

**NATION 5**  
 'TIME TO FOCUS ON AILING  
 ECONOMY, NOT RELIGIOUS ISSUES'

**MONEY 8**  
 RBI LOWERS FY20 GDP  
 GRWOTH FORECAST TO 5%

**SPORTS 12**  
 INDIA CONTINUE  
 T20 AUDITIONS

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



# the pioneer



**FIGHTER**  
 LIKELY TO MARK  
 DEVERAKONDA'S  
 B'WOOD DEBUT

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

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



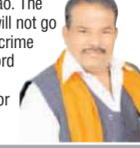
## RBI KEEPS REPO RATE UNCHANGED, CUTS GDP GROWTH PROJECTION

**NEW DELHI:** The Reserve Bank of India on Thursday kept the key policy rate unchanged at 5.15% and decided to continue with its accommodative stance to support the economy. The central bank also revised GDP growth downwards to 5% for 2019-20 from 6.1% projected in its October policy. The RBI said that monetary policy easing since February 2019 and the measures initiated by the government over the last few months are expected to revive sentiment and spur domestic demand.



## EVEN LORD RAMA CAN'T ENSURE A 100% CRIME-FREE SOCIETY: UP MIN

**BARABANKI (UP):** Even Lord Ram cannot guarantee a 100 per cent crime-free society, observed senior Uttar Pradesh minister Raghvendra Pratap Singh on Thursday, amid a public outcry over a rape victim having been set ablaze by the accused in Unnao. The minister, however, sought to assure that the culprit will not go scot free. "Saying that society would be 100 per cent crime free, I don't think this surety can be given even by Lord Ram," said Food and Civil Supplies minister Raghvendra Pratap Singh alias Dhunni Singh, a senior cabinet colleague of Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath.



## CM LEAVES FOR DELHI TO MEET PM MODI

**VIJAYAWADA:** Soon after winding up his tour of Anantapur district, Chief Minister Y S Jaganmohan Reddy has left for New Delhi on Thursday evening. Earlier in the day, the CM inaugurated the Kia Motors plant. It is clear as to what necessitated his sudden tour of Delhi. Jaganmohan Reddy is likely to meet Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah and discuss certain pending issues concerning the State. Jaganmohan Reddy's tour of Delhi comes two days after his Telangana counterpart K Chandrababoo Naidu visited the National Capital.



## CAPSULE

### AIMIM MEMBER HELD FOR COMMENTS AGAINST MAMATA

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

## PARLIAMENT CANTEN SUBSIDY TO BE OUT SOON

**NEW DELHI:** Dec 5 (IANS) From the next session, MPs may have to pay more for the food they are provided in Parliament canteen after they unanimously gave an in-principle approval to a proposal on Thursday to withdraw the subsidy they get on eatables. The lawmakers from all parties took the decision in a Business Advisory Committee (BAC) meeting in which Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla moved the proposal suggesting them to let go of the subsidy that all parliamentarians avail at Parliament canteen, said sources.

## CHIDAMBARAM SAYS GOVT 'CLUELESS, ON ECONOMY'

**NEW DELHI:** A day after stepping out of jail on bail, former finance minister P Chidambaram on Thursday tore into the government's management of economy, accusing it of being "clueless, stubborn and mulish", adding the economic slowdown in the country is a "man-made catastrophe". Alleging that Prime Minister Narendra Modi has been "unusually silent" on the state of economy, a combative Chidambaram said the BJP leader has left it to his ministers to indulge in "bluff and bluster". He refused to speak on the INX Media case pending against him.

# UP rape survivor set ablaze on way to court

PNS ■ UNNAO (UP)

A rape survivor from Unnao was battling for life with 90 per cent burns on Thursday after five men, including two of the accused, allegedly set her on fire while she was on her way to court, police said. One of the two men accused of raping her last year was granted bail 10 days back. The other man had been on the run.

All the five men involved in the Thursday morning attack were arrested within hours and the victim airlifted in the evening to Delhi's Safdarjung Hospital. The woman said in a statement that she was on her way from her village in Unnao district to Rae Bareilly where the trial is going on when she was attacked. Doctors attending on her at the Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Hospital in Lucknow said she

## Battles for life at Delhi hospital



is in a "very serious" condition. "The condition of the girl who was set on fire and bought here at 10 am is very serious. She has 90 per cent burn injuries and we are taking the utmost care," Medical Superintendent Dr Ashutosh Dubey told PTT. In the evening, the state government arranged an air ambulance to take her to Delhi. Lucknow Commissioner Mukesh Meshram told PTT. Meshram said a team of doctors accompanied the woman. In a tweet, the Uttar Pradesh

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

police said the victim had lodged an FIR alleging that she had been raped between January 19 and December 12, 2018 by one of the accused on the pretext that he would marry her. The accused was arrested then and got out on bail on November 25, police said while responding to a tweet by Congress general secretary Priyanka Gandhi Vadra. They added that the probe into the incident is being conducted in a scientific manner and the circumstantial evidence collected.

Continued on Page 3

# Jagan woos investors with promise of govt's 'complete cooperation'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Assuring his government's 'complete cooperation', Chief Minister Y S Jaganmohan Reddy on Thursday appealed to investors across the globe to avail of the opportunities that Andhra Pradesh provided. Speaking after inaugurating the fully functional facility of KIA Motors Plant at Erramanchi village in Penukonda, Anantapur district, Jaganmohan Reddy hoped that KIA will perform well and expand its business by establishing more plants in the state.

The Chief Minister said that his government will provide all possible help and hoped that KIA Motors, along with other world-class industries, will set shop in Andhra Pradesh and generate employment while being part of the development of the state.

He congratulated the Korean automobile giant for starting its unit with world-class standards in the backward region and providing employ-



Chief Minister Y S Jaganmohan Reddy signs a KIA car at the company's plant at Erramanchi village in Penukonda on Thursday.

ment to locals. "I am happy to inaugurate the fully functional facility and hope like-minded companies will come to the state to set up their establishments here. KIA has been doing a wonderful job by providing direct and indirect employment by way of its ancillary units," he said. The Chief Minister hoped that KIA Motors would expand its business and set up more plants to achieve a full-fledged production capacity of three lakh cars. He said that this would create more jobs in the

state. The Chief Minister assured that his government would support KIA Motors in all possible ways and hoped many other industries would be set up in the state soon. Jaganmohan Reddy said that KIA Motors was doing well in the state and when fully functional, it will give direct employment to 11,000 people and indirectly employ 7,000 others. The company already employs over 3,000 people and 3,500 more are employed through ancillary units.

Continued on Page 3



# Farmers: Develop the Capital, make our sacrifice meaningful

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

With no end in sight to their waiting, farmers who pooled their lands for Amaravati on Thursday demanded the state government develop the capital without delay. Speaking to the media at Tulluru, the farmers appealed to Chief Minister Y.S. Jaganmohan Reddy not to let his animosity towards his predecessor N. Chandrababu Naidu come in the way of the development of a world-class capital city Amaravati. They said that it was incomprehensible that the government wanted to change the plans for the state capital city

after roads were laid and work on 80 per cent of the buildings was completed.

Leader of the Farmers Association Sambasiva Rao said: "Until now, the state government has not come clean on its stand vis-a-vis the capital city. After six months of coming to power, the Chief Minister has stated that the pending building works will be completed and our plots will be developed. But what about the rest of the Capital city? If the capital is not developed by the government, then what good development of our plots will do? There will be no value addition to our plots."

Continued on Page 3

# Naidu calls upon people to pressurise govt on Amaravati

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Telugu Desam Party national president N. Chandrababu Naidu on Thursday called for creating awareness among the people on the need for construction of Amaravati, the state capital city. "It is the duty of five crore citizens of the state to protect the people's Capital," he said.

Addressing a roundtable conference here, Naidu said governments keep changing, but it does not mean that a new government should stall the development works initiated by its predecessor. "The state and society are permanent. It is the duty of the governments to protect permanent institutions," Naidu said.

Claiming that he had worked hard to build Amaravati but now efforts were being made to destroy it, Naidu said Tamil Nadu has Chennai, Karnataka has Bengaluru, Telangana has Hyderabad and Maharashtra has Mumbai. "We need to have a Capital city like them since it plays a key role in the development of the state," he said.

The leader of the opposition said it was unfortunate that



Telugu Desam Party national president N. Chandrababu Naidu at the roundtable conference on Thursday.

Chief Minister Y.S. Jaganmohan Reddy had forgotten about AP Capital while expanding the super specialty services under Aarogyasri to Capital cities of neighbouring states. "We brought soil from several sacred places in the country and laid the foundation stone for Amaravati. We wanted to build it in such a way that every Telugu would take pride in it. When I was the Chief Minister of undivided Andhra Pradesh, I developed Cyberabad which is now the hub of IT," he said. Naidu said lakhs of people

were working in the structures built in Hyderabad. "How can the State expect to earn revenue without creation of wealth? How can welfare schemes be implemented without development?" he asked.

CPI state secretary K. Ramakrishna said it was not proper for the government to think about shifting of the Capital at this stage. "It is unfortunate that the Chief Minister is yet to respond when controversy has been generated over the Capital issue," he said.

Continued on Page 3

# MHA sanctions Rs 100 cr to set up women help desks

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Home Ministry has sanctioned Rs 100 crore from the Nirbhaya fund to set up women help desks in police stations across the country.

A home ministry statement said the women help desks would focus on making police stations more women-friendly and approachable, as they would be the first and single point of contact for any woman walking into a police station.

The ministry has sanctioned a sum Rs 100 crore from the Nirbhaya fund for

setting up and strengthening of the women help desks in police stations, the statement said.

The scheme would be implemented by the states and Union Territories, and lady police officers would be deployed at these help desks.

The officials of women help desks would be trained to be sensitive towards women. These help desks would have enlisted panel of experts like lawyers, psychologists and NGOs to facilitate legal aid, counselling, shelter, rehabilitation and training among others.



