

ANALYSIS 7
UNSHAKEABLE
COURAGE

MONEY 8
RBI LOWERS FY20 GDP
GRWOTH FORECAST TO 5%

SPORTS 12
INDIA CONTINUE
T20 AUDITIONS

HYDERABAD, FRIDAY DECEMBER 6, 2019; PAGES 12 ₹3

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FIGHTER
LIKELY TO MARK
DEVERAKONDA'S
B'WOOD DEBUT

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22 JUDGE POSTS VACANT IN AP HIGH COURT: UNION LAW MIN

VISAKHAPATNAM: Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad on Thursday informed the Rajya Sabha that there are 22 vacant posts of judges in the Andhra Pradesh High Court. He was replying to a question by YSR Congress' V. Vijayasai Reddy. The minister said that as per the memorandum of procedure for appointment and transfer of chief justices and judges of a High Court, the Chief Justice of the High Court is required to initiate the proposals for filling up of vacancies of judges in the High Court six months prior to the occurrence of vacancies. However, this timeline is rarely adhered to, Prasad added.



CANNOT TAKE SAME STAND AS PUBLIC IN DISHA CASE: KTR

HYDERABAD: Industries Minister K T Rama Rao, reacting to outcry in the Disha case, has said that he cannot take the same stand as some members of the public or legislators in parliament. The Minister participated as chief guest in the Pre-Valedictory Function for distribution of Certificates to the 94th Foundation Course for All India Service & Central Civil Service Officers on Thursday. He said, 'I am as much keen and as much passionate as anybody else in India to see the end of those four fellows.'



EXIT POLLS PREDICT BJP WILL CONTINUE IN POWER IN K'TAKA

BENGALURU: If the exit polls predictions in Karnataka bye-elections are anything to go by, then Karnataka Chief Minister BS Yediyurappa will comfortably hold onto his chair, post-December 9. The BJP needs to win at least six of the 15 seats that went for the polls on Thursday. The results will be declared on December 9. Four prominent exit polls predicted that the BJP will win at nine seats or more. C-Voter exit polls have predicted the BJP will win 12 out of the 15 seats and Congress will win only three seats. The JD(S) is pegged to win no seats, according to C-Voter.



'DOES SHE EAT AVACADO?' PC ON NIRMALA'S ONION CLAIM

NEW DELHI: 'Does she eat avocado?' quipped former finance minister P Chidambaram, who arrived in Parliament on Thursday after spending 106 days in Tihar jail, when asked to comment on Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman's comment that her family didn't eat onion much. Speaking at a press conference later, Chidambaram said that his comments on the finance minister was not 'sarcastic'. 'I was not sarcastic, I was quoting her. They should have planned in advance, what is the point of importing (onion) now, when will they arrive. But if the finance minister says I don't eat onions, that shows the mindset of this govt,' he said.



CAPSULE

5 WEBSITES BOOKED FOR REVEALING RAPE VICTIM'S DETAILS

HYDERABAD: A case has been booked by the Osmania University police against five websites for telecasting the details of the Shadnagar rape-murder victim. Vijay Gopal, founder of Forum Against Corruption, made a complaint against the websites for their coverage of the incident. 'The news has been widely covered by the media houses in the country. However some local/regional media houses are violating the laws and guidelines laid down by the honorable Supreme Court in regard to coverage in such cases,' he stated in the complaint.

AIMIM MEMBER HELD FOR COMMENTS AGAINST MAMATA

MALDA: A madrasa teacher, who is also a member of Hyderabad-based AIMIM, was arrested here early on Thursday for allegedly posting objectionable remarks on social media against West Bengal Chief Minister and TMC supremo Mamata Banerjee, a senior police officer said. Motiur Rahman (35), a resident of Chanchol area of the Malda district, was taken into custody around 2am, hours after his 'derogatory' comment against Banerjee and her dispensation went viral on Facebook, the officer said.

HYD WOMAN DIES AFTER MOVING CAR CATCHES FIRE

HYDERABAD: A woman from Hyderabad died in Karnataka's Bidar district on Thursday after the car in which she was travelling caught fire. Kalyani, 39, was travelling back to Hyderabad from Maharashtra's Udgir when the incident occurred. A video of the burning car went viral soon after the incident. At around 10.30 am on Thursday, Kalyani, her husband Uday Kumar (42) and two children, aged seven and 10 years old, were travelling back to Hyderabad in a Hyundai i10. Kalyani was sitting on the front seat, while her husband was driving the car along the national highway 9 in Bidar's Mannaekhelli in Humnabad taluk.

Continued on Page 4

UP rape survivor set ablaze on way to court

PNS ■ UNNAO (UP)

A rape survivor from Unnao was battling for life with 90 per cent burns on Thursday after five men, including two of the accused, allegedly set her on fire while she was on her way to court, police said.

One of the two men accused of raping her last year was granted bail 10 days back. The other man had been on the run.

All the five men involved in the Thursday morning attack were arrested within hours and the victim airlifted in the evening to Delhi's Safdarjung Hospital.

The woman said in a statement that she was on her way from her village in Unnao district to Rae Bareilly where the trial is going on when she was attacked.

Doctors attending on her at the Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Hospital in Lucknow said she

Battles for life in Delhi hospital



is in a 'very serious' condition.

'The condition of the girl who was set on fire and brought here at 10 am is very serious. She has 90 per cent burn injuries and we are taking the utmost care,' Medical Superintendent Dr Ashutosh Dubey told PTL.

In the evening, the state government arranged an air ambulance to take her to Delhi, Lucknow Commissioner Mukesh Meshram told PTL.

Meshram said a team of doctors accompanied the woman.

In a tweet, the Uttar Pradesh

One of the two men accused of raping her last year was granted bail 10 days back. The other man had been on the run

police said the victim had lodged an FIR alleging that she had been raped between January 19 and December 12, 2018 by one of the accused on the pretext that he would marry her.

The accused was arrested then and got out on bail on November 25, police said while responding to a tweet by Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra.

They added that the probe into the incident is being conducted in a scientific manner and the circumstantial evidence collected.

Continued on Page 4

TS Govt may seek extension of Chief Secretary Joshi's term

L VENKAT RAM REDDY ■ HYDERABAD

The state government is likely to request the Centre to extend the term of Chief Secretary SK Joshi, who is otherwise due to retire on December 31.

It is learnt that Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao has decided to make a formal request in this regard to Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

Normally, an extension is given for a period of three months.

However, much depends on the decision of the Prime Minister, who heads the Department of Personnel and Training (DoPT), as its minister in the cabinet. Dr Jitendra Singh, minister for personnel and pensions, is the minister of state in PMO handling DoPT affairs.

Soon after the formation of Telangana State in June 2014, KCR appointed Rajiv Sharma as the first CS of the new state. Ahead of Sharma's retirement



Chief Secretary SK Joshi inviting Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao for his daughter's marriage on Thursday

■ KCR secured extension for Rajiv Sharma twice for six months

■ Failed to secure extension for Pradeep Chandra, SP Singh later

on May 31, 2016, KCR approached the Prime Minister and secured extension twice, each for a period of three

months, on the grounds that the state needs the services of the CS who was involved in the process of bifurcation of AP and played a key role in the drafting the AP Reorganisation Act, 2014 as additional secretary in the Union Ministry of Home Affairs.

Continued on Page 4

Suspended IMS director has assets worth Rs 100 cr!

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) of Telangana on Thursday said it has unearthed assets worth a present market value of about Rs 100 crore, allegedly belonging to the then Director of Insurance Medical Services (IMS) who was earlier arrested in an alleged scam in supply of drugs.

The ACB probing the alleged 'multi-crore' scam in the supply of medicines to dispensaries and hospitals here, has already arrested 18 people including the then Director of IMS Ch Devika Rani, some IMS officials and others since September last week and on Wednesday Rani's husband P Gurumurthi, a retired Civil Surgeon was also arrested by the agency.

The state government has already suspended Rani and other officials.



Director of IMS Ch Devika Rani

On credible information, a case of disproportionate assets was registered against Rani and her husband, who had colluded, conspired and abetted the offence, an ACB release said here.

'He also collected the bribe amounts and abetted in concealing the ill-gotten money and purchase properties on behalf of Rani,' it said.

Continued on Page 4

Youth held for rape of minor in Hyd

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A 14-year-old girl staying at the Special Home for Children (Girls) in Nimboliadda here was allegedly kidnapped and raped by a youth. The accused has been arrested.

The girl had been admitted to the home in February by the Miyapur police.

The suspect, P Shiva, 21, resident of IDA Bolaram in Sangareddy district, allegedly lured the girl on November 27th and committed the crime. According to the police, on that day, at around 8 pm, the matron of the home had handed over the keys of the gate to some girls, including the victim, to open the lock when a few persons visited the premises on some work. However, the girls did not lock the gate again, but returned the keys to the matron. Later, Shiva called up the girl over the mobile phone belonging to the watchman and took the girl out.

Continued on Page 4

DISHA CASE

Forensics use 'Superlite' to gather evidence

50 policemen working on the case

NAVEEN KUMAR ■ HYDERABAD

Superlite, a hi-tech gadget, was used by forensics experts who were called upon by the Cyberabad police to gather evidence from the lorry which was used in the brutal rape and murder of veterinarian Disha.

The gadget was earlier used in the sensational Chikanagar baby head case and the horrifying murder case of Medchal, sources from forensics department revealed.

'We have found stains in the vehicle's cabin area. The lorry was thoroughly swept for evidence by our teams. We are yet to ascertain if the liquid samples we acquired are of semen or bloodstains as it is not very clear. The same shall be revealed once the reports



are back from the Forensic Science Laboratory (FSL). All the clues gathered by the team are being analysed properly to build a solid case against the men involved in the offence,' revealed the source.

Superlite is a remarkably efficient imaging instrument that covers all the spectra that matter in forensics.

Cyberabad police has formed seven special teams comprising seven officials in each team and all are given different areas to monitor and handle

Imaging tools work best in dark rooms, but this powerful UV light illuminates traces even in places that are not as dark as desired.

Meanwhile, the Cyberabad police has formed seven special teams comprising seven officials in each team and all are given different areas to monitor and handle. A total of 50 policemen in the commissionerate are working on the case.

Continued on Page 3

MHA seeks suggestions from states for laws overhaul

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) has asked all state governments to send their suggestions for a major overhaul and recasting of the Indian Penal Code and the CrPC, officials said on Thursday.

The new structure and content of criminal laws will be citizen centric and will reflect the aspirations of a modern democracy and provide for speedy justice, especially to the weaker sections of society, an official said.

The Bureau of Police Research and Development may undertake review of the laws such as the IPC, CrPC, Indian Evidence Act and the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act.

The BPRD will constitute a suitable working or consultative group and submit a report.

Sons-in-law, daughters-in-law too could be arraigned if they neglect senior citizens

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A draft Bill to amend the Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens Act, 2007 has provisions to arraign sons-in-law and daughters-in-law if they fail to look after their aged in-laws and provide monthly maintenance.

The Maintenance and Welfare of Parents and Senior Citizens (Amendment) Bill, 2019, which has been cleared by the Union Cabinet and is likely to be introduced in Parliament soon, also removes the cap of Rs 10,000 as maximum maintenance.

Now those who earn more should pay more to their parents as maintenance.

Violators of the law could be



punished with a minimum fine of Rs 5,000 or three months jail term or both.

Some features added in the Bill include preference to applications of those senior citizens above 80 years old if they lodge a complaint about their

neglect by their children or non-payment of maintenance.

All senior citizens homes/home care service agencies should register themselves with the authorities concerned, the Bill mandates.

Similarly there would be

There would be nodal officers for senior citizens in every police station or district level special police unit to hear their grievances. A dedicated helpline number would be available for senior citizens in every state to convey their problems

minimum standards prescribed for senior citizen care homes as per the draft Bill.

There would be nodal officers for senior citizens in every police station or district level special police unit to hear their grievances.

A dedicated helpline number would be available for senior citizens in every state to convey their problems.

The definition 'maintenance'

has been expanded to include safety and security of the parents besides taking care of their food, clothing, housing and health care obligations.

If senior citizens are neglected or not maintained by their children or their sons-in-law or daughters-in-law, they could approach maintenance tribunal for justice. This is the first major amendment to the legislation implemented in 2007.

Onion prices inching closer to Rs 200 a kg

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Onion prices are likely to cross Rs 200 a kg, sooner or later; pouring cold water on the expectations of people that imported onions may help stabilize prices.

In many states, a kg of onion is being traded for prices ranging between Rs 100 and Rs 150. In Hyderabad, a kg of onions is being sold at Rs 170 a kg and is inching closer to Rs 200.

People from a cross-section of society have been expressing their ire at the government's failure to keep the prices of onion under check.



Housewives want to know what the government has been doing when the ruling prices of onions are very high. They are feeling handicapped to prepare curry without onion, which is an essential ingredient. Netizens are cracking jokes on the Internet over the spiraling prices of onions.

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TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham: Margashirsha & Shukla Paksha

Panchangam

Tithi: Dashami 06:34 am (Next Day)

Nakshatram: Uttara Bhadrpada 10:58 pm

Time to Avoid: (Bad time to start any important work)

Rahukalam: 10:44 am - 12:06 pm

Yamagandam: 02:52 pm - 04:14 pm

Variyam: 06:52 am - 08:39 am

Gulika: 07:59 am - 09:21 am

Good Time: (to start any important work)

Amritkalam: 05:36 pm - 07:23 pm

Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:44 am - 12:29 pm

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Partly cloudy

Temp: 28/17

Humidity: 77%

Sunrise: 06:32

Sunset: 05:41

Current Weather Conditions

Updated December 05, 2019 5:00 PM

MINISTER HARISH RAO STRESSES THE NEED FOR FISCAL DISCIPLINE

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Telangana Finance Minister T Harish Rao on Thursday praised Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Reddy for announcing various sops to RTC workers on Thursday. He said that Telangana is progressing under the leadership of KCR. Harish Rao stressed the need for fiscal discipline, be it for development of a state or a business firm. Comparing his role in the state government to that of a heart in a human body, Harish Rao described himself as the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) of Telangana State. He said that plugging wastages is nothing but creating wealth to that extent. Harish Rao was addressing the second edition of the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII) Telangana's CFO Conclave with the theme 'Evolve - The New Age CFOs' here on Thursday. The Minister stressed on the need for CFOs to work for the development of the firm



Minister Harish Rao addressing the second edition of the CII Telangana's CFO Conclave with the theme 'Evolve - The New Age CFOs' on Thursday

rather than trying to appease the management. "The onus of steering the company in the right direction is on the CFO. For this, one may have to take harsh decisions," he noted. Harish Rao, who served as Irrigation Minister in the first

With the downtrend in the economy and also the falling GDP growth rates, we as financial officers must find new resources and also optimise spending
— T HARISH RAO, Finance Minister, Telangana

falling GDP growth rates, we as financial officers must find new resources and also optimise spending," he said. The state of Telangana is top ranking among other states in terms of ease of doing business, he said. He lauded the efforts made by KTR to woo investors to the state. Assuring the CII of the Government's support, the Minister reminded them of the five year long track record of the State government in the field of ease of doing business. He said that TS-iPASS revolutionised the way industries set shop in Telangana. "We are ready to launch the nation's largest Mega Textile Park, Pharma City and Medical Devices Park," Harish Rao said. While appreciating the steps initiated by the Union government to encourage investments

Teacher beats up Class IX student

PNS ■ NIZAMABAD

A Class IX student of a private school was injured grievously after a teacher has beaten him for not writing the notes properly at Armoor on Thursday.

Parents of the student lodged a complaint with the Armoor police, against the teacher.

According to the police, the student Sanjay is studying class IX in St Paul High School at Pipri village of Bheemgal mandal in Nizamabad district.

The complaint stated that, "A teacher who found that Sanjay was not writing the notes properly during study hour, thrashed him with a stick on his back and threatened of serious action against him if the student reveals it."

Scared student did not reveal it to anyone. As Sanjay fell ill, his mother took him to a hospital where the student spilled the beans.

The parents of the student lodged a complaint with the police seeking action against the teacher.



Special Chief Secretary to Medical & Health A Santhi Kumari welcomes Governor Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan at a high-level meeting on Medical & Health Department held in the Durbar hall of Raj Bhavan here on Thursday

Guv praises TS health schemes

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a high-level meeting on Medical & Health Department held in the Durbar hall of Raj Bhavan here on Thursday, Governor Dr Tamilisai Soundararajan said "being a medical doctor, my aim is 'Health for All' - in Telangana state."

"The people of Telangana should be benefitted by health schemes of both State and Central governments and none of them should be deprived of any medical facility in the state," she added. Governor has mentioned about the availability of blood in blood banks, keeping in view of recent incidence of dengue in Telangana and requested to reduce the gap between demand and supply of availability of blood.

Governor, explained about special enrolment drive of membership of JRC & YRC, which has reached 10 lakhs as on Thursday. Special Chief Secretary to Medical & Health A Santhi Kumari, IAS, Dr Praveen, IAS, Dy. CEO, National Health Authority, GoI, Dr Yogita Rana, IAS, Commissioner of Health and Family Welfare, K Manicka Raj, IAS, CEO, AHCT, K Surendra Mohan, Secretary to Governor, Dr Srinivasa Rao Director, Public

Governor appreciated the benefits of Arogyasri and KCR kit, Kanti Velugu and other state sponsored schemes

Health, Dr K Sankar Director, Institute of Preventive Medicine, Dr Linga Raju, Additional Director, AYUSH, Dr Karunakar Reddy, Vice-Chancellor, Kaloji University, Dr Manohar, Director, NIMS, Dr N Jayalatha Director, MNJ Cancer institute, and others attended the meeting.

At the outset Santhi Kumari has informed about the implementation of state's flagship health programmes like KCR kit, Kanti Velugu, Jeevandhara and she gave a PowerPoint presentation on an overview of the medical department, vital health indicators, basic statistics of hospitals, health facilities available for the poor and needy. Later addressing the officers, the Governor appreciated the benefits of Arogyasree and KCR kit, and Kanti Velugu and other state sponsored schemes.



Ministers V Srinivas Goud, Gangula Kamalakar Reddy inspect the state allocated lands for BC communities in Kokapeta of Rangareddy district on Thursday

Ministers inspect Telangana lands allocated to BCs

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Minister for Tourism and Excise V Srinivas Goud along with Minister for BC Welfare Gangula Kamalakar Reddy inspected the state allocated lands for BC communities in Kokapeta of Rangareddy district on Thursday.

Srinivas Goud said, "While the Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Reddy allotted government land worth Rs 2000 - 3000 crore to BCs to build Atma Gourava Bhavans under the HMDA limits, the rulers of the undivided AP regarded the BCs as mere vote banks."

He pointed out that the government allotted 80 acres for the BCs and allocated Rs 80 crore to build the Atma Gourava Bhavans. All amenities are being provided to complete the construction of the Bhavans at a fast pace. The Minister said that the

The proposed buildings would serve as marriage halls and vocational training centers

successive governments have given assurances to BCs and did nothing for their welfare. The proposed buildings would serve as marriage hall, vocational training center and a guest house, he said. A report would be submitted to government after inspecting all sites, he added.

