

**OPINION 6**  
 OLD IS  
 STILL GOLD

**TOLLYWOOD 11**  
 ADDALA'S DRY RUN ENDS  
 AS RAM OKAYS SCRIPT

**SPORTS 12**  
 STOKES KEEPS  
 ASHES ALIVE

VIJAYAWADA, MONDAY AUGUST 26, 2019; PAGES 12 ₹3



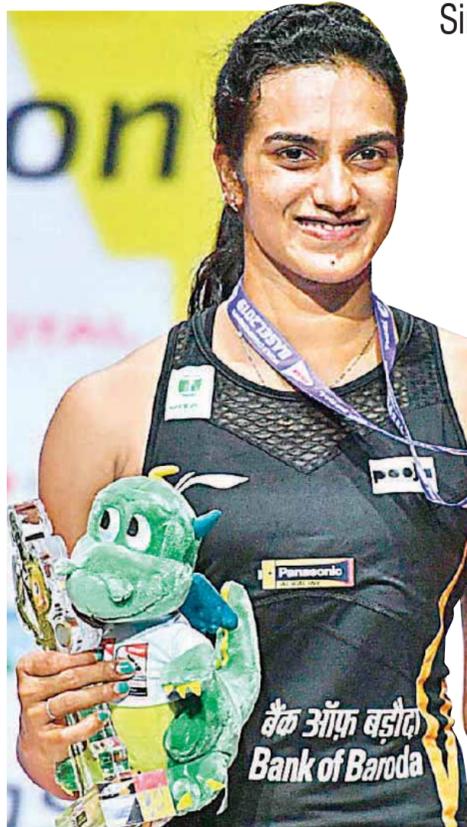
# the pioneer



PRODUCERS WERE  
 NOT CASTING ME  
 BECAUSE I AM  
 SHEER BAD LUCK  
 Page 9

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## On top of the world



### Sindhu becomes first Indian to win World Championships

PNS ■ BASEL (SWITZERLAND)

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

**YS Jaganmohan Reddy (@ysjagan)**  
 Historical Victory!  
 Congratulations @Pvsindhu1 for becoming the first Indian to win the gold medal at #BWFWorldChampionships. Dominated right from the start and finished like a true champion

stark contrast to world No. 4 on Sunday looked completely at sea against the Indian star's relentless attacks. Although Okuhara won the first point of the first game, Sindhu won eight straight points after that to race to a 8-1 lead. Okuhara managed just one more point before the interval with Sindhu leading 11-2. The mauling continued for much of the second period of the opener, which ended in just 16 minutes. Okuhara got a few consecutive points towards the end

to extend her score to 7 but Sindhu sealed the issue on her first game point. In the second game, Okuhara briefly kept pace until the score was 3-2 in Sindhu's favour after which the Indian took six consecutive points to race to a 9-2 lead. Okuhara won two more points but Sindhu kept her foot on the pedal and went into the interval with a 11-4 lead.

Okuhara went on to take just three more points in the second period as Sindhu continued to storm her way to the title. Once again, she managed to get over the line on her first match point.

This was the 16th match between Sindhu and Okuhara. Sindhu now leads 9-7 head-to-head, including three victories in the last five meetings before Sunday's clash.

Both players had not won a title this year. While Okuhara reached the final after a hard fought 17-21, 21-18, 21-15 win against Thailand's Ratchanok Intanon, Sindhu swatted aside China's Chen Yu Fei 21-7, 21-14 in her semifinal clash.

**N Chandrababu Naidu (@ncbn)**  
 My hearty congratulations to P.V. Sindhu for defending the Macau Grand Prix Gold trophy in women's singles. Proud of you.

## Hail the shuttle queen!

SRIDHAR K PENNA  
 ■ HYDERABAD

Like millions of people from all over, those from the sports fraternity, including legends, tend to be extremely superstitious. PV Sindhu is no exception to the rule. Her fans, of which there is no dearth, are more so. Their 'third time' lucky prayers were answered by Sindhu, whose obsessively aggressive 38-minute massacre helped end an Indian jinx and won her the elusive World Championship title. Incidentally, Sunday's BWF World Badminton Championships success at Basel is her first title this season. A brilliant start, so to say.

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



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

champion missed this year's edition.

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

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

In hindsight, although it was a historic first from the Indian point of view, there is an overwhelming feeling in the circles that this has been achieved a tad too late. There are reasons for such conclusions as the lanky Indian was always expected to scale exalted summits like the All England, Olympics and the Worlds, quite earlier. Nonetheless, it is always better late than never.

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

Continued on Page 4

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday pitched for launching a "new mass movement" against single-use plastic from October 2, the birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. In his monthly radio address 'Mann ki Baat', the prime minister said when the country observes the 150 birth anniversary of the Father of the Nation, "we will launch a new mass movement against use of plastic". He also called for efforts to ensure proper collection and storage of plastic to save the environment. In his Independence Day address also, Modi had urged citizens to eliminate single-use plastic and suggested that shopkeepers provide eco-friendly bags to customers. His push against single-use plastic is being seen as an effort to prevent environmental degradation.



TODAY

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

**VIJAYAWADA WEATHER**  
 Forecast: Mostly Cloudy  
 Temp: 32/26  
 Humidity: 57%  
 Sunrise: 06:01  
 Sunset: 06:34  
 Current Weather Conditions Updated August 25, 2019 5:00 PM

### Kodela booked for diverting House furniture

PNS ■ AMRAVATI

Siva Prasada Rao is accused of illegally diverting the furniture belonging to the government from Assembly premises to unauthorised places and to a private showroom belonging to Sivaram Krishna



Former Assembly Speaker Kodela Siva Prasad Rao and his son were late Saturday night booked by the police for allegedly diverting furniture belonging to the Assembly to unauthorised places. A case against Siva Prasad Rao and his son Sivarama Krishna was filed at Thullur police station in Guntur district late on Saturday on a complaint filed by M Eswara Rao, an officer of Andhra Pradesh Legislative Assembly.

The case was registered under Sections 409 and 411 (dishonestly receiving stolen property) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC). Siva Prasada Rao is accused of diverting the furniture belonging to the government from Assembly premises to unauthorised places and to a private showroom belonging to Sivaram Krishna. They were booked two days after Assembly officials searched a motorbike showroom in Guntur. The officials reportedly identified chairs, tables and other furni-

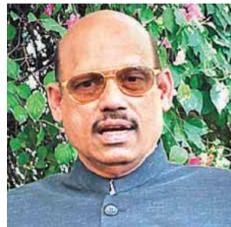
ture belonging to the Assembly. Rao had earlier admitted that while shifting Assembly furniture and equipment to Amravati from Hyderabad in 2016, some of it was taken to his office-cum-residence in Sattenapalli. He said this was done for the safety and maintenance as the furniture could have got spoilt in the temporary Assembly building. The Telugu Desam Party (TDP) leader, who was defeated in the last Assembly elections, also claimed that he wrote to Assembly Secretary asking him to take the furniture. He also offered to pay for the furniture.

## Now, TG talks of four capital cities

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In a controversial statement on Sunday, Rajya Sabha Member T G Venkatesh stated that the YSRCP government was planning to have four capital cities at Vizianagaram, Kakinada, Guntur and Kadapa.

Speaking to The Pioneer, Venkatesh said that the State Government was planning to set up four Regional Development Boards and an equal number of capital cities, which was precisely the reason why Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy had allotted Deputy Chief Ministers posts to each of the four regions in the State.



