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 SAVES INDIA

VIJAYAWADA, FRIDAY NOVEMBER 15, 2019; PAGES 12 ₹3



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NEW TELUGU
 GIRL ON THE
 BLOCK

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No going back on English medium in govt schools: CM

PNS ■ ONGOLE

Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy has once again strongly defended his government's resolve to introduce English medium in government schools. After launching the Nadu-Nedu programme here on Thursday, he said, "Despite criticism from our detractors, we will go ahead with English medium schools as we have to prepare the students to boldly face and stand up to the requirements of the technology-driven world and we should not be found wanting and feel guilty if the GenNext cannot be prepared to face the competition."

He said, "The government is taking the first steps to change the course of history of schools today, with the Manabadi Nadu-Nedu programme in the State and he opined that the programme is turning a new leaf in the education sector."

He said the government will overcome all the challenges and clear every hurdle as the goal is to meet the requirement of what the fast-changing technology in the world expects from youth in 10 years from now.

The government will set up Bridge courses to overcome the transition problems, the Chief Minister said and added that the children will have to struggle for one or two years.

We will spend Rs 3,500 crore on schools every year and



Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy interacting with kids during the launch of 'Manabadi Nadu-Nedu' programme in Ongole on Thursday

Jagan said, "The government is taking the first steps to change the course of history of schools today, with the Manabadi Nadu-Nedu programme in the State and he opined that the programme is turning a new leaf in the education sector."

"This was a conscious decision taken after due consideration and visualising what our future generation requires in the new age of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Robotics where driverless cars would hit the roads," the CM said.

change the face of 45,000 schools across the State in the near future, with a budget of Rs 12,000 crore, he assured. "As part of the first installment, we shall start with 15,700 schools in the first phase and by June 2020 all the facilities will be available in schools," he said.

Only education can take the present generation forward, he said and showed the live examples of Education Minister Adimulapu Suresh, who studied in Telugu Medium, but shifted to English medium and went on to become an IRS Officer. Next to him, were top bureaucrats

Rajasekhara Reddy and Dhanunjay Reddy, both IAS officers, who shifted to English medium in search of a better future and made their mark.

"This was a conscious decision taken after due consideration and visualising what our future generation requires in the new age of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Robotics where driverless cars would hit the roads," the CM said. Jaganmohan Reddy said that for degree and professional courses, a one-year apprentice programme will be introduced in coordination with the Skill Development Centres.

Jagan bowled over by girl's speech in English

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy was overwhelmed by the speech of a student named Jnana Prasanna, who came from Santanulapadu ZP School. She spoke in English on the occasion of the launch of the Nadu-Nedu programme at Ongole on Thursday.

The Chief Minister, who was apparently impressed by the speech, listened to her patiently. He was all smiles throughout the speech.

Jnana Prasanna praised the decision of YS Jaganmohan Reddy for developing government schools. Welcoming the English medium policy, she questioned the leaders who have objected to the same.

She concluded her speech asking the CM, "How can you meet the budget required to implement all these good policies. The people of the State, including students like me, want to know about. Please explain, Sir."

'One chance' is going to be last one for Jagan: Naidu

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu said that Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy has come to power by requesting the people to give him 'one chance' to prove himself, but it will be the 'last chance'.

Naidu, after concluding his 12-hour hunger strike at Dharna Chowk here on Thursday, demanded that the government implement the 'free sand policy' immediately and pay compensation to the building workers who lost their livelihood. He further demanded an ex gratia of Rs 25 lakh to the families of construction labourers, who committed suicide due to sand crisis.

He said, "Sand is not a big issue. But, Jaganmohan Reddy made it a crisis. Sand is the nature's gift, which was grabbed by YSRCP leaders. Sand and soil are freely available at our homes in villages. Why do we need anybody's permission to use them? They have created the crisis citing floods. Because of their money-mongering through sand, lakhs of people have landed in trouble. Workers, who lost their livelihood, committed suicide. Some of them even recorded selfie videos. This speaks volumes of the seriousness of the problem."



TDP chief N Chandrababu Naidu addressing a gathering during the 12-hour hunger strike at Dharna Chowk in Vijayawada on Thursday

Naidu, after concluding his 12-hour hunger strike at Dharna Chowk here on Thursday, demanded that the government implement the 'free sand policy' immediately and pay compensation to the building workers who lost their livelihood

Jana Sena MLA Rapaka Vara Prasad extended his support to the hunger strike of Chandrababu Naidu. He said that by changing the policy, sand supply was stopped for four months, but liquor supply was not stopped even for a single day

Reacting to the amendment to the existing law that awards two years imprisonment apart from imposing a fine of Rs 2 lakh, Naidu said: "Who are the thieves? They are transporting sand to other States illegally and they are bringing in a new law to punish illegal transporters. Will they punish themselves?" Naidu lambasted ministers

and other YSRCP leaders for their remarks on suicide by workers. He said, "They are not thinking about the solution. They are thinking about how to attack us. Pawan Kalyan has exposed the problem by conducting long march. They started attacking him on personal grounds. Is it correct?"

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Lata showing signs of improvement

MUMBAI: Legendary singer Lata Mangeshkar, who was admitted to the Intensive Care Unit of a hospital earlier this week, is showing 'signs of improvement' but will take 'time to recover', hospital sources said on Thursday.

Mangeshkar, 90, was admitted to the Breach Candy Hospital here after she complained of difficulty in breathing in the early hours of Monday.

"She is showing some signs of improvement but it will take time for her to recover. She has pneumonia and chest infection. Any person suffering from it takes time to recover from it," a hospital insider said.

Musharraf's old video on J&K goes viral

ISLAMABAD: A 2015 video in which former Pakistan president Pervez Musharraf admitted that Kashmiris were "trained" in his country as mujahideens to fight the Indian Army in Jammu and Kashmir went viral after it was circulated online again.

The 1 minute 45 seconds video was posted by Hamid Mandokhail from Quetta on Twitter on Tuesday to depict how Pakistan's state policy of terror destroyed the Pashtuns in Pakistan.

Farhatullah Babar, who was the press secretary of former president Asif Ali Zardari, later re-tweeted the video. After Babar re-tweeted the video, several others shared it and commented on it.

Priyanka not among 'star campaigners'

RANCHI: Congress general secretary, Priyanka Gandhi Vadra's name has not figured in the list of the star campaigners for Jharkhand assembly polls, beginning from later this month.

The party on Thursday released a list of 40 star campaigners, including Rahul Gandhi, Manmohan Singh and Sonia Gandhi, for the Jharkhand Assembly polls, but Priyanka's name is missing. Jharkhand will go to polls in five phases from November 30.

TODAY

ALMANAC
 Month & Paksham: Kartika & Krishna Paksha Panchangam
 Tithi: Tritiya: 07:45 pm
 Nakshatram: Migashirsha: 11:13 pm
 Time to Avoid: (Bad time to start any important work)
 Rahukalam: 10:36 am - 12:00 pm
 Yamagandam: 02:48 pm - 04:12 pm
 Varjyam: NIL
 Gulika: 07:48 am - 09:12 am
 Good Time: (to start any important work)
 Amritkalam: 02:15 pm - 03:53 pm
 Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:38 am - 12:22 pm

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER
 Forecast: Partly Cloudy
 Temp: 32/22
 Humidity: 76%
 Sunrise: 06:20
 Sunset: 05:40
 Current Weather Conditions Updated November 14, 2019 5:00 PM

Avinash quits TDP, joins YSRCP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Deveneni Avinash resigned from TDP on Thursday and joined the YSRCP in the presence of Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy at the latter's camp office in Tadepalli. He said the flagship programme of the State government 'Nava Ratnalu', which are benefitting all sections of the people.

"I joined the YSRCP as I am impressed with the welfare programmes of the Jaganmohan Reddy government. He assured that he will strive towards making Jaganmohan Reddy as the Chief Minister once again.

He said, "Injustice was meted to me in the TDP. The associates of Deveneni Nehru have not got any recognition in the party. I have taken these



Deveneni Avinash is all smiles after joining the YSRCP in the presence of Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy at the camp office in Tadepalli on Thursday

issues to the notice of N Chandrababu Naidu and Lokesh, but in vain. I have shifted to YSRCP, respecting the wish of my cadre and associates."

Earlier in the day, Avinash sent his resignation letter to Chandrababu Naidu. He said:

"My father had taught me to give priority to the people, who follow us. We must take any step for them."

He stated in the letter that he had worked for the party with commitment and discipline.

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CM neglecting Telugu: Pawan

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Jana Sena chief Pawan Kalyan alleged that Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy and YSRCP MLAs are neglecting Telugu language and culture. Inaugurating the National Book Festival at the Visalandhra Publishing House here on Thursday, he said even if a single student wants to study in Telugu medium, the government should provide for it.

He said, "I have studied in Telugu Medium. Earlier, laws were inscribed on rocks in Telugu language in Rayalaseema from where the Chief Minister hails. But surprisingly, he is neglecting Telugu language."