# Sons-in-law, daughters-in-law too could be arraigned if they neglect seniors

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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



mum maintenance. Now those who earn more should pay more to their parents as maintenance. Violators of the law could be

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

Some features added in the Bill include preference to applications of those senior citizens above 80-years old if they lodge a complaint about their neglect by their children or non-payment of maintenance. All senior citizens homes/home care service agencies should register themselves with the authorities concerned, the Bill mandates. Similarly there would be minimum standards prescribed for senior citizen care homes as per the draft Bill. There would be nodal officers for senior citizens in every police station or district level special police unit to hear their grievances.

# Manish Kumar Sinha is new Intelligence chief

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government on Thursday gave responsibility of the state Intelligence Bureau to senior IPS officer Manish Kumar Sinha, ending months of suspense over who would be entrusted with the coveted post.

According to informed sources, DGP Gautam Sawang and ACB director-general Kumar Viswajit met Chief Minister Y S Jaganmohan Reddy and finalised Sinha's name for the post. Orders



Manish Kumar Sinha

transferring five IPS officers were issued on Thursday.

Accordingly, Sinha was appointed Intelligence Chief, Mohammad Hasan Reju Director-General of the jails wing, and TA Tripathi, a mem-

ber of Commission of Inquiries, Nellore SP Ishwarya Rastogi was transferred as AIG (Administration) to report at Headquarters and Bhaskar Bhushan was appointed in his place.

Rastogi's transfer has raised eyebrows in political circles, but was expected in light of the frequent criticism by YSRCP MLA Kotamreddy Sridhar Reddy.

As per the orders, Viswajit, who was serving as in-charge Intelligence chief will continue as DG, ACB full time.

Continued on Page 3

**TODAY**  
**ALMANAC**  
 Month & Paksham:  
 Margashirsha & Shukla Paksha  
 Panchangam  
 Tithi : Dashami 06:34 am (Next Day)  
 Nakshatram: Uttara Bhadrpada 10:58 pm  
 Time to Avoid: (Bad time to start any important work)  
 Rahukalam: 10:44 am - 12:06 pm  
 Yamagandam: 02:52 pm - 04:14 pm  
 Varjyam: 06:52 am - 08:39 am  
 Gulika: 07:59 am - 09:21 am  
 Good Time: (to start any important work)  
 Amritkalam: 05:36 pm - 07:23 pm  
 Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:44 am - 12:29 pm

**VIJAYAWADA WEATHER**  
 Forecast: Partly cloudy  
 Temp: 31/20  
 Humidity: 70%  
 Sunrise: 06:32  
 Sunset: 05:41  
 Current Weather Conditions  
 Updated December 05, 2019 5:00 PM

# ICG, Singapore to share best practices to combat piracy

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Indian Coast Guard (ICG) ship Shaurya is on her last leg of four nations overseas deployment and entered Singapore on Thursday. The ship had sailed out from Darwin (Australia) on November 29.

At Singapore, Shaurya will have professional interactions with Singapore Police Coast Guard. The maritime security agency of the island country will share their experience in the field of search and rescue, piracy and pollution response.

Consequent to large volume of trade passing through port of Singapore and proximity to Malacca Strait, which was known for piracy attack in the past, has now turned into safe channel for merchant ships owing to formation of ReCAAP (Regional Cooperation Agreement on Combating Piracy and Armed Robbery against Ship in Asia), the headquarters of which is housed in Singapore and the Director General Indian Coast Guard (ICG) is one of the members of Governing Councils of ReCAAP.

It may be recalled that a Japanese ship Alondra Rainbow was apprehended by the ICG in 1999, which was high-jacked during passage through Malacca Strait. Hence, Singapore Coast Guard over the years has turned into a well-trained organisation.

Owing to their competency in the anti-piracy and ICG having the experience of apprehension her vast mandate, interaction between the two maritime law enforcement



● Visit to Singapore is aimed at learning through each other's area of expertise and competence. During the stay, the ship will also be opened for visits by local populace and Indian Diaspora

● The headquarters of which is housed in Singapore and the Director General Indian Coast Guard (ICG) is one of the members of Governing Council of ReCAAP

will also be opened for visits by local populace and Indian Diaspora. Such visit also promotes the indigenous capabilities in ship building as ICGS Shaunak is indigenously built

by M/s GSL at Goa. The ship is commanded by Deputy Inspector General Jyotindra Singh, includes a team of 17 officers and 116 men.

## Pay attention to farmers' problems, Pawan demands YSRCP govt

PNS ■ MADANAPALLE

Jana Sena president Pawan Kalyan expressed concern over farmers not getting remunerative price for their produce and demanded that the State government take steps to bail out the farmers.

He was visiting the tomato market here on Thursday as part of the Jana Sena Atmeeya Yatra. He assured them that the Jana Sena would lend support to farmers, who are almost on the verge of being driven to streets for want of remunerative prices for their produce.

He vowed to confront the YSRCP government on farmers' problems. He alleged that the YSRCP government did not pay attention to farmers' problems in spite of being in office for the past six months.

He exhorted the government to pay attention to farmers' problems. Farmers are under pressure for want of MSP for their produce.

Furthermore, he pointed out how the construction workers are reeling under difficulties, as the construction activities came to a standstill in the State due to sand shortage.



Bijay Kumar Sahoo, Regional Manager, National Research Development Corporation (NRDC), Visakhapatnam, delivers a lecture on 'Significance of Intellectual Property Rights' in Visakhapatnam on Thursday

## MSMEs in Srikakulam sensitised on Intellectual Property Rights

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a bid to sensitise the MSME industry about the significance of Intellectual Property Rights (IP Rights) and its benefits for existing and prospective entrepreneurs, the Andhra Pradesh Chambers of Commerce and Industry Federation (APCCIF) in association with MSME-Development Institute, Visakhapatnam, organised interactive session on Thursday in Srikakulam.

"To increase the contribution of MSME sector from 35% to 50% to the country's GDP with 40% of nations workforce, the Central government is handholding them by offering various incentives with more simplified compliance procedures," Sudhir Mulagada, Chairman of APCCIF, Visakhapatnam zone, said in his welcome address.

He further stated the objective of the programme was to enhance awareness of MSME about Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) and also to take

measures for protecting their ideas and business strategies. Effective utilisation of IPR tools by MSMEs would also assist them in technology upgradation and enhancing competitiveness, he added.

Delivering the keynote address during the session, Bijay Kumar Sahoo, Regional Manager, National Research Development Corporation (NRDC), Visakhapatnam, said: "On an average, 350 patents are being filed in the State, which is lower compared to other States in the country."

It was unfortunate that of the 50,000 patents filed in India every year; almost 75% to 80% were applied by either foreign companies or NRIs. Delving into the issue further, he said, the Indian government under the Make in India initiative had recognised intellectual property as one of the crucial factors in its vision for long-term development.

"The government is providing incentives for start ups in the form of concessions in the application fees up to 80 per cent, especially for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). Since implementation of such measures, the number of applications for Intellectual Property Rights has risen drastically. He pointed out that when used commercially, IP Rights provide competitive advantage to its holder as it prevents unauthorised usage. SMEs can safeguard their know-how from bigger players in the market by registering their intellectual property," he said.

Dr Dayananda Murthy, Director, Damodaram Sanjivayya National Law University, spoke on the Indian Patent System, Patent Drafting, filing and copy rights. GVR Naidu, Assistant Director, MSME-DI, Visakhapatnam, PVS Ram Mohan, Director AP Chambers, also spoke during the programmes. More than 100 participants took part from various MSMEs, start-ups, industries, academia and other prospective entrepreneurs.



## Girl students advised to learn martial arts

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The new entrants were given a grand welcome at Avanthi Institute of Engineering and Technology here on Thursday. Minister for Tourism and Culture M Srinivas Rao, who graced the occasion as the chief guest, exhorted students to accord priority to games and yoga in addition to their regular studies. He appealed to students to learn good manners and inculcate healthy atmosphere. "Girls should be brave and learn martial arts to face any untoward incident. You must take social responsibility and extend support to curb all social evils," he said.

LKV Ranga Rao, DIG of Police, Visakhapatnam, urged students to be disciplined to taste success. He also encouraged students to involve themselves in social service in order to know the realistic living

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standards of people. He also threw light on the important role of student career is one's life and advised them to plan it properly. Special guest and alumnus of Avanthi College G Amarnath, MLA of Anakapalli said he was proud of being an Avanthian. "I have learned life skills during student career in the college.

# India ranked fifth vulnerable to climate change

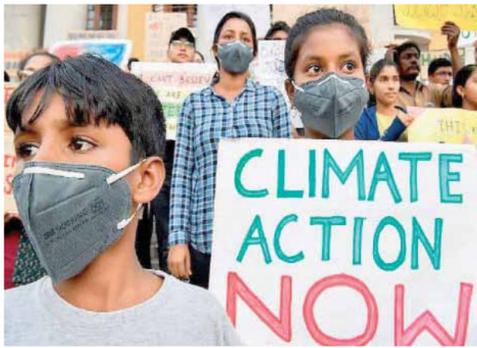
IAN S ■ MADRID

The escalating consequences of climate change are now hitting both rich and poor countries, a report published on Wednesday said. India was ranked fifth vulnerable globally. The Climate Risk Index 2020, an annual report by Germanwatch, ranks countries according to their vulnerability to extreme weather events.

It was released in the Spanish capital on the sidelines of the 25th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) or COP25 that is being held in the backdrop of climate impact biting globally.

According to the report, India has also been badly affected, ranking fifth in the overall global vulnerability index in 2018, ranked first in terms of fatalities and second in the world in terms of losses in millions of dollars.