He added that he had disclosed the matter to the BJP high command but they had not responded. His statement comes in the wake of the controversial remarks made by Municipal Administration Minister Botsa



Satyanarayana on the capital city of Amaravati. While Botsa stirred a hornet's nest by hinting that the capital city may be shifted from Amaravati to elsewhere, Venkatesh had opined that the Chief Minister might

not show interest in the construction of Amaravati. Instead, he hinted that Jagan might expedite the process of setting up of four capital cities in the four regions. While Venkatesh has not made any negative comments on YSRCP or Jagan, he made the remarks as if he were disclosing a political secret.

The State is already in turmoil over Botsa's remarks over the capital. Now, the latest statement by Venkatesh will plunge the State into further confusion and set off a new debate in political circles. Meanwhile, Botsa at a meeting in Vizianagaram on Sunday yet again spoke in the same language.

### Bahrain pardons 250 Indian prisoners

PNS ■ MANAMA

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

### BJP's 'TS Liberation Day' bouncer on TRS

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The BJP-led government at the Centre is making moves to declare September 17 as "Telangana Liberation Day" and hold official celebrations on its own since the TRS government is not holding official celebrations.

The move is aimed to embarrass TRS government and score political points for BJP to emerge as strong political force in Telangana.

The state unit of BJP has sent a request to home minister Amit Shah in this regard and is said to be in 'active consideration' of union home



ministry. Amit Shah has been invited to take part in the TS Liberation Day celebrations in Telangana on September 17 organised by BJP on party's behalf and the party is expecting Amit Shah to make an announcement in this regard.

Though TRS chief K Chandrababu Naidu promised to hold official celebrations on September 17 during

Telangana statehood agitation days, he went back after coming to power, apparently under pressure from AIMIM, which is the friendly party of TRS. The BJP which is engaged in a fierce political battle with ruling TRS in Telangana, especially after it put up a surprising performance by winning four Lok Sabha seats in recent general polls and after trouncing KCR's daughter K Kavitha in Nizamabad Lok Sabha seats, now wants to rake up "Telangana Liberation Day" sentiment to gain its foothold in Telangana and emerge as an alternative to TRS before 2023 Assembly polls.

### EC announces Assembly by-polls to four seats

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

## Gold bars of Rs 1.11 cr seized from RGIA toilet

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

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

The passenger, identified as Shaikh Abdul Sajid, noticed movement of Customs officials and the checking of baggage and dumped the gold bars in one of the toilets near the arrival area and tried to walk away, but based on his suspicious movements, he was nabbed and the 26 gold bars were recovered, said officials. Based on a tip-off, the sleuths from the Air Intelligence Unit



of the Customs wing at the airport, were conducting checks at the area where passengers exited through the green channel. Around an hour later, they noticed the accused Sajid moving suspiciously and intercepted him. On inquiry, he initial-

ly pleaded innocence, but on thorough questioning, he admitted to the crime. Based on his confession, 26 foreign marked gold bars weighing a total of 2,992 grams worth Rs 1,11,60,160, were recovered from the toilet. Inquiries

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

revealed that he carried the gold bars in his hand baggage, but after seeing customs officials, he was afraid and dropped the plan of carrying them outside the airport.

Further inquiries revealed that the accused who landed in an Indigo Airlines flight from Sharjah, was a carrier, who was offered a free ticket by the operators. Officials who are yet to ascertain more details about the

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

## Arun Jaitley cremated with State honours

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Former finance minister Arun Jaitley was cremated at the Nigambodh Ghat here with full State honours on Sunday in the presence of leaders from across the political spectrum and scores of his admirers and party workers. Jaitley's son Rohan performed the last rites.

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

ters Nirmala Sitharaman, Smriti Irani and Anurag Thakur; BJP MPs Vijay Gokul and Vinay Sahasrabudhe; Congress leaders Jyotiraditya Scindia and Kapil Sibal were among those present at the cremation ground.

Chief ministers of Maharashtra, Gujarat, Karnataka, Bihar and Uttarakhand, Devendra Fadnis, Vijay Rupani, B S Yediyurappa, Nitish Kumar and Trivendra Singh Rawat, respectively, were also there.

Earlier, his body was taken to the BJP headquarters from where it was carried in a flower-decked gun carriage.

CAPSULE

**CLEAN UP DRIVE UNEARTHS EXCESSIVE PLASTIC**  
Vijayawada: Receding floodwaters of the River Krishna have exposed new heights of damage and destruction in the capital city. Volunteers of Amaravati Walkers and Runners Association (AWARA) were involved in cleaning of rivers unearthed a considerable amount of plastic. As many as 150 volunteers participated in the cleaning programme of AWARA on Sunday. Prof Ajay Katragadda, founder of AWARA, says "It is our duty to promote eco-friendly jute, cloth and paper bags in a phased manner. People will suffer due to dumping of polythene covers, plastic bottles and other waste plastic material in the side drain and in the rivers by denizens. These plastic material are choking the flow of water, which is the root cause of many problems in the city".

**SPANDANA PROGRAMME TODAY**  
Vijayawada: District Collector Md Intiaz informed the media on Sunday that a special Spandana programme will be organised at the sub-collector's meeting hall on Monday. The Collector said that the Spandana programme would be held as usual at all revenue division and tahsil offices across the district. He said that district officers would participate in the Spandana programme and appealed the people to submit their applications at the sub-collector's office, revenue division offices and tahsil offices.



**Two-day silver expo inaugurated**

**PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA**  
A two-day expo displaying a wide range of silver articles from Samrajya Kingdom was inaugurated here on Sunday. Speaking on the occasion, expo organiser Mahesh Jaju said that Samrajya was formed by the members of the Rotary Club of Midtown Vijayawada, numbering at around 750. He said that there were 200 shareholders in Samrajya and the main aim was to sell silver articles with a less margin and achieve maximum turnover on par with corporate business organisations. Jaju stated that a wide variety of silver articles ranging from spoons to sofas were available at the expo, besides

Jaju stated that a wide variety of silver articles ranging from spoons to sofas are available at the expo, besides gold-coated silver jewellery in the showroom. He added that the Rotary Club of Midtown was one of the biggest clubs across the globe and that they participate in several social service activities. YSRCP leader B Nageswara Rao, showroom CEO Daram Chandragupta, Directors P Anil, B Rahul, K Krishna and others were present.

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**CH SHARMILA ■ VIJAYAWADA**

People in the capital city have been coming up with more ways to keep themselves healthy. As a part of this, many have been following the 'Go Vegetarian' formula to stay healthy and to avoid unnecessary killing of animals. Scientists and researchers stated that a balanced vegetarian lifestyle is much healthier alternative to meat eating. Going vegetarian is a great opportunity to learn more about nutrition and cooking, as well as to improve one's diet.

Abdul Moseen, a software employee, opines that one should first realise that vegetarianism is probably not the goal. The goal is to reduce animal suffering, make oneself healthier, or to oppose industrial food production. "How to become a vegetarian literally depends on your mind. In order to master something, you have to be committed and have patience. You won't find it difficult if you are making food that is yummy and filling to you. Take it one step at a time, try out new vegetable dishes, and find out new food that you like that are vegetarian. It helps to eat and spend time with other vegetarians or vegans. They can help you find food that is satisfying and healthy for you", he said.

According to G Ram, an MBA student, vegetarians have a lower risk of heart disease and have low cholesterol levels compared to others because vegetarian diet has high fibre content with the necessary vitamins and minerals. "Being a vegetarian will help you stay



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that fruits and raw vegetables take 45 minutes or less to digest, while meat can take up to three hours or more. Fruits and vegetables can be fully digested throughout your entire system within 18-24 hours, on the other hand, meat can take two to three days to fully digest. She adds, "After becoming a vegan for only two weeks, I saw a big change in my skin, not a dramatic change since that could take up to a few months. Doctors and dermatologist, who tell you that diet doesn't play a role in your acne or your facial beauty, are wrong because if they knew you found out about the truth, then they would all go out of business".

