



## WINDOWS



A doctor displays 'rakhis' tied on his wrist by patients on the occasion of 'Raksha Bandhan', at CWG Village Covid-19 care centre near Akshardham, in New Delhi on Monday

## Covid tests cross 2-cr mark in India

**New Delhi:** The total number of tests for detection of COVID-19 has crossed the two-crore mark in India, according to the Indian Council of Medical Research data. A cumulative total of 2,02,02,858 samples have been tested up to August 2 with 3,81,027 samples being tested on Sunday, the ICMR said. There are now 1,348 testing labs in the country comprising 914 in the public sector and 434 private labs.

## IMD predicts heavy rain in Mumbai

**Mumbai:** The India Meteorological Department issued a red alert for Mumbai, Thane, Pune, Raigad and Ratnagiri districts in Maharashtra for Tuesday after upgrading its earlier rain forecast from "heavy-very heavy" to "extremely heavy". "Mumbai, Thane, Pune would receive extremely heavy rainfall in isolated places on Tuesday and Wednesday. Raigad has a similar forecast between Monday and Wednesday," an IMD official said on Monday. "The probability of the forecast is very likely, which means 51 per cent to 75 per cent of actualisation," the official added.

## Trump okays sale of Tiktok to Microsoft

**Washington:** US President Donald Trump has agreed to give China's ByteDance 45 days to negotiate a sale of popular short-video app TikTok to Microsoft Corp, two people familiar with the matter said on Sunday. US officials have said TikTok under its Chinese parent poses a national risk because of the personal data it handles. Trump said that he was planning to ban TikTok in the United States after dismissing the idea of a sale to Microsoft.

## NATION



**ALWAYS HAD FEELING THAT RAM TEMPLE WILL BE BUILT: JUSTICE LIBERHAN**

P3



## GRAND RAM TEMPLE CEREMONY

# ONLY PM, 4 OTHERS ON STAGE

## Muslim litigant in Ayodhya case Iqbal Ansari gets invite

Heavily trimmed invite sent to 175; security code on card

**New Delhi:** Two days before the grand Ram Temple ceremony at Ayodhya in Uttar Pradesh, details like the guest list and the invitation card with a saffron theme have been unveiled. The invite mentions Prime Minister Narendra Modi and three more names, indicating a vastly trimmed list in the time of COVID-19.

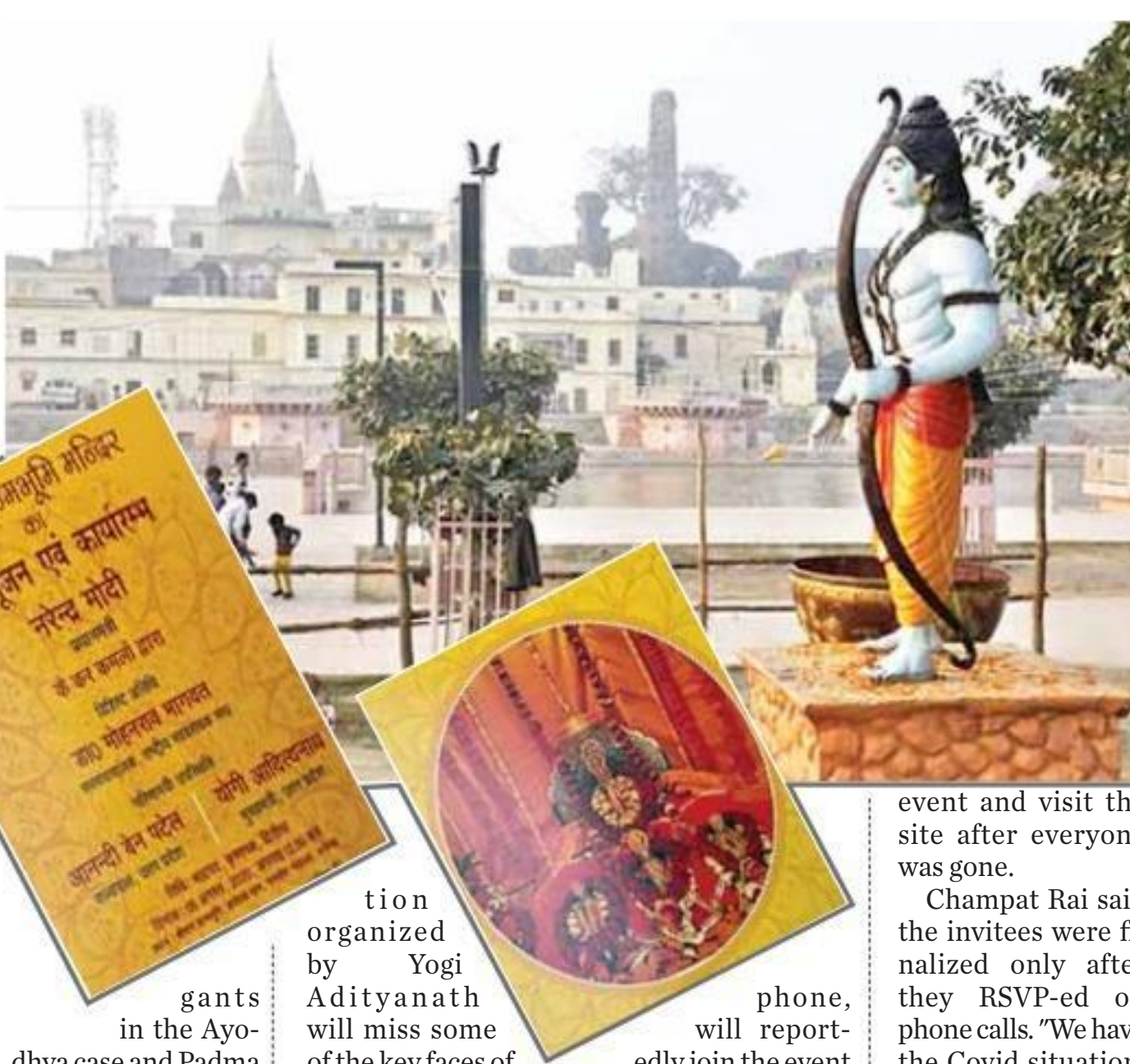
Five people will be on the stage - PM Modi, RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat, Uttar Pradesh Governor Anandiben Patel, Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath and Mahant Nriytra Gopal-das.

The invite also has an image of the idol of "Ram Lalla" or infant Lord Ram. Each invitation has a security code that will work only once; if the guest exits the venue they will not be allowed back in, according to Champat Rai of the Ram Temple trust.

Invites have been sent to some 175 people for the elaborate "Bhoomi Puja" organized on Wednesday in the middle of the nation's coronavirus fight.

The invitations are only for residents of Ayodhya.

Iqbal Ansari, one of the Muslim litigants



in the Ayodhya case and Padma Shri recipient Mohammad Sharif, honoured for cremating over 10,000 unclaimed bodies, were also invited. The mega function organized by Yogi Adityanath will miss some of the key faces of the Ram temple campaign in the BJP - LK Advani, Murli Manohar Joshi and Uma Bharti.

Advani and Joshi, both invited on the phone, will reportedly join the event virtually to observe coronavirus precautions. Uma Bharti said she would, for the safety of the PM and other guests, stay away from the

event and visit the site after everyone was gone. Champat Rai said the invitees were finalized only after they RSVP-ed on phone calls. "We have the Covid situation, that's why we have kept social distancing in mind. We have personally called and apologised to many people."

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## Lord Ram's wish, says Ayodhya case litigant

**New Delhi:** Iqbal Ansari, one of the litigants in Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid land dispute case, has received an invitation to attend the foundation ceremony of Ram temple in Ayodhya on August 5, where Prime Minister Narendra Modi and other dignitaries will be present.

Ansari, who has accepted the invitation, said that he believes that it was the wish of Lord Ram that he received the invitation for 'Bhoomi Puja'. He said, "I will welcome the Prime Minister as he is coming to lay the foundation stone of Ram temple. I will be presenting him the book of Ram-

charitmanas, the holy book of Hindus, with a cloth with the name of Lord Ram on it." Iqbal Ansari, who is the son of Hashim Ansari who was the original litigant in the case, has received the invitation number 146 for the event where only around 175 VVIPs are being invited.

## Ayodhya begins ritual with 'Gauri Ganesh puja'

**Ayodhya:** The rituals preceding the 'bhumi puja' of the Ram temple began here on Monday with an elaborate 'Gauri Ganesh' puja.

The three-day rituals that will culminate with the 'bhumi puja' to be performed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Wednesday began with the Ganesh puja that is considered mandatory for all major occasions in the Hindu religion.

The 'puja' began at 8 a.m with chanting of mantras by 11 priests while 'Ramayana path' were held in various other temples. "Ayodhya has woken up to 'Treta Yug' today. The only sound that one hears in this holy city today is chanting of mantras, 'aartis' and 'Ramayana path' amid pealing of bells. This is the beginning of the three-day ritual that will culminate with 'bhumi puja' and also mark the beginning of temple construction," said Mahant Satyendra, a local priest.

## Temple chief priest sent on quarantine

**Ayodhya:** Acharya Satyendra Das, the chief priest of the Ram Janmabhoomi temple, has been sent to home quarantine after his assistant Pradeep Das tested positive for Covid-19 three days back. Acharya Satyendra Das, said, "As one of my assistants, Pradeep Das, tested Covid positive on July 30, the trust has asked me not to enter Ram temple premises for three days. I will not be performing 'bhumi puja' as other priests have been engaged for that ceremony."



(File photo) Delhi CM Arvind Kejriwal and Lieutenant Governor Anil Bajjal

## LG, CM greet people on Raksha Bandhan

### COVID TAKES SHEEN OFF FESTIVAL

**New Delhi:** Lieutenant Governor Anil Bajjal and Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on Monday greeted people on Raksha Bandhan, saying the festival symbolises traditional Indian values and affection between brother and sister.

Extending greetings, LG Anil Bajjal said on this festival, we should once again take a pledge to protect the honour and dignity of women. He said the festival symbolises eternal love between brother and sister.

In a tweet in Hindi, Kejriwal said, "Heartily congratulations to all the countrymen on pious festival of Raksha Bandhan symbolising affection of brother-sister and Indian Sanskaras".

However, Raksha Bandhan festivities in the national capital were subdued this year owing to the coronavirus pandemic, with siblings having to rely on technology to wish each other.

"Travelling was not an option this year but it's the bond that matters the most. I ordered rakhi and sweets for my brother and he sent me gifts. We had a video call with all cousins too," said Sweetie Gaur, a city resident.

Neetu Bhatia was a bit upset as she would have celebrated Rakhi with her cousin after a long time this year, but the pandemic did not let it happen. "Some differences had cropped up between us over the last few

years and we had not celebrated the festival since then. But over the last year, we resolved our differences and I had planned to surprise him by visiting him this time.

"But I could not meet him. I sent him Rakhi and sweets and wished him over phone. Hopefully we will celebrate the festival together next year," she said. With travel restrictions in place due to the pandemic and apprehensions about going out, Rahul Bhardwaj could not meet his sister who lives in a different city. "This is the first time that it has happened but this is the need of the hour. We need to keep ourselves safe and our loved ones safe too," he said. People also relied on homemade sweets and dishes to celebrate the festival as they were not sure about the quality of sweets available outside.

"The festival was a bit different this year. I got homemade barfi for my brothers and did not buy anything from outside. We are also not going anywhere and just spending time with our family," said Shivani Rawat. Said Nimrat Kaur, "We celebrated Rakhi at home only. I made homemade rakhi and sweets were made at home too. After the lockdown was announced, we did not order anything from outside and only groceries have been bought."

## TN rejects 3-language formula in new NEP

### Will follow existing two-language policy

**Chennai:** The Tamil Nadu government on Monday rejected Centre's three-language formula proposed in the new National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 and said there will not be any deviation from the two-language policy being followed in the state.

Taking strong exception to the proposal for the three-language formula in the NEP, Chief Minister K Palaniswami, who chaired a Cabinet meeting at the Secretariat here, said the state has



Palaniswami

been following the two-language policy for several decades and there will be no change in it.

"Tamil Nadu will never allow Centre's three-language policy. The state will continue with its dual language policy (of Tamil and English)," the Chief Minister said.

"The three-language formula in the NEP is painful and saddening. The Prime Minister (Narendra Modi) should reconsider the three-language policy," he said, adding the Centre should allow the states to implement their own policy on the subject.

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## Gyms to open from tomorrow

### Centre issues Unlock 3.0 guidelines

**New Delhi:** The Union government has allowed gyms and yoga institutes to open shop from August 5 under the third phase of unlocking the Covid-19 lockdown. As per the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA), yoga institutes and gymnasiums located in Covid-19 containment zones shall not be permitted to open.

Elderly people above the age of 65 years, people with co-morbidities, pregnant women and children below the age of 10 years have been directed not to use gymnasiums or yoga institutes in closed spaces. Yogic kriyas are to be avoided



or planned in open spaces. Users to be put in batches and allocated staggered timings to avoid overcrowding of people while entering and exiting the fitness centre. Each batch

could have a gap of 15-30 minutes in between to keep rush at bay and facilitate cleaning and disinfecting process, the release stated. "Those having oxygen saturation level below 95%

should not be allowed to exercise," the release added.

"Individuals must maintain a minimum distance of 6 feet as far as feasible," the guidelines stated. Wearing of masks and face covers is mandatory, however, those may cause breathing difficulties during exercising, therefore, the government has said people can use a visor as a preventive measure.

Frequent hand washing and using hand sanitisers have been emphasised by the MHA which has also advised a strict practice of "respiratory etiquettes".

Continued on Page 5

## OXFORD COVID VACCINE

# Serum Institute gets govt nod for phase 2, 3 trials

**New Delhi:** The Drug Controller-General of India has given a nod to Serum Institute of India (SII) for conducting phase 2 and 3 human clinical trials of the Oxford University's COVID-19 vaccine candidate in the country, according to the Health ministry.

Government officials said that DCGI Dr VG Somani granted the approval late Sunday night after a thorough evaluation based on the recommendations of the

Subject Expert Committee on COVID-19. "The firm has to submit safety data, evaluated by the Data Safety Monitoring Board, to the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation before proceeding to phase 3 clinical trials," a senior official said, referring to the CDSCO. "As per the study design, each subject will be administered two doses four weeks apart (first dose on day one and second dose on day 29) following which the



safety and immunogenicity will be assessed at predefined intervals," the official said. The DCGI has given

approval to SII, Pune, to conduct Phase II+III clinical trials of Oxford University-Astra Zeneca COVID-

19 vaccine (COVISHIELD) in India and this will hasten the development of the COVID-19 vaccine, the

health ministry said in a statement. As a rapid regulatory response, the expert panel at the CDSCO on Friday, after a detailed deliberation and considering the data generated on the vaccine candidate in phase 1 and 2 of the Oxford University trial, had recommended granting permission for phase 2 and 3 clinical trials of the potential vaccine, 'Covishield', on healthy adults in India, the officials also said. Currently, phase 2 and

3 clinical trials of the Oxford vaccine candidate is going on in the United Kingdom, phase 3 clinical trial in Brazil and phase 1 and 2 clinical trials in South Africa. The officials also said the SII had submitted a revised proposal on Wednesday after the SEC on July 28, following deliberation over its application, asked it to revise its protocol for the phase 2 and 3 clinical trials besides seeking some additional information.