India's overall ranking has drastically fallen from 14th in 2017, to fifth in 2018. The report shows that extreme weather, linked with climate change, is affecting not only the poorer countries like Myanmar and Haiti, but also some of the world's richest countries. Japan is the worst-hit country in 2018, while Germany and



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Canada were both also in the 'bottom 10' i.e. the most affected. The results reflect the increasing damage caused by heatwaves, which scientists have found are being worsened by climate change.

To explain this drastic fall in ranking in a year, David Eckstein, Policy Advisor (Climate Finance and

Investment) with Germanwatch said: "India's high rank is due to severe rainfall, followed by heavy flooding and landslides that killed over 1,000 people."

The state of Kerala was especially impacted. The floods were described as the worst in the last 100 years.

According to Eckstein, India

was struck by two cyclones in October and November 2018 that also nearly killed 1,000 people. Last but not least, India also suffered from extreme heat. While the human death toll was kept considerably low due to public measures, the economic damage was quite severe.

Other countries ranking in the bottom 20 in the overall climate risk categories are the US at 12th, Vietnam at sixth, Bangladesh at seventh and France at 15th.

The report also points to the importance of negotiations at COP25. As climate impacts begin to result in permanent loss and damage across the world, there is still no specific UN climate finance facility to reimburse the loss of land, culture and human lives.

So far, the industrialised countries have refused to even negotiate it.

But at COP25, for the first time, financial support for climate-related loss and damage is high on the agenda.

For the poorest and most vulnerable countries, this climate summit is, therefore, of the utmost importance. They demand that states agree a deal to support those who are suffering, or at least acknowledge the necessity, with a pathway towards real help.



## Now, book hotel on hourly basis

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

quick and quality hotel stays. "While the provisions in hotels and the accessibility of booking have changed drastically over the decade, the system of hotels is still ancient. This is where Pobyt comes in to revolutionize the way we look at hotels by challenging the traditional booking methods. In today's day and age of instant coffee, instant loans and instant visas, why can't there be instant hotels?" says Nikhil Gurrall, Founder and CEO of Pobyt.

Pobyt is changing the way we look at short stay and brings to Vizag the smart way of hotel stay with more than 15 hotels providing solutions to corporates and families alike. Be it a delayed flight, a canceled meeting, an unexpected waiting or an emergency stop over, Pobyt is the app one should look forward to," he added.

Giving a scope to book a hotel on hourly basis and value money for short-stays, an innovative mobile-app based firm has entered the Vizag market.

Pobyt App is a fresh innovative option for booking hourly hotels at the budget-friendly rate. With excellent features like instant booking and anytime check-in, it is proved to be very customer friendly and is growing its fan-base by the day with more than 75,000 downloads and an unmarked 4.9 app rating. Founded in 2018, the app has grown and spread its services in 5 cities, such as Hyderabad, Bangalore, Tirupati, Vijayawada and Visakhapatnam. With over 105 hotels that are available in the platform, this app is leading the short stay market with

VIJAYAWADA BULLION RATES	
<b>GOLD</b>	
₹ 38,370 (10 gm)	
₹ 310	▲
<b>SILVER</b>	
₹ 44,000 (1kg)	
₹ 900	▼
<b>CHICKEN RATES</b> ₹/KG	
Dressed/With Skin	₹151
Without Skin	₹172
Broiler at Farm	₹104
<b>EGG RATES</b> ₹/100	
HYDERABAD	443
VIJAYAWADA	457
VISAKHAPATNAM	460
RETAIL PRICE	₹4.57

## Chief pontiff of Bhandarakeri Mutt at Tirumala

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vidyeshateertha Sripadaru of Bhandarakeri Mutt, Udipi, visited Sri Vari temple at Tirumala on Thursday. On his arrival at in front of Sri Vari temple, deputy



Vidyeshateertha Sripadaru of Bhandarakeri Mutt, Udipi, offers prayers at Tirumala on Thursday

executive officer Venkataiah and temple priests welcomed him with temple honours and led him to sanctum sanctorum. Temple AEO Ashok, Parpathayadar Gurrappa and others were present.

# Indians love to order-in, says new report

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

More Indian food lovers are preferring to order-in food in the comfort of their homes, rather than eating out, says a new report by a food delivery platform. India has a dynamic food culture with 48 per cent Indians preferring to order in, surpassing the 34 per cent that prefer dining out today, Bansikotecha - Head of Operations, UberEats, India and SA, told IANS.

"Of all meals that are consumed with spouses or partners, 36 per cent are order-ins at home, making this the new form of date nights. 19 per cent of consumers prefer to spend some me-time with themselves over comfort food. About half of the respondents say order-



ing food is more economical than hiring a cook which often tends to be both, expensive and tedious," Kotecha said, explaining the research report 'Food Moods of India'.

The report reveals that the top reasons why people order-in include convenience (28 per cent), to break the monotony (28 per cent), celebrate a special occasion (16 per cent),

● India has a dynamic food culture with 48 per cent Indians preferring to order in, surpassing the 34 per cent that prefer dining out today, according to Bansikotecha - Head of Operations, UberEats, India and SA

● North Indian food and biryani rule the roost among adults, while desi Chinese and pizza are children's favorites. Three out of four Indians order food to their homes, as compared to a minority that order to offices and other places

or to catch up with friends, family and colleagues (10 per cent). North Indian food and biryani rule the roost among adults, while desi Chinese and pizza are children's favorites. Three out of four Indians order food to their homes, as compared to a minority that order to offices and other places. Out of home food is more a function of convenience than a means of celebration. Easy to eat, all-in-one meal bowls see favour amongst almost one-third of consumers. Almost half still like to order a-la-carte dishes.

CAPSULE



Four booked for smuggling 3,600 turtles

**VISAKHAPATNAM:** Police on Thursday seized 3,600 turtles that were being smuggled from Karapa in East Godavari to Odisha. According to sources, the kingpin, Gotti Gangadhar has been involved in turtle smuggling for some time. The sources said that he operates from Karapa, the mandal headquarters in East Godavari, about 18 km from district headquarters Kakinada. The police booked there the accomplices of Gangadhar for their involvement. They are accused of collecting the turtles from various places along the Godavari river course. The case has been transferred to forest department for further action. East Godavari DFO [wildlife] Nandini Salaria said the forest department has booked a case under Wildlife Act.

# Metro Rail project remains a dream for Vizag denizens

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The dream of Vizagites to travel in metro train seems to be far-fetched now with the State government deciding to invite fresh tenders. The previous TDP government had taken its own sweet time to call tenders and finalise the player.

The present government's decision to floating fresh tenders means that it will be an endless story, commented Vizag resident M Nagaraju on Facebook. Netizens have over social networking platforms also expressed disappointment over the delay in grounding of the metro project.

Earlier, big companies had participated in the RFQ/EoI stage of Visakhapatnam Metro Rail to be developed under PPP model. Adani Enterprises Limited, TRIL Urban Transport Private Limited (TATA REALITY), Shapoorji Pallonji and Company Private Limited, Essel Infraprojects Limited and IL&FS Rail Limited were competing for the project. Participation of such major companies in the RFQ/EoI stage was a clear indication that unique PPP



model adopted is a viable model. The State government had permitted Amaravati Metro Rail Corporation Ltd (AMRC) to take up Visakhapatnam Metro Rail (VMR) project under PPP model. The government proposed to fund the civil infrastructure aspect of the while the private developer would get to invest in non-civil infrastructure and earn revenues through operation and maintenance of the project for a concession period of 35 years. The initial design of the VMR project proposed three

corridors covering 42.55 km and the estimated cost stood at Rs 8,800 crore (excluding land and R&R cost). However, the length has been extended to 46 km now.

The first corridor will cover 30.38 km from Gajuwaka to Kammadi (Via NAD Junction, Gurudwara, Maddilapalem and Hanumanthawka along NH-16) while the second corridor of 5.25 km is proposed to cover Gurudwara Junction to Old Post Office (Via Daba Gardens, Suryabagh, Police Barracks and Poorna Market). The third corridor will cover

● The present government's decision to floating fresh tenders means that it will be an endless story, commented Vizag resident M Nagaraju on Facebook

● Netizens have over social networking platforms also expressed disappointment over the delay in grounding of the metro project. Earlier, big companies had participated in the RFQ/EoI stage of Visakhapatnam Metro Rail to be developed under PPP model

6.91 km covering Thatchilapalem to China Waltair (Via East Point Guest House, Railway Station, RTC Complex, Sampath Vinayaka Temple, Siripuram and AU out gate) in the city.

# Ramachandraiah terms Pawan a political novice

PNS ■ KADAPA

YSRCP leader C Ramachandraiah on Thursday termed Jana Sena president Pawan Kalyan "a politically ignorant person" who has emerged from hibernation to display his ignorance.

Reminding that Pawan Kalyan tasted defeat in the two seats he had contested, Ramachandraiah said that the Jana Sena chief has no following among the people. He advised Pawan Kalyan to know realize his position before shooting off his mouth.

Addressing the media here on Thursday, Ramachandraiah said that Pawan Kalyan had earlier sailed with the TDP and Left parties and now plans to align with the BJP. He called Pawan Kalyan a benami of former Chief Minister N. Chandrababu Naidu.

Referring to Pawan Kalyan's claims of questioning wrongdoers, Ramachandraiah wanted to know why he remained in deep slumber when the TDP looted the state during its five year rule.

Under guidance from Chandrababu Naidu, Pawan Kalyan has been targeting YSRCP whether it is in the Opposition or in power, Ramachandraiah alleged.

"Goading people to address the Chief Minister as Jagan Reddy, Pawan Kalyan is trying to foment trouble among castes. It is not proper on his part to speak thus against a person who is the CM of a state," the YSRCP leader said.

"It is atrocious that Pawan Kalyan is advocating letting off rapists by limiting their punishment to cane lashes, Ramachandraiah said.

