



# the pioneer



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LITTLE ELSA

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Nilam Sawhney

## Nilam Sawhney is new CS

VIJAYAWADA: Social Justice and Empowerment Secretary Nilam Sawhney was on Monday sent back to her cadre state Andhra Pradesh and she is likely to be appointed as the chief secretary of the state, officials said.

The Appointments Committee of the Cabinet has approved repatriation of Sawhney, a 1984 batch Indian Administrative Service (IAS) officer, on the request of the state government, an order issued by the Personnel Ministry said.

Her husband Ajay Sawhney who is also serving the Central deputation had worked as principal secretary of CMO of N Chandrababu Naidu in 2014.



Lata Mangeshkar

## Lata admitted to hospital

MUMBAI: Legendary singer Lata Mangeshkar was admitted to Breach Candy Hospital's Intensive Care Unit in the early hours of Monday after she complained of breathing problems, hospital sources said.

The singer, who turned 90 on September 28, is in a critical condition, they said.

"She was brought to hospital at about 2 am. She is critical and in the ICU," a hospital insider said.

Mangeshkar's niece Rachana Shah said the singer is recovering.

"She was down with a viral infection. She is on path to recovery," Shah said.

In a career spanning over seven decades, the Indore-born Mangeshkar has lent her voice to thousands of songs in over 1,000 Hindi films as well as in various regional and foreign languages.

The indefatigable Mangeshkar recorded her last song this year. "Saugandh mujhe is mitti ki" was released on March 30 as a tribute to the Indian Army.

Her last full album in 2004 was "Veer-Zaara" when she was 75.

# Where did your children study, CM Jagan asks Vice Prez Venkaiah

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister Y. S. Jagan Mohan Reddy has slammed former Chief Minister Chandrababu Naidu and Vice President Venkaiah Naidu for opposing the move to turn all government-run schools into English medium schools.

"Where did your children study," asked Jagan Mohan Reddy to Vice President M. Venkaiah Naidu, TDP leader N. Chandrababu Naidu and actor-politician Pawan Kalyan on Monday.

"Sir, Chandrababu garu, in which medium your son studied? Tomorrow your grandson will be studying in which medium? Sir, Venkaiah Naidu garu, in which medium your son and grandsons studied," Reddy asked.

The chief minister also targeted Jana Sena leader Pawan



Kalyan. "Sir, actor Pawan Kalyan garu. You have three wives, four-five children. What is the medium of instruction in the schools they are studying," he asked.

Reddy was speaking at the National Education Day celebrations here to mark the birth anniversary of India's first

Education Minister Abul Kalam Azad.

"If you want to compete in the world today, English is a must. That's why I have taken initiative to ensure that our children study through English medium."

He noted that when a Government Order was issued

**"If you want to compete in the world today, English is a must. That's why I have taken initiative to ensure that our children study through English medium."**

towards this effect, there was criticism from Chandrababu Naidu, Venkaiah Naidu, Pawan Kalyan and others. "They all should keep their hands on their heart and say where their children studied."

The chief minister announced that from the next academic year (2020-21), English will be the medium of instruction from the first standard to the sixth standard in all government schools. Subsequently in one to four years, English will become the

medium of instruction till the 10th standard. He said Telugu or Urdu will be a compulsory subject in all schools.

The YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) chief said poor families were facing hardship in educating their children. He said their children wanted to do well in studies and hence he was introducing English as the medium of instruction.

He announced that the government schools will undergo a complete makeover under the 'Nedu-Nadu' programme to be launched on November 14. In the first phase, all amenities will be provided in 15,000 schools.

He said his government was making all efforts to improve the literacy rate in the state. He noted that as per the 2011 census, the illiteracy rate in the state is 33 per cent against the national average of 27 per cent.

# VOA, Velugu animators' pay hiked

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The State government has enhanced the honorarium of animators, Sanghamitras and Village Organisation Assistants (VOAs), along with Slum Level Federation (SLF) and Town Level Federation (TLFs), to Rs 10,000 from Rs 2,000 per month after the continuous struggle of Velugu animators, demanding to continue them and enhance their salaries.

The government has issued two GOs to this effect here on Monday through the Rural development department and Municipal administration department.

The honorarium of animators, Sanghamitras and VOAs working under the Rural development department besides SLFs/TLF working under the Municipal administration and Urban development department was cleared by Chief Minister YS

**The government has issued two GOs to this effect here on Monday through the Rural development dept and Municipal administration dept**

Jaganmohan Reddy on Monday.

The Village Organisation Assistants, Sangamitras, Animators render services at the village level and their honorarium is paid from the income of the Village Organisation, while SLF/TLF Resource Persons render services in slums and their service charges come from the income of SLF/TLFs.

The Mission director, Mission for Elimination of Poverty in Municipal Areas (MEPMA) in Guntur will take necessary action in the matter accordingly.



Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas and Steel, Dharmendra Pradhan has dedicated HPCL's VVSP capacity Expansion Project to Nation here on Monday

# HPCL's expanded Vizag-Vij-Sec'bad pipeline dedicated to nation

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Union Minister for Petroleum and Natural Gas and Steel, Dharmendra Pradhan has dedicated HPCL's VVSP capacity Expansion Project to Nation here on Monday.

HPCL's Visakh-Vijayawada-Secunderabad Pipeline of 572 km length with an installed capacity of 5.38 has been recently expanded to 8 MMTPA with the construction of three intermediate booster pump stations at Malle Bhupala Patnam near Narsipatna, Jeelakarragudem near Eluru and Bogaram (Yadagiri district, Telangana).

The project was completed within time with the approved cost of Rs.407 crores. This low cost expansion has been done to assist evacuation of ongoing Visakh Refinery Expansion project additional production.

Minister Pradhan had visited HPCL's Visakh Refinery on November 9. The remote starting of these three station pumps from Visakha master control station and simulation display of advanced Pipeline Intrusion Detection System installed in HPCL pipelines are the notable features reviewed by the Minister.

This new PIDS technology will provide pipeline security with 24x7 automated surveillance system and thus will enhance the safety and integrity of pipeline operations.

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# Uddhav Thackeray phones Sonia

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Shiv Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray on Monday spoke to Congress president Sonia Gandhi and sought her party's support to form a government in Maharashtra. The phone call from Thackeray to Gandhi came before the Congress held a crucial meeting for a second time in the day to decide on whether or not to support the Shiv Sena. The Shiv Sena chief sought the Congress' support to form a government in Maharashtra, sources said. The Sena, the second largest party in the 288-member House with 56 MLAs after the BJP's 105 members, stepped up efforts to grab power in the politically crucial state.

Continued on Page 4

# Kanna sees religious plot to phase out Telugu medium

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

BJP state unit president Kanna Lakshminarayana on Monday alleged a religious conspiracy to replace the Telugu medium of instruction with English in government schools and expressed concern that the government's decision may drastically alter the Telugu culture.

Kanna Lakshminarayana made it clear that the saffron party was not against either Telugu or English medium but strongly in favour of safeguarding the native language and culture. He suggested that the Government should not impose English medium on the students.



"It would not do, if the government decides to ignore Telugu altogether," he remarked.

The difference of 'amma' and 'mommy' cultures would alter the whole cultural fabric of the state, he said.

He cautioned the YS

**He cautioned the government that the BJP would not keep mum if the government decides to side with a particular religion**

Jaganmohan Reddy government that the BJP would not keep mum if the government decides to side with a particular religion.

The BJP would express solidarity with anyone fighting for people's issues. However, he hastened to add that the BJP would go it alone on fighting for people's issues.

# Ayodhya Muslims reject 5-acre land proposal

PNS ■ AYODHYA

Prominent Muslims in this holy town have expressed reservations about accepting the five-acre land, as decided by the Supreme Court in its verdict on November 9 allotting 67 acres of the entire acquired area for the Ram temple.

Maulana Badshah Khan, president of Jamiat Ulema-e-Hind in Ayodhya who was a party in the Babri Masjid-Ram Janmabhoomi case from the Muslim side, said: "We fought the case for the Babri Masjid land, not for any other land."

Continued on Page 4

## INTRODUCTION OF ENGLISH MEDIUM EDUCATION IN GOVT SCHOOLS

# Unexpected of a person born in cradle of Telugu: Pawan

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Jana Sena president Pawan Kalwan was on Monday bewildered at Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy, the son of soil of Kadapa, replacing Telugu medium of instruction in government schools with English gradually. He cautioned the Chief Minister that ignoring Telugu would spell a doom for the state and cited the example of creation of Telangana because of insult to the accent of the region.

In a series of twitter mes-



sages, Pawan Kalyan pointed out how Telugu flourished in over 6,000 villages of the then Renadu region (the present day Rayalaseema region) and

many rock edicts scripted in Telugu were discovered from the region. He pointed out that the president day Pulivendula, Jammalamadugu, Proddutur,

**"We should perhaps learn from Kannadigas, Marathis, Tamilians and people from the Hindi belt on how to safeguard Telugu"**

Kamalapuram and so on are part of the then Renadu region. He said that he was pained at the prospect of a leader of Jaganmohan Reddy's stature belittling Telugu.

Further, he said that Kadapa is home to CP Brown Research

Centre which housed over 66,000 titles in Telugu.

"We should perhaps learn from Kannadigas, Marathis, Tamilians and people from the Hindi belt on how to safeguard Telugu," he said.

Can anybody guess what would be the outcome of insulting mother tongue and its survival, he asked. Since views of the CM will become policies and hence will influence posterity, he urged Jagan to exercise caution while airing his views on important issues like English medium education.

# NTPC's processed seawater bottle to be seen in trains soon

SUMIT ONKA  
■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Very soon, passengers travelling by trains may sip the desalinated and processed seawater of the Bay of Bengal. The proposed seawater desalination project, Rail Neer plant, at National Power Thermal Corporation's (NTPC) Simhadri takes shape on Monday.

CMD of IRCTC, Mahendra Pratap Mall visited NTPC Simhadri on Monday to give shape to the proposed Rail Neer Bottling Plant Project.

With the joint effort of NTPC Simhadri and IRCTC, the construction of the first-of-its-kind desalinated seawater bottling project in the country will begin soon.

The project is a flue gas based desalination system which is envisaged to produce de-mineralised (DM)



water from sea water. The plant is an innovative, low carbon intensive desalination system. The waste from exiting flue gas in a fossil fuel power plant is utilised for distillation of seawater, instead of steam or electricity as in conventional desalination.

The plant produces 120 tonnes of de-mineralised water per day. Chief General Manager of NTPC, Simhadri, V Sudharshan Babu said the plant was being set up as a pilot project and could also address fresh water scarcity along coastal areas.

The 2000 MW NTPC Simhadri had already allocated land to IRCTC to set up a unit to manufacture packaged

drinking water (Rail Neer) soon after inking a pact.

The project is at a very advanced stage and very soon the bottled water of IRCTC may reach the hands of consumers. The facility will utilise patented Flash Desalination Technology (FDT) developed by NTPC Energy Technology Research Alliance (NETRA), the Research and Development arm of NTPC.

The cost of desalination per litre is 49 paisa. The project is part of government's endeavour to demonstrate how water scarcity could be addressed exploring alternative sources.

NTPC will supply water to the water bottling unit of IRCTC from its desalination plant. The water quality is very good as the evaporation during the desalination process is subjected to 60 degree Celsius."

# IT Dept inspects onion traders' premises

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Income Tax Department on Monday surveyed commercial premises of some Onion traders in Maharashtra following reports of alleged hoarding of the vegetable amid its skyrocketing prices, said officials on Monday.

They said IT sleuths are currently checking account books of some wholesale dealers against physical stocks of the commodity and its delivery to buyers as the part of a tax evasion probe.

The Department is examining the onion stocks as its prices have shot up to about Rs 100 a kg in various markets and there are reports of hoarding, they said.

# Govt revives PCPIR project

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government has revived the petroleum, chemicals and petrochemical investment region (PCPIR) project along the Bay of Bengal coast between Visakhapatnam and Kakinada to attract investments to the tune of Rs 2 lakh crore to make the state the largest petrochemical hub of the country.

Two big-ticket projects have been lined up as anchors for the PCPIR in Kakinada with an aggregate investment of over USD 15.72 billion.

The state government's industry, infrastructure and investments department has drawn up the VK-PCPIR Master Plan- 2031 to develop industrial clusters, expressway and major transport network, residential townships and knowledge hubs as part of the project.

Principal secretary to the department Rajat Bhargava unveiled the Master Plan at the two-day summit on 'Global



Chemicals and Petrochemicals Manufacturing Hubs in India' in Mumbai on Monday.

It was the first PCPIR to be approved by the government of India way back in 2009 and was supposed to attract an investment of Rs 3.43 lakh crore and create 12 lakh jobs (5.25 lakh direct and 6.75 lakh indirect) by 2017-18.

In May 2008, the state government constituted the

PCPIR special development authority to undertake all developmental works and in October 2009 a memorandum of agreement was signed with the Centre for executing the project.

Years of political turmoil till 2014 did not help the project take off while it remained grounded during the TDP rule post-bifurcation.

Continued on Page 4

**TODAY**

**ALMANAC**

Month & Paksham: Kartik & Shukla Paksha

Panchangam

Tithi: Purnima 07.04 pm

Nakshatram: Bharani: 08.52 pm

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

Rahukalam: 02:48 pm - 04:12 pm

Yamagandam: 09:11 am - 10:35 am

Varjyam: NIL

Gulika: 12:00 pm - 01:24 pm

Good Time: (to start any important work)

Amritkalam: 03:45 pm - 05:27 pm

Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:37 am - 12:22 pm

**VIJAYAWADA WEATHER**

Forecast: Isolated Thunderstorms

Temp: 32/23

Humidity: 89%

Sunrise: 06.19

Sunset: 05.40

Current Weather Conditions Updated November 11, 2019 5:00 PM

CAPSULE

**Governor releases book on 'Crop Holiday'**

**VIJAYAWADA:** Governor Biswa Bushan Harichandan on Monday released 'Crop Holiday', a book penned by Yalamanchili Shivaji, AP Official Language Commission Chairman Yarlagadda Lakshmi Prasad and Tobacco Board Chairman Yadlapati Raghunath Babu were present. Speaking on the occasion, he said that India is an agriculture-based country and that farmer is the backbone of the country. The State government has introduced Rythu Bharosa scheme to help farmers. Yarlagadda Lakshmi Prasad said crop holiday is good for farmers.

**Bhimadole RI in ACB trap**

**VIJAYAWADA:** A Revenue Inspector of Bhimadole mandal in West Godavari district was caught while accepting a bribe of Rs 3,000 for issuing a family member certificate to the complainant Chodisetty Baby on Monday. The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) sleuths laid a trap and caught RI Gunturu Sowjanya Rani, while accepting the bribe. Baby refused to pay the bribe and approached ACB officials, who laid a trap and eventually caught the official red-handed while accepting the amount. As per the advice of ACB officials, Baby went to the office with the currency notes, which were laced with a chemical. The accused took the money from the complainant and the ACB immediately caught her red-handed. They confirmed that the notes were issued by them.

# Crossing city bridges an ordeal for vehicle users

**G RAVI KIRAN**  
**VIJAYAWADA**

With three canals fed by the River Krishna crisscrossing the city that is bursting at its seams, the City Traffic police are at their wits' end not knowing how to decongest the traffic on the bridges. The narrow bridges across the canals and the road on the Prakasam Barrage are causing innumerable problems to vehicle users.

There are only two ways to cross the River Krishna by road. One is Prakasam Barrage and the other is Kanakadurga Varadhi. While the road on the Prakasam Barrage is too narrow and old, the road on Varadhi is far wider, but it is unable to withstand the ever-increasing vehicular traffic.

Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy has been using the Varadhi route, while travelling to and from the Vijayawada Airport. If a vehicle breaks down for any reason on Varadhi, vehicular traffic on either side of the bridge comes to a grinding halt for a few hours. A vehicle occupies 50% of the width of the two-lane Varadhi road, making it a daunting task for the police to clear a bus or any other heavy vehicle that gets stuck in the middle of the road.



On the Vijayadasami day, an accident took place on Varadhi, causing traffic mayhem. Vehicles were diverted towards the Prakasam Barrage and where another jam was created. Because of this, no vehicle could cross the river for nearly three hours.

Taking note of the seriousness of the situation on Varadhi, the traffic police are

constantly monitoring the flow of vehicles. The supervision has been increased as the route is used by the Chief Minister. The special allotment of traffic personnel was done by the Tadepalli Police Station.

Similar situations are witnessed on the narrow and old bridges on Bandar Canal and Eluru Canal in the city. At the Pandit Nehru Bus Station

- There are only two ways to cross the River Krishna by road. One is the Prakasam Barrage and the other is Kanakadurga Varadhi
- While the road on the Prakasam Barrage is too narrow and old, the road on Varadhi is far wider, but it is unable to withstand the ever-increasing vehicular traffic

(PNBS), vehicles pass through a bridge near the Police Control Room. Every two hours, a traffic jam occurs there. With this, vehicles get stranded on a stretch between the Police Control Room and Kaleswara Rao Market. M Venu Gopal, a private employee, said "Traffic jams are common at this bridge and a few more located at Alankar Centre and Gunadala."

M Venkateswara Rao, former corporator, said: "Almost 13 bridges have to be upgraded as per the present requirement. Proposals were introduced in the VMC Council three years ago. But, nothing has happened and no budget was allocated for the works."



(Left) Coast Guard personnel removing trees uprooted after cyclone Bulbul made a landfall (right) Hovercrafts providing assistance to the affected populace and damage assessment

## CG renders swift assistance to cyclone Bulbul victims

**PNS VISAKHAPATNAM**

Sending a swift assistance after the cyclone Bulbul made landfall, Indian Coast Guard swiftly sailed two ships-ICGS Razia Sultana and ICGS Amogh-for close coast disaster relief operations and simultaneously two Hovercrafts were also deployed with disaster relief material and rescue teams.

Post landfall of Extremely Severe Cyclonic (ESC) 'Bulbul' on the midnight of November 9, between Sagar Island of West Bengal and Khepupara in Bangladesh resulted in large scale inundation of low lying areas and uprooting of trees causing disruption in communication and electricity supply to the affected areas.

The proactive approach by ICG units in advising and shepherding the fishing boats to safe locations well before the arrival of Bulbul ensured

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The proactive approach by ICG units in advising and shepherding the fishing boats to safe locations well before the arrival of Bulbul ensured minimum loss of life and property

minimum loss of life and property.

Additionally, four CG ships and five aircrafts are kept standby for immediate deployment from Visakhapatnam, Paradip and Kolkata and for undertaking rescue and relief operations.

Two Hovercrafts have been positioned at Frazerganj for damage assessment and providing assistance to the affected populace. Additionally, Disaster Relief teams from

Haldia, along with relief material and diesel driven pump, have been dispatched to Frazerganj.

Medical camps have also been organised by Indian Coast Guard Station at Paradip, Haldia and Frazerganj. Disaster Relief Teams of CG stations at Haldia, Paradip and Frazerganj are providing assistance to civil administration in restoring connectivity by removing uprooted trees in the affected area.

## Space alters human heart cells which return to normal on Earth

**VIJAYAWADA**

Heart cells are altered in space, but return to normal within 10 days on Earth, say researchers, who examined cell-level cardiac function and gene expression in human heart cells cultured aboard the International Space Station (ISS) for 5.5 weeks.

Exposure to microgravity altered the expression of thousands of genes, but largely normal patterns of gene expression reappeared within 10 days after returning to Earth, according to the study published in the journal Stem Cell Reports.

"We're surprised about how quickly human heart muscle cells are able to adapt to the environment in which they are placed, including microgravity," said senior study author Joseph C Wu from Stanford University.

These studies may provide insight into cellular mechanisms that could benefit astronaut health during long-duration spaceflight, or potentially lay the foundation for new insights into improving heart health on Earth.

