

OPINION 8
 OLD IS
 STILL GOLD

TOLLYWOOD 13
 ADDALA'S DRY RUN ENDS
 AS RAM OKAYS SCRIPT

SPORTS 16
 STOKES KEEPS
 ASHES ALIVE

HYDERABAD, MONDAY AUGUST 26, 2019; PAGES 16 ₹3



the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com

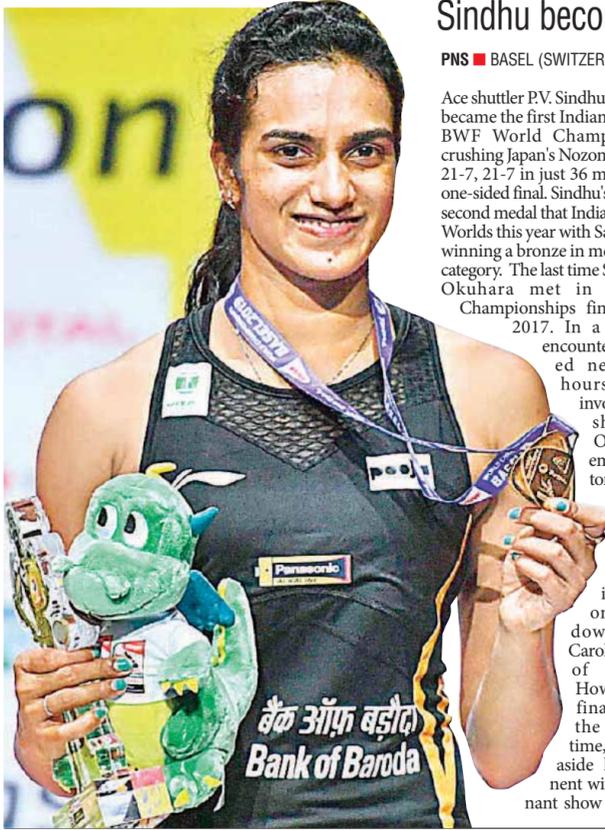


PRODUCERS WERE
 NOT CASTING ME
 BECAUSE I AM
 SHEER BAD LUCK

Page 11

On top of the world

Sindhu becomes first Indian to win World Championships



PNS ■ BASEL (SWITZERLAND)

Ace shuttler P.V. Sindhu on Sunday became the first Indian to win the BWF World Championships, crushing Japan's Nozomi Okuhara 21-7, 21-7 in just 36 minutes in a one-sided final. Sindhu's gold is the second medal that India won at the Worlds this year with Sai Praneeth winning a bronze in men's singles category. The last time Sindhu and Okuhara met in a World Championships final was in 2017. In a pulsating encounter that lasted nearly two hours and involved a 73-shot rally, Okuhara emerged victorious in the end. Sindhu again reached the final in 2018, only to go down to Carolina Marin of Spain. However, she finally broke the jinx this time, brushing aside her opponent with a dominant show from start

By winning the Championship, Sindhu made the country proud. I wish her achieve many more such victories
 —KCR, Chief Minister

To finish. In stark contrast to world No. 4 on Sunday looked completely at sea against the Indian star's relentless attacks. Although Okuhara won the first point of the first game, Sindhu won eight straight points after that to race to a 8-1 lead. Okuhara managed just one more point before the interval with Sindhu leading 11-2. The mauling continued for much of the second period of the opener, which ended in just 16 minutes. Okuhara got a few consecutive points towards the end to extend her score to 7 but Sindhu sealed the issue on her first game point. In the second game, Okuhara briefly kept pace until the score was 3-2 in Sindhu's favour after which the Indian took six

consecutive points to race to a 9-2 lead. Okuhara won two more points but Sindhu kept her foot on the pedal and went into the interval with a 11-4 lead. Okuhara went on to take just three more points in the second period as Sindhu continued to storm her way to the title. Once again, she managed to get over the line on her first match point. This was the 16th match between Sindhu and Okuhara. Sindhu now leads 9-7 head-to-head, including three victories in the last five meetings before Sunday's clash. Both players had not won a title this year. While Okuhara reached the final after a hard fought 17-21, 21-18, 21-15 win against Thailand's Ratchanok Intanon, Sindhu swatted aside China's Chen Yu Fei 21-7, 21-14 in her semifinal clash. This is Sindhu's fifth medal at the World Championships, which is the joint highest in women's singles in the history of the tournament along with Xiang Ning of China, a two-time Olympic gold medalist.

Related report in page 16



Narendra Modi (@narendramodi)

The stupendously talented @Pvsindhu1 makes India proud again! Congratulations to her for winning the Gold at the BWF World Championships. The passion and dedication with which she's pursued badminton is inspiring. PV Sindhu's success will inspire generations of players.

BJP lobs bouncer at TRS

Centre to declare Sept 17 as 'Telangana Liberation Day'

L VENKAT RAM REDDY
 ■ HYDERABAD

In a move to cut the ground from under the feet of the Telangana Rashtra Samiti government in the State, the BJP-led government at the Centre proposes to declare September 17 as 'Telangana Liberation Day' and, more importantly, hold grand official celebrations under the aegis of the saffron party.

This will put the TRS government on the back foot and give the saffron party some brownie points in its quest to emerge as a strong political force in Telangana.

For various reasons, the Telangana State has not been holding official celebrations on September 17th, despite the fact that TRS came to power on the back of sentiments associated with the Telangana statehood movements.

The BJP's state unit has approached Union Home Minister Amit Shah in this regard and the related proposal is said to be under 'active consideration' of the Union Ministry of Home Affairs. To lay it on thick, Amit Shah has been invited to take part in the 'TS Liberation Day' celebrations in Telangana being organized on September 17 on behalf of the saffron party.

Amit Shah is expected to make an announcement in this regard.



- Celebrations to be official, grand like in Maharashtra and Karnataka
- With MIM on board, TRS on the back foot

TRS chief K Chandrasekhar Rao had promised, during the peak of the Telangana statehood agitation days, to hold official celebrations on September 17.

However, he is now accused of renegeing on his promise upon coming to power, apparently under pressure from the All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen, which is TRS' friendly party.

The BJP is engaged in a fierce political battle with TRS in Telangana, buoyed by its surprising performance in the recent Lok Sabha elections. The saffron party won four Lok Sabha seats and even trounced KCR's daughter K

Kavitha in the Nizamabad Lok Sabha seat. The BJP is dredging up 'Telangana Liberation Day' sentiment to expand its footprint in Telangana and emerge as an alternative to TRS well before the 2023 Assembly polls. Speaking to The Pioneer, Union Minister of State for Home G Kishna Reddy said, "When Karnataka and Maharashtra are celebrating Liberation Day officially on September 17 after certain districts of the erstwhile Hyderabad State merged into them, why can't Telangana State do the same? We are not demanding anything new.

In fact, this is the promise made by KCR during the Telangana statehood agitation. KCR has now backtracked only to please his friendly party AIMIM, which is against celebrating Telangana Liberation Day officially.

Continued on Page 3

AP may have 4 Capital cities: TG

VIJAYAWADA: In a controversial statement on Sunday, Rajya Sabha Member T G Venkatesh said that the YSRC government is planning to have four Capital cities at Vizianagaram, Kakinada, Guntur and Kadapa in the State.

Speaking to 'The Pioneer', he said the State government was planning to set up four regional development boards in the State and an equal number of Capital cities, one each for all the regions. This was precisely the reason why Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy had allotted Deputy Chief Minister posts to each of the four regions in the State, he said and disclosed that he had informed the same to BJP high command. "But, our party high command did not respond on the issue," he said.

Hail the shuttle queen!

SRIDHAR K PENNA
 ■ HYDERABAD

Like millions of people from all over, those from the sports fraternity, including legends, tend to be extremely superstitious. PV Sindhu is no exception to the rule. Her fans, of which there is no dearth, are more so. Their 'third time' lucky prayers were answered by Sindhu, whose obsessively aggressive 38-minute massacre helped end an Indian jinx and won her the elusive World Championship title.

Incidentally, Sunday's BWF World Badminton Championships success at Basel is her first title this season. A brilliant start, so to say.

For sheer audacity and dominant performance, it was awesome when taken under any yardstick. The first Indian,

male or female, to effectively penetrate the impregnable Chinese Wall time and again, the 24-year-old toyed with her Japanese opponent Nozomi Okuhara, who had no clue to the thunderous stroke-play that hit her. Sindhu's ruthless annihilation can be gauged from the lopsided 21-7, 21-7 verdict that brought an anti-climax to the much-hyped women's championship clash. The win marks Sindhu's majestic way of settling scores with her old foe, who had conquered the Indian after a 110-minute marathon in 2017. The summit clash jinx haunted Sindhu last year when she failed to put it across an equally determined Carolina Marin. Incidentally, the defending champion missed this year's edition.

Continued on Page 4

Bahrain pardons 250 Indian prisoners

PNS ■ MIANAMA

In a humanitarian gesture, the Bahrain government on Sunday pardoned 250 Indians serving sentences in the Gulf nation during the maiden visit of Prime Minister Narendra Modi to the oil-rich country. The prime minister expressed his gratitude to the Bahrain leadership for the Royal pardon. About 8,189 Indians are lodged in various prisons in foreign countries, with Saudi Arabia having the highest number at 1,811 followed by the UAE at 1,392. It was not clear how many Indians are lodged in jails in the Gulf kingdom.

"In a kind and humanitarian gesture, the Government of Bahrain has pardoned 250 Indians serving sentences in Bahrain," the Prime Minister's Office (PMO) tweeted.

BJP keen on attracting govt employees to its fold

DEEPTHI NANDAN REDDY
 ■ HYDERABAD

The Bharatiya Janata Party is planning to draw employees' organisations to its fold after weaning them away from the grasp of TRS at an opportune moment. The saffron party is eyeing government employees as their en masse support is crucial for it to emerge as the main player in state politics. Towards this end, the saffron party aims to leverage the perceived disquiet among government employees due to some of Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao's recent decisions.

Employees' organisations had played a key role in the rise of the Telangana Rashtra Samiti. Currently they have good rapport with TRS leaders. To get

● Weaning them away from TRS



them to dump TRS, the saffron party is planning to launch an agitation against KCR's proposal to scrap the Revenue Department (though the Chief Minister has expressly denied it) and raise other issues facing employees as well. BJP senior

leaders are reportedly in talks with TNGO Association, Telangana Tahsildars Association and other employees' associations as part of their larger plan to launch an agitation against the TRS government.

Continued on Page 4



EC announces Assembly by-polls to four seats

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Election Commission on Sunday announced by-elections to one assembly seat each in Uttar Pradesh, Tripura, Chhattisgarh and Kerala. The bypolls for Dantewada (Chhattisgarh), Pala (Kerala), Badharghat (Tripura) and Hamirpur (Uttar Pradesh) Assembly seats will be held on September 23.

The bypoll in Hamirpur was necessitated by the disqualification of BJP MLA Ashok Chandel. By-elections to 12 other Assembly seats in UP are also due as most of the sitting MLAs won the Lok Sabha elections this year. But the dates are yet to be announced by the poll panel.

The Dantewada, Pala and Badharghat bypolls were necessitated following the death of the respective sitting MLAs. While the notification for the by-elections would be issued on August 28, counting will be held on September 27, the EC said.



TODAY

ALMANAC
 Month & Paksham: Shrawana & Krishna Paksha
 Tithi : Dashami: 07:02 am, Ekadashi: 05:09 am (Next Day)
 Nakshatram: Ardra: 02:57 am (Next Day)
 Time to Avoid: (Bad time to start any important work)
 Rahukalam: 07:37 am - 09:11 am
 Yamagandam: 10:44 am - 12:17 pm
 Varjyam: 12:01 pm - 01:33 pm
 Gulika: 01:51 pm - 03:24 pm
 Good Time: (to start any important work)
 Amritakalam: 05:23 pm - 06:55 pm
 Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:53 am - 12:42 pm

HYDERABAD WEATHER
 Forecast: Partly Cloudy
 Temp: 32/22
 Humidity: 66%
 Sunrise: 06:01
 Sunset: 06:34
 Current Weather Conditions Updated August 25, 2019 5:00 PM



Arun Jaitley cremated with State honours

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Former finance minister Arun Jaitley was cremated at the AIIIMS here on Saturday. Vice President Venkaiah Naidu, BJP veteran LK Advani, party president and Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, party's working president J P Nadda, Union ministers Nirmala Sitharaman, Smriti Irani and Anurag

The 66-year-old BJP stalwart passed away at the AIIIMS here on Saturday. Vice President Venkaiah Naidu, BJP veteran LK Advani, party president and Home Minister Amit Shah, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh, party's working president J P Nadda, Union ministers Nirmala Sitharaman, Smriti Irani and Anurag

Thakur; BJP MPs Vijay Goel and Vinay Sahasrabudde; Congress leaders Jyotiraditya Scindia and Kapil Sibal were among those present at the cremation ground.

Chief ministers of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka, Bihar and Uttarakhand, Devendra Fadnis, Vijay Rupani, B S

Yediyurappa, Nitish Kumar and Trivendra Singh Rawat, respectively, were also there.

Earlier in the day, his body was taken to the BJP headquarters from where it was carried in a flower-decked gun carriage to the cremation ground, amidst slogans of 'Jaitley ji amar rahein' (long live Jaitley).

Rs 1.11 cr gold bars seized from toilet in RGIA

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A youngster from Hyderabad, in his early 30s, who was allegedly trying to smuggle foreign marked gold into the country, was nabbed by Customs officials at the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport on Sunday.

The accused, identified as Shaikh Abdul Sajid, having noticed movement of Customs officials and the checking of baggage, dumped the gold bars in one of the toilets near the arrival area and tried to walk away, but was nabbed. In all, 26 gold bars were recovered, said officials.

Based on a tip-off, sleuths from the Air Intelligence Unit of the Customs wing at the air-



port conducted checks at the green channel area for passengers. After about an hour later, they noticed Sajid moving suspiciously and intercepted him. On inquiry, he initially pleaded innocence, but on thorough

questioning confessed to the crime. Based on his confession, 26 foreign marked gold bars, weighing a total of 2,992 grams worth Rs 1,11,60,160, were recovered from the toilet. Inquiries revealed that he

The passenger, identified as Shaikh Abdul Sajid, noticed movement of Customs officials and the checking of baggage and dumped the gold bars in one of the toilets near the arrival area and tried to walk away

carried the gold bars in his hand baggage. However, after seeing Customs officials, he got scared and dropped the plan of carrying them outside the airport.

Further inquiries revealed that the accused, who had landed in an Indigo Airlines flight from Sharjah, was a conduit, who was offered a free ticket by the operators. Officials are extracting details about

the operator and the receiver. They suspect that he could have travelled to Sharjah in search of a job. But on his return, the operators offered him a free ticket for his return and forced him to carry gold with him. He was told to hand over the gold bars to a person outside the airport. The gold was seized and the accused was arrested. Further investigation is underway, said officials.

EC shocker: No Huzur Nagar Assembly bypoll

K VENKATESHWARLU
 ■ HYDERABAD

Political circles in Telangana State are aghast at the list the Central Election Commission released on Sunday announcing by-polls to one assembly seat each in Uttar Pradesh, Tripura, Chhattisgarh and Kerala as it skipped by-polls to the Huzur Nagar Assembly constituency, which fell vacant following resignation by Congress MLA N Uttam Kumar Reddy upon his election as Member of Parliament from the Nalgonda Lok Sabha constituency in May. Uttam Kumar tendered his resignation on June 5th.



As per rules, the Election Commission has to conduct elections within six months to any constituency that falls vacant. Thus, EC has to conduct elections to the Huzur Nagar constituency before November. Yet, EC's notification on Sunday did not list Huzur Nagar for unstated reasons.

Continued on Page 3

The National Institute of Technology-Warangal's 17th convocation celebrated recently was a standout day for graduating students as is the norm, but quite unusual in some other respects. All freshly-minted graduates were advised to wear 'traditional attire'. No, not the traditional Telangana attire; they were asked to wear whites with a saffron dupatta thrown on the shoulders. Students however were all game for the 'change of colour' and enjoyed the proceedings at the institute which was till the other day known to be slightly left-leaning or neutral.

Silence of fan vs buzz of cycle

It's been either too much or too little. Till a few months ago, the

New colour at convocation

TDP had kept scribes, PR pros and such others on their toes hopping from one government event to another to stay on top of the goings-on and in the loop. It was a backbreaking time. In contrast, the YSRCP regime has maintained a low profile for its own reasons, leaving info-hungry scrolling sites to know if there is anything worthwhile that they could cover. Things do happen once in a while, but there are too few and far between.

Alexa knows quite a bit

At the inaugural of Amazon's

largest campus, the company showcased its voice assistant Alexa. Home minister and chief guest Mahmood Ali was invited to ask Alexa anything. So he asked: "Alexa, industrial policy of Telangana." Stumped she may be, but Alexa continued unapologetically: "Sorry I don't know". While the awkward moment left the audience in splits, the minister was advised to ask simpler questions like "the Chief Minister of Telangana?". Now, that was bang in Alexa's territory, so prompt came the reply: "Kalvakuntla Chandrashekhara Rao." Then, very helpfully she even offered



more info: "Customers asked this question, 'Who's the Chief Minister of Andhra Pradesh?' Whew, Ms Alexa had more than covered up for some gaps in her knowledge.

Ex-Professors eyeing analyst jobs

While it is best to remain fruitfully

occupied post-retirement and there is also age-limit for further education, it make sense for retired professors to do a course or two that equips them for part-time jobs. A lot of college professors are finding out that being an HR or Business analyst can be very lucrative proposition. So, no matter their background - arts, science, English, chemistry, engineering et al - scores are signing up for an MBA course. That's quite a business strategy in itself!

Whose claims are fake?

Enmity between TRS and BJP is get-

ting bitter with both parties grabbing any available opportunity to go for each others' throats. This week BJP state chief K Laxman and TRS working president KTR sparred over their party membership drives. While KTR mocked the saffron party saying BJP is a "missed call party", Laxman retorted saying TRS enrolls members by either inducements or outright threats. Looks like the fight might end in a tie - for while TRS claims it has notched up a mammoth 60 lakh new members, the BJP claims it is anyway the world's political party.

VH the long-distance runner

Congress leader V Hanumantha Rao recently turned 74, but his hectic party-related work can shame a youth half his age. The other day, VH surprised the police by venturing into the Nallamala to meet the Chenchus who are likely to get affected by proposed uranium mining. In a casual chat with the Congress leader, a scribe said he appreciated VH's very hectic and busy schedule despite his age and prayed for his wellbeing. More than the long miles, it's the 'mileage' that he likes more, said the veteran leader, in true blue politico style.

(PV Kondal Rao, Sumit Onka, Naveena Ghanate, Sushma Nagaraju, Deepthi Nandan, Kolishetty Venkateshwarlu)

Gold continues to be in demand

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

US Fed-reserve, after a meeting and after soliciting the views of stakeholders, is shortly expected to announce the interest rates. Speculation is rife that there would not be any change. There, despite high price, the yellow metal continued to be in good demand. Barring Friday, when gold price took a halt, on all other days in the week, New York gold hovered around US \$ 1,500 (per oz). Finally, gold closed at US \$ 1,529.20 while silver, also followed suit at \$ 17.53 (per Ounce). Platinum and Palladium closed at US \$ 863.20 and Rs. 1,465.76 respectively. Copper closed at Rs.440.45 (per kg).

As against the annual import of some 800 tonnes, in the current fiscal year, the imports are likely to be about 10 per cent less

the annual import of some 800 tonnes, in the current fiscal year, the imports are likely to be about 10 per cent less. Many of the buyers who need to purchase gold for jewellery, due to higher prices, would try to economize by selling old household jewellery, thereby substituting the demand.

During the week, Standard gold (24 carats) appreciated by Rs.130 and closed at Rs.38,100 (per 10 gms). Ornamental gold too, moved up in tandem and was quoted in the range of Rs.36,160 - 36,260 on the closing day. Silver (0.999), too, appreciated by Rs. 700 and closed at Rs.44,500 (per kg). The sentiment in gold and silver is likely to remain strong during a couple of weeks from now.

COMMODITIES

The sentiment in principal wholesale commodity markets in the twin cities was moderate. Rythu Bazaars and the various commodity markets located in Begum Bazar, Kishangunj, Mukthiyargunj,

Risala Abdullah, Mir Alam Mandi, Dilsukhnagar, Kukatpally, Bowenpally, General Bazar witnessed moderate business.

To cope with the increase in festival demand, the government has built up huge buffer stock of essential commodities. However, due to the recent floods in Maharashtra, Karnataka and Madhya Pradesh, onion prices have shot up by 76 per cent. The impact of rising prices of onion will be felt throughout the country.

During the week, common pulses such as tuar dal, moong dal, urad dal and masoor dal remained steady at the previous week's closing levels; so also edible oils and vanaspati. The prices of common vegetables increased substantially due to heavy rains in the vegetable-growing areas. Common vegetables such as cabbage, cauliflower, ribbed guard, snake guard, lady fingers, cucumber, potatoes, onions, tomatoes and French beans, along with other leafy vegetables, recorded an increase in prices in the range of 40 per cent to 60 per cent due to the increased supplies. In Hyderabad, the NECC wholesale egg-price declined by Rs.27 and closed at Rs.310 (per 100). The highest price of Rs.370 was recorded at Lucknow, while Hospet closed at the lowest price of Rs 290 on the closing day.

WEEKLY MARKET REVIEW



'KCR looting public exchequer'

WILL APPROACH CENTRE SEEKING CBI INQUIRY AGAINST PROJECTS' REDESIGN: BHATTI

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Congress Legislature Party (CLP) leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka has alleged that Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao is looting the state indiscriminately in the name of projects' redesign. He said the Congress will approach the Union Home Minister Amit Shah seeking CBI inquiry into the corruption. He alleged that the KCR family looted lakhs of crores of rupees in the name of projects redesigning.

While speaking to the media at Madhira in Khammam district on Sunday, Bhatti slammed TRS government saying that it enhanced the Kaleshwaram project estimations from Rs 28,000 crore to Rs 80,000 crore in the name of redesign. He said that the KCR government increased the cost of Seetharama project, which is supposed to be completed with Rs 1,500 crore, enhanced up to Rs 15,000 crore. He alleged that KCR government is looting the public exchequer in the name of projects redesign. He said that the Congress will take up 'Projects Bata' to expose KCR government's corrupt practices.

Bhatti said that the Telangana would have benefited with the then Congress government's Pranahitha-Chevella project. Bhatti said that the Congress would take up Pranahitha-Chevella project visit on Monday (August 26) only to explain the people as to how the funds of



Pranahitha-Chevella project would have been completed within three years if the TRS government had spent Rs 10,000 cr per year for 3 yrs. The project would have provided irrigation to 16.5 lakh acres, he said

Telangana state were being looted.

He said that the then Congress government had taken up Pranahitha-Chevella project with an estimation of Rs 38,000 crore at Thummidihetti to provide drinking and irrigation water up to Chevella. The then Congress government completed works worth Rs 10,000 crore. The Pranahitha-Chevella project would have completed if the TRS government, after the formation of Telangana, spent Rs 28,000

crore more resulting to green Telangana.

Pranahitha-Chevella project would have been completed within three years if the TRS government had spent Rs 10,000 crore per year for three years. The project would have provided irrigation water to 16.5 lakh acre. Almost 80 per cent of the Telangana would have got drinking water if Pranahitha-Chevella project was completed. The project would have also provided water to industries too, he said.

Congress party will take up 'Projects Bata' to expose K Chandrashekhara Rao government's corrupt practices — MALLU BHATTI VIKRAMARKA, CLP leader



Padayatra: Komatireddy to knock on HC's door

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Congress MP from Bhongir Komatireddy Venkat Reddy has informed that he will approach the High Court as the state police failed to respond on his applications seeking permissions for the proposed 'padayatra' from Udaya Samudram, Nalgonda to Jalasoudha, Hyderabad on August 26.

The move comes after the police denied permission to Komatireddy's 'Padayatra'. Nalgonda SP Ranganath issued notices to Komatireddy denying permission making it clear that it is not possible to provide security. SP mentioned reasons that people would bring Ganesh idols from Hyderabad to districts in this route and the police have to go to Hyderabad for additional security duties for Ganesh festival. Reacting on it, Komatireddy expressed anger over police. He alleged that the police violated his freedom of roaming freely. He said that he will approach High Court on it.

He announced about his 'padayatra' few days ago demanding the state government to complete the Udaya Samudram project immediately. He said that he would file a petition in the High Court very soon.

On Sunday in a statement, Komatireddy informed that he will announce the dates after getting permission for his walkathon from the High Court. Venkat Reddy said that he submitted an application to the Director General of Police (DGP) M Mahender Reddy on August 19 seeking police permission for his proposed 'padayatra'.

Revenue employees' leaders to meet CM KCR

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Deputy Collectors Association, Telangana Revenue Employees Services Association, Telangana Tahasildars Association, Village Revenue Officials Association and Village Revenue Assistants Association have informed that they will meet Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao soon in regard to discuss on proposed new Revenue Act.

They said that they will share their opinions with Chief Minister in regard to new Revenue Act. "We have already prepared a draft in this regard. We will play our role in preparing new Revenue Act", they said. The Unions leaders, in a statement issued on Saturday, have condemned the news published in a section of media and said that the news were published intentionally.

They said that it was not proper to the section of media to distort the intention of meeting Health and Medical Association Minister Etala Rajender. They alleged that the section of media published the news adding falsehood things. They alleged that the section of media is trying to blame the Revenue Employees Unions intentionally. The unions leaders said that they met Etala purely regarding one employee named Ramulu's son Santosh health issue. They made it clear that Etala didn't inform them about the Collectors meeting held at Pragathi Bhavan.

BATHUKAMMA SAREE PRODUCTION GATHERS PACE

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Of the required 1 crore Bathukamma sarees, weaving of over 60 lakh sarees has been completed. So far, around 25 lakh sarees have been sent to districts and there are plans to send at least 50 lakh sarees by month-end.

The district administration has been working hard to distribute the sarees prior to the festival keeping in mind the delay that had taken place last year because of the early elections to State Legislative

Over 25 lakh sarees have been sent to districts so far

In the last three years, power looms in Sircilla district received orders worth over Rs 900 crore, benefiting over 9,435 weavers

Assembly. This year, the target is to produce 6.84 crore metres of cloth at a cost of Rs 320 crore. As of now, the power looms have finished weaving 4.67-crore metre length of the

cloth. Of the 23,000 power looms in the textile town of Sircilla, weaving is going on 17,000 looms.

Textiles meant for distribution among the Muslims on

the occasion of Ramzan and among Christians for the X-Mas are being woven in Sircilla. Besides, the cloth for school uniforms is being manufactured here.

During the past three years, the powerlooms here got orders for over Rs 900 crore, benefiting 9435 workers. The average earning per month of each weaver is increased to Rs 26,000 as against the below Rs 8,000 earlier. The NIFT experts



designed sarees in attractive 80 hues. This year, the sarees meant for the aged and senior citizens would have a golden border, while the sarees meant for the young women would have fancy designs. The state

government is keen to bring a special recognition to the sarees on the lines of Gadwal and Pochampalli sarees. The handloom department is keen to get Siri Sala or Sree sala logo printed on them.

