DECCAN Chronicle

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VIJAYAWADA | WEDNESDAY | 5 AUGUST 2020

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WEATHER

Max: 31.0°C
Min: 25°C
RH: 54%
Rainfall: 23.7 mm
Forecast: Cloudy. Max/Min temp. 31/25ºC

COVID-19 COUNT

CASES	DEATHS
(+50,980)	(+814)
18,55,238	38,972

covid19india.org

STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS

(+1,286)	(+12)
TS: 68,946	563
(+9,747)	(+67)
AP: 1,76,333	1,604

CASES AROUND THE WORLD

1,85,71,754

DEATHS

7,00,387

COUNTRIES, AREAS WITH CASES 213

worldometers.info/coronavirus

ASTROGUIDE

Sarvari; Dakshinayana
Tithi: Shravana Bahula Dwitiya till 10.52 pm
Star: Danistha till 9.31 am
Varjyam: 5.15 pm to 6.59 pm
Durmuhurtam: 11.57 am to 12.47 pm
Rahukalam: 12 noon to 1.30 pm

HIJRI CALENDAR

Zulhijja 14,1441 AH

PRAYERS

Fajar: 5.15 am
Zohar: 1.30 pm
Asar: 5.15 pm
Maghrib: 6.50 pm
Isha: 8.15 pm
SUNSET TODAY 6.38 PM
SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.48 AM
MOONRISE TODAY 8.05 AM
MOONSET TOMORROW 7.55 PM

COUNTER POINT

You have to vacate the bed for a VVIP!

IN BRIEF

REVOLUTIONARY VANGAPANDU PASSES AWAY

V.K.L. GAYATRI | DC
VISAKHAPATNAM, AUG 4

Revolutionary writer, singer and lyricist, Vangapandu Prasad Rao, died at 77 in the wee hours of Tuesday.

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

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

■ Page 3: Vangapandu founded Jana Natya Mandali

Priyanka backs temple, wishes for era of unity

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

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG. 4

In a significant shift in her party's stand on the Ram Mandir, Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Tuesday expressed the hope that Wednesday's *bhoomi pujan* at Ayodhya will be an occasion for "national unity, fraternity and cultural congregation". The Congress hasn't been invited to the Ayodhya ceremony on Wednesday where Prime Minister Narendra Modi and over 100 VIPs are expected to be present.

After the Supreme Court's verdict in November that a temple should be built on the disputed site in Ayodhya, the CWC passed a resolution that welcomed it. Congress chief spokesman Randeep Surjewala had said then the party was in favour of temple construction.

On Tuesday, Ms Vadra, AICC general secretary in charge of UP, tweeted: "Simplicity, courage, restraint, sacrifice, commitment are the essence of the name Deenbandhu Rama. Ram is with everyone".

"With the message and grace of Lord Ram and Mother Sita, the *bhoomi pujan* (will be) an occasion for national unity, fraternity and cultural congregation," she added.

Former Madhya Pradesh CM Kamal Nath said the temple construction is "with the consent of every Indian". He also held a recital of the Hanuman Chalisa. Mr Nath noted it was former PM Rajiv Gandhi who paved the way for the temple construction in 1986.

Congress MP Manish Tewari posted several tweets on the *bhoomi pujan*, including a video message where he sang Mahatma Gandhi's favourite Ram *bhajans*.

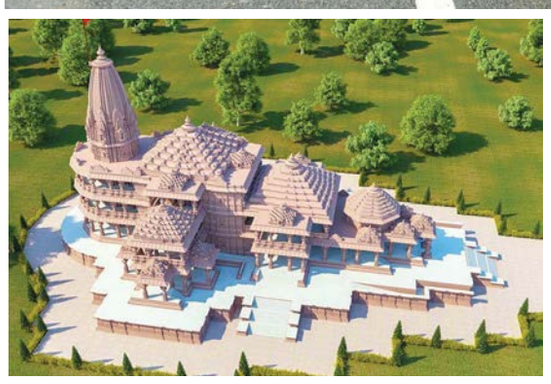
For the BJP, the beginning of construction of a grand temple in Ayodhya is an ideological victory over its rivals with many Opposition leaders now welcoming the development.

Meanwhile, police barricades, yellow banners, walls with a fresh coat of paint and the sounds of *bhajan* mark parts of Ayodhya as the city awaits its big day on Wednesday, when the first brick will be laid by Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the Ram temple. The event at the Ram Janmabhoomi will be attended by 175 people who figure in a select guest list of seers and politicians.

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

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

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



Above: Workers decorate an area in the town of Ayodhya on Tuesday ahead of the ground breaking ceremony of Ram temple. Prime Minister Narendra Modi will lay the foundation stone for the temple, which was marred in decades of controversy and was a subject of protracted litigation.
Left: A model of the proposed Ram temple at Ayodhya. — *PTI*

> **SIMPLICITY, COURAGE,** restraint, sacrifice, commitment are the essence of the name Deenbandhu Rama. Ram is with everyone. With the message and grace of Lord Ram and Mother Sita, the bhoomi pujan (will be) an occasion for national unity, fraternity and cultural congregation,"
>
> **PRIYANKA GANDHI VADRA,** *Congress leader*

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

Washington, Aug. 4: In a huge blow to Indian IT professionals eyeing the US job market, US President Donald Trump on Monday signed an executive order preventing federal agencies from contracting or subcontracting foreign workers — mainly those on H-1B visa — from hiring.

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

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

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

Trump told reporters that his administration will not tolerate firing of hardworking Americans in the pursuit of cheap foreign labour. "As we speak, we're finalising the H-1B regulation so that no American workers be replaced ever again. H-1B should be used for top highly paid talent to create American jobs, not as inexpensive labour programmes and destroy American job," said the president. — *PTI*

TRUMP: INDIA HAS BIG PROBLEM IN STOPPING COVID

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

India's Covid-19 tally increased to 18,55,745 on Tuesday with 52,050 people testing positive for coronavirus infection in a day. China on Tuesday reported 36 new cases across the country, down from 43 the previous day. The country's Covid-19 cases crossed the 100-mark on July 29, for the first time in over three months, sparking the fear of a rebound.

■ Full report on Page 7

India crosses 19L, Pradhan positive

VINEETA PANDEY | DC
NEW DELHI, AUG. 4

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

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

The country, which has been adding over 50,000 new cases since last few days, has topped the world in reporting new infections as the spread of the disease has slowed down in the United States and Brazil. If this rate of new infections, India could cross 20-lakh figure on Thursday.

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

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

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

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

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 4

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

The High Court bench, comprising justice Rakesh Kumar, justice A.V. Sesha Sai and justice M. Satyanarayana Murthy, heard the case and issued an order to maintain status quo on implementation of two Acts, the AP Decentralisation and Inclusive Development of All Regions and AP Capital Region Development Authority (Repeal). When the government pleader asked the court to give it 10 days on the issue, the court directed the government to file a counter-affidavit and posted the next date for a hearing in the case as August 14. It may be mentioned that the state government earlier passed the two Bills in the Assembly and sent them to the Council for passage. However, the council recommended the two bills for consideration by its select committee.

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

■ Page 2: Gov consulted experts before assent

Kits for students as schools re-open

MD ILYAS | DC
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 4

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

In a review meeting of the JVK and Nadu Nedu in Tadepalli on Tuesday, Jagan directed officials to start JVK from September 5 without fail, enabling students to make good use of the kit.

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

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

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

Chinese mobile firm Vivo exits 2020 IPL

MOSES KONDETY I DC
HYDERABAD, AUG. 4

- **VIVO'S FIVE**-year deal worth ₹2,199 crore signed in 2017 runs till the 2022 edition of IPL and fetches the BCCI ₹440 crore every year. However, unlike the hostility in Galwan Valley, Vivo's severance will be conflict-free.
- **THE BCCI** has opened channels to rope in short-term sponsors. "Adani or Ambani could be in the mix," said an official
- Others say Gulf-based firms could also be in fray. Local companies can gain massive mileage out of the glitzy league as the tournament is being played in oil-rich UAE.

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

That leaves little time for the BCCI to float a tender and find an alternative. The cricket board has not made any announcement yet, but insiders admit to jitters in the Board even as they are sure that a suitable sponsor will be found within the short window.

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

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

The BCCI and Vivo are likely to reach a harmonious settlement and resume their partnership subject to improvement of relations between India and China.

The BCCI has opened channels to rope in short-term sponsors. "Adani or Ambani could be in the mix," said an official with connections in the Board.

"Reliance Industries is such a big firm and has presence everywhere, from petrol to telecommunications to insurance. Similar is the stature of the Adani Group. One of them just might jump in," he added.

Others say Gulf-based firms could also be in fray.

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

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

Leopard attacks cop, couple at Tirumala

AVINASH P. SUBRAMANYAM | DC
TIRUPATI, AUG. 4

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

Traffic constable, G. Murali, who claimed to have had a narrow esca-pe in the leopard attack, said that he was chased by a leopard when he was travelling to Tirumala from Tirupati on his two-wheeler on Tuesday. He informed his higher officials that he was coming to Tirumala on his two-wheeler when a leopard pounced upon him near the 4th kilometre along the second ghat road on Tuesday morning. He said that when the wild cat pounced on him and tried to catch his leg, he immediately accelerated his bike and managed to escape.