Past studies have shown that spaceflight induces physiological changes in cardiac function, including reduced heart rate, lowered arterial pressure, and increased cardiac output.

But till date, most cardiovascular microgravity physiology studies have been conducted either in non-human models or at tissue, organ, or systemic levels. Relatively little is known about the role of microgravity in influencing human cardiac function at the cellular level.



To address this question, the research team studied human induced pluripotent stem cell-derived cardiomyocytes (hiPSC-CMs). They generated hiPSC lines from three individuals by reprogramming blood cells, and then differentiated them into heart cells.

Beating heart cells were then sent to the ISS aboard a SpaceX spacecraft as part of a commercial resupply service mission.

Simultaneously, ground control heart cells were cultured on Earth for comparison purposes. Upon return to Earth, space-flown heart cells showed normal structure and morphology. However, they did adapt by modifying their beating pattern and calcium recycling patterns.

In addition, the researchers performed RNA sequencing of heart cells harvested at 4.5 weeks aboard the ISS, and 10 days after returning to Earth.

These results showed that 2,635 genes were differentially expressed among flight, post-flight, and ground control samples.

Most notably, gene pathways

"We're surprised about how quickly human heart muscle cells are able to adapt to the environment in which they are placed, including microgravity," said senior study author Joseph C Wu from Stanford University

related to mitochondrial function were expressed more in space-flown heart cells.

A comparison of the samples revealed that heart cells adopt a unique gene expression pattern during spaceflight, which reverts to one that is similar to groundside controls upon return to normal gravity, the study noted.

According to Wu, limitations of the study include its short duration and the use of 2D cell culture.



## 13,574 appear for APRCET

**PNS VISAKHAPATNAM**

In all, 13,574 (80.39%) candidates out of 16,885 registered appeared for the Andhra Pradesh Research Common Entrance Test (APRCET) 2019 for admissions into PhD/M Phil.

The entrance was conducted by Andhra University from November 9 across 10 cities. Highest number of candidates appeared from Visakhapatnam.

The city-wise attendance are: Visakhapatnam (2,872), Rajahmundry (1,584), Vijayawada (2,050), Guntur (2,312), Nellore (785), Anantapur (874), Kurnool (639), Kadapa (780), Tirupati (1,431) and Hyderabad (1,300). The preliminary key will be uploaded in the APRCET website on November 13.

Objections if any on the preliminary key can be sent with documentary evidence on or before November 15 through email at aprcetobjections2019@gmail.com in the prescribed format given in the website. Objections received after the prescribed date and time will not be considered.

For further information candidates can consult APRCET 2019 office over phone Nos 0891- 2730148 and 2730147.

## VBA to continue stir till Nov 15 for HC in Vizag

**PNS VISAKHAPATNAM**

Unrelenting from their duty boycott strike for setting up of the permanent High Court in Vizag city, Visakhapatnam Bar Association (VBA), on Monday decided to continue their stir till November 15 with consent from the members.

Though the VBA had planned to conduct a secret ballot on Monday among the members to decide whether they would continue the protest, they withdrew the ballot system due to some different opinions among the legal fraternity and they decided to boycott the duties till November 15.



President of VBA G Maheswara Reddy said that the VBA team will meet Chief Justice of Andhra Pradesh High Court Justice Jitendra Kumar Maheswari on

November 13 and 14 to express the need to set up AP High Court in Vizag city, he added.

Majority of the members of VBA are in favour of continuing the protest citing that it is

a perfect time to press the demand of setting up of permanent AP High Court in Vizag city, Reddy added. We will decide our future course of the action plan on November 15, he further added.

The temporary High Court at Nalapatu near Amaravati in Andhra Pradesh was the wrong location for the High Court since Nalapatu lacks basic amenities. There is no need to continue the High Court at Amaravati so that they are demanding that the government relocate the High Court from Nalapatu and establish the permanent High Court in Vizag city, opined senior advocates K Muralidhar and P Anuradha.



Children staging a ballet at the APJ Abdul Kalam Vidya Puraskar Pradanotsavam programme at VUDA Children's theatre in Visakhapatnam on Monday

## Special trains to clear extra rush

**PNS VISAKHAPATNAM**

With a view to clear extra rush of passengers, railways has decided to run weekly Suvridha special trains between Hatia-Bengaluru and Cant-Hatia for four trips leaving Hatia every Friday from November 8 to November 29 and leaving Bengaluru Cant every Sunday from November 10 to December 1.

Train No. 80635Hatia-Bengaluru Cant Special leaving Hatia at 23.00 hrs every Friday will reach Duvvada Saturday at 16.03 hrs and depart at 16.05 hrs and will reach Bengaluru Cant at 12.15 hrs on Sunday.

In the return direction, the train No. 80636 Bengaluru Cant-Hatia weekly special leaving Bengaluru Cant at 22.00 hrs every Sunday will reach Duvvada at 18.03 hrs and depart at 18.05 hrs and will arrive Hatia at 12.00 hrs on Tuesday.

The special train consisting of two AC-2 Tier, four AC-3 Tier, four sleeper class and three general second class coaches in composition. This Suvridha Special will have stoppages at Rourkela, Jharsuguda, Sambalpur, Bargarh, Balangir, Titlagarh, Kesinga, Muniguda, Rayagada, Parvatipuram, Bobbili, Vizianagaram, Kottavalasa, Simhachalam North, Duvvada, Tuni, Samalkot, Rajahmundry, Tadepalligudem, Eluru, Vijayawada, Ongole, Nellore, Gudur, Sullurupeta, Perambur, Katpadi, and Jolarpettai stations en route.

## Device to save kids, pets in vehicles developed

**VIJAYAWADA**

Researchers from University of Waterloo, Canada, developed a new device, which combines radar technology with Artificial Intelligence (AI) to detect unattended children or animals with 100 per cent accuracy.

Small enough to fit in the palm of a hand at just 3mm in diameter, the device is designed to be attached to a vehicle's rear-view mirror or mounted on the ceiling.

According to researchers, it sends out radar signals that are reflected back by people, animals and objects in the vehicle. The built-in AI then analyses the reflected signals.

"Unlike cameras, this device preserves privacy and it doesn't have any blind spots because radar can penetrate seats, for



instance, to determine if there is an infant in a rear-facing car seat," said study researcher George Shaker, a Professor at the university.

"This system is so affordable it could become standard equipment in all vehicles," he added. Development of the wireless, disc-shaped sensor was funded in part by a major automotive parts manufacturer

that is aiming at bringing it to market by the end of 2020. Analysis by the device determines the number of occupants and their locations in a vehicle.

That information could be used to set rates for ride-sharing services and toll roads or to qualify vehicles for car-pool lanes. Its primary purpose, however, is to detect when a child or pet has been acciden-

tally or deliberately left behind, a scenario that can result in serious harm or death in extremely hot or cold weather, the study said.

In such cases, the system would prevent vehicle doors from locking and sound an alarm to alert the driver, passengers and other people in the area that there is a problem. The low-power device, which

"Unlike cameras, this device preserves privacy and it doesn't have any blind spots because radar can penetrate seats, for instance, to determine if there is an infant in a rear-facing car seat," said study researcher George Shaker, a Professor at the university.

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Analysis by the device determines the number of occupants and their locations in a vehicle

runs on a vehicle's battery, distinguishes between living beings and inanimate objects by detecting subtle breathing movements.

Researchers were now also exploring the use of that capa-

bility to monitor the vital signs of drivers for indications of fatigue, distraction, impairment, illness or other issues. The study was presented at the IEEE Sensors 2019 conference in Canada.

CAPSULE

Two Ayyappa devotees drown in pond

**VISAKHAPATNAM:** In a freak incident, two Ayyappa devotees drowned in a local tank while they were plucking lotus flowers in the waters at Yelamanchili here on Monday. The deceased were identified as Lalam Naresh (21) and Pyala Ganesh (27), both were observing Ayyappa Deeksha for the past few days. According to reports, three Ayyappa devotees from Bhogapuram village of Atchutapuram Mandal in Vizag district had come to Yelamanchili to attend a Puja (Ayyappa Puja) on Monday. Near their puja venue, the trio noticed the lotus flowers in a tank and decided to pluck the flowers for Puja. While two of them Ganesh and Naresh ventured into the waters to pluck the flowers but they could not come out of the waters. Based on the information from Ayyappa devotee Satyam, the locals rushed to the spot. Though the locals tried to rescue the duo, their efforts proved futile. The police led by Sub-Inspector N Karthik with the support of locals fished out the bodies from the water and shifted to the government hospital for post mortem. The police have registered a case under Section 174 of CrPC and investigation is on.

Obsession for selfie claims life of B Tech student

**GUNTUR:** Obsession to take selfie with friend on Branch Canal Bridge over River Krishna claimed the life of a 20-year-old B Tech student plunging the youth's family into a sorrow of their life. The deceased was identified as Ila Dhana Lakshmi, resident of Vengal Reddy Nagar in Narasaraopeta. She set out on Monday to attend a function along with her friends. En route, she decided to capture selfie along with her friend Mukesh standing on the Guntur branch canal bridge over river Krishna. As mishap would have it, she along with her friend slipped and fell into the canal. Alarmed by the cries of the friends, the locals tried to save the duo. They were successful in saving Mukesh. He was brought to the shore safely. Dhana Lakshmi was also rescued from the canal, but she could not survive. She was taken to hospital where doctors declared dead on arrival.

'AP best bet for investments'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Endowed with a long coastline and enormous natural resources, Andhra Pradesh is an ideal State for investments, Minister Mekapati Gowtham Reddy has stated at the Global Chemicals and Petrochemicals Summit on Monday in Mumbai.

Minister for Industries, Commerce and Information Technology, Mekapati Gowtham Reddy said that the State plans to play a vital role in the Centre's goal of creating a five trillion economy by 2025.

He said that Andhra Pradesh is willing to play a more participatory role in the development of the national economy. Andhra Pradesh, under the leadership of Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy, has more focus on the four pillars for the implementation of industrial policy: transparency in governance, industrial policy, creating world-class infrastructure and an international workforce of the future.



Minister for Industries, Commerce, and Information Technology Gowtham Reddy speaking the Global Chemicals and Petrochemicals Summit on Monday in Mumbai

The Minister said, "We have a very customised policy for MSMEs which want to invest in the Petroleum, Chemicals and Petrochemicals Investment Region (PCPIR)," and added "The RINL has one of the major operations in the K-G basin of Andhra Pradesh."

In the past 15 years, all the private and public companies have hugely benefited from the reserves in Andhra Pradesh, he said and promised that the companies coming to Andhra Pradesh will get all the required assistance and cooperation.

He invited Union Minister Sadananda Gowda to visit the PCPIR region and ensure the investments in the State. On behalf of the Andhra Pradesh Government, he assured all the investors of required assistance from time to time.

Dr Rajat Bhargava, Principal Secretary, Industries, Infrastructure, Investment and Commerce, made a powerpoint presentation on Petroleum, Chemicals and Petrochemicals Investment Region (PCPIR) of Andhra Pradesh in which he explained about the infra-

structure and facilities available in Visakhapatnam and Kakinada zones and opportunities in the region. He asked the Union government to provide a fund to support and develop more infrastructure in PCPIR as it will help in contributing to the 5 trillion economy. He also asked the Central government to support ZMSME clusters and research hubs.

Besides Rajat Bhargava, State Principal Secretary for Industries, Union Minister for Chemicals and Fertilizers DV Sadananda Gowda, Odisha State Minister of Home, Power, Industries, Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises, Captain Dibya Shankar Mishra, Chief Secretary of Union Chemicals and Fertilizers Raghavendra Rao, Deepak Nitrate P Mehta company chairman Deepak P Mehta, Prabh Das from FICCI Plastic and Petrochemicals Industry Committee, and senior officials of Central Chemicals and Fertilizers Department participated in the summit.

'Did Jagan's daughters study in Telugu medium?'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh Government's decision to introduce English medium in government schools has become a moot point for the ruling YSRCP leaders and rival TDP leaders, who try to expose the double standard being adopted by each other.

The Opposition is seething with anger over the decision and trying to find fault with the Jaganmohan Reddy government. There ensued a wordy duel between the ruling and opposition ranks.

When former Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu targeted YS Jaganmohan Reddy in his criticism of English medium education, Jagan countered asking Chandrababu what was the medium of education of Nara Lokesh and what is the medium of instruction of his grandson Devansh. Responding to CM's remarks, MLC Lokesh Naidu pointed out how YS Jaganmohan Reddy, the then Opposition leader, opposed



When the TDP chief targeted the CM in his criticism of English medium education, Jagan countered asking Naidu what was the medium of education of Nara Lokesh and what is the medium of instruction of his grandson Devansh

when the TDP government decided to introduce English medium education in government schools.

Calling Jaganmohan Reddy a Gajini (a film character that suffers from short-term memory loss), Lokesh recalled how Jagan and the Telugu daily owned by his family had run a campaign to safeguard Telugu medium education. When the TDP prepared a plan to introduce English medium in municipal schools, Lokesh said, Jagan had successfully stalled the idea.

In a message tweeted from his account, Lokesh appended some news paper clippings to

buttress his argument.

Why the wisdom of introducing the English medium of instruction did not dawn on Jagan when he was highly critical about the English medium, he asked.

He sought to know whether Jagan's daughters were pursuing education in Telugu medium when he protested against the government's decision.

Mission Build AP is a scam: TDP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

TDP official spokesperson Panchumarti Anuradha has alleged that AP Mission Build AP is nothing but a quid pro concept. In the name of selling government lands to private parties, YSRC leaders will get the benefit. Speaking to the media at Guntur on Monday, she said that this is not the way to create wealth in the State. "If YS Jaganmohan Reddy does not know how to create wealth, he can take classes from our party Chief Chandrababu Naidu," she said. She alleged that during the Dr. YS Rajasekhara Reddy rule, Jaganmohan Reddy had done the same to loot money from industrialists and others, on which cases are under process in the CBI Court. Now, again he wants to do the same in the name of Mission Build AP, she added.

Anuradha said that TDP will not tolerate any attempts to



Panchumarti Anuradha

sell properties of the government to any private parties in the name of Mission Build. "It is nothing but putting up Andhra Pradesh for sale. They don't know how to create income for the State. They only know how to spend the existing money in the name of schemes to get political gain. But, they don't know how to develop the State.

Expedite probe into cases, DGP tells officials

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

DGP Gautam Sawang has instructed police personnel of all districts to complete investigation into all pending cases. During the monthly crime review meeting, the DGP has enquired about the pending cases with all the wings and the districts. Surprisingly, it was reported that every year more than one-and-a-half lakh cases were registered and only 5% to 10% cases out of them would be completed with proper investigation. All other cases are pending.

DGP Gautam Sawang has asked officials to segregate the pending cases category-wise. He asked them to do the hard work on collecting evidences in support of FIRs. Otherwise, criminals will not fear the law, he added. He said: "Every month, we



DGP Gautam Sawang has asked officials to segregate the pending cases category-wise. He asked them to do the hard work on collecting evidences in support of FIRs

have to review the cases, accumulated over a period of time. We should strive to clear maximum number of cases. We have to get habituated to build perfect FIR first and then collect evidences accordingly. Lapses in the investigation lead to pendency of cases," he added.

Preventing crimes and proving them should be the focus areas of the police, the DGP said and added: "We

have to focus on preventing the crime by taking different measures for different types of crimes.

On the other hand, we have to prove the crimes, against which cases were already registered."

Twitter asks users to help it curb deepfakes

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a bid to control fabricated or manipulated content - known as deepfakes -- on its platform, Twitter on Monday asked users to go through a survey before formulating a new policy on tackling such deepfake or shallowfake content.

The survey asked myriad of questions around misleading altered media -- photos and videos that have been changed to deceive or confuse others -- and how Twitter can take strict action against it. Twitter may place a notice next to Tweets that share synthetic or manipulated media or warn people before they share or like Tweets with synthetic or manipulated media. The micro-blogging platform can also add a link -- for example, to a news article or Twitter



Moment -- so that people can read more about why various sources believe the media is synthetic or manipulated. "Your individual responses are entirely confidential and will not be shared outside of Twitter, but we may share common themes and overall results," Twitter said in a statement.

Examples of misleading altered media are videos that make someone look sick, photos that add people who were not present or delete people who were present and videos that show events that never actually happened. "Deepfakes" are video forgeries that make people appear to be saying things they never did, like the popular forged videos of Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg and US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi that went viral recently.

People prefer change in timings of UDAY double-decker train

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Tirupati-Visakhapatnam and the Visakhapatnam-Vijayawada double-decker trains have found favour with the people if the near 90 per cent occupancy ration even on ordinary days is any indication. However, the occupancy ration during the current peak season has reached 100 per cent.

The travelling public have no issues with the Tirupati bound double decker train, but prefer that the authorities fine tune the timings of the Uday double decker train shuttling between Visakhapatnam and Vijayawada.

Within half an hour of Uday leaving Visakhapatnam station, the superfast Janmabhoomi Express heads for Vijayawada and hence the travelling public does not feel much difference between the two trains as the two reach Vijayawada almost around the same time.

People from North Coastal



AP reach Vijayawada, the state capital, around 11.30 am and take care of their business in government offices, high court and other establishments and take the return train to return home around 10.30 pm.

The Uday double decker train leaves Visakhapatnam at around 5.45 am. But the people want to advance the timing to 4 am or 4.30 am so that they can reach Vijayawada at 10 am when the government offices and other establishments open for the day.

Janmabhoomi express leaves

Visakhapatnam at 6 am. Whichever train they take, they feel that they reach Vijayawada around the same time. If the same trend were to continue, the significance of Uday double-decker train will get diminished.

In the return direction, the double decker train at Tirupati starts around 9.30 am and reaches Vijayawada around 5.50 am. By the time the train reaches Visakhapatnam, it would be around 11 am. People find the Tirupati bound double decker highly useful.

Neighbour arrested in murder of eight-year-old girl

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Neighbour was arrested on Monday in the murder of eight-year-old Muvva Dwaraka, whose body was found in a gunny bag in the neighbour's residence.

The arrested was identified as Mekala Prakash.

The girl was reported missing since Sunday. Parents, relatives and police searched for the girl everywhere in the city on Sunday but of no avail. On Monday drones were pressed into serve and also the dog squad.

Mekala Prakash, as if nothing had happened, mingled with parents, relatives and the locals in searching for the girl.

The locals and the police found his behavior suspicious. His wife, suspecting something fishy, tore open a gunny



bag which Prakash had kept in the house only to find body of the girl.

She alerted the locals about it who handed over Prakash to the police after beating him black and blue. Post-mortem report of the girl is awaited.

Parents of Muvva Dwaraka are weeping inconsolably for their daughter. State women's commission chairperson Vasireddy Padma consoled the bereaved family and assured them of all support on behalf of the government.

DEVOTEES PERFORMING ABHISHEKAM



Devotees performing abhishekam to Shivalingams at a temple in Visakhapatnam on Monday

US Navy team visits VPT ahead of friendly joint exercise

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

A team of delegations from the United States of America Navy visited Visakhapatnam Port Trust here on Monday to understand the facilities available to hold a joint exercise.

The team comprised of Germaine Evans, Jeffrey Young - NCIS Security Specialist, Lawrence Dass - Admin - Defense Office US Embassy and Mr Venkat - RSO Hyderabad met P.L.Haranadh, Deputy Chairman of VPT.

Deputy chairman of VPT welcomed the US Delegates and briefed them about the port operations, types of cargoes handled, the infrastructure facilities available, pilotage



A team from the United States interacting with Visakhapatnam Port Trust Chairman MT Krishna Babu in Visakhapatnam on Tuesday

and anchorage of vessels, the availability of berths in the Inner and Outer Harbours,

the draft and LOA of berths among others. The representatives of US

informed that the reason behind their visit to Visakhapatnam Port is that the US proposes to have a friendly Naval exercise and in this connection they would like to have firsthand information on the Security of the US Crew Members and the US Vessels while berthing at the Port and the logistic arrangements, immigrations process, access control.

