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THE FIRST BLOOD

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the pioneer



RULER FULFILLED
MY WISH TO DO A
FILM ON FARMERS:
BALAYYA
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SHOOTER WANTS CENTRE TO LET HER HANG NIRBHAYA CONVICTS

Shooter Vartika Singh on Sunday wrote a letter in blood requesting the Centre to let her hang the rapists convicted in the Nirbhaya rape and murder case. In the letter, she has sought permission from Union Home Minister Amit Shah to execute the rapists. Speaking to reporters here, Singh said, "I have a letter in my hand that is written to Union Home Minister Amit Shah. I have written it with my blood stating that I should be allowed to execute the convicts in the Nirbhaya case."



AASU HINTS AT LAUNCHING POLITICAL PARTY IN ASSAM

The All Assam Students Union (AASU), which has been protesting the amended Citizenship Act, on Sunday hinted at launching a political party, along with 'Shilpi Samaj' (artists' forum), as an alternative to the ruling BJP and AGP as well as to opposition Congress. When popular singer Zubeen Garg, addressing a protest meet 'Concert for Peace and Harmony' here, said, "we will launch our own party", AASU president Dipanka Nath seconded him saying, "we are now thinking in that direction".



GOVT EXAMINING FOREIGN FUND IN INFRA AT STRATEGIC LOCATIONS

The government has initiated review of foreign fund flows in sensitive like telecom and physical infrastructure at strategic locations of the country, according to sources. A comprehensive review has been undertaken to assess the control over various infrastructures at strategic locations and border areas of the country, the sources said. Given the fact that majority of the industries are now under automatic route for Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) rather than the approval route, the sources said, it is required to have an idea on the foreign presence in these areas including the northeastern region.



INDIAN-ORIGIN MP IN RACE TO REPLACE LABOUR PARTY'S CORBYN

Lisa Nandy, one of the Indian-origin MPs, who was re-elected in Thursday's general election amid a disastrous performance by her Labour Party, on Sunday confirmed plans to throw her hat in the ring to replace party leader Jeremy Corbyn. The 40-year-old MP won her Wigan seat in the north-west of England, holding on to one of the key bricks in the so-called 'red wall' which collapsed as Prime Minister Boris Johnson's Conservative Party won over traditional Labour Party voters across the region.



UPPAL BHAGAYAT

Sq yd fetches Rs 79,900

HYDERABAD: The second day of e-auction of HMDA's Uppal Bhagayat layout on Sunday saw the maximum bid go up to Rs 79,900 per square yard, as against Saturday's highest bid of Rs 77,000 per square yard. The first session of auction was conducted from 9:00 am to 2:30 pm for 23 plots, selling 8288.8 sq.yds in the first session. However, plot no.127, comprising 525 square yards, fetched Rs.79,900 per square yard - the highest bid for the first session.

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BIFURCATION BLUES

Allocation of power staff creates rift between TS and AP

■ AP disinclined to implement SC-appointed panel's order

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Ending uncertainty over the post bifurcation allocation of employees of power utilities between Telangana and Andhra Pradesh states, the Supreme Court-appointed one-man committee of Justice DM Dharmadhikari on Sunday gave its final order directing Andhra Pradesh to accommodate 613 out of the 1,157 employees of AP nativity working in four power utilities of Telangana.

The order came after the final two-day sitting of the committee in which Telangana Genco Director (HR) S Ashok Kumar and AP Transco JMD KVN Chakradhar Babu took part. The committee, with its two-member subcommittee,



The SC-appointed DM Dharmadhikari committee gave its final order directing AP to accommodate 613 out of 1,157 staff of AP nativity working in four power utilities of TS

said on Sunday that a brief written submission was made on behalf of Telangana power utilities. "On behalf of the Telangana power utilities, at the end of the proceedings, an offer

has been made that out of 1,157 allegedly ex parte relieved employees, 613 have opted for Andhra Pradesh," the order read.

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'AP power utilities attitude towards TS vengeful'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Electrical Engineers Association here on Sunday condemned the "adamant attitude" of the AP power utilities for going back on their previous stand to absorb 613 out of the 1,157 employees of AP nativity.

In a statement, association leaders N Sivaji and P Anjaiah said that it showed the "vengeful attitude" of the Andhra power utilities towards Telangana.

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MANDATORY FASTAG EFFECT

Huge traffic jams at toll plazas on highways

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Huge traffic jams were witnessed at all toll plazas across the state on Sunday as the mandatory FASTag rule came into force across the nation and many motorists in the Telugu states are simply not prepared to switch to the new system.

Vehicles lined up for more than one kilometre at Panthangi toll plaza in Choutuppal manal in the district as motorists failed to obtain FASTags, mainly due to lack of awareness on the new system of automatic payment of toll fee. Vehicles lined up at Panthangi toll plaza on both sides.

On the Hyderabad-Warangal Highway, vehicles lined up over one km as the vehicles were not equipped with FASTag chip. With vehicles not having FASTag also



Traffic jam at Panthangi toll plaza on Sunday

moving into the lanes dedicated for vehicles with the requisite tags, there were problems. It became a headache for the staff to regulate traffic.

There was traffic jam also at Korlahaphad toll plaza in Kethapally mandal of Nalgonda district due to the same reason. Even those who did not have FASTag were stopping their vehicles at the special counter that had been

set up near the Korlahaphad toll plaza for issuance of FASTag. The National Highways Authority of India has made arrangements for implementing FASTag at 17 toll gates in Telangana National Highways from December 15. The new electronic toll payment was initially scheduled for rollout on December 1, 2019, but was postponed.

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Veteran actor Gita Siddharth passes away

Mumbai: Veteran actor Gita Siddharth, who featured in films such as Garam Hawa, Parichay, Sholay and Trishul passed away. The news of her demise was confirmed by the Cine and TV Artists' Association (CINTAA) on Twitter. She breathed her last on Saturday morning. "#CINTAA expresses its deepest condolence on the demise of Gita Siddharth (Member Since: May 1970)," read the tweet from the film body.

Thrash Rahul in public: Ranjit Savarkar

MUMBAI: V D Savarkar's grandson Ranjit Savarkar on Sunday appealed to Maharashtra Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray to "thrash" Congress leader Rahul Gandhi in public for "insulting" the late Hindutva icon by his remarks.

Ranjit was referring to the comments made by Rahul Gandhi at a public rally in Delhi on Saturday.

Addressing the "Bharat Bachao Rally", Rahul Gandhi rejected the BJP's demand for apology for his "rape in India" barb, and added that his name was Rahul Gandhi, not "Rahul Savarkar", and he will never apologise for speaking the truth.

Rahul, his family members are fake Gandhis: Minister

PNS ■ BENGALURU

Hitting out at Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for his Savarkar barb, Union Minister Pralhad Joshi on Sunday termed him and his family members as "fake Gandhis".

He also accused the Congress and other "so called secular parties" of trying to project the Citizenship (Amendment) Act as a Hindu-Muslim issue with an intention to create unrest in the country.

"Rahul Gandhi has said he was not Rahul Savarkar... it is impossible for you to become Rahul Savarkar," Joshi said.

Speaking to reporters in Hubballi, he said, "as per convenience you enter into an understanding with anyone, you can become Rahul Uddhav Thackeray - we all know what all words you have used against him and what you have done now."

"You (Rahul) become whatever you want, but speaking against a patriot like Vinayak Damodar Savarkar shows the frustration of Congress... they



Union Minister Pralhad Joshi

"You (Rahul) become whatever you want, but speaking against a patriot like Vinayak Damodar Savarkar shows the frustration of Congress... they are all nakli (fake) Gandhis"

are all nakli (fake) Gandhis- Rahul Gandhi, Sonia Gandhi, and Priyanka Vadra Gandhi- only they can speak such things about others," he added.

Continued on Page 4

CITIZENSHIP ACT

Violence, arson in Delhi; cop injured

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Protestors agitating against the amended Citizenship Act clashed with police on Sunday and set afire DTC buses and a fire tender in New Friends' Colony in southeast Delhi leaving a cop and two fire personnel injured, police said. A Delhi Fire Services official said four fire tenders were rushed to the spot. One fire tender was completely damaged and two personnel were injured in the violence by the protesters.

Saimon Farooqui, the national secretary of Congress-affiliated National Students' Union of India, claimed the protesters were peacefully sitting on Mathura Road when policemen tried to "trouble" a couple of them, who resisted.

A Jamia Millia Islamia students' group said they had nothing to do with the arson and violence. They alleged that "local elements" joined the protest and "disrupted" it. They said they returned to campus as the protest turned violent and were protesting on the campus peacefully.

Some of the protesters claimed that the police baton charged them when they were holding a peaceful agitation. Police lathicharged the protesters and used teargas, Farooqui said.



BJP to create awareness about citizenship law

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid protests against the amended citizenship law, the BJP on Sunday announced a nationwide campaign to spread awareness about the legislation and asserted that it is not discriminatory against Muslims or any other community.

Party spokesperson Sambit Patra told a press conference that BJP workers will fan out across the country to inform people about the law which seeks to provide citizenship to the religious minorities from three neighbouring countries

who arrived in India to escape religious persecution.

"There is no provision in this law that even a single right of our Muslim brothers and sisters will be taken away. Instead rights will be provided to those who are living in India without any rights facing religious persecution in countries like Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan," Patra said.

He said party functionaries from 11 states were briefed by the national leadership on the law's provisions here on Sunday before they start a campaign in their respective state.

Protests in UK over Citizenship Amendment Act

ADITI KHANNA/LONDON: People from different groups gathered outside the Indian High Commission here on Saturday to protest against the Citizenship Amendment Act and what they branded as Modi government's "failures". A group of protesters from the British Assamese community, dressed in their traditional attire and accompanied by children, waved placards in Assamese as well as some in English that read: Save

Democracy, Stop CAB. The peaceful demonstration involved some sloganeering against the Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB), which was signed into law earlier this week. Assam is united and CAB is divisive. Say no to division, yes to unity, said one of the activists. Alongside, the Indian Overseas Congress (IOC) UK chapter organised its Bharat Bachao Rally (Save India) to coincide with similar protests in New Delhi and around the world.

Congress behind citizenship law protests, says PM Modi

DUMKA: Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday blamed the Congress and its allies for stoking Citizenship Law protests that have been breaking out in several parts of the country mainly in the Northeast region including Assam. Addressing an election rally in Dumka, Jharkhand, Modi said that it is the opposition parties who are raising a storm over citizenship law but their actions prove that the CAA's decision was correct.

"Congress and its allies are stoking fire over the citizenship Act. But actions of the Congress prove that all decisions taken in Parliament are correct," he said. Narendra Modi congratulated the people of the Northeast for rejecting violence and said the controversial law was brought to give "respect" to the minority community of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh who have been "forced to live as refugees."

TODAY

ALMANAC
Month & Pakshtam:
Margashirsha & Krishna Paksha
Tithi : Panchami: 03:39 am (Next Day)
Nakshatram: Ashlesha: 02:48 am (Next Day)
Time to Avoid: (Bad time to start any important work)
Rahukalam: 08:04 am - 09:27 am
Yamagandam: 10:49 am - 12:11 pm
Varjyam: 04:10 pm - 05:41 pm
Gulika: 01:33 pm - 02:56 pm
Good Time: (to start any important work)
Amritkalam: 01:16 am - 02:48 am
Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:49 am - 12:33 pm

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Clear with periodic clouds
Temp: 29/17
Humidity: 76%
Sunrise: 06:38
Sunset: 05:44
Current Weather Conditions
Updated December 15, 2019 5:00 PM

God of cricket remembers 'tip' from hotel staffer after 19 yrs!

PNS ■ CHENNAI

The 'God of cricket' has good memory and loads of humility to acknowledge the 'tip' he received from a Chennai hotel staffer 19 years ago.

According to a sensational report, Sachin Tendulkar tweeted a video interview, in which he recalls a conversation with a hotel staffer in Chennai, who had pointed out a problem with the cricketer's game.

It has been 19 years since the hotel staffer, 46-year-old Guruprasad, gave his idol Sachin a piece of advice in the hallways of Taj Coromandel in Chennai.



On December 14, the now retired cricketer tweeted a short excerpt of a video interview, where he recalls this insightful conversation.

"He (Guruprasad) said I want to discuss something with you about cricket. I said yes, please go ahead," said Sachin. "He said - whenever I see you wear

an arm guard, your bat swing changes. And I don't think I had spoken about this to anyone in the world. I was the only person who was aware of that, and this waiter said I am a huge fan and I rewind your batting 5-7 times and watch every ball multiple times. That is why I thought whenever you wear an elbow guard your bat swing changed a bit. And I said yes, you are the only person in the world who has figured out that. But you won't believe, after that I came back to the room from the ground, I carried my elbow guard and I got my elbow guard and redesigned it according to the correct size and padding

required. But he was the only one," recalled Sachin.

Guruprasad now recalls stopping Sachin and asking for an autograph from the cricketer. A member of the security staff in the hotel, he was not even carrying a sheet of paper. He, therefore, asked the star cricketer to leave his autograph on his 'beat book', where he made hourly reports about hotel security.

Sachin willingly signed the book, but Guruprasad was not done. "I asked him if I can give him a suggestion concerning cricket"... "I really wasn't sure if he would listen to someone like me, but he readily agreed."

Vijaya milk prices hiked by Rs.2 per/L

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The State government-run Telangana State Dairy Development Cooperative Federation (TSDDCF) Limited has decided to hike the price of Vijaya milk by Rs.2 per liter with effect from December 16.

As per the revised rates, diet milk will be available at Rs.38 per liter. Double toned milk will be available at Rs.8.50 per 200 ml. Double toned milk will be available at Rs.12 per 300 ml and Rs.20 per 500 ml.

Continued on Page 4

Dec 31 deadline to link PAN-Aadhaar

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

It is mandatory to link your PAN with Aadhaar by the end of this year, the Income Tax Department said in a public message on Sunday.

"Building a better tomorrow! To reap seamless benefits of income tax services, complete the vital link before 31st December, 2019," the department said.

It is mandatory to link your PAN with Aadhaar, according to the public message issued a fortnight before the deadline ends. The deadline to link the permanent account number



(PAN) with Aadhaar was extended till December 31 by the Central Board of Direct Taxes (CBDT) through an order issued in September this year.

Earlier, the deadline for this linkage was September 30. The CBDT frames policy for the Income Tax Department.

Continued on Page 3

Tough laws on women's security: Walking the talk

The Disha gang-rape-cum-murder case and the subsequent Shadnagar 'encounter' deaths of the four accused in the case have no doubt shaken the nation. AP Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy, whose government has enacted a stringent law, named after Disha, for women's security has scored some brownie points.

It remains to be seen whether he walks the talk. Jagan has started receiving accolades from almost every quarter in the Telugu states. His emotional speech in the Assembly before the two Bills on women's safety were tabled caught the fancy of people, particularly women. The moot question is: Will such stringent laws deter criminals who resort to such heinous crimes? For, in less than 24 hours after the AP Disha Act was passed, two rapes took place - one in Guntur city and the other in Prakasam district.

SC order saves SIT There was much curiosity over the outcome of the state government order constituting a Special Investigative Team (SIT) to probe the "encounter" deaths of the accused in the Disha case with Rachakonda Police Commissioner Mahesh Bagawat, who is also dealing with the rape-murder of three girls in Hazipur village, as its head. People were wondering how it would pan out as the Special Investigative Team was required to investigate the 'facts' relating to the 'encounter' that took place with the indulgence of another Police Commissioner of Cyberabad VC Sajjanar. Meanwhile, the Supreme Court put a full stop to the speculations by ordering a three-member judicial probe. According to sources, both Mahesh Bagawat and Sajjanar heaved a sigh of relief following the Supreme Court's direction.



Tea Day in cafes For youths and intellectuals in educationally vibrant centres like Warangal, cafes have provided the much-needed private space for discussions like those of yesteryear English literary giants. On the eve of International Tea

day on Sunday, the same was highlighted, though some of the cafes and tea points in urban and semi urban areas doubled up as smoking areas. Youths in particular are taking the support of these tea points and cafes to overcome public smoking problems. The owners of the cafes and tea points in Tier II cities of Telangana state are taking this aspect lightly. This trend is visible in Warangal, Mancherla, Huzurabad and Siddipet towns. Kohinoor Hotel, Jawahar Cafe and other prominent Cafes of Warangal have fallen in line.

Homework pays Legislators and Ministers of the ruling TRS are seriously engaged in homework of a different kind over the past few months, though elections are not round the corner. They are visiting the villages in right earnest. Their efforts seem to be fruitful as the cadre of opposition parties have started defecting to the ruling party. While joining, the turncoats claim that they are attracted to the developmental schemes launched by the ruling party. In the five Mahabubnagar districts, the MLAs and Ministers are keenly participating in paddy pur-

chasing programmes, school building inaugurations and wayside market foundation stone laying activities, among others. Minister Srinivas Goud is participating in Ayappa Deeksha programmes and is conducting prayers. Legislator Rajender Reddy adopted a different task: teaching in a classroom, after laying the foundation stone in Marikal School. MLA Marri Janardhan Reddy took up a mass marriage programme in his segment through his foundation.

(Contributed by Seelam Arozie, KVenkateswarlu, P V Kondal Rao and Avinash Deepak Puli)



Chief Public Relations Officer Jwala Narasimha Rao and others at the 'Nela Nela Vennela' programme in Houston

A SPIRITUAL TREAT FOR LITERARY LOVERS

PNS ■ HOUSTON Chief Public Relations Officer in the Chief Minister's Office (CMO) Jwala Narasimha Rao spoke about his 'Yuddha Kanda', the last part of the Ramayana, at 'Nela Nela Vennela' programme in Houston and explained the literary excellence of Vavilkolanu Subba Rao who translated Valmiki Ramayanam into Telugu with the title Mandaram.

Chief Public Relations Officer Jwala Narasimha Rao revealed his plans to get the 'Yuddha Kanda' released by Sringeri seer soon after his return to India

He translated 24,000 slokas of the Ramayana authored by Valmiki into 24,000 poems. Jwala Narasimha Rao, simplified Vavilkolanu Rama Rao's work with the title 'Mandara Makarandam' further. Having finished 'Bala Kanda', 'Ayodhya Kanda', 'Aranya Kanda', 'Kishkindha Kanda' and 'Sundarakanda' while in India, Jwala Narasimha Rao took time off his busy schedule and went to the USA to spend time with his son and authored 'Yuddha Kanda' there completing the simplification of Vavilkolanu's

work. 'Darsanam', a spiritual monthly, serialised the six chapters. Taking part in 'Nela Nela Vennela' programme, the CPRO introduced his 'Yuddha Kanda' to literary lovers there. At the invitation of his friend Sudhesh Pillula, Jawala took part in the event and explained the significance of Vavilkolanu Subba Rao's work and also about his 'Yuddha Kanda'. He revealed his plans to get the 'Yuddha Kanda' released by Sringeri seer soon after his return to India. Editor of 'Darsanam' Marumamula Venkataramana Sarma said that he is going to hold a literary meet in Hyderabad soon under the title: 'Jwala Ramayanam-Samalochanam.'

FIRM ASSURANCE

'NO POOR WILL BE LEFT OUT FROM 2BHK SCHEME'

PNS ■ WARANGAL

Minister for Roads & Building and Housing Vemula Prashanth Reddy on Sunday said the state government was keen on providing housing scheme benefits to the needy by sanctioning 2BHKs. He was speaking after formally inaugurating 40 double bed room houses in Raghavur village of Jangaon district. He said the government was keen on implementing the double bed room scheme in a phased manner and asked the beneficiaries, who failed to get the benefit in the first phase, not to feel belittled.