# Womenia

TWEET PATROL


**TAAPSEEPANNU  
@TAAPSEE**

2 years .... one of those films we all will be proud of for the rest of our lives and a treasured time, having shared the screen with this blue eyed star we all miss dearly. And the beginning of @anubhavsinha...



## Growing up in theatre ambience

ASKARI JAFFER

It was long back, when Shabana Azmi was four-month-old, her mother would strap her in the back while going for rehearsals at the Royal Opera House in Mumbai, where Prithvi Raj Kapoor's Theatre was located.

As they could not afford maid and her father was also working, she had no choice but to take the baby Shabana for rehearsals. It was quite extraordinary of Kapoor to comprehend the mother's predicament due to financial distress and non-availability of crèche in those times. Thus, he not only allowed the mother to bring baby Shabana but also encouraged all working mothers to bring their children to theatre. And when Shabana started go-

### Veteran Bollywood actress, Shabana Azmi shares her theatre experience



**'My mom strapped me to her back for her rehearsals'**  
— Shabana Azmi

ing to school, during her vacations her mother would take her to theatre. Later, Kapoor made some costumes for

Shabana and she was just put up on the stage with other artists. Shabana says she grew up feeling very comfortable in the theatre ambience because of her mom. As her school was a girl's school, she used to always get roles of male characters especially villains.

She then joined St Xavier's College where there was only English theatre and no Hindi theatre. She along with Farooq Shaikh, who was 2 to 3 years senior to her, started 'Hindi Natymanch'. This was the first time that they got a chance to present Hindi theatre in the college.

Shabana shares, "I went to Pune Film Theatre Industry Institute (FTII). My audition was very interesting as it was conducted by Roshan Taneja, one of the best actors, who never showed his true expressions on his face. While I gave my audi-

tions, he just kept his hands on his chin and showed no expressions, it made me so tense that I forgot my lines." To handle the situation and pass the audition, she enacted as if she was holding an imaginary letter, which was written in a bad handwriting by her grandmother, and she cooked up her own stories impromptu.

She felt that Roshan had caught her forgetting her lines and she would not get admissions. But, she was shocked when he called her and said 'Achatumhara audition kamyabhai' (your audition was successful).

He said it was clear that she forgot her lines but she dealt with the situation cleverly and bravely carried on without interrupting the audition by engrossing herself in the act.

Now to do this it is important that you need to have a technique so what is important for an actor is observation and a proper concentration and with imagination it improves. The actor's greatest resource base must be life itself. If you are not able to take from life how can you give back to the text?

## What women want

SUJATA ASSOMULL

She is unassuming, authentic and runs away from the trappings of the very glamorous industry she works in. In the twenty years that I have been writing about Anita Dongre there is one word I would use to describe her-- rooted.

A few weeks ago Karishma Mangla Bedi, chairperson of the Delhi Chapter of the Young FICCI (Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce & Industry) Ladies Organisation- YFLO asked me to moderate a session called 'Redressing Fashion: Creativity, Commerce and Consciousness', I said yes in a second—if anyone can tell us how to crack this formula, it is Anita Dongre.

"Fashion is emotional more than anything else. You should feel happy wearing it," said the designer. Creating clothes that make the Indian women happy is really how it started for Dongre. Known as the "Queen of Pret", her first label, AND, focused on everyday Western wear, for the urban women. In the mid-90s Dongre saw a gap in the market for "real" clothes for the real women, always inclusive she catered to women of all sizes and shapes from the get go. Using seed capital from her father and two sewing machines at home (one for herself and another for her sister Meena Sehra), she started supply-

ing local boutiques with easy to wear separates.

It became obvious Dongre's forte was design and Sehra's merchandising. Her brother Mukesh Sawlani joined in 1994 and is now president. The enterprise, born as ADIL and rechristened to House of Anita Dongre (HOAD), is in a league of its own with a turnover higher than any homegrown designer label.

Her label has dressed the Duchess of Cambridge Kate Middleton, Ivanka Trump and Hilary Clinton. HOAD runs as a corporate fashion house with five brands under its banner, including the sustainable fashion label, Grassroot, launched in 2015. From the start she believed Indian women wanted clothing that had a mindful approach to fashion. According to Dongre, India with its history going back to the times of Vedanta, can teach the world how to live a sustainable life. "It is about living a simpler life, like our grandmothers did," explained the vegan designer. HOAD factories have been shut since mid-March, yet Anita has stayed upbeat throughout the conversation, "I am hoping this pandemic makes the consumers more socially responsible." And she says, "Customers should ask questions and companies but be ready to answer them."

For Anita it is about the maker and the wearer. She travels the



length and breadth of India to understand the craft heritage of the country, but knows traditions can only be kept alive if they are relevant. It is only by making clothes that women enjoy wearing, that one can hope to keep the heritage and traditions of India relevant, ensuring that India's craftspeople have continuous employment. During the conversation she noted the need for consumers to support local trade saying, "By doing you will bring employment back to the village and control migration towards urban cities."

This unique ethos that drives the company is a balance of commerce with consciousness. For this designer, craft and commerce have to go hand in hand, and decisions need to be made from a conscious standpoint. It seems a simple mantra of combining what a woman wants with social responsibility, is the basis of her success.

TODAY

### International Clouded Leopard Day

International Clouded Leopard Day (ICLD) is a day of international awareness and an attempt to increase the profile of Clouded leopards both in captivity and in the wild. The objective is to raise awareness and unite conservation thinking amongst zoological collections, charities, NGO's, businesses and all those with an interest in one of the world's most beautiful and iconic cats, the Clouded leopard. Every species on earth has its own unique role to play in maintaining an over-arching ecological balance both in life and in nature.



## Himani Shivpuri recalls her shooting days

SIDDHI JAIN

Veteran actor Himani Shivpuri, who is a known face across Indian cinema and theatre, and has acted in classics like 'Kuch Kuch Hota Hai' and 'Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge', says she used to 'live, breathe and just do theatre' while she was a student at the National School of Drama (NSD).

These days, Shivpuri is being seen in Zee Theatre's teleplay 'Hamidabai Ki Kothi', which is a period drama. She plays Hamidabai, a spirited artist of the dying Kothi tradition, determined to not let the demands of popular culture corrupt her establishment despite societal and financial pressure.

Himani shares, "To get into any character the process is the same whether it is a stage or screen. The detailing that I follow is I gather all the information from the script or with the discussion I do in detail with the director while on the sets to understand the characteristics of the role that I will be playing. That's how one gets into the character but the most important part



I feel is to go through the script thoroughly. I don't think there's any difference. There are two kinds - good or bad acting. For good acting you need to put in some effort, be spontaneous, and work hard to appear effortless and bad acting you don't need any effort, you can be as bad as you like."

She adds further, "As far as theatre going digital is concerned, I feel it is a good move. Especially in this current situation, it is very tough for theatre to survive. I am glad that this concept has come up. I have done some wonderful plays but there are no records of those plays except for some brochures or photos. Sometimes even the photographs are destroyed. I remember once there

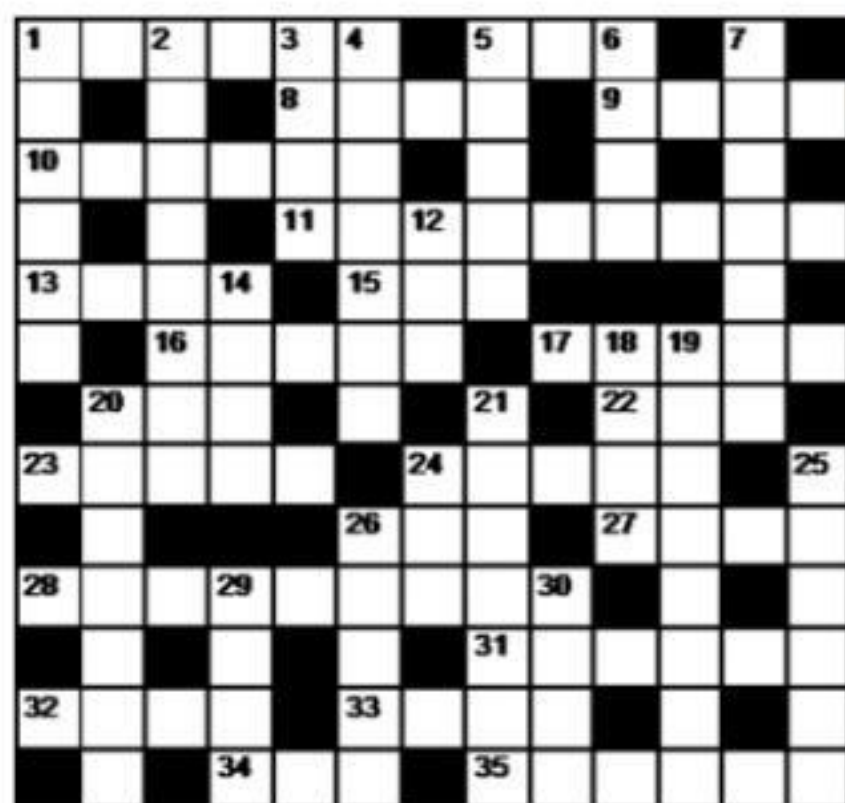
was a fire, beautiful photos of our plays were burnt. With the digital medium, there is a record of plays. Though I prefer the live performance that I use to do in front of a live audience because that gives me the thrill to perform, the response of the live audience is amazing."

However, looking at the current situation she feels it was a great alternative as people are not stepping out from their home so one can enjoy watching all the teleplays sitting at home.

During the pandemic, she discovered that she loved being with herself as she hardly used to get time for herself while she was shooting. During the lockdown, she did yoga, she learned to meditate and learned the Sudarshan Kriya which she has been wanting to do for a long time.

She wrote few poems and tried to write some of her memoirs and figured that she is a very lazy writer but now is glad that she got time to spend with herself.

She also watched films, TV shows on the OTT platform and enjoyed being with family and her dog Arya.



SOLUTION TO AUGUST 3

### CROSSWORD

Across

- 1 Former President \_\_\_\_ Mukherjee (6)
- 5 Headgear (3)
- 8 Poland's Waleisa (4)
- 9 Ages (4)
- 10 Sufficiently early (2,4)
- 11 Uncastrated adult male horses (9)
- 13 Intentions (4)
- 15 Cover (3)
- 16 TV picture element (5)
- 17 Daub (5)
- 20 Parents Teachers Assoc. (3)
- 22 Moronic intro (3)
- 23 Gadget (5)
- 24 Locale (5)
- 26 Cavity (3)
- 27 Give off (4)
- 28 Traveling from place to place (9)
- 31 Pupil protector (6)

Down

- 32 Forehead (4)
- 33 Pointed end (4)
- 34 Animal pen (3)
- 35 Origin (6)
- 1 Original, first (6)
- 2 Tries (8)
- 3 Charitable gifts (4)
- 4 Insects with hard back (7)
- 5 Young person (5)
- 6 Persian fairy (4)
- 7 Contradict (7)
- 12 Feel sick (3)
- 14 Thailand, formerly (4)
- 18 Pouting grimace (4)
- 19 Model to be imitated (8)
- 20 Visible image (7)
- 21 Moisture (7)
- 24 By way of (3)
- 25 Heavy food (6)
- 26 Costly (5)
- 29 Fresh information (4)
- 30 Misprint (4)

### SUDOKU



SOLUTION TO AUGUST 3

### NEWS ROUNDUP

## Soha posts old pic with Saif, netizens think it's Sara and Ibrahim

Actress Soha Ali Khan on Monday posted an old picture where she poses with brother Saif Ali Khan. However, a large number of users mistook the duo in the photo to be Sara and Ibrahim Ali Khan. Soha's picture was meant to wish Saif on the occasion of Raksha Bandhan. "There's no denying you are the coolest brother I know. And there's no denying I don't know the first thing about being cool! #happyrakshabandhanbai #throwback," she wrote on Instagram, along with the vintage picture, where she and Saif pose in front of a car.

However the picture caused a tizzy in social media. Many users confused them with Saif's children Sara and Ibrahim.

"I thought that is Ibrahim," a user wrote. "Omg I didn't realise that it's u n said until I saw who has posted it! I thought it was Sara n Ibrahim," said another. A third user said: "I thought that is Ibrahim and Sara". One questioned: "Is that Saif with Sara?" "Sara and Ibrahim copy paste from you guys..." said a fan.





## Will go for Ramlala's darshan after PM leaves: Uma Bharti

**Bhopal:** Former Union minister Uma Bharti on Monday said she will go for darshan of Lord Ram in Ayodhya after Prime Minister Narendra Modi and others leave the venue of the ground-breaking ceremony for Ram temple construction there, in the wake of the coronavirus outbreak.

The 61-year-old senior BJP leader's comments came a day after Union Home Minister



Amit Shah said he tested positive for the coronavirus. Bharti was among the leaders of the Ram Janambhoomi agitation and is an accused in the Babri mosque demolition case. The ground-breaking ceremony of the Ram temple is scheduled to be held on Wednesday in Ayodhya and is expected to be attended by Prime Minister Modi.

### Iqbal Ansari invited

**Lucknow:** Iqbal Ansari, former litigant in Ayodhya land dispute case, received invitation to attend the foundation laying ceremony of Ram Temple in Ayodhya. he said, "I believe it was Lord Ram's wish that I receive the first invitation. I accept it."

### Masjid land handed over to Sunni Waqf Board

**Ayodhya (IANS):** As the countdown for the grand ceremony of 'Bhoomi Pujan' for the construction of the Ram temple began, Ayodhya District Magistrate Anuj Kumar Jha handed over the five acre land to the Sunni Waqf Board at Dhannipur village in Faizabad, as mandated by the Supreme Court in lieu of the Babri mosque.

A delegation of the newly formed Masjid Trust -- Indo-Islamic Cultural Foundation led by its president Zufar Faruqi and the Board's Chief Executive Officer Sayyad Mohammad Shoib met Ayodhya DM Anuj Kumar Jha at the latter's residence.

Talking to IANS, Board CEO Shoib said, "Today the district magistrate formally handed over the possession of land for the mosque to the Trust members. He handed over the certified copy of revenue record (Khatauni)."