Pawan Kalyan has been demonstrating his lack of awareness on various contemporary issues,



## PAWAN KALYAN CLAIMS TO HAVE NO LUST FOR MONEY

**MADANAPALLE:** Jana Sena president Pawan Kalyan made it clear that he never needed to join politics if making money was his priority.

He claimed that he received a remuneration of Rs 2 crore for his film 'Jaani'. "I would have become a crorepati had I invested the money in buying 30 acres in Madhapur on the outskirts of Hyderabad," the actor-turned politician said.

Addressing party rank and file from Chittoor and Anantapur districts here on Thursday, Pawan Kalyan made it clear he has no lust for money. He said that he did not amass money as having a fortune would have affected his fighting spirit.

"Only those political leaders who stay away from businesses would be worth emulating," he said.

Claiming to be aware of

the shady deals of YSRCP leaders, the Jana Sena chief made it clear that he would not be cowed down by the threats from ruling party leaders. He said that he would go to any length for the sake of society sacrificing even his love for his children and his life.

Claiming himself to be a great adherent to traditional values, Pawan Kalyan warned that YSRCP armies are no match to his power provided he hit the roads.

Claiming that the Jana Sena was no match to the RSS, he said that his political outfit needed youth who do not buckle under threats from faction leaders. "There are many in the RSS who would sacrifice everything for the sake of the country, including their families and marriage. I would want Jana Sena cadre to be like that," he said.

Ramachandraiah said, accusing the Jana Sena leader of creating unnecessary nuisance

over the state government's decision on English medium education.

## Let Amaravati dream come true: Naidu

Continued from Page 1

The CPI leader said the attack on Naidu's convoy revealed how insecure the government is. While the AP Reorganisation Act clearly says that the Centre should sponsor Capital construction, it has shied away from its responsibility, Ramakrishna said. "The Centre built the Vallabhbhai Patel statue at a cost of '3,300 crore," he pointed out and said the government was threatening to file cases against those who talk about special category status to AP. Janasena leader Bolisetty Satyanarayana said that the party had given full support to the TDP government for construction of Amaravati. "Ever since the YSRCP came to power, the works have been stalled. Jaganmohan Reddy wants only politics, but we want development of human resources and protection of environment," he said.

Satyanarayana said many investors backed out as the Centre failed to grant SCS to the State. The CM was not taking up any developmental activity in the state, he said and asked: "What was the CM doing when Botsa compared the Capital with a burial ground?" He wondered why Jaganmohan Reddy was not seeking the advice of an experienced leader like Chandrababu Naidu.

# 52 high schools to be upgraded to jr colleges

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Officials of the district education department are preparing proposals to upgrade 52 high schools as junior colleges in Visakhapatnam district. The initiative is part of the state government's recent plans of introducing junior colleges in all the government schools having strength of over 500 students.

Several government schools in the district are more in demand than private ones. For instance, the Chandrapalem High School in Vizag suburbs has a strength of about 3,800 students - the highest among all government schools in Andhra Pradesh.

This year alone, the school took in 1,200 new students, including migrations of students from private schools. But while the district has nearly 4,000 government schools run by various managements, the junior colleges in the government setting are limited to 85.

Due to limited number of government colleges, private institutions have been fleecing the students by charging



**The Chandrapalem High School in Vizag suburbs has a strength of about 3,800 students - the highest among all government schools in Andhra**

a hefty tuition fee, which is mostly out of reach of many. Some parents from rural areas, being swayed by advertisements are admitting their children in private colleges in Vizag city.

According to officials, the state government started three new government junior colleges in academic year 2019-20 in Anandapuram, Lalam Koduru and Mungapaka of

Visakhapatnam district. On the other hand, 11 Kasturba Gandhi Balika Vidyalayas (KGBVs) were upgraded to junior colleges from the academic year 2019-20 following the success of up-gradation of six KGBVs in 2018-19.

Meanwhile, educationists demand the state government recruit lecturers before upgrading the high schools as colleges.



## Stones pelted at residence of Narasaraopet MP

PNS ■ NARASAPURAM

Unidentified miscreants pelted stones at the residence of Narasaraopet MP Lavu Srikrishnadevarayalu.

The miscreants demanded the MP vacate the house and leave the place immediately. In the process, the window panes of the house were damaged. The miscreants also threatened watchman of the house that the MP should vacate the house and leave the place. The watchman lodged a complaint with the police, who registered a case against unidentified persons.

Lavu Srikrishnadevarayalu is the son of Lavu Rathaiah, who founded the Vigyan Group of Educational Institutions. He contested on YSRCP ticket from Narasaraopet to the Lok Sabha in 2019 and was elected.

# Pawan looking to join BJP: Ambati

PNS ■ TADEPALLI

Sattenapalle MLA and YSRCP spokesperson Ambati Rambabu on Thursday came down heavily on Opposition leaders N Chandrababu Naidu and Pawan Kalyan for what he called their derogatory attitude towards the government.

He said that the roundtable conference on the capital city and Chandrababu Naidu's recent visit to Amaravati was to save Chandrababu Naidu and his benamis.

Talking to the media here, Rambabu said, "Pawan Kalyan said that he doesn't recognize YS Jaganmohan Reddy as Chief Minister. There is no loss to the people of Andhra Pradesh if he doesn't recognize the Chief Minister."

He criticised Pawan Kalyan's comments that YSRCP would not have won 151 MLA seats if the BJP, TDP and JSP had contested together. People have given an appropriate result and the three parties could have drowned in the love the people feel for Jagan, Rambabu said.

He termed Pawan Kalyan's words as meaningless and said no one was worried about such comments, Rambabu said that Chandrababu Naidu



has betrayed the people of the state in the name of capital city. "He (Chandrababu) manipulated the people by presenting them dreams of a grand capital city but has constructed only four temporary buildings," Rambabu said.

"India is a secular country where people from various castes and religions live together. Talking in such a way provokes communal conflict," the YSRCP MLA said, referring to the Jana Sena chief's comments of Jaganmohan Reddy's faith.

He said that Pawan Kalyan's behaviour has changed after his Delhi visit. "Moreover, BJP leaders have asked Pawan Kalyan to join their party. No one knows when Pawan Kalyan will join any party," he said.

## Farmers: Develop the Capital, make...

Continued from Page 1

The farmers also lashed out at municipal administration minister Botsa Satyanarayana for his statements, alleging that such comments were creating confusion. "With his statements, land value plummeted in the capital region," the farmers alleged.

"Nobody is coming forward to develop land in Amaravati capital region and many proposed ventures have ground to a halt. All this happened within days of the statement by the minister," Sambasiva Rao said.

The farmers requested the Chief Minister to give clarity on the future of the capital city. They said that it was unfortunate that both the ruling and opposition parties were holding competing meetings and making contrary comments.

The farmers requested the people to stand up for the development of the capital city so that their sacrifice would be meaningful.



## OUT AT SEA



Fisherman venture into the sea for fishing at Rushikonda area in Visakhapatnam on Thursday

# Gov fully co-operate with all the Investors...

Continued from Page 1

KIA Motors president and CEO Han Wu Park said that Kia cars were popular and over 6,000 bookings were received in a single day. The event was attended by South Korean Ambassador in India Shin Bongkil and Kia Motors MD Kookhyun Shim. South Korea's Kia has set up an

industry at Erramanchi with Rs 13,500 crore.

Ministers Botsa Satyanarayana, Mekapati Goutham Reddy, Sankaranarayana, Gummanuru Jayaram, MPs K Gorantla Madhav, Thalari Rangaiah, Kapu Ramacandra Reddy, officials and representatives of KIA Motors attended the event.

# UP rape survivor set ablaze on way to court

Continued from Page 1

In a chilling recap, the woman said in her statement to Sub Divisional Magistrate Dayashankar Pathak that she was attacked when she reached Gaura turn near her home.

Harishankar Trivedi, Ram Kishore Trivedi, Umesh Bajpai, Shivam Trivedi and Shubham Trivedi set her afire, she said.

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

After being set on fire, she ran for a while before some people saw her and informed police.

She was taken to the community health centre from where she was sent to the dis-

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

Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath directed senior police and state administration officials to visit the spot and submit a report by the evening. The chief minister also told officials that the woman should be given the best possible treat-

ment. He asked police to ensure strict action against the guilty and ensure their conviction, officials said.

Priyanka Gandhi said BJP leaders should stop their false propaganda.

"Yesterday the home minister of the country and Uttar Pradesh chief minister lied that law and order in Uttar Pradesh has become good. Seeing such incidents every day leads to anger, she said.

The Samajwadi Party demanded that the Adityanath government should step down.

"The state government should take moral responsibility for the incident of setting ablaze a rape victim in Unnao and resign," party leader Akhilesh Yadav said in a tweet in Hindi.

# Manish Kumar Sinha is new Intelligence chief

Continued from Page 1

During the elections, the Election Commission had ordered the transfer of AB Venkateswara Rao and Viswajit was given the responsibility of the Intelligence Bureau. Later, Venkateswara Rao was sent to VR and Viswajit was posted as ACB DG, but continued to be in-charge Intelligence chief.

From the day the election results were announced, the name of Telangana state IPS officer Stephen Ravindra started doing rounds for the post. Ravindra's meeting Jaganmohan Reddy before the latter's swearing-in ceremony at Tadepalli lent cre-

dence to the rumours. He also applied for deputation to Andhra Pradesh, a request that the Government of Telangana also accepted. However, the Union government rejected the request on technical grounds; nobody knows the real reason behind the decision.

After the doors closed on Ravindra's name for the post, the AP government put the decision on the backburner. However, Telugu Desam Party supreme N Chandrababu Naidu's tour of Amaravati and the mayhem that followed, apparently have spurred the Jaganmohan Reddy government to take a decision.