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

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

SHORT TAKES

BLAST IN ANOTHER PHARMA FIRM, 4TH IN 100 DAYS

DC CORRESPONDENT
VISAKHAPATNAM, AUG. 4

In yet another industrial accident in the Vizag region, the fourth in the last 100 days, Vijayasri pharma company at Atchutapuram SEZ erupted in flames after a blast, triggering panic among the employees on Tuesday. Initial reports said there were no casualties in the incident.

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

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

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

It may be recalled that Vizag city witnessed four major industrial accidents since May 7 this year. The styrene vapour leakage from LG Polymers, hydrogensulphide leakage from Sainor Life Sciences pharma company, fire mishap at Visakha Solvents pharma company and crane collapse at Hindustan Shipyard Limited have claimed 26 lives and caused injuries to over 500.

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

AUG. 8 FAPCCI TRAINING FOR ENTREPRENEURS

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 4

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

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

HYGIENE IS A MUST IN KITCHENS, SAYS JAGAN

From Page 1

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

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

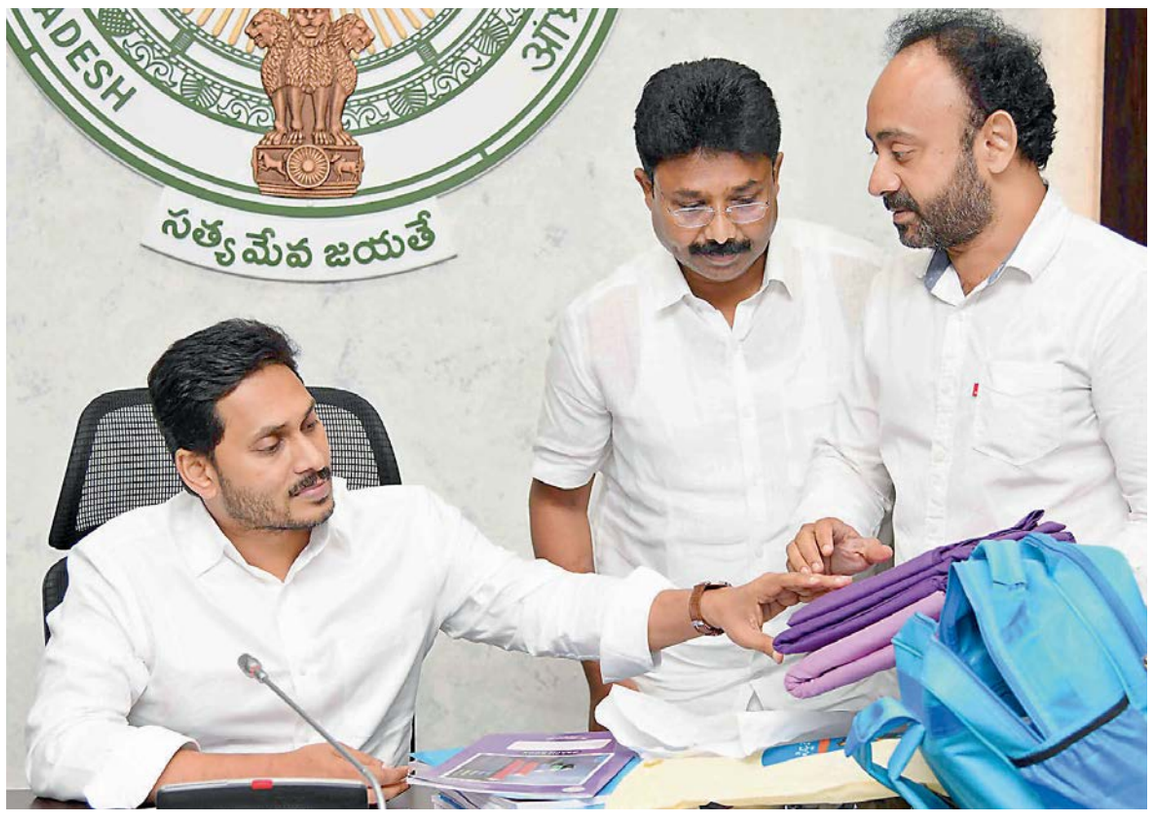
Instructing officials to provide clean drinking water to children in schools and for that purpose mineral water plants should be started. Maintenance is equally important, he said.

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

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

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

Uniform check



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

CM wants industries to file safety compliance reports

Industrial Atlas showing location of industries, industrial parks planned

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 4

- **THE CHIEF MINISTER** said that there should be monitoring of industrial parks as well to see if they are following rules. The overseeing mechanism at these parks must be strong.
- He opined that Vizag gas leak could have been averted if inhibitors had been in place. The mishap took place as there was no supervision, he pointed out.

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

Officials at the meeting proposed that a New Industrial Safety Policy be brought out. The meeting decided to prepare an Industrial Atlas showing the location of industries and industrial parks in the state, categorising them into different safety categories.

CM Jagan said the Atlas should be like a guide and ready reckoner for industrialists who want to start their units in the state. The industries will have to file a Safety Compliance Report twice in a year. The companies should also list the steps taken towards safety, besides subjecting themselves to third-party inspections.

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

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

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

Industries special chief secretary, K. Valavan, Environment special chief secretary Nirab Prasad and other officials were among those who attended the review meeting.

GOVT IS SPENDING ₹350CR MONTHLY ON COVID: MIN

D. SIVA RAMI REDDY | DC
KURNOOL AUG. 4

Health minister Alla Kalikrishna Srinivas said that the state government was spending ₹350 crore per month on medical treatment of Covid-19 patients in the state.

"We are spending ₹500 a day on providing a healthy diet to each patient because we regard their care as our paramount responsibility. There is no need for panic over steep rise in Coronavirus cases as they are the result of a large number of medical tests being conducted in the state," he observed.

He along with finance minister Buggana Rajendranath Reddy interacted with Covid-19 positive patients undergoing treatment in Covid hospitals in the district through video conference from Sunayana Auditorium in Kurnool city on Tuesday.

Mr Srinivas enquired about the facilities provided by the state government in Covid hospitals and quarantine centres.

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

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

Later, reviewing the situation with officials, he ordered them to give special focus to home isolation of infected people and get patients with chronic ailments admitted at any hospital without delay.

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

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

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 4

Opposition leader in Legislative Council Yanamala Ramakrishnudu on Tuesday said Chief Minister Jagan Mohan Reddy should accept the challenge thrown by former chief minister N. Chandrababu Naidu and hold elections as a referendum on the three capitals. "The CM and his ministers are afraid of facing polls because of growing unpopularity of their government in the state," he observed.

The former finance minister reminded the Jagan government of the ruin brought upon Muhammad Bin Tughluq after he shifted his capital from Delhi to Daulatabad and from Daulatabad to Delhi. The move left the treasury of Tughluq empty and led to the ultimate collapse of the dynasty, said Mr Ramakrishnudu and predicted that the same fate would befall Andhra Pradesh if the people did not stop the YSRC government from shifting the capital.

Mr Ramakrishnudu said that Mr Jagan already pushed the state into a chaos in 14 months of his rule and the economists were predicting even worse days ahead. "Mr Jagan's proposal to set up judicial capital in Kurnool is nothing but cheating of Rayalaseema people as the AP High Court was established in Amaravati as per the order of the President of India in consultation with the Supreme Court," he claimed.

He asked how the YSRC government could go ahead with shifting of the capital when Amaravati had been selected as per the laws and also developed to a large extent.

TD FILES CHEATING COMPLAINT AGAINST YSRC MANGALAGIRI MLA ON 3 CAPITALS

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 4

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

TD Tadepalli town president Jangala Sambasiva Rao and other leaders of Tadepalli and Mangalagiri pointed out in their complaint that Ramakrishna Reddy had during 2019 Assembly general elections assured on behalf of YSRC that Amaravati will remain the only capital of the state. But now, the YSRC, after coming to power, has cheated people by proposing the three capitals. The TD leaders said they had filed a case against Ramakrishna Reddy for cheating the people of his constituency.

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

People anxiously wait for HC decision on 3 capitals

MD ILYAS | DC
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 4

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

FRESH RUMOURS ON GANTA JOINING YSRC

K.M.P. PATNAIK | DC
VISAKHAPATNAM, AUG 4

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

The rumours gained strength after tourism and culture minister, Muttamsetti Srinivasa Rao (Avanti), reacted to them by issuing a statement that Ganta is eager to join YSRC only to shield himself from the banks which were out to seize his property, including his house and probably send him to jail if fraud was proved.

"Ganta cannot live without power. He always wants to stay in power, irrespective of party politics," Avanti said. All his followers are involved in land grabbing for which two SITs have been appointed by two governments," he said and added that Ganta's background was briefed to Rajya Sabha member and north Andhra party in charge, V. Vijaysai Reddy time and again.

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

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

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

Ruling party leader kills tribal woman

DC CORRESPONDENT
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 4

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

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

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

Naik hypothecated 2.75 acres of land for ₹3.80 lakhs of hand loan from Srinivasa Reddy two years ago but failed to repay the amount. Reddy went to the farmland of Naik and pressurised the couple to clear the loan but Mantriya Naik expressed his inability to clear the debt and requested to set a value to their hypothecated land to clear the loan. Srinivasa Reddy said that the loan is equal to land value so they did not get anything in return.

