

OPINION 6
 FOR THE SAKE
 OF DEMOCRACY

VIJAYAWADA 9
 A SCHOOL THAT PRODUCED
 LEADERS IN ALL FIELDS

SPORTS 12
 SINDHU BREAKS
 TAI CODE

VIJAYAWADA, SATURDAY AUGUST 24, 2019; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer

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AAMIR KHAN'S
 DAUGHTER IRA TO
 MAKE DIRECTORIAL
 DEBUT
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'Crashed IAF chopper was hit by Indian missile'

NEW DELHI: Five IAF personnel were found guilty for the crash of a Mi-17 helicopter in Budgam in Jammu and Kashmir as a high-level probe concluded that the chopper went down after being hit by a surface-to-air missile on February 27, the day Indian and Pakistani air forces were engaged in a dogfight, military sources said on Friday. A six-month-long Court of Inquiry into the incident found that the Mi-17 V-5 helicopter was hit by a ground-based missile of the Indian Air Force when the chopper was on its way back to Srinagar air base, they said. Six IAF personnel on board and a civilian on the ground were killed in the crash. Five IAF personnel, including the Chief Operating Officer (COO) of the Srinagar base, were held responsible for the crash and all of them are likely to face severe punishment, sources said.

BS-IV vehicles to remain: FM

NEW DELHI: In a big relief for those being concerned about the viability of Bharat Stage (BS) IV-compliant vehicles, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman has announced that the government wants to "dispel of all confusion." The Minister also stated that BS-IV vehicles have been a point of concern for a lot of people, including the auto companies and those who have purchased these vehicles in recent times. Adding that it continues to be so as companies even today are manufacturing these vehicles. The Finance Minister said, "BS-IV vehicles which are purchased up to March 2020 will remain operational for their entire duration of registration".

4-yr-old raped; man arrested

MEDAK: Yet another sexual assault on a four-year-old girl has been reported from Sangareddy district. A 38-year-old man was taken into custody on the charge of sexually assaulting a 4-year-old girl at Mallepally village of Kondapur Mandal on Thursday evening. After the girl complained to her parents, they approached the Kondapur Police on Thursday night. The accused was identified as Shanthiah alias Yohana, a neighbor of the victim's family. DSP of Sangareddy Sridhar Reddy said that the accused had lured the girl, who had returned from Anganwadi School at 4 pm, on the pretext of giving her some biscuits.

Govt withdraws super-rich surcharge

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Buckling under pressure from overseas investors, the government on Friday rolled back the enhanced surcharge imposed on foreign portfolio and domestic investors in Budget 2019-20 as it announced a slew of measures to boost sagging economic growth.

"In order to encourage investment in the capital market, it has been decided to withdraw the enhanced surcharge levied by Finance (No.2) Act, 2019 on long/short term capital gains arising from the transfer of equity shares/units," Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman told reporters here.

The move will dent government revenues by Rs 1,400 crore. Sitharaman had in her maiden Budget hiked the surcharge on income tax paid by super-rich individuals.

The surcharge, levied on top of the applicable income tax rate, was hiked from 15 per cent to 25 per cent for those with taxable income of Rs 2.5 crore, and to 37 per cent for those earning more than Rs 5 crore. This increased the effective tax rate for these two groups by 3.12 per cent and 7 per cent to 39 per cent and 42.74 per cent, respectively.

- FM proposes measures to enhance fund flows for infra, housing projects
- Angel tax provisions for start-ups removed



Some 40 per cent of foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) automatically came under the higher tax rate as they have been investing as a non-corporate entity such as trust or association of persons (AOPs), which in the Income Tax law are classified as an individual for the purpose of taxation.

"The enhanced surcharge on FPI goes, in simple words,

Sitharaman said. "In other words, the pre-Budget position is restored."

The super-rich tax on FPIs, along with lack of measures to boost the economy in the July 5 Budget, was largely blamed for foreign investors withdrawing more than USD 3 billion from the stock markets, putting pressure on indices and the rupee.

Will decentralise administration: Buggana

PATRI VASUDEVAN
 ■ VIJAYAWADA

The State government has clarified that it has no proposal to shift the Capital city of Amaravati from Velagapudi.

In an exclusive interview to The Pioneer, Minister for Finance Buggana Rajendranath has, however, said that the government is contemplating to decentralise the administrative setup, in order to ensure socio-economic equality to all the regions across the State.

EXCERPTS:

Q: A lot of speculation is going on over shifting of the Capital Amaravati elsewhere. Reports are doing the rounds that Visakhapatnam will be the health headquarters, Rajahmundry irrigation headquarters and Kurnool Pharma destination. What is your take on these reports?

A: There's nothing like that. Our priorities are feeding the poor, addressing the needs of students, taking care of the health of mothers, and guarding the fiscal health of the State. Our priorities are also to guard the interests of the State, rather than spending on 'Singapore' model cities. But, however, our administration believes in decentralisation of administration to ensure a socio-economic equality to the people of all regions of the State. We want Srikkulam to be developed as good as Krishna district, and similarly Prakasam

- Focus on welfare, education and health
- No Singapore-type Capital



EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

district as good as Visakhapatnam district.

Q: It seems that the government has slowed down probe into large scale irregularities that took place in CRDA. What are your thoughts on the issue?

A: We are going to disclose the outcome of the probe into CRDA irregularities very shortly. We don't need Mahishmati kind of Capital now, like the Shaik of Abudhabi has built in his country. Former Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu mesmerised the people with his graphic works of iconic bridges, world-class towers and seed access roads. In reality, we are comfortable with the present Secretariat and Assembly structures. We are not against iconic bridges, but we need to stabilise our

finances. Look at the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) limits, and see how the previous TDP government has conveniently crossed the limits. Naidu proposed Rs 6 lakh crore for building the Capital and he came down to Rs1.5 lakh crore? Doesn't he know that an iconic bridge can be built with Rs 300 crore to Rs 400 crore?

Q: How do you justify your stand on Capital city, by just proposing an allocation of Rs 500 crore in your budget?

A: As I already said, our priorities are welfare, education and health. We didn't say that the Capital city will be shifted from here. Just understand the difference between 'Administrative Capital', and Naidu's magic city of skyscrapers and horizontal malls.

We are not in favour of 'Amaravati', but, we have a specific formula for the Capital.

Q: What are your observations about the misappropriations in CRDA?

A: We have noticed that insider trading and zoning have taken place. Irrespective of whether it is officials or politicians, the government won't spare anybody found guilty. The State is already into a major debt trap. The debts and liabilities come to around Rs 360 lakh crore.

Q: It is a fact that the State is facing fiscal crunch. But, you have allowed major allocations to Amma Vodi, Aarogyasri, fee reimbursement and Raithu Bharosa. While the State government is not even in a position to clear the pending bills to a tune of Rs 2 lakh, how will you bring money for these schemes?

A: Expenditure on all the said schemes comes to around Rs 10,000 crore per annum. You have to understand a serious point here. We are building human capital, by taking up the cause of such welfare schemes. See how mothers are going to get incentives for prompting their children to go to schools. Is it not building human capital? Look at Raithu Bharosa. Now, the Government is paying part amount of the insurance of farmers also apart from the Union Government's share.

Continued on Page 3



Haj, Jerusalem ads on RTC bus tickets; BJP slams Jagan

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A controversy has broken out over tickets issued by the Andhra Pradesh Road Transport Corporation to travellers from Tirupati to the temple town of Tirumala. On the back of the tickets are printed government advertisements about pilgrimage to Haj and Jerusalem.

Travellers who noticed the ads on Wednesday brought it to the notice of the regional manager who said a bundle with printed material about non-Hindu pilgrimage had wrongly come to Tirupati.

The transport body's executive director for operations confirmed that this has been brought to their notice and they are probing into it.

"It is an advertisement of the government issued by the minorities department," the officer said.

BJP leaders who have been critical of Chief Minister Jaganmohan Reddy claiming that he is non-Hindu and does not believe in the religion, alleged that he is pushing his agenda for minority religions.



Raja Singh

The transport body's executive director for operations confirmed that this has been brought to their notice and they are probing it

Controversial BJP MLA Raja Singh from Hyderabad has already put out videos raising this issue.

Earlier this week, the BJP had claimed that Mr Reddy had refused to light a lamp during an event in the US,

MINISTER CLARIFIES

Responding to the controversy over appearance of Haj and Jerusalem Yatra advertisements on tickets of APSRTC buses shuttling between Tirupati and Tirumala, Minister for Endowments Vellampalli Srinivas has clarified that the tickets were printed during the previous TDP government. Speaking to media persons on Friday, he said, "We have ordered an inquiry into the issue soon after it came to our notice. It was found that the tickets were printed during the TDP government tenders for which we invited before the elections."

where he is on a visit. They alleged it was because he did not respect Hindu traditions such as lighting a lamp.

Supporters of YSR Congress, the Chief Minister's party, clarified that there was no question of Jagan Reddy refusing to light a lamp as there were only electrical switches and not the traditional oil and wick lamps.

Botsa summoned in Volkswagen case

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A special court dealing with CBI cases on Friday issued summons to Urban Development Minister Botsa Satyanarayana in a 14-year-old Volkswagen case.

The court asked Satyanarayana, a witness in the case, to appear in the court on September 12 to record his statement.

Satyanarayana was the Industry Minister in the YS Rajsekhar Reddy government in 2005 when the scandal had surfaced.

The State Government had allegedly paid Rs 11.67 crore to Vashishta Vahan Pvt Ltd, a special purpose vehicle (SPV) of German carmaker Volkswagen, floated for setting up a manufacturing unit at Visakhapatnam. However, Vashishta Vahan turned out to be a fictitious entity.

The scam came to light in 2005 when Volkswagen sacked its then head of Indian operations

Helmuth Schuster on charges of corruption in some other dealings. Schuster was negotiating with the State Government on behalf of Volkswagen for setting up the car plant in Visakhapatnam.

Following allegations by the opposition that Satyanarayana and some others paid the money to Vashishta Vahan through 'dubious' means, the government ordered the probe by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI).

The CBI in 2010 filed a charge-sheet against six accused, including Schuster. They were charged with criminal conspiracy and cheating. However, Satyanarayana was included as a witness in the case. In 2015, the Enforcement Directorate (ED) had also filed a charge-sheet in the case.

Meanwhile, Satyanarayana told reporters in Amaravati that he was only a witness in the case. He said he was summoned as the 60th witness in the case.

PC gets SC protection, but no freedom

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Friday granted protection from arrest till August 26 to former Union finance minister P Chidambaram in a money laundering case lodged by ED in connection with INX media scam, for which he is already facing custodial interrogation by CBI in a related case of corruption.

The relief granted by the top court in the case of Enforcement Directorate (ED) will have little effect as Chidambaram has been remanded in CBI's custody till Monday by a trial court in the graft case.

However, the Friday order came as a setback to the ED as the apex court refused to accept its arguments opposing Chidambaram's submission that he was entitled for protection from arrest, granted by the Delhi High Court on July 25, 2018, in the money laundering case.

A bench comprising jus-

Chidambaram remains in CBI custody



tics R Banumathi and A S Bopanna said it will hear on August 26 the pleas filed by Chidambaram in which he has challenged the August 20 order of the Delhi High Court rejecting his anticipatory bail pleas in ED and CBI cases.

The bench said it would also hear a fresh plea filed by Chidambaram, challenging Thursday's order of remand passed by trial Court by which he was sent to the CBI custody till August 26.

"In our view, having regard

to the fact that the petitioner was also granted interim protection on July 25 and that the co-accused were also granted bail by the High Court, the petitioner is granted interim protection, insofar as the Enforcement Directorate case is concerned...till the next date of hearing. List the matter on August 26," the bench said.

It also sought reply of ED on Chidambaram's plea by Monday itself.

As soon as the order was dictated, Solicitor General

Tushar Mehta, appearing for ED, tried to hand over some documents in sealed cover to the court saying that the bench should satisfy its conscience before passing an order granting protection from arrest to Chidambaram.

The move was objected by senior advocate Kapil Sibal, appearing for Chidambaram, who said that the same thing was done by the ED before the High Court and a note was submitted after the arguments were over.

The bench refused to peruse the documents at this stage and asked Mehta to submit them on Monday, saying these are confidential and cannot be kept like this with the court.

The hearing saw several rounds of heated exchanges between Mehta and senior advocates and Chidambaram's party colleagues Kapil Sibal and A M Singhvi.

Continued on Page 3

Transco CMD dares Oppn for CBI probe on power deals in TS

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Devalapalli Prabhakar Rao, Chairman and Managing Director of TSTRANSCO and TSGENCO, has asserted that all the power purchase agreements (PPAs) made in Telangana over the past five years have been transparent and graft-free.

On Friday, responding to media reports, the chief of electricity utilities in the state dared an inquiry by the Central Bureau of Investigation or Supreme Court sitting judge on the power deals made after formation of Telangana State.

Prabhakar Rao's media conference is significant in the context of Telangana BJP chief K Laxman's allegations of "huge scam and irregularities in power deals in the state" that were highlighted by a section of the media.

"The reports that appeared



Devalapalli Prabhakar Rao, Chairman and Managing Director of TS Transco, addressing media persons in Hyderabad on Friday

in media today about huge scams in power sector in Telangana are completely baseless. There has been no scope for corruption in power purchase agreements and also in initiating new power generation projects. The allegation that Telangana bought power at Rs 5.50 tariff from solar power developers,

though NTPC came forward to give power at Rs 4.30 tariff is completely baseless. Never did NTPC come forward to offer power at that price. Even in case of Chhattisgarh power, the agreement was between two states and there was no scope for any corruption," Prabhakar Rao said here.

TODAY

ALMANAC
 Month & Paksham: Shravana & Krishna Paksha
 Panchangam
 Tithi : Ashvini: 08:31 am
 Nakshatram: Rohini 04:16 am (Next Day)
 Time to Avoid: (Bad time to start any important work)
 Rahukalam: 09:11 am - 10:44 am
 Yamagandam: 01:51 pm - 03:25 pm
 Varjyam: 08:07 pm - 09:45 pm
 Goolika: 06:04 am - 07:37 am
 Good Time: (to start any important work)
 Amritakalam: 01:00 am - 02:38 am
 Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:53 am - 12:43 pm

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Isolated Thunderstorms
 Temp: 32/26
 Humidity: 76%
 Sunrise: 06:00
 Sunset: 06:36
 Current Weather Conditions
 Updated August 23, 2019 5:00 PM

CAPSULE

IIIT LECTURER DEVI AWARDED PHD

VIJAYAWADA: Jawaharlal Nehru Technological University, Hyderabad, awarded PhD to Duvvuri Nagarajuna Devi in Computer Science and Engineering on online, offline sales and customers opinion analysis entitled - 'Hybrid Approach for Sentiment Analysis on Multi-Domain Data' under the guidance of Professor Dr TV Rajinikanth. She is working as a lecturer in the Computer Science Department at IIIT Nuzvid College. IIIT Nuzvid Director Professor Dr Suryachandra Rao and other faculty congratulated Devi on her achievement.

SCHOOLS ASKED TO PROMOTE PHILATELY AMONG STUDENTS

VIJAYAWADA: The Department of Posts has launched Deen Dayal Sparsh Yojana (scholarship for promotion of aptitude & research in stamps as a hobby), a philately scholarship scheme for generating interest regarding philately among the students of Class VI to IX. In this regard, the postal department invited applications from students from Class VI to IX to apply for the scholarship under the scheme. The candidate must be a student of (class VI to IX), a recognised school in the country with at least 60 per cent marks/grade points in the previous academic year (5 per cent relaxation for SC/ST). The school concerned should have a Philately Club and the candidate should be a member of the club. The last date for submitting applications is on August 31 and the written test will be conducted on September 29. The second level of project work will be on philately in which 40 best students will be awarded Rs 6,000 scholarship. For more details, interested participants can contact the superintendent of post offices. Chief Postmaster General Eleesha asked all schools to utilise the opportunity and to inculcate the habit of philately among students.

RICH TRIBUTES PAID TO PRAKASAM PANTULU

Ongole: The district administration, people and private organisations paid rich tributes to the son of the soil, freedom fighter and the first Chief Minister of the Andhra State Tanguturi Prakasam here on Friday on his 148th birth anniversary. Ministers Balineni Srinivasa Reddy and Adimulapu Suresh garlanded the statue of Prakasam Pantulu at the Collectorate and paid tributes to him. Balineni said that services of Prakasam Pantulu in the freedom movement and as the Chief Minister of the State cannot be forgotten. He advised the people to follow in the footsteps of Prakasam and to strive for the realisation of his ideology. Suresh said that the district, which is formed with the backward areas from other district, is still backward and no development is done though it is named after Prakasam Pantulu. He announced that the YSRCP government will definitely develop the district.

VIJAYAWADA BULLION RATES

GOLD	
₹ 37,820 (10 gm)	
₹ 150	↑
SILVER	
₹ 43,700 (1kg)	
₹ 100	↓

CHICKEN RATES

Dressed/With Skin	₹138
Without Skin	₹157
Broiler at Farm	₹95

EGG RATES

HYDERABAD	315
VIJAYAWADA	330
VISAKHAPATNAM	361
RETAIL PRICE	₹3.30

Political heat gathers as parties join hands on capital city imbroglio

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Amidst speculation that the capital city Amaravati will be shifted to Donakonda, hundreds of farmers, who gave lands to the State government under land pooling met BJP President Kanna Lakshminarayana in Guntur on Friday.

They expressed their anguish at Minister Bostsa Satyanarayana's remarks and said they never expected this piquant situation. "The earlier government asked us land for the capital city construction and we gave as we were concerned about the development of the unscientifically bifurcated State. Now, the present government is not giving us clarity. Our lives are in peril".

They told the BJP chief that the development works in the capital city were halted completely and the lease amount by the government was not paid till now. "Although, we met CRDA officials, they are not able to give us clarity".

Confused farmers also visited Andhra Ratna Bhavan to meet Congress leaders to express their concern and their support.

Farmers raised their concern with them and said that the State government was yet to pay the annual rent and failed to provide infrastructure for their plots.

Senior leader Raghuvvera Reddy, who spoke to them on the telephone assured the support of his party. "We requested to make efforts to retain Amaravati as the capital city of Andhra Pradesh for which he gave us a positive reply," they added. Meanwhile, CPI State Secretary K Ramakrishna on



CPI State Secretary K Ramakrishna addressing the media in Vijayawada on Friday

Farmers told the BJP Chief that the development works in the capital city were halted completely and the lease amount by the government was not paid till now. "Although, we met CRDA officials, they are not able to give us clarity"

Friday said that Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy should come clean on the Capital City and advised his Cabinet ministers not to make confusing statements on Amaravati when the State government was struggling to generate revenue and wealth.

Speaking to media persons, he said the State government was constantly taking steps detrimental for the growth of the State. "Finance Minister has said that it would take five years to put the economy back on the rail as TDP took several destructive decisions. The State government should be more careful while taking the

administrative decisions".

He said that Jagan government received a slap from the Andhra Pradesh High Court on the reverse tendering of the Polavaram and the quixotic statements by Cabinet ministers on 'likely' shifting of Amaravati to Donakonda will force AP to undergo severe financial stress.

He said decisions taken by the Jagan government were increasing the expenditure and not saving money. "There is no coordination between the words uttered by the Finance Minister and the State government".

He said the earlier govern-

ment had collected 33,000 acres of land through land pooling and the Jagan government should make efforts to bring in industries, hospitals, hotels, universities and other educational institutes to generate wealth and increase revenue. "The reverse mode, which the State government is adopting, will not augur well for Jagan".

He suggested setting up of industrial hubs in Rayalaseema, north Andhra and Donakonda will ensure diversified growth.

The senior Left leader found fault with the setting up of Regional Development Council and dubbed them as outfits to accommodate those leaders, who could not get a ministerial berth. "It is nothing, but a waste of money".

He said Jagan policy on sand has crippled the development works across the State. "The State government, which praises the sand policy of Telangana government, should implement the policy immediately instead of waiting till September 5".