Mr Haranadh informed the team that CISF is manning the Port area and the Port is well secured with the coordination and cooperation of Coastal Marine Police, Indian Coast Guard and the Indian Navy's jurisdiction and would be well taken care of.

Suicide cases up by 41% in Vizag

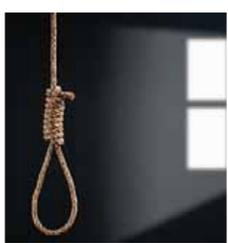
PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The suicide cases in Vizag city has gone up by over 41 per cent in 2016 from 177 in 2015 to 250. Love failures, affairs, and a few others were the major reasons for the increased suicide incidents in Vizag city. This is the latest report of NCRB.

A total of 6,059 persons ended their lives in Andhra Pradesh in 2016 while the number was 6,226 in 2015.

Interestingly, more men (175) committed suicide in Vizag than women (75). Be it family problems, failure in love and examination, more men ended their lives in Vizag than women, because they find themselves unable to overcome from their problems.

The official data of



National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) for 2016 indicates that an alarming rise in suicidal tendencies among men compared to women. Due to family problems, 109 people including 30 women committed suicide in Vizag while illness was the reason for the 37 suicides in the city.

Love Affairs claimed the lives of seven people in Vizag city while bankruptcy was the reason for the suicides of 5 persons.

The means of adopted for suicide varied from easily available means of poisoning to painful means hanging.

A senior police officer said that youngsters were the most victims in suicides. He said that the youngsters must learn to face failures in their life instead of ending their lives as they will be supposed to bread winners of their family in future.

Psychiatrists opined that social, economic, family problems and also love affairs causes led most males to kill themselves where as emotional and personal causes mainly drove women to end their lives.

Interactive AI-powered app for diabetes launched

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The eddii virtual health buddy app, launched on Monday in India in the run up to the World Diabetes Day, solves that problem by gamifying health tracking and management. eddii is an AI-powered virtual character who guides users on a digital adventure. The whimsical cartoon lead uses stories, jokes and games to encourage people to input data like carb counts, insulin usage, exercise notes and mood. Advanced technology allows the chatbot to examine that data and identify patterns. For example, some people will discover that within hours of eating a certain food, their mood shifts.



RTC JAC members argue with police officials at a protest in Hyderabad on Monday. (Right) Police arrest CPI members in Warangal

# Striking employees get support of NRIs

K VENKATESHWARLU  
HYDERABAD

The striking RTC employees are getting support from across the world. Telangana NRIs in United Kingdom (UK) have floated an All-Party Committee with the support of six political parties and announced their support to the ongoing RTC strike.

Extending sympathies to the bereaved RTC families, the NRIs urged the RTC employees not to commit suicides. They demanded the Telangana government to extend Rs 15 lakh ex-gratia and a job to one of the bereaved families.

The NRIs displayed placards 'Dear RTC employees- suicide is not a solution', 'Fight for justice...We are with you', 'KCR do justice to RTC workers immediately', 'Solve RTC issue- Stop RTC privatization', 'Take RTC employees back to work'. The NRIs decided to extend financial assistance to the RTC workers after taking legal opinion. They demanded the government to merge the RTC into government similar to Andhra Pradesh government.

While reminding the Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Rao that the NRIs from London stand by the side of him by waging movement on the banks of Thames River and before the British Parliament, the NRIs said, in a united statement, that it is unfortunate that the situation is arising once again to stage dharnas with the KCR's policies.

Stating that suppressing the peaceful and non-violent movement for their demands is undemocratic, NRIs demanded the state government to conduct talks with RTC employees immediately. The forming of unions takes places as per democratic manner and it is not correct to the Chief Minister to create differences among the employees as some present ministers acted as honorary presidents too, they said.

The six-political parties- Congress, BJP, TJS, TDP, Jana



NRIs hold placards in support of RTC employees in London

**Stating that suppressing the non-violent movement as undemocratic, NRIs demanded the government to conduct talks with RTC employees immediately**

Srinivas Devulapally, Tirupari Narsimha Reddy, Mary, Jawahar Reddy, Jayanth Vaddiraju (Congress), Pasunuri Kiran, Praveen Billa (BJP), Rangu Venkateshwarlu, Swamy Akula, Raju Goud (TJS), Koti, Chaitanya (TDP), Ayyappa, Haneef, Abdul (Jana Sena), Shiva Reddy, Ganesh Reddy (YSRCP), Oruganti Kamalakar Rao, Sravan Goud, Dr Vishwanath Kokkonda (intellectuals).

Later, the NRIs also held a video conference with the Telangana political leaders. While speaking, Revanth Reddy urged Telangana NRI of other nations to extend their support to the RTC employees similar to NRIs from UK.

Komatireddy Venkat Reddy urged the Telangana NRIs from America to extend their support to the RTC employees similar to the NRIs of UK. He said that several issues can be solved if the Chief Minister pays the dues to RTC. It is painful as Chief Minister is speaking lies, Komatireddy lamented.

BJP leader DK Aruna demanded Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Rao to leave the stubborn attitude towards RTC employees. RTC problem will create another problem if the government indulges in detentions and houses, she opined saying that there is no need to Chief Minister to misguide the High Court.

# RTC JAC ups the ante against govt

Employees storm residences of MLAs, MPs and MLCs across the state

PNS HYDERABAD

On the 38th day of the RTC strike on Monday, members of the RTC JAC attempted to lay siege to houses of Ministers, MLAs and MLCs of ruling party across the state and raised slogans against the state government to register their protest against the lathi-charge on the RTC workers during the November 9 Million March held on Tankbund.

They accused the TRS government of failing to resolve the problems of RTC workers. During the protest, clashes between the police and the RTC workers took place leading to jostling by each other causing injuries to the workers. The police effected arrests of the protesters at many places.

In Siddipet, the RTC workers made a vain bid to lay siege to the residence of Finance Minister T Harish Rao. The RTC workers along with the Left parties leaders made a sit-in in front of Harish Rao's house. The police tried to thwart their attempts leading to jostling. In the melee, a woman

**In Siddipet, the RTC workers made a vain bid to lay siege to the residence of Finance Minister T Harish Rao. The RTC workers along with the Left parties leaders made a sit-in in front of Harish Rao's residence**

conductor was injured. Tension prevailed at Minister Yerrabelli Dayakar Rao's residence as the RTC workers protested in front of his house in Ramnagar in Hanmakonda. Tension prevailed as the police and the protesters clashed in front of the house.

Similarly, the RTC workers and the police clashed in front of the house of Vinaya Bhaskar, Warangal West legislator and government whip, in Hanmakonda. The RTC workers along with Congress leaders tried to lay siege to the house when the police thwarted their attempts. The protesters raised slogans against the government leading to the police effecting arrests. As a

result, tension prevailed in the area.

RTC workers accompanied by Congress and Left parties leaders laid siege to the house of Warangal East legislator Nannapaneni Narendar and accused Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Rao of terrorising the RTC workers.

In Narasmpeta of Warangal rural district, the protest programme escalated tensions in the region. The RTC workers proceeded in a rally to the camp office of MLA Sudarsan Reddy from the RTC depot and raised slogans against the government. As the police tried to prevent them, there ensued a clash leading to pushing each other. In the process, a lady constable sustained

# Etela promises to resolve issues

HYDERABAD: The RTC workers stormed Health Minister Etela Rajender's residence and submitted him a memorandum urging him to resolve their problems. Responding favourably to the demands of the RTC workers, he assured the workers to take their demands to the notice of Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Rao.

The workers told the Minister that their contribution to the movement for

Telangana. They told him that 22 RTC workers sacrificed their lives so far. They said that they were at a loss of comprehension on the course adopted by the RTC. The AP government merged the RTC with the government and purchased a fleet of 1,000 buses to the RTC. They said that they were unable to comprehend why the rich state like Telangana is repressing on the rights of RTC workers. It was high-time the state government understood the workers' problems and resolved them.

injuries and also some RTC workers. In all these parts the police made elaborate security arrangements and the resi-

dences of MLAs, MPs, Rajyasabha Members and MLCs were posted with police pickets as a preventive measure.

# Govt revives PCPIR...

Continued from Page 1

Upon becoming Chief Minister in May this year, Y S Jaganmohan Reddy decided to revive the project that was conceived by his late father Y S Rajasekhara Reddy in 2007. The PCPIR would be developed in three major zones Visakhapatnam, Nakkapalli and Kakinada spread over a 640 sq km area, a top official said.

While the region currently has a mix of petrochemicals, steel, metallurgical, textile and food processing industries, the government plans to bring in non-metallic, mixed and non-polluting industries apart from petroleum refineries.

Haldia Petro Chemicals would set up a refinery in the Kakinada Special Economic Zone with an investment of USD 11.43 billion to serve as the anchor unit with supply of required feedstock.

HPCL, in a joint venture with GAIL, would set up a greenfield refinery, a 1.5-million metric tonne per annum petrochemical complex in Kakinada with an investment

of USD 4.29 billion. About 6,750 hectares of land is available for industrial operations in the KSEZ, out of a total 9,120 Ha of allottable land available in the Kakinada region for establishment of petrochemical downstream industries.

As part of the VK-PCPIR Master Plan, a dedicated Expressway would be developed to connect Kakinada to markets in and outside the PCPIR.

The state government expects that the development of Vizag-Chennai Industrial Corridor would further boost industrial growth in Kakinada and create lakhs of jobs.

HPCL, which currently has a refinery at Visakhapatnam with an 8.33 MMTPA capacity, would expand it to 15 MMTPA.

It would also set up a hydrocracker unit with a capacity of 3.053 MMTPA as part of the Visakha Refinery Modernisation Project (VRMP).

An olefins and aromatics complex is also proposed at APSEZ in Visakhapatnam.

# Drive against 'commercialisation of edu'

PNS HYDERABAD

The Congress party launched a campaign against the 'commercialisation of education' in Telangana State on the occasion of birth anniversary of Moulana Abul Kalam Azad, the first Education Minister of independent India, which is also celebrated as National Education Day.

Former Minister and ex-Leader of Opposition in Legislative Council Mohammed Ali Shabbir launched the signature campaign organised by TPCC Minorities Department Chairman Shaik Abdullah Sohail by signing a big poster at a press conference at Gandhi Bhavan on Monday.

TPCC general secretary Md Afzaluddin, TPCC spokesperson Syed Nizamuddin, Hyderabad Minorities Department chairman Sameer Waliullah, Rangareddy Chairman Mohammed Riyaz and other senior leaders were present on the occasion.

# Govt firm on uplift of tribals: Minister

PNS KAMAREDDY

Minister for Social Welfare Satyavathi Rathod has described residential educational institutions as the brain child of Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Rao and noted that TRS government built many residential schools soon after coming to power almost doubling the existing schools.

She was addressing a gathering after inaugurating a Residential school for STs, built at a cost of Rs 4.20 crore, at Narsullabad in Kamareddy district on Monday. Assembly Speaker Pocharam Srinivasa Reddy also graced the occasion.

The number of residential school doubled as the TRS government set up as many schools as they were in undivided AP, she explained. She said that KCR ordered supply of fine rice to residential schools besides extending the students quality education.

Turning a leaf from her life, Satyavathi Rathore said that she was admitted to a residential school when she was young by her parents as there was no



school in her tribal thanda.

She claimed to have run away from the school unable to eat the rice cooked using coarse grains. Therefore, her parents found only alternative for her was to marry her off. Thus her marriage was performed in her childhood.

The Chief Minister was well aware of the problem and was instrumental in supplying fine rice to residential schools, she said putting the per capita government's expenditure on stu-

dents is Rs 1.20 lakh.

KCR believes in development of tribals only through education and hence sanction residential schools for them on a large scale, she observed. She said that KCR was kind enough to convert over 30,000 tribal hamlets (thandas), Koya gudem, Chenchu habitats into village panchayats and provided opportunity of self-rule by the tribals.

Satyavathi Rathod, who began her career as a village

**She said that KCR ordered supply of fine rice to residential schools besides extending the students quality education**

sarpanch, noted that the tribal thandas under the limits of the village panchayat of which she was the sarpanch now became village panchayats and many tribals went on to become sarpanches. She attributed it to the greatness of Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Rao.

"Chief Minister gave an ordinary tribal woman ministerial berth and made me the first ever woman Minister in Telangana Cabinet. In other parties, if a person wants to become Minister, a lot of lobbying will take place. Or else, there should be a god father," she observed.

# Ayodhya Muslims reject 5-acre..

Continued from Page 1

We don't want any other land for mosque anywhere, and instead, we offer that land too for Ram Mandir."

He said if the Muslims wanted to build a mosque, they could do so. "We can purchase land and build our mosque; we are not dependent on any government. If the court or government wants to assuage our sentiments, then the 5-acre land must be given within the acquired area as land marked as graveyards and a 'dargah' was also acquired," said Maulana Jalal Ashraf, a local cleric.

Iqbal Ansari, who was also the main litigant in the case, said: "If they want to give us land, they must do so according to our convenience and only in that acquired 67-acre land."

Khaliq Ahmad Khan, General Secretary of the All India Milli Council and a party in Ayodhya case from the Muslim side, said: "The government must give us land in the acquired area. There are 16 plots in the acquired area, including the plots of former Babri Masjid and 'Shilanyas'. This includes a 'qabristan' (graveyard), four 'Qanaati Masjid' and a mausoleum of the 18th century sufi saint Qazi Qudwa. Some these have been razed," he added.

# 3 mill workers die as lorry rams into them

PNS GUNTUR

Three labourers were killed and six others injured when a speeding lorry lost control and ramed into them at Timmapuram on the national highway in Yadlapadu mandal in Guntur district on Monday.

A speeding lorry lost control and ramed into labourers standing roadside killing three persons on the spot. The incident left the locals terrorised. The incident took place at Timmapuram on Guntur-Chilakaluripeta highway. In Ganapavaram and Timmapuram villages in the vicinity of Chilakaluripeta, there are many spinning mills. The deceased were identified as workers of Kalpataru spinning mill. Over-speeding is stated to be the cause of the accident.

# Free Internet access a basic human right, cry researchers

PNS LONDON

With political engagement and debates increasingly taking place online, free internet access must be considered as a human right, as people unable to get online -- particularly in the developing countries -- lack meaningful ways to influence the global players shaping their everyday lives, researchers have stressed.

Basic freedoms that many take for granted including free expression, freedom of information and freedom of assembly are undermined if some citizens have access to Internet and others do not, said the team from University of Birmingham.

Kerala, for instance, has declared universal Internet access a human right and aims to provide it for its 3.5 crore people by the end of this year. "Internet access is no luxury, but instead a moral human



**Internet could be a key way of protecting other basic human rights such as life, liberty and freedom from torture -- a means of enabling billions of people to lead "minimally decent lives", said the study**

right and everyone should have unmonitored and uncensored access to this global medium -- provided free of charge for those unable to afford it," commented Dr Merten Reglitz, Lecturer in Global Ethics at the University of Birmingham.

Internet could be a key way of protecting other basic human rights such as life, liberty and freedom from torture -- a means of enabling billions of people to lead "minimally decent lives", said the study published in the Journal of Applied Philosophy. "Without such access, many

people 'offline' had decreased. The study cited several examples of Internet engagement that helped hold government and institutions to account like the 'Arab Spring' and #MeToo campaign. The European Union recently launched the "WiFi4EU" initiative to provide 'every European village and city with free wireless Internet access around main centres of public life by 2020. The UN's International Telecommunication Union estimated that by the end of 2018, 51 per cent of the world's

population of 7 billion people had access to the Internet.

"Universal Internet access need not cost the earth -- accessing politically important opportunities such as blogging, obtaining information, joining virtual groups, or sending and receiving emails does not require the latest information technology," said Reglitz. Currently, some 2.3 billion people live without affordable Internet access. "Web-capable phones allow people to access these services and public internet provision, such as public libraries, can help get people online where individual domestic access is initially too expensive." The human right to Internet access was similar to the global right to health, which cannot require globally the highest possible medical treatment, as many states are too poor to provide such services and thus would face impossible demands.

# Uddhav Thackeray phones Sonia

Continued from Page 1

The party has time till 7.30 pm to stake claim on government formation.

Thackeray also met NCP chief Sharad Pawar in Mumbai.

The Congress is expected to take a final call on extending support to the Shiv Sena at a meeting of its top leadership with Maharashtra state leaders.

SHORT READS

**Chhattisgarh: Man beaten to death by Naxals in Sukma**

**SUKMA:** A man was beaten to death by Naxals in Chhattisgarh's Sukma district after they accused him of being a police informer, an official said on Monday. The body of Sudam Hunga, a native of Kamapura village, was found on Monday morning on the outskirts of Jagargunda village and a leaflet left on the spot by Naxals claimed he was killed for being a police informer, the official said. "He was abducted some days ago and it seems he was beaten to death. We have launched a combing operation to nab the culprits," he added.

**Man in sadhu's attire found dead with eyes gouged out in UP**

**BANDA (UP):** The body of a 40-year-old man wearing a sadhu's robe was found with his eyes gouged out in an agricultural field in Budhauli village of Uttar Pradesh's Banda district, police said on Monday. Circle Officer Kuldeep Singh said a post-mortem has established that Krishna Kumar alias Lala was strangled to death. He added that the man had a criminal history with five cases registered against him. Baberu Kotwali station house officer Shashi Kumar Pandey said the man was living in a Durga temple in the village along with other sadhus for the past few months and was found dead on Sunday in the fields with his hands and legs tied together. The body bore deep wound marks and the assailants appear to have gouged out his eyes, the SHO said, adding that three other persons living in the temple have been taken into custody for questioning. Further investigation is underway, police said.

**CRPF jawan injured in C'garh after stepping on electric wire**

**DANTEWADA:** A CRPF jawan was injured on Monday after coming in contact with live wire during a combing operation in Chhattisgarh's Dantewada district, police said. The incident took place in the jungles of Arbe village under Arampur police station area when a team of the CRPF's 11th battalion was patrolling in view of a police camp being set up in Potali village, an official said. Constable Ravi Singh Kushwaha accidentally stepped on the electric wire laid by villagers in the dense forest in a bid to hunt wild boar, and sustained burn injuries, he said.

**CCI invites research papers for annual journal on competition law**

**NEW DELHI:** The Competition Commission on Monday invited original high quality research papers, articles and book reviews for publication in its annual Journal on Competition Law and Policy. The last date of submitting papers is December 31, 2019, the fair trade regulator said in a tweet. "Full papers along with CV of author(s) and duly signed certificate of originality...may be sent to journals@cci.gov.in," the Competition Commission of India (CCI) said in a detailed note. "The Commission invites original high quality research papers, articles and book reviews on competition law, economics of competition law and contemporary antitrust or competition issues for publication in the ... journal," it added. Further, the regulator said that research works on themes such as cartel, vertical restraints and competition, merger and acquisition, new age economy and intellectual property rights and competition law among others will be encouraged.

**Iran says new oil field adds only 22 bln barrels to reserves**

**TEHRAN:** Iran's oil minister said Monday that an oil field whose discovery President Hassan Rouhani announced at the weekend adds only 22.2 billion barrels to the country's estimated crude reserves. Out of the amount at the site, only a tenth — 2.2 billion barrels — can be extracted due to technological limitations, the minister, Bijan Namdar Zanganeh, told reporters in Tehran. Rouhani announced on Sunday the discovery of a new oil field containing 53 billion barrels of oil in southwestern Iran.

**Visva Bharati played glorious role in nation building: Prez**

PNS ■ SANTINIKETAN

Hailing Visva Bharati University as an institute which has upheld the country's culture and ethos, President Ram Nath Kovind on Monday said his visit to the varsity was no less than a pilgrimage.