Continued on Page 3

Finally, Vamsi to sail with YSRCP

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Gannavaram MLA Vallabhaneni Vamsi has officially confirmed during his press conference on Thursday that he is going to join the YSRCP. He lashed out at Chandrababu Naidu for his stand on sand crisis.

He openly supported the YSRCP government and said he is ready to lose his MLA post. "I will sail with Jaganmohan Reddy. Very soon, I will join the YSRCP", he said. He said, "How can sand be mined from the flooded rivers? Naidu used to say that he had invented the computer. Better he invents a technology to excavate sand from swollen rivers."

Vamsi opined that that everybody should have political dignity to discriminate between good and bad policies of the government. He said



Gannavaram MLA Vallabhaneni Vamsi said that Junior NTR had campaigned for the party in 2009, but later he had disassociated himself from TDP

"Following Chandrababu Naidu will ruin our future if Naidu keeps committing mistakes," he added.

that Junior NTR had campaigned for the party in 2009, but later he had disassociated himself from TDP. "Following Chandrababu Naidu will ruin our future if Naidu keeps committing mistakes," he added.

Neelam Sawhney assumes charge as CS

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Neelam Sawhney took over as the new Chief Secretary of Andhra Pradesh on Thursday at the Secretariat in Velagapudi. She recalled her first job at Machilipatnam as the Sub-Collector. She was relieved from services to the Union Government at the request of the Government of Andhra Pradesh to which cadre she belongs. Thereafter, she was appointed as the Chief Secretary of the State.

Continued on Page 3



Neelam Sawhney



ENTRY OF WOMEN

SC refers to 7-judge bench pleas on Sabarimala shrine

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a 3:2 majority verdict, the Supreme Court Thursday referred to a larger 7-judge bench the pleas seeking review of its historic 2018 judgement allowing women and girls of all ages to enter Kerala's Sabarimala temple, set to open on November 17, along with other contentious issues of alleged discrimination against Muslim and Parsi women.

As the majority verdict, penned by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi, kept the review pleas pending for a 7-judge bench and did not stay its September 28, 2018 majority judgement, girls and women

of all age groups will be entitled to undertake the pilgrimage to the shrine.

The CJ, who wrote on behalf of himself and Justices A M Khanwilkar and Indu Malhotra, said the debate about the constitutional validity of religious practices like bar on entry of women and girls into a place of worship was not limited to the Sabarimala case.

They said such restrictions are there with regard to entry of Muslim women into mosques and 'dargah' and Parsi women, married to non-Parsi men, being barred from the holy fire place of an Agyari.

Continued on Page 3

16 disqualified Cong-JDS MLAs join BJP, 13 get bypoll ticket

PNS ■ BENGALURU

BJP on Thursday fielded 13 disqualified Congress-JD(S) legislators as its candidates for the December 5 assembly by-elections in Karnataka hours after the rebels joined the ruling party in the state.

The party aiming to win a majority of the 15 seats that will go for the bypolls, announced a list of 14 candidates with the nominee for Ranebennur constituency yet to be named.

A day after the Supreme



Court paved the way for them to contest the bypolls, as many as 16 disqualified MLAs on Thursday joined the BJP at the party office here.

The disqualified MLAs,

whose rebellion led to the fall of the Kumaraswamy government and the return of the BJP to power in July, were inducted in the presence of Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa.

Air pollution claimed over 5 lakh lives in India

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

More than five lakh people died prematurely in India in 2016 due to dangerous levels of outdoor air pollution and over 97,000 of the them died after being exposed to pollutants from coal burning, a new report revealed on Thursday.

The Lancet Countdown 2019 on health and climate change also cautioned that the impact of air pollution in India will worsen if the country does not shift from coal-based energy.

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It emphasised on rapidly decreasing coal use to zero, saying it was crucial to meet-



ing the commitments of the Paris Agreement.

"Total energy supply from coal increased by 11 per cent in India from 2016 to 2018 and out of over 5.29 lakh pre-

mature deaths in 2016 due to dangerous levels of outdoor fine particulate air pollution (PM2.5), over 97,400 deaths were from coal.

"The energy landscape will have to change drastically, and nothing short of a 7.4 per cent year-on-year cut in fossil carbon dioxide emissions from 2019 to 2050 will limit global warming to the more ambitious goal of 1.5 degree Celsius," the report, authored by 35 institutions worldwide, said.

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Police turn first-aid responders

SUMIT ONKA
■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Whenever deadly accidents take place, most victims breath their lost even before they are rushed to hospitals due to lack of first aid and preliminary care on their way to hospitals within one hour of the accident, considered as golden time.

About 500 police personnel have been trained to administer first-aid to accident victims and the procedure they should follow. Within a distance of one km within the city limits, first aid boxes with 19 emergency medical tools will be placed at pan shops, or other junctions prone to accidents.

Launching the noble programme under Road Safety Volunteer Programme at City AR Grounds here on Friday, Director General of Police Damodar Gowtam Sawang said before reaching ambulance, the cops could provide the treatment required in time of emergencies. "In the case of accidents, many people surround the victim, but are not able to do anything to save the life of the victim. So, I feel, not



(Left) DGP D Gowtam Sawang launching Road Safety Volunteer programme in Visakhapatnam on Thursday (right) Police personnel providing first aid during the mock programme



About 500 police personnel have been trained to administer first-aid to accident victims and the procedure they should follow. Within a distance of one km within the city limits, first aid boxes with 19 emergency medical tools will be placed at pan shops, or other junctions prone to accidents

only the police, but people should also come forward to learn to provide first aid."

Cops gave a demonstration of mock accident scenario before the head cop showing how to clear the place and

tackle the emergency situation. Police teams would also carry first aid boxes with in their Rakshak and patrolling vans and would offer preliminary aid to accident victims, before they are taken to hos-

pitals. Red Cross has donated 500 first-aid boxes. Green, intelligent road channel in Vizag, Vijayawada for free movement of ambulances Using the latest technology like Internet of Things (IoT), police administration has taken up a study to introduce global-standard green corridors in Vizag and Vijayawada. The study is also estimating the budget required to come up with the infrastructure for the green channel. With this system, the traffic signal lights are synchronized and all red lights turn

green whenever an ambulance needs to pass along these roads. During peak hours in the cities, the ambulance gets stuck near the traffic signals, consuming the precious time to save a life. The device installed in ambulances will send signals to all traffic junctions within the radius of 500 to 700 metres. And, the system works in such a way that the signal will turn green always for the ambulance. DGP Sawang said they can introduce the system with the right amount of financial support.

Prodigy siblings win laurels

SEELAM AROZIE
■ VIJAYAWADA

Who said age is a barrier for making a mark at the global level? At a tender age of seven, Yamini Patibandla and her sister Vedasri, who is barely three-year-old, have created enough ripples with their exceptional talent at the global-level.

While Yamini is studying in Class II at Delhi Public School, Vedasri is a pre-KG student at Ambitus Global School. Yamini did the nation and the city proud by winning the Vibha International Cultural in Chennai recently.

The competition is a long-drawn process which was started on June 10 and concluded on October 30. One has to cross four levels - School, State, National and International - to reach the summit and the precocious siblings did it with elan. Yamini bagged six awards in the categories of story writing, storytelling, drawing, Abacus, essay writing and singing. Her sister Vedasri walked away with honours in Drawing and Fancy Dress competitions.

Yamini was also presented



Vedasri



Yamini

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Vedasri, who is barely three-year-old, have created enough ripples with their exceptional talent at the global-level

ty and talent competition in which participants from 56 countries took part.

Exactly a year ago on November 14, Yamini was crowned with the Little Princess of AP title in Vijayawada. Children's parents - P Venkata Rao and Jahnvi - are into paper products business, but ensured that a tradition and customs are their priority in the family.

Jahnvi says, "I have never put in extra efforts to train my kids. Right from the birth, both of them have been showing interest in various talents. It's God's gift that our children have been growing up in a disciplined manner."

with the national-level multi-talented kid award at the same event. Earlier in the year, Yamini was crowned with the World Rising Star-2019 representing the country in the Juniors Category of the beau-

Capsule



Rudra Yagam commences

VIJAYAWADA: The ceremonious Rudra Yagam has commenced at Sri Kapilesvara Swamy temple in Tirupati on Thursday. As a part of the month long homa mahotsavams in the holy month of Karthika, Rudra Yagam will be conducted for 11 days till November 24.



Five students injured in bus mishap

KURNOOL: Five students sustained injuries as the school bus in which they were travelling crashed near Nettekall village at Adoni mandal of Kurnool district. The bus bearing No AP 21 TZ 0898 belongs to Sarada Nikethan School here in the town has picked up nearly 60 students from D Kotakonda, Chinnapendekal, Sambagal and Nettekall villages. While proceeding towards school, the steering rod has broken near Nettekall. With this, the bus driver lost control over steering and slid to one side. In the crash, five students suffered injuries. The injured were shifted to a local hospital. A major accident was averted as the vehicle stopped 10 feet before the electricity pole. After receiving information, police, revenue and transport department officials rushed to the spot. Over the incident, students union leaders staged a protest and demanded action against the school management.