He said the State government had no clarity where it was spending unnecessarily and from where it can generate revenue. "If the trend continues, the Jagan government will take 50 years to set right the tottering economy".

He also asked the State government to seek funds from the Central government as promised in the AP Reorganisation Act - 2014.

Ramakrishna said that party State Council meeting will be held on August 26 and 27 in which CPI National Secretary D Raja will be the chief guest.

Venkaiah Naidu to flag off new train at Gudur tomorrow

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu will flag off the Intercity Express between Gudur and Vijayawada in the presence of Minister for Railways and Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal and Minister of State for Railways Suresh C Angadi on August 25 at 10:30 hrs at Gudur Railway Station.

Train No. 02743 Gudur - Vijayawada Intercity Superfast Express will depart Gudur at 10:30 hrs and arrive in Vijayawada at 15:35 hrs on the same day. In the return direction, Train No. 02744 Vijayawada - Gudur will depart Vijayawada at 18:00 hrs and arrive in Gudur at 22:30 hrs on the same day.

En route, this train will stop in Nellore, Kavali, Singarayakonda, Ongole, Chirala, Bapatla and Tenali Stations.

The regular services will commence from August 26 from both the directions.

Train No. 12743 Gudur-Vijayawada Intercity Express



Vice-President M Venkaiah Naidu will flag off the Intercity Express between Gudur and Vijayawada in Gudur on August 25 (File photo)

Minister for Railways, Commerce and Industry Piyush Goyal and Minister of State for Railways Suresh C Angadi will be present

will depart Gudur at 06:10 hrs on August 26 and arrive in Vijayawada at 10:40 hrs on the same day. In the return direction, Train No. 12744 Vijayawada-Gudur Intercity Express will depart Vijayawada at 18:00 hrs and arrive in Gudur at 22:30 hrs on the same day.

En route, this train will stop in Nellore, Kavali, Singarayakonda, Ongole, Chirala, Bapatla and Tenali Stations. This train will consist of AC chair car and second class chair car.

'TTD aims at protecting desi cows'

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

One of the chief mottoes of TTD is to safeguard and enhance the produce of desi cows as a part of Hindu Sanatana Dharma, said TTD Chairman YV Subba Reddy.

The TTD Board chief graced the Gopuja Mahotsavam at SV Gosala in Tirupati on the occasion of Sri Krishna Janmashtami celebrations on Friday. Speaking on the occasion, he said there are about 2,991 cattle in SV Dairy Farm as well in Palamaner Goshalas owned by TTD. These cows comprise



TTD Board chief graced the Gopuja Mahotsavam at SV Gosala in Tirupati on the occasion of Sri Krishna Janmashtami celebrations on Friday

Earlier, special abhishekam was performed to the presiding deity of Sri Venugopala Swamy followed by Gopuja event

followed by Gopuja event.

Govt Whip Chevirreddy Bhaskar Reddy, Palamaner MLA Venkatesh Goud, CVSO Gopinath Jatti, SV GO Samrakshana Shala Director K Harinath Reddy, deputy executive officer Varalakshmi and others were present.

Workshop to be held on Bills passed by BJP govt

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Civil Liberties Society general secretary Chandrasekhar on Friday said that a state-level workshop will be held at Makineni Basavapunniah Vignana Kendram on September 1 in which bills enacted by BJP government in Parliament will be discussed.

Speaking to media persons, he said the workshop will witness Professor Haragopal discussing scrapping of Article 370 and the future of people of Kashmir.

"Professor N Nirmala will speak on the amendments of labour laws and the right of workers while Professor Gunti Ravi will speak on forest laws and the living conditions of tribal". He said RTI activist Yerramsetti Jagan will discuss issues relating to Right to Information and senior lawyer Abdul will speak about the scrapping of triple talaq and its



AP Civil Liberties Society members releasing a poster in Vijayawada on Friday

Senior lawyer Abdul will speak about the scrapping of triple talaq and its impact on Muslim women

impact on Muslim women. "I will speak on the impact of freedom of expression under the present regime," he added. The workshop will witness several cultural programmes conducted by Praja Kala Mandali".

Unit's President Chittibabu, along with members, released a poster on the workshop.

Krishnashtami celebrated with fervour

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Krishnashtami was celebrated with religious fervour and gaiety at various temples, colonies, organisations and schools here on Friday.

Welcoming Lord Krishna, denizens decorated their houses colourfully, illuminated temples and residential colonies. They drew the footprints of tiny tots in their houses as a symbolic mark of Krishna entering their dwellings.

After performing special puja and rituals, the youth of various associations organised 'Utti' celebrations in which youth gathered to break the pot hung above their head filled with money, milk and curd.

Birla Open Minds Play School Management under the supervision of Sunkara Neelima organised fancy dress competitions to kids. "The event was organised to highlight the importance of the festival," said principal Neelima.

Tiny-tots dressed as Lord Krishna, Radha and Gopikas captured the attention of the audience. A skit highlighting



Tiny tots rocking the cradle of Lord Krishna during the Krishnashtami celebrations in Vijayawada on Friday

Welcoming Lord Krishna, denizens decorated their houses colourfully, illuminated temples and residential colonies. They drew the footprints of tiny tots in their houses as a symbolic mark of Krishna entering their dwellings

the importance of friendship was al enacted.

"KCP Siddhartha Adarsh Residential Public School,



Tiny tots breaking the 'dahi handi'

al songs and performed dances on the occasion. School convener V Sasikala, staff, students and parents actively participated in the Janmashtami bash. The festival was celebrated at Sri Krishna Prarthana Mandiram, Sri Vijayawada Gou Samrakshana Samithi, Uttardi Mutt at One Town and ISKCON at Undavalli in Guntur district.

Later in the evening, cultural programmes were organised in which tiny tots enacted the childhood character of Lord Krishna.

Surprisingly, many events saw mothers acting the role of Yasoda and encouraged the children. 'Dandia' was performed at temples and in residential colonies too. Students rendered devotion-

SCR to run three spl trains to Kakinada

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

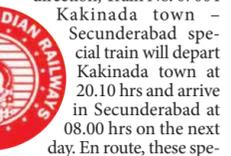
In order to clear extra rush of passengers, the South Central Railway will ply three special trains between Secunderabad and Kakinada town, according to a release from SCR on Friday.

Train No. 07053 Secunderabad - Kakinada town special train will depart Secunderabad at 17.55 hrs on August 30 and arrive in Kakinada town at 04.00 hrs on the next day.

En route, this special train will stop at Kazipet, Warangal, Khammam, Rayanapadu, Eluru, Tadepalligudem, Rajahmahendravaram and Samalkot Stations.

These special trains will have AC II Tier, AC III Tier and Sleeper Class Coaches.

Train No. 07003 Secunderabad - Kakinada town special train will depart Secunderabad at 20.45 hrs on August 31 and arrive in Kakinada town at 07.30 hrs on the next day. In the return direction, Train No. 07004 Kakinada town - Secunderabad special train will depart Kakinada town at 20.10 hrs and arrive in Secunderabad at 08.00 hrs on the next day. En route, these special trains will stop at Kazipet, Rayanapadu, Gudivada, Kaikalur, Akividu, Bhimavaram town, Tanuku, Nidadavolu, Rajahmahendravaram, Dwarapudi and Samalkot Stations in both the directions.



These special trains consist of AC II Tier, AC III Tier and sleeper class coaches.

SCDS students leave for Milan on a study tour

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

As many as 25 students of Samana College of Design Studies (SCDS) from Hyderabad and Andhra Pradesh branches left to Milan (Italy) on Friday to attend a student exchange programme at NABA University, according to SCDS chairperson Samana Hussaini. Faculty Sheeba is accompanying the team as manager.

Addressing media persons, she said SCDS was the first college to provide international exposure to its designers. "The hard work as finally paid off as SCDS is the only college from Telangana and Andhra Pradesh to provide an international platform to designers".

She said both fashion designing and interior designing trainees will undergo a month-long programme.



Milan-bound Samana College of Design Studies students with college chairperson Samana Hussaini in Vijayawada on Friday

Samana College of Design Studies was the first college to provide international exposure to its designers

"During the period, students will be open to a totally new method of teaching and multicultural atmosphere.

They are taking their projects to present at the university and they would come back with new ideas and memories to share with their peers back home".

ACA Colts, Puducherry post wins

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

ACA Colts, powered by a century by D. Naren Reddy (108), defeated Baroda by five wickets in the Sir Vizzy Trophy tournament held both at Visakhapatnam and Vizianagaram on Friday.

In the other match, Chhattisgarh defeated ACA President's XI by five wickets. In the rain-hit match, Puducherry defeated Madhya Pradesh by 39 runs.

The scores: Baroda 298 for nine in 50 overs (Vishnu Solanki 83, Kedhar Devdhar 78, Swapnil Singh 59, B Vasanth Reddy four for 66) lost to ACA Colts 299 for five in 47 overs (D Naren Reddy 108, Y Sandeep 95 UMS Girinath 36, Swapnil Singh two for 62, Rishi Arothe two for 48)

ACA Presidents XI 180 in 42.4 overs (M Pranith 47, Shoaib Mohammed 35, Shubham Singh five for 29, Veer Pratap two for 28) lost to Chhattisgarh 184 for five 41 overs (Jiwanjot Singh 51,

In the other match, Chhattisgarh defeated ACA President's XI by five wickets. In the rain-hit match, Puducherry defeated Madhya Pradesh by 39 runs

Shashank Singh 40, Swaroop Kumar Dasari three for 39).

Madhya Pradesh 202 in 50 overs (Parth Sahani 54, Naman Ojha 37, Saransh Jain 31, Yash Duley 30, Santha Moorthy two or 18, Suresh Kumar two for 45, Fabid Ahmed two for 26) lost to Pondicherry 159 for five in 34.5 overs (Paras Dogra 55 n.o., Gaurav Yadav three for 34) - VJD method

HPCA 298 for nine in 50 overs lost to ACA Secretary 303 for seven in 48.2 overs.

CAPSULE

KRISHNASTAMI CELEBRATED IN TIRUMALA

Tirumala: The annual festival Sri Krishnastami was celebrated with religious fervour in Tirumala on Friday. Special abhishekam was performed to the Kalya Mardana Sri Krishna at Gogarbhram Gardens in Tirumala under the aegis of garden wing of TTD. Deputy director of garden department Srinivasulu performed the abhishekam with milk, curd, honey, turmeric and coconut water. This was followed by Uttosavam where enthusiastic youth took part in the traditional mud pot breaking fete. Special grade deputy executive officer Parvathi, KKC deputy executive officer Nagaratna and other officers were also present. Gopujotsavam was performed with celestial fervour in Tirumala Gosala. The cattle were finely decked and special puja was performed.

HC issues summons to EOs

HYDERABAD: The Telangana High Court on Friday issued summons to the district educational officers of four districts of the state in a contempt case. The case was filed by the qualified candidates of DSC-1998 teachers' recruitment. It has also issued directions for the issuance of the notices to the DEOs for their appearance before the court. The High Court later posted the case till September 5 for their appearance.

PIL on Aarogyasri dismissed

HYDERABAD: The Telangana High Court on Friday dismissed a Public Interest Litigation by terming it as infructuous. The petition was filed by one Perala Sekhar Rao, a social activist from LB Nagar urging the HC to declare the action of the state government and the Telangana Network Hospitals Association to suspend cashless Aarogyasri healthcare services as illegal unconstitutional. He also urged the HC to direct the state government and the association to resume the implementation of the Aarogyasri scheme immediately besides directing the state government to strengthen government hospitals in all over the Telangana instead of providing huge budget for private hospitals of the state. A division bench of the High Court comprising of the Chief Justice of the state Justice RS Chauhan and Justice Shameem Akhtar told the petitioner that his petition had turned out to be infructuous as the services have been resumed in the state.

Taking health care to the next level

PNS ■ HYDERABAD
Anvaya is an online healthcare platform for the elderly, which provides healthcare and utility services. A Hyderabad-based Eldercare company Anvaya is initiating the healthcare digital transformation and has now expanded to cities like Bangalore and Chennai. They also launched the mobile App, 'Anvaya Kincares', using which one can facilitate the well-being of their loved ones past their prime needs. The services encompass the whole spectrum of healthcare services along with necessities. Key services including booking doctor appointments, consultation, diagnostic services, pharmacy services, preventive health checkups, home healthcare services, assistance during surgeries, and also with daily household chores, such as plumber, carpenters, electricians to elderly. "Supporting the elderly population with their health requirements is a delight. The global population of people aged 60 and older is expected to be more than double from 900 million in 2015 to about 2 billion in 2050. We at Anvaya are committed to understand, customise and execute health related services for the comfort and convenience of the elders in India," said Prashanth Reddy Director of Anvaya, Elderly Care Services. "By doing this we are changing the way healthcare services are delivered and accessed to the elder ones," he added.

TDP-BJP painting YSRCP govt anti-Hindu: Vishnu

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Senior YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) leader and Vijayawada Central MLA Malladi Vishnu lashed out at the propaganda in a section of Press against the YSRCP government and condemned attempts by the TDP and BJP to paint the Andhra Pradesh government headed by YS Jaganmohan Reddy as an anti-Hindu one.

With the directive of the then Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, APSRTC tickets bore advertisements relating to various faiths and schemes. They also carried his name as per an order to RTC. It was specifically on the government's orders that Naidu's name was prominently featured on bus tickets, Vishnu reminded mediapersons.

The YSRCP leader told reporters that maximum damage to the prestige of Hindu faith was caused under the TDP rule. He recalled that a number of priests took to the streets to protest against injustice rendered to Hindu faith under the TDP regime. Similarly, 29 innocent pilgrims died during the Pushkaral due to Naidu's thoughtless decision in Rajamahendravaram.

It was during the TDP



■ The YSRCP leader told reporters that maximum damage to the prestige of Hindu faith was caused under the TDP rule

■ YSRCP MLA recalled that a number of priests took to the streets to protest against injustice rendered to Hindu faith under the TDP regime

■ Dr YS Rajasekhara Reddy was a true friend of Hindus and extended all help to priests, Vishnu recalled and opined that the late Chief Minister had increased the budget for certain pujas and rituals in temples

■ Similarly, YS Jaganmohan Reddy's government views all segments of society equally. It does not discriminate between castes, classes or faiths, he pointed out

BJP State Chief Kanna Lakshminarayana made a similar comment on the issues related to RTC tickets and the death of 100 cows at Gosala. "This is unfortunate. What about the death of cows at Simhachalam Gosala during the TDP rule? Will the BJP take the responsibility for that?" he asked.

regime that pujas, which were violative of shastras, were performed at Kanakadurga temple and other shrines. The TDP is trying to project the YSRCP as an anti-Hindu party after its miserable failure in the Assembly elections. The senior YSRCP leader said that action would be taken against people indulging in malicious propa-

ganda of this kind.

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that?" he asked. Dr YS Rajasekhara Reddy was a true friend of Hindus and extended all help to priests, Vishnu recalled and opined that the late Chief Minister had increased the budget for certain pujas and rituals in temples. Similarly, YS Jaganmohan Reddy's government views all segments of society equally. It does not discriminate between castes, classes or faiths, he pointed out.

The people of the State had taught the TDP a fitting lesson and gave it only 23 seats, he said and added that the BJP failed to win even a single seat. It is ironical that these parties should criticise YSRCP, he added.

Amara Raja sets up EV battery charging stations

PNS ■ TIRUPATI

In a bid to promote India's move towards EV adoption, Amara Raja installs EV battery charging/ swapping stations, along with a fleet of e-Autos in Tirupati. The initiative is undertaken in collaboration with the Tirupati Municipal Corporation as a part of its Smart City programme.

The inauguration of the same happened in the presence of Girisha PS, IAS, Commissioner, Municipal Corporation of Tirupati, Bhumana Karunakar Reddy, MLA, Tirupati, H Harinatha Rao, CMD of APSDCL, and other senior officials of Amara Raja.

The launch of the fleet of e-Autos and EV charging/ swapping station is a technological demonstration of Amara Raja Group's capabilities and commitment in the e-Mobility segment.

The lithium ion battery packs and EV battery charging/ swapping stations are designed and developed in the state-of-the-art R&D facilities of Amara Raja.

The company has recently added a lithium ion battery pack manufacturing facility of 500MWH capacity at its Tirupati manufacturing unit. EV charging infrastructure



Amara Raja is offering lithium ion battery packs, charging station Amara Raja is offering lithium ion battery packs, charging station

■ Important step towards making one of the most visited pilgrim cities in the country, a green city

■ Women Drivers to run the E-Auto fleet encouraging Self-employment

plays a key role in enabling proliferation of e-Mobility in the country and therefore Amara Raja is offering lithium ion battery packs, charging stations and fleet operation solutions as an end-to-end package

to its customers. Speaking on the occasion, Ramachandra N Galla, Chairman, Amara Raja Group, says "Amara Raja is committed to take part in the government's initiatives to drive green mobility in the country. Amara Raja is closely watching trends and emerging business opportunities in the arena of electric mobility and has taken concrete steps towards enhancing its R&D capabilities, so as to develop battery packs for electric mobility and EV charging stations".



Muslim woman dresses her kids as lord Krishna

PNS ■ KARIMNAGAR

A devastating communal sentiment has swept many regions of the country in the recent past, affecting a number of lives. During these times of communal turmoil, little gestures of peace act like a soothing balm. One such gesture was made by a muslim woman, who dressed her kids as Lord Krishna and Rukmini for a fancy dress competition on the occasion of Janmashtami.

The rare gesture came to light in Kakatiya School of Jammikunta where Shaheda, a muslim woman dressed her children Mohsin and Sabeena as lord Krishna and Satyabhama. Shaheda's gesture has won the accolades from many and people were overwhelmed. The parents of other students commended her for taking up a task that mirrors the oneness and religious unification.

Bounce to launch e-Scooters in Tirupati by 2019-end

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Bounce, India's first and fastest growing dockless bike sharing player, on Friday announced its plan to launch 100 electric scooters in Tirupati by the end of this year. Bounce made an official announcement at an event attended by Tirupati MLA Bhumana Karunakar Reddy and Commissioner of Tirupati Municipal Corporation and Smart City CEO PS Girisha. The corporation is currently working with different stakeholders, including auto unions, to convert auto-rickshaws into battery-operated vehicles.

"Bounce electric scooters are aimed at encouraging commuters to opt for eco-friendly shared transport, and in doing so, reducing traffic congestion and pollution. We are looking forward to launching 100 electric scooters in the Temple City", said Bounce's CEO and Co-founder Vivekananda Hallekere. Commenting on the launch, PS Girisha, Municipal Commissioner Tirupati and Smart City CEO, said: "This is a commendable initiative by Bounce and we are enthusiastic about their plan to deploy electric scooters in Tirupati."

In our effort to make the city pollution free, this will be the first step towards the adoption of sustainable mode of shared transportation".



■ Tirupati MLA Bhumana Karunakar Reddy said: "Tirupati is growing rapidly and we need bike sharing services. With Bounce, both residents of Tirupati and pilgrims will have access to greener as well as cleaner commuting options"

■ Bounce currently operates in the city of Bengaluru with 7,000 dockless scooters

■ The Bounce app allows the users to pick up a scooter and drop it at any legitimate parking lot

Tirupati MLA Bhumana Karunakar Reddy said: "Tirupati is growing rapidly and we need bike sharing services. With Bounce, both residents of Tirupati and pilgrims will have access to greener as well as cleaner commuting options".

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Bounce app allows the users to pick up a scooter and drop it at any legitimate parking lot. The company has started its operations in Bengaluru in September 2018 and has done over five million rides, covering 30 million km. With strong presence in Bengaluru and Hyderabad, the company is now planning to expand its fleet in other cities.

Asia Paper & Pulp dismisses reports of backing out

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Indonesian pulp and paper giant Asia Pulp and Paper (APP) has dismissed rumours that it has backed out of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to construct the world's biggest paper and board mill in Ramayapatnam, on the coast of Andhra Pradesh. After a change of government there, local media published reports that the new Chief Minister had created a hostile environment for deals concluded under the then Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu, and that APP consequently cancelled the MoU early this year.