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

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

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

GOV CONSULTED EXPERTS BEFORE GIVING NOD

From Page 1

As the council had not taken any decision on the two Bills, the state government considered both Bills passed in the Council after 30 days and sent them to the Governor for his approval on July 18.

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

However, this was challenged in the High Court.

AYODHYA | TEMPLE

BJP wants special pujans held at all Ram temples in state today

Timing of Bhumi Pujan inauspicious: Almanac expert

VADREVU SRINIVAS | DC
KAKINADA, AUG. 4

- **NOTED ALMANAC** expert Hanumanthavajjula Subrahmanya Sarma says the timing of Bhumi Puja at Ayodhya is inauspicious, as Saturn and Mars are not favourably disposed towards Lagna (Libra).
- **HE MAINTAINED** that when any construction is taking place, the main astrological aspects should always be considered.

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

He told reporters here that construction of Lord Ram Temple in Ayodhya will symbolise Indian culture. The entire world will know why every village in the country has a Ramalaya. He said as part of BJP's resolve to construct Ram Temple in Ayodhya, several changes had taken place in the country. Atal Bihari Vajpayee became the Prime Minister and conducted Pokhran tests. He also won the Kargil War with Pakistan. Now, the present Prime Minister Narendra Modi has abolished Article 370. All these good signs have appeared after the issue of Lord Rama Temple came onto the scene in the country, he maintained.

Mr Veerraju wanted the Bhumi Pujan for Lord Rama Temple in Ayodhya to be marked by people of the state with special pujas and bhajans at their houses. On Wednesday evening, people should light lamps at homes and at all the temples, so that the entire scene looks like a Deepavali being celebrated. He, however, underlined that all Covid-19 protocols must be followed.

BJP Kakinada Lok Sabha constituency president Ch. Ramkumar said people are getting ready to perform special pujans in all the villages. People are voluntarily coming forward to participate in these pujans to mark their support for construction of the Ram Temple in Ayodhya.

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

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

He said construction of Rama Temple has been a long-pending issue. Hence, it is important that the most auspicious moment is fixed for its construction. He advised the Union government as well as Uttar Pradesh government to change the time, if possible.

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

GOVERNMENT OF ANDHRA PRADESH

COLLECTOR'S OFFICE: GUNTUR

FORM NO.VII

[Under Section 19(1) of the Act read with sub rule (1) of rule 25]

Declaration

Rc.No.1298/2017-G3 **Dated:14.07.2020**

Whereas it appears to the District Collector, Guntur that a total extent of Acs. 8.15 cents of land is required in Jonnalagadda Village of Narasaraopet Mandal, Guntur District for a public purpose viz., the Construction of Railway line Doubling with electrification in between Guntur - Gunthakal Section, the District Collector, Guntur having been satisfied that the lands specified in the schedule below have to be acquired for a public purpose, whereas Form - VI(B) Notices were issued to the interested persons under Section-15(2) as per the Right to Fair Compensation and Transparency in Land Acquisition, Rehabilitation and Resettlement Act 2013 (Act 30 of 2013) and objections were not received within stipulated time. The requiring body viz., the Deputy Chief Engineer (Constructions II) South Central Railway, Guntur has deposited the amount towards the cost of acquisition of the lands, the following declaration is made under section 19(1) of the Act 30 of 2013 (Central Act 30 of 2013).

Declaration

Under Section 19(1) of the Act 30 of 2013(Central Act 30 of 2013) the District Collector, Guntur District, hereby declares that the lands specified below and measuring an extent of Acs.8.15 cents, be the same a little more or less, are needed for a public purpose, to wit for the constructions of Railway line Doubling with Electrification in between Guntur - Guntakal Stations.

SCHEDULE

District: **Guntur** Mandal:**Narasaraopet** Village: **Jonnalagadda**

SCHEDULE

District : GUNTUR Mandal : Narasaraopet Village : Jonnalagadda

Sl. No.	Survey No	Total Extent (Ac. Cts)	Extent under Acquisition in (Ac. Cts.)	Classification of the land	Name of the person interested	Boundaries North	South	East	West	Details of Trees, structures etc., if any
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
1	166/D-A	0.03	0.03	Govt. Dry (Patta land)	Vankayalapati Brahmaiah S/o Venkatappaiah	166-DB	176	166-DB	Narasaraopet Village Boundary	-
2	166/D-B2	0.03	0.03	Govt. Dry (Patta land)	Nallapati Venkatrayudu S/o Subbarayudu	174-C	175-B	174-D	166-DB part	-
3	166/D-B1	0.77	0.77	Govt. Dry (Patta land)	Gangavarapu Manjulatha W/o Peddi Raghava Rao	166-C	175-B	166-DB part	166-DA part	-
4	174/D-3	0.49	0.49	Govt. Dry (Patta land)	Vankayalapati Nagaiah S/o Venkatappaiah	174-C	173-B	202-B	174-D part	18- palm Trees
5	174/D-3	0.33	0.33	Govt. Dry (Patta land)	Nallapati Lakshmi Narayana S/o Venkateswarlu	174-C	173-B	174-D Part	174-D Part	-
6	174/D-3	0.08	0.08	Govt. Dry (Patta land)	Nallapati Venkatrayudu S/o Subbarayudu	174-C	166/D-B	174-D Part	166/D-B	-
7	174/D-1	0.06	0.06	Govt. Dry (Patta land)	Nallapati Chanikya S/o Nageswara Rao	174-C	174-E	174-D Part	174-D Part	-
8	174/D-2	0.07	0.07	Govt. Dry (Patta land)	Nallapati Naresh S/o Nageswara Rao	174-C	174-E	174-D Part	174-D Part	-
9	173/B-1A	0.05	0.05	Govt. Dry (Patta land)	Vankayalapati Nagaiah S/o Venkatappaiah	174-D	173-B part	202-B	173-B part	Well
10	173/B-1B	0.01	0.01		Nallapati Lakshmi Narayana S/o Venkateswarlu	174-D	173-B part	173-B part	174-E	-
11	192/D-1	0.49	0.49	Govt. Dry (Patta land)	Unclaimed	192-C	192-E	192/D 2	192/D 1	Though classified as patta land as per Revenue Records i.e RSR,Adangal etc., nobody came forward to claim title over the subject land and also Vagu course is existed on ground for several decades
12	192/D-2	0.26	0.26	Govt. Dry (Patta land)	Nallapati Ramachandra Prasad S/o Chandrasekhara Rao	192-C	192-E	192/D 3	192/D 1	Fish Tank, 6-palm Trees, 1-Neem Tree
13	192/D-3	0.13	0.13	Govt. Dry (Patta land)	Nallapati Ramachandra Prasad S/o Chandrasekhara Rao	192-C	192-E	194/D	192/D 2	Fish tank
14	192/G-1	0.03	0.03	Govt. Dry (Patta land)	Nallapati Jayamma W/o Ankamma	192/D	192-G part	192-F	202-B	-
15	192/E-1A	0.14	0.14	Govt. Dry (Patta land)	Nallapati Ramachandra Prasad S/o Chandrasekhara Rao	192/D	192-E1 part	192-E2	192-F	Fish Tank
16	192/E-2A	0.05	0.05	Govt. Dry (Patta land)	Nallapati Ramachandra Prasad S/o Chandrasekhara Rao	192/D	192-E2 part	191	192-E1	Fish Tank
17	191-1	0.19	0.19	Govt. Dry (Patta land)	Nallapati Prameela Devi W/o Siva Rama Chandrasekhara Rao	194/D	191 PART	194-E	192-E	Fish Tank
18	194/E-1	0.20	0.20	Govt. Dry (Patta land)	Nallapati Prameela Devi W/o Siva Rama Chandrasekhara Rao	194-D	194-E part	190/A	191	Fish Tank
19	194/D-A	0.46	0.46	Govt. Dry (Patta land)	Nallapati Prameela Devi W/o Siva Rama Chandrasekhara Rao	194-C	191	194-D/B	192/D	Fish Tank
20	194/D-B	0.46	0.46	Govt. Dry (Patta land)	Nallapati Siva Rama Chandrasekhara Rao S/o Venkateswaralu Chowdary	194-C	190/A	221-D	194-DA	Fish Tank
21	190/A-A1	0.55	0.55	Govt. Dry (Patta land)	Nallapati Siva Rama Chandrasekhara Rao S/o Venkateswaralu Chowdary	194-D	190/A-A part	221-E	194-E	Fish Tank
22	221/D-B1	0.0750	0.0750	Govt. Dry (Patta land)	Nallapati Rama Krishtamma S/o Peda Peraiah,	221-C	222-B	221-DC	221-DA	-
23	221/D-B2	0.0250	0.0250	Govt. Dry (Patta land)	Cherukuri Seshaiah S/o Venkata Ratnam and Cherukuri Adeiah S/o Venkata Ratnam	221-C	222-B	221-DC	221-DA	-
24	221/D-C1	0.0750	0.0750	Govt. Dry (Patta land)	Nallapati Rama Krishtamma S/o Peda Peraiah,	221-C	222-B	239-B	221/D-B	-
25	221/D-C2	0.0250	0.0250	Govt. Dry (Patta land)	Cherukuri Seshaiah S/o Venkata Ratnam and Cherukuri Adeiah S/o Venkata Ratnam	221-C	222-B	239-B	221/D-B	-
26	224-A1A1	0.16	0.16	Govt. Dry (Patta land)	Koritala Srinivasa Rao, S/o Chinna Venkateswarlu	221-D	224-A1 part	224-A2	224-A1 part	Welland Pig farming shed in dilapidated condition without farming
27	224-A1A2	0.06	0.06	Govt. Dry (Patta land)	Koritala Ramakoteswara Rao S/o Chinna Venkateswaralu	221-D	224-A2 part	224-A1 part	221-E	Roofless cattele shed 1.Kumkudu tree,1-Neem Tree, 2-Cement Pipes (Under Ground)
28	224-A2A	0.01	0.01	Govt. Dry (Patta land)	Nallagangula Koti Reddy S/o Venkata Reddy	224-A1	224-A2 part	224-A2 part	221-E	Kumkudu trees -2
29	224-A2C1	0.0650	0.0650	Govt. Dry (Patta land)	Upputuri Rama Mohan Rao S/o Venkateswarlu	221-D	224-A2 part	224-B	224-A2 part	
30	224-A2C2	0.0650	0.0650	Govt. Dry (Patta land)	Kamineni Brahmaiah S/o Venkateswarlu	221-D	224-A2 part	224-A2 part	224-A1	Tomb, Neem Trees-2,
31	222/B-1A	0.3150	0.3150	Service Inam	Nallapati Rama Krishtamma S/o Peda Peraiah,	221-D	222-B part	222-B part	223	-
32	222/B-1B	0.1050	0.1050	Service Inam	Cherukuri Seshaiah S/o Venkata Ratnam and Cherukuri Adeiah S/o Venkata Ratnam	221-D	222-B part	222-B part	223	-
33	222/B-1C	0.10	0.10	Service Inam	Koritala Seshaiah S/o Peraiah	221-D	222-B part	240-B	222-B part	-
34	240/B-1A	0.26	0.26	Service Inam	Koritala Seshaiah S/o Peraiah	239-B	240-B part	240-B part	222-B	-
35	240/B-1B	0.25	0.25	Service Inam	Kunda Daveedu S/o Chinna Venkaiah	239-B	240-B part	240-B part	240-B part	
36	240/B-1C	0.19	0.19	Service Inam	Nallapati Anjaneyulu S/o Ramaiah	239-B	240-B part	239-A	240-B part	-
37	239/A-1A	0.17	0.17	Service Inam dry	Nallapati Anjaneyulu S/o Ramaiah	239-B	239-A part	239-A part	239-A part	-
38	239/A-1B	0.26	0.26	Service Inam dry	Nallapati Ramesh S/o Anjaneyulu	239-B	239-A part	239-A part	240-B	Well
39	239/A-1C	0.17	0.17	Service Inam dry	Yarram Anil Kumar S/o Koteswara Rao	239-B	239-A part	242-D	239-A part	
40	239/B-5	0.05	0.05	Govt. Dry (Patta land)	Nallapati Anjaneyulu S/o Ramaiah	239-C	239-A	242/C	239-B Part	-
41	239/B-4	0.05	0.05	Govt. Dry (Patta land)	Nallapati Ramesh S/o Anjaneyulu	239-C	239-A	242/B Part	239/B Part	-
42	239/B-3	0.02	0.02	Govt. Dry (Patta land)	Kunda Daveedu S/o Chinna Venkaiah	239-C	239/A	239/B Part	239/B Part	-
43	239/B-2	0.03	0.03	Govt. Dry (Patta land)	Koritala Seshaiah S/o Peraiah	239-C	239/A	239/B Part	222	-
44	239/B-1	0.05	0.05	Govt. Dry (Patta land)	Yarram Anil Kumar S/o Koteswara Rao	239-C	240/B	239/B Part	222/B	
45	242/C-1	0.08	0.08	Govt. Dry (Patta land)	Nallapati Venkatrayudu S/o Subbarayudu	242-B	243/D	242/C-A part	239-B	-
46	242/C-2	0.09	0.09	Govt. Dry (Patta land)	Nallapati Naresh, S/o Nageswara Rao	242-B	243/D	242-CA Part	242-CA Part	-
47	242/C-3	0.08	0.08	Govt. Dry (Patta land)	Nallapati Chanikya S/o Nageswara Rao	242-B	243/A	242-CB	242-CA part	-
48	242/D-1A	0.15	0.15	Serivce Inam Dry	Nallapati Venkatrayudu S/o subbarayudu	242-C	242-D part	242-D part	239-A	-
49	242/D-1B	0.14	0.14	Serivce Inam Dry	Nallapati Naresh S/o Nageswara Rao	242-C	242-D part	242-D part	242-D part	Well, Neem Tree-1
50	242/D-1C	0.14	0.14	Serivce Inam Dry	Nallapati Chanakya S/o Nageswara Rao	242-C	242-D part	243-A	242-D part	-
51	243/A-B1	0.01	0.01	Govt. Dry (Patta land)	Yarram Haribabu S/o Koteswara Rao	242-C	243-AB Part	243-AB Part	242-D	-
	Total		8.15							