# Always had feeling that Ram Temple will be built: Justice Liberhan



He was a sitting judge of the Punjab and Haryana High Court. Later, he was appointed Chief Justice of the Andhra Pradesh High Court from where he retired on November 11, 2000. He headed the Liberhan Commission which took 17 years to complete its inquiry, which delved

into all the facts and circumstances in connection with the events which took place at the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid site on December 6, 1992. The inquiry held several senior BJP leaders responsible for the demolition of the mosque. The report was submitted to then

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh on June 30, 2009.

When queried why he had this feeling that Ram temple would be built at the disputed site, Justice Liberhan replied, "It is a personal feeling. I have no comments to offer on why I have had this feeling."

He also emphasised that everybody should respect the judgment of the Supreme Court on the Ayodhya title dispute. When queried that many continue to criticise the apex court judgement on the matter, he replied, "The Supreme Court has given a verdict on the matter. People should respect it and there is no point in criticising the verdict."

The Liberhan Commission had concluded that the demoli-

tion of the Babri Masjid was a planned attack, carried out by a specialised team of RSS cadre, which has been affirmed by the Supreme Court, in the recent Ayodhya title dispute judgment that termed it as a "calculated act."

When queried on facing pressure while probing such a critical issue, Justice Liberhan replied, "I never faced any pressure."

The Liberhan Commission had concluded, "It would be unsatisfactory to attribute these attacks (on the Masjid) to the average 'kar sevaks'. These were pre-planned attacks and had been demonstrably assigned to a 'specialised team of RSS cadre and was coordinated and guided by the effective leadership at the spot."

## 10 mosques, Dargaahs echo harmony

**Ayodhya (IANS):** Eight mosques and two 'Dargaahs' surrounding the Ram Janmabhoomi have been conveying a message of peaceful coexistence of the two communities in the temple town of Ayodhya where the Ram temple is to be built.

These Muslim places of worship are located within 100-200 metres of the fortified area, where Azaan and Ramayana chants seamless blend to cement the syncretic culture of Ayodhya.

Unlike the Babri masjid, where Namaz stopped after December 23, 1949, regular five-time prayers are offered at these centuries-old Islamic structures adjacent to Ram Janmabhoomi, which also includes a Shia mosque and Imambara and the Tehribazar Jogiyon ki Masjid, which the name suggests was built by

Hindu salvation seekers ('Jogis') more than 200 years ago.

There are about eight mosques and two mausoleums adjacent to the 70-acre premises of Ram Janmabhoomi mandated by the Supreme Court for Ram temple. Proper Azaan and Namaaz are being offered in these mosques without any objection from local Hindus including the occasional 'Urs' at mausoleums adjacent to Ram Janmabhoomi premises.

These eight mosques - Masjid Dorahikuan, Masjid Mali Mandir ke Bagal, Masjid Kaziyaan Achchan ke Bagal, Masjid Imambara, Masjid Riyaz ke Bagal, Masjid Badar Paanjitola, Masjid Madaar Shah, Masjid Tehribazar Jogiyon ki, and mosoleums of Khanqahe Muzaffariya and Imambara.

Talking to IANS, Haji Asad

Ahmad, corporator of Ayodhya Nagar Nigam, who represents Ram Kot ward where Ram Janmabhoomi premises is situated, said, "It is the greatness of Ayodhya that mosques surrounding the Ram mandir are giving a strong message of communal harmony to the rest of the world."

"We take out our 'Juloos' of Barawafaat that goes through the periphery of Ram Janmabhoomi, our all religious functions and rituals are respected by our fellow citizens," he said.

Reacting over the mosques been situated adjacent to Ram Janmabhoomi premises, the chief priest of Ram Janmabhoomi temple Acharya Satyendra Das, said, "We were having dispute only with the structure that was connected with the name of Babar, we never had any disputes with rest of the mosques and mau-

soleums in Ayodhya and this is the town of communal harmony where both Hindus and Muslims live in peace."

"Muslims offer their Namaaz we offer our Puja, the mosques adjacent to the premises of Ram Janmabhoomi will definitely strengthen the communal harmony and peace will prevail" said Das.

"Both Hindus and Muslims accepted the Supreme Court verdict over Ram Janmabhoomi and we have no dispute with each other," he added.

Sayyad Akhlaq Ahmad Latifi, the Sajjada Nasheen and Peer of 500-year-old mausoleum 'Khanqahe Muzaffariya' adjacent to Ram Janmabhoomi premises, said "we are observing all our religious practices freely, we offer five-time prayers in the mosque at Khanqaah and hold yearly 'Urs'."

## Brothers bring water from 151 rivers, 3 seas for 'bhumi puja'

**Ayodhya (IANS):** Two brothers, both in their 70s, have collected water from 151 rivers across the country and three seas and have now brought it to Ayodhya ahead of the 'bhumi puja' of the Ram temple.

Radhey Shyam Pandey and Pandit Triphala, who belong to Jaunpur district, have been collecting water from the Indian rivers and seas and also soil from 16 places in Sri Lanka since 1968.



"It has always been our dream that whenever the Ram Temple gets constructed, we will gift the holy water

from rivers across India and soil from Sri Lanka. We have collected water from 151 rivers, three seas and soil from 16 places in Sri Lanka," said Radhey Shyam Pandey.

Since 1968 to 2019, the brothers have been travelling on foot, cycle, motorcycle, train, and airplane to collect the elements.

### Dead lizard in 'sambar' bowl

**New Delhi:** A customer reportedly found a dead lizard in a bowl of 'sambar' at a popular South Indian restaurant at Connaught Place in Delhi, police said on Monday.

The incident took place on Saturday night, they said.

According to the police, Pankaj Agarwal, a resident of Fatehpuri area in Chandni Chowk, visited the restaurant along with his two friends. They ordered 'dosa' and 'sambar' for dinner. When Agarwal started eating, he found a dead lizard in his bowl of 'sambar'. He captured the sight in his mobile phone and questioned the restaurant staff following which the manager assured him that it will not happen in future, they said. However, Agarwal informed the police about the incident.

"Based on the complaint, we have registered an FIR against the restaurant under IPC section 269 (negligent act likely to spread infection of disease dangerous to life) and section 336 (act endangering life or personal safety of others)."

## Chemical-laced potatoes being sold in Delhi

**New Delhi (IANS):** Potatoes being sold in Delhi could be laced with harmful chemicals. Leader of Opposition in Delhi Assembly Ramvir Singh Bidhuri has written a letter to the Lieutenant Governor about the poisonous vegetables and demanded an investigation by the Crime Branch.

Bidhuri citing a report of Shriram Lab has claimed that potatoes, coated with plaster of paris, cement and yellow 'chuna' are being sold in Delhi and these potatoes are dangerous for health and can cause serious illness.

Usually hill potato is quite popular in the market. Bidhuri claimed that customers are being misled in the name of 'Pahari' potato which is brought from Shimla and elsewhere. This chemical-rich potato is being brought from cities like Sambhal, Bareilly, and Chandausi, which are being sold in the market in the name of hill potatoes. The Leader of Opposition has claimed that this potato is grown in a steady manner and at the same time these chemicals are applied to sell substandard potatoes at



high prices. It is dried in the sun so that it looks like a hill potato.

Bidhuri claimed that hundreds of trucks of potatoes are being ordered in Azadpur Mandi and it is being supplied even outside Delhi. Bidhuri claimed that even after being aware of it, the mandi administration and the government remained silent.

He demanded that the investigation of the matter be probed by the Crime Branch of Delhi Police so that those involved in this dangerous business could be exposed and arrested. He alleged that the Delhi government has not taken any initiative to stop this business, despite the fact that such adulteration has come to light in Azadpur Mandi, which is under the Delhi government.

## Tripura BJP MLA defies quarantine orders

**Agartala (IANS):** Ruling BJP MLA in Tripura and former State Health Minister Sudip Roy Barman on Monday defied orders to go into quarantine after visiting a Covid Care Centre (CCC) and distributing fruits among the Covid patients here on Sunday.

Barman in reply to the West Tripura District Magistrate (DM) Sandeep Mahatme's letter, said: "Some vested interested persons are trying to put me intentionally in the quarantine centre so that I can easily come in contact with others who have tested positive for the coronavirus, which could be hazardous to my health."

He also wrote that he had neither clinically or otherwise tested positive for COVID-19, nor was he a symptomatic or asymptomatic patient.

The BJP MLA told the media that an FIR was registered against him on Monday.

Barman became the Health

and Family Welfare, Information Technology and Science and Technology Minister after the BJP-led alliance government came to power in Tripura in March 2018. He was sacked from the cabinet in May last year. He is one of the architects of the BJP-IPFT (Indigenous People's Front of Tripura) government, which wrested power from the Left Front in the 2018 Assembly polls.

Soon after, the West Tripura District Magistrate in an order asked Barman to remain in institutional quarantine for seven days followed by a seven day home quarantine.

"Under the Epidemic Diseases Act, 1897, subsequent ordinance, and the Disaster Management Act, 2005, for the safety of yours and the community at large you are hereby directed to remain in quarantine," said the DM's order to the MLA. Refusing to go into any kind of quarantine, Barman in a strongly worded letter to the

District Magistrate said: "I have not been tested or having any symptoms and not being advised by medical officer. I went to the CCC wearing the Personal Protective Equipment and other kits. Could you please enlighten me as to how SP, DM, Zilla Sahadipati of Sepahijala District (another district of Tripura) being tested positive for Covid could remain in home isolation."

The former Minister said that on July 22, four doctors operated upon a corona positive pregnant woman (at a hospital here) and were allowed to resume their duties the next day while a journalist of a local television channel and a senior retired police officer both tested positive but were allowed to be in home quarantine.

The 54-year-old leader led six other MLAs to join the BJP in June 2017 from the Trinamool Congress. All the seven had earlier been elected to the state Assembly on Congress tickets.

### 'Drone boy' violates quarantine

**Bengaluru (IANS):** The city police has registered a second FIR against N. M. Pratap or 'drone boy' for violating the Covid quarantine norms, an official said on Monday.

"An FIR has been booked against Pratap for violating quarantine rules," a police official told IANS.

Pratap, 24, violated home quarantine rules and has been put under institutional quarantine in a four-star hotel.

Just a few days before the end of his quarantine, he violated the norms by meeting his lawyer in the hotel with the whole episode being caught on CCTV.

On July 30, Pratap was seen meeting his lawyer for an hour in his room, prompting police to lodge an FIR.

The first FIR was lodged when he violated home quarantine and the second one when he violated institutional quarantine.

In the second FIR, Pratap was booked under the National Disaster Management Act 51 b, and under IPC 188, 269.

## Poonch women overwhelm jawans as they tie rakhi

**Srinagar (IANS):** Sashastra Seema Bal jawan Anil Nehvle on Monday felt as if he was among his family members at home in Maharashtra even though he was thousands of miles away as he stood guard in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch and women from the area walked up to him with rakhis.

The rakhis were a token of their love for all these men in uniform as every day they guard them putting their own lives at risk.

"We have come to celebrate Raksha Bandhan at the last village in Poonch with our brothers guarding the border. Our brothers from far off places are guarding these borders. They are away from their families on this day. We want to be with them today,"



said Anuradha Thakur, a local resident said.

Shops were closed due to corona virus lockdown, so the women made the rakhis themselves for the jawans. Away from their families it was a moment of joy for the SSB jawans manning posts near the Line of Control.

"I belong to Maharashtra

and am on duty in Poonch. The girls in Poonch celebrated Rakhi with us. We got the love of our sisters even while we are away from our families, we are thankful for that," Anil Nehvle said. The jawans felt overwhelmed with emotion. There was a sense of appreciation and belonging as they prepared for many more hours of vigil. Traditionally a Rakhi also used to be tied on a man's wrist by his family before he set out for a war, and although it has become more of a festival now, there was a little of that old sentiment in Jammu and Kashmir as appreciation and gratitude for the men in uniform was evident on Raksha Bandhan as the nation celebrated the bond between brothers and sisters.

## Sushant had bipolar disorder, was undergoing treatment: Mumbai Police

**Mumbai:** Late actor Sushant Singh Rajput suffered from bipolar disorder and was undergoing treatment for the mental health condition, Mumbai police investigating the suicide case said on Monday.

"It has come to surface that he had bipolar disorder, he was undergoing treatment and taking medicines for it. What circumstances led to his death is the subject of our investigation," Mumbai Commissioner of Police, Param Bir Singh said at a press conference. The 34-year-old actor was found dead under mysterious circumstances at his Bandra home in Mumbai on June 14. The Mumbai police had then prima facie found it to be a case "death by suicide".

Singh said no party was held at the Bandra house of the actor on June 13, a day before he was found



dead there.

"Till now statements of 56 people have been recorded; all angles are being investigated be it a professional rivalry, financial transactions or health," Singh said, adding that no name of any politician has come up during the investigation.

He further said, "Sushant's father, sister and brother-in-law's statements were recorded on June 16. At that moment, they didn't raise any suspicion, neither did they complain about any lapse in our investigation."

The case has taken another

### 'Forcible quarantine of IPS officer inappropriate'

**Patna:** Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar has expressed his displeasure over the way Bihar Police IPS officer Vinay Tiwari, who is in Mumbai to probe Sushant Singh death case, was treated by the Mumbai Police. Tiwari was "forcibly quarantined" upon arrival in Mumbai by Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation officials.

"Whatever has been done to him

turn with Sushant's father lodging an FIR with the Bihar Police against actress Rhea Chakraborty, who claims to be the late actor's girlfriend, and her kin for abetment to suicide. The development appears to have raised concerns over a rift between the Maharashtra and Bihar governments, which was followed by a Bihar IPS officer

is inappropriate," Kumar said when asked about Vinay Tiwari, SP City (East), who is in Mumbai to investigate an "abetment to suicide" case.

He also said the matter has been taken up with the authorities in Maharashtra by DGP Gupteshwar Pandey. "He (Pandey) will himself speak to the authorities concerned," Kumar said.

being 'forcibly' put under quarantine by Brihanmumbai Municipal Corporation after he reached Mumbai to probe the case.

"Rhea Chakraborty was one of the 56 people questioned by Mumbai police. Her statement was recorded twice and she was called to the police station several times," Singh said.