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**'Go vegan', the new mantra for staying healthy**



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**M Sravani, a medical student, believes that fruits and vegetables have many nutrients, minerals, and vitamins that our bodies crave. While fruits and raw vegetables take 45 minutes, or less to digest, while meat can take up to three hours or more**

away from unhealthy food that can cause weight issues. A low-fat and plant based diet will help you reduce weight in a healthy way. Eating equal amount of fruits, vegetables and whole grains help satisfy hunger. People, who do not consume meat have a lower body mass index. I always

**Gold continues to be in good demand**

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

Other economic parameters, except Brent and Crude oil, moved northward. Brent closed at US\$ 59.34 (per barrel) while Crude oil was quoted at Rs. 3,870 (per barrel). Gold MCX stood at Rs.38,822 (per 10 gms) and Silver MCX at Rs.44,593 (per kg). Sensex and Nifty 50 closed at 36,10701.16 and 10,829.35 points respectively. Leading foreign currencies' exchange rates were: US \$: Rs.71.80, British Pound: Rs. 88.15, Euro: Rs. 80.70, Singapore \$: Rs.51.76, Canadian \$: Rs.53.85, Swiss Franc: Rs.73.68, Australian \$: Rs.48.48, Saudi Rial: Rs. 19.15, Kuwaiti Dinar 236.08 and UAE Dirham: Rs.19.55.

At home, business is yet to pick up. Due to high prices, imports are likely to be adversely affected. As against

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**Public Diplomacy Division to hold Inter-school quiz competitions**

**PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA**  
The Public Diplomacy Division and Branch Secretariat, Hyderabad, Ministry of External Affairs, Government of India will organise an Inter-school Quiz competition on the topic 'India and The World' for students of Class IX and X studying in schools at Hyderabad, Vijayawada and Guntur regions. The initial rounds for schools in Vijayawada and Guntur region will be held today at 11am at PV Siddhartha Public School, Mogalrajpuram, Vijayawada. The valedictory function of the quiz programme will be held at 2pm on the same day and will be attended by Siddharth Jain, Commissioner Industries, Government of Andhra Pradesh and Dr Gajarao Bhupal, IPS.

**13 AD sculptures unearthed at Anigandlapadu village**

**PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA**

Two sculptures of Ganesha and Mahishasura Mardini dated back to 13th Century AD were found on the premises of Sivalayam at Anigandlapadu village in Kanchikacharla mandal of Krishna district during the renovation of the temple recently. Based on the information given by Gondi Suresh of Chilukuru village, Dr E Sivanagi Reddy, archaeologist and CEO of Cultural Centre of Vijayawada and Amaravati (CCVA), inspected the sculptures on Sunday as a part of the awareness programme 'Preserve Heritage for Posterity'. He said that both the sculptures represent the Kakatiya style of art and the Ganesha, devoid of any headgear, was seated in Lalitana, while

**Achaeologist and CEO of Cultural Centre of Vijayawada and Amaravati (CCVA) Dr Sivanagi Reddy appealed villagers and the government to preserve the sculptures by providing shelter**

holding a danta, laddu, parasu and ankush in his hands. The sculpture of Goddess Durga was standing in 'Alidhasana' killing the Mahishasura, the demon, and holds different weapons in each hand and was adorned with ornaments. Dr Reddy also noticed three inscriptions dated back to 1194 AD and 1209 AD, recording the gift of the land to God Pandiswara by Ketinayakudu and Mahamandaleswara Kesavaraju ruling from Evankandravati (present-day Emani village near Duggirala in Guntur district) to Gods Mulasthana Mallikarjuna and Gokiswara. This evidently proves that the sculptures were part of the subsidiary shrines of the temple complex. Dr Sivanagi Reddy appealed villagers and the government to preserve the sculptures by providing shelter. President of Andhra Arts Academy Golla Nararayana Rao, journalist and writer Ghanta Vijaya Kumar and President of AP Society for Preservation of Buddhist Heritage Subhakar Medasani participated in the programme.

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**Chhattisgarh downs Andhra Colts**

**PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA**

Chhattisgarh defeated Andhra Colts by seven wickets in the Sir Vizzy Trophy tournament held simultaneously in Vizianagaram and Visakhapatnam here on Sunday. In Vizianagaram, Andhra Colts made 156 in 42.2 overs and in reply Chhattisgarh overhauled the target in the 29th over by losing three wickets. Pradesh 249 for four in 42.2 overs (Yash Duley 106, Parth Sahani 58). Cricket Association of Puducherry 284 for eight in 50 overs (Paras Dogra 85, S Suresh 35) bt Mumbai 173 in 38.3 overs (Sairaj Patel 67, Chinmay 38, S. Singh three for 37, Fabid three for 29). Indian Oil Corporation 155 in 36.4 overs (Y Jaiswal 46, Ninad Rathore three for 20, Swapnil three for 35) lost to Baroda 156 for three in 29.5 overs (Yusuf Patel 72 no, Kedar Devdhar 31, Aamir Gani three for 52).

**Andhra Colts made 156 in 42.2 overs and in reply Chhattisgarh overhauled the target in the 29th over by losing three wickets**

Cricket Association of Puducherry 284 for eight in 50 overs (Paras Dogra 85, S Suresh 35) bt Mumbai 173 in 38.3 overs (Sairaj Patel 67, Chinmay 38, S. Singh three for 37, Fabid three for 29). Indian Oil Corporation 155 in 36.4 overs (Y Jaiswal 46, Ninad Rathore three for 20, Swapnil three for 35) lost to Baroda 156 for three in 29.5 overs (Yusuf Patel 72 no, Kedar Devdhar 31, Aamir Gani three for 52).

**Divorce rate among newly married couples going up**

**PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM**

The institution of marriage is apparently going through a rough patch. There is a spurt in divorces cases with the Family Court in Vizag city receiving on an average 120 divorce cases in a month and that too over petty reasons. In many cases, just within a year of their marriage, the young couples are trying to go for legal separation. With over 5,000 pending cases, at least four to five cases come to the family courts on every day in Vizag city for divorce. Interestingly, seven out of ten divorce cases were filed by women only in the city, said legal fraternity. Advocates also said that compared to previous years, the Family Court in Vizag receiving more divorce cases for the past few years. A couple of weeks ago, a working woman approached the Family Court in Vizag city seeking legal separation from

**Family Court in Vizag city receiving on an average 120 divorce cases in a month**

**Of the 100 cases in a month, over 80 per cent cases related to the young couple, who get married through matrimony columns, and find it difficult to stay together after couple of months of their marriage**

her husband. She had tied the knot in February 2018, but wanted divorce because her husband used to pass comment on food prepared by her. And the woman complained that her husband was not giving enough time to her in weekends, said a senior advocate P Anuradha, who deals with divorce cases.

**AP ASICON annual conference concludes**

**PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA**

The three-day conference of Association of Surgeons of India State Chapter AP ASICON concluded here on Sunday. Nearly, 1,500 surgeons from across the State, 1,200 medicos and 1,000 delegates attended the conference. Experts explained the latest developments and techniques in laparoscopic surgeries in different entities through a PowerPoint presentation. On the concluding day of the conference, organisers announced the best paper presentation and Dr Kolla Vamisi

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Krishna of Andhra Hospitals, Vijayawada, submitted a paper on 'Splenogondadal fusion, a very rare case report was the best of the submitted 550 paper presentations. On the occasion, organisers felicitated 10 senior surgeons. ASI -AP president Dr KRC Naidu, President-elect Dr K Tirumala Prasad, honourable secretary Dr DSVL Narasimham, treasurer Dr G Rammohan, organising chairman APASICON-2019 Dr TJ Prasanna Kumar and others were present.