Note:- The land to an extent of Ac 0.49 in Sy.No.192/D-1 of Jonnalagadda Village is classified as Govt dry as per RSR, but there exists Vagu course on ground. For the time being, nobody claimed title over the land. Hence thorough enquiry with regard to title over the land is under process and necessary action will be taken towards payment of compensation to the rightful owner, as per the provisions of LAR&R Act 2013.

A plan of the lands is kept in the office of the Revenue Divisional Officer, Narasaraopet and may be inspected on any working day during office hours.

The number of families likely to be rehabilitated and resettled due to land acquisition are Nil, and affected persons are Nil.

Mines of Coal, Iron - Stone, slate or other minerals lying under the said land or any particular portion of the said land, except such parts of the mines and minerals which may be required to be dug or removed or used during the construction phase of the project for the purpose of which the land is being acquired are not needed.

Place: Guntur
Date:14.07.2020

Sd/- **I Samuel Anand Kumar**
Collector & District Magistrate, Guntur

An artist paints masks awareness images on Bandar road in Vijayawada on Tuesday. — *C. NARAYANA RAO*

Man gets death for rape, murder of 7-year-old girl

MD ILYAS | DC
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 4

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

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

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

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

DGP Goutam Sawang appreciated the professional competence displayed by the Vijayawada city police in the scientific investigation and said that this conviction would serve as a message that those guilty of crime against women and children would not be spared and act as a deterrent to all such predators. The DGP stated that further consolidation of Disha initiatives in line with government's vision of a safe and secure society for women and children was on the anvil in a steadfast manner.

State registers 9,747 new Covid-19 cases, 67 deaths

State has carried out 40,732 tests per million population

SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC
VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 4

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

The state health department issued the Covid-19 bulletin here on Tuesday reporting that out of 64,147 samples tested, 9,747 people have been tested Covid-19 positive.

Out of 21,75,070 samples tested so far in the state, 95,625 infected patients have been discharged after recovery while 79,104 patients are undergoing treatment in various hospitals.

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

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

The recovery rate of coronavirus-infected patients in the course of treatment appears to be good in East Godavari as 13,939 patients have been discharged, followed by 11,568 in Kurnool, 10,944 in Anantapur, 10,545 in Guntur, 8,640 in West Godavari, 7,097 in Chittoor, 5,293 in Krishna, 5,058 in Visakhapatnam, 4,844 in Srikakulam, 4,651 in Kadapa, 3,997 in Nellore, 3,697 in Prakasam, 2,457 in West Godavari, 2,461 from other states and 434 from other countries.

With regard to deaths, Guntur has registered 12, followed by nine in Krishna, eight in Kurnool, seven each in Chittoor, East Godavari and Nellore, six each in Anantapur and Srikakulam, two in Visakhapatnam, one each in Prakasam, Vizianagaram and West Godavari.

Kurnool has the highest number of deaths so far with 218, followed by 188 in East Godavari, 187 in Krishna, 163 in Guntur, 131 in Visakhapatnam, 130 in Anantapur, 127 in Chittoor, 111in West Godavari, 92 in Srikakulam, 78 in Prakasam, 66 in Vizianagaram, 64 in Nellore and 49 in Kadapa. AP has carried out 40,732 tests per million population and registered a Covid-19 positive rate of 8.11, while Maharashtra has continued to register the highest positive rate at 19.56 and Telangana is at 13.89.

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

In Nellore district, 557 new cases have been reported of 3,365 samples tested, taking the total number of cases to 9,899.

In Chittoor district, 104 new cases have been reported between 9 am and 7 pm on Tuesday, taking the total number to 12,978. Among new cases, 53 from Tirupati, 24 from Madanapalli, five from Renigunta, three from Ramachandrapuram, two cases each from four mandals and one case each from nine mandals. In addition to it, two more from other districts have also been reported.

State health authorities have discharged 6,953 patients after recovery in the last 24 hours.

TWO PRAKASAM LEGISLATORS TEST 19 POSITIVE

PATHRI RAJASEKHAR | DC
NELLORE, AUG. 4

Two legislators from Prakasam district tested positive for the coronavirus on Monday and the information surfaced on Tuesday.

One of them represents a constituency from the western parts of Prakasam district. He had been to Tirumala along with his family on August 1 and had darshan on August 2. His wife is also infected and both of them are undergoing treatment at a private hospital in Ongole.