MLC Naradasu Lakshman Rao, local MLA Prakash Goud, BC welfare commissioner Anita Rajendra, additional commissioner Saida, revenue and municipal officials were present.

Temporary RTC drivers stage protest

PNS ■ WARANGAL

The temporary drivers and conductors, who served RTC for 55 days, staged a demonstration demanding employment source in front of nine depots of erstwhile Warangal district on Thursday.

The employees said that they have served RTC when the entire regular employees staged protests and created issues in the state.

Nearly 400 temporary employees staged the demonstration seeking experience certificate from the government so that they can get any opportunity in the future.

STRAIGHT FROM FARM



Ministers Jagadish Reddy, S Niranjani Reddy at the Rabi Mela in Suryapet on Thursday

Officials told to collect reliable data for statistical year book

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana State Planning Board Vice-Chairman B Vinod Kumar said that the Statistical Year Book for 2020 being compiled by state's planning department should be authoritative and the data should be made available though a handbook.

Vinod Kumar was participating at a meeting held at the Directorate of Planning and Statistics in Khairatabad here on Thursday.

It has become customary for the government to compile a statistical handbook prior to Assembly sessions.

Vinod Kumar said that the statistical year book for 2020 should serve as a compass to various schemes being imple-



Vinod Kumar directed the officials to collect comprehensive information on government schemes and initiatives

mented by the government. He directed the officials to collect comprehensive information on various government schemes and development initiatives. The officials were directed to ensure that the data reaches all

22K students attend ISRO science show

PNS ■ WARANGAL

The two-day exhibition conducted by Indian Space Research Organisation (ISRO) at NIT Warangal concluded on Thursday.

Nearly 22,000 students from 255 schools visited the exhibition in these two days.

S Govardhan Rao, registrar of NIT Warangal attended as the chief guest to valedictory function of Vikram Sarabhai Centenary programme conducted by ISRO at NIT Warangal on Wednesday evening.

Briefing about the exhibition, Dr. B Rajasri, NRSC director said that the officials worked incessantly to organise the event at Warangal. She thanked the NIT Warangal administration, district

administration and Red Cross for making the exhibition a huge success.

Speaking on the occasion, Govardhan Rao said, organising such exhibitions will ignite the minds of schoolchildren. Students will endeavor to get seats in IITs and NITs.

He also said that students should adapt culture and vision of ISRO to succeed in the personal and professional life. Later IRCSS and Red Cross officials also addressed the gathering.

Venu Vinodh, sector officer of district administration spoke about the advantages of visiting science exhibition. He reiterated that their visit to the exhibition should create a spark in them to become good scientists.

Rythu Bima: Woman duped of Rs 2.5 lakh

PNS ■ SANGAREDDY

A middleman cheated a widow who had received Rs 5 lakh under Rythu Bima in Nagur (K) village of Kangti Mandal.

According to inspector Venkateshwarlu, Nadimidoddi Shanthamma's received Rs 5 lakh under Rythu Bima scheme. A middleman, Vagomore Tukaram, under the pretext of getting her some more benefits obtained her Aadhaar card, bank details and ATM card.

Using another woman to pose as Shanthamma before the bank officials, Tukaram ordered things spending Rs 2.5 lakh from her account. Shanthamma was shocked after checking her bank account.

HYDERABAD BULLION RATES	
GOLD	
₹ 38,370 (10 gm)	
₹ 310	↑
SILVER	
₹ 44,000 (1kg)	
₹ 900	↓
CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG	
Dressed/With Skin	₹160
Without Skin	₹182
Broiler at Farm	₹110
EGG RATES ₹/100	
HYDERABAD	444
VIJAYAWADA	450
VISAKHAPATNAM	455
RETAIL PRICE	₹4.43

One-third of lung cancer patients have depression

PTI ■ NEW YORK

Nearly one-third of patients newly diagnosed with the most common form of lung cancer have moderate to severe symptoms of depression, a new study suggests. For many of these patients depression occurs in a toxic blend of high levels of anxiety, traumatic stress, impaired day-to-day functioning and significant pain and other physical symptoms, findings published in the journal showed.

"The results suggest doctors need to screen lung cancer patients for depression and then act to refer patients for care," said study lead author Barbara Andersen from the Ohio State University in the US. "Some oncologists may have a mindset that 'of course, you are depressed, you have lung cancer.' This may show an under-appreciation of the breadth of depressive symptoms and other difficulties which

KEY POINTS

- 93 per cent of the patients said the depressive symptoms made it difficult to do their work, take care of things at home

- For many of the lung cancer patients, depression occurs in a toxic blend of anxiety, traumatic stress, impaired day-to-day functioning and other physical symptoms



Some oncologists may have a mindset that all the lung cancer patients have depression. This may not appreciate the other difficulties which accompany it.

—BARBARA ANDERSEN, Lead author from the Ohio State University

accompany it," Andersen said. Patients with moderate or severe depressive symptoms are more likely to have lower quality of life and worse disease outcomes compared to those also diagnosed with lung cancer but with mild or no depressive symptoms. According to

the researchers, data came from 186 patients at one cancer hospital who had been recently diagnosed with advanced-stage non-small cell lung cancer, which accounts for 85 per cent of all lung cancer cases. Patients completed a teleph-

one survey measuring psychological and physical symptoms, stress and day-to-day functioning. Results showed that eight per cent of the patients scored at the severe depressive symptom level and 28 per cent had depressive symptoms.

Nearly 93 per cent of the patients with depression said the depressive symptoms made it difficult to do their work, take care of things at home and get along with other people.

Compared to other cancer patients, those with high levels of depressive symptoms were much more likely to report severe physical symptoms, including 73 per cent who said they experienced 'quite a bit' or 'very much' pain. Every one of the patients with severe depressive symptoms said they had severe or moderate issues functioning with their usual activities such as work, study, housework and family or leisure activities. In general, those with moderate depressive symptoms saw negative effects that were somewhat less -- but still significant -- than those with severe symptoms, the study found. But there were two striking differences between the groups.

HARITA HARAM Officials told to increase survival rate of saplings

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Rural Development Commissioner Raghunandan Rao on Thursday directed the district collectors to assess the growth of saplings planted as part of the 30-day action plan for panchayats and Harita Haram and take steps to replace the plants that recorded stunted growth and dead plants with healthy ones within a week.

Raghunandan Rao directed

the Panchayat officer, Rural Development Officer and forest officers to supervise the special drive and complete the task within a week. He also directed the field assistants to record the growth of the plants on a monthly basis and upload images in relevant websites.

Raghunandan Rao said that the survival rate of the plants was only 79 per cent and wanted officials to put in more efforts to increase the rate.

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA FOREST DEPARTMENT e-PROCUREMENT NOTICE

Re.No.: 276/2019/D1. Dt: 03.12.2019
 No of Works (4) Name of the Works: Construction of Four (4) Forest Range Officer Quarters at WLM Kinera sani, Manuguru, Bhadrachalam and Yellandu Divisions in undersigned. TOTAL ECV: Rs. 1.08 Crores. Bid Submission Start Date & Time: 09.12.2019 at 10.30 am. Bid Submission Closing Date & Time: 30.12.2019 at 3.00 pm. Date of Opening: 30.12.2019 at 3.10 pm. Further details can be seen at 'e-Procurement market place at www.eprocurement.gov.in' Ph. No.: 08744-295050. R.O. No: 1051-DP/CL-AGENCY/ADVT/12019-20 Sd/- District Forest Officer, Bhadradi Kothagudem Dist.

CRIME CORNER

Cops avert suicide

The Hyderabad Police responded to a Dial 100 call in 6 minutes and averted a suicide in Chilkalguda area on Thursday. According to Police Inspector of Chilkalguda, AC Balagangi Reddy, they received a call via dial 100 on Thursday at 12:38 pm and the same was taken up by 12:39 pm. "Our teams reached the spot at 12:45 pm and noticed Khan, 45, tried to hang himself from the ceiling through a window. A constable then broke open the door and stopped Khan from committing suicide," said the official, adding that marital dispute was the reason behind the man opting for the extreme step.

Two arrested for 'vulgar' TikTok videos

The Cyber Crimes of Hyderabad police arrested a WhatsApp group admin and a TikTok user for posting and sharing vulgar, objectionable and derogatory comments by creating fake accounts on TikTok. The accused were identified as Nimesh Chowdhary alias Nimesh Chinnakurthy, 30, a hotel supervisor from Anantapur and Aravind Patel alias Gandla Aravind, 21, an unemployed youth from Karimnagar. The arrest was made following a complaint from one Janardhan Devalla, wherein he stated that since October 2019, Nimesh Chowdhary has been intentionally abusing him and his friends in vulgar, objectionable and derogatory manner by creating fake accounts on Tik Tok. Further, a WhatsApp group was created by name 'Lover Boy' that had Aravind as admin. Following complaint, a case was booked and the duo was placed under arrest on Thursday.

GOC TASA visits CDA

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Major General RK Singh, General Officer Commanding (GOC), Telangana and Andhra Sub Area (TASA) has visited the Office of Controller of Defence Accounts and IFA, Secunderabad on Thursday. He appreciated the commendable efforts regularly put in by the Controller's Office in deliverance of services, particularly in the realms of all payment issues of Soldiers and rendition of financial advice in procurement proposals of Defence Services. The General has discussed important issues with the Controller of Defence Accounts, K Venkata Rao, IDAS and Senior Officers on the occasion.



Controller of Defence Accounts, K Venkata Rao, IDAS presenting a memento to Major General RK Singh, GOC, Telangana and Andhra Sub Area at CDA Secunderabad on Thursday

KTR BATS FOR GLOBAL STANDARD ROADS IN CITY

■ Says new traffic commissionerate will be set up to improve traffic management

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

MA&UD Minister KT Rama Rao stated that the government will develop the city roads on par with international standards to provide quality roads for commuters and footpaths for pedestrians. He held a review meeting with the senior officials of the MA&UD in Hyderabad on Thursday. Officials from the Electricity Department, TSIIC and HMWSSB also took part in the meeting. Minister asked the officials of all the departments to work with coordination.

For strengthening the road network in the city, works for 709 kilometres main roads will be initiated under the Comprehensive Road Maintenance Programme (CRMP) from December 9th onwards. Under the program, private agencies will operate and maintain the 709-km of major roads in the city for five years. Minister stated that the government, GHMC, and police department will provide complete support to the agencies. Minister instructed the zonal commissioners to supervise the works.

Soon, a new traffic commissionerate will be set up in GHMC limits to improve traffic management in the city. Minister suggested the idea of having one unified Command of Traffic Commissioner for GHMC area of three Commissionerates to have a better coordination in regulating the traffic. Talking about the usage of public transport across the cities, the Minister said that 72 per cent of the population in Mumbai uses public transport, while only 34 per cent of the Hyderabad population uses public transport. Minister mentioned that the number of vehicles in the city in the past five years increased from 73 lakhs to 1.2 crore. He stated that new reforms will be introduced in the transport system which will further encourage citizens to use



Officials told to identify problematic locations

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Minister KT Rama Rao held a convergence meeting with senior officials of the MA&UD and Police department in Hyderabad on Thursday. Speaking to the officials of both the Departments, the Minister stated that women's safety should be a top priority.

Minister directed the officials to act tough on the miscreants, especially the ones who create nuisance by drinking in public places and near wine shops. He also

asked the officials to seal such wine shops if found flouting the rules.

He instructed the GHMC officials to lay penalties on owners of old and unmainained buildings which have turned into a hub for anti-social elements.

Minister stated that there are four lakh LED lights in the city and measures will be taken to increase the number of LEDs soon. Minister asked the GHMC officials to set up more LED lights on isolated roads, colonies and areas around ORR.

■ Talking about the usage of public transport across the cities, KTR said that 72% of the population in Mumbai uses public transport, while only 34% of the Hyd population uses public transport

officials to develop more parking spaces in the city and asked them to take permission from private landowners to utilise empty spaces for parking.

He further directed officials to develop the open layout and plots for public use by building public toilets, bus shelters, sky walkways. On the measures of women protection, the Minister asked police officials to identify the trouble areas and keep regular vigilance and provide lighting in those areas. With the help of Mepma take awareness campaign on utilisation of Dial 100 and Hawk eye in case of danger in this regard the ZC and DC should take initiative.

public transport. Minister instructed the officials to develop greenery and lay more footpaths and develop cycle ways at the Metro, MMTS stations and main roads. He also directed the



Shure expands base, opens facility in city

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Shure Incorporated, a US-based global market leader in microphones and audio electronics, has expanded its presence in India by establishing a new facility in Hyderabad. This is the second Shure facility in India, after the Company opened a sales and marketing office in Bangalore in 2018.

The new Hyderabad location marks the fifth global Shure Engineering Center dedicated to product development and software excellence, joining Copenhagen, Denmark; Edinburgh, Scotland; Niles, Illinois, USA; and Suzhou, China. Located in the tech hub of the city, this

new facility will provide software intelligence that will help Shure expand its product portfolio.

Attendees at the grand opening included Minister of MA&UD KT Rama Rao; Jayesh Ranjan; V Rajanna, TCS Sr Vice President & Global Head - Technology Business Unit; Shure President and CEO Christine Schyvinck; Dr. Avinash Vaidya, Shure Executive Vice President of Product Development and Chief Technology Officer, as well as other noble dignitaries and Shure Executive Staff members and Associates based in Hyderabad and Bangalore.

155 new traffic signals to come up in Hyderabad

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation Standing Committee approved the proposal by Police Commissioners for setting up traffic signals at 155 places at cost of Rs 30.41 crore in addition to the existing 221 signals.

The standing committee met on Thursday under the chairmanship of Mayor Bonthu Rammohan. Approvals were given to Division Corporation to utilise Rs 1 lakh for Play and Sports Material. Rs 2.79 crore has been sanctioned for CC roads in Saroonagar Circle. Under the Integrated Municipal Solid Waste Management Project, a sum of Rs 527.67 crores for maintaining Jawahar Nagar Dumpypar will be sent for government's approval. Rs 4.95 crore has been approved for Shakipet's sewage diversion and sanitation development works. Standing committee gave approval for calling out bids for the maintenance of EPF and ESI records of outsourcing workers and operators in GHMC.

'CHARM'INAR



"Due to the Charminar Pedestrianisation Project and the sanitation upkeep, pedestrians now prefer to sit down & enjoy its beauty. One may recollect that such a sight was impossible to imagine a few years ago," tweeted Zonal Commissioner Musharrarf Faruqui along with the picture

TSBIE places student checklist for IPE Mar 2020

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana State Board of Intermediate Education (TSBIE) on Thursday uploaded a Student Check List of Intermediate Public Examination March 2020 in their official website (tsbie.cgg.gov) for students who have paid examination fees.

The first-year regular students can check their details by entering SSC/X Class hall ticket number. The second-year regular and private student can check the details by entering the last appeared intermediate exam's hall ticket number. Students can verify the entered details such as candidate's name, parents' names, group medium, second language, PH category, appearing subjects, and amount of exam fees paid for IPE March 2020. The authorities have instructed students to contact the principal of the concerned junior college in case of any corrections required. The principals may submit the same to the concerned District Intermediate Education Officer/Nodal Officer on or before December 15, 2019, with relevant original certificates.



Two arrested for OLX fraud

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A Nigerian national and Manipur native was arrested by the Rachakonda Cyber Crimes Police for cheating a victim to the tune of Rs 1.60 lakh by posting a fake advertisement of an SUV on OLX. The accused were identified as Emmanuel Ujunwa Okorom alias Ranky alias Ewmoa Okorom, 40, a Nigerian national, and Mercy Mawite, 39, of Churachandpur district in Manipur, who were apprehended on Thursday for cheating the victim from Mansoorabad of LB Nagar.

The duo posted a fake advertisement of an Innova car on OLX platform, claiming

that the car is parked at the cargo section of Rajiv Gandhi International Airport and Rs 1.60 lakh has to be paid to avail a gate pass. When inquired about the physical inspection, accused Mercy spoke by impersonating an Airport Manager and shared account details of a Bengaluru based bank and asked to transfer the amounts towards parking charges and once the amounts got transferred to the given account, the accused switched off their phones and thereby cheated the victim. On credible information, both the accused were apprehended from Victoria Memorial Metro Station when they came to meet their lawyer.

Forensics use 'Superlite'...

Continued from Page 1

While DCP Shamshabad's team is heading the investigation of the case, the second team is dealing with the evidence being gathered, another team on forensics, another one on witness identification, still another one on legal proceedings. A team is also focused on gathering technical evidence from CC cameras and the last one will be working on scene to scene analysis and crime scene reconstruction.

Sources revealed that Disha's bangles and mobile phone was found about half-a-kilometer from the site of offence as the accused had buried the items in the vicinity, near Tondupally gate.

The cops have assured that they would be in a position to file a chargesheet in the case within a month. On December 12, a video conference is said to be done with the accused from Cheralpally jail for their hearing in the high court.



3 arrested at RGIA with gold concealed in their rectum

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Directorate of Revenue Intelligence seized over 1.2 kg of gold in paste form valued at Rs 48.49 lakh at the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport here and arrested three people in this connection on Thursday.

Based on a tip, officers intercepted three passengers who were about to depart to Mumbai in the early hours and recovered four elliptical shaped balls wrapped with black colour adhesive tape containing gold in paste form from them, the DRI's Hyderabad zonal unit said in a release.

Two of them had concealed the gold in paste form in the rectum and inquiry revealed that they arrived from Mumbai on Wednesday. It was revealed that the three were entrusted with the job of carrying gold in paste form which was given to them by one person at Mumbai airport.

The passengers had booked their tickets on fake names and possessed morphed Aadhaar cards to hoodwink authorities, the DRI said. The passengers admitted that the gold was smuggled in to the country and they did not have any documents to prove the licit purchase/import of the said gold.

The smuggled gold has been seized under the Customs Act, 1962 and 3 persons are arrested. Further investigation is in progress.

IIT-H collaborates with Japanese institutions

PNS ■ HYDERABAD



Prof BS Murty, Director, IIT-H with Prof Kazuhiti Hashimoto, president of National Institute For Material Science, Japan

Indian Institute of Technology Hyderabad has collaborate with four major institutions in Japan for research in various areas including earthquake engineering besides in joint doctoral programmes. This will be a major boost to Indo-Japanese Collaborations in Academic and Research areas.

Prof BS Murty, Director, IIT Hyderabad, signed the MoUs with the Institutions during his recent visit to Japan. The Institutions include: MoU with Earthquake Disaster Mitigation Research Division (EDMRD), National Research Institute for Earth Science and Disaster Resilience, on Earthquake Engineering; MoU with Graduate School of Science and Technology, Shizuoka University on Doctoral Degree

We have signed MoUs with educational institutions in Japan to have joint supervision programme where research students can go there to continue some part of their research in these institutions, says BS Murthy

Sandwich Programme. MoU with Saitama University on Academic Exchange of faculty, students and implementation of cooperative Research Projects and educational programmes. MoU with National Institute for Materials Science (NIMS) to strengthen Research collaboration

Prof Murty also held discussions with Nagoya Electric Works, Nihon University for a discussion on the Japanese Technical Cooperation Project for Smart Cities for Emerging

Countries-based on sensing, network and big data analysis of Multimodal Regional Transport System.