**RTO conducts surprise drive on NH-16**

**PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM**

RTO officials in the city conducted a surprise drive on the National Highway 16 near Gajuwaka limits and Aganampudi Toll Plaza in the wee hours of Sunday. Officials registered 32 cases against private buses and imposed Rs 1.56 lakh worth fine on the violators. Speaking to the media, RTO of Gajuwaka V Siri Anand stated that many accidents had been taking place during the wee hours, either due to negligence or rash driving of drivers, or due to



technical failures. To avoid such incidents, RTO officials conducted a surprise check, inspecting over 100 buses belonging to private trav-

**The special drive focused on adhering to speed limits as inter-state vehicle drivers had been found speeding within city limits to reach their destination sooner**

The special drive focused on adhering to speed limits as inter-state vehicle drivers had been found speeding within city limits to reach their destination sooner. "During the special drive, we noticed a driver, who was driving his car after consuming a considerable amount of liquor. Our men handed him over to the Duvvada police and booked a drunken driving case against him. During the check, we also inspected the medical box, first aid kit and documents of vehicles and booked 32 cases and issued a check report", he added.

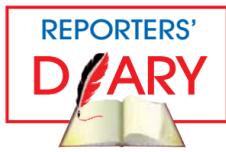
The National Institute of Technology-Warangal's 17th convocation celebrated recently was a standout day for graduating students as is the norm, but quite unusual in some other respects. All freshly-minted graduates were advised to wear 'traditional attire'. No, not the traditional Telangana attire; they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

**Silence of fan vs buzz of cycle**  
It's been either too much or too little. Till a few months ago, the

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

**Alexa knows quite a bit**  
At the inaugural of Amazon's

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



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

**Ex-Professors eyeing analyst jobs**  
While it is best to remain fruitful-

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

**Whose claims are fake?**  
Enmity between TRS and BJP is get-

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

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

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

CAPSULE

**WOMAN, DAUGHTER FOUND MURDERED**

**Vijayawada:** Two women were found murdered at Ramachandrapuram in East Godavari district in the early hours of Sunday. The deceased belonged to the same family and were identified as Balusu Madhavi(45) and her daughter Balusu Karuna(18). East Godavari SP Adanan Nayeem Asmi, who is on the spot in Ramachandrapuram, said head injuries were witnessed on bodies and a hammer was reportedly used to hit them on their head. The weapon was found at the place of the offence. "We suspect family dispute behind the murder. Police are investigating the case and the son and the husband of Madhavi are being interrogated. As the family members are daily wage earners, we are not suspecting property issue as the motive for the murder", the SP said.

**TEACHER ENDS LIFE**

**Vijayawada:** In a macabre incident, a school teacher working at Delhi Public School in Nidamanuru committed suicide at Gannavaram. She is learned to have jumped into a lake to end her life at Marlapalli village in Gannavaram. Police identified the deceased as Pushpalatha, a native of Chodagiri of Eluru in West Godavari district. Police found her two-wheeler and handbag on the banks of the lake. They registered a case and shifted the body to a hospital for post-mortem.



**Bathukamma saree production gathers pace**

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

The district administration has been working hard to distribute the sarees prior to the festival keeping in mind the delay that had taken place last year because of the early elections to State Legislative Assembly. This year, the target is to produce 6.84 crore metres of cloth at a cost of Rs 320 crore. As of now, the power looms have finished weaving 4.67-crore metre length of the cloth. Of the 23,000 power looms in the textile town of Sircilla, weaving is going on 17,000 looms.

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

During the past three years, the powerlooms here got orders for over Rs 900 crore, benefiting 9435 workers. The average earning per month of each weaver is increased to Rs 26,000 as against the below Rs 8,000 earlier. The NIFT experts designed sarees in attractive 80 hues. This year, the sarees meant for the aged and senior citizens would have a golden border, while the sarees meant for the young women would have fancy designs.

**Commercial division of APSRTC to blame for ticket controversy**

**G RAVI KIRAN ■ VIJAYAWADA**

The furore over a religious advertisement displayed on the back side of APSRTC tickets for shuttle services between Tirupati and Tirumala appears to be due to the negligence of the commercial division of the State-owned transport company APSRTC.

Sources said that the incident was not a conspiracy by the TDP, or a failure on the part of the ruling YSRCP, rather it was due to the negligence and lack of vision on the part of APSRTC's commercial division.

The division had taken an advertisement on 'Jerusalem Yatra' from the Minority Ministry during the previous TDP government's rule in March and duly printed the same. But, due to the election code coming into force, rolls were kept in stores. After the elections, the division started using the old rolls on which advertisements relating to 18 schemes by the TDP government were printed.

The roll with the advertisement on 'Jerusalem Yatra' had gone to Tirumala from Nellore, the zonal headquarters for three districts of



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■ After the elections, the division started using the old rolls on which advertisements relating to 18 schemes by the TDP government were printed

Nellore, Prakasam and Chittoor. The rolls were distributed all over the State through zonal offices. If the advertisement was not religious in nature, the controversy might not have arisen at all. If it was a political advertisement from the TDP government, it might have led to a political uproar.

The printing of TIM rolls had taken place on March

**After the elections, the YSRCP assumed power but all the TIM rolls printed by the TDP government still remained. The commercial division went ahead with the TIM rolls, assuming that it would be a waste of money if the rolls were withdrawn**

2019. It was clear that the intention of the government

was to take advantage of an advertisement on RTC tickets before the elections. The officer, who finalised the advertisement, knew well enough that these rolls could not be used after the election notification.

Knowing that the poll code would go within a few days, the commercial division went ahead with the printing of the advertisements on the rolls. This was the first mistake committed by the RTC. Interestingly, the APSRTC did not receive the payment for the advertisement from the Ministry of Minority Welfare till date.

After the elections, the YSRCP assumed power but all the TIM rolls printed by the TDP government still remained. The commercial division went ahead with the TIM rolls, assuming that it would be a waste of money if the rolls were withdrawn.

However, the mistakes committed by the APSRTC had incurred the wrath of BJP and Hindutva Groups in the State. YSRCP leaders launched an immediate inquiry about the issue and found that the incident had occurred due to the negligence of the APSRTC's commercial division.



Workers removing the boat stuck in the Prakasam Barrage on Saturday

**Boat extricated from Prakasam Barrage gate**

**PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA**

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

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

Officials appreciated the team that worked hard to extricate the boat without causing any damage to it. It may be

recalled that two boats were swept away in the floodwater at Pavitra Sangamam. While one boat passed through the open gate at the Prakasam Barrage on August 14, the other got stuck in the gap between the apron of the barrage and its 68th gate.

NDRF and SDRF teams tried to disentangle the boat, but in vain. Technicians were also called to cut the boat with welding machines, but that was called off.

After floodwater levels came down, all the gates of the barrage were closed except the 68th gate, which continued to be open until the boat was extricated.

**Tele-film artiste held for making video against Anil Kumar Yadav**

**PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA**

Tele-film artiste K Sekhar, who made and posted a video on social media using abusive language against the State government and Minister for Water Resources Anil Kumar Yadav, was arrested by the Suryaraopet police here on Sunday. During the 2019 general elections, Sekhar had acted in TDP's advertisements.

After the elections, he made a short film against the YSRCP government and donned the role of a farmer, where he criticised Anil

Kumar Yadav's role in handling the flood situation. The controversial video was posted on YouTube and other social media platforms. I&PR Chief Digital Director Devendar Reddy complained to DGP Gautam Sawang against the video on Thursday.

