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VIJAYAWADA, WEDNESDAY AUGUST 21, 2019; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer

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BIG B IS THE
ONE AND ONLY
MEGASTAR: CHIRU

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CHANDRAYAAN 2 Successfully enters orbit of Moon

BENGALURU: In a major milestone for India's Moon mission, the Chandrayaan-2 spacecraft successfully entered the lunar orbit on Tuesday.

Lunar Orbit Insertion (LOI) maneuver was completed successfully at 0902 hours as planned, using the onboard propulsion system, the Bengaluru headquartered space agency said in a statement. "The duration of maneuver was 1,738 seconds. With this, Chandrayaan-2 was successfully inserted into a Lunar orbit," ISRO said.

Following this, a series of orbit maneuvers will be performed on Chandrayaan-2 spacecraft to enable it to enter its final orbit passing over the lunar poles at a distance of about 100 km from the Moons surface, it said.

INX MEDIA CASE

Chidambaram went missing after HC rejects bail

NEW DELHI: The Delhi High Court on Tuesday rejected the anticipatory bail plea of former Finance Minister P. Chidambaram in the INX Media case. However, Chidambaram moved the Supreme Court against the Delhi High Court order rejecting his anticipatory bail plea in the INX Media case. According to top agency sources, Chidambaram is untraceable. He has switched off his phones. Agencies are on the lookout for him.

On January 25, the Delhi HC had reserved its order on Chidambaram's bail plea in the case being probed by the ED and the CBI. On March 11, the HC allowed CBI to file additional documents on record to support its case against Chidambaram in the case.

'RSS-BJP's real target is social justice'

NEW DELHI: Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra on Tuesday accused RSS of having "dangerous intentions", and said its chief Mohan Bhagwat pitching for a debate on reservation was just an excuse but the real target of the RSS-BJP is social justice. She also alleged the Modi government of throttling pro-people laws.

"The confidence of the RSS is high and intentions are dangerous. At a time when the BJP government is throttling pro-people laws, the RSS has also raised the issue of debate on reservation," she said in a tweet in Hindi.

Is AP govt contemplating an alternative to 'Amaravati'?

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Municipal Administration Botsa Satyanarayana's observations on Amaravati have raised many an eyebrow as he has stated that construction cost of the capital city is too high and internal discussions are going on in the government over the capital. "Flyovers and huge structures have to be built in Amaravati, while the construction cost in other areas of the State is low", Satyanarayana said.

It may be noted that the budget allocation for the Capital City of Amaravati is just Rs 500 crore. Stating that Amaravati is a flood-prone area, the minister said the State government would assess the damage caused by floods and decide on the extent of compensation. He hit out at the 'yellow' media for putting out distorted news and pointing fingers at the YSRCP government's prompt steps, which minimised the damage to property and prevented human loss. Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy had constantly enquired about the flood situation in the State from the US and issued appropriate directions.

Exactly a year ago, the then Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu had directed the CRDA officials to expedite capital construction to win the confidence of the people.



INTENT IS CLEAR WITH RS 500-CR ALLOCATION

With an allocation of Rs 500 crore for Amaravati construction in the State Budget, the YSRCP government had dropped enough hints on its priorities. With this, the government has reiterated its stand on the 'reverse tendering', which is to be taken up in a phased manner in all capital works. It may be recalled that Capital Amaravati was the top priority during the TDP government's regime. Former Professor of Economics Dr LSN Prasad said he was amazed at a single line mention of the allocation of funds for construction of Capital City Amaravati. "The allocation to social welfare and education was more than expected," he said and added that allotting only Rs 500 crore for the capital construction was something that needs to be discussed at length. Allocation of Rs 92,050 crore for development activities was laudable, he said and added that making budgetary allocation towards financial aid for barbers, tailors and auto drivers is a new concept. Prasad further stated that the revenue deficit is only Rs 1,700 crore and the total deficit is Rs 32,500 crore.

Naidu had suggested to CRDA officials to elicit the opinion of the common man apart from global experts to seek

suggestions for making Amaravati the happiest place.

However, Satyanarayana's comments contradict the for-

mer CM's observations by saying that Amaravati construction would be a costly affair.

It may be recalled that former bureaucrat EAS Sarma had said one year ago "The State budget figures show that as a result of the diversion of revenue for non-productive purposes and shrinkage in the space for capital investments, the State is unable to devote enough resources for lifeline sectors such as agriculture and crucial sectors like social welfare. While the State's finances are deteriorating, there seems to be no conscious effort on the part of the government to observe economy and austerity. Meetings are held not in modest state guest houses, but in five star hotels. Special aircraft are routinely used for travel, unmindful of the fact that even the US ministers are reluctant to charter special aircraft, fearing public uproar."

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Naidu sees conspiracy in inundation of his house

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Telugu Desam Party (TDP) chief N Chandrababu Naidu has alleged that the State government has hatched conspiracy to inundate his residence on Krishna riverbank in floodwaters. He said many poor families have lost their homes.

Naidu, who visited the flood-affected areas in Krishna district on Tuesday, lashed out at ministers and the DGP for treating the drones issue as a small one. He opined that with the help of drones, anybody can bomb the premises. Operating drones in a high-security zone where Z Plus security is arranged without any permission is ridiculous and all the ministers and police officials are treating it as a routine affair, he added.

Naidu opined that the Government had failed in avoiding damage due to floods. The officials had deliberately delayed the release of water from Prakasam Barrage, only to inundate riverbank areas on Undavalli Karakatta (bund) and villages in the capital region. "They wanted to see my home in floodwater. If the Lingamaneni Guest House is submerged, it is the worry of the owner. Why are the ministers bothered?" he said.

Naidu alleged that local MLAs Alla Ramakrishna Reddy and Sridevi were concentrating only on my home, leaving all other victims affected by floods. The TDP chief said if Anna Canteens were present at the time of floods, they would have been a great help to the victims.

HC reserves judgment on Navayuga plea

VIJAYAWADA: Andhra Pradesh High Court has reserved its judgment on a petition filed by Navayuga Company seeking cancellation of a fresh tender notification issued by the State government for hydel project construction in Polavaram project. All the arguments were presented by the counsel of Navayuga Company on Tuesday. Navayuga Company was the earlier contractor of the Polavaram Project including and hydel project. On August 14, the government issued an order cancelling its earlier order stating that the work was not done in-time and issued a fresh notification on August 17.

The counsel of Navayuga delay that there was no delay in work from the contractor's side. APGencom, which has signed the agreement with Navayuga for construction of Hydel project, had failed to identify the place for construction of the power project. He further argued that APGencom is the appropriate authority to take a decision on cancellation of work order and not the Government of Andhra Pradesh. The cancelled order issued by the government is not valid, he said.

Check your beer before drinking

● Adulteration of beer, other liquor rampant on outskirts

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The seal of the bottle may be intact, but the content may not be the intended brand of beer or other liquor, but spurious liquor adulterated with harmful ingredients. The whole thing is packaged so well that detection is next to impossible.

Due to administrative negligence, 'spurious liquor business' is thriving like anything. Things have come to such a pass that when liquor shops receive their stocks from depots, unscrupulous elements manage to supply spurious liquor using the same vehicle.



Adulteration is rampant on the outskirts of the city. The product targeted most for adulteration is beer. The nefarious practice was previ-

ously limited to bars, but now it is spreading among wine shops, more so if they have 'permit' rooms. The counterfeit liquor that

excise officials seized on Monday at Abudhalla Nagar is just the tip of the iceberg and reflective of the pernicious practice. Hazardous chemicals are sometimes used to adulterate liquor.

Often water mixed with sugar, chemicals, soap nut juice and shampoo (which give it a frothy look when shaken) is palmed off as beer. Upon mixing the ingredients, the bottle is sealed after being filled with soda and gas. No wonder, when the bottle is opened the effervescence would make it look like nothing but beer.

Continued on Page 3

Tollywood actor Raj Tharun crashes car at Narsingi

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

An up-and-coming actor of Tollywood, Raj Tharun, was involved in a road mishap when his car careened and crashing into a divider near the Outer Ring Road at Alkapur in Narsingi in the wee hours of Tuesday.

According to sources, another person was travelling in the car, along with

the 27-year-old actor. They were returning to Hyderabad when the incident occurred.

"The place where the mishap occurred is an accident prone zone. Many serious accidents have taken place at that area as there is a sharp u-turn with no proper lights," said an official.



Continued on Page 3

City students look for neighbouring cities for internship

SHARMILA

■ VIJAYAWADA

Students of Vijayawada are migrating to other cities for internships due to lack of opportunities here. Of late, internship has become a popular option among students to enhance career prospects by gaining real-time industry exposure. Today, almost all universities have made it mandatory for students to pursue internships in the middle of their academic sessions.

An internship provides an opportunity for a student to work alongside regular staff in a workplace to gain some basic hands-on experience and educational and professional insight into a career path. But in the capital city, it is more like a course.

Students spoke to The



Pioneer and shared their views. Says Haseena, a student: "As part of our academic regulation, the students have to go through a minimum of three internships in all eight semesters to get more practical education to get hands-on experience. We are not able to find a proper internship, though we

have online websites like Internshala. Internships are in Hyderabad, Bengaluru and other cities. It is difficult for us to go there and stay for an internship. Even though the government is saying that it is going to make Amaravati as an IT hub, if the situation is not encouraging for students, who

An internship provides an opportunity for a student to work alongside regular staff in a workplace to gain some basic hands-on experience; educational and professional insight into a career path. But in the capital city, it is more like a course

want to do an internship in Vijayawada. I want to go to Hyderabad for three months of internship".

Sunil, a student, said: "Basically, the internship is a primary step to learn concepts, a method to execute ideas about the project, get the knowledge to excel in a professional career in the special field. I have been to internships in Vijayawada, but they are more like coaching classes. In the name of the internship, they are conducting classes and charging heavy fees. It's better to go out of the city for

a proper internship to acquire certain skills".

Says Vignesh: "Internship is a part of the academics and a few colleges in the city have industrial connect to offer internship during the academics. The city started growing after the capital city was announced at Amaravati and it will take some time to shape into a big city after industries and IT-related establishments setting up their shops. Presently, students are opting nearby cities for their internship as they are more developed".

Assembly furniture finds its way into Kodela's home

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

There seems to be no end to controversies surrounding former speaker Kodela Siva Prasada Rao. This time around it is the furniture at the AP Assembly building in Hyderabad found in his residence that put him in trouble.

According to sources, the furniture in question has been shifted to his residence at Sattenapalli, while he was speaker of the Assembly. This was revealed while the officials were verifying the inventory of items following handing over of the buildings by the AP Government to its Telangana counterpart in Hyderabad.

The Assembly Secretary issued a notice to Siva Prasada Rao on the issue. Narasaraopet

MLA Gopireddy Srinivasa Reddy, who won against Siva Prasada Rao, lashed out at him over the issue. He said the former speaker had dented the image of Narasaraopeta with his act. Surprisingly, Dr. Kodela Siva Prasada Rao admitted that a few items of furniture were shifted to his home at Sattenapalli. He further said that he is ready to pay for them or the authorities can take them back. "I have sent my reply to the notice of the Assembly Secretary in detail, maybe they didn't see it," he added. Now, the Government is in a dilemma on whether a case has to file on Dr. Kodela Sivaprasada Rao or to take back the furniture. Already, many complaints have come against Dr. Kodela's son and daughter in the last two months.

TODAY
ALMANAC
Month & Paksham:
Shravana & Krishna Paksha
Tithi: Shashthi: Full Night
Nakshatram: Ashwini: 12:48 am
(Next Day)
Time to Avoid: (Bad time to start any important work)
Rahukalam: 12:19 pm – 01:53 pm
Yamagandam: 07:37 am – 09:11 am
Varjyam: 08:25 pm – 10:10 pm
Gulika: 10:45 am – 12:19 pm
Good Time: (to start any important work)
Amritakalam: 04:54 pm – 06:39 pm
Abhijit Muhurtham: Nil

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Thunderstorm
Temp: 32/26
Humidity: 78%
Sunrise: 04:54
Sunset: 06:39
Current Weather Conditions
Updated August 20, 2019 5:00 PM



CAPSULE

KRISHNA DISTRICT
BADMINTON CHAMP
FROM AUGUST 21

VIJAYAWADA: Krishna District Badminton Association is organising Sureddy Venkataratnam Sureddi Kasturi Memorial district championship at DRRMC Indoor Stadium here on August 21 to 23, according to KDBA secretary E. Thirumurthy here on Tuesday. He said the tournament will be held for u-13 and u-15 sub-junior boys & girls, u-17 and 19 junior boys & girls and men & women in singles and doubles. "The tournament will be inaugurated District Collector Mohammad Imtiyaz on August 21 at 10 a.m.," said Ramineni Ram Mohan, President, Krishna District Badminton Association.

GAS LEAK CLAIMS
LIFE OF AN OLD MAN

KURNOOL: A 70-year old man, Pullaiah, succumbed to burn injuries when fire broke out at his residence due to gas leakage on Monday. According to police, his daughter-in-law Saraswati switched on the stove in the morning for cooking. But due to gas leakage from the cylinder, the fire broke out and began to spread across the house. Saraswathi and her husband Balayya ran out of the house. However, the old man, who was on the bed, could not run and was charred to death. The body was shifted to the Nandyal Government Hospital for post-mortem. Deceased son and daughter-in-law escaped with minor injuries and were admitted to a hospital. The police registered a case and took up investigation.

Interim report on RTC merger to CM soon, says minister

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Transport and Information and Public Relations Perni Venkataramaiah (Nani) on Tuesday said that an interim report will be prepared at the experts' panel meeting on RTC merger with the State Government and it (the report) will be submitted to Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy soon after his return from the US.

Speaking to media persons at the Meet-the-Press event organised by the Andhra Pradesh Union for Working Journalists (APUWJ), he said the Finance Minister will also attend the meeting. "The Cabinet decision to merge RTC is implemented earnestly. The roadmap has been prepared and the merger is within the vicinity."

Answering to a question on road safety, he said the State government has earmarked a revolving fund of Rs 100 crore for traffic management and to create awareness among students on traffic rules especially from Class VIII and above.

"The amount will be used for various publicity and precautionary pursuits to make roads a safe place for the users. The high-end two-wheelers with more horsepower are entering the market luring riders to ride the vehicles at an alarming speed."

He said majority of accidents took place owing to the negligence of drivers.

He said accidents involving more people were coming down, but mishaps involving one or two were increasing at an alarming rate mostly owing to reckless driving and violation of



Minister for Transport and Information and Public Relations Perni Venkataramaiah (Nani) addressing the Meet-the-Press programme in Vijayawada on Monday

The minister said the State govt has earmarked a revolving fund of Rs 100 crore for traffic management and to create awareness among students on traffic rules especially from Class VIII and above

traffic rules. "Deaths while driving two-wheelers are more. Roads are widened and dividers were laid to streamline traffic at crucial places. But, many youngsters often take U-turns to trigger accidents."

The minister said that the media played a prominent role in modern society and it was the responsibility of the media management to look after the basic needs of the journalists, who were working with commitment. "It is unfortunate that several media manage-

ments are not taking care of the basic needs of the journalists."

He said that governments were afraid of the media as they showcased news and views to people in an unbiased manner. "But unfortunately journalists are unable to solve their problems. Having an accreditation card and a subsidy bus pass is not enough. I will make efforts to address your problems," he promised.

He agreed that the Information Department was

a poorly managed owing to shortage of funds and promised to transform it into a media-friendly one. "I know the journalists are put to a lot of inconveniences, while covering government programmes. Next year, I promise you an air-conditioned bus for covering government programmes."

Responding to a question on Bunder Port, the minister made it clear that the project would be taken up by the State government if the efforts by it to work in tandem with the Central government departments fail.

"The AP government and some Central Government departments are planning to form into a consortium to carry out the port works. If the efforts fail then AP will take up the Bunder Port works all alone".

Santosh is district coordinator of YSR Aarogya Sri

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

PHRS Santosh took charge as the Krishna district coordinator of Dr YSR Aarogya Sri on Tuesday. He was transferred from West Godavari district.

Santosh said that there are 121 government and corporate hospitals registered under Aarogya Sri. The scheme will benefit people with white ration card to the tune of Rs 5 lakh and all eligible people can get the benefit of the scheme.

He said if the hospital management showed any slackness towards Dr YSR Aarogya Sri patients, stern action will be taken against the hospitals besides cancellation of the permissions.

He said for better services, the Aarogya Sri cardholders can contact district coordinator on 8333814009, District Manager Naveen (8333814010), Team Leader Shyam Babu (8333814044), Vijay Kumar (8333814043), Rama Krishna (8333814045), Sivaram Prasad (8333814079) and Ramesh Babu (8333814078).



With floods receding, VMC back to drive on plastic ban

G RAVI KIRAN
■ VIJAYAWADA

The recent floods hampered the plastic ban campaign, which was taken up by the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC) on a war-footing.

The campaign was kept aside for a while as the entire administration was concentrating in the relief works at various centres.

With floods receding, the VMC is planning to accelerate the plastic ban campaign. "The city is all set to return to normalcy after two days. The VMC will take up the plastic ban issue with renewed vigour, said an official.

The VMC has started a vigorous campaign avoiding usage of single-use plastic bags in the city. From August 1 onwards, this campaign was put to motion by Commissioner V Prasanna Venkatesh, who conducted several awareness meetings for different sections of people. He also planned rallies and awareness programme from August 15, but the unexpected floods had disturbed his plans.

The programme of visiting shopping malls and proposing alternative single-use plastic bags - like jute and cloth - is con-

With floods receding, the VMC is planning to accelerate the plastic ban campaign. It will take up the plastic ban issue with renewed vigour, said an official

tinuing irrespective of floods as they are coordinated by NGOs. But, the programmes planned with the staff of VMC and other government department were postponed due to floods. Awareness programmes in colleges, meetings with business folk and others are postponed.

Chief Medical Officer of Health, VMC Dr Arjuna Rao said: "Actually, plastic ban programme was not disturbed by floods. A few teams are continuing their work at ground level despite floods. But, as far as VMC teams were concerned, as all of them were involved in flood relief works, hence, plastic ban programmes were postponed. Meeting meat shop owners are going as per schedule this week. Many awareness programmes are also scheduled in the colleges".

Andhra Greens tops table, lifts trophy

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Greens emerged champions with five points and lifted RVVK Prasad Trophy in the quadrangular one-day limited-overs tournament that ended at Mulapadu here on Tuesday.

Four teams - Andhra Greens, Andhra Blues, Himachal Pradesh and Bengal took part in the under-19 tournament meant for giving the



Vijayawada Central MLA Malladi Vishnu presenting the winners trophy to Andhra Greens skipper at Mulapadu on Tuesday

much-needed exposure to the

Later, he met Damodar Gautam Sawang, Director General of Police, and discussed on the issues pertaining to the provision of security to the passengers in the zone's jurisdiction.