## Centre should take holistic view of women's health

Natalia Kanem, executive director of the UN Population Fund, is among experts warning about disrupted health services and a surge in gender-based violence. As the Covid-19 pandemic accelerates, fears are increasing about the effect of the pandemic on women's and girls' sexual and reproductive health and their access to care. In response to Covid-19, in March, WHO issued interim guidance for maintaining essential services during an outbreak, which included advice to prioritise services related to reproductive health and make efforts to avert maternal and child mortality and morbidity. The Lancet reported her concerns in detail, and everyone should take note of those. As the pandemic spread, many countries implemented tough lockdowns and travel restrictions in a bid to slow transmission. In doing so, some governments did not heed WHO's advice,

and instead forced sexual and reproductive health services to close because these services were not classified as essential. These services include abortion or even, as Human Rights Watch has reported in Brazil, contraception. This decision not only denied women and girls access to time-sensitive — and potentially life-saving — services, but also further distanced them from already difficult-to-access sexual and reproductive healthcare. Although numerous countries have now eased restrictions, the effects of travel restrictions, closure of health services, economic hardship, and gender-based violence are already evident. With the pandemic growing in many places, governments have to make difficult decisions about how best to protect the health of their citizens. The effect that Covid-19 had on women and girls is devastating. There are many women in situations of desperation right now and all this tallies up to devastating health and social consequences for that woman, for that girl, for that family, for that community. UNFPA predicts there could be up to 7 million unintended pregnancies worldwide because of the crisis, with potentially thousands of deaths from unsafe abortion and complicated births due to inadequate access to emergency care. Of particular concern is the skyrocketing of gen-

der-based violence which has become a pandemic within a pandemic, and this should be in our minds, the international studies reveal. Similarly, Marie Stopes International (MSI), which works in 37 countries, predicts that the closure of their services would result in up to 9.5 million vulnerable women and girls losing access to contraception and safe abortion services in 2020. That disruption could result in as many as 2.7 million unsafe abortions and 11,000 pregnancy-related deaths. For example, countrywide lockdowns in Nepal and India forced clinics operated by MSI — the largest provider of family planning services in India outside of the public sector — to close. The governments of Nepal and India both ordered tough national lockdowns for several months and because of mobility restrictions, neither providers nor clients could reach MSI clinics, forcing the clinics to close. In India, millions of women living in hard-to-reach areas have been unable to access contraceptive services. The Centre should take a holistic view of these and not just an ad hoc measure to tide over health issues of women and girls. Well, it may be too much to expect a vision for the future from our leaders in our country. To claim that we are a developing country is false by any yardstick.

# Constitutional complexities of AP capital



Madabhushi Sridhar Acharyulu

The dilemma over 'Amara-vati' or 'not' appears to continue for some more time with the decision-making being shifted from the Cabinet to the Assembly to the Governor to the High Court. Governor of Andhra Pradesh Bishwabhusan Harichandan gave his assent to the AP Decentralisation and Inclusive Development of All Regions Bill, 2020, and the AP Capital Region Development Authority (Repeal) Bill, 2020 which were passed twice by the AP Assembly to establish three capitals. This raises several constitutional questions.

First conflict is with the AP High Court hearing the challenge to ordinance (later Bill signed by the Governor), which should have made the Governor to wait for judgment, especially when 'judicial capital' is within the domain of Judiciary.

The HC bench of Chief Justice J K Maheshwari, Justices A V Sessa Sai and M Satyanarayana Murthy on 23rd January 2020 restrained AP from shifting any government office anywhere till it completed hearing a batch of petitions on the State capital issue. Hearing the challenge to the AP Decentralisation and Inclusive Development of All Regions Bill, 2020 and the APCRDA (Repeal) Bill, the Bench also directed the government to hand over copies of the reports of the High Power Committee (HPC) and other committees on the capital issue to "all those concerned". The High Court has scheduled the hearing of these petitions on August 6. On March 21, 2020 the HC passed interim orders suspending GO 13 to shift the offices of Vigilance Commissioner and Commissionerate of Enquiries to Kurnool. The State government's justification for shifting of offices merely on the reason of lack of enough space is unreasonable and illogical. The court agreed with the contention that shifting of both offices which are part and parcel of the General Administration Department would defeat the very purpose of that institution which primarily to curb corrupt practices. Though the judicial intervention in policy matters is limited, the courts cannot refuse to act when decision is against the Constitution and guided by malice.

Now the decision of Legislative Council to send the Bills for consideration of Select Committee became purposeless. The Governor's assent conflicts with decision of Legislative Council of Andhra Pradesh. It was brought to the notice of HC by Advocate General that the Legislative Council has referred two Bills to a Select Committee, which should have been honoured by the Assembly and the government, as that facilitates



a deeper and wider discussion on the issues of creating three capitals, which effectively means divesting 2/3rds of capital from Amaravati. The select committee generally takes three months to debate it. Neither the Governor nor the HC can ignore the opinion of the Legislative Council, especially when that facilitates the democratic discussion on a vital aspect because the decision on capital cannot be frequently changed. Once a city is capital, it is always a capital, beyond the lifetime, almost permanently. This should have been brought to the notice of the Governor. He could have considered if there are any constitutional defects, or the fact of Council's decision, the pending challenge before a High Court.

Whether the Governor was properly apprised of the implications of the Article 200 of Indian Constitution which placed three options before him regarding the Bills. The Bill passed by the Legislative Assembly of a State shall be presented to the Governor who shall declare either that (a) he assents to the Bill or that (2) he withholds assent therefrom or that (c) he reserves the Bill for the consideration of the President. He can also return the Bill if it is not a Money Bill, together with a message requesting that the House will reconsider the Bill or any specified provisions thereof and, in particular, will consider the desirability of introducing any such amendments as he may recommend in his message. But once returned, the Bill is passed again with or without amendment and sent back to the Governor, he 'shall not withhold assent' therefrom.

The proviso to Article 200 contains a very important limitation on the powers of the Governor in assenting the consent. It says: Provided further that the Governor shall not assent to, but shall reserve for the consideration of the President, any Bill which in the opinion of the Governor would, if it became law,

so derogate from the powers of the High Court as to endanger the position which that court is by this Constitution designed to fill.

YS Jagan Mohan Reddy's government contemplates 'judicial capital' in an unprecedented manner. The Judiciary under the supervision of the Supreme Court is an independent estate equally sovereign and powerful. The SC and AP High Court together with the Executive concluded and proceeded further to have 'judicial capital in Amaravati. Does the Legislature or Executive have any power to direct the High Court to immediately shift to Kurnool from the present seat in Amaravati? If such an order is emanating from the Bill, doesn't it derogate the powers of the High Court? It is surprising that this specific sentence did not persuade the Governor to reserve it for the Presidential consideration. The State legal experts should have advised the Governor on this aspect.

The Governor should have noticed that the present HC at Amaravati has been established by the Presidential Order not by GO of AP government. After bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh into Telangana and Andhra Pradesh as per the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014, the High Court of Judicature at Hyderabad was constituted as a common High Court, until the new High Court for the State of Andhra Pradesh is created.

In pursuance of article 214 of the Constitution and the order issued by the Supreme Court of India and in exercise of powers conferred under clause (a) of sub-section (1) of section 30, sub-section (1) of section 31 and sub-section (2) of section 31 of the Andhra Pradesh Reorganisation Act, 2014, the President has constituted the High Court of Andhra Pradesh, from the 1st day of January, 2019 with the principal seat of such High Court at Amaravati in the State of Andhra Pradesh and the High

Court of Judicature at Hyderabad shall become the High Court for the State of Telangana. This was issued on 26 December 2018. This will be the 25th High Court which is expected to function from a temporary structure in Amaravati till a permanent building is set up at the 'Justice City' being planned in Amaravati. The Justice City of Amaravati must transform into Judicial capital in Kurnool, according to the new Bills.

Unfortunately, the capital and the seat of High Court for Andhra Pradesh was always fluid, changing and controversial. It was established in 1954, when the new 'state of Andhra' (not combined Andhra Pradesh) was formed after Potti Sriramulu sacrificed his life demanding the Andhra State to be carved out of earlier Madras Presidency. The Court initially met at the Guntur city till 1956, when State merged with the Hyderabad State (roughly present Telangana) with Andhra State to form the State of Andhra Pradesh. By that time the Capital and the High Court were firmly established in Hyderabad. One of the significant reasons for merger of two States against the will of Telangana was Hyderabad, a ready-made natural capital with sufficient infrastructure. The judiciary being a main stakeholder of High Court's location, the AP Assembly cannot unilaterally decide on shifting it. If the Andhra Pradesh has sincerely felt that decentralisation is required, so-called objective of three capitals, they should have sent a formal proposal to the Supreme Court taking HC into confidence, for establishment of a bench in Kurnool. Is it necessary to call a city as 'judicial capital', and make law for it? As the High Court has scheduled the case about three capitals on August 6, the legal and constitutional complications might come up for further probe.

*(The writer is former Central Information Commissioner and Professor at Bennett University)*



## With a heavy hand, India rides out Kashmir's year of disquiet

FAYAZ BUKHARI

The scars of last summer remain in Soura, an enclave that became a symbol of Kashmir's resistance to India's Central government a year ago on Wednesday.

Coils of concertina wire, remnants of makeshift roadblocks, lie close to the broken tar of roads dug up to keep the security forces of Prime Minister Narendra Modi out of this area of 15,000 people in Kashmir's main city of Srinagar.

A year after stripping Kashmir of its autonomy, Modi's government has prevented widespread protests and violence, with a heavy hand on people who for weeks had barricaded themselves in and staged protests, hurling stones at federal troops armed with pellet guns and tear gas.

Security forces eventually broke through.

But local politicians warn that anger is rife with young men still picking up arms - and stones. This Himalayan region has been at the heart of tensions between Hindu-majority India and Muslim Pakistan for decades, the cause of two of the three wars between the nuclear-armed neighbours. Both countries claim the region in full, but each rules only in part.

On August 5, 2019, Modi split the State of Jammu and Kashmir into two federally controlled territories and took away its special privileges, saying this was necessary to better integrate the region with the rest of India.

New Delhi flooded troops into the Muslim-majority Kashmir valley, where insurgents have fought since the 1990s. India detained thousands, imposed harsh movement restrictions and forced a communications blackout.

Many of those measures have since been eased, but the internet remains throttled and a subsequent Covid-19 lockdown - India has the world's third-highest coronavirus infections and rising fast - has forced

millions of Kashmiris to stay in their homes for 12 months. "The government said that they did it for the good of Jammu and Kashmir. What good things have happened since then? They have destroyed our economy," said Mohammad Yusuf Tarigami, a former lawmaker. "Where is the development?"

Modi's government says it has undertaken reforms but that the pandemic, hitting Kashmir hard like the rest of India, got in the way.

Reforms include legal changes to help non-Kashmiris who can now apply for government jobs and secure seats in colleges for their children, 10,000 new government jobs, extending federal schemes to the territory and bolstering the village-level administrative system. "We have to try and win public sentiment," a government official said, adding there is a push to improve roads, water and electrification. Jammu and Kashmir police chief Vijay Kumar said security forces had kept up the pressure on the insurgency, killing 138 militants in the year to July, slightly more than the 129 killed in the same period last year. Still, officials express concern that there is little sign of a let-up in disaffected youth joining the armed revolt.

jobs, extending federal schemes to the territory and bolstering the village-level administrative system. "We have to try and win public sentiment," a government official told this correspondent, adding there is a push to improve roads, water and electrification.

Jammu and Kashmir police chief Vijay Kumar said security forces had kept up the pressure on the insurgency, killing 138 militants in the year to July, slightly more than the 129 killed in the same period last year.

Still, officials express concern that there is little sign of a let-up in disaffected youth joining the armed revolt.

This year around 60 new recruits have joined the militant groups through July, compared with 80 for the same period last year, according to a government estimate. "The challenge would be how do we tamp down the recruitment," the government official said.

Two of Fatima Wani's three sons have found little work as labourers in the past 12 months, making it difficult to make ends meet.

But the 62-year-old housewife's worry is with her eldest son, picked up for allegedly taking part in a protest and booked under the Public Safety Act, which allows for detention for up to two years without charge. About 150 people arrested last year are still detained, two-thirds of them charged under the law, according to government data.

Wani said her family had to sell a cow to pay for their travel to the northern town of Agra to meet her son in prison.

"He is innocent," she said, tears rolling down her cheeks. "I want justice."

Police chief Kumar said arrests had been made of stone-throwers and associates of militants trying to stir up violence in the streets, some of whom had been booked under the security act.

In Soura, the indignation remains. A young man, who gave his name as Sahil and claimed he had been detained three times by police for clashing with troops, said he wasn't going to back down.

"We are being suppressed, and I will fight against that suppression in whatever way I can," he said. "I will continue stone pelting."

## Bharat Jhunjhunwala does it again!

With reference to the article 'Make Ayodhya the Global Spiritual Capital' by Bharat Jhunjhunwala (Aug 3), there is only a reaction of shock and agony. So deep is his hatred for Hinduism and so superficial is his understanding of Hindu philosophy that he is incapable of making any reasoned statements. The arguments which flow out in the name of sarcasm are so puerile that it fits to raise laughter for bawdy high school students. In no country in the world, except India, can it happen that one can hurt the majority religion and sentiment in this manner without fear of any repercussions. In fact, many would celebrate such polemics in the name of freedom of expression. Yoga Vasishtha is a deep philosophical treatise on Advaita Vedanta and obviously the author has missed the message completely, presuming he has read them. The higher and lower knowledge in the realms of the transcendental and the material respectively; the reality of Brahman; the 'unreal-reality' of the material world are concepts which require some study and understanding of Advaitic philosophy. If the humility that the author knows more than the reader is absent in reaching out to our texts, what one encounters is a profound confusion and misunderstanding. Advaita and its clearest exposition in the Yoga Vasishtha goes beyond all religions and 'isms' and could be possibly the only solution for a strife-filled world. Across time and space, people have found the true solutions for everything including the quest for perfect happiness in Advaita. The author's understanding of course stays at a primitive level. It is unfortunate that his hatred for perhaps a political party and individuals transfers to the only traditional system of the world (termed Hinduism as a blanket word) which talks of universal brotherhood and acceptance of any divergent



## LETTERS

views. It is even beyond acceptance too, when the defining quality of the land and its traditions is an 'indifference to differences.' When a small child puts his hand on a hot stove, there is no anger, the reaction is only of shock and agony. Something similar happens on reading this article.

Dr Pingali Gopal, Warangal, Telangana

### Hooligans' raj in AP

I am dismayed by the two things going on in undue haste; one building of Ram temple in Ayodhya by the Centre and the other, the signing by the AP Governor the Bill to form three capitals for Andhra Pradesh and the State going ahead with their agenda of splitting the capital. The common man is perplexed at this crucial juncture of coronavirus spreading its disastrous tentacles fast to keep in pace with Italy and maybe the maniac leaders clinging to their nefarious agenda, come what may and die who may. While Ram temple invitations go across all religions to give secular colour to the event notwithstanding the latest leg hitting and hammering the head and, lynching in beef trafficking and the three capitals process seem to go ahead to no matter how many farmers sacrificed their lands for capital in Amaravati. As their dreams shattered, capital farmers are dying day by day, while we live under hooligans' raj without truth and justice.