VIJAYAWADA BULLION RATES

GOLD	
₹ 38,220 (10 gm)	₹ 120 ↑
SILVER	
₹ 44,500 (1kg)	₹ 200 ↑

CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG

Dressed/With Skin	₹154
Without Skin	₹175
Broiler at Farm	₹106

EGG RATES ₹/100

HYDERABAD	380
VIJAYAWADA	418
VISAKHAPATNAM	415
RETAIL PRICE IN VIJAYAWADA	₹4.18

APCC leaders pay tributes to Nehru

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Andhra Pradesh Congress Committee (APCC) leaders celebrated the 130th birth anniversary Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru at the Andhra Ratna Bhavan in the city on Thursday. Speaking on the occasion, APCC General Secretary

Naraharasetti Narasimha Rao appealed to the Congress activists to restore the glory of Congress by following in the footsteps of the architect of modern India, freedom fighter and the ambassador peace Jawaharlal Nehru. APCC Secretary Koraganji Bhanu and NSUI leader Srinivas and others participated.

'Smart toilets' to monitor and improve health, says study

IAN ■ NEW YORK

Wearable, smart technologies are transforming the ability to monitor and improve health, but a decidedly low-tech commodity -- the humble toilet -- may have the potential to outperform them all, a new study suggests. The Coon Research Group is designing a toilet that will incorporate a portable mass spectrometer that can recognise the individual and process samples across a variety of subjects. Coon also believes the "smart toilet" concept could have major population health implications. For the study, published in the journal Nature Digital Medicine, researchers from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and the Morgridge Institute for Research are working to put the tremendous range of metabolic health information contained in urine



to work for personalised medicine. "We're pretty sure we can design a toilet that could sample urine. I think the real challenge is we're going to have to invest in the engineering to make this instrument simple enough and cheap enough. That's where this will either go far or not happen at all," said study lead author Joshua Coon. Urine contains a virtual liquid history of an individual's nutritional habits, exer-

cise, medication use, sleep patterns and other lifestyle choices. Urine also contains metabolic links to more than 600 human conditions, including some of the major killers such as cancer, diabetes and kidney disease.

For the study, two research subjects consistently collected all urine samples over a 10-day period, submitted those samples for tests with both gas chromatography and mass spectrometry for a complete readout of metabolic signatures. The two subjects also happen to be lead authors on the paper - Joshua Coon and Ian Miller. However, the sample size used in the study is too small. Collectively they provided 110 samples over the 10-day period, and also used wearable technology to track heart rates and steps, calorie consumption and sleep patterns.

Mahesh Babu conducts medical camp in Burrripalem

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Superstar G Mahesh Babu in association with Andhra Hospitals organised a free medical camp at Burrripalem village in Guntur district on the occasion of the Children's Day on Thursday.

The camp was led by Andhra Hospitals, General Paediatrics, Paediatric ENT & Paediatric Ophthalmology were covered. Doctors discussed the common paediatric problems, seasonal diseases, treating those problems, cleanliness and preventive measures.

In all, 143 children turned up for the camp where medicines were distributed free of cost. This is the 27th camp to be held in association with Mahesh Babu since 2016. Dr PV Rama Rao, Chief of Children's



A doctor examining a kid at a free medical camp organised by Tollywood actor G Mahesh Babu in association with Andhra Hospitals at Burrripalem village in Guntur district on Thursday

Services and Director, Andhra Hospitals, said in a press note that health awareness and health camps would continue on a long-term basis. Mahesh Babu's aim is to develop Burrripalem as a model health

village in Andhra Pradesh in association with Andhra Hospitals. Dr Laxman, Dr Nagendra, Dr Deepthi, Dr Venkat, staff nurses and pharmacist made their contributions at the camp.

National Book Week celebrations get underway at Loyola College

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Noted theological writer and author of the Catholic version of The Bible in Telugu Rev Fr P Jojayya on Thursday inaugurated the National Book Week celebrations being conducted under the aegis of the Fr Gordon Library of Andhra Loyola College in association with the Department of Visual Communication. The book exhibition is being organised as part of the celebrations to showcase the some rare and unique works in diverse fields of enquiry.

Books representing great museums in the world followed by great mathematician Ramanujan's 'Unpublished Papers' and the manuscripts of his other collections are on display. The exhibition features



MC Das, Management Consultant and Writer, being felicitated at the National Book Week celebrations in Vijayawada on Thursday

the 12-volume set of the Oxford English Dictionary and famous speeches of all-time great people, including Nobel laureates. Guest of Honour Rev Fr A Francis Xavier, Director, ALIET in his opening remarks, spoke about the greatness of Mahatma

as an open book. "We all can learn many things from his autobiography and from other valued collections displayed at the exhibition," he said. Principal Rev Fr GM Victor Emmanuel, SJ explained about the importance of reading

habits and he strongly mentioned about reclusiveness, which can be overcome by books.

The special talk arranged for students on "Writing skills of Hasya Brahma Jandhyala, a Telugu film director," by Dr MC Das, Management Consultant and Writer, dwelt at length on various dimensions of Jandhyala and how he authored 84 movie scripts and directed more than 39 movies. He advised the students to cultivate the habit of listening, thinking and practising to come up in life. He concluded his talk by saying readers are leaders. Librarian Dr GA Prasad Rao introduced this year's theme "The Life and Writings of Mahatma Gandhi" to mark the 150th birth anniversary celebrations.

Music may help reduce cardiac stress while driving: Study

AGANCIES ■ RIO DE JANEIRO

Stress while driving is a risk factor for the development of cardiovascular disease and sudden cardiac complications such as heart attack, but now researchers have found that listening to music while driving can reduce cardiac stress.

"We found that cardiac stress in the participants in our experiment was reduced by listening to music while they were driving," said study lead author Vitor Engracia Valenti, Professor at Sao Paulo State University in Brazil.

For the study, published in the journal Complementary Therapies in Medicine, researchers analysed the effects of music on cardiac stress in five women between the ages of 18



and 23. "We opted to assess women who were not habitual drivers because people who drive frequently and have had a licence for a long time are better adapted to stressful situations in traffic," Valenti explained. The volunteers were assessed

on two days, in different situations and in a random order. On one day, they drove for 20 minutes at rush hour (5:30-6:30 pm) along a three km route in a busy district of Marilia, a medium-sized city in the northwest of Sao Paulo, without listening to music. On the other day, the vol-

We found that cardiac stress in the participants in our experiment was reduced by listening to music while they were driving

— VITOR ENGRACIA VALENTI, Professor at Sao Paulo State University

unteers drove the same route at the same time of day but listened to instrumental music on a CD player coupled to the car radio. The use of ear buds or headphones while driving is a traffic offense. "To increase the degree of traffic stress, we asked them to drive a car they did not own. Driving their own car might help," Valenti said. The level of cardiac stress was estimated by measuring heart rate variability using a heart rate monitor attached to the participant's chest. Defined as fluctuations in

the intervals between consecutive heart beats, heart rate variability is influenced by the autonomic nervous system. The more active the sympathetic nervous system, the faster the heart beats, while the parasympathetic nervous system tends to slow it down. "Elevated sympathetic nervous system activity reduces heart rate variability, whereas more intense parasympathetic nervous system activity increases it," Valenti said. Analysis showed a reduction in heart rate variability in the volunteers who drove without

music, indicating a lower level of parasympathetic nervous system activity but sympathetic nervous system activation.

Conversely, heart rate variability increased in the drivers who listened to music, indicating a higher level of parasympathetic nervous system activity and a reduction in sympathetic nervous system activity. However, the sample size used in the study was too small but significant.

"Listening to music attenuated the moderate stress overload the volunteers experienced as they drove," Valenti said. "Listening to music could be a preventive measure in favour of cardiovascular health in situations of intense stress such as driving during rush hour," he said.

NRI donates jewel to Kondanda Rama Swamy

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

An NRI devotee C Siva Kumar of Tirupati has donated a Lakshmi dollar gold chain to Sri Kodanda Rama Swamy temple in Tirupati on Thursday. Weighing around 58.848 gms the chain worth around.

Rs 2.58 lakh has been handed over to the deputy executive officer Shanti in the temple by the devotee. AEO Munikrishnaiah and superintendent Ramesh were also present.

NAIDU'S DEEKSHA A BIG FARCE, SAY YSRCP MLAS

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) leaders have come down heavily on TDP Chief N Chandrababu Naidu saying that his 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. Deeksha was a big drama.

Penamaluru MLA Kolusu Parthasaradhi said the TDP leader had looted all the five elements. Naidu had looted thousands of crores of rupees.

Admitting that there was some problem in the availability of sand due to floods, Parthasaradhi said now the sand is produced at the rate of 1.5 lakh tones per day. Sand would be made available for people freely in about two or three days.

He alleged that Naidu was jealous of Jagannathan Reddy's welfare schemes for the weaker sections of the society, so he is resorting to dramas in the name of Deekshas.

Stating that Naidu was failed to prove his charges against YSRCP leaders, he said, "People are laughing at the TDP Chief."