Have time? Help out kids in school

PNS ■ KHAMMAM

To overcome shortage of teachers in government schools, the state government has introduced a scheme called 'Vidyanjali' to encourage retired employees, teachers, old students, NGOs, subject experts and activists of voluntary organisations to teach on part-time basis in the schools.

Education commissioner Vijay Kumar issued orders in this regard on August 13. In fact, 533 teacher posts remained vacant in government schools in the district. Since the teacher recruitment is not full scale, the government wants to use services of experienced teachers for some time without putting burden on the government.

Those who prefer to spend time teaching, they should choose their favourite time slot. In the designated portal, the candidates should choose relevant school. Having registered their names, the enthusiasts to teach will be welcomed by concerned school headmaster and mandal education offi-



Under 'Vidyanjali' scheme, retired employees, teachers, old students, NGOs, subject experts and activists of voluntary organisations can teach on part-time basis in the schools

Their names would be put on display in the concerned school, in the office of the MED and DEO. At various celebra-

tions and at national festivals, these volunteers who opted to teach in schools will be felicitated in an appropriate manner.

These teachers are not entitled to any allowances like transport allowance or any other allowances. The retired employees and subject experts can coach students in sports and games, culture, finearts like music, theatre, craft, dance, computer education and moral science and so on. DEO P Madan Mohan exhorted those who are keen to teach should make use of the facility.

State on path of development, says Errabelli

PNS ■ WARANGAL

Panchayath Raj Minister Errabelli Dayakar Rao asked to the media to focus on the development programmes with a positive motto while projecting them in the media and newspapers.

The Minister said certain media houses were trying to tarnish the image of the government for their vested interests. "Though the media houses might have their own stands, the scribes should focus on the genuineness in the development and they should take utmost interest in highlighting the facts," he said.

Stating that the Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) government led by K Chandrashekhara Rao was trying to implement development with a firm approach, the Minister said the all-round growth of Telangana state is slowly becoming a reality these days.

Andhole Congress cadre in doldrums

PNS ■ MEDAK

Although the former Deputy Chief Minister, Damodara Raja Narasimha has clarified that he would not defect to any other party from the Congress, the party cadre in Andhole segment of Medak are in a dilemma for the past few weeks.

Initially, they were inflicted a huge loss by the TRS but in the recent times the BJP's emergence as a major force in this constituency is making the Congress cadre to think twice before staying in tact with the organisation. The latest development of Damodara though a gossip has not been taken seriously by the Congress leadership but the TRS is taking it as an advantage and pouncing on the Congress to wipe out all its cadre in the erstwhile bastion of the party.

BJP's emergence as a major force in this constituency is making the Congress cadre think twice before staying with the party.

There were even rumours of Damodar Raja Narasimha joining the saffron party

The Andhole BJP is led by Babu Mohan and since he too enjoyed a considerable chunk of support base, the Congress leaders in the village level is placed in a disappointed mode. This may ultimately take the party towards a back seat, says the cadre.

Man dies in SUV mishap

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A 35-year-old man was killed on the spot in a road mishap while his friend sustained injuries at Hayathnagar cross roads on late Saturday night.

The accident occurred while the two were travelling in a Bolero SUV Vijayawada during the weekend, Hayathnagar inspector K Satish said. The deceased was identified as, Arun Michell, was a local musician, and his friend as Hanok, said the police.

Police said while the two men were heading out of the city, a lorry carrying electronic equipment dashed into a divider and turned turtle, crushing the driver's side of the Bolero. Arun was killed on the spot. Hanok however, escaped with minor injuries. "The lorry was being driven at a high speed. The driver left the vehicle and fled the scene," said sub-inspector Nagaraju. Both the vehicles were badly damaged in the accident.

The accident led to km-long traffic jam on the highway. Later, a case was booked against the lorry driver under Section 304A (death by negligence) of IPC. The body was shifted to Gandhi hospital for postmortem examination.

TSRTC's 'Dial your officer' event today

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

To redress transport grievances and provide passenger-centric services, Greater Hyderabad Zone of Telangana State Road Transport Corporation is organising 'Dial your RTC officer' programme on Monday from 5 pm and 6 pm.

Officers who can be contacted during the programme include, Khushro Shah Khan, Regional Manager, Hyderabad Region, (Ph.8374499915), G Yugendher, Regional Manager, Secunderabad Region (Ph.9959900808) and Madhava Rao, Divisional Manager, Kacheeguda division (Ph.9959226087), according to a press release.

Mindspace-RGIA Metro link to give realty a push

DEEPTHI NANDAN REDDY ■ HYDERABAD

The proposed metro rail line connecting Mindspace Junction with Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA) may finally spur the long-dormant real estate sector in and around Shamshabad and spruce up the social infrastructure in the area.

Though lands in Shamshabad caught the fancy of investors and attracted realtors and builders to the area two decades ago, when the airport came into existence, the development around the area did not quite take off, giving a huge jolt to the realtors.

In fact, several investors who had bet big on Shamshabad have burnt fingers, as neither residential nor commercial launches happened. But with the metro rail to be laid between RGI Airport and Mindspace Junction, Shamshabad and surrounding areas may get a new lease of life.

"Though everyone expected Shamshabad to become a hotspot area after the launch of the airport, the area did not become quite popular as expected. Though initially land developers and investors with deep pockets invested in the area, no construction companies or builders have launched



The proposed line will push the realty prospects of Shamshabad upwards and accelerate connectivity for residents in many areas

projects. Even those working in the airport are staying in the city and traveling to the workplace, but not staying anywhere nearby," said K Sreedhar Reddy, treasurer of Telangana Real Estate Developers Association (TREDA) speaking to The Pioneer.

"But now Shamshabad will grab the eyeballs if the metro rail comes into existence. Because, techies who are working in Hitech city, Gachibowli surrounds can travel between workplace and office quite easily in a short span, if they buy a home anywhere between Shamshabad to Gachibowli,

on either side of the metro rail line. Therefore builders who are already finding the prices in the West Hyderabad region unviable are thinking of Shamshabad as the next best option," he added.

It might take about three to five years for the metro rail link between Hitech City and the airport to come into existence, but Hyderabad Metro Rail Limited is all set to launch works, as soon as the government gives the nod. The proposed 31-km-long metro rail stretch from Mindspace Junction to RGIA Airport will be taken up with an investment

of about Rs 5,000 crore. Therefore, builders are already seriously evolving the potential of Shamshabad for residential launches.

"It is getting to a tipping point in West Hyderabad areas like Gachibowli, Kokapet, Raidurg. Land prices have already crossed one lakh mark per yard. Also, there is a pressure on infrastructure, with everyone flocking to West Hyderabad. Though there are best infrastructure facilities in IT Hub, problems of traffic jams, flooding due to rains, congestion are occurring frequently. So it makes sense to look beyond Gachibowli and go towards Shamshabad or any area abutting ORR or metro rail," said V Rajashekar Reddy, general secretary of CREDAI.

"One can travel to offices in IT Hub within 30 minutes from Shamshabad if the metro line becomes a reality. Also one can get land or house at one-third of cost in Shamshabad when compared to Hitech City surroundings, keeping in view the today's price trends, he said explaining the benefits for realty companies and homebuyers if Shamshabad is developed. Besides attractive land prices, availability of huge land bank in Shamshabad is also enticing builders.

JNTUH registration: Staffers say portal is insecure, faulty

Engg teaching staff asked to register by Aug 31, TCEA claims JNTUH portal can be accessed by anybody

SUSHMA NAGARAJU ■ HYDERABAD

Engineering colleges affiliated to JNTUH have been asked to submit lists of their teaching staff to the university by August 31. The JNTUH authorities have sent a circular to this effect asking college managements to register details of the teaching staff on the JNTU Academic Audit online portal to maintain transparency and authenticity.

However, the Technical College Employee Association (TCEA) denies the university's claim that the portal is authentic. The association said that there was little use of registering details because as of now the portal is insecure and anyone from outside can access it and fill in details claiming to be a college lecturer and even claim an ID. TCEA said uploading details of their staff would still not give the university a correct idea of the staff number given the insecure nature of the portal.

On the university's part, it has already been 20 days since engineering classes commenced, and therefore it has instructed colleges to be quick in submitting details.

The JNTUH's making such a request to colleges is not new. Every year, the affiliated colleges need to register details of new teaching staff and existing ones to JNTUH. It is meant serve as a record for the university and help avoid malpractices in recruitment.

The authorities said that this practice helped it resolved the issue of lecturers working for five or six universities. Not just that, the colleges that had been running classes by



The association said that there was little use of registering details because as of now the portal is insecure and anyone from outside can access it and fill in details, claiming to be a college lecturer and even get an ID issued

appointing B-Tech graduates also came to an end.

The application to register for staff details asks for name, experience, qualification, date of joining, latest photo and identification proof. Thereafter, a registration ID is generated for each faculty member, said the university authorities.

Currently, the portal shows that 83,543 faculty members have registered with JNTUH. However, the Telangana State Technical Employees' Association also contended that the portal is not fool-proof and authentic. It does not have a verification exercise to determine whether the details submitted for registration are from a genuine staff member or any person from outside.

The creation of fake registrations is just one click away, the association said. Once the details are filled and a person clicks on register, a registration ID is generated. College managements use the registration IDs generated in such a manner in files they submit when seeking affiliation.

"According to AICTE, the number of lecturers in Telangana across various disciplines is approximately 43,286. When that is the case, how does JNTUH itself show lecturer strength of 83,543? This process is not at all authentic and of no use. The portal was opened in 2015 but even now cases surface when during JNTUH inspection where fake numbers are produced with respect to faculty," said TCEA president Santhosh Kumar.

Mother sells baby, files 'kidnap' complaint

Woman arrested, says she was forced to sell her child out of poverty

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The LB Nagar police rescued a 10-month-old boy, who was sold by his mother for Rs 60,000, and shifted the infant to Shishu Vihar. The woman had cooked up a kidnap story and even staged an accident to mislead the police. She was arrested along with the person who 'bought' the baby.

Police said accused D Vijayalakshmi, 30, a beggar, allegedly sold her son Akhil due to poverty. She then lodged a complaint with the police stating that an unidentified couple kidnaped Akhil

from Gunti Jangaiah Colony in LB Nagar.

She claimed that a couple riding a scooter hit her, and sped off with Akhil while she was lay unconscious after the blow.

Police collected surveillance camera footage from the spot, identified the registration number of the scooter and tracked down the vehicle owner, Oraganti Moshia, a vendor. Moshia was detained for questioning, during which he confessed that Vijayalakshmi had sold the baby to him and that the accident scene was staged.

He confessed that he had bought the infant from Vijayalakshmi for Rs 60,000 in Shadnagar recently. The mother too confessed that she sold her child due to poverty, police said, adding that the woman had also approached other people in Shadnagar to sell the child before selling him to Moshia.

The infant was handed over to Child Welfare Committee, which shifted him to Shishu Vihar in Yousufguda for safe custody. Vijayalakshmi and Moshia were produced in court and remanded in judicial custody.



Last phase counseling for MBBS seats held

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Kaloji Medical Health University will conduct the final phase counseling for MBBS convener quota seats in private and government medical colleges. The one-day final counseling began on Sunday. Most of the seats were filled in the first three rounds of counseling. The last phase has been introduced to fill the vacant seats. Candidates can find the details of colleges and vacant seats in all medical colleges on the website.

Woman, 3rd accused in beheading case, arrested in Miyapur

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The gruesome murder auto driver Praveen four days ago was carried out by three assailants, including a woman who was arrested by the Miyapur police on Sunday.

Dokku Swathi, 27 was the third accused arrested in the case along with two others identified as Dokku Srikanth Yadav, 30, and Kukkala Naga Srinu, 20. All three are residents of Miyapur are in the city.

Madhapur DCP A Venkateshwara Rao said Praveen had been moving about for last few months with another person whom Srikanth had attempted to kill in 2017. Srikanth suspected that Praveen was planning to murder him. However, their common friends tried to broker a compromise between them. Srikanth continued to live under constant fear that Praveen might kill him anytime, so he planned to eliminate the man himself. On August 23, Srikanth along with Srinu drove Praveen to their house where Srikanth's wife strangled Praveen and killed him. Police said



Auto driver Praveen, who was killed

Srikanth fear that Praveen might kill him anytime, so he planned to eliminate the man himself

Srikanth, Srinu and another person Rajesh later took Praveen's body to a deserted spot in Miyapur, severed the head and threw it at Miyapur crossroads.

Police registered a case of murder and arrested Srikanth, Srinu and Swathi based on a complaint. Police also seized a knife, and a motorcycle from the accused.

BJP's 'TS Liberation Day' ...

Continued from Page 1

Referring to the BJP state unit's request concerning Telangana Liberation Day, Kishan Reddy said: "The Home Ministry is in receipt of such a request from the Telangana unit of BJP. A decision on this is yet to be taken. Home minister Amit Shah will take a call on this request."

Telangana Liberation Day is usually celebrated by BJP and certain other parties on September 17 to commemorate the rebellion and the subsequent Police Action which led to the freedom of Hyderabad state from the Nizam's rule on September 17, 1948. On that day, the Nizam of Hyderabad announced a ceasefire and the surrender of his troops, paving the way for integration of Hyderabad with the Indian Union.

There is a long-pending demand, supported by various parties and organizations, for official celebrations to mark this day as being done in Karnataka and Maharashtra. However, this demand could not be met either in undivided AP or in Telangana State now.



Advisor to Government (Media Affairs) KV Ramanachary being felicitated at the event on Sunday

'Information dept serves as eyes and ears of govt'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Department of Information and Public Relations acts as 'eyes and ears' of the government and plays a pivotal role in dissemination of information using different modes of communication, said KV Ramanachary, Advisor to Government (Media Affairs) and former Commissioner, I&PR.

He was speaking at "Atmeeya Sammelanam" programme held for the retired employees of the Department at RR District ZP Meeting Hall, here on Sunday. He recalled and hailed the services of the employees of the department during his three stints in the capacity of the HOD. The officers and staff have to work really hard at any point of time with no holidays to upkeep the image of the government. He opined that officers who have worked in the department can easily afford to work in other department irrespective of the cadre.

MVS Prasad, former

I&PR also acts as a bridge between the government and the general public, said its ex-chief

Commissioner, I&PR said that the Department acts as a bridge between the government and the general public. It not only provides all the publicity needs of the government but also bring awareness about the policies and programmes of the government to the downtrodden classes of the society.

He also shared his memorable experiences during his stay in the department. A L Kismat Kumar, Former Director, I&PR and Chairman, Organizing Committee has informed that the programme has been planned as a get-together function for all the retired cadres of all the

Department and it has provided a much-needed platform to the participants to share their experiences.

Umamaheshwar Reddy, Former Joint Director shared health tips among the participants and asked them to imbibe four principles for better long life viz. eating half than before, double water intake, light exercise including walking and stay smiling always. Earlier, KV Ramanachary also released a book displaying the information about all the retired employees of the Department irrespective of their cadres of combined state on the occasion. Further, retired employees who are aged above 80 were also felicitated. Dr B Balaraju, General Physician and medical expert has delivered a lecture on health tips on the occasion. L Veerappa, former DPPRO welcomed while E Venkatesham, former Deputy Director proposed a vote of thanks. Retired Directors, M Pramoda Rao, A Subash Goud, A Satya Rao also participated.

EC shocker: No Huzur Nagar Assembly bypoll

Continued from Page 1

The Congress, TRS and other political parties are worked up over EC's decision.

Ruling TRS has started doing the ground work to grab the Huzur Nagar seat from the party Congress. The pink party has done some exercise on the candidate to be fielded from the constituency. TRS will most probably field Sanampudi Saiji Reddy, who lost in the December 2018 elections at the hands of Uttam Kumar Reddy. There were rumours doing the rounds that TRS may field Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao's daughter K Kavitha from Huzur Nagar.

The Congress may field Uttam Kumar Reddy's wife

Padmavathi Reddy, who lost the 2018 elections from the Kodad constituency at the hands of TRS candidate Bollam Mallaiah Yadav. The saffron party is yet to find a reliable candidate as it barely has presence in the Huzur Nagar constituency.

When contacted, Telangana State Chief Electoral Officer Rajat Kumar said that he was not aware of the by-election schedule issued by the Central Election Commission. He said that he would find out about the schedule.

TPCC working president Jetti Kusuma Kumar suggested that the EC may have skipped the Huzur Nagar constituency as BJP does not have a candidate in the seat.

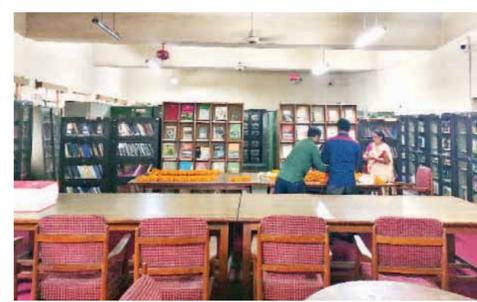
Fragile books, few patrons tells library's tale

MAYANK TIWARI ■ HYDERABAD

A majority of books at the library of Telangana State Archives and Research Institute in Tarnaka are old and fragile. The large leather-bound collection stacked on metal racks is lined with grime and dust. Some of these are cataloged while others are just nameless tomes.

The archives' library contains Persian literature chronicling the time before the British colonised India. There are works in Urdu literature too, which almost died in post-Nizam era. "Post-British era, Persian held official status in the court and the administration, and it heavily influenced many of the local languages, particularly Urdu," says Wikipedia.

The collection of 40,000 books mostly on history, architecture and old-school philosophy in Persian and Urdu, is country's largest



The public library lies almost hidden in one corner of the archives and research institute and is only frequented by

a few scholars from abroad and a handful of Indians.

Kevin Haynes, a Ph.D. Scholar from US who is digitising books on Indo-Persian architecture, said, "This library is a reserve of literary wealth which can be found nowhere else."

The collection of about 40,000 books is mostly on history, architecture and old-school philosophy. There are very few new books dedicated to 'Architecture and History of Hyderabad State' which were donated by writers and publishers.

"The library has free entry, although very few people show up here, although one or two visitors come over on a regular basis. If anyone is looking for digitisation copy of a book,

it can be had for Rs 500 a month," said the library assistant. "Lack of funds and staff crunch is the reason why the library is in such a poor condition," he said.

"State archives is not only a repository of books but also of old manuscripts letters, folios and even scrolls, which makes it the largest repository with 43 million of documents, some dating back to 1406 AD. Of these, 90 per cent of the records are in Persian and Urdu languages, making it perhaps the largest quantum in India," said Dr Zareena Parveen, director of State Archives in conversation with The Pioneer recently.

Employees against CPS, to protest from Sep 1

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Contributory Pension Scheme Employees' Association of Telangana at a meeting held here on Sunday resolved not to retire until the Contributory Pension Scheme (CPS) is withdrawn.

Addressing the participants, association president D Kamalakara exhorted the state and Central governments to give up the adamant attitude against annulling the scheme. The association would step up the agitation, if necessary, he said. The association will undertake a novel protest programme from September 1 in support of its demands, he said explaining that the members would work one hour additionally in all districts to register their protest against governments not willing to withdraw the CPS. Union General secretary C Bhupati Rao publicity secretary M Raghunandan and others spoke.

The meeting resolved to sensitise the state and central governments on the agony of the association members and strive to ensure that the CPS is withdrawn.

Nizamsagar project yet to receive inflows

Against the FRL of 17.80 tmc, there is only 0.13 tmc water in the reservoir currently

PNS ■ NIZAMSAGAR

The recent heavy rains have brought more than enough inflows into Sriramsagar, Pocharam, Singitam, Kalyani, Nallavagu, Kaulas Naala irrigation projects but not into the Nizamsagar project, which is described as the boon of undivided Nizamabad district.

Lands cultivated in the catchment area of the Nizamsagar and Singur project is around 2.08 lakh acres. Against the FRL of 17.80 tmc, there is only 0.13 tmc in Nizamsagar. Similarly, the Singur project's storage capacity is 29.90 tmc while the water available in the project is at 0.45 tmc.

As per government order, if there is 10.5 tmc of water in Singuru project, water is released to Nizamsagar. Going by the availability of water in Singuru project, it is clearly understood that not a single drop is going to be released into the Nizamsagar project.

Following the recent heavy



rains, farmers transplanted paddy at many places. But, on account of lack of inflows into the Nizamsagar and Singuru projects from upper catchment areas of neighbouring Karnataka, the transplanted paddy is withering away. When Karimza stream is in spate in Bidar and Maharashtra region, there will be inflows into Singuru.

In Nizamsagar and Banswada mandals, paddy is being transplanted in an extent of 30,000 acres. Transplanting

of paddy has been completed in respect of 1.50 lakh acres in Nasrullahbad, Birkur, Kotagiri, Varni, Rudrur, Bodhan, Yedapalli, Renzel, Nizamabad, Armoor and Balkonda mandals. Some of the farmers who transplanted paddy are dependent on bore wells while a majority of them transplanted paddy hoping that there would be inflows into the Nizamsagar project. If the rains continue to play truant for another week, these farmers will be in soup.

Situation not normal in J&K: CPI

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

CPI national general secretary D Raja, who came to Telangana for the first time after becoming the general secretary of the party, alleged that the NDA government, led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, has made Kashmir issue, which was a bilateral issue till now, into an international issue.

He said that the Modi government is stepping ahead to transform India as a Hindu nation. As part of it, the Modi government abrogated Article 370, which provides autonomous status to Kashmir. Moreover, the Modi government is making it clear that it abolished Article 370 only to fulfill their idealism of making India as Akhand Bharat. He alleged that the abrogation of Article 370 is undemocratic and unconstitutional.

Participating in the "Indrajith Gupta Centenary birth Anniversary Celebrations at Maqdhoom Bhavan here on Sunday, Raja delivered a speech on 'Abrogation of Article 370-



CPI national general secretary D Raja addresses a meeting in Hyderabad on Sunday

Consequences in Kashmir".

He said that there is no truth in the news published in the media that Kashmir is peaceful after the abrogation of Article 370. The Centre is spreading false news about Kashmir. Prime Minister himself is telling lies and the people of Kashmir questioning to tell as to whom they believe in, he said.

Ridiculing Union Home Minister Amit Shah's statement

that Kashmir means Pak Occupied Kashmir and China Occupied Aksai Chin but Union Foreign Minister Jai Shankar is stating that India will stick to actual Line of Control.

He alleged that RSS and BJP are speaking lies and they never stand by the side of truth. He alleged that the Modi government passed Jammu Kashmir Division Bill without taking the opinion of Assembly

and against the Jammu Kashmir people.

This Act is against the Constitution's Federal Spirit, he slammed. He alleged that BJP is suffering from Islamophobia. Ambedkar never supported Hindu State and the nation would be destroyed if it happened, he said. He called upon people to protect Parliament, democracy, and constitution as the Modi government violated all.

When 'recommendations' push aside merit

PNS ■ NIZAMABAD

A seat in BC hostels for poor students has become hard to get without recommendation of elected people's representatives or Ministers. Elected representatives sending recommendation letters for a seat in the hostels for their candidates has attracted enough criticism.

A candidate is sure to get a seat if he or she is armed with the letter. The officials set aside the rules and give him or her priority. On account of this practice, the eligible candidates are not getting the seats. There are 13 post-Metric hostels for BCs in the district, including seven for BC girls. Each hostel has 100 seats. Because of many colleges are located in the city, demand for seats in hostels in the city skyrocketed.

In the district headquarters, there are only two hostels each for BC boys and girls. There is only one seat available in the

A candidate is sure to get a seat if he or she is armed with a letter from MLA or Minister



boys' hostel at Namdevvada (BC-A boys' hostel) for which at least 170 have applied. These include, 20 recommended by people's representatives.

The hostel authorities got 20 seats sanctioned additionally and allotted them to the can-

didates. In the other hostel at Mirchi Compound in the city, around 74 have applied for 23 seats. At least 50 students have been denied seats. The same is the case with the girls' hostel at Dubba, near here. For 40 seats in the hostel for BC girls, 220

have applied. There were no vacancies in the girls hostel at Subhashnagar.

Students pursuing education in the city hail from districts such as Kamareddy, Nirmal, Jagtial, Rajanna Sircilla, Adilabad and Warangal. To apply for a seat in hostels, students should have studied in government colleges or schools. The allotment of seats should be purely on the basis of merit. But, the BC welfare officials shelved the rules rendering injustice to poor but meritorious students. The elected people's representatives issue recommendation letters, but rarely mount pressure on government to increase the number of seats in the BC hostels.

BJP planning to attract govt employees to its fold

Continued from Page 1

"We have got dependable information that CM KCR has made it clear in Collectors' Conference to scrap Revenue Department. He wants to weaken the Revenue Department by branding them as corrupt. By weakening the Municipal Department and scrapping the Revenue Departments and by giving full powers to Collector, KCR wants to keep villages and towns in his absolute control and run the state in a dictatorial and tyrannical way. If this happens, then not just opposition parties but even employees will be diminished. Therefore, we are planning to launch an agitation, along with employees' associations. We feel that this will be a win-win combination as BJP will get employees' backing, while employees' bodies will be strengthened with our support, as we are in power at Centre," said N Ramchander Rao, speaking to The Pioneer.

Although Revenue Department officials are

Now, with BJP buoyant in the state and with BJP's national leadership making aggressive moves, even employees' organisations see light at the end of the tunnel and are determined to ensure that TRS heeds their demands

miffed at KCR's stance towards the wing, they have so far not dared to go to the extent of launching a stir against the TRS government. Still, TNGOs Association and other powerful bodies are disappointed at the ways of the TRS government.

Now, with BJP buoyant in the state and with BJP's national leadership making aggressive moves, even employees' organisations see light at the end of the tunnel and are determined to ensure that TRS heeds their demands.

"Government has not implemented any promise it made to employees like the announcement of IR, PRC and others. Even EHS has not been implemented satisfactorily. There is

no clarity on the increase in the retirement age till now. Now scrapping of Revenue Department has become a huge concern. Leave alone promises, we are not even getting an appointment with CM many a time. Absolute power to TRS is making us think twice to take on TRS. If opposition to TRS emerges powerful, then employees will be ready to fight against ruling party," said a senior leader of Telangana Employees Joint Action Committee, highlighting the discontent among employees.

Sensing this discontent among employees, BJP is waiting for an opportune moment to woo employees' organisations and consolidate its base.

TRS misleading people: BJP

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BJP vice president and membership drive in-charge M Dharma Rao slammed the TRS for belittling BJP's membership drive.

"TRS working president KT Rama Rao and other leaders have been trying to mislead people on BJP's membership drive. They are saying that BJP is giving memberships through mobiles as no one is showing interest to become members. It is unfortunate that KTR and TRS leaders could not understand the significance of online and mobile membership campaigns, while everyone all over the country are appreciating it. TRS leaders are making this misleading propaganda, as they are unable to digest the response BJP's membership drive is receiving from people," said Dharma Rao. "TRS leaders have enrolled members by luring and threatening people. But BJP is enrolling only those who are voluntarily joining impressed by party's policies," he said.

Hail the shuttle queen!

Continued from Page 1

It is a remarkable irony that Sindhu after two bronze (2013, 2014) and an equal number of silver, Sindhu's fifth medal in badminton's crème de la crème event, after the All England, puts her in the illustrious company of China's Xiang Ning, as the only two in its history to pocket five singles medals in the coveted championship.