His grandson was also infected a few weeks back and he was recovered after treatment in the same private hospital at Ongole.

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

Vangapandu founded Jana Natya Mandali

FROM PAGE 1

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

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

The Communist Party of India, Marxist (CPM) expressed condolences on Vangapandu Prasada Rao's death. Vangapandu's photograph was garlanded in the CPM office and rich tributes paid. Srinivas said Vangapandu enlightened the people with his songs and dances and was a humanitarian poet.

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

VELIGONDA 1ST TUNNEL WORKS BY OCTOBER

DC CORRESPONDENT
NELLORE, AUG. 4

The state government has taken steps to expedite the first tunnel works of the Veligonda project to complete them by October this year.

Prakasam district collector Pola Bhaskar has disclosed while inspecting Gottipadia – Kakarla link canal works at Sairam Nagar in Ardhaveedu mandal on Tuesday.

The collector said that they had given instructions to the engineers to stick to the schedule assigned by the government.

SCHOOL OF PLANNING AND ARCHITECTURE: VIJAYAWADA
(An institution of National Importance under the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India) S.No. 4/4, ITI Road, Vijayawada – 520 008, Andhra Pradesh, India
Advt.No.SPAV/DTCP/2020 Dated 03.08.2020
WEB NOTICE
Applications are invited for GIS Specialist, Research Associate and Research Assistant on purely temporary and contractual basis. The application can be downloaded from institute's website and filled application may be sent to recruitmentdtcp@spav.ac.in on or before 14.08.2020. For further details regarding qualifications, remuneration etc, please refer the SPA Vijayawada website www.spav.ac.in.
Sd/- Registrar

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SITUATION VACANT

MANAGERS

WANTED SALES managers for OTC and FMCG Products for reputed company around AP and Telangana HEALING HASTHA HERBAL CONCEPTS Contact.9133533779 (HYMM/2021/ C01214)

MULTIPLE VACANCIES

URGENT REQUIRED for Dubai mall staff cashier supervisor salesman driver store incharge food packers cashier helper data entry accountant salary 70 to 90k Interview at banjara hills 10/12/14/16 August FRC Travels 88130-35559 ,80530-44313 (W/2021/AT000225)

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Open e-Tender Notice No. DRM/EnHM/BZA/04/CMCC-BZA & OBHS-17208/2020 dt. 03-08-2020
PUB/0715
For and on behalf of the President of India, the undersigned invites E-Tenders for the following works up to 15-00 hours on the date mentioned against each.
Sl. No.: 1, **Tender No.:** EnHM/BZA/CMCC-BZA STN/2020, dt. 03.08.2020, **Name of Work:** Comprehensive mechanized cleaning contract for Upkeep and Maintenance of Vijayawada station inclusive of its allied works for a period of 730 days., **Approximate value of the work (Rs.):** 22,94,29,516.73, **Period of contract:** 730 Days, **Cost of Tender form (Rs):** 10,000/-, **EMD (Rs):** 12,97,200/-, **Time & date: Closing of Tender:** 02.09.2020 up to 15.00 hrs.
Sl. No.: 2, **Tender No.:** EnHM/BZA/OBHS-BZA 17208/2020, dt. 03.08.2020, **Name of Work:** Onboard Housekeeping Services for train Nos. 17208-07 (BZA-SNSI-BZA) based at Coaching depot / Vijayawada for a period of 730 days., **Approximate value of the work (Rs.):** 26,98,957.14, **Period of contract:** 730 Days, **Cost of Tender form (Rs):** 3,000/-, **EMD (Rs):** 54,000/-, **Time & date: Closing of Tender:** 02.09.2020 up to 15.00 hrs.
1) The prospective tenderers are advised to visit website **"www.ireps.gov.in"** before the date of tender closing to note any changes/ corrigenda for any tender.
Divisional Railway Manager (EnHM), Vijayawada
A0930
For further tender conditions / details and for downloading the tender documents, Please visit website at http://www.ireps.gov.in or www.scr.indianrailways.gov.in

SHORT TAKES

BREAKTHROUGH ELUDES TALKS WITH CHINA

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG. 4

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

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

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

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

BHUSHAN REFUSES TO TENDER APOLOGY

PARMOD KUMAR | DC
NEW DELHI, AUG. 4

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

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

Justice Kapadia went on to become Chief Justice of India.

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

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

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

75-YEAR-OLD WOMAN RAPED IN KERALA

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, AUG. 4

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

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

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

Ayodhya awaits a new beginning today

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

Ayodhya, Aug. 4: The famous Hanuman Garhi temple here is all decked up for the visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi who will be in the city for the *bhoomi pujan* of Ram temple on Wednesday.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

> The construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya will deeply connect Indian society to its cultural roots to prosper economically and expand culturally as a model to guide humanity
>
> MANMOHAN VAIDYA, SR. RSS FUNCTIONARY

> Hindutva is now the "basic coat on the canvas of polity" and political parties subscribing to its various shades may be vying for power in future as socialism and secularism are no longer the pivot of politics
>
> K. N. GOVINDACHARYA, EX-RSS IDEOLOGUE

PRIEST OF RAVAN TEMPLE SAYS HE WILL DISTRIBUTE SWEETS TODAY

Ayodhya, Aug. 4: Nearly 650 km from Ayodhya, a priest of a temple dedicated to demon king Ravan is eagerly awaiting the groundbreaking ceremony of the Ram temple.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Sena: Covid will now disappear

Mumbai, Aug. 4: The Covid-19 crisis in the country will disappear with the blessings of Lord Ram, the Shiv Sena said on Tuesday, and pointed out that veterans like L.K. Advani and Murli Manohar Joshi won't be present in Ayodhya for the temple 'bhoomi pujan' ceremony.

An editorial in the party mouthpiece *Saamana* took a dig at the August 5 ceremony being held amid rising cases of coronavirus in the country.

"There is no other golden moment like the one when Prime Minister Modi performs the bhoomi pujan at Ayodhya," the Sena said.

"Coronavirus is there, but will disappear with Lord Ram's blessings," it added.

Advani and Joshi, key leaders associated with the Ram temple construction campaign, will witness the ceremony via video conferencing from Delhi, the editorial noted.

They were advised not to attend the ceremony in view of their age and the outbreak of Covid-19 in Ayodhya, it said.

Uma Bharti, another prominent leader attached to the campaign, will also not be present at the ceremony and will instead watch it "from the banks of the Sarayu river through the eyes of her mind", the Sena said.

There is excitement in the country in view of the bhoomi pujan ceremony, the Sena said.

> The *Saamana* editorial said that the responsibility of security arrangements in Ayodhya was with the Home ministry, but it is unfortunate that Home Minister Amit Shah tested coronavirus positive.

"Coronavirus has spread in Ayodhya, Uttar Pradesh and the entire country. This crisis, too, will fade away with the blessings of Lord Ram," it said.

The responsibility of security arrangements in Ayodhya was with the Home ministry, but it is unfortunate that Home Minister Amit Shah tested coronavirus positive, it said.

Despite the presence of the Prime Minister, the RSS chief, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister and others, the ceremony will be lacklustre without Shah, the Sena said.

It said Shah participated in a public event in Delhi last Saturday and attended the cabinet meeting last Wednesday observing social distancing norms, and has asked those who came in his contact in the past few days to isolate themselves and get tested for coronavirus.

The entire Council of ministers needs to be isolated, if the home minister is saying this, it said.

Shah is close to Modi but nothing will happen to the prime minister and the home minister due the blessings of Lord Ram, it said. *- PTI*

K'TAKA SCHOLAR WHO SUGGESTED DATE GETS THREAT CALLS

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

N. R. Vijayendra Sharma alleged he had been receiving telephone calls regarding fixing the auspicious date.

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

Police on Tuesday said they were looking into the complaint.

Sharma said earlier this week that Swamy Govind Dev Giriji, a member of the Ram Janmabhoomi Teerth Kshetra Trust, had approached him regarding fixing muhurat for the ground- breaking ceremony.

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

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

Advani believes temple will usher in 'Ram Rajya'

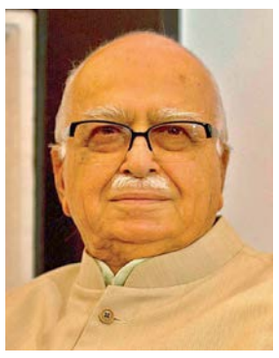
DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG 4

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

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

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

He expressed his gratitude to saints, leaders and people in India and the world over who made "valuable contributions and sacrifices in the Ramjanambhoomi movement.



L. K. Advani

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

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

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

Bihar for CBI probe into Sushant's death

NAYEAR AZAD | DC
PATNA, AUG. 4

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

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

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

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

"They are not responding to our repeated messages and phone calls. In a way, they have announced that they will not let us work there. I have not seen this kind of non-cooperation in my entire career", the DGP said.

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

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

However, on Tuesday after the CM announced his decision to recommend a CBI inquiry into the case, leader of the Opposition Tejashwi Yadav claimed that his party RJD was the first to raise the issue forcefully in the assembly and said that "a court-monitored CBI probe would be better".

Pak's map has J&K, Ladakh & parts of Guj

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI | DC
NEW DELHI, AUG. 4

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

India said Islamabad's move "confirms the reality of Pakistan's obsession with territorial aggrandisement supported by cross-border terrorism".