Addressing a press conference at Mylavaram, MLA Vasanta Krishna Prasad said



Kolusu Parthasaradhi



Vasanta Krishna Prasad

Addressing a press conference at Mylavaram, MLA Vasanta Krishna Prasad said Naidu has no right to observe Deeksha against sand crisis as TDP leaders attacked the officials who had taken action against the sand mafia during his government

Naidu has no right to observe Deeksha against sand crisis as TDP leaders attacked the officials who had taken action against the sand mafia during his government. Sand looted had taken place only during the

TDP government, he alleged. The Mylavaram MLA alleged that TDP had created artificial scarcity of sand through the Blue Frog company which is under the instructions of Naidu and his son

Lokesh. The day is not far off when the people would teach a fitting lesson to Naidu, he said. As per the charge-sheet given by the voters in the last elections, Naidu got 23 seats. In the next elections, he would not get even those seats, he prophesied.

Stating that illegal sand mining to the tune of hundreds of crores of rupees was done near Naidu's residence on Krishna riverbank, Vasanta Krishna Prasad said several cases in regard to sand mining during the TDP government are still pending in courts.

Meanwhile, Pamarru MLA Kaila Anil Kumar said YSRCP President and Chief Minister YS Jagannathan Reddy did not hesitate to take action on his own partymen. Chandrababu Naidu have the guts to take action against erring TDP leaders?" he wondered. Anil Kumar said, in the name of the free sand policy, Naidu had given sand freely to his partymen. Warning that the TDP would meet the same fate as it did in Telangana, he advised Naidu to stop dramas in the name of Deekshas.

ACB exposes corruption in welfare hostels

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Officials of Anti-Corruption-Bureau (ACB) on Thursday raided Andhra Pradesh Social Welfare Boys Hostels, Ramabhadrapuram, and Pedduru in Vizianagaram district. The sleuths found irregularities in the hostels.

The ACB team led by DSP BVS Nageswara Rao carried out a surprise raid at the hostels and observed the mismatch of hostel boarders' attendance (inflating student strength to draw excess amount from the government) and substantial variations in the quality of grocery items such as rice, pulses, edible oil and a few others. Apart from the mismatch in attendance, lapses were found in the records of stores also, he added.

At the time of the visit, the hostel at Pedduru was locked and the officials have found that very few students are staying in the hostel for food.

The raids also exposed lack of basic amenities like water, proper sanitation and quality food at the hostel. The staff also are deviating the regular food menu as they are not supplying eggs, bananas, milk, curd to the students reg-



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ularly. The students are not happy with the quality of food being served in the hostels and the quantity is also low, Rao added.

The ACB officials will sub-

mit a report to the government on the staff of the hostels are manipulating the accounts to swindle funds meant for spending on students' welfare.

Neelam Sawhney assumes charge as CS

Continued from Page 1

Neelam Sawhney is the first woman Chief Secretary of the State. She belongs to 1984 batch of IAS. In the unified Andhra Pradesh, she had worked in Krishna, Srikakulam, Nalgonda, Nizamabad and Khammam districts in various capacities.

She had worked in the headquarters of AP as the Deputy Secretary of Municipal Administration and Project Director of Women & Child Welfare. She also worked as the MD of APIC and SAAP.

CM neglecting Telugu: Pawan

Continued from Page 1

He opined that YSRCP is committing the same mistakes as the TDP. The State was divided only because of the sentiment of the Telangana people over their dialect, he said. Pawan Kalyan lambasted Perni Nani for calling him 'Pawan Naidu'. Jagannathan Reddy, who is a Christian by religion, has the caste tag in his name. People know who is casteist," he said.

GAT notification for 2020 released

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

GITAM Deemed to be University Vice-Chancellor Prof. K. Sivarama Krishna on Thursday released the notification for GITAM Admission Test (GAT-2020).

Addressing a press conference at GITAM Vizag City Centre on Thursday, Vice-Chancellor informed that GAT-2020 will be conducted from April 11 to 21, 2020 at 50 centres across the country.

The admissions into 21 B.Tech., 13 M.Tech., programs, B.Pharm., M.Pharm., programs and M Arch program is based on GAT-2020 ranks, he added. He said that the university is offering these programs at Visakhapatnam, Hyderabad and Bengaluru campuses.

To encourage students on national level, GITAM Deemed to be University has decided to offer merit scholarships of ₹30 crore from 2020 academic year, GITAM vice-chancellor Prof.K.Sivarama Krishna said. For this the university would offer free education to top rankers in GITAM Admission Test-2020 (GAT-2020) and other entrance tests such as JEE main exam, AP-EAMCET and Telangana EAMCET.

GITAM Introducing AI, MI in Civil, Biotech, etc

In view of growing demand and future opportunities



Addressing the media at GITAM Vizag City Centre, Vice-Chancellor said that GAT-2020 will be conducted from April 11 to 21, 2020 at 50 centres across the country

GITAM Deemed to be university is introducing Internet of Things (IOT), Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Machine Learning (ML) courses were introduced in every branch of engineering from the academic year 2020, informed by Vice-Chancellor.

Candidates can apply online on website www.gitam.edu from 15th November. GAT-2020 applications are also available at counters set up at Union Bank of India, Indian Bank and Karur Vysa Bank branches. The last date to apply for GAT-2020 is 30th March 2020. Online slot booking for GAT-2020 will be opened on 5th to 7th April 2020. The candidate can download hall ticket from above-mentioned website from 5th April onwards. GAT-2020 results will be announced on 25th April 2020. The counselling for admissions will be held in the second week of May 2020.

GITAM offers financial assistance worth of Rs.30 crores to the deserving meritorious candidates. Merit Scholarships in the form of Fee concession will be offered to top 3000 rankers of GAT-2020 for admission into B.Tech programmes.

Review meeting on Vaikunta Ekadasi held

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vaikuntha Ekadasi, the most auspicious and challenging festival among the list of religious events that is being observed in Tirumala is scheduled on January 6 and Vaikuntha Dwadasi on January 7 next, the Additional EO AV Dharm Reddy held a review meeting on Thursday.

The Additional EO discussed in length about various arrangements including Annarasadam, Health, Security, Accommodation which were made for the big fete during 2017 and 2018. He had also seen the arrangements of serpentine queue lines in 2017 and arrangements made in galleries in 2018 during this auspicious occasion through power point presentation.

He directed all the HoDs and officials of concerned departments to make better arrangements to the pilgrims in terms of darshan, accommodation, queue line management, sanitation, Annarasadam, keeping in view the past experiences.

52% of police complaints received through Spandana from women victims

● 94% grievances resolved in last 18 weeks

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a unique trend under the Spandana programme about 52% of complaints received by the police are from the women victims. Head of the Andhra state police, DGP Gowtam Sawang revealed that women were more than 52 per cent of petitioners at Spandana programme across the State. During last 18 weeks of its inception, the department has received 42,220 matters before them. The top cop was in Vizag on Friday to review the performance of the Vizag police force.

"Though crime rate was not increased in Andhra Pradesh, the police response to the complaints has grown up in the recent past. It is good to see that women victims and neglected section of society are coming forward to register complaint due to the Spandana programme," said the top cop.

Out of the complaints received at Spandana, the police department has registered 9,113 cases. As many as 39,492 grievances were



resolved till now. This accounts to be about 94 per cent resolution. However, the rest 2,728 petitions are still pending at various stages. While the maximum complaints were about family disputes, sexual harassment cases were also high.

According to police department, they have received 5,742 cases of harassment and family disputes. Among them, 4,272 cases were about family disputes only. Lauding the efforts of police personnel, director general of police Damodar Goutam Sawang expressed his immense satisfaction in settling several family disputes without register-

ing the cases.

He said that Spandana programme was successful in redressing the complaints of victimised women and promising girls from good society. He appreciated the state police force for reaching out to the vulnerable sections of people to solve their grievances. With this, the police department was encouraged to collaborate with public for more outreach programmes.

Citing few cases, the DGP said: "As an outcome of Spandana programme, the state police could take action on some unscrupulous persons, who have sexually exploited women for long

SPANDANA	
Harassment and family disputes	5,742
Molestation	73
Sexual harassment/ eve teasing	66
Rape	62
Immoral trafficking	56
Dowry deaths	9
Crime against children	8
Miscarriages	2

time and extorted huge amounts up to Rs 60 lakh from the victims in different cases. In one particular case, we could catch-hold of a man, who had exploited 17 girls."

He further said, "When compared to previous years, the crime rate has come down 50 per cent this year. With the support from vigilant public, the crime detection and prevention increased drastically. Now, more people are coming forward seeking our services. The police department shall thank Chief Minister for conceiving this programme."

SC refers to 7-judge bench pleas on Sabarimala shrine

Continued from Page 1

It was time the apex court evolves a judicial policy to do "substantial and complete justice", the added.

The majority view, delineated by the CJI in its nine-page verdict, was not agreed to by Justices R F Nariman and D Y Chandrachud.

