

# DECCAN Chronicle

THE LARGEST CIRCULATED ENGLISH DAILY IN SOUTH INDIA  
KARIMNAGAR | WEDNESDAY | 5 AUGUST 2020

**WEATHER**

Max: 30.3°C  
Min: 23.7°C  
RH: 71%  
Rainfall: Trace

Forecast: Cloudy sky, moderate rains likely.  
Max/Min temp. 32/23°C

**COVID-19 CUNT**

CASES (+50,980)  
DEATHS (+814)

18,55,238 38,972

*covid19india.org*

**STATE GOVERNMENT BULLETINS**

(+1,286) (+12)  
TS: 68,946 563

(+9,747) (+67)  
AP: 1,76,333 1,604

**CASES AROUND THE WORLD**

1,85,71,754

**DEATHS**  
7,00,387

COUNTRIES AREAS WITH CASES  
**213**

*worldometers.info/coronavirus*

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**ASTROGUIDE**

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

**HJRI CALENDAR**

Zulhijja 14,1441 AH

**PRAYERS**

Fajar: 4.51 am  
Zohar: 12.32 pm  
Asar: 4.49 pm  
Maghrib: 6.53 pm  
Isha: 8.06 pm

**SUNSET TODAY 6.47 PM**  
**SUNRISE TOMORROW 5.56 AM**  
**MOONRISE TODAY -**  
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**IN BRIEF**

**Ex-MLA Rajaiah passes away**

Khammam: Former MLA of Bhadrachalam and CPM leader Sunnam Rajaiah, who was known for his simple living, passed away due to Covid-19 on Tuesday. He was 60, and is survived by his wife, two daughters and a son, none of whom is in politics. Rajaiah's funeral was held at his native village Sunnamvarigudem, which was allotted to AP during state bifurcation. He had a fever and had cleared his first test for Covid-19. When he did not recover, a second test was taken and the result was positive. Rajaiah's health condition deteriorated and he was shifted to Vijayawada, where he died in a hospital.

■ Full report on Page 2

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■ Full report on Page 2

**2 kidnapped Indians set free**

New Delhi: Two Indians, who were kidnapped in Afghanistan in May 2018, were released from captivity on July 31 and returned to India on Tuesday, the external affairs ministry said. The two were among seven Indians kidnapped in Afghanistan in May 2018. A total of six Indians have now been released so far from captivity, the MEA said. — PTI



**NATION | 4**

**Bihar for CBI probe in Sushant's death**



**WORLD | 7**

**China accuses US of bullying over TikTok**

**SPORTS | 8**

**England take on Pak in Test from today**



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

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

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

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

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

Trump told reporters that his administration will not tolerate firing of

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

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

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

■ Full report on Page 7

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

## India crosses 19L, Pradhan positive

VINEETA PANDEY | DC  
NEW DELHI, AUG. 4

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Chinese mobile firm Vivo exits 2020 IPL

MOSES KONDETY | DC  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 4

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

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

made any announcement yet, but insiders admit to jitters in the Board even as they are sure that a suitable sponsor will be found within the short window.

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

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

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

● **THE BCCI has opened channels to rope in short-term sponsors. "Adani or Ambani could be in the mix," said an official**

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

the BCCI ₹440 crore every year. However, unlike the hostility in Galwan Valley, Vivo's severance will be conflict-free, it is learnt.

The BCCI and Vivo are likely to reach a harmonious settlement and

resume their partnership subject to improvement of relations between India and China.

The BCCI has opened channels to rope in short-term sponsors. "Adani or Ambani could be in the mix," said an official with connections in the Board. "Reliance Industries is such a big firm and has presence everywhere, from petrol to telecommunications to insurance. Similar is the stature of the Adani Group. One of them just might jump in," he added. Others say Gulf-based firms could also be in fray. "With the tournament being played in oil-rich UAE, companies can gain massive mileage out of the glitzy league. I am sure they would be eyeing the event," another official said. All said, it's a game of Chinese checkers for now. Whoever said sports and politics don't mix.

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 4

The state government on Tuesday withdrew permission to treat Covid-19 patients to a second corporate hospital in the city in as many days, announcing that Virinchi Hospitals in Banjara Hills will no longer be allowed to admit Covid-19 patients.

The health department in its orders said the hospital was "charging exorbitant rates," indulging in

favourite Ram bhajans.

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

Meanwhile, police barricades, yellow banners,

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

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 4

Hospital in Somajiguda, also for similar reasons. The department has made it clear that the currently admitted Covid-19 patients in Virinchi and Deccan hospitals will continue to receive treatment at the facilities at the rates prescribed by the government. The government had capped charges for treatment in ICU at ₹9,000 per day.

■ Page 2: Private hospitals in city have 4,244 patients

## Virinchi Hospitals too lose licence for treating Covid

## Etala castigates pvt hospitals over fees

BALU PULIPAKA | DC  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 4

The government on Tuesday castigated corporate and private hospitals, accusing them of acting without any sense of responsibility and calling their functioning during the Covid-19 pandemic "the worst behaviour on record."

"If a patient looks like he or she is not likely to survive, some corporate hospitals are sending them to Gandhi Hospital," health

minister Etala Rajendar said, adding, "this is just wrong." He was addressing a media meet here.

"In some instances, patients who arrive at private hospitals in a serious condition, irrespective of the cause, are not being admitted. We appeal to these hospitals not to act in such a manner," Rajendar said, adding that the first priority is to treat and save a patient's life.

■ Page 2: Start treating the patient first, says Etala

## Leopard attacks cop, couple at Tirumala

AVINASH P. SUBRAMANYAM | DC  
TIRUPATI, AUG. 4

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

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

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

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

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



## SHORT TAKES

## NO GRAPHIC PICTURES ON TOBACCO ITEMS

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 4

Pictorial warnings prohibiting the use of tobacco products has been deferred by the Union ministry of health and family welfare, which had earlier agreed to display them.

Graphic pictures of people suffering from oral cancer were to be displayed to dissuade new users. Implementation of the measure during the pandemic would have helped as risk and severity of pulmonary infections damages upper airways and also decreases immunity of the body.

Dr Rakesh Gupta, who works for tobacco cessation, said, "By delaying pictorial warnings on tobacco products, the health ministry is contradicting its own advisory to hold back tobacco use during the pandemic. It is going to adversely impact the motivation of tobacco users to quit. This deferment is under the pressure of the tobacco industry which is a big blow to those who have worked hard to come to this stage."

In India, 27 crore adults use tobacco and it kills more than 13 lakh users every year. Pictorial health warnings were an easy and cost-effective tool for educating against tobacco use.