A spokesperson from APP dismissed the reports. "APP is still evaluating the economic and logistical considerations for the development of a pulp and paper mill at Ramayapatnam, including site suitability, adequate water supply, regulatory approvals and the supply of sustainable plantation wood," he said. "Contrary to speculation in the media, no decision has yet been taken to commence or withdraw the proposed development at this time", he added. The proposed APP Mill would



The proposed APP Mill would be able to produce five million tonnes of paper and board grades at the \$3.5 billion coastal facility. Environmental approvals for it are still pending

be able to produce five million tonnes of paper and board grades at the \$3.5 billion coastal facility. "Environmental approvals for it are still pending. Participation from the State government would be particularly important in terms of water supply to the mill", he added. Sources close to the MoU suggest that its construction is envisaged as a long-term project that may stretch over the next 10 years.

Student dies of fever, unions stage dharna

Mancherial: Another student of a Tribal Welfare Residential School died of acute fever at his residence at Karshalaghattam village in Thandur mandal on Thursday. Holding the warden of the hostel responsible for his death, students unions staged a dharna demanding justice for the parents of the student.

Will decentralise administrative setup: Buggana

- Continued from P1

While Naidu assured a beautiful Capital for Andhra Pradesh, your government is more worried about expenditure on the Capital. Could you please elaborate your stand?

Our Government welcomes judicious and purposeful expenditure. If Naidu's Singapore-type Capital happens here, the people of the State have to pay the interest for Rs 1 lakh crore debt. Is it justified? We want to assure the people of AP, a debt-free and liability-free State as we are practical. One must understand that our Government is not living in dreams.

BJP overtakes Cong in membership

K VENKATESHWARLU ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Congress, which had done its intensive membership drive last year, is lagging behind the BJP in terms membership. The ruling TRS and BJP have completed their membership drives and criticizing each other on the number of membership. The BJP stood in second place with 31 lakh members after TRS, which has 60 lakh members in its kitty. The Congress had done its intensive membership drive last year and it had 19 lakh party members in the state.

The ruling party in the state, TRS and ruling party at the Centre, BJP is indulging in blame game and are conducting press conferences competitively to criticize each other on every day basis. The spar between these two parties is confusing Congress literally. The confused Congress is trying hard to criticize both TRS and BJP. However, TRS almost stopped criticizing Congress targeting fully BJP.

On the other hand, both TRS and BJP are busy with their membership drive all these days. Ruling TRS has closed its membership drive on August 22. Speaking on the



day, TRS' working president KT Rama Rao stated that their total membership enrollment stood at 60 lakh, including 20 lakh active members. He criticized state BJP alleging that the TRS active members are 20 lakh and more than BJP's total membership of 12 lakh. TRS conducts its membership drive for every two years. Last time (in 2017), the TRS membership was 60 lakh. The party Chief K Chandrasekhar Rao handed over then a cheque of Rs 9,88,66000 as insurance premium to the insurance company for the 60 lakh members of the party. This time too, the TRS party is offering insurance to its members. The state Congress is not doing its membership drive this year as it did last year. The

The BJP stood in second place with 31 lakh members after TRS, which has 60 lakh members in its kitty. Congress has 19 lakh party members in the state

party has to wait another four years for the membership drive. As per Congress party constitution, it will conduct its membership drive for every five years though it will give membership through online on any day. This has resulted

the party to lag behind the saffron party.

The party official spokesperson G Niranjana said that earlier the party used to take up membership drive for every three years but the party changed it to for every five years. "We will take up membership drive in 2023 as we already taken it up in 2018", he told to 'The Pioneer' over phone from Delhi. He said that the people have a chance to take the party membership anytime during five years. "We will take up intensive membership drive for every five years only", he said. He made it clear that it will not harm party interest any way. The gap is better for the membership, he defended.

On the other hand, the BJP leaders said that they gave 13 lakh new memberships this year. They have already 18 lakh old members. Their total membership is 31 lakh, they said. State BJP will take up membership for every three years. The BJP membership drive was closed on August 20. Interestingly, the BJP crossed the Congress, which has 19 lakh members, and has 12 lakh more members than Congress now. The total voters in the state as per Election Commission are 2,80,64,680.

PC gets SC protection, but no freedom

- Continued from P1

Mehta vehemently opposed the order granting protection from arrest to Chidambaram in the money laundering case and said that the probe agency "has collected innumerable evidence to show that the money has been transferred from one company to another shell company".

He said Chidambaram amassed 11 properties outside the country and has 17 bank accounts, not only in India but also abroad, and the money was transferred through a web of shell companies.

Mehta said that lot of "hue and cry" and "political vendetta" is alleged by petitioner (Chidambaram) and his party colleagues but "I am saying with a great sense of responsibility that this is a case of money laundering of a monumental magnitude".

He said custodial interrogation of Chidambaram was needed to unravel the truth and claimed that while being Union finance minister he had asked Indrani and Peter Mukherjee to "take care of his son" when she had met with him in 2007 regarding FIPB approval for their company INX Media.

Mehta said they need to confront Chidambaram with the evidences collected so far, including some e-mail and money transaction, as several persons who have created the shell companies have executed a will in the name of Chidambaram's granddaughter. Mehta said Chidambaram has been evasive in his replies, refused to divulge anything and have not cooperated in the probe. "Custodial interrogation of the accused is necessary to unravel the truth which cannot be done under the protective umbrella of anticipatory bail", he said and insisted that the court should go through the case diary and satisfy its conscience before granting any relief to the former minister.

At the outset, Sibal said that it is violation of his fundamental right under Article 21 of the Constitution, that his petition challenging the high court order was not heard by the apex court on July 20 and 21 and he was arrested on the Wednesday night.

"My rights under Article 21 cannot be frustrated", he said and added that the high court, while rejecting the anticipatory bail plea, had taken on record

a note submitted by the ED, which was not even argued. "Word by word, comma for comma and full stop for full stop, even adjectives were copied as it was in the note and para-wise noting was done," Sibal said and added that if the courts are going to copy-paste from a note of probe agencies then how will common people protect themselves.

Singhvi said that in the anticipatory bail rejection order of the ED case, the high court should not have made observations with regard to Aircel-Maxis cases.

The apex court was hearing two separate petitions filed by Chidambaram challenging the Delhi High Court August 20 verdict by which his anticipatory bail was dismissed in the cases registered by both the agencies- CBI and ED.

The CBI had registered an FIR on May 15, 2017, alleging irregularities in the Foreign Investment Promotion Board (FIPB) clearance granted to the INX Media group for receiving overseas funds of Rs 305 crore in 2007 during Chidambaram's tenure as the finance minister.

Thereafter, the ED lodged a money laundering case in 2017.



Asiatic Lions to roar in Vizag zoo

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Indira Gandhi Zoological Park (IGZP) received a pair of Asiatic Lions from Sakkarbaug Zoo in Gujarat under an animal exchange programme. The Vizag zoo, which is the only wild dog breeding centre, will give five wild dogs in exchange of the two lions.

The animals were transported in Okhla-Puri Express that reached the city accompanied by Zoo animal keepers and officials from the two zoos.

The wild dogs will be leaving on August 25 on-board Puri-Okhla express. The Asiatic lions are now under observation at the IGZP's animal rescue centre. They will be released to the enclosure after the quarantine period, according to the cura-

The Asiatic lions are now under observation at the IGZP's animal rescue centre

tor, Yasoda Bai. The agreement on animal exchange was made in 2016 at the annual conference of Indian zoos held at Guwahati, where 34 zoos from across India participated.

The last animals received by the zoo under the animal exchange programme were chimpanzees from Israel. However, one of the chimps, aged around 21 years,

City cops bust child kidnappers gang

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The city police on Friday arrested a four-member gang, including two women, on charges of kidnapping children and selling them for money. They also nabbed three persons for purchasing kids from the gang and two more, who helped the kidnappers.

Police found that the gang had kidnapped five children and sold four of them at prices ranging from Rs 50,000 to Rs 1.20 lakh. Four children have been rescued.

The arrested have been identified as kingpin B Nagamani, J Anand alias Chandu alias Sekhar, T Sumanth Kumar, M Lakshmi, all residents from various parts of Visakhapatnam while the mediators include M Jyothi and Ch Devi.

Addressing a press conference here, Commissioner of Police RK Meena said the gang was busted while investigating the Simhachalam kidnapping case, which was reported on August 5.

On August 5, one N Kanthamma from Paderu lodged a complaint with Gopalapatnam Police Station that her two-year-old son N Abhiram was kidnapped by Sekhar, who knew her from Simhachalam, when she had



Commissioner of Police RK Meena addressing the media with regard to the busting of the child kidnappers gang in Visakhapatnam on Friday

gone to the wash room. After registering a case, the police took the accused into custody and rescued the baby with the help of CCTV footage.

As a part of further investigation, the police came to know that Chandu alias Sekhar was not alone and that there was a gang committing the crime since 2016, Meena said.

The Commissioner said it all started in 2016, when Nagamani, a resident of Arilova, who runs a prostitution business, informed Sumanth, with whom she had an illegal affair that her sister Sathyavathi in Eluru was in need of children. Sumanth discussed with her and hatched a plan to kidnap a poor child and

hand over to Sathyavathi where they could earn easy money. In November 2016, the duo kidnapped an eight-month-old girl, who was with a beggar near VUDA Park area and sold her to Sathyavathi's husband B Rambabu for Rs 50,000. After the incident, Sumanth left for Vizianagaram, but Nagamani decided to commit

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more offences to make easy money.

In 2017, Nagamani discussed about the kidnapping idea with J Anand alias Chandu, who is an auto-rickshaw driver from Arilova. Later, Anand sold his daughter to one Mohammed Ziauddin for Rs 1 lakh.

Continuing their crimes, in July 2017, the duo kidnapped a girl from Arilova. After police launched a man-hunt, the duo approached the police with the baby saying that they found her in some area and escaped, RK Meena said. Yet again in November 2018, they kidnapped a two-year-old boy from Bheemili and sold to Ch

Eswara Rao at Nakkapalle for Rs 1.20 lakh. Their next kidnapping was Simhachalam where they were caught, he added.

DCP (Zone II) B Uday Bhaskar said that the duo conduct dry runs at various areas in auto before committing the offence.

"Since Nagamani, given her business interests, has many contacts. In Whatsapp, she shares photographs of children they had kidnapped. To whomsoever they sell, they inform them that these children are orphans, separated from parents, beggars and convince them", Uday Bhaskar said.

YLMC pipeline project back in the limelight

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Yeleru left main canal (YLMC) pipeline project planned over a stretch of 153 kms has resurfaced after years as the water is touching its full level. Greater Visakhapatnam Municipal Corporation (GVMC) could not initiate the project due to financial constraint.

The YLMC is an open canal and brings water from Godavari/Yeleru reservoir to the city. The estimated cost for laying pipelines was around Rs 2, 000 crore.

GVMC has been preparing a detailed project reports (DPRs) to augment the storage volumes of several tanks as an alternative option. These tanks include 'Kondakarla Ava' in Munagapaka, Penjeruvu, VK Sagaram tank in Rayavaram, and Gopalapatnam Awa in Payakaraopeta.

However, the Yeleru pipeline project is being considered as the best alternative plan for constructing summer water storage tanks or augmenting storage of some tanks to resolve the water problem of the city. The pipeline project would have no maintenance and the civic body need not



The Yeleru left main canal (File photo)

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acquire land unlike in the case of summer water storage tanks. Vizag MP MVV Satyanarayana said that the availability of water plays an essential role for the functioning and development of any city.

"Several industries of the city have already come forward to fund to the tune of Rs 1,200

crore for the Yeleru pipeline project. We have to explore options to raise the remaining funds.

I would try my best to get a good chunk of funds for the project from the Union government. I convened a meeting with the GVMC officials regarding the project recently," he said.

Steel units to adopt cost-cutting measures

NO COMPROMISE ON QUALITY STEEL: RINL CMD

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

As the steel market is facing a slowdown, steel industries would have to adopt the cost-cutting measures in India to survive the tough time, said PK Rath, the Chairman and Managing Director of Rashtriya Ispat Nigam Limited (RINL), the corporate entity of Visakhapatnam Steel Plant.

Delivering the key-note address at the one-day seminar on cost-effective technologies and market for long products, organised by the magazine, Steel and Metallurgy, here on Friday, Rath said that the steel market is witnessing a downturn at present and he also exuded confidence that the slugging steel market would be overcome in the coming months and there is need for the Union Government to lend a helping hand to the steel industry.

He said the long-term



RINL CMD PK Rath addressing the one-day seminar on cost-effective technologies and market for long products in Visakhapatnam on Friday

Rath said that the steel market is witnessing a downturn at present and he also exuded confidence that the slugging steel market would be overcome in the coming months

prospects for steel market were very bright, but in the short time the industry

would have to come to grips with such difficulties. Steel, he said, was a cyclical market.

"The Visakhapatnam steel plant is adopting all cost-cutting measures and producing quality steel as well to cater to the market needs," he added.

"The forged wheel plant of the RINL at Rai Bareilly would be ready for commissioning in September. We have all the facilities in our integrated steel plant.

These difficult days for the steel units will not last long. We are hopeful of better days soon, though the first quarter was not very encouraging," he said adding it was necessary for the steel industry to adopt Eco-friendly measures and to invest in such technologies.

Nirmalya Mukherjee, the editor of the magazine who moderated the debate, said the Union Government's plan to invest Rs 20 lakh crore on infra development would give a tremendous boost to the steel sector.

Not leaving Congress: Damodara Narasimha

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Congress senior leader and former Deputy Chief Minister Damodara Raja Narasimha has expressed anger over the rumors spread over social media that he is shifting his loyalties to BJP. He stated that some are deliberately spreading false news. He made it clear that he is not leaving the Congress party at any cost. In a statement on Friday, he said that he is very much in Hyderabad city. "I didn't meet anybody", he said. On Friday, news had spread in social media that Damodara Rajanarasimha is joining BJP along with his wife Padmini Reddy. It may be recalled that Padmini Reddy joined BJP before Assembly elections in the morning and left in the evening.



Microsoft, ISB ink pact to set up AI digital lab

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

IT giant Microsoft and Indian School of Business (ISB) have signed a MoU to set up an AI (Artificial Intelligence) Digital Lab and also offer an executive programme titled 'Leading Business Transformation in the Age of AI' at the B-School's campus. Speaking about the tie-up with ISB, Amit Maheshwari, President, Microsoft India said AI is a game-changer to drive new business models and transform today's businesses and workplaces.

"With this coming together of ISB and Microsoft, it is a unique opportunity to increase the innovation with AI in businesses. Our new partnership with ISB will empower business leaders to increase their tech intensity and do more with AI," Maheshwari said.

ISB Dean Rajendra Srivastava said the collaboration with Microsoft India will enable the



institution to use AI to understand new phenomena that are relevant for business as well as policy and subsequently disseminate the knowledge to business leaders who will lead to transform their businesses through artificial intelligence to compete effectively.

The ISB expects to see about 1000 CXOs undergoing the three-day non-technical programme in the next three to four years, Anand Nadakumar, associate dean of the B-School said adding the pro-

gramme will begin from October. The AI digital Lab powered by Platifi technologies, a Microsoft partner, will provide an opportunity for ISB to enhance its research eminence through unique insights that will be derived from the research conducted by the lab which will also likely to have a significant impact on business and policy not just in India but all over the world, a joint press release said. Microsoft will support ISB with best in class infrastructure access to cloud and AI tools, it said.

BJP hopes consolidate position in TS

AVINASH DEEPAK PULI ■ MAHABUBNAGAR

The Bharatiya Janatha Party is keen on strengthening its base in Mahabubnagar district and opened the gates for all the parties, particularly, on the eve of the visit of Union Home Minister Amit Shah to Hyderabad on Saturday. Leaders, including DK Aruna and AP Jithender Reddy are taking every possible step to attract the cadre from the Congress and TRS in the districts like Mahabubnagar and Gadwal and they are targeting the two parties from the roots to inflict heavy loss on those parties. In Gadwal, the Congress party, as per the

version of the BJP leader DK Aruna, would be wiped out completely though certain opponents of the former Minister say that she may not influence the cadre of the Congress subsequent to her defection to the BJP.

However, the Congress dissidents are keen on joining the BJP saying that the acquaintance with the ruling party would ultimately help them secure the development easily. In Mahabubnagar district, former MP AP Jithender Reddy is eyeing on the TRS cadre and he has reportedly chalked out a plan of action to decimate the party roots in the pockets where his personal hold is evident.



Devotees seen at Krishna temple in Visakhapatnam on the occasion of Janmastami in Visakhapatnam on Friday.

Janmastami celebrated with religious fervour

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Janmastami was celebrated with religious fervor all over the city. Despite the rain whole day, devotees thronged temples and various places all day long. The main even was held at AS Raja College grounds where the local branch of International Society for Krishna Consciousness launched three day celebrations since Friday morning.

The organizers are expecting that over one lakh devotees participating in the three day festival.

A special mandapam was created to perform Hari NamaJapaYagna. Devotees entered the mandapam with a sankalpam chanting Hare Krishna Mantra 108 times. Inside the mantapam there were 108 tiles laid in a sequence. Devotees stepped on each tile to chant the mantra once thus finishing their vow before they exit the mantapam.

The organizers are expecting that over one lakh devotees participating in the three day festival.

Last time around 20, 000 devotees chanted the mantra this reaching the figure to complete Sahasra Hari Nama Japam.

Lord Krishna in baby form was gently rocked on a grand cradle on this day. Devotees will participate in swinging the Lord marking his divine appearance. Two grand abhishekam was held on Friday and another would be held on Saturday night.

Devotees thronged in huge numbers to watch this eye catching abhishekam with soul stirring kirtans. People also visited various temples in the city and many places all over north coastal Andhra Pradesh.

CONGRESS TO UP THE ANTE AGAINST TRS

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

■ Komatireddy to take up 'padayatra' from Nalgonda to Hyderabad on Monday

Telangana Congress leaders are intensifying their fight against the alleged corruption in irrigation projects in the State. The Congress party has planned to take up two programmes on August 26. The TPCC chief N Uttam Kumar Reddy will visit the Pranahitha river flow at Thummidihetti along with MPs, MLAs, MLC, former Ministers and other leaders. On the other hand, on the same day, Bhongir MP Komatireddy Venkat Reddy will take up 'Padayatra' from

Udaya Samudram, Nalgonda to Jalasoudha, Hyderabad along with 5,000 farmers demanding the State government to complete Udaya Samudram project immediately.

In Thummidihetti programme, the Congress leaders would examine the Pranahitha river flow at Thummidihetti spot. It may be recalled that the then Congress government had taken up Pranahitha-Chevella project with Rs



38,000 crore estimated amount aiming to irrigate 16.5 lakh acre. However, the TRS government had redesigned the

Pranahitha-Chevella project and changed the project construction spot from Thummidihetti to Kaleswaram by constructing barrage at Medigadda.

The Congress is arguing that the water would have supplied through gravity if constructed project at Thummidihetti and the project would have completed much before. The Congress was also arguing that the project would have completed as a national project

without burdening the people.

To examine Pranahitha river flow at Thummidihetti, the Telangana Congress had taken up a tour programme to Thummidihetti. TPCC Chief N Uttam Kumar Reddy, MLC T Jeevan Reddy, MPs, MLAs, TPCC working presidents, former Ministers, candidates contested elections in Assembly from Karimnagar and Adilabad district will participate in the tour. The leaders will through train up to Sirpur Kagaz Nagar. There from they will go by road to reach Thummidihetti.

SHORT READS



Govt's advisers have admitted economy in deep mess: Rahul
NEW DELHI: Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Friday said the government's own advisers had now admitted that the country's economy was in a "deep mess" and asked the Centre to remonetise it by putting money in the hands of "the needy and not the greedy". He also said the Congress had been cautioning about the state of the economy for long. "Government's own economic advisers have finally acknowledged what we cautioned for long - India's economy is in a deep mess. "Now, accept our solution and remonetise the economy, by putting money back in the hands of the needy and not the greedy," Gandhi wrote on Twitter.