Speaking about the importance of these collaborations, Prof BS Murty, Director, IIT Hyderabad, said, "IIT Hyderabad has signed MoUs with educational institutions in Japan to have Joint supervision programme where research students can go there to continue some part of their research in these institutions."

REGIONAL MATHS OLYMPIAD-2019 Narayana Institutions win big

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Narayana Educational Institutions have bagged highest number of selections in Regional Maths Olympiad (RMO)-2019 with a tally of 35 selections. Addressing a press conference,

Dr Sindhura Narayana, Managing Director of Narayana Group, expressed immense happiness on securing highest number of selections. She said that all the selections have been achieved by regular class room students of Narayana Institutions. She also congratulated the international medallists M Adarsh Reddy, V Sai Teja for securing Silver and Bronze Medals respectively in International Olympiad on Astronomy and Astrophysics



(IOAA) at Hungary, JV Adithya for securing Silver Medal in International Junior Astronomy Olympiad (IAO) at Romania and VV Sai Keerthana for securing Bronze Medal in European Girls Mathematical Olympiad (EGMO) at Ukraine. Dr Sindhura said that it has always been the endeavor of Narayana to mould the stu-

dents to face all competitive exams confidently so that they could emerge as Global Leaders in their chosen fields. The superior Integrated Curriculum and superlative academic planning is the reason why Narayana students are coming out in flying colors in IIT-JEE MAIN, ADVANCED, NEET and OLYMPIAD Exams.

DISHA CASE
KTR: I can't take same stand as public

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Industries Minister K T Rama Rao, reacting to outcry in the Disha case, has said that he cannot take the same stand as some members of the public or legislators in parliament.

The Minister participated as chief guest in the Pre-Valedictory Function for distribution of Certificates to the 94th Foundation Course for All India Service & Central Civil Service Officers on Thursday.

He said, "I am as much keen and as much passionate as anybody else in India to see the end of those four fellows. But unfortunately, being in government, I cannot be taking the same stand. I cannot be saying 'hang them in public immediately' or 'shoot them on sight'. That's not how the system works. You've to brace yourself to reality, operate within the purview of legality and the Constitution of India."

KTR said, "We want instant results and instant gratification. There was an unfortunate incident where a young vet was raped and murdered, you may have seen uproar. They want instant results and instant capital punishment. Some very respected members of parliament were speaking on the floor of the House, asking them to be lynched, asking them to be instantly shot. While their anger and emotion is justified, the fact is, to be able to get it done lawfully and legally, there are lot of things that come in the way. There was a young girl who was raped and

KCR wants barrage across Godavari to store 3 tcm ft

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister K. Chandrasekhar Rao on Thursday said that a barrage would be constructed at Dummugudem that would help the state generate hydel power and also store Godavari river waters. KCR directed officials to make necessary arrangements to lift 3 tmc ft water from Kaleswaram project to Mid Manair. He also directed officials to prepare estimates for these two works and call tenders.

The CM also instructed officials to call tenders immediately for supplying additional water to Mallanna Sagar and to complete the residual works in the Sri Seetharama project. He wanted works on Kanthanapally Barrage to be completed by March-end.

The CM chaired a review meeting on irrigation projects in the state and Irrigation water planning at the Pragati Bhavan.

The CM said that there was adequate water available at Dummugudem, for at least 150 days in the year. He said that this had potential to generate hydel power.

Taking this into consideration, the CM decided to construct a barrage to store 37 tmc ft of water while the proposed hydel power plant would generate 320 MW power.

The CM instructed officials to design the barrage in such a way that it required less land and the river itself would act as storage. He wanted the officials



The Chief Minister wanted an inventory to be made on the irrigation projects in the state, reservoirs, canals, lifts, tanks with all the details at this proposed workshop

to finalise the designs at the earliest and invite tenders as early as possible.

The CM directed the officials to lift 3 tmc ft of water daily from Kaleswaram project to Mid Manair and from there 2 tmc ft to Mallanna Sagar from next year onwards. As on date 2 tmc ft of water is being lifted from Kaleswaram project to Mid Manair. The CM wanted tenders for both works to be invited by December-end.

An estimated Rs 13,000 to Rs 14,000 crore would be required to lift 3 tmc ft of water to Dummugudem and Mid Manair. The CM decided to get approval for these works in the next Cabinet meeting.

KCR said that regardless of major, medium or minor irrigation categories, the irrigation department should work as one entity. He wanted the state be divided into six to seven irrigation zones with each zone headed by an Engineer-in-Chief.

The E-in-C should supervise and monitor all the irrigation projects, works and schemes. He wanted the irrigation key officials in the state finalise a comprehensive irrigation policy.

The CM wanted an inventory to be made on the irrigation projects in the state, reservoirs, canals, lifts, tanks with all the details at this proposed workshop.

shop.

All manuals, strategies to manage the projects, reservoirs, canals, lifts and tanks should also be finalised at the workshop, he said. The CM said that the funds needed for the irrigation sector would be allocated in the state Budget.

The CM instructed officials from the electricity departments to supply power to set up hydel power plant at Dummugudem, to lift 3 tmc ft water from Kaleswaram.

The CM also wanted availability of additional impellers, pump sets and power transformers at all the project sites. After the irrigation policy, inventory and management strategy are finalised, a state level irrigation conference will be held, he said.

KCR also directed officials to prepare an alternative plan to supply water to the Nagarjunasagar ayacut when there was not much flow in Krishna river.

Since Mid Manair gets 3 tmc ft of water, water availability is no problem, he said.

KCR advised officials to fill up Baswapur reservoir with water from the Kaleswaram project and release water from there to Shamirpet stream, Musi river, Asif Nahar and bypass Udaya Samudram and link with Panagal stream.

From there, the Chief Minister wanted water to be supplied to Nagarjunasagar online reservoir Pedda Devulapalli. This would help supply water to Nagarjunasagar ayacut when needed, he said.



BJP ridicules KTR for criticising Centre

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

BJP state president Dr. K Laxman ridiculed TRS working president and IT Minister KT RamaRao for criticising Centre. He wondered at allegations made by KTR that centre is showing step motherly attitude towards South India alleging that state government is not in a position to utilise the funds given by the centre.

While speaking to the media on Thursday at party office, Laxman threw a challenge at KTR to debate on Centre's allocations to Telangana and state government's utilisation of funds given by the centre.

He said that KTR gets sanctions and funds from Delhi but wastes them. He comes to Hyderabad and claims saying centre gave nothing, Laxman said. Laxman alleged that KTR is hatching conspiracy to encroach the defense lands located in Hyderabad. The Defense Ministry and centre had set up many companies in Hyderabad. The centre does not need suggestions from KTR, he said.

Laxman explained that the TRS government had stated first that it will construct Secretariat at Bison Polo Grounds. Later it said it will construct Secretariat at present premises demolishing the existing one. TRS government once again stating that it will construct Secretariat at Bison Polo Grounds after High Court's slap on the issue. The state government has to give alternative lands when it takes defense lands. But the state government is not allocating alternative lands for the last two years. It is not submitting details in this regard. However, the state government heads are asking the centre every time when they go to Delhi and submitting memorandums.

Laxman said that the state government has not yet shown the land for Tribal University to set up it as per Division Act. However, the centre is voluntarily gifting Indian Institute of Management (IIM) to the state now. The Central Government's Finance Commission is allocating funds to the states including Telangana state. The Chief Minister is distributing the same funds to the villages in the state but not the funds of state government or state Finance commission. Finding fault with KTR for questioning the centre on bullet rail, Laxman asked KTR, who failed to complete a small railway line even after allocating funds to the state, to tell the latter needs bullet rail.

Hyd woman dies after moving car...

Continued from Page 1

According to the Mannaikhelli Police, the temperature of the air-conditioning equipment in the car had increased drastically and smoke began coming out of the car. Within seconds, the car caught fire and Uday Kumar immediately parked the car on the side of the road and got out. He then rescued his children, who were sitting on the rear seat, after instructing his wife to get out.

However, the fire allegedly spread within minutes and Kalyani was unable to get out of the car. "She was wearing a seatbelt and it got stuck. She was unable to detach the seat belt when the car caught fire," said Mannaikhelli station officer Sunita. Uday Kumar called an ambulance and within minutes a fire engine also arrived at the spot to douse the flames. However, due to the intensity of the fire, Kalyani couldn't be saved and she succumbed to burns.



Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao releases a book on Kaleswaram project written by Sridhar Deshpande on Thursday

CM KCR releases book on Kaleswaram project

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao released a book Kaleswaram project: Telangana Pragathi Ratham written by Sridhar Deshpande, (Irrigation) officer on duty (OSD) to CM at Pragati Bhavan on Thursday.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Minister congratulated Sri Sridhar Deshpande for compiling the entire history and comprehensive information about the Kaleswaram project in his book with a view to present it to the future generations.

Sri Sridhar Deshpande has compiled in his book about the commitment and dedication of the Chief Minister and how KCR researched more than an engineer using Google Earth Tools and the statistics given by the Central water Commission on Godavari river flow. Poet and writer Sri Juluri Gowrishankar and Kaleswaram chief engineer Venkateswarlu and others participated.

Suspended IMS director has assets worth...

Continued from Page 1

On December 3, simultaneous searches were conducted at her residence in Hyderabad and her relatives' houses at Tirupati and Kadapa in Andhra Pradesh, the ACB said.

During the searches it was revealed that Rani and her husband have acquired immovable properties worth Rs 15 crore and moveable properties of over Rs 8 crore.

While the 'documentary value' of these assets is Rs 23.14 crore, the market value is about Rs 100 crore, it said.

Gurumurthy was arrested and produced before an ACB court here which sent him to judicial custody.

Apart from these, payment of about Rs 7.3 crore to a jewellery firm by Rani is being probed, the ACB said adding the case is under investigation.

Hanumantha Rao urges Congress to appoint him as TPCC chief

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Congress senior leader V Hanumantha Rao has urged the party high command to appoint him as TPCC chief. Stating that there is no other senior leader in the party than him, Hanumantha Rao said that he is very close to people. He requested the high command to give chance to BCs this time to bring the party to the power again.

Speaking to the media at Delhi on Thursday, Hanumantha Rao exuded confidence that the party high command will appoint him as PCC chief.

Finding fault with TRS working president and IT Minister KT Rama Rao for stating that the centre is showing step mother attitude towards South India, He questioned KTR to tell as to why their government is showing step mother attitude towards Osmania and Kakathiya University students, who were the reason for the formation of separate Telangana state. "Why the TRS government is not allocating funds and not appointing vice-chancellors to the universities in the state?" he questioned.

He claimed that the state government is not giving scholarships to the students.

Hanumantha Rao criticised the Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao for not visiting the residence of Disha and attending the weddings frequently.

He demanded the Chief Minister to visit Disha's residence at least now.



Onion prices inching closer to Rs 200 a kg!

Continued from Page 1

There have been reports from certain parts of the country that thieves these days steal bags containing onions, while leaving cash in the till untouched. Some miscreants reportedly stole onions straight from farms. Farmers are shying away from cultivation of onions as they know from experience that the crop is unremunerative in the present circumstances. Besides, unseasonal rains damaged the bulk of the onion crops raised by farmers. All these factors have contributed to the high onion prices in the open market. In the wholesale market, a kg of onion is being sold at Rs 150.

The Centre has initiated the process of importing 11,000 tonnes of onions from Turkey. Arrangements are also under way to import 6,000 tonnes of onions to the city from Egypt. Officials of the Civil Supplies Department say that stocks of onions would arrive by the second week of December.

TS Govt may seek extension...

Continued from Page 1

The basic idea was that he would be helpful for Telangana in sorting out pending bifurcation-related issues with AP. Thus, Rajiv Sharma continued in his post till November 31, 2016.

Later, Pradeep Chandra was appointed as CS; though he was due to retire a month later.

However, KCR again requested the Prime Minister to extend the services of Pradeep Chandra. KCR's plan did not materialize and Pradeep had to retire on December 31, 2016.

Later, SP Singh was appointed as CS on January 1, 2017. He was due to retire on January 31, 2018. The CM made a request to PM seeking extension of the services of SP Singh. This request too was not granted.

KCR then appointed SK Joshi as the CS. He took charge on February 1, 2018.

After Rajiv Sharma, SK Joshi has been the longest-serving CS of Telangana. He will complete one year and 11 months on December 31, 2019. KCR is impressed with the functioning of SK Joshi. He particularly remembers Joshi's contribution as irrigation secretary, when the CM conceived redesigning of existing irrigation projects to take up Kaleswaram, Palamur-RR projects etc.

However, it remains to be seen whether the PM approves of the extension of Joshi's services.

UP rape survivor set ablaze...

Continued from Page 1

In a chilling recap, the woman said in her statement to Sub Divisional Magistrate Dayashankar Pathak that she was attacked when she reached Gaura turn near her home. Harishankar Trivedi, Ram Kishore Trivedi, Umesh Bajpai, Shivam Trivedi and Shubham Trivedi set her afire, she said.

She alleged that Shivam and Shubham Trivedi had abducted and raped her in December 2018. The FIR, however, was registered in March.

After being set on fire, she ran for a while before some people saw her and informed police. She was taken to the community health centre from where she was sent to the district hospital, before being referred to Lucknow, police said.

The incident, just days after the Hyderabad rape case in which the victim's body was set ablaze, triggered outrage. The Rajya Sabha was adjourned for 30 minutes amid an uproar by opposition parties. Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi and Samajwadi Party president Akhilesh Yadav hit out at the Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh over the law and order situation.

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath directed senior police and state administration officials to visit the spot and submit a report by the evening.

5 websites booked for revealing rape...

Continued from Page 1

Following the complaint, the police booked a case under Section 228A (whoever prints or publishes the name or any matter which may make known the identity of any person against whom an offence under section 376 was committed) of IPC. Upon conviction, the guilty are awarded a jail term which may extend up to two years or fine. "A case was booked against the web portals following a complaint made by one Vijay Gopal. As the issue relates to online activity, our superiors have sought legal opinion. Most probably the case will be transferred to the Cyber Crime police station for further investigation," said the Osmania University police.

YOUTH HELD FOR RAPE OF MINOR IN HYDERABAD

Continued from Page 1

Shiva, along with his friend, then took the victim to a house in Miyapur and confined her there for three days. On November 29, he sexually assaulted her.

On information about the confinement of the girl at Miyapur, a police team rushed to the spot and rescued the girl the next day. Shiva has been absconding since then, according to the Kacheguda police.

The girl did not reveal the details to the Bharosa centre staff on December 2, following which the police sent her for a medical check-up.

The mother of the girl stays in Miyapur. In February, when the girl had gone 'missing', the police traced her and sought to hand over her to her mother. As the victim's mother refused to take her back, the girl was admitted to the special home for children. On Tuesday night, the police arrested Shiva. Upon questioning, he admitted to luring the girl and sexually violating her.

A case under Section 363 and 376(2)(ii) of IPC and Section 3 r/2 of POCSO Act was registered by the police against Shiva. He was produced before the court and remanded.

Congress, BJP demand prohibition in Telangana

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Congress is gearing up to wage a movement against indiscriminate sale of liquor in the state. Demanding the state government to close the belt shops and permit rooms in the state, the Congress said it will wage movement across the state very soon. Meanwhile, the Congress party will hold a candle light march from Tank Bund to Raj Bhavan on Friday protesting against the atrocities against the women in the state. The leaders will also submit a memorandum to the Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan in this regard. The Congress Legislature Party (CLP) that met on Thursday, expressed concern (Sangareddy) and Seethakka (Mulugu) participated in the CLP meeting. Later they staged a protest before the CLP office raising slogans against the state government.

Later speaking to the media at Assembly Media Hall along with MLAs, Bhatti Vikramarka alleged that atrocities against women increased in the state. Disha incident in Hyderabad, Manasa incident in Warangal and Laxmi incident in Asifabad were disturbing seriously. Expressing sympathies to the bereaved families, Bhatti demanded the state government to hang the culprits immediately. Bhatti said that liquor sales in the state increased indiscriminately.

Vikramarka. Congress MLAs - D Sridhar Babu (Manthani), Komatireddy Rajagopal Reddy (Munugode), T Jagga Reddy

DK Aruna to stage 48-hr hunger strike

HYDERABAD: Alleging that indiscriminate sale of liquor in Telangana is the main reason for growing crime against women, BJP senior leader DK Aruna on Thursday announced that she will undertake two-day fast demanding prohibition in the state. DK Aruna said she would observe fast on December 11 and 12 to press the demand for prohibition. The Former Minister said such a step was necessary to check the increasing number of crimes against women in the state. Following the recent gruesome gang-rape and murder of a woman veterinarian in Hyderabad, both BJP and Congress have targeted the TRS government for unrestrained sale of liquor in the state. Addressing the media, the BJP leader alleged that the Chief Minister has transformed the state as the 'state of boozers'. She demanded the state government to control the sale of liquor in the state. She urged all political parties, peoples unions and women to extend their support to her proposed two-day hunger strike at Indira Park. Meanwhile, the women wings of BJP and Congress also staged protests, demanding the government to impose prohibition. They alleged that easy availability of liquor is leading to rapes and other crimes against women.



'India's average annual water resources potential at 1,999 bn cubic metres'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI
The country's average annual water resources potential is around 1,999 billion cubic metres and 699 billion cubic metres is utilised for various purposes, according to the government.
Citing data from the Central Water Commission (CWC), Jal Shakti Minister

Gajendra Singh Shekhawat told the Lok Sabha on Thursday that about 450 BCM of surface water is being utilised for various purposes.
The central government has formulated a National Perspective Plan for water resources development that envisages transfer of water from surplus basins to water-deficit basins through inter-

The minister also said 699 BCM of water, including 450 BCM of surface and 249 BCM of ground water, is being utilised for various purposes

linking of rivers.
"As per the recent estimate by CWC in the year 2019, India receives an average annual precipitation of about 3,880 BCM (billion cubic

metres). The average annual water resources potential in the country is assessed as 1,999.20 BCM because the remaining water is lost to the atmosphere through evapotranspiration from barren lands, forests, natural vegetation, rain-fed agriculture, natural ponds and lakes, etc.
"Further, owing to topographic, hydrological and

other constraints, the utilisable water is 1,122 BCM, which comprises 690 BCM of surface water and 432 BCM of replenishable ground water resources," he said.
The minister also said 699 BCM of water, including 450 BCM of surface and 249 BCM of ground water, is being utilised for various purposes.



SHORT READS



Teacher shot dead outside school in Punjab

CHANDIGARH: A woman teacher was shot dead on Thursday outside her school in Punjab's Mohali district while she was with her five-year-old daughter, police said. Sarabjit Kaur was attacked in the morning when she was parking her scooter outside the school in Kharar town, a police official said. The shooter is yet to be identified, police said, adding that he had covered his face with a shawl. The teacher's daughter, who studies in the school, was accompanying her at the time of the incident, they said. In CCTV camera footage, the assailant was seen running away from the spot, police said, adding that he did not harm the girl. Kaur used to teach Punjabi and French at the private school. The assailant was seen roaming in the area and as soon as the teacher reached the school he opened fire on her, eyewitnesses told reporters.

