet President Trump on the tarmac in Cleveland, I took a COVID test. I tested positive," Xinhua news agency quoted DeWine as saying in a tweet on Thursday. "I have no symptoms at this time. I'm following protocol and will quarantine at home for the next 14 days," the 73-year-old Republican added. Local media said he later returned to Columbus, the state's capital city. Lt. Gov. Jon Husted was also tested for coronavirus ahead of Trump's visit and turned out negative, DeWine's office said. After landing in Cleveland, Trump wished DeWine and called him a "great guy" who has "done a fantastic job". Latest data from the Ohio Department of Health showed there were 96,305 coronavirus cases in the state.

Nepal registers highest deaths

Kathmandu (IANS): The Nepal government has reported five COVID-19 deaths in the last 24 hours, the largest single day spike in the number of fatalities.

With the new deaths, Nepal's coronavirus fatality toll has reached 65, reports Xinhua news agency. "Five persons aged between 42 years to 72 years died of the COVID-19 in the last 24 hours," Jageshwor Gautam, spokesperson at the Ministry of Health and Population, told a press briefing on Thursday. "The fatality rate has risen as infection is growing among the older people," Sameer Adhikari, joint spokesperson at the health ministry told Xinhua on Thursday. "Growing mobility of people after the lockdown was lifted has resulted in more infections among the older people whose immunity remain weaker compared to younger age people." The government had enforced lockdown on March 24 to prevent the spread of COVID-19 and lifted it on July 21.

Siddaramaiah clinically stable

Bengaluru: The condition of former Chief Minister and leader of the Opposition in the Karnataka Assembly Siddaramaiah, who recently tested positive for COVID-19, is clinically stable and he is responding to COVID-19 treatment, the hospital authorities said on Friday. "Leader of the opposition and former Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah is clinically stable and responding to COVID-19 treatment. He is comfortable and his appetite has improved. Our team of experts will continue to monitor him closely," Manipal Hospital said in a health bulletin.

Silent spread of virus keeps scientists grasping for clues

London: One of the great mysteries of the coronavirus is how quickly it rocketed around the world.

It first flared in central China and, within three months, was on every continent but Antarctica, shutting down daily life for millions. Behind the rapid spread was something that initially caught scientists off guard, baffled health authorities and undermined early containment efforts — the virus could be spread by seemingly healthy people.

As workers return to offices, children prepare to return to schools and those desperate for normalcy again visit malls and restaurants, the emerging science points to a menacing reality: If people who appear healthy can



transmit the illness, it may be impossible to contain.

"It can be a killer and then 40 percent of people don't even

know they have it," said Dr. Eric Topol, head of Scripps Research Translational Institute.

Researchers have exposed the

frightening likelihood of silent spread of the virus by asymptomatic and presymptomatic carriers. But how major a role seemingly healthy people play in swelling the ranks of those infected remains unanswered — and at the top of the scientific agenda.

The small but mighty coronavirus can unlock a human cell, set up shop and mass produce tens of thousands of copies of itself in a single day. Virus levels skyrocket before the first cough, if one ever arrives. And astonishing to scientists, an estimated 4 in 10 infected people don't even have symptoms.

The slyness of the virus remains on the minds of many scientists as they watch societies re-

open, wondering what happens if silent spreaders aren't detected until it's too late.

Travelers with no coughs can slip past airport screens. Workers without fevers won't be caught by temperature checks. People who don't feel tired and achy will attend business meetings.

The nose and mouth are convenient entryways for the coronavirus. Once inside, the virus commandeers the cell's machinery to copy itself, while fending off the body's immune defenses. Virus levels skyrocket in the upper airway, all without symptoms early on. Many scientists believe that, during these days, people can spread virus just by talking, breathing or touching surfaces.

13.78 lakh patients recovered

OVER 60,000 CASES IN A DAY FOR THE FIRST TIME



New Delhi (PTI): Registering over 60,000 cases in 24 hours for the first time, India's COVID-19 tally galloped past 20 lakh on Friday, while the number of recoveries surged to 13.78 lakh, according to Union Health Ministry data. The COVID-19 tally had crossed 19 lakh just two days back.

It took 110 days for COVID-19 cases in the country to reach one lakh and 59 days more to cross the 10-lakh mark. Thereafter it took just 21 days more to go past 20 lakh. This was the ninth day

in a row that the COVID-19 tally increased by more than 50,000.

According to the health ministry data updated at 8 am, 62,538 cases were added in a day taking the total coronavirus case-load to 20,27,074.

The death-toll climbed to 41,585 with 886 people succumbing to the infection in 24 hours, the data showed.