# Vegetable donations worth Rs 120 cr poured in for TTD

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The vegetable donations received by the TTD Annaprasadam department in the last 15 years will be to the tune of Rs 120 crore, said Additional EO AV Dharna Reddy. A review meeting with vegetable donors was held at Annamaiah Bhavan in Tirumala on Thursday.

Later speaking to media persons, the Additional EO said, the concept of the vegetable donation was mullied by him in 2005 when he was the Special Officer of TTD. Since then till



date nearly Rs 115 to Rs 120 crore worth vegetable donations have been poured in for TTD.

In 2018-19, about 1,572 tonnes have been donated while from April till November this year, nearly 1,200 tonnes have been received so far, he added. He said henceforth a meeting

will be held with all the major vegetable donors once in every two months. "We also informed them to gather small donors in their respective places so that we will go and address them as a thanksgiving gesture", he maintained. The Additional EO also said the donors from Andhra Pradesh, Telangana State, Tamil Nadu and Karnataka have been contributing about two dozen varieties of vegetables and they have now agreed to give 36 varieties. Even the Rice Millers Association also donated about 55 tonnes of rice in the last two months", he said.

SHORT READS

**1,342 girls among 2,279 children adopted in 2019-20: Smriti Irani**  
NEW DELHI: As many as 2,279 children, including 1,342 girls, were adopted in 2019-20, Women and Child Development Minister Smriti Irani said on Thursday. Of the 2,279 children, as many as 2,004 were adopted within the country and 275 by people from other countries, Irani said in response to a question in the Rajya Sabha. She said 16 complaints about illegal activities at specialised adoption agencies have been reported between 2016 and 2019.

**Tehseen stages protest outside Par'l Complex over onion prices**

NEW DELHI: Political analyst Tehseen Poonawalla started a solo protest outside the Parliament Complex at Vijay Chowk against Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman over rising onion prices but was whisked away by police. As he was protesting in the media parking at Vijay Chowk, policemen surrounded him and took him to Jantar Mantar as mediapersons jostled to capture the development. He was taken to Jantar Mantar by the police from where he later left.

**'States should come up with action plan to curb digital banking fraud'**

NEW DELHI: Lok Sabha Speaker Om Birla on Thursday said the states should come up with an action plan to curb the rising incidents of digital banking frauds in the country after a Member of Parliament raised the issue in the House. Raising the issue during the Zero Hour, Arvind Kumar Sharma of the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) said on one hand the nation was moving towards Digital India while on the other hand, such fraudulent activities were taking place. "In digital banking, frauds are taking place through different apps like Paytm... Every day frauds are taking place...and the police does not even register an FIR," he said. Digital India is the dream of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and in this way, people are being cheated, Sharma said. Soon after the member raised the issue, Birla said directions should be given to the states, which should come up with an action plan.

**CAB will invert the secular character of citizenship: CPI**

NEW DELHI: The CPI claimed on Thursday that the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill will completely invert the secular character of Indian citizenship, as envisioned in the Constitution. In a statement, the National Secretariat of the party criticised the government's attempt to push the bill in this session of Parliament. "These proposed amendments to the Citizenship Act will totally invert the secular character of Indian citizenship as envisioned by the Constitution makers and replace it with the majoritarian designs of the BJP-RSS. Recently announced plans to impose the NRC nationwide will only create hatred and animosity between communities and will put strain on the secular, democratic fabric of our Constitution and society."

**'Govt committed to protecting citizens' right to privacy'**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government is committed to protecting the fundamental right of its citizens to privacy and reports of surveillance of citizens are completely misleading, Union minister Ravi Shankar Prasad told Rajya Sabha on Thursday. Replying to a query on safety of citizen's data during Question Hour, the Electronics and IT minister said the government operates strictly according to provisions of law and laid down protocol.



Ravi Shankar Prasad

"There are adequate safeguards to ensure that no innocent citizen is harassed or his or her privacy breached... The government is committed to protecting the fundamental rights of citizens, including the right to privacy," he said. Prasad said that as media reports about UK-based research firm Comparitech highlighting that India ranks behind only Russia and China when it comes to surveillance of citizens. "From the media reports, the basis on which such a conclusion is drawn, appears flimsy and questionable. Absence of data protection bill and a data protection authority as regulator has been cited but there are suitable provisions under the IT Act and work is in progress

to bring in a law for data protection," he said. Another factor cited is that, The Aadhaar Identification Scheme gives citizens a unique ID number and is also home to the largest biometric database, which contains details of 1.23 billion people, he said, adding that it is a baseless assumption that the Aadhaar database includes information such as purchases, bank accounts, insurance etc. Prasad said the government's request to WhatsApp regarding traceability without compromising on encryption has been wrongly projected as a possible privacy intrusion. He said though the report recognises that the laws and courts in India are working to protect data privacy, it seems to have jumped to a conclusion without looking at the legal regime in India and the checks and balances available. "These attempts to malign the government of India for reportedly surveilling citizens are completely misleading," he said. According to Prasad, said his ministry is working on the Personal Data Protection Bill to safeguard the privacy of citizens, which it proposes to table in Parliament. Denying any instance of data breach from Aadhaar database, he said for security of Aadhaar data centres, UIDAI has a well-designed, multi-layer robust security system in place and it is being constantly upgraded to maintain the highest level of data security

**According to Prasad, said his ministry is working on the Personal Data Protection Bill to safeguard the privacy of citizens, which it proposes to table in Parliament**

and integrity. The architecture of Aadhaar ecosystem has been designed to ensure security and privacy which is an integral part of the system from the initial design to the final stage. He said UIDAI data is fully secured and encrypted at all times i.e., at rest, in transit and in storage. Additionally, he said there are multiple layers of security at physical level in UIDAI data centres and is being managed by armed CISF personnel round the clock. The security assurance of Aadhaar ecosystem has been strengthened with enactment of the Aadhaar Act, 2016 and subsequently the Aadhaar and Other Laws (Amendment) Act, 2019 which has stringent penalties/punishments for offenders.

**Guj: Recruitment exam protest continues, govt assures action**

PNS ■ AHMEDABAD

Even as hundreds of job aspirants continued their protest in Gandhinagar for the second day on Thursday demanding cancellation of a recruitment exam held recently, the Gujarat government assured to resolve the issue through dialogue.



Vijay Rupani

Stating that the government will "do everything possible to ensure justice to the hard-working candidates", Chief Minister Vijay Rupani said action will be taken after an inquiry. However, he did not give any definitive assurance whether the exam will be cancelled as demanded by the protesters.

**Aggrieved candidates have been alleging that although copying occurred at several centres during the exam, the BJP government was turning a blind eye to protect those candidates who were linked to the ruling party**

Candidates who had appeared for the written test conducted by the Gujarat Subordinate Service Selection Board (GSSSB) on November 17 have been protesting to press for their demand of cancellation of the exam held for recruitment of 3,910 non-secretariat clerks and office assistants. The protest was launched following complaints of copying and cheating during the exam. "My government is committed to take action following an inquiry into the allegations of mass-copying and paper leak. We are committed to make sure that wrong people do not get jobs. We will do everything possible to ensure justice to the hard working candidates. I am confident that the issue will

be resolved through dialogue," Rupani said in Anand town. Minister of State for Home, Pradeepsinh Jadeja, also assured that the issue would be resolved through dialogue with the agitators. However, he also did not give any specific assurance. "Our sympathies are with the six lakh students, who had appeared for this test. Our government is ready to take action against those who were involved in copying during the exam. We having an open mind and we are in talks with the candidates to resolve the issue," Jadeja told reporters in Vadodra. Aggrieved candidates have been alleging that although copying occurred at several centres during the exam, the BJP government was turning a blind eye to protect those candidates who were linked to the ruling party. Jadeja had assured on Wednesday that the Board will resolve cases of cheating within two days. Refuting opposition Congress's claim of large-scale irregularities, Jadeja had said the Board had received only 39 written complaints of cheating. More than 10 lakh candidates had applied for the exam, while over 6 lakh appeared for it.

**Pawar expresses shock over UP rape-murder**

PNS ■ MUMBAI

NCP chief Sharad Pawar on Thursday expressed shock after a rape survivor in Uttar Pradesh was set ablaze by five men, and asked the Centre to take immediate cognisance of the incident. Pawar also alleged that the incident would not have occurred if the culprits were prosecuted "in time". "Extremely shocked to hear that the girl who filed a rape complaint in #Unnao was set ablaze. The victim is battling for her life. If the culprits were prosecuted in time this wouldn't have happened. Home department of the central government should take immediate cognizance," Pawar tweeted.



Senior NCP leader Praful Patel said the incident took place a few days after the brutal rape and killing of a veterinary doctor from Hyderabad, and asked if the country failed its women and society. "It is about time the government takes immediate measures towards women safety. To stop crime against women, the government must punish the perpetrators immediately to send a strong message to society. #Unnao #Justice," Patel said on the micro-blogging site. The rape survivor from Unnao in Uttar Pradesh was allegedly set ablaze early Thursday morning by five men, including one who was an accused in the crime, police said.

**Cong, JMM and RJD have forged alliance to 'loot' Jharkhand**

PNS ■ POTKA (JHARKHAND)

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath on Thursday alleged that the three opposition parties, including Congress and JMM, have forged an alliance to "loot" the mineral-rich Jharkhand and spread Naxalism in the state. He further said that unlike some where "the family is the party" and they can not think beyond that, the BJP is committed to work for all the sections of the society.