In a way, with the latest triumph she has actually broken through the silver jinx that haunted her no end. She had to rest content with a second best finish at the 2016 Rio Games. Gold Coast Commonwealth Games Down Under and the Asian Games in Jakarta.

In hindsight, although it was a historic first from the Indian point of view, there is an overwhelming feeling in the circles that this has been achieved a tad too late. There are reasons for such conclusions as the lanky Indian was

With the latest triumph, PV Sindhu has actually broken though the silver jinx that haunted her

always expected to scale exalted summits like the All England, Olympics and the Worlds, quite earlier. Nonetheless, it is always better late than never.

What stands her apart is that unlike Saina Nehwal, she stayed loyal to her mentor, Pullela Gopichand, who can take particular credit for making an astounding shuttler of the girl who stands at 5'10".

Now that she has brought home the medal that every badminton player craves for, the brazenness of the politics will come to the fore, all over again. States will vie with one

another to announce mind-boggling rewards to the undisputed poster girl of Indian sport. These honourable gentlemen are averse to support up-and-coming promising talents but do not hesitate one bit to offer mindboggling amounts to champions, who are anyway entitled for hefty prize money.

One is not complaining against the Sindhus, Sainas and Sanias for the staggering earnings they make and the subsequent endorsement deals they rightfully command.

However, one should spare a thought to the ground realities-their successors are waiting in the wings but cannot knock on the doors because of want of financial support in the absence of godfathers and patrons. It is these future hopefuls who need to be reassured that help is round the corner even if they fail to make the TOPP and Gold Quest grade.

Boat extricated from Prakasam Barrage

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The iron boat that got stuck in the 68th gate of the Prakasam Barrage was finally disintegrated on Sunday, thanks to the efforts of experts drawn in from Visakhapatnam, Kakinada and other places.

The experts extricated the 14-tonne boat without causing any damage to it. Local irrigation officials could have removed the boat sooner, but the delay was caused as the government did not want the boat to be damaged in any way.

Officials appreciated the team that worked hard to extricate the boat without causing any damage to it. It may be recalled that two boats were swept away in the floodwater at Pavitra Sangamam. While one boat passed through the open gate at the



Prakasam Barrage on August 14, the other got stuck in the gap between the apron of the barrage and its 68th gate.

NDRF and SDRF teams tried to disentangle the boat, but in vain. Technicians were also called to cut the boat with welding machines, but that was called off. After floodwater levels came down, all the gates of the barrage were closed except the 68th gate, which continued to be open until the boat was extricated.

Ramagundam Municipality gets new hi-tech parking lot

PNS ■ PEDDAPALLI

Police Commissioner V Satyanarayana along with MLA Korukanti Chandar inaugurated parking zone at new Municipal Corporation office in Godavarikhani town. Speaking on the occasion, the Commissioner said instead of parking the vehicles in front of shops, the owners and workers of the shops should park their vehicles at municipal parking zone paving the way for the customers to park their vehicle in central parking area.

By this facility to ease the traffic in the town, there would not be any traffic problems in Laxminagar shopping area if vehicles were parked in central parking area, he said. The commuters and the pedestrians had been facing problems on the roads due to haphazard parking in the town, said the



MLA Korukanti Chandar

Commissioner, adding, the owners and people working at different shops should park their vehicles at the newly constructed parking zone only. If any one violates the rule, they would be penalized and their vehicles would be shifted to traffic police station, warned the Commissioner who unveiled a flexy detailing the penalty fees for traffic violations according to new motor

This facility will ease the traffic in the town. There would not be any traffic problems in Laxminagar shopping area if vehicles were parked in central parking area

vehicle act. CP Satyanarayana informed to arrange more flexies at important centers to educate the motorists about the revised penalties. Pitching for the need of wearing helmet, the CP and MLA Korukanti Chandar felicitated the motorists who were wearing helmet by giving them rose flowers. AR Commandant Sanjeev, Traffic ACP Venkateshwar Rao, Godavarikhani ACP Umender, Traffic CI B Ramesh Babu, One Town CI Parsa Ramesh and others also participated in the programme.

Mystery shrouds techie's death

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The body of a woman was in a lake at Marlapalem, near Gannavaram, in Krishna district on Sunday. She used to reside at Ramnagar in Gannavaram and worked at software company Algorithm, Medha Towers. Identified as Pushpalatha belonging to Eluru, the woman married her lover Anil Kumar, also a resident of Eluru, eight years ago. However, she divorced her husband following domestic disputes.

Initially, she had worked as a teacher at the Delhi Public School in Vijayawada after she started living separately. Later, she took up job as a software engineer at Algorithm in Gannavaram.

She left her house on Saturday evening informing her mother that she was going to meet a friend.

Her handbag and scooter (two-wheeler) were found at the Marlapalem lake. The police searched the lake and found her body.

The police first suspected that the woman might have committed suicide by jumping into the lake. But later, knowing about her marital problems, they are not ruling out the possibility of her murder.

Nizam Sugar Factory land encroached upon

PNS ■ BODHAN

The threat of encroaching the Nizam Sugar Factory at Bodhan is looming large. Some of the lands of over 16,000 acres given by the erstwhile Nizam to the sugar factory, which is located on a 20-acre site, have been encroached. Thanks to the lack of records of the Nizam Sugar Factory lands with the Revenue Department, which is coming in handy for the encroachers.

Purchase of factory lands, registration, and other deals are often turning out to be controversies with a lack of pucca records with the Revenue Department. Recently, some vested interests tried to encroach 2.30-acre land worth several crores of rupees next to



cane yard in the sugar factory. When the encroachers deployed JCB to level the ground in the land, some youth living in Hanuman Tekdi objected to it.

Following the privatization of the lands in 2002, a core committee has been appointed

to protect the lands. The million-dollar question is what the committee has been doing when the sugar factory land is being encroached upon?

When the factory was set up in 1938, the erstwhile Nizam earmarked 16,000 acres for the sugar factory. These lands

Following the privatisation of the lands in 2002, a core committee was formed to protect them

under the state government's land purchase scheme and another 3,500 acres have been sold through public auction. Records of the core committee indicate that 1,292 acres have been allotted to the factory employees who retired from service voluntarily for their housing.

The poor have raised their houses on the factory lands, dumping yards, schools, shrines, social welfare hostel buildings have been built on the factory lands. The light railway line developed on 188 acres later become a road. In 2002, the factory was privatized and the management purchased valuable lands in the vicinity of the factory. By the time the factory was closed on December 23, 2015, the vested

interests eyed on the valuable lands of the factory. In Shakkar Nagar, under the control of the core committee, there are many valuable lands, some of which are suspected to have been encroached.

The lands distributed among the landless poor through various corporations under the land purchase scheme ended up in controversy at many places. Some beneficiaries have been given the land, but no patta and vice versa. On Mondays, representations of this nature are submitted to the RDO office as part of Praja Vaani. There are at least 500 cases of irregularities. Nizam Sugar Factory core committee officer Khalid Ali said that he received at least 350 such complaints.

SHORT READS

Rahul wants single-window for papers to flood-hit people

NEW DELHI: Congress leader and Wayanad MP Rahul Gandhi has written to Kerala Chief Minister Pinarayi Vijayan, seeking setting up of a single-window system for reissuance of documents lost or damaged during the recent devastating floods in the state. Gandhi, in his letter to Vijayan, flagged that many flood-affected families in his constituency lost essential documents such as ration cards, Aadhaar cards, school or college certificates, land titles, registered documents, birth certificates, death certificates, tax receipts, pan cards. The flood victims are forced to visit multiple offices requesting for reissuance of lost or damaged documents, he said. Gandhi suggested that instead of expecting flood victims to approach many offices, a nodal officer at the office of the district collector may be designated to receive consolidated application from the affected families with details of lost documents.

Child dies after manjha slits throat

NEW DELHI: A four-and-a-half-year-old girl, who was travelling on a motorcycle with her parents, died after her throat was slit by a glass-coated manjha in Khajuri Khas area, police said on Saturday. The victim was identified as Ishika, a resident of Sonia Vihar. The baby was admitted to JPC hospital where doctors declared her brought dead, the police said. The family was on its way to the Hanuman Mandir in Jamuna Bazar when the accident occurred. Ishika was sitting in the front while her father Girish Kumar was riding the motorcycle, police said. A case under section 304A of the IPC has been registered and further investigation is underway, the police added.

Man dies under police custody in UP

AMETHI (UP): A 35-year-old man, who was arrested on the charges of theft, died under mysterious circumstances in police custody here on Sunday, an official said. Ram Avtar Pasi, 35, was arrested by a patrol team Saturday night and he died in the custody at Inhauna outpost in the early hours of Sunday. Superintendent of Police (SP) Khyati Garg said. Deputy Superintendent of Police Tiloi Rajkumar Singh has been asked to investigate the matter, she added. Garg said the body has been sent for post-mortem. The exact cause of Pasi's death will be ascertained once the post-mortem report is out, she added.

13 injured in clash between two groups in UP's Muzaffarnagar

MUZAFFARNAGAR: Thirteen people were injured after a clash broke out between two groups over taking water from a public hand pump, police said on Sunday. The incident took place on Saturday in Sakoti village, which comes under the jurisdiction of Jhinjana police station, said Dinesh Kumar, in-charge of Chosana police outpost. Injured persons were rushed to a nearby hospital, he said. Meanwhile, security was tightened and extra police force was deployed in the village, Kumar added.

Punjab Cong leaders flay Swamy's statement on Kartarpur Corridor

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Several Punjab Congress leaders, including two state cabinet ministers, on Sunday hit out at BJP MP Subramanian Swamy for his remarks that the work on the Kartarpur corridor should be stopped in the interest of the nation.

The senior Congress leaders, including eight party MLAs, castigated Swamy and said his comments on the Kartarpur corridor had hurt sentiments of the Sikhs.

In a joint press statement, Punjab ministers Sukhjinder Singh Randhawa and Bharat Bhushan Ashu besides MLAs Harpratap Singh Ajnala, Kuljit Singh Nagra, Amarinder Singh Raja Warring, Fatehjung Singh Bajwa, Barindermeet Singh Pahra, Kulbir Singh Zira, Balwinder Singh Laddi and Santokh Singh Bhalaipar said the BJP-ally Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD) must clear their stand on the issue.

They said, "The entire Punjab, especially the Sikh circle, knows it too well that the Badal family loves to cling to



power rather than working for Sikh interests."

The Congress leaders further added that the silence of the SAD on various issues, including the GST on gurdwaras and the opposition to the corridor by a BJP leader, "proved that it was hand in glove with the BJP in this sin".

"It was part of a deep-rooted conspiracy that Swamy gave this statement in Chandigarh. Now, the cat has come out of the bag and the Punjab BJP leadership must clarify their position as to whether they are in agreement with the statement of their party leader or not," they said.

They also said the Sikh Panth would never forgive the SAD-BJP "for creating obstacles" in fulfilment of the long-cherished wish of Sikhs.

Swamy had on Saturday said the work on the Kartarpur corridor should be stopped in the interest of the nation and there should be no talks with Pakistan on any issue.

"In my view, in the interest of the nation, the work (on Kartarpur corridor) should not move ahead. Whatever work has taken place (on the project), let it stop there," said Swamy talking to reporters on the sidelines a seminar here.

We are committed to complete it: Pakistan

PNS ■ ISLAMABAD

Pakistan is committed to complete the Kartarpur corridor project for Sikh pilgrims ahead of the 550th birth anniversary of Baba Guru Nanak despite the tensions in relations with India, a senior aide to the Pakistani Prime Minister said on Sunday.

The Kartarpur corridor will connect Darbar Sahib in Pakistan's Kartarpur with Dera Baba Nanak shrine in Gurdaspur district and facilitate visa-free movement of Indian Sikh pilgrims, who will have to just obtain a permit to visit Kartarpur Sahib, which was established in 1522 by Baba Guru Nanak.

Special Assistant to Pakistan Prime Minister Firdous Ashiq Awan in a series of tweets said that Kartarpur is a sacred place for Sikhs and is the perfect example of interfaith harmony. She dismissed reports that Pakistan had stalled work on the corridor due to fresh strain in ties with India.

She said irrespective of India-Pakistan relations Pakistan's doors are open to Sikh pilgrims visiting the Darbar Sahib Kartarpur. In the world of growing extremism and intolerance, Kartarpur corridor resonates the message of respect and tolerance, she was quoted as saying by Radio Pakistan.

Awan said the white colour in the Pakistani flag represents minorities and it is as dear to the government as the green is.

Book to detail 'rise and fall' of Nirav

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



Nirav Modi

The story of the fugitive diamondaire Nirav Modi will fill the pages of an upcoming book, "Flawed: The Rise and Fall of India's Diamond Mogul Nirav Modi".

Hitting the stands on August 31, the book written by journalist-author Pavan C Lall will lay bare details of one of the India's biggest financial scandals and profile the man allegedly behind it, Modi, 48, currently lodged in a prison in London, is wanted in India in connection with the nearly USD 2 billion Punjab National Bank (PNB) fraud.

"It traces Nirav Modi's early years and his roots in the business to his association with his uncle Mehul Choksi and the phenomenal success he achieved till his taste for the high life led to circumstances that are any entrepreneur's worst nightmare," said publishing house Hachette in a statement.

Based on personal encounters, incisive interviews and meticulous research, the book claims to "expose the incredible twists and turns of the Nirav Modi story".

A third-generation dia-

The book claims to expose the incredible twists and turns of the Nirav Modi story

mantaire, Modi, moved from Belgium to India and with time became an astute businessman whose firm grip over an intercontinental supply chain saw his branded jewellery stores dotting not just every Indian metropolis but also marquee locations in foreign lands like London, New York and Hong Kong.

Modi's diamond-encrusted designs were worn by stars like Kate Winslet, Rosie Huntington-Whiteley and Naomi Watts, while the Bollywood star Priyanka Chopra-Jonas appeared in advertisements for the brand.

Give specific timelines for cleaning of Yamuna: NGT

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal has directed stakeholders to give specific schedule for cleaning the Yamuna, while noting that repeated timelines have not been adhered to in the last 30 years and pollution of the river was still continuing. A bench headed by NGT chairperson justice Adarsh Kumar Goel made it clear that the tribunal will finalise fresh timelines with clear adverse consequences of violating such revised schedules.

"Such pollution needs to be controlled at the earliest for protection of environment and public health and having regard to unique significance of the Yamuna river, which is a major tributary of the Ganga river," the bench said.

The tribunal directed all authorities to submit timelines for the actions to be undertaken in terms of orders of the NGT and directed Additional Solicitor General Sanjay Jain, appearing for the Delhi government, to compile



serious concern as it was highly contaminated with industrial effluent and sewage.

It had also asked the Haryana Pollution Control Board to conduct a study of water quality and the flow of Yamuna at the point it enters Haryana, and submit the list of industries located in the catchment area.

The green panel had noted that almost 67 per cent of the pollutants that enter the Yamuna would be treated by two sewage treatment plants at Delhi Gate and Najafgarh under the first phase of the Yamuna Revitalisation Project.

extended timeline wherever it has expired.

The green panel had earlier said that failure of authorities is affecting life and health of citizens, and threatening the existence of a major river like Yamuna.

The tribunal had earlier also expressed dissatisfaction over the cleaning of the Yamuna river and directed Delhi, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh governments to submit a performance guarantee of Rs 10 crore each within a month.

The green panel had said pollution in the Yamuna was of

Banned drugs worth Rs 400 crore seized

PNS ■ IMPHAL

In one of the largest drug seizures in Manipur, the police have seized banned party drugs worth Rs 400 crore in the international market from Thoubal district, a senior police officer said on Sunday.

Acting on a tip-off, a police team with a help of local civil associations detained a mini truck at Phoudel Keirambi Makhra area of Thoubal district on Saturday, Superintendent of Police, Thoubal, S Ibomcha Singh said. The seized truck was brought to the Thoubal police station. During search of the truck the police recovered 40 lakh contraband amphetamine-based World is Yours (WY) tablets, popularly known as party drug, valued at Rs 400 crore in the international market, the SP said.

"The red-coloured tablets were kept concealed under carpets in the mini truck," Singh said, adding that the drugs were smuggled in from Myanmar.

8 vehicles of Sule's convoy booked

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Eight vehicles, which were part of NCP MP Supriya Sule's convoy, were fined after being found parked in a no-parking area in Maharashtra's Solapur city, police said on Sunday.

Sule on Tuesday evening participated in an event called 'Sanvad Taishi', a mass outreach campaign ahead of the state Assembly polls, at the Indian Medical Association's hall at Dufferin Chowk in Solapur, located around 400 km from here.

As the programme started, there was traffic jam in the area following which the police asked the event organisers to remove some vehicles parked in the no-parking area outside the premises, a traffic police official said.

However, despite repeated warnings, the vehicles were



NCP MP Supriya Sule

not removed, he said.

Subsequently, eight vehicles, including some SUVs, which were part of Sule's convoy, were fined under relevant provisions of the Motor Vehicles Act, the official said.

These included a four-wheeler registered in the NCP's name and another vehicle in which Sule, the Lok Sabha member from Baramati (Pune district), arrived for the event, he said.

Baby-feeding cubicles at all UP bus stations

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh State Roadways Transport Corporation (UPSRTC) will set up baby-feeding cubicles at all bus stations of the state in a phased manner, an official said on Sunday.

The step is aimed towards making the state's bus stations "lactating mother and newborn baby friendly", the official added.

In a statement, UPSRTC Managing Director Raj Shekhar said: "The need and requirement was very much felt by the UPSRTC in last few years. Now looking into the importance and the requirement of this, the UPSRTC board has approved the project of setting up of B r e a s t - F e e d i n g Cubicles/Kiosks (Baby Feeding Cubicles) in each bus station of UPSRTC."

Art show on Lord Krishna's life

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The legend of Lord Krishna's life, and his triumph over enemies, which captivates most people across the country, is now the central theme of an ongoing art exhibition showcasing the Hindu god in various avatars.

"Divine Intervention", held at Art Spice Gallery, The Metropolitan Hotel & Spa, by artists P Gnana and G Subramanian has on display around 50 paintings and sculptures of Lord Krishna -- along with other gods -- connecting the viewers to the deepest human chord of emotive capacity.

The exhibition is a beautiful affiliation where the viewer is privileged to view enchanting sculptures



The exhibition is a beautiful affiliation where the viewer is privileged to view enchanting sculptures and beautiful paintings.

"It will not only take you on a spectacular visual journey between master and creator,

cherishing your devotion to the sublime but will also provoke viewer's senses," said Singapore-based Gnana, widely known for his paintings,

sculptures and conceptual installations.

Simple yet soulful, the alluring divine collection has not experimented too much with colours as one finds the central colour palette blue only, the colour usually associated with lord Krishna, the eighth incarnation of lord Vishnu.

Also, almost impossible to ignore, the paintings depict a deep child-like innocence in all of its portrayals -- be it of lord Krishna, Buddha, Ganesha or Hanuman -- beside being richly characterised by bursts of joyous colours and having recurring leitmotifs of the bird and a long-stalked lotus.

Man held for kidnapping 3 girls to implicate police officers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A 38-year-old NGO worker was arrested for allegedly kidnapping three minor girls to falsely implicate two assistant sub-inspectors of Kalindi Kunj police station who had arrested him earlier, police said on Saturday.

Bimal Kumar, a resident of Noida Sector-5, was arrested from Khadda Colony in Jaitpur area, said Chinmoy Biswal, deputy commissioner of police (southeast).

Kumar was previously arrested on June 30 on the charge of breaching peace by two SIs and since then, he wanted to take revenge from the police officials, another senior official said.

On August 16, he saw three girls, residents of Khadda Colony, who appeared to be



sad. Kumar approached them and asked the reason for their sadness. They told him that they are sisters and their parents have died, police said.

They told Kumar their uncle, with whom they now live, does not love them, they said.

Kumar hatched a conspira-

cy to extract revenge on the two Kalindi Kunj police station ASIs who had arrested him. He decided to frame them for kidnapping the girls, police said.

Kumar convinced the girls he will take care of them and also help them get their share of property from their uncle, police said.

Minority Affairs Ministry team for Kashmir

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A Minority Affairs Ministry team will visit the Kashmir Valley for two days from Tuesday to identify the areas to implement centrally-sponsored development projects after provisions of Article 370 were abrogated, Union minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi has said.

He also asserted that those opposing the government's withdrawal of J&K's special status, acting as per their "political prejudice", will also come around to support the move after seeing its impact.

"A team of senior officials, including the Secretary, will be visiting the area (Kashmir Valley) on August 27-28. The team will explore development possibilities -- where schools, colleges, skill development centres can be opened," Naqvi told PTI in an interview.

The team will look at all possibilities of social-economic development projects, he said.



Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi

The team will explore development possibilities -- where schools, colleges, skill development centres can be opened

MUKHTAR ABBAS NAQVI
Union minister

was no going back. "It is (Narendra) Modi's government. Everybody knows that in this government, decision is made after a lot of thinking, but there is no question of a rethink after a decision has been made," he said.

Asked if people of the Kashmir Valley were supportive of the government move, Naqvi claimed that they were "absolutely supportive".

Earlier this month, the government had revoked J&K's special status under Article 370 of the Constitution and divided the state into two Union territories -- Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh.

The focus of the ministry is now on Jammu and Kashmir,

and Ladakh, Naqvi said, and emphasised that the revocation of Article 370 has opened up possibilities of large scale development there.

Naqvi also said the Pradhan Mantri Jan Vikas Karyakram (PMJKV) will also be applicable in all areas of J&K and Ladakh.

The PMJKV is a centrally-sponsored scheme that seeks to improve the development of minority concentration areas through creation of socio-economic infrastructure, provision of basic amenities, and other measures.

"Now the ministry will be active in the entire region -- Leh, Ladakh, Kargil, Jammu and Kashmir. We will make

efforts to set up schools colleges, polytechnic, engineering colleges and hospitals," Naqvi said.

"Because of Article 370, there were many things which we wanted to do, but could not do it. Now it can be done," he said.

Asked about the reaction to the government move, Naqvi said "some opposition friends" had hopes that the country will be "set ablaze" with the Article 370 move, but the opposite happened, and the move was welcomed.

"It was welcomed in Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh. Article 370 has not given anything to the people there, but has taken away from J-K and Ladakh. Over 100 laws on education, employment, human rights, minority or child rights, were not applicable there. So, the people realised that Article 370 was a big impediment in their path to development," he said.

'Burnt e-waste residue removed from banks of river Ramganga'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Black powdery residue of burnt electronic waste (e-waste) has been removed from the banks of river Ramganga in Moradabad, an important tributary of the Ganges, a report by the Uttar Pradesh government has said.

The report was recently submitted by the state government of Uttar Pradesh before a bench of the National Green Tribunal pursuant to its directions.

The report holds importance as the tribunal had earlier imposed an environment compensation of Rs 10 lakh on the UP government after it was told that large number of people were involved in unscientific dismantling, crude chemical leaching of printed circuit boards, burning of wires/waste electrical and electronic components, grinding of residues and washing of metal rich residue on the banks of the Ramganga river.

The UP government, in its progress report, informed the tribunal that e-waste removed from the banks of river Ramganga in Moradabad is



The UP government, in its progress report, informed the tribunal that e-waste removed from the banks of river Ramganga in Moradabad is being stored safely in a scientific manner at a temporary site

being stored safely in a scientific manner at a temporary site.

"The work of disposal of black powder from the banks of the river is divided into two phases - first the removal and storage of the black powder in a scientific manner and the second phase comprises permanent disposal of the powder in the proposed Treatment

Storage Disposal Facility (TDSF) in Amroha district.

"The first phase of work has been completed and verified by an inter-departmental committee constituted by the district magistrate of Moradabad comprising officers from Nagar Nigam, Rural Engineering Services, Public Works Department, Moradabad Development Authority and

UPPCB," the state government said, adding that the TDSF will also begin functioning soon.

"Environment and public health are one of the prime concerns of the state and the state is working with utmost sincerity towards providing a healthy environment to its citizens," it said.

Earlier, a committee comprising officials of the UP Pollution Control Board (UPPCB), Moradabad Nagar Nigam, UP Public Works Department and the UP Rural Engineering Services had told the tribunal in a report that the e-waste lying on the banks of the Ramganga river contains hazardous chemicals such as chromium and cadmium.

The committee, formed by the NGT, had said the concentration of metals in the e-waste, which was in the form of black powder, was above the prescribed level.

The report was filed in a petition by scientist Mahendra Pandey, seeking action against illegal processing of electronic waste in Moradabad, Bareilly and Shahjahanpur districts of Uttar Pradesh along the Ramganga river.

DENYING INFORMATION TO RETIRED EMPLOYEE

MP info commissioner issues notices to PWD officials

PNS ■ BHOPAL

The state information commissioner of Madhya Pradesh has issued show-cause notices to two PWD officials for allegedly denying information under the RTI Act to a retired employee on payments owed to him. RTI applicant Shrinivas Tiwari, a senior citizen now, was posted with the Public Works Department (PWD) as a timekeeper in Rewa and retired in 2010.

He claimed that the PWD never awarded him any promotion or tenure-based incentives and he has been running from pillar to post to get his payments. Madhya Pradesh Information Commissioner Rahul Singh, while deciding on his RTI appeal, held senior authorities responsible for his grievances.

Shrinivas filed a writ petition before the Jabalpur bench of the Madhya Pradesh High Court in 2010 which ruled in his favour and asked the state government to settle his pending dues. Following the court's decision, he approached the executive engineer of PWD Rewa, Hari Singh Thakur, who refused to act upon the order, Shrinivas

In 2010 Shrinivas filed a writ petition before the Jabalpur bench of the Madhya Pradesh High Court which ruled in his favour and asked the state government to settle his pending dues

claimed, alleging that when he approached other officers, they demanded 10 per cent commission for settling of the dues.

Shrinivas moved a contempt petition before the high court in 2014, after which the then engineer-in-chief of PWD Akhilesh Agarwal and Principal Secretary K K Singh appeared before the court and informed that the government was actively working towards redressing his grievances. The state government produced an order issued by the head of the department, saying that in compliance with the high court order, Shrinivas' issue must be resolved.

The court agreed with the government and the contempt petition was dismissed.

Shrinivas then moved an RTI application asking details of his salary break-up and benefits. Public Information Officer Thakur, who earlier as an executive engineer had refused to act upon the court order, denied a reply to the query.

Shrinivas then moved for first appeal before the superintendent engineer, who ordered Thakur to provide the information but he did not act upon it.

Information Commissioner Singh, fixing the responsibility, made Engineer-in-Chief R K Mehra as deemed Public Information Officer (PIO) and issued show-cause notices to Executive Engineers Thakur and Narayan Sharma as to why disciplinary action should not be taken against them, along with a fine of Rs 25,000 for RTI violations. Singh also ordered a compensation of Rs 10,000 to applicant Shrinivas.

The information commissioner asked Superintendent Engineer V K Jha, along with Mehra, Thakur and Sharma, to be present for a hearing on August 28 in Bhopal. Singh asked PWD Principal Secretary Malay Shrivastav to ensure the early redressal of the Shrinivas' grievances.