## HC IMPOSES ₹50K FINE ON VILLAGE PANCHAYAT SECY

VUJJINI  
VAMSHIDHARA | DC  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 4

Justice T. Vinod Kumar of the Telangana High Court on Tuesday imposed a fine of ₹50,000 on the Landapur village panchayat secretary of Nirmal district, for furnishing fabricated documents before the court and concealing the original papers which reflected irregularities in allocating fishing rights to fishermen in local water bodies.

The allegation was that the official went by the advice of minister A. Indrakaran Reddy, who had allegedly developed a grudge against the fishermen co-operative society of Talveda village for not supporting the TRS in the 2018 Assembly elections.

Society members approached High Court, stating that, due to political pressure, the police was not allowing them to nurture fish in the water tanks of the village and preventing them from catching fish.

Apart from the merits of the case, the court found that the documents and payment slips of allotment of water tanks were fabricated and contrived, by concealing old documents. Justice Vinod Kumar imposed the fine and directed the collector to take action against the panchayat secretary for unlawful activity.

## FIVE HELD FOR STEALING PHONES WORTH ₹1.5 LAKH

JAYENDRA  
CHAITANYA T. | DC  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 4

Police have arrested five youngsters of a courier service in Shamshabad for stealing mobile phones meant for delivery to customers. Six mobile phones worth ₹1.5 lakh have been seized from them.

Police said Mohd. Muzamith, M. Anil, T. Malla Prashanth, and K. Bablu, residents of Shamshabad and C. Shiva of Shabad, all in their early 20s, had been working as helpers at Hyderabad Hub E-com Express, a courier company at Rasheedguda in Shamshabad. In the last week of July, Muzamith stole an MI phone. When he did not find anyone at the company being aware of the theft, he decided to continue stealing phones and shared his modus operandi with his friends.

Security and Loss Prevention executive of the company, A. Koteswar Reddy, realised that a mobile phone, which was supposed to be delivered to a customer, was missing. Two days later, Reddy found that six more phones of MI and Lenovo had gone missing, apart from two chains that were to be delivered to customers.

He lodged a complaint with the police, who took up investigation. When confronted, the five youth confessed that they had stolen the mobile phones and chains, which were recovered from them. All the five have been arrested and produced before a court on Tuesday.

## Umbrella distancing



Devotees at the Peddamma temple at Jubilee Hills, Hyderabad, hold umbrellas provided by the authorities to maintain social distancing while standing in a queue on Tuesday. The devotees are expected to hold the umbrellas for the duration of their stay in the temple. — R. PAVAN

## Lockdown takes toll on kids with special needs: Experts

Parents say there is no replacement for physical, sensory therapy

HARLEEN MINOCHA | DC  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 4

Children with special needs are getting left behind due to the Covid-19 and lockdown conditions, say experts. Since the advent of online education and training, children with disabilities have faced major disadvantages with lack of regular interaction with their teachers, peers, and no physical, sensory and occupational therapy.

The lockdown has aggravated the erratic behaviour of kids with disabilities making it more difficult for parents to handle the situation. One such case is that of Ten-year-old

Madhav (name changed) who attended a non-verbal school until the lockdown. He used to spend his days learning from a special education teacher working with speech, physical and occupational therapists. Ever since the school shut, the 10-year-old's moods worsened and his distractions grew by the day. The behaviour perturbed the family. Even after he calmed down after a few weeks, the family wasn't able to understand his erratic behaviour.

"A lot of kids with disabilities find comfort in routine. When that routine gets disrupted, their anxiety goes up and they

● **WHILE** there are online therapy options to explore, parents say it limits the scope to enhancement of only academic skills of children. For sensory integration and body balance, a therapist is required hands on.

tend to behave differently," said Dr Garima Vegivada, clinical director, speech language pathology, Hear 'N' Say Clinic, Secunderabad.

While there are online therapy options to explore, parents say it limits the scope to enhancement of only academic skills of children. "Initially we

were worried that lockdown would mean a setback for my daughter who suffers from autism. She has adapted well to online therapy that is limited to enhancing her academic skills. For specific issues like sensory integration and body balance, a therapist is required hands on. Parents can be guided but some exercises are best handled by experts," said Neha, a special needs parent.

Dr Garima was of the view that online therapy will prevent loss of the work done prior to the lockdown and ensure some continuity.

"The lockdown has reduced the number of parents and children seeking help due to restrictions in movement. There is hardly a 10 per cent inflow to my clinic, as compared to earlier. We are encouraging parents to opt for tele-rehabilitation to retrieve the situation and provide much needed solace to children," she said.

This is a need of the hour treatment option that needs greater awareness for more and more children and parents in distress and those in the remote areas with no access to such therapies, Dr Garima added.

## Rajaiah, who took bus as MLA, dies of Covid-19

RAVINDRA SESHU | DC  
KHAMMAM, AUG. 4

Former MLA of Bhadrachalam and CPM leader Sunnam Rajaiah, who was known for his simple living, passed away due to Covid-19 on Tuesday. He was 60, and is survived by his wife, two daughters and a son, none of whom is in politics.

Rajaiah's funeral was held at his native village Sunnamvarigudem, which was allotted to Andhra Pradesh during state bifurcation.

Rajaiah had a fever and had cleared his first test for Covid-19. When he did not recover, a second test was taken and the result was positive. Rajaiah's health condition deteriorated and he was shifted to Vijayawada for treatment, where he died in a hospital.

Rajaiah was elected to the Assembly from Bhadrachalam in 1999, 2004 and 2014. Rajaiah was known to be idealistic and used to travel by autorickshaw to the Assembly and Secretariat in Hyderabad. He was once stopped by the police while entering the Assembly after getting down from an autorickshaw. He had to then show the police his MLA's identity card.

Rajaiah was also known to travel to Hyderabad and back home by RTC buses.

In one instance, a person from Bhadrachalam went to meet Rajaiah in Hyderabad on a minor problem that he was facing, related to the Scheduled Tribes students hostel. Rajaiah took him to the office in an autorickshaw and had the issue resolved by talking to the officials concerned.

As an MLA, he never tried to secure a government job for his children, nor inducted them into politics. One of his daughters, who completed her BTech, is working in a private company and the other two children are doing small jobs.

The people of Bhadrachalam recalled his services and paid tributes to Rajaiah. B. Sankar Reddy,



Sunnam Rajaiah

a political leader in Bhadrachalam, said, "Rajaiah was an impeccable leader. Rajaiah was never egoistic and used to receive people warmly and hear their woes. He used to move with the people to solve their problems."

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao, former CPI general secretary Suravaram Sudhakar Reddy and several political party leaders condoled the demise of Rajaiah. Sudhakar Reddy said Rajaiah was a dedicated Communist who remained committed to the party in spite of various hurdles.

CPI-M Khammam and Bhadradi-Kothagudem district committees expressed shock and grief. CPI-M Khammam district president N. Nageswara Rao said, "Sunnam was a committed and discipline leader of the CPI-M"

Transport minister Puvvada Ajay said, "The people of Khammam and Bhadradi districts have lost a perfect leader". TRS MP Nama Nageswara Rao, former MP P. Srinivasa Reddy, former minister Tummala Nageswara Rao and Sattupalli MLA Sandra Venkata Veeraiiah expressed their grief.