Ministers Vemula Prashanth Reddy and Errabelli Dayakar Rao hand over house patta to a beneficiary in Raghavur village of Jangaon district on Sunday

The Minister said the a poor family toils hard to secure a house and perform marriage to their daughter but those two tasks were made easy under the able leadership of Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao, who formulated schemes for the benefit of the poor and needy in the state. The Minister said the schemes mentioned in the manifesto of the TRS are slowly but steadily becoming reality with the concerted planning of the Chief Minister. "No other state in the country is implementing this kind of novel scheme (2BHK scheme) and this has become reality under the able

No other state in the country is implementing this kind of novel scheme (2BHK scheme) and this has become reality under the able leadership of the Chief Minister, said Vemula Prashanth

leadership of the Chief Minister," he said. The Minister ridiculed the Congress party and its lackluster scheme planning during their regimes and said the schemes of the previous government never surpassed a help limit of Rs 70,000. Panchayat Raj Minister Errabelli Dayakar Rao, who

was also present on the occasion said the TRS government was keen on providing housing, financial assistance for marriage under Shaadi Mubarak, Kalyana Lakshmi schemes, and the irrigation resources to the rural parts and needy sections and this prime objective is taking the poor families to come out of

the problems. The Minister further said that he was initiating measures to secure Kaleshwaram to the undivided Warangal district through Mallannasagar and Devadula respectively. Local legislator Dr T Rajaiah said the government would take necessary steps to provide the housing scheme facility in phase wise. He thanked the Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao for completing the housing scheme firstly in Station Ghanpur segment. ZP Chairperson Sampath Reddy and local leaders were also present on the occasion.

Yellow metal softens marginally

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

As was expected, the US and China are now inching towards inking of the first phase of new trade agreement. US President Donald Trump himself has given this indication. Following this, the US administration has reduced the import duty on Chinese goods by 50 per cent with effect from December 15. In sequence, the yellow metal softened marginally so also the precious metals.

233.08 and Rs. 71.83 respectively. Singapore dollar closed at Rs.52.23. Belying the gossips of economic meltdown, Sensex and Nifty 50 closed at the higher levels of 41,009.71 and 12,086.70 points respectively. Brent recorded a thin appreciation of about 0.30 dollars and closed at 64.34 dollars (per barrel). Crude oil closed at Rs.4,241 (per barrel) while Copper stood at Rs.440 (per kg). At home, the precious metals remained divergent. Gold MCX and Silver MCX closed at US dollars 1,478.12 and Rs. 37,773 (per ounce). Silver followed suit and closed at 17.01 dollars (per ounce). Platinum moved up and closed at \$ 931.15 (per ounce) and \$ 1,954.06 (per ounce). In Hyderabad, standard gold (24 carats) declined by Rs.500 and closed at Rs.37,740 (per 10 gms). Ornamental gold too moved in tandem and was quoted in the range of Rs. 35,820-35,920 (per 10 gms). Silver (0.999) on the other hand, appreciated by Rs.600 and closed at Rs.44,100 (per kg).

WEEKLY MARKET REVIEW



TRS will sweep municipal polls: Kamalakar

PNS ■ KARIMNAGAR

BC Welfare and Civil Supplies Minister Gangula Kamalakar expressed confidence that TRS would continue in the power in the state for the next 20 years. People were fed up with the political parties which ruled the State during the last 50 years and had given clear mandate to TRS in all the elections by reposing faith on the party. The Minister made these comments while inviting congress party leaders into TRS in a programme held at Chinthakunta of Kothapalli mandal on Sunday. Impressed by the performance and welfare schemes being implemented by TRS government, leaders from Congress and BJP parties were showing more interest to join the ruling party. TRS would win any elections, and party is going to sweep the next coming municipal elections, he expressed confidence. Recent local body elections were a classic example wherein TRS won the total of eight MPTCs and a ZPTC seat in Kothapalli mandal. TRS government was ruling the State with a great respect, Kamalakar said people of the State were having a lot of faith in TRS.

Samata's father-in-law dies of heart attack

PNS ■ KHANAPUR

Yellaiah, 65, father-in-law of gang rape and murder victim Samata, died on Saturday at his house at Gosampalle in Khyannapur mandal of Asifabad district on Saturday. Agonised at the gang rape and murder of his

daughter-in-law Samata on the outskirts of Yellapatur on November 24, he suffered a heart attack and died. A pall of gloom descended on Gosampalle village following death of two members in the family within a span of 20 days.

MSP for turmeric: Centre awaiting TS proposal

PNS ■ NIZAMABAD

BJP Lok Sabha Member Dharmapuri Arvind on Sunday said that the Central Government will come out with a permanent solution to turmeric farmers' problems as the turmeric board would not be able to render justice to the farmers. Addressing media here, he disclosed that there was possibility of some of the boards instituted for various crops were likely to



get scrapped. He hinted at Centre constituting a coordination committee, which

The BJP MP hinted that Centre may constituting a coordination committee, which enjoys the same powers as that of the boards, for turmeric under the leadership of an IAS officer

enjoys the same powers as that of the boards, for turmeric under the leadership of an IAS officer. The Centre will give funds to the tune of Rs 100 to Rs 200 crore per annum to benefit

turmeric farmers, he said. Hereafter, seeds, fertilizers, sale and purchase activities, insurance, quality of turmeric and other aspects would be decided on locally. Reiterating that the Centre

would give a better deal to turmeric farmers, he advised them against walking into the trap set by political leaders. Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Jaganmohan Reddy announced MSP for turmeric, but the Government of Telangana failed to follow suit why, he questioned. The Centre is ready to announce the MSP for turmeric provided the state government sends proposals to it in this regard, he said.

CAA targets fanatical and secessionist elements

HC UPADHYAY ■ HYDERABAD

The Citizenship Amendment Bill (CAB) has been passed by both Houses of Parliament and it has also received the President's assent. Now, it has become the law of the land, though not much to the liking of fanatical Muslims and some non-Muslim leaders whose game plan to garner electoral support of the illegal Muslim migrants from the neighbouring countries has fallen flat. The new Act offers the much-needed help to persecuted Hindus, Jains, Sikhs, Christians and Parsis by fanatical Muslims of Pakistan, Afghanistan and Bangladesh, who officially follow Islam as state religion. It is, indeed, strange that some misguided fanatical Muslims in India, knowing it fully well that their interests would not be affected by the new Act, still foment trouble in some pockets of the country like Assam, Meghalaya and other illegal migrants-dominated north-eastern states. With their eyes on the vote bank, some political parties add fuel to the fire, as a result of

which violence has erupted in these pockets. Now there comes the news that the state governments of West Bengal, Punjab and Kerala have openly announced they would not obey the new law. This is really a serious matter. Not following the law of land, duly passed by parliament, is a criminal offence and is tantamount to treason. Nobody is above law, be it just a citizen or a political master. The rule of the law should prevail. Hope, the central government would ensure peace and safety of the people at any cost and take stringent action against those who defy law and incite mob violence. The feeling of defiance of the law has its deep roots in the unerasable historical prejudice against the Hindu population. The anti-majority elements have been living in a fool's paradise that they can brow-beat the vast majority of Hindus and continue the decades-old practice of arm-twisting, particularly in the changed circumstances. Now that the times have changed, it is high time to correct the historical errors com-

The feeling of defiance of the law has its deep roots in the unerasable historical prejudice against the Hindu population. The anti-majority elements have been living in a fool's paradise that they can brow-beat the vast majority of Hindus and continue the decades-old practice of arm-twisting, particularly in the changed circumstances

mitted by our yesteryear leaders. After this landmark legislation, other game-changing legal measures, such as the National Register of Citizens, Uniform Civil Code, scrapping of the Minorities Commissions at the central and state levels and banning noise pollution through high volume loud speakers in places of worship in blatant violation of the Apex court judgment delivered by the bench headed by the then Chief Justice of India, R.C Lahoti, should be initiated without losing time. In this process, obviously,

many vested interests will have to be tackled and the arrogant, fanatical and secessionist anti-national elements will have to be shown their rightful place.



LEGAL ROUNDUP

SC forms probe panel The Supreme Court of India appointed a three-member probe committee, headed by a retired judge of the same court, Justice V.S Sirpurkar, to investigate into the 'encounter' deaths of four accused in the Disha gang-rape and murder case. The other members of the probe committee are: Justice Rekha Baldotra,

former Judge of the Bombay High Court, and former Director of the CBI Karthikeyan. The court granted six months' time to complete the probe, while making it clear that no other probe will be carried out in the subject matter. The 'encounter' had generated instant public applause throughout the country, though feeble voices from some well-informed quarters, including legal fraternity, were raised against the way in which the police handled the entire issue.

Ayodhya verdict: near finality The apex court has dismissed 18 review petitions filed against the historic Ayodhya Ram Mandir verdict delivered by it on November 9. But this doesn't mean that the judgment has attained finality. The aggrieved parties, at least some of them, would certainly explore the last legal remedy, called the curative petition. Of course, there are very thin chances of success in such a petition. After crossing this final hurdle, all doors of judiciary would

be closed for the aggrieved parties. Whatever the outcome of the legal process, by dragging the matter up to its last stage, the petitioners have certainly lost goodwill of Hindus. Legality apart, had the warring Muslim litigants stuck to their pre-verdict public assurance that they would honourably accept the court verdict; the much-needed atmosphere of communal harmony could have been created. **Fined for forgery** The Bombay High Court, in a case of forgery, has imposed the cost of Rs.10,000/- on three petitioners, while rejecting their plea to withdraw the writ petition and also directed registration of a criminal case against them in the magistrate court. The issue was brought to the notice of the court by the counsel for the respondent, who said that the thumb impression on the Vakalatnama filed by the petitioners was not of the fourth petitioner who is not living in India. The counsel also contended that the fourth petitioner had not given his consent to file the writ petition in question and further that after the fourth peti-

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CRIME CORNER

Skeletal remains of woman found at sand stockyard

HYDERABAD: The skeletal remains of an unidentified woman were found at a sand stockyard in Abdullapurmet of Ranga Reddy district on Saturday. According to the police, the remains of the woman, suspected to be aged between 25-30 years, were recovered while workers were loading sand onto trucks at the stockyard owned by the Telangana State Mineral Development Corporation (TSMDC) on Saturday. Upon being informed by the project officer of TSMDC, Niranjan, the Abdullapurmet Police reached the spot with clues team and inspected the place. "The skeletal remains including the skull and some portions of the muscles and visceral organs were found. Police officials recovered a saree and a rudraksha from the spot as well, based on which they are trying to identify the body. It is suspected that the body could have been brought along with the sand while being loaded into the truck from a sand quarry in Midgil of Mahabubnagar about seven months ago," said the police, adding that senior police officials from LB Nagar zone visited the spot.

US-bound students anxious as visas get delayed

HYDERABAD: Even as the spring season in US varsities is going to commence very soon, the students aspiring for visa to pursue education in US varsities are experiencing anxious moments as the waiting period to get a visa is not less than 78 days as far as US consulate office here is concerned. With the US government relaxing rules, many students prefer to attend visa interview in US Consulate Office here. The minimum waiting period for visa is 25 days and the maximum waiting period is 78 days. The US consulate at Kolkata has the minimum waiting period of 25 days, while it is 35 days in US consulate at Chennai, 78 days in US consulate in Hyderabad. However, the Delhi embassy of USA takes 35 days to issue visa. In fact, the application procedure for F-1 visa can begin 120 days prior to the issue of visa. During the period, parents try for educational loan. If the loan gets delayed, the visa waiting period also increases. Annually, 40,000 to 50,000 students travel to the USA to pursue education.

December 31 deadline to link PAN-Aadhaar

Continued from Page 1

The Supreme Court, in September last year, had declared the Centre's flagship Aadhaar scheme as constitutionally valid and held that the biometric ID would remain mandatory for the filing of I-T returns and allotment of PAN.

Section 139 AA (2) of the Income Tax Act says that every person having PAN as on July 1, 2017, and is eligible to obtain Aadhaar, must intimate his Aadhaar number to tax authorities. Aadhaar is issued by the Unique Identification Authority of India (UIDAI) to a resident of India and PAN is a 10-digit alphanumeric number allotted by the I-T Department to a person, firm or entity.

'Hyderabad Police staff is tech-savvy'

NAVEEN KUMAR ■ HYDERABAD

The Hyderabad Police are using technology to the hilt for the benefit of public. As many as 15 constables in every police station can efficiently handle initiatives like Crime and Criminals Tracking Network and Systems (CCTNS) and DPR (Daily Performance Report). Hyderabad Police Commissioner Anjani Kumar said that the new initiatives have helped them to monitor progress of investigation and witness production in the court and as a result has secured more convictions in court. Every police station in Telangana has a Facebook account and a Twitter handle to communicate with people. The state has 800 police stations and the technology initiatives would be extended to all the districts and all the units of the police force as well. All police stations will also have reception desk and grievance redressal and petition management system. Feedback will be taken through third party call centre and based on this, every police station will be given citizen satisfaction rating. This year, Telangana has secured second rank in implementing CCTNS by registering 96.4 compliance score while Karnataka scored 98.6 among other states in the country, according to Status of Policing in India Report-2019 on police



adequacy and working conditions prepared by the common cause and Centre for the Study of Developing Societies (CSDS). Explaining about DPR, Hyderabad Police Commissioner said, "It is an online application which every officer, including the constable, digitally uploads the work done by them during their shift at the end of the day. The progress has increased from 0 per cent to 63 per cent in an year." Another initiative, TFC (Technology Fusion Centre) located at Hyderabad Police Commissionerate, provides access to a variety of structured and unstructured data from various sources such as merging information from detection of crime and criminal data, incidents from emergency number 100, Hawk-eye, road accidents, city-wide surveillance cameras, patrol vehicles tracking data, investigation analysis, traffic

- Police technology**
- Mobile forensics
 - Geo Tagging
 - Enhanced CCTV cameras
 - Crime mapping
 - Automated Fingerprint Identification System
 - Digital Forensics
 - Hyd Cops App
 - Hawk Eye App
 - Lost Report App
 - CCTNS (Crime Criminal Technology Network System)
 - DPR (Daily Performance Report)
 - Papillon-Afis
 - Superlite

enforcement data, and social media platforms. Hawk-eye is an app through which citizens can lodge complaints or report crimes. "This facility helps us improve response times through aggregation, analysis, and dissemination of actionable information to the field officers. It is a collaborative effort of multiple agencies that provide resources, expertise, and information with the goal of maximizing their ability to detect, prevent, investigate and respond to any crime incidents and threat activities," an official said, adding that apart from this, the community policing support centre is aiming to bring police and citizens together to prevent crime.

Actor-cum-producer nabbed for cheating

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Tollywood producer and actor Shaikh Basheed was apprehended by the West Zone team of Commissioner's Task Force for cheating gullible victims in the guise of sanctioning huge loan amounts by collecting funds from them. Basheed told the victims that he will help them establish a company called 'SBKSSAAS Builders and Developers Pvt. Ltd (SBK GROUPS) at MRC Colony in Banjara Hills, police said. Basheed had started a finance company on the name of SBK GROUPS and also started similar companies in Mumbai, Chennai, Bangalore and Dubai of the same name. He worked as a producer for nine Telugu films. He acted as a lead in Eevadra Hero movie. "Previously, Basheed was involved in 11 cheating cases in various police stations of Hyderabad city," said the DCP of Commissioner's Task Force, P. Radhakrishna Rao.



Shaikh Basheed

According to police, Basheed runs his business at SBK groups with only one lady. When customers approach the office for construction purpose, he sends a fake estimation through email and asks them to deposit an amount as processing fee and registration amount, following which he stops responding to them. He also collects money from people who show interest to work in the film industry by giving them fake assurance and fake promises.

RGV gets notices to appear before CCS police

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Filmmaker Ram Gopal Varma was served notices by the Cyber Crimes Police of Hyderabad to appear before the police on Monday.



The summons were followed by a case booked against him by KA Paul for allegedly morphing his image and circulating the same on social media. In the picture, Paul, who is also the founder of Praja Shanti Party is seen handing over a Censor Board certificate to Varma. The complaint was made by a relative of Paul. Based on the complaint, the police registered a case under various Sections of the IT Act against Varma and are investigating. Paul and Varma were recently at loggerheads over a Telugu movie.

ARTS AND CRAFTS



Tourism Minister Srinivas Goud inaugurates the 25th All India Crafts Mela at Shilparamam on Sunday

Be kind towards animals: Kavitha
Former MP donates Rs 5 lakh to animal rescue shelter

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Former MP Kalvakuntla Kavitha, MP Dr Ranjith Reddy and Chevella MLA Kale Yaddaya inaugurated the country's one-of-its-kind animal rescue shelter at Miyakhangadda village in Shankarpally mandal of Rangareddi District on Sunday. A place to bark animal rescue shelter is maintained by animal rescuer Zabi Khan. The youth-led organisation founded in 2015 by a teenager Zabi works for abandoned and abused animals. The organisation has rescued and rehabilitated more than 3,000 animals. Speaking at the inauguration,

Kavitha congratulated Zabi for his efforts of rescuing abandoned animals. "Treating the ill ones and finding them good families by putting them on adoption expecting nothing in return is the best example for humanity. I urge all the citizens to be kind towards animals," Kavitha said. She added, "I also thank Telangana Government who has considered opening up a permanent sanctuary for animals. The sanctuary will be one-of-its-kind in the entire nation and also the first awareness center for humane education through animals. Kavitha later donated Rs 5 lakhs to the rescue shelter.



Former MP Kalvakuntla Kavitha plays with a dog at animal rescue shelter in Miyakhangadda village of Shankarpally on Sunday.

PBEL CITY ELECTROCUTION
Cops nail Golden Star MD, staffers for Monish's death

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Narsingi Police have filed a charge sheet nailing the culprits for the death of 7-year-old Monish, who succumbed to electrocution at PBEL City, a gated community, in February, 2019. The Cyberabad Police mentioned the managing director and five staffers of Golden Star Private Limited, the maintenance company of PBEL City, in their charge sheet. The final copy of the charge sheet will be submitted to the court on December 16.



Monish

Police booked the staffers of Golden Star under 304 (2) (culpable homicide, not amounting to murder) of the IPC. The employees include MD Ankit Verghese, 25, housekeeping staff Sai Kumar Goud and Madhav, a mechanic. Besides, the officers also booked INCOR Builders and the Owners' association under section 304 A (Cause of death due to negligence) of the IPC. It was recalled that on February 11, around 6.30 pm, Monish was electrocuted while playing with his friends in the lawn. CCTV cameras installed at the residential area captured the entire incident. The visuals prove that the boy was unattended for at least three to five minutes. After noticing

PBEL City. While installing additional lighting, Sai Kumar, who is untrained on electrical works, removed the connection from the lamppost's junction box. After the festival celebration, the man is supposed to have reconnected the live wires. However, he did not, and that is criminal negligence," police said. Monish played with the lamppost which had an exposed live wire, resulting in his electrocution. Notably, there were several such lampposts with exposed wires. It could have led to the death of many of the community's innocent residents. "During the custody, both accused confessed that they were working on the behalf of the electrician," added the investigating officer. According to the PME, a cardiac arrest caused by the electrocution. This critical evidence substantiates the case under criminal negligence booked against the management of Golden Star and the developers. The examination during the post mortem report found red-brown wound on Monish's left forearm. The report said that electrical entry probably caused the injury. Besides, Monish had no wound or fracture and his heart contained clotted blood.