SHORT READS

Wanted Maoist commander surrenders in Chhattisgarh

DANTEWADA: A Maoist deputy commander, wanted in connection with several incidents of violence, surrendered in Chhattisgarh's Dantewada district on Sunday, a police official said. Muchaki Budra alias Naresh (32), who was carrying a reward of Rs 8 lakh on his head, turned himself in before Dantewada Superintendent of Police Abhishek Pallava, he said. Budra, a native of Jagargunda area in Sukma district, surrendered while citing disapproval with the "hollow ideology" of Maoists, Pallava said. He was active as deputy commander of military platoon no. 24 in Malangir area committee of Maoists in Dantewada. "He was instrumental in carrying out several Maoist attacks, including at the house of Congress leader Awdhesh Gautam at Nakulnar village in 2010 in which two civilians and a Naxal were killed, and on a Central Industrial Security Force (CISF) team in Kirandul wherein six security men and a civilian lost their lives in 2012," Pallava said. Budra joined the outlawed CPI (Maoist) in 2007 and was elevated as deputy commander in 2010, he said. He has been given Rs 10,000 cash as "encouragement money" for laying down arms, the official said, adding that he will be further provided assistance as per the government's surrender and rehabilitation policy.

Police seizes 1.14 kg brown sugar in Assam

DIBRUGARH: Brown sugar worth over Rs one crore in the international market was seized from a house in Dibrugarh town of Assam on Sunday, a police officer said. Brown sugar weighing 1.14 kg, Rs 19.55 lakh in cash and two mobile phones were seized during a search operation, carried out by the police, in the house of one Raja Ali at Kalibari area here, Deputy Superintendent of Police (Law & Order) Nitumani Das said. Ali escaped by jumping from the first floor of the building and a woman has been apprehended, the DSP said. A search operation has been launched to nab Ali, the police officer said. The operation was conducted under his leadership, along with DSP(HQ) Samir Daptar Baruah and Officer in Charge of Dibrugarh police station, Das said.

Captured wild tusker dies of ailment at forest camp

BENGALURU: A wild tusker died apparently owing to a stomach ailment at a forest camp near Shivamogga on Saturday. The elephant Naganna, believed to be over 30 years old, showed symptoms of the ailment as the tusker was very slow in its movement, according to its mahout. Medicines were given, but the animal did not respond to the treatment and died, deputy conservator of forest S J Chandrashekhar told PTI. However, the forest department was awaiting a forensic report to ascertain the exact cause of the death, said Chandrashekhar. Naganna was captured from the Bhadravati forest division and kept at the Shivamogga forest camp.



Gajapati urges devotees to cooperate with govt's plan on Puri temple

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Gajapati Maharaja Dibyasingha Deb has appealed to all devotees of Lord Jagannath to cooperate with the Odisha government's initiative to develop the 12th century shrine and also Puri town.

Deb, considered as the first servant of Lord Jagannath, issued a statement on Saturday, a day after Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik sanctioned an additional package of Rs 500 crore for the development of Puri.

"We welcome the state government's initiative," Gajapati said adding that all should sincerely cooperate with the development plan for the temple and the holy town. Gajapati's statement is significant in view of the opposition to the state government's initiative by a section of local people.

Gajapati, however, said: "All developmental activities should be undertaken in accordance with the spirit of Puri's great spiritual, religious and cultural heritage along with traditions."

He was optimistic on the smooth implementation of the developmental plan initiated by the state government.

The state government in

two phases sanctioned Rs 765 crore for the overall development of Puri town and the temple.

Though the local people welcome the initiative, many residents are opposed to the state government's plan to evict residential, commercial and spiritual institutions like 'mathas' located within 75 meters from the temple boundary wall.

After announcing the special package on Friday, Patnaik had appealed the local people to cooperate with the government's initiative including eviction drive. The chief minister said the people should make sacrifice for the security of Lord Jagannath's temple. He assured the affected people will be properly rehabilitated.

Patnaik said as terrorists target religious establishments across the globe, the state should make all arrangements to protect the 12th century shrine in Puri.

Meanwhile, the district administration of Puri on Saturday undertook an eviction drive near Baliapanda to facilitate the construction of a multi-layer parking lot close to the sea beach.

The government has plans to demolish illegal structures over an area of 1.53 acres near the beach.

MANN KI BAAT PM calls for movement against plastic from Oct 2

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday pitched for launching a "new mass movement" against single-use plastic from October 2, the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi.

In his monthly radio address 'Mann Ki Baat', the prime minister said when the country observes the 150th anniversary of the Father of the Nation, "we will launch a new mass movement against use of plastic". He also called for efforts to ensure proper collection and storage of plastic to save the environment. In his



Independence Day address also, Modi had urged citizens to eliminate single-use plastic and suggested that shopkeepers provide eco-friendly bags to customers. His push against single-use plastic is being seen as an effort to prevent environmental degradation.

Bihar schools have worst student-teacher ratio

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Schools in Bihar have the fewest teachers per student with a pupil-teacher ratio (PTR) of 38, followed by Delhi at 35, while Sikkim has the best student-teacher ratio at four, according to HRD Ministry officials. The Right To Education Act, 2009 in its schedule has laid down PTR for both primary and upper primary schools. At primary level, the PTR norm is 30:1 and at the upper primary level it is 35:1. "In upper primary schools, Bihar has a PTR of 39. In primary schools, the PTR is 38 and 35 for Bihar and Delhi, respectively," a senior HRD Ministry official said.

Ribeiro questions Centre's move, says people's will vital

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Former police officer Julio Ribeiro has said people's will is the "crux of the matter" in issues like Jammu and Kashmir, and he would not have taken decisions like the ones taken by the Union government from a "moralistic" perspective.

Ribeiro, widely credited for tackling terrorism as the head of Punjab Police with a strong hand in 1980s, said from the policeman's perspective, he will give full marks to the government's "clever" moves in Jammu and Kashmir.

The Centre on August 5 abrogated Article 370 of the Constitution which gave spe-



cial status to Jammu and Kashmir and also divided the border state into two Union Territories. The government carried out these moves from New Delhi after a virtual lockdown of the state, by putting politicians and activists under house arrest, imposing curfews and suspending communication, much of which still continues.

Tea in 'kulhads' across railway stations, airports and malls soon

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Soon, your favourite cup of tea may be served in eco-friendly 'kulhads' across all major railway stations, stalls at bus depots, airports and malls across the country, with Union Transport and MSME Minister Nitin Gadkari writing to Railway Minister Piyush Goyal in this regard. Currently, caterers at two railway stations, Varanasi and Rae Bareilly, use terracotta-made 'kulhads', glasses and plates.

"I have written a letter to Piyush Goyal to make use of kulhad mandatory at 100 railway stations and also suggested airports and state transport undertakings having tea stalls at bus depots to make the use of kulhads mandatory. We will also encourage malls to have kulhad tea stalls," Gadkari said.

Pakistan releases more water, flood threat in villages of Punjab's Ferozepur district

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

A few villages in Punjab's border district Ferozepur are facing a flood threat after a major portion of an embankment in the catchment area of the Sutlej river was washed away following the pakistan's release of water into the Indian territory.

Officials on Sunday said the Ferozepur district administration is on high alert, while precautionary deployment of the NDRF and the Army teams has been made in view of the flood threat which looms large in some villages.

"Pakistan has released water in huge quantity which caused damage to the embankment in Tendiwala village, and there is danger of floods in some villages," a spokesperson of the Punjab government said.

"Being on guard, the district administration has announced



evacuation in most sensitive villages along the Sutlej river as a precautionary step besides deploying various teams of the health department, food and civil supplies department and others," he said.

Punjab Chief Minister Amarinder Singh asked the Water Resources Department to work out a joint action plan with the Army to strengthen the embankment at the village

on the Indo-Pak border.

Presiding over a high-level meeting to review the flood situation in Ferozepur, Jalandhar, Kapurthala and Rupnagar districts, he directed the principal secretary Water Resources to ensure strengthening of Tendiwala embankment on war footing to avert the flooding of nearby villages, an official statement said.

The chief minister, it said,

also directed the Ferozepur deputy commissioner to keep NDRF teams on standby to meet any exigency arising out of the floods.

The spokesperson said people need not panic as the administration is geared up for the task with relief work at vulnerable points being undertaken at a fast pace. Irrigation and drainage departments are already engaged to repair the damaged embankment in Tendiwala village, he said.

Sand filled gunny bags have been stacked in huge quantity and work is on to strengthen the embankment, he added. "In the wake of the damage to the embankment due to heavy discharge of water from the Pakistan side, the strengthening work of Tendiwala embankment is being undertaken on war footing," the spokesperson said.

DELHI 'BAOLIS' Stepping into the past to manage water needs today

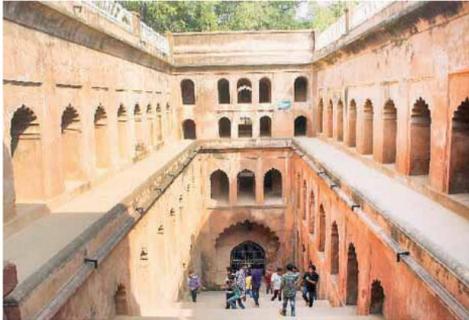
PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Once important community spaces, stepwells from centuries ago needn't just be relics of the past for tourists and history buffs but can be used to conserve water in these arid times, even with dipping groundwater levels, say conservationists and historians.

The disconnect between the people and Delhi's 'baolis' caused by restricted access and lack of interest have resulted in many of the historical structures being reduced to museum pieces. And that has done more harm than good, they say.

Historian-author Narayani Gupta, for instance, believes authorities should introduce "conservative use" instead of disallowing access to people entirely.

She said all the baolis were maintained, used and cherished by communities in the



past but their "interaction" is today limited to just tourists. "A carefully used 'baoli' would make so much more sense, but the Archaeological Survey of India believes in emptying out all its buildings. Conservative use should be introduced for many structures," she told PTI.

A beginning has been made with the 'baoli' in Delhi's Nizamuddin area, which has continued to remain relevant through its 700 years of its existence.

Locals, who believe it is a source of 'sacred water', and conservationists have joined hands to ensure that the 'baoli'

"A carefully used 'baoli' would make so much more sense, but the Archaeological Survey of India believes in emptying out all its buildings. Conservative use should be introduced for many structures — NARAYANI GUPTA, Historian-author

is maintained properly and regularly cleaned.

After a wall collapse in 2008, the Aga Khan Trust together with the CPWD and the MCD cleaned the well to its original depth of 80ft. The project revealed that there was a blocked passage and seven underground aquifers.

It was the first time in 700 years that it was being cleaned, said Ratish Nanda, a conservation architect with the Aga Khan Trust. The involvement and the interest of the community made the difficult job achievable and possible. "Since the water is consid-

ered sacred, locals were involved at every stage. At the beginning of the project, there was a community prayer to start the project. Then the community contributed in both time and effort and took great pride in the conservation," Nanda told PTI.

According to Nanda, since a machine could not clear the sludge accumulated over the centuries, the locals lent a hand.

"We removed about 40ft of sludge with buckets, we made a human chain of buckets, it took a long time to clear the sludge and then finally the con-

servation of the baoli was started with the same stone which had collapsed," the architect recalled.

There are a total of 15 baolis in Delhi under the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) -- most of which were used by local communities and inhabitants of the fort complexes and are now behind iron bars -- the ASI revealed in response to an RTI query by PTI.

Hussain, who has been taking care of the Nizamuddin baoli for 22 years, believes the waters can heal what doctors can't.

"This water is so miraculous that if you have any health problems a doctor may not be able to heal you, but take a dip in this water for seven days, with a peaceful mind and everything will be fine," Hussain said, adding that it changes colour seven times a day.

Film on Arun Khetarpal challenging: Sriram

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Filmmaker Sriram Raghavan, who is set to direct a film on the life of youngest Param Vir Chakra recipient Arun Khetarpal, says it is the most challenging subject for him.

Dinesh Vijan will be producing the biopic which is tentatively titled 'Ekkiis'.

"Dinesh offered me this film and when I heard it, I found it interesting. 'Ekkiis' is a working title. We are set in 1970s. It is the story of two eras. We have finished the script and are doing a rewrite and all," Raghavan told PTI.

"We have enough people from military on board. These things you can't get it wrong one bit. When you are working on a real story it is your responsibility to get everything right and stay as true and authentic as possible. It is all the more challenging for me as it is not



my zone, I am doing something else. But I liked the story so I am doing it," he added.

Speculations were rife about Saif Ali Khan being part of the film, but Raghavan said the cast of the film is yet to be finalised. "Whenever Saif and I meet we do talk about various subjects. We haven't spoken to any actor. All this should be announced formally." The director is basking in the glory of his last film "Aandhadhun" winning three National Awards. The Ayushmann Khurrana-starrer dark comedy thriller is now being adapted in Tamil.

HONG KONG PROTEST

Police tighten noose on protesters

Hong Kong: Hong Kong police used water cannon for the first time on Sunday, raising the stakes against protesters who have staged sometimes violent rallies that have rocked the city for the past three months.

Officers were also seen with drawn sidearms as protesters clashed with police in the district of Tsuen Wan after a rally at a nearby sports stadium.

The financial hub has been gripped by mass rallies that were initially against a proposed extradition bill to China, but have spun into a wider pro-democracy movement targeting the pro-Beijing government.

As thousands of people marched in the pouring rain to Tsuen Wan, a group of hardcore protesters erected makeshift roadblocks and dug up bricks from the pavements.

After firing tear gas in an attempt to disperse the crowds, police drove water cannon vehicles onto the streets, unfurling signs warning protesters they would deploy the jets if they did not leave.

The jets were later fired from the moving trucks towards a crowd of protesters who ran away, but a hardcore group of protesters later threw



A policeman points a weapon during a protest in Hong Kong on Sunday

bricks and Molotov cocktails in violent confrontations with riot police.

There were no immediate reports of injuries.

Police had previously said the vehicles, complete with surveillance cameras and multiple spray nozzles, would only be used in the event of a "large-scale public disturbance".

Throughout the protests, Beijing has used a mix of intimidation, propaganda and

economic muscle to constrict the protests in a strategy dubbed "white terror" by the movement.

The MTR - the city's metro - is the latest Hong Kong enterprise to face public censure, after appearing to bend to Chinese state-media attacks accusing the transport system of being an "exclusive" service to ferry protesters to rallies.

On Sunday the MTR shut stations near the main demonstration area in 'Tsuen Wan, in

the second day of station closures in-a-row.

"However bleak our future is, we're trying to express ourselves rationally," said Peter, in his 20s, before the clashes began.

"We have faith in ourselves and we have faith in our city that some day our demands will be answered."

A second rally in the afternoon of a few hundred people - some of them family members of police - criticised the

government for leaving officers to handle the brunt of the crisis, while also calling for an independent investigation into the police handling of the protests.

"I believe within these two months, police have got enough opprobrium," said a woman who asked not to be named and said she was a police officer's wife.

The city's officers are often the focus of protesters' anger because of their perceived heavy handling of the rallies.

Ten people were left in hospital after Saturday's clashes - two in a serious condition - staff said, without detailing if they were police or protesters.

On Saturday police baton-charged protesters and fired tear gas, while demonstrators threw rocks and bottles later into the night in a working-class neighbourhood.

Protesters say Hong Kong's unique freedoms are in jeopardy as Beijing tightens its political chokehold on the semi-autonomous city.

The city had appeared to have pulled back from a sharp nosedive into violence, with the last serious confrontation taking place more

than a week ago, shortly after protests paralysed the airport.

G7 to help nations hit by Amazon fires: Macron

Biarritz: World leaders at the G7 summit have agreed to help the countries affected by the huge wildfires ravaging the Amazon rainforest as soon as possible, French President Emmanuel Macron said Sunday.

"We are all agreed on helping those countries which have been hit by the fires as fast as possible," he told journalists at the summit in the southwestern French resort of Biarritz.

Ahead of the gathering, Macron called on world leaders to hold urgent talks on the wildfires ripping through the world's largest rainforest, pledging "concrete measures" to tackle it.

The vast forest also takes in parts of eight other countries: Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, French Guiana, Guyana, Peru, Suriname and Venezuela.

"This morning, Colombia called on the international community (to help), so we must help out," he said.

"Our teams are making contact with all the Amazon countries so we can finalise some very concrete commitments involving technical resources and funding." Macron's bid to put the Amazon crisis high on the agenda at the G7 angered Brazil's far-right leader Jair Bolsonaro, who lashed out over what he sees as outside interference, denouncing the French leader's "colonialist mentality".



France's President Emmanuel Macron gestures as he speaks to the press after a plenary session at the Bellevue centre in Biarritz, southwestern France on Sunday

Pope fears for Amazon, the planet's 'vital lung'

Vatican City: Pope Francis on Sunday voiced concern for the Amazon rainforest, a "vital" lung for the planet, as the worst blazes in years have sparked a global outcry.

"We are concerned about the vast fires that have developed in the Amazon," the pope told the faithful at the Vatican.

"That forest lung is vital for our planet." He urged the world's 1.3 billion Catholics to pray for the fires to be extinguished as quickly as possible.

Official figures show

78,383 forest fires have been recorded in Brazil this year, the highest number of any year since 2013.

The Argentine pope, who will gather bishops for a conference on the Amazon in October, met Brazilian indigenous leader Raoni in 2013 when he toured Europe warning of the dangers of deforestation. The pope denounced the exploitation of the Amazon by "huge international economic interests" in a 2015 encyclical.

N Korea tests new 'super-large' multiple rocket launcher

Seoul: North Korea said on Sunday leader Kim Jong Un supervised the test-firing of a "newly developed super-large multiple rocket launcher," another demonstration of its expanding weapons arsenal apparently aimed at increasing its leverage ahead of a possible resumption of nuclear talks with the US.

The North's Korean Central News Agency said Saturday's weapons test was successful and cited Kim as saying the rocket launcher is "indeed a great weapon."

Kim underscored the need to "continue to step up the development of Korean-style strategic and tactical weapons for resolutely frustrating the ever-mounting military threats and pressure offensive of the hostile forces," according to the

KCNA.

The "hostile forces" likely referred to the United States and South Korea, whose recently ended regular military drills infuriated North Korea.

The North has called the drills an invasion rehearsal and conducted a slew of missile and rocket tests in response. Some experts said North

Korea aims to show off its weapons to try to get an upper hand ahead of a possible restart of nuclear negotiations, which remain largely stalemated since the second summit between President Donald Trump and Kim in Vietnam in February fell apart due to squabbling over US-led sanctions on North Korea.

Trump 'not happy' with missile test

Biarritz: US President Donald Trump on Sunday said he was "not happy" about North Korea's latest missile test but played down the seriousness of the incident.

"I'm not happy about it but then again he's not in violation of the agreement," Trump told reporters on the sidelines of the

G7 summit after North Korea's Kim Jong Un supervised the test-firing of a "super-large multiple rocket launcher."

Trump has staked enormous political capital on personal diplomacy with Kim in a so-far unsuccessful effort to persuade the dictator to give up his nuclear weapons arsenal.

Trump says hasn't 'discussed' joint G7 message with Iran

Biarritz (France): US President Donald Trump on Sunday denied signing off on a joint G7 message to Iran over its nuclear programme as announced by his French counterpart Emmanuel Macron.

"No I haven't discussed that," Trump told reporters on the sidelines of the G7 summit in the southwestern French resort of Biarritz.

This contradicted Macron who shortly beforehand had said the G7 countries 'agreed on what to say to Iran'.

Trump said: "We'll do our own outreach. But you can't stop people from talking. If they want to talk, they can talk."

A landmark 2015 nuclear deal between Western powers and Iran all but collapsed after Trump unilaterally withdrew US support last year, reimpos-

ing sanctions that have crippled Iran's economy.

Macron has been leading efforts to defuse the crisis by finding ways of resuming dialogue, meeting Iran's top diplomat Mohammad Javad Zarif for rare talks in Paris on Friday

on the eve of the summit.

He has also held telephone talks with President Hassan Rouhani on Sunday, a diplomatic source said G7 leaders had mutually agreed to task Macron with sending a message to Iran.

Iran's Zarif lands in France's Biarritz

Tehran: Iran's Foreign Minister Mohammad Javad Zarif landed in the French seaside resort of Biarritz on Sunday for talks during a G7 summit, a spokesman for his Ministry said.

"Zarif... Has arrived in Biarritz, where the G7 is being held, to continue talks regarding the recent measures between the presidents of Iran and France," spokesman Abbas Mousavi tweeted, referring to

their efforts to salvage a nuclear deal.

"There will be no meetings or negotiations with the American delegation during this trip," he added.

French President Emmanuel Macron and his Iranian counterpart Hassan Rouhani have held a series of phone calls in recent weeks aimed at de-escalating tensions between Tehran and Washington.

2 Israeli drones crash over Beirut, Hezbollah denies firing

Beirut: Two Israeli drones crashed in a Hezbollah stronghold in the Lebanese capital overnight, Lebanese and Hezbollah officials said on Sunday, saying the first fell on the roof of a building housing the group's media office while the second landed in a plot behind it. The spokesman for the Iran-backed Hezbollah said the group did not fire on any of the drones, which crashed amid heightened tensions between neighbouring Israel and Iran and shortly after Israeli warplanes attacked targets near the Syrian capital, Damascus. Israeli aircraft continued to violate Lebanese airspace Sunday, flying low over Beirut hours after the drones had crashed, raising fears of a wider conflict. Hezbollah spokesman Mohammed Afif said a small, unmanned reconnaissance drone fell on a building housing Hezbollah's media office in the Moawwad neighborhood in Dahyeh, the group's stronghold in southern Beirut.

crashed in an empty plot nearby, shattering windows in surrounding buildings. He said the second drone was likely armed, judging by the damage it caused.

Lebanon condemns Israel 'aggression' after anti-Hezbollah drone attack

Beirut: Lebanon condemned an Israeli "aggression" after two drones Sunday targeted the Beirut stronghold of the Iran-backed Shiite group Hezbollah, warning of further regional tensions.

Hezbollah, considered a terrorist organisation by Israel and the United States, is a major political actor in Lebanon and a key backer of the Damascus regime in war-torn Syria. The early morning incident in south Beirut came hours after Israel said it had conducted air strikes in neighbouring Syria to prevent an Iranian force from launching an attack on the Jewish state.

Iran denies its Syria positions hit by Israeli strikes

Tehran: A high-ranking Iranian official on Sunday denied Iranian positions had been hit by Israeli air strikes near the Syrian capital overnight.

"This is a lie and it is not true," Mohsen Rezaei, the secretary of the Expediency Council, told ILNA news agency in response to Israeli claims its air force struck Iranian positions in the war-torn country.

"Israel and America do not have the power to attack various centres of Iran, while the advisory centres that we have, have not been harmed," said Rezaei, a former commander of Iran's Revolutionary Guards. "Actions taken jointly by Israel and America in Syria and Iraq are against international regulations and defenders of Syria and Iraq will soon respond to them."

Iran blacklists US-based think-tank, says Ministry

Tehran: Iran has blacklisted US-based think-tank the Foundation for Defense of Democracies and its chief Mark Dubowitz on accusations of being behind "economic terrorism" against the Islamic republic.

The Iranian Foreign Ministry said in a statement issued late Saturday that it had "added the so-called Foundation for Defence of Democracies (FDD) and its director to the sanctions list".

"The American institution with the deceitful name" and Dubowitz were accused of being involved in "designing, imposing and intensifying the impacts of economic terrorism against Iran", it said.

The FDD and Dubowitz were blamed for "seriously and actively trying to harm the

Iranian people's security and vital interests", according to the English-language statement posted on the ministry's website.

They were accused of doing so through "fabricating and spreading lies, encouraging, providing consultations, lobbying, and launching a smear campaign" against Iran.

As a result, they would be "subject to legal consequences", it said.

The move would be "without prejudice to any further legal measures that the other administrative, judicial or security institutions and organisations may take" against them and their "collaborators and accomplices". The FDD describes itself as a Washington-based "non-partisan research institute focusing on national security and foreign policy".

GENOCIDE DAY

Thousands of Rohingya rally in B'desh camps

Kutupalong: Some 200,000 Rohingya rallied in a Bangladesh refugee camp to mark two years since they fled a violent crackdown by Myanmar forces, just days after a second failed attempt to repatriate the refugees.

Around 740,000 Rohingya from Myanmar's Rakhine state escaped in August 2017 during the brutal offensive, joining another 200,000 who fled earlier persecution in vast camps in southeast Bangladesh.

Children, hijab-wearing women, and men in long-skirt lungis shouted "God is Great, Long Live Rohingya" as they marched at the heart of the world's largest refugee camp to commemorate what they described as "Genocide Day".



Under the scorching sun, thousands joined in a popular song with the lyrics "the world does not listen to the woes of Rohingya". "I have come here to seek justice for the murder of my

two sons. I will continue to seek justice till my last breath," 50-year-old Tayaba Khatun said as tears rolled down her cheeks.

Myanmar had said they were conducting counter-insur-

gency operations against Rohingya extremists after they attacked police posts, but the UN last year called for Myanmar's top generals to be prosecuted for genocide over the

crisis. Rohingya leader Mohib Ullah said the stateless minority wanted to return home, but only after they were granted citizenship, their security was ensured and they were allowed to settle back in their villages.

"We have asked the Burmese government for dialogue. But we haven't got any response from them yet," Ullah told the rally. "We were beaten, killed and raped in Rakhine. But still that is our home. And we want to go back." Police officer Zakir Hassan told AFP some 200,000 Rohingya took part in the peaceful gathering.

Security has been tight across Kutupalong camp, the world's largest refugee settlement and home to more than 600,000

Rohingya. "Hundreds of police, army and border guards have been deployed to prevent any violence," local police chief Abul Monsur said. The rally came three days after the failed attempt to repatriate the refugees, which saw not a single Rohingya turn up to return across the border. On Saturday, Bangladesh police said they shot dead two refugees during a gunfight in a camp after the pair were accused of killing a ruling party official. The Rohingya are not recognised as an official minority by the Myanmar government, which considers them Bengali interlopers despite many families having lived in the country for generations.

UJVN LIMITED
 H.O.: "UJJWAL", Maharani Bagh, GMS Road, Dehradun-248006
 (Telephones: 0135-2763808, & Fax- 0135- 2763508)
 CIN No. U46101UR2001SGC025866,
NIT Time Extension Notice-1
 Due to unavoidable circumstances the date of submission and opening of NIT no 03/EE(Gen)/MB-II/2019-20: Maintenance of Garden and operation of canteen at Dharasu power house for the year 2019-20 invited by the office of Executive Engineer (Generation), Dharasu Power House, MB-II Chinyalisaur (Uttarkashi) is hereby extended as below:
Last Date/Time for receipt bid : 02.09.2019 at 16:00 Hrs.
Date of opening of bid : 05.09.2019 at 11:00 Hrs.
Name & Address of the officer inviting the bid : EE(Gen), MB-II, Dharasu Power House, Dharasu, Uttarkashi (U.K.)
 Further details, subsequent addendum/ corrigendum/ cancellation etc. may be seen at www.uttarakhandjalvidyut.com.
 पृ. सं. 464 दिनांक 24.08.2019 **Executive Engineer (Generation)**
 "Avoid wasteful use of Electricity"

PAPER WITH PASSION
Booster shot

Can Sitharaman's announcements be the energy drink that the Indian economy needs to wake up from its slumber?