Fee hike in JNU done to meet increased expenditure

NEW DELHI: Union HRD Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal 'Nishank' on Thursday said the fee hike in Jawaharalal Nehru University was done in order to meet the increased expenditure on the maintenance of hostels and to run them on a "no profit no loss" basis. In a written reply to a question over the JNU hostel fee hike, which has led to an agitation by students, the minister said that the varsity has increased room rents after around 40 years. The varsity has been witnessing protest over hostel fee hike for over a month.

Relative of RSS office-bearer shot in UP's Etah

ETAH (UP): A relative of an RSS office-bearer was shot at by unidentified persons in Uttar Pradesh's Etah district, police said on Thursday. Sachin Solanki (40), relative of RSS office bearer Rajpal Singh, was shot on the Etah-Marhara road in the afternoon and was rushed to a hospital, they said. He was later referred to Agra for treatment as his condition was stated to be serious. Police are probing the matter. No arrests have been made so far in this connection.

'Time to focus on ailing economy, not religious issues'

PNS ■ KOLKATA

In a veiled attack on the BJP-NDA government at the Centre, West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee on Thursday said "politics of divide and rules would do no good to the country, which is currently facing an economic slowdown. Speaking at a programme here, the TMC supremo asserted that it was time to address economic woes in the country, instead of harping on "Hindu-Muslim" issues.
"Unemployment and poverty have reached sky-high levels. At a time like this, I don't know if harping on Hindu-Muslim issues will yield any positive result," she said.
The chief minister urged people to work together for peace and prosperity.
"Nobody knows what will happen to the banks tomorrow. There is uncertainty everywhere. This never happened before. Let us work together



for peace, prosperity and unity. Dwelling on religious matters will not bring the desired outcome," she insisted. The TMC boss also claimed that industrialists in the country feel intimidated by central agencies - the CBI, the IT department and the ED. "Many of them have

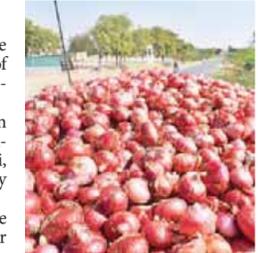
left Indian shores due to this (intimidation). Rahul Bajaj had the guts to speak out. But I feel he has been put under scanner since then," she said.
Veteran industrialist Rahul Bajaj recently said that India Inc was afraid of criticising the Centre's policies. He found

support in Biocon chairperson Kiran Mazumdar Shaw who said the government treated India Inc as "pariahs" and doesn't want to hear any criticism of the economy.
Slamming West Bengal Governor Jagdeep Dhankhar over alleged delay in clearance of bills, she said there was a "parallel administration running in the state."
"I am sorry to say this... The House got adjourned as bills were not signed. We are fighting, and we will fight this out," she added.

Debate over onion prices spices up political talk

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

piralling prices of onion in the country have become the talk of the town, and a subject of banter among politicians.
On Thursday, the onion prices which have been fluctuating for over a month in Delhi, touched Rs 109 per kg in many markets in the city.
The soaring rates may have made a common man's platter a little less appealing, but the ongoing debate over onion prices has surely spiced up verbal exchanges among a few in political circles.
Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday had said in Lok Sabha that the government has taken several steps to check rising prices of onion and to improve technology for better storage of the kitchen staple.
Adding a dash of humour to her statement, she, however, also said she doesn't eat much of onion or garlic, adding, "I belong to a family which does not eat onion and garlic."



When asked about Sitharaman's comment, former finance minister P Chidambaram, who arrived in Parliament on Thursday after spending 106 days in Tihar jail, quipped, "Does she eat avocado?"
Addressing a press conference later, Chidambaram, however, said his comments on the finance minister was not "sarcastic."
"I was not sarcastic, I was quoting her. They should have planned in advance, what is the point of importing (onion) now, when will they arrive. But if the

finance minister says I don't eat onions, that shows the mindset of this government," he said.
Asked about the soaring prices of the bulb across the country, Union minister Ashwini Kumar Choubey said he is not aware of it as he never tasted onions.
The government had on Wednesday said that the state-run trading firm MMTTC has placed another onion import order of 4,000 tonnes from Turkey and the shipments are expected to reach by mid-January.
From Facebook to Twitter, the social media too revelled in some humour over the rising prices of onion, while a few users offered some suggestions.
"Work in Silence, B! Let your Success Buy onion !!! (FEELING PROUD) (sic)," user Raju Roy posted on Facebook and shared a picture of a basket carrying some onions.
Anchit Pandey, another Facebook user wrote in Hindi, "Can live without love (pyaar), but not without onion (pyaaz)."

RAPE SURVIVOR SET ABLAZE Priyanka targets HM, UP CM over law and order

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader Priyanka Gandhi Vadra hit out at the BJP government in Uttar Pradesh over the law-and-order situation in the state on Thursday after a rape survivor was allegedly set on fire in Unnao by five men.
"Yesterday the home minister of the country and the Uttar Pradesh chief minister clearly lied that law and order in Uttar Pradesh has become better. Seeing such incidents everyday angers the mind. BJP leaders should now come out of false propaganda," she said in a tweet.
The Congress general secretary also tagged a news report of the incident, wherein in the rape survivor from Unnao was allegedly set ablaze early on Thursday morning by five men.
"In another tweet, she said, "Hurt by the news of health of the Unnao victim. Pray to God that the victim gains health soon."
"The BJP government's statement of yesterday was that all is well in UP. Today another statement has come. But it is the responsibility of the CM and UP government



to issue false statements and false propaganda," she added.
Uttar Pradesh Congress chief Ajay Kumar Lal also trained his guns on the state government and Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath over the sorry state of affairs, saying a jungle raj was prevailing in the state.
"It is strange that even after such heinous cases, the BJP government is patting its back. The accused, who were in jail, come out and commit another crime. No one is safe in the state," he said, adding that the Congress was standing firmly with the victims of such incidents and would fight for them from the House to the streets.

485 candidates with Hindi as mother tongue passed 2018

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As many as 485 candidates who had chosen Hindi as mother tongue were selected through the civil services examination in 2018, the government said on Thursday. A total of 812 candidates were recommended for central civil services on the basis of the 2018 test. Of these, 485 chose Hindi and the rest had opted for other regional languages as their mother tongue, it said. The civil services examination is conducted annually by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) to select officers of Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Foreign Service (IFS) and Indian Police Service (IPS) among others.
The examination is conducted in three stages -- preliminary, main and interview.
During the 2017 exam, 1,056 candidates were recommended for different services. Of them, 633 had chosen Hindi as their mother tongue, according to data given by Minister of State for Personnel Jitendra Singh in a written reply to the Rajya Sabha. Out of the 1,209 candidates selected in the civil services exam in 2016, 664 had Hindi as their mother tongue. In the 2015 examination, 643 had claimed Hindi as their



The civil services examination is conducted annually by the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) to select officers of Indian Administrative Service (IAS), Indian Foreign Service (IFS) and Indian Police Service (IPS) among others

mother tongue as against 743 such candidates who were selected in the 2014 test.
A total of 1,164 and 1,363 candidates were recommended in civil services examination in 2015 and 2014, respectively.
"The government strives to have a workforce which reflects gender balance and women candidates are encouraged to apply and participate in civil services. Female candidates are exempted from payment of fee for civil services examination," the minister said. Further, relaxation of age up to 35 years (up to 40 years for members of scheduled castes and scheduled tribes) is given to widows, divorced women and women judicially separated from their husbands who are not re-married for employment to Group 'C' and erstwhile Group 'D' posts that already exist, Singh said. Similar relaxation also exists for Group 'A' and Group 'B' posts except where recruitment is made through open competitive examination, he said.

Week on, no portfolio allocation to ministers; BJP slams govt

PNS ■ MUMBAI

BJP leader Ashish Shelar on Thursday criticised the Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi government led by Uddhav Thackeray for failing to allocate portfolios to its ministers even after a week of being sworn in.
The Shiv Sena, Congress and NCP came together and formed the Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi (MVA) government which took office late last month. However, ministers are yet to be allotted portfolios.
"The MVA made promises to Independents at the time of government formation, but eight days after the swearing-in ceremony, not a single ministerial portfolio has been allocated," Shelar said in a statement.
He claimed that there was a "huge unrest" among legislators of all the three MVA alliance partners. Shiv Sena president Uddhav Thackeray was sworn in as chief minister of the state on November 28.
Besides Thackeray, Sena leaders Eknath Shinde and Subhash Desai, NCP MLAs Jayant Patil and Chhagan Bhujaal, and Congress' Balasaheb Thorat and Nitin Raut also took oath, but they have not been assigned any ministry so far. A source said the allocation of portfolios to the six ministers is "expected

The MVA made promises to Independents at the time of government formation, but eight days after the swearing-in ceremony, not a single ministerial portfolio has been allocated

soon". A meeting of prominent Congress and NCP leaders took place in New Delhi earlier this week to discuss the allocation of portfolios, according to sources. "The meeting was attended by NCP's Sharad Pawar and Praful Patel, and Congress leaders Ahmed Patel, Balasaheb Thorat, Ashok Chavan and Nitin Raut. A discussion with the Shiv Sena will follow before taking a final decision," a source said.
As per the sharing of ministerial berths decided among the MVA allies, the Shiv Sena is to get 16 ministries, including the CM's post, the NCP 15, including deputy chief minister's post, and the Congress 12, apart from the Assembly Speaker, sources said. The state government can have a 43-member council of ministers, which is 15 per cent of the total strength of the 288-member Assembly.

Rape survivor torched: NCW seeks report from UP police

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The NCW on Thursday sought a detailed action taken report from the Uttar Pradesh police after a rape survivor was set ablaze allegedly by five men, including two accused of raping her.
In a letter to DGP O P Singh, National Commission for Women chairperson Rekha Sharma also sought a detailed report regarding the number of reported heinous crimes committed against



women and bail granted in such cases in the last three years. Sharma said the com-

Sharma said the commission is 'disturbed' by the rise in crimes against women in the state despite the enactment of several laws to safeguard the rights of women

mission is "disturbed" by the rise in crimes against women in the state despite the enactment of several laws to safeguard the rights of women.
The rape survivor from Unnao was battling for life on Thursday after five men, including two of the accused who are out on bail, allegedly set her on fire while she was on her way to court in Rae

Bareilly, police said. The woman, who was raped in December last year, has 90 per cent burn injuries. The five men have been arrested.
"Considering the gravity of the matter, it is requested to send a detailed action taken report in the matter from the date of filing complaint of rape by the rape survivor and strict action be taken against erring officials for not providing protection to the rape victim, if found guilty," Sharma said in the letter.



PM has assured CBI probe into Fathima's suicide, says Kerala MP

PNS ■ KOCHI

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah have assured a group of MPs that CBI will investigate the recent suicide of a girl student at the Indian Institute of Technology-Madras, RSP leader N K Premachandran, MP, said on Thursday.
Premachandran also said both Modi and Shah have

also informed the MPs that the government is thinking of ordering a CBI probe into the "mysterious deaths and torturing" happening in higher educational institutions in the country.
The MPs met Modi and Shah separately. "Both the PM and Home minister have informed us that the suicide of Madras IIT student Fathima Latheef will be investigated by CBI. The investigation will

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi representing Wayanad constituency in the Lok Sabha is the first signatory in the memorandum
— N K PREMACHANDRAN



be led by an Inspector General rank woman officer," the Kollam MP said.
The Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP) leader said the MPs met Modi and Shah along with Fathima Latheef's father and sister who hail from Kollam in Kerala. A memorandum seeking a CBI probe into the case was handed over to the Prime Minister and Home Minister by the MPs.
"Congress leader Rahul

Gandhi representing Wayanad constituency in the Lok Sabha is the first signatory in the memorandum," Premachandran said.
The crime branch wing of the Tamil Nadu police is now investigating the suicide of Fathima Latheef, a first year Humanities student, on November 9.
The incident had sparked protests in Chennai, with opposition parties including the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, demanding a "transparent" investigation into the death.
Earlier, the students father Latheef had met Tamil Nadu Chief Minister K Palaniswami and the state police chief at Chennai and demanded a fair probe. Latheef has raised several questions and expressed suspicion over a number of aspects related to his daughters death.

Insider vs outsider

By distinguishing immigrants on the basis of religion, the Citizenship Bill goes against the spirit of our Constitution



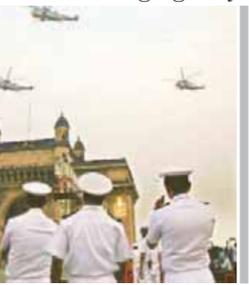
From the looks of it, the resurrected Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, which died in the Rajya Sabha last session because of a lack of numbers and consensus, is a polarising tool meant for the Bengal elections and intimidating Muslims. For it completely keeps the Northeastern States, which equally share the border with Bangladesh, out of its purview, saying most of them have Inner Line Permits and special status that guard them against an influx of "outsiders" (Hindu immigrants in this case) and, therefore, need not

be anxious about a law that would apply for the rest of the country. Opposition to the Bill stems from the fact that it reinforces ethnic and communal faultlines due to its overt and covert support to selective migrants escaping persecution in the neighbourhood. While it proposes to grant Indian citizenship to fleeing Hindus, Sikhs, Buddhists, Jains, Christians and Parsis, who are residents of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh, it excludes persecuted Muslim sects, the Shias and Ahmadiyas. In other words, non-Muslim immigrants would not face deportation and Muslims would. It also proposes to reduce the mandated 11 years of residence in India for citizenship eligibility to six years, hastening cooption. By distinguishing settlers on the basis of religion — that too pitting Muslims versus non-Muslims — the isolationist Bill goes against the fundamental right to equality under Article 14 of the Constitution. Ostensibly, the BJP wants to neutralise the Muslim infiltration in border States, encouraged by votebank politics of past years, with a Hindu influx and effect a demographic change. But this idea is preposterous, simply because there aren't enough Hindus left in these countries who would want to return to their roots. The population of Hindus in Bangladesh at the time of Partition was close to 30 per cent and is currently estimated to be less than five per cent. The Hindu population in Pakistan was 23 per cent at the time of Independence and is currently about one per cent. Afghanistan's Hindu population declined since 1992 from a quarter million to less than 220 families. As of 2017, no more than a few thousand Hindus and Sikhs were left in Afghanistan. The less said about the other minorities the better. So, illegal Muslim infiltration from Bangladesh is the only concern because of porous borders and needs to be monitored. Pakistan does push militants into Kashmir but migrants are hardly a problem in the northwestern part of the country. Clearly, the Bill has been envisioned with Bangladesh as its focus.

Also, now that Assam, Arunachal, Mizoram, Tripura, Meghalaya and Nagaland have been kept out of the Bill's purview, it is clear that the BJP's target is undoing Muslim immigration into Bengal. It has now stepped back from the Northeast simply because it is investing too much in the region in developing a new votebank and strengthening its footprint. Massive protests have already taken place in the Northeast, especially in Assam, where ethnic groups have raised concerns about the burden of "illegal migrants" being passed on to their State alone and it being contradictory to the spirit of the Assam Accord and the just-released National Register of Citizens (NRC) list. The Assamese argue that the Bill granting citizenship to Hindu refugees from across the border till the cutoff year of 2014 would swamp Ahom identity and the right of indigenous people over their land, opportunities and resources. The Conrad Sangma-led Meghalaya Democratic Alliance (MDA), where BJP is a coalition partner, had earlier sought an immediate review while the Mizos feared a massive influx by Buddhist Chakmas. The indigenous people, be it the Assamese, Khasis or the Nagas, argue that the Northeastern States are yet to recover from the influx of Hindu Bengalis from 1971 and, of course, the subsequent illegal Muslim immigrants. They equate all refugees to the drought of economic opportunities for locals and are deeply distrustful of any migration policy. So now that these States are out of the Bill, it effectively applies only to Bengal. Combined with NRC, which is intended to review the status of naturalised settlers, the Bill clearly seeks to loosen up the Muslim votebank in Bengal, which has almost a monolithic loyalty to the Trinamool Congress. The BJP might use the Hindu refugees like the Congress did the Muslim ones but both encourage alienation of locals rather than integration. What everybody seems to forget is that for all our professed secularism, we are carrying the ghosts of Partition. That explains why communalisation is an easy gamble. We cannot afford to derail the peace by stoking such sentiments.

A shipless Navy

India has an ocean when other nations just have seas but it is not doing a great job of protecting its naval interests



When Admiral Karambir Singh bemoaned the lack of funds to the Navy, he stated not just a fact of life but also hinted at just how poorly India has treated its maritime force. This is peculiar given not just India's huge coastal border and the need to protect it but also the need to project itself as a power in the Indian Ocean Region (IOR). Indian interests in the IOR and that of its geographic neighbours are being challenged by the eastern neighbour giant, China, which has been busy acquiring assets across the IOR.

China's "String of Pearls" is one that can potentially be used to strangulate India economically and militarily in case of a potential future conflict with assets like Gwadar in Pakistan. Sri Lanka's Hambantota Port is the most telling example of how China is developing a form of economic imperialism and the potential of deploying that against India. India's dwindling allocation to the Navy as a percentage of all defence funds has the sea service upset, and rightly so, from 18 per cent of overall funds in 2012-13 to 13 per cent in 2019-20. While some could dismiss this as inter-service rivalry and the constant jostling inside the forces for money, a reality in all large military powers, the Indian Navy is currently moth-eaten. New projects have taken eons, best exemplified by the inordinate gestation and commissioning process for the Project 15 and 15A guided missile destroyers. By the time the Project 15B 'Vishakhapatnam-class' ships come into service in 2021-22, India's 10 modern guided missile cruisers will be outnumbered by China's 34 Type 52C, 52D and Type 55 Destroyers. Even for coastal defence, a decision to purchase modern minesweepers have continued for two decades.

The Indian Navy, however, does need to share some blame with an unhealthy obsession with aircraft carriers, a need for power projection that has cost us. Carriers are inordinately expensive, take years to produce and in the Indian context, are of little tactical or strategic value against China, although things are slightly different against Pakistan. India should concentrate on rapidly building up its submarine and smaller surface vessel fleet, which with modern weapons can punch well above their weight. India is an old maritime power and we have an ocean when other nations just have seas. We should be proud of that and protect our interests at all costs.

Graded confusion

The new evaluation system of the Delhi university, which is an amalgam of absolute and relative grading systems, is bizarre and is bound to affect academic standards



SHOBHIT MAHAJAN

Confusion (noun): The state of being bewildered or unclear in one's mind about something. This is how the dictionary defines "confusion." There certainly seems to be a lot of it currently in the hallowed corridors of the University of Delhi. No, "graded" does not refer to a gradual onset of bewilderment; it is about the complete lack of clarity in the evaluation of academic competence.

Recently, the University of Delhi notified new rules for evaluation. The university, which had hitherto been giving absolute marks to students, moved to a grading system. However, the rules governing the conversion of marks to grades, as decided by the university, are bizarre to say the least.