Helicopter makes emergency landing in Uttarkashi

DEHRADUN: A helicopter involved in relief operation in the rain-hit Uttarkashi district of Uttarakhand made an emergency landing at Lagwada on Friday, officials said. However, both pilot and co-pilot of the helicopter were safe and escaped with minor injuries, Director General law and order Ashok Kumar said. The private helicopter made the landing on the banks of a river when it was on way to Chiwa to distribute relief material among affected people, Uttarkashi District Magistrate Ashish Chauhan said. The incident comes just two days after a helicopter involved in relief efforts in flood-hit Uttarkashi district crashed and erupted in flames after it got entangled in the overhead electricity wires, killing three people on board.

'PC's arrest had sobering effect on Congress'

NEW DELHI: In a dig at Congress leaders pitching for not "demonising" Prime Minister Narendra Modi, BJP's Amit Malviya on Friday said the arrest of the former finance minister P Chidambaram had a "sobering effect" on his party colleagues. Malviya, the IT cell head of the party, said law catching up with Chidambaram has made other Congress leaders to start "singing praises" of the prime minister. "Law catching up with Sonia Gandhi's courtier seems to have had a sobering effect on other Congress leaders, including Chidambaram's lawyer, who like a canary, are suddenly singing praises of Prime Minister Modi," he said. Senior Congress leaders, including Abhishek Singhvi, who is representing Chidambaram in court and Shashi Tharoor came out in support of their party colleague Jairam Ramesh who said that "demonising" the prime minister was wrong and he should be praised for the right things he do.

TRIPLE TALAQ

SC agrees to examine validity of new law; issues notice to Centre

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Friday agreed to examine the validity of a newly enacted law which makes the practice of instant divorce through triple talaq among Muslims a punishable offence entailing imprisonment of up to three years.

A bench of justices N V Ramana and Ajay Rastogi issued notice to the Centre on a batch of petitions seeking to declare The Muslim Women (Protection of Rights on Marriage) Act 2019 as 'unconstitutional' on grounds that it allegedly violates the provisions of the Constitution.

"We will examine this," the bench told senior advocate Salman Khurshid, who was appearing for one of the petitioners.

Khurshid said there were many dimensions, including making the practice a punishable offence and jail term of up to three years, which need to be examined by the top court.

He said the petitioners were concerned about making the practice of triple talaq among Muslims an offence as the apex court had already



declared it to be null and void.

"If there is no such thing as triple talaq then what are they making an offence," he told the bench and referred to a five-judge Constitution bench verdict which had declared the practice of triple talaq among Muslims as null and void.

To this the bench asked, suppose if a religious practice is declared as null and void and

it is declared as an offence like dowry and child marriage, but if it still goes on then what is the remedy.

Responding to the query, Khurshid said several aspects have to be examined and in the triple talaq matter the Constitution bench had already said the practice is void.

He said it has to be examined whether the religious practice denies the rights to the woman.

The bench, while agreeing to examine the validity of the 2019 Act, observed that petitioners have also raised the issue of punishment of up to three years and grant of bail to the husband only after the

The bench, while agreeing to examine the validity of the 2019 Act, observed that petitioners have also raised the issue of punishment of up to three years and grant of bail to the husband only after the woman is heard by the court

woman is heard by the court. A total of four petitions have been filed in apex court challenging the validity of the law.

Two Muslim organisations Jamiat Ulama-I-Hind and Samastha Kerala Jamiathul Ulama, a religious organisation of Sunni Muslim scholars and clerics in Kerala, have moved the Supreme Court this month challenging the law's validity.

Jamiat Ulama-I-Hind approached the apex court on Thursday.

President Ram Nath Kovind has given assent to the Act which makes 'talaq-e-biddat' or any other similar form of talaq having the effect of instantaneous and irrevocable divorce pronounced by a Muslim husband void and illegal.

In the plea filed through

advocate Ejaz Maqbool, Jamiat Ulama-I-Hind has claimed that since the pronouncement of talaq by a Muslim husband upon his wife had already been declared "void and illegal", there was no requirement to enact the law.

"However, the impugned Act criminalises the act of pronouncement of talaq by a Muslim husband and makes it a cognizable offence, without appreciating that such pronouncement had already been declared unconstitutional and amounted to nullity in the eyes of law," the plea said.

Referring to the provision of the Act which stipulates punishment of up to three years jail along with fine, the plea said it is an "ill-conceived provision which imposes excessive and disproportionate punishment."

Outbreak of diseases feared in Punjab

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

The floodwater from the deluged areas of Punjab, particularly Jalandhar, Ropar and Ferozepur districts began receding on Friday, giving rise to the threat of an outbreak of epidemic diseases.

With no rains in the past two days, the water in flooded areas has started receding, officials said.

The Army and NDRF personnel, however, continue to work overtime to shift people out of the flooded areas to safety, officials said.

The prime concern for the state health authorities is the possible outbreak of epidemic diseases in the flood-hit areas once the water vanishes, Jalandhar Medical Officer A S Duggal said.

Many people are already affected by diarrhoea, gastroenteritis, fungal infection and skin disease and are being treated at different camps, he said.

Apprehending the outbreak of various diseases, he said the



cases of water-borne ailments would increase in days to come.

After recent rains and the release of excess water from the Bhakra Dam, the Sutlej river and its tributaries had flooded villages in Ludhiana, Jalandhar, Ferozepur and Rupnagar in Punjab, causing damage to the crops and houses in low-lying areas.

With no fresh rains in the last two days, the water has started receding in swollen rivers of Punjab and Haryana but the farming fields over hundreds of acres and several villages remain inundated, officials said.

Akhilesh dissolves SP's Uttar Pradesh units

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav on Friday dissolved the party's entire Uttar Pradesh units including the state executive, and district and youth wings, sources said, as he attempts a course correction in the party after its Lok Sabha poll debacle.

The party, however, has retained state president Naresh Uttam, they said.

"Party president Akhilesh Yadav has dissolved the state executive. All district executives and the executives of youth and other wings have also been dissolved," a senior party leader told PTI requesting anonymity. "A new executives will be formed soon."

The surprise development is being seen as an effort by the SP to recover its electoral base after its poor performance in the recent Lok Sabha polls when it won just five seats -- the same as in 2014 -- despite stitching a pre-poll alliance with the BSP and the RLD.



Much to the SP's chagrin, while its tally remained stuck at five, the tie-up benefitted Mayawati's BSP, which bagged 10 seats in the state -- it drew a blank in 2014 general polls.

What rubbed salt to the SP's wound was the shock defeat of Dimple Yadav, Akhilesh's wife who had entered the fray as a sitting MP. She represented the Kannauj Lok Sabha seat.

Just a day after the Lok Sabha results were declared, the party chief sacked the

panel of leaders appointed as spokespersons for TV channels.

The appointment of all party panellists was cancelled in one stroke by the party chief who also said that no TV channel should invite any of them for debate.

A party insider said Akhilesh began churning within the organisation the very day the results were out, with over a dozen Assembly by-polls not far away, and the bigger target of 2022 Assembly elections in mind.

'Hate for BJP nursed among minorities for 70 yrs'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Hate for the BJP has been planted in the minds of minorities for 70 years and it cannot be wiped out in 70 days or seven years, Union minister Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi said Friday, asserting that the effect of this "poison" is now receding.

Though the BJP was founded in 1980, its precursor Jan Sangh had been active since the 1950s.

Naqvi asserted that minorities are feeling "completely safe" under Prime Minister Narendra Modi's leadership as he has not indulged in any political exploitation of minori-

ties for votes and has done development without discrimination.

In an interview to PTI, the Minority Affairs Minister said the prime minister's population control pitch cannot be looked through a religious prism and the government wanted to act on this through awareness and not by the "Emergency-style" control as done by the Congress.

"A growing economy can never ignore population explosion. Awareness is needed and society should be sensitised. Muslim community population has gone down. Those giving it communal angle have no knowledge,



"There should be awareness (on population control). It should be carried out as a mission like the cleanliness drive for which no law was made," he said.

On the acquittal of all

A growing economy can never ignore population explosion. Awareness is needed and society should be sensitised. Muslim community population has gone down. Those giving it communal angle have no knowledge

MUKHTAR ABBAS NAQVI
 Union minister

"Any crime that happens should be dealt with strongly...No crime should be looked upon from the communal angle," he said.

Asked if Prime Minister Modi's popularity among minorities has gone up after the government's triple talaq law, Naqvi said the government's move on triple talaq, Article 370, demonetisation and GST, were reform measures and not intended for popularity.

However, he said minorities have "strong trust" on Modi as they have realised that there are no riots and no atmosphere of discrimination under his leadership.



Army personnel killed in Pak firing along LoC in J-K's Rajouri

PNS ■ JAMMU

An Army personnel was killed in Pakistani Army firing along the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district on Friday, prompting strong retaliation from the Indian side, officials said.

The killing of Naik Rajib Thapa, 34, raised the death toll in the cross-border firing in the past week to four -- three soldiers and one civilian.

"Pakistan Army resorted to unprovoked ceasefire violation along the LoC in Nowshera sector and in the exchange of fire, Naik Thapa attained martyrdom," Defence spokesman Lt Col Devender Anand said.

He said Thapa was a brave, highly motivated and sincere soldier.

"The nation will always remain indebted to him for the supreme sacrifice and devotion to duty," Lt Col Anand said.

Thapa was a resident of Mechpara village in Jalpaiguri district of West Bengal. He is survived by wife Khusbu Mangar Thapa, the spokesman said.

He said the Indian Army responded strongly and effectively to the ceasefire violation by Pakistan.

Heavy damage to Pakistani Army posts and casualties to Pakistani soldiers have been inflicted in the retaliatory action, he added.

Earlier, officials said the

Officials said the soldier was manning a forward post in Kalsia village of Nowshera sector when it came under unprovoked firing from across the border in the early hours

soldier was manning a forward post in Kalsia village of Nowshera sector when it came under unprovoked firing from across the border in the early hours.

The soldier was critically injured and was immediately evacuated to a military hospital where he succumbed to injuries, they said.

Thapa's death was the fourth casualty on the Indian side in Pakistan mortar shelling and small arms firing in the twin districts of Rajouri and Poonch since August 17.

While an Army jawan and a youth were killed and four soldiers injured in heavy Pakistani shelling and firing in Mendhar sector of Poonch district on August 20, another soldier was killed in Nowshera sector of Rajouri district on August 17.

Top Army commander visits forward bases

PNS ■ JAMMU

The Northern Army commander visited forward bases in Poonch and Akhnour sectors along the Line of Control (LoC) on Friday and expressed satisfaction at the measures adopted by the forces to counter infiltration.

The visit by General Officer Commanding, Northern Command, Lt Gen Ranbir Singh comes in the wake of nearly a dozen ceasefire violations by Pakistan along the LoC in the twin border districts of Rajouri and Poonch over the past week that left three soldiers and a civilian dead.

He was accompanied by White Knight Corps Commander Lt Gen Paramjit Singh during the visit, a defence spokesman said.

"The Army commander expressed satisfaction on measures adopted to strengthen counter-infiltration posture with increased alertness and use of high-end technology. He also appreciated the aggressive domination of LoC adopt-

He was accompanied by White Knight Corps Commander Lt Gen Paramjit Singh during the visit, a defence spokesman said

ed to give befitting response to adversary's ceasefire violations and tactical actions," the official said.

He said the commander was also briefed on 'Mission Reach Out', an initiative undertaken to bring normalcy to the region.

Lt Gen Ranbir Singh appreciated the coordination between the Army, civil administration and the Central Armed Police Force (CAPF), and complemented the troops for bringing the situation in the districts of Poonch, Rajouri and Reasi back to normal.

BABRI DEMOLITION

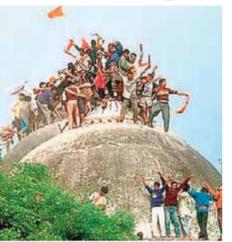
SC asks UP govt to pass orders in 2 weeks on judge's tenure

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Friday asked the Uttar Pradesh government to pass orders within two weeks on extension of tenure of the special judge conducting trial in the 1992 Babri Masjid demolition case, involving BJP veterans L K Advani, M M Joshi and Uma Bharti.

A bench of justices R F Nariman and Surya Kant said a fresh letter has been written by the special judge on July 27 in which he had made five requests including providing him security.

The bench asked senior advocate Aishwarya Bhati,



appearing for the state, to consider all the five requests within two weeks time saying these requests appears to be reasonable.

The apex court had on July 19 extended the special judge's

tenure till the completion of trial and delivery of verdict in the case. However, the state government was yet to pass the order.

He was also asked by the top court to deliver the verdict within nine months.

The top court had said that the extension of tenure of the special judge, who is set to retire on September 30, will only be for the purpose of concluding the trial and delivering the verdict in the case.

During the extended tenure, he will remain under the administrative control of the Allahabad High Court, the court had said.

'Monumental money laundering by PC': Govt

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The centre today opposed former Union Minister P Chidambaram's petition for interim protection from arrest by investigation agencies, saying that any such order by the Supreme Court would hinder the ongoing probe into a case of "monumental" money laundering involving INX Media.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, who was representing the CBI and the Enforcement Directorate in the top court, maintained that custodial interrogation of Mr Chidambaram was sorely needed to unravel transactions allegedly made through shell companies in the case. "I am saying with a sense of responsibility that this is a case of money laundering of a monu-



mental magnitude," he said.

The Supreme Court eventually granted interim protection from arrest to Mr Chidambaram in the case, and posted the next hearing for Monday. The Congress leader, however, will remain in CBI custody until then due to the

top court's refusal to interfere with an order delivered in this regard by a special CBI court yesterday.

"Having heard the counsels for the petitioner and Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, we are of the view that the co-accused were granted bail in the ED

case. Petitioner shall not be arrested till further hearing of the case. List the petition on Monday (August 26). The respondent shall file their reply and contentions by Monday," the bench comprising Justices R Banumathi and AS Bopanna said.

Mr Chidambaram has been accused of facilitating a huge infusion of foreign funds into a television company - INX Media - in 2007 at the instance of his son Karti, who allegedly received bribes for his role. He was the Union Finance Minister at the time.

In his objection to granting Mr Chidambaram interim protection, the Solicitor General said that the Enforcement Directorate has collected innumerable pieces of evidence to prove that properties were

bought by the accused both in India and abroad. His claims led to a heated argument between the prosecution and defence counsel.

Advocates Kapil Sibal and Abhishek Manu Singhvi, who are arguing Mr Chidambaram's case in court, said they have filed a separate petition to challenge the Special Judge's order sending him to CBI custody.

Mr Chidambaram was arrested amid high drama on Wednesday, a day after the Delhi High Court refused to grant him anticipatory bail in the INX Media case. Justice Sunil Gaur called the former Union Minister the "kingpin" in the case, and said that he should not be given special treatment just because he is a parliamentarian.

PAPER WITH PASSION
The new Dalit identity

Protests over Sant Ravidas's shrine show that SC/STs are becoming equally aggressive about identity politics



The political import of the thousands of Dalits marching in Delhi to save the shrine of their saint Ravidas is not just about claiming rights and space in a Brahminical order or the appropriation of land as evidenced by the parks of their supreme leader Mayawati. It is about equality and comparative weighing of scales, another form of minority assertion in the face of brute majoritarianism, a question mark on different approaches to the similarity of contexts, and another manifestation of identity politics.

Besides, Sant Ravidas embodies a socio-cultural idea of India that undercuts the monolithic imposition of today. Born in the 15th century in Varanasi to leather makers, he denounced the Hindu Brahminical order, challenged deity worship and worked for an egalitarian society against a Hindu Rashtra, becoming the one voice of the marginalised. And such was the power of his messages that many of his disciples even found mention in the Guru Granth Sahib of the Sikhs. None can miss the impactful swathe of this man from Varanasi, unmistakably a prime political constituency today. Nor can the appropriation of the "mandir wahin banayenge" slogan be missed as an equal claimant as the Ram temple in Ayodhya. For starters, both have historicity of belief. Lord Rama was believed to be born in Ayodhya, Guru Ravidas was believed to have visited the Chamarwala Johar in Tughlaqabad 500 years ago. Like Ayodhya, this memorial site is disputed with facts of 1950 differing from facts of 1963, the latter being accepted by the court as encroachment and, therefore, a ground for demolition. Like Ayodhya, status quo has been continuing for years with no party, and even the Delhi Development Authority (DDA), carrying out any demolition on the ground. Like Ayodhya, protesters do not want the memorial shifted as a reconciliatory move and want it on hallowed ground, asking whether Ram temple activists would agree to a commensurate shift in venue? Besides, Dalit activists argue, the construction of Tughlaqabad Ravidas temple is not on the road or creating any obstruction to the general masses. In fact, it can even be part of the Centre's forest project and, without any other pressing logic, seems just another harassment play by the mainstream Right. The latest demolition follows two others by the DDA, one of Buddha Vihar at Devi Hill, and the other at Bhagwan Valmiki Mandir in Seemapuri. Which is why the Tughlaqabad incident has snowballed as a politico-cultural movement, linking both Ravidas and Babasaheb Ambedkar.

The latest round of protests also reflects the growing counter-muscularity in the Dalit leadership, being led from the front by Bhim Army chief Chandrashekhar Azad. His agitationist politics is finding resonance given the waning political influence of Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) chief Mayawati, who, while arguing for the restoration of the temple, disagreed with the violence associated with it as diluting the key plank. Of course, Behenji still believes Azad to be a foisted creation of the BJP's ideological parent, the RSS, and there are still a lot of theories as to whether Guru Ravidas followers are being coopted into the Hindutva sub-culture. But considering Azad's traction among the youth across north India and a combined Dalit iconisation of all leaders, it is a constituency strong enough to negotiate with anybody, not only, as alleged by Mayawati many times, the BJP. Azad may have been deployed as a vote-cutter initially but now has a solid consolidation of Dalit youth, who are countering majoritarian celebrations by scaling up celebrations of Guru Ravidas, Valmiki, Dr Ambedkar, a signal that they do not want to be subsumed or Sankritised in their thinking. Now that the Bhim Army has started working nationwide, Dalit youth are being motivated to assert and not deny their ancestry. This is important given that the young Dalit vote could be a change-maker in the forthcoming Assembly elections. Only this week, Azad launched the Bhim Army Students Federation (BASF) and said he wanted students of Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), Other Backward Classes (OBC) and religious minorities to be aware of both their rights and duties. Clearly, he is creating a new swell in the existing discourse.

Fire in the jungle

As a nation that will suffer the impact of global warming and climate change, India, too, must raise concerns



Smoke from the fires raging across the Amazon rainforest has blanketed several Brazilian cities, including Sao Paulo, in a choking haze — a sight familiar to residents of several north Indian cities. Thankfully, because Brazil is half a world away, the chances of the clouds of smoke, from what some are claiming to be the largest wildfire in recorded history, reaching Indian skies is remote. But that does not mean that India will not suffer the impact of these horrendous fires which have been allowed to continue for days, possibly due to acts of omission by the Brazilian Government, elements of whom want to open up the rainforest land to agriculture and pasture.

The Amazon Rainforest is called the "lung of the world" and while this is technically not true — biologists have learned that planktons, marine and freshwater organisms are the biggest oxygen generators — it does soak up large amounts of carbon. More importantly, it is home to the greatest diversity of plant, animal and fish life on the planet. Within those organisms might lie the cure for all sorts of diseases or amazing new materials unknown to mankind. These organisms will be wiped clean off the face of the planet without even being discovered. This should be a matter of global concern and Governments across the world should speak up about the tremendous destruction of nature. It is heartening to see that French President Emmanuel Macron has stood up and spoken about the wildfires and how they must be tackled. It would be good if Narendra Modi does the same. While political and economic decisions are the prerogative of national Governments, the state of the environment is a global issue since damage to it impacts all of mankind. At a time when Governments, from Brazil to India and the US, have all moved into a kind of hyper-nationalistic realm and bristle at any "intervention", the realisation has to come that the world must collaborate on these things — from the Amazon wildfires to the disappearing Himalayan glaciers and the tonnes of plastic in the sea — because when the catastrophe comes, it will be devastating for our species. And unless we figure out a way to reach interstellar space and propagate our species to other worlds, we run the risk of going extinct. The time for action is now because climate change is real.