At the same time, the number of patients who recuperated from the disease surged to 13,78,105 on Friday taking the recovery rate to 67.98 per cent.

US death toll crosses 1,60,000

Washington: The United States has recorded over 160,000 deaths due to coronavirus till now, according to data compiled by Johns Hopkins University. With 4,881,974 positive cases, the US continues to be the worst-affected country followed by Brazil. So far, 2,912,212 COVID-19 cases have been reported in Brazil.

Globally, over 19 million cases of coronavirus have been detected and about 713,813 people have died from the disease since December last year.

The World Health Organisation declared the COVID-19 outbreak a pandemic on March 11. The US remains the worst-hit nation, both in terms of the number of cases and fatalities.

There are 6,07,384 active coronavirus cases in the country presently.

Modi govt missing: Rahul on crisis

New Delhi: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Friday slammed the Central government as India crossed the 20 lakh COVID-19 positive cases. Taking to Twitter, the Congress leader reiterated his

earlier tweet, sent out on July 17, which stated "The 10,00,000-mark has been crossed. With the rapid spread of COVID-19, by August 10, more than 20,00,000 will be infected in the country.

The government must take concrete, planned steps to stop the epidemic."

"20 lakh-mark has been crossed, Modi government is missing," the Congress leader tweeted.

HC quashes orders putting curbs on elderly film, TV artistes

Mumbai: The Bombay High Court on Friday quashed two government resolutions issued by the Maharashtra government that barred film and TV artistes and crew members above 65 years of age, from going to work to studios or outdoor sets during the COVID-19-induced lockdown.

A bench of Justices SJ Kathawalla and RI Chagla set aside the GRs (government resolutions) issued on May 30 and June 23 by the state government. The bench, however, said that "all other advisories applicable for all persons above 65 years of age, will be applicable for those above 65 years of age working in the film and TV industry."

The bench's judgement came in two petitions, one by film and TV artist Pramod Pandey (70), and another by the Indian Motion Pictures Producers Association, filed through advocate Ashok Saorogi. Both petitioners had challenged the state resolutions issued under its 'Mission Begin Again' initiative that barred TV and film cast and crew from sets and studios. -

Virus fear: Man cremated after 15 hours

Bhubaneswar (PTI): The body of a 25-year old man lay at his home in a village at Konark in Odisha for more than 15 hours as relatives and villagers stayed away suspecting that he had been infected with COVID-19, officials said on Friday.

The man had died on Wednesday at Mankaragoradi village and his family was forced to arrange for PPE kits and other protective gear before the body could be taken to the cremation ground in the outskirts of the village.

None was ready to carry his body on their shoulders as is the practice for fear of contracting the disease. His body was instead carried to the local cremation ground in a cycle cart the next day.

The last rites were performed on Thursday afternoon, the officials said.

Vichitra Rout, a tractor driver in the area, had been suffering from high fever for the past few days and was di-



agnosed to be afflicted with typhoid.

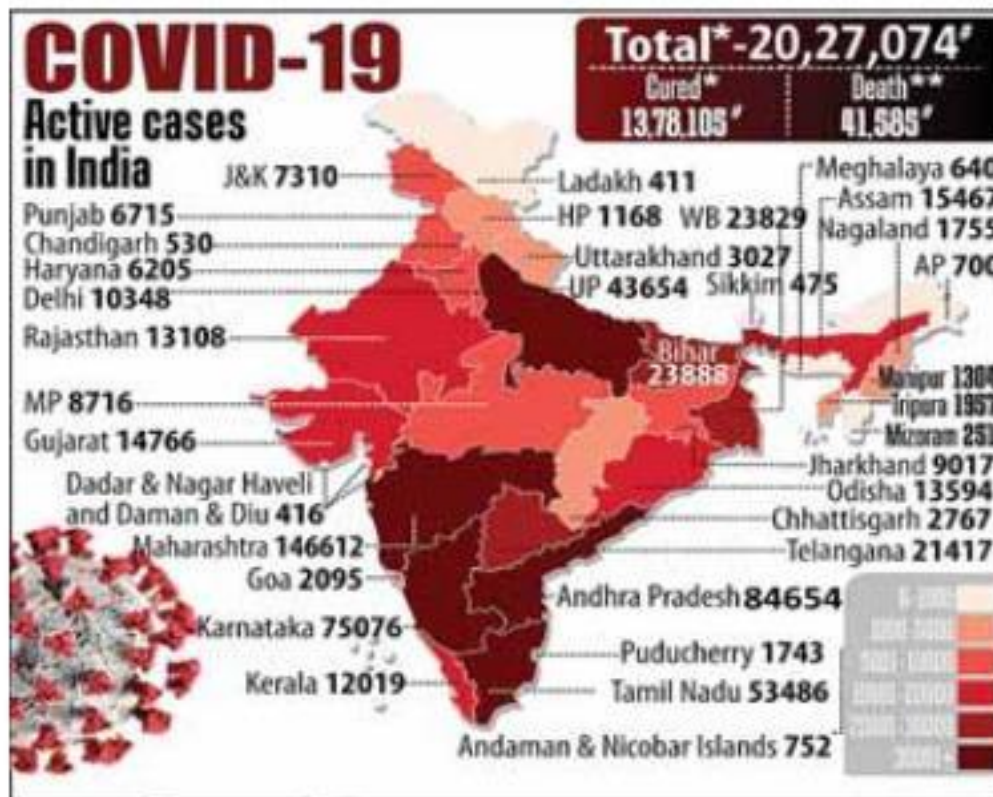
He was asked by the community health centre where he was being treated to undergo the COVID-19 test, his family members said.