Earlier, he inaugurated the renovated orthopaedic and physiotherapy block at the Railway Hospital. He inspected various wards in the hospital and interacted with patients and enquired with doctors on

Malladi Vishnu participated as chief guest and handed over the trophies to winners and the top performers.

ACA secretary Ch Arun Kumar, Dr Kinjal Suratwala,

ACA General Manager (Game Development), Mulapadu Grounds Administrative Manager Koka Ramesh, ACA media manager CR Mohan took part in the function.

Book on 'Early history of AP' out

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A book - 'Early History of Andhra Pradesh: Archaeological Sources' - written by Dr E Sivanagi Reddy, renowned archaeologist, and Dr B Subrahmanyam, former Deputy Director, Archaeology Department, was released by Minister for Information Technology and Industries Mekapati Gautam Reddy at his chambers at the Secretariat here on Tuesday.

The minister congratulated Reddy and Subrahmanyam for writing the authentic history of pre, proto and early historical periods with archaeological evidence retrieved through excavations and supplemented by a good number of pho-



Minister for Information Technology and Industries Mekapati Gautam Reddy releasing a book on 'Early history of AP' in Vijayawada on Tuesday

The minister congratulated the authors on writing authentic history of pre, proto and early historical periods

tographs covering both the Telugu States.

Sandeep Mandava, CEO, Malaxmi Properties and Recharla Realcon Private Limited, and Deepa Balasubramanian, CEO, The Sedibus, a start-up ecosystem, participated in the programme.

Gangavaram Port distributes scholarships

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

As part of its Corporate Social Responsibility programme, the Gangavaram Port Limited on Monday provided scholarships to select students and disbursed stationery materials for them. The ceremony was attended by MLA of Gajuwaka Constituency Tippala Nagi Reddy, in the presence of CEO Sambasiva Rao, COO V Janardhan Rao, Vice President - Vigilance (R&R and Security) B Balakrishna, and Vice President (R&R and Security) L P S Ramu Naidu, along with other staff members of Gangavaram Port.

SCR GM calls on Governor, meets Chief Secretary

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

South Central Railway General Manager Gajanan Mallaya during his visit to Vijayawada division on Tuesday called on Governor Biswa Bhushan Harichandan.

He also met LV



South Central Railway General Manager Gajanan Mallaya meeting Andhra Pradesh Governor Biswabhusan Harichandan at Raj Bhavan on Tuesday

Subrahmanyam, Chief Secretary, at the Secretariat, along with Sreenivas, Divisional Railway Manager, and discussed the progress of various ongoing and new railway projects in the State.

He sought cooperation from the State government regarding land acquisition. He also met Ajeya Kallam, Principal Advisor.

Later, he met Damodar Gautam Sawang, Director General of Police, and discussed on the issues pertaining to the provision of security to the passengers in the zone's jurisdiction.

Earlier, he inaugurated the renovated orthopaedic and physiotherapy block at the Railway Hospital. He inspected various wards in the hospital and interacted with patients and enquired with doctors on

facilities available and further improvements at the Railway Hospital in Vijayawada.

He inspected the Electrical Traction Training Centre (ETTC), Satyanarayanapuram, and interacted with Assistant Loco Pilots undergoing training. He discussed on training modules adopted and various courses being conducted.

He, along with Divisional Railway Manager, Vijayawada Division, planted saplings for the green environment on the premises of ETTC.

The General Manager reviewed the achievements and performance of Vijayawada division with the divisional officers. He complimented officials and staff for their best performance and advised them to maintain the high levels of performance.

APSSDC organising conference to train students

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh State Skill Development Corporation (APSSDC), the nodal agency for skill development in the State is organising a conference to connect industry and academia from the pharmaceutical and life sciences sector on August 21 at Vijayawada Club, according to Dr Arja Srikanth, Managing Director, APSSDC, here on Tuesday.

He said the chief guest of the programme would be Dr LV Subrahmanyam, Chief Secretary, and the key speakers would be Dr Lanka Srinivas, Mentor, ELIX Global, AVB Reddy, ex-president AP Pharmacy Council, Rama Murthy Naidu, Registrar to Pharma Council, and JSV Prasad, Special Chief Secretary.

He said with the intention to impart skill to students and youth as per industry needs, the APSSDC was collaborating with Life Sciences Sector Skill

The Andhra Pradesh State Skill Development Corporation was collaborating with Life Sciences Sector Skill Development Council (LSSSDC) for imparting training to trainers

Development Council (LSSSDC) for imparting training to trainers. He said knowledge dissemination and providing on-the-job training and apprenticeship in the pharmaceutical and life sciences sector were part of the programme.

"Target Group for the above training are students and unemployed youth having a minimum qualification of Class X, ITI, Intermediate, graduates and postgraduates," he added.

Ajeya Kallam inaugurates vintage photo exhibition

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Principal Adviser to Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy Ajeya Kallam on Tuesday said black and white photographs serve as an objective lesson to modern digital lensmen.

Inaugurating a photo exhibition - 'Echoes of Time, a Photographic Journey' - at the Cultural Centre of Vijayawada & Amaravati, he emphasised the importance of capturing historical events in photo frames for posterity.

The exhibition was organised by Photogenic Arts Circle to mark the centenary celebration of Dr Bhagawan Das, former chief secretary of Andhra Pradesh.

Kallam complimented K. Sudhakar Reddy, secretary, Photogenic Arts Circle, for organising the expo.

Sudhakar Reddy briefed his entry into the field and on the guidance he received from Dr Bhagawan Das in photography and photogrammetry.

He fondly remembered his association with Das, the founder president of AP Photography Academy and paid rich tributes for his contribution to the field of photography.

The organisers felicitated



Principal Adviser to Chief Minister Ajeya Kallam inaugurating a vintage photography exhibition in Vijayawada on Tuesday

Principal Adviser to Chief Minister Ajeya Kallam fondly remembered his association with Das, the founder president of AP Photography Academy and paid rich tributes for his contribution to the field of photography

Ajeya Kallam, and presented the book 'Echos of time a Photographic Journey' consisting of the more photographs of Bhagawan Das, compiled by Sudhakar Reddy.

A. Laxmi Kumari, CEO, AP State Creativity and Cultural

Commission, Indla Rama Subbareddy, renowned physiatrist, E. Sivanagi Reddy, CEO, Cultural Centre of Vijayawada & Amaravati, and Golla Narayana Rao, secretary, Andhra Arts Academy, were present.

AP GOVT'S WATER PRIORITIES WOEFULLY WRONG

"Nothing is underserved for making poetry"... is the famous poetic expression of great Telugu writer of 20th Century Srirangam Srinivasa Rao, popularly known as Sri Sri. Principal political players of Andhra Pradesh appeared to have imbibed the essence of such poetic saying and unleashed a veiled attack on their political rivals, even over flood havoc that disturbed the lives of lakhs of people in the state. Ruling YSR Congress and principal Opposition party Telugudesa are fully engaged in verbal duel, particularly when the devastating flood in river Krishna in result of releasing lakhs of cusecs of water from projects

upstream. Darts flew from both sides following the flood, particularly in the absence of Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy who is on a visit to US. The two political rivals, YSRC and TDP, severely criticized each other over flood and water 'management'. The alleged operation of drone cameras over the residence of N Chandrababu Naidu on the pretext of surveying the flood situation sparked severe criticism. A private person operating the drone without permission over the residence of Naidu who enjoys NSG protection is the main cause of uproar from Opposition. The government has evaded a direct reply to this aspect and defended it as being a part of

Optimal use of high water levels during floods can hardly be made if the rulers don't grab the opportunity and have a lethargic attitude in getting things done in a timely manner

flood survey. Actually, YSRC has been concentrating on the issue of a private bungalow that was taken by Chandrababu for residential purpose during his tenure as CM, and lives there even now as Leader of Opposition in AP Assembly. But YSR Congress has been persistently stating that it's an illegal building that came up near the flood bank, which attracts the provisions of River Conservation Act. Apart from that building, the government has also

issued notices to the other 22 structures constructed alongside the river bund/flood bank. Since those buildings might happen to obstruct the river flow and cause severe damage during floods, the government is of the firm opinion that such buildings, including Chandrababu's house, must go.

What appears to be the alarming part in this episode is the government maintain-



M D RATNA KUMAR
Senior Journalist

ing excess water in the Prakasam Barrage, in whose vicinity Naidu's residence is located, beyond its storage capacity of 3 tmc. In such a situation, the 'target' may get inundated, maybe to the lik-

ing of his opponents who are out to prove that the building is an illegal construction built on river flood bank. What needs to be done is releasing all water in excess of the barrage capacity and initiate relief operations.

All this brings to mind the devastating floods in Krishna river in 2009. The grim situation was effectively tackled by then CM K Rosaiah by early release of water from the two major projects of Nagarjuna Sagar and Srisailem even before flood waters reached their reservoirs.

The current government's priorities appear to be different from its predecessors'. Even former CM Dr YS Rajasekhara Reddy handled

the flood situation during his tenure very deftly in the face of severe criticism from his own party quarters. He stood up for the interests of his own region -- by effectively using flood waters without breaching the reservoir capacity limits -- and got due recognition in the end.

Whatever be the current AP government's objectives, it still couldn't get the water needed to meet the requirements of Rayalaseema through Pothireddipadu (PRP) head regulator in the upstream of Srisailem project which is designed specially to cater to the needs of parched lands of the region. The optimal use of high water levels during floods can hardly be done if the rulers don't grab

the opportunity and have a lethargic attitude in getting things done in a timely manner.

A staggering 200 tmc of surplus water - enough to meet the water requirement of 13 lakh of acres of land in the Krishna delta -- got drained into the sea in floods this time. Large amounts of surplus water could have been saved by diverting it into several medium and minor projects in the state.

In other words, government didn't act responsibly and instead chose to prioritise targeting its political rival, when it could have used flood waters sensibly for the benefit of people and collect valuable brownie points in the process.

Officials told to complete repair works on Tirumala

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

Tirumala Special Officer AV Dharma Reddy instructed officials to complete the repair works of public toilets in Tirumala before the annual Brahmotsavams and cater to the demand of the pilgrims.

During the weekly review meeting of senior officers held at Annamaiah Bhavan in Tirumala on Tuesday, the Special Officer instructed the CE Ramachandra Reddy to ensure that all cottages and toilet blocks are free from repairs and cater to the needs of the multitude of pilgrims visiting Tirumala during the annual fete.

The Special Officer instructed senior officers, who had adopted each area to ensure its overall development, and stated that their status would be reviewed from next week onwards for the betterment of the system. He also reviewed the pending civil, electrical and water works in Tirumala, along with sanitation and procurement of ingredients, required to make prasadam.

Tollywood actor Raj Tharun crashes car

Continued from Page 1

Police reached the spot after some local people informed them of the crash. They identified the car as registered in the name of a Pradeep from Lead India Private Limited Company.

After the mishap, the actor left the scene in another car. CCTV footage obtained showed the actor walking away from the crash site.

Due to similarity of the surnames, veteran Tollywood actor Tarun Kumar started getting calls, with people seeking to enquire about his 'condition'. The actor later clarified that he was safe in his house, much less involved in any accident. However, the Narsingi Inspector of Police, G V Ramana Goud, denied that any such incident had occurred. "No such thing has happened. There was no crash. No Tollywood actor was involved in anything," said the official when contacted.

Crop loss in Krishna district put at Rs 19 crore

G RAVI KIRAN
■ VIJAYAWADA

The recent floods have dealt a big blow to farmers in Krishna district, causing a crop loss of up to Rs 19 crore in an extent of about of 23,500 acres.

In Vijayawada, hundreds of people lost their homes in the floods. Enumeration of loss began on Monday after completion of which, the compensation to be paid by the government will be decided.

Standing crops are under 2.5-foot water at many places so there is no scope for estimating the crop loss now. Maybe within three days, the loss can be assessed properly by Village Committees formed by the government in coordination with the revenue department.

According to reports, most of the commercial crops like cotton, chilli and horticulture crops were damaged due to floods.

Still, in many island villages, people are travelling on boats to reach a few places. Food arrangements have been made by government officials at various places. However, the victims in island villages have alleged that there are no sufficient arrangements for food for the



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■ Officials informed that medical camps will be continued for three more days

■ Power restoration in island villages is going on and it may be completed by Wednesday.

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VMC Commissioner Prasanna Venkatesh distributed relief materials to flood victims in Krishnalanka in the city.

District Collector Imtiyaz said, "Assessment of flood loss will be done within three days. As water is still there in the standing crops, assessing the crop damage may take time. We have obtained some information already. Full details of crop loss with the names of victims will be prepared this week itself".

Collector seeks donations for flood-hit

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Krishna District Collector Md Imtiyaz on Tuesday appealed NGOs and philanthropists to come forward with donations for the flood-affected people in the district. The Collector held a meeting with members of the Rotary Club, Chamber of Commerce, cloth merchants and a few NGOs to mobilise help for those affected by the flood.

The Collector said that many villages and islands in Krishna river basin had been submerged. As many as 46 villages in 19 mandals were severely affected. As a precautionary measure, 49 special camps were set up and shelter was given to about 13,450 people in municipalities. Similarly, 13 special camps providing shelter to about 7,800 people that were set up by the Vijayawada Municipal Corporation (VMC).

The Collector said that apart from providing shelter, other amenities such as food, blankets, sarees, lungis, mosquito nets, towels and utensils should be provided to the flood victims. He stated that NGOs and voluntary organisations should lend helping hand and school bags and books should be provided to the students. He also emphasised the need to organise medical camps to control the



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spread of diseases.

He ordered officials to distribute rice, red gram dal and palm oil to all eligible families affected by floods in the district. He, along with Joint Collector Madhivilatha, held a video conference with village and mandal level officials.

Speaking on the occasion, the Collector said that all eligible families affected by floods would get 25 kg rice, one kg red gram and one kg palm oil. He appreciated the staff for shifting the people to rescue shelters from the flood-

affected areas and for providing facilities. He stated that there were around 103 fair price shops under the flood-affected areas in the district, adding that stock was available at 50 fair price shops and the rest would get the stock by Tuesday evening.

Differently-abled Welfare Department Additional Manager AVD Narayana Rao, Cloth Merchants Association President Jaganmohan Rao, Rotary Club President P Anil Babu and others were also present.

Ajeya Kallam releases book on 'Telugu Diaspora'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A book with title 'Telugu Diaspora' through the ages from the earliest times' edited by Prof P Chenna Reddy, former Director of Archaeology and Museums, erstwhile Andhra Pradesh, was released by Principal Advisor to Chief Minister Ajeya Kallam on Tuesday at the Secretariat.

Speaking on the occasion, Ajeya Kallam praised the efforts and contribution of Prof Chenna Reddy in highlighting the rich culture and heritage of Andhraites across the globe. Telugu Diaspora refers to the Telugu speaking



'Telugu Diaspora through the ages from the earliest times' a book edited by Prof P Chenna Reddy, former Director of Archeology and Museums, erstwhile AP, being released by Principal Advisor to CM Ajeya Kallam, in Vijayawada on Tuesday

people of Indian States residing mainly in other countries like the US, Europe and Gulf. Prof Chenna Reddy is a well known archaeologist and is popular for his books on Emperor Krishna Devaraya wherein he has mentioned in

detail about the jewellery offered to Lord Venkateswara and also nine other famous temples like Simhachalam, Nagulapuram, Sree Kalahasti, Ahobilam, Sree Shailam, Udayagiri and Dharanikota (Amaravati).

TTD SO inspects rest houses, queue complexes

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

TTD Special Officer AV Dharma Reddy made extensive inspections of TTD rest houses, mada streets, and Vaikuntam queue complexes on Tuesday, directing officials to take various devotee friendly steps. During his visit to Panchajanya, Kausthubham, and HVC Rest Houses, the SO instructed officials to take up change of linen as well as repairs. He also interacted with devotees at the Panchajanya rest house and received feedback from them. Along with CVSO Gopinath Jatti, he inspected the mada streets, Ugrana Ananthawar Thota, Vaikuntam queue complex 2 and Divya Darshan complexes, and made suitable suggestions to officials on the underground cable works and darshan line queue management.



Governor Biswa Bhusan Harichandan flagging off the mobile dental care unit at the Raj Bhavan in Vijayawada on Tuesday

Governor flags off mobile dental care unit

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Governor Biswa Bhusan Harichandan on Tuesday flagged off the mobile dental care unit at the Raj Bhavan here on Tuesday, an initiative by Child Welfare Committee of Vijayawada, in association with Dr Sridhar Oral Health Foundation.

The Governor appreciated the efforts of BVS Kumar, Chairman of Child Welfare Committee, Vijayawada, and Dr Sreedhar Reddy for their initiative to offer dental care to orphans and semi-orphans staying at various child care institutions in Vijayawada and other places in Krishna district. The Chairman explained to the Governor how they go about rescuing orphans and

child labour and rehabilitate them by providing shelter at 92 childcare institutions located in various places in Krishna district.

He informed that the dental care programme for orphans will go for three months, covering all the child-care institutions in the district, offering necessary examination, treatment and providing clips costing around Rs 2,000 wherever required. The Governor had earlier looked at the dental examination equipment and other facilities provided inside the mobile dental care unit. Mukesh Kumar Meena, Secretary to Governor, Arjuna Rao, Joint Secretary to Governor, and other officials of Raj Bhavan were also present.

Where has all the money gone?

Continued from Page 1

"The government gave up that power to print money under the FRBM Act. There is a severe liquidity problem now and these are issues which need to be discussed. But some of our economic theoreticians oppose blindly the printing of money to overcome cash crunch," one economist said.

The current total capital of RBI is about Rs 10.53 lakh crore. Of this, the revaluation reserves on account of foreign exchange and bullion the RBI holds amount to Rs 7 L cr. The economists' fraternity too is divided on how to resolve the situation. While some economists say the current liquidity crisis could have been handled better if the government had the power to print currency at will, some others argue that an unfettered right to print money will trigger an inflationary spiral, rekindling memories of the 1960s and 1970s when the RBI was printing money to finance the government's huge budget deficit. "Indiscriminate printing of money is inflationary and will hurt the poor the most. Inflation will make life tougher, the poor poorer, and the rich richer. The political fallout of such a policy is usually negative," they opine.

A garland of scorpions for the Lord

PNS ■ KURNOOL

India is a land of customs and beliefs with some of them unique and dating back to centuries. The act of offering flowers, fruits and milk to the deity is a common practice in temples across the country. However, the temple of Kondalarayudu in Kurnool district hosts a surprising ritual - that of offering scorpions as prasadam for the Lord.

The temple, located among the hills at Kodumur mandal in Kurnool district, practises the custom of offering live scorpions to the deity on every third Saturday of the holy month of Shravana. The tradition itself dates back to five decades,



Devotees offering scorpions to the Lord at Kondalarayudu temple Kodumur mandal in Kurnool district on Tuesday

with the villagers enthusiastically participating.