Yogi Adityanath

The BJP's fire-brand leader's barb was directed at the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha (JMM), Congress and the RJD who have come together to take on the BJP in the ensuing elections for the 81-member Jharkhand assembly. "They have joined hands only to loot mineral-rich state like Jharkhand, create chaos and play with the security of the people besides spreading naxalism," Adityanath alleged while addressing an election meeting here in support of the BJP candidate and sitting MLA Menka Sardar. He alleged that the opposition parties have come together to divide the society on caste, language and regional lines. "The BJPs thought is if the nation remains secured, we all will stay secured," Adityanath said. He charged the JMM, Congress and the RJD with being angry at the abrogation of Article 370 to make Jammu and Kashmir an integral part of the nation. "They have joined hands only to loot mineral-rich state like Jharkhand, create chaos and play with the security of the people besides spreading naxalism," Adityanath alleged

**BJP has no 'moral ground' to stay in power**

PNS ■ BENGALURU

Congress legislature party leader Siddaramaiah claimed on Thursday the BJP does not have the "moral grounds" to stay in power in Karnataka, as he alleged that the Amit Shah-led party bought over 17 disqualified MLAs.

"They (BJP) are the ones who came to power through the backdoor. They don't have the moral grounds to stay in power as chief minister and ministers.

They formed the government by horse-trading, forcing the 17 people to resign, and destroying democracy," he told reporters at the district headquarters town of Gadag. Siddaramaiah's statement came despite Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa's warning that he would file a defamation suit against him and JD(S) leader H D Kumaraswamy for making statements alleging that the 17 disqualified MLAs were bought over by his party.



"When did things like these happen? Whenever Yediyurappa comes, he does these things, be it in 2008 or now. Did they have the people's mandate?" the former chief minister said. To a question on any truck with the JD(S) after the bypolls, he said no such talks took place between the two parties.



BABRI MASJID DEMOLITION 27th ANNIVERSARY

**Tight security at Ayodhya**

PNS ■ AYODHYA

Barely a month after the Supreme Court verdict on the Ayodhya dispute, police are on high alert for the 27th anniversary of the Babri Masjid demolition, which falls on December 6.

Security is tight in the temple town with a senior Uttar Pradesh Police official saying the arrangements are similar to the plan they had devised for November 9, the day the apex court pronounced verdict on the Ramjanmabhoomi-Babri Masjid land dispute.

"The security plan for December 6 will be a continuation of the plan we had devised for November 9," Additional Director General of Police (Law and Order) PV Ramasastri told PTI, adding that the precautions taken by them were the same they had adopted on the judgment day. Ayodhya SSP Ashish

Tiwari said the entire district had been divided into four zones, 10 sectors and 14 sub-sectors. "The zone is headed by an additional superintendent of police, while the sector is looked after by a deputy superintendent of police. The sub-sectors are taken care of by SHO-level police officials," he said, adding that intensive checking was being carried out. "As many as 78 sand bag posts have been established with armed policemen posted there. Barriers have been put in place to control traffic. As many as 269 police pickets have been in sensitive areas," Tiwari said. The SSP added that 305 troublemakers had been identified and action was being initiated against them. Apart from this, nine quick response teams have been deployed.

**Video leaves Punjab ministers red-faced**

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

Two public relations officials in the Punjab government are in trouble for releasing a video clip that showed some ministers bantering about drug abuse, before a cabinet meeting was to begin.

The clip was apparently meant to be sent out muted, capturing the scene just ahead of the meeting on December 2. But what was uploaded carried the audio as well, leaving the state government red-faced. Substance abuse is a major problem in the state and the Congress had promised elimination of drug trafficking within weeks of coming to power during the last assembly poll campaign. In the clip, a couple of ministers were heard referring to drugs as "medicine" and talking about their benefits in a lighter vein. The officials from the Punjab Information and Public Relations Department have been asked to explain their conduct. "Two officials of the PR department have been charge-sheeted for sharing the unmuted video," a senior official said on Thursday.

JHARKHAND POLLS

**Nadda fires corruption salvo at rivals**

PNS ■ JAMUA



BJPs working president J P Nadda on Thursday alleged that leaders involved in Rs 1.76 lakh crore spectrum scam were wooing the people with "enticing slogans" in the ongoing Jharkhand assembly elections. Addressing a poll meeting in Giridih districts Jamua assembly constituency in support of BJP candidate Kedar Hazra, the former union health minister said the ensuing elections would shape the fate of Jharkhand as he reminded the people how the previous governments had indulged in scams. "What was the image of the country before 2014? What was the environment? There was Rs 1.76 lakh crore (Spectrum) scam, coal scam, helicopter scam. What is the situation now under the lead-

ership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi, only developmental works," Nadda said. "After the abrogation of Article 370, central acts are now effective in the union territory of Jammu and Kashmir, including Prevention of Corruption Act, absence of which had earlier encouraged corruption by three families. Now a probe is on," the senior BJP leader said without naming any families he

accused of indulging in corruption in J & K. "Some leaders are now coming to you with enticing slogans half of their leaders are on bail, what will they serve the people," he said taking a veiled dig at the opposition Congress. He said the Narendra Modi-led BJP government at the Centre and the Raghubar Das ministry in Jharkhand have ushered in several developmental schemes for everyone. "The Congress and the Jharkhand Mukti Morcha, who talk about social divisiveness, are now talking about development, not because they like developmental works but it has become necessary for them to talk about development following Modi jis 'Sab ka Saath, Sab Ka Vikash, Saab Ka Viswas' (together with all, development for all and trust of everyone)," Nadda said.

**Alwar coldest in Rajasthan at 6.4 °**

PNS ■ JAIPUR

Alwar was the coldest place in Rajasthan with a minimum temperature of 6.4 degrees Celsius, the MeT department said on Thursday. In Churu the temperature on Wednesday night was 6.6 degrees. Ganganagar and Kota registered minimum temperatures of 7.6 and 9.2 degrees Celsius respectively, while Ajmer and Jaipur registered minimums of 10.5 and 11.1 degrees Celsius. The night temperature at other places was above 12 degree Celsius, according to the department. The weather conditions are likely to remain the same during next 24 hours.



**PM Modi, Amit Shah live in their own imaginary world'**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI



Commenting on the current dismal economic scenario in the country, Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Thursday said Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah are living in an imaginary world of their own without any contact with the outside world. Speaking to the media here, he slammed the Centre over the Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, saying his party is against anyone who engages in discrimination. "We believe that India belongs to everybody -- all communities and all religions," he said. Responding to a reporter's query on the Centre's claim that there is no financial crisis in the country, he said the Modi-Shah duo are "living in their own imaginations". "They don't have any contact with the outside world. They

live in their own world and fantasise about things. That is why the country is in such trouble. There would be no problem if they listened to the people of the country. Modi's style of governance is to distract the attention of the people from reality," Gandhi said. According to him, Modi wants India too to live in an imaginary world. "Now that imagination that he has created is breaking, and he is in trouble," he added. Gandhi, currently, is in his

**'Now that imagination that he has created is breaking, and he is in trouble,' he added. Gandhi, currently, is in his parliamentary constituency of Wayanad in Kerala, and will stay there for the next few days**

parliamentary constituency of Wayanad in Kerala, and will stay there for the next few days. "I'm grateful for the love, support and enthusiasm of the people of Wayanad who've turned up in large numbers to greet me. I thank you all," he tweeted.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



## SHORT READS



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

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

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

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

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



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

Unemployment and poverty have reached sky-high levels. At a time like this, I don't know if harping on Hindu-Muslim issues will yield any positive result  
— MAMATA BANERJEE  
West Bengal Chief Minister

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

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

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



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

## 485 candidates with Hindi as mother tongue passed 2018

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

## Rape survivor torched: NCW seeks report from UP police

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



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

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

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

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



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

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

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

be led by an Inspector General rank woman officer," the Kollam MP said. The Revolutionary Socialist Party (RSP) leader said the MPs met Modi and Shah along with Fathima Latheef's father

and sister who hail from Kollam in Kerala. A memorandum seeking a CBI probe into the case was handed over to the Prime Minister and Home Minister by the MPs. "Congress leader Rahul



Gandhi representing Wayanad constituency in the Lok Sabha is the first signatory in the memorandum," Premachandran said. The crime branch wing of the Tamil Nadu police is now investigating the suicide of Fathima Latheef, a first year Humanities student, on November 9. The incident had sparked protests in Chennai, with opposition parties including

the Dravida Munnetra Kazhagam, demanding a "transparent" investigation into the death. Earlier, the students father Latheef had met Tamil Nadu Chief Minister K Palaniswami and the state police chief at Chennai and demanded a fair probe. Latheef has raised several questions and expressed suspicion over a number of aspects related to his daughters death.

PAPER WITH PASSION

## Insider vs outsider

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



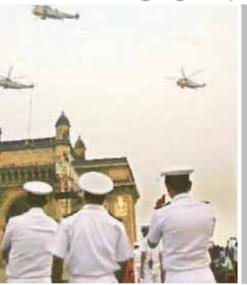
From the looks of it, the resurrected Citizenship (Amendment) Bill, which died in the Rajya Sabha last session because of a lack of numbers and consensus, is a polarising tool meant for the Bengal elections and intimidating Muslims. For it completely keeps the Northeastern States, which equally share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

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

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

## A shipless Navy

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



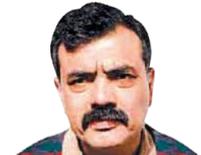
When Admiral Karambir Singh bemoaned the lack of funds to the Navy, he stated not just a fact of life but also hinted at just how poorly India has treated its maritime force. This is peculiar given not just India's huge coastal border and the need to protect it but also the need to project itself as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

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

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

## Graded confusion

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



SHOBHIT MAHAJAN

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

One can already see that this curious mixture of absolute

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

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

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

Hitherto, the percentage required to pass any exam in the

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

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

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

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

## SOUNDBITE

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

**Congress leader**  
—Rahul Gandhi



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

**Historian**  
—William Dalrymple



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

**Indian-American Congresswoman**  
—Pramila Jayapal



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

**Congress leader**  
—P Chidambaram



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Women deserve respect

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

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

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

### A blueprint to revive the economy

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

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

More than enforcing strict laws, what is needed is a change in attitude towards women and treating them with utmost respect and empathy. This will indeed go a long way in reducing crimes.