## PVT HOSPITALS IN HYD HAVE 4,244 PATIENTS

From Page 1

The charges for treatment in private hospitals were capped at ₹4,500 a day.

According to the Covid-19 bulletin issued on Tuesday, as of 8 pm on Monday, Virinchi had 118 admitted Covid-19 patients while Deccan Hospital, as on Sunday evening, had 26 Covid-19 patients. The private hospitals that are allowed to treat Covid-19 patients had between them 4,244 admitted as Coronavirus cases as per Tuesday's Covid-19 bulletin.

Health minister Etala Rajendar, meanwhile, said the intention of the government was not to shut down private hospitals but to ensure they mend their ways. "We want them to follow the rules, fee ceiling and treat people humanely. This is a serious health crisis and private hospitals should treat it as such and not exploit patients," he said.

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## KCR may give pension sop to farmers today

S.A. ISHAQUI | DC  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 4

Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao is likely to discuss in the Cabinet a new sop for farmers, something he had promised during the inauguration of the Kondapochamma Sagar on May 29.

The Cabinet is meeting at 2 pm on Wednesday in Pragathi Bhavan.

After inaugurating the project, Rao had said at a press conference that he would soon make an announcement for the benefit of farmers which will be unprecedented and never attempted by any other state. He had asked the farmers to bear with the suspense for just a few more days.

He said, "I will be making some major announcements for the farmers very soon. The finances have already been worked out."

Sources in the government said the announcement had got delayed in view of the Covid-19 crisis.

The government has been already giving financial assistance of ₹5,000 per acre per season to each farmer under Rythu Bandhu besides extending the Rythu Bhima insurance scheme.

The Chief Minister has kept the scheme as secret and even ministers, MLAs and officials are curious about what it could be. One guess is that the CM could announce a pension scheme for farmers.

As per the official agenda, the Cabinet will discuss the possibility of reopening schools in the first week of September,



K. Chandrashekar Rao

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and the anti-Coronavirus measures to be implemented by educational institutions.

It is also expected to discuss the construction of the Secretariat complex and regulatory farming methods and the river water dispute with Andhra Pradesh.

Sources revealed that apart from the above issues, the Cabinet may take up the issues of enhancing the retirement age of government employees, financial situation of the state apart from the new scheme for farmers.

Rao on Tuesday held a marathon review meeting with the officials of the roads and buildings, irrigation, agriculture and finance department officials at Pragathi Bhavan.

## Uttam asks KCR to get AP to stop project in Seema

DC CORRESPONDENT  
HYDERABAD, AUG. 4

TPCC president N. Uttam Kumar Reddy and Ram Mohan Reddy, the party's Krishna Water Protection Committee convener, have requested Chief Minister K. Chandrashekar Rao to immediately intervene and to take action to stop the construction of the Rayalaseema lift irrigation project by the Andhra Pradesh government.

Both the leaders wrote an open letter to the Chief Minister on Tuesday stating that the plan of the AP government was illegal and against the law, as water was being taken outside the Krishna basin and to the Pennar basin. This was against the interests of the people of Telangana state.

They said that in spite of two letters written by the Krishna River Board chairman, the AP government without giving a reply was going ahead with the construction of the project floating tenders.

They told Rao, "in case the AP government does go ahead with physical execution of the work, the Congress demands that you accept moral responsibility for failing to protect the interests of Telangana and you should resign as CM."

The Congress leaders said that if the AP government was not stopped, irrigation under the projects in the Krishna basin like the Nagarjunasagar,

● **TPCC CHIEF N. UTTAM** Kumar Reddy wrote an open letter to the Chief Minister stating that the plan of the AP government was illegal and against the law, as water was being taken outside the Krishna basin and to the Pennar basin. This was against the interests of the people of Telangana state.

Palamuru-Ranga Reddy, Dindi, Srisailem Left Bank Canal and A. Madhava Reddy projects would be adversely affected. "There is a real danger of the undivided Mahabubnagar, RR and Nalgonda districts turning into a desert," they said. Drinking water supply to Hyderabad would also be affected.

The Congress leaders told the CM: "It is indeed surprising and shocking that when the government of India calls for an Apex Mouncil meeting on such an important subject, you have chosen to hold a Cabinet meeting for the Secretariat design the same day."

They said if AP completes the Pothreddy-padu expansion from 44,000 cusecs to 80,000 cusecs per day and builds the Rayalaseema project to draw 3 tmc ft of Krishna water per day, the very purpose of creation of a separate state — to prevent injustice in allocation of water — will be defeated.

## Start treating the patient first, orders Etala

From Page 1

He said the health department received thousands of complaints on overcharging, excessive billing and other aspects related to Covid-19 treatment at private and corporate hospitals. "When we gave permission to treat Covid-19 patients after High Court issued orders, we said this

is a serious pandemic, you should play your part, show humanity and not bleed people of their money," he said.

Rajendar said: "But they, have in many ways, have not followed the spirit of the decision. They are seeking lakhs of rupees in deposits, charging ₹1 lakh to ₹2 lakh a day for treatment. If

a patient dies, they are not allowing the body to be taken away by the families unless the money is paid."

"This is the worst behaviour, that has been recorded," he said.

The minister said despite repeated appeals not to charge more than ₹9,000 a day and issuing orders to that effect, some

hospitals had not mended their ways. "More punishments for the hospitals are underway. If they do not change their ways, then more action will be taken. Some hospitals are destroying the image of all," he said.

Rajendar said every government healthcare facility and all other hospitals have been instructed

to first admit a patient even if no test has been done to confirm Covid-19. "Start treating the patient first. Depending on whether Covid-19 positive or not, continue the treatment as required and prescribed," he said.

On Monday, during a conference with eminent doctors, it was again established that the tablets

used do not cost more than 15 paise each and injections required are about ₹10 each. Only if the patient comes in late and in a serious condition are expensive medicines needed.

Even if a patient is to be put on oxygen for ten days, it does not cost more than ₹2,500 for that, he said.



## IN BRIEF

### 103 Covid cases in Khammam

**Khammam:** Over 103 Covid-19 cases were reported from Khammam district on Tuesday. The officials collected samples from 372 persons and 103 persons tested positive for Covid-19. There are 70 Covid-19 patients undergoing treatment in isolation wards of district headquarters hospital and 30 at Maddulapalli Covid-19 Centre. About 22 patients were discharged on Tuesday from the two centres.