To get an idea of what the changes are, it is important to recapitulate how evaluation was previously done here. Examinations were evaluated and percentage marks were given in each subject. These marks were then moderated — a process, which contrary to the dictionary meaning of the word, essentially meant that the marks were scaled up in case the students did not do well.

This kind of moderation is something everyone is familiar with. Every year, in response to newspaper reports of a "difficult" paper, the Central Board of Secondary Education (CBSE) agrees to "moderate" the results. This leads to an inordinate number of students getting extremely high marks, in some cases they score 100 per cent marks even in subjects like History.

Massive grade inflation, which results from this innocuously named process of massaging the results, has been the norm in the Delhi University, too, for a number of years now. This form of inflation, like its economic counterpart, is obviously corrosive to the academic well-being of the university.

If this assault on academic standards was not bad enough, this year onwards, the evaluation system has undergone another change, which is truly disastrous. The University Grants Commission (UGC) had asked all universities to introduce the grading system from the 2015-16 academic session. The grading scheme ranges from Outstanding (O) to Fail (F). That by itself is not a problem if the conversion of the raw scores in the examination to the grade was either absolute (as has been the norm in many Indian universities) or if the grades are given on a relative scale where the grades only indicate the student's position relative to the entire class (as was suggested by the UGC). This is the norm in most universities in the US as well as some institutes in the country. There is nothing inherently good or bad about either of these systems if they are followed consistently.

However, the University of Delhi, in its wisdom, has decided to come up with an amalgam of absolute and relative grading systems, thereby making a mess of what the grades mean. For instance, a student will get an "O" grade if his/her marks (they have



already been scaled up/moderated) are more than the lower of 90 per cent or mean+2.5 times the standard deviation.

The 90 per cent condition obviously assumes an absolute grading scheme whereby one's score is 90 per cent. The second condition is related to a relative grading scheme. This formula assumes that the marks obtained by a class comprising a reasonable number of students would follow what is called a bell-shaped or normal distribution.

In this distribution system, one can compute the average or mean marks obtained as well the standard deviation, which is a measure of the spread around the mean. Thus, a larger standard deviation means that the marks are more spread out around the mean than in a distribution with the same mean but smaller standard deviation.

One of the properties of a normal distribution is that we can say what percentage of the population (in this case the students) would be in various regions of the marks distribution. Thus, a student whose marks are mean + 2.5 times standard deviation would have higher marks than more than 99 per cent of the students.

One can already see that this curious mixture of absolute

THIS CHANGE IS ACTUALLY MORE PROBLEMATIC THAN SIMPLY SOME NUMBERS. A MAJORITY OF THE STUDENTS IN THE SCIENCES ULTIMATELY END UP TEACHING IN SCHOOLS. WHAT THE UNIVERSITY HAS EFFECTIVELY DONE IS TO ENSURE THAT THE STANDARD REQUIRED TO GET A DEGREE IS LOWERED. THE IMPACT THIS WOULD HAVE ON SCHOOL TEACHING CAN ONLY BE IMAGINED

and relative grading can lead to a strange situation. In principle, one could get an "O" grade even as he/she scores low marks. Consider a class where the mean score is 45 and standard deviation is four. Then anyone with more than 55 marks will get an "O." Looking at the student's grades, one would have no idea whether the "O" signifies absolute (90 per cent) or relative standing.

The impact of this at the lower end of the grades is even more disastrous. A student needs the lower of 30 per cent or (mean — standard deviation) to pass the course. Now, if the grading was purely relative, what this would mean is that about 16 per cent of the students would necessarily fail. However, the rule stipulates the lower of the two figures. Thus, if the mean and standard deviation is such that the number comes out to be more than 30 per cent, anyone with 30 per cent would pass. On the other hand, if that number comes out to be less than 30 per cent, then those marks are all that are needed to pass. Thus, 30 per cent is the maximum in any paper that would be required by a student to pass the exam.

Hitherto, the percentage required to pass any exam in the

university was 40 per cent. This has now been effectively brought down to a maximum of 30 per cent. One can argue that there is nothing sacrosanct about 40 per cent and it is as arbitrary a number as any other. This may be strictly true but what is undeniable is that this would lead to a lowering of academic standards.

This change is actually more problematic than simply some numbers. A majority of the students in the sciences ultimately end up teaching in schools. What the university has effectively done is to ensure that the standard required to get a degree is lowered. The impact this would have on school teaching can only be imagined.

The University of Delhi was only recently deemed as an Institute of Eminence. The philosophy behind this controversial scheme is to endow some institutions to improve their positions in the global university rankings, which seem to have acquired a talisman-like aura with our education planners. Mandating a lowering of academic standards, as one is witnessing in higher education, is certainly an odd way to achieve that objective.

(The writer is professor of physics and astrophysics, University of Delhi)

SOUNDBITE

There are 15 to 16 cases against me. When you look at a soldier, he will have lots of medals on his chest. Every single case is a medal for me.

Congress leader
—Rahul Gandhi



There is a universal wish in most religions and in most parts of the world to wipe out old-fashioned practices when literacy becomes widespread.

Historian
—William Dalrymple



Not standing up to a President who abuses power would set a wrong precedent, and that is not good for the future of the country.

Indian-American Congresswoman
—Pramila Jayapal



I thought the Finance Minister said she does not eat onions, she is not bothered... What does she eat? Does she eat avocado? She does not eat onions.

Congress leader
—P Chidambaram



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Women deserve respect

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Crying shame" (December 2). There is a widespread protest in various parts of the country demanding public lynching, chemical castration and capital punishment for perpetrators of the brutal sexual assault and grisly murder of a young veterinarian in Hyderabad. Some of our politicians, too, have demanded the same.

At this juncture, my heart goes out to the young girl of Kathua in Jammu & Kashmir, who was abducted, raped for days and then murdered. At that time, the arrests of the accused saw some heartless and communal-minded elements opposing the crackdown. The gravest shock was the presence of people with political affiliations taking part in these protests.

For long, I have been against capital punishment for rapists. When confronted with conscience-jolting acts of depravity, it is but normal for people to act in anger and revulsion. Instead, the need is to address the patriarchal inequality inscribed in daily life against women.

A blueprint to revive the economy

The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth for the second quarter of the financial year 2019-20 registered a further fall, slipping to 4.5 per cent from the first quarter rate of five per cent. The informal sector, which was neither indexed, monitored or taxed, never figured in its computation. Experts feel that the slowdown was always more pronounced in the unorganised sector, which is far more dependent on cash. As is wont, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman chose to play down the crisis in Parliament and sought to reel out extraneous details and figures. Truth be told, the Indian economy is faced with a catastrophic recession today. Core sectoral output has shrunk with associated effects on allied manufacturing activities.

Private businesses, which had been in expansion mode prior to the onset of the slowdown, have now started scaling back capacity utilisation to minimise systematic risk. And if revenue, whether from sales or investment, dips any further, many small firms will be forced to pull their shutters down. Peremptory cut in corporate tax and a stimulus package for the realty sector were reportedly meant to encourage investment and mitigate liquidity crunch. Bereft of budgetary leverage, the Government then indulged in the forcible appropriation



of the contingency fund of the RBI and is now in a hurry to forsake its ownership of profit-making PSUs. The question, however is: Will the tax cut or stimulus engineer a spurt in growth? Or will it lead to a pick-up in consumption/demand? Or is it that under the pretext of structural adjustments, the Government has gone overboard to shield the corporates from existing unpredictability? Only time will unravel the truth. For the time being, only a multi-pronged strategy can resurrect the economy.

Haridasan Rajan
Kozhikode

Overworked cops

Sir — As per data released by the Bureau of Police Research and Development (BPRD) on July 2, 4,000 police personnel protect about 300 VIPs in Telangana. The

VIPs include 17 Lok Sabha MPs, six Rajya Sabha MPs, 120 MLAs and 40 MLCs, among others.

The Chief Minister, State Ministers, a junior Union Minister, Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, Chairman of the Council, judges and

bureaucrats are all included in the VIP list.

The scenario, however, changes when it comes to protecting the common man. According to the BPRD's data, 131 cops take care of a population of one lakh in Telangana as against the national average of 193 cops per one lakh population.

Also, a single policeman mans an area of 2.5 square km, much below the national average of a 1.27 personnel per square kilometre. Telangana is also hamstrung by the lack of police personnel. In fact, it faces the highest shortfall of cops after Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and West Bengal in the country.

And the entire nation, including the media, leaders in the Opposition, activists and the public spewed venom at the police department for its poor handling of the veterinarian's case who was raped, murdered and then burnt. Did the media ever bother to highlight the poor conditions under which a cop, in any part of this country, lives, works or resides?

P Arihanth
Secunderabad

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

A golden investment

Putting money in gold has its pros and cons. However, including it in the portfolio is vital to hedge against volatility and inflation



HIMA BINDU KOTA

Indians have a major love for gold and hold it in high regard as a safe investment option and a nest egg for future generations, especially women. It is estimated that a large chunk of the 700-800 tonnes of gold that India imports goes into making jewellery as women and families traditionally like to think of it as a substitute for money. Even now, gold has not lost its glitter among the host of investment options available like stocks, bonds, mutual funds and real estate, to name a few, as historically, it offers a perfect hedge and stability when the markets do not. This is because it has an inverse relationship to equity investments.

For instance, if the equity markets start performing poorly, gold would have performed well. Adding the yellow metal to an investment portfolio forms a buffer against overall volatility. Additionally, putting money in gold is worthwhile because it is an inflation-beating investment. Over a period of time, the return on gold investment is in line with the rate of inflation.

Increasing political and economic uncertainty in the country and globally is a harsh reality of the times we are living in and it affects the economic environment everywhere. Hence, gold is considered a safe haven in ambiguous circumstances. In fact, history is full of falling empires, political coups and the collapse of currencies. During such times, investors who held gold were able to successfully protect their wealth and in some cases, even use the commodity to escape from the turmoil. Consequently, whenever there is news that events might lead to global economic uncertainty, investors often buy gold as a safe haven.

Any rational investor should include the yellow metal in his portfolio to provide stability and diversify against sharp movement in equity and bond prices.

People can invest in Gold Exchange Traded Funds (ETFs). These are simple products that combine the flexibility of stocks and the simplicity of gold as an investment. ETFs trade on the cash market of the stock exchanges, like any other company stock. They can be bought and sold continuously at market prices. ETFs are excellent passive instruments that are based on gold prices and invest in bullion. Because they are backed by gold, ETFs have complete transparency. Due to their unique structure and creation mechanism, ETFs have much lower expenses as compared to physical gold holding. Gold ETFs are ideal for those who would like to invest in the yellow metal but do not want to suffer the hassles and bear the costs of storing and safeguarding it.

Gold equity funds invest in the shares of firms that are involved in gold mining. These are pure equity funds and are often international in nature since there are not many listed gold mining firms in India. Like any other stock fund, they can deliver much higher returns than pure gold. But when gold prices are low, mining companies shut mines as the cost of production is higher than realisation costs. Stocks of such mining companies were battered for many years. Investors have to deal with three risks in these funds. First, returns from these funds are dependent on gold price movement. Second, these gold funds invest in stocks, which means they carry the risk associated with shares. Third, there is also currency exchange risk. This means if the rupee appreciates, returns can get affected. Gold equity funds are best suited for sophisticated investors and are not ideal for a retail investor.

With the advent of the Sovereign Gold Bond (SGB) scheme investing in the yellow metal has become much easier and convenient now. With the Union Government's SGB scheme, an investor can earn an assured interest rate, eliminating risk and cost of storage. The SGB 2018-19 Series-I has a subscription price of ₹3,114 per gram and an individual can buy a maximum of 4 kg. SGBs provide attractive interest rates with an asset appreciation opportunity. The annual interest rate offered is 2.5 per cent and the interest is tax free. The redemption is linked to gold prices. There is 100 per cent elimination of risk and cost of storage. Also, SGBs are exempt from capital gains tax, if held till maturity. The bonds carry a tenure of eight years with an option to exit from the fifth year onwards. SGBs are the most efficient way of putting money in gold from an investment point of view if you can stay put for five years or more. Importantly, indexation benefit is available if the bond is transferred before maturity. Gold bonds score high on liquidity as they are tradable on the exchanges. Also, they can be collateral against a loan, an aspect that is missing in ETFs.

Like every investment, putting money in gold also has its pros and cons. However, including it in the portfolio is vital to hedge against volatility and inflation. Depending upon the economic, financial and political situation, the level of diversification should range anywhere between five per cent to 30 per cent.

(The writer is Assistant Professor, Arny University)

POINT COUNTERPOINT

I DON'T EAT A LOT OF ONIONS AND GARLIC, SO DON'T WORRY (ABOUT PRICE RISE AND SHORTAGE). MY FAMILY DOESN'T HAVE MUCH TO DO WITH ONIONS.

—FINANCE MINISTER
NIRMALA SITHARAMAN



THE FINANCE MINISTER SAID YESTERDAY SHE DOES NOT EAT ONIONS, SHE IS NOT BOTHERED... WHAT DOES SHE EAT? DOES SHE EAT AVOCADO?

—FORMER FINANCE MINISTER
P CHIDAMBARAM

Unshakeable courage

Twenty five years after Latur was jolted by an earthquake that left a trail of destruction, several thousand women affected by the tragedy are recognised as transformational leaders



MOIN QAZI

Over 26 years ago, on September 30, 1993, Latur district in the Marathwada region of Maharashtra was jolted by an earthquake that left a trail of mass destruction. It ravaged hundreds of villages and uprooted multitudes of people.

Today, several thousand women among those severely affected by the tragedy are recognised as transformational leaders. How these semi-literate and impoverished women converted adversity into opportunity and finally prosperity is a saga of grit and tenacity. The glue that bonded them and provided the necessary impetus towards leading a revolution was a passionate and indefatigable social entrepreneur, Prema Gopalan. Schooled and trained in disaster management, she began reconstruction and rehabilitation work among these women and in 1998 formally launched Swayam Shikshan Prayog (SSP) (self-education for empowerment) with a larger and long-term mission of self-empowerment and self-learning.

The crisis and the consequent social mobilisation for reconstruction of houses gave people the opportunity and impetus for large, community-centered efforts and started creating models for building community resilience. SSP started out as a not-for-profit, helping bridge the gap between the community and the Government following the temblor. It worked to enable women from the community to monitor the relief effort and act as intermediaries by giving feedback to the Government on the progress of building work, selection of beneficiaries and what was needed on the ground.

Prema realised the potential of these rural women and believed they could grow into planners in local development and governance. Building on their capacities, she steered them through a broad-based development strategy of economic and social empowerment. It helped her conceptualise the broad vision for SSP. The objective of SSP is to promote inclusive and sustainable community development among low income women in climate-threatened areas by building robust ecosystems that could enable them to access skills training, financial and digital literacy and technology and marketing platforms. They have become equipped to navigate the challenges posed by climate change, natural disasters, agriculture, health and sanitation. They also have the negotiating skills to deal with Government agencies and local self-Government bodies.

Women are at the centre of SSP's work, creating the tools, services, and networks they need to break through complex and entrenched situations of poverty and the caprices of the climate. The purpose of its partnerships — spanning entrepreneurship, health, agriculture, technology and financial services — is to create sustainable solutions that can be broadly implemented to improve the lives of women living in poor, rural communities.

Prema believes that rural women should be acknowledged for who they really are — a new generation of dynamic entrepreneurs, job-creators and economy drivers, committed to bringing a change in their communities. She has steered thousands of women in the most vulnerable communities in drought and flood-affected villages by partnering them with global and local businesses to set up sustainable last-mile social enterprises in clean energy, sanitation, basic health services, nutrition and safe agriculture. They have transitioned from self-employment to diversify their ventures, aggregate into

“HOW THESE SEMI-LITERATE AND IMPOVERISHED WOMEN CONVERTED ADVERSITY INTO OPPORTUNITY AND FINALLY PROSPERITY. IS A SAGA OF GRIT AND TENACITY. THE GLUE THAT BONDED THEM AND PROVIDED THE NECESSARY IMPETUS TOWARDS LEADING A REVOLUTION WAS A PASSIONATE AND INDEFATIGABLE SOCIAL ENTREPRENEUR, PREMA GOPALAN”



value chains and mentor thousands of others to get on the path of entrepreneurship

Prema is a recipient of Social Entrepreneur of the Year Award, 2018 of the Schwab Foundation and the SSP has received a large number of global and national awards including the Equator Prize, 2017 from UNDP and UNFCCC Momentum for Change Award, 2016 for Communities and Climate Change.

One of the key issues that Prema and her team are targeting is climate change and have identified six impact areas. They are linked to agriculture, water and energy resources, food security, health, climate-related natural disasters and climate-induced migration.

“Women can reverse climate change impact for the poor by leading from the front,” says Prema. Among the impoverished, women face the brunt of risks associated with climate change since they are primary managers of energy, water, food and essential services. Hence clean energy products dominate social businesses of these women. Prema's team is enabling thousands of women to succeed in remote markets by selling everything — from solar chargers for mobile phones to more efficient cooking stoves — that can lift a rural household out of extreme poverty. The businesses are leveraging the last-mile rural women's entrepreneurship network for awareness generation on clean energy technologies and access to products and services.

The SSP model comprises four ventures: A resilience fund for women-led businesses; a fraternity of 5,000 self-help groups networked through federations; a rural school of entrepreneurship and leadership for women which provides business, financial and marketing skills; and a market aggregator that provides warehousing, branding, marketing and distribution services to last-mile business

women. The consortium nurtures the value chains and entrepreneurial ecosystems that women need to succeed in remote and opaque markets.

Rural women are the human face of poverty and development. They toil on their farms but lack access to land titles and are therefore, not recognised as farmers. This, in turn, denies them access to finance to update their farm, training technology and markets. SSP's women entrepreneurs are taking their communities forward, reshaping the local economy, securing food self-sufficiency, driving local initiatives for increasing incomes, creating jobs, building access to key assets in times of crisis and creating a lasting impact. As a result, they are no longer perceived as beneficiaries; instead they have emerged as partners.

There has also been a failure of agricultural strategy over the last decade, as food crops have gradually been abandoned in favour of cash crops such as sugar cane, which is more profitable but is highly water-intensive. In such a scenario, sustainable and diversified agriculture is the only solution to stop the deepening of India's agrarian crisis, especially since the impacts of climate change are now visible. Water insecurity lies at the core of the crisis. Shifting to organic farming (which increases soil fertility) to grow drought-resistant varieties that provide additional incomes and household nutritional security while simultaneously enhancing biodiversity, is a viable option.

One of the most revolutionary contributions of SSP is in bringing about this shift to sustainable farming and protection of water and natural resources. Men are losing interest in farming but women continue to work the land. The SSP has empowered women farmers in climate-resilient agricultural practices. These women are now active decision-makers on core issues

like growing crops, conserving natural resource and increasing biodiversity. In this arid zone, these women collectives have made farming breakthroughs possible. Through the years, SSP has created large-scale programmes aimed at development centered on women's participation and leadership. SSP has also built a support system of village-level networks of entrepreneurs known as *sakhis* (friends). An innovative intervention is in rural health care. SSP selects and trains women who are landless but have basic education, are interested in health care and community service. These *Arogya Sakhis* are community members who receive basic training and live and work in the communities they serve.