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

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

But strangely, while the demand for a plebiscite will continue on the part of Islamabad, Pakistan has gone ahead and declared that J&K is part of Pakistan along with some portions of Ladakh to the North and Gujarat to the West.

> The map announced by Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan comes on the eve of the first anniversary on August 5 of India revoking Article 370.
>
> The new map would now be the "official map" of Pakistan after being approved by the Pakistani federal cabinet.

The move is being seen as an attempt to provoke India.

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

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

In a statement, the MEA said, "We have seen a so-called 'political map' of Pakistan that has been released by Prime Minister Imran Khan. This is an exercise in political absurdity, laying untenable claims to territories in the Indian State of Gujarat and our Union Territories of Jammu & Kashmir and of Ladakh. These ridiculous assertions have neither legal validity nor international credibility. In fact, this new effort only confirms reality of Pakistan's obsession with territorial aggrandisement supported by cross-border terrorism."

According to Pakistani media reports, Imran Khan — while addressing the country along with his Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi — said that the new map would now be the "official map" of Pakistan after being approved by the Pakistani federal cabinet and would be the one used in schools and colleges.

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

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

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC
SRINAGAR, AUG. 4

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

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

As tensions run high, large contingents of policemen have been deployed at the residences of various political leaders belonging to both mainstream and separatist camps to thwart possible attempts by them to organise protests. The police also took several political activists into preventive custody.

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

The authorities said that Srinagar will remain under curfew also on Wednesday.

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

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

SHORT TAKES

IRS OFFICER PRADEEP TOPS UPSC EXAM

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Kerala not to opt for sero survey for now

Experts say their focus, priority is on identifying the cases

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, AUG. 4

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

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

Moreover, they said that the number of cases in which the source of infection is not known is just between 1 and 2 per cent.

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

At least 50 to 60 per cent people should develop antibody to have herd immunity set in.

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

"It is high time antibody testing started in Kerala. Not only antibody test the state should also do epidemiological survey of antibody tests," said IMA state secretary Dr Gopikrishnan.

He said Kerala should take a cue from Dharavi and Delhi where extensive testing was carried out. The existing testing rate in Kerala is not satisfactory. Even the sentinel survey being carried out among vulnerable groups like health care professionals and law enforcing agencies is not enough. The results are taking a bit too long.

Kerala had reported the first case of Covid-19 on January 30, which was also the first positive patient in the country. During the first two stages, Kerala managed the situation quite remarkably attracting global attention and acclaim. Till May 4, there were only 419 cases and three deaths. However, within three months the cases have gone up to 26,873 and 84 deaths.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Entire Kashmir now 'red zone'

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

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

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

The Lakhanpur containment zone on the national highway will be a red/containment zone with a 500-metre buffer, the order stated.

CLASSIFICATION OF districts has been done after a detailed review of the Covid-19 situation with top officials.

It said the classification of districts has been done after a detailed review of the Covid-19 situation with top officials, and it will be reviewed periodically.

The review included the recent spike in new cases in view of the movement of people to J&K and between districts.

On Tuesday, Jammu and Kashmir recorded 390 Covid-19 cases, taking the total number of infections to 22,396.

Ten fatalities in the last 24 hours pushed the death toll from the disease to 417, officials said.

They said all the 10 deaths were reported from Kashmir Valley.

— PTI

ANTI-CAA STIR RESUMES AFTER 5 MONTHS

MANOJ ANAND | DC
GUWAHATI, AUG. 4

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

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

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

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

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

Architect of modern Indian theatre, Alkazi, passes away

DC CORRESPONDENT
MUMBAI, AUG. 4

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

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

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

Reacting to the death, Bollywood actor Nawazuddin Siddiqui wrote on Twitter, "The true architect of the Modern Indian Theatre. The Doyen who possessed the extreme knowledge in all the aspects of Art. The magician who nurtured many greats of theatre. May your brightest spark from the heaven keep us enlightening."

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

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

He was awarded the Padma Shri (1966), the Padma Bhushan (1991), and Padma Vibhushan in 2010.

TWO INDIANS KIDNAPPED IN 2018 FROM AFGHANISTAN RELEASED

DC CORRESPONDENT
NEW DELHI, AUG. 4

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

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

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

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

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

LIVE RICH
FINANCIAL Chronicle
VISAKHAPATNAM | WEDNESDAY | 5 AUGUST 2020

quick BITES

INDICATORS		%
Sensex	37,687.91	2.03
Nifty 50	11,095.25	1.87
S&P 500*	3,296.97	0.07
Dollar (₹)	75.04	-0.03
Pound Sterling (₹)	97.99	0.22
Euro (₹)	88.43	-0.13
Gold (10gm)* (₹)	54,830▲97	0.17
Brent crude ($/bbl)*	44.40	0.25
IN 10-Yr bond yield	5.833	-0.004
US 10-Yr T-bill yield*	0.515	-0.048

* As of 9:30 PM IST

Adani, Suraksha, Sunteck submit EOI for HDIL

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

Reserve Bank clears appointment

Insider Jagdishan to head HDFC Bk

FALAKNAAZ SYED
MUMBAI, AUG. 4

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

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

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

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

"A meeting of the board of directors of the bank will be convened in due course inter alia to approve the appointment of Mr. Sashidhar Jagdishan as the Managing Director & CEO of the bank, in place of Mr. Aditya Puri, who is due to retire as Managing Director of the bank on October 26, 2020," said HDFC Bank in a statement.

Sashidhar Jagdishan

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Mkt rebounds on short covering

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD
MUMBAI, AUG. 4

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

The Sensex gained 748.31 points, or 2.03 per cent, closing at 37,687.91 while the Nifty-50 closed 203.65 points, or 1.94 per cent, at 11,095.25

"The key highlight of the day's trade was huge gains in Reliance Industries and HDFC Bank and good investor participation in the broader market, with smart money finding its way into select midcaps across sectors," said a broker.

Reliance Industries gained 7.10 per cent after a sharp fall in previous sessions while another index heavyweight HDFC Bank gained 3.94 per cent after the bank informed stock exchanges about RBI's approval of Sashidhar Jagdishan, an insider, as MD & CEO of the bank for a period of three years.

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

The BSE Mid-cap index gained 1.02 per cent and the BSE Small-cap Index gained 1.23 per cent.

The Nifty Bank index gained 1.97 per cent as other private bank shares also recovered from the previous day's losses.

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

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

Coal mining: Neighbours need govt nod

SANGEETHA G
CHENNAI, AUG. 4

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

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

According to this Press Note, "an entity of a country, which shares a land border with India or where the beneficial owner of an investment into India is situated in or is a citizen of any such country, can invest only under the government route". The Press Note was issued in April as the government wanted to curb opportunistic acquisitions and takeovers of domestic companies by investors from neighbouring countries in the backdrop of the pandemic.

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

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

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

DECCAN Chronicle

5 AUGUST 2020

Repression, mistrust rule Valley 1 yr later

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

To suppress the living norms of the people, in J&K, around 40,000 additional soldiers were brought in to supplement the half a million already present; nearly 7,000 people, including nine-year old children, were placed in detention; even second and third-tier politicians were thrown into jail (other than those of BJP); representative government ended; all phones and the Internet were shut; Section 144 CrPC was imposed across Kashmir Valley for months together; even doctors reporting to hospitals for duty were thrashed at barriers by police and security; educational institutions shut shop; newspapers were forced to carry only government briefings (propaganda), the writing of editorial opinion ceased and was replaced by tracts on gardening, philosophy and morality; journalists had to report to police stations and a coordination mechanism established between the information department and security department; industry and business collapsed; unemployment soared. All this went on for eight months before the Coronavirus-related lockdown. Thus, Kashmir has been locked down for one whole year now.

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

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

What's special about NEP?

The hullabaloo over the new National Education Policy (NEP) in Tamil Nadu could be intriguing to many. Particularly when every political party jumps into the fray to discuss educational reform or when Chief Minister Edappadi K. Palaniswami says that he cannot allow the proposed teaching of three languages, defying his ally, the BJP.

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

Every education policy has been shaped by politics. Many a custom that prevented subaltern communities from pursuing higher education was removed through orders and moves to deny opportunities for the marginalised people were fought through political action.

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

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

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Subhani

Men in The Castle and J&K's metamorphosis

V. Sudarshan

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

A fatuous record it certainly is. And yet, it could be out of a satirical version of Franz Kafka's incomplete and allegorical novel, *The Castle*. In eight days, between January 18 and January 25, 2020, as many as 36 Union ministers visited 60 locations in 12 districts of Jammu and Kashmir and addressed 100 public meetings while inaugurating 210 public projects, probably delivering lengthy monologues to rigged audiences. And yes, grievance boxes have been placed in each and every panchayat in Jammu and Kashmir. Taken together, they represent the core of New Delhi's new relationship with the erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir in the year since Article 370 was abrogated. These are also probably going to be among the talking points of future choreographed visits of foreign diplomats to mark the colossal development strides taken in Jammu and Kashmir.