The villagers catch the scorpions that hide under the rocks from the hills and carefully take them to the temple, where

they will made into a garland that would be placed on the deity. The interesting part is that everyone participates in the ritual without fear. For many, it is almost a competi-

The temple practises the custom of offering live scorpions to the deity on every third Saturday of the holy month of Shravana

tion to see who can carry the maximum number. According to the locals, if the scorpions bite them, a three time circumambulation around the temple would keep them away from harm.

The locals of Kodumur and surrounding areas believe that the creatures will not harm them while they work in their

fields and at their homes, if they offer the scorpion poojas to the deity. It is also believed that the sting of the scorpions, which would be poisonous on other days, become specifically impotent on this day.

The temple management committee president Ram Manohar Reddy provides drinking water and prasadam to the devotees, who come once a year to witness the unique ritual. Various devotees from all walks of life, including childless couples, believe that if they visit the Kondalarayudu temple and seek the Lord's blessings, all their wished would be fulfilled. More than 7000 people had come to participate this year.

CAPSULE

TTD JEO INSPECTS KALYANA MANDAPAMS

Tirupati: Joint Executive Officer (JEO) P Basant Kumar on Tuesday inspected the ongoing development works of TTD Kalyana Mandapams and Sri Venkateswara Swamy temple in Vijayawada and Krishna districts. He visited the ongoing works of TTD Kalyana Mandapams at Uyyuru as well as Sri Venkateswara Divyakshetram at Venkatapalem in the capital city of Amaravati. He also inspected the ongoing works of TTD Sri Venkateswara Swamy temple in Mimmakuru of Krishna district, along with officials.

TWO YOUTHS DROWN IN A BID TO RESCUE WOMAN

VIJAYAWADA: In a tragic incident, two youngsters - Sivarama Krishna and Sai Ajay - drowned in Rives Canal on Tuesday. Sivarama Kriahna, was a carpenter belonging to Ferry area of Ibrahimpatnam and Sai Ajay was a his B. Tech graduate from Madhuranagar in Vijayawada. According to police, a housewife Rani from Machavaram in the city had a quarrel with her husband a few days back and came to her maternal home. Her parents convinced her and were taking her back to her in-laws' house at Eluru by a vehicle. The woman came out of the vehicle at a bridge across Ryves Canal near Gunadala saying she was feeling like vomiting. Then, she suddenly jumped into the canal filled with floodwaters. When her parents cried for help, four youngsters jumped into the canal to save the woman. Two of them brought her back safely. Unfortunately, Sivarama Krishna and Siva Ajay drowned in the canal. NDRF teams traced the body of Sivarama Krishna. They are continuing search for the body of Sai Ajay.

63 Hull Artificers passing out from INS Vishwakarma

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The passing out parade of 63 Hull Artificers (HA) apprentices comprising of 56 Indian Navy HA sailors and seven Coast Guard Yantriks was conducted at INS Vishwakarma on Tuesday. The parade was reviewed by Rear Admiral Sanjay Datt, Chief Staff Officer (Technical) of Headquarters Eastern Naval command (HQ ENC), who marked the completion

All sailors who completed the programme would shortly assume their appointments at frontline warships

GOVT YET TO PROVIDE NATIONAL HEALTH PROGRAMME FOR MEN

SUMIT ONKA ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The government of India is yet to introduce a national health programme for men even as their life span shows a steady decrease, not only in India but across the globe. According to statistics, two thirds of the world's oldest population (85 years and above) are women. Given the death rate, more men are dying due to cancer and cardio-vascular diseases than women. The government needs to come up with health programmes for men in preventive healthcare in the light of this increasing gap between the average age of women and men, said Dr Rajeev Sood, President of Men's Health Society of India (MHSI) and Head of Department of



Urology & Renal Transplant at Ram Manohar Lohia. He was giving a presentation on 'Men's Health and the Aging Indian Male' at the National Conference of Sexology held in Vizag. "The difference in life span of the two sexes range from 3-12 years in most regions of the world, making it an

almost universal phenomenon. Many diseases like metabolic syndrome, suicide, cardiovascular disease, road traffic accidents, occupational hazards and mental illnesses affect and kill men more than women. It has been estimated that most of these chronic illnesses are preventable (upto 70%) and arise

According to Dr Sood, "The upcoming issues in the promotion of men's health include increasing the men's health literacy, making a centrally funded global programme on men's health, and the need of providing professionals dedicated towards the issue"

out of lifestyle issues and socio-cultural factors," he pointed out, adding that even though women fall sick more often with minor ailments, they have lower mortality resulting from better care.

The need for health promotion and illness prevention to uplift health care for men is also largely unmet in India and adds to the morbidity.

According to Dr Sood, "The upcoming issues in the promo-

tion of men's health include increasing the men's health literacy, making a centrally funded global programme on men's health, and the need of providing professionals dedicated towards the issue. NGO's can play a huge role by providing trained professionals specialized in the area. There is also a need to promote research, but above all, the focus needs to be on encouraging men to be open about their health issues."

Asian Pulp & Paper Industry very much with us: Minister for IT

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Government of Andhra Pradesh condemned the campaign on investments going back in the State. Speaking to the media on Tuesday, Minister for IT, Industries & Commercial Taxes Mekapathi Gowtham Reddy said that there was no truth in the campaign on the Asian Pulp & Paper industry, which had planned to install a plant at Rajahmundry.

He said that the management of the Asian Pulp & Paper Industry was in touch with the officials of the government and talks were going on towards the final decision on installing the plant in the proposed place itself.

"But, a few people are cam-



paigning that the company has gone back and that other industries will go back too because of the new government," he said.

The news that Asian Pulp & Paper Industry had withdrawn from its proposal of installing a big plant at Rajahmundry went viral in social media, as

well as the mainstream media. Earlier in January 2019, they had signed an MoU with the government of Andhra Pradesh under the TDP rule.

Gowtham Reddy stated that the government was going to release a white paper on the status of industries soon to clarify and rule out any

rumours. He added that the best industrial policy was under preparation and that Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy was inviting investors from across the world.

The Minister said that under the YSRCP government, Andhra Pradesh Industrial Infrastructure Corporation (APIIC) had received 800 applications within two months. "Even at the Outreach Convention, we received a good response," he added, and stated that the Adani Group had come forward to invest Rs 5,500 crore in Krishnapatnam. The Minister made it clear that there would be no backdoor dealings or kickback agreements with any company by their government, unlike the previous TDP rule.

Complaint filed against NTV scribe Rehana for "anti national FB post"

Hyderabad: The president of Hindu Sangathan filed a complaint with the Saidabad Police on Tuesday against a journalist alleging her post on a social media platform was 'anti-national'.

In a statement to the police,

Karunsagar Kashimshetty, the president of the Hindu organisation had claimed that the journalist's post on Facebook was fake news and was done with an intention to cause a rift citizens and the Indian government.

Chief Minister's Volleyball tourney begins

PNS ■ SRIKAKULAM

The state-level Chief Minister's Volleyball Tournament opened on grand note here on Tuesday, where players from all the 13 districts took part in the opening ceremony.

District In-Charge and state Endowments Minister V Srinivas Rao, along with Roads and Buildings Minister Dharmana Krishnadas, unveiled the sport flag of the State and formally launched

the three day tournament, which will conclude on August 22.

Speaking on the occasion, Rao stated that the State government had been encouraging sports and games across the state, and announced the schedule of various games to be held at state level in different districts till THE end of 2020.

D Krishna Das appreciated the administration and sports officials for making elaborate arrangements on a short

D Krishna Das appreciated the administration and sports officials for making elaborate arrangements on a short notice

notice. Addressing the players, the Minister said that winning and losing were the part of the

Car owner gets e-Challan for not wearing helmet

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In another erroneous e-Challan incident, the owner of a four-wheeler received an e-Challan for not wearing a helmet. Rambilli traffic police issued the challan on July 31 against the car owner for not wearing helmet and the due date to pay the fine amount of Rs 135 was mentioned as August 15.

The e-challan that the car owner received on his registered mobile number also had an additional fine of Rs 1,135 for defective number plates and wrong parking of the car during last December. The car owner checked the details of the e-challan on the portal of the AP traffic police and

was shocked to see a different picture. However, the picture was later removed.

When asked about the incident, Additional Deputy Commissioner of Police (Traffic) M Ramesh Kumar said that it had been a typing error while uploading the details of the vehicle over the portal. He further said that such incidents have been common due to irregular number plates and added that traffic police officials might type incorrect information as the registration numbers are not clearly visible to them. He urged the vehicle owners to approach the traffic police in case of wrong e-challans so that they could be immediately cancelled.

Man impregnates minor girl, aborts pregnancy

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In another case of sexual assault, a man was arrested for raping and impregnating a minor girl in Vizag. The accused threatened the minor to go under abortion after four months of pregnancy by allegedly bribing the doctors at the King George Hospital.

The Vizag police on Tuesday arrested Ravi Kumar, a resident of Gopalapatnam area in Vizag city, for raping the 14-year-old girl studying in class X. The 16-week pregnancy was illegally terminated by a team of doctors at KG Hospital. Four others were also arrested in connection with the case for supporting the accused.

According to Deputy Commissioner of Police, South Zone, B Uday Bhaskar, the victim, along with her mother, had been residing at Gopalapatnam in Vizag for the past few years. The girl's neighbour Ravi befriended her and raped her at his home several times.

Earlier this month, she experienced stomach pain and so was rushed to a private hospital, where doctors learnt that she was four months pregnant.



According to Deputy Commissioner of Police, South Zone, B Uday Bhaskar, the victim, along with her mother, had been residing at Gopalapatnam in Vizag for the past few years. The girl's neighbour Ravi befriended her and raped her at his home several times

Ravi, along with his family members, threatened them. The girl underwent abortion at KG Hospital in Vizag on August 7, 2019 and was discharged on August 15.

Later, Ravi and his family members took the girl to Anakapalle to hush up the entire episode.

However, the victim's grand-

mother B Sarojini, who came to know the events, approached the Gopalapatnam police. "We have investigated the case in various aspects and nabbed the accused Ravi and four others, who helped him with the crime. We will look into other angles to nab the others involved," the DCP said.

Advocates boycott courts, demand for High Court in Vizag city

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Legal professionals across North Andhra Pradesh boycotted courts and staged demonstrations on Tuesday, demanding the State government to relocate the AP High Court from Nelapadu to Vizag city.

"The AP High Court has been functioning from a temporary structure near Nelapadu in Guntur district for past few months. Nelapdu is on the outskirts and there was is no development in the area. Vizag city has excellent infrastructure and legal talent and it is the best place for establishing the High Court," said President of the Joint Action Committee (JAC) of the legal fraternity, North Andhra Pradesh, G Maheswara Reddy.

Holding placards, the advocates, including a few women lawyers, raised slogans in Vizianagaram, Srikakulam district, demanding the government to fulfil the demands of the legal fraternity.

Members of the Visakhapatnam Bar Association opined that the relocation of the AP High Court was solely in the hands of the government and that Vizag would be an appropriate location. They added that the establishment of a High Court in Vizag had been the demand of the legal fraternity for decades, and added that they would intensify their agitation in the coming days.

Root out Devadasi system from society: AP Chief Justice

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Chief Justice of AP High Court Vikram Nath has called upon people to join hands for the eradication of Devadasi system from the society as it is one of the most heinous practices committed against women.

Addressing a state-level workshop organised by the Andhra Pradesh Scheduled Caste Development Finance Corporation (APSCCFCL) here on Tuesday, Chief Justice Vikram Nath said that it was the responsibility of everyone in the society to fight against the social evil. He added that it was being practised in seven districts in the State and not a single case had been filed.

Gandham Chandrudu, VMD, APSCCFCL, stated that they would create awareness and take up rehabilitation works to support the Devadasi families.



The Chief Justice of AP High Court Vikram Nath lighting the traditional lamp to inaugurate a workshop on eradication of Devadasi system in Vijayawada on Tuesday

"Even now, a considerable number of girls and young women are initiated into this system every year and there are more than 80,000 Devadasis in our State. The traditional system is taking different forms depending on the social, geographical and economic factors. While the system is followed by

many communities of the Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribes, studies indicate that over 80 percent of the Devadasis are from Scheduled Castes," said Justice KC Bhanu.

Gandham Chandrudu, Vice-Chairman and Managing Director APSCCFCL stated that they would create aware-

ness and take up rehabilitation works to support the Devadasi families. "Special sensitisation and skill development programmes should be organised for the victims so that they can take up income generation activities to lead a dignified life," said devadasi welfare activist Professor Challapalli Swarooparani.

Rajiv's vision put India on growth path: Prithviraj Chauhan

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Former Maharashtra Chief Minister Prithviraj Chauhan has called upon the Congress workers to take the sacrifices of former Prime Ministers late Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi to the people. He stated that Rajiv Gandhi had brought anti-defection law to control 'Ayarams' and Gayarams' in political parties but the trend is going on still.

Recalling the services of Rajiv Gandhi, Chouhan said that Rajiv Gandhi, who lost her mother in the attack of her own security guards, strived hard to see that such situation not arise to anybody. The conditions were serious when Rajiv became the Prime Minister of the nation, but he worked hard to protect law and order and for peaceful country, Pridviraj said.

Addressing the gathering on the occasion of 75th birth anniversary celebrations of late Rajiv Gandhi here on Tuesday at Gandhi Bhavan, Pridviraj said that Rajiv became Prime Minister of the nation by winning more than 400 MP seats. He identified the necessity of



computers for transparent governance. He worked for peace in Punjab, Assam and Mizoram. He was also ready for discussions with Srilanka Tamils and sent peace Army to Lanka. But LTTE killed Rajiv by not digesting the peace discussions with Srilanka Tamils, Pridviraj said. Rajiv Gandhi introduced Navodaya schools, Operation Black Board schemes as part of Rural Education Policy. Rajiv was also introduced Telecom, Water, Education Technology Mission for the growth of nation, he recalled. Former

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister K Rosaiah, TPCC Chief N Uttam Kumar Reddy, MLC T Jeevan Reddy, former MLC Prof K Nageshwar, senior journalist Dr K Ramachandramurthy, AICC secretaries Saleem Ahmed, Bose Raj, Srinivas Krishnan, former Minister Sailajanath, AICC in-charge RC Kuntia, former MP V Hanumantha Rao, MLAs Bhatti Vikramarka, D Sridhar Babu, T Jagga Reddy, Ponnala Laxmaiah, and others also participated.

In the morning, VH and former Minister Shabbir Ali welcomed Rajiv Sadbhavan rallies reached to the statue of Rajiv Gandhi located at Punjagutta. Later, the leaders paid floral tributes to Rajiv Gandhi statue.

After that, the leaders also paid floral tributes to the portrait of Rajiv Gandhi at Gandhi Bhavan. Later, Uttam launched Youth Congress' blood donation camp at Gandhi Bhavan. Hundreds of Youth Congress activists donated their blood on the occasion. The Youth Congress was also organized a photo exhibition on Rajiv Gandhi at Gandhi Bhavan.

SHORT READS



Four TN fishermen held for fishing off Neduntheevu

RAMESWARAM(TN): Four Tamil Nadu fishermen were arrested by the Sri Lankan Navy on Tuesday for allegedly fishing off Neduntheevu, a fisheries department official said. The fishermen from Kottapattinam in Pudukottai district had ventured into the sea on Monday and were fishing near Neduntheevu when the Sri Lankan naval personnel reached the spot and arrested them, Assistant Director of Fisheries, Pudukottai, Kumaresan said. The fisherfolks were taken to Kangesanthurai port in the island nation along with their boat, he said. On August 13, seven fishermen from here were arrested by the Lankan Navy for allegedly fishing off Neduntheevu.



Gangster Chhota Rajan convicted in attempt-to-murder case

MUMBAI: A special court here convicted gangster Chhota Rajan and five others on Tuesday in a 2012 attempt-to-murder and extortion case lodged against them by a Mumbai hotelier. Arguments on the quantum of punishment will be held later in the day. Special court judge A T Wankhede convicted the six under various sections of the stringent Maharashtra Control of Organised Crime Act (MCOCA) in the case of hotelier B R Shetty, who was shot at in suburban Andheri when he was going to meet his friend. Rajan is currently lodged in Tihar jail in Delhi after his deportation to India following his arrest in Indonesia in October 2015.

Another elephant attack claims life of hospital employee

COIMBATORE: A private hospital employee was killed by a wild elephant at Thoppampatti, near here, and this is the second such incident reported in two days. Two men, both aged 27, were sitting and talking near Ganapathi Garden late Monday night when the elephant came down from a hill near the CRPF camp, police said Tuesday. Seeing the elephant, the men took to their heels, but the elephant took Prem Karthik with its trunk, hurled him down and trampled him to death, they said. His friend Vignesh managed to escape and informed the villagers about the incident. They, in turn, alerted the police and the forest department personnel. The personnel recovered the Prem's body and sent it for a postmortem at the government hospital. On early Monday, an elephant attack occurred just three km away from Pannimadai, where a driver was trampled to death, leading to panic among the people of the vicinity.

ALLAYS FEARS ON NRC

GOVT SAYS NON-INCLUSION DOES NOT MAKE ONE FOREIGNER

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In an effort to allay fears, the Union Home Ministry on Tuesday said non-inclusion of a person's name in the final list of NRC does not by itself amount to him or her being declared a foreigner and assured that adequate arrangements have been made for appeal against it.

The ministry also said it will amend the rules to increase the time limit of filing of appeals in foreigners tribunals (FTs) from 60 to 120 days for those who would be excluded from the final National Register of Citizens, a list of Assam's residents to be published on August 31.

The decisions were taken at a high-level meeting chaired by Union Home Minister Amit Shah and attended by Assam Chief Minister Sarbananda Sonowal and others here on Monday.



In a statement, the ministry said under the provisions of Foreigners Act 1946 and Foreigners (Tribunals) Order 1964, only foreigners tribunals are empowered to declare a person foreigner.

"Thus, non-inclusion of a person's name in NRC does not by itself amount to him/her being declared as a foreigner," it said.

In order to facilitate the

persons excluded from NRC, adequate number of such tribunals is being established at convenient locations.

"It has been decided that state government would also make arrangements to provide legal aid to the needy people amongst those excluded from NRC. As it may not be possible for all those excluded from final NRC to file the appeal within the prescribed

"Thus, non-inclusion of a person's name in NRC does not by itself amount to him/her being declared as a foreigner," it said

time, the MHA will amend the rules to increase the present time limit of filing of appeals in FTs from 60 days to 120 days regarding exclusion from final NRC," the statement said.

At the meeting, it was also decided that adequate arrangements will be made by the state government to provide full opportunity to people excluded from the NRC list to appeal.

"Every individual, whose name does not figure in the

final NRC, can represent his/her case in front of the appellate authority i.e. foreigner tribunals," it said.

The Citizenship (Registration of Citizens and Issue of National Identity Cards) Rules, 2003 are also being amended accordingly.

To maintain law and order, the ministry said, central security forces are being provided to the state.

The Union Home Ministry and the Assam government have held extensive deliberations in recent weeks, the statement said.