Rout is the only son of his parents and the sole breadwinner of the family.

He was referred to the district headquarter hospital at Puri for the test but when he was taken there on August 4, work at its out patients department had been suspended as some health

workers there had contracted coronavirus. Rout was therefore referred to a Bhubaneswar Hospital but died on Wednesday before arrangements could be made by his family for taking him there, they said.

By then rumour had spread in the area that he had fallen prey to COVID-19 and the villagers shunned the family. Even the relatives showed reluctance in making arrangements for the last rites and none came forward to help the family.



IPL title sponsorship: Eyes on Amazon, Unacademy; Jio the dark horse

New Delhi (IANS): The suspension of Vivo's title sponsorship with the Indian Premier League (IPL) has opened up the market for a new brand to come in for the 2021 edition of the cash-rich league. But market experts believe it will be a case of one from either e-commerce or e-learning companies coming in with the telecom sector playing the role of the dark horse.

Speaking to IANS, a market analyst said that it is just the push a brand like Amazon could need going into the Diwali weekend. Also, the deal would cost them much less than what a Vivo had to shell out Rs 440 cr. In fact, it is likely to be a win-win situation whoever jumps in and grabs the opportunity.

"See, at present after whatever has happened with the lockdown and economic impact, two of the biggest players would be from the e-learning and e-commerce sector. You don't expect a new player, like some start-up, to walk in. But, maybe someone like a Byju's, which is already a part of the BCCI family, can step up and do the big ticket event. Not to forget Unacademy who have been looking to associate itself with the cricket fraternity.

"When you come to the e-commerce side of things, while Diwali



is four days after the final, you don't shop two days before the occasion. You actually do it a month leading into the festival. What better than for Amazon or Flipkart to use that space and get ultimate mileage? Also, you have to realise that nobody will be paying 440 cr. So, in short, you get the best advertising seat for say half or 1/3rd the value. It cannot get better than this actually," the analyst said.

Ad film maker Prahlad Kakkar believes that one cannot rule out the pharma sector because some of the pharmaceutical companies have done really well during the coronavirus pandemic. But he also feels that if ready, Amazon could be the frontrunner.

"I don't know if Amazon will look to come in as they are pretty cautious in their approach. But if they do, they could take it away. E-learning brands yes. But also,

be more to do with the good terms the owners share with the BCCI.

"See, Jio is already a brand that is individually associated with



the eight teams. Why would it further want to get into the title sponsorship game? If they do, that would be more to do with the relationship they share with the BCCI. Also, as per statistics, they have been one of the most prominent brands in the IPL window ever since they associated themselves with the eight teams.

"But then, you can never rule Jio out as the telecom industry has the capability if it wishes to. I would term them as the dark horse. For me, the favourites would be between an e-learning brand or an e-commerce one," the expert said.



Sindhu, Saina, 6 other shuttlers to resume training in Hyderabad

New Delhi (IANS): The national badminton camp for eight Tokyo 2020 Olympic hopefuls, including PV Sindhu, will resume from Friday at the Pullela Gopichand Badminton Academy in Hyderabad.

The decision was taken by the Sports Authority of India (SAI) after clearance for the camp was received from the Telangana government on August 1 allowing resumption of sporting activities from August 5. Apart from Sindhu, the seven other athletes who will resume training at the academy include Saina Nehwal, Kidambi Srikanth, Ashwini Ponnappa, Sai Praneeth, Chirag Shetty, Satwiksairaj and N. Sikki Reddy.