## TELUGU POET VANGAPANDU PASSES AWAY

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

Revolutionary writer, singer and lyricist, Vangapandu Prasad Rao, died at 77 in the wee hours of Tuesday. Vangapandu was a popular singer with his revolutionary songs influenced by Communism. He died of age-related illness at his residence in Parvathipuram of Vizianagaram district. He is survived by his daughter Vangapandu Usha and two sons.

Vangapandu wrote over 300 folk songs that depict the lives of various depressed communities in North Andhra and also tribals. His song 'Yem Pillado Yeldamoshtava Veldamostava,' which was used without his permission in the Ram Charan starrer Maga Dheera created a big controversy, and finally the producers reached a compromise with him.

Songs like 'Jajjanaka Janare,' 'Sarkaru Dawakhanuaku' and 'Uttarandhra Palle Pilupu' made him most popular in both Telugu states.

Born in Pedda Bondapalli village, Parvathipuram mandal in 1943, Vangapandu was influenced by the Naxalite movement and founded the Jana Natya Mandali, a cultural wing of the People's War Group in 1972. Later, he was popular after he wore a black blanket with turban, as Uttarandhra Gaddar. During Samaikhyandhra Poratam, he participated in activities across the present state of Andhra Pradesh. Recently, Vangapandu also wrote and sung a song on Covid-19.

## HC ISSUES STATUS QUO ORDER ON AP 3 CAPITALS ACT

**SAMPAT G. SAMRITAN | DC VIJAYAWADA, AUG. 4**

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

The High Court bench, comprising Justice Rakesh Kumar, Justice A.V. Sesha Sai and Justice M. Satyanarayana Murthy, heard the case and issued an order to maintain status quo on implementation of the AP Decentralisation and Inclusive Development of All Regions Act and the AP Capital Region Development Authority (Repeal) Act.

When the government pleader asked the court to give the state 10 days on the issue, the court directed the government to file a counter affidavit and posted the hearing to August 14.

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

Subsequently, the state government passed them again in the Assembly on June 16 and sent them to the Council which adjourned sine die without their passage. As the Council had not taken any decision on the two Bills, the state government considered them passed in the Council after 30 days and sent them to the Governor for his approval on July 18.

## 31 KMPH WINDS BLOW OVER HYDERABAD

**T.S.S. SIDDHARTH | DC HYDERABAD, AUG. 4**

Certain pockets of the city are witnessing wind speeds of up to 31 kmph, or 16 knots. The average for this time of the year is 9.8 kmph.

According to the Telangana State Development Planning Society (TSDDS), Kapra, Rajendranagar and LB Nagar had the wind blowing at 31.7 kmph, 16.1 kmph and 19 kmph respectively. "There are two weather systems that are brewing in the Arabian Sea and Bay of Bengal. The conjunction of these systems is causing the winds to blow over the peninsular region," said Rajanikanth Poola, an independent weather observer from the city.



Villagers of Gunjala in Bheempur mandal declared self-lockdown and set up barricades at the entrance of their village to prevent outsiders from entering into their place, following a rise in the number of Covid-19 positive cases in Adilabad district. On Monday, 24 positive cases were reported from Adilabad district. — DC

# Covid-19 spreads fast in Adilabad villages

### Tribals say people from other states, Hyd carried the virus

**PILLALAMARRI SRINIVAS | DC ADILABAD, AUG. 4**

Coronavirus is spreading to villages too and cases are being reported from tribal areas too during the last 10 days in old Adilabad district.

The villagers say that people coming from other states and Hyderabad carried the virus to the remote villages, which had not reported Covid-19 positive cases so far. To check the spread of the virus, local businessmen and traders have declared that they would keep the shops open only till 6 pm in many towns of Adilabad district. It is said that two positive cases were reported from a tribal village in Uttoor

■ In villages sharing borders with Maharashtra, the spread of Covid-19 is more rapid as the positive cases are increasing by the day

■ 24 positive cases were reported from Adilabad district on Monday. Two positive cases reported from a tribal village in Uttoor mandal and one case reported from Narnoor mandal

mandal and one positive case in Narnoor mandal, Adilabad district.

Covid positive cases were reported from some villages in Ichoda and Neredigonda, Boath and Adilabad Rural mandals too in Adilabad district. As many as 24 positive cases were reported in Adilabad district on Monday.

Same is the case with Kumarambheem Asifabad and Mancheril districts.

The positive cases are spreading fast in villages

sharing borders with Maharashtra. Identifying the fact, some villages declared self-lockdown and are not allowing outsiders to enter into their villages, as a precautionary measure.

The village elders and sarpanches of some villages are strictly implementing self-lockdown while the state and central governments had eased restrictions in Unlocked 3.0.

Till recent past, people in rural areas and interior

areas were confident that they would contract Coronavirus, but people have now developed a fear of getting Covid-19 with many positive cases being reported from rural areas.

B. Venkatesh, of Adilabad, said the spread of the virus has been rapid in villages in the last 10 days. Ashanna of Gunjala village in Bheempur mandal said: "We have declared self-lockdown with positive cases on the rise and there is news that outsiders are spreading the virus by visiting the villages."

However, the villagers are continuing with their regular activities without any fear of contracting the virus after the barricades were set up at the entry points.

## Monsoon woes



Motorists were caught unaware when there was sudden downpour in Karimnagar on Tuesday afternoon. — YELABAKA RADHAKRISHNA

# India's Covid-19 testing rate lower than others, says WHO

**ADITYA CHUNDURU | DC HYDERABAD, AUG. 4**

Soumya Swaminathan, chief scientist at the World Health Organisation (WHO), said that the testing rate across India was lower than those of countries that have done well in managing the Covid-19 pandemic,

such as Germany and South Korea. She was speaking via video conference at a meeting of pharmaceutical industry leaders organised by IT minister K.T. Rama Rao at Genome Valley in the city. Repeating the words of WHO director-general Tedros Adhanom

Ghebreyesus, Swaminathan noted that without sufficient testing, "it is like fighting a fire blindfolded."

Stressing the need for more testing, she said, "We need benchmarks for public health departments such as tests per million population and positivity rate."

# Soil, water from Bhadradri temple taken to Ram Mandir Bhumi Puja

**A. RAVINDRA SESHU | DC BHADRACHALAM, AUG. 4**

The sacred water from the Godavari river in Bhadrachalam along with the soil of the land will be used in the bhumi puja to be held on August 5 in Ayodhya.

Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, is attending to the laying of the foundation stone for the Ram mandir on the disputed site.

The Ram temple in Bhadrachalam used to be



Bhadradri temple



Ram Mandir

considered 'dakshina Ayodhya'. The temple was built by Bhakta Ramadas, who worked as a tehsildar under the Nizam's

rule by the name of Kancharla Gopanna.

The Vishwa Hindu Parishad, Khammam vibhag secretary, Oruganti

# 20 nominations received for 5 co-option posts

**PULI SHARAT KUMAR | DC KARIMNAGAR, AUG. 4**

As many as 20 nominations were received for five co-option posts in Karimnagar Municipal Corporation (KMC).