The Government is right about something, the Indian economy is still growing. But the problem is nobody believes that it is doing so or that it is catching up as fast as it should and this lacklustre conviction is the Government's fault. Growth numbers have been manipulated and uncomfortable figures massaged, others have been withheld to spin a particular narrative. But not all numbers can be fudged. Declining sales and growth figures for publicly listed companies do come out as does Government data. These numbers are painting a grim picture. And while Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman may be right in arguing that India too will be impacted as the world itself is headed towards a cyclical slowdown, the fact is that the Indian economy is still largely based on domestic consumption. This makes arguments from the likes of former vice chairman of Niti Aayog, Arvind Panagariya — which essentially went (with due apologies to Marie Antoinette) "let them export" when he was talking of the troubles faced by the Indian automotive industry — belie an understanding of the situation. But at least someone in the Government, maybe even the Prime Minister, saw that private sector investment in our country was hurtling downhill. This, coupled with little or no major foreign investment, will worsen the job crisis further. India, which mind you needs to create a million jobs a month over the next decade to absorb its "demographic dividend," might actually start losing them.

At least the realisation has dawned that unless domestic consumption is enhanced, there can be no short-term growth. So the measures announced by the Finance Minister, crucially about bank recapitalisation and associated issues as well as the Government paying back its dues to ease working capital crisis alongside, are a good start. It is the cup of coffee that many people have to start their day. It is, however, not a full meal and one hopes that the Government thinks of some other radical new measures to boost the economy. While cutting tax rates is an anathema to Indian Governments — whether on the personal side or on products — it might become essential to boost spending because when people are worried about the state of the economy, they will not spend unless one actually puts money in their hands. Cheaper loans will not make an iota of difference if people do not want them. At the same time, the Government has to rein in motormouths inside the official structure, who have actively gone and harmed industries with comments that have been out of line. Many of those remarks have come from motivated individuals inside policy-making institutions and others, who hold important roles. There is no doubt that this Government, or any Indian government, will have major social sector priorities but if economic growth falters, the aim to lift hundreds of millions out of poverty will remain a pipe-dream. The situation is frankly quite critical and while one should not go as far as to say that the survival of the modern Indian nation state depends on competent handling of the situation, anyone who makes such an argument today will have the attention of many. We are hoping that this stimulus will lift sentiments and energise the equity market. Others still want the big bang reforms, not a nudge.

Seniors are against 'demonising' Modi or drawing comparisons but want the party to fight the government cogently on issues

Cong's inner voice

Seniors are against 'demonising' Modi or drawing comparisons but want the party to fight the government cogently on issues



It would perhaps be easy enough to conclude that some senior Congressmen leading the "stop demonising Modi" chorus have been coopted by prevalent nationalist thinking and are in a rebellious mood as the party goes adrift every day. Some would say the simmering down of the attack could perhaps be influenced by the severity of government probes against fellow Congressman P Chidambaram. But what senior leaders like Bhupinder Hooda, who has refused to critique the abrogation of Article 370, or Jairam Ramesh said of appreciating the governance of the Modi regime when it did right, is perhaps indicative of what could repair the Congress. If one looks back at the party's heady days of winning crucial heartland polls last December and the slide within months in the Lok Sabha polls this summer, then one could find the answers. For the Assemblies, the Congress campaign relied strongly on regional CM faces, an issue-based counter and practical alternatives to the existing governance. In contrast, the party's national election campaign played into the personality cult war that Team Modi had set up with "Modi versus Who," and the Congress atrociously relying on a catchy but self-defeating tag of "Chowkidaar Chor Hai." Given the Congress' own burden of corruption, it was no doubt easier for Modi to rightfully project himself as a vigilante of the nation's interests and turn the nomenclature on its head. Undoubtedly, the negative campaign against Modi only ended up lionising him. Many senior leaders had then murmured privately that the party was just not cut out for a presidential style contest and needed a different sales pitch. It could have countered "sabka vishwas" with its own broad-based alliance of varied interests and regional aspirations, one which it failed at. And by the time it unfurled NYAY as its vision document and policy statement, it had missed the bus. It completely misread the nationalist surge after Balakot and would now want to bury the Rafale allegations with the ghosts of history.

While the Young Turks have set their terms of engagement, refusing to criticise the Government's Kashmir policy for the sake of it and wanting to strengthen their network in States where Assembly polls are due, some saner seniors have claimed the "nationalist" tag of the INC. They are urging the leadership to develop a template on issues that have been mishandled by the Modi regime rather than just being a petulant noise-maker. Jairam Ramesh, although considered a close inner circle member, at least knows that true loyalty is not about acquiescence but about showing the mirror to the leadership so that it undertakes a much-needed course correction. He was pragmatic enough to admit that Modi's "economics of governance" and the Ujjwala Scheme to provide cooking gas connections to BPL households did generate a groundswell that no rhetoric could check. In fact, continued attacks would only make the Congress look like a vituperative irritant and not the serious national party it is. Besides, focussing on Modi would automatically draw attention away from the gravity of issues and the Prime Minister, too, would be happy with that. What the Congress must realise is that a responsible Opposition means that its criticism is worth respecting and paid heed to instead of becoming the subject of an internet joke fest. If such musings do inspire a change of thinking, then maybe the party will actually look towards working on issues and develop an alternate matrix of governance. The Congress supreme leader can be powerful not by entitlement any longer, certainly not by individual charisma but by drawing on organisational strength and giving hope to the rank and file. In short, giving Congressmen a workable narrative.

SC Agrawal
 Delhi

Old is still gold

The Govt's decision to abruptly remove 10-year-old seed varieties from the market may do more harm than good. It must phase them out gradually and earn farmers' trust



INDRA SHEKHAR SINGH

The Government is about to make a terrible mistake with its seed policy. The Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare has decided to withdraw certified/notified varieties of seeds that are older than 10 years from the market. The Government system, backed by the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), cancelled the indent of seed producers, who have requested for popular varieties between 10-15 years old.

Several small and medium seed companies across the country obtain breeder seeds from ICAR every year and take up the production of foundation seeds and certified seeds to distribute them to the farmers. Older varieties, between 10 and 15 years, are still very popular among the farmers. In fact, they demand varieties that are older than 25 years, too, because of their adaptability, resilience and high-yielding capabilities under adverse conditions. The sudden disappearance of the seeds from the market will rob the farmers of freedom, their right to choose the seeds he/she wants to grow and the market of *laissez-faire* principles. Besides, this conservative policy decision may also cause extreme chaos among the farming community, disrupt the seed economy and impact crop production negatively.

Any sound agriculturist will tell you that diversity breeds resilience, delivering both higher yields and immunity for the plants from diseases and pests. This can be achieved through breeding and introduction of newer varieties to maintain pace with natural evolution among pests and pathogens. With time, older varieties need replacement as they become vulnerable to biotic and abiotic factors. Seeds bred for disease resistance may lose those traits as pests/diseases keep evolving, depending on agro-climatic conditions, among other things. This results in decreased efficiency of the seed or requirements of more crop protection or artificial boosters to maintain sustained yields. So when it comes to science, the Government is making an objective decision, a scientific one.

But a one size fits all approach does not work in the farm sector. And why should it? The category of the Indian farmer is occupied by many — starting from the forest-dwelling Santhal farmers of Jharkhand to the progressive cereal farmers from Punjab, the Gond farmers growing corn in central India, the Assamese farmer cultivating paddy in the fields of North-East, the desert farmers of Ladakh and Thar and the coastal farmers from Kerala. The list can go on and on.

The Indian farmers are a diverse group with different qualities and limitation but have one common requirement of certified/superior seeds. While farmers in Punjab are very progressive and quick to adapt to newer schemes and seeds, the



Gond farmers of Madhya Pradesh may not even know about the many Government schemes and seeds, given they are remotely located.

It can be concluded from historical evidence based on the spread of Green Revolution in India that there are three groups — Core areas, covering Punjab, Haryana, Western Uttar Pradesh, Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu; periphery, covering eastern Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Karnataka, Kerala; and remote, covering North-Eastern and hilly States, Goa and Puducherry — when it comes to the spread of technological innovation in agriculture.

The time of adaptation or even a variety being accepted by one zone differs to a great degree. After the commercialisation of a variety, it may take around one to three years for it to be widely accepted by core areas such as Punjab and Haryana. For the same variety to trickle down to eastern Uttar Pradesh, it may take another three to four years and for it to reach remote areas like Jharkhand, six to eight years. By the time farmers across these zones gain confidence in the variety and raise demands, the 10-year period is already over.

Old is gold, there is no better adherent to this adage than Indian farmers. General consensus on a good seed is built on how it performed last year or when some farmers get higher yields or less disease. The approach to buying seeds is very conservative. Mostly, varieties that have proved themselves over a season or two in the region are sold. Smaller farmers do not gamble with new varieties. Medium/large farms may experiment with newer varieties but it takes two to three seasons before the intended advantage is delivered.

Farmers need to trust a variety before they adopt it. And given the climatic variations and water scarcity, it may take a longer time for the seed to perform ideally. Hence, the time of adaptation increases, depending on the area.

The hardest truth of the seed world is that its economy is based on the choices made by the farmers. The market is driven by demand and is based not only on science but farmers' intuition. They trust their logic over and above the Government/seed retailer or the labelling. To cultivate demand for a particular variety of seed, therefore, may take ten years or more. In India, the sat-

uration point may be reached way beyond the 25-30 year period. There are many examples. PBW-343 (1996), WH-147 (1978) in wheat, Varuna (1976) for mustard, Pusa Basmati 1 (1989), Govind (1989) in paddy among others are still the farmers' favorites and they have continuously given yields and performed optimally. If suddenly they are removed from the market, with no alternative to the farmers, this may lead to discontentment among the agrarian community.

This will also encourage black marketing, hoarding of trusted varieties as the farmers will not gamble. Besides, it may give birth to a shadow seed economy. Instead of aiding the farmers, the Government may well push them to act complicity with black marketers. The rural economy will suffer and the seed economy along with the markets will see a decline, which may translate to a decrease in crop production.

But the Government can still steer the moment towards creating a positive impact. It may begin by allowing varieties till 15 years to be produced through the ICAR system. Then, it should do a detailed study to get an estimate of market penetration of new varieties

and understand market trends to bring transformative changes. This policy needs to be reviewed on a case-to-case basis.

While less popular varieties can be phased out after 10-12 years, more popular varieties may continue up to 20-22 years. Preparing for the replacement drive of a variety of seed, the Government can use digital media to showcase efficiency, using farmer-friendly videos in regional languages and live crop demonstrations.

This campaign can be strengthened by efforts of *Krishi mitra*/village-level agriculture officers. The Government can supply new varieties to the farmers directly so that they can sow them in small patches in their region. Once the farmers see the new varieties perform better, they will develop trust for new seeds and, thus, natural demand can be created. The Government must not only make the best use of scientific principles but also keep in mind economic forces of demand as for many farmers, old seed is still gold.

(The writer is Programme Director for Policy and Outreach at the National Seed Association of India)

SOUNDBITE

Opposition parties could have visited Srinagar and told the truth to the country. It would have built confidence among people.



Rajasthan Chief Minister —Ashok Gehlot

She (Mira) is creative and has a great sense of clothes and is very good with food, too. Having said that, she is pretty comfortable in front of the camera, too.



Actor — Shahid Kapoor

For many years China (and many other countries) has been taking advantage of the US. As President, I can no longer allow this to happen.



US President —Donald Trump

In the interest of the nation, the work (Kartarpur corridor) must not move ahead. Whatever work has been done (on the project), let it stop there.



BJP MP —Subramanian Swamy

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Welfarist approach

Sir — The Bombay High Court has asked the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to file a reply on a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) filed by the National Association for the Blind, seeking the Central bank's assurance that sizes of currency notes will not be changed in future as visually challenged people take time to get familiar with new-sized notes.

The subject came to light after the size of ₹100 and ₹500 notes were gradually changed after demonetisation. The RBI should give an assurance that in the future, if notes are required to be changed, it will be done simultaneously for notes of all denominations. The problem also extended to coins.

Visually differently abled people face the same problem when new ₹2 coins of exactly the same size, shape and weight of the then prevailing old ₹1 coins are circulated. The RBI should also ensure that similar sized coins in different denominations are not in circulation simultaneously. We must be sensitive in policy-making.
 SC Agrawal
 Delhi

Healthy criticism is a must for democracy

At last, some Opposition parties, including Congress leaders, have come out in the open to highlight Prime Minister Narendra Modi's success in the "economics of governance." A section of the Congress' senior leadership, including Jairam Ramesh, Abhishek Manu Singhvi and Shashi Tharoor, has said that "demonising" the Prime Minister will not help the Opposition's cause and accepted that he "talks in a language that connects him with the people." The lingering impression among the citizens, too, is that the rabid "anti-Modi" stance adopted by the Congress led to the Modi Government's resounding victory in 2019. Demeaning and demonising the Prime Minister of a country, despite public opinion to the contrary, cannot bring laurels to the Opposition. When a leader is denounced on a consistent basis by any party, it tends to lose acceptability and trustworthiness even if the condemnation is genuine.

Though Modi 1.0 could not dissect the problems faced by the nation and find a long-lasting solution, citizens still reposed faith in it. Even the economic slowdown did not change their standing. The Congress brass must take note of Jairam Ramesh's remarks. Instead of



ganging up against him, it must re-evaluate its campaign strategy to emerge victorious. With Rahul Gandhi gone and Sonia Gandhi at the helm, she must enthuse the spirit of party workers, rebuild the organisation, reviving communication strategy in order to connect with the masses and sharpen the economic critique. Instead of criticising the Government for the sake of it, it must take recourse to healthy criticism.

Ganapathi Bhat
 Akola

Law is supreme

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Chidambaram in a spot" (August 22). The ugly spectacle of a former Union Home Minister going through unseemly contretemps and evasions to dodge the Central Bureau of

Investigation (CBI) had unnecessarily riveted the nation to its television sets.

Any top politician getting arrested — be it Lalu Prasad of Rashtriya Janata Dal (RJD) in the fodder scam in 1997 or M Karunanidhi in 2001 — becomes a premise for settling political

scores. A look at all such cases, where high-profile leaders are involved, points to a similar outrage and hullabaloo surrounding their arrest, though the merits of allegations in each case may vary drastically.

So, the Congress' charade that Chidambaram is a victim of

"political vendetta" ought to be dismissed. Whether the charges levelled against him are true or not is for the judiciary to determine. Nobody is above the law. Ultimately, corruption in high places must be weeded out.

J Akshay
 Bengaluru

Custody blues

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Chidambaram in a spot" (August 22). It is indeed ironical that Congress leader P Chidambaram has had to spend time in custody of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) at the very guest house that was inaugurated by him. Whether the charges against him in the INX Media case are true are not, it cannot be denied that the *modus operandi* adopted by the CBI to arrest him was deplorable. It also defies logic as to why Chidambaram had to knock the court's door numerous times if indeed he is not guilty?

Shubham Kashyap
 Via email

Send your feedback to:
 letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Greenland's gamble

It makes little difference to Greenlanders whether foreign investment comes from Denmark, China or the US, so long as they have political control



GWYNNE DYER

Right from his purchase of New Jersey casinos to his proposed acquisition of Greenland, Donald Trump's real estate deals have always been plagued by bad timing. The US could probably have bought Greenland from Denmark in 1917 (when it did buy the US Virgin Islands from the Danes), but it's a century too late now. Nevertheless, the US President's latest bad idea does give us an incentive to catch up with what's been happening in Greenland and it's quite interesting. Trump may not know this, since he rarely reads intelligence reports, but in November 2017 Greenland's premier, Kim Kielsen, led a government delegation to Beijing to seek Chinese investment.

Greenland, the world's biggest island, is not yet fully independent but it is autonomous from Denmark in everything except foreign affairs and defence. Kielsen was looking mainly for Chinese investment in mining enterprises but he was also interested in attracting a Chinese bid to build three modern airports on the island, which currently depends on World War II-era airstrips.

This set off a security panic in NATO, involving implausible nightmare visions about Greenland getting so deep in debt to Chinese banks that it would end up letting China (which has comically declared itself a "near-Arctic nation") operate military aircraft from those airports. The US military, which has a large air base at Thule in northern Greenland, then took fright. Washington strongly urged the Danish government, which provides two-thirds of Greenland's budget revenue, to nip this threat in the bud. Copenhagen had previously refused to fund the new Greenland airports but late last year it suddenly came up with very low-interest loans for them. End of panic.

By then Kielsen's government in the tiny capital of Nuuk (population 17,000) had collapsed but his Siumut Party came out ahead in the election last April and he is back. And the issue of Chinese mines in Greenland is still on the table. In fact, there already is one in southern Greenland, producing uranium and rare earths for a Chinese-Australian consortium. Other projects potentially involving Chinese capital and workers are under discussion, including an open-cast iron-ore mine near Nuuk, a zinc mine in the north, and both offshore and onshore oil and gas leases.

For the 56,000 Greenlanders, 90 per cent of whom are Inuit (Eskimo), the geo-strategic implications of Chinese investment are irrelevant and they are probably right about that. What worries them, and occupies a central place in Greenlandic politics, are the cultural and social implications of foreign investment by anybody, Chinese or not.

The Greenland Inuits are one of the few indigenous societies in the world that have full or almost full control over their own destiny but the impact of the modern world on their traditional culture has been as destructive as it was for all the others: depression and other psychological illnesses, rampant alcoholism and drug use, and an epidemic of suicides. So they face a choice. Do you go on trying to preserve what is left of the old Arctic hunting and fishing culture, although it's already so damaged and discouraged that the island has the highest suicide rate on the planet? Or do you seek salvation in full modernisation through high-speed economic growth, while keeping your language and what you can of your culture?

What's remarkable about Greenlandic politics is how aware the players are of their dilemma and their options. "If you want to become rich, it comes at a price," says Aqqaq Lyngve, one of the founders of the Inuit Ataqatigiit (Community of the People) party that ran the government until 2013. Lyngve and many others didn't want to pay that price, and under the Inuit Ataqatigiit administration, all mining was banned in Greenland. Quite apart from the environmental costs of large-scale mining operations, they believed, the many thousands of foreign workers they would bring in would have a devastating impact on the already very fragile Greenlandic culture.

The decision was made in 2013, when the Siumut Party took power. It believes that modernisation has gone too far to turn back now. Better to gamble on solving the current huge social problems by enabling everybody to live fully modern, prosperous lives. If you're no longer marginalised and poverty-stricken, you'll feel better about yourself. Let us hope so but the die is cast. Greenland will modernise, and in due course, we will find out if that helps. It makes little difference to Greenlanders whether the foreign investment comes from Denmark, China or the US, so long as they have political control — but they certainly don't want to become Americans. The "Greenland Purchase" is not going to happen. As Soren Espersen, foreign affairs spokesman of the Danish People's Party, said last week: "If (Trump) is truly contemplating this, then this is final proof that he has gone mad."

(The writer's new book is *Growing Pains, the Future of Democracy and Work*)

THE MEASURES ANNOUNCED BY THE FINANCE MINISTER WILL FACILITATE EASE OF DOING BUSINESS, IMPROVE DEMAND AND BOOST THE OVERALL ECONOMY.
 —PRIME MINISTER
NARENDRA MODI

POINTCOUNTERPOINT



THE NATION IS REELING UNDER RECESSION. THE MODI GOVERNMENT IS ONLY DOING HALF AND INCOMPLETE ROLLBACK OF THE PROVISIONS IT IMPOSED.
 —CONGRESS CHIEF SPOKESPERSON
RANDEEP SURJEWALA

Integration wasn't won in a day

The fight for total mainstreaming of J&K with the rest of India began with the birth of the All Jammu & Kashmir Praja Parishad in 1947



ANIL GUPTA

The political movement headed by Sheikh Abdullah, that originated in Kashmir in 1931, to some extent remained unsuccessful in gaining the support of Jammu, especially the Hindu-dominated areas. Its genesis, growth and ideological moorings made it suspect in the eyes of Dogra nationalists who viewed it as something alien and unacceptable. Pandit Prem Nath Dogra led the All Jammu and Kashmir Rajya Hindu Sabha as the main opposition party. It merged with Praja Parishad which was formed in Jammu immediately after the tribal invasion in November 1947.

The struggle for total integration of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) with India began with the birth of the All Jammu & Kashmir Praja Parishad, popularly known as Praja Parishad. It opposed Abdullah's major policy planks such as abolition of landlords, anti-Dogra drive, attempts at framing a separate constitution for J&K, a separate flag and so on.

Sheikh Abdullah became the Prime Minister of J&K in March 1948. He abhorred opposition and wanted to become de facto ruler of the state. As an advocate of a one-party State, he forced the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru to introduce Article 370 in the Constitution of India to ensure Kashmiri Muslim domination. After, that he began annihilation of the opposition. His cronies chanted slogans like, "ek rehnuma (mentor), Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah, ek tanzeem (organisation) National Conference, ek jhanda (flag), Halwala, ek manshoor (manifesto) Naya Kashmir, which alarmed the pro-integration Dogras of Jammu. Prem Nath Dogra and his colleagues felt this was dangerous for democracy and would fulfill Abdullah's totalitarian ambitions.

Moreover, Abdullah's policies were exclusively confined to the welfare of Kashmiri Muslims and ignored the sentiments and interests of the people of Jammu and Ladakh. His animosity towards the Maharaja transformed into hatred for the Dogras of Jammu. Unfortunately, he had clout with the ruling party at the Centre which had a Kashmir-centric inclination. This was a major cause of concern for the people of Jammu. Praja Parishad was committed to full integration of J&K with the Indian union and safeguarding the legitimate democratic rights of the people of Jammu. Consequently, it became popular in Jammu, including among Muslims there. Its growing popularity irked Abdullah who resorted to suppressing its growth. Several activists, including the author's grandfather, Bishan Das Mahajan, were expelled from the state. Praja Parishad leaders were also put behind bars in February 1949 and by mid-1949, Abdullah imprisoned as many as 294 of its workers. In May 1949, the Parishad began a protest for the release of Prem Nath Dogra.

Abdullah finally yielded to the combined pressure and intervention of some nationalist leaders in Delhi and released him from jail in October 1949. However, the persecution did not end there and Abdullah's hatred for the nationalists was further aggravated by the fact that the Parishad's demand for full integration clashed directly with the National Conference (NC) demand for complete autonomy for J&K. As many as 15 youths were shot and some others injured at various places for hoisting the Tricolour. The agitators even included the demand for abolishing the permit system for entering or leaving J&K.

Many may argue about the relevance of this

MANY MAY ARGUE ABOUT THE RELEVANCE OF THIS ARTICLE UNDER THE CHANGED CIRCUMSTANCES. BUT IT IS IMPERATIVE FOR THE PRESENT GENERATION TO BE AWARE OF THE STRUGGLES AND SACRIFICES MADE BY THEIR PREDECESSORS WHICH ACTED AS THE ENABLER OF THE PRESENT LANDMARK ACHIEVEMENT OF ARTICLE 370



article under the changed circumstances but it is imperative for the present generation to be aware of the struggles and sacrifices made by their predecessors which acted as the enabler of the present landmark achievement.

The Parishad tirelessly tried to unite the people of Jammu with a view to foil the attempts of those who either favoured autonomy or tried to separate the state from the Indian Union. It also opposed the setting up of a separate Constituent Assembly and favoured the application of the Indian Constitution.

Despite being opposed to a separate constitution for the state, a special session of the party held on May 8, 1951, decided to contest the elections to the Constituent Assembly. Because of large-scale rejection of nomination papers of its candidates and nefarious manipulation of the elections by Abdullah, the party decided to boycott the elections. In spite of its strong support base, it did not have a single member in the Constituent Assembly, which under Abdullah's leadership, framed a constitution that promoted the concept of "State within a State."

The NC and Abdullah did everything to ensure that all party members were part of the J&K Assembly. Abdullah dubbed the Parishad as communal, ignoring the fact that many Muslims were also contesting on its tickets. Slowly, the Parishad turned into a mass movement and played a key role in opposing separatist and communal politics in J&K.

Emboldened by the support he enjoyed from Nehru and after signing of the Delhi Agreement, Abdullah began hoisting the NC flag at official functions and atop government buildings. However,

in keeping with his habit of double-speak, he implemented the agreement only in part to further his agenda of autonomy. On January 15, 1952, he delivered a speech at an official function at Gandhi Memorial College, Jammu and hoisted the NC's flag alongside the Tricolour, asking the students to salute it but they objected. This infuriated Abdullah and he ensured that they were penalised.

This was followed by a 38-day hunger strike by students in 1952. On February 8, 1952, the people of Jammu came out in solidarity with them that led Abdullah to impose curfew and get PN Dogra arrested. The intense public pressure that followed this forced Delhi to act and ensure the release of Dogra and others. It soon turned into a public movement against Abdullah's despotism and his anti-national activities. The movement found support nationally in the form of the Bharatiya Jana Sangh, which was formed in 1951.

Another mass movement was launched by the Parishad in November 1952 against the separatist and communal politics of Abdullah. In December 1952, Jan Sangh president Syama Prasad Mookerjee announced the launch of a nation-wide agitation for the abolition of Article 370. On May 8, 1953 he decided to enter J&K, thus violating the prevalent permit system and was arrested by Abdullah as soon as he set foot in the state. He was jailed and tortured at Srinagar, which led to his mysterious death on June 23, 1953. An estimated 10,000 activists were imprisoned in Jammu, Punjab and Delhi, including Members of Parliament, leading to an uproar in India.

Blinded by his ambition, Abdullah

indulged in competitive communalism and worked towards the establishment of an independent Muslim majority-state claiming that India was not secular enough. The Parishad opposed it tooth and nail and accused Abdullah of not being Indian enough. Abdullah was finally arrested in August 1953 after he made secessionist speeches at RS Pura on April 10 and on July 13.

After this, the Praja Parishad movement largely subsided and it finally merged with the Jana Sangh in 1963. Ever since then, Jana Sangh and later its successor, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), had been struggling and agitating for ending J&K's special status, which not only promoted separatism, religious militancy but was the major cause of rampant corruption and poor development. The re-entry of Sheikh Abdullah in state politics in 1975 under an agreement with the then Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and the subsequent Rajiv-Farooq accord and Rahul-Omar bonhomie gave a new fillip to the demand for autonomy and saw the rise of *jihadi* and radical forces in Kashmir.

The historic decision of August 5, 2019 is the result of the struggle and sacrifices of three generations of Praja Parishad, Jana Sangh and BJP workers. The BJP, as a successor of the Jana Sangh, remained focussed and committed to abolition of Article 370 and J&K's full integration with India. Many accused the party of using it only as an election plank to woo voters in the Hindi heartland but all of them have been proved wrong.

(The author is a Jammu based political commentator and columnist)

The great surrogacy debate

The Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2019, which prohibits commercial surrogacy but allows it for altruistic purposes, has once again put the spotlight on reproductive autonomy, women's rights and the extent to which the State should intervene



NEHA CHAUHAN

The newly-introduced Surrogacy (Regulation) Bill, 2019, passed by the Lok Sabha, has once again stirred the big debate regarding reproductive autonomy, women's rights and the extent to which the State should intervene. The Bill prohibits commercial surrogacy but allows it for altruistic purposes. It mandates that the intending couple should have a "certificate of essentiality" and a "certificate of eligibility" that are issued upon fulfillment of certain conditions.