Speaking about the resumption, national badminton coach Pullela Gopichand said, "I am

very happy to have our elite shuttlers back for on-field training after this long break. We are fully equipped to resume training in a safe environment."

To ensure complete safety of athletes and proper social distancing norms during the training, the academy has been divided into colour zones wherein only athlete and coaches will be allowed to access the green zone, or the field of play, while there are different zones earmarked for support staff and administrative staff who will have no access to the field of play, said SAI.

The training will be conducted in keeping with the guidelines of the Ministry of Health and the Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) drawn up by SAI, alongside the state government's regulations, it added.

England white-ball tour to India postponed until early 2021

London (IANS): England's white ball tour of India, originally scheduled for late September to early October this year, has been postponed until early 2021, the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) and England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) confirmed on Friday.

England were scheduled to tour India in September as part of the FTP to play three T20Is and as many ODIs and then return again in January 2021 to play five Test matches.

In a media release, both the boards said that they are in consultation with a view to confirming the 2021 schedules for an all-formats England tour to India to run from late January to late March and for India's Test tour to England due in the summer of 2021.



BCCI Secretary Jay Shah said: "The BCCI and ECB are working closely to finalise the schedule as we move towards the resumption of cricket. The India-England series is one of the most anticipated contests in world cricket. The two teams compete hard on the field and

provide some riveting moments. "I am pleased with the way BCCI and ECB have managed the situation. The rescheduled tour is also being redesigned in a way to accommodate both red and white-ball format and will now be a comprehensive one," he added.

ECB's Chief Executive Officer, Tom Harrison, said: "Now that we have clarity regarding the postponement of ICC Men's T20 World Cup, it enables us to work with other Boards to progress the vital task of optimising the international schedules in the challenging circumstances that we have all been having to address with the COVID-19 pandemic.

"International cricket between India and England is a highlight of the cricketing calendar and we look forward to working with the BCCI to firm-up the schedules for these eagerly anticipated tours as soon as possible."

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the BCCI has been forced to stage the 13th edition of the Indian Premier League (IPL) in the UAE from September 19 to November 10 this year.



ISL: Jamshedpur FC appoint Owen Coyle as head coach

Jamshedpur (IANS): Jamshedpur FC on Friday announced the signing of Owen Coyle as their new head coach ahead of their 2020-21 Indian Super League (ISL) campaign.

Coyle comes fresh of a spectacular performance in the 2019-20 ISL season, where he took the then bottom-placed club to the ISL finals. The 54-year-old Owen is distinguished by his style of attack-minded football seen in all his previous stints.

"Jamshedpur has a tremendous football legacy. The club has all the right things in place, starting with its vision and translating into a robust foundation of grassroots, youth, Tata Football Academy, and required infrastructure such as fantastic training and accommodation facilities at par with some of those in Europe," Owen said in a statement.

"The vociferous fans have been amongst the best in ISL over the past three seasons, which I had the opportunity to see while soaking in the atmosphere in my debut game in India at the Furnace. This club deserves to be competing at the

pinnacle of the ISL and nothing less, and I am excited and honored to have been entrusted with the task," he added.

Owen is a former English Premier League manager Bolton Wanderers and Burnley and has also managed Houston Dynamo in Major League Soccer. Under Coyle, Bolton reached the FA Cup semis in his first season in-charge, and he was awarded the Premier League Manager of the Month thrice during his tenure.

He later moved on to Wigan Athletic in the English Championship, followed by his first stint outside Europe with Houston Dynamo in USA's Major League Soccer (MLS) in 2014. He then returned to the English Championship with Blackburn Rovers in 2016, followed by a short spell at Ross County in Scotland before his move to India in 2019.

Chanakya Chaudhary, Chairman - Jamshedpur FC, underlined the importance of having the Scotsman on board and said, "He has proven credentials and shares the ambitions of the club, which was evident in our fruitful discussions.

Man Utd dominate Young Player of the Year shortlist

London (IANS): Manchester United on Friday saw three players being named in Premier League's Young Player of the Year shortlist while Chelsea had two representations. The award, which is voted by fans, is handed to the player who was aged 23 or under at the start of the campaign.

United's front three of Marcus Rashford, Anthony Martial and Mason Greenwood were all nominated for the prestigious award after they starred in the team's third-place finish this season. The Red Devils technically saw one more player being named in the list as goalkeeper Dean Henderson, who is currently on loan at Sheffield United, was also nominated. Chelsea saw two players being nominated for the award, namely Mason Mount and Christian Pulisic. Liverpool's Trent Alexander-Arnold and Aston Villa's Jack Grealish completed the list of shortlisted players. Meanwhile, Premier League's Manager of the Year nominees are Leicester City's Brendan Rodgers, Chelsea's Frank Lampard, Sheffield United's Chris Wilder and Liverpool's Jurgen Klopp.