BIE provides voc certificate course training to 100 jawans

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The certification award ceremony for the pass outs of short term vocational certificate courses conducted by the AOC Centre, No. 2 Training battalion, Army Ordinance Corps Centre, Trimulgherry, and, Commissioner of Intermediate Education was conducted here on Saturday. The certificate courses offered included artisan and wood technology, tailoring and dress designing, drawing and painting, leather and stitching technology, and, motor vehicle management. These courses are permitted by the Commissioner of Intermediate Education and provisional permission or recognition has been accorded for the academic year 2019-2020. During the function, 100 Army jawans, who completed the courses successfully were awarded the certificates by Commissioner of Intermediate Education and Secretary, Board of Intermediate Education, Syed Omer Jaleel. Col. Commandant Officiating and others were present.



A series of demonstrations against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC) by Jamaat-e-Islami Hind at Dharna Chowk on Lower Tank Bund, Indira Park on Sunday.

Protests continue against CAA

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A series of demonstrations against the Citizenship Amendment Act (CAA) and the National Register of Citizens (NRC) continued in the city on Sunday. Protesters joined the dharna held by the Jamaat-e-Islami Hind at dharna chowk

on Lower Tank Bund, Indira Park. The gathering included social activists, religious scholars and leaders, students and leaders of various political parties. The speakers demanded the Union government to withdraw the Act and drop the idea of implementing National Register of Citizens across the country. Meanwhile, hundreds of Muslims on Sunday offered special prayers at the Jama Masjid, Darulshifa in the old city early in the morning. The special prayers of Qunoot-e-Naazilah were performed to help those facing hardship to tide over their troubles.

As froth spills out of lake, effluents keep flowing in



Raa Cheruvu Lake in Boddupal covered with froth

CONRAD DIAS ■ HYDERABAD

Raa Cheruvu Lake in Boddupal has been continuously frothing with foam. Residents near the lake say industrial effluents are to be blamed for current state of the lake as untreated water is being let into the lake from the last few months.

The industries around the lake dump chemical waste directly into it. The released effluents pollute the lake to such an extent that the surface of the lake is covered with froth. Prashanth, an NGO volunteer and a resident of the locality said that froth has been spilling out

While pollutants released from the industries around Raa Cheruvu Lake in Boddupal are a major problem, residents say even the measures being taken by the officials are backfiring

from last three days and it shows that the lake is in terrible condition. "Raa Cheruvu lake was a source of drinking water and fishing, a decade back. We have been working to clean the lake from past 6 months, but the industrial waste released into the lake turns water poisonous. Minister Malla Reddy has also ordered the companies around the lake to stop releasing industrial waste and polluted water into the lake," Prashanth said. He also added that the cleaning of the lake will not improve the condition unless the companies stop dumping waste into it. Officials from Pollution Control Board have initiated

cleaning a programme, but there has been no improvement. While pollutants are a major problem, residents say even the measures being taken by the officials is backfiring. The residents request the officials to stop the chemical and sewage water into the lake first. The residents of that area said that they have complained to the Municipal Corporation about the issue but they have not taken any action yet. There are nearly 30 colonies around the lake and it is affecting the health of the people. People are suffering from many diseases due to the condition of the lake.

Electric pole in middle of road posing danger

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

An electric pole in the middle of the road at Ambedkar Nagar in Boddupal is posing danger to people commuting on that stretch, especially at night. Venkata Chary, a resident of the locality said that in the recent part, there have been a few minor accidents due to the pole and are afraid that it may lead to some serious accident in the future. "A few days back a boy hit the pole with his motorcycle. He had minor

injuries as he was riding slow. The pole is in such a place that it will cause a major accident someday," Venkata Chary said. They have complained to Telangana State Southern Power Distribution Company Limited to remove the pole but no action has been taken yet. However, the official from TSSPDCL has said that they have informed the concerned personnel in charge of that area regarding the issue and the problem will be rectified as soon as possible.

Trains booked up for Sankranti

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

With Sankranti being the peak season for people travelling to their native places, travellers are facing severe problems with no tickets available in trains. Waiting list in long distance trains heading towards Andhra Pradesh has crossed over 1,000. In some trains like Simhapuri, Satavahana, Golkonda, Rayalaseema, the waiting list runs up to 200, while it runs up to 300 for Sabari Express.

Much to the surprise of passengers who tried to buy tickets through IRCTC website, all the tickets in sleeper class and AC coaches are in waiting list with chances of seat confirmation very bleak.

The people have been exhorting the Centre to introduce Jana Sadharan train services for the festival. The private bus operators have been hiking the bus fares exorbitantly because of the lack of regular train services. They demanded the SCR to run special trains and attach additional bogies to the existing



trains to cope up with the additional rush.

Within one or two hours of opening advance booking for accommodation in buses heading for destinations in AP are being booked. In fact, there is no accommodation in buses till January 13 putting a big question mark how people should travel to their native place for the festival.

There are lakhs of people of AP origin living in Hyderabad. Some plan to visit their native

place on January 10, while some others plan their trip on January 11 and 12. The APSRC is running on an average 600 bus services to AP from Hyderabad.

Accommodation on these buses is completely booked. However, accommodation on some buses which travel to Vijayawada and a limited number of seats are available on day service buses. The TSRTC runs daily at least 300 services, which are almost full. The

Much to the surprise of passengers who tried to buy tickets through IRCTC website, all the tickets in sleeper class and AC coaches are in waiting list with chances of seat confirmation very bleak

waiting list for buses travelling to Visakhapatnam, Kakinada, Rajamahendravaram, Amalapuram, Bhimavaram, Eluru, Khammam and Bhadrachalam exceeded the limit.

As there is no accommodation in regular buses of the RTC of both the states, the Telugu states have started booking seats in special buses. Recently the bus fares have been hiked. In the name of special buses, 50 per cent fare is being charged additionally. TSRTC operated 4,500 buses last year and has plans to run 5,000 buses for the festival. Of them, 3,500 will be operated to various Telangana districts and the rest to the destinations in AP.

On ordinary days, over 2.5 lakh people travel to various destinations daily from twin cities, including 1.93 lakh from Secunderabad station alone. During Sankranti festival, an additional 50,000-1,00,000 per day will travel to their native places in AP.

At least 20 lakh people will travel to their native places, but the special trains introduced by SC Railway will never cross 50. The railway authorities are accused of introducing special trains not in advance but in the eleventh hour helping touts to corner majority of seats. The SC Railway has prepared plans to run 80 special trains. But the number of trains to be run from Hyderabad seems to be less.



Ministers Harish Rao, Jagadish Reddy, MLAs Gadari Kishore Kumar, Ramalinga Reddy, Press Academy Chairman Allam Narayana and others at the book launch of 'Pitta Vaalina Chettu', in Suryapet on Sunday

'Suryapet's dream came true with Godavari water'

PNS ■ KOTHAGUDEM

Without Chief Minister K Chandrababhan Rao, bringing Godavari water to Tungaturthi mandal in Suryapet district would not have been possible even after a millennium, said Minister for Power G Jagadish Reddy here on Sunday.

He was speaking at the book launch of 'Pitta Vaalina Chettu', written by Vardhelli Venkateswarlu, at a function held at Kothagudem in Tungaturthi mandal of Godavari water to Tungaturthi district. Speaking on the occasion, Jagadish Reddy said that Bheemireddy and V Buchchiramulu, who had sacrificed their lives to bring Godavari water to Tungaturthi, would have been happier had they been alive today as their struggles are bearing fruit.

Even engineering officials were perplexed at inauguration of Kaleswaram project within three and half years of laying

The people of Tungaturthi voted TRS to power in 2014 and 2018 believing that only TRS could fulfil their dreams and do justice, said Minister for Power G Jagadish Reddy

the foundation stone. He said the happiness of KCR was indescribable when he noticed Godavari water running across Suryapet district.

"Over 50-years of wait for Godavari water to flow across the Tungaturthi mandal came to an end. About 45 years ago, survey was done for execution of the Pochampadu project. Blood flowed in the region where Godavari water are supposed to flow," he said. The people of Tungaturthi realised that only the TRS alone could do them justice and voted it to power in 2014 and 2018 elections.

The Kaleswaram waters first reached Tungaturthi. The constituency benefited most under the Mission Kakatiya too as it is endowed with the highest number of tanks. The title Pitta Valina Chettu reflected all these facts, he further said. Finance Minister T Harish Rao, Rajya Sabha member Badugula and ZP Chairperson Deepika Yugandhar and others were also present on the occasion. MLAs Gadari Kishore Kumar, Ramalinga Reddy, Press Academy Chairman Allam Narayana were also present on the occasion.

Vijaya milk prices hiked by Rs 2 per /L

Continued from Page 1

Family milk would be available at Rs.42 per liter. Tea special milk would be available at Rs.42 per liter. Toned milk would be available at Rs.9 per 200 ml, Rs.22 per 500 ml and Rs.44 per liter. The same toned milk would be available at Rs.258 per 6 liters. Cow milk is available at Rs.22 per 500ml. The TSDDCF, in a pamphlet, mentioned that there is no change in the prices of standard milk and whole milk. The vendor's base margin has increased to Rs.3.25 paise, as the federation has hiked the margin to 25 paise per liter.

With the price hike, TSDDCF will get about Rs.3 crore per month and Rs.36 crore per year additionally.

Meanwhile, the Balala Hakkula Sangham (Children's rights association) has demanded the state government to roll back the increase in the price of Vijaya milk. Balala Hakkula Sangham honorary president Achyutha Rao stated that milk was the sole nutritious food for children and mothers were depending upon milk available in the market to rear their children. Children from poor and middle class families would be the losers if the government increased the price of milk, the association said.

Congress plans to launch 'Telangana Bachao Andolan'

K VENKATESHWARLU ■ HYDERABAD

Taking cue from AICC's 'Bharath Bachao Andolan', the Telangana Congress leaders have decided to launch a similar programme 'Telangana Bachao Andolan' in the state. Many leaders from the Telangana Congress camped in Delhi for over a week and actively took part in 'Bharath Bachao Andolan' held at Ramlila Maidan. Following the response for programme, the Telangana Congress leaders have decided to take up a similar andolan in the state.

According to sources, Telangana Congress Affairs in-charge RC Khuntia on Saturday held a meeting with leaders from the state after the 'Bharath

Bachao Andolan' programme in Delhi and took opinion from them in regard with the issue. In the meeting, the leaders formally decided to launch 'Telangana Bachao Andolan'. It was decided that the main slogan of the andolan would be 'KCR Ko Hatao- Telangana Ko Bachao'.

The leaders, in the meeting, opined that the situation in the state is no way different from that of the Centre in adopting 'anti-people' policies. They further came to a conclusion that it was high time to launch an agitation against the TRS government in the state ahead of the municipal polls.

According to the sources, the Telangana Congress would conduct a Core Committee meeting at Hyderabad and finalise the action plan.

Meanwhile, a section of leaders are mounting pressure on the TPCC to take up these sort of agitational programmes in the state against the state government to make their mark in the state politics.

Meanwhile, the aspirants of TPCC chief position tried to influence the party high command leader in their own way. According to sources, many leaders lobbied with the AICC general secretary KC Venugopal and others. Some aspirants have made their supporters to recommend their names to party high command.

One of the Telangana leaders, who went to participate in Bharath Bachao Andolan, has told on condition of anonymity that the high command will appoint new TPCC chief as soon as possible.



Congress leaders during 'Bharath Bachao Andolan' in New Delhi

Huge traffic jams at toll plazas on...

Continued from Page 1

Officials have since completed technical arrangements for issue of FASTag at tollgates on the Telangana National Highways. However, on state highways, FASTag is yet to be deployed. Lack of coordination between contractors and state government is causing the delay.

The Centre would bear 50 per cent of the cost of FASTag equipment; the remaining amount is locally contributed. The state government and contractors have locked horns over the issue. So far, only 58,000 FASTag chips have been sold in Telangana.

Toll gates on the Hyderabad - Warangal Highway, Sangareddy route, and several other places are earmarked for FASTag lanes. Only one or two lanes are functioning for cash payments, causing a lot of inconvenience to passengers.

The situation is no different in Andhra Pradesh. For instance, toll plazas in Krishna district are not functioning. The officials have opened just two cash counters to clear the traffic.

Thousands of passengers every day are suffering as they are not able to switch to the new electronic toll payment fast-track lanes at Keesara toll plaza in Kanchikacharla Mandal. Toll gate staffers are working at the standard cash counter to clear the traffic.

14 lakh farmers yet to receive PM Kisan benefits

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Under the Pradhana Mantri Kisan Samman (PM Kisan), around 14-lakh farmers are yet to receive Rs 2,000 in their bank accounts. The Union Agriculture Department deposited Rs 2,000 under the scheme in respect of 24-lakh farmers under the scheme and could not do so because of the defects in bank account numbers and other technical defects.

The State Agriculture Department is making arrangements to send the details to the Centre in a few days. The Center is likely to deposit the amount in the remaining farmers' bank accounts by December end.



Only six districts - Siddipet, Kamareddy, Mahabubnagar, Nalgonda, Sangareddy and Khammam-accounted for over one lakh farmers receiving the amount in their bank account, while Medchal figured at the other end of the spectrum with only 11,000 of its farmers receiving the amount in their bank accounts. The fifth installment is going to be credited from Jan onwards.

Sq yd fetches Rs 79,900

Continued from Page 1

The total revenue realised during the first session was Rs. 51.60 crore.

The second session of auction was conducted from 2:00 pm to 10:00 pm for 20 plots with an average of 20,621 sq yds in total. Plot No. 68, consisting of 917 sq.yds, fetched Rs.64,000 per square yard - the highest for the second session. There was stiff competition for Plot Nos 15 (740 square yards) and 68 (917 square yards) from 7:00 pm. onwards till 10:00 pm.

The revenue for the second session totaled Rs.83,66,17,700/- The revenue for the 2nd Day totaled Rs. 135 crore and 30 lakhs (approximately).

Water released for Yasangi in Nalgonda

PNS ■ NALGONDA

Rajya Sabha member Badugula Lingaiah Yadav on Sunday released water to left and right canals of Musi project for the first wetting of yasangi season for 35,000 acres of ayacut. Lingaiah Yadav said Chief Minister K Chandrababhan Rao was keen on providing irrigation facility to all cultivable lands in the State. Nakrekal M.L.A Chirumarthi Lingaiah was also present.

Lingaiah Yadav said that the State government was committed to help farmers and launched Rythu Bandhu and Rythu Bhima schemes. The farmers were taking up cultivation with confidence due to the investment support, availability of seeds, fertilizers and irrigation facility, he added. Reminding that the efforts of the government have succeeded in providing irrigation facility for two crops in Musi project ayacut, Chirumarthi Lingaiah said that the TRS government had completed the

modernisation of left and right canals of Musi project by spending Rs 65 crore.

Water leakage from the project, which occurred after one of its regulatory gates was washed away, was also fixed. Energy Minister G Jagadish Reddy had assured the ayacut farmers to provide irrigation facility for second crop by filling SRSP and SLBC canals, and fulfilled his promise. He reminded that more than 50 irrigation tanks had been already filled through left and right canals of Musi project, which has recharged the bore wells in the ayacut.

He requested CM to get the project desilted to increase storage capacity. Following washing away of a regulatory gate, farmers of 42 ayacut villages were apprehensive on getting water for yasangi season. Irrigation officials worked with a plan and succeeded in maintaining the water level at 640 feet as against full reservoir level of 645 feet with the help of inflows in October.



Student washed away in canal

PNS ■ NALGONDA

An intermediate student, who was celebrating his birthday, got washed away in SLBC canal at Arjalabavi village in Nalgonda district on Sunday. A first year student of Gowtham Junior College, Sk Khaja Baba (15) got washed away in SLBC canal when he went for a bath along with his brother and three friends.

According to Nalgonda town-II police, Khaja Baba was the son of Jhani Pasha, resident of Hanuman Nagar in Nalgonda town. Along with his brother Sk Vali and three friends

The victim, a first year student of Gowtham Junior College, Sk Khaja Baba (15) got washed away in SLBC canal when he went for a bath along with his brother and three friends

Dheeraj, Praveen and Naveen, the victim went to SLBC canal at Arjalabavi for swimming as Sunday was holiday for their college. His friends Dheeraj, Praveen and Naveen were also intermediate students and neighbors of the victim. Among the five students, only Praveen and Naveen were

familiar with swimming skills. When they went into the canal, Sk Khaja Baba got swept away in the canal due to flow of the water.

Eye witness Naveen told that Khaja Baba, Vali and Dheeraj jumped into the waters when they went to the canal for bath. On receiving the information about the incident, Nalgonda town-II police rushed to the place and taken up searching for Khaja Baba in the canal.



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

National BC Welfare Association president R Krishnaiah demanded the Prime Minister Narendra Modi to initiate steps to amend the Constitution to introduce reservations for SCs, STs and BCs in private sector.

Launching the 'Telangana BC Trade Union' on Sunday at BC Bhavan here, R Krishnaiah said the many companies are now in the hands of private agencies after the introduction of Liberalisation, Privatisation and Globalisation in 1992. Around 90 per cent of jobs are in private sector and government jobs are decreasing day by day, he said. At this juncture, there is a need to introduce reservations in private sector to get SCs, STs and BCs



National BC Welfare Association president R Krishnaiah addressing the media in Hyderabad on Sunday

their share in private jobs, Krishnaiah opined. "In private sector, people from BC, SC, and ST communities' constitute to only 5 per cent. People from these communities make up to 90 per cent of the population, out of

which only 5 per cent are working in private sector. This is nothing but a sheer injustice to them," he alleged. He also demanded the Centre to introduce 50 per cent reservations to BCs in legislative houses and reservations in promotions.

Allocation of power staff creates rift between TS and AP

Continued from Page 1

Another significant direction was with regard to the 256 of employees who had opted for Telangana from AP. These employees are among the 1,156 relieved employees.

The offer, made on behalf Telangana, is that out of the 256 employees who have opted for Telangana, irrespective of their home district, Telangana is willing to accommodate 50% of the employees, subject to the condition that 613 out of the 1,157 should be accommodated by AP.

"The present offer made was discussed with the subcommittee members of the Andhra

Pradesh side, but has not been accepted. The present committee, therefore, concludes its proceedings for final report," the statement said.

Justice Dharmadhikari made it clear that he would be submitting the very order to the Apex Court. Reacting to the allocation of 544 employees for Telangana, Telangana State Power Engineers Association (TSPEA) president P Ratnakar said it was understood that Telangana had to take 544 of the employees in question, even though there was no mention in the final order.

"AP is not willing to take the employees even though there is

no problem of paying salaries or promotions. It seems that they are simply delaying the inevitable," he said. He said that AP might move the Supreme Court against the order, as the phase of presenting facts and discussions came to an end on Sunday.

During the proceedings, the committee put forward the formula of 613 employees for AP and 544 for Telangana; however, the AP side made it clear that they had no vacancies to accommodate the same. The representatives of Telangana power utilities, however, argued that AP had accepted in writing to take back 441 of these employ-

ees. Out of the remaining, 74 had reached superannuation, leaving very few (98) to be absorbed by AP.

It was submitted before the one-man committee by Telangana that 242 employees of Telangana nativity had been taken back without any hassles.

The employees unions stated that great injustice had been done to Telangana state by the committee by not allocating employees based on nativity. The TSPEA argued that the previous governments, setting aside statutory provisions such as Article 371 (D) and GO 610, had appointed non-natives in the Telangana region.

AP power utilities attitude...