When the draft NRC was published on July 30, 2018, there was a huge controversy over the exclusion of 40.7 lakh people from it. The draft NRC included the names of 2.9 crore people out of the total 3.29 crore applications.

In the list published in June 2019, over a lakh more people were excluded.

‘Unpleasant trends of intolerance, polarisation can damage our polity’

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Former prime minister Manmohan Singh on Tuesday said "unpleasant trends" of growing intolerance, communal polarisation, and incidents of violent crimes propelled by hatred of certain groups will damage our polity.

Remembering former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi on his 75th birth anniversary, he said these trends are repugnant to promotion of peace, national integration and communal harmony, which are cherished objectives enshrined in our Constitution.

"All of us need to reflect on how we can contribute to arresting these trends," he said.

Recalling Rajiv Gandhi's words, Singh said, "Nothing is more important than the unity and integrity of our nation. India is indivisible. Secularism is the bedrock of our nationhood. It implies more than tolerance. It involves an active effort for harmony."

"No religion preaches hatred and intolerance. Vested inter-



Manmohan Singh

ests, both external and internal, are inciting and exploiting communal passions and violence to divide India," he said.

Singh said another cause for solemn reflection today is some "disturbing trends" that our country has been witnessing over past few years.

"These unpleasant trends of growing intolerance, communal polarisation, growing incidents of violent crimes propelled by hatred of certain groups and of mobs taking the law in their own hands can only damage our polity," the former prime minister said.

He said Gandhi's birth

"No religion preaches hatred and intolerance. Vested interests, both external and internal, are inciting and exploiting communal passions and violence to divide India," he said

anniversary is an occasion to remember values of broad secular outlook, spirit of tolerance, commitment to communal harmony and empathy to others, which define our nationhood.

"Our homage to Rajiv ji should not only be a remembrance of his extraordinary personality and contribution to nation building - it should also be marked by a reaffirmation of our commitment to abide by

these very values," he said.

Describing Gandhi as an "illustrious" and a young former prime minister who was a true visionary, Singh said he truly set the direction for equipping our nation for entering the new millennium with a progressive, modern and scientific outlook.

Singh also noted that major strides in communication and information technology, in strengthening democracy at the grass roots level, in education, in ending the decade-old insurgency movement in Mizoram, in opening a fresh dialogue with China, in launching technology missions, have been the direct results of his vision and efforts.

They have given us today a firm platform to launch further initiatives for growth and development, he said.

He also said homage to Rajiv Gandhi should not only be a remembrance of his extraordinary personality and contribution to nation building, but also be marked by a reaffirmation of our commitment to abide by these values.

SARADHA SCAM

HC extends protection to Kumar

PNS ■ KOLKATA

The Calcutta High Court on Tuesday extended the protection from arrest to West Bengal CID Additional Director General Rajeev Kumar in connection with the Saradha chit-fund scam.

Justice Madhumati Mitra extended Kumar's interim protection till August 28 after a CBI counsel submitted before her that his senior was out of town in connection with another case. The junior counsel for the CBI prayed for an adjournment of hearing of Kumar's petition seeking quashing of a notice served on him by the agency to appear for questioning in connection with the Rs 2,500-crore scam. The court said the matter would be heard again on August 27. Kumar, a former commissioner of Kolkata Police and Bidhannagar Police, was appointed ADG, CID, by the Mamata Banerjee-led government before the 2019 Lok Sabha election.

‘Centre trying to strangulate elected govt in Pondy’

PNS ■ PUDUCHERRY

Senior Congress leader Mukul Wasnik Tuesday charged the NDA government at the Centre with trying to "strangulate" the democratically elected government in Puducherry.

Addressing a meeting to celebrate the 75th birth anniversary of late Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi Tuesday here, Wasnik said the Centre was "creating problems" for the territorial government.

"But, Chief Minister V Narayanasamy and his cabinet colleagues would fight out the challenge posed by the Centre and they would all be successful in their efforts to protect democracy."

The All India Congress Committee General Secretary recalled that late leader Rajiv Gandhi had launched several missions to promote technology, literacy, empowerment of women and also country's economic growth.

Hitting out at the central government for withdrawing the special status granted to Jammu and Kashmir, wasnik said "Jammu and Kashmir had a state government. But now it had been reduced to a



Mukul Wasnik

status of a Union Territory and two Union Territories have been carved out of Jammu and Kashmir."

"This is for the first time a state had been reduced to a Union Territory. This is the style of functioning of the central government," he said.

The Congress leader called upon the party cadre to take a pledge on the occasion to ensure that the mission of Rajiv Gandhi to make India a strong democratic country was achieved.

"We will not compromise whenever democracy is attacked.

It is our bold and clear determination," he added.

Actor Manju, crew stuck due to HP floods

PNS ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Malayalam superstar Manju Warrier and her film crew were among those stranded in Himachal Pradesh as flash floods and landslides blocked roads in many parts of the state. Three days of heavy rain led to snapping of several key road links. They have been rescued and are being moved to safety, the Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister said.

Around 30 to 40 people, including Manu Warrier, filmmaker Sanal Kumar Sasidharan and the crew of a film they were shooting for were stuck in the hill state's Chattru. Around 200 people were stuck in the flood-affected area.

"They were taken out of the area a short while ago and sent



Manju Warrier

in vehicles safely," Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Jairam Thakur told reporters.

The actress managed to call her brother on Monday night at around 9 pm through a satellite phone as telephone lines were not working.

She said they were running out of food and other essentials which were likely to last just another day, according to the brother Madhu Warrier.

Dabholkar's kin seek arrest of 'real killers'

PNS ■ PUNE

On the occasion of the sixth death anniversary of Narendra Dabholkar on Tuesday, his family members and activists demanded arrest of "real perpetrators" responsible for killing the rationalist.

Members of Dabholkar-founded Andhashradha Nirmulan Samiti (ANS) and his family members organised a protest march at the Omkareshwar bridge where Dabholkar, 68, was shot dead by motorcycle-borne assailants during a morning walk on this day in 2013.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) is cur-

rently probing the case.

As per the chargesheet filed by the CBI in June, 2016, Hindu Janajagruti Samiti member Virendra Tawde was the alleged mastermind behind Dabholkar's killing.

"It has been six years now since my father was killed but the probe has stopped at one point. Before his death anniversary in 2018, the suspected shooters were arrested and it was expected that real perpetrators too would be exposed, but in reality nothing happened," said Hameed Dabholkar. He said the case has progressed only because it has been monitored by the high court.

Govt okays Rs 4,432 cr aid to Odisha, K'taka

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre has approved release of over Rs 4,432 crore to Odisha, Karnataka and Himachal Pradesh for the damage caused by natural calamities in these states during the last financial year.

In a statement, the home ministry said a high-level committee, headed by Union Home Minister Amit Shah, has approved additional central assistance of Rs 3338.22 crore to Odisha for the damage caused by the cyclone Fani, Rs 1029.39 crore to Karnataka for drought and Rs 64.49 crore to Himachal Pradesh for avalanches and hailstorm during 2018-19.

The funds will be disbursed from the National Disaster



Response Fund (NDRF).

This additional assistance is over and above the funds released by Centre in the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) already placed at the disposal of states.

During 2018-19, the central government had released Rs 9,658 crore to all states and during 2019-20, till date, it has released Rs 6,104 crore to 24

states from the SDRF, the statement said.

In view of cyclone Fani, Rs 340.87 crore was released to Odisha in advance on April 29 from the SDRF. Prime Minister Narendra Modi visited the state on May 6, and as announced by him, an immediate assistance of Rs 1,000 crore was released in advance. Additionally, an ex gratia of

This additional assistance is over and above the funds released by Centre in the State Disaster Response Fund (SDRF) already placed at the disposal of states

Rs 2 was provided to next of the kin of the deceased and Rs 50,000 to those seriously injured in the cyclone from PM's Relief Fund.

During cyclone 'Fani', the centre had deployed 71 teams of the National Disaster Response Force (NDRF), 19 columns of Army, nine Engineering Task Force (ETF), 27 aircraft/helicopters and 16 ships of Armed Forces for relief and rescue operations, the statement said.

It said that more than 15.5 lakhs people were taken to safety and the centre had provided all necessary assistance in restoration of power supply and communication in affected districts, including that of providing necessary stores, generator sets, steel poles and skilled manpower. As other states were also likely to be affected, an amount of Rs 688 crore was released in advance from SDRF to Andhra Pradesh, Tamil Nadu and West Bengal.

Didi Ke Bolo: Testing time for TMC leaders

PNS ■ KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's 'Didi Ke Bolo' (Tell Didi) campaign is helping the TMC reach out to people in distress, but at the same time forcing party leaders to handle uncomfortable questions about cut money, arrogance of local leaders and syndicates.

As advised by poll strategist Prashant Kishor and his organisation, appointed by the Trinamool Congress (TMC) after its poor performance in the Lok Sabha polls, Banerjee on July 29 had launched a dedicated helpline number and a website as part of 'Didi Ke Bolo', to enable people to have a direct interface with party functionaries.

As part of the programme, over 1,000 party leaders are visiting 10,000 villages to redress the grievances of people.



Mamata Banerjee

Senior TMC leaders cited examples of Rima Datta of North 24 Parganas district, Samar Mandal of South 24 Parganas district, Ebadur Rahman of Hooghly district, Jagannath Chakraborty of Howrah district and Md Firoz of Jalpaiguri district who had received assistance for medical emergency or getting admission to colleges.

"After getting calls from people in distress, we contacted local TMC leaders and departments concerned, who

As part of the programme, over 1,000 party leaders are visiting 10,000 villages to redress the grievances of people

were asked to resolve the issues. All the complaints were addressed within 24 hours," a senior TMC leader told PTI.

Even people from West Bengal who were stuck in floods in Karnataka and Kerala were rescued after their location and coordinates were passed on to the disaster management department, the TMC leader said. However, the initiative has also raised some allegations against a section of party leaders.

"People have called up the helpline number and complained about extortion, cut money and syndicates. As soon as we received such calls, we

looked into their grievances.

"Some callers have complained against certain leaders, especially those who have joined the TMC from other parties after we came to power in 2011," another TMC leader said on condition of anonymity.

During the mass outreach programme too, the party leaders are being forced to bite the tongue while answering queries on cut money and alleged arrogance of local TMC leaders, a party functionary said. "We are facing a tough time answering these questions. But we can assure the people that steps will be taken to address

these issues," a TMC leader, who faced such uncomfortable questions, told PTI.

Among those participating in the outreach programme are senior party leaders and ministers Rabindranath Ghosh, Jyotipriyo Mullick, Arup Roy, Firhad Hakim, Partha Chatterjee, Sashi Panja, Sadhan Pande, Tapan Dasgupta, Nirmal Ghosh and Abdur Rezzak Mollah.

"In some of the areas that we have visited, people are questioning us why we are hesitating to throw out corrupt and arrogant leaders from the party. We will submit our observations to the leadership," said another TMC leader.

Reacting to the development, state BJP president Dilip Ghosh said people of West Bengal are 'fed up' with the misuse of the state government and "cut money business" of the TMC.

Puri's arrest: Nath dubs it action with 'malicious intention'

PNS ■ BHOPAL

Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath on Tuesday dubbed the arrest of his nephew Ratul Puri in a money laundering case as "action with malicious intention", even as the BJP said the Enforcement Directorate's move was based on its investigation.

Accusing the Union government of using the central agencies to target leaders like former finance minister P Chidambaram and others, Nath expressed hope that the court will take a right decision in the case.

Puri, a businessman, was arrested late Monday night by the Enforcement Directorate (ED) under provisions of the



Kamal Nath

Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA) after he appeared before the central probe agency in New Delhi.

He was arrested by the ED in a fresh case of money laundering linked to an alleged Rs 354 crore bank loan fraud case.

Reacting to it, Nath said, "I have no connection with their (Puri's) business. But, I think

the arrest appears to be an action take with malicious intention."

"It is sad that all the agencies are being misused for political purpose," he told reporters on the sidelines of a programme organised here to mark former prime minister Rajiv Gandhi's birth anniversary.

Nath was asked a question about Puri's arrest. Asking the Centre of using its agencies to target leaders like Chidambaram, others and industrialists, the chief minister said, "I don't bother about anything."

The ED has summoned Chidambaram in connection with its money laundering probe into alleged aviation related financial irregularities during the UPA dispensation.

FIRST COLUMN

Reunification of India a necessity

The idea of Indian reunification is one whose time has come though there's no doubt that it will take a long time to achieve. However, it must be under a strong, liberal leadership



MARKANDEY KATJU

For a long time, I have been propagating the idea that India, Pakistan and Bangladesh should reunite under a secular government for their mutual good (see the Mission Statement and articles on indianreunificationassociation.co.in). I have long said that India, Pakistan and Bangladesh are really one country, with a common culture, and were one for centuries.

Many people have criticised this idea, more so in light of the recent developments in the subcontinent. Many Pakistanis, including Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan, say that recent developments in the region prove that the founder of Pakistan, MA Jinnah, was right in insisting that Muslims get their own homeland otherwise atrocities (e.g. lynching, attacks and incarceration of Muslims for long periods on trumped-up charges) would be committed on them in a united India. So these developments prove that Partition was good for Muslims, and the idea of Indian reunification is only a pipe dream, they point out.

My reply is as follows: Our aim must be to create a highly industrialised country, because only then can we generate the wealth needed for the welfare of our people and give them decent lives. Only a high level of industrialisation can create millions of jobs to wipe out unemployment.

The Partition of India in 1947, and creation of an Islamic state, which was a historical British swindle on the basis of the bogus two-nation theory, was aimed at preventing this growth. If India emerges as another China, then, with its cheap labour, our industries will undercut their rivals from developed countries. Who will buy their costly goods then and won't their industries shut down? One China has become a headache for the West. Will they permit another?

So the secret understanding among developed countries is that India must not be allowed to emerge as a modern industrial giant like China. To prevent that, Indians must remain divided on the basis of religion, caste, region etc.

All this talk of improving relations between India and Pakistan (such as that touted by the campaign *Aman Ki Asha*) is unrealistic and nonsense. The very purpose of creating Pakistan as an Islamic state was that there shouldn't be peace but hostility between the two neighbors and Hindus and Muslims. If there are good relations then the very purpose of creating Pakistan will be defeated.

Our common enemy is massive poverty, record unemployment, appalling child malnourishment, farmers in distress, spiralling prices, ignorance, lack of healthcare, unabated corruption, atrocities on minorities, etc. We waste our scant and precious resources fighting each other instead of joining hands and fighting against these problems that are our real enemies.

To say that Partition was necessary to safeguard Muslims is puerile. First, there are as many Muslims in India as in Pakistan (about 200 million in each). Second, Muslims in Pakistan may be safe from Hindu bigots, but are they safe from Muslim bigots? Are Ahmadis, Shias safe? Are Bareilvis safe from Deobandis? They often bomb mosques, *dargahs*, etc. And are the Muslims there free from the evils of unemployment, price rise, malnourishment, ignorance, lack of healthcare, corruption, etc? It was a stupid idea that creation of Pakistan will keep Muslims safe. In fact Partition has increased the problems of Muslims, Hindus, Sikhs, Christians there.

So, unless we reunite, we will keep wasting our scant resources fighting each other, and will never become a highly industrialised country, and thus remain poor with many social evils. As mentioned earlier, we are really one nation with a common culture, and were befooled by the British into thinking we are each other's enemies. But how are we to reunite?

This can only be done peacefully and voluntarily, and will take a long time, maybe 10-20 years. The communal venom which was injected into our body politic by vested interests for over a century, will take a long time to be expelled. During this period, we must patiently explain to the masses the truth that we are really one nation, were one for centuries, and spread the idea of Indian reunification among them.

As Victor Hugo said, "There is one thing more powerful than all the armies in the world, and that is an idea whose time has come." The idea of Indian reunification is one whose time has come though it will no doubt take a long time to achieve.

We will be called daydreamers by many. But when Giuseppe Mazzini spoke of Italian unification, he too was called a daydreamer, though the dream became a reality thanks to the efforts of Count Cavour and Giuseppe Garibaldi. West and East Germany reunited in 1990 after partition in 1945. North and South Vietnam reunited in 1975 after a partition of over 21 years.

At present, all that needs to be done is to spread the idea of reunification, as is being done by the Indian Reunification Association. Later, when the idea has gripped the imagination and minds of the masses, then people will use their creativity and find ways to make a peaceful reunification a reality.

However, it's vital that such a reunification is under a liberal leadership, which while ensuring religious freedom does not tolerate religious bigotry from any quarter and crushes it with an iron hand. Such progressive leaders will rapidly ensure industrialization of the nation, provide for the welfare of the people and catapult India into the front ranks of the world community. How and when such a historic transformation will take place, who these leaders would be, is impossible to predict. But it is a necessity.

(The writer is a former judge of the Supreme Court of India)



I HAVE NO CONNECTION WITH THEIR (PURI'S) BUSINESS. BUT, I THINK THE ARREST APPEARS TO BE AN ACTION TAKEN WITH MALICIOUS INTENTION.
—MADHYA PRADESH CHIEF MINISTER
KAMAL NATH



ED TOOK ACTION ON BASIS OF ITS PROBE. PEOPLE INVOLVED IN PLUNDERING COUNTRY'S MONEY WOULD NOT BE ALLOWED TO GO SCOT-FREE.
—MADHYA PRADESH BJP SPOKESMAN
RAJNEESH AGRAWAL

The overleverage fix

More research must be done as to why firms become hooked to high debt. As they say about addiction, admitting you have a problem is the first step towards solving it



HIMA BINDU KOTA

The recent suicide by Café Coffee Day owner jolted every coffee lover in the country and brought to the fore the grim reality that high debt can be dangerous for a company. A business is said to be overleveraged when it carries too much debt and is unable to make interest payments on loans and meet other expenses.

Overleveraged companies are often unable to pay operating expenses because of the burden brought on by debt in the form of interest payments and principal repayments. Overleveraging can sometimes lead to a downward financial spiral where the company cannot generate enough revenue to make the debt payments and pay its usual operating expenses. This leads to the company having to borrow more to stay in operation, and the problem gets worse. This spiral usually ends when the company closes its doors or files for bankruptcy protection.

A less leveraged company can be better positioned to sustain drops in revenue because they do not have the same expensive debt-related burden on their cash flow. Businesses that borrow money to add to a product line, expand internationally, or upgrade their facilities are often better able to offset the risk they take on when borrowing.

Leverage can be measured by financial leverage ratios, sometimes called equity or debt ratios, which measure the value of equity in a company by analyzing its overall debt picture. These ratios either compare debt or equity to assets as well as shares outstanding to measure the true value of the equity in a business.