Addressing the annual convocation of the university as a 'paridarshak' (visitor), Kovind said this "seat of learning" has played a glorious role in nation building.

"I call this (visit to the university) a pilgrimage because the two greatest visionaries of modern India, Rabindranath Tagore (founder of the varsity), and Mahatma Gandhi, frequently met here. It is here that we all pick the threads of life and lessons of these great sages and learn from them," he said.

Kovind recalled that Tagore had turned to Gandhi for help when the varsity was in dire need of funds in 1935 and had received a draft of Rs 60,000.

For Gurudev (Tagore), as well as for Mahatma, right education was the key to national regeneration, the president emphasized.

"Gurudev had thought of an alternative model (of education) which advocates for intimate communion with nature



Ram Nath Kovind

and Visva Bharati, to this date, follows that tradition," Kovind stated.

This uniqueness of Visva-Bharati is something that "we need to cherish and hold up with pride", he insisted.

"It was in this place that Tagore lived, worked and gave concrete shape to his dreams. The community here - students, academics, staff, ashramites - are proud inheritors of that rich legacy which your founder has left you.

"Its illustrious alumni covering a diverse range of personalities, from Indira Gandhi and Satyajit Ray, have not only fulfilled its founder's vision to a great extent, but also con-

tributed in taking independent India to new heights," Kovind said during his address to the students.

In an age where machine and wealth are considered benchmarks of progress, Visva-Bharati has emerged as a unique blend of tradition and modernity, the president observed.

"Tagore felt it necessary not only to train the minds of the students through disciplines like philosophy, literature or history, but also to engage their souls with music and painting and fine arts. Given the pragmatic needs, there was space for agricultural studies too," he said.

**For Gurudev (Tagore), as well as for Mahatma, right education was the key to national regeneration, the President emphasized**

Kovind urged students to take a pledge to strive towards Visva-Bharati's glorious future in accordance with the Nobel laureate's vision.

"Tagore was too great to be inhibited by man-made barriers of gender, caste, community or race. Open air for open minds. He wanted to remove walls, literally and metaphorically, when the world was raising walls," he added.

Congratulating the students who received their degrees on the occasion, he urged them to remember the institution which has nourished them as a "foster-mother".

"You have done well so far, and I wish you the best... Visva-Bharati has made you aware of your potential, and made you sensitive to your role in society," the President added.

**Ayodhya verdict welcomed by 'one and all': Sri Sri**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Spiritual leader Sri Sri Ravi Shankar on Monday said the Supreme Court's verdict on the Ayodhya land dispute case was welcomed by 'one and all' in the country as citizens have responded peacefully since the judgement was announced.

Pointing out that the past few days have been tranquil across the country, the founder of The Art of Living Foundation said "... that means people have really welcomed this great judgement. It has been welcomed by one and all."

He was speaking at the 12th International Women Entrepreneurial Challenge (IWEC) Awards & Conference here.

The apex court, in a historic verdict on Saturday, backed the construction of a Ram temple by a government-formed trust at the disputed site in Ayodhya. It ruled that an alternative five-acre plot must be allotted for construction of a mosque in



Sri Sri Ravi Shankar

the Hindu holy town.

"It has been a long-standing, unresolved conflict between two communities. In India, it was a thorn in the harmonious relationship between two communities," Shankar said.

"The Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid dispute had been going on for over a century and has for long polarised the country and frayed the secular tapestry of Indian society.

"Today it is resolved and the same solution which I have been offering since 2003 proved to be right and the same solution has been now

It has been a long-standing, unresolved conflict between two communities. In India, it was a thorn in the harmonious relationship between two communities

**SRI SRI RAVI SHANKAR**  
Spiritual leader

promulgated by the court as such," the spiritual leader, who was part of the Supreme Court-appointed mediation panel in the Ayodhya case, said.

After the verdict was delivered on Saturday, Shankar had welcomed it, saying that the judgement had brought "joy and relief" to members of both the Hindu and Muslim communities.

"I wholeheartedly welcome the historic judgment of the Hon. Supreme Court. This has brought joy and relief to people of both communities from a long-standing dispute. #AYODHYAVERDICT," he had tweeted.

**Senior Cong leaders leave Jaipur resort**

PNS ■ JAIPUR

Senior Congress leaders have left the resort in Jaipur, where newly-elected Maharashtra Congress legislators are staying, to attend the working committee meeting of the party in Delhi.

The Congress is expected to take a final call on extending support to the Shiv Sena at the meeting of its top leadership with Maharashtra state leaders at 4 pm.

Former Union minister Sushil Kumar Shinde, former chief ministers Prithviraj Chavan and Ashok Chavan, state Congress chief Balasaheb Thorat and party general secretary Avinash Pande have left the resort, sources said. The Congress MLAs are staying in the resort here since Friday and the leaders held rounds of meeting to discuss political impasse in Maharashtra.

The Shiv Sena is racing against time on Monday to cobble together an alliance to form a government in Maharashtra.

**JNU students protest fee hike, dress code**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Hundreds of students protested near the Jawaharlal Nehru University here on Monday against the administration's "anti-student" policy.

Students wanted to march towards the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), where Vice President Venkaiah Naidu was addressing the university's convocation at an auditorium.

The gates of the AICTE, around 3 km from the JNU, were locked and the security personnel were stationed in and outside the premises in wake of the protests that started in the morning.

Barricades were placed outside the north and west gates of the JNU campus, as well as on the route between the AICTE auditorium and the JNU at Baba Balaknath Marg, near the traffic signal, underneath the flyover and near the venue, an officer said.

But students broke these blockades and marched towards the venue around 11.30 am. Some of the protesters have been detained, police said.

With placards in their hands, the students were beating tambourine and raising slogans like "Delhi Police Go Back" and calling Vice Chancellor M Jagadesh Kumar a "thief".



**With placards in their hands, the students were beating tambourine and raising slogans like 'Delhi Police Go Back' and calling Vice Chancellor M Jagadesh Kumar a 'thief'**

Human Resource Development Minister Ramesh Pokhriyal was not being able to come out of the venue.

"JNUSU president Aishe Ghosh and vice president Saket Moon were asked to talk to the students to make way for the HRD minister. Police requested the protesters to move from the gate, but they refused," an officer said.

The JNUSU office-bearers met Pokhriyal who assured them that their demands would be looked into.

They, however, were not able to meet the V-C. The protesters were also raising slogans "we want V-C".

"Historic day for us that we broke barricades, reached the convocation venue and met the minister," Ghosh said. "This could happen because we were united."

"This is not the end of our movement. We urged the HRD minister to ask the V-C to have a dialogue with the students," the JNUSU president said. "It is due to the V-C that things have come to be like this."

The HRD minister has promised that students' union would be called for meeting to the ministry.

**VP bats for political empowerment of women**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Vice President Venkaiah Naidu pitched on Monday for political empowerment of women by providing adequate reservation for them in Parliament and state legislatures.

At the third convocation ceremony of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), he expressed happiness over the fact that women constitute 51 per cent of the students in the institute because of special admission policy for them, and those hailing from distant places and belonging to marginalized sections.

"I would also like to stress on the need for political empowerment of women by providing adequate reservation for them in Parliament and state legislatures," Naidu said.

The Vice President asserted that the time has come for



Venkaiah Naidu

India to again emerge as a global hub of learning.

"For this to happen, our universities and institutions of higher learning have to reorient their methods of teaching and focus more sharply on research. In Indian civilization, emphasis was always on a holistic integrated vision of education. We must bring back this multi-disciplinary approach to learning," he added.

**Sena leader Sawant quits Union cabinet**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Shiv Sena leader Arvind Sawant on Monday announced his resignation from the Union cabinet, saying there is no trust left and it would not be proper to continue as minister when a new government is being formed in Maharashtra.

Addressing a press conference, Sawant accused the BJP of reneging on its promise to the Sena for equal division of seats and power and forcing the Uddhav Thackeray-led party to snap ties.

He alleged that the BJP was resorting to "lies" by denying the agreement reached between the leaders of the two allies before the assembly elections.

"They have also hurt my party by lying. Since there is no trust left, I have decided to resign," Sawant told reporters.

He also accused the BJP of hurting the sentiments of the Shiv Sena and of the Thackeray family.

"I have resigned as Union minister. I have sent my resignation to Prime Minister Narendra Modi," the Shiv Sena leader said and displayed his letter resigning as Heavy Industries minister.

Asked if the Sena has snapped its ties with the BJP, he said, "When I have resigned, you can understand what it means."

"The BJP had agreed with Sena to equal division of seats and power but it has now rejected this," Sawant said.



**Nearly 13,000 tribals become literate in Kerala in two years**

PNS ■ THIRUVANANTHAPURAM

Battling various odds from poverty to backwardness, nearly 13,000 members of various tribal communities in Kerala have been initiated into the world of letters in the last two years under different schemes, the state Literacy Mission said here on Monday.

The state-run agency, which designed special literacy programmes for the marginalised sections, had already covered Wayanad and Attappady, the major tribal settlements, besides 100 selected hamlets across the state.

Under various schemes, a total of 12,968 tribal people, have become literate across the state in the last two years, according to the figures released by the Mission.

Of this, 7,302 people had become literate in Wayanad through a special literacy drive while 3,760 had been initiat-

ed into the world of letters in Attappady block through an equivalency scheme.

The Mission director, P S Sreekala, said the triballiteracy programmes would be expanded to more settlements in view of the good response.

"We have roped in instructors from the tribal community to teach the illiterate tribals. This is one of the reasons for the success of the programme. Our objective is to eradicate illiteracy completely from the tribal hamlets of the state in a phased manner," she said.

With the support of the all-women network, Kudumbashree, the Literacy Mission is now gearing up to launch the programme at Aralam farm in Kannur district, where a majority of inhabitants are tribals.

Of the total 1,600 families living in six blocks of the farm, a majority are believed to be illiterate.

**Monitor use of plastic in election campaigns: NGT**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Green Tribunal (NGT) has directed the Election Commission of India and the Chief Electoral Officers of all states and Union Territories to monitor the compliance of advisories against the use of plastic, especially banners and hoardings, during elections.

The NGT's decision came after it was informed that the Ministry of Environment and Forests (MoEF) has asked the



Chief Secretaries and Chief Electoral Officers of all states and UTs to use alternative options during election campaigns.

The ministry said that it has written letters to them asking to use material such as compostable plastic, natural fabrics, recycled paper and other eco-

friendly material.

"In view of the fact that MoEF as well as Election Commission have taken the view that use of plastic during elections particularly banner/hoardings needs to be avoided, it will be appropriate that compliance of advisories/ directions mentioned above is appropriately monitored by the Election Commission of India, Chief Electoral Officers of all the States/UTs and the Central Pollution Control Board," the tribunal said.

**Sanjay Raut's 'love jihad' swipe at BJP-PDP ties**

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Senior Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut on Monday said if the BJP was not willing to fulfill its promise of sharing the chief minister's post in Maharashtra, there was no point in continuing the alliance.

A day after Governor Bhagat Singh Koshyari invited the Shiv Sena to stake claim to form government, Mr Raut told reporters that the BJP "insulted" people's mandate by not abiding to the "50:50" formula which, he claimed, was decided before the Lok Sabha polls.

The BJP on Sunday announced it would not form government in the state and accused the Shiv Sena of "disrespecting" people's mandate secured by the NDA in the recent Assembly polls.

"The BJP's arrogance that it would sit in the opposition but not share the chief minister's post has led to this situation...if the BJP is not willing to implement its promise, then there is



no meaning in staying with the alliance," the Rajya Sabha member said.

To a query, he said when the BJP could tie-up with the People's Democratic Party (PDP) to form government in the then Jammu and Kashmir state, why the Sena cannot do the same with the NCP and Congress in Maharashtra.

"Should we call the BJP's association with PDP as 'love jihad'? I am simply underscoring here the contradiction behind the question," Mr Raut said.

**The PDP, a regional party, and the BJP, both ideologically different, came together to form government in the erstwhile Jammu and Kashmir state in 2015. However, the BJP ended its alliance with the Mehbooba Mufti-led party last year, following which the government there collapsed.**

MLAs after the BJP (105), has time till 7.30 pm on Monday to stake claim to form government.

"A conspiracy is going on to keep Maharashtra under control through President's rule. The Sena, NCP and Congress have agreed to not let this conspiracy succeed," he added.

Reaching out to the opposition parties, he said the Congress and NCP should bury their internal differences to come up with a "common minimum programme" in the interest of Maharashtra.

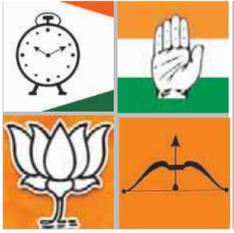
"The Sena, NCP and Congress agree on protecting

the interest of Maharashtra," he said. After the BJP declined to form government in Maharashtra on Sunday, the governor asked the Sena to "indicate its willingness and ability" to stake claim.

While the Sena has been making efforts to reach out to the NCP and the Congress, the Sharad Pawar-led party on Sunday said the Sena will have to walk out of the NDA first. Sena leader Arvind Sawant, the lone party minister in the Modi Cabinet, on Monday announced his decision to quit the NDA government at the Centre.

# Mahabharta of power

The Cong-NCP-Sena alliance for a Government is based on a seasonal hatred of the BJP. Can numbers work?



**M**aharashtra is no Karnataka, where a hung verdict had led to political machinations and a power surge of convenience. Yet in a shape-shifting scenario of permutations and combinations, Government formation is turning out to be a bizarre prospect despite a decisive electoral verdict. The Congress was desperate then, seized the advantage, was one up on the BJP but could not last even with like-minded partners in a

coalition arrangement. It is still desperate for regaining a State that was its stronghold but in Maharashtra is faced between the devil and the deep sea. It cannot afford to settle with its enemy's enemy, namely the Sena, and put its credibility on the line by supporting the latter's Government from the outside. Nor can it afford to lose the heft of its ally, the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), and play second fiddle to it, now that the latter has been invited by the Governor to stake a claim, and concede to its chief Sharad Pawar's acceptability among both the BJP and Sena. Predicted to be even more unstable than Karnataka, one hopes the Congress' decision doesn't give more ammunition to the BJP's charge that it is better to be *mukt* of it and a single party rule is the only way forward, be it in Lok Sabha or the States. The pre-poll alliance of the BJP-Shiv Sena, which has crumbled under the destabilising weight of egoistic turf wars, has put a question mark on the efficacy of alliance politics that the BJP-led National Democratic Alliance (NDA) has so far prided itself in. Particularly, when it loses a 30-year-old ally, that too one which has significantly helped in pushing a core Hindutva plank and Ayodhya. For all talk of development, the granularity of the BJP's fundamental ideology was left to the Sena to manage while the bigger party could bask in the benevolence of the idea of a grand Bharat Parv. In that sense, Sena was the fall guy for doing things with a fringe, parochial mindset and taking the blame for them with a vision limited to Jai Maharashtra. Now that the BJP has appropriated its only comfort zone and relegated it to secondary space, the Sena is making a desperate lunge to be seen and heard, relevant as it still is as a counterweight. With the election of Sena founder Balasaheb Thackeray's grandson Aaditya, it now feels it can indeed roar like a tiger than be the whimpering sidekick at a neighbourhood park. The BJP, with its Chief Minister-worthy leader in Devendra Fadnis, the man who even has the RSS' blessings, knows people trust it for providing a stable leadership. It knows the nakedly ambitious Sena could go around with a shopping bag but would not have a natural proximity, nor the leadership, compromised as it would be by the Congress-NCP conditions. In fact, it is sitting back to expose the Sena as a spoiler. And it wants to reap the spoils knowing that a new anti-BJP coalition could be wobbly without mutual convergence of interests.

The Congress is upon its worst moment of reconciliation, one that threatens its ideological consistency even if it were to support the Sena Government from outside, cede ground to the NCP and insist upon a common agenda of governance. How could it have justified itself supporting a Hindutva-driven aggression to its minority votebank or even accepted Sena's chief ministership? Aligning with the Sena would mean drawing attention to its own uncharitable history of using Thackeray to undercut its own dissidents and State leaders. Besides, it has worked with the Sena to get support on its contentious issues like the Emergency. Using the Sena to keep the BJP out, therefore, would be like jumping from the frying pan into the fire. Staying in would be more problematic than staying out. As for Pawar himself, everybody was surprised about the return of the true Marathi warrior, who held on despite BJP-engineered defections and is justifiably angry with the national party despite supporting it in 2014. But by going with the Sena, he would look just like any other greedy regional satrap though the NCP has made support conditional on Sena snapping ties with the BJP. Pawar has always enjoyed being kingmaker but does that mean he won't have a say as a king even with the Congress behind him? That's another ego battle at work. The only thing holding him and the Sena together is their seasonal hatred of the BJP. Maharashtra has anyway proved that arithmetic does not matter. The coalition of convenience may find it difficult to get stability considering the BJP will have the ammunition to stall them at each step and insist one Fadnis was better than a hydra-headed king. Sad for a State which is dealing with a serious farm crisis. Sadder for a people whose choices do not matter anymore.

# Go for success

Shafali Verma's rapidfire 50 is evidence that the Indian cricket board needs to promote the women's game more



**P**urists might argue that it is a bit unfair to compare men's and women's sport even in the same game. But the recent achievement by teenage sensation Shafali Verma, who at two months short of 16 years struck an international 50 in a T20 international against the West Indies, is quite an achievement. Alongside the spectacular success of the Indian women's team in the last cricket world cup as well as the achievements of various members of the team, maybe it is

pertinent to pose the question to the new boss of Indian cricket, Sourav Ganguly, on whether it is time for the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) or whatever new name that he wishes to give that organisation, to hold a professional Indian Premier League (IPL)-style contest for the women's game.

Critics might argue that the pool of talent in the women's game is far more limited. For the time being, this is a valid argument but only if there is a eight-team tournament for the IPL. A smaller, four-team tournament with additional slots for international talent may easily meet the competitive marks needed by any such competition. Evidence of the success of the short form of the women's game is seen in Australia, where the Women's Big Bash League (WBBL), which is played alongside the Australian T20 league, the BBL, has been a huge success and has made superstars out of players like Ellyse Perry and Alyssa Healy. Its inaugural games unearthed a 16-year-old gem in Phoebe Litchfield. The tournament has dramatically expanded Australia's women's cricket talent pool and with Cricket Australia committing to pay all its cricketers equally, they have taken the lead when it comes to equal opportunities. It will take a man to change the dynamics between men's and women's cricket in India and bring them to some level of parity. Sourav Ganguly can easily be the one. He was the visionary leader who laid the foundations of the success that Virat Kohli and his men enjoy today, over a decade after he retired. No Indian cricket fan doubts his dynamism and leadership abilities. Now, freed of the burden of the Committee of Administrators, Ganguly can effect lasting change. Change that can mean that girls like Shafali Verma can become superstars for every single Indian, much like the man whose record she broke, Sachin Tendulkar.

# Historical reconstruction

The Supreme Court's landmark judgment on the disputed site in Ayodhya rests on historical evidence; the gains of which are civilisational



SANDHYA JAIN

**A** learned member of the five-judge Bench (not Constitution Bench) wisely collated the evidence regarding Sri Ram's birth-place and appended it to the Supreme Court's verdict of November 9, granting the disputed site to Ram Lalla Virajman. The 116-page addendum highlights the Vishwa Hindu Parishad's (VHP) gigantic efforts to collect every scrap of evidence to legally establish Hindu belief in the birth-place of Vishnu's avatar. The evidence is compelling. Critics, who allege that the judgment privileged one community, have not read the 1,045-page document.