Continued from Page 1

They pointed out that AP had agreed to take back 613 employees and submit proposals for the 256 employees who had opted to switch from AP to TS (since they are not part of the 1157 employees) during the proceedings of the Justice Dharmadhikari committee in October last. "Even justice Dharmadhikari has expressed his displeasure over the attitude of the AP power utilities' management," they said. The association opined that Telangana had accepted the orders of the committee with utmost humility when it said that the State power companies must take 50% of 256 AP employees who had expressed their wish to join the Telangana service. "We have all accepted the directions of the committee keeping in view the fact that undue delay in sharing of the employees would have an impact on the process of promotions in the state. Besides, financial burden could not be imposed on the newborn state, they opined.

SHORT READS



Hindu Janajagruti Samiti opposes Goa 'Sunburn' festival

PANAJI: A Goa-based right wing organisation on Sunday urged the state government not to allow 'Sunburn Klassique' festival to be held in the coastal state, alleging that drugs were consumed at such events. The electronic dance music (EDM) festival is scheduled to be held at the Vagator beach in North Goa district from December 27 to 29. Hindu Janajagruti Samiti's (HJS) Goa convener Manoj Solanki said the state government should immediately withdraw the permission granted to organisers of the Sunburn Klassique festival. "The culture promoted at the festival is not ours. A wrong culture is promoted during the event, which attracts thousands of youth every year," he said. Solanki alleged that drugs were consumed by people at such events.

Chavan takes dig at Oppn for boycotting gov't tea party

Nagpur, Dec 15 (PTI) Taking a dig at the BJP, senior Congress leader Ashok Chavan on Sunday said despite it being the International Tea Day, the opposition party refused to have a cup of tea with the Maharashtra Vikas Aghadi government on the eve of the winter session of the state legislature. Fadnavis on Sunday said the BJP would boycott the customary tea party to be hosted by Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray in the evening. Commenting on it, Chavan tweeted, "It was expected that the opposition party leaders will attend the high tea and jointly discuss the crucial problems of the state." "Incidentally, today is also the International Tea Day. Unfortunately, the opposition parties boycotted the high tea," the former chief minister said in a tweet in Marathi. Notably, during the BJP-led state government's tenure from 2014 to 2019, the Congress and NCP, which were then in the opposition, used to boycott the high tea invitations from the ruling side.



Rahul should drop his surname as it was stolen by his family

NEW DELHI: Rahul Gandhi should drop his surname as it was "stolen" by his family for political gains, BJP leader Sambit Patra claimed on Sunday, a day after the Congress scion refused to apologise for his "rape in India" remark saying he is not 'Rahul Savarkar'. Addressing a press conference, Patra said former prime minister Indira Gandhi had called Savarkar "son of soil", while her grandson was referring to him in a derogatory note. "They stole the Gandhi name for political gains. He should give up the name of Gandhi. You (Rahul Gandhi) are a political deserter," Patra alleged.

CITIZENSHIP ACT

AGP to file plea in SC for nixing amended CAA

PNS ■ GUWAHATI

The Asom Gana Parishad (AGP), an ally of the ruling BJP, would file a petition in the Supreme Court praying for revocation of the amended Citizenship Act, party leader Kumar Deepak Das said on Sunday.

He asserted that the AGP respected the sentiments of common people, who were wary that the law might threaten their identity and existence.

"We will take the legal route to seek revocation of the amended Act as the indigenous people of Assam are apprehensive that their identity, language might come under threat," Das, a former Rajya Sabha MP said. Sources said a delegation of the AGP, led by Das, would leave for Delhi in the evening to file the plea in the apex court as PILs seeking revocation of the Act were scheduled to be taken up for hearing on December 18.

Former AGP Minister Prafulla Kumar Mahanta, who had been vocal about his opposition to the amended Act, claimed the party never adopted any resolution supporting the law.

He urged the AGP leadership to clear its stand on the contentious matter.

Dissidence had been brewing in the AGP after party chief Atul Bora said if the



Exclude Brahmaputra valley from citizenship law: Atul Bora

GUWAHATI: AGP chief Atul Bora said on Sunday that the Brahmaputra valley, where violent protests have been happening over the amended Citizenship Act, should be excluded from its purview. Addressing a press conference here, Bora, also a state minister, said as the legislation has already become an Act, so at least the Brahmaputra valley should be excluded and it may be implemented in the Barak valley. The Barak valley, which has a significant Bengali population, has not seen any major agitation. AGP leader and Assam minister Keshab Mahanta said the party has not left its "old stand" of opposing the contentious Act. "Though we are a part of the NDA, our stand has not changed. We still do not want this Act to be implemented in Assam and North East," he said. The party's lone MP in Rajya Sabha, Birendra Prasad Baishya, opposed the Bill during discussion, but voted in favour of it. After that, the party has been termed a "traitor" and is facing severe criticism across the state, with party leaders urging the top brass to clear their stand on the contentious matter.

Centre "wants to bring the Bill, he cannot do anything about it." AGP member in Rajya Sabha, Birendra Prasad Baishya, had voted in favour of

the legislation. The regional party has seen a spree of resignations, primarily from district-level bodies, over the issue. Mahanta, however, claimed Bora's views were "personal" and had nothing to do with the party.

"Being a regional party, we cannot go against the interests of indigenous people. Views expressed by Bora had nothing to do with the party's stance on the Act," he claimed.

Earlier in the day, AGP workers held demonstrations outside the party headquarters in Ambari area of Guwahati, demanding resignation of Baishya, party president Atul Bora and two other ministers.

Senior AGP leader Brindaban Goswami urged party workers to "ensure that the aspirations and sentiments of the Assamese people are honoured and the law revoked". "What is the point of filing a petition against the amended Act now after the party MP voted in its favour?" Goswami contended.

During the previous tenure of the BJP, Bora, who is also the state agriculture minister, and two AGP ministers had resigned from Sarabananda Sonowal-led government over the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, which had later lapsed as it could not be taken up for discussion in the Rajya Sabha.



'No need to fear, Indian Muslims neither intruders nor refugees'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Amid a heated debate on the Citizenship (Amendment) Act, Chairman of National Commission for Minorities Syed Ghayoorul Hasan Rizvi has asserted that the legislation is not against minorities and Indian Muslims need not fear as they are neither intruders nor refugees. He also said it is expected from the Union government to ensure that Indian Muslims do not face any problem due to the National Register of Citizens (NRC). "This legislation is not against minorities. Even Parsis, Christians, Sikhs, Jains and

Buddhists are minorities," Rizvi said on Saturday. "Some people are also saying that the Act is anti-Muslim but it is not true as there is no mention of Indian Muslims in it," the NCM chairman said. He said Indian Muslims need not fear the Act as they have nothing to do with the Muslims of Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan. "There is no danger to Indian Muslims," Rizvi said. "Indian Muslims are neither intruders nor refugees. An Indian Muslim is a respected citizen and the question of sending him out of this country does not arise. The home minister has also said the same," Rizvi said.



JHARKHAND ELECTION

AJSU chief indicates openness to post-poll alliance with any party

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The AJSU Party, an erstwhile ally of the BJP in Jharkhand, indicated on Sunday that it is open to post-poll alliance with any party that fulfils its agenda of better and inclusive governance.

For the AJSU Party, its mission of "abki baar, gaon ki sarkar" to make villages an intrinsic part of the governance delivery system is supreme, its chief Sudesh Mahato said.

Hitting out at the BJP and the Congress, he alleged that both the national parties were "same" and ignored the state.

"I don't want to make government of any party or individual. I want the government of the people of Jharkhand which works for overall development of the people... For me, the Congress and the BJP are same," Mahato said when asked about whom his party would support if the polls throw up a fractured mandate.

"For us, our agenda of 'abki baar, gaon ki sarkar' is most important. It focuses on governance, delivery system and making villages an intrinsic



part of it. We want to fulfil Mahatma Gandhi's dream of swaraj," Mahato said over phone. Training his guns on his erstwhile ally BJP, Mahato alleges the party wants to win election without giving importance to local issues.

"Where is the BJP's slogan of 'Ab ki baar 65 paar' (to win over 65 of the 81 seats)? The party has stopped raising it and is talking about Ram temple. It can't win elections by ignoring local issues," he said.

The prime minister had assured that there would not be any politics over the Supreme Court verdict on the Ayodhya

issue, but he was now raising the temple issue during campaign in the state, Mahato alleged. Asked if the amended Citizenship Act will have any effect on the elections, Mahato said these "diverting tactics" won't work now.

This is assembly elections and local issues matter more to the people, he said.

The AJSU Party fought the 2014 assembly elections in alliance with the BJP and won five out of the eight seats it had contested. It was also part of the Raghubar Das-led government for five years in the state.

DCW chief falls unconscious, hospitalised

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

DCW chief Swati Maliwal, who was on a hunger strike to demand capital punishment for rapists within six months of their conviction, was taken to a city hospital after she fell unconscious on Sunday morning.

When Maliwal's condition deteriorated on Saturday night, doctors advised her to go to a hospital, but she refused to budge.

On Sunday morning, she was taken to the LNJP Hospital after she fainted.

According to a DCW member, she was initially taken to the emergency ward of the hospital since she was unconscious. Later when she regained consciousness, she refused to allow doctors to put her on intravenous fluids. Maliwal was shifted to a special ward, where she was put on intravenous fluids, he said, adding that her condition was stated to be stable.

He said the DCW chief's supporters were stationed outside the hospital. Maliwal was on a hunger strike for over 10 days at the Samta Sthal near Raj Ghat.

'Advantage for India as work-age population bulge to last till 2055'

PNS ■ AHMEDABAD

Vice President M Venkaiah Naidu on Sunday said the "next 30 years" are crucial for India in terms of the demographic dividend as the "bulge" in the working-age population of the country will last till 2055. He also called upon the need to equip the youth with skills that will enable them to face 21st century challenges.

Naidu was addressing the 62nd convocation ceremony of Sardar Patel University at Vallabh Vidyanagar in central Gujarat.

"More than 65 per cent of our population today is below 35 years of age and that is really a huge advantage. This bulge in working-age population is set to last till 2055. Therefore, next 30 years are very crucial for India. We need to skill and equip our youth for the challenges of the 21st century," he

said. "Today, India is going through a phase which is filled with hope and opportunities. As the vice president, I have visited many foreign countries and one common thing that I have experienced is that everybody has faith in India's capabilities, talent and efforts," he added.

On the occasion, Naidu called upon the graduating students to work for the uplift of those who are not as fortunate as them.

"We should leave the path of caste, creed, cash and criminality and adopt goals set by our heritage like character, calibre, capacity and contact," he advised them.

"We should adopt the mantra of reform, perform and transform given by our Prime Minister Narendra Modi," he added. Earlier, Naidu paid tributes to Sardar Patel at his statue on the university campus on his 69th death anniversary.



Internet services suspended in 5 districts of Bengal

PNS ■ KOLKATA

Internet services were on Sunday suspended in five districts of West Bengal, amid violent protests against the amended Citizenship Act across the state, a senior government official said. According to the official, the government has decided to shutdown Internet services in Malda, Murshidabad, Howrah, North 24 Parganas and parts of South 24 Parganas districts to prevent rumour-mongering and circulation of fake news, especially on social

Choose between power and Savarkar: BJP

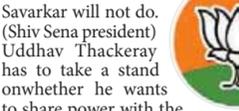
PNS ■ MUMBAI

BJP spokesman Shahnawaz Hussain on Sunday said the country will never forgive Congress leader Rahul Gandhi for insulting Veer Savarkar and asked the Shiv Sena to choose between power and the freedom fighter.

Talking to reporters here, Hussain, in a stinging attack on the Congress leader, said there can be no comparison between Savarkar and Gandhi, who has a "borrowed" surname.

"Just tweeting a protest against Gandhi's insult of

Talking to reporters here, Hussain, in a stinging attack on the Congress leader, said there can be no comparison between Savarkar and Gandhi, who has a 'borrowed' surname



Savarkar will not do. (Shiv Sena president) Uddhav Thackeray has to take a stand on whether he wants to share power with the Congress which has insulted the national icon and freedom fighter," he said.

Addressing the Congress' mega 'Bharat Bachao Rally' in Delhi on Saturday, Rahul Gandhi rejected the BJP's demand for apology over his "rape in India" barb, and added that his name was Rahul Gandhi, not

"Rahul Savarkar", and he will never apologise for speaking the truth. Reacting to Rahul Gandhi's remark mentioning Savarkar, Shiv Sena's Rajya Sabha member Sanjay Raut on Saturday in a tweet said there could not be any "compromise" about reverence for the Hindutva ideologue.

Accusing the Congress of insulting nationalists and freedom fighters, Hussain said the people taught a lesson to the Sonia Gandhi-led party twice and it was not even able to claim the leader of opposition's post in the Lok Sabha.

Kashmiri pandit group welcomes CAB

● Says entire nation 'stands with PM'

JAMMU: Panun Kashmir, an organisation of Kashmiri migrant pandits, on Sunday welcomed the passing of the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill in both houses of parliament and said that the "entire nation stands wholeheartedly with PM Narendra Modi". "The passing of CAB by parliament is a resolve to ensure complete politico-cultural decolonisation of India. Decolonising Indian mind is a critical necessity for national integration," Convener of Panun Kashmir, Agnishekhar, told reporters here. Agnishekhar, who was flanked by several other leaders of the group including its chairman Ajay Chrungeo, said the decision to grant citizenship to persecuted Hindus of Pakistan, Bangladesh and Afghanistan is a monumental decision of Modi government to address the mutilations inflicted on Hindus during the colonial enslavement. He alleged that the state of India since independence chose to remain a mute bystander to the genocidal attrition unleashed on Hindus left behind in Pak, Bangladesh and Afghanistan.

TMC takes out rallies against citizenship law

PNS ■ KOLKATA

The ruling Trinamool Congress in West Bengal took out rallies across the state on Sunday, protesting against the amended Citizenship Act.

Several senior party leaders, including ministers, led rallies in various districts and also appealed to the people to maintain peace and refrain from indulging in violence. Carrying posters and placards, TMC members shouted slogans against the Modi government and demanded that the new citizenship law be immediately scrapped.

"We want this divisive Citizenship Act to be immediately scrapped. Our state government has already said that it will not be implemented in Bengal, so we appeal to the people not to take law into their hands, and protest peacefully," senior TMC leader and education minister Partha Chatterjee said. TMC supremo and Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee will hit the streets from Monday in protest of the law.



Fadnavis seeks Rahul's apology over Savarkar remarks

PNS ■ NAGPUR

Leader of the Opposition in Maharashtra Assembly Devendra Fadnavis on Sunday demanded an "unconditional apology" from Congress leader Rahul Gandhi over his 'My name is not Rahul Savarkar' remark.

Talking to reporters here, Fadnavis also announced that the BJP would boycott the customary tea party to be hosted by Chief Minister Uddhav Thackeray on Sunday, on the eve of the winter session of the state Assembly.

"Congress leader Rahul Gandhi should tender an unconditional apology over his remarks on Savarkar. He does not seem to have studied India's history of the Independence movement," Fadnavis said.

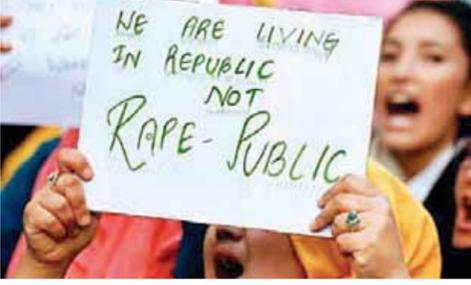
On 7th anniversary of Nirbhaya case, rape conviction rate low at 32%

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Seven years after the brutal Nirbhaya gang rape that shook the entire nation, the conviction rate in rape cases in the country is as low as 32.2 per cent despite laws dealing with sexual assault being made stringent in the aftermath of the incident.

According to the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) data available for 2017, the total number of rape cases that went to trial in that year was 1,46,201 but only 5,822 of them resulted in conviction.

What is perhaps more worrisome is that while the conviction rate in rape cases has increased



marginally in recent years, the charge-sheeting rate has gone down -- which means cases are not going to court. The charge-sheeting rate in rape cases dropped to 86.6 per cent in 2017 from 95.4 per cent in 2013, the NCRB statistics show. Shilpi Jain, who was the

defence lawyer in the Alwar rape case wherein a foreign tourist was raped by Bitti Mohanty, son former Odisha director general of police B B Mohanty, said the field-level staff of police dealing with rape investigation need to be made more efficient. "They are mostly ill-equipped, inexperienced, power gets to

their head and in most cases they are extremely corrupt," said Jain. "A sub-inspector is the highest-level officer who files a charge sheet, so one can imagine the quality of the content," said Jain. Similarly, the prosecutors who deal with the cases at the district

level are of low caliber and less driven, she said, adding that all these factors make up badly investigated cases which results in low conviction rate.

A 23-year-old paramedic student, who came to be known as Nirbhaya, was gang raped on the intervening night of December 16-17, 2012, in a running bus in south Delhi by six people. Severely assaulted before being thrown out on the road, she succumbed to injuries on December 29 at Mount Elizabeth Hospital in Singapore.

All the accused, including a juvenile, were arrested and charged with sexual assault and murder. One of the accused, Ram Singh, died in police cus-

tody of possible suicide on March 11, 2013 in the Tihar Jail.

A week after the horrific attack on Nirbhaya, the Justice JS Verma Committee was set up to review the criminal laws to sternly deal with sexual assault cases.

The Committee's report, which was published within a month, formed the basis of the Criminal Law (Amendment) Act of 2013 to set the maximum punishment for rape as death penalty rather than life imprisonment.

On February 3, 2013, the Criminal Law (Amendment) Ordinance, 2013 was promulgated by then President Pranab Mukherjee.

Take the lead

The domino effect of protests over fee hikes and citizenship law shows that a mass student movement may be possible

The protests over the new Citizenship Act, which promises religion-based acceptance of refugees and excludes the concerns of minorities and indigenous people, may congeal as a mass student movement that's rearing its head across the country in a manner reminiscent of the anti-reservation stir of the 90s. As the young Assamese stood up for their linguistic and cultural pride, one that has been threatened since colonial times by waves of privileged Bengali-speaking settlers, their marginalisation has found echoes across

the country. Students at various colleges and universities, even in faraway Delhi, are out to challenge not just the autocracy of the ruling regime but occupy the space for balance, humanism and logic that has been vacated by civil society, Opposition leaders and rationalists. This confluence of students, therefore, comes from generational solidarity, from their stakeholderhood in an India that is being created by selfish politics but will leave them suffering the consequences and unlearning what we have raised them to believe, to hold the establishment to account. Perhaps, it is getting endorsement because of the silence from a coopted majority. For the new Citizenship Act is not about reimagining India in a positive way but about reconstructing on ruins and relics of our civilisational foundations. It is not about denying immigration rights to Muslims but the selective culling of whom we want on our land that goes against the grain of the Constitution, one of the best documents that guarantees our citizenry equality. It is about creating a fear psychosis among the majority community that for the first time believes it has been a victim of parasitic minorities, no matter how small their numbers. It is about a One India based on Hindu nationalism that disregards, as in the Northeast, the emotions of locals who have over the years reclaimed their political rights as national parties have merrily played around with demographics, encouraging immigration for votebanks, first Muslim, now Hindus. It is about upending stability that has been hard-earned in a diverse India. In that sense, the BJP has, by fomenting disunity, probably gifted a plank of unity that might just lead to a transformative and revolutionary student movement. If the mass coalescence following the Nirbhaya rape, the Dalit atrocities, the Rohith Vemula suicide and fee hikes at institutions is any indication, then the young are getting restive. If the 90s fed the drive for economic empowerment in a globalised world, then millennials are looking at value-creation of a different kind, one that keeps them connected to their identity than be submerged by the homogeneous hold of power. One that is not intellectual fadism of campus politics but can be carried into the real world, one that is not just anger against the system but about claiming it.