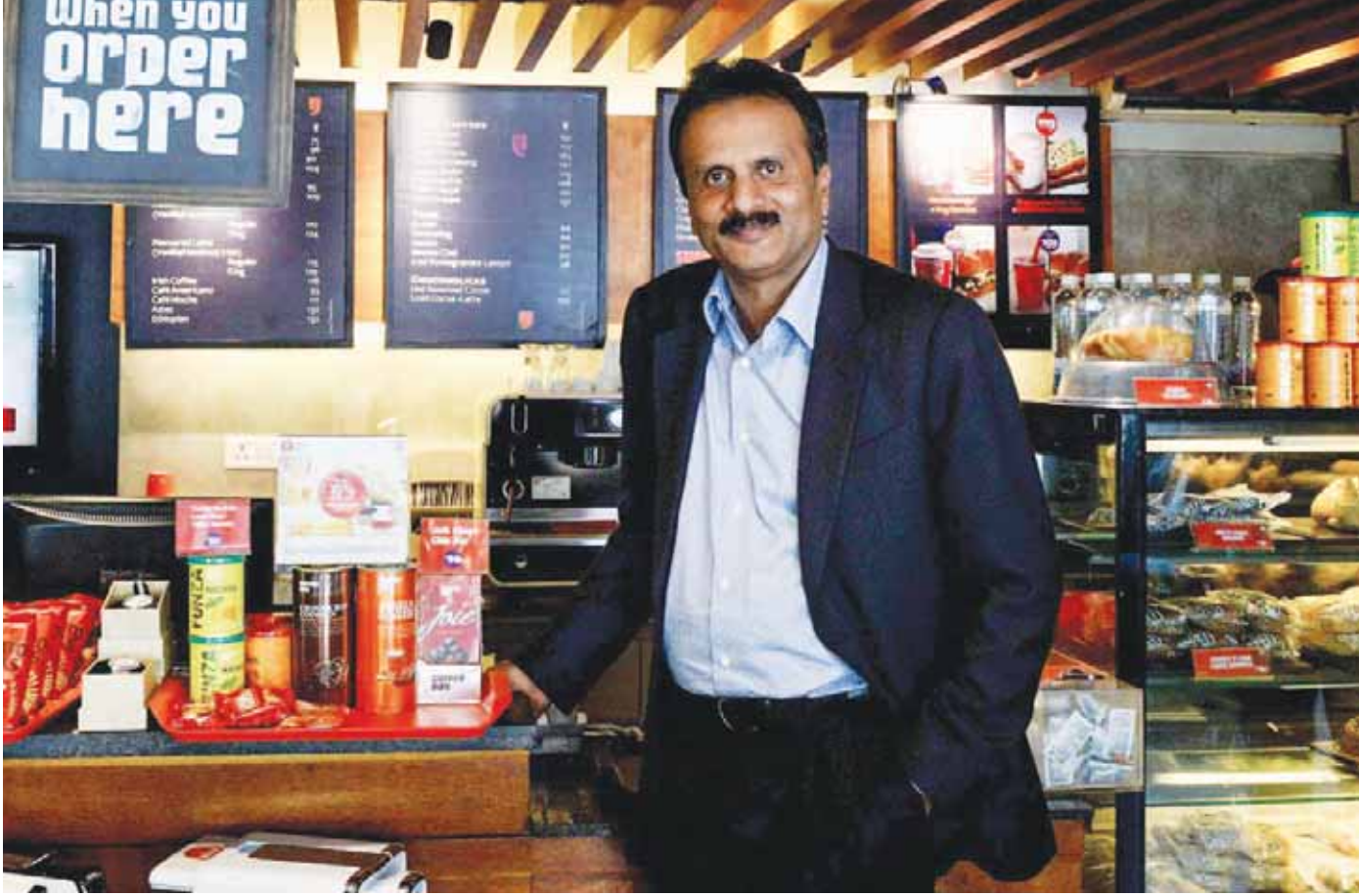
This shows how much of the company assets belong to the shareholders rather than creditors. When shareholders own a majority of the assets, the company is said to be less leveraged. When creditors own a majority of the assets, the company is considered highly leveraged. All of these measurements are important for investors to understand how risky the capital structure of a company is and if it is worth investing in.

The most common financial leverage ratios are debt ratios, debt-equity ratios and equity ratios. Debt ratio is a solvency ratio that measures a firm's total liabilities as a percentage of its total assets. In a sense, the debt ratio shows a company's ability to pay off its liabilities with its assets. In other words, this shows how many assets the company must sell in order to pay off all its liabilities.

The debt to equity ratio is a financial, liquidity ratio that compares a company's total debt to total equity. The debt to equity ratio shows the percentage of company financing that comes from creditors and investors. A higher debt to equity ratio indicates that more creditor financing, i.e., bank loans, is being used than investor financing, i.e., shareholders.

The equity ratio is an investment leverage or solvency ratio that measures the amount of assets that are financed by the owner's investments by comparing the total equity in the company to the total assets.

In fact, some years ago, a team of financial scholars at Stanford Graduate School of Business and at Germany's Max Planck Institute studied banks and found that they have become "addict-



ed" to increasing their debt levels steadily. According to them, "leverage begets leverage". However, it was further analysed that other corporations have become addicted to debt, even when it reduces the total value of the enterprise. Once a company begins to take on debt, they say, the leverage becomes almost "irreversible". Shareholders will generally oppose measures that reduce debt and support moves to increase it whenever the opportunity arises.

According to Paul Pfleiderer, a professor of finance at Stanford, taking leverage is like eating potato chips. One cannot stick to the commitment of eating just a few chips. So, if one cannot stop after eating just one chip, one might be better off not eating them at all.

The authors argue that since reducing debt entails a transfer of risk - and wealth - from shareholders to creditors, there is a clear disincentive for shareholders to cut back on borrowing. If a company buys back its bonds, for example, bondholders will demand a premium above the current market price for those bonds. That's because bondholders will insist that the buyback price reflect the fact that the remaining debt will be at less risk of default.

In other words, bondholders get all the benefits of debt reduction and shareholders have to foot the cost upfront. Government tax policy makes companies even more biased toward higher debt, because it allows companies to deduct interest payments from their taxable income.

In theory, creditors can protect themselves by insisting on contracts or "covenants" that restrict a company's ability to increase its leverage in the future. Among other things, covenants can restrict a company from selling additional bonds or making big payouts to shareholders, which reduce the company's equity.

In practice, the authors argue, covenants are difficult to enforce. Most covenants give companies at least some discretion to take on more debt,

because companies need flexibility in dealing with new opportunities and problems. On top of that, the creditors are often dispersed and unable to take a unified position.

The most obvious risk of high debt is the increased danger of falling into financial distress or even bankruptcy. But on the other hand, rising leverage can also make companies reluctant to invest in promising new projects.

That's because part of the increase in value generated by an investment would flow not to the shareholders but to the creditors, because their bonds and loans would become more secure. Corporate boards take a hard new look at how much they compensate management through stock options and other grants of equity in the company. The more money managers earn from grants of stock and options, rather than from their salaries, the more they will align their self-interest with shareholders rather than creditors.

As bad as it may seem, at some point, almost all businesses must take out loans. Debt financing can be attractive to business owners because banks won't dictate how they should spend the money and they don't have to split up company ownership. Highly leveraged companies are very sensitive to economic declines and at higher risk for bankruptcy.

There are several problems of a highly leveraged company. First, the lenders require borrowers to pay back their loan in a timely manner. This becomes a problem for fledgling companies that borrow money for projects with long-term returns. If payments come due before the company starts seeing returns, loan repayments can be a crippling expense.

Paying back the loan on a regular basis means less money to finance operations and invest in growth opportunities.

Second, substantial loan payments can easily cripple a highly leveraged company. A company doesn't have an obligation to repay capi-

tal from equity sources.

However, banks and lenders have top seniority when it comes to repayment in the event of a bankruptcy. This means that lenders will get paid out before anyone else, including the company owner. If the company has a secured loan, the bank can repossess company assets. Depending on the business structure and the terms of the loan, the owner of the company may also be personally liable for the loan repayment.

Third, just like with individual lending, banks scrutinize corporate credit reports before doling out more loans. Banks are unlikely to provide further funding to highly leveraged organizations. Not only are these companies at high risk for bankruptcy, the new lender might not get paid back if the company goes under.

Older loans typically carry higher seniority compared to newer loans, so lenders are hesitant to put themselves at the bottom of the list for recouping their investment. In the event a bank does issue a loan, the interest rate will be high enough to account for that increased risk.

Fourth, one of the options a company has to reduce its financial leverage is to increase the amount of equity capital.

However, investors rarely give money to highly leveraged businesses. Investors avoid highly leveraged companies for all the same reasons lenders do, plus they're the last in line to get repaid.

If an investor is willing to invest in a highly leveraged company they'll expect to receive an especially large percentage of ownership in exchange for their money.

It's important that further research should be done to shed light on why companies can become hooked to high debt. As they say about other forms of addiction, admitting you have a problem is the first step towards solving it.

(The writer is Assistant Professor, Amity University)

Time to defuse population bomb

While Modi talked about India's demographic dividend in his first term, in his second term he has realised that though a large population may not be a bad thing, it has to contribute to the country's growth



KALYANI SHANKAR

Eyebrows were raised when Prime Minister Narendra Modi expressed concern about the population explosion in the country in his recent Independence Day speech. There was a feeling of surprise that the Prime Minister chose to bring up an issue that has been a 'No-No' for many politicians from the days of Emergency when the Indira Gandhi government used coercive population control measures. Her Family Planning programme received widespread condemnation and effectively never realized its purpose. Later the ministry's name was changed to Family Welfare.

India's population is 1.34 billion, which is nearly a four-fold increase since Independence. Modi has reasons for concern as according to the World Population Prospects 2019 of the United Nations, India is expected to add

nearly 273 million people between 2019 and 2050. Inevitably, with these figures, "India is projected to surpass China as the world's most populous country around 2027", the report said. The biggest challenge for India is its unpreparedness to accommodate such a huge population. Looking at these figures, "The time has now come that we should take such challenges ahead," Modi said.

Interestingly, while Modi talked about India's demographic dividend in his first term, in his second term he has realised that though a large population by itself may not be a bad thing, it has to contribute to the growth of the country. This needs to be supported by capital, technology and infrastructure, as well as skills. That is why the Prime Minister is now talking of education as a means of both moderating the rising population and making it productive.

The country is already facing an acute drinking water crisis, garbage disposal and sewage treatment problems, inadequate rainfall, climate change, increased levels of pollution, high infant and child mortality rate and poor standard of living in the economically weaker sections.

The Prime Minister's speech was

mainly targeted towards these poorer sections of society and his appeal to them for keeping the family small was aimed at improving their standard of living.

He is aware that the poor are missing out on opportunities to climb up the economic and social ladder because they have too many mouths to feed. Making it a nationalistic issue, he said, "Those who follow the policy of a small family also contribute to the development of the nation; it is also a form of patriotism."

Why did Modi talk of population explosion now? It obviously stems from the fact that his hands are strengthened after the massive mandate he received in the 2019 polls.

Politically, Modi is much stronger today, while the Opposition is weak like never before. Add to that the Prime Minister's recent success in Parliament in getting controversial Bills like Triple Talaq and abrogation of Article 370 pertaining to the special status of Jammu and Kashmir passed, despite being in a minority in the Rajya Sabha.

Second, the Indian Right-wing, including the BJP, has always expressed concerns about the increasing minority population. They feel that the Muslims are trying to overtake Hindus in the country by multiplying fast. The

Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) chief Mohan Bhagwat, during his annual Dussehra address some time ago, noted, "We need to rise above vote bank politics to formulate a holistic approach, equally applicable to all citizens, towards the population policy."

In Parliament too, BJP members have raised this issue. Recently Rakesh Sinha, a BJP Member of Parliament, introduced a Private Member's Bill to regulate population. Earlier, another BJP member Sanjeev Balyan, who is now a minister, had also introduced another Bill with the backing of 124 members.

The late BJP stalwart Atal Bihari Vajpayee too had made such an attempt in 2000 by bringing a forward-looking National Population Policy. However, it made the two-child norm a voluntary commitment for individuals. The Modi Government has also followed the same approach that the family planning programme in India is target-free and voluntary in nature.

Modi's speech has triggered speculation that a mild interventionist population policy is not far off. It is a very sensitive issue both at the state level as well as the religious level.

The North-South divide and the Hindu-Muslim divide are the two

issues that raise their heads whenever the spotlight is on population control. While the southern states feel that their great success in bringing down the population is costing them in terms of resources devolved from the Centre, the Minority Affairs Minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi has claimed this week that it is a social reform.

The Prime Minister is not one to waste words and he has used the Independence Day speech to prepare the country for population regulation, going forward. There is an urgent need to aggressively push concepts like the two-child policy, child spacing, increased use of contraceptives and voluntary sterilisation. The two-child norm should be made a uniform criterion for government jobs, getting aid and subsidies and other benefits. Perhaps incentives and disincentives might work better in containing the size of the family. The health ministry is already implementing many of these schemes, but much more will be needed to create awareness and to make an impact in the long run.

As India aspires to become a major economic power, it's time to define whether a growing population is an opportunity or a danger.

(The writer is a senior journalist)

CAPSULE



Artimas Fashions ties up with Virat Kohli brand

KOLKATA: Artimas Fashions, a subsidiary of listed hosiery firm Lux Industries, has entered into a tie-up to manufacture and market a male innerwear brand, promoted by Indian cricket captain Virat Kohli. Initially, the 'one8' brand would be available on e-commerce platforms, after which retail-channel sales would follow, Nischal Puri, the MD of city-based Artimas Fashions, said. "The size of mid-to-premier innerwear market in India is Rs 5,400 crore and growing at 11.5 per cent per annum," Puri said. He said that 'one8' products would address the preferences of the present-day youth of the country who are living in 'an era of self-indulgence'. Puri said that the company would be knitting its own fabric at its own factory in West Bengal while premium cotton would be imported, adding that the manufacturing and marketing rights of the Virat Kohli-brand in the country had been licensed to Artimas Fashions.



Sterling and Wilson Solar shares tumble over 10% on debut

NEW DELHI: Shares of Sterling and Wilson Solar made a disappointing debut on the bourses on Tuesday, falling more than 10 per cent over its issue price of Rs 780. The scrip opened the day at Rs 700, with a discount of 10.25 per cent over its issue price on the BSE. At the NSE, shares got listed at Rs 706, down 9.48 per cent from the issue price. The Rs 3,125 crore initial public offer of Shapoorji Pallonji group firm Sterling and Wilson Solar Ltd was subscribed 92 per cent. The price range for the offer was fixed at Rs 775-780 per share. The firm had said that the portion of the net proceeds would be utilised towards funding full repayment of loans.



Non-life insurers register 23% rise

NEW DELHI: Non-life insurance companies earned a premium income of Rs 14,378.45 crore in July this year, up nearly 23 per cent from a year ago, data from the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai) showed. The 34 non-life insurance firms had collected a premium income of Rs 11,715.05 crore in the corresponding month a year ago. Of these, 25 general insurers recorded a rise of 14 per cent in their collective premium in July at Rs 12,275.93 crore as against Rs 10,782.34 crore in the same month of 2018, as per Irdai data. The seven standalone private sector health insurers witnessed a 44 per cent jump at Rs 1,116.85 crore from Rs 777.01 crore premium collected a year before.

Resolve stressed assets on time: RBI to bankers

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Reserve Bank deputy governor NS Vishwanathan Tuesday exhorted bankers to ensure timely resolution of stressed assets under the new framework to extract the best value and underlined the need for dealing only in "genuine" cases.

The central bank will be coming out with the final guidelines for private and foreign bankers' compensation soon, he said, speaking at the annual industry event Fibac.

Vishwanathan said the RBI's revised framework on resolution of stressed assets introduced on June 7 is "less intrusive" as it gives banks the leeway to draft their own resolution plans for a particular case.

"Timely resolution is very important. I'd request you to ensure that the resolutions are done in time, not just for the regulatory requirement but also because it will result in better valuation going forward," he said. "We've given a lot of freedom to banks to determine various contours. We are making less intrusive regulations and



NS Vishwanathan

hope that banks will use this to deal with genuine stress in their balance sheets to address the problem," he added.

The RBI issued the new NPA recognition and resolution guidelines on June 7 after the Supreme Court had in April declared the earlier one issued on February 12, 2018 as ultra vires. The new framework lays focus on better coordination between banks while dealing with a stressed assets by mandating them to sign inter-creditor agreements and decide on a resolution strategy in 30 days, which will have to be

The RBI issued the new NPA recognition and resolution guidelines on June 7 after the Supreme Court had in April declared the earlier one issued on February 12, 2018 as ultra vires

implemented in 180 days. Meanwhile, Vishwanathan also said the RBI will soon be coming up with the final guidelines for top management compensation.

"Last year we had issued draft guidelines on revised compensation policy, aligning it with global guidelines. We have got excellent comments from the market, bankers and HR practitioners and we will soon come out with final guidelines on the revised compensation policy," he said.

It can be noted that in the draft guidelines, the RBI had proposed measures including making 50 percent of the compensation of senior officials of private and foreign banks 'should be variable'. According to media reports, the central bank is also planning a "claw-

back" clause, such that a key official has to pay past bonuses and incomes if she has been found to have erred in any aspect.

Vishwanathan reiterated that the country has adopted a flexible approach when it comes to adopting the post global financial crisis regulations formed at the global level, which includes being conservative on a few things and consciously deviating in others.

The strategy is to "calibrate" the regulations in sync with the local requirements, he said, listing out the deviations which have been opted for.

The deviations include net stable funding ratio which has been deferred to April 2020, adopting group exposures framework in April 2020 even after adopting the large exposure framework in April 2019.

Hyundai drives in Grand i10 Nios at Rs 4.99L

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

South Korean auto major Hyundai on Tuesday expanded its compact segment portfolio in India with the launch of Grand i10 Nios hatchback, priced between Rs 4.99 lakh and Rs 7.99 lakh (ex-show-room). The company, which is present in the country through a wholly-owned subsidiary, has introduced the model with both petrol and diesel powertrains. The petrol variants, with manual and automated manual transmission (AMT), are priced between Rs 4.99 lakh and Rs 7.14 lakh.

Diesel trims, including manual and automatic variants are tagged between Rs 6.7 lakh and Rs 7.99 lakh.

The company claimed fuel efficiency of 20.7 km/litre for the 1.2 litre petrol manual variants and 20.5 km/litre for the AMT versions.



Samsung eyes 65% mkt share of India's premium smartphone

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Tech giant Samsung on Tuesday said it is confident of cornering 65 per cent market share in the premium smartphone segment (Rs 30,000 and above) with the launch of its flagship Galaxy Note 10 and 10+ in India.

The company, which competes with the likes of OnePlus and Apple, in this segment, said in the first half of 2019 (January-June), its market share was at 63 per cent in value terms in the premium category (as per GfK data).

"We had 52 per cent value market share in the premium segment in 2018. This rose to 63 per cent in H1 2019," Samsung India Senior Vice President and Head of Marketing, Mobile Business Ranjivjit Singh told PTI.

He added that by the year-end, the company is confident of expanding this share further to 65 per cent and above.