As the dispute centres on the destruction of the Ram Janmabhoomi temple at Ayodhya by Babur's general, Mir Baiq, evidence proving the sacredness of the shrine prior to 1528 is critical. The *Janma Sakhis* (biographies) of Guru Nanak Dev show he visited Ayodhya in 1510-1511 AD, before Babur's invasion of India. Later, Guru Tegh Bahadur and his son, Guru Govind Singh, also visited the temple at Ayodhya. Though the *Janma Sakhis* do not identify the exact place of the Janmabhoomi, Guru Nanak's visit shows that pilgrims were visiting Ayodhya prior to the temple's destruction. Thus, the faith and belief of Hindus regarding the location of Lord Ram's birth-place, as asserted in scriptures and sacred books, including *Valmiki Ramayana* and *Skanda Purana*, is not groundless.

During emperor Akbar's reign (1556-1605), Tulsidas composed the *Ramcharitmanas* (1574-75). The *Balakanda* shows Brahma urging Vishnu to save the gods, sages, *gandharvas* and Earth from Ravana's terror; Vishnu promises: "Fear not, O sages, Siddhas and Indra; for your sake I will assume the form of a human being. In the glorious solar race, I shall be born as a human being along with my part manifestations." (*Doha* 186-7) Vishnu grants a boon to sage Kasyapa and his wife Aditi to be born in Ayodhya as Dasaratha and Kausalya; Vishnu would take birth in the form of four brothers, "the ornament of Raghu's line."

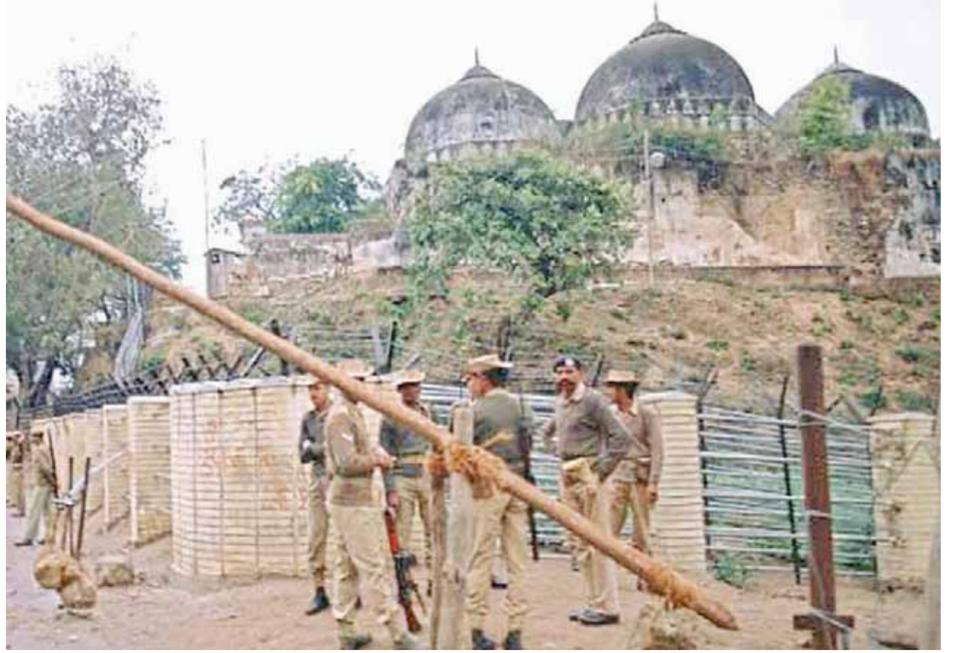
Akbar's biography, *Ain-i-Akbari*, mentions Ayodhya as the residence of Ramachandra and one of the holiest places of antiquity. Traveller William Finch visited India from 1607 to 1611 AD and mentioned the ruins of Ramachandra's castle.

Father Joseph Tieffenthaler visited India between 1766 and 1771 AD and found in Oudh (Awadh) a famous place called Sita Rasoi on a mud hill. Emperor Aurangzeb got the fortress called Ramcot (Ramkot) demolished and a Muslim mosque, with triple domes, constructed at the same place. Tieffenthaler recounts that some said the masjid was constructed by "Babor" (Babur) and 14 black stone pillars of five span high from the fortress are visible there; 12 support the interior arcades of the mosque. He describes the *bedi* (cradle) of Ram and says Aurangzeb or Babur razed the temple "to deny the noble people, the opportunity of practicing their superstitions." However, the people "go around three times and prostrate on the floor." This is clear evidence that Hindus at the time of Tieffenthaler were worshipping the *janamsthan* as a deity.

The East India Gazetteer of Walter Hamilton (1828) notes that pilgrimage to Oudh are chiefly by the Ramata sect. *Montgomery Martin in History, Antiquities, Topography and Statistics of Eastern India* (1838), mentions the glory of Ayodhya. Edward Thornton's *Gazetteer of India* (1854) and *Gazetteer of the Territories under the Government of the East Indies Company of the native States in the Continent of India* (1858) gives details of Oudh.

Mirza Jaan's *Hadith-e-Sehba* (1856) states, "The above mentioned place is called seat of father of Lord Rama. Places of idol worshiping situated here were demolished... The place of worship is called the birthplace of Lord Rama and the place which is adjacent to it is called "Sita Ki Rasoi"... At that place, Babur Shah got constructed a very big masjid under the supervision of Sayyad Musha Ashiqan in the year 923 Hijri and its history is still maintained. Today, the above-mentioned "Sita Ki Rasoi" is called the "masjid." The learned judge observed, "The book candidly accepts that at the *janamsthan* of Lord Ram, (a) mosque was constructed by Babur."

In 1858, the British Government annexed Awadh,



after which all official reports, correspondences and orders cite the "Mosque" as "Mosque Janma Sthan." The *Historical Sketch of Tehsil Fyzabad, Zillah Fyzabad* by P Carnegy, Officiating Commissioner and Settlement Officer of Ayodhya and Fyzabad (1870), states that Ayodhya is to Hindus what Mecca is to the Mohammedans and Jerusalem to the Jews. Carnegy categorically stated that at the place of *janamsthan*, emperor Babur built a Mosque, which still bears his name, in AD 1528. These facts are repeated in several subsequent Gazetteers.

The report of the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) of North West Provinces and Oudh (1889) states, "The old temple of Ramachandra at *janamsthanam* must have been a very fine one, for many of its columns have been used by the *Muslimans* in the construction of Babar's masjid." Alois Anton Fuhrer's report of the ASI (1889), *The Sharqi Architecture of Jaunpur; with Notes on Zafarabad, Sahet-Mahet and other places in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh*, states that Babar's Masjid at Ayodhya was built on the very spot where the old temple *janamsthan* of Ramachandra was standing. Fuhrer reiterates this in *Monumental Antiquities and Inscriptions in the North-Western Provinces and Oudh* (1891). Obviously, Prof BB Lal's excavations followed ASI precedents.

AKBAR'S BIOGRAPHY, AIN-I-AKBARI, MENTIONS AYODHYA AS THE RESIDENCE OF RAMACHANDRA AND ONE OF THE HOLIEST PLACES OF ANTIQUITY. TRAVELLER WILLIAM FINCH VISITED INDIA FROM 1607 TO 1611 AD AND MENTIONED THE RUINS OF RAMACHANDRA'S CASTLE

The *Gazetteer of Bara Banki*, Vol 48 (1921), mentions that in 1853, the Bairagis seized the *janamsthan* temple land (pg 169), prompting Muslims led by Amir Ali, to march towards Ayodhya. They were intercepted by Col Barlow of the First Regiment of Oudh; the regiment was wiped out and Amir Ali and many others were killed.

On November 30, 1858, Syed Mohammed Khatib Moazzim of the Babri Mosque complained that one Nihang Singh had constructed an earth *chabutra* (platform), written "Ram Ram" inside the mosque, and was conducting *havan* (rituals) there. There are several pleas by mosque officials for the removal of the *chabutra*. In 1866, Bairagis placed an idol inside the premises. In 1877, the Deputy Commissioner, Ayodhya, granted permission to Khem Das, Mahant, *janamsthan*, to open the door in the mosque's northern wall to give Hindus a separate route to the site. In 1934, a dome was damaged in a riot, which the administration got repaired.

These accounts prove that Hindus continuously struggled to access and worship the site; hence the Sunni Wakf Board could not establish possessory rights over it. The judgment rests on historical evidence; the gains are civilisational. (The writer is Senior Fellow, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library; the views expressed are personal)

## SOUNDBITE

India was once known as *Vishvaguru*. The time has come for the country to once again emerge as a global hub of learning.



Vice President — M Venkaiah Naidu

If I have any claim to the word 'icon' it's only because I was on an iconic show, with an iconic cast, and an iconic haircut. *Friends* was the gift of a lifetime.

Actor — Jennifer Aniston



We welcome the opening of the Kartarpur corridor and hope that both sides continue to show goodwill to resolve differences through dialogue.

Chinese official — Geng Shuang



If Babri Masjid was illegal, then why is Advani being tried for its demolition and if it was legal then why is Advani getting the land?

AJIMM leader — Asaduddin Owaisi

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Accepting the verdict

**Sir** — This refers to the report, "Ram gets back his birthplace" (November 10). The historic Ayodhya verdict and the grace with which it was accepted by the people proved the maturity of the Indian democracy, its judiciary and citizens. All apprehensions of post-verdict tension proved wrong as not a single untoward incident was reported. Indeed, there could have been no better solution to the 492-year-old dispute.

The construction of the Ram Mandir in Ayodhya had been on the BJP's poll agenda for long, which helped it consolidate its supporters. On the other hand, Opposition parties left no opportunity to accuse the saffron party for not fulfilling its promise.

BJP president LK Advani's rath yatra from Somnath to Ayodhya played a major role in the party's ascent to power. After the Supreme Court verdict on Ayodhya, it is now expected that party leaders will refrain from politicising this issue and instead concentrate on more serious issues plaguing the nation.

MC Joshi  
Lucknow

### Welcoming Kartarpur

**D**uring Partition, Shakargarh, a *tehsil* on the right bank of Ravi River where Kartarpur is located, went to Pakistan and Gurdaspur, a *tehsil* on the left bank of Ravi River, remained with India. The opening of the much-awaited corridor, connecting Dera Baba Nanak in Punjab with Darbar Sahib Kartarpur in Pakistan, was a long-cherished dream for the Sikh Panth. Kartarpur Sahib, where the founder of Sikhism, Guru Nanakji, spent almost 18 years of his life teaching and preaching and which was his final resting abode, is what Mecca is for the Muslims. The new corridor will allow Sikh pilgrims holding a special permit to freely visit the shrine.

Immediately after assuming power, Pakistan Prime Minister Imran Khan made a promise to construct the Kartarpur corridor before the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanakji, a gesture that found immediate traction with the Sikh community. The BJP-Akalis combine, which seemed rather unconcerned initially, reversed its position quickly, sensing a possible Sikh backlash. As is common these days, a section of the electronic media indulged in continuous double-speak on Pakistan and the architects of the corridor, in line with the mood of



the ruling party. Fortunately, Sikhs are sensible and are difficult to sway. Punjab exhibited extraordinary resilience to the mischievous representations unleashed in Pakistan and kept its peace. The Kartarpur passage has within it the spark to convert itself into a "corridor of peace" in the region.

Haridasan Rajan  
Kozhikode

### A true legend

**Sir** — As the Chief Election Commissioner, TN Seshan not only ushered in strict electoral reforms for the enforcement of the Moral Code of Conduct but he gave the Election Commission

of India (ECI) the much-needed spine. He took the electoral body to greater heights of authority, credibility and visibility. It is testimony to his strong character and personality that people can relate with him when it comes to elections.

We may not remember him

as the first man to become the Election Commissioner but for his strong character. He took charge in an era of booth capturing and rigging but literally transformed the way elections are now conducted in our country.

Bal Govind  
Noida

### Stupendous victory

**Sir** — Kudos to team India for accomplishing an exceptional victory in the third T20 international match played against Bangladesh. The middle order batsmen must be commended for playing responsible knocks in the series decider. After early dismissal of Indian openers Rohit Sharma and Shikhar Dhawan, the need was for a composed partnership between the two batsmen to accelerate the team to a massive total. KL Rahul's scintillating 52 and Shreyas Iyer's outrageous 62 proved to be the one.

Being asked to bowl in the second innings by the toss winning team, especially at a time when there is dew on the ground, it seemed like a strenuous task for Indian bowlers. But Deepak Chahar accomplished the best bowling figures in T20 internationals, taking six wickets for just seven runs in a spell of 3.2 overs. He did something one would never have anticipated.

Tushar Anand  
Patna

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

**FIRST COLUMN**

## Not a coup, just a big blunder

If you are going to rig the vote, do it from the start. Don't wait until the count shows that your candidate is not doing well and then intervene



GWYNNE DYER

Democracy is in danger in Bolivia as the result of legitimate pressures from the poor. We cannot generate economic growth and well-being for a few and then expect that the large majorities that are excluded will watch silently and patiently. A recent President of Bolivia said that, but it wasn't Evo Morales (who has just quit, plunging the country into chaos). It was Carlos Mesa, the man whom Morales tried to cheat out of the presidency in last month's election. Mesa said it in 2005, the last time he was President, just before he quit and Morales won a landslide victory in the election triggered by the former's resignation.

Most outside commentators used to stick to a simple script when talking about Bolivia. Evo Morales was the good guy, because he was the country's first indigenous President (he grew up speaking Aymara, and only learned Spanish as a young adult) and because he looked like and seemed to care about the poor majority of Bolivians.

On the other hand, Carlos Mesa belongs to the privileged white minority (15 per cent of the population) who have always controlled both the politics and the wealth, so he must be the bad guy. But his face doesn't fit the frame: He is an historian and television journalist and he resigned from the presidency in 2005 after trying and failing to nationalise the country's gas industry.

Evo Morales took his place, and he did better. Morales nationalised not only oil and gas but the tin and zinc mines and key utilities as well. He got away with it, where Mesa couldn't, because he paid out good compensation to the owners — and he could do that because Bolivia was riding a commodities boom that tripled the country's Gross Domestic Product in 15 years.

The boom has been over for a while now and a more cunning politician than Morales might have decided to let Mesa win this election. Then, as the country's income dropped further, Mesa would have got the blame for downsizing the welfare State Morales built, and Morales could return to power triumphantly in five years, claiming that Mesa had betrayed the poor. Morales' mistake was to believe that he was the indispensable man. He clung to office too long, and now he is toast. He will retain enough of a following to be a permanent political nuisance but he has embarrassed his country and he's unlikely ever to hold high office again. Under the new constitution of 2009, promulgated by Morales himself, a Bolivian President is entitled to only two five-year terms. But as he got closer to the 2019 deadline, Morales changed his mind and in 2016 he held a referendum that proposed to allow the President any number of terms. He lost. So Morales went to the Supreme Electoral Tribunal, which is dominated by his own party. Unsurprisingly, the tribunal agreed that the two-term constitutional limit violated his 'human rights' — so there he was last month, seeking a fourth term as President in a race with eight other candidates.

Everybody knew that Morales would lead and Mesa would be the runner-up in the first round of voting. Many suspected that Mesa would pick up more votes and overtake Morales in the second round — so his advisers decided that he had to win in the first round. He could do that only if he were ahead of Mesa by at least 10 per cent of the votes cast.

On October 20, the 'fast count' of the national vote went smoothly until 84 per cent of all the votes had been counted — at which point it became clear that Morales was not going to have a big enough lead over Mesa. So suddenly the counting stopped, and did not resume for 24 hours. It then showed Morales with a 10.1 per cent lead over Mesa, so no second round was needed. All hail Morales's fourth term!

But the vote-rigging was just too blatant and for almost three weeks the protesters have been in the streets. By last weekend even the police were refusing to defend Morales. When the election monitors from the Organisation of American States delivered their verdict on Sunday, saying that there were "serious security flaws" in the computer systems and "clear manipulation" of the count, Morales resigned. The election results were cancelled and it's pretty clear that he will not be a candidate when the re-run happens.

How much damage has all this done? Not much. Bolivia used to hold the world record for military coups, but everybody behaved reasonably well this time. Most of the good things Morales did, like entrenching the rights of indigenous communities in the constitution, will survive him. Carlos Mesa, who will almost certainly be the next President, has a very different style, but he is not hostile to most of Morales's goals. And here's a take-away for everybody in politics: If you are going to rig the vote, do it from the start. Don't wait until the count shows that your candidate is not doing well and only then intervene to fix it. Amateurs!

(Gwynne Dyer's new book is 'Growing Pains: The Future of Democracy and Work'.)

**POINTCOUNTERPOINT**

THE MANDATE WAS FOR A BJP-SENA ALLIANCE. IF THE SENNA WANTS TO FORM THE GOVERNMENT WITH THE CONGRESS AND THE NCP, WE WISH THEM GOOD LUCK.  
 —MAHARASHTRA BJP CHIEF  
 CHANDRAKANT PATIL



WHERE WAS THEIR IDEOLOGY WHEN THEY FORMED THE GOVERNMENT IN J&K WITH THE PDP, WITH MAYAWATI IN UP AND WITH NITISH KUMAR IN BIHAR?  
 —SHIV SENNA MP  
 ARVIND SAWANT

# Time to secure South Asia

Regional economic integration remains the only option for addressing the long-standing, protracted interstate tensions in South Asia



M ASHRAF HAIDARI

The South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Chamber of Commerce recently hosted a conference on "Regional Economic Integration: A Catalyst for Socioeconomic Prosperity in South Asia."

I welcomed this timely forum. Afghanistan, a country-participant and member-State of SAARC, has long been advocating for an acceleration of region-wide efforts to jump-start the process of regional economic integration. Doing so can indeed be a catalyst for the sustainable development of all South Asian nations, which hold so much promise in terms of both natural and human resources that should be harnessed for lifting the whole region out of poverty, disease, environmental degradation, and other challenges that directly feed terrorism, extremism and criminality in the region.

At the same time, regional economic integration remains the only option for addressing the long-standing, protracted interstate tensions in South Asia. We know this from the bitter experiences of Europe during the 18th, 19th, and early 20th centuries, where the pursuit of zero-sum foreign policies and militarism eventually led to the utter destruction of the whole continent in the two world wars.

But, in the wake of World War-II, Europeans realised that what unfortunately remains the status quo in South Asia would no longer serve their shared best, long-term national security and economic interests.

That is why they gradually but steadily moved toward long-term economic integration, which they understood could help address their short and long-term human and protective security needs, which were increasingly intertwined. Those needs could no longer be ensured by the pursuit of the same zero-sum approaches that caused two devastating wars.

These harsh experiences and Western Europe's resulting adoption of a common economic market soon, began inspiring other regions of the world to form such regional groupings as the SAARC, the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), the Eurasian Economic Community (EEC), the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), the African Union (AU), and the Union of South American Nations (USAN), to name a few.

As we know, however, not all these regional groupings have achieved their dream of meaningful economic integration on a par with Europe associations.

SAARC stands out in having lagged far behind others because two of its key member-States remain hostile to each other. This continues to hinder efforts by the other member-States, including Afghanistan and Sri Lanka, to make steady progress toward regional economic integration, which underpinned the vision and mission of SAARC when it was established in 1985.

As we continue advocating for cooperation against confrontation among our neighbours, Afghanistan has consistently pursued a foreign policy that promotes regional economic cooperation against zero-sum hedging strategies.

We strongly believe that the replacement of confrontational policies at the regional level,

“ SAARC STANDS OUT IN HAVING LAGGED FAR BEHIND OTHERS BECAUSE TWO OF ITS KEY MEMBER-STATES REMAIN HOSTILE TO EACH OTHER. THIS CONTINUES TO HINDER EFFORTS BY THE OTHER MEMBER-STATES, INCLUDING AFGHANISTAN AND SRI LANKA, TO MAKE STEADY PROGRESS TOWARDS REGIONAL ECONOMIC INTEGRATION, WHICH UNDERPINNED THE VISION AND MISSION OF SAARC WHEN IT WAS ESTABLISHED IN 1985 ”



with those of cooperative, win-win partnerships would gradually minimise the existing interstate tensions in South Asia. And this would enable SAARC to realise its vision, knowing that South Asia is an extremely young and naturally-endowed region where our youths demand jobs and a secure future in a common, interdependent neighbourhood.