“These women conduct a series of preventive tests using mobile health devices, capture the data by using a tablet and upload the results on the cloud server developed by our technology partner,” says Prema. The data is then shared with a doctor, who analyses it and provides a report and prescriptions over the cloud. The *Sakhis* then guide the patients on the treatment and precautions to be taken. Wherever needed, they are referred to hospitals for further treatment.

The Government, too, has learnt from these initiatives and public health programmes are modelled round them. The community health workers, including the Accredited Social Health Activists (ASHA) and the Auxiliary Nurse Midwife, are indeed the foundation of our public health care system and have played a central role in its success, thereby reducing maternal and child mortality. ASHAs are central to India's strategy to improve maternal and child health and are selected by the village they serve.

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

Time for serious introspection

As rape-cum-murders and voyeurs watching gruesome videos of crimes on porn sites become more rampant, society needs to mull over the reasons for such moral decay and later augment its institutions to restore ethics



PURVA BHATT

should learn martial arts; maybe she should just die in the womb.”

Such gender inequalities in this process find both confirmatory bias and social legitimisation, which again become a cause for concern.

We Indians are highly sensitive, emotional and empathic people, yet we are the ones with a transient memory. We vehemently vent our angst and frustration with a few candle marches, displaying our momentary spur of rebellion and then get caught in the daily humdrum of our lives.

However, the fact remains that our society is facing moral decay! While on one hand the majority of the nation was mourning over and petrified by the unfortunate rape and cold-blooded murder on the streets of Hyderabad, on the other hand, the name of the victim was searched more than eight million times on a porn website by voyeurs and perverts.

Where most of us might again eloquently pour out our vexation, exasperation, anger, through a few social media posts, rallies and march-

es, the “illusion introspection” deflects us from pondering upon the *de facto* cause of such savagery.

It diverts us from perusing social patterns by conveniently passing on the buck and putting it all down to the State's inefficiency. The State ensures a “public prosecutor” bearing in mind the underlying assumption that the act is a breach not only of legal but also of social laws and the defendant poses a threat to society.

Then how can society behave like a passive observer that is dependent upon the State's discretion, by shifting all the responsibility to the State? The idea of what is morally “wrong” and “right” has been intricately discussed in Indian society. Our society talks about ethically right, morally right, socially right even universally right conduct and notions in much more detail than any other civilisation.

These weren't just topics of discussions by a few intellectuals but were principles understood and practised by the masses in their daily lives. The philosophy of dharma (often intentionally confused with

religion) was one such concept. Our society inculcated a sense of ethical, moral and social values through various social institutions such as family, education and even occupation.

The State should be encircled, held responsible and asked all the inconvenient questions. However, what is also important is for members of society to wake up and own up to the issue of moral decay. Politicians and the State's other institutions must be held accountable but not just when such saturation limits are crossed.

The State should have been questioned by society even when it removed moral science from school curriculum; the State should have been interrogated when it took upon itself to decide society's curriculum, pedagogy and syllabus, even when it took control of our social and religious institutions.

Decadence and depravity in any society is not just the concern of politicians, to be discussed and deliberated upon to form corrective policies. It is for the society to introspect, discuss and correct.

Sadly, society has let the State systematically encroach upon much of its authority and responsibility, consequently leading to the weakening of social norms and sanctions. When was the last time we discussed in our families social values, moral consciousness, ethical conduct, the idea of collectivism, the thought of the peace mantra *Sarve bhavantu sukhinah!*

There has been a systematic demolition of prominent institutions which in various ways maintained the moral density of society. Society, after ceding its powers to the State, started behaving like a beneficiary of its pity and benevolence. However, society cannot shed all responsibility and just pass the buck to the State.

Its members need to question their role in the decadence that has crept into society. While the nation ensures uniformity of legal norms and sanctions on all its citizens, why do the deterrents against committing crime have varying effects on different individuals? We need to ask ourselves a simple question, whether our

fathers or any other men we admire, would have ever committed such a gruesome act even if there was no fear of punishment for rape? The answer in most cases would have been a resounding “no.”

However, the perpetrators of the barbaric act still did it, with seemingly little or no fear of strict legal norms. Therefore, as a sociologist, I would argue that the power of social norms is often more persuasive than legal norms. The aforementioned argument therefore again puts the ball in the court of society which needs to carefully examine its role, its moral decay and the power that it has ceded to the State.

This does not mean that society must develop its mechanisms to ensure justice, it would be in complete binary opposition to the argument presented here. What society needs is to introspect over reasons for such moral decay and later augment its institutions to restore ethical density.

(The writer is an Assistant Professor in Humanities and Social Science and researcher, MNIT)



FOREIGN EYE



A TOXIC ALLIANCE SHUNNED BY BORIS

The US President's departure from London came as a relief to Boris Johnson as Donald Trump is a fan of Brexit and praises the Prime Minister as the man to deliver it. His presence in UK was an electoral hazard for the Conservatives as some voters admire Trump but most do not. It is no recommendation for the Tory leader to be liked by a man notorious for dishonesty, ignorance, narcissism and chauvinism. (The Guardian editorial)

RBI lowers FY20 GDP growth forecast to 5%

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank of India on Thursday unexpectedly hit a pause button on cutting interest rate as it gave more importance to prevailing inflation pressure and rising food prices over a worrying slowdown in the economy.

After five consecutive cuts in interest rates this year, the six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC), headed by RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das, unanimously voted to hold the key repo rate at 5.15 per cent and reverse repo rate at 4.90 per cent.

Bankers and economists had widely expected the central bank to cut rates for the sixth time to support a slowing economy, whose growth rate slipped to a six-year low of 4.5 per cent in the September quarter from 7 per cent a year back.

The RBI reiterated that it would maintain an accommodative stance as long as necessary to revive economic growth but cut its GDP growth forecast to 5 per cent for the 2019-20 fiscal from the earlier estimate of 6.1 per cent.

Das said the pause was temporary and the central bank wanted to assess the effect of its policy after reduction of 135 basis points in five policies this year.

Banks have passed on only 44 basis points of the rate cuts to borrowers, he said.

"There is space available for further monetary policy action," Das told reporters here, adding that there is a need to "maximise the impact of rate reductions".

According to the RBI, the need at this juncture is to address impediments, which are holding back investments in the economy.

Das said the central bank cannot "mechanically" keep cutting interest rates every time and that it will wait for the impact of the coordinated measures taken by the government and the RBI over the past few months to push growth to play out before taking a call on rates.

While there are green shoots in the economy, it is too early to take a call on their sustainability, Das said.

The recent measures initiated by the government will help to revive sentiment and spur domestic demand, which



Reserve Bank of India (RBI) Governor Shaktikanta Das, along with his deputies, arrives for the RBI's bi-monthly monetary policy review meeting, in Mumbai, Thursday

is being blamed as prime reasons for the slowdown, he added.

Further, Das said there is good coordination between the fiscal and monetary policies so far in addressing growth concerns and that the RBI is not worried about government missing fiscal deficit target.

The MPC recognises that there is monetary policy space for future action. However, given the evolving growth-inflation dynamics, the MPC felt it appropriate to take a pause at this juncture," the MPC said in a statement.

Das said this was a "temporary pause" in the interest rate cutting cycle and the MPC will be better placed to decide on it in February after more data comes in and the government brings out its Budget for 2020-21.

"Let the impact of 135 basis point cut play out more," he said and emphasised that timing was important rather than mechanically cutting rates.

Stating that headline inflation at 4.6 per cent in October was "much higher than expected," the central bank raised upwards its inflation forecast for the second half of the fiscal year to 5.1-4.7 per cent from 3.5-3.7 per cent seen previously.

Bankers and economists had widely expected the central bank to cut rates for the sixth time to support a slowing economy, whose growth rate slipped to a six-year low of 4.5 per cent in the September quarter from 7 per cent a year back

Co-op banks with Rs 500 cr assets to be under CRILC

MUMBAI: The Reserve Bank of India on Thursday announced a slew of measures, including bringing all urban cooperative banks (UCBs) with an asset base of Rs 500 crore and more under the ambit of the CRILC reporting framework, a development that will help in curbing PMC Bank type of frauds.

The RBI has created a Central Repository of Information on Large Credits (CRILC) of scheduled commercial banks, all-India financial institutions and certain non-banking financial companies with multiple objectives, which, among

With a view to building a similar database of large credits extended by primary UCBs, it has been decided to bring such entities with assets of Rs 500 crores and above under the CRILC reporting framework

— RBI STATEMENT

others, include strengthening offsite supervision and early recognition of financial distress, according to the RBI's Statement on Developmental and Regulatory Policies.

"With a view to building a similar database of large credits extended by primary UCBs, it has been decided to bring such entities with assets of Rs 500 crores and above under the CRILC reporting

framework," it said. Detailed instructions in this regard will be issued by the end of the month, it said.

With a view to reduce concentration risk in the exposures of UCBs and to further strengthen the role of them in promoting financial inclusion, it is proposed to amend certain regulatory guidelines related to them.

The guidelines would primarily relate to exposure norms for single and group/interconnected borrowers, promotion of financial inclusion, and priority sector lending, among others, it said.



Aggregate lending limit hiked to Rs 50 L for P2P lenders

MUMBAI: With a view to expand peer to peer (P2P) lending platform business, the Reserve Bank on Thursday raised aggregate lending limit by five times to Rs 50 lakh for such lenders.

At present, the aggregate limits for both borrowers and lenders across all P2P platforms stand at Rs 10 lakh, whereas exposure of a single lender to a single borrower is capped at Rs 50,000 across all NBFC-P2P platforms.

"A review of the functioning of the lending platforms and lending limit was carried out and it has been decided that in order to give the next push to the lending platforms, the aggregate exposure of a lender to all borrowers at any point of time, across all P2P platforms, shall be subject to a cap of Rs 50 lakh," the RBI said in its statement on developmental and regulatory policies.

Further, it has also proposed to do away with the current requirement of escrow accounts to be operated by bank promoted



This will help provide more flexibility in operations and necessary instructions in this regard will be issued shortly

trustee for transfer of funds having to be necessarily opened with the concerned bank.

This will help provide more flexibility in operations and necessary instructions in this regard will be issued shortly, it said.

Commenting on announcement, NBFC-P2P platform Finzy head of product Apoorv Gawde said the decision will help expand the

industry and increase the confidence of investors in the asset class.

"It will help building scale in two major forms - existing investors who have experienced the power of P2P will now get an opportunity to increase their participation and a new segment of HNI investors will also begin to see the value of this asset class thanks to the increased limits," he said.

New prepaid card soon for transactions up to Rs 10,000

MUMBAI: The Reserve Bank on Thursday proposed to introduce a prepaid payment instrument (PPI) that could be used only for transactions of goods and services worth up to Rs 10,000.

PPIs have been playing an important role in promoting digital payments and bringing in the new PPI will further facilitate its usage, as per an RBI statement issued post announcement of the monetary review on Thursday.

"To further facilitate its (PPI) usage, it is proposed to introduce a new type of PPI which can be used only for purchase of goods and services up to a limit of Rs 10,000," the statement said.

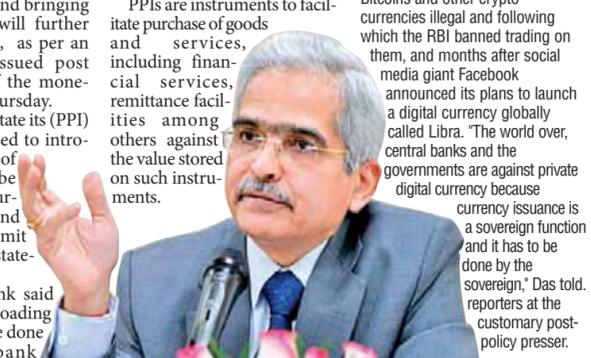
The central bank said the loading and reloading of such PPIs can be done only from a bank

account and used for making bill payments and merchant payments.

Such PPIs can be issued on the basis of essential minimum details sourced from the customer.

The RBI said it will give instructions in this regard by December 31, 2019.

PPIs are instruments to facilitate purchase of goods and services, including financial services, remittance facilities among others against the value stored on such instruments.



announced its plans to launch a digital currency globally called Libra. "The world over, central banks and the governments are against private digital currency because currency issuance is a sovereign function and it has to be done by the sovereign," Das told reporters at the customary post-policy presser.

CAPSULE



Gold falls Rs 74, silver tumbles Rs 771

NEW DELHI: Old prices on Thursday fell by Rs 74 to Rs 38,985 per 10 gram in the national capital on rupee appreciation. The precious metal had closed at Rs 39,059 per 10 gram in the previous trade, according to HDFC Securities. Silver also dropped by Rs 771 to Rs 45,539 per kg from Rs 46,310 per kg on Wednesday. "Spot gold for 24 Karat in Delhi declined by Rs 74 on rupee appreciation along with strong Asian currencies. The spot rupee was trading 7 paise stronger against the dollar during the day," HDFC Securities Senior Analyst (Commodities) Tapan Patel said. Gold prices seasawed in the last two days on flipping news about the US-China trade deal, Patel added. In the international market, both gold and silver prices were trading flat. While the yellow metal was trading at USD 1,475.4 per ounce, silver was quoting at USD 16.88 per ounce. Motilal Oswal Financial Services Ltd VP - Commodities Research Navneet Damani said, "US imposing tariffs on Brazil and Argentina and various comments from US President (Donald Trump) kept the momentum positive for precious metal." "Although few sources reported that the US-China are said to move closer to a deal despite the heated rhetoric which capped the bullion's rally," he added.

'Growth rate to go up again like earlier'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister Rao Inderjit Singh on Thursday said 4.5 per cent growth rate in the September quarter was not "unprecedented" and hoped that the gross domestic product will improve.

"There is nothing to be worried about it. 4.5 per cent is the second quarter (September quarter) assessment. In the next quarter, we hope that it would go up again," said Singh, who is Minister of State for Statistics, Programme Implementation and Planning, in the Rajya Sabha.



He added that the growth rate has also gone down earlier also and then bounced back in the following quarter.

"Concerns have been raised about GDP, which has come down to 4.5 per cent in the second quarter," he said adding that "this is something which is not unprecedented".

In 2008-09 also, the GDP fell to 3.9 per cent (on the base year of 2004-05).

"Immediately after, in the next year, the GDP went up by 8.5 per cent. Our country has such resilience to overtake this 4.5 per cent GDP that has come into the second quarter," he said.

Share markets end lower in a see-saw trade

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Benchmark indices Sensex and Nifty closed lower in topsy-turvy trade on Thursday after the Reserve Bank surprised with its decision to hold key policy rates.

At the closing bell, the 30-share BSE gauge Sensex was lower by 70.70 points or 0.17 per cent at 40,779.59. The index swung between losses and gains after the central bank kept the rates unchanged.

The 50-scrip NSE Nifty settled the day with a loss of 24.80 points or 0.21 per cent at 12,018.40.

On the Sensex chart, Bharti Airtel, Tata Steel, IndusInd Bank, HeroMoto Corp and



Tata Motors were among the major laggards.

On the other hand, TCS, ITC, L&T, Infosys and Tech Mahindra led the gains.

Sectorally, metal index fell the most, followed by basic materials and energy indices.

Capital goods, IT and tech indices moved higher.

The RBI unexpectedly kept

benchmark interest rates unchanged on concerns of headline inflation breaching its medium-term target.

After five consecutive cuts in interest rates this year, the six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) headed by RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das unanimously voted to hold the key repo rate at 5.15 per cent and reverse repo rate at 4.90 per cent.

Bankers and economists had widely expected the central bank to cut rates for a sixth time to support a slowing economy, whose growth rate slipped further to a six-year low of 4.5 per cent in the September quarter from 7 per cent a year back.

RBI DECISION TO HOLD RATES

Realty players express disappointment

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Cash-starved realtors expressed disappointment over the RBI's decision on Thursday to keep the benchmark lending rate unchanged and said the apex bank should have cut repo rate by 1 percentage point to boost housing sales and economic growth.

"India Inc. was expecting a rate cut of 100 basis points instead of small tinkering such as a rate cut of 25 basis points, which would have provided a boost to the government's recent initiatives to kick-start GDP growth," NAREDCO President Niranjan Hiranandani said.

"The decision to wait and watch the outplay of previous cuts will go against the current sentiments. The markets overall are disappointed," he said, adding that real estate developers are facing liquidity crunch. Knight FRank India CMD



Shishir Bajjal said the RBI's decision to not lower interest rate has come "as a surprise and a bit of a disappointment to the industry".

"Lower interest rate would have helped push up credit demand and investment in the economy, aiding overall economic growth. It would have provided much required reprieve to some ailing sectors like real

estate and auto," he added.

Anarock Chairman Anuj Puri said, "From a real estate point of view, rate cuts are obviously always welcome as they help improve overall sentiment. The expected rate cut of 25 basis points would have caused home loan values to fall below 8 per cent for first time ever".

Sanjay Dutt, MD & CEO, Tata Realty & Infrastructure

Lower interest rate would have helped push up credit demand and investment in the economy, aiding overall economic growth. It would have provided much required reprieve to some ailing sectors like real estate and auto

—SHISHIR BAJJAL
Knight FRank India CMD

Ltd said, "This time while the focus of the RBI remains to be on reviving the economy, we are disappointed to see no change in the policy rate".

The real estate industry, in particular, has been facing some difficult times and with inventories piling up the need to push demand and encourage purchase is now more than ever, he added. However, Anshuman Magazine, Chairman & CEO - India, South East Asia, Middle

East & Africa, CBRE, said the RBI's decision to keep the repo rate unchanged is an indication towards the government's focus on the evolving inflation-growth dynamics.

JLL India CEO & Country Head Ramesh Nair said the central bank by keeping the rates unchanged has recognised that the need of the hour is to infuse confidence about the economic growth through a holistic approach.

"The decision to maintain policy rates augurs well for the economy as the recently introduced policy reforms will take time to pan out and materialise. The economy needs to absorb the impact of the recently introduced reforms and the previous rate cuts. The real estate sector is expected to pick up due to the favourable policy incentives and the faster transmission of previous rate cuts," he added.

'Natural gas consumption to rise 3-fold in 10 yrs'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India's natural gas consumption will have to rise more than three-folds in next 10 years for the environment friendly fuel's share to increase to 15 per cent in the country's energy basket, Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said on Thursday adding that a massive USD 60 billion is being spent to expand gas infrastructure to meet such a demand.

Natural gas currently makes up for 6.2 per cent of all energy consumed in the country. To cut dependence on polluting coal and liquid fuels, the government is targeting its share to rise to 15 per cent by 2020-30.

"Gas consumption has to rise to 600 million standard cubic metres per day for achieving 15 per cent share in energy basket" from current levels of 166 mmscmd, he said at a FICCI conference on gas infrastructure.

The current consumption comprises 80-90 mmscmd of

To cut dependence on polluting coal and liquid fuels, the govt is targeting its share to rise to 15% by 2020-30

domestic output and the remaining coming by way of imports, he said.