Perhaps this is the reason why students in Assam, unlike the anti-outsider movement of the late 1970s and early 80s, are spontaneously coming together as an amorphous force. They have demonstrated peacefully by and large through blockades, gatherings and processions. It is the police clampdown which has been harsh in comparison, both in the State and even in Delhi. The All Assam Students' Union (AASU) may be leading the protests like the old times but has been joined by university students and even farmers and tribals. And so far they have decided to stay away from politicisation by national parties, be it the BJP or the Congress. Technology and media outreach have helped mobilise support, scale up the new law as a transnational issue and has even inducted peers in the diaspora. Student movements in India today may begin local but then draw traction in the broader context. This is the reason why the JNU fee hike agitation spread to all other institutions and became a swell of anger against fee hike in the higher education system in general. The *Hok Kolorob* movement in Jadavpur University, against the abrasive arrogance of the VC, had a domino effect with demonstrations being staged across India, including Delhi, Mumbai, Hyderabad and Bengaluru. But in recent times, it is the Hong Kong students' protest, with human chains, night vigils and Nelson Mandela songs, whose innovation and energy have even compelled a totalitarian China to take a step back. The good part about this non-violent resistance against the regime was that it could not be demonised by the establishment but weaponised the entire world's sympathy. In the same way, the new wave of home-grown student movements could very well capture the national imagination. Once young people have freed themselves from State fear, then we may yet reap a true democratic dividend.

India calling

A record number of Indian-origin MPs were voted to the UK Parliament but not all might end up being friends of India



Fifteen of the newly-elected Members of Parliament (MPs) in Westminster will have Indian roots. And while 15 out of 650 MPs might not seem like much, this is an assertion of how influential the British Indian community has become. At least two or three MPs of the Conservative Party, which won a stunning victory, are expected to become members of the Cabinet, including Priti Patel and Rishi Sunak, the latter familiar to some Indians as Infosys-founder NR Narayana Murthy's son-in-law.

There were several Indian-origin MPs from the Labour Party as well and their number included Lisa Nandy, who some are pegging as a potential candidate for leading the Labour Party following the planned resignation of the current leader, Jeremy Corbyn. While most Indian-origin MPs of the Conservative Party are generally seen as pro-India — there was a concerted effort within the Indian community to consolidate behind the Conservatives after Corbyn's statements on the Kashmir issue and his previous statements sympathetic to terrorist organisations — it is not as if Labour's Indian origin MPs are anti-India. But given Labour's extreme position on some issues, it is almost certain that its MPs will be critical of the Indian Government's stance on several issues. This is something that the Modi regime must be prepared for as such MPs, while being the biggest advocacy group for Indian interests, could also end up being the biggest critics of policies back home. The Chennai-born US Congresswoman Pramila Jayapal has been leading attacks in the US Congress against the Modi Government. Several first and second-generation Sikh immigrants in politics, particularly in Canada, have been openly advocating the Khalistani cause. Just because someone holds an Overseas Citizen of India (OCI) card does not make them a "friend" of India. Our diplomats and policy-makers should never forget this. At the same time, the Modi Government's overt support to certain Indian organisations that are weaponising the Indian diaspora politically is a good move. For example, many of Jayapal's constituents are from the Indian community working in the Greater Seattle area's IT industry, dominated by Amazon and Microsoft. Hundreds of them have written to her criticising her stance on Kashmir, making her realise that she cannot take the community's vote for granted. We should celebrate the success of our diaspora in every field, including politics, but we must not for one second forget that they do not owe their allegiance to India and are not "Indians."

A broken justice system

Increasingly, rape cases have seen an outpouring of public anger where the demand for death has reached a high pitch. Only reforms in the police and judicial systems can help

KUSHAN MITRA

No matter what problems one may have with fairness of social media platforms like Twitter, posts here do make up for an interesting read and allow one to gauge the mood, if not of the country, definitely of the chattering class. Reactions to the rape and murder of a young veterinary doctor in Hyderabad were telling. Several Twitter users advocated not just death penalty but some even argued that the perpetrators be lynched. This kicked in a fevered discussion and even found its way into the Parliament where several MPs, across party lines, argued in favour of lynching of the rapists. Not a State-sanctioned death penalty but public lynching.

The irony, at a time when people are talking about bringing anti-lynching provisions into the law, was not lost on some. People's anger stemmed, in no small part, due to the fact that December 2019 marks seven years of the horrific gang-rape in South Delhi, where a young physiotherapist was brutally assaulted and left for dead. The perpetrators of this horrific crime, despite being convicted and given the death penalty, have successfully eluded the sentence that was handed down to them. This is death of our conscience by using every available aspect of the law to delay their execution.

But isn't this the right of every prisoner? The ability to use every possible means to prove his innocence or mitigate his sentence or even delay it, particularly when it is a matter of death? The only other major democracy that regularly executes prisoners is the US, which has several provisions in its statute books. Even the Governor of a State can issue a last-minute pardon to prisoners if appeals to the US Supreme Court fail. To deny them that would potentially mean convicting an innocent man or woman to death. In college and school debates, we have held discussions on justice delayed is justice denied but it is almost certain that a rushed judicial process is dangerous. It is gratifying that the Chief Justice of India, Sharad Arvind Bobde, realised this. While commenting on the murders of the four undertrials in the Hyderabad rape and murder case, he said, "Justice should not be revenge. I believe justice loses its character as justice if it becomes revenge."

Those — including not just liberal ideologues in the country but also Right-wing thought leaders — against death penalty have a simple argument: Who is a man to judge a crime? But how do you explain this in the Indian context, because at our core, we remain a deeply tribalistic society where the 18th and 21st centuries have had a troubled relationship. Anyone who has been 50 kilometres outside India's major metropolitan areas, particularly the national Capital, will understand this. When



crimes are committed in such a brutal manner and scale, there is an expectation of punishment matching the act. India is not Norway, where a mass murderer can be allowed to live and also fight the State for human rights. No, we are India, where we have a very specific set of criminal issues. We should not pretend to be a socially developed State. Indeed, it can be argued that India's social problems will likely get worse before they get better and the country will have little choice but to execute certain citizens.

We have to, however, take every single possible precautionary measure to prevent the possibility of an innocent man/woman going to the gallows. We cannot accept even one wrongful death sanctioned by the State. That said, when it is proven beyond any iota of doubt that an accused is guilty of those "rarest of rare" cases, where State-sanction is justified, then the executive and the judiciary both should ensure that the punishment is delivered swiftly. To keep a man or a woman on death row for an indefinite time is technically, cruelty. Of course, one may not sympathise with the murderers but constant appeals bouncing

“ WE HAVE TO, HOWEVER, TAKE EVERY SINGLE POSSIBLE PRECAUTIONARY MEASURE TO PREVENT THE POSSIBILITY OF AN INNOCENT MAN/WOMAN GOING TO THE GALLOWES. WE CANNOT ACCEPT EVEN ONE WRONGFUL DEATH SANCTIONED BY THE STATE ”

around the judiciary and the Union Home Ministry for years is plainly ridiculous. If someone has been sentenced to death for a heinous crime, the death penalty should not be handed out like candy by the lower judiciary. If the sentence has been confirmed by the Supreme Court, the Home Ministry and the President should get on with their jobs.

We have had Presidents who have delayed the signing of death warrants because it went against their conscience. Fair enough, but Presidents should come out and vocal about it instead of delaying matters until the next head of the State assumes power.

This is a peculiar Indian issue — putting off tough decisions instead of acting on them. It took a century to bring natural justice to the Ayodhya case. On top of that, the fate of the Delhi rapists is still hanging in the air. This is one major reason why there is so much pendency in courts. Forget about the failure of the bureaucracy and the executive to take decisions. Of course, there are other reasons, too, such as delay in filling judicial vacancies, which coupled with the lack of education and knowledge across the board,

including that of the legal profession, has completely broken the criminal justice system in the country.

So when incidents like the Hyderabad rape case happen, there is public anger. The same sentiments run across among the local population when alleged child snatchers or cattle hustlers are lynched. We know how people get worked up over vigilantism.

Our justice system has failed us completely and needs to be revamped with meaningful implementation of processes. Increasingly, people have started taking matters into their own hands. If this isn't a sign of a banana republic, no one really knows what is. It is, therefore, imperative for the executive and the judiciary to work towards fixing this. While policing is a State subject, there needs to be a comprehensive federal re-evaluation of policing and the judiciary, just like the indirect taxation system was overhauled to the Goods and Services Tax system. But we cannot afford to bungle anymore. India needs police and judicial reforms now in sync with the severity of the emerging crime graph.

(The writer is Managing Editor, The Pioneer)

SOUNDBITE

BJP asked me to apologise for telling the truth. I am not Rahul Savarkar. I am Rahul Gandhi. I will not apologise. Nor will anyone from the Congress.



Congress leader —Rahul Gandhi

The big films that I've done and their success gave me the courage to do smaller films and take it all upon my shoulders.



Actor —Sonakshi Sinha

One of India's great strengths is its Constitution. As a fellow democracy, we respect India's institutions, but are concerned about the implications of the CAB Bill.



US diplomat —Sam Brownback

Clearly, this is not an ordinary slowdown. It is India's great slowdown, where the economy seems headed for the intensive care unit.



Former Chief Economic Advisor —Arvind Subramanian

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Assam's anxiety

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Spent force" (December 13). The hard-earned peace in Assam is now on a knife's edge with continuous violent protests in several parts of the State following the Citizenship (Amendment) Act (CAA), 2019, which seeks to grant citizenship to non-Muslim migrants from Bangladesh, Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The passage of the CAA is an act of betrayal by the BJP, which had promised to solve the vexed foreigners' issue once and for all in accordance with the 1985 Assam Accord. The pact stipulates that all foreigners, who came to Assam on or after March 25, 1971, shall continue to be detected, deleted from the rolls and expelled in accordance with the law.

Apprehensions and fears of the Assamese were genuine and, hence, the National Register of Citizens (NRC) was necessitated by the Supreme Court. A consensus was arrived at where it was decided that the final NRC list would be a piece of legal document for identification, deletion of names from the voters' list and

Russia will be missed on the world stage

This refers to the editorial, "Shut out Russia" (December 11). It is unfortunate that Russia has been banned for four years by the World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA) from participating in the world's major sporting events on grounds of doping non-compliance. The WADA took this decision after concluding that Moscow had planted fake evidence and got rid of files linked to positive doping tests in laboratory, data that could have aided the process of identifying drug cheats.

It must be noted that Russia has been embroiled in performance-enhancement drug scandals since a 2015 report commissioned by the WADA found evidence of mass doping among Russian athletes. Many players were sidelined over the past two Olympics and Russia was stripped of its flag altogether at last year's winter games in Pyeongchang as punishment for State-sponsored doping cover-ups at the Sochi games in 2014. One of the conditions for the reinstatement of the Russian anti-doping agency, RUSADA, had been that Moscow would provide an authentic copy of the laboratory data. However, the punishment does still leave the door open for Russian athletes, who are clean, to compete at big international events without their flag for the coming years, something they did at the Pyeongchang Olympics. There have been



protests claiming that the WADA's decision is part of a broader Western attempt to hold Russia back from progressing in the international arena. How will Russia's absence affect the Tokyo Olympics and the World Cup in Qatar? If Russian athletes do not participate in the Olympics, then a lot of the tournament's sheen will disappear. After all, Russia is a sporting power to be reckoned with. The brilliant performances of its athletes often set new global standards in sports.

TK Nandanani Kochi

expulsion of all illegal Bangladeshi migrants, irrespective of their religion. However, instead of pursuing the next phase of the NRC exercise, which is the deletion and deportation of foreigners, the BJP Government

is busy making amends to the NRC and has also called for a nation-wide exercise. The Government holds no sincerity in resolving the foreigners' problem in Assam. Granting citizenship to immigrants of

minority communities from Bangladesh will open the floodgates for legalising refugees and eventually stir anxieties among the indigenous Assamese people. This will also add more pressure to Assam's already shrinking land

and resources and lead to conflicts between communities.

Himangka Kaushik New Delhi

Temporary relief

Sir — The trade war between the US and China, which has continued for almost two years now, led to uncertainty in the way global businesses would be conducted going forward.

Investors underwent sleepless nights as they kept navigating through an environment of slowing growth and increasingly volatile markets. While US President Donald Trump slapped punitive tariffs on Chinese imports, China, too, retaliated. As a result, the global economy suffered.

With the US and China now striking a "phase one" deal to de-escalate trade war, the world can genuinely take a breath. While this is just the first step, any sign that the trade war is cooling off needs to be cheered.

Sudhanshu Via email

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Preserve nation's genetic wealth

We need to take our animal resources seriously and utilise them efficiently for economic and social uplift in rural areas



VK **BAHUGUNA**

India is endowed with huge genetic resources and is one of the 17 megadiversity nations of the world. Human-animal interactions date back to early civilisations and are not restricted to economic reasons. They have deeply impacted the cultural, spiritual and religious life of people. These genetic resources have played a critical role in our agrarian economy. In domesticated livestock and birds, the documented breeds are 30 of cattle, 10 of buffalo, 40 of sheep, 20 of goat, 18 of poultry, nine of camel and six of the horse.

World over, scientists have been seeking animal germplasm in their quest to utilise their genome for medicine and food, to feed growing populations and shore up the dwindling genetic base due to deforestation and climate change. There have been cases in India and Nepal when scientists from Western countries on a tourist visa were found trapping beetles.

We need to take our animal resources seriously and utilise them efficiently for economic and social uplift in rural areas. Traditionally, livestock had been the backbone of small farmers for nutrition, farm work as well as other activities. A whopping 21 million people are dependent on livestock for their livelihood and this sector contributes 4.11 per cent to the country's GDP. The share of animal products in agriculture is more than 25 per cent. Though the country is the largest producer of milk in the world, its production from indigenous cows is minimal. The world is tapping the genome of Indian cows for the healthy A2 milk as the A1 milk produced by foreign breeds like Holstein Friesian and Jersey is not very healthy because it contains Beta-Casein which causes hypertension, heart ailments and diabetes.

These foreign breeds are also prone to infections and need big investments for better milk output. In our quest to increase cow milk production in the past, we had indiscriminately used foreign breeds and neglected Indian cows. There was not much emphasis on research targeted at improving milk production from local breeds. However, countries like Brazil, Uruguay and New Zealand realised the genetic potential of Indian cows early on and have now emerged as world leaders in the production of A2 milk. The Gir cow and other Indian breeds in Brazil won the prize for the highest milk production in a 2014 contest. This germplasm was supplied by India to Brazil during the early and middle part of the last century.

Though the Indian Government has now taken steps for promotion indigenous cow breeds, the attempts are half-hearted at best and lack focus on integrated planning for the future. The Department of Animal Husbandry must focus on converting hybrid cows into fully domestic breeds in the next 15 years. India should initiate bilateral arrangements with Brazil and other countries to get the superior high-yielding Indian cow gene pool back to improve the productivity of bovines back home. Similarly, we should have a breeding programme with South Asian countries which are home to Indian breeds. For instance, both Pakistan and India have breeding tracks for Red Sindhi, Sahiwal and Tharparkar cows and joint programmes can be launched for enhancing milk production from these breeds and their conservation. This programme should be launched for buffaloes simultaneously as they also produce A2 milk.

Thankfully, now in India, people are working towards making world-class products from cow dung and urine and exporting them. There is also a foundation that is proving that cows can be economically reared for their entire life and is working with more than 75,000 Indian cows in 25 shelters. It offered help to Uttar Pradesh and Uttarakhand but is yet to get a response from the States.

There should be a plan for economic utilisation of cows when they become unfit to yield milk. At present they are let loose and stray cattle foraging on the streets and blocking traffic are a menace apart from being a big problem for Government agencies. It is well-known that the desi cow's urine and dung have great cultural, economic and medicinal value. This has been proved by several scientific studies. The Animal Welfare Board and the Kamdhenu Commission should be assigned the task of preparing projects for this, so that cows are treated well once their productive years are over. An integrated farmer-centric decentralised programme must be initiated for all other animals like horses, ducks, camels, donkeys, goats, sheep, pigs, quail and so on, with the sole aim to energise the earning potential of farmers. This will require sufficient funds, manpower and technological upgradation through research.

Stray dogs are yet another neglected species in the country. With people preferring foreign breeds, the local dogs are left to roam the streets and scavenge. There should be a complete ban on breeding pedigree dogs and people should be encouraged to adopt strays. The management of animal wealth should get top priority if we have to bring prosperity in rural and tribal areas.

(The writer is a former civil servant)

MY NAME IS RAHUL GANDHI, NOT RAHUL SAVARKAR. I WILL NEVER APOLOGISE FOR SPEAKING THE TRUTH. BUT MODI MUST APOLOGISE FOR RUINING ECONOMY.

—CONGRESS LEADER
RAHUL GANDHI

POINTCOUNTERPOINT



VIR SAVARKAR WAS A REAL PATRIOT. NO ONE BECOMES GANDHI AND A PATRIOT BY MERELY ADOPTING A SURNAME.

—UNION MINISTER
GIRIRAJ SINGH

India's *beti* not *nirbhaya*

The overall utilisation of Nirbhaya Funds allocated to States till date is just 11 per cent, which is only ₹252 cr of the ₹2,264 cr sanctioned for ensuring the safety of women



RAKESH SENGER

Seven years ago today, the country witnessed an act of monstrosity, when a 23-year-old woman was gang-raped, had a rod inserted in her private parts and was left to die on the roadside in Delhi. Despite battling hard for many days, she couldn't survive, and, to honour her courage, was named *Nirbhaya* (fearless).

Due to the ghastliness of the crime, the citizens of the country came out on the streets demanding justice for *Nirbhaya* and safety for all women. Candle marches and protests were held all over and many PILs were filed. The protests showed results and the then Government introduced the Nirbhaya Fund in the Budget for the Financial Year 2013-14, for the safety and protection of women.

Circa 2019. It has been seven years but the situation remains unchanged and women continue to be unsafe in public spaces. On November 27, a 27-year-old veterinarian was gang-raped and burnt to death, her charred body recovered the next day. This was followed by reports of a nine-year-old girl being raped and strangled to death in Karnataka, the rape and murder of a six-year-old in Rajasthan, a 37-year-old being gang-raped in Odisha, the Unnao rape victim being burnt to death by the accused out on bail and another girl being threatened with the same fate by her tormentors if she testified against them. These are just a few among many more similar heinous crimes against women reported in recent days in the country. These cases led to another outcry in the nation and once again got everyone thinking about the safety of women in their families.

Questions were once again raised in the Parliament on the utilisation of the Nirbhaya Fund, following which, the Minister of Women and Child Development, Smriti Irani, presented data in the Lok Sabha on its use.

The Nirbhaya Fund was created with a corpus of ₹1,000 crore in 2013 and this was increased to ₹3,600 crore in the last six years. Of this, ₹2,264 crore, which is 63 per cent of the corpus, was allocated to various States and Union Territories (UTs), by various departments, including the Ministry of Women and Child Development, Home Affairs, Justice and Road Transport and Highways.