**Tharcus S Fernando**  
Chennai

### Overworked cops

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

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

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



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

**Haridasan Rajan**  
Kozhikode

bureaucrats are all included in the VIP list.

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

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

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

**P Arihanth**  
Secunderabad

Send your feedback to:  
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

**FIRST COLUMN**

## A golden investment

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



HIMA BINDU KOTA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(The writer is Assistant Professor, Amity University)

**POINT COUNTERPOINT**

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

—FINANCE MINISTER  
**NIRMALA SITHARAMAN**



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

—FORMER FINANCE MINISTER  
**P CHIDAMBARAM**

# Unshakeable courage

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



MOIN QAZI

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

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

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

Prema realised the potential of these rural women and believed they could grow into planners in local development and governance. Building on their capacities, she steered them through a broad-based development strategy of economic and social empowerment. It helped her conceptualise the broad vision for SSP.

The objective of SSP is to promote inclusive and sustainable community development among low income women in climate-threatened areas by building robust ecosystems that could enable them to access skills training, financial and digital literacy and technology and marketing platforms. They have become equipped to navigate the challenges posed by climate change, natural disasters, agriculture, health and sanitation. They also have the negotiating skills to deal with Government agencies and local self-Government bodies.

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Time for serious introspection

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



PURVA BHATT

It sends chills down my spine when I think of the fateful night of November 27. As usual, after a heinous rape case makes the headlines, the country wakes up from its slumber, shakes its head in sympathy and expresses outrage, shock and anger.

The nation enters into a zone of empathy and the oft-heard statements are, “It could've been my daughter, my wife or my sister; it could have been me; maybe I should avoid coming back home late at night; maybe I shouldn't send my daughter to another city to pursue her education; maybe she shouldn't drive a two-wheeler, maybe she

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



**FOREIGN EYE**



## A TOXIC ALLIANCE SHUNNED BY BORIS

The US President's departure from London came as a relief to Boris Johnson as Donald Trump is a fan of Brexit and praises the Prime Minister as the man to deliver it. His presence in UK was an electoral hazard for the Conservatives as some voters admire Trump but most do not.

It is no recommendation for the Tory leader to be liked by a man notorious for dishonesty, ignorance, narcissism and chauvinism. (The Guardian editorial)

# RBI lowers FY20 GDP growth forecast to 5%

PNS ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

"Let the impact of 135 basis point cut play out more," he said and emphasised that timing was important rather than mechanically cutting rates. Stating that headline inflation at 4.6 per cent in October was "much higher than expected," the central bank raised upwards its inflation forecast for the second half of the fiscal year to 5.1-4.7 per cent from 3.5-3.7 per cent seen previously.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## No way privately-issued digital currencies can be allowed: Das

**MUMBAI:** It is "too early" to talk about a central bank-issued digital currency due to technological handicaps, but the RBI is looking into this, governor Shaktikanta Das said. He, however, made it clear that the RBI is completely against private digital currency, asserting the sovereign's right over this function.

The comments come a year after the government tagged Bitcoins and other cryptocurrencies illegal and following which the RBI banned trading on them, and months after social media giant Facebook announced its plans to launch a digital currency globally called Libra. "The world over, central banks and the governments are against private digital currency because

currency issuance is a sovereign function and it has to be done by the sovereign," Das told reporters at the customary post-policy presser.

The comments come a year after the government tagged Bitcoins and other cryptocurrencies illegal and following which the RBI banned trading on them, and months after social media giant Facebook announced its plans to launch a digital currency globally called Libra. "The world over, central banks and the governments are against private digital currency because

## Aggregate lending limit hiked to Rs 50 L for P2P lenders

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

## 'Growth rate to go up again like earlier'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

He added that the growth rate has also gone down earlier also and then bounced back in the following quarter. "Concerns have been raised about GDP, which has come down to 4.5 per cent in the second quarter," he said adding that "this is something which is not unprecedented".

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

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

## Share markets end lower in a see-saw trade

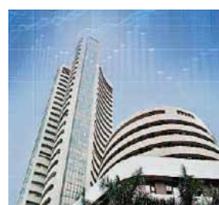
PNS ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

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



Tata Motors were among the major laggards.

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

Sectorally, metal index fell the most, followed by basic materials and energy indices. Capital goods, IT and tech indices moved higher.

The RBI unexpectedly kept

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

The current consumption comprises 80-90 mmscmd of

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

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

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

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

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

### RBI DECISION TO HOLD RATES

## Realty players express disappointment

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



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

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

estate and auto," he added.

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

Sanjay Dutt, MD & CEO, Tata Realty & Infrastructure

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

—SHISHIR BAJJAL  
Knight FRank India CMD

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

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

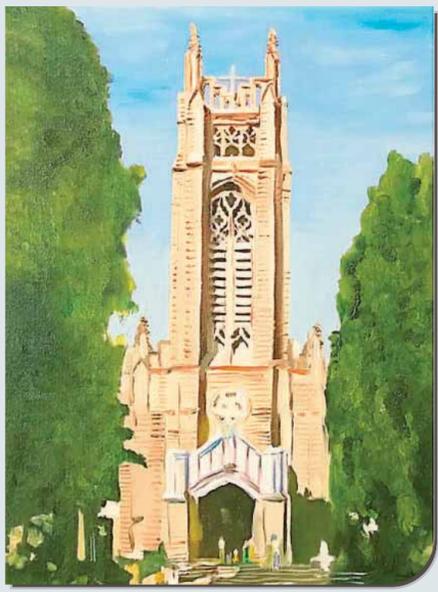
East & Africa, CBRE, said the RBI's decision to keep the repo rate unchanged is an indication towards the government's focus on the evolving inflation-growth dynamics.

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

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



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



## PORTRAYING NATURE'S INSPIRATIONS

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

**A** conducive ambience is important for an artist to visualise his thoughts and convert them into art. Since the bustling, high voltage sounds of the city disturb the train of thoughts, many artists prefer to work in solitude. Hyderabad-based artist Chintakayala Prashanth, who once came to know about the immense inspiration nature can offer when alone, prefers to work in the wild.

Prashanth recently completed his art tour from Bangalore to Kanyakumari in 80 days on his bicycle. In admiration of the diverse cultures, traditions and monuments he came across during his journey, he captured them in a series of portraits on canvas. Speaking to *The Pioneer*, Prashanth says, "I have been in the art field for 15 years. I did my Bachelors in Arts from the Jawaharlal Nehru Architecture and Fine Arts University (JNAFAU), Masab Tank. My media for my art is sketching and watercolours. What I learnt from my travels is that the work I produce amid nature is better than what I do in public which has so many noises distracting me. I found that ambience plays key role in perfecting the expression of art."

He adds, "Once I got the taste of making portraits in the midst of nature there was no going back. I did one of my paintings in a forest and it was one of my best work. Working in nature helps concentration and the ambience inspires the artist to work efficiently."

About his 2,000-km tour on his bicycle from Bangalore to Kanyakumari, Prashanth says, "After understanding about the value of making paintings away from the concrete jungle, I travelled from Bangalore to Kanyakumari searching for inspiration. In this tour, I met people from various cultures and traditions. My paintings are the

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

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

city and in the wilderness. He shares, "I started walks for art lovers at Ananthagiri Hills. Each week, I organise workshops on the importance of making paintings in nature. I also conducted some sketch trips in and around Hyderabad. These sketch walks and trips help people learn about the importance of ambience in creating art." On a concluding note, Prashanth said that he is planning to go on a nationwide tour soon to find more cultures, traditions and monuments for his canvases.



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

CHINTAKAYALA PRASHANTH  
 ARTIST

## Putting WASTE to GOOD use

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



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

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

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



The process of upcycling a plastic bottle into a toy

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

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



## Performing arts come to town

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

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

tated towards these as they seem the most honest to me," says Guru Vidhya. The joint conversation by Vidhya Subramanyam and Anupama Kylash was followed by a presentation by Guru Vidhya Subramanyam titled 'A Dialogue between the Self and the Nayika', pieces from Jayadeva's *Ashtapadi*. The dialogue within a dancer as she explores and presents the meaning of a piece was presented — classical, eternal. The series is conceived by eminent artists of Hyderabad.

**BHARATNATYAM DANCER, GURU VIDHYA SUBRAMANYAM AND KUCHIPUDI DANCER, DR ANUPAMA KYLASH PERFORMED AT THE EVENT**



## LADY GAGA OPENS UP ABOUT WANTING BABIES

**T**he 33-year-old spoke about her plans while chatting with a YouTube star, reports *eonline.com*. "More music, not retiring any time soon... all kinds of different music," Gaga said in a 27-minute video, when asked what she thinks will happen for her in the next 10 years. "I wanna do more movies, I wanna have babies and I want to continue to build the behemoth that is Haus Laboratories into the make-up company of my dreams," she added. She said she is "living my inspirations right now, in this moment. When I get inspired, I do things right away." "There will be tons of crazy things that I do over the next decade," she added.

## CRISS ANGEL PLANS CANCER CHARITY EVENT

**F**amous American magician Criss Angel has vowed to raise \$5 million for cancer research after his five-year-old son's leukemia returned. The superstar illusionist's son Johnny Crisstopher was first diagnosed with cancer back in 2015 at just 21-months-old, prompting Criss to make a documentary about his son's chemotherapy treatments, and raise \$1 million for paediatric cancer research, reports *aceshowbiz.com*. Angel tells *tmz.com* that despite three years of treatment that eventually brought him into remission, Johnny Crisstopher has had a 'relapse' and will be admitted to hospital on December 09.