Out of the five, two co-option posts were reserved for minorities and three are in the general category and one in each category has been reserved for women. Former corporators Nademally Rama, Chiti Rama Rao and Jangama Rajaiah, along with two members from MIM Miyazuddin Khadri and Rafia Sultana, filed their nomination on Friday (July 31).

On the final day of receiving nominations (August 3), around 15 members Syed Amjad Ali, Chennadi Ajith Rao, Putta Narendar, Kommu Madhukar, Sadaveni

■ Out of total 60 divisions under KMC limits, the TRS party has 41 seats while the BJP has 14 seats and MIM has 5 seats

■ Since, the BJP is not participating in the municipal co-option elections, there is a possibility for the ruling TRS to win all the five posts

Sujatha, Sadaveni Srinivas, Razia Begum, Mohasin Ahmed Khan, Lingampalli Sujatha, Lingampalli Srinivas, Bakarapu Sivaiah, K. Madhukar, Farhana Azeez, Akhilunnisa and Khaza, applied for the co-option posts and submitted their nominations to the Assistant City Planner Y. Subash.

ACP Y. Subash said that the nomination papers will be scrutinised from Tuesday (August 4)

to Thursday (August 6) and the final list will be displayed on the notice board of the municipal office on August 6. The elections for the five co-option posts will be conducted on August 13, he informed.

Out of 60 divisions present under KMC limits, the TRS party has 41 seats while the BJP has 14 seats and MIM has 5 seats. Since, the BJP is not participating in the municipal co-option elections, there is a possibility for the ruling TRS to win all the five posts. One of the TRS leaders, on condition of anonymity, said the MIM and TRS had an agreement for allocation of one seat to the MIM in the minority category and to take the remaining four co-option posts.

A majority of the members who filed their nomination for co-option posts belong to the TRS party,

## TRIBALS PAY TRIBUTES TO RAJAIAH

**DC CORRESPONDENT ADILABAD, AUG. 4**

Leaders of various Adivasi organisations expressed shock over the sudden demise of former MLA Sunnam Rajaiah of CPM, due to Covid-19.

Leaders of Thudumdebba expressed their condolence to the bereaved family. Thudumdebba district president Godam Ganesh said Sunnam Rajaiah heaped praises on Rajaiah and said he was a committed leader who was in the forefront in resolving the Adivasis' issues and problems. He felt the responsibility towards people who elected him.

Adivasis will remember the relentless services of Sunnam Rajaiah for ever. Sunnam Rajaiah fought for the rights of the Adivasis tooth and nail till his death.

Sunnam Rajaiah was three times MLA of Bhadrachalam and who lead a humble life and worked for the development and welfare of the downtrodden sections.

## HIGH COURT ORDERS SA BUILDERS TO COOPERATE WITH ED

**VUJJINI VAMSHIDHARA | DC HYDERABAD, AUG. 4**

The Telangana High Court has ordered the promoters and managing partners of SA Builders of Hyderabad to cooperate with the Enforcement Directorate (ED) in its investigation of the alleged money laundering by the Heera Group of Nowhera Shaik. The Heera Group had allegedly collected ₹5,600 crore from around 2 lakh people of the Muslim community by offering higher returns on their investment.

Justice Gandikota Sri Devi was dealing the petition of Syed Akther, Syed Afsar and Syed Qaiser, who are related to SA Builders and Developers, requesting the court to give directions to the ED to not arrest them and not force them to appear before the officials in the name of investigation.

# Puvvada focuses on KMC elections

**DC CORRESPONDENT KHAMMAM, AUG. 4**

Minister for transport Puvvada Ajay Kumar is busy scheduling more programmes in Khammam Municipal Corporation (KMC) than other assembly segments in Khammam and Bhadradri-Kothagudem districts in the hope to build an impression before elections.

KMC elections will be held in March, 2021, leaving only seven months left. Kumar seeks to win in most of the divisions and the urban body is part of his native Khammam Assembly constituency.

The minister should show some development work in the town before the elections and he managed more allocation of funds to the corporation keeping the election in view. The central lighting on Bypass, Yellandu and Wyrta roads and water fountains at the crossroads were completed. His plans for Khammam development were revealed at a review meeting held for the development of the corporation. He asked officials to clear the 2000 pending land regularisation scheme applications as soon as possible.

TRS leader K. Murali said, "The minister laid stress on a clean environment in all streets of the corporation. The complaints of the people should be addressed and be solved immediately."

With this, more time is available to him and he is participating in more programmes in Khammam.



Puvvada Ajay Kumar

Clean surroundings in public parks, setting up of public toilets at centres, setting up of complexes for street vendors and constructing vegetarian and non-vegetarian markets in the corporation, are among Kumar's priorities. All this should be completed at the earliest is his direction to corporation officials.

Keen to show efficiency by completing various projects, winning in KMC is imperative for Kumar and it will be a first litmus test for him after taking over charge as cabinet minister.

He also wants to maintain cordial relations with all the ruling party legislators in two districts.

Except for Bhadrachalam, Madhira and Aswaraopet, all remaining seven segments are with the ruling party at present. Kumar is not fixing an official programme other than his assembly segment without informing the ruling party MLA.

With this, more time is available to him and he is participating in more programmes in Khammam.

# Bhatti: Govt failed to protect Dalits

**IRREDY SRINIVAS REDDY | DC HYDERABAD, AUG. 4**

Congress Legislator Party leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka expressed unhappiness over the attacks on Dalits and alleged the government had failed in protecting their rights.

Speaking to the media at the Assembly on Monday, Mallu Bhatti said, "We fought for a separate state for self-respect and the betterment of lives of the people, but after the bifurcation, attacks on Dalits have increased and Constitutional protections for the Dalits is out of the question."

He noted that a Dalit farmer from Veluru in Siddipet district had died by suicide as he feared he would lose his land for the construction

■ A Dalit farmer from Veluru in Siddipet district died by suicide as he feared he would lose his land for the construction of Rythu Vedikas.

of Rythu Vedikas. The issue was taken to the notice of DGP M. Mahendar Reddy, but we did not receive any response, he said. "The attacks on Dalits have continued by the TRS. We have decided to complain to the Governor about the ongoing attacks on Dalits," the CLP leader said.

He said he was surprised by Chief Minister K. Chandrababai Rao's decision to postpone Apex Council meeting to discuss river water disputes with AP. "I have never seen any CM who betrays his state and acts in favour of another state," he said.