To understand the ways the disbursed money had been used, the Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation (KSCF) carried out an analysis of its utilisation by States/UTs. It revealed that despite an increase in crimes against women and children every year, the overall utilisation of Nirbhaya Funds allocated to States/UTs till date was a mere 11 per cent, which is only ₹252 crore of the ₹2,264 crore sanctioned. It was appalling to learn that none of the States/UTs could spend more than 50 per cent of the funds allotted till the financial year 2019. Shockingly, the BJP-ruled Maharashtra had failed to use a single rupee allotted to it, while Tripura and Tamil Nadu had just spent three per cent of the funds. Manipur had spent four per cent and Daman & Diu, West Bengal, Gujarat and Delhi spent five per cent of the total funds allocated to them. Further, out of the 36 States/UTs for which data is available, the utilisation in 18 States/UTs has been less than 15 per cent, which is a testimony of their utter disregard towards women's safe-

“ DESPITE AN INCREASE IN CRIMES AGAINST WOMEN AND CHILDREN EVERY YEAR, IT WAS APPALLING TO LEARN THAT NONE OF THE STATES/UTS COULD SPEND MORE THAN 50 PER CENT OF THE FUNDS ALLOTTED TILL THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2019. SHOCKINGLY, MAHARASHTRA HAD FAILED TO USE A SINGLE RUPEE ALLOTTED TO IT, WHILE TRIPURA AND TAMIL NADU HAD JUST SPENT THREE PER CENT OF THE FUNDS. MANIPUR HAD SPENT FOUR PER CENT AND DAMAN & DIU, WEST BENGAL, GUJARAT AND DELHI SPENT FIVE PER CENT OF THE TOTAL FUNDS ALLOTTED TO THEM ”



ty. The analysis also revealed that States, including Telangana, Karnataka and Odisha, where the recent cases of crimes against women were reported, have spent only six per cent of the funds allocated to them. In Uttar Pradesh, where the Unnao rape victim was burnt to death, 79 per cent of the funds had remained unspent. The highest utilisation of funds, which was 50 per cent, was done by just two States, Mizoram and Uttarakhand, with just three States, Haryana, Nagaland and Chhattisgarh showing spending of more than 30 per cent of the funds allocated.

The report shows that crimes against women and children have been on a constant rise from 2015 to 2017. The total crimes against women reported in 2015 were 329,243 which increased to 338,954 in 2016 and 359,849 in 2017. Similarly, crimes against children went up from 94,172 to 106,958 and 129,032 in 2015, 2016 and 2017, respectively. The latest annual *Crime in India, 2017* report issued by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) showed that in 2017, 32,559 cases of rape were reported, of which 17,382, (53 per cent) were those of minors. A review of the report from 2013 onwards shows that every year over 30,000 women and girls fall victim to the heinous crime.

The huge non-utilisation of the fund, especially set up for the protection of women, is a testimony to the complete lack of political will and utter disregard for the importance and seri-

ousness of the issue of women's safety. The Nirbhaya Fund was created for the implementation of projects and schemes exclusively designed for providing safety and security to women in public places. Some major schemes, where the States were supposed to use the funds, included the establishment of an Emergency Response Support System, Central Victim Compensation Fund, Cyber Crime Prevention against Women and Children, One Stop Centre Scheme, Mahila Police Volunteers, and Universalisation of Women Helpline Scheme.

However, meagre spending of the fund has resulted in the sub-optimal operationalisation of these schemes, with the country failing to achieve, even partially, the objectives for which it has been created.

Over the years, there have been demands for setting up special courts, appointing more women police officers, installation of CCTV cameras and street lights in every nook and corner and taking other measures to make the streets safer for the fair sex.

There is a need for strengthening the judiciary through the appointment of more judges, public prosecutors and other officials for time-bound disposal of sexual assault cases. It is imperative to train police officers to ensure timely filing of strong chargesheets against criminals with a diligent investigation to make water-tight cases, among other things.

While recently, some policy developments have taken place, including

creation of special courts for speedy disposal of cases related to Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (POCSO) Act; further strengthening of the POCSO Act; launch of the fast track special courts (FTSC) scheme for expeditious disposal of cases of rape and the POCSO Act, 2019 (which calls for establishing 1,023 FTSCs), much more needs to be done.

The KSCF has also been working relentlessly for the last several years to raise awareness against these crimes, demanding that India be made a country safer for women and children. A major step taken was the launch of Bharat Yatra, a national march against sexual abuse of children in 2017 and the Rape Free India campaign before the Lok Sabha elections, earlier this year.

The recent incidents of rape and other crimes against women are a wake-up call for State Governments. There is a need for States/UTs to formulate schemes for the safety of women and girls and implement them on a war footing. They need to utilise the Nirbhaya Fund placed at their disposal, and if necessary, allocate a budget from their funds for implementation of these schemes.

The women and children of the country have remained unsafe for long. It is high time that steps are taken to make them feel secure as they go about their daily business, at home and outside.

(The author is Executive Director, Programmes, at Kailash Satyarthi Children's Foundation)

Unions allow students to let off steam

Clandestine extremist groups have been operating on Pakistani campuses in the vacuum created by the absence of unions



NADEEM PARACHA

The 'Students Solidarity March' on November 29 seems to have ruffled some feathers. It was being thought and even hoped by some that the march would draw nothing more than the kind of negligent attention candle vigils attract. But this wasn't the case and thousands of students from assorted universities and colleges poured out in almost every major city of Pakistan, mostly demanding the restoration of student unions.

Campus unions were first banned in 1984 by the General Zia dictatorship and then restored in 1989 by the first Benazir Bhutto regime. However, they were banned again in 1993, this time by the Supreme Court.

The manner in which the current Government has reacted to the recent march suggests that a lot more hap-

pened, or was perceived to have happened, than just a handful of students marching and raising slogans. Prime Minister Imran Khan tweeted that he was in favour of restoring the student unions. But by the time the tweet was posted, his own Government was arresting certain prominent student leaders and booking them for sedition. Twitter trends such as #StudentsSolidarityMarch and #StudentsMarchExposed began to compete against each other. Some commentators on TV were hailing the march; some were cynically dismissing it as an "elitist" one-off; while others were warning that the restoration of unions would again prompt violence on campuses.

The latter is the most frequently used reason against the demand for restoring the unions. In fact, Khan, even while supporting restoration, pointed out that the unions, before they got banned in 1984, had become violent. This is the perception that has overshadowed the fact that, till the late 1970s, elected student unions were bastions of well-intentioned democratic activities.

One can claim that Khan, too, was drawing his information in this con-

text from the negative perception associated with student politics. But I would like to share here an incident in which Khan actually faced the violence he was talking about. During the Indian cricket team's tour of Pakistan in 1982-83, the fifth Test match of the series at Karachi's National Stadium was repeatedly invaded by student activists agitating against the growing Government curbs on campus politics in Karachi. Khan was bowling and some students charged towards an Indian batsman on strike. Others ran towards the batsman on the non-striker's end who was standing with Khan. Khan pulled out a stump from the ground and threatened to use it against the charging students. However, before he could do this, cops entered the fray and chased away the students.

Indeed, campus politics, especially in Karachi and Lahore, had become increasingly violent. This was mainly due to the brutalisation of politics and society by the Zia dictatorship and the steady introduction of sophisticated weapons in the hands of the youth. These weapons began to arrive almost immediately after Pakistan agreed to fight the US' and Saudi Arabia's proxy battles against the Soviet Union and

Iran. During my research in 2015, findings showed that there were just three incidents of gunfire in the country's student politics between 1951 and 1977. The first was recorded at Karachi University in 1968, in which a student was arrested for possessing a pistol but one that was never actually fired. Then a pistol was used for aerial firing during a student union election at the same university in 1974. There were no casualties. A pistol was also fired during the union elections at Lahore's Punjab University in 1975 in which a student was killed.

What gets missed in this urge to keep a lid on student politics, is the important underlying fact behind student uprisings and violence. For example, most scholars who studied the global rise and fall of student activism between the 1960s and 1970s, point out that student violence and agitation mushroomed in the 1960s when universities and colleges failed to accommodate the large influx of middle-class students in that decade.

The students' anger towards the logistical and administrative problems caused by this influx boiled over and was expressed through political action. Student activism receded when, in the 1970s, colleges and universities (in the West) managed to better accommodate the students.

The same thing happened in Pakistan in the 1960s. Pakistani universities and colleges also began to receive a large-scale influx of students. Then, in the 1990s, when most students began to join private educational institutions, politicised student unions fell out of favour. But as we are now seeing, this was a stopgap arrangement.

No one is talking about the damning 2009 and 2013 reports prepared by the British Council in Pakistan. The

reports speak about a growing youth bulge in the country, with over 60 per cent of the country's population being under the age of 30.

The reports' findings warn that disillusionment among the youth would continue to grow due to political and economic instability, and this might lead many young people to adopt extreme measures.

We have already seen the growth of incidents in which educated young people have been involved in committing crimes or joining extremist organisations. The pouring out on to the streets of students on November 29 can also be explained and seen in this context.

In fact, this should actually encourage the Government to restore the unions. Because unions can once again become conduits for the students to express their aspirations and concerns in a democratic manner, rather than become despondent, cynical and desperate; or worse, join clandestine extremist groups which, ever since the late 1990s, have been surreptitiously operating on campuses in the vacuum created by the absence of student unions.

(Courtesy: Dawn)



WE SHOULD ALL BE GRETA

Amid protests, clashes and expulsion of activists, the COP25 wound up recently, once again producing more promises and little political will that could save the planet for our children and generations to come. To make measures work, every one of us should be a Greta Thunberg. Every head of State or Government should be a Greta. By avoiding the use of plastic as much as possible, we can start this change from our homes.

(Courtesy: Daily Mirror)

CAPSULE

EaseMyTrip files Rs 510-cr IPO papers with Sebi

NEW DELHI: Online travel company EaseMyTrip has filed draft papers with capital markets regulator Sebi to float a Rs 510 crore initial public offering. Through the IPO, company's founders Nishant Pitti and Rikant Pitti will each sell shares to the tune of Rs 255 crore through offer-for-sale mechanism, according to draft papers filed with the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi). EaseMyTrip.com is operated by Easy Trip Planners Private Ltd. The city-based company said the object of the public issue is to achieve the benefits of listing the equity shares on stock exchanges. "Our company expects that listing of the equity shares will enhance our visibility and brand and provide liquidity to its existing shareholders," it added. The company's issue is being managed by Axis Capital and JM Financial.

Trade body urges Centre to take steps to revive J-K biz

SRINAGAR: The Kashmir Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) on Sunday asked the Centre to take steps for revival of businesses in Kashmir, saying the valley's economy has suffered losses to the tune of Rs 15,000 crore due to disturbances in the wake of abrogation of Article 370 in on August 5. KCCI president Sheikh Ashiq Hussain, who was among the several trade bodies' heads who met Union Minister of Commerce and Industry, Piyush Goyal, in Jammu, also urged the government to restore interest services to businesses in Kashmir. "I informed the minister about the estimated losses which are to the tune of Rs 15,000 crore over the last four months," Hussain told PTI after the meeting. He said the KCCI has prepared a report on business and job losses caused by the disturbances after the Centre revoked Jammu and Kashmir's special status and divided into two union territories.

PFS gets Rs 145 cr from resolution of stressed account

New Delhi: PTC India Financial Services (PFS) has received Rs 145 crore as part of resolution of its stressed loan account in the thermal power segment. The long-term infrastructure financing company said it has recovered Rs 145 crore from Prayagraj Power Generation Company Ltd (PPGCL). PPGCL owns and operates a 1,980 MW (3X660 MW) coal-based thermal power project in Uttar Pradesh and had become a non-performing asset due to financial and operational stresses. PFS is also expected to receive Rs 7 crore as per agreement, PFS said in a statement on Sunday. This development shall augment the liquidity position of PFS and also result in a reduction of its stressed assets portfolio. "Going forward, it shall also have a positive bearing on the yields and spread of PFS as this account was reflected in the assets but not yielding any income," it said.

INDUSTRY BODIES, FARMER ORGANISATIONS AND ECONOMISTS

FM to hold pre-Budget talks

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Beginning the customary pre-Budget consultation exercise from Monday, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will seek inputs from various stakeholders including industry bodies, farmer organisations and economists for reviving consumption and boosting growth.

Sitharaman is likely to present her second Budget for the Modi 2.0 government in Parliament on February 1.

Sources said the pre-Budget consultations starting Monday will last till December 23.

They said the main focus of the Budget this time will be on boosting economic growth, which slowed to an over six-year low of 4.5 per cent in the second quarter of 2019-20.

As per the finance ministry, Sitharaman will meet stakeholder groups of 'New Economy: Start-ups, Fintech and Digital Sector' on Monday morning, and financial sector and capital market represen-



Industry bodies have demanded that income up to Rs 5 lakh should be exempt from tax for individual taxpayers from the current Rs 2.5 lakh to spur demand for goods and services

tatives later in the day.

Industry sources said the government has sought their views on matters like ease of doing business, regulatory environment impacting private investment, export competitiveness, role of state (delayed payments, contract enforce-

ment), and revival of private investment and growth, among others.

The minister is likely to meet industry chambers on December 19.

With the government already effecting significant cut in corporate taxes, expecta-

tions are high that it would announce some relief for the salaried class by making changes in the personal income tax structure.

Industry bodies have demanded that income up to Rs 5 lakh should be exempt from tax for individual taxpayers from the current Rs 2.5 lakh to spur demand for goods and services.

They are also demanding hiking the overall deduction limit to at least Rs 3 lakh (from the current Rs 1.5 lakh under Section 80C of the Income Tax Act) to boost investments and increase tax savings for individual taxpayers.

The finance ministry has already started the Budget preparation exercise, with different ministries and departments making expenditure projections.

The Budget will be keenly watched by market participants for numbers on key macroeconomic indicators like fiscal deficit.

Air India mulls launching Mumbai-London service

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Disinvestment-bound national carrier Air India is mulling launching a flight service to London Stansted from the country's financial capital, a senior airline official said.

Air India currently operates a flight to Stansted from Amritsar. It also has operations to London Heathrow from Mumbai.

British Airways and Virgin Atlantic are the two other airlines flying to London from Mumbai. Air passenger traffic on Mumbai-London route has spiked 25 per cent in the last five years. It is expected to go up by 27 per cent this fiscal following the resumption of services on the route by Virgin Atlantic in October, despite the grounding of Jet Airways which used to have three daily flights to London Heathrow from the city.

"There is a need for more traffic to London region. However, due to the slot constraint issues at the London Heathrow, we are not able to add new flights on the Mumbai-London route.



British Airways and Virgin Atlantic are the two other airlines flying to London from Mumbai

"There are options to go to London Stansted from Mumbai. We are evaluating this route," Air India Regional Director Ravi Bodade told reporters on Saturday during a media tour of the airline's various facilities, including its Maintenance, Repair and overhaul (MRO) facility and the iconic Air India Tower.

Air India at present has the right to operate 42 flights per week to London.

Bodade said currently the airline is carrying out the route feasibility study such as the passenger traffic, aircraft type and frequency of operations, among others.

"We will take a decision on this issue very soon," he said, adding the route may commence operations within the winter schedule itself. The winter schedule, which is effective from October 27, will last till March 28, 2020.

He also said Air India may deploy its flagship Boeing 787 Dreamliner to operate the service on the route under consideration.

Air India CMD doubts turnaround possibility

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As the central government is planning to invite bids for Air India soon, its CMD said on Saturday that expecting a radical improvement in the airline bordering on a turnaround is an impractical thought "in this environment of disinvestment". In a Facebook post, Air India Chairman and Managing Director Ashwani Lohani said, "Air India needs to survive till it is sold."

"I wonder why is it so difficult for this appreciation to sink in and also that in this environment of disinvestment, expecting a radical improvement bordering on a turnaround is an impractical thought. That output can be given sans inputs is a grossly impractical thought," he added.

Air India's net loss in 2018-19 was around Rs 8,556 crore.

Lohani said: "Air Indians are indeed putting in their best even at this critical juncture and that is very very appreciable."

JNTO eyes 16% jump in Indian tourists visiting Japan in 2019

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Japan National Tourism Organisation has pegged the number of tourists visiting Tokyo from India to grow by 16 per cent this year, a top official said.

According to JNTO, Director Aya Hashimoto, Japan witnessed 1,54,029 Indian travellers visiting the country in 2018.

"Japan already witnessed a 14.4 per cent rise in January to October 2019 to 1,49,300 Indian visitors," he told PTI.

To a query, he said the number of visitors were more from major metros like New Delhi, Mumbai.

"This year we are expecting a growth of 16 per cent compared to travellers visited last year", he said.

Asked about those cities in Japan that are being promoted among Indian travellers, he said, the 'Golden Route' is a popular choice among tourists as it covers major cities like

Tokyo, Hakone, Nara, Osaka, Kyoto and Hiroshima. "A traveller must visit these cities while in Japan. Hence, it is termed as Golden Route", he said, adding



Japan already witnessed a 14.4 per cent rise in January to October 2019 to 1,49,300 Indian visitors," he told PTI

the best time to tour Japan was in April-May or October and November.

He said another destination 'Hokkaido' was getting popular among Indian tourists as it offers powder snow and various snow activities like skiing and snowboarding.

As part of promoting tourism among the Indian travellers, JNTO organised Japan tourism expo in Chennai and have planned to conduct similar events in Bengaluru in February and in New Delhi before March 2020.

Tata Steel BSL bags award for energy conservation

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Tata Steel BSL said on Sunday that it has been honoured by the Odisha government for taking effective initiatives to conserve energy in its plant located at Narendrapur in Odisha's Dhenkanal district.

The Odisha State Energy Conservation Award 2019 award was given to the company during the National Energy Conservation Day Celebration 2019 here on Saturday, a company statement said.

The award was in the category of captive power plant above 100 MW, it said.

On behalf of the company, Saroj Kumar Banerjee, Chief of Environment, Tata Steel BSL received the award from Odisha's Energy Minister Dibya Shankar Mishra.

"We are humbled to be recognised with this prestigious award for our initiatives



taken in the direction of conserving energy," Banerjee said while speaking at the function.

"While carrying out the existing projects on energy conservation, we are exploring new ways and technologies to raise the bar and push for industry benchmarks in the field," he added.

The company got the recognition for improving energy conservation performance by reducing carbon footprint, fossil fuel consumption, generating more power through waste heat recovery and implementing energy efficiency projects, the company statement said.

China suspends planned tariffs on US goods

PNS ■ BEIJING

Beijing suspended additional tariffs on US products that had been due to kick in on Sunday, after Washington and Beijing announced a major thaw in their trade war Friday. China will suspend the planned addition of 10 percent and 5 percent tariffs on some US imports, and "continue to suspend additional tariffs on US-made autos and spare parts", China's finance ministry announced Sunday.

The move follows US President Trump's cancellation of new tariffs on Chinese products as part of a "phase one" trade deal.

China's commerce ministry said on Friday it had agreed with the US a mini-deal that includes a progressive rollback of tariffs and the protection of intellectual property rights.

Discoms' outstanding dues to power gencos rise 48 pc to Rs 81,010 crore

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Power producers' total outstanding dues owed by distribution companies rose around 48 per cent to Rs 81,010 crore in October 2019 over the same month last year, reflecting stress in the sector.

Distribution companies (discoms) owed a total of Rs 54,654 crore to power generation companies in October 2018, according to portal PRAAPTI (Payment Ratification And Analysis in Power procurement for bringing Transparency in Invoicing of generators).

The portal was launched in



May 2018 to bring in transparency in power purchase transactions between generators and discoms.

In October this year, the total overdue amount, which was not cleared even after 60 days of grace period offered by generators, stood at Rs 67,143

Power producers give 60 days to discoms for paying bills for the supply of electricity

crore as against Rs 39,338 crore in the same month last year.

Power producers give 60 days to discoms for paying bills for the supply of electricity. After that, outstanding dues become overdue and generators charge penal interest on that in most cases.