For the sake of democracy

Decades after the Indian republic was founded, citizens today are worried about the increasing erosion of credibility of elected representatives who continue enjoying legislative privileges



JS RAJPUT

In a democracy, citizens enjoy the privilege of casting their vote to elect representatives. In India, we elect leaders right from the panchayat level to the Parliament. The right to vote is prized and all of us are taught about it in our schools and universities. We are also reminded about this by politicians of all hues before every election. It is also a well-established fact that the Indian voter is far more mature now and knows about the "power" of his/her vote. This was proved beyond any doubt to one and all — nationally and internationally — in 1977 when the citizens unseated Indira Gandhi from her traditional family fiefdom in Uttar Pradesh and simultaneously threw her out of power at the national level by decimating her political party. A very interesting interlude followed her defeat. People had high hopes from the next Government as it was supposed to work under the astute guidance of Jayaprakash Narayan. Those, who inherited power, could not manage the Government. They were assessed unfit by the people and Indira Gandhi was brought back to power within three years. People not only pardoned her but also taught a lesson to those who could not rise above petty personal feuds as they had not "learnt to live and work together." All this, experts say, is the essence of democracy.

Democracy shines when a humble person, setting aside all his/her woes, concerns and stress of providing the next meal, enters the polling booth and puts his/her finger on the EVM button. Who can read or visualise what clouds their minds in the shape of a better tomorrow for him/her, the family and for the little world that deserves outside support on many counts. The voter is still far from the promises made in the Constitution of India. One more election opportunity and expectations soar again. The Indian voter has also witnessed how elected representatives have often let them down on several counts. Most of them vanish for five years, take more interest in their own welfare than that of the electorate, show little concern and connectivity to their electors, give no dignity to them and after five years, return with folded hands, pleading for "one more chance." But if one weighs the performance of elected representatives on Gandhian expectations, one would mostly be disappointed.

Winston Churchill never expected that India could manage its independence. He was convinced that Indians were unfit to govern themselves and, hence, the British had to stay on to look after them. It was not easy for him or those of his ilk to see beyond the cobwebs of the much-publicised altruistic perception that the British essentially travelled to India to "salvage the souls of the savages." One could claim with a sense of pride and achievement that whether Churchill liked it or not, India has established its credentials in "how to make its democracy operational in its minutest nuances." We could do it as it was not new to democratic practices of governance.

The Ganrajyas of Lichhavi and Vaishali are well-known historical instances. Even at that time, education for preparing young ones



with a focus on "lot learn to live together" began in joint families that accommodated four generations under one roof. It was also a ground to teaching them to respect different viewpoints and accommodate the likes and dislikes of everyone. Respect for diversity and the realisation how essential it was, were inherent in the Indian tradition. Indian culture prepares its children for a duty-bound society that respects relationships within the family and beyond.

It will be worthwhile to remember what Churchill said: "Democracy is the worst form of Government, except for all others", which invites learned and informed deliberations even now. He viewed democratic politics not only as an "insurance" for future, against external dangers, but also against threats "scarcely less grave and much more near and constant" that threaten us all. India, like every other functional and dynamic democracy, must remain conscious of the dangers to its democracy that are emerging within the system from the very functionaries that are entrusted with the task of sustaining and strengthening democratic values.

We are all aware how traditional democratic values have confronted difficult situations in the era of globalisation and commercialisation. They stand overshadowed by emerging materialist values. On several occasions, elected representa-

tatives, including those holding positions of greater political power, find it difficult to maintain the right balance between Indian perception of democratic public life and the lure of power and pelf — glamour and glitz in a globalised free-market world.

The chinks emerging in the Indian democracy are not unexpected. Mahatma Gandhi could envision in April 24, 1922, that "As we become independent, all the defects of the system of elections, injustice, the tyranny of the richer classes as also the burden of running administration, are bound to come upon us. People would begin to feel that during those days, there was more justice, better administration and peace and there was honesty to a great extent among the administrators compared to the days after Independence."

When I came across this part of Gandhian writing some four decades ago, my simplistic query to eminent Gandhian personalities was: How could Gandhiji cultivate such serious apprehensions about elections when he had no such experience in India? They were kind enough to enlighten me that Gandhiji had studied the British election system in-depth and could visualise what impact the taste of power produces on the majority of elected representatives.

Having elected 17 Parliaments and innumerable State Assemblies, district and panchayat level bodies, the Indian voter has seen it all. They are worried and are struggling with the increasing erosion of credibility of elected representatives, who unfortunately — exceptions apart — could not live up to expectations. They have seen how representatives coming from humble backgrounds become billionaires. They know for sure that their Minister, Chief Minister or Deputy Chief Minister could spend anywhere from ₹5 crore to ₹50 crore to refurbish their official bungalows. Former Chief Ministers are given huge bungalows for life with support staff. When the High Court ruled against this practice, the Madhya Pradesh Government found a new way to bypass the court's orders. Using discretionary quota, it reallocated the same houses. Such instances could be aplenty.

The youth of today may find it difficult to believe that the members of the Constituent Assembly did not get any salary, let alone pension. They got an allowance of ₹45 per day for the days of sitting. And they were the ones who got it reduced to ₹40 per day in consideration of the tough economic condition of the country. An eminent expert on the nuances of parliamentary democracy and an internationally acknowledged scholar and author of *Our Constitution*, Subhash Kashyap brilliantly analysed the "rise" of the Indian parliamentarian at the national level in his latest outstanding

treatise, *State of the Nation: Democracy Governance and Parliament*. Members of the Constituent Assembly were mostly freedom fighters and men and women known throughout the length and breadth of the country for the sacrifices they made. They worked tirelessly to give India its Constitution. They gave themselves a sitting allowance of ₹40 per day. Contrast this with their successors. The salaries and allowances of Members of Parliament Act, 1954, fixed a salary of ₹400 per month for an MP and a daily allowance of ₹21.

After this, there have been 29 upward revisions to the Act. There were members, whose conscience was pricked but their viewpoint was overlooked by the majority. Nanaji Deshmukh was one such exception. He raised this issue in 2004 and pointed out that "salaries and allowances of members had gone up 90 times during the first 50 years". But his words made no impact. These upward revisions invariably got a full-throated fast-track approval from the MPs. Kashyap describes the position in its totality: "At a time when the salary of a member was only ₹12,000 per month, Nanaji had estimated that the direct monthly expenditure on an MP was at least ₹3 lakh per month. Himself an MP, he knew first hand. On that basis, the present monthly cost of an MP must work out close to ₹10 or ₹15 lakh per month or more, which could be few hundred times the per capita income of an Indian."

Whenever issues related to MPs or State legislatures come up during discussions, I am invariably reminded of the Gandhian vision that defects of elections would weigh heavily on our people. The resilience of electors in democracy may have its upper limits. It is public knowledge that each candidate is supposed to submit a detailed statement of the expenditure incurred during election campaigns. They also know that it should always be within the limits prescribed by the Election Commission of India.

Every Indian voter would be willing to say "every one spends much more than what they claim to have spent", exceptions apart. Is this situation acceptable? May be, someday, some young elected representative will launch a campaign against this routine practice and be hailed as a "hero" striving to restore democratic values. This could be done by some young person, who remains honest, humble and humane as the representative of people.

(The writer is the Indian Representative on the Executive Board of UNESCO)

SOUNDBITE

Indicators suggesting economic slowdown are a cause for worry but rather than the mocking tweets wouldn't it be wiser to suggest ideas?

Shiv Sena deputy leader — Priyanka Chaturvedi



Artists are usually emotional and we tend to react immediately. I have learnt not to react soon and that it is essential to listen and understand the other side.

Actor-comedian — Kapil Sharma



India and Pakistan should resolve the Kashmir issue bilaterally and no third party should interfere or incite violence in the region.

French President — Emmanuel Macron



In our country there are four pillars — democratic institutions, election commission, media and judiciary. We are very much missing democracy.

West Bengal Chief Minister — Mamata Banerjee



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Chidambaram's arrest

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Chidambaram in a spot" (August 22). Hitherto, hardened criminals were known only to play a cat-and-mouse game with the law enforcement agencies. Now, a leading politician, who not long ago was India's Home Minister, P Chidambaram, was allegedly running away from the law. But the spectacle surrounding him finally climaxed with his arrest by sleuths who hopped over his plush bungalow's walls to get to him.

Meanwhile, it is ironical that Chidambaram used to taunt the Government how the likes of Vijay Mallya and Nirav Modi managed to evade the authorities and flee abroad. Now, it is the Government's turn to ask him how he could manage to send the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) on a wild goose chase.

While politicians are known to have gotten away with murder given their ability to "influence" witnesses, the case against Chidambaram appears to be relatively watertight. A key accused

The rule of law must prevail

This refers to the editorial, "Chidambaram in a spot" (August 22). The sequence of events leading up to Congress leader P Chidambaram's arrest by the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) and his incarceration in the investigative agency's headquarters had all the ingredients of a riveting drama. The sight of officials from the CBI and the Enforcement Directorate (ED) scaling the boundary wall to gain entry into Chidambaram's house, displaying alacrity and eagerness to please their political masters, was worthy of a movie scene.

It won't be an exaggeration to say that political vendetta is writ large on the exertions made to frame and fix Chidambaram, humiliate and hound him out of the political realm. What stands exposed is that the law does not take its own course but one that the Government of the day wishes. Fighting corruption selectively and episodically has become a weapon to pin down and "punish" political opponents. The denial of pre-arrest bail by the Delhi High Court, diverging from the norm, and the Supreme Court's refusal to give



an urgent listing to Chidambaram's petition seeking protection from arrest have inevitably made the citizens feel that the Indian judiciary is not keen to ensure that they don't have to suffer a loss of liberty. Everyone should be entitled to the presumption of innocence until they are proven guilty.

G David Milton
Maruthancode

Let the court decide

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Chidambaram in a spot" (August 22). The spectacle, where officials from the CBI and ED arrested former Finance Minister P Chidambaram from his residence, has raised serious questions about the conduct of

the investigative agencies. Officials scaled the walls of his Jorbagh residence to arrest him. In a defiant mode, Chidambaram, who is accused of money laundering and receiving kickbacks in the INX Media case, put up a strong defence of himself and his family members, saying none of them have been accused of any offence by the

probe agencies.

Perhaps, it's best to leave the matter to the courts. No person, even if he/she has held or is holding a high office, is above the law. The investigative agencies as well as the courts must now follow due processes and ensure transparency in the case.

TK Nandan
Chennai

Stop interfering

Sir — It is surprising that despite India having made it amply clear that no third party intervention is needed as far as resolving the Kashmir issue is concerned, US President Donald Trump has again offered assistance. He may have the requisite skills to convert a business deal but when it comes to resolving intractable issues between sovereign countries, it's a different matter altogether. His negotiations with Kim Jong-un is an example. They have yielding no results.

Manisha
Via email

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

RSS roots for reservation

More inclusive than most, the RSS has always been supportive of reservation and there has been no incoherence in its thinking on the issue



SANJAY PASWAN

The RSS has always been supportive of reservation and there has been no incoherence in its thinking on the issue. There's always an anxious attempt by a section of the media and the intelligentsia to manipulate the outlook of the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS) on reservation. In my long-standing association with its political wing, the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), I have witnessed no incoherence in the thinking of the RSS on reservation policies. On the contrary, time and again, there have been assertions in favor of policies that give preferential treatment to marginalised sections in state-sponsored education and government jobs, among other things. In one of his Independence Day speeches from the ramparts of the Red Fort, former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee said that the quota system is a form of historical compensation and shall continue until its purpose is served.

The RSS and its affiliated organisations have consistently worked for inclusion through representation of marginalised sections at meaningful places. Be it university policy-making or national politics, the RSS has established a semblance of social diversity at top positions through the Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP), the BJP and a plethora of other organisations. It must be noted that both have the rare distinction of being the world's largest organisations.

While, the ABVP remains one of the oldest student-led organisations and largest in terms of membership and footprint, globally, the BJP, with more than 11 crore members that are increasing daily, will remain the world's largest political party for the foreseeable future. It is impossible to achieve this feat right from universities to the Parliament with a myopic social vision. Hence, there is a robust modus operandi at an institutional level that ensures equitable representation of diverse social groups.

Varvasi Kalyan Ashram, another affiliate organisation of the RSS has made deep inroads in tribal areas and has successfully created sustainable educational opportunities for tribal children. This is a silent revolution being heralded not in Delhi's posh Khan Market area but right from the jungles of Gumla and Simdega in Jharkhand to Malkangiri in Odisha.

There's much brouhaha over the appointment of D Raja as the General Secretary of the Communist Party of India (CPI). The commentariat is determined to present this as a watershed moment in the history of Dalit representation in national politics. It might be a remarkable event in the history of the leadership of the CPI as majority of the general secretaries of the party have been Brahmins, as was rightly observed by a senior journalist Kurban Ali in an opinion piece published in the *Prabhat Khabar*.

In contrast, the late Bangaru Lakshman holds the unique distinction of being the first Dalit to lead a national political party and the BJP is extremely proud of this significant fact as it took the party just 20 years to do what the so-called liberal and socially progressive CPI took more than nine decades to achieve. Much before the anointment of Meira Kumar, the late GMC Balayogi was the first Dalit to hold the esteemed Chair of the Lok Sabha Speaker in the BJP-led NDA government.

The social justice movement is at the crossroads today. The BJP is motivated by genuine impulse not illusion of inclusion that was created by the previous dispensations. It was the Narendra Modi-led Government at the Centre that gave a constitutional sanction to the National Commission for Backward Classes through the Constitution (123rd Amendment) Bill. Our purpose is firm in symbiosis and not symbolism. From Stand Up India to the Mudra Yojana, there is an everlasting commitment to make Dalits, OBC's and tribal communities partners and stakeholders in India's growth story.

Reservation, envisioned as a way to uplift people on the fringes has undoubtedly served its purpose. Dalits, socially marginalised groups and tribal communities now are satisfactorily represented and empowered to voice the concerns of their community. However, a lot remains to be done. There is still a glaring lack of social diversity in the judicial process, mass-media, civil society and industry.

I speak as a Dalit rights activist that no one family should be entitled to corner the benefits of reservation and accumulate wealth and political clout. At the provincial level, there have been policy experiments of bifurcating and trifurcating marginalised sections right from Andhra Pradesh to Bihar and Uttar Pradesh recently. The fruits of reservation must reach those at the bottom of the social pyramid. Conversations on reservation have already started within the community and no action on reservation will be initiated unilaterally by the Centre without consultations with stakeholders.

(The writer is a former Central Minister, Member of Legislative Council, Bihar and Professor at Patna University.)

THE FIGHT WAS BETWEEN HIM (SIDDARAMAIAH) AND HD KUMARASWAMY. IT BECAME DIFFICULT FOR HIM TO SEE KUMARASWAMY AS THE CHIEF MINISTER.

— JD(S) SUPREMO HD DEVE GOWDA

POINT COUNTERPOINT



MR DEVE GOWDA IS AN EXPERT IN PULLING DOWN GOVERNMENTS. HISTORY IS OPEN FOR ALL TO SEE. IT IS HIS BIRTH TRAIT.

— CONGRESS LEADER SIDDARAMAIAH

Enforced altruism

CSR is more socially relevant when it is driven by welfare motives rather than being a mandated policy commanding philanthropy



MOIN QAZI

When we flip through the world's business history, we find that all large mercantile communities were great patrons of the art of philanthropy. They regarded it a divine tradition. The world today is witnessing a growing realisation in enterprises of the importance of altruism. Hence, a great deal of money has been flowing into the social sector. Like individual citizens who have moral and social responsibilities, businesses are being perceived as corporate citizens who need to commit time, talent and resources for welfare of society as they draw their sustenance from it. This idea has now been corporatised under the appellation, Corporate Social Responsibility, better known as CSR.

A social responsibility: CSR is a concept whereby firms integrate social and environmental concerns into their business operations and is generally understood to be a tool for achieving a balance between economic, environmental and social imperatives, while addressing expectations of shareholders and stakeholders.

In the global economy, stakeholders include customers, suppliers, employees, communities, and financiers — shareholders, bondholders plus banks and other sources of capital — and they are all intertwined.

CSR is a very broad concept that aims at managing a business in a way that it contributes towards sustainable development by delivering social, economic and environmental benefits to all stakeholders. It addresses issues like human rights, corporate governance, health and safety, environmental effects, working conditions and contribution to economic development. Whatever the definition is, the purpose of CSR is to drive change towards sustainability.

We are seeing the emergence of a new crop of mega donors who are upending long-established norms in philanthropy. Not only are they increasingly willing to take on hot-button social and political issues, they also have a problem-solving and impact-making mindset. CSR is now being recognised as a critical component to an organisation's values, its operating ethos, its business strategies and its purpose. Businesses are being measured on financial and social metrics.

CSR is often used interchangeably for Corporate Citizenship and is also linked to the concept of Triple Bottom Line Reporting (financial, social and environmental), which is used as a framework for measuring an organisation's performance against economic, social and environmental parameters. In essence, CSR is about building sustainable businesses, which need healthy economies, markets and communities.

Over the years there have been many voices within the business community who believe that companies must break out of conventional preoccupation with profit and do more to address the world's pressing social needs. The chorus has been joined by leaders from civil society, governments, policy think tanks and world bodies on education, health and rehabilitation. Business leadership has acknowledged the demand for enlarged corporate responsibility in ways which can reflect a profound attitudinal change individually and collectively.

It is now widely acknowledged that CSR



should be a critical component to an organisation's operating ethos, its values, and its purpose. CSR existed earlier also, however, well-meaning but inappropriate programmes were foisted on communities without any dialogue. That was replaced by the writing of blank cheques to favoured groups, often without an accompanying structure. Today, however, enlightened companies engage in extensive dialogue and planning and are forming partnerships with governments, NGOs and communities to push a wider and deeper agenda.

For a long time, the general sentiment was that for businesses, earning a profit should take precedence over ideals like acting responsibly and ethically. Even today, many companies are paying just lip service.

A legal mandate: India is the first country to mandate that firms expend at least 2 per cent of their net profits on special development projects. Its unique law, Corporate Social Responsibility Rules in the Companies Act, 2013, came into effect on April 1, 2014.

However, there is a crucial difference between the way CSR is implemented in the West and in India. A generally accepted gold standard for CSR in the Western world is that it must be closely integrated with a firm's business strategy so that the programmes create a shared value for the company's shareholders. In India, this linkage is explicitly prohibited for CSR; the focus is restricted solely to contribution towards societal welfare.

Experience the world over shows that CSR is more socially relevant when it is driven by altruistic motives rather than being a mandated policy commanding philanthropy. It is very difficult to legislate since moral obligations have to be inculcated, not legislated. Laws can set the minimum standards, but they cannot create an environment or ambience for a philanthropic mindset. This is why we see marked aberrations in the CSR agenda of most corporations. Many businesses harbour a variety of secondary aims

and often use CSR for boosting their social profile and business markets. Such lack of well-intentioned commitment has been detrimental to this noble philosophy.

Companies are trying to dress up CSR as a business discipline and expecting that every initiative deliver business results. That is asking too much of CSR and distracts from what must be its main goal: to align a company's social and environmental activities with its business purpose and values. If in doing so, CSR activities enhance reputation, mitigate risks and contribute to business results, it is acceptable. But for many CSR programmes, those outcomes are becoming a spillover, not their reason for being.