For instance, the couple must be Indian citizens and married for at least five years; the wife should be between 23 to 50 years of age and the husband between 26 to 55-years-old. They must not have any surviving child (biological, adopted or surrogate). However, this would not include

a child who is mentally or physically challenged or suffers from life-threatening disorder or fatal illness. This apart, the couple must also fulfill other conditions that may be specified by regulations.

The Bill was introduced to clamp down on rampant commercial surrogacy, with India fast becoming a hub. Surrogacy is a \$400 million a year business with an estimated 3,000 fertility clinics in major Indian cities, says a 2012 UN study.

Worldwide, it is estimated that around 15 per cent of reproductive-aged couples are affected by infertility. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), the infertility rate in India is between 3.9 to 16.8 per cent. Infertility rates vary from State to State. While it is 3.7 per cent in Uttar Pradesh, Himachal Pradesh and Maharashtra, it's 5 per cent in Andhra Pradesh and 15 per cent in Kashmir.

Hence, there's a big population that needs help starting a family but the new law will make surrogacy inaccessible for this cohort. There are arguments for easy availability of the option for adoption in India, but in the end, the state shouldn't decide how couples expand the family.

While this Bill makes altruistic surrogacy legal in India just like South Korea,

Hong Kong and Vietnam, in most of the neighbouring countries it's either banned or there are no regulations governing it. After widespread reports of Indian women travelling to Nepal once India enforced visa restrictions for foreigners commissioning surrogacy in India in 2013, the Supreme Court of Nepal ruled against commercial surrogacy in August 2015.

To date, however, normative standards on surrogacy have been relatively limited. The UN international human rights mechanisms have not yet taken up the issue of surrogacy in a focussed or uniform way. The UN Special rapporteur on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography has addressed the issue and highlighted the lack of regulation of commercial surrogacy. It has called upon countries to adopt legislation to protect the rights of women and children and develop and implement international standards.

Coming back to the Bill, another sticking point is that surrogacy remains only for the married heterosexual couples and completely excludes singles, live-in partners and same-sex couples.

The other problem that various sections of women groups and activists have

with this Bill is that the following aspects are missing from it and must be addressed.

First, the reason for not having a common position on surrogacy as outlined in the Assisted Reproductive Technology (Regulation) Bill, 2017 is not having an integrated approach towards the use of assisted reproductive technologies.

Second, as per the definition of "infertility", the Bill excludes women who conceive but are unable to carry a child through the period of the pregnancy due to miscarriage, fibroids, hypertension and diabetes. In some countries like The Netherlands, South Africa and Greece medical conditions that permit altruistic surrogacy are well-defined.

Third, the Bill includes a sub-clause for National Surrogacy Board to define "any other condition or disease" for which surrogacy may be allowed. For a robust implementation, the eligibility criteria should not be left to regulations but be part of the law.

Fourth, as part of the certificate of essentiality, the Bill outlines the following conditions, a certificate of proven infertility of one or both the partners from a District Medical Board; an order of parentage and custody of the surrogate

child passed by a magistrate's court. However, the Bill lacks any review or appeal procedure in case of rejection of the application.

Fifth, the surrogate mother is required to be a close relative of the intending couple. However, the "close relative" or the nature of this relationship is not defined. While it provides flexibility to the intending couple to broaden the choice of surrogates, it may also be subjected to perceptual scrutiny at the time of receiving the certificate of essentiality.

Sixth, the eligibility criterion that specifies that the couple should be married for at least five years stops the couple from deciding the size of their family as per their requirement. It's not clear that once infertility is established, why a couple should be made to wait for five years.

Seventh, the criteria of not having "been a surrogate mother earlier" cannot be monitored until there's a centralised system to record pregnancies in the country.

Eighth, the purpose of imposing a focus on "altruistic surrogacy" is an assumption that it will not be exploitative or coercive. With commercial surrogacy, there is at least an option for stringent contract and legal provisions but it will be difficult to

monitor altruistic surrogacy. There is enough evidence that families can also be exploitative towards women who may be coerced to become surrogates for close relatives. Thus, the argument that the altruistic surrogacy cannot be an exploitative arrangement does not stand.

From a surrogate mother's perspective, there are several concerns like prevention of coercion or any other form of exploitation, legal counselling for the implications of surrogacy on health and lives, informed consent, access to remuneration for surrogacy, nature of the relationship with the legal family of the child, among others.

The Bill violates the fundamental rights of surrogates and potential parents. The banning of surrogacy will make it more discreet and underground, putting a lot of these women at further risk.

Despite all the intricacies of the Bill, it leaves us with these questions — Where is the choice of surrogate women? Will banning commercial surrogacy address all these pressing issues? Why ban surrogacy and not regulate it?

(The writer is Senior Technical Advisor, Advocacy and Accountability at International Planned Parenthood Federation, South Asia)

Seven of top-10 firms lose Rs 86,880 cr in m-cap

● ITC takes biggest knock

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Seven of the 10 most valued domestic companies cumulatively lost Rs 86,879.7 crore in market valuation last week, with FMCG major ITC taking the biggest hit.

In a weak broader market, Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL), HDFC Bank, HDFC, Kotak Mahindra Bank, ICICI Bank and SBI were the other firms which witnessed a drop in their market capitalisation (m-cap), while TCS, HUL and Infosys finished with gains.

The m-cap of ITC dropped by Rs 20,748.4 crore to stand at Rs 2,89,740.59 crore.

It was followed by SBI whose market cap tumbled Rs 17,715.4 crore to Rs 2,41,946.22 crore.

The m-cap of HDFC Bank tanked Rs 17,335.3 crore to Rs 5,91,490.98 crore and that of ICICI Bank declined by Rs



In a weak broader market, Reliance Industries Ltd (RIL), HDFC Bank, HDFC, Kotak Mahindra Bank, ICICI Bank and SBI were the other firms which witnessed a drop in their market capitalisation (m-cap), while TCS, HUL and Infosys finished with gains

15,084.5 crore to Rs 2,55,484.91 crore.

HDFC's valuation fell by Rs 9,921.2 crore to Rs 3,52,202.72 crore and that of Kotak Mahindra Bank dipped Rs 5,155.85 crore to Rs 2,81,185.14 crore.

The m-cap of RIL went down by Rs 919.16 crore to Rs



8,08,836 crore.

In contrast, the valuation of TCS zoomed Rs 31,538.79 crore to Rs 8,43,367.22 crore and that of Infosys jumped Rs 11,746.94 crore to Rs 3,44,419.45 crore. Hindustan Unilever Ltd

(HUL) added Rs 7,176.31 crore to its m-cap to reach Rs 4,02,512.28 crore.

In the ranking of top-10 firms, Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) led from the front followed by RIL, HDFC Bank, HUL, HDFC, Infosys, ITC, Kotak Mahindra Bank, ICICI Bank and SBI.



For G7, 'too early' to reintegrate Russia

PNS ■ BIARRITZ

G7 leaders back strengthening cooperation with Russia after its expulsion from the group in 2014 but believe it is too early to reintegrate Moscow and return to a G8, diplomatic sources said Sunday. "The leaders of the G7 are in favour of reinforcing coordination with Russia on current crises (but)... it is too early for reintegration," said a diplomatic source, who asked not to be named. Russia was thrown out of what was the G8 in 2014 after it seized Ukraine's Black Sea peninsula of Crimea, an annexation never recognised by the international community. The G7 now brings together Britain, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, and the United States.

FPIs withdraw Rs 3,014 cr from capital markets in Aug

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Overseas investors have pulled out a net amount of Rs 3,014 crore from the Indian capital markets this month so far, but the trend may reverse following the removal of enhanced surcharge on FPIs, experts said.

According to depositories data, foreign portfolio investors (FPI) withdrew a net amount of Rs 12,105.33 crore from equities, but pumped in Rs 9,090.61 crore into the debt segment during August 1-23.

This has translated into a total net outflow of Rs 3,014.72 crore from the capital markets (both equity and debt).

"Out of 15 trading sessions, foreign investors were net buyers in only two sessions. The sell off in equities continued due to a mix of factors including US Fed rate cut, US-China trade war and the post Budget tax hike on high income investors," said Harsh Jain, co-founder and COO of Groww.

The Centre on Friday announced a slew of measures to revive growth momentum, including rollback of enhanced super-rich tax on foreign and



domestic equity investors imposed in the Budget.

Prior to the announcement of enhanced super-rich tax in the Union Budget for 2019-20 in July, FPIs were net buyers for five consecutive months.

FPIs had infused a net Rs 10,384.54 crore in June, Rs 9,031.15 crore in May, Rs 16,093 crore in April, Rs 45,981 crore in March and Rs 11,182 crore in February into the Indian capital markets. However, the position reversed in July, when FPIs turned net sellers to the tune of Rs 2,985.88 crore.

Now, with the withdrawal of the enhanced surcharge on

FPIs, confidence in the market is likely to be restored, analysts said. "One can now expect reversal of the FPI selling. The market is likely to look up from now on. However, sustained rally in the market will happen only when we have visibility on good earnings growth and reversal of the slowdown underway in the economy which requires more reforms."

"The Finance Minister has announced that she will come back with more reforms soon. So, there is hope," said V K Vijayakumar, chief investment strategist at Geojit Financial Services.

CAPSULE



New measures by govt to boost leather industry: CLE

NEW DELHI: The measures announced by the government to push economic growth will help attract investments and boost exports of leather sector, CLE said on Sunday. Council for Leather Exports (CLE) Chairman P R Aqel Ahmed said the stimulus measures have come at the right time, as leather, leather products and footwear industry is currently facing challenges in the global market. Exports from the sector have declined by 4.90 per cent during April-June 2019, primarily due to reduction in exports to Europe, which is the major market, accounting for about 53 per cent of exports.



Nalco gets Dun & Bradstreet Award for excellence

BHUBANESWAR: Aluminium major NALCO has bagged the Dun and Bradstreet PSU award 2019 for excellence in export performance. The award was presented in recognition of the stellar role played by Navaratna NALCO among the public sector undertakings (PSUs) in the Indian economy as well as in the wider socio-economic development, a company release said. Union Minister of Heavy Industries and Public Enterprises Arvind Sawant presented the award at the PSU Award ceremony held over the weekend in New Delhi. NALCO clocked export earnings of Rs 4,792.71 crore in 2018-19.



Mother Dairy to launch Orange Barfi

NAGPUR: This Ganesh Chaturthi, Mother Dairy is set to launch Orange Barfi here, a local delicacy made using orange pulp and milk sourced from farmers, on a call given by Union Minister Nitin Gadkari. "The sweet is prepared with 25 per cent orange juice and milk. Therefore, it will help orange growers as well as dairy farmers," Gadkari said in New Delhi. The Road Transport & Highways and MSME minister, who is a MP from Nagpur, said the dairy brand would launch the 'Orange Barfi' on Ganesh Chaturthi.

Investors, lenders don't want tycoon Gautam Thapar as CG Power chief

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Investors and lenders of power equipment maker CG Power & Industrial Solutions Ltd want tycoon Gautam Thapar to be removed as chairman of the company after an investigation unearthed a multi-crore financial scam in the firm, sources privy to the development said.

The company had in a regulatory filing on August 20 stated that an investigation instituted by its board had found major governance and financial lapses including some assets being provided as collateral and the money from the loans siphoned off by "identified company personnel, both current and past, including certain non-executive directors." Also, some liabilities and advances to related and unrelated parties had been understated.

While the board had on May 10 sent CEO and Managing Director K N Neelkant on leave pending an investigation into some "suspect, unauthorised and undisclosed" transaction, Thapar has continued as the company Chairman.

The sources said some



investors, at whose behest the probe was launched, now want Thapar and Neelkant to be removed from their posts to enable a thorough cleanup of the company affairs.

An email sent to Thapar seeking his comments on the scam and move by investors remained unanswered.

While the regulatory filing had not named anyone involved in the scam, the sources said the investigation had found strong links to the present management.

Though the company with 8,000-plus employees and manufacturing units at 21 locations worldwide has an excellent track record and a strong order book, the alleged irregularities had led to it becoming over-leveraged, investors and lenders felt.

Assets under gold ETFs jump to Rs 5,000 crore

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

● First 4 months of FY20

Assets managed by gold exchange traded funds rose to Rs 5,079.22 crore in the first four months of the current fiscal, a period during which stock market dropped 3 per cent as investors turned to the yellow metal amid economic headwinds. Data from Morningstar showed that assets under management (AUM) of gold ETFs (Exchange Traded Funds) have been rising since April this year. In contrast, the 30-share Sensex has fallen 1,191.79 points or 3 per cent during the April-July period. The BSE's benchmark index suffered a massive drop of nearly 5 per cent in July compared to the previous month.

"For a long time, investors have stayed away from investing in gold ETFs/funds, as gold prices, after making a high around 2012, has retracted and remained range-bound since then. However, there has been a reversal in trend this year, with gold prices again moving up," Himanshu Srivastava, Senior Research Analyst and Manager Research, Morningstar Investment Adviser India said.

While gold as an asset class acts as a hedge against inflation, it is also a safe haven in times of economic turmoil, he said,



adding that the global economy has been facing headwinds in the recent times, gold has once again found its safe haven appeal. In April, gold ETFs AUM stood at Rs 4,594.06 crore and rose to Rs 4,606.69 crore in May. It further climbed to Rs 4,931.16 crore and Rs 5,079.22 crore in June and July, respectively, as per the data.

V K Sharma, Head PCG & Capital Markets Strategy, HDFC Securities said the US-China trade war, plunging bond yields and fears of recession have attracted safe haven buying in gold.

In this financial year, gold has given spectacular returns to investors and has outperformed stock markets handsomely, he added.

He also noted that gold would continue to attract buyers as economic uncertainties prevail and fearful investors shy away from financial assets.

Regarding stock markets yet to give positive returns in the current fiscal, Lakshmi Iyer, Chief Investment Officer (Debt) and Head Products at Kotak Mutual Fund Company, said there has been a global trend of risk aversion, which has meant less money into risk asset class like equities and money flow into safe haven asset class like fixed income and gold.

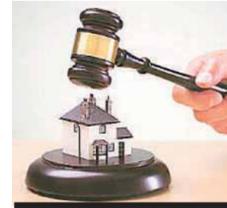
Insolvency proceedings begin against Today Homes

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The NCLT has initiated insolvency proceedings against NCR-based real estate firm Today Homes Noida Ltd on a petition filed by a group of homebuyers.

A two-member NCLT bench, headed by President Justice M M Kumar, has appointed an interim resolution professional (IRP) to take over the management of the company.

There are many companies in Delhi-NCR which are facing insolvency proceedings, including Jaypee Infratech, because of default to home buyers and bankers.



The tribunal rejected the submission of the real estate firm that it has got four-year extension from UP RERA to complete the project

The tribunal rejected the submission of the real estate firm that it has got four-year extension from UP Real Estate Regulation Authority (RERA) to complete the project, saying that Insolvency and Bankruptcy Code (IBC) overrides provisions under the

really law.

Today Homes Noida Ltd had contended that UP-RERA has extended its timeline till June, 2021 to complete the Ridge Residency housing project in sector 135, Noida.

"Observing that there is 'overwhelming evidence to

prove default" against the company, the tribunal directed the erstwhile promoters, directors and employees of Today Homes Noida to "provide every assistance and cooperation" to IRP in managing the affairs of the company.

The National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) also granted it protection from the lenders by prohibiting them to recover the amount for a certain period.

The tribunal order came over a batch of petitions filed by home buyers of the real estate firms, who are now a financial creditor of the company following amendments in the IBC.

Direct MF: Paytm Money expects 50% increase market share

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Digital investment platform Paytm Money expects its market share in direct mutual fund subscriptions to go up to 50 per cent in six months with a 'Switch' option that it plans to start in a fortnight, a top company official said.

Currently, its market share stands at around 40 per cent of total such subscriptions.

The company is planning to start 'Paytm Switch' option for mutual funds (MFs) in 10-15 days that will enable customers



to switch from regular MF to direct MF, from banks, stock brokers, distributors and asset management companies to Paytm Money.

"Currently, we have 40 per cent of total direct mutual fund subscribed from our platform. With Paytm Switch, we

expect it to go to 50 per cent in next 5-6 months," Pravin Jadhav, whole-time director at Paytm Money, said. He said regular MF in which commission is charged by the seller, accounts for 85 per cent of total market share and direct MF is around 15 per cent.

"We expect direct MF share in the market to increase to 25 per cent in 2 years. In the direct MF segment, Paytm Money contribution will reach around 50 per cent in 5-6 months from 40 per cent at present," Jadhav said.

RBI REINVENTS GREENSPEAK

From 'Panglossian countenance' to 'floccinaucinihilipilification'

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Whether it is in employing one of the longest English words or recalling a character in French philosopher Voltaire's novel in order to cheer an otherwise gloomy economic countenance, the RBI's messaging between continuous rate cuts is leaving central bank observers scurrying for their dictionaries.

The Mint Road mavens, from RBI chief Shaktikanta Das to panel member Chetan Ghate, seem to be borrowing a leaf or two from the lexicon of legendary US Federal Reserve chair Alan Greenspan, who was once described as someone practicing the art of "constructive ambiguity".

Closer home, Parliamentarian and erudite speaker-writer



Shashi Tharoor's usages have been lessons in vocabulary and one of them found its way in reference to the growth forecast by Monetary Policy Committee member Ghate. "The estimates of economic growth have unfor-

tunately been subject to a fair degree of floccinaucinihilipilification. Notwithstanding this, growth is likely to pick up," he said during the previous three-day MPC meet, as per the minutes released on August 21.

The Mint Road mavens, from RBI chief Shaktikanta Das to panel member Chetan Ghate, seem to be borrowing a leaf or two from the lexicon of legendary US Federal Reserve chair Alan Greenspan, who was once described as someone practicing the art of 'constructive ambiguity'

The Oxford dictionary defines floccinaucinihilipilification as an "action or habit of estimating something as worthless". The 29-letter word, one of the longest, is based on four Latin terms that mean "at little value" — flocci, nauci, nihili and pilii.

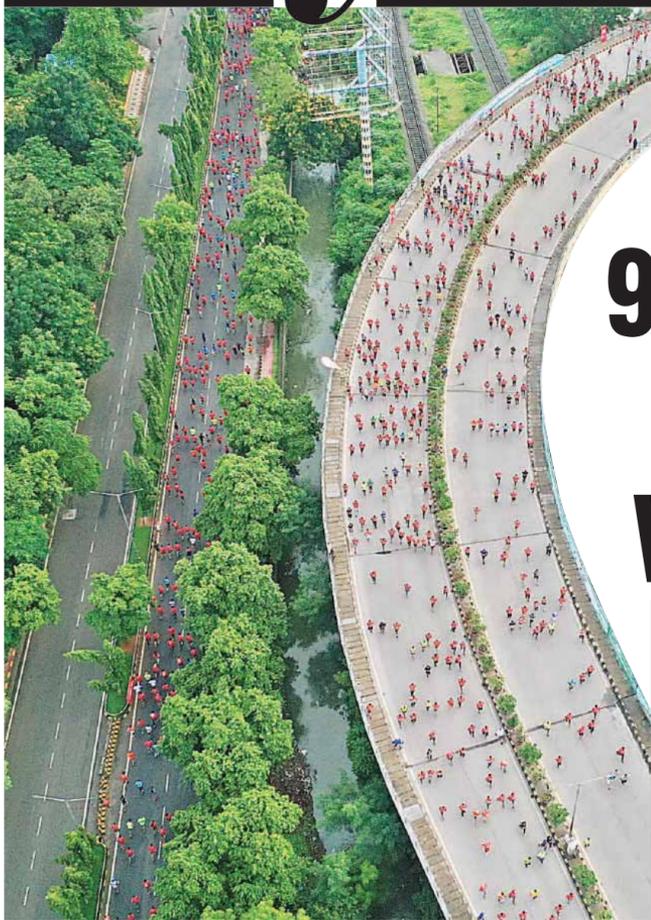
Governor Das, a history graduate and unlike his immediate predecessors Urjit Patel and Raghuram Rajan who have

reams of academic papers on economics and monetary policy, on August 19 left the Mint Road watchers and bankers scrambling for dictionaries to decipher his remarks at a banking summit in the financial capital. Das invoked the French philosopher and novelist Voltaire in a speech on the economy. "I am not saying we maintain a Panglossian countenance and smile away every dif-

ber of the MPC and is a professor of economics and planning at the Indian Statistical Institute in the national capital.

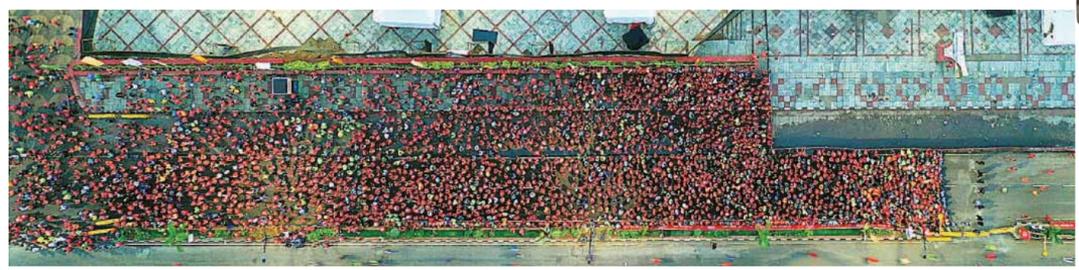
If we look at the central bank languages elsewhere, especially in the US, there is something called the Fedspeak aka Greenspeak, which was full of indecipherable delphic dialects. Those were usages that Alan Greenspan, one of the longest serving US Federal Reserve chairmen, popularised and were even derided as "a turgid dialect of English", a parallel to the 'newspeak' language portrayed in George Orwell's novel '1984'.

Greenspan was known for making wordy, vague, and ambiguous statements and the strategy was used to prevent the financial markets from overreacting to his remarks.



On an otherwise dull and cloudy Sunday morning, 25k people took to the streets to take part in the Airtel marathon. The runners had an exhilarating time as they had scores of citizens and musicians to goad them on

9TH EDITION OF AIRTEL MARATHON TEEMS WITH 25K RUNNERS



Marathons have become an integral part of weekends for many in the city. And this Sunday was no less as people came out in large numbers to cheer over 25,000 runners participating in the 9th edition of the Airtel Hyderabad Marathon. Over 12 music bands kept the runners in high spirits while sports enthusiasts and citizens

lined the entire route. Athletes received their prizes at GMC Balayogi Stadium, Gachibowli from Mr Abhijeet Madnurkar, race director, Mr Avneet Singh Puri, CEO, Bharti Airtel Andhra Pradesh & Telangana and Mr Murali Nannapaneni, President, Hyderabad Runners Society. A total of 1,235 runners participated in the Full Marathon which was flagged off by Shri

Anjani Kumar, IPS, Commissioner of Police, Hyderabad and 4,516 runners took part in the Half Marathon flagged off by Shri M Dana Kishore, IAS, GHMC Commissioner at People's Plaza. The 10K run saw 8,292 runners and was flagged off in the presence of dignitaries from the government, corporate houses and the organising team from Hyderabad Runners Society.



- 9,181 RUNNERS REGISTERED IN 5K FUN RUN
- 8,292 TOOK PART IN 10K RUN
- 4,516 PEOPLE TOOK PART IN HALF MARATHON AND 1,235 IN FULL MARATHON
- MORE THAN 1,200 RUNNERS PARTICIPATED FOR CHARITIES
- OVER RS 30 LAKH RAISED BY 150 PARTICIPANTS RUNNING FOR 50 CHARITY ORGANISATIONS AND NGOS
- 250 PARAMEDICS | 21 MEDICAL STATIONS | 5 FULLY-EQUIPPED AMBULANCES WERE DEPLOYED AT THE SITE FROM CARE HOSPITALS



'Producers were not casting me because I am sheer bad luck'

Taapsee Pannu, who is now one of the most critically acclaimed Bollywood actresses, was once shunned away from South industry as she was considered to be "bad luck". Currently basking in the success of *Mission Mangal*, Taapsee did not have a smooth journey initially. The actress shared a few incidents from the past that had almost ended her career in the industry. "The producers were not casting me because they thought my five scenes and two songs in the film made a hell lot of difference to the film's result because I'm sheer bad luck. That was really hurtful and scary because it questioned my credibility and existence at a point. But thank God, that part didn't take over me and I survived," *Hindustan*

Times quoted her as saying, Taapsee further said that she was extremely discouraged by people, who had rigorously cautioned her about casting couch and other negative aspects of the industry. However, she remained focussed, and achieved heights without compromising on her morals. "When you're not from a film background, and work to carve a niche, people try and paint a different image about the film industry. I was told, 'Everyone will pounce upon you or take advantage of you'. And if you enter the industry, you'd have to bend backwards or do things against your morals. It was a scary image for a girl who was sitting in Delhi having a middle-class life. Thankfully, the image didn't turn out to be true and I didn't compromise on my ethics, or bend rules to fit in," she added. The actress further asserted that every industry has positive and negative sides, but she is blessed to have some people from the industry who

are still her support system. "Everything has a good and a bad side (to it), but I only saw the bad side being portrayed very gloriously, everywhere. When I entered the film industry, there were experiences that weren't great but I had some people who were genuine, and they're still with me on my journey," the actress said. After the success of multi-starrer *Mission Mangal*, Taapsee will next be seen in films like *Saand Ki Aankh* and *Tadka*.

'I WAS EXTREMELY DISCOURAGED BY PEOPLE, WHO HAD RIGOROUSLY CAUTIONED ME ABOUT CASTING COUCH AND OTHER NEGATIVE ASPECTS'



Sitara's YouTube entry

It seems like the two-star kids, Mahesh Babu's daughter Sitara and Vamshi Paidipally's daughter Aadya are making their mark on social media by starting their YouTube channel. The little duo posted their debuted video '3 Marker Challenge' in which they showcased play-

ing games and doing some activities. With just two videos on air, their YouTube channel has already crossed 25,000 subscriptions with their debut video crossing three lakh views until today. Actor Mahesh Babu, wishing their success, tweeted, "Some fun time for these little girls!!! Enjoy ur YouTube stint Wishing you two all the very BEST (sic)."



● Namitha Prasad



● Shivika



● Kulsum



● Nishetha



● Sneha



● Lithika



● Priya



● Mannara Chopra

PARTY

MAJESTIC FURNITURE

Socialites attended in large numbers for a furniture shop launch in the city. Visitors enjoyed watching the latest material on display.

CITY GUIDE

COMEDY

SUNDEEP SHARMA LIVE

● Sundeep Sharma is the "Brahman bro" of comedy. This Bareilly guy has a typical North Indian accent and performs jokes with a desi flair. He is a storyteller and incorporates social, political and general issues in his comedy. His mimicry of famous national and international personalities only adds to his hilariousness.



August 31 onwards, Oakwood Residence Kapil

RUCKUS NIGHT 3.0

● 3-hour non-stop comedy trip where we assure you all would be tripping because of laughter. Stand-up comedy in India is moving out of its infancy and garnering major attention among the working professionals. Sightsavers' wishes to host a charity event "Ruckus Night 3.0" of which the entire funds raised shall be used in setting up vision centers across the nation equipped with quality eye care equipment made freely accessible to everyone who needs it.