UEFA EUROPA LEAGUE

Sevilla overpower Roma 2-0, advance to quarters

Berlin (IANS): Sevilla booked their spot in the quarterfinal after edging an uninspired Roma 2-0 on first-half goals from Sergio Reguilon and Youssef En-Nesyri in an all-or-nothing encounter in Europa League's round of the last 16. The fixture was set as a single-legged clash after the first leg was cancelled back in March. Hence, UEFA decided to schedule the game on neutral soil in Duisburg, Germany on Thursday, reports Xinhua news agency.

From the starting whistle, Sevilla assumed control and pressed Roma into defence. As a



result, goalkeeper Pau Lopez had his hands full as Lucas Ocampos headed on target in the seventh minute before Jules Kounde rattled the crossbar following a corner six minutes later. Sevilla continued on the front

foot and their efforts paid off in the 21st minute when Reguilon danced through Roma's defence to slot home the opener from close range.

Nine minutes later Jesus Navas wasted a good chance to double the advantage as he wasn't able to keep the ball after trying to round goalkeeper Pau Lopez.

As the match progressed, Roma gained a foothold into the game only to see Sevilla extending their lead just before the break after Ocampos initiated a fast break for En-Nesyri, who tapped home from close range to make it 2-0.

ENG vs PAK 1ST TEST (LUNCH)

Buttler-Woakes stand keeps visitors at bay

Manchester (IANS): Pakistan bowlers on Friday again dominated proceedings as they kept the England batsmen on the backfoot throughout the first session of the third day of the first Test being played at the Old Trafford. England reached 159/5 at Lunch, still trailing by 167 runs.

Starting from their overnight score of 92/4, Ollie Pope and Jos Buttler displayed cautious cricket initially and kept the bowlers at bay.

Pope soon got over the fifty-run mark and this was his fifth half-century in 11 Tests. Pakistan seamers kept building the pressure and it took England 32 balls to score eight runs and go past the 100-run mark.

Pope's 117-ball vigil finally came to an end as he became fast-bowler Naseem Shah's first scalp of the innings. A short delivery from Naseem produced an edge off Pope's bat and he was caught by Shadab Khan at gully for 62.

All-rounder Chris Woakes then joined Buttler in the middle and the duo started to rebuild the innings. Both batsmen were cautious in their approach but hit boundaries whenever bad deliveries came their way. At the end of the session, Buttler and Woakes remained unbeaten and had put together a partnership of 32 off 46 deliveries when balls were taken off by the umpires.

Brief scores:

England: 169/5 at Lunch (Pope 62, Buttler 38*; Abbas 2/33) **Pakistan:** 326 all-out (Masood 156, Azam 69; Broad 3/54)



PCB looking to invite England for T20I series in Pak: report

London (IANS): The Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) is looking to invite England to tour the country for a T20I series later in the year. Pakistan are currently touring England for an ongoing three-match Test series that will be followed by a T20I series consisting of as many matches.

According to DawnNews, PCB chief executive Wasim Khan will meet his England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) counterpart Tom Harrison next week and formally put forward the invite. Additionally, he is also ready to offer the option of England touring Pakistan early 2021 if it isn't possible this year due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

England have not toured Pakistan since the 2005/06 series due to security concerns but the team's head coach Chris Silverwood had said recently that he has no problem with the team undertaking a short tour of the country ahead of a scheduled visit in 2022.

"For me it's great that it's a topic of conversation again," Silverwood told Sky Sports. "We are looking to get back there."

"Personally, I'd have no problem going," he said. "I've never been so it would be nice to go and have a look. And I know our batsmen are looking forward to batting on their wickets."

Bale decided not to play against Man City, says Zidane

Manchester (IANS): Real Madrid manager Zinedine Zidane has dismissed claims that winger Gareth Bale was axed from the squad to face Manchester City in the second leg of Round of 16 clash in the UEFA Champions League.

Bale was earlier left out of Real's final LaLiga clash as well. He cut an awkward figure after Real's 34th league win and speculations have been rife about his future at Santiago Bernabeu.

Zidane, however, revealed that Bale wasn't axed from the squad to face City as the Welshman decided against making the trip to Manchester.

"I will explain because many things are said," Zidane told reporters in a news conference as per Goal.com.



"We have a relationship of respect between player and coach, that is clear. The only thing I can say is that he has decided not to play, and the rest is between him and me."

Bale has hardly played for the Spanish giants this year and has been linked with a move back to the Premier League and even China.