Indeed, this won't come to pass unless South Asian Governments learn relevant lessons from pre and post-war Europe, that would encourage them to make tough but necessary policy choices against the status quo for achieving shared peace and prosperity across the region through economic integration.

The Government of Afghanistan has done its part and continues to do so. Despite the imposed security challenges the nation is facing, Afghanistan has put forth a strategic solution for adoption and implementation by its near and far neighbours: The Heart of Asia-Istanbul Process (HOA-IP) on Regional Security and Cooperation for a Secure and Stable Afghanistan and the Regional Economic Cooperation Conference on Afghanistan (RECCA). These Afghanistan-led processes were established to help secure regional cooperation for Afghanistan's stabilisation and sustainable development, thereby ensuring region-wide stability and prosperity, which SAARC strives to accomplish.

Even though HOA-IP and RECCA remain underutilised so far, it is in the best short and long-term interests of the countries — including India and Pakistan — that participate

in the two processes, to achieve the shared goals of the two platforms. Of course, every tangible step they take to utilise these interconnected processes will help minimise their own and other nations' security and socioeconomic vulnerabilities against the terrorist-extremist-criminal nexus that victimises Afghanistan more than any other country in the region.

This constructive thinking underpins our growing ties with the friendly Government and people of Sri Lanka, with whom Afghanistan shares an ancient civilisation.

Since I took up my assignment as Afghanistan's Ambassador to Sri Lanka last year, we have worked to further expand our bilateral relations with a focus on promoting full-spectrum connectivity that builds deeper economic, defence, cultural, and people-to-people ties between Afghanistan, Sri Lanka and the rest of South Asia.

In this light, we have met with numerous businesses, including members of Sri Lanka's chambers of commerce, to discuss the vast bilateral trade potential that needs to be realised.

More recently, high-powered Afghan delegations have met with the representatives of the Ceylon Chamber of Commerce; the Colombo Chamber of Commerce; the National Chamber of Commerce as well as the International Chamber of Commerce of Sri Lanka to discuss the formation of an Afghanistan-Sri Lanka Business Council to promote exchange of trade teams, business-to-business meetings and business match-making conferences, which should facilitate bilat-

eral investment between the two nations. To this end, we look forward to finalising and signing with Sri Lanka a memorandum of understanding (MoU) on trade and investment promotion and protection.

This step, together with our bilateral air services agreement, should facilitate the establishment of a direct passenger and cargo flight between Kabul and Colombo. When this happens as one of the country's key goals, Afghans and Sri Lankans should be able to reconnect with their shared heritage through tourism, trade, investment, education and cultural exchange.

Indeed, the achievement of this bilateral goal will help South Asia as a least connected region, make a giant leap forward towards regional economic integration — effectively connecting SAARC's northernmost member-State, Afghanistan, with its southernmost counterpart, Sri Lanka.

And this necessary connectivity will undoubtedly benefit the rest of South Asia where the challenges that face our nations and the opportunities that we must exploit to our shared advantage are increasingly intertwined. That is why others in the SAARC should consider doing away with the prevailing zero-sum approaches and join Afghanistan and Sri Lanka to operationalise the vision of SAARC for the common economic benefit of all of its member-States with increased interdependencies.

(The writer is the Ambassador of Afghanistan to Sri Lanka, as well as a Senior International Security Fellow at the New America in Washington-DC)

# Indians voted for reforms in 2019 LS polls

The Finance Minister has indicated that a lot of the market rectifications or some of the other structural changes often on the list of economists are well on the cards, as a mandate of 303 makes them possible



KARAN BHASIN

The year 2019 will go down in Indian history as a critical juncture that changed the country's trajectory. With a switch in our direction, it is evident that we're going to change our eventual destiny. For the first time in 48 years of the country's political history, India elected a second term, full-majority Government in 2019.

It was also for the first time in the country's history that Indians voted for a reformist Government, thereby signalling a new dawn in the nation's politics. The electoral results broke the myth of the citizens voting against reforms, which prevailed in academic discussions for many years. Any analysis of the

developments of different events in 2019 cannot be without a detailed discussion on the significance of 303 seats.

The subsequent full majority Government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi comes with the backdrop of improved numbers for the BJP in the Rajya Sabha and a long list of States where the saffron party is currently in power. All of this opens interesting opportunities for some of the long-standing politically-sensitive, yet important economic reforms. More importantly, it gives the BJP the necessary political capital to take tough decisions.

Be it the issue of triple talaq or of Article 370, we see an unflinching commitment by the Government to its manifesto. Especially the so-called 'core' agenda of the BJP such as the Uniform Civil Code (UCC), Article 370 and the issue of construction of the Ram Temple. The way things stand, in 2019 at least two of these core promises have been delivered, one by the BJP and the other by the Supreme Court. It is important to

recognise the significance of both these achievements, as these were extremely challenging and contentious issues with severe political and social repercussions. The handling of both these issues has been with utmost care and this shows the level of empathy by our executive, judicial and legislative bodies. The Prime Minister's address after the judgment is extremely important as he welcomed the verdict and gave a call for the creation of a 'New India'. The theme of 'New India' seems to be consistent with Modi's agenda to build a more inclusive, dynamic and equitable society.

The focus is on creation of equal opportunities to ensure upward mobility in the nation's economy. The Government has drastically pivoted India's welfare programmes away from the leaky socialist ones. Smart welfare in the form of Direct Benefit Transfer (DBT) must be viewed as a tool that aims at creating a basic and decent standard of living for all. This is also the year when India initiated one of the bold-est corporate tax cuts in its history.

In fact, the reductions were one of the largest tax cuts in the 21st century. Their significance is difficult to fathom for many commentators, but the fact that it makes our tax rates competitive amongst other East Asian countries after a really long time, illustrates the importance of the same.

The Finance Minister too indicated that a lot of the market reforms or some of the other structural reforms often on the list of economists are well on the cards, as a mandate of 303 makes them possible. Recall the land ordinance during Modi 1.0, which became a problem because of the lack of numbers in the Rajya Sabha. Now there is no such problem and therefore, critical reforms such as land reforms can become a reality sooner rather than later.

The fact that growth is slower in 2019 is also an important thing that many have ignored. With the slow-down coming early in the term of Modi 2.0, we are likely to see a lot of reforms to address some of the long-standing issues that affect the

economy. A bulk of these reforms have become necessary and urgent such as the corporate tax cuts. As it is often said, one should never miss an opportunity for reforms and certainly Modi 2.0 is not a Government to shy away from them. The significance of it all is that as the BJP delivers on its core agenda, Modi has created a new agenda of developing a 'New India'.

This implies an unflinching commitment towards economic growth and development for the next couple of years, which will likely result in a transformation of the country's economy and society.

The manifesto of the BJP seems to have become a form of social contract between the party and the people. It is this form of social contract that has enabled the growth of the party across the country, giving it further political capital to fulfil its promises.

It is interesting to also point out that just as the BJP is expanding, old allies like the Shiv Sena have parted ways. The power struggle between the two old partners over

the issue of rotational chief ministership and the subsequent falling out have plunged the State into a crisis of governance till the vexed *kissa kursi ka* (who will rule) Maharashtra is settled.

Clearly, none of the political parties in the country have learnt their lessons from the Karnataka debacle or the unsuccessful Jammu & Kashmir experience, which showed very clearly that unnatural alliances only result in misgovernance and political instability does more damage to institutions over a period, than anything else.

In the future, when fresh elections are held in Maharashtra, the people of the State will definitely ask all these political parties some tough questions. They will ask why their mandate to the saffron alliance was not respected and why governance in Maharashtra was put on hold for many days after the people had given their verdict.

At the end of the day, politics and economics are always intertwined and that is precisely why one needs to watch out and learn vital

lessons from such developments.

No matter, what the result of the political games and machinations in Maharashtra, the fact remains that the sooner the reins of the State come into responsible hands, the faster the beleaguered State that has been reeling under a farm and water crisis, can head on the path of economic development.

More importantly, no matter how one looks at 2019, one finds significant political, social and cultural developments that are likely to have significant consequences for the future of the Indian economy. The BJP has an unflinching commitment to its social contract, which is resulting in further consolidation of its power.

With just another month and a half before 2019 ends, nobody knows what more is likely to happen, but one thing is for sure, Indian politics and the country are likely to have transformed into something better by the end of the year.

(The writer is a New Delhi-based public policy researcher)

CAPSULE



**Jana Small Finance Bank raises Rs 225 cr from TPG Asia**

**MUMBAI:** Bengaluru-based Jana Small Finance Bank on Monday said it has raised Rs 225 crore equity in the latest funding round from its existing investors - Jana Holdings, TPG Asia and HarbourVest Partners. With this equity infusion, the capital adequacy ratio for the small finance bank has reached 19.97 per cent as on October 31, 2019, as against the regulatory requirement of 15 per cent, the release said. The total capital infusion for Jana Bank stands at Rs 2,947 crore. As of September 2019, the bank's total deposits stood at Rs 7,503 crore while advances were at Rs 8,550 crore. The bank's net non-performing assets were at 1.72 per cent of net advances as on October 31, 2019 and gross non-performing assets stood at 3.98 per cent on AUM.



**Paytm plans to invest Rs 500 cr in tech startups**

**NEW DELHI:** Digital payments firm Paytm on Monday said it plans to invest Rs 500 crore in early stage startups that build complementary technologies augmenting the digital ecosystem. The company will focus on artificial intelligence-based technology and big data solutions for new innovations that can generate large scale employment. "The company has set aside Rs 500 crore to invest in early-stage companies that build complementary technologies augmenting the digital ecosystem," Paytm said in a statement. The company said it expects to employ technology across the growing internet to become the dominant player in AI.



**Hinduja Global Solutions Q2 net up 10 pc at Rs 49 cr**

**NEW DELHI:** Hinduja Global Solutions (HGS), the BPO arm of the diversified Hinduja group, on Monday posted a 9.7 per cent rise in consolidated net profit at Rs 49.1 crore in September 2019 quarter. The company had registered a net profit of Rs 44.7 crore in July-September 2018 quarter. HGS said in a statement. Its revenue increased 11.4 per cent to Rs 1,290.6 crore for the quarter under review from Rs 1,158.6 crore in July-September a year ago, it added. "HGS posted a robust revenue growth in Q2 FY2020, driven by demand across healthcare and CES (Consumer Engagement Services) verticals," HGS CEO Partha DeSarkar said.

PMC BANK SCAM

# Maha Sikhs unable to go on Kartarpur pilgrimage

PNS ■ MUMBAI

At least 1,950 Sikhs from Maharashtra could not go to Gurudwara Darbar Sahib in Pakistan after opening of the Kartarpur corridor as they are facing financial crunch due to a scam at the Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative (PMC) Bank, a senior community leader claimed.

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday inaugurated the Kartarpur corridor and flagged off the first batch of over 500 Indian pilgrims, including former prime minister Manmohan Singh and Union minister Harsimrat Kaur Badal.

The corridor links Gurudwara Darbar Sahib in Pakistan, the final resting place of Sikhism founder Guru Nanak Dev, to Dera Baba Nanak shrine in Punjab's Gurdaspur district.

The PMC Bank has been put under restrictions by the RBI since September after an alleged Rs 4,355 crore scam came to light, following which the deposit withdrawal was initially capped at Rs 1,000, causing panic and distress among depositors. The withdrawal limit has been raised in a staggered manner to Rs 50,000.

Nearly 2,000 Sikhs from Mumbai, Nashik, Nanded, Navi Mumbai and Thane, most of whom have accounts in the PMC Bank, wanted to go on to the Gurudwara Darbar Sahib as part of the trip organised by local body Nirmaan Sevak



**“We were in the process of submitting their details online on the required website, but suddenly due to the PMC Bank crisis many opted out. Of these 2,000 people, only about 50 could finally manage to go. All others dropped out due to lack of money because of the PMC Bank scam”**

— HARDEV SINGH SAINI, Member of a gurudwara committee in Kurla,

Jattha, Hardev Singh Saini, member of a gurudwara committee in Kurla, said.

"We were in the process of submitting their details online on the required website, but suddenly due to the PMC Bank crisis many opted out. Of these 2,000 people, only about 50 could finally manage to go. All others dropped out due to lack of money because of the PMC Bank scam," he claimed.

Ravindra Kaur Saini, who has three accounts in the PMC Bank, said she was disap-

pointed at not being able to be a part of the historic pilgrimage.

"We were waiting for this historic moment for last many years, but unfortunately we did not get a chance to go due to the PMC crisis. I have three accounts in the PMC Bank, but did not have money in hand to go," she said.

Another member of the Kurla gurudwara committee, Preetpal Singh Seth, said several people with accounts in the PMC Bank could not help each other to make the pilgrimage as all of them are currently cash-strapped.

"I also lost this golden opportunity to go on the pilgrimage. Around 80 per cent account holders in the PMC Bank are Sikhs. Most of the people come forward to help each other during such times, but this time they are facing the cash crunch," he said.

The depositors have so far held over two dozen protests since the bank was put under directions by the RBI, and have agitated outside the RBI's headquarters and also the official residence of Maharashtra's chief minister.

They also targeted political campaign venues ahead of the elections to the state, which resulted in them getting an audience with Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman as well. The crisis at the bank is attributed to loans made to realty player Housing Development Infrastructure Ltd (HDIL), which were allegedly hidden from regulators' scrutiny, turning non-performing assets.

Five persons, including HDIL promoters and bank's top management, have been arrested.

## Gold rises Rs 118 on global cues as rupee depreciates

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices on Monday rallied by Rs 118 to Rs 38,678 per 10 gram. HDFC Securities in global prices and sharp rupee depreciation against the dollar, according to HDFC Securities.

On Saturday, the precious metal had closed at Rs 38,560 per 10 gram. HDFC Securities Senior Analyst (Commodities) Tapan Patel said spot gold prices for 24 Karat in Delhi were trading up by Rs 118 with recovery in global gold prices and sharp rupee depreciation.

He further said the spot rupee was trading around 20 paise weaker against the dollar during the day.

The Indian rupee depreciated 8 paise to 71.34 against the US dollar in early trade on Monday tracking uncertainty over the US-China trade deal and subdued opening of the domestic equity market.

Silver prices also gained Rs 293 to Rs 45,263 per kg as against Rs 44,970 per kg in the previous trade.

On international trend he said, "Gold prices on Monday witnessed marginal recovery after declining more than 3 per cent in the previous week on US-China trade deal hopes."



## Housing sales of 9 listed players up 11% in Q1 to Rs 5,300cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Housing sales of nine major players, which are listed on stock exchanges, rose 11 per cent to nearly Rs 5,300 crore during the first quarter of this fiscal as home buyers are preferring organised players having good track record of execution, property consultant Anarock said.

The sales of these nine listed entities are expected to grow in the remaining period of this fiscal, it added. These nine companies are -- DLF, Godrej Properties, Mahindra Lifespace, Oberoi Realty, Brigade and Kolte-Patil.

"The robust sales and increased new launches by these top nine listed players are only likely to grow in the upcoming quarters, especially since homebuyers are now more skewed towards leading developers who assure them timely project delivery and quality construction," Anuj Puri, chairman of ANAROCK

**ANAROCK**  
VALUES OVER VALUE

**The sales of these nine listed entities are expected to grow in the remaining period of this fiscal, it added**

Property Consultants said. In 2016-17, the new launches by these nine listed players in top seven cities comprised 5 per cent share of the overall launches, this share increased to 10 per cent as on 2018-19 and will increase steadily, he added.

"Adroitly following consumer demand, these developers have fine-tuned their product offerings and are launching projects in the high-demand affordable and mid-range segments," Puri said.



## Biz confidence declines across industry: NCAER

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Business confidence across the industry declined in the September quarter over the previous three months due to an all-pervasive worsening of business sentiment, said a survey by economic think tank NCAER on Monday.

NCAER's Business Confidence Index (BCI), an indicator of business sentiment across Indian industry, stood at 103.1 in the second quarter of 2019-20, falling 15.3 per cent quarter-on-quarter, despite a small reprieve in July 2019.

As compared to the year-ago period, the BCI fell 22.5 per cent during the second quarter.

This is based on the 110th Round of the Business Expectations Survey (BES) carried out by NCAER, said the National Council of Applied Economic Research.

"The numbers suggest a deep and all-pervasive worsening of business sentiments"

**As compared to the year-ago period, the BCI fell 22.5 per cent during the second quarter**

The survey focussed on four components which have equal weightage in the BCI.

The steepest decline was for the component, 'the overall economic conditions will improve in next six months', where the share of positive responses fell from 58.9 per cent in June 2019 quarter to 46.3 per cent in September 2019 quarter.

"The percentage of respondents expecting that 'the financial position of firms will improve in the next six months' decreased from 48.8 per cent in June 2019 to 39.3 per cent in September 2019," the think tank said.

## 'Chemicals ind can contribute \$300b to GDP by FY25'

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Union minister for chemicals and fertilisers Sadananda Gowda on Monday said the sector has the potential to contribute over USD 300 billion to GDP over the next five years when the economy is slated to scale the USD 5 -trillion-mount.

The chemicals and fertilisers sector, which currently contributes nearly 7.76 percent of manufacturing now, has the potential to reach 20-25 per cent in the next five years and can nearly double to USD 304 billion, he said.

"Government has set an ambitious target of making the country a USD 5-trillion economy by 2025. I believe that the chemicals and fertilisers

sector has a huge role to play in this and can contribute USD 304 billion of that, up from the present USD 160 billion," Gowda said at the India chemicals summit here.

Assuring the industry of all the necessary support, he urged the stakeholders need to work hard to realize its full potential and said "certainly this is not an impossible target. Though I am satisfied at the present growth rate, I believe we can grow faster on the back of the right policies."

With per capita

income steadily increasing, the mid income population presents a huge market. It is expected that the chemical industry will grow at 9 percent annually over the next five years," Gowda said.

He also said government is committed to provide a predictable and market-friendly policy framework to enable companies to take investment decisions and pointed

to the enabling reforms such as GST, relaxed FDI norms, labour reforms and bankruptcy laws.

These initiatives have made the country one of the most attractive investment destinations leading to an inflow of USD 280 billion foreign capital during the past five years alone, Gowda said.

He further said government has already approved setting up of four petroleum, chemicals and petrochemical investment regions in Gujarat, Andhra

Pradesh, Odisha and Tamil Nadu. Upon completion, these regions will be home to around Rs 8 lakh crore investments, and are likely to generate over 4 million jobs.

Chemicals and petrochemicals secretary P Raghavendra Rao said the country still imports chemicals worth billions of dollars, underlining the huge untapped opportunity for growth.

"As we are expecting the industry to grow to USD 304 billion by 2025, imports are also likely to increase to USD 126 billion. This indicates that as the market grows, trade deficit is also growing at a faster rate. We need to see this USD 126 billion as an opportunity to increase our own production," he said.

**“These initiatives have made the country one of the most attractive investment destinations leading to an inflow of USD 280 billion foreign capital during the past five years alone”**

—SADANANDA GOWDA

## Saugata Gupta, Vipin Sondhi join Ashok Leyland board of directors

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Hinduja flagship firm Ashok Leyland on Monday said Marico MD and CEO Saugata Gupta and outgoing JCB India MD and CEO Vipin Sondhi have been appointed as directors to its board.

The board of directors of the company, at a meeting held last week, decided to induct Saugata Gupta as Independent Director and Vipin Sondhi as Director, Ashok Leyland said in a statement.