DRAMA

PARK

● A comedy play about three men in a park fighting for their place; there are three benches but not enough. The play touches upon that thing which is at a premium these days - space - literally and metaphorically. What starts of as light-hearted banter evolves into a serious conflict about space, territory, and ownership. These become the main issues.

CHALAM'S 'MAIDANAM'

● Maidanam, one of the most famous and most controversial of Chalam's novels, dramatises his ideas on marriage, freedom and the moral issues involved in them. Rajeswari, is a young, frustrated housewife. It all starts with her thorough disillusionment with her tradition-bound, unfeeling, emotionally sterile lawyer-husband who is given to treating her as a piece of property, as one who fulfills his sexual and social needs.



September 7 onwards, Phoenix Arena
 LIKE THE AIR I BREATHE
 ● Artist Bakula Nayak exhibits her paintings inspired by the beautiful epic love poem Ritusamharam and vintage ephemeras. Ongoing, until September 2, 6.30 pm, Kalakriti Art Gallery, Banjara Hills.

GET YOUR EVENT LISTED: To get your events listed, please send your details along with a poster and contact number to pioneer.features@gmail.com

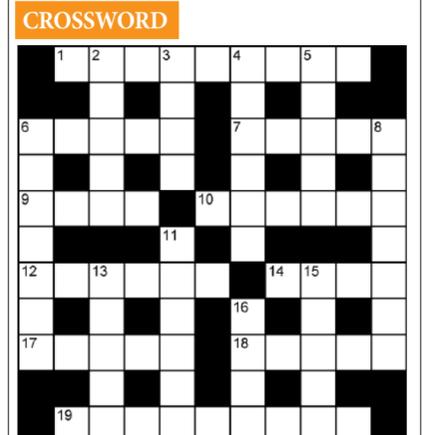
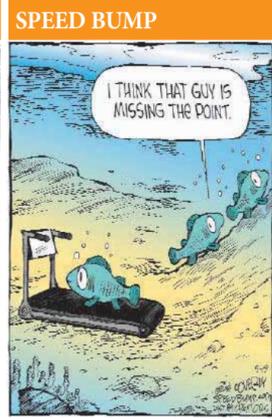
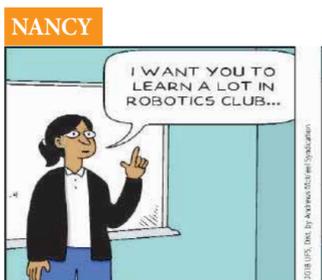
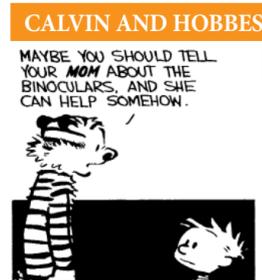
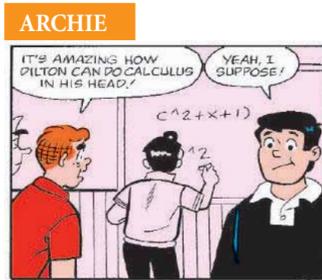


● DJ Ankytrix

MUSICAL NIGHT

It was a great evening for socialites and music lovers who attended the Monster Ultra White Nights by DJ Ankit Kocher at Farzi cafe over the weekend. Set with the theme 'glow in the dark mode', young music aficionados enjoyed the evening with delicious food, booze along with a unique musical extravaganza.

FUN TIME



Yesterday's solution

7	5	2	8	4	9	1	6	3
9	8	6	3	5	1	2	7	4
1	3	4	7	6	2	5	8	9
2	4	9	6	1	7	8	3	5
3	6	1	5	2	8	9	4	7
5	7	8	9	3	4	6	1	2
4	1	7	2	9	6	3	5	8
6	9	3	4	8	5	7	2	1
8	2	5	1	7	3	4	9	6

Rules

- Each row and column can contain each number (1 to 9) exactly once.
- The sum of all numbers in any row or column must equal 45.

ACROSS

- Little by little
- Court case
- Country of the Spanish
- Second-hand
- A citrus fruit
- A health professional
- Grow plants in this
- A horse rider's straps
- Unlocks
- Joy
- This comes after lightning
- Use these when knitting
- Talk a lot about other people's business
- Porcelain things
- Follows orders
- Connect together

DOWN

- Lift up
- A toy person for playing with
- Soak up
- Memorise

SOLUTION

I	O	N	O	O	N			
N	I	N	T	H	A	D	O	R
V	G	A	T	S				
I	N	S	I	L	T			
S	E	B						
I	R	O	N	B	A	N	A	P
B	R	M	R	L				
L	A	D	L	E				
E	S	O						
P	R	I	S	O	N			

ADDALA's dry run ends as RAM okays script



Although names like Kamal Haasan, Venkatesh and Sharwanand were rallied around for his next *Kuchipudi Vari Veedhi*, nothing concrete has emerged until now, writes NAGARAJ GOUD

One colossal flop can derail a reputed director's career and that is exactly what happened to Sreekanth Addala after *Brahmotsavam*. It's been over four years since his last film released and he is still waiting to get a nod from an A-lister to get going with his next project. Although names like Kamal Haasan, Venkatesh and Sharwanand were rallied around for his next, nothing concrete has emerged until now. *The Pioneer* has learnt that Addala has managed to get a nod from Ram, who is currently basking in the success of *iSmart Shankar*, with the story-line of *Kuchipudi Vari Veedhi*.



A source close to the development shares, "Addala has met Ram's uncle Sravanthi Ravi Kishore and pitched the story of *Kuchipudi Vari Veedhi*. The veteran who liked the script had suggested some changes and Addala agreed to them. Later, Ram heard the narration and said he is interested. As things stand now, Ravi Kishore is likely to produce the film under Sravanthi Movies." The source further adds that after the success of *iSmart Shankar*, Ram was looking at a mass entertainer to consolidate on his market further but we hear nothing caught his fancy. "He had to overlook *Thadam* remake and a script from Rahul Sankrityan, director of *Taxiwala* to continue with the winning streak. He believes Addala might not be a commercial entertainer, but has elements to attract a large section of the audience, which is why he has been keen on doing it," the source concludes.



BUNNY's new BEAST

Already an owner of three high-end SUVs, actor Allu Arjun has added another beast to his car collection. And he aptly titled it as 'Beast'. The actor, who shared an image of the vehicle on his Twitter handle, wrote, "New Car in the House. I named him BEAST. Everytime I buy something... there is only one thing on my mind. Gratitude. #rangerover #aabeast (sic)." For those who are late, this is the brand new model of Range Rover that Bunny, who has two films in the pipeline besides the on-sets one *Ala Vaikunthapuramlo* with Trivikram, has acquired for an approx of Rs 2.3 crore. The actor has recently made headlines for his purchase of new vanity van worth almost Rs 3.5 crore. A technological marvel, it was transformed in a way that it looks like a home on the inside, matching with the tastes of the actor. According to sources, the renovation by a Mumbai automotive designer had costed him another Rs 3.5 crore.

Office-bearers of Telangana film chamber

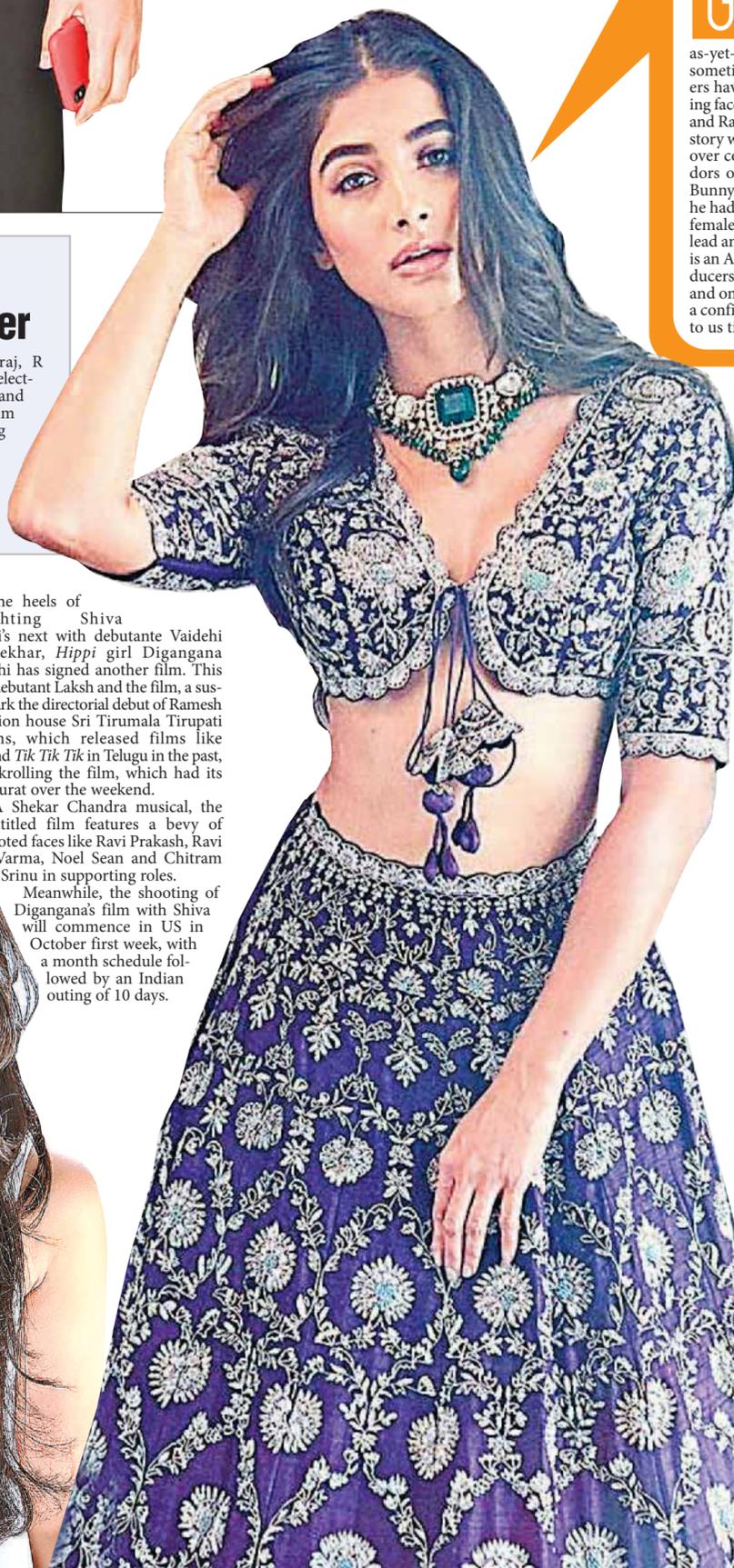
Pramakrishna Goud, AM Ratnam, Gururaj, R Ravindra Gupta and Ali Bhai were on Sunday elected President, Chief Advisor, Vice-president and Secretaries respectively for Telangana Film Chamber of Commerce (TSFCC). Speaking later, Goud said, he would strive hard to come up with lands for the construction of new building for the body and a cultural centre. He also noted that he would see that the workers of 24 crafts of filmmaking would get work on a regular basis. He said he would be meeting Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao in this regard.

Digangana ON A ROLL

The actress will star alongside debutant Laksh in a suspense thriller



Close on the heels of green-lighting Shiva Kandukur's next with debutante Vaidehi Chandrasekhar, *Hippi* girl Digangana Suryavanshi has signed another film. This time it's alongside a debutant Laksh and the film, a suspense thriller, will mark the directorial debut of Ramesh Kadumula. Production house Sri Tirumala Tirupati Venkateswara Films, which released films like *Bichagadu* and *Tik Tik Tik* in Telugu in the past, is bankrolling the film, which had its muhurat over the weekend. A Shekar Chandra musical, the untitled film features a bevy of noted faces like Ravi Prakash, Ravi Varma, Noel Sean and Chitram Srinu in supporting roles. Meanwhile, the shooting of Digangana's film with Shiva will commence in US in October first week, with a month schedule followed by an Indian outing of 10 days.



POOJA HEGDE to star opposite Akhil?

Given their reputation and experience, getting the nod of a happening actress alongside Akhil Akkineni for their next with Bommarillu Bhasker, has turned out to be an arduous task for leading production house Geetha Arts. The as-yet-untitled film, a romantic comedy, has gone to sets sometime back without a heroine and it seems the makers have finally convinced someone to be the film's leading face. Although names like Kiara Advani, Priyanka Arul and Rashmika Mandanna were considered, with whom the story was even narrated, they couldn't be a part of the film over conflicting schedules. And if the word in the corridors of Tollywood is anything to go by, then producer Bunny Vaas has got the nod of Pooja Hedge and it seems he had to agree to pay a bomb for her participation. "The female lead part has equal importance to that of the male lead and Bhasker was on the lookout for a performer who is an A-lister as well. The sentiment was echoed by the producers and Akhil. And so, the casting rigmarole went on and on," notes a source. We tried reaching out to Vaas for a confirmation on the development but he didn't get back to us till the time of going to press. — NG



VETERANS boost an anthology DRAMA

Ether Anil who was seen as Venkatesh's daughter in *Drishyam* and Naina Ganguly of *Vangaveeti* fame are headlining new director Teja Marni's *Johar*, an anthology drama produced by Sandeep Marni under Dharmas Surya Pictures banner. The likes of acclaimed faces Subhalekha Sudhakar, Easwari Rao and Rohini are playing other key roles in the film, which has completed its shooting formalities. "The entire story will revolve around five lives with four stories and are affected by one strong decision or a superior lie," the team said about the film's core. Shot in Rajahmundry, Kakinada, Visakhapatnam and Varanasi, the film is being edited by Siddharth, who directed the damp squib *Bhairava Geetha* last year, while noted face Chaitanya Prasad penned the dialogues.





BREAKING BAD MOVIE TO DEBUT ON NETFLIX IN OCTOBER

Long the subject of rumor, but confirmed to exist just this week, *The New York Times* reports that the *Breaking Bad* movie, officially titled *El Camino: A Breaking Bad Movie*, will debut on Netflix in October. The title comes from the vehicle Jesse used to escape in in the final minutes of the series finale. An official announcement from the streaming service is expected to arrive today, but *NYT* reports the film will be released on October 11. Written and directed by series creator Vince Gilligan, the film is described as follows, "In the wake of his dramatic escape from captivity, Jesse must come to terms with his past in order to forge some kind of future." Emmy winner Aaron Paul will reprise his role for the film, calling it "a chapter of *Breaking Bad* that he didn't realise he wanted. "And now that I have it, I'm so happy that it's there," he added. Paul revealed that the idea first came to him from Gilligan about two years ago as they were talking about the tenth anniversary of the series' premiere. "At the very end of the conversation he mentioned that he had an idea of where to take it from here, and he wanted to hear my thoughts on it. I quickly told Vince that I would follow him into a fire." It's unclear what other characters from the *Breaking Bad* universe will appear in the series, though one photo included in the *NYT* write up on the story features recurring character Skinny Pete, now with a full head of hair. The Emmy Award-winning series aired on AMC before seasons were later made available on Netflix. Vince Gilligan credited the streamer for its contribution to the show's success in his 2013 Emmy acceptance speech, saying that he thinks Netflix helped keep the show on the air. AMC's *Breaking Bad* ended its critically acclaimed five-season run with a finale that brought in a series record 10.3 million viewers. It was followed by the prequel series *Better Call Saul*, focused on Bob Odenkirk's small-time lawyer Jimmy McGill, which just got renewed for a fifth season.



KIT HARINGTON BOARDS 'THE ETERNALS', GEMMA CHAN ALSO JOINS FILM

Marvel Studios president Kevin Feige has announced that actor Kit Harington has boarded the star-studded cast of *The Eternals* movie. Harington is the second star from HBO's epic fantasy show, *Game of Thrones*, who is set to make his Marvel Cinematic Universe (MCU) debut after fellow-actor Richard Madden joined the film's team earlier this year. Madden is leading the cast which also boast the names of Hollywood stars like Angelina Jolie, Salma Hayek, Kumail Nanjiani, Brian Tyree Henry, Lauren Ridloff, Lia McHugh, Don Lee, and Barry Keoghan. "We have assembled a giant cast for you.... We pull back the cosmic curtains on MCU in ways that you can't imagine," Feige said at the D23 Expo here. Created by Jack Kirby in 1976, the story of *The Eternals* is set millions of years ago when the cosmic beings known as the Celestials genetically experimented on humans to create super-powered individuals known as the Eternals along with the villainous Deviants. About Harington's character, Feige said he is playing "non-Eternal" Dane Whitman, who goes by the name of Black Knight in the comics. Though Harington was not present at the event, the rest of the cast joined Feige on the stage, standing in front of concept art sketches of their respective characters. Madden has been confirmed to portray the film's lead, the all-powerful Ikaris, while Jolie will essay the role of fierce warrior Thena. Hayek will be playing the wise and spiritual leader Ajak. Ridloff makes her debut as the first deaf hero in the MCU. She will portray the super-fast Makkari. Nanjiani will star as cosmic-powered Kingo. Henry has been cast as intelligent inventor Phastos; McHugh as the eternally young, old-soul Sprite; Keoghan as aloof loner Druig; and Lee as the powerful Gilgamesh. Feige also confirmed that *Captain Marvel* star Gemma Chan is set to start her second innings in the MCU with *The Eternals*. The actor will portray the role of humankind-loving Sersi. Critically-acclaimed filmmaker Chloe Zhao is attached to direct the movie from a script by Matthew and Ryan Firpo. *The Eternals* is scheduled to release on November 6, 2020.



Bollywood heartthrob Alia Bhatt is currently rocking the internet and the music channels with her scorching appearance in the music video of the single titled *Prada*. The peppy number is sung by The Doorbeen, of *Lambergini* fame, with newcomer Shreya Sharma. Alia's presence has done wonders for the song as well as its singers. It pitches the two-member band, The Doorbeen, as well as their co-singer Shreya, to a league where their names will now draw automatic recall. If their earlier hit *Lambergini* made The Doorbeen a household name among music buffs, Alia's presence in their new music video underlines the fact that the industry is now taking them seriously. This year's National Award-winning actor Vicky Kaushal has also taken the "non-filmy" path. In singer Arijit Singh's new single, *Pachtaoge*, Vicky plays a passionate man, who is madly in love. Nora Fatehi of *Dilbar*

fame also features in the over four-minute video that is more like a movie oozing love and betrayal. When busy new-age stars as Alia and Vicky take out time to foray the non-film music video territory, it signals a trend. It has been happening for a while now, with a few other GenNow stars going the music video way. Hrithik Roshan and Sonam Kapoor did it a while back for Yo Yo Honey Singh's *Dheere dheere se meri zindagi mein aana*. Tiger Shroff has done it more than once. He was seen with Disha Patani in the *Befikra* video, filmed on the song sung by Meet Bros, Aditi Singh Sharma and Natalie Di Luccio. Tiger also filmed Arijit Singh's non-film hit *Chal wahaan jaate hain* with Kriti Sanon. Shahid Kapoor and Kiara Advani did a peppy dance number to Yo Yo Honey Singh's non-film recreation of *Urvasi*. Taapsee Pannu and Saqib Saleem featured in *Tum ho toh*, Amaal Mallik's song featuring Shaan. There are more instances. Why do stars of the big screen get into the world of music videos, which gives them footage of a mere few minutes? The reasons could be varied for different stars. For Hrithik, a hit video during a phase of hiatus between releases let the actor stay in the limelight. Tiger Shroff's videos mostly happened in his early years — they were a good supplement to his early releases, to endear him to a larger fan base. Shahid Kapoor's video with

Kiara Advani strategically came before the release of their film, *Kabir Singh*, ideally to whet fan curiosity about the actor's first-time pairing with the budding actress. But mostly it is about catching instant public attention, as Nora Fatehi of *Pachtaoge*, who has carved a niche as a dancer lately, would tell you. "This year the audience gets to slowly see my acting abilities with projects such as *Batla House* and the forthcoming *Street Dancer 3D!* I've been waiting for such opportunities to come my way as I've always wanted to be an actress. With a project like *Pachtaoge*, I got to purely showcase my acting skills to another level," said Nora. The new generation of stars getting into music videos, however, are merely following the footsteps of older actors. Before bursting onto the Bollywood scene, John Abraham, Shahid Kapoor and Bipasha Basu showed their acting skills in pop music videos. This was in the nineties. Amitabh Bachchan was at the peak of popularity when he appeared in Adnan Sami's music video *Kabhi nahi* in 2002. Sami was a trendsetter of sorts in the early 2000s, casting stars like Govinda and Rani Mukerji in his song videos. If top stars are at it, lesser celebrities will naturally do it, too. Earlier this month, the *Oye Lucky! Lucky Oye!* actress Neetu Chandra added oomph to the music video of

singer Payal Dev's *Ishqa*. Asked what made her take up a non-film song, she told *IANs*, "In today's time when digital platforms are grabbing so much limelight, I don't think it matters if you do a non-film song or a film song. Good content sells on whichever platform you may show it. Payal Dev's voice is wonderful — it's classy, husky and has a folk-peppy feel which has made the song sound so amazing. Combine it with Mudassar's choreography and Raj Ashu's beats and we definitely have a winner." Of course, filming a song on a star naturally means there is a chance that the singer — the real artiste of the creation — will get sidelined. Ever since *Prada* released, for instance, most of the talk about the song has been around Alia's presence. The song's budding singer Shreya Sharma, asked if this made her feel a little left out, points at the fact that star power is important, adding that Alia's lip-synching to her voice is more than enough. *Lambergini* was a huge success and it made sense to stick with the same theme. Also, the song is doing really well and Alia Bhatt has performed on my vocals. I don't think I could have asked for anything more, Shreya told *IANs*. While some singers might be open to having a Bollywood face fronting their song's video, there are others who wish to be the voice as

well as the face of their project. "It's good to see the importance being given to non-film songs. It would have been better had those non-film songs' videos featured singers instead of actors. There are songs in films for actors, so they get to showcase their skills there. Non-film songs, on the other hand, give facial recognition to composers like us," popular composer Tanishk Bagchi said. "If you look at previous songs like Silk Route's *Dooba dooba* or Lucky Ali's *O sanam*, the singers had featured in the videos, too. Those songs were big hits. I hope that phase returns," added Tanishk, who along with actress-singer Zara Khan recently released a single, *Khud se zyada*, featuring them. Yes, there are films for actors but Neetu thinks it is a fantastic opportunity for them to be able to feature in music videos. "They take their own path nowadays and are loved by audiences. There are so many non-filmy songs which are huge hits, have crossed millions of views, and have changed an actor's life," she said. "Music and dance are essential in our country and along with films, it gives us actors a chance to do different things. It helps us grow in different ways, explore ourselves as dancers and emote on someone's singing," added Neetu. — IANS

EMMA STONE GOES 'PUNK ROCK' FOR CRUELLA

Actress Emma Stone will be bringing the story of one of Disney's greatest villains, Cruella de Vil, on the big screen with *Cruella*, and she says it comes with a fresh approach and is very "punk rock". Disney on Saturday shared a first look of the actress as the iconic villain at the D23 Expo here. Stone could not attend the event, but shared information about the project through a video message, in which a dalmatian also made an appearance. "Since you're such huge Disney fans, we wanted to let you know a bit about the story," Stone said, adding, "1970's set in London, it's 'punk rock'". In the first look of the live-action project, Stone as Cruella is seen with short permed hair with de Vil's signature black and white colour-blocked hairstyle. She is wearing a black leather checkered jacket, and is holding onto three leashes attached to three dalmatians. Her henchmen Jasper and Horace (essayed by Joel Fry and Paul Walter Hauser) are in the background. A non-Dalmatian puppy can also be spotted in the back. The film also stars Emma Thompson. Cruella first appeared in 1961's animated feature *101 Dalmatians*, in which she kidnaps dalmatian puppies with an aim to use their fur to make coats. The character was voiced by Betty Lou Gerson in the animated version. Glenn Close played the villain in a 1996 live-action reboot and its 2000 sequel, *102 Dalmatians*. Disney's *Cruella* will delve into the backstory Cruella, and try to find an answer to the question — "How did she get this way?" Directed by Craig Gillespie, *Cruella* is slated to release in 2021.



EVELYN SHARMA IN AWE OF BAHUBALI STAR

MUMBAI: Actress Evelyn Sharma said she is a huge fan of *Bahubali* and that she got too excited when she was offered a role in Prabhas-starrer *Saaho*. "Being a huge fan of *Bahubali*", you can imagine how excited I was to work with Prabhas. When I got the call from Sujeth asking me to join *Saaho* to play the role of Jennifer, there was only one answer: yes," Evelyn wrote on Instagram. Along with it, she posted a photograph in which she can be seen sharing smiles with Prabhas. *Saaho*, a Sujeth directorial, is scheduled to release in Hindi, Telugu and Tamil on August 30. It also features Shradha Kapoor and Neil Nitin Mukesh.



SONG THERAPY

SOUND OF MUSIC, VISION OF STARS

Stokes keeps Ashes alive

Ben's historic innings help hosts chase 359 with 1 wicket remaining to beat Aus in Headingley Test



AFP ■ HEADINGLEY (LEEDS)

Ben Stokes was the hero yet again as his incredible unbeaten century saw England to a thrilling one-wicket win in the third Ashes Test at Headingley on Sunday.

England — all out for a woeful 67 in their first innings — were 286-9, still needing 73 more runs to reach a victory target of 359 when bespectacled No 11 Jack Leach walked out to bat to join Stokes at the crease.

Leach, however, held firm with World Cup final winning batting star Stokes' astonishing 135 not out seeing England complete their highest successful fourth innings chase as they squared the five-match series at 1-1.

"There's nothing like being out there in the end and getting your team over the line. I didn't get nervous till we needed single figures, I didn't know what to do then," admitted Stokes.

Australia, who would have retained the Ashes had they won, missed a clear chance to run Leach out when Nathan Lyon failed to gather a throw and then paid dearly for squandering a review.

All-rounder Stokes eventually played fast bowler Pat Cummins for four to seal a famous victory arguably even more

improbable than England's celebrated 1981 Ashes Test success at Headingley when they won after following-on.

This was only the fourth time a team had made more than 300 to win in the fourth innings of a Test at Headingley.

"It was a very special feeling. Stokesy was unbelievable. It was like nothing I've ever seen before. And the crowd was insane," admitted Leach.

Australia captain Tim Paine said: "It's hard to take, losing that from that position but you tip your hat sometimes.

"Ben Stokes played an unbelievable innings and in the end he was too good for us."

As Leach looked on, all-rounder Stokes went into one-day mode by driving off-spinner Lyon for two straight sixes and then produced a stunning reverse against him that sailed high over deep point.

Stokes' extravagant scooped six off Cummins reduced the target to 40.

Despite Australia captain Tim Paine having scattered all his fielders to the boundary, Stokes pulled Josh Hazlewood for four to complete a remarkable 199 ball century — his second in a row after his 115 not out in the drawn second Test at Lord's — featuring eight fours and five sixes.



Smith set for tour match return

AFP ■ LONDON

Steve Smith is set to make his return to action in a tour match against Derbyshire after the Australia star batted against bowlers for the first time on Sunday since being concussioned.