Acting on the instructions of the DGP, the Vijayawada police arrested Sekhar and started investigation into it. Police are learnt to have asked Sekhar to disclose the names of persons, who had given him the contract to make the video.

**Mystery shrouds techie's death**

**PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA**

The body of a woman was found in a lake at Marlapalem near Gannavaram in Krishna district on Sunday.

She used to reside at Ramnagar in Gannavaram and worked in a software company Algorithm, Medha Towers. She was identified as Pushpalatha belonging to Eluru, the woman married her lover Anil Kumar, also a resident of Eluru, eight years ago. However, she divorced her husband following domestic disputes.

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

She left her house on Saturday evening informing



Body of Pushpalatha was floating in a lake at Marlapalem near Gannavaram in Krishna district on Sunday (inset) Deceased during her happier days

her mother that she was going to meet a friend.

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

Police first suspected that

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

A case was registered and investigation is on.

**Situation not normal in Kashmir: CPI**

**PNS ■ HYDERABAD**

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

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

Participating in the 'Indrajith Gupta Centenary Birth Anniversaries Celebrations at Maqdhoom Bhavan here on Sunday, Raja delivered a speech on 'Abrogation of Article 370-Consequences in Kashmir'.

He said that there is no truth



CPI National General Secretary D Raja addressing a press conference in Hyderabad on Sunday

in the news published in the media that Kashmir is peaceful after the abrogation of Article 370. The Centre is spreading false news about Kashmir. The Prime Minister himself is telling lies and the people of Kashmir questioning to tell as to whom they believe in, he said.

Ridiculing Union Home Minister Amit Shah's statement that Kashmir means Pak occupied Kashmir (PoK) and China-occupied-Aksai Chin, but Union Foreign Minister Jai Shankar is stating that India

**CPI National General Secretary D Raja alleged that the abrogation of Article 370 is undemocratic and unconstitutional**

will stick to actual Line of Control. He alleged that RSS and BJP are speaking lies and they never stand by the side of truth.

He alleged that the Modi government passed Jammu

and Kashmir Division Bill without taking the opinion of Assembly and against the Jammu & Kashmir people.

This Act is against the Constitution's Federal Spirit, he slammed. He alleged that BJP is suffering from Islamophobia.

Ambedkar never supported Hindu State and the nation would be destroyed if it happened, he said. He called upon people to protect Parliament, democracy and constitution as the Modi government violated all.

**Have time? Help out kids in school**

**PNS ■ KHAMMAM**

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

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

Those who prefer to spend time teaching, they should choose their favourite time slot. In the designated portal, the candidates should choose relevant school. Having registered their names, the enthusiasts to teach will be welcomed by school head master and mandal education officers concerned. Their names would be put on display in the school concerned



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

in the office of the MED and DEO. At various celebrations and at national festivals, these volunteers, who opted to teach in schools, will be felicitated in an appropriate manner.

These teachers are not entitled to any allowances like transport allowance or any other allowances.

The retired employees and subject experts can coach students in sports and games, culture, finearts like music, theatre, craft, dance, computer education and moral science and so on. DEO P Madan Mohan exhorted those who are keen to teach should make use of the facility.

### 3 in custody for tribal woman's murder

Araku Valley police have taken three persons into custody in connection with the murder of 20-year-old tribal woman Killo Pushpa. It may be recalled that Pushpa's body was found in a pool of blood, with her head smashed in, among the bushes near the Government School at Araku Valley on Saturday morning.

Pushpa was a resident of Chinalabudu village and was working as a Data Operator at the Mee-Seva Centre in the region. She was married to P Mahesh, a resident of Bosibeda village under Araku Valley Mandal and a driver by profession. According to the police, Pushpa is Mahesh's second wife. He had married Rajeswara a few years back and the couple had two children. The police suspect that Rajeswari and her relatives might have killed Pushpa, as she had allegedly developed a grudge on her after the marriage.

Inspector Pydaiah and Sub-Inspector Arun Kumar are investigating the case from various angles to establish the reasons behind the murder of the woman. Condemning the brutal murder, relatives, friends and family members of the deceased took out a massive rally in Araku Valley on Sunday, demanding that the police nab the accused immediately.

# BAI cash rewards for Sindhu, Sai Praneeth

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BAI announced a cash reward of Rs 20 lakh to PV Sindhu following her historic win at the World Championships in Basel on Sunday where she etched her name in record books by becoming the first Indian to win a gold medal.

Sindhu, who was in magnificent form throughout the week put on a flawless performance as she defeated Japan's Nozomi Okuhara 21-7, 21-7 in a one-sided affair.

Congratulating Sindhu on her momentous achievement, BAI President, Himanta Biswa Sarma said, "It has been a great week of top-class badminton, with an incredible performance by PV Sindhu. B Sai Praneeth's medal (bronze) in the men's singles category after 36 years is also another memorable achievement. It's an absolute moment of pride for India badminton and the entire nation as we celebrate these triumphs."

He announced the five lakh cash reward for Sai Praneeth who created history by becoming the first men's singles player since Prakash Padukone in



1983 to win a medal at the World Championships.

Ajay K Singhania, General Secretary, BAI, heaped praise on both. "Sindhu has shown imperious performances as

she defeated proven champions on course to her medal. Credit to national coach Gopichand and foreign coach Kim Ji Gung for their relentless efforts, also not to forget the way Sai

Praneeth played to win a bronze medal. I would like to congratulate both the shuttlers as such performances are true inspirations for the upcoming players."

## B Tech students open for Grama Sachivalayam jobs

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The desperation for employment in the State can be gauged from the fact that around 20 percent of applicants for the recently notified Grama Sachivalayam posts are from engineering graduates. As many as 21,69,814 applications have been received for 1,26,728 vacancies across various posts. Moreover, 42 percent of the applicants were post-graduates.

According to the CM dash board, 21,69,814 applicants applied for 19 posts, categorised into various divisions like Panchayat Secretary (Grade-V), Village Revenue Officer (VRO) Grade-II, ANMs -only female (Grade-III), Animal Husbandry Assistant, Village Fisheries Assistant, Village Horticulture Assistant, Mahila Police and Women & Child Welfare Assistant, Engineering Assistant (Grade-II), Panchayat Secretary (Grade-VI) Digital Assistant, Village Surveyor (Grade-III), Welfare and Education Assistant, Ward Administrative Secretary, Ward Amenities Secretary (Grade-II), Ward Sanitation & Environment Secretary (Grade-II), Ward Education & Data Processing Secretary, Ward Planning & Regulation



Grama Sachivalayam posts are from engineering graduates. As many as 21,69,814 applications have been received for 1,26,728 vacancies across various posts

Secretary (Grade-II) and Ward Welfare & Development secretary (Grade-II).

Exams were scheduled for September 1 to 8, according to the respective categories. 12,54,071 candidates applied under Category -I, while 1,33,822 applied under Category II (A) and 1,55,173 under Category II (B). As many as 6,26,748 candidates applied under Category III. According to the official

records, 93,581 candidates, highest among all districts, are from Anantpur, followed by 93,230 aspirants from East Godavari and 88,731 aspirants from Visakhapatnam.

After various rumors spread about the Grama Sachivalayam recruitment's, AP Principal Secretary of Panchayati Raj clarified on his twitter handle that there would be no interview round and that the selection process would completely depend on written marks.

Kona Narayana Rao, a PhD graduate from Vishakhapatnam, said that it had been a long time since a recruitment of this kind had been notified for such huge vacancies. "We hope the State Government will conduct this in a transparent manner," he added.