The real story, however, is quite the opposite. The only politicians who have a free but security-enveloped run of Jammu and Kashmir are the Central ministers, politicians from New Delhi, some of whose official portfolios are much longer than their names but mean little in the new Jammu and Kashmir. Not the local politicians, even the more mildly offensive in the eyes of New Delhi like Saifuddin Soz, who just the other day impotently peered through concertina wiring to wiggle his finger to demonstrate the complete freedom of his movement. And yes, New Delhi, hereinafter to be referred to as "The Castle", now controls Jammu and Kashmir in exactly the same way as Pakistan controls Occupied Kashmir, from Islamabad, through nameless bureaucrats, seemingly eliminating the need for elected representatives. Kafka's novel is set in unending winter and most scenes are dark, *The Castle* bureaucracy unreachable and the protagonist, eerily, is a mysterious character identified simply as "K", an outsider seeking acceptance. With Kafkaesque efficiency, our bureaucrats in The Castle have managed not to hold elections, even to panchayats. This of course underscores the absurd importance of having grievance boxes in every panchayat in Jammu and Kashmir. To prompt a wink-wink reaction from Washington, the Chinese might be well advised take a few pages of this silver-lined playbook's refinement of democracy and upholding of human rights, to apply to the Uighurs, for instance.

Needless to say, the achievements of the year gone by are unparalleled. In terms of counter-terrorism operations, The Castle appears on top of that beast; in the seven months they have culled as many terrorist recruits as they did in almost all of the previous year. And yet, despite this everyday demonstration of efficiency, The Castle has been unable to address the alienation and disaffection of the village that lies below, buried deep in the icy drifts in the aftermath of the crude and surgical killing of Article 370. To the nearly 700 companies of paramilitary forces, comprising CRPF, SSB, ITBP and over a hundred companies of the better-primed Rashtriya Rifles, the supply of cannon fodder seems limitless, visible in the new recruits to militancy, some of vintages as recent as three or four days.

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

Kafka died leaving his last novel hanging midsentence, unfinished. Several endings thus become plausible. The parallels are uncanny elsewhere as well outside the artificial microcosm of Kashmir, where the larger plots have begun writing themselves, somewhat to our chagrin. From the East to the West our recent neighbourhood initiative, which began with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's impromptu inviting of all the leaders to his swearing-in in May 2014, seems to have arrived at a critical and enigmatic phase. The drawbridge is going up, a moat of self-imposed absurdity completes the separation. In Bangladesh, which we helped liberate, our envoy continues to find difficulty getting an audience with Sheikh Hasina amid protests against our Prime Minister for pushing both the NRC and the CAA, both inimical to Bangladesh, and capable of driving Bangladesh firmly into the Chinese embrace. It is a squabble a day scene with Nepal now. As we get turfed out of Afghanistan and diplomatically booted out of Iran, there is more likely than not a congruence of both tactical and strategic intent involving a range of countries, especially in the Muslim world, more aligned with the Chinese and Pakistanis, than with New Delhi. Just because most of the Gulf and Arab nations have not spoken up about the depredations around these contentious issues does not mean they do not have a clear view or are not watching with concern the goings-on. Any reprieve that we may have got through Covid-19 on the CAA, and even on Kashmir, is temporary and illusory. The EU remains phlegmatic and focused on its key goals where the lack of various freedoms in Kashmir are concerned. It is not going to change its mind or vote. Joe Biden, should he come up trumps, has already been conferred the Hilal-e-Pakistan for his yeoman service for promoting friendship with Pakistan. One year after August 5, 2019, the intransigent military arrival of the Chinese in our part of Ladakh, however helplessly the folks in The Castle spin it with Rafales and so on, is the clearest indication that the world as we wished to know it is no longer the same. At the centre of the faultlines of that new world is a word beginning with K. Which ending do you think waits to write itself for our K?

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

LETTERS

GOOD SHOW

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

Dr C. Ghanshyam
Visakhapatnam

A BLACK MARK

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

Jagannadham Chowdari
Srikakulam

SERVICE RECORD

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

Veeraganta Bhaskar Rao
Bobbili

50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

PM says ban on Naxalites not possible

NEW DELHI, August 3

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

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

Vijay Sai Reddy

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

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

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

In 2001, the Government of India placed an order for Rafale jets which are multi-role combat aircraft for the Indian Air Force. Due to the Narendra Modi government's untiring efforts, the jets became part of our air force after 19 long years.

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

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

Out of the 36 Rafale aircraft, 30 will be fighter jets and six will be trainers. The jets could be purchased only because PM Narendra Modi took the right decision to get these aircraft through an inter-governmental agreement with France, after the long-pending procurement process.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Hence, I welcome the Rafales wholeheartedly. I hope the remaining "birds of steel" will land as soon as possible.

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

SHORT TAKES

WORK RESUMES TO REBUILD CHURCH DESTROYED ON 9/11

New York, Aug. 4: After a three year halt due to financial problems, work resumed on Monday on a Greek Orthodox church being built to replace one destroyed in the attack on the World Trade Center on September. 11, 2001.

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

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

Gov. Andrew Cuomo, who was there to see work resume, said the continuing reconstruction is more proof of New Yorkers' persistence to rise from the ashes of the terror attacks. "This St. Nicholas is going to be more splendid and more inviting than the St. Nicholas that was here before," he said. — *AP*

RAJAPAKSA BROS HOPE TO WIN MAJORITY IN POLLS

Colombo, Aug. 4: Sri Lankans head to the polls today with the ruling Rajapaksa brothers looking for a super-majority in parliament to change the constitution and unravel democratic safeguards. Political observers say the siblings — renowned for their ruthless crushing of Tamil separatist rebels to end a decades-old conflict in 2009 — want to end presidential term limits, bring the judiciary and police under their direct control, and extend their dynastic power to a new generation.

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

ISAIAS LASHES US EAST COAST WITH WINDS, RAINS

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

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

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

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

GOLDEN GLOBES VOTERS HIT WITH ANTITRUST SUIT

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

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

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

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

2 massive explosions rock Beirut

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

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

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

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

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

Trump rails as Nevada opts for mail-in ballots

US Prez has claimed mail ballots would lead to voter fraud

Carson City (US), Aug. 4: Nevada lawmakers passed a bill on Sunday that would add the state to a growing list of US states that will mail active voters ballots ahead of the November election amid the Coronavirus pandemic.

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

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

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

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

The consensus among experts is that all forms of voter fraud are rare. Nevada Secretary of State Barbara Cegavske told lawmakers on Friday that she wasn't aware of any fraud in the June primary, when Nevada mailed all active voters absentee ballots and only opened a limited number of polling places to prevent the spread of Coronavirus.

Limited polling places in Reno and Las Vegas resulted in lines of up to eight hours. In the June primary, all Nevada counties had one polling place except for Clark County, which had three in the Las Vegas area. The bill requires at least 140 polling places throughout the state in November, including 100 in Clark County, which had 179 in the November 2018 election. — *AP*

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

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

India's Covid-19 tally increased to 18,55,745 on Tuesday with 52,050 people testing positive for coronavirus infection in a day. China on Tuesday reported 36 new cases across the country, down from 43 the previous day. The country's Covid-19 cases crossed the 100-mark on July 29, for the first time in over three months, sparking the fear of a rebound.

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

As such, compared to larger countries, the US is doing much better in the fight against the Coronavirus, he said. "Don't forget, we're much bigger than — other than India and China. China is having a massive flare up right now. India has a tremendous problem. Other countries have problems," he said in response to a question.

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

Trump avoids praising Lewis

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

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

"How do you think history will remember John Lewis?" Jonathan Swan of the Axios media outlet asked Trump in the interview aired on Monday.

"I don't know, I really don't know," the president answered.

"I don't know John Lewis, he chose not to come to my inauguration." Lewis clashed with Trump on multiple occasions — as well as boycotting his swearing-in ceremony, Lewis cited Russian interference in the 2016 election to question his legitimacy and warned US democracy was under threat. — *AFP*

3 WRITE SOS ON SAND, RESCUED FROM ISLAND

Wellington, Aug. 4: Three men have been rescued from a tiny Pacific island after writing a giant SOS sign in the sand that was spotted from above, authorities say.

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

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

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

China accuses US of bullying over TikTok

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

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

A day earlier, President Trump gave TikTok six weeks to sell its US operations, in the latest escalation to an ongoing political and trade battle between Washington and Beijing.

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

But Wang told a regular press briefing on Tuesday: "The US, without providing any evidence, has been using an abused concept of national security... unjustifiably suppressing certain non-US companies." He said the national security grounds for the US's clampdown on Chinese firms "does not hold water", adding that the companies conduct their business activities in accordance with international rules and US laws.

"But the US is cracking down on them on trumped-up charges. This is all political manipulation," said Wang, who warned the US not to "open Pandora's box". — *AFP*

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

US finds possible Covid treatment

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

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

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

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

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

These findings suggest that this series of compounds should be investigated further as a potential therapeutic for human Coronavirus infection, they said. — *AFP*

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

Chad slows down internet to combat 'hate speech'

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

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

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

The images, which are dated July 14, show him opening fire on one of them at point-blank range, before being attacked with a knife.

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

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

U.S. 'CLOUD' SUPREMACY HAS EUROPE WORRIED OVER DATA

Paris, Aug. 4: Europe is sitting on a wealth of data that is the 21st equivalent of a precious metal mine during the gold rush.

But instead of exploiting it themselves Europeans may be allowing American tech giants to gain control of all the excavation equipment, some experts say, pointing to a flurry of European companies announcing deals with US tech players for cloud services.