Dr T Ramadas, Visakhapatnam

thehansreader@gmail.com

## NEP, the great transformer

This refers to India's new and remarkable initiative in revamping educational standards in the country, with the proposed new National Educational Policy in the country. India is in the process of jettisoning redundant and obsolete practices in planning as well as in the educational sector that we have been so used to carrying on without a murmur. As India bids adieu to the Five-Year Plan, it is time to think afresh according to growing challenges in order to make India a competitive and compatible entity to reckon with, in the face of global challenges and diverse applicability of science and technology. What could be undoubtedly called a pathbreaking move in revamping education in the country, the new Ed-



ucation Policy could not have come at a time when there is no uniform quality in education in the country, with overall educational quality taking a nosedive, except for in some select educational institutions. That would be a blueprint for coming years, doing away with the present 10+2 model to 5+3+3+4, covering ages 3-18. The merger of UGC, AICTE and the introduction of vocational training from Class VI, with internships will surely prove a game changer in technical education in the country, providing an enormous scope for self-employment, and to take care of paucity of skilled workforce in the emerging markets in the country and abroad.

S Lakshmi, Meenangadi, Wayanad, Kerala



# Committed to uplift rural women: AP CM



State government officials and representatives of corporate majors sign MoUs for empowerment of women in the presence of Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy and Ministers at his camp office in Tadepalli on Monday

- **State govt signs agreements with major companies like Hindustan Unilever, P&G for empowerment of women**
- **CM says empowerment of women is not possible until rural economy is changed, bringing about improvement in financial conditions of women and weaker sections**
- **Explains the financial assistance to be provided to women in the next 4 years under the YSR Cheyutha and YSR Asara schemes**

## HANS NEWS SERVICE

**Amaravati:** The state government signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with renowned companies like Hindustan Unilever, ITC, Procter and Gamble for the empowerment of women on Monday.

Speaking on the occasion, Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy said the government was fully focused on women empowerment. "Empowerment of women is not possible until we bring changes in the rural economy, as well as the women from the weaker sections. The AP government is working hard to

change the lives of women and launching YSR Cheyutha scheme on August 12," he said.

The Chief Minister said as part of YSR Cheyutha scheme, the government would offer financial assistance to all the SC, ST, BC, Minorities women who are aged between 45-60.

The state government will implement this scheme in a clean, corruption-free and transparent manner, he said. All the eligible women beneficiaries will get a financial assistance of Rs 75,000 in four years i.e., Rs 18,750 each every year.

Jagan advised women to make use of this financial assis-

tance to generate employment opportunities for themselves which would provide a steady income. Recently, Amul also signed an MoU with the state government, he said while adding that the government would support and guarantee women in availing bank loans. "As of August 12, we are giving about Rs 4,500 crore under this scheme and the state government will implement YSR Asara Scheme in September to support 90 lakh Self-Help Groups (SHGs) with a sum of Rs 6,700 crore annually," the Chief Minister said.

He said that a total of Rs 44,000 will be provided to each beneficiary in four years i.e. Rs 11,000 a year, and around one crore women would be benefited with this scheme.

Proctor & Gamble senior manager Joseph Wacky, ITC divisional CEO Rajinikanth Kai, HUOL GSM Chatla Ramakrishna Reddy, representatives of various companies and government officials concerned were present at the meeting.

## e-Raksha Bandhan launched

- The month-long programme is aimed at creating awareness on women and children in cyberspace
- Designed by Police Department and CID, the programme will train edu institutions and working women on cyber security in virtual mode

## HANS NEWS SERVICE

**Amaravati:** Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy launched e-Raksha Bandhan, a month-long awareness programme on safety of women and children in cyberspace, on Monday from his camp office in Tadepalli on the auspicious occasion Rakhi Purnima.

The e-Raksha Bandhan was jointly designed by the police department and CID for the safety of children and women.

Speaking on occasion, Jagan Mohan Reddy assured that the state government was taking all measures for the safety of women and to prevent crime against them. He said that as a part of this month-long awareness programme, schools, colleges and working women will be trained online by cyber security experts through a YouTube channel. Experts on women safety will give suggestions to women on how they can protect themselves from cyber crimes. The Chief Minister said the campaign would be conducted



Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy launches e-Raksha Bandhan at camp office on Monday. Home Minister M Sucharitha, AP Women's Commission chairperson V Padma, DGP D Goutam Sawang, women MLAs are seen.

through short films, animations and reading material to create awareness among women over cyber crimes. He asserted that the cyber wing will collect all the complaints made by distressed women through Disha app, Cyber Mitra and Disha police station and stern action would be taken against them.

Reiterating that the state government accords utmost priority to women empowerment, the Chief Minister reminded that 50 per cent reservation has been given to them in all sectors.

He expressed happiness that the state government was distributing housing sites to around 30 lakh women beneficiaries.

He said that as part of liquor ban, wine shops in the state had been reduced by 33 per cent. On the occasion of Raksha Bandhan, Home minister M Sucharitha, MLA Vidadala Rajini, AP Women's Commission chairperson Vasireddy Padma and others tied rakhi to Jagan.

# YSRCP dares TDP to seek reelection

- **Minister Anil Kumar claims it should be TDP that needs fresh mandate for its legislators as it is the one that opposing 3 capitals**
- **Repeats allegations of Naidu promoting commercial interests in Amaravati**
- **Says the govt is still committed to Amaravati as Legislative capital, will develop it**

## HANS NEWS SERVICE

**Amaravati:** Asserting that the mandate was for five years, the YSRCP has asked TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu and his MLAs to seek re-election as it was TDP that has been opposing the three capitals concept.

Speaking to media here on Monday, water resources minister K Anil Kumar Yadav challenged Naidu to seek re-election of his MLAs if he faults their decision on three capitals as the mandate given to them was up to 2024.

He slammed Naidu for trying to promote commercial activity by concentrating development only at Ama-

ravati and to serve the real estate business of his cohorts. He said that TDP has no moral right to talk on the capital issue or criticise Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy of bringing up decentralisation. He said that the TDP chief was seen more distressed towards the approval of three capitals than the state bifurcation.

Anil Kumar said Jagan had given consent for establishing capital in Amaravati, where he suggested use of degraded forest lands or government lands instead of pooling agriculture lands. In the five-year rule, Naidu had spent only Rs 10,000 crore and tried to push the state into more debts to pool remaining Rs 95,000 crore.

The minister assured that Amaravati was still a capital city (Legislative) and the state government was very much committed to its development. In regard to this, he said that the Chief Minister had built his own house in Amaravati, but Naidu built a lavish house in Hyderabad and didn't dare to step in Amaravati for the last five months. He termed Jana Sena chief Pawan Kalyan as a confused man, for demanding MLAs of Krishna and Guntur districts to resign in support of Amaravati.

## HANS NEWS SERVICE

**Vijayawada:** Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) president S Sailajanath warned Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy that regional differences would crop up if he went ahead with his proposal of three capitals. He said in a statement here on Monday that the Chief Minister was taking unilateral decisions just like his predecessor N Chandrababu Naidu. "If the capital is changed whenever the administration is changed, who should be held responsible," he wondered.

Sailajanath recalled that the farmers gave their land for the capital city after Jagan Mohan Reddy as the opposition leader assured them that the capital

- **Demands that the CM should consult all stakeholders on the issue instead of going ahead with his unilateral decisions**

would remain at Amaravati. "If the capital is shifted in the name of decentralisation, the farmers are at the losing end," he said.

The Chief Minister should consult all the stakeholders before taking the decision on the capital city, he said. "The capital city should be available for all the people in the state," he pointed out.

The PCC chief ridiculed the proposal of development of all regions instead of demanding special package from the Centre for the development of north Andhra. The Chief Minister

should convince his friends to provide special packages for Rayalaseema and north Andhra on the lines of Bundelkhand, he said remarking that his friends did not believe in the Constitution and they were averse to the democracy.

Recalling that High Court and the capital city were situated at different places in 14 states in the country, he said that according to the Sribagh Agreement, capital city and the High Court were different issues. The High Court should be at one place and merely stating High Court benches, the Chief Minister was misleading people, he said.

Sailajanath condemned the arrest of the Congress leaders when they launched agitation against the three capitals issue.

## Hyd hospital loses licence

## HANS NEWS SERVICE

**Hyderabad:** The State Health department has cancelled permission to Deccan Hospital, Somajiguda for providing Covid-19 treatment with immediate effect.

According to Director, Public Health Dr G Srinivas Rao, this hospital was overcharging the patients admitted for treatment. No new Covid patient has to be admitted by the said hospital and no inconvenience to be caused to already admitted patients and they have to be treated as per ceiling fixed by the government. If it is found that Deccan Hospital was not following these orders, then the government will be compelled to cancel the license issued to the hospital, the Director said.

# TRS netas continue to fall prey to Covid

## HANS NEWS SERVICE

**Hyderabad:** Two more TRS MLAs and few other leaders have tested positive for the Covid-19 and were admitted in hospital for the treatment.

The Patancheru MLA Gudem Mahipal Reddy, Ramagundam MLA K Chander and MLC Naradasu Laxman were tested positive. According to reports, the Patancheru MLA along with his family members including his mother, brother and a gunman were tested positive. The MLA was immediately taken to Apollo Hospital for treatment.

Another TRS MLA K Chander along with the Ramagundam Mayor B Anil Kumar had symptoms after they participated in the Singareni Vanamahotsavam recently. They had undergone tests and were found to be positive. Chander was admitted in a private hospital at Gachibowli in Hyderabad. Recently, MLA A Jeevan Reddy and MLC Naradasu Laxman were also tested positive.

The number of TRS leaders getting positive has gone up during the last couple of months. The first one among the MLAs to get tested positive was Muthireddy Yadgiri Reddy. He was admitted in a private hospital and was discharged after treatment.

Later, Nizamabad Rural MLA Bajireddy Goverdhan, who was in contact with Muthireddy was also admitted in a private hospital after being tested positive. Hyderabad Mayor Bonthu Rammoan who had undergone Covid tests three times was also tested positive though he was asymptomatic and was under home quarantine. He had pledged to donate plasma after getting cured from Corona by starting a center and encourage others.

Earlier, Deputy Speaker T Padma Rao Goud along with some of his family members including his sons and grandson were tested positive. Home Minister Md Mahmood Ali, his son and his grandson were also tested positive. The other MLAs who tested positive include Alair MLA Gongidi Sunita, Nizamabad Urban MLA Bigala Ganesh Gupta, Qutbullapur MLA KP Vivekanand, former minister Kadiyann Srihari was also tested positive. In all one Minister, seven MLAs, two Mayors, one MLC, a former Minister and a Deputy Speaker were affected with Covid. The leaders have been participating in various government programmes and getting infected with the virus.

# Ramesh Kumar takes charge as AP SEC



N Ramesh Kumar after taking charge as State Election Commissioner at R&B guesthouse in Vijayawada on Monday

- **Says the poll panel is an independent Constitutional body that functions impartially**
- **Hopes he will get cooperation from the State govt in discharging his duties**

**Vijayawada:** Nimmagadda Ramesh Kumar took charge as State Election Commissioner (SEC) on Monday, three days after the state government reinstated him on the orders of the High Court.

The retired Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer arrived at the SEC office and took the charge. He said all the district collectors and other officials concerned were informed about his assuming office.

Speaking on the occasion, Ramesh Kumar said that the SEC is an independent Constitutional body and functions without any prejudice. He hoped that he would continue to get the support from the government in discharge of his duties.

Ramesh Kumar was removed as SEC by the YSRCP government after he postponed the local body elections in March citing the precautions required to check the spread of Covid-19 pandemic.

The state government on July 31 issued a gazette notification in the name of Governor Biswa Bhusan Harichandan, restoring Ramesh Kumar as SEC on the direction of the High Court.

The notification stated that it was subject to the outcome of the Special Leave Petition (SLP) filed by the state government in the Supreme Court, challenging the High Court order.

The development came 10 days after Ramesh Kumar called on the governor and brought to his notice the orders passed by the High Court reinstating him as the SEC and instruction given by the court in a contempt petition filed by him against some government officials for not implementing the

court orders.

The High Court on July 16 had asked Ramesh Kumar to call on the Governor, saying the latter has the powers to appoint the SEC as per its order.

The bench comprising Chief Justice J.K. Maheshwari and M. Satyanarayana Murthy gave the direction on a contempt of court petition filed by Ramesh Kumar who was reinstated as SEC by the High Court on May 29.

He alleged that the state government was resorting to contempt of court by not allowing him to resume office as the SEC.

The YSRCP government had issued an ordinance on April 10 to sack Ramesh Kumar as the SEC following a row over the postponement of local body elections.

Within hours after sacking him, the government appointed former high court judge Justice V Kanagaraj as the new SEC.

On the petitions of Ramesh Kumar and several others, the High Court on May 29 struck down the ordinance, declaring it unconstitutional. It also set aside the orders appointing Kanagaraj as the new SEC.

Ramesh Kumar had issued a circular to all District Collectors, CEOs of zilla praja parishads, District Panchayat Officers, and Municipal Commissioners the same day, stating that pursuant to the High Court orders he stood restored to the office of SEC.

However, the next day he withdrew the circular after Advocate General S. Subramanya Sriram stated that Ramesh Kumar's action of issuing a circular is illegal as the High Court had not asked him to take charge. (IANS)

## AP records 7,822 fresh cases, 63 deaths

**Total infections reach 1,66,586, deaths rise to 1,537**

**Amaravati:** The Covid-19 surge continued in the state with the addition of 7,822 fresh cases on Monday, taking the tally to 1,66,586.

While 5,786 patients had recovered and been discharged from hospitals across the state, another 63 succumbed to the pandemic in the last 24 hours, a government bulletin said.

With a total of 88,672 recoveries so far, the number of active cases now stood at 76,377 and the total fatalities increased to 1,537, the bulletin added.

In the last 24 hours ending 10 am on Monday, 45,516 samples were tested, including 18,088 for rapid antigens while the cumulative tests crossed 21,10,923.

The infection positivity rate rose to 7.89 per cent after 39,520 per million population tests were conducted.

Government data also revealed that the recovery rate increased to 53.23 per cent while the mortality rate slipped marginally to 0.92 per cent.

After easing a little in the last couple of days, East Godavari once again recorded the highest number of 1,113 cases, now aggregating 23,314, while Visakhapatnam registered 1,049 fresh cases, taking its cumulative to 14,196.

Visakhapatnam now has the highest number of 10,124 active cases, the bulk of which came in the last week.

Anantapuram district also continued its upward trend with 953 new cases, reaching 17,476 so far.

Kurnool inched closer to the 20,000-mark, aggregating 19,679 with the addition of 602 fresh cases.

West Godavari district reported 11 fresh casualties in the last 24 hours, followed by Visakhapatnam nine, Prakasam eight, SPS Nellore and Srikakulam districts seven each.

## 32 e-vehicles flagged off

- **A TN-based company donates the vehicles which are completely battery-operated**
- **They will be distributed among Panchayat Raj, Municipal Administration, Medical and Health and Civil Supplies Departments**

## HANS NEWS SERVICE

**Amaravati:** A fleet of 32 e-vehicles, provided by Tamil Nadu based VSL Industries, was flagged off by ministers Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy and Kodali Sri Venkateswara Rao (Nani) here on Monday.