Justice Nariman, writing for himself and Justice Chandrachud, regretted his "inability to agree with" the view of the CJI and said the scope of the review pleas was limited to the entry of menstruating women into the hill-top shrine in Kerala and directed the state government to ensure strict compliance of the 2018 verdict.

The majority judgement also said that a decision by a larger bench "would put at rest recurring issues" with regard to the fundamental right to profess and practice any religion.

"In the context of the pre-

The majority judgement also said that a decision by a larger bench "would put at rest recurring issues" with regard to the fundamental right to profess and practice any religion

sent strength of judges of the Supreme Court, it may not be inappropriate if matters involving seminal issues including the interpretation of the provisions of the Constitution touching upon the right to profess, practise and propagate its own religion, are heard by larger bench of commensurate number of judges," it said.

Air pollution claimed over 5 lakh lives in India

Continued from Page 1

It said coal phase-out is essential, not only as a key measure to mitigate climate change, but also to reduce morbidity and mortality from air pollution.

"Coal continues to be the second largest contributor to global primary energy supply (after oil) and the largest source of electricity generation (at 38 per cent, compared with gas, the next highest at 23 per cent)," the report said, adding that most of the growth in total primary energy supply (TPES) of coal has been in

Asia, notably China, India, and Southeast Asia.

Overall, carbon dioxide emissions from fossil fuels have risen by 2.6 per cent from 2016 to 2018, the report said. Another global study from Switzerland, held earlier this year, revealed that China and the US may be the largest producers of coal power, but power plants in India take the highest toll in the world when it comes to health as coal-fired power plants produce more than just carbon dioxide, which contributes to global warming.

Coal burning also releases

particulate matter, sulphur dioxide, nitrogen oxide and mercury — thus damaging the health of many people around the world.

According to Lancet, "Concerningly, the previous downward trend in coal supply has reversed, with a 1.7 per cent increase recorded in total primary energy supply from 2016 to 2018."

The report also talks about heatwaves limiting the labour capacity of various countries.

"Temperature rise and heatwaves are increasingly limiting the labour capacity of various populations. In 2018, 133.6 bil-

lion potential work hours were lost globally, 45 billion more than the 2000 baseline, and southern areas of the USA lost 15-20 per cent of potential daylight work hours during the hottest month of 2018," the report said.

The 2019 Lancet report presents an annual update of 41 indicators across five key domains: climate change impacts, exposures, and vulnerability; adaptation, planning, and resilience for health; mitigation actions and health co-benefits; economics and finance; and public and political engagement.

'One chance' is going to be last one for Jagan: Naidu

Continued from Page 1

The YSRCP government is foisting cases on TDP leaders and the cadre. "They are not leaving even the youngsters, who protest in the social media against the government," he lashed out. The families of the workers, who committed suicide, attended the protest programme.

Former ministers

Devineni Umamaheswara Rao, Somireddy Chandramohan Reddy and other leaders participated in the programme. Jana Sena MLA Rapaka Vara Prasad extended his support to the hunger strike of Chandrababu Naidu. He said that by changing the policy, sand supply was stopped for four months, but liquor supply was not stopped even for a single day.

India-US HADR Amphibious Exercise commences

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The maiden Tri-Services India-US Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) Amphibious Exercise, known as 'Tiger Triumph' commenced on Thursday with the opening ceremony onboard INS Jalashwa.

The Exercise represents the growing strategic partnership between the two countries and aims at sharing best practices and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in undertaking multinational HADR operations. The Harbour Phase of the Exercise is scheduled at Visakhapatnam from November 14 to 16 and would include Subject Matter Expert Exchanges on Amphibious and HADR operations, including discussions on case studies and lessons learnt, and would include deliberations on planning and execution pro-



cedures of various tasks: Logistics, Cargo Handling, Contingency Response Mechanisms.

Friendly sports events have also been scheduled to enhance interaction between the partic-



ipating armed forces personnel of both nations. The Sea Phase, from November 17 to 21, would witness both the Forces jointly transiting from Visakhapatnam to the simulated HADR location in Kakinada, wherein troops would transfer ashore and set up a joint Command and Control Centre and a joint relief and medical camp. The participating assets from the Indian Navy include INS Jalashwa, a Landing Platform Dock, INS Airavat, a Landing Ship Tank (Large), including their integral landing crafts and helicopters, and Hydrographic Survey Ship INS Sandhyak, operating as a hos-

pital ship. The Indian Army would be deploying one battalion group comprising troops from 19 Madras and BMP-II Infantry Combat Vehicles from 7 Guards. The Indian Air Force would deploy one C-130J Super Hercules aircraft, Mi 17 transport helicopters and a Rapid Action Medical Team.

The US Task Force would include the US Navy ship Germantown, a Landing Ship

The Harbour Phase of the Exercise is scheduled at Visakhapatnam from November 14 to 16 and would include Subject Matter Expert Exchanges on Amphibious and HADR operations

Dock with integral Landing Craft Air Cushions and Amphibious Assault Vehicles and specially trained troops from the US III Marine Expeditionary Force.

The joint force will be consisting of a Marine Mechanised Rifle Company, a Marine Logistic element and Medical Regulatory Team.

Avinash quits TDP, joins YSRCP

Continued from Page 1

"Whatever be the responsibility given to me, I have tried to fulfil it. You have sent me to Gudivada, I have followed your advice. Now again, you are asking me to

go to Gannavaram. My followers and I were in confusion. We have been neglected by the party. I don't want to blame anybody for it. I am resigning to the party only as per the wish of Devineni Nehru associates."

SHORT READS



EC announces bypoll to one RS seat each in Karnataka, UP

NEW DELHI: Bypolls in two Rajya Sabha seats in Karnataka and Uttar Pradesh, which fell vacant recently will be held on December 12, the Election Commission announced on Thursday. The Karnataka seat fell vacant after Congress member K C Ramamurthy resigned to join the BJP. The seat from Uttar Pradesh fell vacant after Samajwadi Party member Tazeen Fatma resigned to contest the Rampur assembly bypoll, the seat once represented by her husband Azam Khan. Khan had resigned from the Rampur assembly seat after he won the Lok Sabha polls. While the tenure of Ramamurthy was to end on June 30, 2022, the term of Fatma was up to end on November 25, 2020. The counting of votes will take place on December 12 after the polling concludes.

Goa govt to conduct socio-economic survey of tribals in state

PANAJI: The Goa government has decided to carry out a socio-economic survey of the tribals in the state for working out strategies for the community's uplift, a senior official said on Thursday. The survey, which will be conducted by the Goa Institute of Public Administration and Rural Development, aims to assess the impact of various government welfare schemes and projects implemented for the community. Director of the Tribal Welfare Department, Sandhya Kamat, told reporters here. Tribals comprise around 12 per cent of the total population in Goa. "Based on the findings of the survey, the authorities would work out strategies to further boost the welfare of the community," she said. Kamat said the department has observed that there are several tribal villages in the interiors of Goa, which are still unaware about the welfare schemes meant for them.

Speeding four-wheeler crushes toddler to death

NAGPUR: A toddler was crushed to death by a four-wheeler in front of her house at Shrikrishna Nagar in Maharashtra's Nagpur city, police said on Thursday. The incident took place at around 5.30 pm on Wednesday, when a speeding four-wheeler ran over two-and-a-half-year-old Nidhi Brijbhushan Patel who was playing on the road outside her house, an official said. The driver sped away without stopping the vehicle, he said, adding that a neighbour witnessed the mishap and alerted the victim's mother. The victim was rushed to a nearby hospital where she was declared dead on arrival, the official said. An offence has been registered under sections 279 (rash driving) and 304A (death by negligence) of the Indian Penal Code and relevant sections of the Motor Vehicles Act at Nandanvan police station, he said. "We are examining the CCTV footage from the area to identify the vehicle," he added.

SC DISMISSES PLEAS SEEKING REVIEW OF RAFALE JUDGMENT

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court Thursday gave clean chit to the Modi government on the purchase of 36 fully loaded Rafale fighter jets from French company Dassault Aviation, rejecting the plea for registration of an FIR by the CBI for alleged commission of cognisable offence in the deal.

The apex court dismissed the pleas seeking review of the December 14, 2018 verdict in which it had said that there was no occasion to doubt the decision-making process in the procurement of 36 Rafale fighter jets.

"We find the review petitions are without any merit," said a bench comprising Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi and Justices S K Kaul and K M Joseph.

The rejection of review petitions is tantamount to the apex court giving the clean chit to the Modi government for the second time.

Reading out the judgement, Justice Kaul said the judges had reached the conclusion that it is not appropriate to order a roving inquiry into the allegations.

Maintaining that the review petitions have sought a registration of an FIR in connection with Rafale fighter jet deal, the bench said: "We do not consider it to be a fair submission. We do not find it appropriate to consider passing order for registration of FIR."

Justice Joseph, who wrote a separate judgement, said he agreed with the main verdict written by Justice Kaul subject to certain aspects on which he has given his own reasons.

In December last year, the apex court had dismissed the petitions seeking an investigation into alleged irregularities in the Rs 58,000 crore deal.