Challenges for socially responsible companies: It is true that since there are so many causes competing for attention, it may not be possible for organisations to have a universally inclusive mission. Studies suggest that charity leaders have a geographic bias with corporations homing in on projects closer to their headquarters. Consequently, more remote regions where development aid is acutely needed are being ignored. Politics can also skew priorities, with companies looking to gain political goodwill by funding government-led projects rather than initiating more socially relevant initiatives which are thirsty for funds.

Even as annual CSR expenditure is on the rise, the impact on the ground remains a matter of debate. CSR has usually been peripheral in most organisations and it is not woven into the texture of business. Further, it is not always necessarily transparent or mission-oriented. It may be used for enhancing the brand reputation or to provide a cover of moral counterbalance for brushing off a besmirched public image or for camouflaging dark acts. There is always a creative tension between social mission and business goals.

Moreover, a significant amount of any CSR expenditure comes with strings attached. There are terms that dictate exactly where and how

funds must be used. While this may be appropriate in some cases, it reflects a serious lack of trust in the non-profit entities and hinders their ability to operate effectively. When donors insist that their money should go exclusively to the people served, there is not enough money left for the non-profit entities to focus on building their own organisations. They are, therefore, unable to invest in talent, technology, systems, or reporting. Reporting requirements are often an onerous administrative burden on these small organisations which have to devote their scarce skills to educated, English-speaking personnel for writing reports for the donors rather than running the programmes.

These development agents are the right conduits for reaching the deeper backwaters which have tougher geographical terrains and are centres of social schisms and extremist ideologies. In such regions donors also need to go beyond the sacred *trimurti*—sustainability, replicability and scalability—which should be restricted to mainland organisations. Too much insistence on technicalities leaves genuine development work out of the CSR net. A worm's eye view is as critical as a bird's eye view to ensure that projects deliver visible and lasting outcomes and leave a larger and lasting imprint.

A more important aspect of CSR that needs greater attention is the need for embedding CSR values in employees. It is only when employees align their social philosophy with that of their employers that the real benefits of CSR can materialize. A sincerely and honestly practiced charity always delivers rich dividends in the long run. That is the lesson we learn from both philosophers and business leaders. It is wise to remind ourselves again of the advice of Henry Ford, "A business absolutely devoted to service will have only one worry about profits. They will be embarrassingly large."

(The writer is Member, NITI Aayog's National Committee on Financial Literacy and Inclusion for Women)

AI will transform digital marketing

As digital marketing becomes increasingly important for businesses, we need to start thinking beyond conventional techniques. With the ability to collect, analyse and learn from data, AI has the potential to transform digital strategy



TUHIN BANIK

As digital marketing becomes increasingly important for businesses, they need to start thinking about stepping up their strategies by going beyond conventional Search Engine Optimization (SEO) techniques.

Artificial Intelligence (AI), holds the key to the future of digital marketing. When Google unveiled RankBrain in 2015, users noticed that the results to their queries in the search engine became more useful and relevant. The algorithm, which uses AI to analyse and respond to user queries like a human being would, also returns identical questions asked by other users. With the ability to collect, analyse and learn from data, AI has the

potential to transform your digital strategy.

So what exactly is AI? A simplistic explanation is that AI is a branch of computer science that deals with building intelligent machines that can think and respond like a human being. The trailblazing English mathematician, Alan Turing, proposed the Turing test in 1950 to determine the intelligence of computers and identify if a computer can achieve human-level performance in cognitive tasks that are sophisticated enough to fool an interrogator.

Although no AI programme has come close to passing the undiluted Turing test, cognitive and computer scientist John McCarthy observed that Turing's philosophy of AI is unlikely to have an effect on the practice of AI research, which has grown by leaps and bounds in the last two decades.

This brings us to the question of how an enterprise can use AI to market its business. The fact remains that a fifth of all the searches done using Google are voice based. It's a big number, and digital marketers should



understand its significance and start planning their marketing strategies to optimise websites to make the most use of voice search, along with traditional text search.

Some of the ways in which digital marketing can be pumped up using AI are predicting customer behavior, using Accelerated Mobile Pages (AMPs) to reduce load time and AI chatbots to enhance user experience.

Let's look at how AI helps in predicting customer behaviour. Advancements in predictive analytics allow marketers to extract more information from data, and use it to pre-

dict the behavior of customers. They can then apply cluster models to group them and predict purchase trends. Predictive analysis also helps the sales and marketing divisions with lead scoring, making it possible to score leads based on their readiness to purchase. Businesses can upsell and cross-sell based on existing data.

If your website's mobile browser pages are not loading quickly, it can spoil the user experience. That's where AMPs come in. The AMP plugin takes web pages and makes them load faster by stripping them down to the basics. RankBrain has enabled Google to

understand better what its users are looking for, and AMP content automatically shows up in the top stories carousel. If you are a business with an AMP page, then you have better chances of showing up in the top three search results in Google.

A lot of businesses already use chatbots, making it possible for the user to interact with the bot via instant messaging.

The time is ripe for companies to start using AI-based chatbots, which are significantly better. They can retain customer data, and customers do not have to repeat themselves every time. They can handle multiple customer requests at the same time, eliminating the wait time. They can also track the purchase patterns of customers, allowing businesses to revamp their marketing strategy and boost sales.

Last, but not the least, companies need to scale up content marketing. Content marketing refers to the practice of marketing a brand or a business by sharing educational, insightful, or entertaining articles that add value to the lives of readers. Research

has shown that the strategy is more effective in attracting and retaining customers as it isn't purely promotional. The Natural Language Generation (NLG) engine, Wordsmith, was able to create more than a billion human sounding articles in 2016. Although AI is still not advanced enough to write natural sounding articles on every topic, it is still useful for data driven content such as quarterly reports, market data, and sport matches. Once the content is ready, you can scale it up with an influencer marketing platform to ensure that it reaches the target audience.

Embracing AI technologies will benefit your digital marketing strategy in many ways. AI will not replace the jobs of advertisers and marketers, but help them unleash their creative and strategic potential. Business owners need to identify the roadblocks faced by their marketing campaign or company and use insights derived from AI-based marketing to solve the issues.

(The writer is founder, CEO and search scientist at a leading AI-powered digital marketing firm)



AN ESSENTIAL ADDITION
 It's true that collective action can have effects, but these are limited. A revulsion among the workers at Google has so far stopped the company from cooperating with the US immigration service. It has not stopped its YouTube algorithms from corrupting politics in Brazil. Any effective moral action must come from corporations as a whole, not just some of their workers.
 (The Guardian editorial)

CAPSULE



Sensex, Nifty rebound on hopes of FPI tax rollback

MUMBAI: Market benchmark BSE Sensex rebounded from early lows to close 228 points higher on Friday on expectations of FPI tax roll back and some measures by the government to boost growth. The 30-share barometer closed higher by 228.23 pts or 0.63 per cent at 36,701.16, hours ahead of a presser by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. The broader NSE Nifty rose by 88 points or 0.82 per cent to settle at 10,829.35, with 41 of its 50 constituents closing with gains. The two benchmark indices had declined up to 1 per cent in the early session due to heavy selling in banking, financials, auto and FMCG stocks. However, reports of roll back of FPI tax and announcement that the finance minister would address the media in the evening fuelled speculations that the government would announce measures to support the sagging economy.



Slowdown in auto sector temporary: KIA Motors India

NEW DELHI: Korean automobile maker KIA Motors India on Friday said the current slowdown in the industry is a temporary phase, and customer sentiments will revive again. "There is some industry slowdown. We believe that the slowdown in the automobile industry is temporary. Customer sentiments will revive again," said Yong S Kim, ED and CSO of KIA Motors India. Kim was talking to reporters here at the launch of the SUV 'Seltos', manufactured at its plant in Andhra Pradesh. He said the company entered the Indian market with an SUV, as it is the fastest growing segment in the automobile industry in the country. "For a new entrant, there is no good time. We are confident of our product...", he said.



Moody's cuts India GDP growth forecast to 6.2% for 2019

NEW DELHI: Moody's Investors Service on Friday cut India's GDP growth forecast for 2019 calendar year to 6.2 per cent from the previous estimation of 6.8 per cent. For 2020 calendar year, it reduced the estimate by a similar measure to 6.7 per cent. In a statement, it said the weaker global economy has stunted Asian exports and the uncertain operating environment has weighed on investment.

'Prepare for new challenges, protect Indian cos from abuse'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Urging the Competition Commission to prepare for dealing with new challenges, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Friday said there is a need to protect Indian enterprises from excessive abuse in terms of competition from international players in the changed global economic order.

Sitharaman, who also holds the corporate affairs ministry portfolio, flagged the issue of competition sans frontiers and at times, its adverse impact on Indian consumers.

Speaking at an event to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Competition Commission of India (CCI), she said the time has come for the regulator to suo moto examine the impact of global firms on the domestic market in terms of competition.

"You have your job with challenges all of which should guide us both in order to protect the Indian consumers... yet ensure Indian enterprises are not going to be subject to excessive abuse from companies which are existing some-



where else, which do not submit themselves to the Indian law," the minister said here.

The regulator, which keeps a tab on unfair business practices, has been dealing with various cases related to digital markets.

Minister of State for Finance and Corporate Affairs Anurag Singh Thakur said that when traditional models of business have been dislodged by the emergence of radical innovation, it has been seen that in some cases traditional players have resorted to lobbying with domestic regulators for the

adoption of regulations that can delay or block such innovations.

CCI Chairman Ashok Kumar Gupta said it has been acting in a nuanced manner with regard to alleged anti-competitive activities in the digital market.

According to Sitharaman, it is just not the number of suo moto cases but also the way in which the Commission has to keep itself alert to many of the developments which are happening globally.

"Physical borders no longer determine competition within

44 The time has come for the regulator to suo moto examine the impact of global firms on the domestic market in terms of competition
— NIRMALA SITHARAMAN, Finance Minister

a country and in that way we are dealing with not fair play as it is.

"We are dealing with an entity which is outside, probably legally, complying with many of the requirements in the jurisdiction in which they exist but having an impact on consumers here both positively and probably unfairly... if that is not abuse then what can be," the minister said.

Against this backdrop, she said it was the right time for the Commission to suo moto take up cases and "probably even direct the government towards what it has to deal with which probably for many reasons government would hesitate to tread on as things stand".

Further, Sitharaman said there is a very big challenge before the regulator in the new economic context, not just within the jurisdiction that one operates but also from other jurisdictions.

At the G20, Sitharaman said whole discussions today are going into saying "how would you define operations and how would you define profits or turnovers which are generated in a geographical area where one does not operate".

"... physically you are not present but you are making a turnover and earning your profits in an area which is jurisdictionally different from where you are. So if that is the way global competition is evolving... whose impact is so much on us that we are still probably wondering as to how we are going to rein in that kind of, if I may use the word, abuse.

"It is not always abuse but it is a smoking gun. That's the smoking gun which governments, not just in India, but also in many of the countries which we think are far ahead of us in understanding competition law," she added.



Union Minister Nitin Gadkari Inaugurating 6th International MSME Expo & Summit 2019 in New Delhi on Friday

MSMEs must create 5 cr jobs to boost economy: Gadkari

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari said on Friday that unemployment is a major challenge and MSMEs must create five crore jobs in five years to address the issue as India aims to become a USD 5-trillion economy.

Currently, micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) contribute 29 per cent to the country's gross domestic product (GDP) and have created 11 crore jobs in recent years.

Stating that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has set a target of India becoming a USD 5-trillion economy, the Union transport and MSME minister said MSMEs will have to raise their contribution to GDP to 50 per cent and also create five crore more jobs in the next five years to achieve this objective.

"Unemployment is the biggest challenge facing us. Eleven crore jobs have been created and you (MSMEs) have to generate 5 crore more jobs in the country in five years," he said at the 6th India International MSME Expo here.

Moreover, he said the government has taken several steps towards addressing key challenges faced by MSMEs, including in marketing of their products and ensuring timely payments to them.

Highlighting that e-commerce firm Alibaba had a major role in China's economic growth, Gadkari said the MSME ministry has signed an agreement with the Government e-Market (GeM) portal under the commerce ministry to establish India's new e-commerce marketing portal.

Moreover, he said the government has taken several steps towards addressing key challenges faced by MSMEs, including in marketing of their products and ensuring timely payments to them

The new portal may be named 'Bharat Craft', he said, adding that the online platform will be of the scale of Amazon and Alibaba.

The government, he added, has set a target for the proposed portal to achieve a turnover of at least Rs 10 lakh crore in the next two years.

To ensure timely payments to MSMEs and prevent erosion of their working capital, Gadkari said the government is "seriously exploring" if it can bring a legislation to ensure payments within 45 days of supplying a product.

The minister said he has spoken to global multilateral lending agencies like the World Bank, Asian Development Bank and KfW to see if the cost of capital can be brought down for the MSME sector, one of the largest job creator in the country.

The three-day MSME expo at Pragati Maidan opened on Friday.



Steps on to develop GIFT City, says Sebi chief

PTI ■ GANDHINAGAR

Several measures are underway, including introduction of new products like dollar-rupee derivatives, to further development of 'GIFT City' in Gujarat as a major International Financial Services Centre (IFSC) on the lines of global centres like Singapore and Dubai, capital market regulator Sebi's chairman Ajay Tyagi said on Friday.

The Sebi chief also said the trading turnover of various products on exchanges operating in GIFT City is fast picking up and it would only increase going further.

Addressing a seminar here on 'GIFT IFSC- Onshoring the Offshore', Tyagi said prominent IFSCs set up across the world, including London, New York, Singapore and Dubai, have contributed significantly to the GDP and created large employment opportunities in such jurisdictions.

"India also must figure on the map of the global financial centres network," he said.

The government had announced plans in 2015 to set up India's first IFSC in GIFT City, after which Sebi had issued general guidelines during the same year. Specific guidelines on intermediaries, fund raising, market infrastructure institutions, funds,



44 The trading turnover of various products on exchanges operating in GIFT City is fast picking up and it would only increase going further
— AJAY TYAGI, Sebi's chairman

etc have also been issued subsequently.

Financial sector regulators such as Sebi, RBI, IRDAI and PFRDA have also issued their respective guidelines for IFSC, an overall financial services focused centre involving multiple areas such as banking, insurance, capital markets, among others.

The central government has also announced several tax incentives for operations in GIFT IFSC, while the state government has also provided incentives including stamp duty exemption for entities having registered office in GIFT for capital market activities.

Gold rises for fourth consecutive day, touches fresh high of Rs 38,995

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Continuing its record-setting trend for the fourth consecutive day, gold prices rose Rs 25 on Friday to reach a record high of Rs 38,995 per 10 gram in the national capital amid a weaker rupee, according to the All India Sarafa Association.

Gold prices have been hitting a fresh high every day since Tuesday.

Meanwhile, silver held steady at the previous level of Rs 45,100 per kg.

Even as the precious metal lost steam overseas, persistent buying from jewellers mainly led to the rise in gold prices, traders said.

Besides, a weaker rupee also led to the increase in price of the precious metal.

The rupee declined below the 72 mark against the US dollar in the opening session on Friday. It fell by 22



In New York, spot gold was trading lower at USD 1,496.30 an ounce, while silver was almost flat at USD 17.11 an ounce

paire to trade at a nine-month low of 72.03 against the US dollar in early session.

In New York, spot gold was trading lower at USD 1,496.30 an ounce, while silver was almost flat at USD 17.11 an ounce.

"Globally, gold traded weak with international spot gold prices falling below USD 1,500 on Friday on positive US equity futures and stronger dollar index," HDFC Securities Senior Analyst (Commodities)

Tapan Patel said.

Traders are awaiting the key Jackson Hole meeting for cues on gold prices. Fed Chair Jerome Powell's speech on Friday will be crucial for markets to get clarity over future rate cuts which may affect gold prices, Patel said.

In the national capital, gold of 99.9 per cent purity advanced Rs 25 to Rs 38,995 per 10 gram, while that of 99.5 per cent gained Rs 5 to Rs 38,825 per 10 gram.

Bosch board appoints Bernhard Straub as chairman

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Auto components major Bosch on Friday said its board has appointed Bernhard Straub as Chairman with effect from August 24, 2019.

Considering the recommendations of the nomination and remuneration committee, the board has approved the appointment of Straub, currently non-executive, non-independent Director, as an additional director designated as a Chairman of the board, Bosch Ltd said in a regulatory filing.

The board, in its meeting held on Friday, has also accepted the resignation of V K Viswanathan as Chairman and Director of the company with effect from August 23, 2019, as a part of succession planning, it added.

IBC can't resolve power sector crisis, but ARCs can: Secy

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Financially crippled power companies cannot be revived or resolved under the provisions of the existing bankruptcy laws, but asset reconstruction companies can better deal with them, a senior government official said Friday.

Crucial agreements on the power purchase and fuel supply come apart if an asset goes for bankruptcy by sending it to NCLT as required under the law now, leaving only the plant and machinery, Union power secretary SC Garg said.

The power sector is one of the worst performing from an asset quality perspective for banks and Garg pegged the overall stressed portfolio at



44 Crucial agreements on the power purchase and fuel supply come apart if an asset goes for bankruptcy by sending it to NCLT as required under the law now, leaving only the plant and machinery
— SC GARG, Union power secretary

around Rs 4 trillion or over 65,000 mw of generation capacity.

"Not every kind of industry or every kind of asset can be best reconstructed through the IBC," Garg told an event on ARCs organised by industry lobby Assocham.

If a power sector asset goes to NCLT, "practically nothing will survive, except the plant", he said, adding PPAs and FSAs will come off. Any new buyer will lose interest asset because of this, he said, recommending the ARC route to resolving the stress in the sector.

SBI cuts interest rates on fixed deposits up to 0.5%

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The country's largest lender State Bank of India on Friday slashed interest rates on fixed deposits across various tenure by up to 0.5 percentage point, a move which will lower returns for savers.

In view of the falling interest rate scenario and surplus liquidity, SBI realigns its interest rate on Term Deposits with effect from August 26, 2019, SBI said in a statement.

The move to reduce interest rate on fixed deposits by the country's largest lender is expected to be followed by other lenders. The bank has slashed retail term deposit rates by 10-50 basis points across tenors as well as bulk term deposit rates by 30-70 basis points across tenors, it said.

The bank has slashed the interest rate for the fixed deposits with maturity of 7-45 days to 4.5 per cent from existing 5 per cent. The rate reduction 46-179 days, 180 days to less than one year maturities baskets is 25 basis points (0.25 percentage point) at 5.5 per cent and 6 per cent respectively while for maturity bucket of 1-2 years is only 10 basis points at 6.70 per cent.

For top maturity period of 5-10 years, the decrease is again 25 basis points at 6.25 per cent. The bank also said that it has retained interest rate on savings bank deposit at 3 per cent for customers with balances above Rs 1 lakh with a view to protecting the interest of savings bank depositors.

Customers with SB balance up to Rs 1 lakh will continue to get the rate of interest at 3.50 per cent despite cut in the repo rate by the RBI earlier this month.

As global economic picture dims, solutions seem out of reach

PTI ■ WASHINGTON

As global leaders gather on two continents to take account of a darkening economic outlook, this is the picture they face: Factories are slumping, many businesses are paralyzed, global growth is sputtering and the world's two mightiest economies are in the grip of a dangerous trade war.

Barely a year after most of the world's major countries were enjoying an unusual moment of shared prosperity, the global economy may be at risk of returning to the rut it tumbled into after the financial crisis of 2007-2009.

Worse, solutions seem far from obvious. Central banks can't just slash interest rates. Rates are already ultra-low. And even if they did, the central banks would risk robbing themselves of the ammunition they would need later to fight a recession.

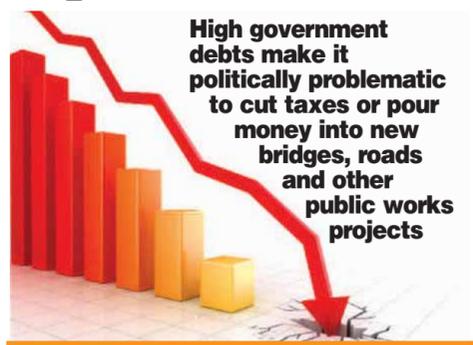
High government debts make it politically problematic to cut taxes or pour money into new bridges, roads and other public works projects.