The 32 vehicles, fully battery operated and non-pollutant worth Rs 1 crore, would be distributed on the basis of 12 each to panchayat raj and municipal administration departments besides four each to medical and health and civil supplies departments.

They were handed over to the Andhra Pradesh government free of cost by VSL Industries.

While 15 vehicles would be used for lifting trash from houses, four would be used for spraying disinfectants for containing Covid-19 pandemic, four others for testing Covid-19 and four for distributing food to the houses.

VSL Industries chairman Harikrishna was felicitated on the occasion.

Panchayat raj minister Ramchandra Reddy said that the vehicles would be useful in containment of pollution as they are battery-operated.

Panchayat raj principal secretary Gopal Krishna Dwivedi, municipal administration commissioner Vijay Kumar, Vijayawada Municipal Commissioner Prasanna Venkatesh were among those present on the occasion.



## TODAY'S QUOTE

### Kerala to train, export health workers

“Kerala will invest in training and exporting health workers with the aim of capitalizing on their remittances. There will be demand for Kerala nurses and paramedics all over the globe. Lack of investment in public health system hurts economy


- Kerala FM **Thomas Isaac**



## COVID

### Pvt security agencies seek tax relief

Central Association of Private Security Industry (CAPSI) has written to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, seeking exemption of the sector from the payment of service tax. In its letter, the industry body has sought a meeting with the Prime Minister to discuss the issue at length.

FOREX (buy rates in ₹)				
US Dollar	79.51	South		
Euro	92.58	African Rand		4.99
UAE Dirham	22.46	Hong Kong Dollar		11.13
Thai Baht	2.76	Japanese Yen		0.82
British Pound	101.89	New Zealand Dollar		52.19
Australian Dollar	55.99	Saudi Riyal		22
Canadian Dollar	58.67	Swedish Krona		9.83
Swiss Franc	85.08	Singapore Dollar		57.23

DELHI TUESDAY 4 AUGUST 2020

## BIZ BRIEFS

### Gold price rises by ₹185 to ₹54,678/10gm

**New Delhi:** Gold prices rose by Rs 185 to Rs 54,678 per 10 gram in the national capital on Monday amid rupee depreciation, according to HDFC Securities. In the previous trade, the yellow metal had closed at Rs 54,493 per 10 gram. Silver also jumped Rs 1,672 to Rs 66,742 per kg from Rs 65,070 per kg in the previous trade. "Spot gold price for 24 carat in Delhi was trading up by Rs 185 with rupee depreciation," HDFC Securities Senior Analyst (Commodities) Tapan Patel said. In the international market, gold was trading lower at \$1,973 per ounce, while silver was flat at \$24.30 per ounce.

### Apollo Pharmacy's new initiative

**Hyderabad:** Apollo Pharmacy announced the launch of its new digital Learning Management System (LMS), designed exclusively for its employees. Branded as 'myGurukul', the LMS was launched virtually by Dr Prathap C Reddy, Chairman, Apollo Hospitals Group at a webinar conducted for the employees of Apollo Pharmacy recently. The platform has been designed to further enhance the skills and capabilities of the 30,000 employees of Apollo Pharmacy. It is the first of its kind training platform for retail pharmacy business. Dr Prathap C Reddy, Chairman, Apollo Hospitals Group, said, "Members of Apollo Pharmacy family have been at the frontline of combating Covid-19, as all our retail pharmacies were open every day, across 600 cities in 21 States. Medicines were home delivered to customers even during the lockdowns".

### Piaggio unveils new models

**Hyderabad:** Piaggio India launched two new offerings in the market - Vespa VXL, SXL Facelift 2020 Range and new Aprilia Storm with disc brake and digital cluster. The company showcased these new offerings at Auto Expo 2020 in Greater Noida at the starting of the year and recently commenced the pre-booking of Vespa VXL, SXL Facelift 2020 models with 125 cc and 150 cc BS6 engines. Customers can continue to book their choice of new Vespa among the range of models showcased online on Vespa's e-commerce platform and book the new Aprilia Storm scooter on the Aprilia's e-commerce platform. Diego Graffi, Chairman and MD, Piaggio India, said, "As premium differentiated Italian brands, it is our commitment to continuously redefine and enhance our discerning consumer's experience".

### CIL sees jump in output

**New Delhi:** State-owned Coal India Ltd (CIL) on Monday said it has clocked a 17 per cent growth in composite opencast production in July over the same month a year ago. Further, the company is expecting the production to rise post monsoon in view of the positive growth trend in the Over Burden Removal (OBR). OBR implies removing top soil to expose the coal seams and make them mining ready. The composite production was 110.40 million cubic metres (M CuM) for July, against 94.4 M CuM in July 2019, CIL said in a statement. "For CIL which relies on opencast mines for 95 per cent of its entire annual coal output, OBR is a crucial performance indicator which exposes the coal seam for future production at short notice," said a company executive.

# GMR Infra looks to sell land, non-core assets

It has 10,500 acres land; in talks to monetise land in Kakinada SIR

**New Delhi:** GMR Infrastructure is working on disinvestment of non-core assets including land and hopes to yield significant value even from 50 per cent of land monetization, according to a document. The airport-to-port conglomerate in an investor presentation said land at strategic industrial locations will benefit from the possible manufacturing dislocation from China.

"Plan is to divest large part of other assets identified as non-core divestment initiative," the document said and noted that it has 10,500 acres of port and industrial land and even 50 per cent land monetization could yield significant value.

About its Kakinada Special Investment Region (SIR) in Andhra Pradesh, the group said that it is in discussion with a large number of clients for monetization of land. "Government of Andhra Pradesh signed MoUs with Halodia Petrochemicals Ltd to set up a refinery cum petrochem project in 2,500 acres and with HPCL-GAIL consortium for petrochem complex in 2,000 acres land," it said and added in addition pact has been inked with a stainless

- Expects more demand for industrial parks post-Covid
- Developing infra in 275 acres at Krishnagiri SIR in Tamil Nadu
- Infra major posted ₹1,127 cr losses during Q4 of FY20



steel manufacturer for 500 acres and an Australian lithium refinery for 100 acres."

The port-based Kakinada SIR in the Krishna-Godavari basin has plans for an all weather multipurpose deepwater port, a logistics park, a petrochemicals cluster and an eco-industrial park, it said.

As per the document, 4,650 acres area there has been notified as SEZs and utility and environment approvals are in place.

In Kakinada SEZ in Andhra Pradesh, however, the company has continued its efforts for various government approvals and technical studies and added that

demand for industrial parks is expected to revive to pre-Covid-19 levels.

The group said Infrastructure has not been much affected in the region due to Covid-19 as the company was able to re-mobilise and commence work quickly as the workers hailed from neighbouring areas and Hosur.

About Krishnagiri SIR (Tamil Nadu), the company said Infrastructure development in 275 acres is in progress with all approvals in place.

It said it is leveraging locational advantage to create cluster in aerospace, automobile, logistics, engineering and electronics sec-

tors besides setting up a special investment region in joint venture with Tamil Nadu Industrial Development Corporation (TIDCO).

The infra major said while State Industries Promotion Corporation of Tamil Nadu (SIP-COT) will acquire 500 acre for their Industrial park, it has leased 20 acre to Toyota Boshoku for their manufacturing unit.

GMR Infrastructure Limited's consolidated net loss for the quarter ended March 31 narrowed to Rs 1,126.82 crore, as against Rs 2,341.24 crore loss in the January-March period in FY19. (PTT)

### Rupee skids 20 paise to 75.01 against US dollar

**Mumbai:** The Indian rupee on Monday slid 20 paise to close at 75.01 to the US dollar, weighed down by lacklustre equities and concerns over continuous surge in Covid-19 cases in the country. Starting off the session on a weak note, the domestic unit swung between a high of 74.88 and a low of 75.03. It finally ended at 75.01, registering a loss of 20 paise against the greenback. The dollar index, which gauges the greenback's strength against a basket of six currencies, rose 0.11 per cent to 93.45. Forex traders attributed the rupee fall to a host of reasons like stronger dollar, muted domestic equities and rising Covid-19 cases dragged the local unit down.

The Financial Benchmark India Private Ltd (FBIL) set the reference rate for the rupee/dollar at 74.7722 and for rupee/euro at 88.8737. The reference rate for rupee/British pound was fixed at 98.1719 and for rupee/100 Japanese yen at 71.64.

## Rate cut expected even as inflation jumps up

**Mumbai:** The Reserve Bank is expected to administer another dose of lending rate cuts to boost the revival process from the Covid-19-induced economic downturn.

Economists and industry experts pointed out that despite an elevated level of inflation, growth concerns will necessitate the RBI's Monetary Policy Committee to go in for another rate cut. The MPC is expected to release its resolution on the monetary policy after their meet August 4-6.

The easing, if administered, will theoretically allow commercial banks to reduce their lending rates, thereby, helping both consumers and the industry to get cheaper finance. Subsequently, the increased money flow in the hands of consumers will help to boost sales and demand, and for the industry, provide for higher capital in-

vestment on the back of lower cost. Nonetheless, the retail inflation data has been at an elevated level during June, and this might be a key factor for dissuading the MPC from going in for a large rate cut.

"It would be a tough decision for the MPC, as inflation has risen on account of supply chain disruption. 'Life and Livelihood' - both are at stake," said Sunil Kumar Sinha, Principal Economist, India Ratings & Research. "However, we reckon that the accommodative stance will be maintained."

Data showed that India's June retail inflation stood at an elevated level. The retail or consumer price index stood at 6.09 per cent in June. The urban CPI stood at 5.91 per cent and rural at 6.20 per cent.



# Mkts plunge as investors remain in selling mode

Sensex crashes 667 pts; Nifty closes below 10,900

**Mumbai:** The Sensex crashed 667 points while the Nifty closed below the 10,900-mark on Monday as investors remained in selling mode for the fourth straight session amid frothy valuations and mounting Covid-19 cases. A depreciating rupee and grim macroeconomic data further sapped risk appetite, traders said.

The 30-share BSE Sensex, which opened in the red, stayed in the negative zone throughout the session to close at 36,939.60, down 667.29 points or 1.77 per cent. Similarly, the NSE Nifty tumbled 181.85 points or 1.64 per cent to end at 10,891.60.

The Sensex has now lost 1,553.35 points in four days, while the Nifty has shed 408.95 points.

Kotak Bank was the top loser in the Sensex pack in Monday's session, slumping 4.41 per cent, followed by IndusInd Bank, Axis Bank, ONGC, HDFC Bank, Bajaj Auto and Reliance Industries



Massive selling in index majors RIL and HDFC duo dragged the key indices lower

(RIL). Only six index constituents closed with gains - Titan, Tata Steel, SBI, L&T, HCL Tech and PowerGrid, spurring up to 3.15 per cent. According to traders, massive selling in index majors RIL and HDFC duo dragged the key indices lower. Further, foreign fund outflows and concerns over the unabated rise in Covid-19 cases across the world kept investors on edge, they added. On the macro front, India's manufacturing sector activity contracted at a slightly faster

pace in July as demand conditions remained subdued, PMI data showed. The headline seasonally adjusted IHS Markit India Manufacturing Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) stood at 46 in July, down from 47.2 in June.

This is the fourth straight month of contraction for the Indian manufacturing sector. "As virus cases continued to rise and with the uncertainty regarding rate actions by the RBI, markets succumbed to the momentum slowdown visible in the last couple of trading sessions. Losses were led by financials."

"Although momentum has slowed down, stock specific action is still happening, dependent mainly on the earnings results and commentary. As long as the markets hold the current range, these downturns could be short-lived and should be utilised to accumulate quality stocks," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research at Geojit Financial Services.

# Microsoft confirms talks to buy TikTok by Sept 15

Going ahead with discussions after Satya Nadella's conversation with Trump

**San Francisco:** Microsoft has officially confirmed it is in talks to acquire the operations of video-sharing platform TikTok in the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand markets following a conversation between Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella and President Donald Trump.

"Microsoft is prepared to continue discussions to explore a purchase of TikTok in the United States," the tech giant said in a blog post. "Microsoft fully appreciates the importance of addressing the President's concerns. It is committed to acquiring TikTok subject to a complete security review and providing proper economic benefits to the United States, including the United States Treasury," the company said.

The official confirmation came after reports surfaced that Microsoft has halted its bid to buy the US operations of China-based TikTok after President Donald Trump



Microsoft will acquire TikTok operations in the US, Canada, Australia and New Zealand markets

vowing to ban the short-video making app that has over 80 million monthly users in the country. According to a report in The Wall Street Journal, a sale was thought close to agreement "but was put in doubt after the US president's warning".

Microsoft said that it "will move quickly to pursue discussions with TikTok's parent company, ByteDance, in a matter of weeks, and in any event completing these

discussions no later than September 15, 2020". During this process, Microsoft looks forward to continuing dialogue with the US government, including with the President. The discussions with ByteDance will build upon a notification made by Microsoft and ByteDance to the Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States (CFIUS).

The two companies have provided notice of their intent to explore a preliminary proposal that would involve a purchase of the TikTok service in the US, Canada, Australia, and New Zealand and would result in Microsoft owning and operating TikTok in these markets. Microsoft said it may invite other American investors to participate on a minority basis in this purchase.

Microsoft said it would ensure that all private data of TikTok's American users is transferred to and remains in the US.

### Bol Q1 net at ₹845 crore



**Mumbai:** Bank of India on Monday reported over five-fold increase in its consolidated net profit for the April-June quarter at Rs 845.78 crore. During the corresponding period of the last fiscal (2019-20), the bank had reported a consolidated net profit of Rs 154.10 crore. Total income of the bank during the period under review increased to Rs 12,022.48 crore from Rs 11,613.21 crore reported a year ago, Bank of India said. Percentage of gross NPA of the banks declined to 13.86 per cent during the quarter ended June of FY2020-21, from 16.44 per cent in the same quarter last of last fiscal. The filing said that Covid-19 continues to spread across many countries and in India and the same has resulted in significant volatility and decline in the global and local economic activities.

## Remittances may fall by \$100 bn in 2020

**New Delhi:** As the world goes through an unprecedented recession amid the pandemic, global remittances may fall by \$108.6 billion in 2020 if the economic impact of Covid-19 persists throughout the year, says a report by the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The report published on Monday noted that the pandemic continues to weigh heavily on economic systems and employment around the world. Migrant workers are among the hardest hit groups, with many facing scant job security and limited access to social assistance, it said.

Large-scale unemployment and wage reduction among migrant workers also threaten the wellbeing of many households in Asia and the Pacific who depend on remittances to meet their daily needs, said the ADB report. "Based on our worst-case scenario, where the Covid-19 economic impact persists throughout the year and dissipates halfway in the last three months of the outbreak, global



remittances will fall by \$108.6 billion in 2020," it said. This is equivalent to an 18.3 per cent decline from what would have been expected without the impact of Covid-19. Remittance receipts in Asia and the Pacific would fall by \$54.3 billion, equivalent to 19.8 per cent of remittances in 2018.