Commenting on the development, Ashok Leyland

Chairman Dheeraj Hinduja said, "The induction of both Saugata and Vipin into the board of direc-



Vipin Sondhi Saugata Gupta

tors at Ashok Leyland will add significant strategic depth to the company given their rich and unique experience across the fast-moving consumer

goods (FMCG) and automotive sectors in India and international markets."

Gupta is credited with transforming Marico into a high performing business, responsible for driving growth and operations both in India and across international markets, with a commitment to sustainable development, the statement said.

Sondhi, who is currently JCB's MD and CEO - India, South East Asia and Pacific and a member of their Global Executive Leadership Team, will formally join the Hinduja Group later this month.

## By Dec mills must export last year's balance sugar quota

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Monday gave sugar mills three months more till December to export the last year's balance quota of the sweetener.

Mills were able to export about 3.8 million tonne of sugar during the 2018-19 marketing year (October-September) due to depressed market conditions, against the target of 5 million tonne under the Minimum Indicative Export Quota (MIEQ) scheme.

"Now, it has been decided by the central government to allow those sugar mills, which had partially exported their MIEQ of 2018-19 till September 2019, to export the balance quantity of their MIEQ by December 31, 2019," said a fresh notification issued by the food ministry.

This will be over and above the quota allocated for the ongoing 2019-20 marketing year.

A senior food ministry official said that much of the sugar during the last year was exported to the Middle East, Iran, Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka.

**A senior food ministry official said that much of the sugar during the last year was exported to the Middle East, Iran, Afghanistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka**

hopeful that the quota will be fulfilled as the global market is facing 4 million tonnes of deficit.

India has started the 2019-20 marketing year with an all-time high opening stock of 14.5 million tonne against a requirement of 3-5 million tonne.

The government has pegged sugar output to decline to 28-29 million tonne for the current year from 33.1 million tonnes during 2018-19 due to sharp fall in cane acreage in Maharashtra and Karnataka. Whereas industry body ISMA has projected the country's output to touch a three-year low at 26 million tonne during 2019-20.



## Wheat sowing down 37 percent ; oilseeds up

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Wheat planting remained lower by 37 per cent at 9.69 lakh hectare till last week of the ongoing rabi (winter) season of the 2019-20 crop year, but the acreage under oilseeds was higher during the period, according to the agriculture ministry's latest data.

Sowing of wheat and other rabi crops begins from October, while harvesting from April onwards. Wheat is the main rabi crop.

According to the latest data released by the ministry, farmers have planted wheat in an area of 9.69 lakh hectare till last week of this season, compared with 15.35 lakh hectare a year ago.

Wheat acreage was lagging at 74,000 hectare in Madhya Pradesh till last week of this season, when compared with 6



lakh hectares in the year-ago period.

In Punjab, farmers planted wheat in 4.20 lakh hectare as against 4.68 lakh hectare a year ago, while that in Haryana in 1.16 lakh hectare as against 1.19 lakh hectare in the said

period.

Wheat planting, however, in Uttar Pradesh was covered in more area at 1.73 lakh hectare till last week of this season as against 94,000 hectare a year ago, the data showed.

The lower wheat acreage,

**According to the latest data released by the ministry, farmers have planted wheat in an area of 9.69 lakh hectare till last week of this season, compared with 15.35 lakh hectare a year ago**

farm experts said, was due to late harvesting of 2019 kharif crops that has delayed sowing in some states, especially Madhya Pradesh. The curbs on stubble burning has also delayed land preparation.

Among other rabi crops, area sown to pulses also remained lower at 27.85 lakh hectare till last week of this rabi season, as against 39.93 lakh hectare in the year-ago period.

Coarse cereals were also planted in lesser area at 12.39 lakh hectare as against 13.54

lakh hectare in the said period. However, the planting of oilseeds was undertaken in more area at 41.24 lakh hectare till last week of this rabi season as against 39.65 lakh hectare a year ago.

Rice planting area remained similar to the previous year's level of 5.77 lakh hectare in the said period.

Total acreage under all rabi crops was down by 15 per cent at 95.35 lakh hectare till last week of this season, as against 112.24 lakh hectare in the



File photo of a jam on top of Mt Everest



You may be the best of mountaineers, but if the mountain decides against it, there's nothing you can do. Determination in itself plays a huge role, but it is not everything. Nature and fate take their own course.

ROMIL BARTH WAL  
 MOUNTAINEER

## THE WHITE WALL OF GLORY AND PAIN

The Mount Everest, the tallest mountain in the world has today been reduced to a mere trophy for people who plan to scale without thinking twice about the risks associated with it. The journey is not for the faint-hearted and is bound to humble anyone, given the harsh conditions stacking upon man-made perils such as traffic jams at the peak, says Romil Barthwal, an IITan, Army officer, mountaineer, trekker and endurance athlete who narrated his daring tales at an interactive session in an event titled 'Conquering the Everest within'.

He led a team of 15 members to a punishing 8,848 metres above sea-level to the summit. This is the crown jewel of the several high altitude mountains that he has scaled in the past. He was also one of the few people to be selected from India to be a part of the Boston marathon. He addressed the issue of the recent increase in traffic jams at the summit and said, "I have seen several people trying to scale the summit without experience or preparation. People treat the mountain like a recreational space and the journey is often treated as something which helps them prove a point in society. Many pay huge sums to scale the Everest and often ignore the sherpas (guides). This results in their own harm. The increasing number of people at the summit inevitably leads to traffic jams that might lead to casualties."

beginning at the first base camp may range between -20°C to -30°C while the temperature at the peak may even drop to as low as -60°C. Romil said that preparations for the May 26, 2019 climb began a whole year before, on the same date. "You may be the best of mountaineers, but if the mountain is against you, there's nothing you can do. Determination in itself plays a huge role, but it is not everything. Nature and fate take their own course."

The plain chaos of city life sucks everybody in. Sometimes mountains are the only salvation. ANUSHKA PRADEEP finds out what it takes to conquer the tallest peak in the world from a decorated Army officer

In response to a question by an audience member regarding the ordeals he faced, Romil replied, "The whole of last year was spent in preparation of scaling the Everest. We had previously scaled mountains measuring around 6,000 feet, such as the Stok Kangri near Ladakh. But, the practice was almost as arduous as the Everest itself. I had to make sure that all my teammates returned home unscathed, which is unfortunately not the case with many first-timers. Thus hard work and proper preparation don't have substitutes," he said. When *The Pioneer* asked him if he received support from his family, Romil said, "Generally families are against their kids' plans to participate in such exercises. But luckily in my case, my family encouraged me throughout my journey, albeit they were a hesitant at first. In fact, both my daughters are inspired by me and one of them has already begun participating in marathons. She has enrolled in mountaineering courses as well."



find themselves trapped in a vicious cycle of job and family responsibilities. While they keep postponing their happiness and passion for the

future, most people don't even realise when the chance to fulfil their dream passes them. My advice to them would be to find a way to

make use of time in a manner where they live a wholesome life and not fall into the 'I'll figure out along the way' trap."



## A platform for young innovators

Sankalp, an initiative by the Telangana State Innovation Cell, is encouraging budding innovators in the state to showcase their creations

A wristband to monitor the health of the old and the disabled; a security bangle that protects women from attacks; colourful bags made out of old sarees and dupattas. These are just some of the many innovative ideas that the youth of Telangana have come up with, but were ignored so far. To share the unheard stories of these innovators of Telangana, the Telangana State Innovation Cell (TSIC), along with The Good Talk Factory, organised the second edition of the Sankalp — 'Intinta Innovator' speaker series — at the British Library recently. The event aimed to give a platform for all the young

brilliant minds to speak out about their ideas. TSIC is an initiative by the Government of Telangana that believes in driving economic growth by nurturing imaginative minds. "There are three types of thinkers. The first set ponders upon the surroundings and seeks help, the second set complains about the problem and the third set of people is those who think creatively and find a solution for the problem," said Jayesh Ranjan, Principal Secretary, ITE&C, Government of Telangana at the event. Among the innovators who spoke about their work was Hemesh, a student from Jubilee Hills Public School, who devised a wristband that monitors the

health of the old, the disabled and people in need of medical care. The wristband, along with a mobile application, monitors the person's temperature and pulse rate and notifies when if the person is moving, awake or asleep. It also automatically calls an ambulance if the health worsens. A 'Smart Pillbox' programme in it gives timely alerts about the medication. Another speaker was J. Rama, a soft skills trainer, who, through her enterprise 'Health Engineer', has given life to used sarees and dupattas by turning them into colourful bags. Rama

spreads awareness about the dangers of non-biodegradable polythene bags. Another speaker, Vishwaja Reddy, too, while spreading awareness about menstrual hygiene, has successfully built and installed sanitary vending machines and incinerators. Each speaker was given a resounding applause for the work they have accomplished. People also lauded Hareesh Gadi, the mastermind behind the 'Self-Security Bangle for Women', which, once worn, sends electric shocks to attackers. Furthermore, this

bangle also alerts relatives and the nearest police station along with sharing the woman's live location. Along with the keynote speakers, the event also included open mic performances that included poetry and storytelling. TSIC IS AN INITIATIVE BY THE STATE TO DRIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH BY NURTURING INNOVATORS

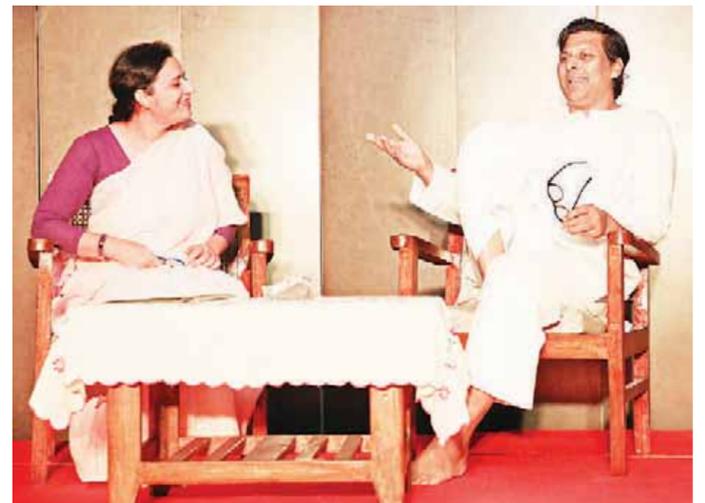


## MANTO, ISMAT COME ALIVE

The play *Ismat aur Manto ki Chuhalbaaziyaan* was staged recently in the city by Roadwayz and Kahaniwala — cultural groups that organise plays and poetry events. Capt S.N. Ahmed, who played Manto, captivated the audience by bringing the character to life. He performed with utter ease and the viewers were able to witness the famous Urdu writer in flesh and blood through Capt Ahmed. His dialogue delivery in Urdu and the effective use of available stage space, demonstrated how well he had sunk into the character. Seema Khan, as Ismat Chughtai, was a perfect match for the grand doyenne of Urdu fiction. Through her dialogue delivery, her body language and her costume Seema reinvented herself as Ismat Chughtai. The 50-minute play, was conceptualised and

researched by Suhas Bhatnagar. He breathed life into the characters and ensured that the audience could connect with them. As both the actors were involved in the writing process, the dialogue delivery was seamless. Excerpts from the original stories were in complex Urdu, but the actors made it sound simple. The audience, who was majorly non-Urdu speaking crowd, found few words tough to comprehend, but were so involved, that they understood the crux just with the enactment. Despite being serious and revolutionary writers of their time, the play portrayed how they would have shared lighter moments, which was the essence of the show. Ismat Chughtai is considered an epitome of women empowerment in literary writing, who fought for her freedom of speech. She is known for her short stories such as *The Quilt* and many

novels and plays. Chughtai is considered as one of the four pillars of modern Urdu short story. Saadat Hasan Manto, was one of the most controversial writers of his time, for his refusal to tone down the raw portrayal of human nature. He is best known for his stories about the partition of India and the many screenplays he had written for Bollywood. He is acknowledged as one of the finest Urdu writers of the 20th century. THE PLAY SHOWED HOW MANTO AND ISMAT WOULD HAVE SHARED LIGHTER MOMENTS DESPITE BEING REVOLUTIONARY WRITERS





## BELGIAN DJ DUO DIMITRI VEGAS & LIKE MIKE WRAPS UP INDIA TOUR

**B**elgian DJ duo Dimitri Vegas & Like Mike (DVLK) wrapped up their India tour on a powerful note with actress Tamannaah Bhatia adding *desi* fun. They have promised to be back soon.

"India is such a special place to us. The fans keep showering us with immense love and respect. We hope to return soon," they said.

"30,000 people Crowd Control in Mumbai! India we love you...No better way to end our tour," tweeted

Dimitri, whose full name is Dimitri Thivaos. The music duo performed in Bengaluru on November 7, Hyderabad on November 8, followed by New Delhi on November 9, and finally culminated their musical tour in Mumbai on November 10 for their India Take Over 2019 Tour with Sunburn Arena, presented by Percept Live.

Tamannaah made a special appearance backstage in Mumbai.

"This was my first ever concert appearance and it has been the most fascinat-

ing experience ever! I'd definitely like to attend more of these in the future and Tomorrowland is definitely on my bucket list for next year," Tamannaah said.

They delivered music lovers a mesmerising audio and visual treat.

Karan Singh, Chief Operating Officer, Percept Live, said, "After hosting multiple tours in the past for Dimitri Vegas and Like Mike, the response we have garnered on this tour has been phenomenal, reiterating the duo's ever-increasing popularity in India."

## Boseman's 21 Bridges gets India release date

**C**hadwick Boseman's *21 Bridges* will release in India on November 22.

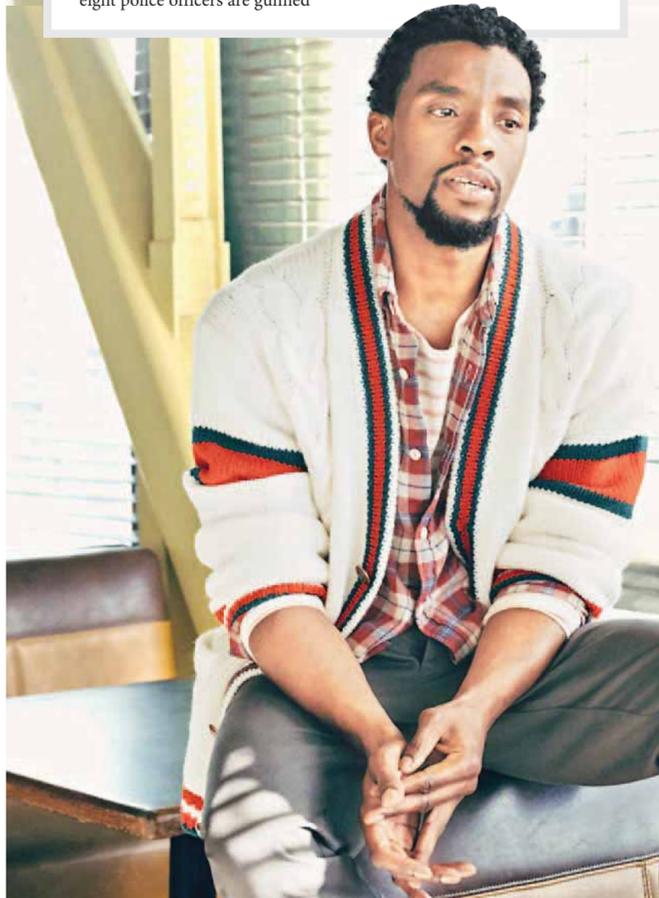
The action film by Russo Brothers is being brought to India by PVR Pictures.

In *21 Bridges*, the *Black Panther* star plays a detective whose police officer father was killed in the line of duty. When eight police officers are gunned

down during a robbery, the detective decides to go on a manhunt and set things right.

The film reunites Boseman with the acclaimed producers Joe and Anthony Russo, also known as the Russo Brothers, after *Avengers: Endgame*.

Helmed by Brian Kirk, the movie also stars Sienna Miller, Stephan James, Taylor Kitsch, Keith David and J.K. Simmons.



## AKSHAY KUMAR TO STAR IN SPY THRILLER

**A**kshay Kumar is set to star in espionage thriller titled *Bell-Bottom* and the film is slated to be released in theatres on January 22, 2021.

According to a press release, directed by Ranjit M Tewari, the film follows the story of one of India's forgotten heroes.

The story is inspired by true events and is penned by Asem Arora and Pervez Shaikhand.

This is Akshay's first collaboration with producer Vashu Bhagnani.

Produced by Pooja Entertainment in association with Emmay Entertainment, the project goes on floors mid next year.

### FUN TIME

#### ARCHIE



#### CALVIN AND HOBBS



#### GARFIELD



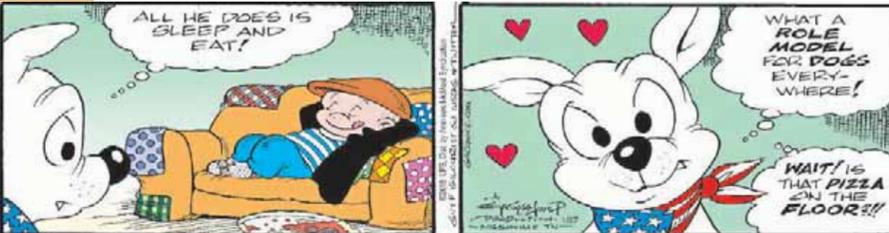
#### REALITY CHECK



#### SPEED BUMP



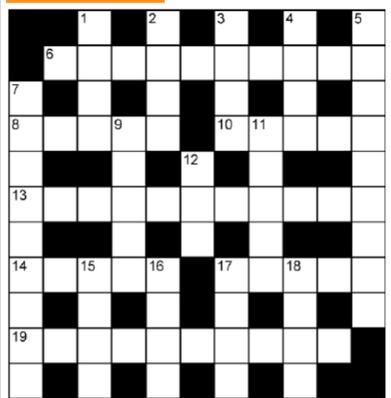
#### NANCY



#### GINGER MEGGS



#### CROSSWORD



- ACROSS**
- 6 Broken down; not working properly (3,2,5)
  - 8 A word for a taxi driver
  - 10 A sung musical drama
  - 13 Saying you are sorry
  - 14 Light soft modelling wood
  - 17 Part of a poem or song
  - 19 Follows seventeenth
- DOWN**
- 1 A round underground part of some plants
  - 2 A small type of horse
  - 3 A toy that spins around a held string (2-2)
  - 4 The part along the side or end
  - 5 Three-sided figures
  - 7 A way of cooking eggs

**SOLUTION**

STARTIS IDOL  
IUS SRI  
CAGE SHOUTS  
KUNAMT  
OTULDN  
XIGNORED  
YMHWP  
GUESTS HALL  
EAWRA  
NINE PASTRY

#### SUDOKU

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

**Yesterday's solution**

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



# People have forgotten to laugh: Nageswara Reddy

Making people laugh is an art. The days of full-length comedies need to return to draw audience to the theatres and send them back in good spirits. NAGARAJ GOUD finds more about filmmaker G. Nageswara Reddy's attempts to make laughing clubs obsolete

**K**nown for his comedy entertainers, filmmaker G. Nageswara Reddy hasn't had a good run at the box-office in the past three years. His last, *Achari America Yatra*, was a colossal flop, disappearing into thin air in no time upon release. He admits he shouldn't have taken up the film in the first place. "I expressed my reservations about the story at the time of filming. But, due to the market demands I had to go ahead and finish it. In fact, I was even doubtful about its box-office prospects as the cameras rolled. In the end, the damage was done as it incurred losses to me, Manchu Vishnu and the producer,"

he informs. Reddy is now looking forward to the release of his next, *Tenali Ramakrishna BA BL*, featuring Sundeep Kishan and Hansika Motwani in the lead. As usual, he is banking on comedy to do the trick for him. "It has been a while since we had a full-length entertainer in Telugu and our film will deliver just that. I believe people are taking a lot of pressure off late, worried about earning and managing money. They have forgotten to laugh daily, a factor that has led to the formation of laughing clubs. Films have the power to limit laughing clubs to a certain extent, and our film, is a hilarious family affair from the first reel to the last. It also has a track involving Annapurna, Posani Krishna Murali, Vennela Kishore, Satya Krishna and Saptagiri. They will have the audience rolling in the aisles more than

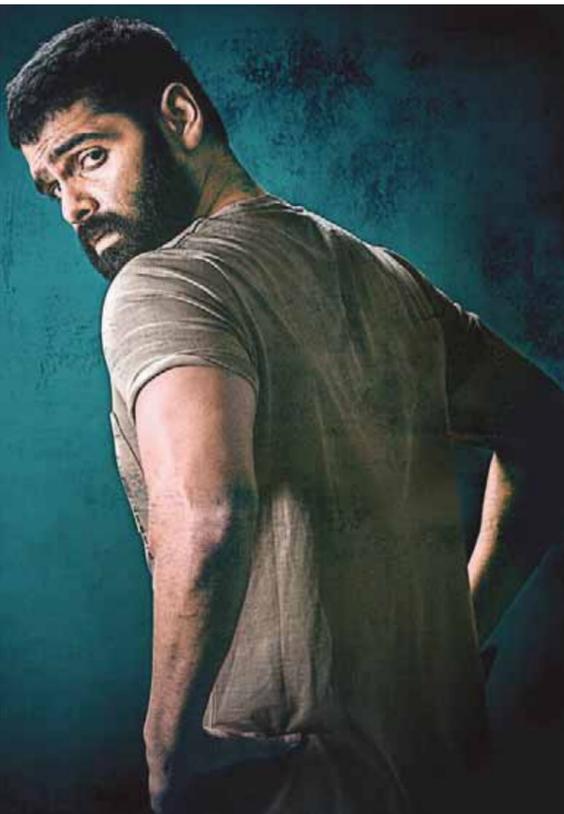
Sundeep," he promises. Talking about the film's story and Sundeep's role, he says, just like Tenali Ramakrishna who saved his king Sri Krishnadevaraya from an impending danger in the 15th century, Sundeep's titular part too saves his leading lady, Hansika, from danger. "Sundeep, who plays a lawyer, believes in com-

promise when it comes to warring parties in a civil court. But, in the second half of the movie, he ends up fighting a case with all his might and shrewdness. Like Tenali Ramakrishna, our Ramakrishna is also witty and playful but when confronted with a serious situation, he rises to the occasion," Reddy informs, sure that the film will help his leading man earn the tag of a commercial hero.