### MR & MISS INDIA INTL RUNWAY MODEL 2019

## Aspiring models showcase talent

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The enthusiasm of around 30 aspirants made for a lively atmosphere in the eagerly awaited Mr & Miss India International Runway Model 2019 Vizag Auditions here on Sunday.

The best eight models, including male and female, will qualify for the pageant's

national finale to be held in Hyderabad on October 12, 2019.

Gracing the occasion were NHRC Chairperson for South India and former model Smriti Simha and actress Sindhu Reddy, both of whom were in the jury, according to the main organizer and founder of IRFW, John Paul.

He said this was a unique concept, especially those in the 17 to 28 years age-group. Visakhapatnam was the best platform for them, he said, adding that it could gradually elevate its standards to that prevalent in Mumbai, Goa and New Delhi.

Auditions are also being held at Bangalore, Pune, Goa and Chennai.

## NCBC chief to review plea on inclusions in OBC

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The National Commission for Backward Classes (NCBC) member, Achary Talloju, received memorandums from various communities seeking inclusion in backward classes here on Sunday.

He was on a two-day visit to Vizag district to look into the requests received from

various communities urging the Union Government to bring them under BC community umbrella. He held a meeting with district officials at Circuit House in the city.

District Collector V Vinay Chand explained about the implementation of various state government schemes being implemented as part of Navaratnalu program for the BC communities. He also

mentioned about the Spandana being conducted by the district officials on every Monday to receive the complaints from the public.

Addressing media personnel, Talloju, a senior BJP party leader, said all the government schemes made for BC community people should reach the beneficiaries. "As there is a mismatch between OBC communities

recognized by the State Government and the Centre, we are reviewing social, financial status and other aspects for the various communities," he pointed out.

He also directed the district officials to ensure that BC students receive the central government's BC scholarships and appealed them to stick to the 27 percent reservation for BC candidates during recruitments.

He emphasized that the benefits of various welfare schemes meant for SC, ST and OBC reach eligible candidates and wanted the caste based reservation issues being faced by the state and central government employees. The people from backward districts like Srikulam and Vizianagaram should get special focus, he remarked.



### TRS misleading people: BJP

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

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

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

"TRS leaders have enrolled members by luring and threatening people. But BJP is enrolling only those who are voluntarily joining impressed by party's policies," he said.

## When 'recommendations' dominate

A CANDIDATE IS SURE TO GET A SEAT IF HE OR SHE IS ARMED WITH THE LETTER FROM A MLA OR MINISTER

PNS ■ NIZAMABAD

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

A candidate is sure to get a seat if he or she is armed with the letter. The officials set aside the rules and give him or her priority. On account of this practice, the eligible candidates are not getting the seats.

There are 13 post-Metric hostels for BCs in the district, including seven for BC girls. Each hostel has 100 seats. Because of many colleges are located in the city, demand for seats in hostels in the city skyrocketed.

In the district headquarters, there are only two hostels each for BC boys and girls. There is only one seat available in the boys' hostel at Namdevvada (BC-A boys' hostel) for which at least 170 have applied. These include, 20 recommended by people's representatives.

The hostel authorities got 20 seats sanctioned additionally and allotted them to the candidates. In the other



hostel at Mirchi Compound in the city, around 74 have applied for 23 seats. At least 50 students have been denied seats. The same is the case with the girls' hostel at Dubba, near here. For 40 seats in the hostel for BC girls, 220 have applied. There were no vacancies in the girls' hostel at Subhashnagar.

Students pursuing education in the city hail from districts such as Kamareddy, Nirmal, Jagtial, Rajanna Sircilla, Adilabad and

Warangal.

To apply for a seat in hostels, students should have studied in government colleges or schools. The allotment of seats should be purely on the basis of merit. But, the BC welfare officials shelved the rules rendering injustice to poor but meritorious students. The elected people's representatives issue recommendation letters, but rarely mount pressure on government to increase the number of seats in the BC hostels.

## Nizam Sugar factory lands encroached upon

PNS ■ BODHAN

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

Purchase of factory lands, registration, and other deals are often turning out to be controversies with a lack of pucca records with the Revenue Department. Recently, some vested interests tried to encroach 2.30-acre land worth several crores of rupees next to cane yard in the sugar factory. When the encroachers deployed JCB to level the ground in the land, some youth living in Hanuman Tekdi objected to it.

Following the privatization of the lands in 2002, a core committee has been appointed to protect the lands. The million-dollar question is what the committee has been doing when the sugar factory land is being encroached upon?

When the factory was set up in 1938, the erstwhile Nizam earmarked 16,000 acres for the sugar factory. These lands spread across Bodhan, Yedapalli, Renzel, and Koagairi, Varni, Mesra, Chandur and other mandals. Sugarcane cultivation has been encouraged by promoting 16



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

the factory lands. The light railway line developed on 188 acres later became a road. In 2002, the factory was privatized and the management purchased valuable lands in the vicinity of the factory. By the time the factory was closed on December 23, 2015, the vested interests eyed on the valuable lands of the factory. In Shakkur Nagar, under the control of the core committee, there are many valuable lands, some of which are suspected to have been encroached.

The lands distributed among the landless poor through various corporations under the land purchase scheme and another 3,500 acres have been sold through public auction. Records of the core committee indicate that 1,292 acres have been allotted to the factory employees who retired from service voluntarily for their housing. The poor have raised their houses on the factory lands, dumping yards, schools, shrines, social welfare hostel buildings have been built on

## Nizamsagar project yet to receive inflows

AGAINST THE FRL OF 17.80 TMC, THERE IS ONLY 0.13 TMC AVAILABLE IN THE PROJECT

PNS ■ NIZAMSAGAR

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

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



As per government order, if there is 10.5 tmc of water in Singuru project, water is

released to Nizamsagar. Going by the availability of water in Singur project, it is clearly understood that not a single drop is going to be released into the Nizamsagar project.

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

In Nizamsagar and Banswada mandals, paddy is being transplanted in an extent of 30,000 acres. Transplanting of paddy has been completed in respect of 1.50 lakh acres in Nasrullahbad, Birkur, Kotagiri, Varni, Rudrur, Bodhan, Yedapalli, Renzel, Nizamabad, Armoor and Balkonda mandals. Some of the farmers who transplanted paddy are dependent on bore wells while a majority of them transplanted paddy hoping that there would be inflows into the Nizamsagar project. If the rains continue to play truant for another week, these farmers will be in soup.

SHORT READS

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

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

Child dies after manjha slits throat

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

Man dies under police custody in UP

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

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

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

# Punjab Cong leaders flay Swamy's statement on Kartarpur Corridor

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

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

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

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

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



power rather than working for Sikh interests."

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

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

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

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

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

## We are committed to complete it: Pakistan

PNS ■ ISLAMABAD

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

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

Special Assistant to Pakistan Prime Minister

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

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

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

# Book to detail 'rise and fall' of Nirav

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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



Nirav Modi

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

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

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

A third-generation dia-

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

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

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

# Give specific timelines for cleaning of Yamuna: NGT

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



such information and suggest extended timeline wherever it has expired.

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

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

The green panel had said pollution in the Yamuna was of

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

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

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

# Banned drugs worth Rs 400 crore seized

PNS ■ IMPHAL

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

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

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

# 8 vehicles of Sule's convoy booked

PNS ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

However, despite repeated warnings, the vehicles were



NCP MP Supriya Sule

not removed, he said.

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

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

# Baby-feeding cubicles at all UP bus stations

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

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

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

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

# Art show on Lord Krishna's life

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



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

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

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

sculptures and conceptual installations.