In order to give relief to

power generation companies (gencos), the Centre enforced a payment security mechanism from August 1. Under this mechanism, discoms are required to open letters of credit for getting power supply.

According to the latest data on the portal, outstanding dues in October has decreased over the preceding month. In September 2019, total outstanding dues on discoms stood at Rs 82,548 crore.

However, the overdue amount in October has increased over preceding month of September. The total overdue amount was Rs 65,155 crore in September.

Coal Min to set up 'Sustainable Development Cell' for mining

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Coal Ministry on Sunday said it will establish 'Sustainable Development Cell' (SDC) for promoting sustainable coal mining in the country and address environmental concerns at closure of mines.

The SDC envisages to address environment mitigation measures in a systemic manner and provide a better environment to people working and residing in the vicinity of mines, the ministry said in a statement.

"The Ministry of Coal has decided to establish a 'Sustainable Development Cell' in order to promote environmentally sustainable coal mining in the country and address environmental concerns during the decommissioning or closure of mines," it said.

The SDC will advise, mentor, plan and monitor mitiga-



tion measures taken by coal companies for maximising utilisation of available resources in a sustainable way, minimising adverse impact of mining and mitigating it for further ecosystem services, and will act as nodal point at Ministry of Coal level in this matter.

The cell will also formulate the future policy framework for environmental mitigation measures, including the Mine

closure Fund. The SDC will adopt a systemic approach, starting from collection of data, analysis of data, presentation of information, planning based on information by domain experts, adoption of best practices, consultations, innovative thinking, site-specific approaches, knowledge sharing and dissemination with an aim to ease the lives of people and communities in general, the statement said.

Housing sales may rise marginally by 4 pc in 2019: Report

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Housing sales are estimated to rise by mere 4 per cent to 2.58 lakh units across seven major cities during this calendar year on subdued demand because of liquidity crunch and overall economic slowdown, according to property brokerage firm Anarock.

"Indian real estate was devoid of any appreciable forward momentum in 2019. Dwindling consumption, lacklustre investment appetite and the global slowdown overshadowed all possibilities for growth," Anarock Property Consultants Chairman Anuj Puri said.

India's GDP growth rate slumped to a six-year low of 4.5 per cent in Q2 FY20.

In its yearly round-up for the real estate sector, Anarock



Capital Region (NCR), Bengaluru, Pune, Hyderabad, Chennai and Kolkata.

"The real estate sector's performance - a reliable barometer of India's overall economic health - painfully reflected the macro-economic state of affairs. The liquidity crisis did not relent and denied any 'real' growth during the year," Puri said.

"Multiple developers fell off the grid while others still struggle to stay viable. However, strong players with healthy balance sheets - in many cases diversified beyond real estate - sailed through 2019 and recorded decent housing sales and revenue growth," he added.

For the housing sector, 2019 was a non-event in terms of sales growth and investor interest.

CG POWER IMBROGLIO

Thapar denies fund misuse cites board approvals

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Citing regular board approvals for various inter-corporate loans, former CG Power Industrial Solutions' non-executive chairman Gautam Thapar has refuted allegations of fund misuse amid alleged governance lapses coming under the regulatory scanner, according to documents submitted by him to the government.

In a 36-page submission to the corporate affairs ministry early November, Thapar, who was sacked in a boardroom coup in the wee hours of August 30, has provided documents on various issues, including inter-corporate loans, minutes of board meetings and loans from lenders like Standard Chartered Singapore and Yes Bank.

CG Power board sacked



Gautam Thapar

Thapar after an audit report by Vaish Associates, which itself is based on as many as 23 disclaimers, claimed that Thapar swindled Rs 3,000 crore from CG Power.

Markets regulator Sebi banned Thapar and entities associated with him for three years, following which he moved the Securities Appellate Tribunal, which has asked the



Markets regulator Sebi banned Thapar and entities associated with him for three years, following which he moved the Securities Appellate Tribunal, which has asked the company to provide relevant documents to him

company to provide relevant documents to him.

The Serious Fraud Investigation Office (SFIO) has also started a probe against

CG Power and 15 group entities. The ministry has moved NCLT Mumbai seeking to restate the books of accounts of CG Power from FY16. An

order is expected on Monday.

The documents, seen by PTI, show how Standard Chartered Singapore extended a USD 44-million lifeline to CG Singapore in February 14, 2018. The entire money was then paid to CG International Netherlands through another group entity AIA and Avantha. The same amount was fully transferred back to CG International Netherlands on the very same day.

Later, the company in turn paid back the entire amount to StanC Singapore, thus making the account standard, show the documents.

While a major allegation revolves around funds moving in and out of CG Power and group entities, Thapar has claimed that such a route was taken following suggestions from lenders since CG Power was facing liquidity issues.

TEACHER WHO GOES THE EXTRA MILE

A teacher is at the forefront of education for children from a young age. They play a key role in guiding students to achieve new heights. But a few teachers go out of the way to ensure that their kids are not left behind due to financial or other difficulties. Inspired by late Dr Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, former president of India, Suryapet-based government school

teacher Raghu Pasupuleti is helping poor students pursue higher studies by helping them financially, academically and by improving the infrastructure of various government schools. Speaking to *The Pioneer*, Raghu says, "Being a government school teacher, I have seen many students who are so poor that they cannot even afford to buy bags or stationary. I started helping them in 2012 by providing them with the basic necessities needed to pursue their studies. I am also helping students choose their favourite careers by guiding them." Raghu also conducts special classes for Class X students of government school and provides them with snacks in between. He also talks to the parents to make them understand the importance of education for their children. People have heard of ice bucket and rice bucket challenges. But

Raghu took it to a whole new level by starting the My Books Bucket Challenge. Explaining the concept of My Books Bucket Challenge, Raghu shares, "I want many people to join my cause. To inspire them, I started My Books Bucket Challenge in 2017, wherein people must buy the basic necessities for a school student and put those in the bucket. Later, they can donate it and challenge their friends by posting it on social media. This initiative received tremendous response and many people accepted my challenge." Inspired by Raghu's service towards the underprivileged kids, his colleagues too have joined him and contribute towards improving the facilities at various government schools. Raghu shares, "I'm adopting poor students who have completed Class X to help them complete their higher studies. My colleagues also donate some amount

every month towards this. We also explain about hygiene issues to girls and distribute pads in many govt schools." For his services Raghu was awarded Sarvepalli Radhakrishna award in 2018, Shivaji Seva Ratna award, Karamveer Chakra Award and more. Apart from helping students, Raghu also conducts programmes about the dangers of using plastic, benefits of eco-friendly Ganesh idols and planting trees, through his foundation Aashaya. Raghu adds, "I also explain about the importance of saving our environment and reducing plastic usage. I tell them to use cloth bags for buying vegetables and boxes to carry meat. I also participate in planting trees to inspire students to do more. My main aim is to make government schools on par with private schools in all segments."

Suryapet-based government school teacher Raghu Pasupuleti is helping poor students by providing for their basic needs, giving them career guidance and conducting social activities, finds V SATEESH REDDY



Art has always been used as a form of expressing one's emotion and/or portraying life in a way not possible using written language. Sireesha Srinivas has done just that

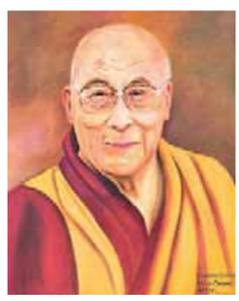
'REMINISCING' paintings for a cause

Reminiscences (Kashmir on Canvas), an art exhibition is being hosted by Sireesha Srinivas whose cause is to handover the proceeds to the families of martyrs of J&K and Telangana police. Sireesha, wife of Hyderabad-based IPS officer Dr B. Srinivas, ADG, J&K, has spent over two decades in Kashmir and has witnessed the tumultuous changes in the Valley firsthand. Her husband's postings enabled her to stay in the most beautiful places like Kargil and Kupwara and capture its beauty. She put up her first solo exhibition in the Hungarian International Cultural Centre in New Delhi and there has been no looking back since. This exhibition has paintings of landscapes, figuratives, still life, drawings and abstract works with Kashmir. According to Sireesha, these proceeds will be given to families of the martyrs of J&K and Telangana Police by Telangana Governor Dr Tamilsai Soundararajan to Mahender Reddy, IPS, DGP, Telangana and to Dr B. Srinivas, Adtl DG, J&K. Sireesha made her foray into the art as an amateur self-taught artist as there has been a little premium for formal training in art in Kashmir and the security



concerns for her have only limited the opportunities, if any, to pursue art curriculum. She does not, however, find the lack of a curricular orientation as limiting factor since the passion for her is to portray the picturesque beauty in front of her as she sees it in its original form. It is the reminiscences of the memorable time that is being spent amidst the magical moun-

tains that Sireesha expresses in her art with great zest and finesse. Capturing nature's landscapes on canvas with impeccable ease and the serious attention to the finer details reflects her signature style. She dabbles with colours in oil and acrylics with poise and the serenity in her paintings is in synchrony and symphony with nature. The



flora, fauna and the people of Kashmir have become a part of her artistic drama that unfolds on the canvass. The Saffron flowers, the Shikaras, the Lambs and the Snow Peaks are the real emotive elements that come together in her paintings in a lyrical quality. "It was during one of the art exhibitions that Dr Karan Singh, the erstwhile Maharaja



of Jammu and Kashmir, found a great rhythm in my portrait work. Drawing inspiration from a couple of portraits work, a special edition of South Indian Saints have been captured on canvas, thanks to the encouragement from my friends and well-wishers. The proposed Art Exhibition has a collection of 20 portraits including a dozen of Saints from South

The proposed Art Exhibition has a collection of 20 portraits including a dozen of Saints from South India besides men of spiritual benevolence. It will also portray a dozen Sufi Shrines of Kashmir and over 80 landscapes of Kashmir. — SIREESHA SRINIVAS

India besides men of spiritual benevolence. The art exhibition shall continue till tomorrow. It will also portray a dozen Sufi Shrines of Kashmir and over 80 landscapes of Kashmir. The exhibition would, therefore, be an amalgam of Saints from South, Shrines from Srinagar and nature's delight from Kashmir," she says. — PNS

Rowing their way to Pattaya

Hyderebad is not new to rowing as a sport/recreation thanks to the Rowing Club based in the city. The club has been a part of many competitions and has won accolades. The rowing club is however in the news now. The Hyderabad Rowing Club has been asked to take part in the prestigious Asian Master Rowing Regatta in Pattaya, Thailand. The event will be held on the Mab-Pa Chan reservoir in Pattaya from December 18 to 22. The competition is expected to attract entries from 52 Asian countries with over 700 elite rowers taking part in the Junior and Masters' categories. The Hyderabad Rowing Club will be represented by six rowers and the average age of these Masters is 47. This is the first ever team of Masters who are representing Hyderabad at a global platform. The team trains under chief national coach and Dronacharya Awardee Ismail Baig along with guidance from other

coaches on the Telangana Rowing Association. Baskaran A Reddy is the leading member of the four-rowers sweep crew and is an entrepreneur who owns an IT Company. He is partnered by Thomas Govathoti, who is a senior investment banker, Gadi Chandrasekhar Reddy, an industrialist and Siva Kishore Kosaraju, owner of an SME company. A separate two-member team represented by Dr S.A. H. Adil, a corporate lawyer and S. Satyakanth, a businessman, will be competing in the Double Scull category. The team will depart to Bangkok on December 16th from Hyderabad with a fighting spirit and a never say die attitude. — PNS

THE HYDERABAD ROWING CLUB WILL BE REPRESENTED BY SIX ROWERS AND THE AVERAGE AGE OF THESE MASTERS IS 47



CITY GUIDE

» ART



VOCAL RECITAL
● 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.

» THEATRE



KISI AUR KA SAPNA
● Sutradhar Theatre Group is staging a play Kisi Aur Ka Sapna on December 20 at Lamakaan from 8 pm. The play traverses through different eras in history and politics, using the journey to display the various shades of a theatre actor's life.



MASALA CHAI
● Kissago Theatre Group is staging a play Masala Chai on December 21 at Lamakaan from 8 pm onwards. A lot can happen over a cup of tea! Masala Chai revolves around the concept tea being a form of social network. People get together for tea and build long term friendships with tea being the binding factor in many relationships.

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

PARTY



● Naini Narshimha Reddy



● Praveen Kumar Yadav & Mahitha Shree



● Gurba and Meenu Sorri



● Devrath and Deshika



● Sonal and Anil Goyal



Photos by SV Chary

● Cindy Agarwal

WEDDING TALES

Cinema celebrities, political bigwigs and socialites graced the post wedding reception of Venkat, son of political leader Chinna Srisailem Yadav with Mahitha Shree, daughter of K Dayanand. The guests blessed the newly-weds for their new journey



● Jeevitha Rajasekhar



● Allu Aravind



● C Kalyan



● Chinna Srisailem Yadav and Aswin



● Naveen Kumar Yadav

NEW JOURNEY

Friends, relatives and well-wishers attended the wedding festivities of Devrath, son of Anil Goyal with Deshika, daughter of late Rajkumar Gupta and conveyed their best wishes for new couple.

FUN TIME

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



GARFIELD



NANCY



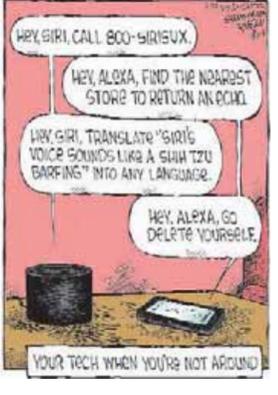
GINGER MEGGS



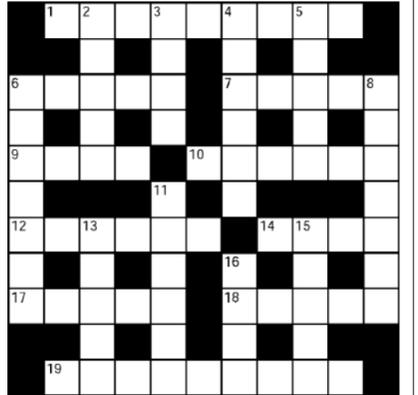
REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



ACROSS
1 This type of word describes something
6 Circular
7 A boat you paddle along
9 A throbbing pain
10 The USA's coldest state
12 Assistant
14 A round mark
17 Move in time to music
18 A pale purple colour
19 Smashed into small pieces
DOWN
2 Uncooked bread
3 Comes to a finish
4 Use a feather to make someone laugh
5 A planet
6 Got to
8 Stretchy stuff in clothes
11 The one most recently bought
13 A meal
15 The throbbing of your heart felt at your wrist
16 Sick things together with this

SOLUTION
ACROSS
1 WHISKERS
6 CIRCLE
7 KAYAK
9 STING
10 ALASKA
12 ASSISTANT
14 ROUND
17 DISCO
18 LAVENDER
19 CRUMBS
DOWN
2 CRUST
3 FINISH
4 FEATHER
5 PLANET
6 GOT TO
8 STRETCHY
11 BOUGHT
13 MEAL
15 THROBBLING
16 SICK
17 DISCO
18 LAVENDER
19 CRUMBS

SUDOKU

	5		7	8	9			
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6						5		
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Yesterday's solution
1 8 4 3 5 9 2 6 7
6 3 7 1 4 2 8 9 5
2 9 5 6 8 7 3 4 1
5 2 6 8 9 1 4 7 3
3 7 1 5 6 4 9 8 2
9 4 8 7 2 3 1 5 6
8 5 3 4 1 6 7 2 9
7 6 9 2 3 8 5 1 4
4 1 2 9 7 5 6 3 8

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.



JEETHU JOSEPH respects audience intelligence: **KARTHI**

According to Karthi, it took the script of Rensil D'Silva, screenplay writer of *Rang De Basanti* and director of *Kurbaan*, starring Saif Ali Khan and Kareena Kapoor, to get him and Jyotika come together for *Donga*, reports **NAGARAJ GOUD**

Karthi has commenced shooting for Mani Ratnam's costume drama *Ponniyin Selvan* last week in Thailand but with his *Donga* set to battle it out with other Telugu biggies like *Ruler* and *Prathiroju Pandage* this Friday at the box-office, he had to take permission from the master filmmaker to promote the film in Hyderabad on Sunday. The expectations surrounding *Donga* are high, courtesy the actor's recent release, *Khaidi*, doing phenomenally well in the Telugu states. The fact that it also marks him teaming up with sister-in-law Jyotika for the first time meant that there's extra zip around it. The actor points out it took the script of Rensil D'Silva, screenplay writer of *Rang De Basanti* and director of *Kurbaan*, starring Saif Ali Khan and Kareena Kapoor, to get him and Jyotika come together. "He shared a one-line script. I liked it. He followed it up by giving two-page narration, which was equally good. I liked the sister role in it. *Vadina*

too gave her thumbs-up later. We were given a two-hour narration afterwards. The emotions in it stirred us up," Karthi begins. Next stop for him was to get a right director to steer the project. The film's producers proposed the name of *Drishyam* director Jeethu Joseph as the script was right up in his alley. "He liked the script and with me and *Vadina* attached to star in it, he was keener to direct. My confidence on the film's script got a shot in the arm after he agreed to direct," Karthi maintains, adding that Jeethu and Rensil later worked on the screenplay for seven months. "The project has been in the development for more than two years. It's that we had to wait for Jeethu to get freed from his other commitments." Acting with Jyotika, he says, was more like an extension of conversations at home. "On-sets experience with *Vadina* wasn't different to that of usual dinner table conversations because the film's scenes were casual in nature. In the film, we

initially don't see eye-to-eye but later become friends. *Vadina* is very good with her Tamil now and she took the dialogues one month prior to the shoot and came thoroughly prepared. She is a single take artiste and when you perform with her and Satyaraj, who plays our father, your acting improves further. In fact, if Satyaraj garu didn't agree to take up the project, I was sure that the film shouldn't be made. But we were glad that he accepted. He is playing a role with multiple shades," he states. He cherishes the experience of being directed by Jeethu. He insists that he had an Alfred Hitchcock image of Jeethu because of the experience the director commands, having directed Mohanlal, Kamal Haasan and Dileep. But it was broken on the first day on sets. "The first sentence that came out from him was, 'A film is a work of a team and we should work together to make a good film'. Our days on sets used to start with us discussing a scene, its pluses and minuses, and how we could improve it, for

one hour. We would shoot the scene in flat two hours. He was super quick with his work. It didn't seem like I was working with a senior director. It looked like I was working with a college mate. Also, as a filmmaker he respects audience intelligence a lot. He believes in justifying the film's twist with a right logic," Karthi explains. Continuing in the same vein, he adds, "It's for the first time I completed a film in a start-to-finish schedule of 65 days. No actors' dates were wasted as the pre-production went on for almost a year. Even if rain threatened to disrupt shoot outdoors, alternate arrangements for an indoor scene were in place. It was a new experience altogether."