"Our tools for fighting recession are no doubt more limited (than) in the past," said Karen Dynan, an economist at Harvard University's Kennedy School.

The International Monetary Fund and the World Bank have downgraded the outlook for world growth. On Thursday, Moody's Investors Service said it expects the global economy to expand 2.7% this year and next — down from 3.2% the previous two years. And it issued a dark warning: Get used to it.

"The new normal will likely continue for the next three to four years," the credit rating agency said.

Concerns are rising just as



central bankers meet in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, and leaders of the Group of Seven advanced economies gather this weekend in the resort town of Biarritz in southwestern France.

A spotlight will shine, in particular, on whatever message

Federal Reserve Chairman Jerome Powell sends in a speech Friday in Jackson Hole.

The dour global outlook partly reflects U.S. President Donald Trump's combative trade conflicts with China and other countries. A realization

has taken hold that Trump will likely keep deploying tariffs — and in some cases escalating them — to try to beat concessions out of trading partners.

"The trade uncertainty is here to stay," said Madhavi Bokil, senior credit officer at Moody's. Squeezed by protectionism, global trade is likely to grow just 2.5% this year, its slowest pace in three years, the IMF says. Manufacturers, whose fortunes are closely tied to trade, are struggling. J.P. Morgan's global manufacturing index dropped in July for a third straight month, hitting the lowest level since 2012.

The global funk also reflects the pull of gravity: The economies of Europe and Japan, fueled by central banks' easy-money policies, overexerted themselves a couple of years ago and are now returning to their more typical state:

Sluggishness.

The IMF expects China's economy, the world's second-biggest, to grow 6.2% this year — the weakest since 1990 — and just 6% next year. Trump's trade war is certainly a factor. The president has imposed tariffs on \$250 billion in Chinese imports and is set to tax nearly \$300 billion more before year's end.

China's slowdown is also being orchestrated in part by the officials in Beijing, who are trying to contain lending to control the country's runaway debts.

And an economic chill in China sends shivers into the many countries — from copper-producing Chile to iron ore-making Australia — that feed Chinese factories with raw materials.

Then there's Europe. In the 19 countries that use the euro currency, growth slowed in

the second quarter to an anemic annual rate of 1.1%, or 0.2% from the quarter before.

The eurozone, which maintains close trade ties with the U.S. and China, has been sidetracked by the collision between Trump and President Xi Jinping. And Trump has threatened to impose significant tariffs on European auto imports.

Even more than the tariffs, uncertainty over trade disputes is chilling investment and purchasing. Despite cheap borrowing costs from central bank stimulus, investment in new plants is lagging, an ominous sign that bosses don't foresee a pickup.

In Europe's economic powerhouse, Germany, the economy shrank 0.1% in the second quarter by the quarter before. If output should fall for a second straight quarter, Germany would find itself in a recession.

UNLOCKING THE HIDDEN POWER OF CONSCIOUSNESS



The Four Sacred Secrets, authored by Preethaji and Krishnaji, will teach you how to unlock the hidden power of consciousness, shed anxiety and cultivate a life of fulfilment, wealth and happiness, writes V SATEESH REDDY

Husband and wife, Preethaji and Krishnaji has taken their mutual interest in philosophy a step forward and co-authored *The Four Sacred Secrets*. The book is about unlocking the hidden power of your consciousness, while also helping the reader to shed anxiety and cultivate a life of fulfilment, wealth and happiness; with this accessible guide outlining the four keys to personal transformation.

Preethaji and Krishnaji are renowned philosophers and transformational leaders. The book is not the first venture that they have done together, as they started the O&O Academy — a philosophy and meditation school for transforming consciousness. Preethaji offers courses in major cities around the world

that lead people to scientific and transcendental dimensions of consciousness. Her TEDx Talk, 'How to End Stress, Unhappiness and Anxiety to Live in a Beautiful State', has reached more than two million people.

Preethaji says, "Arranged into four sections, *The Four Sacred Secrets* is easy-to-follow exercises and meditations offering a neuroscience-backed method to perform at one's highest possible level. Fusing the transcendental and the scientific, the mystical and the practical, we combine spiritual practices with proven scientific approaches and include ancient fables and modern stories that will speak intimately to your heart, taking you on a life-altering adventure of self-discovery and success."

Drawing on the power of untapped consciousness to

reframe life's challenges — be it work pressure, family issues or personal relationship problems — the book's brilliant insights offer a path to reconnection and redirection of energy towards positive solutions.

Krishnaji says, "This life-transforming book will guide you to consciously create wealth, heal your heart, awaken yourself to love, and help you to make peace with your true self."

The book mainly focuses on four key practices: living with a "spiritual vision; discovering one's inner truth through non-judgmental self-awareness; connecting to the universal intelligence that surrounds everyone; and dissolving inner conflict to help others."

Preethaji adds, "We have co-authored this book to share our own experience of the power of the beautiful state as well as the experiences of our students who have transformed their lives from the inside out in every aspect, from building lasting relationships to creating satisfying and successful careers. We have deliberately changed the names, country origins, and backgrounds of these students to preserve their privacy while maintaining the authenticity of their insights and experiences of transformation. As these stories reveal, if you are curious about transforming your consciousness, you will discover a greater sense of effortless living, loving, and achieving. Once you begin to hold these sacred secrets close to your heart, the universe becomes a loving friend, supporting you with magical synchronicities that power you along the way."

A SCHOOL THAT PRODUCED LEADERS IN ALL FIELDS

What is common among Microsoft CEO Satya Nadella, India's permanent representative at the United Nations Syed Akbaruddin, Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy and well-known cricket commentator Harsha Bhogle. They are all products of Hyderabad Public School.

The premier educational institution of the city has churned out powerful corporate honchos like Mastercard President and CEO Ajay Banga, founder and CEO of Fairfax Financial Holding Prem Watsa and Adobe Systems CEO Shantanu Narayan besides Satya Nadella. With Syed Akbaruddin in news for leading India's charge on Kashmir at the United Nations, the spotlight is on the distinguished alumni of Hyderabad Public School (HPS).

"My Alma Mater-ever grateful 2 thee (sic)," the leading diplomat tweeted after HPS said it was proud to recognise man of the moment, Syed Akbaruddin, who passed out from HPS in 1976, is the 1985-batch IFS officer and handled many key diplomatic assignments including the spokesperson of the ministry of foreign affairs.

The HPS alumni rose to great heights of success and fame in different fields like business, politics, civil services, sports and films. Cobra beer founder and a member of UK Parliament Karan Billimoria, former Andhra Pradesh chief minister N Kiran Kumar Reddy, All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen (AIMIM) chief and Hyderabad MP Asaduddin Owaisi, former cricketer Venkatpathy Raju and Telugu actors Akkineni Nagarjuna and Rana Daggubati are among the other alumni of this 96-year-old school.

HPS managing committee member Marri Aditya Reddy said that the institution was proud of its alumni excelling in various walks of life. He was all praise for Syed Akbaruddin for the way he is defending India at the United Nations.

"Somebody who comes from Hyderabad and from simple upbringing is defending the nation. We are so proud of him. It speaks of the immense value system created at HPS over the decades," said Aditya Reddy, grandson of former Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Marri Channa Reddy.

With its strong eco-system, HPS helped its pupils coming from modest background to become leaders in different

fields. "This is what gives us excitement. Ordinary people were able to excel in personal and professional capacities. It was possible due to the value system created in the HPS atmosphere," said Aditya Reddy, also an alumni of HPS.

Inspired by famous Eton College of Britain, Mir Osman Ali Khan, the last Nizam of Hyderabad State founded the school in 1923. It was exclusively meant for the sons of the nobility. It was only in 1951 that the HPS opened its doors for public. Even after Independence and Hyderabad State's merger with Indian Union, the school had an elitist tag as children of only powerful politicians, wealthy businessmen, IAS and IPS officers and celebrities used to get admission.

The school started admitting girls in 1984. Aditya Reddy said that when Channa Reddy was the chief minister he brought a balance in the running of the school by giving some control to the government by making principal secretary of education the chairman of HPS board of governors.

HPS, which started with six students in 1923, today has nearly 3,000 students. It is run by a society comprising of eminent people from all walks of life. Its management committee has seven members while a 35-member board looks after day to day affairs of the institution.

Spread over 130 acres in Begumpet near the old airport in the heart of the city, HPS is said to have the largest campus, even bigger than Vatican City. Its main building is a heritage structure while the campus has trekking routes, rock-formations, two cricket fields, athletic arena and several hockey, football grounds and a big library.

Aditya Reddy said that HPS shed their elitist school tag long ago and it had been giving admissions to SCs, STs, BCs and minorities as per the government policy. "We have been maintaining the social and economic balance. There is no differentiation as we also admit children from under privileged sections of the society," he said.

HPS SHED THEIR ELITIST TAG LONG AGO AND IT HAD BEEN GIVING ADMISSIONS TO SCs, STs, BCs AND MINORITIES AS PER GOVERNMENT POLICY



ADITYA REDDY



ASADUDDIN OWAISI



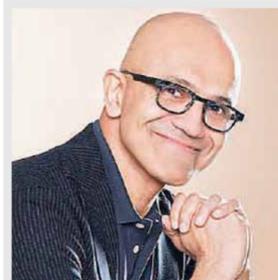
HARSHA BHOGLE



N KIRAN KUMAR REDDY



KARAN BILLIMORIA



SATYA NADELLA

“Every year, HPS is producing so many celebrities in various fields. It made me believe that I too can make it big in the world. I want to be a forensic psychologist or a published author, and HPS has helped realise my path for the future. The school has always provided me with the support, inspiration and advice I need

LEKHA CLASS XII

“HPS producing a number of celebrities makes me proud to say that I study in one of the most elite schools in the world. I want to be an Indian Administration Officer. Thanks to the extraordinary opportunities and exposure available here, I think I have all I need to build a secure future for myself.

PRADHYUMNA CLASS XI

“The amount of exposure I got from this school is unreal. I aspire to become a travel journalist and my teachers are very supportive of my plans. They've never doubted its feasibility. Sometimes that's all a student needs: support, guidance and someone to believe in them. HPS never fails to deliver.

AHANA BASU CLASS XI



MEGASTAR TO UNVEIL SVR'S STATUE

Megastar Chiranjeevi will be unveiling a statue of legendary actor SV Ranganarao at SVR Circle, Tadeppaligudem this Sunday. The actor who celebrated his 64th birthday on Thursday will fly to Gannavaram airport on Sunday morning in a special chartered flight. He will reach the venue through road by 10.15 am and will unveil the statue amid SVR and his fans.

Chiru is a big fan of SVR and never missed an opportunity to shower his admiration on the late actor. "We can learn immensely, especially from SVR's movies. They are an encyclopaedia (for aspiring actors). I became his fan because of my dad (Venkat Rao). In 1969-71, when I was in class VII, my dad was into stage acting. He wanted to get into the cinema but didn't muster the courage to try his luck in Madras because of financial constraints. When he was with the excise department at Bapatla, one Ekambareswara Rao produced a couple of films



Since then I used to like SVR and regularly watch his films. Guess my acting aspirations too began because of him," Chiru had said earlier this June at an event in Hyderabad where a book *Mahanatudu* — a compilation of rare photographs of SVR from his most famous films — was unveiled by him.

VIVEK OBEROI TO PRODUCE MOVIE ON BALAKOT AIRSTRIKES



Actor Vivek Oberoi, who last played Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a film, will now produce a movie based on the Balakot airstrikes to salute the valour of the Indian Air Force (IAF). Titled *Balakot*, the film will be based on the airstrikes as well as the capture and subsequent release of IAF Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman in the aftermath of the terror attack in Kashmir's Pulwama district on February 14.

"As a proud Indian, patriot, and a member of the film fraternity, it's my duty to highlight what our Armed Forces are truly capable of. In the form of a trilingual, this film is a powerful tool to underline the achievements of brave officers like Wing Commander Abhinandan, who went behind the enemy lines and did what makes every Indian proud of them," said Vivek.

"The Balakot airstrike was one of the well-planned attacks by the IAF. I have followed everything in the news right from the attack in Pulwama to the airstrikes in Balakot. There was a lot that was speculated and spoken about back then; this film will put all of that to rest, once and for all. I thank the IAF for trusting us with this story and we hope to do justice to it," he added.

To be shot in Hindi, Tamil and Telugu, the film will feature established actors from these industries in pivotal roles, including that of Wing Commander Abhinandan, who was later awarded Vir Chakra, and Squadron Leader Minty Agarwal, who guided the IAF's interception mission launched to stop Pakistan's fighter jets. She has become the first woman to receive the Yudh Seva Medal. "I am delighted to receive the requisite permission from the IAF a day before Independence Day. Hollywood filmmakers applaud their Armed Forces, intelligence agencies, industries and leaders. Why should Indian filmmakers shy away from doing that for India? As a nation, with one of the strongest Armed Forces on the globe, we have achieved a lot, and it's time to start reiterating it to the world at large," said Vivek. The film will go on floors this year and is expected to release in 2020. It will be shot in the backdrop of Jammu and Kashmir, Delhi and Agra.

TAYLOR SWIFT RELEASES 'LOVER' MUSIC VIDEO



Grammy winner Taylor Swift has unveiled the music video for her latest song *Lover*. The 29-year-old singer released the romantic video, which also stars her longtime backup dancer Christian Owens, on Thursday, reports *people.com*. "The leading man in this video is someone I have performed on stage with for years," said Swift during a YouTube Live ahead of the video's release.

"(He was the) leading man in the *King of My Heart* performance every night on the reputation tour. Every night I could see how expressive he is and just how heroic and what an amazing actor he is as well." In the music video, which Swift co-directed with Drew Kirsch, the singer and Owens feature as a couple as they swim in a fishbowl, slow dance at home and party with their friends while going through ups and downs together. At the end of the video, the lovebirds get their happily ever after as their child opens a Christmas present containing a snow globe holding their memories.

AAMIR KHAN'S DAUGHTER IRA TO MAKE HER DIRECTORIAL DEBUT

Superstar Aamir Khan's daughter Ira Khan will make her directorial debut with a theatre production titled *Euripides Medea*. The play with a Greek tragedy storyline will be showcased in selected Indian cities, this year-end. Sources close to her reveal that she has already commenced work on her directorial debut and her play will premiere in December. The rehearsals for the play will be starting soon and will happen in Mumbai itself.

"There's no particular reason that I decided to start with the theatre. I love theatre, it's magical and all consuming; in its classical form, in the world of technology, it's very real and physical. I love the suspension of disbelief that the audience allows for because then there's so much you can express," Ira said.



Unlike most star kids, she has "never considered acting". "In terms of more plays, I'd have to find a story that I want to tell. I don't have a particular genre that I like. I'm not particularly into horror but other than that I'm open to all sorts of stories," she said. This comes a day after her "Everything will be okay" post that had left her fans worried.

AYUSHMANN'S FAN IN FRENZY

Actor Ayushmann Khurrana is riding high on success of all his films. The actor who won a National Award, (Best Actor) for *Anhadhun*, was celebrating the success of the film at a party when, in a surprising event, he came across a fan who had gatecrashed the party.

The fun fact about this whole event was that, the fan was dressed in a cotton yellow saree, imitating Ayushmann from the poster of his forthcoming film *Dream Girl*, and he stormed through the venue holding his pallu, eager to meet his favourite superstar. Ayushmann, who is known to be very cordial and loving towards his fan, thanked him and took pictures with the fan.

Right after the trailer was released, it became the top trending video on YouTube and garnered over 15 million views in less than 24 hours. Audience all across the country and the world are appreciating the actor and lauding him for his unique choices and him being at the helm of changing the course of Indian cinema by putting content based films on the top.

Fans have been going berserk over the trailer so much so that they have been trying to call Pooja aka the dream girl on the number given at the end of the trailer. The poster of *Dream Girl* has the star looking quirky in a cotton saree and sitting on a rickshaw. Nushrat Bharucha is the lead actress paired alongside the actor with Vijay Raaz, Manjot Singh, Annu Kapoor and Rajesh Sharma among others in the cast. Directed by Raaj Shandilya, produced by Ekta Kapoor, Shobha Kapoor and Aashish Singh, the film is set to release on September 13.



KHUSHALI KUMAR'S DEBUT FILM A 'SLICE-OF-LIFE COMEDY'

Gulshan Kumar's daughter Khushali Kumar is all set to make her Bollywood debut opposite R Madhavan in *Dahi Cheeni*. She plays a lawyer in the film and has already started doing her homework to get into the skin of the character.

"As part of my preparation, I have started interacting with renowned lawyers, to understand their work ethics and legal proceedings. I have been visiting courtrooms to see how they operate and how a lady lawyer reacts in a court. In fact, I have met some power-packed female lawyers. It was a great honour to stand with them and get clicked. I plan to spend more time across various courts to understand their mannerisms and conduct in the courtroom. I am sure it will help me prepare for my stint as a lady lawyer in *Dahi Cheeni*," said Khushali. She describes her debut flick as "a slice-of-life comedy", adding, "The film shines light upon the problems that societies across the world face today. It is based on a true story and is so far removed from the pomp and show of Bollywood that it feels like a breath of fresh air. The film has a quirky and realistic approach."

Khushali, who dreamt of becoming an actress right from her childhood, will be making her debut alongside R Madhavan and she is feeling a bit scared already. "It's scary to stand next to Maddy but I have made up my mind and am ready to go at it full throttle." The newcomer loves to travel and her first film will take her to Bhopal, where parts of it will be shot. "I love to travel, and when a film can offer (the scope to) travel, it gives me immense joy. Since the film is set in Bhopal, I can't wait to reach the city and start shooting. The people of Bhopal are honest and clear-minded. There's so much to learn from the city and its people, which you will come across in my character." *Dahi Cheeni* is being helmed by debutant director Ashwin Neal Mani as is expected to go on floors soon.

KIM SHARES FIRST-EVER PIC WITH HER FOUR KIDS



Kim Kardashian took to Instagram to share her first-ever picture with all four of her kids in Bahamas. In the pic, Kim is on the beach with her junior quartet of North West, Saint West, Chicago West and Psalm West. The group makes for a great photo-op. "I thought taking a pic with three kids was hard but OMG this is almost impossible!" Kim captioned the snapshot. In the picture Kim's swimsuit is colour-coordinated with that of her daughters, Chicago and North. They are all turned up for beach action in silver swimsuits, while sons Psalm and Saint wore shorts.



DISNEYLAND'S AVENGERS CAMPUS TO OPEN IN 2020

The Avengers will assemble once again next year, this time not to fight supervillain Thanos but to recruit more superheroes to join them in their mission to save the world through 'Avengers Campus', a Marvel-themed park arriving at Disneyland in California and Paris.

Although Spiderman's future in the Marvel Cinematic Universe remains in a limbo, thanks to the standoff between Disney and Sony Pictures, the iconic web-slinger will be part of the superhero land, and remain in the spotlight. A copy of Spiderman's suit is on display at D23 Expo, highlighting the plans surrounding a new attraction themed around the hero.

Bob Chapek, Chairman of Disney Parks, Experiences and Products Chairman, revealed the official title of the Marvel land — 'Avengers Campus'. He said that guests will be recruited to fight alongside the Avengers, and the campuses will be a place for guests to train with their heroes. Visitors will become part of an interconnected, global story spanning from California to Paris to Hong Kong.

"We're building an immersive superhero-themed land at Disney California Adventure and Disneyland Paris that will enable our guests to join the Avengers to save the world," said Chapek.

"These lands are actually campuses created by Avengers to train up new heroes. When guests, or future superheroes, visit the campus, they will become a part of the interconnected global story that spans from California to Paris to Hong Kong," he said, adding that he looks forward to the time when he can share more information about the attractions of the land "some day". The Marvel-themed area will be launching in 2020.