SC'S RAFALE RULING: RAHUL FOR JPC PROBE

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Thursday said the Supreme Court's Justice K M Joseph has left open a "huge door" for investigation into the Rafale deal and demanded that a probe must begin in full earnest.

He also called for a Joint Parliamentary Committee (JPC) probe into the fighter jet contract.

Gandhi's remarks came after the Supreme Court gave clean chit to the Modi government on the purchase of 36 fully-loaded Rafale fighter jets from French company Dassault Aviation, rejecting the plea for registration of an FIR by the CBI for alleged commission of cognisable offence in the deal.

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BJP seeks Rahul's apology

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The BJP on Thursday hailed the Supreme Court's verdict in the Rafale case as a "victory of truth" and mounted an all-out attack on Rahul Gandhi over the issue with its president Amit Shah leading the party's demand for an apology to the nation from the Congress leader.

Soon after the court rejected pleas that sought a review of its earlier



Ravi Shankar Prasad

The decision reaffirms Modi government's credentials as a dispensation that is transparent and corruption-free, he added.

"Now, it has been proved that disruption of Parliament over Rafale (issue) was a sham. The time could have been better utilised for the welfare of people. After today's rebuke from SC, Congress and its leader, for whom politics is above national interest, must apologise to the nation," Shah said in a swipe at Gandhi.

CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Following is the chronology of events in the Rafale fighter jets deal in which the Supreme Court on Thursday rejected review petitions against its verdict giving clean chit to the Narendra Modi government:

- DEC 30, 2002:** Defence Procurement Procedures (DPP) adopted to streamline process
- Aug 28, 2007:** Ministry of Defence issues Request for Proposal for procurement of 126 MMRCA (medium multi-role combat aircraft) fighters
- SEP 4, 2008:** Anil Ambani-led Reliance Group incorporates Reliance Aerospace Technologies Ltd (RATL)
- MAY 2011:** Air Force short-lists Rafale and Eurofighter jets
- Jan 30, 2012:** Dassault Aviation's Rafale aircraft comes up with the lowest bid
- MAR 13, 2014:** Work Share agreement signed between HAL and Dassault Aviation under which they were responsible for 70 per cent and 30 per cent of the work, respectively, for 108 aircraft
- AUG 8, 2014:** Then defence minister Arun Jaitley tells Parliament that 18 direct 'fly-away' aircraft expected to be delivered in 3-4 years from signing of the contract; remaining 108 aircraft to be delivered in the next seven years
- APR 8, 2015:** The then foreign secretary says detailed discussions underway between Dassault, MoD and HAL
- APR 10:** New deal for acquisition of 36 direct 'fly-away' aircraft from France announced
- Jan 26, 2016:** India and France sign MoU for 36 Rafale aircraft
- SEP 23:** Inter-governmental agreement signed
- NOV 18:** Government states in Parliament that the cost of each Rafale aircraft to be approximately Rs 670 crore and that all aircraft will be delivered by April 2022
- DEC 31, 2016:** Dassault Aviation's Annual Report reveals the actual price paid for the 36 aircraft at about Rs 60,000 crore, more than double the government's stated price in Parliament
- MAR 13, 2018:** PIL in SC seeks independent probe into Centre's decision to procure 36 Rafale fighter jets from France and disclosure of the cost involved in the deal before Parliament
- SEP 5:** SC agrees to hear PIL seeking stay on Rafale fighter jet deal
- OCT 8:** SC agrees to hear on October 10 fresh PIL seeking direction to Centre to file in 'sealed cover' the details of the agreement for buying 36 Rafale fighter jets
- OCT 10:** SC asks Centre to provide details of decision making process in the Rafale fighter jet deal in a sealed cover
- OCT 24:** Former Union ministers Yashwant Sinha and Arun Shourie and activist-lawyer Prashant Bhusan moves SC, seeking registration of FIR into Rafale fighter jet deal
- OCT 31:** SC asks Centre to place it in sealed cover within 10 days the pricing details of 36 Rafale fighter jets
- NOV 12:** Centre places price details of 36 Rafale fighter jets in a sealed cover before SC; it also gives details of steps that led to finalisation of the Rafale deal
- NOV 14:** SC reserves judgement on pleas seeking court-monitored probe in Rafale deal
- DEC 14:** SC says there is no occasion to doubt the decision-making process of the Modi government and dismisses all the petitions seeking direction to the CBI to register an FIR for alleged irregularities in the jet deal
- JAN 2, 2019:** Sinha, Shourie and Bhusan move SC seeking review of its December 14 judgement
- FEB 26:** SC agrees to hear review petitions in open court
- MAR 13:** Govt tells SC that documents filed by review petitioners are sensitive to national security
- APR 10:** SC dismisses Centre's objection claiming privilege over documents by petitioners to seek review
- APR 12:** BJP MP Meenakshi Lekhi moves SC against Rahul Gandhi for wrongly attributing his 'chowkidar chor hai' remarks on Rafale to the apex court
- Apr 23:** SC issues contempt notice to Rahul Gandhi for his remarks on Rafale verdict



Mamata refrains from reacting on Ayodhya verdict

PNS ■ KOLKATA

West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee refrained from reacting on Ayodhya verdict on Thursday, six days since it was passed by the Supreme Court, saying she is too busy with the relief work after Cyclone Bulbul.

The Ayodhya verdict was passed by the apex court on November 9 and not a single leader of the ruling TMC in West Bengal, including Banerjee, who is party supremo, has come out with a reaction on it.

"I don't want to comment on it as this is a government meeting and I am too busy with the cyclone relief work," Banerjee said while addressing a press conference post an administrative review meeting. A total six lakh people have

been affected and over five lakh houses damaged due to the cyclone, which made land-fall late on Saturday between Sagar Islands in West Bengal and Kheppara in Bangladesh. A total 14 people, including fishermen of a capsized trawler whose bodies were found by the Coast Guard, had died in the calamity.

According to TMC sources, there has been "strict instruction" from the party top brass asking its leaders not to "utter a single word" on the judgement.

"We have been asked not to speak on this issue. Only our party supremo Mamata Banerjee will speak on it if needed.

Or it will be by someone assigned by her," a senior TMC leader had said on Saturday.

Sena blames Shah for Maha crisis

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Shiv Sena leader Sanjay Raut on Thursday said that had BJP president Amit Shah informed Prime Minister Narendra Modi about the "50:50" seat-sharing formula "in time", Maharashtra would not have been facing the current political impasse.

Raut wondered if Modi was "kept away" by top BJP leaders from the decision taken over seat-sharing.

Shah on Wednesday said the Shiv Sena's demands, including sharing the chief minister's post, were "unacceptable" to the BJP.

He also rejected Sena chief Uddhav Thackeray's claim that the BJP agreed to share the CM's post with the ally, saying Prime Minister Modi many times and he "at least 100 times" said in public during the Assembly polls campaign that Devendra Fadnis



Sanjay Raut

will again head the government if the saffron alliance gets a majority.

Reacting to it, Raut said, "Had Shah informed Prime Minister Narendra Modi about this decision of '50:50 formula' in time, we would not have been facing this situation today."

"I heard Modi (during poll campaigns) saying that Fadnis will continue as the chief minister of Maharashtra, but we maintained the decorum and did not object it as we did not see it as a political message to us," he said.



BSY calls defectors joining BJP as 'future MLAs'

PNS ■ BENGALURU

In what is seen as an indication that most of the disqualified legislators who joined BJP on Thursday will be party's candidates for December 5 bypolls, Karnataka Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa called them as "future MLAs and Ministers", as he assured of keeping up the promise made to them.

The assurance came from the Chief Minister as 16 disqualified Congress-JD(S) legislators were welcomed into the BJP fold, a day after the Supreme Court paved the way for them to contest the Assembly bypolls in the state.

"It is because of the sacrifice of these 17 Congress- JD(S) legislators and they quitting as MLAs, some even as Ministers, I have been able to take oath as the Chief Minister," Yediyurappa said.



B S Yediyurappa

Welcoming disqualified MLAs and their supporters, he said, "as the Chief Minister along with the party President I would like to assure you that, we will keep up the promise made to you word to word and won't betray you."

BJP, which aims to win a majority of the 15 constituencies where bypolls will be held is likely to field most of them as the party candidates.

Toxic gas leak: Seven persons detained, probe ordered

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Seven persons were detained and a probe ordered on Thursday into the leak of harmful gas at a private seafood processing plant in Odisha's Balasore district which left over 100 people sick, officials said.

A case has been registered in Khantapada police station in connection with leakage of the harmful gas in the factory at Khantapada and a special forensic team sent to assist in the investigation, Director General of Police (DGP), BK Sharma said.

Seven officials of the plant have been detained for questioning. A six-member team of forensic experts has reached the spot as part of the investigation, he said.

Around 100 people, mostly



women, fell sick after toxic gas leaked from the prawn processing plant on Wednesday night. The affected people were taken to the Khantapada primary health centre and most of them were later shifted to the district headquarters hospital here, an official said.