Renault, Orange, Deutsche Bank, and Lufthansa recently plumped for Google Cloud. Volkswagen signed up with Amazon Web Services. The French health ministry chose Microsoft to house its research data. — *AFP*

MUGHAL-E-AZAM SCREENPLAY FOR OSCAR LIBRARY

London, Aug. 4: Indian cinema classic *Mughal-e-Azam* celebrates its 60th anniversary this week with director K. Asif's son Akbar Asif presenting the screenplay of the film to the Oscars library in Hollywood.

Akbar Asif, the UK-based son of the late director, said he presented the screenplay to the Academy Awards to mark the big anniversary of his father's historical epic starring Prithviraj Kapoor, Dilip Kumar and Madhubala, which falls on Wednesday.

Three versions of the legendary screenplay — in Hindi, Roman text and English translation — are now available at the Margaret Herrick Library, a world-renowned reference and research collection of the Academy devoted to the history and development of the motion picture as an art form and an industry. — *PTI*

PIO researcher killed in US

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

According to the police, Sarmistha Sen, who was based in Plano city in the state of Texas, was randomly attacked and killed while jogging on August 1 near the Chisholm Trail Park. Her body was found lying in the creek-area near Legacy Drive and Marchman Way by a passer-by, according reports.

Sen, a mother of two sons, was a pharmacist and researcher who studied molecular biology and worked with cancer patients, reports said. According to the *Dallasnews.com*, a person of interest in the case has been arrested on a burglary charge.

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

NUCLEAR | HISTORY

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

Hibakusha make last plea to scrap N-bombs

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

The "hibakusha" — literally "person affected by the bomb" — have for decades been a powerful voice calling for the abolition of nuclear weapons.

There are an estimated 1,36,700 left, many of whom were infants or unborn children at the time of the attacks.

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

"What we hibakusha are saying is we can't repeat (a nuclear attack)," 88-year-old Terumi Tanaka, who survived the Nagasaki bombing, said ahead of the anniversaries.

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

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

He has spent much of his life sharing his experience, hoping that explaining the horrors of nuclear weapons will convince people to support a ban.

But he recognises that the community of those who lived through the attacks is shrinking, and their message will have to be passed on by others in the decades to come.

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

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

LINES DRAWN FOR IPL

Tests, quarantine, bio-bubble part of plan

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

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

If any individual tests positive, he will go into a 14-day quarantine. After the quarantine, he will be required to undergo two more Covid-19 RT-PCR tests within a space of 24 hours and if they come negative, that person will be cleared to fly to UAE for the IPL.

"Following their arrival in the UAE, the players and support staff will have to return at least three negative tests during a week's quarantine and if they are negative, they can enter the bio-bubble and start training.

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

During the first week in the UAE, the players and team officials will not be allowed to meet each other in the hotel and they can only do so after they test negative thrice, following which they will be cleared to enter the bio-bubble and start training.

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

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

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

- **Indian players and support staff will have to undergo two Covid-19 RT-PCR tests, 24 hours apart, a week before joining the 14-day quarantine period with their respective teams in India.**
- **The players and support staff will be tested on Day 1, Day 3 and Day 6 of their quarantine in the UAE.**
- **Teams have been told to not fly out bef-ore August 20. Families will not be allowed to meet anyone outside bio-bubble.**

SHORT TAKES

Red card for coughing on field

Zurich: A football player who deliberately coughs close to another player or match official can be issued a red card.

The International Football Association Board, the game's lawmaker, updated its guidelines while the pandemic perseveres.

A referee can only red card a player when they are certain the cough is intentional. A yellow card is also optional.

The new rule falls under "using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures."

IFAB said in a statement: "As with all offenses, the referee has to make a judgment about the true nature of the offense.

"If it were clearly accidental, then the referee would not take action nor if the 'cough' took place with a large distance between the players.

"However, where it is close enough to be clearly offensive, then the referee can take action," the statemen from IFAB added. — *AP*

World Cup winner Iker calls it a day

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

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

"Today is both one of the most important and most difficult days of my sporting life, the time to say goodbye has arrived," he said on *Twitter*.

Casillas joined Portuguese side Porto in 2015 after a tearful departure from Madrid but suffered a heart attack in May last year.

He played 167 times for the national team, winning trophies in 2008, 2010, 2012 in a golden age for Spanish football.

He lifted five Spanish league titles and the Champions League on three occasions during his time at the Santiago Bernabeu. — *AP*

Brazil football sides ignore rules

Sao Paulo: Both teams in the Sao Paulo state league final this week are accused of wilfully ignoring health recommendations to stop the Coronavirus.

Defending Sao Paulo state champion Corinthians refused on Monday to be tested again, while archrival Palmeiras was criticised for releasing players and staffers to go home after matches. The first leg of the state final is on Wednesday, and the second on Saturday. The Covid-19 protocols of the Sao Paulo football body are the same ones being applied to the Brazilian championship. — *AP*

Ali confident of Babar show

Manchester, Aug. 4: Pakistan captain Azhar Ali is confident Babar Azam will show he is one of the world's leading batsmen in the Test series against England.

The 25-year-old Babar has a fine career Test average of 45.12 from 26 matches heading into the first of a three-match campaign against England at Old Trafford on Wednesday.

But his figures during the past two years suggest he is approaching the prime of his career.

Babar's five Test hundreds have all come since the start of 2018, during which time he has scored 1,375 runs in 15 matches at a hugely impressive average of 65.47.

Babar is top of the global Twenty20 batting rankings, third in the one-day standings and sixth in the Test list.

Azhar, asked if the England series would see Babar join Australia's Steve Smith and India's Virat Kohli in the top bracket of Test batsmen, told British media: "I think he is right up there already.

"People are thinking and talking about it. He is just hungry for runs and I think if he keeps doing that he will be up there for quite a long time.

"His performances have improved massively in Test matches over the last year or so. Firstly, he was performing really well in white-ball cricket and people thought he was only a white-ball player but he took on that challenge and played with a lot of freedom and flair," he added.

Paksitan captain Azhar Ali looks on during a nets session at the Old Trafford in Manchester, England, on Tuesday. — *AP*

Azhar, anxious not to pile too much pressure on to Babar, said he wanted the batsman to relax and play his natural game.

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

Pakistan could also do with runs from Azhar, who knows English conditions well from his time with Somerset, and Asad Shafiq.

The two batsmen have scored just two hundreds each in 18 Tests since the veteran pair of Misbah-ul-Haq, now Pakistan's coach, and Younis Khan retired in 2017.

ENG DELAY DECISION ON STOKES FOR OPENER

Meanwhile, England are set to delay a decision on the bowling fitness of star allrounder Ben Stokes before naming their final XI to play Pakistan in the first Test at Old Trafford.

Stokes' quad injury meant he was unable to bowl in England's victory over the West Indies at the Manchester ground last week, which sealed a 2-1 series victory.

He was selected as a specialist batsman for that match, with England dropping Zak Crawley from their top order to make room for an extra bowler.

Stokes bowled in the Manchester nets on Monday but rain cut short his planned stint on Tuesday.

"We still need to know a bit more about where Ben is at," Root said at his pre-match press conference.

"Because of the weather he wasn't able to bowl outside so we'll probably wait on that tonight and make a decision in the morning (Wednesday).

"Ben being able to do everything he can do is huge for this team and it shows how pivotal he is, but if he's not fit there are a number of ways we can go," the England captain added. — *Agencies*

He (Azam) is right up there already. He is a very important player for us but I would like him to be free from any pressure and just enjoy his game.

— AZHAR ALI
Pakistan captain on star batsman Babar Azam

Live on TV
FIRST TEST
England vs Pakistan from 3.30 pm on Sony Six

WINDIES TOUR OF AUSTRALIA POSTPONED

Melbourne, Aug. 4: Cricket Australia on Tuesday said it has put on hold a three-game T20I series against the West Indies which was scheduled to be held in October.

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

It was supposed to be a warm-up series ahead of the T20 World Cup but with the showpiece event being postponed last month due to the global health crisis, the two cricket boards decided to postpone it.

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

"Serving as warm-ups for the ICC T20 World Cup, the series will now coincide with the rescheduled T20 World Cup in Australia, in either 2021 or 2022."

Top players from both the countries will now take part in the rescheduled 13th IPL, which will be held in the UAE from September 19 to November 10.

— *PTI*

- **Cricket Australia put on hold a three-game T20I series against the West Indies which was scheduled to be held in October.**

Rooftop tennis? Roger that!

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

WOMEN'S | TENNIS

Pliskova makes winning return

Palermo (Italy), Aug. 4: Tour-level tennis resumed after a five-month enforced break on Monday, and players at the Palermo Ladies Open had to handle their own towels and not shake hands of opponents.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Laura Siegemund of Germany also eased through in straight sets, beating Irina-Camelia Begu of Romania 6-3, 6-4.

It was harder for Sara Errani, the only previous champion in in the draw. The 2012 winner took nearly three hours to secure a 7-5, 1-6, 6-4 success over Sorana Cirstea.

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

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

— *AP*

- **After a five-month hitaus, the women's tour-level tennis resumed at the Palermo Ladies Open with strict protocols in places post the Pandemic.**
- **The players had to handle their own set of towels, not allowed to shower and are no shake hands with their opponents amidst other rules in the tournament.**

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