Inside the pavilion at D23 Expo, guests can see an in-story experience and learn why the Avengers are building these campuses. There's Spiderman's suit, Iron Man's technology, advanced gadgets and jets to help the guests get an idea of the attraction.

Newbie Faria Abdullah joins Naveen, Darshi and Rahul



Rahul Ramakrishna



Naveen Polishetty

The team felt that the movie could use a fresh face rather than a recognisable one. The decision to replace Shalini Pandey was done with the latter's understanding, finds

NAGARAJ GOUD



Priyadarshi

The casting of Naveen Polishetty, Priyadarshi and Rahul Ramakrishna-starrer, an untitled comedy directed by Pittagoda fame Anudeep, has gone for a slight change. Instead of initial choice Shalini Pandey, the makers have signed on newbie Faria Abdullah to be the film's key female face, *The Pioneer* has exclusively learnt. "The team felt that a fresh face would give the film a more realistic appeal than going with a recognised face, which is why they've decided to replace Shalini. It was done healthily, since Shalini shares a great relationship with producer Swapna Dutt and she understood the latter's intentions," confirmed a source close to the development. The source adds that Faria is a local, having featured in some funny videos in Deccani dialect. "Director Nag Ashwin, the brother-in-law of Swapna, saw her at an audition sometime back and recommended her name to the team. He believed that she was apt to carry forward the role of a lawyer and Anudeep echoed a similar opinion after auditioning her. She has already shot for the film for four days and the team is happy with her performance."

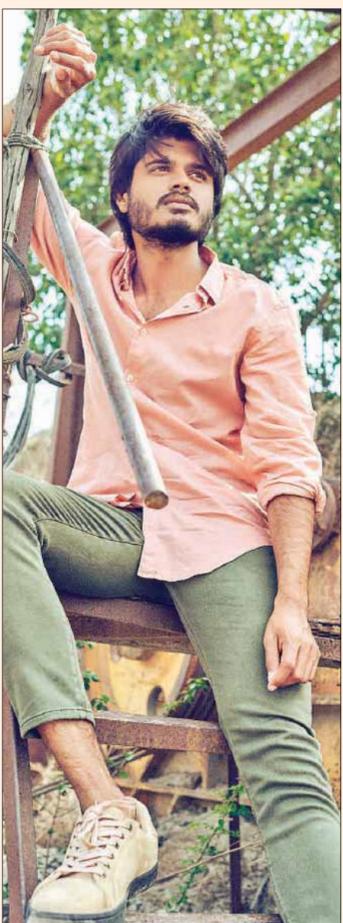
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A SOURCE



Anand Deverakonda set for his next

The team for the movie, directed by debutant Vinod Anantoju, boasts of relatively new faces except for the two actors



After an impressive turn in *Dorasani*, actor Anand Deverakonda is set for his next. To be directed by debutant Vinod Anantoju, the film will go in front of the cameras in Hyderabad on August 26. "The first schedule will be on for a month in Hyderabad, post which the unit will be stationed at Guntur and its surrounding areas for 20 days. The idea is to complete the film by mid-November," said a well-placed source close to the unit. The film had its *muhurat* sometime back in a low-key ceremony but the source added that the makers have no intention to keep the film low-profile; it's just that the unit doesn't want to work with any weight on their shoulders. "The team is fairly new, so they want to enjoy the filmmaking process. Except for Anand and his love interest in the film Varsha Bollamma, who has recently agreed to be the film's leading face, most of the other cast members are relatively new. In fact, it will not boast off any noted supporting faces. To lend a degree of authenticity to the film, director Vinod has roped in theatre artists from Hyderabad and some interested acting aspirants from Guntur," the source informed.

The film is a romantic comedy-drama with a lot of family emotions woven into the script. "Vinod initially made it as a demo film and after it turned out to be good, he decided to make it a feature. Initially, he was looking at newcomers to spearhead it and Anand heard it during March this year. He straightaway said he'd associate with it. It centres on his role's aim in life and how his dreams are getting pulled back due to family and love," the source said and added that Sunny Kurapati, who has shot *Dorasani* and *Agent Sai Srinivasa Athreya*, will be the film's cinematographer while Sweekar Agasthi of *C/O Kancharapalem* is the music director.

— NG



Vinod initially made it as a demo film and after it turned out to be good, he decided to make it a feature. Initially, he was looking at newcomers to spearhead it and Anand heard it during March this year

A SOURCE

KSHANAM DIRECTOR WRAPS UP HIS SECOND FILM



In the making for almost two years, *Kshanam* director Ravikanth Perepu's second film, *Krishna & his Leela*, featuring Sidhu of *Guntur Talkies* fame in the titular role, is through with its filming. The film, a joint production venture between Suresh Productions and Viacom18, is an urban romantic comedy. It co-stars Shradha Srinath, Seerat Kapoor and Shalini Vadnikatti. The film was recently shot in Ladakh, which has recently been made a Union Territory. "One last shot, Promise! At 17,582 ft above sea-level, we wrap *Krishna & his Leela* in Ladakh. With all the surrounding tension around Ladakh right now, the people here were extremely friendly in helping us finish this. Every film has its journey in the making and this one is a specimen. See you at the movies. Coming soon," Perepu posted on Instagram, tagging his cast and crew members.

Kshanam technical team — cinematographer Shaneil Deo and composer Sricharan Pakala — have associated with this film as well in the same capacities. It remains to be seen when the makers will announce the release date.

THE FILM, A JOINT PRODUCTION VENTURE BETWEEN SURESH PRODUCTIONS AND VIACOM18, IS AN URBAN ROMANTIC COMEDY

Indian 2 faces another SETBACK

Actress Aishwarya Rajesh is no longer part of the project as her dates for the movie were clashing with her other commitments

Tamil-Telugu actress Aishwarya Rajesh who not long ago expressed how happy she was to have bagged Shankar's *Indian 2*, starring Kamal Haasan, is no longer part of the project. Speaking to a Tamil web portal, the actress said that since the dates of *Indian 2* clashed with that of her other commitments, she had to exit from the project. She was supposed to play a significant part along with the likes of Kajal Aggarwal, Rakul Preet Singh and Priya Bhavani Shankar.

This is the latest setback the film, whose crux is said to be based on

women empowerment — the reason behind roping in several heroines to be part of the cast — had to endure. To rewind a bit, it was delayed by nearly six months as the production house was concerned with the ballooning budget. At one point, the film was on the brink of being called off, before hectic parleys between Shankar, Kamal and Lyca Productions resurrected it.

Slated to hit screens for Sankranti, the film also features Siddharth, Vivek, Nedumudi Venu, Samuthirakani, Delhi Ganesh and Vidyut Jamwal in key roles. Anirudh Ravichander is the music director.

THE MOVIE WAS PREVIOUSLY DELAYED BY NEARLY SIX MONTHS AS THE PRODUCTION HOUSE WAS CONCERNED WITH THE BALLOONING BUDGET. HECTIC PARLEYS BETWEEN SHANKAR, KAMAL AND LYCA PRODUCTIONS RESURRECTED IT



SINDHU BREAKS TAI CODE

PV inches closer to elusive Gold; Praneeth breaks 36-year drought

Momota vs Sai Praneeth
Live from 1:30pm IST
STAR SPORTS 1 NETWORK

PTI ■ BASEL

PV Sindhu secured her fifth World Championships medal following a stunning comeback while B Sai Praneeth became the first Indian male shuttler in 36 years to grab a podium in the prestigious event here on Friday.

On a day of double delight for India, Olympic Silver medallist Sindhu staged a come-from-behind victory over Chinese Taipei's Tai Tzu Ying, before Praneeth ended an agonising wait with a straight-game win over Indonesia's Jonatan Christie.

Sindhu, who won back-to-back Silver medals in the last two editions of the tournament to go with her two Bronze, edged past world number 2 and Asian Games Gold medallist Tzu Ying 12-21, 23-21, 21-19 in a pulsating contest that lasted 71 minutes, inching closer to an elusive gold medal at the worlds.

World No 19 Praneeth, who got the Arjuna Award this year, notched up a 24-22, 21-14 win over Asian Games Gold medallist Jonatan in a 51-minute battle, joining Prakash Padukone in the medal list at the tournament.

Padukone was the first Indian to win a men's singles World Championships medal — a Bronze — in the 1983 edition.

In the women's singles, Sindhu showed tremendous grit after being blown away in the opening game, edging past her fancied rival, who enjoys an upper hand (10-4) after 14 career meetings.

"I think in the first game, I had given a huge lead and I couldn't cover. I was prepared for her deception but my shots were going to mid court. But the second game was anybody's game and I kept fighting and won the second. The



B Sai Praneeth reacts after beating Jonatan Christie

BWF/Twitter



PV Sindhu celebrates after winning quarterfinal match against Tai Tzu Ying

BWF/Twitter

third game went same way, she was leading but I had hope. At 18-18, I had to be patient and keep the shuttle inside, there were long rallies ad I am happy to win this," Sindhu said after the win.

"We keep playing each other, so we know each other's game. I needed to be positive. It was a really good match and taking out such close matches gives a big boost to the confidence and I hope I can prepare well and come back stronger tomorrow."

The 24-year-old Indian will take on the winner of the match between China's Chen Yu Fei and Denmark's Mia Blichfeldt on Saturday.

"I don't know whom I will play. Chen Yufei is doing well in recent times and Mia has beaten Saina yesterday. I will be playing them after a long time. Anything can happen, I just have to be there and focus on tomorrow's match," Sindhu said.



In the men's singles quarterfinals, Praneeth, who had won the Singapore Open in 2017 and finished runners-up at Swiss Open earlier this year, came into the tournament with a 1-2 head-to-head count against the Indonesian.

But the past record didn't matter as the Indian came out attacking to stave off a stiff challenge from Jonatan in the opening game and then blew him away in the second to find his place in history.

"It feels awesome. It feels great and I am happy to win today. I still have matches, so I have to focus on that and be fitter for tomorrow. We can talk about what medal later on," laughed Praneeth after the match.

Talking about the match, Praneeth said: "In the first game,

the rallies were going on really long and I was attacking a lot and there was a lot of pressure and it made me tired. It was crucial because if he would have won then it could have been different.

"Later Gopi sir told me not to attack and that changed the rhythm and I think those inputs helped me

a lot."

Praneeth will take on World No 1 Kento Momota of Japan in the semifinals on Saturday.

"I think everybody is trying to find a way to beat him. It is not easy he being the world No 1. You have to put him under pressure, so lets see how it goes. I will give my best"



still can't believe 2 match points which the umpire overruled in the second game . And the umpire tells me in the mid of second game "let the line umpires do their job" and I dnt understand suddenly how the umpire overruled the match points..very sick @bwfmedia @HSBCBWF

Kashyap, Saina slam 'bad umpiring'

PTI ■ BASEL

Indian badminton ace Saina Nehwal on Friday slammed the standard of umpiring in her BWF World Championships pre-quarterfinal loss to Denmark's Mia Blichfeldt, terming it "very sick".

Her husband Parupalli Kashyap, who often sits by the courtside during her matches, also lashed out at the umpire following the narrow defeat.

"Still can't believe 2 match points which the umpire overruled in the second game. And the umpire tells me in the mid of second game 'let the line umpires do their job' and I don't understand suddenly how the umpire overruled the match points..Very sick," the London Olympic Bronze medallist tweeted.

Saina, who had won a Silver at the 2015 World

Championships and a Bronze in 2017, put up a gritty performance before losing 21-15, 25-27, 12-21 to Blichfeldt, seeded 12th, in the women's singles match that lasted an hour and 12 minutes on Thursday.

There was no video referral in place for Saina's match as it was not held in one of the two courts with live streaming facility. "2 match-points snatched away by bad umpiring. And numerous wrong decisions," Kashyap, a 2014 Commonwealth Games champion, wrote on his Twitter handle.

"Unbelievable that there are no reviews on other courts at the WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS. When will our sport get better ? SICK @bwfmedia @HSBCBWF @NSaina #feelingcheated #totalbwfworldchampionships2019"

Table toppers clash

AFP ■ LIVERPOOL

Liverpool vs Arsenal
Live from 10:00pm IST
STAR SPORTS SELECT 1

Early Premier League leaders Liverpool and Arsenal face-off, while Frank Lampard is under pressure to deliver his first win as Chelsea boss at Norwich today.

One of the only two remaining 100 percent records in the Premier League will go at Anfield where the European champions will hope to continue a fine recent record against the north Londoners.

Jürgen Klopp has never lost in seven previous Premier League meetings against Arsenal and his side have beaten the Gunners 4-0 and 5-1 at home in the past two seasons.

However, Unai Emery's outfit are hoping a busy summer in the transfer window, while Liverpool did not strengthen, will have significantly narrowed the 27-point gap between the sides last season.

Emery could hand a first start to £72 million (\$87 million) club record signing Nicolas Pepe, while on-loan Real Madrid midfielder Dani Ceballos earned rave reviews by creating both goals on his full debut against Burnley last weekend.

However, it is at the back that Arsenal need a drastic improvement and there is an early opportunity for veteran centre-back David Luiz to make his mark by halting the free-scoring trio of Sadio Mane, Roberto Firmino and Mohamed Salah, who combined for all five Liverpool goals when the sides last met.

Arsenal have some outstanding finishers of their own. Pierre-Emerick Aubameyang, who shared the Premier League Golden Boot with Mane and Salah last season, has scored his side's winner in the first two games of the campaign.

And on the evidence of Liverpool's first four games of the season across all competitions, a defence

that registered 20 Premier League clean sheets last season looks far less solid.

Alisson Becker remains sidelined with a calf injury, meaning Adrian — whose calamitous attempted clearance gifted Southampton a goal last weekend — will keep his place in goal.

Whilst Liverpool and Arsenal have taken advantage of a couple of kind fixtures to get their campaigns off to a bright start, Manchester City, Manchester United and Tottenham all dropped points on matchday two.

The roles are reversed this weekend as United host Crystal Palace, who have yet to score this season at Old Trafford, City travel to Bournemouth and Spurs seek to dismiss Newcastle with the ease newly-promoted Norwich did last weekend.

PUKKI TO PILE PRESSURE

Lampard was not handed an easy start to life as Chelsea boss with a trip to Old Trafford followed by Liverpool in the UEFA Super Cup and the visit of an ambitious Leicester side to Stamford Bridge last weekend.

However, Lampard, who had just one year's managerial experience at Derby prior to taking over his old club, needs a win at Norwich to ease the questioning of his tactics.

The former England international has been accused of being too gung-ho in his approach as both United and Leicester cut Chelsea open relentlessly on the counter-attack and if he cannot tailor his approach, Norwich have a striker in form ready to take advantage. Teemu Pukki has scored four times in his first two Premier League appearances, including a hat-trick against

AFP ■ TURIN

Juventus begin their Serie A campaign at Parma today looking to push their record Scudetto run to nine but with a different style of football under new coach Maurizio Sarri, who will miss the opening fixtures with pneumonia.

Behind, Napoli and Inter Milan are waiting in the wings hopeful that Sarri's arrival can lead to turmoil in Turin and a changing of the guard in Italy.

Carlo Ancelotti's Napoli have not won the title since 1990 and open at Fiorentina Saturday with Antonio Conte's Inter at home to promoted Lecce on Monday.

Like Sarri, Conte last coached at Chelsea, and along with three-times Champions League winner Ancelotti, Serie A have a world class coaching setup this season.

Juventus start the season without Sarri however who will miss the Parma game and his former club Napoli in Turin on August 31 with pneumonia. The 60-year-old is still overseeing training.

Juventus are targetting a 36th

Juve begin title defence



Juventus players pose for group photo after the end of training session in Turin

Juventus/Twitter

Scudetto but their main objective remains the Champions League which they have not won since 1996.

After splashing out on Cristiano Ronaldo last season Juventus have again reinforced with midfielders Aaron Ramsey and Adrien Rabiot and Dutch defender

Matthijs De Ligt.

'RAISED THE BAR' In Milan, Conte, who led Juventus to the first three in their series of eight titles, has also been given money to spend to give Inter a first Serie A title since 2010.

Zizou challenges Bale to prove his worth

AFP ■ MADRID

R Madrid vs R Valladolid
Live from 10:30pm IST
LIVE ON FACEBOOK

Zinedine Zidane has challenged Gareth Bale to show why he is still one of the world's best players as he continues his reintegration at Real Madrid.

Bale was a surprise inclusion in the starting line-up against Celta Vigo last weekend, when Madrid opened with an impressive 3-1 win in La Liga and Bale was arguably man of the match.

Zidane said in July it would be "best for everyone" if Bale left Madrid this summer but the Welshman has been eager to stay and appears to be regaining the confidence of his coach.

"What has changed is that the player is going to stay, nothing more," Zidane said in a press conference on Friday, ahead of today's game at home to Real Valladolid.

"The important thing is the player wants to stay. It's true that a lot was said about him, by me as well, but he is going to stay.

"He is a great player, he has shown that before and he has to show it again. He has to be the player we know that he is."



Bale's start in Vigo came after Eden Hazard sustained a thigh injury in training and it remains to be seen if he can keep his place when the Belgian returns after the international break.

Harmanpreet proud to lead India to success

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Drag-flicker Harmanpreet Singh is a proud man after having led India to success in his maiden stint as captain of the national team in the just-concluded Olympic Test event in Tokyo.

World No 5 India rested some senior players and fielded a relatively young team for the Olympic Test event but still managed to lift the crown, defeating New Zealand 5-0 in the final on Wednesday.

"It was a fantastic opportunity for everyone involved in the team to showcase what they can do. With some experienced players rested for the tournament, we had a fairly younger squad, but it was a great chance for the youngsters to do well and I am really pleased with the way everyone stepped up.

"The team performed well against teams like Japan, Malaysia and New Zealand, and it was an immensely proud moment for me to have led the Indian men's hockey team for the very first time," said the 23-year-old Harmanpreet, who captained India in the absence of Manpreet Singh.

Harmanpreet scored two goals in the tournament and both his strikes came against New Zealand — the first in the 1-2 loss in round-robin match, while the other was in the final.

"Scoring is something that I have really worked on since the junior days. To be able to help the team in scoring some important goals at crucial junctures in a match is something that motivates me even further," Harmanpreet said.



Harmanpreet Singh poses for photo during Indian team training session

Harmanpreet/Twitter

"I have worked on my drag-flicking with the coaches, and finally it is showing on the field as well and I am really pleased, but I will continue to keep working."



Niko Kovac & Philippe Coutinho walk during Bayern Munich training session

AP

Bayern loanees ready to shine

AFP ■ BERLIN

Schalke vs Bayern
Live from 10:00pm IST
STAR SPORTS SELECT 2

New loan signings Ivan Perisic and Philippe Coutinho both hope to make their Bundesliga debuts as champions Bayern Munich attempt to reboot a rocky start to the season at Schalke today.

Perisic and Coutinho, both of whom arrived in Munich on loan this month, will be in the squad for the first time as Bayern look to pick up their first win of the new season against David Wagner's Schalke.

Coutinho, 27, has been the talk of Germany since Bayern announced his arrival on a one-year loan deal from Barcelona last week.

Bayern sporting director Hasan Salihamidzic said the Brazilian would provide "a touch of the spectacular", and hopes the former Liverpool player can sprinkle some much-needed stardust on the German top-flight.

Bayern announced record engagement figures on their social media accounts following Coutinho's arrival, but fans may have to wait to see him in action.

Coach Niko Kovac confirmed on Thursday Coutinho was not yet fit enough to play the full 90 minutes, and would start on the bench against Schalke.

The Croatian coach said his compatriot Perisic had better chances of making a first start for Bayern.

Perisic, 30, joined Bayern on a one-year loan from Inter Milan earlier this month, but was forced to sit out the season opener against Hertha Berlin due to a suspension carried over from Serie A. That game confirmed a bumpy start to the new season for Bayern, as they were held to a 2-2 draw and immediately slipped two points behind title rivals Dortmund, who had beaten them in the German Supercup two weeks previously.



BUNDESLIGA