"The premium category, estimated to be about Rs 15,000-20,000 crore, is growing at about 9-10 per cent. We are growing at strong double digits and expect to grow at over 20 per cent," he said.



Apart from the Note series, the company's lineup in the premium category includes Samsung Galaxy S series and A80. He said the Note 10 series has powerful flagship devices that will take the productivity and creativity of millennial users to the next level. "For the first time ever, Galaxy Note10 comes in two sizes, so consumers can find the Note that's best for them. It has an enhanced S Pen that converts handwriting to digital text, and enhanced Samsung DeX for PC and link to Windows for all meeting productivity needs of the customers," Singh added.

Engineers at Samsung R&D Institute in Bengaluru have worked on several of the innovative features of the

Galaxy Note10. From August 23, Galaxy Note10+ will be available for Rs 79,999 onwards, while Galaxy Note10 is priced at Rs 69,999. Galaxy Note10+ will be available in two variants - 12GB RAM and 256GB memory, and 12GB RAM with 512GB memory. The Note 10 has 8GB RAM with 256GB internal storage.

The Note 10 features 6.3-inch display, triple camera setup (16MP+12MP+12MP) and 3500 mAh battery. The Note 10+ has 6.8-inch display, quad camera setup (16MP+12MP+12MP and VGA) and 4,300 mAh battery. Both devices have 10MP front camera. The S Pen has been equipped with gesture control.

Shell exits city gas business in India

● Sells Mahanagar Gas Ltd (MGL) stake in open market

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Shell India, the local arm of the Netherlands-based Royal Dutch Shell Plc, on Tuesday exited the city gas business in the country after it sold its 10 per cent stake in Mahanagar Gas Ltd for Rs 770 crore.

According to stock exchange data, BG Asia Pacific Holdings (BGAPH), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Shell, sold 9.98 million shares in the company through block deals at Rs 780 apiece.

Mahanagar Gas Ltd (MGL), where the majority stake is owned by state-owned GAIL India Ltd, sells compressed natural gas (CNG) to automobiles and piped-cooking gas to house-



holds in and around Mumbai.

When MGL was listed in July 2016, Shell and GAIL held 32.5 per cent stake each in the company. Last year, Shell sold 24 per cent of its shareholding in two tranches - 8.5 per cent in April and 14 per cent in August -- in

the open market through bulk deals. The government of Maharashtra has 10 per cent shareholding in MGL, while the remaining is with the public. Shell sold its stake in the open market after GAIL waived off its first right of refusal. According

to the shareholding agreement, partners had the first right to buy in case either one of them wanted to exit.

"We already have a controlling stake. What purpose would it have served to buy the additional stake at market price," a senior GAIL official said. He said the sale price was "too high".

"It doesn't make any sense for us to buy the stake at the market price," he added.

When Shell first started diluting its stake in MGL in April last year, the company had stated that this was "part of Shell's ongoing portfolio optimisation to transform Shell into a simpler company, delivering stronger returns".

Mahindra inks JV deal to acquire over 58% in Sri Lanka firm

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Mahindra & Mahindra Financial Services (Mahindra Finance) on Tuesday said it has entered into a joint venture deal with Sri Lanka's Ideal Finance to acquire up to 58.2 per cent stake in the company for LKR 2 billion (nearly Rs 80 crore).

Mahindra Finance will invest LKR 2 billion until March 2021 for up to 58.2 per cent stake in Ideal Finance, it said in a release.

The rural and semi-urban focussed non-banking financial company (NBFC) said the joint venture (JV) will capitalise on Mahindra Finance's 25-year expertise in the financial services domain and Ideal Finance's domestic market knowledge to build a market leading financial services business in Sri Lanka.

"The strategic investment in Ideal Finance is a significant step in Mahindra Finance's global expansion strategy. The company has been looking at expanding its market overseas as part of its global growth strate-



With this JV, Mahindra Finance aims to replicate its business model in Sri Lanka, it said, adding that the company has fuelled the entrepreneurial aspirations of over 6.2 million customers in over 3,70,000 villages in India

gy. Sri Lanka, with its cultural and geographical similarity to India and its vibrant financial services market, emerged as the first choice," it said.

With this JV, Mahindra Finance aims to replicate its business model in Sri Lanka, it said, adding that the company has fuelled the entrepreneurial aspirations of over 6.2 million customers in over 3,70,000 villages in India. It manages assets under management (AUM) of over USD 10 billion.

Ideal Finance Ltd (IFL) focusses on rural and semi-urban sector, caters to com-

mercial trucks, motor cars, three-wheelers, two-wheelers, gold loans and personal loans.

IFL, which started operations in 2012, has an asset base of LKR 4.4 billion and an equity base of LKR 1.1 billion and as many as 10 branches.

"We believe that the Sri Lankan market holds great potential for growth. We see a strong, long-term growth opportunity in this market and are committed to bringing in the required capital and expertise to fuel this growth," said Ramesh Iyer.



SBI festival home, auto loans cheaper rates

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

State Bank of India (SBI), the country's largest lender, on Tuesday announced a number of offers including cheaper rates for home and auto loan borrowers, to cash in on festival fervour. Customers can avail the cheaper loans with added benefits such as waiver in processing fees, pre-approved digital loans and loans with no escalation in interest rates spread across various categories, SBI said in a statement.

The bank has not specified the time period for which this festival offer would be valid. However, the move would be followed by the other lenders as well. "SBI has waived processing fees on car loans during festival season. The bank is offering lowest interest rate starting from 8.70 per cent to customers opting for car loan, with no escalation in interest," it said. No escalation will ensure that the customer will not have to face fluctuation in the interest rate.

For customers applying for a

car loan online through the bank's digital platform like YONO or website, a 25-basis point concession on interest rate can be availed, it said.

The salaried customers can also avail the loan up to 90 per cent of the car's on-road price, it said. Recently, SBI reduced marginal cost of funds-based lending rate (MCLR) by 15 bps due to which overall home loan interest rate is now reduced by 35 bps since April 2019. Currently, the bank offers cheapest home loan with an interest rate of 8.05 per cent as repo rate-linked home loan and this rate will be applicable to all existing and new loan from September 1, it said. With regard to personal loan, it claimed Rs 20 lakh will be available at the lowest interest rate starting from 10.75 per cent with the longest repayment tenure of 6 years, reducing equated-monthly instalment (EMI) burden on the customers. Additionally, salary account customers can avail pre-approved digital loans up to Rs 5 lakh through YONO.

Wipro inks pact with IISc for research in robotics, 5G

PNS ■ BENGALURU

Wipro Limited on Tuesday announced a strategic partnership with the Indian Institute of Science (IISc) to conduct advanced applied research in autonomous systems, robotics and 5G space.

The two organisations have jointly set up the Wipro IISc Research and Innovation Network (WIRIN), an industry academia collaboration unit. A group of senior professors and research staff from IISc and engineers, developers, architects and researchers from the autonomous systems, robotics and 5G domains at Wipro would constitute the team at WIRIN, Wipro said in a press release. They would focus on the research and development of cutting-edge technologies in artificial intelligence, machine learning, visual computing, human computer interaction (HCI) and vehicle-to-everything communication (V2X), it said.



Square Yards' Q1 revenue rises 53% to Rs 60 crore

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Property brokerage firm Square Yards, which is backed by Anil Ambani led-Reliance Group, has clocked 53 per cent growth in its revenue at Rs 59.5 crore for the first quarter of this fiscal, a top company official said on Tuesday. It had posted a revenue of Rs 38.9 crore in the year-ago period. During the April-June quarter, Square Yard said that Indian real estate operations contributed 64 per cent to the group's overall revenue, followed by international real estate with 25 per cent contribution, while the remaining 11 per cent came from the mortgage business.

Q1FY19 is seasonally weakest quarter for India real estate



which follows the best quarter for the calendar year (January-March), Square Yards CEO Tanuj Shori said, adding that 'launches and sales are at annual lows, and this year was no different. Infact volumes were at all time low in top 9 cities, coupled with regulatory tightening on lending norms for mortgage products'. On the company's performance, he said it has delivered strong results in the weak industry backdrop, with

revenues growing by 53 per cent. Elaborating further, Shori said the distribution expansion (increase in sales employees) continued with about 80 per cent jump year-on-year, continuing from similar expansion in the last quarter.

Square Yards launched its developer enterprise platform Square Edge last quarter and re-launched its broker aggregation platform - Square Connect. It has also started a brand campaign, with a view to position the company as first port of call for real estate buying experience.

"We continue to ramp up distribution capacity, and are creating both tech and physical infrastructure to prepare for a 100 per cent growth target in FY20.

TikTok safe user campaign launched

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

TikTok on Tuesday said it will launch an awareness campaign to sensitise Indian netizens about safe and responsible use of user-generated content platforms as the Chinese company looks to curb incidents of people risking their lives to shoot videos. The firm, which has drawn flak from the Indian government and courts on alleged misuse of its platform, said it has partnered with the Digital Empowerment



Foundation (DEF) to execute a digital literacy programme in the country. "As internet penetration grows at a rapid pace across India, the need to drive awareness around safe user behaviour is felt like never before. We believe that #WaitASecToReflect will encourage all digital citizens to use the

internet and online platforms in a more responsible, respectful and constructive manner," TikTok Director of Public Policy (India) Nitin Saluja said in a statement.

Sebi mulls slew of reforms tighter check on rating

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With an aim to further safeguard investors' interests and to take defaulters to task, capital market regulator Sebi is planning to unveil a slew of reforms, including for greater checks on credit rating agencies and for rewarding informants in insider trading cases with up to Rs 1 crore reward.

The regulator is also planning to ease its norms for 'Muni Bonds' to allow smart cities and other entities undertaking tasks similar to municipalities to raise funds through this route and get their securities listed on the stock exchanges.

Officials said that Sebi's board,



at a meeting scheduled on Wednesday in Mumbai, is also likely to take up issues relating to mutual funds, startup listing platform and buybacks, among other agenda items.

Amid concerns over banks citing 'client confidentiality' to resist sharing of information on delayed loan repayments and possible defaults by their borrowers, Sebi is planning to tight-

Officials said that Sebi's board, at a meeting scheduled on Wednesday in Mumbai, is also likely to take up issues relating to mutual funds, startup listing platform and buybacks, among other agenda items

en its norms to make it mandatory for companies to provide these details to credit rating agencies.

Amid numerous cases of huge loan defaults, including in cases like IL&FS, rating agencies have also come under the scanner for failing to flag potential credit risks of the securities and entities rated by them.

However, rating agencies have

often sought to shift the blame to companies and lenders by claiming that they do not get information about delay in meeting bank obligations and payment failures, which are considered early indicators of a default. Sebi is now proposing to amend its regulations for rating agencies to ensure that any listed or unlisted entity, before getting rated, gives an explicit

consent to obtain from their lenders and other entities full details about their existing and future borrowings as also their repayment and delay or default of any nature and provide the same to the rating agencies.

The move is aimed at helping rating agencies get timely information about the rated entity's financial strength and incorporate it in their ratings.

In another major proposal, Sebi plans to propose that an informant will get up to Rs 1 crore reward, a hotline for sharing details confidentially, and a possible amnesty or settlement for minor wrongdoings in return for cooperation in the probe.



PRESERVING THE ICONIC TALES

Film Preservation and Restoration Workshop India 2019, which aims to preserve and restore the glory of Indian cinema by teaching film enthusiasts on its techniques, will begin in Hyderabad on December 8, reports V SATEESH REDDY

Old movies are like textbooks for youngsters who want to learn filmmaking. In this digital era, while we upgrade our techniques to the latest technology, we are also forgetting to restore and preserve the movies we made on celluloid,” said actor Nagarjuna, who launched the poster of the 5th edition of Film Preservation and Restoration Workshop India 2019 at Annapurna Studios on Tuesday. The event was also attended by actress-activist Amala Akkineni, and Principal Secretary of IT, Government of Telangana, Jayesh Ranjan.

The one-week long workshop would be organised by Film Heritage Foundation in association with Viacom 18, and International Federation of Film Archives from December 8 to 15 at Annapurna Studios. The workshop helps enthusiasts to learn about various topics like film preservation, restoration, paper and photograph conservation, digital preservation and restoration, archive strategy, film repair, film scanning, colour correction and more.

The actor further says, “I saved my iconic movies such as *Annamayya* in a hard disk, but the files got corrupted years later. I’m ashamed of myself for not having pre-

served or restored a single movie of mine to date. I have done more than 90 films and I’m not sure how many of those I have to save due to their present situation.”

Film experts from all over the world guide participants on techniques to save celluloid cinema and on how to deal with issues relating to digital cinema. Nagarjuna adds, “My father used to tell me about films from the Silent Era. Now, none of those films has been saved. Hard disks can become unreliable any time and so, we need to find a solution to preserve and restore our classics. These workshops started four years ago in India and saved more than 300 films. I hope it will inspire film enthusiasts to join in this workshop and to save the cinema.”

Amala mentions that they have arranged 20 classrooms for this workshop. “We are very happy to help make this a big event. It is our duty, as film personalities, to show our youngsters the greatness of classic movies and help them learn how to save those films. I’m requesting the entire Telugu film fraternity to come forward and join this workshop.”

Jayesh Ranjan says, “I’m also running a film club — Moving Images — and we screen old classics for cine-

ma lovers. The club started three months ago and has a great response from the audience. More than 300 people attends our screening. It is always important to know the iconic movies of our past. We are ready to screen the movies restored through this workshop.”

Sudhanshu Vats, Viacom18 CEO and MD, says, “Cinema is an integral part of our country’s cultural DNA and we owe it to our future generations to pass it on. This is the reason why we have collaborated with this workshop. To take it further, we are also conducting a round table conference with the Telugu film fraternity to discuss the workshop.”

Shivendra Singh, the founder of Film Heritage Foundation, says that film is an art form and reflects the times we live in. “To save Indian cinema, we started conducting workshops since 2015 and have been training individuals on restoring old cinema. More than 200 film enthusiasts will participate in the workshop. People from Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal, Bhutan, and Afghanistan are participating in it as well.”

The applications for the workshop will be open from August 25 to October 20. One can apply at www.filmheritagefoundation.co.in



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NAGARJUNA AKKINENI



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AMALA AKKINENI

With the kind of films that unspool every week, one can conclude that there is a dearth of not only ideas but also direction! Varied kinds of films are being made, as each filmmaker is trying to come out with something different. This includes all — big as well as medium-range producers. The idea seems to be taking a shot in the dark. It is all about taking chances.

Some producers are falling back on period costume dramas, which work out very costly and are not every director’s cup of tea. This genre was avoided for a long time mainly because of these two reasons: capability and cost. Yet, we have had period films like *Bajirao Mastani* and *Padmaavat*, *Manikarnika* and *Kesari*. There have been a few flops in this genre like *Mohenjo Daro*, *Rangoon* and *Thugs Of Hindostan*. The backers of such films would do it only based on saleable stars, coupled with a capable director. Still, it often proves risky.

Each week, a new kind of film is dropped in the market. For instance, last week we had *Khandaani Shafakhana*, a film discussing sexual problems for those who can make sense of the title! For one, sex and problems related to it are not generally discussed in India. Delhi and surrounding areas do have such clinics but that does not make the subject acceptable all over.

One may have thought if *Vicky Donor* could work, why not take it a step further? Odd subjects like *Vicky Donor* or *Piku*, very personal to people, do work. However, they need to be woven into a plausible story and dealt with a fair amount of humour. Recent such films are *Piku*, *Padman*, and *Toilet: Ek Prem Katha*. This is called reaching out to personal matters of people. Humour is a must since it delivers the message without making the proceedings seem mundane.

It seems filmmaking is all about inspirational and awareness films. A small film about a person few had heard about, *Paan Singh Tomar*, followed by *Bhaag Milkha Bhaag*, opened up a new genre — the biopic. *Neerja*, *MS Dhoni: The Untold Story* and *Dangal* followed in quick succession. The film industry calls this a “*daur*” (trend). It does not last long, though.

Most writers who script stories like *Piku* or *Vicky Donor*, or directors who make films like *Dangal*, *Bhaag Milkha Bhaag* and *Neerja*, have always had this problem, regarding what next. They usually have nothing that matches the earlier success. No maker seemed to have a worthy successor. Therefore, they go back to the usual claptrap and come a cropper.

There were also some biopics like *Manjhi: The Mountain Man* or *Sachin: A Billion Dreams*, where the makers just chose to go with the trend but turned the

film into a documentary. A film like *Sachin: A Billion Dreams* costs crores as royalty to the character on whose life it is based, as well as to acquire real-life footage. The film on Sachin was a victim of failing to dramatise. The idea is to pick a life story and add a fair amount of fiction along with the music as was done with the *Dhoni* film.

Akshay Kumar has become a torchbearer of the films that convert real-life stories into reel life sagas. He has been greatly successful in his endeavours. His image of being a thoroughbred nationalist probably adds to the acceptability of his films. His instincts and beliefs seem to be paying up so far. Then, there is John Abraham. He loves to play the incredible hulk tackling major cases like the Rajiv Gandhi assassination or Pokhran nuclear tests. He has been partly successful.

It is believed that there are only seven basic storylines in this world. Films were made accordingly. There was a time when some makers stuck to making religion-based or mythological films while a few others only made horror movies. The mainstay for most makers, however, was romance and family socials. Action movies were not in vogue in the mainstream cinema till mid-1970 and

action, in a measured amount, was a part of regular movies. Action movies as such were rated B Grade, released only at designated cinema halls, and it was left to actors like Kamran Khan and Sheikh Mukhtar. Dara Singh later introduced action movies where wrestling was the theme.

There were a few costume dramas and comedies. While most producers stuck to their formula of catering to the family audience, some even stuck to certain alphabets to name their films with. Producer J Om Prakash (who passed away last week) named all his films starting with alphabet A, as did producer Mohan Kumar. Another filmmaker, Arjun Hingorani, preferred alphabet K to name his films. Filmmakers, like many others, are quite superstitious and this trend of faith in a certain alphabet still prevails in filmmakers like Rakesh Roshan, whose films have titles beginning with K.

Now, the genres of family socials, horror and mythology have been taken away by television serials. Action films are accepted only coming from a couple of stars. There is little

choice left for filmmakers.

The limited choice is between romance, action and comedy, with few writers and makers to justify the latter. While ideas are borrowed from foreign films (which includes this year’s National Award winner, *Andhadhun*), and films from South languages are being sought once again for remakes by a few.

So, after each successful film, the question arises — what next? From the records, the makers of *Piku*, *Bhaag Milkha Bhaag*, *Dhoni: The Untold Story*, *Dangal*, *Neerja* and many such films have either delivered flops or are at a loss for an idea for their next! — IANS

WHAT NEXT? FILMMAKER’S DILEMMA

With each year, filmmakers are facing a dearth of content as well as direction, with new genres and ideas that are proving to be risky devoid as they are of right stars and directors



THE BOX OFFICE

• Last week has seen two major films release with *Batla House* and *Mission Mangal*, both on Thursday, August 15, to cash in on the national holiday. Both have reaped the benefit with good collection figures for the opening day. While *Mission Mangal* has managed a hefty ₹29 crore on the opening day, *Batla House* has collected about ₹14.75 crore.