Remittances in South Asia are expected to fall the most, by \$28.6 billion, 24.7 per cent of 2018 receipts, followed by remittances to Central Asia (\$3.4 billion), Southeast Asia (\$11.7 billion). The ADB research showed that the majority of the decline in remittance flows to the region is explained by a \$22.5 billion fall in remittances from the Middle East, which accounts for 41.4 per cent of the total remittance loss in Asia.





Women tie 'rakhi' on Raksha Bandhan to a doctor, who reportedly helped residents during Covid-19 surge at the Dharavi slum, in Mumbai on Monday

## Karti Chidambaram tests positive

**Chennai (IANS):** Congress MP from Tamil Nadu, Karti Chidambaram is the latest political personality to be infected with Covid-19. The son of former union minister P. Chidambaram took to social media on Monday to announce that he has tested positive for the virus. He stated that he is presently in home quarantine as his symptoms are mild. He however advised people who had come in contact with him over the past few days to follow prescribed Covid protocols. "I have just tested positive for #Covid. My symptoms are mild and as per medical advice I am under home quarantine. I would urge all those who have recently been in contact with me to follow medical protocol." he tweeted. Karti Chidambaram represents the Sivaganga Lok Sabha constituency. He is the latest among political personalities to get infected with the coronavirus.



## 56k Indian expats leave Oman

**Muscat (IANS):** More than 56,000 Indian expats have had to leave Oman, after residing in the Gulf country for years, due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic which led to many being unemployed, a media report said. Anuj Swarup, Second Secretary at Indian Embassy in Oman, told Gulf News on Sunday that the Vande Bharat Mission from the Gulf country that started on May 9 has operated a total 105 flights till date, enabling more than 18,000 Indian nationals to return to India. "In addition to this, more than 38,000 Indian nationals have travelled to India on 216 charter flights operated by social organisations and various other organisations." As we enter the Phase 5 of Vande Bharat Mission (VBM), a total 19 flights have been scheduled in the first half of August to various Indian states. Flights have been scheduled as per the registrations received by the Embassy and we will continue to facilitate travel of Indian nationals."

## UK to launch '2 new, 90 min' tests

**London (IANS):** UK Health Secretary Matt Hancock announced that the country will launch two new tests which can detect the novel coronavirus in 90 minutes in hospitals, care homes and laboratories, it was reported on Monday. The Department of Health said on Sunday that the swab and DNA tests will help deal with the virus in winter, enabling clinicians and NHS Test and Trace to differentiate between COVID-19, which requires sufferers to undergo specific self-isolation, and other seasonal illnesses, reports the Metro newspaper. Almost half a million new LamPore swab tests will be available from next week across adult care settings and laboratories. Millions more of the tests, supplied by Oxford Nanopore, are set to be rolled out later in the year.



## 50% off comes into force in UK

**London (IANS):** Diners across the UK will be able to enjoy half-price meals throughout August from Monday, as part of a government scheme aimed at boosting restaurants and pubs after the COVID-19 lockdown. The scheme, "Eat out to help out" applies to eat-in food and drink on Monday to Wednesdays at more than 72,000 venues, the BBC reported. The discount is capped at 10 pounds per person and does not apply to alcohol. No vouchers are required to use the offer, with the participating establishment deducting 50 per cent from the bill and charging the discount to the Treasury. There is no minimum spend and you can use the discount as often as you like on eligible days.

## Kerala became complacent: CM

**Kochi:** Kerala CM Pinarayi Vijayan warns people not to be careless in taking requisite precautions to prevent catching the Covid virus. "People should not be careless in taking Covid-19 precautions. "Initially, everyone hailed Kerala for good work in containing Covid-19 as we took necessary precautions. But we became complacent that is why we reached to the present situation," Vijayan said. Eighty-two people have died of Covid so far in the state. Despite community transmission, Kerala has been able to maintain a cumulative test positivity rate of 2.6% and a fatality rate of 0.32% which is among the best. The current positivity rate of 4.6%, which is much better than the national average of 11.7%, calls for doubling the rate of testing in the state. But the cases are now doubling in 10 to 11 days whereas nationally its 18 to 20 days.



## Nurse ties rakhi to MP CM

**Bhopal:** Saroj, a nurse ties rakhi to MP Chief Minister Shivraj Singh Chouhan at a hospital in Bhopal. Saroj is deployed at the ward in which the chief minister is admitted. He had tested positive for covid on July 25. Chouhan will undergo further hospitalisation after a COVID-19 test conducted on the 9th day returned positive, health officials and a state minister said on Monday. Chouhan has been in Chirayu Medical College and Hospital in Bhopal since July 25 undergoing treatment for COVID-19. A health bulletin from Chirayu Hospital said, "CM's RT-PCR test for SARS-Cov-2 on 9th day was positive. His medical parameters are normal."

## Why didn't Shah choose AIIMS: Tharoor

**New Delhi:** Congress MP Shashi Tharoor on Monday questioned Union Home Minister Amit Shah's choice of a private hospital over a government one after he tested positive for Coronavirus on Sunday. Talking to Twitter, Congress leader Tharoor said, "True. Wonder why our Home Minister, when ill, chose not to go to AIIMS but to a private hospital in a neighbouring State." "Public institutions need the patronage of the powerful if they are to inspire public confidence," he added. Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday informed that he has tested positive for coronavirus and has been advised by the doctors to be admitted to the hospital.



# 50,000 cases for fifth day in a row

Cases in India cross 18 lakh mark



**New Delhi (IANS) :** With 52,972 new coronavirus cases and 771 deaths in the last 24 hours, India's overall caseload stood at 1,803,695, while the total fatalities increased to 38,135, data from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare revealed on Monday.

With the country reporting over 50,000 cases for the fifth day in a row, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi took a swipe at Prime Minister Narendra Modi, who had said "the right decisions at the right time means India is better off".

The country had crossed the 17 lakh mark on Sunday. Notably, as many as 1,07,707 coronavirus cases were added in a day.

Currently, 5,79,357 cases are

active, 11,86,203 people have recovered from the disease and were discharged.

India has one of the lowest Case Fatality Rate (CFR) at 2.13 per cent as compared to the global average.

With a recovery rate of 65.44 per cent, a total of 40,574 people were discharged in the last 24 hours, the Ministry said.

A total of 2,02,02,858 samples have been tested so far, of which 3,81,027 were tested in the last 24 hours.

Maharashtra remained the worst-hit state with 4,41,228 cases and 15,576 deaths, of which 260 occurred in the last 24 hours. Tamil Nadu comes in second with 257,613 cases and 4,132 deaths. The state registered 98

## Jail inmate escapes from hospital

**Rajkot (PTI):** A coronavirus positive undertrial on Monday escaped from a COVID-19 hospital after being shifted there from a sub jail in Gondal in Gujarat's Rajkot district, police said. Anand Giri is an accused in several theft cases and was shifted to the COVID facility late last month after he tested positive for the virus, and he escaped in the early hours of the day, said Inspector Kishor Ramanuj of Gondal Town police station.

He was one of the nine inmates from the sub jail shifted to the hospital for COVID-19 treatment, eight of whom have now recovered, he added. In all there are 18 inmates from various jails in this hospital, he said.

fatalities in the last 24 hours.

Amid the grim situation, Delhi, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh saw a decline in the number of active cases. Mizoram, Tripura and Uttarakhand too witnessed plummeting active cases.

While on the global front, India remains the third worst-hit nation.

## 2/3rds of migrants have returned to cities: Survey

**Mumbai:** Nearly two-thirds of migrant workers, who had left for home due to the coronavirus-induced lockdown, have either returned to cities or wish to do so in absence of skilled employment in villages, according to a new study that surveyed 4,835 households. The collaborative study on 'How is the hinterland unlocking' was carried out by the Aga Khan Rural Support Programme (India), Action for Social Advancement, Grameen Sahara, i-Saksham, PRADAN, SAATHI-UP, SeSta, Seva Mandir and Transform Rural India Foundation.

The study is based on a rapid assessment survey of 4,835 households across 11 states in 48 districts carried out in the period of June 24 to July 8. The study found that 29 per cent of migrants, who had left for villages, are now back in cities, while 45 per cent want to return to cities.



"Absence of skilled employment in villages is reflected in the fact that nearly 2/3rd of returned migrants have either migrated again or wish to do so," it said.

The study also found that migrants who returned are engaged mainly in labour work in villages - more than 80 per cent of them - which reflects absence of skilled employment in villages. "More than one-fourth of the migrant workers are still searching for work in villages," the study found.

It also found that one in 4 households is thinking of taking their child out of school (24 per cent). "Though distress is still considerable, structural changes are not yet visible and the health risk of COVID-19 in rural India is rising," the study warned. The survey found that 43 per cent of households still reported reduction in meals, while 55 per cent said they have reduced the meal items.

## Karnataka doctor cheers up patients with birthday bash

**Ballari (IANS):** A 28-year-old doctor from Karnataka's Ballari district has celebrated his birthday with coronavirus patients to cheer them up as most of them are gloomy in isolation, said an official on Monday. "With an intention to spread positive vibes among Covid patients, Dr Sohai Sai-fuddin Inamdar celebrated his birthday at O P Jindal Centre, a dedicated Covid care facility, by distributing cake and biscuits," said Ballari deputy commissioner S.S. Nakul to IANS.

The special birthday bash occurred at Torangallu in Ballari district's Sandur Taluk, 316 km north of Bengaluru, where the Jindal steel plant and township is located. Inamdar, an orthopaedics medical student, had just completed his final year post-graduate course examination at Vijayangara Institute of Medical Sciences (VIMS) in Ballari. He



completed a week's duty at the Covid hospital treating moderate cases on oxygen support. "What I felt was that the patients are very stressed out as they are isolated. There are not many caretakers also, they are feeling very lonely and left out," said Dr Inamdar.

So the young doctor felt like reducing their stress and cheering them up a little bit in the hospital.

"So I just wanted to reduce their stress a little bit by making them feel more involved. It was my birthday also, so I thought I will distribute cake and celebrate with them that they might feel involved and encouraged a little bit," he said. Wearing head-to-toe personal protective equipment (PPE), Inamdar and his colleagues distributed the birthday cake in paper plates to the Covid patients lying in beds.

## Doctors to take final call on admission, discharge of patients

**Kolkata (PTI)** Aiming to free up private hospital beds for COVID-19 patients requiring emergency treatment, the West Bengal Clinical Establishment Regulatory Commission in an advisory said that only the doctor will decide on admission or discharge.

The decision of the examining doctor taken without any extraneous consideration or recommendation will be deemed final, it said. If the number of waiting patients is more than the number of vacant beds, the doctor on duty would examine each patient and allot beds to the most deserving ones ignoring any extraneous considerations or recommendations. The decision of the doctor on duty will be final and binding upon all, said an advisory from the Commission.

The examining doctor will also take the final call on shifting a patient from the general bed to the ICU or ITU, the advisory stated.

We have noticed that patients refuse to go home without a confirmatory coronavirus negative report though the discharge guidelines state that clinically fit patient can now be sent home even without testing negative. Following this we have decided on this new advisory so that patients who need to be hospitalised do not have to wait as they do get any vacancies, one member of the Commission said.



## Lanka makes face masks mandatory in Parliament

**Colombo (IANS) :** In an effort to curb the spread of COVID-19, Sri Lanka's health authorities said on Monday that face masks will be mandatory in the new Parliament following Wednesday's general elections. A 21-page operation guideline report was handed over by Director General of Health Services Anil Jasinghe to Secretary General of Parliament Dhammika Dasanayake, which includes many of the general health regulations pertaining to COVID-19.

According to the guidelines in the report, newly-elected parliamentarians will be required to wear face masks.

## After Yeddy, daughter tests +ve

KARNATAKA CM'S 6 STAFFERS ALSO INFECTED

**Bengaluru:** One of the daughters of Karnataka Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa has tested positive for COVID-19 and has been admitted to the same hospital, where her father is undergoing treatment for the infection, hospital sources said.

Yediyurappa was hospitalised last night after testing positive for coronavirus. The Chief Minister's younger son B Y Vijayendra said he was going in for seven days of home quarantine as a precautionary measure.



"Thank you all for your messages and prayers. My father Shri B S Yediyurappa ji is doing fine and under observation of doctors who said there is no need to worry. As a precaution, I will observe home quarantine for next 7 days," Vijayendra tweeted. Six persons, including a

woman working at the official residence of Yediyurappa here, also tested positive for coronavirus, an official said on Monday.

Yediyurappa's official residence 'Cauvery' and the adjacent home-office 'Krishna' are located on Kumara Krupa road in the high security area of the city centre.

"A team of doctors and nurses from the state-run hospital rushed to Yediyurappa's residence and home office to test the staff and those frequenting the places on duty.