**SCHOOL OF PLANNING AND ARCHITECTURE: VIJAYAWADA**  
(An Institution of National Importance under the Ministry of Human Resource Development, Govt. of India) S.No. 44, (IT) Road, Vijayawada - 520 008, Andhra Pradesh, India  
Advt.No.SPAAV/DTCP/2020 Dated 03.08.2020

**WEB NOTICE**

Applications are invited for GIS Specialist, Research Associate and Research Assistant on purely temporary and contractual basis. The application can be downloaded from institute's website and filled application may be sent to recruitment@dtcp@spav.ac.in on or before 14.08.2020. For further details regarding qualifications, remuneration etc, please refer the SPA Vijayawada website [www.spav.ac.in](http://www.spav.ac.in).

Sd/- Registrar



SHORT TAKES

BREAKTHROUGH ELUDES TALKS WITH CHINA

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, AUG. 4

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

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

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

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

BHUSHAN REFUSES TO TENDER APOLOGY

PARMOD KUMAR | DC  
NEW DELHI, AUG. 4

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

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

Justice Kapadia went on to become Chief Justice of India.

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

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

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

75-YEAR-OLD WOMAN RAPED IN KERALA

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC  
THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, AUG. 4

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

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

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

Ayodhya awaits a new beginning today

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- PTI



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

Sena: Covid will now disappear

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

It said Shah participated in a public event in Delhi last Saturday and attended the cabinet meeting last Wednesday observing social distancing norms,

and has asked those who came in his contact in the past few days to isolate themselves and get tested for coronavirus.

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

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

- PTI

K'TAKA SCHOLAR WHO SUGGESTED DATE GETS THREAT CALLS

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

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

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

Police on Tuesday said they were looking into the complaint.

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

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

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

- PTI

Advani believes temple will usher in 'Ram Rajya'

DC CORRESPONDENT  
NEW DELHI, AUG 4

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

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

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

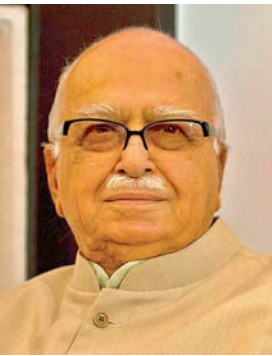
He expressed his gratitude to saints, leaders and people in India and the world over who made "valuable contributions and sacrifices in the Ramjanambhoomi movement.

● The construction of Ram temple in Ayodhya will deeply connect Indian society to its cultural roots to prosper economically and expand culturally as a model to guide humanity

MANMOHAN VAIDYA, SR. RSS FUNCTIONARY

● Hindutva is now the "basic coat on the canvas of polity" and political parties subscribing to its various shades may be vying for power in future as socialism and secularism are no longer the pivot of politics

K. N. GOVINDACHARYA, EX-RSS IDEOLOGUE



L. K. Advani

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

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

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

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

SRIDHAR KUMARASWAMI | DC  
NEW DELHI, AUG. 4

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

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

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

So far Pakistan had stopped short of calling Kashmir offically and had always pushed for a UN-mandated plebiscite.

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

● The map announced by Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan comes on the eve of the first anniversary on August 5 of India revoking Article 370.

● The new map would now be the "official map" of Pakistan after being approved by the Pakistani federal cabinet.

declared that J&K is part of Pakistan along with some portions of Ladakh to the North and Gujarat to the West.

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

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

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

In a statement, the MEA

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

YUSUF JAMEEL | DC  
SRINAGAR, AUG. 4

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

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

As tensions run high, large contingents of

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

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

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

The authorities said that

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

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

PRIEST OF RAVAN TEMPLE SAYS HE WILL DISTRIBUTE SWEETS TODAY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

- PTI





SHORT TAKES

IRS OFFICER PRADEEP TOPS UPSC EXAM

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Kerala not to opt for sero survey for now

Experts say their focus, priority is on identifying the cases

GILVESTER ASSARY | DC THIRUVANANTHAPURAM, AUG. 4

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Entire Kashmir now 'red zone'

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

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

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

The Lakhampur containment zone on the national highway will be a state secretary Dr Gopikrishnan. He said Kerala should take a cue from Dharavi and Delhi where extensive testing was carried out. The existing testing rate in Kerala is not satisfactory. Even the sentinel survey being carried out among vulnerable groups like health care professionals and law enforcing agencies is not enough. The results are taking a bit too long.

state secretary Dr Gopikrishnan.

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

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

red/containment zone with a 500-metre buffer, the order stated.

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

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

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

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

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

—PTI

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

## ANTI-CAA STIR RESUMES AFTER 5 MONTHS

MANOJ ANAND | DC GUWAHATI, AUG. 4

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

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

All the motorcycles stopped just beside the Chief Minister's residence and the Aasu activists raised slogans against the Citizenship Act. As in the beginning of March, anti-CAA rallies were put on hold across the state due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the protest caught everyone by surprise and security personnel scrambled and threw a protective ring around the Chief Minister's residence in Dibrugarh.

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

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

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

## Architect of modern Indian theatre, Alkazi, passes away

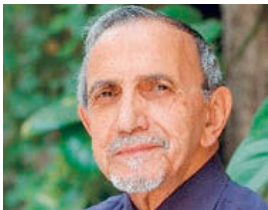
DC CORRESPONDENT MUMBAI, AUG. 4

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

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

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

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



theatre. May your brightest spark from the heaven keep us enlightening."

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

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

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

## TWO INDIANS KIDNAPPED IN 2018 FROM AFGHANISTAN RELEASED

DC CORRESPONDENT NEW DELHI, AUG. 4

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

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

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

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

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

LIVE RICH

# FINANCIAL Chronicle

KARIMNAGAR | WEDNESDAY | 5 AUGUST 2020

## quick BITES

| INDICATORS             | %              |
|------------------------|----------------|
| Sensex                 | 37,687.91 2.03 |
| Nifty 50               | 11,095.25 1.87 |
| S&P 500*               | 3,296.97 0.07  |
| Dollar (₹)             | 75.04 -0.03    |
| Pound Sterling (₹)     | 97.99 0.22     |
| Euro (₹)               | 88.43 -0.13    |
| Gold (10gm)* (₹)       | 54,830.97 0.17 |
| Brent crude (\$/bbl)*  | 44.40 0.25     |
| IN 10-Yr bond yield    | 5.833 -0.004   |
| US 10-Yr T-bill yield* | 0.515 -0.048   |

\*As of 9:30 PM IST

## Adani, Suraksha, Sunteck submit EOI for HDIL

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



## Reserve Bank clears appointment Insider Jagdishan to head HDFC Bk

FALAKNAAZ SYED MUMBAI, AUG. 4

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

"He understands the bank's ethos, culture

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

—PTI

## Mkt rebounds on short covering

RAVI RANJAN PRASAD MUMBAI, AUG. 4

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

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

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

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

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

The BSE Mid-cap index gained 1.02 per cent and



the BSE Small-cap Index gained 1.23 per cent.