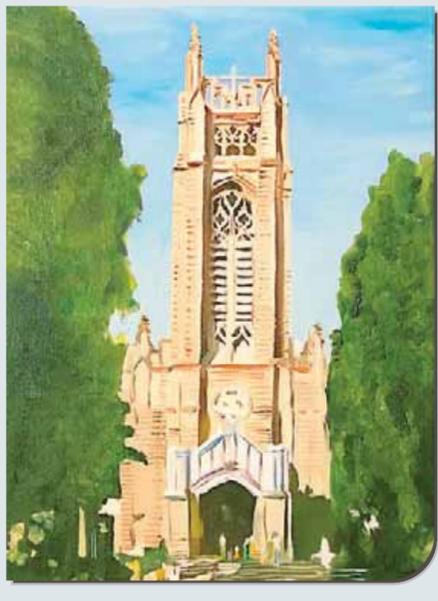
"A massive USD 60 billion is being spent on building gas infrastructure to meet the demand," he said.

The investment is being done in building LNG import terminals, laying pipelines and expanding city gas distribution network so that the usage of non-polluting fuel in the country rises.

Pradhan said natural gas, having dual advantages of being cleaner as well as a cheaper fuel (when compared with liquid fuels like diesel and furnace oil), could help steer India as a transition/bridging fuel towards a 'low carbon future'.



Union Minister for Petroleum & Natural Gas and Steel, Dharmendra Pradhan witnessing the Demonstration and Experimental driving of xEV vehicles, in New Delhi on December 05, 2019. Secretary, Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas, Dr M.M. Kutty is also seen.



PORTRAYING NATURE'S INSPIRATIONS

Chintakayala Prashanth finds his inspiration to create art in the midst of nature and people. He speaks to V SATEESH REDDY about the importance of ambience

A conducive ambience is important for an artist to visualise his thoughts and convert them into art. Since the bustling, high voltage sounds of the city disturb the train of thoughts, many artists prefer to work in solitude. Hyderabad-based artist Chintakayala Prashanth, who once came to know about the immense inspiration nature can offer when alone, prefers to work in the wild. Prashanth recently completed his art tour from Bangalore to Kanyakumari in 80 days on his bicycle. In admiration of the diverse cultures, traditions and monuments he came across during his journey, he captured

them in a series of portraits on canvas. Speaking to *The Pioneer*, Prashanth says, "I have been in the art field for 15 years. I did my Bachelors in Arts from the Jawaharlal Nehru Architecture and Fine Arts University (JNAFAU), Masab Tank. My media for my art is sketching and watercolours. What I learnt from my travels is that the work I produce amid nature is better than what I do in public which has so many noises distracting me. I found that ambience plays key role in perfecting the expression of art." He adds, "Once I got the taste of making portraits in the midst of nature there was no going back. I did one of my paintings in a forest and

it was one of my best work. Working in nature helps concentration and the ambience inspires the artist to work efficiently." About his 2,000-km tour on his bicycle from Bangalore to Kanyakumari, Prashanth says, "After understanding about the value of making paintings away from the concrete jungle, I travelled from Bangalore to Kanyakumari searching for inspiration. In this tour, I met people from various cultures and traditions. My paintings are the

stories of these people I met along the way. I also showcased various monuments and heritage sites from my tour. It was great to experience a new culture and tradition everyday during my tour." It is surprising that Prashanth completed his bicycle tour without money. When asked about how he managed to provide for his food and shelter, Prashanth explains, "The reason I choose to travel by bicycle is so that I can meet as many

people as I can. For my survival, I did sketches of people I met along my way and, in return, they offered me a place to stay for free. During my travel, I also met two cyclists who were on their journey from Kashmir to Kanyakumari. After knowing about my solo journey, they helped me with money and other travel needs." After completing his tour, Prashanth started sketch walks in the city for people to show them the difference between creating art in the



city and in the wilderness. He shares, "I started walks for art lovers at Ananthagiri Hills. Each week, I organise workshops on the importance of making paintings in nature. I also conducted some sketch trips in and around Hyderabad. These sketch

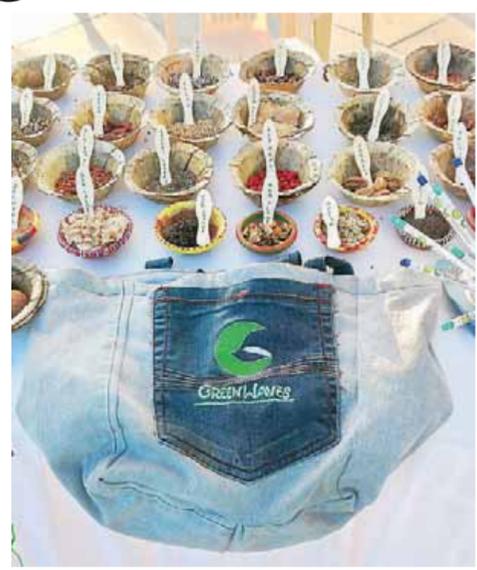
walks and trips help people learn about the importance of ambience in creating art." On a concluding note, Prashanth said that he is planning to go on a nationwide tour soon to find more cultures, traditions and monuments for his canvases.



“For my survival, I did sketches of people I met along my way and, in return, they offered me a place to stay for free. I also met two cyclists who were on their journey from Kashmir to Kanyakumari. After knowing about my solo journey, they helped me with money and other travel needs.”
 CHINTAKAYALA PRASHANTH
 ARTIST

Putting WASTE to GOOD use

Hyderabad-based start-up Green Mitti is teaching people how to upcycle e-waste, inculcate ecologically sustainable living habits in kids and adults alike, finds V SATEESH REDDY



The process of upcycling a plastic bottle into a toy

Three friends Anil, Aditya and Varma started Green Mitti in 2018 to make products from e-waste. They taught people how to turn regular waste into various products and thereby reduce the amount plastic in the open. Speaking to *The Pioneer*, Potluri Anil Chowdary says, "Green Mitti is a platform to provide and highlight our contributions towards protecting nature in a more ecologically sustainable way. We have come forward with a phase-wise environmental solution awareness programme. There is an urgent need to inculcate a proper environmental education in every aspect of life in the present day scenario, especially considering human induced climate change and

with global warming pushing life on this planet to the brink. Our objective is implementation of ecologically sustainable living habits and improvement of micro climate and local biodiversity." Green Mitti team uses the process of upcycling for e-waste and plastic waste. Anil shares, "Electronic waste, that includes broken computer parts, TV sets and other such objects, has chemicals and plastic in them and we upcycle them to extract copper, aluminum, glass, iron from it. We use these materials to make decorative items. Some e-scrap is used for gardening. The metals that we use from e-waste are authorised by the Pollution Control Board." Anil said that the Green Mitti is Varma's idea who has worked on the biodiversity of Western Ghats. Anil finished his diploma in Environment Resource Management from Waiariki Institute of Technology, New Zealand in 2015.

Apart from e-waste, Green Mitti also focuses on recycling organic waste. Anil said that they make rakhis and pencils made by woolen and cotton that have seeds in it. "After using, these items can be disposed off into the soil where the seed in them grows," Anil said. Their other green products include upcycled glass bottles, flower manure, herbal seeds, seed pens and pencils, seashell earrings, cloth bags, upcycled old cassettes, coconut bowls and more. They also encourage people to grow Banti and Tulasi plants which work as mosquito repellents. Anil adds, "Through recycling, we can make many products

from regular waste. Many people grow plants for beautification, but instead of that, we can grow plants that help improve our natural ecosystem. We work on waste management and greenery." Anil shares, "With the level of carbon dioxide increasing rapidly, it's the time for all of us to work for a cleaner environment. We are conducting workshops

for students and helping them make these products. I believe that if a student is aware of the dangers of plastic then he or she will definitely contribute something." About Green Mitti activities, Anil says, "We provide training on creating various products. We provide volunteer and internship certificates to students/ individuals/ institutions too."



Performing arts come to town

Ascintillating conversation between the two renowned dancers captivated the crowd at the Our Sacred Space that launched its series on performing arts, *Antarangam* — The Inner Space, recently in the city. It is a conversation series conceived and hosted by various artists. The first edition was performed by world renowned Bharatanatyam dancer, Guru Vidhya Subramanian and a Kuchipudi dancer, teacher and scholar Dr Anupama Kylash. "Ultimately we are all here for art. We are conduits and vehicles of art," Vidhya Subramanian said who grew up watching dance performances that ultimately led her to become a world-class dancer. She also said that teaching is a two-way street and many of her performances developed through the questions her students have asked her. When Dr Anupama Kylash was asked if she thinks that the act of solo performance is

dying and that group production is in trend, she said, "I don't think so per se, we just have fewer artists that are working from the ground up. We are seeking to do something that the audience wants. If the production is group oriented, I'll do that. If it's solo, I'll do that too. Ultimately the work should move me. There's wonderful work going on in both solo and group acts." Renowned Bharatanatyam Guru Vidhya Subramanian from the United States was trained under gurus S.K. Rajarathnam and Kalanidhi Narayanan. Her artistry has earned appreciation in India, Germany, France, UK, Russia, Afghanistan, Kenya and USA. Her dance is often described as an offering of the mind, body and soul. "I can speak more truthfully from my own experiences as a woman, then what I see around me and I needed to speak from the woman's point of view as opposed to male poets writing about women. I organically gravi-

tated towards these as they seem the most honest to me," says Guru Vidhya. The joint conversation by Vidhya Subramanian and Anupama Kylash was followed by a presentation by Guru Vidhya Subramanian titled 'A Dialogue between the Self and the Nayika', pieces from Jayadeva's *Ashtapadi*. The dialogue within a dancer as she explores and presents the meaning of a piece was presented — classical, eternal. The series is conceived by eminent artists of Hyderabad. **BHARATANATYAM DANCER, GURU VIDHYA SUBRAMANIAN AND KUCHIPUDI DANCER, DR ANUPAMA KYLASH PERFORMED AT THE EVENT**

CITY GUIDE

» ART



SPACE TIME

Gallery Space, Banjara Hills is presenting a group art show Space Time Continuum by Sachin Jaitare, Ramesh Gorjala, Anjaneyulu G and Bratin Khan until December 20 between 10 am and 6 pm.

» EVENTS AND MARKETS



HYDERABAD COMEDY FESTIVAL

Stage adda brings to you Hyderabad's biggest comedy festival ever. More than 35 artists will be performing in the city during this three-day festival. All events shall be held at Oakwood Residence Kapil Hyderabad and Bhaskara auditorium. The events will be held from December 13.



FUN FLEA FAIR

Fun Flea Fair is a destination for all those who seek fun experiences along with art, food and music. With 4 live music bands, open mic stage, games and workshops and many more fun attractions the flea market promises all its guests an amazing Saturday. The fair will be held tomorrow at 11 am at Hitex Exhibition Center.

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



● P. Susheela



● Dipshika



● Priyanka



● Prerana



● Snehalata



● Disha

PARTY

GAGA OVER FASHION

Trendz, a three-day women's exclusive exhibition and sale was inaugurated by Priyanka Sharma at Hotel Taj Krishna recently. Guests at the event were seen gushing over the wide range of clothes and accessories which were showcased at the expo.

A DAY FOR A CAUSE

Suchirindia Foundation recently celebrated Sankalp Divas which is aimed at inspiring corporates and the general public to invest their time and resources into contributing for a good cause. Actress Nandita Das was felicitated at the event which was attended by P. Susheela & Dr. Adish C. Aggarwala, President Intl Council of Jurists, London, who was also the chief guest.

Photos by SV Chary



● Kiron



● Nandita Das



● Priyanka Sharma



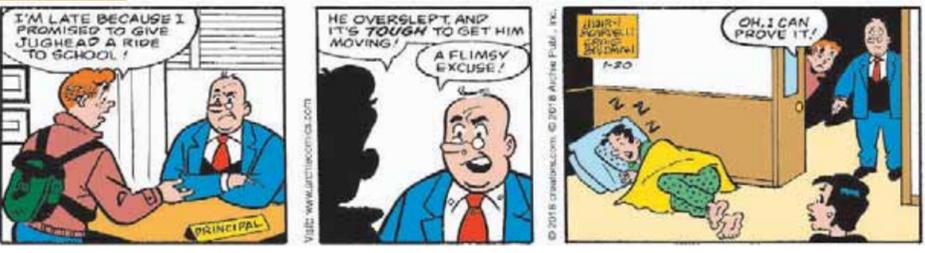
● Nandini



● Santhi Kathiravan

FUN TIME

ARCHIE



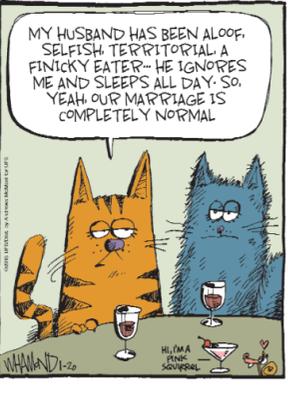
CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



NANCY



SUDOKU

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

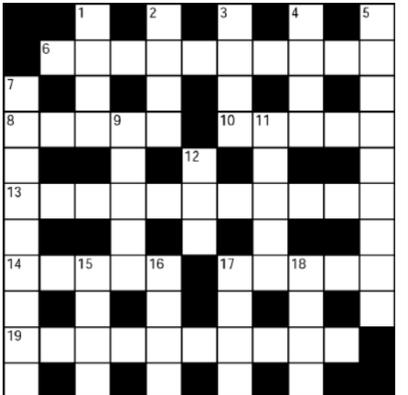
Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

CROSSWORD



ACROSS

- 6 Words that ask you politely to come
- 8 Arm joint
- 10 The head of a city council
- 13 Very tall city buildings
- 14 From Ireland
- 17 These birds honk
- 19 A person who has seen something happen and can give evidence in court

DOWN

- 7 Sweated
- 9 A desert green place
- 11 This fruit has pips
- 12 Rub with a towel
- 15 A thought
- 16 This grows on heads
- 17 Firearms
- 18 The direction opposite west



GINGER MEGGS



Fighter likely to mark DEVERAKONDA'S Bollywood debut



Puri can't wait to cash in on Vijay Deverakonda's appeal. NAGARAJ GOUD finds out how *Fighter* can make the *Arjun Reddy* star a household name across the country

Vijay Deverakonda being spotted multiple times in Mumbai sometime back triggered speculations about his Bollywood entry, only for the actor to rebuff such claims later. "I haven't been offered any Hindi film. When they are ready to give me a mainstream film, I would take it up," he had said at an event in the city mid-October. However, it seems like he has found a mainstream film. Or rather a Telugu film which has a pan-India appeal. We hear from sources that his next, *Fighter*, with Puri Jagannadh has the potential to woo audience across the country — reason enough for the director, who is hot off the massive success of *iSmart Shankar*, to contemplate

making it in Hindi as well. Chips in a source, "Besides the fact that Deverakonda's fame transcends state borders, the emotional rich content of *Fighter* can resonate with the North Indian belt as well. Deverakonda was told about it and he had no issues as such. Puri started negotiations with the production houses in Mumbai to make the film in Hindi as well. There's a possibility of the film being made in Tamil too." Adds the source, "As far as the casting goes, the makers are keen on Kiara Advani to be the film's leading lady. The actress is an admirer of Deverakonda and it wouldn't be a surprise if she gives her nod despite her date diary being full. Chances of Ramya Krishnan playing a crucial role are not ruled out as well." In *Fighter*, an emotional action-drama, Deverakonda will be seen as a youth with a stammer. Professionally, he will be seen as a martial arts exponent. The actor is in awe of *Fighter* script. "Puri sir gave a complete narration of the *Fighter* script and there wasn't a single change I could propose. It was airtight. I will have a blast shooting for it," the actor told us October-end. To roll next month, major portions of the film will be shot in Hyderabad and Europe.



RAM to shake a leg in *Romantic*

Smart Shankar has not only set the box-office coffers ringing big time but also forged a life-long bond between Puri Jagannadh and Ram. The actor minced no words in expressing his affection for Puri in the promotional events that he had attended for the film. And taking his bond with Puri further, we hear that Ram has grooved for a small dance portion in the director's next production venture *Romantic*, starring Akash Puri. While we don't know whether

it was on the insistence of Puri that Ram decided to shake a leg for the film, we know that the song has been shot in Hyderabad recently. In fact, our source says that even Puri will be seen alongside Ram in the number for a few seconds. In *Romantic*, which is a love story, Akash will be seen as a slum-dweller who struggles to make his ends meet, while newbie Ketika will be seen as his innocent love interest. Prominent VFX supervisor Anil Paduri is debuting as a director with the flick. The film's shooting has been wrapped up and makers are planning to release it for summer next year. — NG

Ravuri Srinivas gets *Donga* rights

After the phenomenal success of his Diwali release *Khaidi*, expectations surrounding Karthi's next, *Donga*, which sees him teaming up with his sister-in-law Jyothika, are high. Although the film's promotional activities have kicked off a good 20 days ago, the film found a distributor to release it in Telugu much later. Harshitha Movies' Ravuri V. Srinivas has acquired the film's Telugu dubbing rights and will be releasing the film on December 20.

"After a blockbuster like *Khaidi*, Karthi is coming with a different commercial film *Donga*, which is blended with action and emotions in equal measure. The teaser and songs which were out recently have received a tremendous response," Ravuri said. An emotional action drama, *Donga*, directed by Malayalam filmmaker Jeetu Joseph, features Karthi and Jyothika as siblings who don't meet eye-to-eye until the film's climax. It was wrapped up in 65 working days. The film will face a stern competition at the Telugu box-office as Balakrishna-starrer *Ruler* and Sai Dharam Tej-starrer *Prathiroju Pandage* are set to release on the same day as well.



Thaman's tunes for BALAYYA

S S Thaman — who is basking in the grand reception his songs in Allu Arjun-starrer *Ala Vaikunthapuramlo* have received — has been finalised to compose music for Nandamuri Balakrishna's next with Boyapati Sreenu. Although Mani Sharma's name was attached to the much anticipated project, it seems that Boyapati has decided to go ahead with Thaman, with whom he did *Sarrainodu* earlier. "The untitled project has a lot of scope for mass numbers and Boyapati felt

Thaman is the best bet given his hot streak. The musician too came on board after falling in love with the story. The music sessions will most likely begin next year," said a source. The film, which will see

Balayya and Boyapati reteaming for the third time after *Simha* and *Legend*, will go to sets later this month. A major part of the film will be shot across the US. Miryala Ravinder Reddy is the producer.