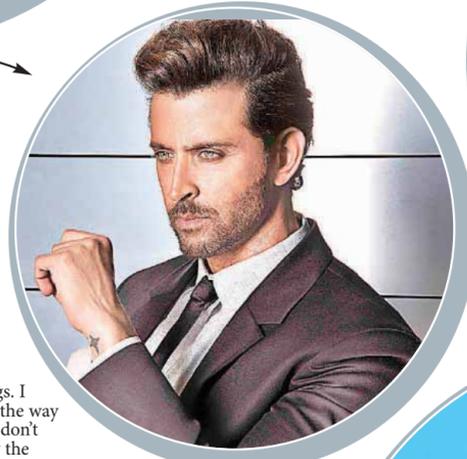


## SANJAY MAKES DIGITAL DEBUT WITH OPERATION PARINDEY

**D**irector Sanjay Gadhvi is all set to make his digital debut with an upcoming original film *Operation Parindey* on the OTT platform ZEE5. *Operation Parindey* is based on interesting events and happenings post-surgical strikes. It is a fictional account of one of the most controversial jailbreak in the history of India. "What originally drew me to this story was that it is inspired by a true-life event. The cast that I got on for this film is perfect and extremely apt to play their respective characters. This is my digital directorial debut and I am happy to be working with ZEE5 on it who have a fantastic reach making sure our story reaches far and wide," Gadhvi said.

## HRITHIK VOTED SEXIEST ASIAN MALE OF THE DECADE

**B**ollywood star Hrithik Roshan has been voted the Sexiest Asian Male of 2019 as well as the last decade in an online poll released in London on Wednesday. The 45-year-old actor, who has box office hits such as *War* and *Super 30* this year, topped the annual Sexiest Asian Male ranking compiled by British newsweekly, *Eastern Eye*, based on votes from film fans around the world, heat generated on social networking sites as well as wider impact over the year. Roshan scored a double win as he topped the overall ranking for the last 10 years as well. "I would like to thank everyone who feels so and has voted for me; I am flattered," said Roshan, as he stressed that he did not view it as an 'achievement'. He said, "Just a person's looks are not relevant in the



larger scheme of things. I don't judge people by the way they look. Similarly, I don't judge myself either by the way I look. "What is attractive in a person is his/her story, journey and the way that person has dealt with situations in his/her own life. Looking a certain way for my characters is just a part of my job, which takes a lot of effort and hard work." Eastern Eye Entertainment Editor and author of the annual ranking Asjad Nazir attributed Roshan's success to a well-rounded career trajectory. "Hrithik is the most-voted star since the list was founded 16 years ago and consistently shown there is more to him than the Greek God looks and physique," said Nazir. Bollywood actor and 2017 winner Shahid Kapoor came in at a second place, with television actor Vivian Dsena

ranking third, action hero Tiger Shroff making his debut in the top 10 at No. 4 and British Asian popstar Zayn Malik completing the top 5 for 2019. "The men featured in 2019 were connected by the fact they all went beyond their stardom and looks to make a positive impact. That is what really sexiness is about and why this list connects with millions around the world," said Nazir. Besides Roshan, the top 10 for the decade is dominated by actors and singers except for Indian cricket captain Virat Kohli, who is ranked seventh. The list, which created a buzz on social media as it trended on Twitter in recent weeks, will be published in *Eastern Eye* on Friday.



## PC JONAS HONoured WITH DANNY KAYE HUMANITARIAN AWARD

**A**ctress Priyanka Chopra Jonas was honoured with the Danny Kaye Humanitarian Award for her philanthropic work as UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador for child rights. She was felicitated with the award at the 15th annual UNICEF Snowflake Ball on Wednesday here. Priyanka even took to Instagram to share what the award means to her. "I am in awe of the tireless efforts and unwavering commitment of the people who work for #UNICEF. Thank you for allowing me to be part of this journey. To serve as your Goodwill Ambassador is the privilege of my life. Congratulating his wife, Nick Jonas said that he is proud of her. "I am proud of who you are and the good you've brought into the world as a good-will ambassador with @unicef @unicefindia for over 15 years now. You inspire me every single day by just being you. Congratulations my love," Nick wrote. On the film front, Priyanka was recently seen in the Hindi film *The Sky Is Pink*. She is currently shooting for Netflix's *The White Tiger* along with Raj Kummar Rao.

### FUN TIME

#### ARCHIE

I'M LATE BECAUSE I PROMISED TO GIVE JUGHEAD A RIDE TO SCHOOL!

HE OVERSLEPT AND IT'S TOUGH TO GET HIM MOVING!

A FLIMSAY EXCUSE!

OH, I CAN PROVE IT!

#### CALVIN AND HOBBS

ARE YOU JUST GOING TO SIT INSIDE ALL DAY?

YOU SHOULD GO PLAY OUTSIDE AND GET SOME FRESH AIR!

#### GARFIELD

GOOD HEALTH

DONUTS

#### REALITY CHECK

MY HUSBAND HAS BEEN ALLOOF, SELFISH, TERRITORIAL, A FINICKY EATER - HE IGNORES ME AND SLEEPS ALL DAY. SO, YEAH OUR MARRIAGE IS COMPLETELY NORMAL.

#### CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	5		
6						
7						
8		9		10	11	
			12			
13						
14		15		16	17	18
19						

#### NANCY

PEE-WEE IS THE LITTLE KID WHO LIVES NEXT DOOR - HE LIKES TO HELP ME DO "BIG KID" CHORES.

PEE-WEE - GO OVER TO SLUGGO'S HOUSE AND BORROW HIS LITTLE LADDER.

DON'T LOSE YOUR WAY ON YOUR WAY BACK.

#### SPEED BUMP

NO, I HAVE NO IDEA WHAT THE HELL YOU JUST SPOOKED IN YOUR MOUTH - I'M GIVING AWAY TOOTH PICKS.

#### GINGER MEGGS

ARE Y'SURE, GINGE? THIS LOOKS REAL DANGEROUS!

I'M SURE! IT'S NOT DANGEROUS!

WELL, I MEAN, MAYBE IF YOU FALL OFF.

#### SUDOKU

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

Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

#### ACROSS

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

#### DOWN

- A round handle
- The scene from a window
- Do damage to
- Very small
- Took clothes off
- Sweated
- A desert green place
- This fruit has pips
- Rub with a towel
- A thought
- This grows on heads
- Firearms
- The direction opposite west

SOLUTION

W	I	N	T	E	R	S	L	A	P
E	E	P	L	A	A				
L	E	A	P	B	I	T	T	E	R
C	L	A	P	P	E	D			
H	I	K	N	A	N	Y	T		
D	R	O	S	E	L	S			
D	R	O	W	S	I	F	L	E	A
E	B	H	E	E	F				
N	E	E	D		B	R	I	D	G

# Fighter likely to mark DEVERAKONDA'S Bollywood debut



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

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

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



## RAM to shake a leg in *Romantic*

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

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

## Ravuri Srinivas gets *Donga* rights

After the phenomenal success of his Diwali release *Khaidi*, expectations surrounding Karthi's next, *Donga*, which sees him teaming up with his sister-in-law Jyothika, are high. Although the film's promotional activities have kicked off a good 20 days ago, the film found a distributor to release it in Telugu much later. Harshitha Movies' Ravuri V. Srinivas has acquired the film's Telugu dubbing rights and will be releasing the film on December 20. "After a blockbuster like *Khaidi*, Karthi is coming with a different commercial film *Donga*, which is blended with action and emotions in equal measure. The teaser and songs which were out recently have received a tremendous response," Ravuri said. An emotional action drama, *Donga*, directed by Malayalam filmmaker Jeetu Joseph, features Karthi and Jyothika as siblings who don't meet eye-to-eye until the film's climax. It was wrapped up in 65 working days. The film will face a stern competition at the Telugu box-office as Balakrishna-starrer *Ruler* and Sai Dharam Tej-starrer *Prathiroju Pandage* are set to release on the same day as well.



## Thaman's tunes for BALAYYA

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

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

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



## Bollywood is not my aim: RAASHI

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

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

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



# India continue T20 auditions

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



Kieron Pollard attends training session AP

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

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

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

In 31 T20s, Rahul has amassed 974 runs at an average of 42.74 with 110 not out being his highest score. He is also a prolific scorer in the IPL.

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

West Indies, on the other hand,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## We all need to support Pant: Kohli

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

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

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

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

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

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



Pant arrives for training ahead of 1st T20 AP

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

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

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

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

## We need to protect young talents: Pollard

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

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

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

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



Alzarri Joseph & Brandon King during Windies training session AP

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

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

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

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

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

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

"We play a lot of cricket in India. It's just a matter of using our experience and hopefully that experience can be a good step for us." Pollard said his side need to improve their collective game as a team to give India a tough fight in the series.

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

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

## Third umpire will call front foot no balls

PTI ■ DUBAI

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

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

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

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

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

## KXIP felt I haven't delivered: Ashwin

IANS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

"That was something I did not enjoy. Thankfully I have gotten over it. I took the help of people and I have gotten over it. World Twenty20 is a realistic goal for everybody. Who does not want to represent India at the competition. Yuvraj Singh came back for World T20 in 2014 and then in 2017 Champions Trophy. I am only 33."

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

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

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

## India complete century of medals

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

AGENCIES ■ KATHMANDU

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

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

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

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

## All-Indian final in badminton singles

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

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

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

In the men's doubles semi-final, Krishna Garaga and Dhruv Kapila notched up an easy 21-15, 21-7 win. However, India's challenge came to an end in the women's double category after both the pairs, Kuhoo Garg-Anoushka Parikh and Meghana Jakkampudi-N Sikki Reddy, lost in the last-4 clash.

Thursday with 11, of which four were Gold, six Silver and one Bronze.

Taekwondo players' impressive show also continued as they gave India six medals — 3 Gold, 2 Silver and 1 Bronze.



Aryaman Tondon in action during SAG

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

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

## 'Only one spot to be filled in pace attack'

PTI ■ HYDERABAD

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"I don't think we have

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

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

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

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

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

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