• *Jabariya Jodi* remains poor. The film collects about ₹16.5 crore for its first week.

• *Judgemental Hai Kya* fails to deliver.

THERE WAS A TIME WHEN SOME MAKERS STUCK TO MAKING PATRIOTIC OR MYTHOLOGICAL FILMS, WHILE THE MAINSTAY FOR MOST MAKERS WAS, HOWEVER, ROMANCE AND FAMILY SOCIALS

WITH KHAYYAM, MUSIC LOST A NOTE

Many Bollywood celebrities and eminent personalities paid tribute to the legendary musician, whose funeral will be held with full state honours

When the creator of some of the most memorable compositions, National award-winner Khayyam's death broke on Monday night, a string of celebrities, including Lata Mangeshkar and Amitabh Bachchan were left shocked. The Bollywood music composer whose real name was Mohammed Zahid Hashmi passed away at the age of 92, late on Monday at a private hospital here following a

brief illness, an aide said. The Padma Bhushan awardee was admitted to Sujay Hospital in suburban Juhu a few days ago owing to breathing issues and other age-related illnesses. "He died at Sujay Hospital at around 9.30 pm," a family friend said. According to the composer's spokesperson, Khayyam's mortal remains will be kept at his residential complex from 10 am onwards for people to pay their last

respect. Thereafter, his funeral will take place with full state honours, the spokesperson said. Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Monday expressed sorrow at the demise of acclaimed music director Khayyam, saying he will be remembered for his efforts to support upcoming artists. "India will remain grateful to Khayyam Sahab for giving us some of the most memorable compositions, which will be remembered forever," he tweeted. Modi said Khayyam will also be remembered for his humanitarian gestures to support upcoming artists. "His demise is extremely saddening," he said.



Several B-town celebrities took to social media to pay tribute to the composer.



Anil Kapoor: A humble man, a great composer and a true artist. Khayyam Saab was and will remain an inspiration. He will truly be missed.



Vishal Dadlani: Feels like music lost a note today. Khayyam Saab, thank you for your music and your kindness each time we met. Wish it could have been more often, but I'm glad I was able to thank you in person for the...



Lata Mangeshkar tweeted in Hindi: Legendary musician and a beautiful soul, Khayyam Saab is no more. I can't express in words how sad I am. An era of music ended with his demise. I pay my tribute to him.



Hansal Mehta: An entire era was blessed with music from Madan Mohan, SD Burman, Naushad, Khayyam, RD Burman and Kalyanji Anandji aided by singers at their peak and some great poetry. What we have is mostly mediocrity and noise with only a few exceptions. Sound rules over melody and poetry.



Kailash Kher: Fondly known as Khayyam Saab composer of *Kabhi Kabhi Mere Dil Mein, In Ankho Ki Masti Ke, Dikhai Diye Yun* and many more epic songs. Thank you for leaving treasures of music behind. RIP.



Amitabh Bachchan: A legend in music. A soft-spoken amiable soul. One that contributed to several films and some of the more important ones of mine pass away. Khayyam sahib for all the memorable music he conducted and produced. Prayers condolences.



Madhur Bhandarkar: Khayyam sir, your immense contribution to the world of music will be always remembered.



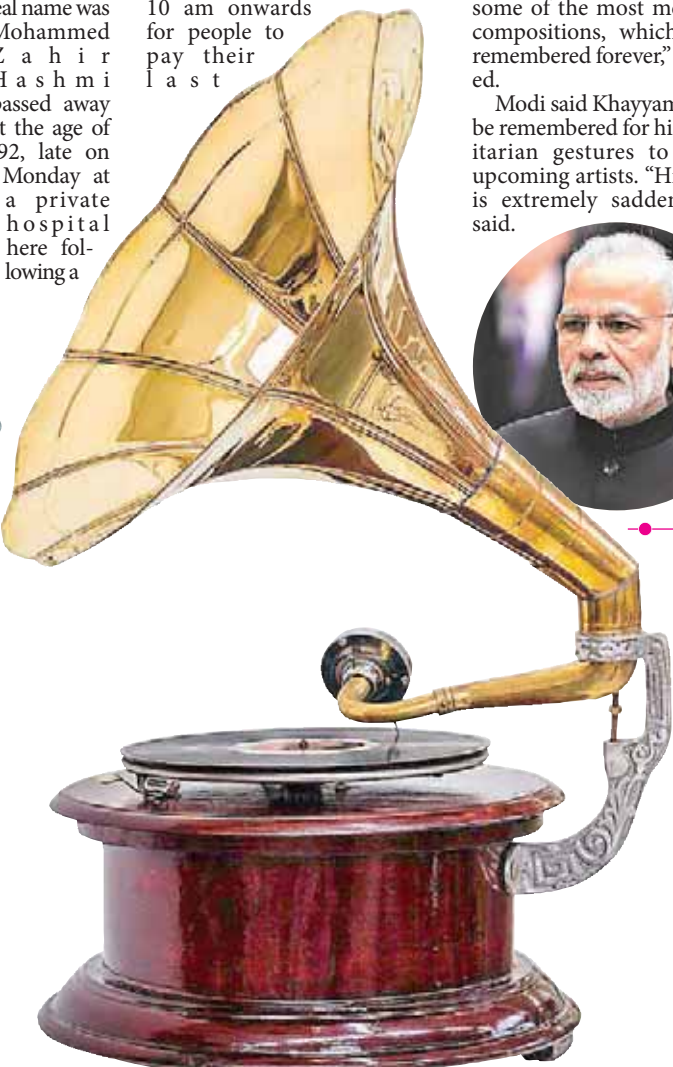
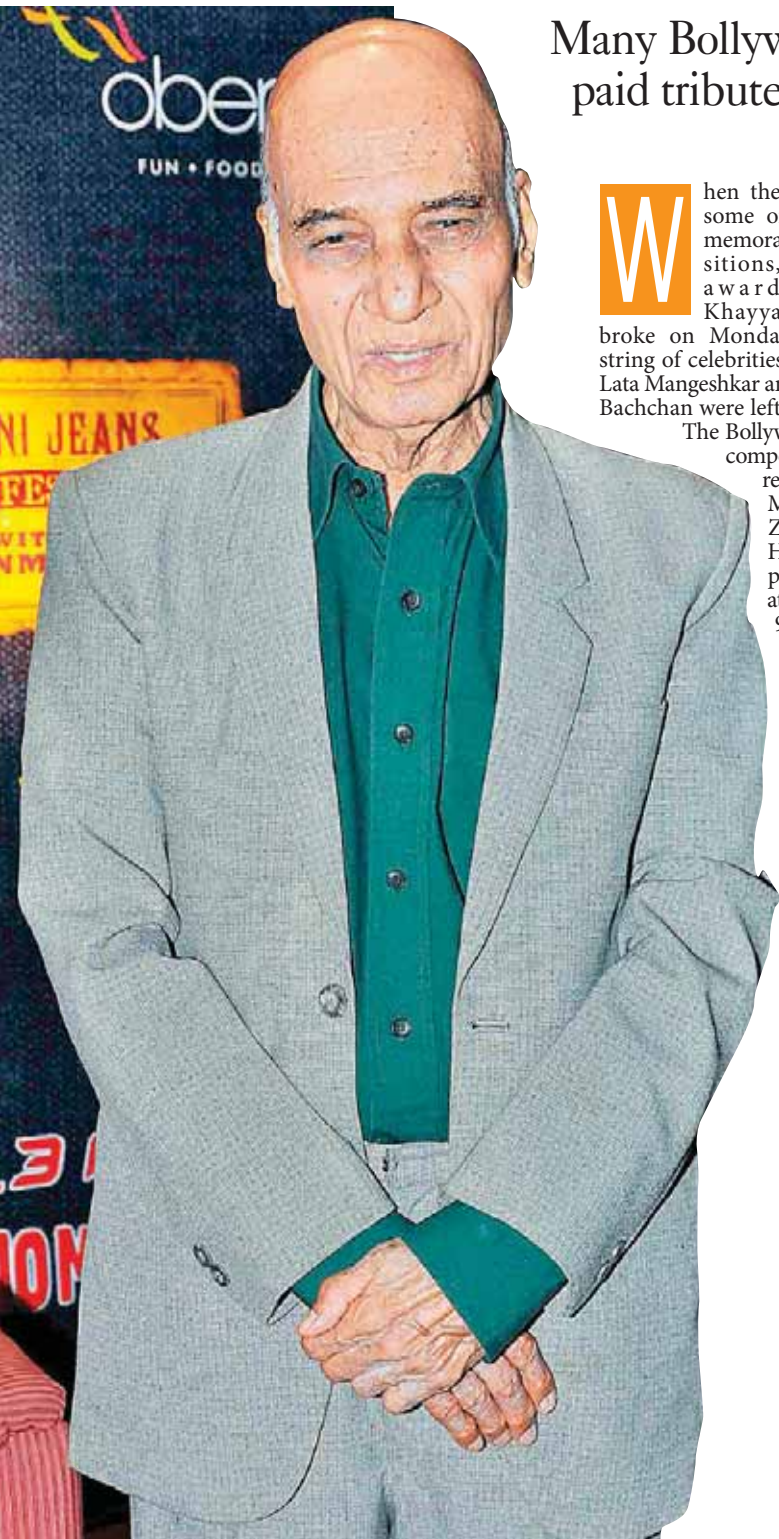
Shekhar Suman: RIP Khayyam Sahab. The world will miss your melodious music. You were a maestro and a gentleman. The music of *Umrao Jaan*. Stays as one of the best forever. Alvida!



AR Rahman: A True Patriot and a Master Songwriter... Mohammed Zahur Khayyam.



Adnan Sami: I'm extremely saddened to learn of the demise of our Legendary Music Composer Khayyam Sahib. He is credited with some of the most iconic film soundtracks. *Umrao Jaan, Kabhi Kabhi, Razia Sultana* to name a few. God bless his soul.



REMEMBERING THE MAESTRO'S TIMELESS COMPOSITIONS

AAKHRI KHAT...

Aakhri Khat was Rajesh Khanna's debut film and on the other hand, Khayyam's last Hindi film before his eight-year sabbatical. The lyrics of the songs were penned by Kaifi Azmi and the soundtrack includes the famous song *Baharon Mera Jeevan Bhi Sanwaro*, sung by Lata Mangeshkar. Bhupender Singh marked his debut as a playback singer with this film album.

KABHIE KABHIE...

Khayyam composed the music of megastar Amitabh Bachchan's film

Kabhie Kabhie. The film received three Filmfare Awards for Best Lyrics, Best Music and Best Male Playback Singer. Reportedly, Yash Chopra asked Khayyam to pray for the film's success. And *Kabhie Kabhie* broke all the records at the box office!

UMRAO JAAN...

The music of Rekha's *Umrao Jaan* was composed by Khayyam, however, he was not the first choice of the director of the film. Reportedly, Khayyam was brought on board after the original music composer of the film and the director had some irreconcilable differences. He won

both the Filmfare Award and the National Film Award for Best Music Director.

PHIR SUBHA HOG...

For *Phir Subha Hogi*, Sahir Ludhianvi recommended Khayyam. The composer also had to pass Raj Kapoor's test of tuning a Tanpura to get the film. Songs like *Cheer O Arab Hamara* and the duet version of *Woh Subah Kabhi To Aayegi* became popular among the audience.

BAZAAR

Bazaar had many great songs. But the best pick will always be *Karoge yaad to*

har baat, brilliantly sung by the gifted Bhupinder Singh. Beautifully picturised on Naseeruddin Shah and Smita Patil who are considered as the two of Hindi cinema's most talented actors.

RAZIA SULTAN...

Khayyam was nominated in Filmfare Awards in the category of Best Music Director for the music of this film. The lyrics were penned by Jan Nisar Akhtar and Nida Fazli. However, music director duo Laxmikant-Pyarelal was the first choice of the director of the film. He asked them to rework on a particular song. When he went to meet them, he was

asked to wait as the duo was in a meeting. Feeling insulted, the director replaced them with Khayyam.

NOORIE...

The music of the film played a major role in making Manmohan Krishna's only film as director. The film was a huge hit at the box office and the seventh highest-grossing film in 1979. The film starred Farooq Shaikh, Poonam Dhillon, Madan Puri and Iftekhar in lead roles.

AHISTA AHISTA...

1981 was a great year of Khayyam as

three of the four albums released in the year were hits. The songs *Kabhi Kisi Ko Mugammal Jahan Nahin Milta, Mana teri nazar mein, Bin bulaye hum chale aaye* and *Nazar se phool chunati hai nazar* from the film had the music lovers raving it.

THODISI BEWAFAI...

This is the only film in which Khayyam worked with Gulzar. And their work together was welcomed by everyone. Songs *Hazar Raahen Mud Ke Dekhin* and *Aaj Bichhde Hain*, which were the sad songs of separation, made a place in everyone's heart.

SALMAN MAY FACE BAN IF HE WORKS WITH MIKA

Singer Mika Singh, who was banned by the Federation of Western India Cine Employees association (FWICE) after he performed at a wedding in Karachi, awaits the final verdict which will be out after he meets the members of the film body. According to a report published in *Mid Day*, the federation has said that, any artist working with Mika till the verdict arrives may face ban. He was reportedly speaking with reference to an upcoming six-city gig in the US where Salman Khan



and Mika will be performing.

Titled *Up, Close and Personal With Salman Khan*, the show has been scheduled for next week. Mika is expected to join them in the Houston leg of the programme on August 28. Ashok Dubey, general secretary, FWICE, explained the technicalities of the ban. He told *Mid Day*, "If we impose a ban, it means all our technicians — including actors, directors and even spot boys — will not work with Mika. If someone works with Mika during this ban, say Salman or anyone else, then he too will be banned."

Commenting on whether the ban applies to gigs held outside the country, Dubey said, "Whether it's an organiser from the US or any other country, we cannot stop anybody from conducting an event. Our policy is simple, we will not work with the person who has been banned."

The show has been put together by Sohail Khan's event management company in coordination with one Jordy Patel's company called JA Events in India and Bhavesh Patel in the US. The report quotes Jordy as saying, "We are only dealing with Bhavesh Patel as our contract is with him. Some local promoter in the US must have signed on Mika and added him to the line-up. Salman will have nothing to do with Mika at the event. They will not even interact on stage."

Mika had on Sunday put out a video on Twitter, where federation member BN Tiwari mentioned that Mika has expressed a desire to apologise to the nation.

RADHIKA NOT AN AWARD CRAZY PERSON

Actress Radhika Apte was a part of two films — *Andhadhun* and *Padman* — that bagged National Film Awards this year. She is grateful, but says she isn't crazy about awards. "I am glad that both the films won National Film Awards. I am happy and grateful for the awards, but I don't look at films like 'this should win a National award'. I just think people should watch the film and hope they like it. I am not an award-crazy person," Radhika told IANS.

While *Padman* was declared Best Film on Social Issues, Ayushmann Khurrana and Vicky Kaushal jointly received the Best Actor Award for their performances in *Andhadhun* and *Uri: The Surgical Strike*. Apart from the Best Actor Award, *Andhadhun* also won Best Hindi Film award and an honour for its screenplay writer (adapted).

Radhika feels Sriram

Raghavan's *Andhadhun* is a well-scripted and shot effort. "The performances were good. It was extremely thrilling. Every few minutes, you would find yourself in a different turn or twist in the script. It kept you hooked throughout the plot. The story was very interesting," said Radhika.

She feels that over the years, National Film Awards have been recognising Hindi movies for their potential, so she doesn't think suddenly they are looking at Hindi cinema in a different way. She agrees content of Hindi cinema has changed and at some level, "it has improved".

"What's happening today is that people want to watch different cinema and more content, so it is a good time if a film like *Andhadhun* can fit into both the brackets of critically-acclaimed cinema and commercial success," she said.



The teaser of Megastar Chiranjeevi-starrer *Sye Raa Narasimha Reddy* was unveiled at a grand event in Mumbai on Tuesday.

Speaking at the event, which was attended by the principal cast and crew comprising Kichcha Sudeep, Vijay Sethupathi, Ravi Kishan, Tamannaah and Ram Charan along with Hindi presents Farhan Akhtar, Ritesh Sidhwani and Anil Thadani, Chiru dubbed Amitabh Bachchan as his real-life mentor. The iconic Bollywood figure is playing the Telugu star's guru Gosai Venkanna in the costume drama. "He is my mentor. I feel there is only one megastar and that is he. I'm indebted to him for having accepted to be part of my film," Chiru said.

Recalling Big B's participation, he added, "Film's director Surrender Reddy said if Amitabh ji plays my guru, then there would be nothing like it. I said I would try. I rang him and asked him if he can be a part of the film. I told him, 'It is produced by Ram Charan and has an amazing story'. To which, he said, 'You've never asked me anything until now and since you are asking, I'm saying ok. He asked me to send my team later to Mumbai, which I did. I extend my heartfelt thanks to him.'"

He further said that he shot for the action sequences on his own. "During the narration, I felt Surrender Reddy and Charan will use a body double for the action given the technology at disposal. However, they wanted me to per-

BIG B is the one and only megastar: CHIRU

The actor, speaking at *Sye Raa* teaser release event in Mumbai, said that he is indebted to the Bollywood actor for being a part of the movie

form stunts on my own. I was just recuperating from a shoulder surgery but they were unyielding. It was not fair (smiles) but I was happy. I always cherished doing hard work," he noted and quipped that because of his punctuality, his wife Surekha felt that Charan would get a bad name. "I used to report to sets 7 am every day while the current lot, including Charan, is known to go to sets a little late."

He further said the Tamil version of the film would have Kamal Haasan's voice-over. While the Telugu version teaser had the voice-over of his brother Pawan Kalyan, the Malayalam version had Mohanlal's. "I requested Kamal to lend his voice for the film and he said he is willing to do it. He couldn't give the voice-over for the teaser, as he is not feeling well. But for the film, he will be," Chiru suggested.

SYE RAA TEASER TOUTS THE FIRST REBEL INDIA FORGOT

The teaser of *Sye Raa* is a visual treat for the fans, as it promises a riveting drama. It had a glimpse of breathtaking action sequences, production design befitting a bygone era and above all, a thundering Chiranjeevi as freedom fighter Uyyalawada Narasimha Reddy. For legions of Telugu film buffs, the icing on the cake is the voiceover by Pawan Kalyan, Chiranjeevi's brother or Power Star as he is referred to by his fans. The teaser opens with the narrator saying how we can never forget heroic freedom fighters, and soon, we are introduced to Chiranjeevi as Narasimha. He has been touted as the first rebel that India has forgotten. The teaser also gave glimpses of other actors such as Amitabh Bachchan, Tamannaah, and Sudeep. It doesn't just focus on war scenes and valour but goes beyond that, leaving a lasting impression. The multi-starrer, produced by Ram Charan and helmed by Surrender Reddy, will hit silver screens on October 2. The shooting had kick-started in 2017, and it was recently wrapped up. The makers shot a vital war sequence, reportedly spending a whopping ₹45 crore for it. International stunt choreographers such as Greg Powell, Lee Whittaker and Ram-Laxman were roped in for the action scenes. The movie will clash with Hrithik Roshan and Tiger Shroff's *War* and Sidharth Malhotra and Tara Sutaria's *Marjaavaan*.