**“**Sundeep plays a lawyer who believes in compromise when it comes to warring parties. But, in the second half, he ends up fighting a case with all his might and shrewdness. Like Tenali Ramakrishna, our Ramakrishna is also witty and playful but when confronted with a serious situation, he delivers

G. NAGESWARA REDDY, FILMMAKER



## RED TO MOVE TO GOA

**L**aunched last month-end, Ram-starrer *Red*, which is a remake of this year's Tamil super hit *Thadam*, will go in front of cameras later this week. We've learnt that the first schedule will be held in Hyderabad for 10 days, post which the unit will travel to Goa for a near two-week schedule. "The schedule might extend if the situation arises. Goa has been a lucky place for Ram as his successful ventures like *Nenu Sailaja* and *iSmart Shankar* have been shot there. All the principal actors will be partaking in this schedule, during which some key scenes and a song will be shot. The Hyderabad schedule will follow soon after," said a source. Excited about acting in an investigative thriller for the first time, Ram, speaking at the muhurat, had mentioned that the film has a mix of both mass and class elements. The Tamil script has been tailored to suit Telugu audiences tastes. To be directed by Kishore Tirumala, *Red* sees Ram in dual roles for the first time, while Nivetha Pethuraj and Malavika Sharma are the leading ladies. A production venture of Sravanthi Ravi Kishore, the film has music by Mani Sharma. — NG



## JAYALALITHAA biopic with Kangana to be shot in Telugu too

**I**nitially planned as a Tamil-Hindi bilingual, the biopic on J. Jayalalithaa, the late chief minister of Tamil Nadu, is now being shot in Telugu as well. Titled *Thalaivi*, the drama, directed by Tamil director A.L. Vijay, has gone to floors in Chennai on Sunday, with the chief cast and crew in attendance. As Bollywood actor Kangana Ranaut is reprising Jayalalithaa, the anticipation surrounding the project is high. For past four months, she has been on an extensive preparation, read-

ing about Jayalalithaa, besides learning Bharatnatyam. She has also been to the US to give measurements for prosthetics. Renowned Hollywood artist, Jason Collins, who has worked on films like *Captain Marvel*, is working on the national award winner's look. Aravind Swamy has been roped in to play legendary politician M.G. Ramachandran who was instrumental in grooming the star actress into a politician. Beginning with her journey as an actress, the film will end with Jayalalithaa becoming the Chief Minister for the first time. The ups and downs she weathered till that period will be a part of the film. *Baahubali* writer Vijayendra Prasad has written the story.

## SITARA to give voice for little Elsa

**I**n a clever move, Disney India has roped in superstar Mahesh Babu's daughter Sitara to lend her voice for the younger version of Elsa in the Telugu version of the highly-awaited sequel of *Frozen*. The seven-year-old, who has a YouTube channel to her name along with her friend Aadya, daughter of filmmaker Vamshi Paidipally, has recently featured in a commercial for a real estate firm along with her other family members. It was her first spell in front of the camera. This stint with Disney is her second professional assignment and she has already completed the dubbing formalities. "Sitara's love for the movie is so much that when she was offered to voice young Elsa, there was no way we could've turned it down. It is a movie that every girl relates to and Sitara is no different. We would like to thank the team of Disney for this wonderful opportunity," said Namrata, Sitara's mother and actress. We wonder if Sitara too will follow her dad's footsteps and establish herself as a child actor. *Frozen 2* will hit screens on November 22.



## Ranveer pulls off Kapil's 'Natraj' shot

**T**alking to Instagram on Monday, Ranveer Singh, who is playing Kapil Dev in '83, treated his followers to a brand new still from the film in which he is seen nailing Kapil's iconic 'Natraj' shot — a swivel and a pull that sends the ball flying to the boundary. The said shot is part of Kapil's knock of 175 against Zimbabwe at Tunbridge in the 1983 World Cup. Only a few thousands were lucky to watch the innings, which Dev's former teammate Sunil Gavaskar regarded as 'the greatest innings' he has ever seen. As the British Broadcasting Corporation employees were on strike, the

match couldn't be televised. The legendary former skipper himself was full of praise for the actor. "Hats off Ranveer!" Kapil Dev wrote while retweeting his photo. The picture also found admiration from former India cricketer and commentator Sanjay Manjrekar, who lauded him for looking the part, both with the shot and the gear he is wearing in the photo. "Well done Ranveer! Not easy to 'pull' this off. Great attention to detail too with gear etc," Manjrekar tweeted. The cast of the film includes Jatin Sarna as Yashpal Sharma — the inventor of the 'badam shot' — and Saqib Saleem as the all-rounder Mohinder Amarnath. Haridy Sandhu will portray another all-

rounder, Madan Lal. Tamil actor Jiiva has been cast as Krishnamachari Srikanth. Pankaj Tripathi will play the role of team manager P.R. Man Singh. Punjab actor Ammy Virk will bring alive Balvinder on screen. Tahir Raj Bhasin will be playing Sunil Gavaskar. Deepika Padukone plays Kapil's wife, Romi. The film's shooting has been wrapped up and it will be dubbed into Telugu as well. Presented by Reliance Entertainment and produced by Deepika Padukone, Sajid Nadiadwala, Kabir Khan, Nikhil Dwivedi, Vishnu Induri, 83 Films Ltd. and Phantom Films, '83 is touted as the "biggest sports film" of the country and is scheduled for release on April 10, 2020.

# Chahar happy to repay captain's faith

# Given heads up to be India's No 4: Iyer



Deepak Chahar celebrates with his Indian teammates after completing his maiden five-wicket haul against Bangladesh in T20s PTI

FIANS ■ NEW DELHI

It almost looked like Bangladesh would run away with the third T20I in Nagpur on Sunday and with it register their maiden series win over India as Mohammad Naim and Mohammad Mithun looked to be in cruise mode. With dew not helping matters, skipper Rohit Sharma handed the ball to pacer Deepak Chahar, hoping for the youngster to rise to the occasion. And that is exactly what he did.

Chahar, who had earlier scalped for Liton Das and Soumya Sarkar, delivered instantly in the 13th over and started the collapse. The rest as they say is history. Chahar finished with figures of 6/7 — the best in T20Is — and also became the second Indian to pick a hat-trick in the format.

Speaking after game, Chahar said that while everyone is talking about him picking the hat-trick and winning India the game in conditions

not suited for bowlers, it is the faith that skipper Rohit showed in him that makes him happy. "He told me I will use you as a Bumrah today. I will bowl you in the crucial overs and that was motivating for me. I love it when I am given responsibility under pressure because that makes me feel that I am being trusted. I feel bad when nobody trusts me. To get that confidence from the captain felt good at that stage of the game," he smiled.

It is not often that you have players liking the fact that he is compared to a teammate, but Chahar says there is no doubting the fact that Bumrah is the No 1 bowler at present in the format and it is a matter of pride to be compared to the pacer.

"Imandar hona chahiye (You should be honest)...I know where he stands and I also know where I stand. He is the No 1 bowler in the format and as a T20 bowler, he has everything, be it pace or control. He is the No 1 bowler for me and saying that is not a shame. I am not competing with him and my job is to do well. You need to focus on the game and the team should win and that has to be the priority.

"When they were cruising at the end of 12 overs, I wanted to walk up to him and ask for the ball from the captain, but I didn't because I knew the captain would have his plan and give me the ball. The whole thought was that we shouldn't lose the game and the series. What matters when you play for the country is to perform and win matches," he explained.

Pundits have often spoken about how he is more of a new-ball bowler, but Chahar silenced all with his performance on Sunday. And the pacer says that it was more about people assuming things because he always had variations up his sleeves.

"People assumed that and didn't give me a chance to

bowl at the death. Whenever I got a chance, I bowled well. I have bowled before as well, even for my state. Generally you don't bowl those bowlers at the death who bowl at less than 130kph, but I don't have that issue. I have bowled around 135kph even in the IPL and say in CSK I wasn't used because Mahi bhai had other bowlers.

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Every player is preparing keeping the World T20 in mind and while Chahar too wants to go ahead and represent the country in the showpiece event in Australia in 2020, he wants to keep working on his game and get better with each passing day.

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Deepak Chahar celebrates with MS Dhoni after taking wicket during IPL. IPL20.com

## 'CSK stint taught me to counter dew & sweat factor'

PTI ■ NAGPUR

Countering the dew in the sultry Chennai heat has been a big part of Deepak Chahar's cricket education and he said it showed during his world record figures of 6 for 7 against Bangladesh in the series-deciding third T20.

Chahar, who also became the first male cricketer from the country to take a T20 International hat-trick, has been one of the Chennai Super Kings' successful new ball bowlers, used judiciously by franchise captain Mahendra Singh Dhoni.

"Playing in Chennai, I have now realised how to counter dew and sweat. How to keep my hands clean. At times, rub dry soil in your hands and then bowl (so that hands don't get slippery)," the 27-year-old Rajasthan seamer said during

an interview on 'Chahal TV'. Asked what was his strategy considering that there was no nip in the air and the ball wasn't swinging a lot.

"Since the side boundaries (at VCA Stadium) were big and that was the plan that we will have to force the batsman to play shots on the sides. I also wanted to vary the pace as the ball was getting wet because of the dew and it was difficult to grip," Chahal explained.

For the 27-year-old, never even in his wildest of imaginations, he could have thought about incredible figures of 6 for 7 in 3.2 overs.

"Came to know in the end that I got a hat-trick since I got the first wicket off the last ball of previous over. Even if you sit back at home and dream, you will not think that in four overs, you will get six wickets for 7 runs," said a beaming Chahal.

## DRS = 'Don't ask Rishabh System'

FIANS ■ NAGPUR

India came back strongly from their first match defeat at the hands of Bangladesh to win the three match T20I series 2-1, but there was no respite for stumper Rishabh Pant as the jeers turned into cat-calls for his gaffes behind the stumps, especially with the Decision Review System (DRS).

Pant, who was under the scanner for his wrong DRS calls in the first rubber, made similar mistakes on Sunday even.

During Bangladesh's chase, pacer Khaleel Ahmed bowled a shortish delivery to Mohammad Naim and Pant launched an appeal for caught

behind. He even convinced stand-in skipper Rohit Sharma to seek a review only for replays to show that the ball was missing the bat in a big way.

There were chants of "Dhoni, Dhoni", the former India captain known to call it right almost every time, as social media also lashed out at Pant's repeated failures.

"The DRS would never fail if captain always do the opposite of Pant's opinion," wrote a Twitter user.

"DRS stands for — Don't ask Rishabh System," wrote another enthusiast drawing attention for his cheeky comment.

"Lesson for Rohit Sharma: when pant calls for DRS, don't take it," read another comment.

## Deepak jumps 88 places in rankings

PTI ■ DUBAI

India fast bowler Deepak Chahar, who returned a world record haul of six for seven against Bangladesh on Sunday, has moved up 88 slots to 42nd in the latest ICC T20 rankings for bowlers.

The list, however, continued to be led by slow bowlers. The top five and eight of the top nine are spinners, with Mitchell Santner reaching second place — his best position since he topped the table in January 2018, behind Afghanistan's Rashid Khan.

Rohit Sharma continued to remain India's top-ranked batsman at seventh position while K L Rahul moved up a place to eight after his half-century on Sunday.

England's Dawid Malan has made a grand re-entry to the batting chart, grabbing third position in the list led by Pakistan's Babar Azam, while Aaron Finch of Australia has taken second spot after gaining two positions.

England captain Eoin Morgan and New Zealand opener Martin Guptill have also made notable movements to take joint ninth place while Jonny Bairstow has reached a career-best 498 rating points and is in the top 40 for the first time.

Bangladesh batsman Mohammad Naim's 143 runs in three matches saw him at joint-38th position along with Bairstow.

Ashton Agar's fine performances against Sri Lanka and Pakistan have seen him move up 57 places to ninth in the bowling list.

In the all-rounders' table, Glenn Maxwell's continued absence has enabled Afghanistan's Mohammad Nabi to move above him to take the top spot for the first time.

In the team rankings, Pakistan continued at the top with 270 points but Australia were only one point behind them after winning their three-match series 2-0. England, South Africa and India occupied the next three positions and were within five points of each other.

## Long way to go in T20s: Mahmudullah

PTI ■ NAGPUR

Bangladesh captain Mahmudullah feels his team still has a long way to go in Twenty20s as it is neither learning from its mistakes nor has the big-hitters essential to the format.

Bangladesh have come close to victory on many occasions but failed to cross the line, especially against top teams like India losing the just-concluded T20 series 1-2.

"We have a long way to go in T20 cricket. We don't have big hitters. We have to be dependent on our skill hitting. So we are working on our game sense and become more consistent mentally," said Mahmudullah following the 30-run loss in the series-decider. "As a batting unit, if we



can improve then we will have more chances to win," he added.

Needing 50 runs off the last 30 balls with six wickets in hand, Bangladesh were on course for a memorable series win but lost wickets in a heap to blow it all away.

"I am not sure whether it

was composer or not. But if you see, we did similar kind of mistakes probably in few games in recent times. That's where I think big teams are quite good and very consistent in these situations and they can chase down this sort of total.

"Having said that, the wicket was very good to chase on. Our bowlers did a very good job to restrict them to 174. We just didn't finish well."

"If you analyse these three games, I think we played good cricket. But T20 cricket is such a format, if you lose momentum it's very hard to get it back. We were very close in this game but as we lost three-four wickets in six or seven balls and that's the crucial part of that game," said the skipper.

## Shafali, Deepti power Eves to 10-wicket win

PTI ■ GROS ISLET

Teenager Shafali Verma scored her second consecutive half century after off-spinner Deepti Sharma starred with the ball as the Indian women's cricket team registered an emphatic 10-wicket win over the West Indies in the second T20I.

The 15-year-old Shafali continued her impressive run by scoring a quick-fire 69 off 35 balls alongside Smriti Mandhana (30). The duo powered India to a 2-0 lead in the five-match series on Sunday.

Shafali, who overtook the iconic Sachin Tendulkar to become the youngest Indian cricketer to score a half-century in international cricket, displayed scintillating form yet again and smashed 10 fours and two sixes.

Earlier, the Indian bowlers,



Shafali Verma chats with Smriti Mandhana during 2nd T20 against Windies. BCCI

led by Deepti, who registered career-best figures of 4 for 10, managed to restrict the West Indies for a paltry 103 for seven in the stipulated 20 overs.

Deepti accounted for the four wickets in the last four overs.

Later Mandhana, who had also smashed a half-century in the series-opener, played second fiddle to Shafali in guiding the team home. The 23-year-old's innings was laced with four boundaries.

West Indies captain Anisa Mohammed had no answer to the Indian duo and used seven bowlers, including herself, with no success.

The combined effort saw India reach their target in 10.3 overs.

The third T20I will be played at Providence Stadium in Guyana on November 14.

## Shooters continue medal rush

PTI ■ DOHA

Teen shooter Saurabh Chaudhary claimed the Silver medal in men's 10m air pistol event to continue India's surge at the 14th Asian Championship here on Monday.

The 17-year-old World Cup and the Asian Games Gold-medallist shot 244.5 to finish second on the podium behind North Korea's Kim Song Guk, who won the top prize with a world record 246.5.

With 583, both Chaudhary and Abhishek Verma had qualified for the final in seventh and sixth place, respectively.

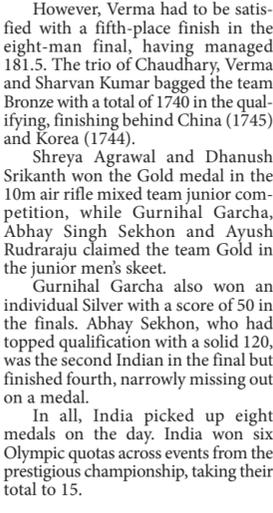


However, Verma had to be satisfied with a fifth-place finish in the eight-man final, having managed 181.5. The trio of Chaudhary, Verma and Sharvan Kumar bagged the team Bronze with a total of 1740 in the qualifying, finishing behind China (1745) and Korea (1744).

Shreya Agrawal and Dhanush Srikanth won the Gold medal in the 10m air rifle mixed team junior competition, while Gurnihal Garcha, Abhay Singh Sekhon and Ayush Rudraraju claimed the team Gold in the junior men's skeet.

Gurnihal Garcha also won an individual Silver with a score of 50 in the finals. Abhay Sekhon, who had topped qualification with a solid 120, was the second Indian in the final but finished fourth, narrowly missing out on a medal.

In all, India picked up eight medals on the day. India won six Olympic quotas across events from the prestigious championship, taking their total to 15.



Shreya Agrawal and Dhanush Srikanth in action during a shooting event.

## Mumbai makes it three in a row

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Domestic giants Mumbai continued its winning run in the Syed Mushtaq Ali Trophy thrashing Madhya Pradesh by nine wickets on Monday.

This is Mumbai's third win on the trot after they beat Mizoram and Haryana in the first two league games of Group D.

In the game at the Wankhede Stadium, Mumbai rode on blistering half centuries by openers Jay Bista (68 off 36 balls) and Aditya Tare (74 not out off 48 balls) to chase the 1