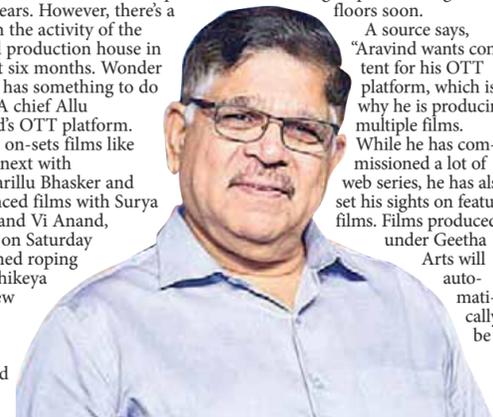
MY CONFIDENCE ON THE FILM'S SCRIPT GOT A SHOT IN THE ARM AFTER JEETHU AGREED TO DIRECT, SAYS KARTHI

Geetha Arts ramps-up production activities

Production house Geetha Arts and its offshoot GA2 Pictures was associated with doing one film a year or two at the maximum for the past many years. However, there's a surge in the activity of the reputed production house in the past six months. Wonder why? It has something to do with GA chief Allu Aravind's OTT platform. Besides on-sets films like Akhil's next with Bommarillu Bhasker and announced films with Surya Pratap and Vi Anand, they've on Saturday confirmed roping in Karthikeya for a new film, which we've reported earlier

this month. Titled *Chaavu Kaburu Challaga*, it will see Karthikeya, who is reeling under multiple flops, as Basthi Balaraju. To mark the directorial debut of Koushik Pegallapati, it will go to floors soon. A source says, "Aravind wants content for his OTT platform, which is why he is producing multiple films. While he has commissioned a lot of web series, he has also set his sights on feature films. Films produced under Geetha Arts will automatically be

streamed on his OTT platform. He is also in the process of acquiring some other films. He brought *Arjun Suravaram* recently. He has also signed Raj Tarun for a new film which will roll next year. The production activities will only increase next year."



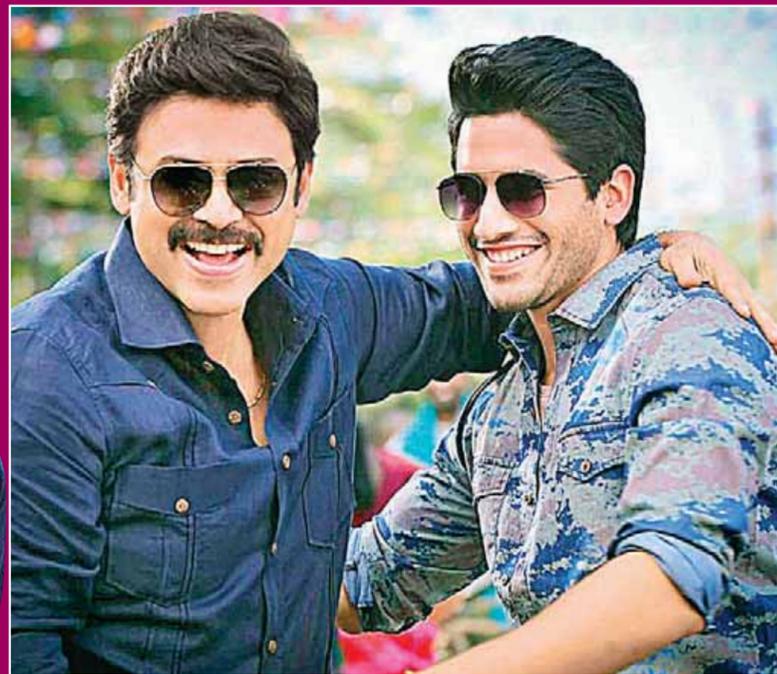
NAG'S NEXT ROLLS IN THE OLD CITY

More than four months after *Manmadhudu 2* hit the screens, superstar Nagarjuna will finally begin his untitled next with writer Solomon (*Oopiri* and *Maharshi* fame) today. As is the case with the actor's films, there is secrecy surrounding it until it goes to floors. A little birdie tells us that the first schedule will last for mere three days. "The shoot will take place in and around Charminar. Nag will be joining the sets today itself," said a source. The source added the plan is to complete the film, a production

venture of Niranjana Reddy under Matinee Entertainments, by mid-April and see if there is a possibility to time it for a summer release. "The film's pre-production has been going on meticulously for the past two months, so there is every possibility for the film to arrive in summer. But Nag would take a call on the release. The summer slot is already crammed up with multiple big-ticket ventures and he would give his consent to the release only if there's a proper window available," informed the source.

— NG

Venky Mama takes an impressive start



Victory Venkatesh and Naga Chaitanya-starrer *Venky Mama*, directed by Bobby, has got off to a flier at the ticket counters, notwithstanding the reviews. After minting close to Rs 8 crore share on day one from all areas and emerging as Venkatesh's biggest opener, the film managed to keep its momentum going into the second day as well, registering Rs 7 crore share. The total tally is somewhere Rs 15.20 crore share. "The second day hold is nearly 90 per cent of day one. The overall number is excellent bearing in mind the pretty average reviews the film got. The *mama-alludu* combination truly clicked. Sunday numbers will be better than Saturday but Monday will determine where the film will head," says a trade observer. Film's producer Suresh Babu and TG Vishwa Prasad are keen on continuing with the promotions going into the New Year.

Ruler fulfilled my wish to do a film on farmers: **BALAYYA**

Actor Nandamuri Balakrishna, who is awaiting the release of *Ruler* this Friday, said the film highlights about the greatness of farming community. "I wanted to do film on farmers since long. I even met farmers for film *Rythu* (with Krishna Vamsi) but it couldn't go to sets. *Ruler* has a farmer angle to it and it fulfilled my dream. In fact, it wasn't the story that we first decided to make. We wanted to do another script but it couldn't happen. Later, I rang director Paruchuri Murali to know if he has a story. I'm spontaneous with my decisions and when he narrated the story to me, I've

immediately decided that it'd be my next film. Murali has even penned some powerful lines on the importance of farmers," Balayya said. He was speaking at a promotional event of the film in Visakhapatnam over the weekend. He further added that it was he who picked C Kalyan as the producer. This is his second film with the producer after *Jai Simha* (2018), which was a successful venture. "I can't mingle with everyone. I shared a good bond with him on the sets of *Jai Simha* and decided to repeat him for this film. Working in tandem with director KS Ravikumar, he completed the film in four months. I didn't want him to shoot some portions in Bangkok asking him to prefer Hyderabad but he was keen on a foreign backdrop," Balakrishna informed.

“ I WANTED TO DO FILM ON FARMERS SINCE LONG. I EVEN MET FARMERS FOR FILM RYTHU (WITH KRISHNA VAMSI) BUT IT COULDN'T GO TO SETS



Caribbeans taste the first blood

Hetmyer, Hope score hundred to guide Windies to 8 wicket win in 1st ODI

PTI ■ CHENNAI

Rishabh Pant struck his maiden half-century at M S Dhoni's spiritual home to silence his critics as India shrugged off a poor start to post a challenging 287 for eight in the first ODI against West Indies here on Sunday.

Shreyas Iyer (70 off 88), who is emerging as a solid number four, and Pant (71 off 69) paired up for a 114-run stand for the fourth wicket after India lost opener K L Rahul (6) and skipper Virat Kohli (4) in the seventh over of the innings. It was Iyer's third consecutive half-century.

Rohit Sharma (36 off 56) too struggled on a slow surface before Iyer and Pant resurrected the innings with their gritty partnership.

A quickfire half-century partnership between Kedar Jadhav (40 off 35) and Ravindra Jadeja (21 off 21), who batted ahead of debutant Shivam Dube, provided the thrust in the slog overs.

Left-arm paceman Sheldon Cottrell (2/46 from 10 overs including 3 maidens), Keemo Paul (2/41) and Alzarri Joseph (2/45) were among the wickets for the visiting team.



West Indies' Shimron Hetmyer, left, celebrates with batting partner Shai Hope after scoring a century during the first one day international cricket match

iting team.

The home team appeared to be in a spot of bother at 80 for three in the 19th over on a sluggish pitch when Iyer and Pant came together. After taking their time to get going, the two played some splendid shots and were not afraid to hit the ball in the air when the opportunity presented itself.

The fact that the first six of the innings came in the 28th over when Pant smashed offie Roston Chase over mid-wicket was an indicator of the slow proceedings.

Iyer displayed his class as he came up with some lovely cuts against the spinners-Chase and leggie Hayden Walsh. Pant, on his part, showed patience and hit some powerful shots after gaining in confidence and assessing the nature of the pitch.

The two handled the spinners well and hit a six each apart from some well-timed drives.

Walsh, who had bowled impressively in the T20s preceding this series, was not allowed to settle into any rhythm as Rohit first, and then the Iyer-Pant duo went after him. He was taken for 31 runs in 5 overs.

Iyer perished for a well-made 70 with his dismissal coming against the run of play, when his flick landed in the safe hands of Pollard off Joseph's bowling, ending a brilliant 114-run fourth wicket partnership with Pant.

Pant fell going for a big hit, caught by Shimron Hetmyer in the deep of Pollard's bowling. It was a much needed knock for an under-fire Pant, who is seen as Dhoni's heir apparent.

Then the duo of Jadeja and Jadhav, who both play for Chennai Super Kings under Dhoni in the IPL, joined hands for a crucial 59-run stand for the sixth wicket during the course of which they batted judiciously and ran well between the wickets.

While Jadhav holed out to Pollard off Paul, Jadeja was run out. Jadeja was beaten by a Roston Chase throw but was initially not given out. An appeal by a West Indian fielder resulted in the on-field umpire going upstairs, following which the Indian southpaw was declared out.

India got off to a slowish start as Sheldon Cottrell bowled two maiden overs to start with and Jason Holder did not give away much as the openers Rohit and Rahul chose to play cautiously.

After Rahul's dismissal, Kohli walked in to a roar from the Chepauk crowd and played an imperious on-drive off the fourth ball he faced. In an anti-climax, he fell the next ball, bowled off the inside edge as he tried to run one from Cottrell down to the third-man area.

Rohit Sharma gained in confidence and scored a couple of boundaries including a superb straight drive off Holder in the 10th over. He appeared set for a big score before he hit Joseph's first ball in the match tamely to Pollard at mid-wicket to be dismissed for 36 (56 balls, 6 fours).

There was a moment of mirth for the spectators as a dog entered the field of play in the 26th over with Pant and Iyer at the crease.

ABID SCORES HUNDRED IN DRAWN TEST

AFP ■ RAWALPINDI

Opener Abid Ali became the first batsman to score hundreds on both Test and one-day debuts as Pakistan's first home match in the long form of the game since the 2009 attack on the visiting Sri Lanka team ended in a tame draw against the same opponents Sunday.

On 95, the 32-year-old hit paceman Vishwa Fernando for a boundary and then drove him through cover for two to complete his hundred, raising his hands in jubilation before kneeling on the ground to offer a prayer of gratitude.

His hundred came in 267 minutes, laced with 11 boundaries, and was the highlight of a Test badly affected by bad weather.

Pakistan finished at 252-2, with stylish batsman Babar Azam knocking his third Test century with a boundary off spinner Dilruwan Perera.

Azam ended with 102 not out, which came in 151 minutes of punishing batting spiced by 14 crisp boundaries.

But the day belonged to Abid, one of 15 batsmen to score a hundred on their one-day international debut - against Australia in Dubai in March his year - since the inception of limited over cricket in January 1971.

None of the others also scored a century on their debut in Test cricket, which started in 1876.

Abid is the 11th Pakistani batsman to score a century on Test debut.

Abid's feat spiced up the historic Test, the first in Pakistan since the 2009 attacks on the Sri Lankan team but left international cricket suspended in the country.

Only 91.5 overs were possible on the first four days as rain, bad light and overcast conditions affected play. The fourth day was abandoned without a ball being bowled.

But there was bright sunshine on Sunday as Sri Lanka batted for 20 minutes to declare their first innings at 308-6 with middle-order batsman Dhananjaya de Silva scoring an unbeaten 102.

With gates opened to the crowd for free, about 12,000 fans were kept entertained by Dhananjaya and then Abid.

Pakistan lost opener Shan Masood for nought when he drove a full toss from paceman Kasun Rajitha straight into the hands of Dinesh Chandimal at cover Skipper Azhar Ali scored a shaky 36 before he was caught off Lahiru Kumara.

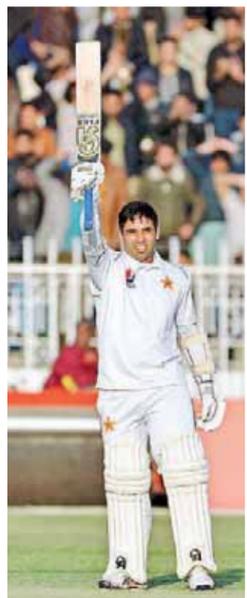
Dhananjaya finally completed his sixth Test century in the morning.

The 28-year-old right-hander drove paceman Mohammad Abbas for his 15th boundary to bring up the hundred in his 28th Test.

De Silva remained unbeaten on 102 after 241 minutes of batting, having come in with the score on 127-4 on Thursday. Dilruwan Perera remained unbeaten on 16.

The pick of the Pakistan bowlers were 16-year-old quickie Naseem Shah, who took 2-92, and Shaheen Shah Afridi with 2-58.

The second Test is in Karachi starting December 19.



Abid Ali raises his bat

Lyon, Starc power Aus to massive win

AFP ■ PERTH

Australia recorded one of their biggest wins over New Zealand on the fourth day of the first Test at Perth Stadium on Sunday.

Having trailed by 250 runs on the first innings the Kiwis were set a mammoth 468 to win - which would have been a record chase in Test cricket - on a deteriorating pitch after Australia declared at 217 for nine in their second innings.

The visitors were never in contention after losing their first wicket with just six runs on the board and were unable to push the match into a fifth day after Mitchell Starc and Pat Cummins cleaned up the Kiwi tail under lights in Perth's first ever day-night Test.

New Zealand were dismissed for 171 and were beaten by 296 runs, the last five wickets falling in a hurry for just 17 runs.

It was just one run shy of their biggest losing margin to Australia - in runs - in a match where both teams batted twice.

Australia's biggest win, other than innings victories, was 297 runs in Auckland in 1974.

Starc (4-45), who claimed nine wickets for the match, and Cummins (2-31) used the pink ball to good effect under lights to bring the match to a quick conclusion after none of the recognised Kiwi batsmen offered significant resistance.

The chase started poorly, with opener Jeet Raval making just one before being caught at



Mitchell Starc celebrates after taking wicket of New Zealand's Neil Wagner

Cricket.com.au/Twitter

gully by Nathan Lyon (4-63) from the bowling of Starc.

Starc batsman and captain Kane Williamson then made just 14, before falling to Lyon's first ball of the innings.

Williamson got off to a fast start with boundaries from the first two balls he faced, but was caught at short leg fending a ball that bounced and turned sharply off his glove into the hands of Matthew Wade.

Ross Taylor was their last real hope of making a revival but on 22 he tried to pull a Starc delivery and got a bottom edge through to wicketkeeper Tim

Paine to give the left-arm quick his seventh wicket of the match.

Tom Latham showed plenty of application to face 68 balls for his 18, but was given out leg before wicket to Lyon after an Australian DRS review, with umpire Aleem Dar initially giving him not out.

BJ Watling attempted to stem the tide with a gritty 40 and enjoyed a bit of luck as Australia didn't review when he got a faint outside edge through to Paine.

Smith then dropped a tough chance off the bowling of Lyon at first slip. He was given out on review caught down leg side by

Paine off the bowling of Starc after umpire Nigel Long had turned down the appeal - a dismissal that signalled the end of the Kiwi resistance.

Earlier, Australia's second innings fell away dramatically after being 131 for one at one stage on the third day.

The home team lost seven wickets for 58 runs, as they struggled against a sustained barrage of short-pitched bowling on another hot Perth day.

Tim Southee again impressed with 5-69, after also picking up four wickets in the first innings.

Aussies on the rise again: Paine

AFP ■ PERTH

Skipper Tim Paine believes Australia is climbing back towards the top of Test cricket after a third successive powerhouse victory at Perth Stadium on Sunday.

The home side went into the Perth Test ranked fifth on the International Cricket Council rankings, while New Zealand were second.

"We are getting there, but we can get better," he said.

"We are still improving, but certainly over the last 18 months there has been dramatic improvement in this cricket team.

"We've got some players back, which are helping, but we have also seen some real improvement in the guys who got a chance 18 months ago, and the experienced guys have come back and put a bit of icing on top.

"We are moving in the right direction and happy with the way we've played in the last three or four Tests."

Paine said it was also pleasing to see other players stepping up, after Smith almost single-handedly retained the Ashes for Australia with his batting heroics in his first series after suspension.



Tim Paine celebrates after Kane Williamson's wicket

Twitter

For the first time in his career Smith has gone three Tests without a half-century, but Paine actually views that as a positive.

"We touched on at the end of the Ashes," he said.

"We needed other guys to stand up and can't be reliant on Steve.

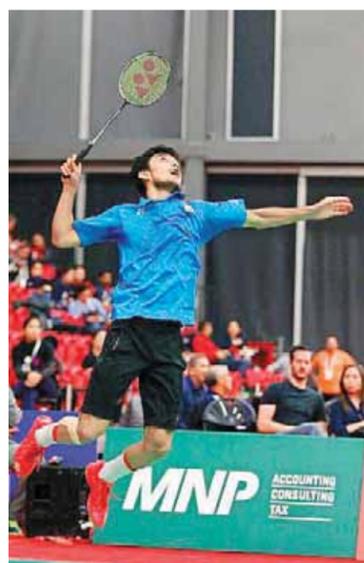
"Obviously Marnus (Labuschagne) has been unbelievably good, and Davey (Warner) and Joe Burns have been scoring runs.

"If we want to be one of the better teams in the world guys have got to stand up and we can't be reliant on too few.

"We are really happy with how our batting has developed."

Lakshya wins Bangladesh international challenge

PTI ■ DHAKA



Lakshya Sen in action during Bangladesh International challenger

BAI/Twitter

Fast-rising Indian shuttler Lakshya Sen notched up his fifth title of the season, claiming the men's singles crown at the Bangladesh International Challenger with a straight game win over Malaysia's Leong Jun Hao in the final here on Sunday.

The 18-year-old Indian has capped a superb year with a 22-20, 21-18 win over Hao in the summit clash to clinch his fifth title in last seven tournaments.

"Happy to end the year on a winning note with my 5th international title here in Bangladesh!! Hope to continue my good form in the next year 2020. Like to thank all my sponsors @OGQ_India @HerbalifeIndia @YonexIndia @Sports_PDCSE @ppba @bai_media," Lakshya tweeted.

Momota wraps 11th title

AFP ■ SHANGHAI

World number one Kento Momota fought back from a game down to win a record 11th title of the year on Sunday with victory at the BWF World Tour Finals.

The peerless Japanese player defeated Indonesia's Anthony Ginting 17-21, 21-17, 21-14 in 87 high-quality minutes in the final at the season-ending showpiece in Guangzhou.

Momota celebrates a new mark in men's badminton, overtaking Malaysian great Lee Chong Wei's 10 tournament wins in 2010.

"At this World Tour Finals I played carefully from the first match partly with the aim of winning an 11th title," the 25-year-old Momota said.

"Even in tough games I did not give up."

Momota was pushed all the way by the speedy Ginting and the Japanese fell 12-5 down in the deciding third game to the world number eight.

However, the reigning two-time world champion surged back.



Kento Momota poses for a photo

BWF/Twitter

Ginting was trailing 17-14 when he called the doctor on court for treatment on his right foot.

The fading Indonesian continued but Momota rammed home his advantage to seal a stellar season in style.

The 23-year-old Ginting has now tasted defeat in all five of his finals this year.

"He led (in the deciding game) but I was patient," said Momota, who was banned for a year in 2016 for illegal gambling.

"And then I got to know that he was suffering pain so all I needed to do was stay calm."

In the women's final China's Chen Yufei also roared back from a game down to defeat Taiwan's Tai Tzu-ying 12-21, 21-12, 21-17.

Chen, who will replace Tai as world number one in the latest rankings, had lost 14 of their previous 15 clashes.

"I'm very excited," said Chen.

"I didn't think much about my 1-14 record against her, I had to focus on the task today."