## Over 1,100 patients untraceable in UP

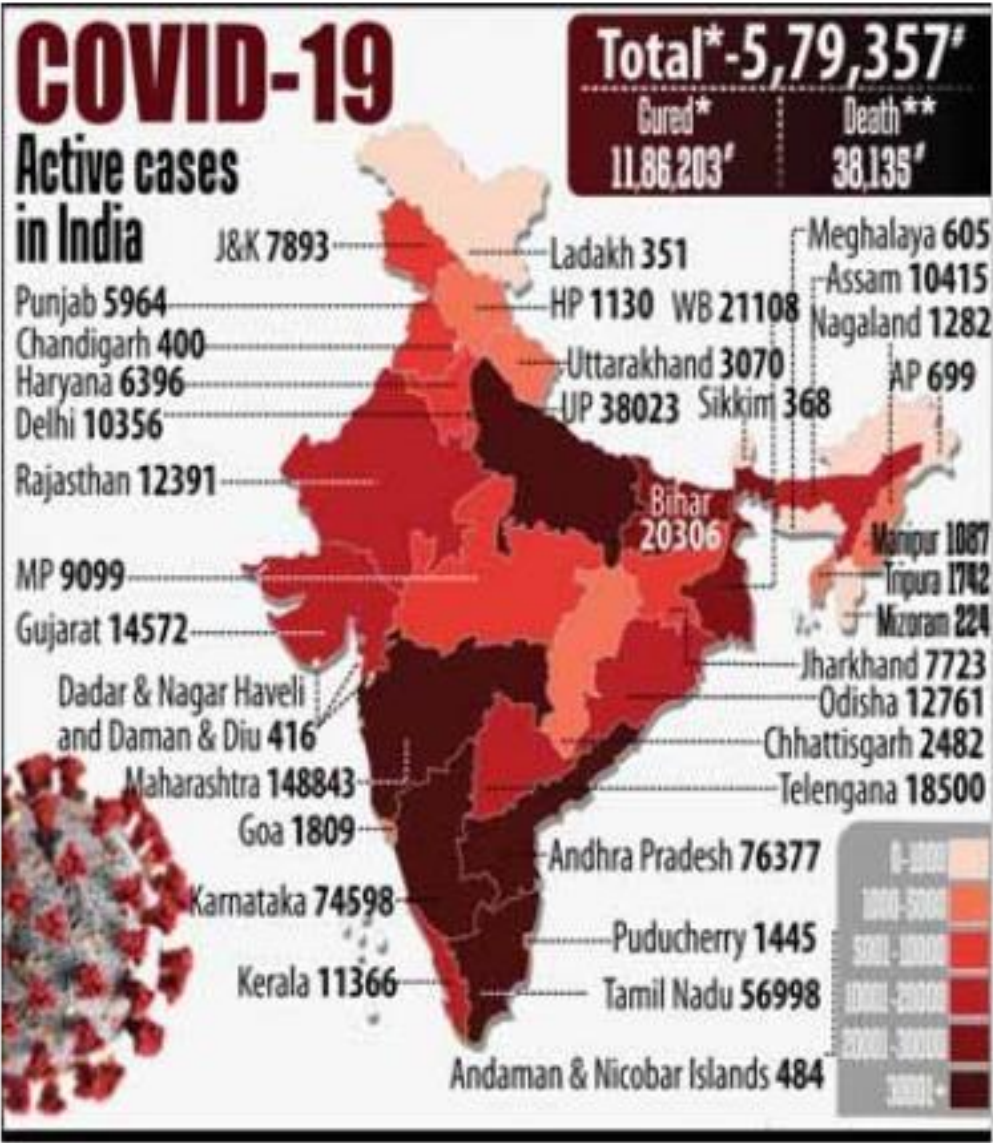
**Lucknow:** An alarming situation has come to the fore in Lucknow after it was found that in the last nine days as many as 2,290 patients, who have tested positive for coronavirus, have submitted their false information including name, address, contact number etc. to the local administration during their tests.

As per the information received, all these 2,290 patients were examined between July 23-July 31. The administration got to know about this fraud when they tried to contact the patients to inform them about their Covid-19 reports.

The local administration immediately sought the help of Uttar Pradesh Police's surveillance division after which 1,171 people were traced and admitted to the hospital. However, 1,119 patients are still untraceable and a hunt to trace them is on.

A legal action is said to be taken against these people for providing wrong information about themselves to the administration.

"Thousands of tests were done to break the chain of coronavirus infection. People were tested at camps set up at several places in Lucknow. During this, some people submitted their wrong name, address and contact numbers. When a probe was initiated, the names and addresses were found to be wrong. We have traced down 1,171 till date, while efforts are on to trace down the remaining patients. All the hospitals and labs conducting tests are directed to verify the details of the patients at their end before taking their samples," Sujit Pandey, Commissioner of Police Lucknow told media on Sunday.



## Data leak reveals Iran's cover-up of deaths

**Tehran (IANS):** A data leak has revealed that the number of coronavirus deaths in Iran is nearly triple than what the government claims, a BBC investigation has found. The data, which was sent to the BBC by an anonymous source, has details of daily admissions to hospitals across Iran, including names, age, gender, symptoms, date and length of periods spent in hospital, and underlying conditions patients might have. The first death in Iran from COVID-19 was recorded on January 22, almost a month before the first official case of coronavirus was reported in the country, according to the data. The leaked information revealed that the government's own records appear to show almost 42,000 people died with coronavirus symptoms up to July 20, versus 14,405 reported by its Health Ministry. The number of people known to be infected is also almost double official figures: 451,024 as opposed to 278,827. Tehran, the capital, has the highest number of fatalities at 8,120, while the city of Qom, the initial epicentre of the virus in Iran, is worst hit proportionally, with 1,419 deaths - that is one death with COVID-19 for every 1,000 people.





# BCCI to hand 2-yr ban to players committing age, domicile fraud

**New Delhi (IANS):** The Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) has adopted new measures to counter the menace of age and domicile fraud in cricket in the country.

The additional measures, adopted by the sport's governing body in India, will be applicable to all cricketers participating in the BCCI age-group tournaments, from season 2020-21 onwards. They are:

- 1. Voluntary Disclosure Scheme for players who are already registered

Under this scheme, players who voluntarily declare that they have manipulated their date of birth by submitting fake/tampered documents in the past will not be suspended and allowed to participate in the appropriate age group level if they disclose their actual date of birth (DOB).

Players have to submit a signed letter/email along with supporting documents to BCCI Age Verification Dept. revealing their actual DOB before September 15.

However, if registered players do not disclose the facts and are found to have submitted fake/tampered DOB proof documents by BCCI, then they will be banned for two years, and after completion of two-year suspension, they will not be allowed to participate in age group tournaments of BCCI, as well as, age group tournaments organised by the state units.

- 2. Season 2020-21 onwards, any player submitting fake/tampered birth certificate will be banned for two years from all cricket matches under the aegis of BCCI & state units. After completion of two-year suspension, such players will not be allowed to participate in age group tournaments of BCCI, as well as, age group tournaments organised by state units.



lowed to participate in age group tournaments of BCCI, as well as, age group tournaments organised by state units.

- 3. All cricketers committing domicile fraud, including senior men & women, will be banned for two years. Voluntary Disclosure Scheme does not apply for cricketers who have committed domicile fraud.

- 4. For the BCCI Under-16 age group tournament, only players who are between 14-16 years old will be permitted to register.

- 5. In the Under-19 age group, if a player's birth is found to be registered more than two years after birth, as mentioned in the birth certificate, then there will be restrictions on the number of years allowed to participate in the BCCI Under-19 tournaments.

The board further said that in order to report age fraud, a dedicated 24x7 helpline (9820556566/9136694499) has been put in place.

BCCI President Sourav Ganguly said: "We are committed to providing a level-playing field across all age groups. The BCCI has been taking steps to counter age fraud and are now introducing even stricter measures from the upcoming domestic season. Those

who do not voluntarily disclose their misdemeanour will be punished heavily and will be banned for two years."

BCCI Secretary Jay Shah said: "BCCI has a zero-tolerance approach towards age fraud in cricket. Not only have we dedicated a 24/7 helpline to counter this menace, but the board also has a system in place that thoroughly examines, and cross-verifies documents submitted by its registered players. The Voluntary Disclosure Scheme will provide those who have committed the fraud a chance to come forward and admit their offence."

Arun Singh Dhumal, BCCI Treasurer said: "It has been BCCI's constant endeavour to take stringent measures to eradicate age fraud. We believe these additional methods taken by the BCCI will help in tackling the issue of age and domicile fraud."

Rahul Dravid, Head Cricket, NCA: "Age fraud is a serious matter and is detrimental to the health of the sport. Many youngsters who are supposed to be playing in a particular age group fail to make it owing to age fraud. With the BCCI taking stern actions to curb this, it is only advisable for the players to come forward and abide by the directives issued by the board."



**Happy to see GC carry forward my effort; hope to see women's IPL soon: Edulji**

**New Delhi (IANS):** Former India cricketer Diana Edulji during her time as member of the Supreme Court-appointed Committee of Administrators (CoA) had given wings to the dreams of many women cricketers in the country by starting the Women's T20 Challenge in 2018. And on Sunday, the Indian Premier League (IPL) Governing Council continued with her vision as they confirmed that four women's T20 games will be played during the playoffs in UAE this year.

Speaking to IANS, Edulji thanked the Governing Council for continuing with her vision of the women's T20 matches on the sidelines of the IPL.

"I am thankful to the GC for continuing to promote women's cricket. I am happy that an effort I started during my time in the BCCI as a CoA member is being carried forward and hopefully we will see a women's IPL soon. Good luck to the women cricketers for the upcoming season," she said.



## Hamilton recounts moment he won British GP with three tyres

**Silverstone (IANS):** Mercedes racer Lewis Hamilton continued his hot run in the ongoing Formula One season as he romped home to a thrilling win at the British Grand Prix. But it wasn't like any other regular victory for him as he went past the finishing line with just three tyres.

Hamilton's teammate Valtteri Bottas saw his tyre deflate two laps before the finish and the same fate awaited the Brit on the final lap at the iconic Silverstone circuit on Sunday. The 35-year-old somehow managed to drag

the car over the line, as sparks kept flying underneath his vehicle, just five seconds ahead of Red Bull's Max Verstappen. Before the tyre mishap, Hamilton held a 32-second lead over the Belgian-Dutch racer, going into the final lap.

"Up until that last lap, everything was smooth sailing," Hamilton said after the race as per Daily Mail. "When I heard Valtteri's tyre went I looked at mine and everything seemed fine."

"The car was still turning, and

the last lap I started to back off and then the tyre deflated. It was definitely heart-in-the-mouth (moment). You could see the tyre was falling off the rim."

"Oh my God, I was just praying to get it round. I nearly didn't do it, but thank God we did," the six-time world champion added.

Courtesy of his record seventh win at the circuit, Hamilton extended his lead at the top of driver's standings to 30 points. Hamilton's teammate Bottas, meanwhile, failed to score as he finished 11th.

## Crucial WTC, players' ranking points in offing in Eng-Pak series

**Dubai (IANS):** England and Pakistan cricketers will be eager to improve their rankings when the two teams clash in a series involving three Tests starting Wednesday at Old Trafford in Manchester.

In the World Test Championship (WTC) points table, England moved up to third position following a 2-1 series win over West Indies recently. The hosts have a chance to leapfrog Australia to second place, while Pakistan can overtake New Zealand to fourth position.

As for the players, skipper Azhar Ali and vice-captain Babar Azam will be among the players in focus for Pakistan and they will be up against the likes of Ben Stokes and Stuart Broad, who made massive gains in the rankings following their impressive performances recently.

Azhar, presently 27th among batsmen, will be hoping to regain the form that lifted him to sixth in December 2016, while Babar will be hoping to progress from a career-best aggregate of 800 rating points. Babar is currently sixth after having occupied a career-high fifth place in February.

Fast bowler Mohammad Abbas (13th) and experienced leg-spinner Yasir Shah (24th), who have in the past, been ranked third and first, respectively, and left-arm fast bowler Shaheen Afridi (32nd) are other Pakistan players to watch.

For England, Stokes displaced West Indies captain Jason Holder from the top of the all-rounders' list during their last series and formerly top-ranked Broad rose to third position in the bowlers' list, currently led by Australia fast bowler Pat Cummins.

Stokes is also England's top-ranked batsman in fourth position, with captain Joe Root (ninth) and opener Rory Burns (17th) their next batsmen on the list.

# Red cards for deliberate coughing, says FA amid Covid-19 pandemic

**London (IANS):** The English Football Association (FA) has issued guidelines allowing referees to show red or yellow cards to players who deliberately cough at match officials or opponents in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic.

According to a Sky Sports report, the FA said action should be taken when "the referee is certain someone deliberately, and from close range, coughed into the face of an opponent or match official."

It added that the offence would fall under the category of "using offensive, insulting or abusive language and/or gestures".

"If the incident was not severe enough to merit a sending-off, a caution could be issued for 'unsporting behaviour' - shows a lack of respect for the game".

Arsenal recently won a record-extending 14th FA Cup title after beating Chelsea 2-1 in the final at the Wembley Stadium last Saturday.

Chelsea's hopes of getting an equaliser were dented when midfielder Mateo Kovacic received a second yellow card in the 73rd minute of the match



for a rather soft foul on Granit Xhaka. They ended the match with nine players after Pedro had to be stretched off due to an injury.

Chelsea, who finished 10 points above Arsenal in the Premier League this season, were dominant in the opening proceedings with Pulisic becoming the first American to score in an FA Cup final.

## Had turned down county contract to take part in Kargil war, claims Akhtar

**Lahore (IANS):** Former Pakistan pacer Shoaib Akhtar has claimed that he had turned down a 175,000-pound county contract with Nottinghamshire to fight the 1999 war against India in Kargil.

Code named 'Operation Vijay', the Kargil war was fought at an altitude of around 16,000 feet wherein 1,042 Pakistani soldiers lost their lives and 527 Indian soldiers made the supreme sacrifice in the line of duty.

"People hardly know about this story. I had a 175,000-pound contract with Nottingham. Then in 2002, I had another big contract. I left both when Kargil happened," Akhtar said in an interview to Pakistan's ARY News.

"I stood on the outskirts of Lahore. A general asked me what I'm doing there. I said war is about to start and we'll die together. I left county (cricket) twice like this and the counties were shocked. I wasn't concerned about that. I called up my friends in Kashmir and told them I am ready to fight," he added.

Akhtar has time and again spoken about how sports and politics should be kept on different pedestals and that while there was intense rivalry on the field when the two teams clashed, they have shared great friendship off it. In fact, he had even proposed hosting a series between India and Pakistan to fight the economic turmoil due to the coronavirus pandemic.



# Brothers Amarjit, Jeakson inspired me to play football: Kritina

**New Delhi (IANS):** Time stood still as Jeakson Singh Thounaojam leapt higher than all in the sultry Delhi air to head the ball into the back of the Colombian net -- becoming India's first-ever goalscorer at a FIFA World Cup in 2017.

As he ran to celebrate much to the joy of the delirious home fans, joining the celebrations was the man with the armband -- Amarjit Singh Kiyam -- Jeakson's fellow midfield general as well as cousin -- with the two having made the journey from Thoubal to the FIFA U-17 World Cup India 2017 together.

The unforgettable goal has inspired a new generation of players across the length and breadth of the country to dream big and soar high. Among those is another member of the Manipuri duo's family itself -- Kritina Devi Thounaojam -- some two years younger to her elder cousins, and currently a probable of the Indian



U-17 Women's team for the upcoming FIFA U-17 Women's World Cup.

"I remember watching Jeakson's goal in the World Cup live on television. It was a unique feeling. It was such a powerful moment for the country, and also our family," 17-year-old Kritina told www.the-aiff.com.

"I was inspired to play football seeing my brothers. Amarjit and Jeakson taught me so much. We trained together whenever they would come back to our village. Practising with them always made me very happy."

"It was amazing when I saw them playing in the World Cup. That motivates me to play in the

World Cup as well. It will be a proud moment if we have three World Cuppers from the family," she added.

Amarjit, who made his senior team debut last year at the age of 18, jogged down memory lane and mentioned how all of them took their first lessons from the same coach, where Kritina would sometimes be the only girl.

"All of us used to train together under Jeakson's father (Deben Singh) -- he was our first coach. There were other players as well with us. The first girl to have joined was Kritina. There were times when she was the only girl amongst us and would also play for our local team," Amarjit mentions. "She is a very good player -- technically good and mentally very strong. Seeing her, a few more girls also joined from nearby, including Babina (Devi Lisham, another U-17 women's team player)," Amarjit, who has five senior international caps to his name, said.