DAPPER BALAYYA

With his Tony Stark-ish goatee look getting trolled heavily — after a picture, of him with a fan, made the rounds on Monday evening — the makers of Nandamuri Balakrishna's next with KS Ravikumar have quickly gone into damage control mode and released his first look from the film on Tuesday.

Appearing to have gone for a complete makeover from head to toe, the actor, sporting a van dyke beard, looked dapper in a suit. The film's shooting is presently going on in

Thailand and on Tuesday, the director started filming an action sequence under the supervision of a local stunt choreographer. After the completion of the action sequences, some key portions will be shot there. Later, the setting will shift to Hyderabad.

The action-drama sees Sonal Chauhan and Vedika as Balayya's romantic interests, while the likes of Jayasudha, Prakash Raj, Bhumi Chawla, Sayaji Shinde, Nagineedu, Saptagiri and Srinivas Reddy round off the supporting cast. C. Kalyan is producing the film under Happy Movies.



NANI IN HANU'S PERIOD PIECE

The actor will be seen as soldier in an Army backdrop from the '80s for the action period drama, finds NAGARAJ GOUD

After wrapping up Vikram Kumar's *Gang Leader*, Nani dived headlong into the sets of Indraganti Mohana Krishna's *V* earlier this month. The *Sammohanam* filmmaker's murder mystery requires Nani's dates till November, after which, we've learnt, the actor will be joining forces with his *Krishnagadi Veeraprema Gaadha* filmmaker Hanu Raghavapudi for a new feature.

A highly placed source close to the development confirms to *The Pioneer*, "The film, a gritty action period drama, will be set in an army backdrop of the '80s and will see Nani as a soldier. Hanu has been researching the story for the past six months, travelling across the country for the material. One of

the most promising filmmakers around, he understands that he disappointed the audience with his last *Padi Padi Leche Manasu*, which is why he has gone back to the drawing board and is investing heavily on the writing front to come up with a watertight script. He got Nani's consent long back. The actor rates the director very high."

The source adds, "The film will move to floors in April or May next year in Ladakh with a 40-day schedule before it moves to other parts of the country. Nani has to significantly prep for his part. It remains to be seen whether he will start another project before joining Hanu's sets or will allot time for prep. Mythri Movie Makers are tipped to produce the film."



VISHNU INDURI AND SONY JOIN HANDS

They will produce films of south Indian directors who recently won the best director awards at the recent SIIMA

Presently associated with the biopic of former Chief Minister of Tamil Nadu J Jayalalithaa and 1983 World Cup triumph, producer and entrepreneur Vishnu Induri will be joining hands with Sony Pictures Entertainment to produce films of South directors who recently won the best director awards at SIIMA award at Doha, Qatar.



In Telugu, Vishnu, who has produced the two-part biopic of NTR earlier this year, and Sony Pictures, which will mark their debut with Adivi Sesh-starrer *Major*, will bankroll *RX100* director Ajay Bhupathi's third film. In Tamil, they will pool in resources for Nelson's next. They will also produce ventures of Mahesh Kumar and Zakariya Mohammed from Kannada and Malayalam industries respectively.

Coming to Telugu, Bhupathi is attached to make *Mahasamudram*, starring Ravi Teja, Siddharth and Aditi Rao Hydari, with Gemini Kiran. A crime drama set in Visakhapatnam, it will move to floors in October.

Edaina Jaragocchu story gave me goose bumps: Bobby Simha

The actor mentioned that K Ramakanth's writing and the way he etched the characters sealed the deal for him

National award-winning actor Bobby Simha, who will be seen as the prime antagonist in *Edaina Jaragocchu*, featuring Sivaji Raja's son, Vijay Raja, says the film has been a two-year-long journey for him. "When the makers first approached me for the film two years ago with a brief line, I kind of liked it but I was looking for more. In the third meet, the story gave me goose-bumps. The director's writing and the way he etched characters sealed the deal for me. Irrespective of it being a small film I said I'd do it," the actor said. He was speaking at a promotional event of the film in Hyderabad recently.

In the crime horror thriller, Vijay will be seen as a guy who is into multiple part-time jobs. One of his avatars — that of a bank recovery agent — makes him fall in love with a girl (Pooja Solanki) and the follow-up events are narrated comically with a twist. A joint venture between Wet Brain Entertainment and Sudharm Productions, the film marks the directorial debut of K Ramakanth, who earlier worked as an assistant director to Chandrasekhar Yelleti.

Speaking about Vijay, Bobby added, "I never felt that he was a newcomer. He was not camera shy or was afraid of it. He slipped into the character with relative ease. I found a younger brother in him."



ARJUN-CARTHYK TO DIRECT A SATIRICAL COMEDY

Producer MLV Satyanarayana has given his nod for their writer-director duo's second venture, as he was impressed with the way they went about making *Rajdooth*

After making their directorial debut with *Rajdooth* last month, writer-director duo Arjun-Carthyk is set for their next. *The Pioneer* has understood that they got the nod of their first producer MLV Satyanarayana aka Satti Babu for their second effort as well. "Satti Babu was impressed with the way the duo went about making *Rajdooth*. They promised him that they will finish the project under ₹2.50 crore but they wrapped it up under ₹1.50 crore. Also, he was impressed with the pace at which the duo shot the film," said a source.

The new project will be a satirical comedy and will feature three young and happening comedians, while an experienced comedian will be the leading face. Sudarshan has already been zeroed in as one of the three young comedians, while the duo is on the hunt for other actors. "The film will have satires on government and on the current state of media where a small issue is blown out of proportion, albeit in a lighter tone. Without taking sides, it will also take a dig at Andhra-Telangana bifurcation in a funny way. It will have the flavour of the iconic Hollywood comedy *Hangover*, but story-wise, it's a completely original screenplay," added the source.



‘Frightening’ Archer won’t let up: Stokes



Jofra Archer walks back to his mark before bowling to Usman Khawaja

AFP ■ LEEDS

England's Ben Stokes has told Australia to expect more bouncers from Jofra Archer in the remainder of the Ashes.

"It's part of the game and a big part of Jofra's game, being aggressive, not letting batsmen settle," said Stokes.

Archer produced a hostile and compelling display on debut as the rain-affected second Test ended in a draw at Lord's on Sunday.

Not only did he take five wickets, he repeatedly unsettled Australia with a short-pitched balls. The 92mph bouncer that hit Steve Smith on the neck forced the star batsman to miss the last day with concussion.

"When someone takes a nasty blow no bowler is going to say 'I'm not going to bowl that again because I don't want to hit them again,'" Stokes, a lively seam bowler, added.

"The concern is always there when someone takes it, but next ball, when you get back to the mark, it's 'I'm going to keep doing it.'" Smith, who could be ruled out of the third Test at Headingley starting on Thursday as well, had earlier been hit a painful blow by Archer on his left forearm.

Marnus Labuschagne, Smith's replacement at Lord's as cricket's first concussion substitute, was then hit flush on the grille of his helmet second ball by another Archer thunderbolt.

All the deliveries are considered a legitimate part of a fast bowler's armoury and Stokes said Archer had no reason to change his approach in Leeds.

Stokes believes Archer's extra pace can help England overturn a 1-0 deficit in the five-match Ashes series following their 251-run loss in the first Test at Edgbaston.

"Everything is so rhythmical with Jofra it is tough to see when that bouncer is coming," said Stokes.

"There's no 'tell'. He bowled a lot of them, but they don't seem to pick it up.

"He gives another dimension to our bowling attack. The first innings he bowled 29 overs but his last spell of eight was one of the best out-and-out fast bowling spells I have seen since I started playing," he added.

"We've seen (Australia's) Mitchell Johnson do it to us,

especially in 2013, but Jofra just makes it look so easy. I'd rather have him on my team than have to face him. He's a frightening talent.

"The sky is the limit for him and he's a great addition to our Test team."

England's top order remains a concern but after all-rounder Stokes's elevation to number five in the second innings at Lord's, he scored an impressive 115 not out.

"It just depends on what happens in the game," he said.

"I went to six because my bowling workloads have gone up in the last few years. I'm sure it will change.

"We're a very versatile batting line-up, some days it might be Jonny Bairstow at five, some days Jos Buttler, some days me. We're all capable, it just depends on workloads."

Eng need to preserve Archer: Akhtar

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

Former Pakistan speedster Shoaib Akhtar believes England have got a great weapon in Jofra Archer but they need to preserve him and manage his workload in a way that the 24-year-old doesn't get injured very often.

"Archer is an exciting talent. He is strong but I believe he is the perfect candidate for being injury prone. With his action and speed, I believe he can have back injuries, so he needs to be preserved," Akhtar said in a

video posted on his Youtube channel.

"My suggestion will be to play him in fewer matches, he should not bowl 27 overs in an innings. What he cannot do in 14 overs, he won't be able to do it 27 overs," he further said.

Akhtar also feels that Ashes, which is currently 1-0 in favour of Australia, would now take a turn with Archer's inclusion into the England lineup.

"I think Ashes will now take a turn. I believe fast bowlers should bowl with more intensity now.

Healthy rivalry augurs well for team's pace attack, says Umesh



Umesh Yadav bowls during India's nets session

PTI/File Picture

PTI ■ COOLIDGE

Pacer Umesh Yadav says he has regained confidence after working on his erratic line and length in the time away from the Indian team and is confident of making the playing eleven in the Test series against the West Indies starting on Thursday.

Umesh, who took three wickets for 19 runs in the West Indies A first innings in the warm-up game which concluded on Monday here, said he worked on getting his rhythm back at the Vidarbha Cricket Academy with coach Subroto Banerjee in the last few months.

"As a fast bowler you have to practice and you need to set your rhythm, to know at what line and length you have to bowl. I have also tried the same, to get my rhythm right. I was preparing myself to do what I will be doing in a match situation," Umesh said after the drawn warm-up game.

"I went to Vidarbha Cricket Academy and worked with coach Subroto Banerjee there and asked him for his opinion. There were these issues of length of deliveries. It happens to a lot of fast bowlers, when you are playing a lot continuously, you're unable to settle into a specific line and length. I worked on that," he added.

He said he was able to bowl into the right areas during the warm-up game against the West Indies A team.

"I am playing a practice match after a long time. I had earlier come here to play for India A and I played one game. The wicket is not too different and it has swung.

"(In the warm-up game) I was focussing on the areas I have to put the ball. My mindset was to put the balls in those areas and bowl dot balls. I was being able to do that," he added.

The 31-year-old played his last Test in Australia in December 2018. He then played for Vidarbha in the domestic competitions and followed it up with a stint with Royal Challengers Bangalore in the IPL.

"After the Australia tour, I played in Ranji trophy and we (Vidarbha) won and then IPL came. In the two and half months after that, I gave myself some time to work on my errors and get my rhythm back. Accordingly, I prepared my mindset.

"I worked on bowling drills and trained a lot on whatever bowling problems which I thought I had. You need off-time because it is only during your off-time that you can re-shape your mindset on what needs to be done," he added, when asked about the drills at the Vidarbha academy.

Asked about the competition in the current Indian team in the fast-bowling department, he said, "When you know you're going to play back-to-back Test matches, you need that kind of bench-strength.

"All the fast bowlers know there is a good competition and that everyone is going to get an opportunity. Whoever does well, will get to play more. If we think in that manner, it's good for us because we will try to improve ourselves.

"It is a healthy competition and it is good for the team. It make us more exciting and challenging and will improve our performance."

Murray falls in first hurdle

AFP ■ WASHINGTON

Andy Murray on Monday fell in the first round of the ATP Winston-Salem Open, where the three-time Grand Slam champion was giving his surgically repaired hip just its second test in singles.

Britain's Murray, who feared in January that his hip trouble would end his career, accepted a wild card into this week's tournament in North Carolina after falling in his singles comeback in Cincinnati last week.

He again showed glimpses of his once-dominant self, but was inconsistent in a 7-6 (10-8), 7-5 loss to 73rd-ranked American Tennys Sandgren in a match lasting 2 hours and 10 minutes.

"Some things were a bit better today I think," Murray said. "I was hitting the ball a bit cleaner than I did maybe in Cincinnati... I feel like I moved fairly well to some drop shots, which maybe last week I wasn't running to.

"So there's some good things in there but also some stuff I would like to do better."

LANDMARK FOR LEE

Having said in Cincinnati he would discontinue doubles to focus on returning to peak singles form, Murray said he might consider playing an ATP Challenger Tour event before heading to Asia, where he is entered in September's Zhuhai Championships and the China Open.

"Maybe I need to play

a level down to get some matches and build my game up a little bit before I start playing on the tour again," he said.

In other action on a day when rain wreaked havoc on the schedule, South Korean Lee Duck-hee became the first deaf player to win an ATP Tour match, beating Switzerland's Henri Laaksonen 7-6 (7/4), 6-1.

"My message for people who are hearing impaired is to not be discouraged.

If you try hard, you can do anything," said Lee, who will next face third-seeded Hubert Hurkacz of Poland.

Lee was two points from victory when thunderstorms swept through.

When he and Laaksonen returned some five hours later, Lee quickly polished off a win he admitted he hadn't been expecting.

"I thought that I was just going to do my best and try to stay focused," Lee said. "But I came out a winner."



Rashid to captain Afghans in B'desh

PTI ■ KABUL

Off-spinner Rashid Khan will lead Afghanistan in their one-off Test against Bangladesh and the triangular series featuring Zimbabwe. The Test will begin on September 5 while the tri-series will kick-off from September 13.

Alongwith Mohammad Shahzad, who is serving a suspension, middle-order batsman Nasir Jamal, left-arm spinner Sharafuddin Ashraf, paceman Wafadar Momand, and left-arm wristspinner Waqar Salamkheil have not been included in the squad.

On the other hand, experienced left-arm paceman Shapoor Zadran, who is yet to feature in the longest format of the game, and Afsar Zazai, the wicketkeeper-batsman who played Afghanistan's maiden Test — against India in June 2018 have been included in the side.



Rashid Khan celebrates after taking wicket

AP/File Picture

ed in the side.

Announcing the squad, chief selector Andy Moles said: "We have selected a 17-member squad for the T20I matches as per the advice of the captain as we have two important tournaments — T20I Asia Cup and ICC T20 World Cup 2020 — ahead of us. We will seek to prepare good sides for these tournaments and those players who perform well, will be considered for selection.

"We will also consider the performance of players in the upcoming Shpageeza Cricket League and Afghanistan Premier League T20 for future selection."

Squad for Test against Bangladesh: Rashid Khan (C),

Ihsanullah Janat, Javid Ahmadi, Ibrahim Zadran, Rahmat Shah, Hashmatullah Shahidi, Asghar Afghan, Ikram Alikhil, Mohammad Nabi, Qais Ahmad, Sayed Ahmad Shirzad, Yamin Ahmadzai, Zahir Khan Pakteen, Afsar Zazai and Shapoor Zadran.

Squad for T20 Triangular Series: Rashid Khan (C), Asghar Afghan, Mohammad Nabi, Hazratullah Zazai, Najeeb Taraki, Rahmanullah Gurbaz, Mujeeb ur Rahman, Shafiqullah Shafaq, Najib Zadran, Shahidullah Kamal, Karim Janat, Gulbadin Naib, Fareed Ahmad Malik, Sharafuddin Ashraf, Fazal Niazi, Dawlat Zadran and Naveen ul Haq.

Serena to play in Auckland

AFP ■ WELLINGTON

Serena Williams announced on Tuesday she will warm-up for January's Australian Open at the Auckland Classic, a tournament that has mixed memories for the American superstar.

Williams slumped to a shock second-round loss in her only previous appearance in New Zealand in 2017, lashing out at windy conditions she described as some of the "least favourite" she had ever experienced.

But she went on to win the Australian Open later that month, claiming the most recent of her 23 majors to pass Steffi Graf's Open-era benchmark of 22. She also announced her engagement to Alexis Ohanian while in New Zealand and it later emerged she was pregnant with her first child while competing at the tournament.

Currently ranked eighth in the world, the 37-year-old said she wanted to show New Zealanders what she could do on the court.

"Oh man, I want to win that title so bad," she said in a statement.



Serena Williams

AP/File Picture



Ankita Raina prepares to return a shot

Ankita/Twitter

Ankita progresses to 2nd round

PTI ■ NEW YORK

India's Ankita Raina knocked out ninth seed Belgian Ysaline Bonaventure to progress to the second round of the US Open Qualifiers but Ramkumar Ramanathan bit the dust in the men's singles here.

The 194th ranked Ankita was up against a higher-ranked player but prevailed 6-1, 1-6, 6-2 for her second win against the Belgian on the Pro Tour.

She had beaten the 111th ranked Bonaventure in her own country in 2014 on clay.

Ankita has not gone beyond the second round at the Grand Slam qualifiers and she has a good chance to better that stat as she is up against Czech Republic's Denia Allertova, who is placed 85 places below her at 279.

In the men's singles, Ramkumar Ramanathan bowed out with a 5-7, 6-7(9) defeat against Italy's Filippo Baldi.

Southee to lead NZ in SL T20s

FIANS ■ WELLINGTON

Right-arm pacer Tim Southee will captain New Zealand in a three-match T20I series against Sri Lanka starting September 1 in Kandy.

Regular skipper Kane Williamson and paceman Trent Boult will be returning home for a pre-planned rest following the current Test series, which Sri Lanka are currently leading 1-0.

The 14-man squad features three specialist spinners in Ish Sodhi, Mitchell Santner and Todd Astle. "Kane and Trent played an enormous role in our recent World Cup campaign and with a big summer ahead, we see it as a good opportunity to give them a rest," said selector Gavin Larsen.

"The series in Sri Lanka will be a challenging one against a team who are tough to beat in their own conditions."

He also said the series represented the start of a new T20 cycle, with nine T20Is series scheduled for the side ahead of next October's World T20 in Australia.

"Following that amazing ride in the ODI World Cup, it's exciting to



Tim Southee bowls during practice match

AP

begin setting our sights on another world event," Larsen said.

"Our T20 team has been pretty consistent over the past couple of years and we're really happy with the power and versatility we have in this squad."

Squad: Tim Southee (c), Todd Astle, Tom Bruce, Colin de Grandhomme, Lockie Ferguson, Martin Gupitll, Scott Kugeleijn, Daryl Mitchell, Colin Munro, Seth Rance, Mitchell Santner, Tim Seifert (wk), Ish Sodhi, Ross Taylor.