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

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

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

## Coal mining: Neighbours need govt nod

SANGEETHA G CHENNAI, AUG. 4

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



DECCAN  
Chronicle

5 AUGUST 2020

# Repression, mistrust rule Valley 1 yr later

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

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

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

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

## What’s special about NEP?

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

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

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

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

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

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ADITYA SINHA  
Editor

K. SUBHAKAR  
Printer & Publisher

DECCAN CHRONICLE offices are located at:

**Hyderabad:** 36, Sarojini Devi Road, Secunderabad - 500 003, Ph: 040-27803930-4; Fax: 040-27805256  
**Vijayawada:** No.C-3 & 4 Patamata, Industrial Estate, Auto Nagar, Vijayawada (A.P.), Ph: 0866-2555284/2555287; Telefax: 0866-2555234  
**Visakhapatnam:** Survey No.1/3A Beach Road, Near Kailasagiri Ropeway, Sector-9 MVP Colony, Visakhapatnam - 530 017 (A.P), Ph: 0891-2552333/2552334; Fax: 0891-2755285  
**Rajahmundry:** Vemuguri, Dhawaleswaram Rd, Rajahmundry, Ph: 0883-2417618/2417208; Telefax: 0883-2417208  
**Anantapur:** Thapovan colony, Bangalore By-Pass Road, Anantapur - 515004, Ph: 08554-276903; Fax: 08554-276904  
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**Chennai:** SP-3 Developed Plot, Industrial Estate, Guindy, Chennai - 600 032, Ph: 044-22254747/ 48/50/51; Advt Fax: 22254765/22254766/42305325  
**Bengaluru:** 5th Floor, BMTC Commercial Complex, 80 Feet Road, Koramangala, Bengaluru-560 095 Ph: 080-43460500; Fax: 080-22960552  
**Coimbatore:** 77, Vivekananda Road, Ramnagar, Coimbatore - 641 009, Ph: 0422 2231255  
**Kochi:** No.3-B, 3rd Floor of DD TRADE TOWER, Kaloor-Kadavanthara Road, Ernakulam, Ph: 0484-4039408  
**Thiruvananthapuram:** St Joseph’s Press, TC 15/1040, Cotton Hill, Thycaud (PO), Thiruvananthapuram 695 014  
**Kozhikode:** Door No 6/1002 E, First Floor of City Mall, Opp. YMCA, Kannur Road, Kozhikode - 673 001, Fax : 0495-4019 018  
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Subhani



# Men in The Castle and J&K’s metamorphosis



V. Sudarshan

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

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

from Islamabad, through nameless bureaucrats, seemingly eliminating the need for elected representatives. Kafka’s novel is set in unending winter and most scenes are dark. *The Castle* bureaucracy unreachable and the protagonist, eerily, is a mysterious character identified simply as “K”, an outsider seeking acceptance. With Kafkaesque efficiency, our bureaucrats in The Castle have managed not to hold elections, even to panchayats. This of course underscores the absurd importance of having grievance boxes in every panchayat in Jammu and Kashmir. To prompt a wink-wink reaction from Washington, the Chinese might be well advised take a few pages of this silver-lined playbook’s refinement of democracy and upholding of human rights, to apply to the Uighurs, for instance.

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

Internally, in terms of

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

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

Kafka died leaving his last novel hanging mid-sentence, unfinished. Several endings thus become plausible. The parallels are uncanny elsewhere as well outside the artificial microcosm of Kashmir, where the larger plots have begun writing themselves, somewhat to our chagrin. From the East to the West our recent neighbourhood initiative, which began with Prime Minister Narendra

Modi’s impromptu inviting of all the leaders to his swearing-in in May 2014, seems to have arrived at a critical and enigmatic phase. The drawbridge is going up, a moat of self-imposed absurdity completes the separation. In Bangladesh,

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

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

## LETTERS

### FOLLOW KARNATAKA

It has been reported that corporate hospitals are not handing over dead bodies of Covid-19 patients till the payment of bills. I understand that the Karnataka government has passed an order that bodies should be handed over immediately after taking an affidavit from relatives. The TS government can issue such an order.

**A.R.R. Datta**  
*Hyderabad*

What a that the Covid dead are denied even this last farewell (*Funeral of Covid patients proves to be challenging*. There is already a severe emotional impact on the bereaved families and they are forced to run from pillar to post for cremation. People have become inhuman and intolerant. The government should make rules to make the cremation easier at the place of choice of the dead patients’ families. Anybody who obstructs or delays this should be punished.

**K.S.M. Sarma**  
*Ragannaguda, RR dist*

## LANGUAGE POLICY

The three-language formula is burdensome to students. It is a waste of their time if they have to learn a third language (*TN rejects 3-language policy proposed in NEP, Aug. 4*). Ninety per cent of the time should be given to learning English and the rest for the state language. Once they complete their studies, students need English everywhere, even to go abroad. The NEP should consider focussing on the English language in the education system.

**J. Vijay Kumar**  
*Secunderabad*

## 50 YEARS AGO IN DECCAN Chronicle

### PM says ban on Naxalites not possible

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

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

Vijay Sai Reddy

# Rafales to boost India’s bargain strength with China, Pakistan

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

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

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

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

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

Out of the 36 Rafale aircraft, 30 will be

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



## SHORT TAKES

## WORK RESUMES TO REBUILD CHURCH DESTROYED ON 9/11

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

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

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

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

## RAJAPAKSA BROS HOPE TO WIN MAJORITY IN POLLS

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

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

## ISAIAS LASHES US EAST COAST WITH WINDS, RAINS

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

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

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

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

## GOLDEN GLOBES VOTERS HIT WITH ANTITRUST SUIT

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

An antitrust lawsuit filed against the Hollywood Foreign Press Association said the organisation illegally monopolized entertainment reporting in Los Angeles while creating near-impossible barriers to entry for new members. "All year long, HFPA members enjoy all-expenses-paid trips to film festivals around the world where the studios treat them lavishly and accommodate their every desire," said the suit brought by Norwegian journalist Kjersti Flaas.

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

## 2 massive explosions rock Beirut

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

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

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

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



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

## Trump rails as Nevada opts for mail-in ballots

US Prez has claimed mail ballots would lead to voter fraud

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

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

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

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

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

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

## MUGHAL-E-AZAM SCREENPLAY FOR OSCAR LIBRARY

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## PIO researcher killed in US

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

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

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

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

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

avirus, he said. "Don't forget, we're much bigger than — other than India and China. China is having a massive flare up right now. India has a tremendous problem. Other countries have problems," he said in response to a question.

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

## Trump avoids praising Lewis

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

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

"How do you think history will remember John

Lewis?" Jonathan Swan of the Axios media outlet asked Trump in the interview aired on Monday.

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

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

## 3 WRITE SOS ON SAND, RESCUED FROM ISLAND

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

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

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

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

## China accuses US of bullying over TikTok

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## US finds possible Covid treatment

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

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

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

These Coronaviruses 3C-like proteases, known as 3CLpro, are strong therapeutic targets because they play vital roles in coronavirus replication, the researchers said.