District Collector K Sudarsan Chakrabarty and SP B Jugalkishore who visited the plant and hospital said, the condition of all the affected people was stable and many of them have been discharged from the hospital after proper treatment.

Congress hits out at Patnaik

PNS ■ BHUBANESWAR

Opposition Congress on Thursday took potshots at Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik for remaining absent in the Assembly during a discussion relating to his home portfolio, referring to his direction to the BJD MLAs to ensure full attendance in the House.

Congress Legislature Party leader Narasingha Mishra made the comment while resenting reply to a debate on the home department by its minister of state D S Mishra in place of Patnaik, who holds the charge of the home department.

"If a teacher preaches students to speak truth and himself utters lies all along, what



Naveen Patnaik

will be the fate of the state?" Mishra remarked while referring to Patnaik's instruction to the party MLAs to ensure full attendance in the house and sincerely taking part in the business of the assembly.

"It is unfortunate that the chief minister is absent when the house is discussing on the most sensitive issue relating to his department," the congress legislature party leader said.

FROM BIHAR TO GUJARAT

First-timers flock to Ayodhya after SC verdict

PNS ■ AYODHYA

Wearing a yellow kurta with 'Jai Shri Ram' prints and sporting a prominent 'tilak' on his forehead, teenager Shivam Kumar travelled all the way from Bihar's Rohtas district to Ayodhya, carrying a sack full of bricks to deposit at a Ram temple workshop in the holy town.

The November 9 Supreme Court verdict on the Ayodhya issue was a moment of unbridled joy for the Ram devotees.

"I was just too anxious to come to Ayodhya, and so I, along with two other friends, decided to head to 'Ram ki Nagari' and contribute my bit for the temple," he said.

Kumar, 16, joined lakhs of people in the holy town who had converged here for 'Kartik



Purnima' holy dip on Tuesday. A native of Dehri-on-Sone town in Rohtas, he is pursuing his graduation in science stream.

"This is my first visit to Ayodhya. I had never thought that I will be coming here so soon," he told PTI, as he carefully laid out red bricks on old

Vishwa Hindu Parishad spokesperson Sharad Sharma said the number of devotees visiting the workshop has spiked since the Supreme Court judgement on November 9

Supreme Court judgement on November 9.

"On Saturday night, a lot of people visited the workshop and the number has only multiplied over the next few days. Normally, about 1,000 people visit the workshop everyday. The number has now risen to nearly 5,000. The Karsewakpuram workshop has become a big tourist attraction," he told PTI.

Since the historic judgement of the apex court that paved the

way from Moradabad, was seen taking selfies against the backdrop of the 'Ramshila' wall put up by the VHP from the bricks which earlier had laid near the Ramjanmabhoomi site, donated by Indians at home and abroad.

From Pratapgarh, Gaurav Uma Vaish, 16, and Janvi Uma Vaish, 14, visited Ayodhya for the first time, accompanied by their parents. They were both wearing marigold garlands after visiting the Hanuman Garhi temple.

Rakesh Kumar, their father, said the family visited Ayodhya for the Kartik Purnima holy dip but the visit became "all the more special" as the Supreme Court has ruled in favour of the construction of a temple for Ram Lallah.

CAPSULE

Newly married couple arrested for brandishing firearms at reception

KOHIMA: A newly married couple in Nagaland's Dimapur town were arrested by police after a photo of them brandishing assault rifles on their wedding reception went viral on social media, a police officer said on Thursday. The Dimapur police took suo moto cognizance of the photo of the couple posing with assault rifles on their wedding reception and arrested them on Wednesday for unauthorised display of firearms in contravention to the ceasefire ground rules, the officer said. Bohota Kiba and his newly married wife posed for photographs with the assault rifles on November 9 during their reception, the police said. Bohota Kiba's father Kilo Kilonser is a senior member of the NSCN (NK), the police said. Two other NSCN(NK) militants who gave the couple the weapons to pose with were also arrested by the police, the officer said. The couple were later released on police bail bond, the officer added.



CBI interrogates IPS officer Arnab Ghosh in Saradha case

KOLKATA: IPS officer Arnab Ghosh, one of the Special Investigation Team (SIT) members that initially probed the Saradha scam, was interrogated by the CBI here on Thursday over alleged suppression of evidence. This was the second time that Ghosh was being questioned by the central investigating agency in this connection this year. Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) sources said that the officer was questioned at the CBI office in CGO complex in Salt Lake regarding some "missing" articles like a red diary and a pen drive that the central agency had been seeking since the investigation was handed over to it by the SC. The SIT was formed by West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee to probe the Saradha chit fund scam before the CBI began an investigation at the orders of the Supreme Court in 2014.

PM, Sonia pay tributes to Nehru on his birth anniversary

NEW DELHI: Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Congress President Sonia Gandhi and former President Pranab Mukherjee on Thursday paid homage to India's first prime minister Jawaharlal Nehru on his 130th birth anniversary. Former Vice President Hamid Ansari, former PM Manmohan Singh and a number of Congress MPs, senior leaders and party workers also paid homage and floral tributes at Nehru's memorial at the Shanti Van, the final resting place. "Tributes to our former PM Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on his birth anniversary," Modi tweeted. Party leader and Nehru's great grandson Rahul Gandhi remembered Nehru as one of the great architects of India. "On his birth anniversary, we remember our first PM, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru Ji, a statesman, visionary, scholar, institution builder & one of the great architects of modern India," Rahul tweeted.

AAP slams Centre over air pollution

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

As the air quality in Delhi again deteriorated to alarming levels, the AAP on Thursday hit out at the Centre for not taking "concrete steps" to tackle pollution despite a Supreme Court direction to expedite deliberations to find a permanent solution to the problem.

The air quality remained in the severe category on Thursday and the Delhi-NCR region shrouded by a thick layer of toxic smog. It neared the "emergency" level for the second time in a fortnight on Wednesday due to raging farm fires in neighbouring states and unfavourable weather.

Senior AAP leader Sanjay Singh alleged that the BJP is trying to "politicise" a sensitive issue like pollution and the Centre is not taking concrete steps to tackle the issue.

"The BJP, on the other hand, is trying to increase the pollution in the national capital. I think it is time that the Centre clarifies why no concrete steps are being taken despite the Supreme Court's direction," Singh told reporters.

He claimed that a meeting on pollution held by Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar was not attended by state environ-



The Supreme Court on Wednesday directed the Centre to explore the feasibility of a hydrogen-based Japanese technology as a permanent solution to the air pollution in the NCR region and other parts of north India.

ment ministers of Haryana, Punjab and Rajasthan. "I request these ministers to show some seriousness towards the sensitive issue. Just to portray AAP in bad light, you are putting people at risk not only in Delhi but also in Punjab and Haryana who are suffering due to pollution by stubble burning," he said. The Supreme Court on

Wednesday directed the Centre to explore the feasibility of a hydrogen-based Japanese technology as a permanent solution to the air pollution in the NCR region and other parts of north India. The court directed the Centre to expedite the deliberations on the issue and come before the court with its findings on Dec 3.

Noida Litfest to see participation by over 60 speakers

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

It is raining literature festivals in the country and joining the bandwagon is Noida International Literature Festival that is hosting over 60 literary figures to celebrate the power of the written word. Opening on Saturday, the two-day literary event themed "The World of Dreams and Imagination", will be held at Radisson Blu MBD, Sector-18, Noida, organizers Vibhor Festival Trust said in a statement.

Among the speakers will be writers Narendra Kohli, Anirban Ganguly, Vikram Sampath, Sudeep Sen, Rajat Sethi, politician Varun Gandhi, and classical dancer Arushi Nishank.

"The free for all festival will have 33 events and activities, including book readings, talks, panel discussions, debates, book launches, music and dance and poetry, celebrating literature, art, music, poetry and freedom of expression," they added.

The festival, now in its third edition, will also host panel discussions on pertinent issues ranging from "India's rising soft power", "Women Empowerment" and "LGBTQ" to "Horror fiction writing", "Indian cinema" and "Writing in Dogri".

Baby abandoned on MP street adopted by European couple

PNS ■ NEEMUCH

An infant, abandoned by his parents on a street in Madhya Pradesh's Neemuch district, has been adopted by a couple from Malta.

A senior official of the city-based orphanage which took care of Kush, who is now one-and-a-half years old, expressed happiness that the boy finally got a family and hoped his fortunes will now change for good.

His adoptive parents - Glenn George Grimon and Katia Grimon - were also overjoyed to have a son after being childless for last 14 years.

Kush was just a day old when the police rescued him from a city street where his parents left him one-and-a-half years back. He was subsequently sent to the government recognised orphanage 'Shishu Grah', its director Usha Gupta said. In the meantime, the Grimons, in their quest to have a baby, got to know about the orphanage through an agency in Europe and then made all efforts to come to Neemuch and adopt the child.

Kush was formally adopted by the Grimons on Wednesday after completion of all legal formalities, Gupta said.