He is expected to return to action in a three-day tour match at Derby starting Thursday with a view to being available for selection for the fourth Test at Old Trafford, Manchester, that begins on September 4.

"Steve Smith batted against bowlers for the first time today (Sunday)," said an Australia team spokesman.

"The session lasted 25 minutes. He also did some high intensity running."

The spokesman added: "He will continue to be assessed but is expected to play in the tour match at Derby."

Smith has made a spectacular return to Test cricket in what is the former Australia captain's first series since he completed a 12-month ban for his role in a ball-tampering scandal in South Africa.

He made 144 and 142 in Australia's 251-run win in the first Test at Edgbaston and 92 at Lord's, having retired hurt on 80 when struck on his unprotected neck by Archer.

Stokes then hoisted the next two balls for six.

He rode his luck when a sliced two off Cummins was dropped by a diving Marcus Harris at third man.

Stokes, however, commandingly pulled and drove Cummins's next two balls for four to leave England just nine runs shy of victory.

RUN-OUT CHANCE

But a single left Leach on strike with two balls left in the over.

The first of those sailed over Leach's head and the next saw Australia waste a review for a ball that pitched outside leg stump.

England now needed eight — or two boundaries — as Stokes faced Leach.

The third ball of the over saw Stokes



drive Lyon for a six that just cleared Marnus Labuschagne at long-on and England needed two to win.

A colossal mix-up between Stokes and Leach should have seen the No 11 run out but Lyon fumbled the return.

Lyon then had an lbw appeal against Stokes turned down by umpire Joel Wilson only for replays to suggest it would have been out.

But Australia had used up all their reviews.

England still needed two to win but Leach, who made a career best 92 as nightwatchman in a recent Test win over Ireland, was on strike to Cummins.

Leach though managed a single that tied the scores as he got off the mark after 59 minutes at the crease.

And Stokes then cut Cummins for

"I have no sister but if I did I'd want her to marry Ben Stokes."
— GRAEME SWANN

"ARISE SIR BEN STOKES."
—ENGLAND'S BARMY ARMY SUPPORTERS GROUP.

"I've seen some remarkable cricket moments in my life but that is the best I've seen in over 50 years. @benstokes38 saved the Ashes and gave a magical inspirational innings. Even better than his World Cup performance."
—GEOFFREY BOYCOTT

"Hi, my name is Ben, Ben Stokes!"
— KEVIN PIETERSEN.

"That was special from Ben Stokes. Single handedly winning the test match. Great viewing."
—VIRENDER SEHWAG

"One of the best innings of test match cricket you will see, well played @benstokes38. What a game, what a test match. #ashesaliveandkicking. Both teams so close together. Go the Aussies for the next test."
—DARREN LEHMANN

"The greatest ever innings by an Englishman."
—ALASTAIR COOK

"You cannot do that Ben Stokes"
—NASSER HUSSAIN.

"Wow, just Wow. The Ashes is something else. England and Australia keeping test cricket alive. The rest of the world MUST come to the party now..."
—ALVIRO PETERSEN

a boundary to seal an astounding triumph.

The left-handed batsman faced 219 balls in total, with 11 fours and eight sixes in a superbly paced five-and-a-half hour innings.

It seemed England's chances had evaporated when they lost three wickets for just 16 runs after lunch to be reeling at 261-7.

SINGLES

IND BLUE CONCEDE LEAD TO INDIA RED

BENGALURU: Maharashtra batsman Ankit Bawne made an unbeaten 121 but could not prevent India Blue from conceding a 30-run lead to India Red on the third day of the Duleep Trophy match here on Sunday. After bowling out India Blue for 255 in 83.2 overs, India Red (285 in 1st innings) extended the advantage by moving to 93 for 2 at stumps, a lead of 123 runs. At stumps, Nair was batting on 43 (55 balls, 7 fours) while Kalsi was on 21 (34 balls, 3X4), looking to be a lot more positive than in his first-innings ton. India Red hit back after a wicketless first session with right-arm paceman Avesh Khan (4 for 58) and left-arm medium-pacer Jaydev Unadkat (3 for 52) and Vidarbha spinner Akshay Wakhare (3 for 32) helping the team pull things back.

WAQAR APPLIES FOR BOWLING COACH JOB

KARACHI: Former Pakistan captain Waqar Younis has applied for the bowling coach role with the national team as he is not mentally prepared to take charge as head coach for the third time. Waqar, 47, who has twice worked as head coach of the Pakistan team in 2010 and in 2014-2016, applied for the bowling coach position with the PCB's application deadline ending on Sunday. "I have applied for the position of bowling coach because I think I can contribute a lot in this area. Frankly speaking, I am not averse to being the head coach but this time, to be honest, I am not mentally prepared for it," Waqar said from Australia. "Would prefer to work in the bowling department if the board shows faith in me," he said.

HURKACZ BEAT PAIRE, WIN 1ST ATP TITLE

LOS ANGELES: Poland's Hubert Hurkacz upset top seed Benoit Paire in three sets at the Winston-Salem ATP tournament to clinch his first career title. The towering 22-year-old became the first Polish player to win a tour singles event since Wojtek Fibak lifted the WCT Chicago crown in 1982, winning 6-3, 3-6, 6-3. Hurkacz recorded five service breaks en route to victory in 2hr 9min against the 30-year-old Frenchman. Hurkacz is the 14th player to become a first-time tournament winner on the ATP Tour in 2019. Saturday's win completed an impressive week for Hurkacz, who knocked off 16th seed Feliciano Lopez, 10th seed Frances Tiafoe and second seed Denis Shapovalov en route to his maiden title.

WERNER EXTENDS LEIPZIG CONTRACT

MUNICH: Bayern Munich transfer target Timo Werner has signed a four-year contract extension at RB Leipzig, the Bundesliga club confirmed on Sunday. The announcement, which was made just before Leipzig's first home game of the season against Eintracht Frankfurt, ends speculation that Bayern would sign Werner on a free transfer in 2020. "I am happy to have extended my contract. It was a long process, but I wanted to be completely sure that I could make the next steps in my development at this club," said Werner. The 23-year-old striker had previously held firm against all new contract offers, and openly hinted at his interest in a move to Munich last season.

DABANG DELHI BEAT UP YODHA

NEW DELHI: Naveen Kumar was once again the star for home side Dabang Delhi as they beat UP Yodhya 36-27 in a Pro Kabaddi League match here on Sunday. The 19-year-old raider picked up a Super 10 (16 points) for the seventh consecutive time this season as Dabang secured an important victory to keep their record of 100 per cent win at home intact and push them to the top of the Season 7 points table. Meraj Sheykh got a place in the starting seven for Dabang Delhi after his influential cameo in their win against Bengaluru Bulls in the previous outing while there was no Rishank Devadiga in the seven for UP Yodhya who went in with Monu Goyat as their chief raider. Elsewhere, Rohit Kumar's impressive show helped defending champions Bengaluru Bulls beat league toppers Jaipur Pink Panthers 41-30.

INDIA FINISHES WITH 12 MEDALS

BASEL: India's Pramod Bhagat made a strong comeback to defeat England's Daniel Bethell and clinch his third title in the men's singles SL3 category at the BWF Para Badminton World Championships on Sunday. It was world No 1 Bhagat's second Gold in this World Championships having won his men's doubles SL3-4 title on the penultimate day of the competitions. Interestingly in that match, he and his partner Manoj Sarkar came from a game down to defeat compatriots Nitesh Kumar and Tarun Dhillon 14-21, 21-15, 21-16 in the final. Overall, India finished with 12 medals, including three Gold. Though the total number of medals is same as in 2015 Worlds, but back then India had four Gold, making it the best ever show.

AGENCIES

Rahane, Vihari take India ahead

PTI ■ NORTH SOUND

Ajinkya Rahane remained on course to score his first Test century in two years while Hanuma Vihari hit a fluent fifty as India tightened their grip over the West Indies in the series-opener, here on Sunday.

Vihari (57) and Rahane (90) raised an unbeaten 100-run partnership for the fifth wicket after India lost skipper Virat Kohli, taking India to 287 for four at lunch on the fourth day for an overall lead 362.

Rahane, who scored 81 in the first innings, has not scored a Test hundred since his 132 against Sri Lanka in August 2017.

For Vihari it's only his second Test fifty.

Resuming at 185 for three, India lost Kohli (51) when his leading edge off Roston Chase flew to John Campbell, who took the catch on second attempt.

That ended the fourth-wicket partnership between Kohli and Rahane that yielded 106 runs for India.

The other overnight batsman Rahane was joined by Vihari, who easily worked the ball around in gaps

to keep the scoreboard ticking.

Holder now made it all-spin attack by introducing John Campbell from the other end.

As soon as the new ball was available, pacers Kumar Roach and Shannon Gabriel operated in tandem but before that West Indies part-timers had bowled 41 overs in this innings alone.

While Roach and Gabriel bowled a few testing deliveries, it largely remained an untroubled stay for both Rahane and Vihari.

Opener Mayank Agarwal (16) was the first wicket to fall for India in the second innings, trapped by Chase in the 14th over although TV replays showed the ball was missing the leg stump but the batsman didn't go for review on Saturday.

After Agarwal's departure, KL Rahul (38) and Cheteshwar Pujara (25) added 43 runs for the second wicket to take India forward.

Rahul, however, gave away his wicket, bowled by Chase. He went across his stumps while going for a sweep, only to expose all the three stumps and the West Indian spinner stuck as the batsman failed to connect the ball.

An over later, Roach went through Pujara's defence to reduce India to 81 for three.

Before that, India bowled out West Indies for 222 in 74.2 overs in their first

Holder 'extremely disappointed' with Windies top-order failure

PTI ■ NORTH SOUND

Not standing up to a challenge has become a "common thing" for West Indies' top-order batsmen, lamented an "extremely disappointed" captain Jason Holder.

Holder expressed his disappointment after West Indies were bowled out for 222 in reply to India's first-innings total of 297 all out in their opening World Championship Test match.

"Extremely disappointed... It has been a common thing for our batsmen now. We have not been able to step up as a top-order, the middle and lower order have done an exceptional job," Holder said.

"We are behind the eight ball because we did not bat well in the first innings," he said during a media conference at the end of third day's play.

"The boys are fighting, the effort was exceptional, we have been in the match with the bowling effort. We kept toiling away, it is not a surface on which you can bowl out a side cheaply. We hope to restrict India and then

chase down the total," he added.

Holder spoke after Virat Kohli (51) and Ajinkya Rahane (53) propelled India to a commanding position with their unbroken 104-run partnership for the fourth wicket, extending the visitors' overall lead to 260.

He lauded his pace attack, especially Kumar Roach, for his consistency.

"Bowlers are doing an exceptional job. India is scoring at two and a half runs per over, we are fighting very hard. The body language has been right up there. We got early wickets and they built a partnership in the first innings. We just need to play smart cricket in the remaining match."

"Kemar has been brilliant. We, as a fast-bowling group, have done a good job. Kemar keeps you guessing, there is never a situation in which he gets predictable. It is a plus having Kemar in this side. He makes something happen with the ball."

"Yes, Ishant got five wickets in the first innings, but in my opinion, Kemar has been the standout bowler in this match," he added.

innings in reply to 297 with Ishant Sharma returning with best figures of 5 for 43. Besides Ishant, Mohammed Shami (2/48) and left-arm spinner Ravindra Jadeja (2/64) scalped two wickets a piece.

Watling, CDG put Kiwis on front



AFP ■ COLOMBO

Contrasting half-centuries from BJ Watling and Colin de Grandhomme helped New Zealand lead by 138 runs in their first innings against Sri Lanka on day four of the rain-hit second Test on Sunday.

Only 48 of the scheduled 98 overs were possible as New Zealand reached 382 for five at stumps. The tourists resumed the day on 196-4. The first session was washed out by rain and a wet outfield at Colombo's P Sara Oval.

De Grandhomme scored 83 in an unbeaten 113-run stand for the sixth wicket with Watling, who finished the day on 81.

Watling also played the supporting role in an earlier

partnership of 143 with Tom Latham, who hit 154.

Off-spinner Dilruwan Perera broke the marathon stand after trapping Latham leg before on a delivery that pitched and hurried on to the batsman's pad.

Latham, who started the day on 111, registered his fifth 150-plus score in Tests. His career-best 264 not out also came against Sri Lanka in Wellington last year.

No 7 De Grandhomme attacked hitting the home bowlers around the ground, smashing five fours and five sixes.

Watling, who started the day on 25, played a patient knock during his 208-ball stay.

Sri Lanka were without captain and opening batsman

Dimuth Karunaratne, who strained a muscle of his left leg and will be unable to bat until the fall of the fifth wicket, and wicketkeeper Niroshan Dickwella.

Angelo Mathews is the stand-in-captain and substitute Dinesh Chandimal is keeping wicket in the absence of Dickwella, who sustained a cut on the little finger of his left-hand on day three.

The Kane Williamson-led New Zealand will be looking to bat only once and then let their pace duo of Tim Southee and Trent Boult have a crack at the Sri Lanka batsmen in a bid to square the series.

Play will get under way at 9:45 am (0415 GMT) today, the final day of the match, weather permitting.

Champion for the ages

Sindhu says 'No words to express happiness, have waited Gold for so long'

PTI ■ BASEL

Two-time Silver medallist P V Sindhu was left speechless after her agonising wait for the elusive Gold finally ended with a maiden World Championship title here on Sunday.

Sindhu became the first Indian to win World Championships Gold by thrashing familiar rival Nozomi Okuhara of Japan 21-7, 21-7 in one of the most lop-sided finals ever.

Two years after being robbed of the Gold by Okuhara in an epic 110-minute final that went down as one of the greatest battles in badminton history, Sindhu finally exorcised the ghost of that heart-wrenching loss with a dominating win over the same opponent.

"I am really very happy. I have waited for this victory and finally I have become a world champion," Sindhu told reporters.

"I have no words to express, because I have been waiting for so long. Last time, it was Silver, before that it was Silver and finally I am a world champion so I am really really happy. I have been expecting this for a very long time. So I got it finally and I want to enjoy it, feel it."

It was Sindhu's fifth World Championships medal — most by a female singles player alongside former Olympic and world champion Zhang Ning of China — to go with the two successive Silvers and a couple of Bronze medals.

Sindhu has also won an Olympic Silver in 2016 Rio Games, a Silver at Gold Coast Commonwealth Games, an Asian Games Silver at Jakarta and the BWF World Tour Finals last year.

Sindhu credited her coaches for the performance and dedicated the win to her mother P Vijaya.

"A lot of credit to my coaches, Gopi Sir and Kim (Ji Hyun) and also to my parents, my support staff and sponsors who believed in me," she said.

"I dedicate this win to my mom, its her birthday today. I thought I will gift her something and finally I gift her this Gold medal. It is because of my parents that I am here today."

As the Indian national anthem reverberated across the St Jakobshalle stadium here, Sindhu stood at the podium with moist eyes.

"It was really special when the flag went up and national anthem was playing and I had goosebumps. I have no words to express because you play for your country and it is definitely a proud moment for me," she said.

The Olympic Silver medallist said



she approached the finals like any other match and it took the pressure off her as she could produce her best.

"I think I just focused on my match and didn't think it was a final. I just thought it was just another match like I played the semifinals and quarterfinals. I just went in that way and gave my 100 percent."

"Winning and losing is secondary but for me just going to the court and giving my 100 percent is very important."

Talking about the final, Sindhu said, "Usually the Japanese girls play a lot of rallies, so there were long rallies and then I was dominating all of them and from the starting I maintained the

lead and finished it off.

"I was very confident even though I was giving one or two points, then I was getting those points back and finally I did it."

Crestfallen after the devastating loss, Okuhara, the 2017 champion, said she just couldn't match up to the pace of Sindhu.

"Amazing performance! Congratulations on becoming the 1st ever to win the BWF World Championships! You have made India proud, yet again," —SACHIN TENDULKAR

"PV Sindhu creates history by becoming the first-ever Indian to claim gold in BWF World Badminton Championships! India is proud of @Pvsindhu1. My hearty congratulations! Govt will continue to provide best support & facilities to produce champions." —KIREN RIJJU

"Congratulations to @Pvsindhu1 for the first ever world championships gold medal from India." —SAINA NEHWAL

"What a champion you are girl! @Pvsindhu1 congratulations. Enjoy the moment." —SANIA MIRZA

"Congratulations @Pvsindhu1 for winning the BWF World Championship. This is a proud moment for the entire country. Your magic on the court, hardwork and perseverance enralls and inspires millions. Best wishes World Champion for all your future battles." —RAM NATH KOVIND

"Congratulations, Sindhu, on becoming the first Indian to win the gold medal at the BWF World Championships. (You) dominated right from the start and finished like a true champion." —Y S JAGAN MOHAN REDDY

"The stupendously talented @Pvsindhu1 makes India proud again! Congratulations to her for winning the Gold at the BWF World Championships. The passion and dedication with which she's pursued badminton is inspiring. PV Sindhu's success will inspire generations of players." —NARENDRA MODI

"BAI President @himantabiswa announces cash award of ₹ 20 lakh for World Champion @Pvsindhu1 and ₹ 1 lakh for @saiprnee92 for their historic performance at the #bwfworldchampionship2019." —BAI

"Sindhu played very speedy returns and I couldn't move fast enough. I couldn't defend. It can happen in sports, this time it didn't work out," said the World No 4 Japanese.

"I have lost matches in other competitions so I know I will have to improve my physical and mental fitness to be prepared for next time."

Haryana Steelers will continue to build momentum

Every season of the Pro Kabaddi League is a roller coaster ride and this season has not been any different for the Haryana Steelers. It has been an honour for me to lead an inspiring bunch of players on the mat throughout the season so far. We were in major trouble when we lost three matches in a row at the start of the tournament, but the way the side has fought back has been incredible. Grit and determination is far more important than talent in sport and the players in the Haryana team have shown their mettle in this competition. It was magnificent to defeat Patna Pirates, Bengaluru Bulls and UP Yodha in consecutive matches. The side gained a lot of confidence after triumphing in tough contests.

After performing well in the first match against Puneri Paltan, we couldn't play to our potential in the next three matches. And then we changed our strategy. Our fortunes changed from thereon. We had issues in our defense unit. The coaches and the team management thought about which player will be most suitable in which position. Thereafter, we had our strategies in place for the raiders of the opposition team. The better the defense does, the better the team will perform.

Haryana's raider Vikash Kandola has been a big boost for the team. We missed him terribly in the first three matches. The team's spirits were uplifted after his return. He has been in tremendous form and he will continue to contribute to the side's victories in the upcoming matches. Vikash has been our top raider with 58 points in 6 matches.

Along with Vikash, it has been brilliant to see the way our youngsters and especially Vinay (raider) perform in this season. The 19-year-old Sunil has also made vital contributions for the team in the defense set-up.

However, the Haryana Steelers' main advantage this season has been our coach Rakesh Kumar. Our coach is also young, who was playing until last year. He has a good knowledge about how much a certain player should practice and how far to push a certain athlete. He decides the amount of practice for each player. Rakesh knows what is best for each athlete to perform at his best.

The Haryana Steelers are in a good position in the standings, but we have to keep believing in ourselves to win games. The most important aspect in a league format is momentum. Therefore, once we win a match, we should ensure that our performance doesn't drop in the next game. Mistakes happened, but the team is prepared to correct each of its mistakes and move forward in the tournament. The team dissects its performance after each game to play even better in the upcoming matches.

The team has put up a great performance in the season so far. The management isn't looking too far ahead as yet. We are aiming to qualify for the knockout stages at the moment and then we'll think about the semi-finals of the tournament.

(The writer is captain of Pro Kabaddi League side Haryana Steelers)



Dharmaraj Cheralatha



David Silva taps Sergio Aguero's back after the forward scores his second goal. AP

David Silva sparkles as Aguero double fires City

AFP ■ LONDON

Sergio Aguero bagged a brace and David Silva marked his 400th appearance for Manchester City by playing a role in all three goals as the champions won 3-1 at Bournemouth on Sunday.

First half efforts from Aguero and Raheem Sterling ensured Pep Guardiola's side led at the interval despite a stunning free-kick reply from Bournemouth's Harry Wilson.

Argentina striker Aguero wrapped up City's second Premier League victory of the season with his second goal of the game after half-time. It was Silva, though, who was the architect of the win and having already announced this will be his last season at the Etihad Stadium, this display only underlined how much he will be missed.

The Spanish midfielder remains an integral part of Guardiola's team, with his contribution to City's goals demonstrating exactly why he is so valued by his manager.

For the 15th minute opening goal, it was Silva who operated as the fulcrum towards the

start of the move with the midfielder finding Oleksandr Zinchenko on the left, allowing the left-back to drill in the low cross that eventually led to Aguero's finish.

Silva's contribution to the second was even more eye-catching, with his superbly weighted ball picking out Sterling's darting run into the box before the England attacker struck past keeper Aaron Ramsdale.

Then a positive surge into the Bournemouth area caused confusion among the home back-line before Aguero pounced for the third.

Those moments helped City maintain control of a game that could easily have slipped from their grasp had Eddie Howe's side enjoyed better fortune.

Aguero's predatory finishing was the perfect tonic for City after Brazil striker Gabriel Jesus was withdrawn from the squad with a hamstring problem sustained in training.

City said Jesus will be back to full fitness after next month's international break, meaning he should miss only next weekend's clash with Brighton.

Serena-Sharapova showdown seizes spotlight

AFP ■ NEW YORK

Serena Williams faces Maria Sharapova in a blockbuster first-round match today at the US Open, the feature showdown on the first day of the year's final Grand Slam tennis event.

Eighth-ranked Williams, who lost to Naomi Osaka in last year's US Open final and to Simona Halep in last month's Wimbledon final, is seeking her 24th career Grand Slam singles title to match Margaret Court's all-time record.

The 37-year-old American owns a 19-2 record against Russia's 87th-ranked Sharapova and has beaten her 18 consecutive times dating to 2005.

That lopsided rivalry, however, has not prevented the matchup from being the talk of the tournament since Thursday's draw announcement.

"Of course I'm going to watch it," Osaka said. "I think everyone in New York is going to watch it."

Williams owns a 3-1 record over Sharapova in Grand Slam matchups, having lost their first such meeting in 2004 at Wimbledon, but this will mark the first time they have met in a US Open.

Williams last won a Grand Slam at the 2017 Australian Open, while pregnant.

Five-time Grand Slam champion Sharapova, 32, failed a drug test at the 2016 Australian Open and served a one-year ban. The 2006 US Open winner last won a Slam at the 2014 French Open. She has reached the fourth round at the past two US Opens.

Other first-day matches in Arthur Ashe Stadium send Swiss third seed Roger Federer against India's 190th-ranked Sumit Nagal, top-seeded defending champion Novak Djokovic against Spain's 76th-ranked Roberto Carballes Baena and French Open champion Ashleigh Barty, the second seed from Australia, against 77th-ranked Zarina Diyas of Kazakhstan. Eighth-seeded Williams could



Serena vs Sharapova
Live from 4:30am IST
STAR SPORTS NETWORK

meet second-seeded French Open champion Ashleigh Barty of Australia in the quarter-finals. Barty, Osaka, Halep and Czech third seed Karolina Pliskova, seeking her first Slam title, are among the foes trying to deny Williams yet again in a quest she insists doesn't dominate her thoughts. She has not played since retiring from the WTA Toronto final with back spasms, handing Canada's Bianca Andreescu the title.

OSAKA VERY CONFIDENT

Osaka won last year's final after Williams was given a game penalty by umpire Carlos Ramos, who US Open officials have decided will not work on any match with Serena or Venus Williams at this year's US Open.

This time, Osaka has had a better run-up to the Open despite a first-round Wimbledon crash out.

"This year I went to two quarter-finals back to back and I feel very confident about how I am right now."

While it's Osaka's first time defending a Slam, she had her first taste of defending a title this year at Indian Wells.

Meanwhile, Halep, who has crashed out of the US Open in the first round the past two years, enters with confidence after beating Williams at Wimbledon.

"It cannot be worse than the last two years, to lose in the first round," Halep said. "I'm really good. I'm feeling healthy. I'm feeling fresh."

"The pressure of doing something special, it's off. Now what comes, comes as a bonus. I'm still working. I'm still motivated to win titles. I've started to feel more and more that I'm capable to do that so my confidence is very high."

Barty says "nothing has really changed for me" since her title at Roland Garros.

"I just came here to play and do the best that I can," Barty said. "I'm focused on my first round on Monday and that's all I'm worried about for the moment."

Big 3 remain ones to beat

AFP ■ NEW YORK

While a host of young rivals hope to disrupt the dominance of the "Big Three" in men's tennis, Novak Djokovic, Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer remain the US Open favorites.

The year's final Grand Slam showdown starts today on the Flushing Meadows hardcourts with top-ranked Djokovic, 20-time Grand Slam champion Federer and Spanish superstar Nadal having combined to win the past 11 Grand Slam titles.

Federer, 38, doesn't see a problem with the dominance by the sport's elder statesmen, who together own 54 of the past 65 Slam titles.

"I don't think it's a problem, per se," Federer said. "Now that Novak, Rafa and me are healthy again, Andy (Murray) also slowly coming back again, has made it much harder for young guys to come through."

"They are definitely knocking on the door big-time now. I think that's very encouraging for those who want to see somebody else win. I think also Novak's domination, Rafa's domination is also not normal for the game of tennis."

"I think there's going to be chances moving forward, but it's not surprising with the type of tennis they've been playing in recent years."

Third-seeded Federer also throws in a chance for Swiss compatriot Stan Wawrinka, who like Britain's injured Murray has won three Slam crowns during the "Big Three" reign, but figures a familiar face will be lifting the US Open trophy.

"Yeah, it seems like the same guys are the favorites again this time around," Federer said. "It will be a surprise if anybody else won."

Defending champion Djokovic, seeking a 17th career Grand Slam title, has won four of the past five Slams, denied only by Nadal's French Open win in June. The 32-year-old Serbian says he has adjusted to the extra pressure of defending over the years.

"It's a paramount challenge to defend a Grand Slam title," he said. "These are the tournaments you want to win the most. This is where you want to shine."



ed over Federer and Djokovic both being in the opposite half of the draw.

Russia's Daniil Medvedev has enjoyed a stellar US Open run-up with a win at Cincinnati and runner-up efforts at Washington and Montreal.

Austrian fourth seed Dominic Thiem lost to Nadal in the Roland Garros final and will be a threat.

Germany's sixth-ranked Alexander Zverev warns not to ignore other lower seeds such as Japan's seventh-seeded Kei Nishikori, the 2014 US Open runner-up, and Greece's eighth-ranked Stefanos Tsitsipas.

ANDERSON OUT

Two-time Grand Slam finalist Kevin Anderson withdrew from the tournament on Saturday due to a right knee injury.

The 33-year-old South African lost the 2017 final at Flushing Meadows to Rafael Nadal and finished runner-up to Novak Djokovic last year at Wimbledon.

Anderson's place in the draw will go to Italian lucky loser Paolo Lorenzi, the US Tennis Association announced.

World number 17 Anderson has not played since his third-round exit at Wimbledon last month. Injury ruled him out of the recent hardcourt events at Washington, Montreal and Cincinnati.