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

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

# BRO DG reaches Ladakh on 5-day visit

PNS ■ JAMMU

Border Road Organization (BRO) Director General Lt Gen Harpal Singh arrived in the Leh township of Ladakh on Sunday to take stock of construction activities of various strategic road networks that are vital to Army movement in the region.

The BRO chief's visit to the strategically important region assumes significance as it came at a time when relations between India and Pakistan are under strain following the Centre's move to scrap special status to Jammu and Kashmir and its bifurcation into union territories of Jammu and Kashmir, and Ladakh early

**Lt Gen Singh will visit the strategic and administratively critical roads that are vital for Army movement in the region**

this month. A spokesperson of the BRO said Lt Gen Singh will take stock of all construction activities of various strategic road networks constructed and maintained under Project Himank and Vijayak in Ladakh sector during his five-day visit.

He will visit the strategic and administratively critical roads that are vital for Army movement in the region, the official said.

The spokesperson said the General is likely to visit the

eastern sector of Ladakh where he will take stock of the development of roads vital for the movement of troops.

Ladakh is the most strategic region as it borders the country with Pakistan and China.

"During his visit, the General will also interact with the top Army brass and local administration to discuss various issues involved in the development of road connectivity which is required to meet the development of the region," the spokesman said.

# Man held for kidnapping 3 girls to implicate police officers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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



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

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

Kumar hatched a conspira-

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

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

# Minority Affairs Ministry team for Kashmir

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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



Mukhtar Abbas Naqvi

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

**MUKHTAR ABBAS NAQVI**  
Union minister

was not going back. "It is (Narendra) Modi's government. Everybody knows that in this government, decision is made after a lot of thinking, but there is no question of a rethink after a decision has been made," he said.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PAPER WITH PASSION  
**Booster shot**

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

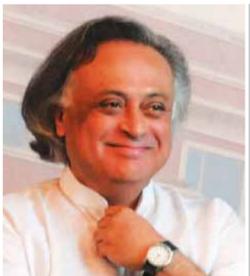


The Government is right about something, the Indian economy is still growing. But the problem is nobody believes that it is doing so or that it is catching up as fast as it should and this lacklustre conviction is the Government's fault. Growth numbers have been manipulated and uncomfortable figures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

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

**Cong's inner voice**

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



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

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

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**Old is still gold**

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



INDRA SHEKHAR SINGH

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**SOUNDBITE**

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



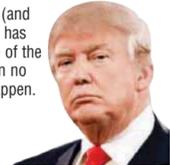
Rajasthan Chief Minister — Ashok Gehlot

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



Actor — Shahid Kapoor

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



US President — Donald Trump

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



BJP MP — Subramanian Swamy

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

**Welfarist approach**

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

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

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

**Healthy criticism is a must for democracy**

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

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



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

Ganapathi Bhat Akola

**Law is supreme**

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

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

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

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

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

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

J Akshay Bengaluru

**Custody blues**

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

Shubham Kashyap Via email

Send your feedback to: [letterstopioneer@gmail.com](mailto:letterstopioneer@gmail.com)

**FIRST COLUMN**

## Greenland's gamble

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



GWYNNE DYER

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**POINT COUNTERPOINT**

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



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

# Integration wasn't won in a day

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



ANIL GUPTA

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

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

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

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

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

Many may argue about the relevance of this

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Blinded by his ambition, Abdullah

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

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

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

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

# The great surrogacy debate

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



NEHA CHAUHAN

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## ● ITC takes biggest knock

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

The m-cap of RIL went down by Rs 19.16 crore to Rs



8,08,836 crore.

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

Hindustan Unilever Ltd

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

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



## For G7, 'too early' to reintegrate Russia

PNS ■ BIARRITZ

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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



domestic equity investors imposed in the Budget.

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

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

Now, with the withdrawal of the enhanced surcharge on

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

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

## CAPSULE



### New measures by govt to boost leather industry: CLE

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



### Nalco gets Dun & Bradstreet Award for excellence

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



### Mother Dairy to launch Orange Barfi

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

The sources said some



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

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

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

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

## Assets under gold ETFs jump to Rs 5,000 crore

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

### ● First 4 months of FY20

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

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

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



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

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

Gold ETFs are passive investment instruments that are based on price movements and investments in physical gold.

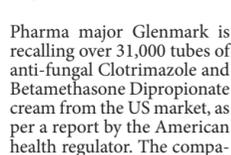
In this financial year, gold has given spectacular returns to investors and has outperformed stock markets handsomely, he added.

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

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

## Glenmark recalls products from US

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



Pharma major Glenmark is recalling over 31,000 tubes of anti-fungal Clotrimazole and Betamethasone Dipropionate cream from the US market, as per a report by the American health regulator. The company's US-based arm is recalling the lots. According to the latest Enforcement Report by the US Food and Drug Administration (USFDA), Glenmark Pharmaceuticals Inc USA is recalling 31,224 tubes of Clotrimazole and Betamethasone Dipropionate cream USP, 1 per cent/0.05 per cent, 15 gram tubes, manufactured by Glenmark Pharmaceuticals Ltd at its Baddi facility in Himachal Pradesh. The ongoing voluntary class III recall is on account of "Temperature Abuse: complaints received of liquidy texture," it added.

The recall is a nationwide within the United States, the USFDA said. Clotrimazole and Betamethasone Dipropionate cream is used on the skin to treat fungal infections of the feet, genitals, inner thighs and buttocks, arms and legs and other body parts.

As per USFDA, a class III recall is initiated in a situation

**According to the latest Enforcement Report by the USFDA, Glenmark Pharmaceuticals Inc USA is recalling 31,224 tubes of Clotrimazole and Betamethasone Dipropionate cream USP**

"in which use of or exposure to a violative product is not likely to cause adverse health consequences".

Lupin's arm, Lupin Pharmaceuticals Inc, is also recalling 39,216 bottles of Lisinopril and Hydrochlorothiazide tablets USP, 10 mg/12.5 mg, 100 tablet bottle manufactured at its Pithampur facility from the US market, the report said.

## Insolvency proceedings begin against Today Homes

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



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

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

reality law.

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

"Observing that there is overwhelming evidence to

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

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

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

## Direct MF: Paytm Money expects 50% increase market share

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

## RBI REINVENTS GREENSPEAK

# From 'Panglossian countenance' to 'flocinaucinihilipilification'

PNS ■ MUMBAI

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

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

Closer home, Parliamentarian and erudite speaker-writer



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

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

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

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

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

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

culty," he remarked. The dictionary meaning of 'Panglossian' is "a way of life characterised by one of extreme optimism". The expression refers to Professor Pangloss, a character in 'Candide, ou l'Optimisme' or 'Candide: Optimism' — a satire written by Voltaire in 1759.