"Vaccine developments and treatments are the biggest targets in Covid-19 research, and treatment is really key," said Kyeong-Ok Chang, a professor at Kansas State

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

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

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

## Chad slows down internet to combat 'hate speech'

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

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

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

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

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

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

But instead of exploiting it themselves Europeans may be allowing American tech giants to gain control of all the excavation equipment, some experts say, pointing to a flurry of

European companies announcing deals with US tech players for cloud services.

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

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

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

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



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

## NUCLEAR | HISTORY

## There are about 1,36,700 survivors of the atom bomb attacks in Japan Hibakusha make last plea to scrap N-bombs

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

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

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

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

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

who survived the Nagasaki bombing, said ahead of the anniversaries.

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

The attack on Nagasaki killed 74,000 people and came three days after a first bomb devastated the city of Hiroshima, killing 140,000.

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

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

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



## SHORT TAKES

## Red card for coughing on field

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

— AP

## World Cup winner Iker calls it a day

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Brazil football sides ignore rules

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

Defending Sao Paulo state champion Corinthians refused on Monday to be tested again, while archrival Palmeiras was criticised for releasing players and staffers to go home after matches.

The first leg of the state final is on Wednesday, and the second on Saturday. The Covid-19 protocols of the Sao Paulo soccer body are the same ones being applied to the Brazilian championship starting next weekend.

Corinthians said in a statement that its refusal was in line with the health protocols of Sao Paulo state's soccer body. It added its players and staffers have been in isolation at the club training ground for 14 days, since the restart of the tournament after a four-month break.

— AP

## LYING GYMNAST COACH SET FOR PRISON TERM

**New York:** A former Michigan State University head gymnastics coach is scheduled to be sentenced on Tuesday for lying to police during an investigation into ex-Olympic and university doctor Larry Nassar.

Kathie Klages, 65, was found guilty by a jury in February of a felony and a misdemeanor for denying she knew of Nassar's abuse prior to 2016 when survivors started to come forward publicly. The misdemeanor carries up to a two-year prison sentence or a fine of up to \$5,000. The felony carries up to a 4-year prison sentence or a fine of up to \$5,000.

Klages testified at trial that she did not remember being told about abuse. If the case had not involved Nassar, her lawyer has said, Klages would never have been found guilty.

— AP

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# Lines drawn for IPL Tests, quarantine, bio-bubble part of plan

New Delhi, Aug. 4:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The players and support staff will be tested on Day 1, Day 3 and Day 6 of their quarantine in the UAE and after clearing that, they will be tested every fifth day during the 53-day event.

Over and above the BCCI testing protocol, the teams can do more tests on their own and additional tests



Mumbai Indians captain Rohit Sharma (left) and his Chennai Super Kings counterpart M. S. Dhoni pose with the IPL trophy in this file photo.

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● The players and support staff will be tested on Day 1, Day 3 and Day 6 of their quarantine in the UAE.

● Teams have been told to not fly out before August 20. Families will not be allowed to meet anyone outside bio-bubble.

may also be conducted under the rules put in place by the UAE government.

The teams have been told to not fly out before August 20 so that they can carry out the necessary testing protocols and the quarantine drill if needed.

The BCCI has left it to the teams to decide on the travel of partners and families of the players but they too will have to follow strict bio-secure protocols if they wish to accompany the cricketers and support staff.

The families will not be permitted to meet anyone outside the bio-bubble and will have to practice social

distancing while interacting with other families and the players, that too with a facemask on.

"The families will also not be allowed to enter the PMOA (players and match officials area) and field of play at any time during the training and matches."

"And anyone who breaches the bio-secure protocols, will have to be in self-isolation for seven days and return two negative tests on day 6 and 7 to be allowed to re-enter the bio-bubble," the official added.

The IPL will allow unlimited COVID-19 replacements considering the delicate health situation.

— PTI

## Ali confident of Babar show

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Pakistan captain Azhar Ali looks on during a nets session at the Old Trafford in Manchester, England, on Tuesday.

— AP

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

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

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

The two batsmen have

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

**ENG DELAY DECISION ON STOKES FOR OPENER**

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

Stokes' quad injury

## Not sorry to miss league, says Starc

Melbourne, Aug. 4: Left-arm Australian pacer Mitchell Starc doesn't regret giving the IPL a miss this year, saying he is comfortable training for the upcoming summer season.

Starc had pulled out of the lucrative T20 event to focus on the T20 World Cup in Australia which was postponed last month due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

"I know hindsight is a wonderful thing and now the IPL is on at a different time but no, I wouldn't change it," the 30-year-old, who played for Royal Challengers Bangalore for two years, was quoted as saying by *Cricchet.com.au*.

"I'm happy to spend that time when the blokes are at the IPL in September I'll be getting ready for a summer. The IPL will be around next year and if I feel the urge or people

I'm happy to spend that time when the blokes are at the IPL in September I'll be getting ready for a summer. As of this year I'm very comfortable with the decisions I've made.

— MITCHELL STARC

Australian cricketer on giving the league a miss this year

want me around I'll definitely consider it, but as of this year I'm very comfortable with the decisions I've made," he added.

Starc was bought by Kolkata Knight Riders in the 2018 IPL auction but was ruled out of the season due to an injury and was eventually released in November.

— PTI

## WINDIES TOUR OF AUSTRALIA POSTPONED

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

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

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

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

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

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

— PTI

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## Rooftop tennis? Roger that!



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

## WOMEN'S | TENNIS

## Pliskova makes winning return

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

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

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

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

Vekic sealed a place in the second round on her second match point. Vekic will next face Italian teenager Elisabetta Cocciaretto, who beat Polona Herczeg of Slovenia 7-6 (1), 6-3 for her first victory over a player ranked in the top 50.

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

— AP



Kristina Pliskova serves to third-seeded Maria Sakkari during their singles match at the Palermo Ladies Open in Palermo, Italy, on Tuesday. Pliskova won 6-4, 6-4.

## LIED TO CAS TO REDUCE BAN, ADMITS PUERTA

Buenos Aires, Aug. 4: Retired tennis player Mariano Puerta has admitted he lied to the Court of Arbitration for Sport to reduce his suspension after a second positive doping test. Four months after the high point of his career — the final of the 2005 French Open — the Argentine tested positive for etilefrine, a banned cardiorespiratory stimulant. He had also been caught in 2003 for the use of a banned anabolic steroid.

Puerta was initially suspended for eight years, but the penalty was reduced to two years thanks to a defense strategy that he said "was a lie."

"But I did not take any sporting advantage. I don't want to be seen as a deceiver," Puerta said in an interview published by *La Nacion* newspaper on Monday.

Puerta's defense said he drank water from a glass used by his then wife Sol Estevanez.

— AP