Bollywood is not my aim: RAASHI

Raashi Khanna was shooting for *Ayogya* in Chennai when she was offered a role in *Venky Mama*. Not for one to waste time, she flew to Hyderabad the same evening where she met the film's producer Suresh Babu. "I am happy with the offer as it's for the first time that both Venkatesh and Naga Chaitanya are featuring together, raising the expectations of both fan clubs. I was later briefed about my role. I liked it and agreed to come on board," she said. She continued, "I play a filmmaker called Harika who hails from a city but gets stuck in a town where Venky sir and Chay live. It's a weird situation but funny. My role has more screen time in the first half than in the second half. Both Venky sir and Chay have a lot of respect and love for each other in real life. I haven't met anyone like them in the industry till now. They are gentlemen and extremely down-to-earth." Raashi has done a fair number of films where she was not the solo

heroine but she has no qualms about it. "As long as my role is good, it doesn't matter who else is there in the movie with me. Plus, I don't want people to categorise me either as a glamorous heroine who can't perform, or as a performer who is averse to glam roles. I want to do both," she informed. She started her career with the Hindi film industry but over time, has decided to give preference to the South. She said that Bollywood is not her aim. "I will go wherever good work takes me. I do get offers from Mumbai but unless I get a very good one, I don't want to shift. I'm sure I don't want to sail in two boats," said the actress who made Hyderabad her home for past four years. As she has started dubbing for her lines in *World Famous Lover* (WFL), a first for her, she was also keen on dubbing for *Venky Mama* as well. "I was shooting back-to-back and so, couldn't dub for *Venky Mama*. But from WFL, I could dub for my parts. There's nothing like dubbing for your own role," she said. Speaking about WFL that is

scheduled to release on Valentine's Day next year, she says she is playing an intense role. "This is the toughest role I've essayed in my career so far. Most of the people rate my performance in *Tholiprema* as my best but they will forget *Tholiprema* after watching WFL," she assured. Speaking about the recent rape and murder of Disha, Raashi said that besides anger, a sense of fear had also crept in when she was going through the news reports about the incident. "The accused should be chopped in front of people. The problem is that people can only voice their opinions. At the end of the day, it's up to the government and the judiciary to do something about it. If they don't, such incidents will continue to repeat. As actors, the most we can do is to pressurise the government to take action and I believe we should do that. Mahesh Babu did that which was wonderful," she stated.



India continue T20 auditions

Captain Kohli makes white ball return as Rahul, Pant, Samson look to make most of Windies series and book World Cup ticket



Kieron Pollard attends training session AP

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

The likes of KL Rahul and Rishabh Pant will be aiming to cement their places in the squad as India continue auditions for next year's T20 World Cup when they take on the West Indies in a three-match T20 series, starting here today.

India will continue their preparations for the T20 World Cup in Australia and many players, whose places are not yet secure, will try to impress the team management and selectors with their performances against the West Indies.

One such name is Rahul. In the absence of injured opener Shikhar Dhawan, the series will provide the stylish right-handed batsman, who holds a good record in T20s, a very good opportunity to secure his place as Rohit Sharma's partner up the order.

In 31 T20I, Rahul has amassed 974 runs at an average of 42.74 with 110 not out being his highest score. He is also a prolific scorer in the IPL.

Besides Rahul, another individual who would like to answer his critics with solid performances is Pant.

Seen as MS Dhoni's successor, Rishabh has endured a slump in form post ICC World Cup and was heavily criticised for throwing his wicket away on multiple occasions.

Even his glove-work came under heavy scrutiny and the left-hander was dropped in the longest format of the game and Wriddhiman Saha regained his place in the playing XI.

With the selectors bringing in talented Sanju Samson in the squad and talks of Dhoni coming out of his sabbatical soon, it's high time for Pant to either perform or lose his place in the squad.

The series is also huge for Samson. Although he was named in the T20 squad against Bangladesh, the Kerala 'keeper-batsman didn't get a



India's captain Virat Kohli gestures during a training session ahead of their first T20 against Windies AP

India vs West Indies
Live from 7:00pm IST
STAR SPORTS 1 NETWORK

single opportunity in the series and was only picked for this rubber after Dhawan sustained a knee injury.

It is certain that Pant will be the first choice wicketkeeper but in case he fails again, it remains to be seen whether the team management gives Samson an opportunity, which he certainly deserves.

On the bowling front, there are several notable comebacks with the likes of Kuldeep Yadav, Mohammed Shami, and Bhuvneshwar Kumar returning to the side's T20 setup.

The duo of Kuldeep and Chahal, also known as *Kulcha*, will reunite after a long time. Kuldeep last featured in the shortest format in February 2019 against New Zealand.

The find of the Bangladesh series, Deepak Chahar, is also expected to play a big role alongside Shami and Bhuvneshwar in the past attack.

West Indies, on the other hand,

would be looking for revenge after being dismantled by India 3-0 in their own backyard in August.

Having been entrusted with the captaincy responsibility, Kieron Pollard will look to lead from the front.

With Nicholas Pooran ruled out of the first T20 because of a four-match ban for ball-tampering, the onus would be on Evin Lewis and Lendl Simmons, Shimron Hetmyer to guide West Indies batting line-up.

Keeping in mind the T20 World Cup, the West Indies are also trying out various combinations and have drafted in quite a few new faces in the team.

The visitors have opted for young Brandon King, Khary Pierre, Sherfane Rutherford, Kesrick Williams and Hayden Walsh Jr over experienced players like Carlos Brathwaite, Andre Russell and Dwayne Bravo.

PERFORMANCE IN T20IS						
Type (rankings)	P	W	L	T	N/R	Success%
India (5)	123	76	43	1	3	63.41
West Indies (10)	116	50	59	3	4	46.12
India v West Indies	14	8	5	—	1	60.71

HIGHEST TOTALS		
India	245-6 in 20 overs at Lauderhill	27-08-2016
West Indies	244-4 in 20 overs at Lauderhill	27-08-2016

LOWEST TOTALS		
India	153-7 in 20 overs at Lord's	12-06-2009
West Indies	95-9 in 20 overs at Lauderhill	03-08-2019

TOP INDIVIDUAL SCORES		
India	111* Rohit Sharma at Lucknow	06-11-2018
West Indies	125* Evin Lewis at Kingston	09-07-2017

BEST BOWLING		
India	3-4 Deepak Chahar at Providence	06-08-2019
West Indies	4-16 Darren Sammy at Port of Spain	04-06-2011

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India	3-4 Deepak Chahar at Providence	06-08-2019
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We all need to support Pant: Kohli

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

India captain Virat Kohli on Thursday threw his weight behind the under-fire Rishabh Pant, asserting that he wouldn't let the young wicketkeeper-batsman feel isolated as he battles a slump in form.

The skipper fully backed the 22-year-old, saying it is the team's collective responsibility to support Pant in the trying times.

"We certainly believe in Rishabh's ability. As you say, it's (also) the player's responsibility to do well, work hard and I agree but I think it's a collective responsibility of everyone around us as well to give that player some space to do that," he said.

"If he misses a chance or something, people can't shout. It's not respectful because no player would like that to happen," he added.

Kohli said he expects the crowd in India to get behind the youngster, who was booted in the last series against Bangladesh.



Pant arrives for training ahead of 1st T20 AP

"You are playing in your own country and you should get support rather than always thinking what mistake is this guy going to make. No one wants to be in that position," he said.

"He can't be isolated to such an extent that he gets nervous on the field. If you want him to do well and win matches for India all of us collectively should make him feel like he belongs and we are here to do things for him rather than against him," Kohli added.

TEAMS, India: Virat Kohli (c), Rohit Sharma, KL Rahul, Shikhar Dhawan, Rishabh Pant, Manish Pandey, Shreyas Iyer, Shivam Dube, Ravindra Jadeja, Washington Sundar, Yuzvendra Chahal, Kuldeep Yadav, Deepak Chahar, Bhuvneshwar, Shami.

Windies: Kieron Pollard (c), Fabian Allen, Brandon King, Denesh Ramdin, Sheldon Cottrell, Evin Lewis, Sherfane Rutherford, Hetmyer, Khary Pierre, Lendl Simmons, Jason Holder, Hayden Walsh Jr, Keemo Paul, Kesrick Williams.

WI need to protect young talents: Pollard

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

West Indies T20 captain Kieron Pollard on Thursday said young cricketers in his country need to be protected from "vultures of the game" when they are initiated into international cricket.

West Indies have opted for some young players in their 15-member team for the limited overs series and Pollard said they need to be given enough opportunity to showcase their talent.

"They (Brandon King and Kesrick Williams) have been pretty good. It's good that we have young guys coming in from the Caribbean Premier League (CPL). They are excited to represent West Indies. But the problem is, we as individuals



Alzarri Joseph & Brandon King during Windies training session AP

try to judge people too quickly," Pollard said during pre-match conference.

"We need to have patience. At the end of the day we need results but sometimes you have to be honest

with yourself. We look forward to these talents showing the world what they can do. Sometime you need to have umbrella over them and protect them from the vultures out there to pull them down,"

he added.

Youngsters like Brandon King, Khary Pierre, Sherfane Rutherford, Kesrick Williams and Hayden Walsh Jr were preferred for the India tour to experienced players like Carlos Brathwaite, Andre Russell and Dwayne Bravo.

"They (young players) need experience and we need to back these guys and see how far they can go because we have seen their talent, their attitude. It's just a matter of trying to teach them and ease them into the world of international cricket which we know is a very tough place."

Talking about the upcoming series, Pollard said his team will look to use the experience of playing in India to challenge the hosts.

"We play a lot of cricket

in India. It's just a matter of using our experience and hopefully that experience can be a good step for us."

Pollard said his side need to improve their collective game as a team to give India a tough fight in the series.

"We are coming up against India, a formidable team No1 side going around and I think that's good for us, getting an opportunity to come across them. We look at it as a challenge and have to deal with what is presented in front of us," he said.

"We are looking to do the basics right, use our opportunities every time we step on the cricket field. We are not focussing on too many individuals. We collectively as a team is looking to improve our cricket," said the visiting captain.

Third umpire will call front foot no balls

PTI ■ DUBAI

Front foot no balls in the upcoming T20 and One-Day International series between India and the West Indies will be decided by the third umpire and not the on-field officials, the International Cricket Council (ICC) announced on Thursday.

The series, comprising three T20Is and an equal number of ODIs, starts today in Hyderabad and technology to call front foot no balls will be put to trial in it.

"Throughout the trial, the Third Umpire will be responsible for monitoring every ball bowled and identifying whether there has been any front foot infringement," the ICC said in a statement.

"If there has been an infringement on the front foot, the Third Umpire will communicate this to the On-Field Umpire who will subsequently call a no ball. As a result, the On-Field Umpire will not call a front foot no ball without the advice of the Third Umpire," it added.

The ICC said the benefit of doubt in close calls will lie with the bowler.

"...And if a late no ball call is communicated, then the On-Field Umpire will rescind a dismissal (if applicable) and call no ball. The On-Field Umpire will remain responsible for other in-game decisions in the usual way," the ICC said.

KXIP felt I haven't delivered: Ashwin

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

He might not be in the scheme of things when it comes to white-ball cricket, but off-spinner R Ashwin hasn't given up hope of playing for India in the World T20 in Australia.

"I enjoy playing day in, day out. But I felt somewhere in my career, because of the white ball snub and injuries, I had lost the joy of playing the game, which was very very dangerous for me. I could not watch the game on TV," R Ashwin told *Mumbai Mirror*.

"That was something I did not enjoy. Thankfully I have gotten over it. I took the help of people and I have gotten over it. World Twenty20 is a realistic goal for everybody. Who does not want to represent India at the competition. Yuvraj Singh came back for World T20 in 2014 and then in 2017 Champions Trophy. I am

only 33." Ashwin also said that his IPL move to Delhi Capitals wasn't really something that he asked for.

"My stint at Kings XI was fantastic to say the least. The experience enriched me in every possible way. I was given the role of captaincy, that was new boundaries I explored. Within my purview, I thought I did a fair job, if not a very good job, but these decisions were not mine entirely," Ashwin said.

"There are other factors, the owners did feel I haven't delivered which is true because I could not take the team through to the play-offs in both the seasons. You can give excuses why we could not do that, but I am someone who takes it under my chin and admits that 'yes I couldn't deliver'. The trade was more initiated rather my doing," he said.

India complete century of medals

Athletes win whopping 50 medals on Thursday to breach 100 marks and consolidate top spot

AGENCIES ■ KATHMANDU

Led by strong performances by wushu players and swimmers, India breached the 100-medal mark by winning a whopping 50 medals on the fourth day of competitions to consolidate its top position in the South Asian Games here on Thursday.

India secured its best medal haul on a single day so far in the Games to lead the medal tally with 58 Gold, 41 Silver and 19 Bronze for a total of 118 medals to leave hosts Nepal far behind in the second spot.

India added 26 Gold, 18 Silver and 6 Bronze on Thursday. The bulk of India's medals came from swimming, wushu, weightlifting and athletics. India's Gold rush was triggered by wushu with as many as seven yellow medals coming from it.

Suraj Singh fetched the first wushu Gold of the day in men's gunshu all-round event before Y Sanathoi Devi (women's sansou 52kg), Punam (women's 75kg),

All-Indian final in badminton singles

NEW DELHI: Indian shuttlers Ashmita Chaliha and Gayatri Gopichand registered convincing victories in their respective semi-finals on Thursday to set up an all-Indian summit clash in the women's singles category in Pokhara.

While, top-seed Ashmita thrashed her Sri Lankan opponent Achini Ratnasiri 21-5, 21-7, Gayatri also had an easy task against Dilmi Dias of Sri Lanka during a 21-17, 21-14 win. Men singles semi-finals also saw India's dominance as Aryaman Tondon and Siril Verma set up final against each other after winning their semi-final matches.

Deepika (women's 70kg), Sushila (women's 65kg), Roshibina Devi (women's 60kg) and Sunil Singh (men's 52kg) also clinched top spots in their respective events.

Swimming accounted for the most medals for India on Thursday with 11, of which four were Gold, six Silver and one Bronze.

es. Top-seeded Siril beat Sri Lanka's Dinuka Karunaratne 21-9, 21-12 in straight sets. However, Aryaman had to fight hard during his 21-18, 14-21, 21-18 win against second seed Nepal's Ratnajith Tamang.

In the men's doubles semi-final, Krishna Garaga and Dhruv Kapila notched up an easy 21-15, 21-7 win.

However, India's challenge came to an end in the women's double category after both the pairs, Kuhoo Garg-Anoushka Parikh and Meghana Jakkampudi-N Sikki Reddy, lost in the last-4 clash. **PNS**



Aryaman Tondon in action during SAG

Track and field athletes had a relatively quieter day after leading from the front in the past two days as they pocketed six medals, including one Gold, on Thursday.

Triple jumper Karthik Unnikrishnan was the lone Gold winner in athletics as he cleared a distance of 16.47m while compatriot Mohammed Salahuddin jumped 16.16m to win the Silver.

'Only one spot to be filled in pace attack'

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

India captain Virat Kohli on Thursday said there is only one spot left to be filled in the team's pace attack for next year's T20 World Cup in Australia, indicating that Jasprit Bumrah, Bhuvneshwar Kumar and Mohammed Shami are almost certain to make the cut.

"The fight obviously is for one spot and I think more or less three guys have made a place for themselves. It's going to be a healthy competition and it will be interesting to see how it pans out," Kohli said.

Referring to India's problem of plenty in pace bowling, Kohli said, as a captain, he couldn't have been happier.

"It's not that big an issue for us. I think Bhuvu (Bhuvneshwar) and (Jasprit) Bumrah are experienced bowlers. They have been very consistent in T20 cricket. Deepak (Chahar) has come in and has bowled really well," he told reporters.

"(Mohammed) Shami is coming back and he is bowling really well. If he gets into a rhythm and specifically works on what's required in T20 cricket then he will be very, very useful in places like Australia, especially with his ability to pick wickets with the new ball. He has enough pace to execute yorkers," he added.

"Also couple of more guys are under the scanner for sealing that spot along with three seamers. It's a good position to be in because everyone is bowling really well," the India captain said.

Kohli was also honest enough to admit India's problems in T20 cricket.

"I don't think we have

been very good while batting first in T20 cricket and defending low totals as well. So those are two things we really need to focus on," he said.

The duo of Kuldeep Yadav and Yuzvendra Chahal, will also reunite after a long time. Besides Washington Sundar and Ravindra Jadeja are also in the squad.

And Kohli hinted that all the four could earn a ticket to Australia.

"Having two wrist spinners is big advantage when you are playing in Australia in big fields. There might be some games where both might play together. But in T20 cricket, it's all about balance and predominantly we see one guy playing with Jadeja and Washy (Sundar) because it gives us all kinds of variety in the bowling attack.

"You need to have six bowling options in T20 cricket. That's the basic rule. You can't go with five expecting everyone to bowl four good overs. I think that is the balance we need to create," he said.

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SINGLES

CELTIC STRIKE LATE AS RANGERS SLIP

GLASGOW: Scott Brown's dramatic injury-time strike gave Celtic a 2-1 win over Hamilton to move the Hoops two points clear at the top of the Scottish Premiership as Rangers let a two-goal lead slip to draw 2-2 at Aberdeen. Celtic looked on course for a routine evening when Ryan Christie pounced to score from close range in the 13th minute to put the home side in front. But the Accies stayed in the game and seemed to have secured an unlikely point when Marios Ogiropoulos bundled in a leveller in the 90th minute. Celtic, though, snatched winner when captain Brown burst into the box to fire two minutes into injury time.

BARCA RAISE FATI'S RELEASE CLAUSE

BARCELONA: Barcelona have raised teenage star Ansu Fati's release clause from 100 million to 170 million euros (\$188.3 million). The 17-year-old's release clause will also be bumped up to 400 million euros — almost double the world-record 222 million euros PSG paid Barcelona for Neymar — when he signs a professional contract with the first team. "FC Barcelona and the player Ansu Fati have agreed on an improved contract until June 30, 2022, with two years optional, and on his release clause, which moves from 100 to 170 million euros," Barca said in a statement.

KHEDIRA OUT FOR THREE MONTHS

TURIN: Juventus midfielder Sami Khedira has been ruled out for three months after undergoing knee surgery, the Italian champions announced. The 2014 World Cup winner had surgery in his native Germany. "The operation was perfectly successful and the player will be able to start rehabilitation immediately," Juventus said in a statement. "The expected recovery time is around three months." The 32-year-old has played a key role this season where he featured in 13 of the 14 league games.

BOPANNA AIMS TO PLAY QATAR OPEN

MUMBAI: Forced out of India's recent Davis Cup tie due to a shoulder injury, doubles specialist Rohan Bopanna said his recovery is on the right track and he plans to compete at the Qatar Open in January. "It (the shoulder) is getting better and I just started training, maybe 2-3 days ago. So, I have a whole month before the season starts. So it will be fine by the time the first tournament starts, which is on the January 6th — Doha event in Qatar," Bopanna said. The tourney will be held in Doha from Jan 6 to 12.

SL OVERHAUL CRICKET COACHING TEAM

COLOMBO: Sri Lanka's cricket board Thursday announced a major revamp of the national team after their poor showing at the recent World Cup, confirming Mickey Arthur's appointment as head coach. SL's secretary Mohan de Silva said the country had been without a proper coach since the early World Cup exit. "We are very pleased to have Mickey and hope his experience in Asia will help build our team to a very high standard," de Silva told reporters after hiring the 51-year-old. Grant Flower was appointed the new batting coach, David Saker as bowling coach while Shane McDermott is in charge of fielding training. **AGENCIES**