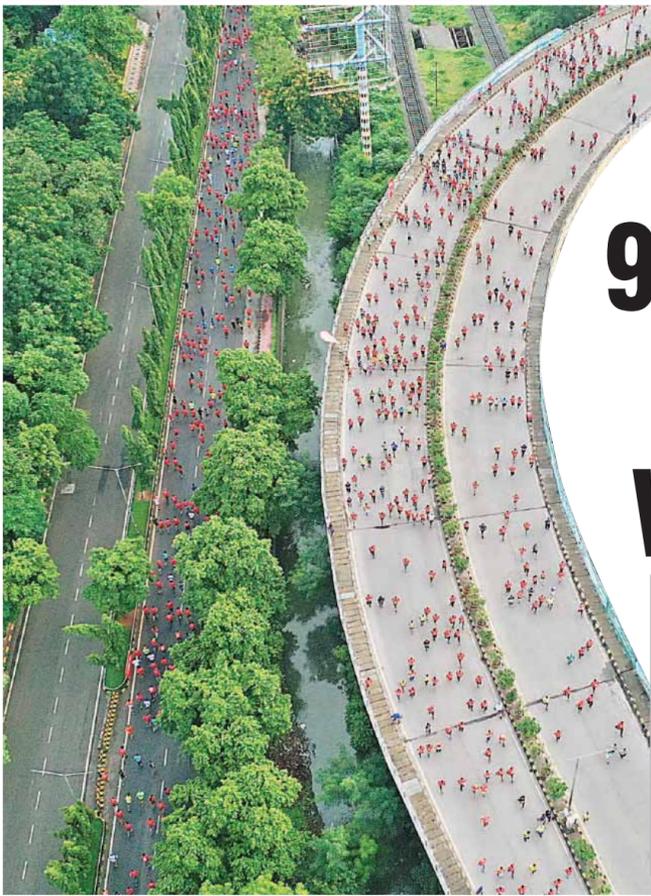
Earlier this month, the MPC unanimously voted for a rate cut and with a 4:2 majority chose an unconventional 35 basis points — the first in the history of the Reserve Bank, while the other two voted for a 25 bps reduction. The central bank has slashed rates four times in a row.

Maybe given the complex way the Street and the real economy have been behaving, policy wonks are trying to decipher more meaning into the crisis. Ghatge is an external mem-

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

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

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



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

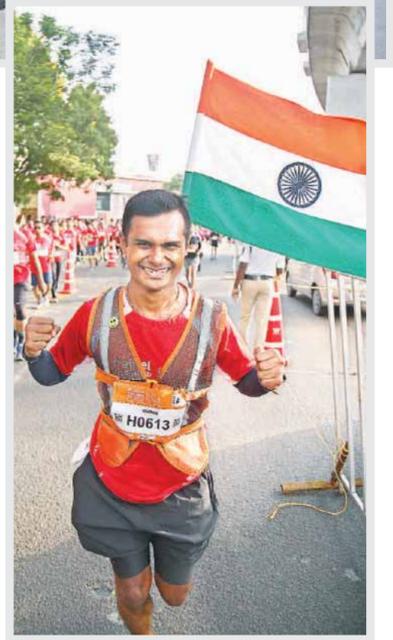
## 9TH EDITION OF AIRTEL MARATHON TEEMS WITH 25K RUNNERS



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

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

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



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



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

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

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

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

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



## Sitara's YouTube entry

**I**t seems like the two-star kids, Mahesh Babu's daughter Sitara and Vamshi Paidipally's daughter Aadya are making their mark on social media by starting their YouTube channel Aadya&Sitara (A & S). The little duo posted their debuted video '3 Marker Challenge' in which they showcased play-

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



## BREAKING BAD MOVIE TO DEBUT ON NETFLIX IN OCTOBER

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



## KIT HARRINGTON BOARDS 'THE ETERNALS', GEMMA CHAN ALSO JOINS FILM

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



## EVELYN SHARMA IN AWE OF BAHUBALI STAR

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

## EMMA STONE GOES 'PUNK ROCK' FOR CRUELLA

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



## SONG THERAPY

# SOUND OF MUSIC, VISION OF STARS

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

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

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

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

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

# ADDALA's dry run ends as RAM okays script

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

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

A source close to the development shares, "Addala has met Ram's uncle Sravanthi Ravi Kishore and pitched the story of *Kuchipudi Vari Veedhi*. The veteran who liked the script had suggested some changes and Addala agreed to them. Later, Ram heard the narration and said he is interested. As things stand now, Ravi Kishore is likely to produce the film under Sravanthi Movies."

The source further adds that after the success of *iSmart Shankar*, Ram was looking at a mass entertainer to consolidate on his market further but we hear nothing caught his fancy. "He had to overlook *Thadam* remake and a script from Rahul Sankrityan, director of *Taxiwala* to continue with the winning streak. He believes Addala might not be a commercial entertainer, but has elements to attract a large section of the audience, which is why he has been on doing it," the source concludes.



## BUNNY's new BEAST

**A**lready an owner of three high-end SUVs, actor Allu Arjun has added another beast to his car collection. And he aptly titled it as 'Beast'. The actor, who shared an image of the vehicle on his Twitter handle, wrote, "New Car in the House. I named him BEAST. Everytime I buy something...

there is only one thing on my mind. Gratitude. #rangerover #aabeast (sic)."

For those who are late, this is the brand new model of Range Rover that Bunny, who has two films in the pipeline besides the on-sets one *Ala Vaikunthapuramlo* with Vikram, has acquired for an approx of Rs 2.3 crore. The actor has recently

made headlines for his purchase of new vanity van worth almost Rs 3.5 crore. A technological marvel, it was transformed in a way that it looks like a home on the inside, matching with the tastes of the actor. According to sources, the renovation by a Mumbai automotive designer had costed him another Rs 3.5 crore.

## POOJA HEGDE to star opposite Akhil?

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



## Office-bearers of Telangana film chamber

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

## Digangana ON A ROLL

The actress will star alongside debutant Laksh in a suspense thriller



**C**lose on the heels of green-lighting Shiva Kandukuri's next with debutante Vaidehi Chandrasekhar, *Hippi* girl Digangana Suryavanshi has signed another film. This time it's alongside a debutant Laksh and the film, a suspense thriller, will mark the directorial debut of Ramesh Kadumula. Production house Sri Tirumala Tirupati Venkateswara Films, which released films like *Bichagadu* and *Tik Tik Tik* in Telugu in the past, is bankrolling the film, which had its muhurat over the weekend.

A Shekar Chandra musical, the untitled film features a bevy of noted faces like Ravi Prakash, Ravi Varma, Noel Sean and Chitram Srinu in supporting roles.

Meanwhile, the shooting of Digangana's film with Shiva will commence in US in October first week, with a month schedule followed by an Indian outing of 10 days.



## VETERANS boost an anthology DRAMA

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



# Stokes keeps Ashes alive

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



AFP ■ HEADINGLEY (LEEDS)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Australia captain Tim Paine said: "It's hard to take, losing that from that position but you tip your hat sometimes. Ben Stokes played an unbelievable innings and in the end he was too good for us."

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

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

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



## Smith set for tour match return

AFP ■ LONDON

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Stokes then hoisted the next two balls for six.

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

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

**RUN-OUT CHANCE**

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

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

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

The third ball of the over saw Stokes



AFP ■ LONDON

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

a boundary to seal an astounding triumph.

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

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

## SINGLES

### IND BLUE CONCEDE LEAD TO INDIA RED

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

### WAQAR APPLIES FOR BOWLING COACH JOB

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

### HURKACZ BEAT PAIRE, WIN 1ST ATP TITLE

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

### WERNER EXTENDS LEIPZIG CONTRACT

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

### DABANG DELHI BEAT UP YODDHA

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

### INDIA FINISHES WITH 12 MEDALS

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

AGENCIES

# Rahane, Vihari take India ahead

PTI ■ NORTH SOUND

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

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

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

For Vihari it's only his second Test fifty.

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

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

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

to keep the scoreboard ticking.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Holder 'extremely disappointed' with Windies top-order failure

PTI ■ NORTH SOUND

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

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

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

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

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

chase down the total," he added.

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Watling, CDG put Kiwis on front



AFP ■ COLOMBO

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

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

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

Watling also played the supporting role in an earlier

partnership of 143 with Tom Latham, who hit 154.

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

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

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

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

Sri Lanka were without captain and opening batsman

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

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

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

Play will get under way at 9:45 am (0415 GMT) today, the final day of the match, weather permitting.