"The boy was just one-day-old when he arrived at our cen-



A senior official of the city-based orphanage which took care of Kush, who is now one-and-a-half years old, expressed happiness that the boy finally got a family and hoped his fortunes will now change for good

tre. But now he has got a good family to take care of him. We are really happy for him," she said. The Grimons were equally thrilled at the prospect of taking Kush home. "We have been married for 14 years, but we could not have a child. So, we chose to adopt a baby and contacted an agency in Europe from where we got in touch with the Shishu 'Grah,'" said Glenn Grimon, who works as a finance officer in a shipping company.

Rs 2,904 cr payout for Marathwada farmers mooted

PNS ■ AURANGABAD

A compensation of Rs 2,904.36 crore needs to be paid to farmers in Maharashtra's Marathwada region for the crop loss caused by unseasonal rains, a government report has said.

A report prepared by the Aurangabad divisional commissioner's office said that unseasonal rains affected 44,33,549 farmers, ruining crops over 41,49,175 hectares of land in eight districts.

The report, based on a survey conducted by the revenue department, was submitted to the state administration on Wednesday, deputy divisional commissioner Parag Soman said. The state is currently under President's rule.

The perennially drought-stricken region of Marathwada received poor rainfall this monsoon, but was pounded by heavy showers in October, destroying standing kharif crops.



2 arrested during encounter for slaughtering calf

PNS ■ NOIDA

Two suspected cattle thieves were held here after an exchange of gunfire with police early on Thursday when the accused and two of their partners were allegedly slaughtering a calf, officials said. Officials at Sector 39 police station during patrolling noticed some suspicious activity being carried out in an open ground near a cemetery in Sector 38A around 3.45 am, they said.

"When the police team inquired about their presence along with a calf, the men opened fire at the officials and tried to escape. Two of the accused got injured in retaliatory firing by the police, while two others managed to escape," Superintendent of Police, Noida, Vineet Jaiswal said.

The carcass of the calf was found strewn on the ground, while some equipment, including a butcher's chopper, were also recovered from the spot, police said.

Two illegal firearms were also seized from the injured duo, they said. Those injured have been



identified as Nazim, 35, and Farman, 21, and admitted at the district hospital for treatment, while those absconding are Naushad and Kaamil, Jaiswal said.

The accused hailed from Amroha district in Uttar Pradesh but were staying in Delhi's Jamia Nagar area and had picked up the calf straying on road, he added. An FIR has been registered under relevant provisions of the law against the accused and Noida Police has contacted their counterparts in Amroha and Delhi for details of their criminal history, if any, Jaiswal said.

Slaughtering of cow and its progeny is prohibited in the state under the Uttar Pradesh Prevention of Cow Slaughter Act, 1955.

Tripura govt helping farmers with orange cultivation

PNS ■ AGARTHALA

The Tripura government is helping farmers grow orange in new areas of the state, Agriculture minister Pranajit Sinharoy has said.

The state government has given 200 families with Rs 15,000 each to grow orange in Baramura hill range in West Tripura district.

"We are trying to expand orange production in different parts of Tripura because the climatic condition supports orange productions in the state. For the first time, orange was grown in 500 hectare of land in Baramura hill range in West Tripura district," Sinharoy told a press conference here on Wednesday.

He said in one hectare of land 80,000 pieces of oranges are grown. In 500 hectares of land 40,000,000 pieces of oranges were grown this time in Baramura range. Orange is also being grown in Ampa and Killa blocks of Gomati district and Sakhan hills of Dhalai district. Earlier orange cultivation was only done in Jampui hills in North Tripura district.

Objectionable messages on Vivekananda statue at JNU

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Objectionable messages were found written on the pedestal of a yet to be unveiled statue of Swami Vivekananda on the JNU campus on Thursday.

There was no immediate reaction from the varsity's administration over the incident, which came to light after a video went viral.

The statue, which is covered in a saffron-coloured cloth, is located at the varsity's administrative block.

Representatives of the Jawaharlal Nehru University Students' Union (JNUSU) denied their involvement in the incident and said they will issue a statement soon. On Wednesday, students had painted various messages for vice-chancellor Mamidala Jagadesh Kumar inside the administration block of the university as they barged inside the building to talk to him about the hostel fee hike.

By evening, the fee hike saw a partial rollback and JNU said the clauses in the Draft Hostel Manual pertaining to the dress code and curfew timings were also removed. Hundreds of students, led by



By evening, the fee hike saw a partial rollback and JNU said the clauses in the Draft Hostel Manual pertaining to the dress code and curfew timings were also removed

the JNUSU, had barged inside the administration block to talk to the VC and on not find-

Mathematician Vashishtha Narayan Singh dies in Patna

PNS ■ PATNA

Renowned mathematician Vashishtha Narayan Singh died at a hospital here on Thursday after prolonged illness, his family members said.

He was 74. Singh, who had been ailing for quite some time, died at the Patna Medical College and Hospital (PMCH).

Expressing grief over Singh's death, Bihar Chief Minister Nitish Kumar said, it has caused an irreparable loss to the state and the country. The chief minister announced that Singh will be cremated with full state honours, an official release said.

Singh, who was born at Basantpur village in Bhojpur district, did his schooling from Netarhat school in undivided Bihar. He studied at Patna Science College after which he went to University of California in 1965 and completed his Ph.D on cycle vector space theory in 1969.



Cops resume work at Tis Hazari court, lawyers continue strike

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi Police Thursday resumed duty to look after the security at the Tis Hazari court premises after a gap of about two weeks following clashes with lawyers even as advocates continued to boycott work.

Deputy Commissioner of Police Monika Bhardwaj apprised District Judge Girish Kathpalia of the security status and informed him that police personnel have been deployed at the three entrances of the



court premises. apprehensions of a hostile environment, about 20 police

personnel resumed work wearing civil dress instead of the uniform.

being appointed at each of the entrances and the lockup area, where the alleged police firing incident had taken place during the clash, they were asked to apprise the senior officials if altercations take place between them and the lawyers.

In all the six district courts in the national capital continued to boycott work completely on Thursday to protest against the clash at Tis Hazari court in early November, with proxy counsels appearing in courts to

take dates in matters and assist the litigants.

of advocates marched on the streets near the Saket court, raising "We want justice" slogan and holding placards. Traffic was blocked and diverted for half an hour while they marched on the road.

Singh Kasana, general secretary of coordination committee of All District Courts Bar Associations in Delhi, said that advocates of all the district courts here will protest outside the Parliament on November 20.

COAL SCAM

Court awards 3-year jail term to 2 directors of company

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A Delhi court on Thursday awarded varying jail terms to three persons in a coal scam case related to irregularities in the allocation of the Jharkhand-based North Dhadhu coal block.

Two directors of Pawanjay Steel and Power Limited (PSPL), Gyanchand Prasad Agarwal (70) and Umesh Prasad Agarwal (58), were sentenced to rigorous imprisonment for a period of three years each for the offences of criminal conspiracy (120-B of IPC) and cheating (420 of IPC), while 65-year-old S K Kanungo, Chief Manager (Marketing) of Hari Machines Ltd (HML), was jailed for a period of two years for the offence punishable under 120-B of the IPC. Special judge Bharat Parashar also imposed a fine of Rs 75 lakh on the company, while Rs 40 lakh each was imposed on the Agarwals. Besides, the court also directed Kanungo to pay a fine of Rs one lakh.

It said "dishonest misrepresentation" was made by the accused before the Screening Committee and it continued even before then Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who was also holding the portfolio of Minister of Coal, approved the recommendation of the committee. "Off-late the anti social activities of persons of the upper socio-economic strata of the society in their occupation and which have come to be known as 'white collar crimes' have attracted attention..." "Such white collar crimes are in fact more dangerous to the society than ordinary crimes, firstly, because the financial losses are much higher, and, secondly because of the damages inflicted on public morale," the court said. The court dismissed the contentions of the advocate P K Dubey, appearing for the convicts, that no loss was caused to anyone as no coal was extracted, saying that "non-extraction of coal in itself has caused huge loss to the country".



CHANDRAYAAN-3

India may again attempt soft landing on Moon next Nov



PNS ■ BENGALURU

After an unsuccessful bid two months ago, India may attempt another soft landing on the Moon by next year-end, probably in November, sources in ISRO said on Thursday.

The Indian Space Research Organisation had constituted a high-level committee, headed by S Somanath, Director of Thiruvananthapuram-based Vikram Sarabhai Space Centre, the lead centre responsible for all launch vehicle programmes of ISRO, to prepare a report on the proposed Chandrayaan-3.

"The panel's report is awaited. The committee has been given a guideline to prepare the

"Rover, lander and landing operations will get more focus this time and whatever deficiencies in the Chandrayaan-2 mission will be corrected," sources in the Bengaluru-headquartered space agency said

mission before the end of next year," a senior ISRO official said.

"There is a good launch window in November". "Rover, lander and landing operations will get more focus this time and whatever deficiencies in the Chandrayaan-2 mission will be corrected,"

sources in the Bengaluru-headquartered space agency said.

On September 7, ISRO attempted a soft landing of Chandrayaan-2's 'Vikram' on the uncharted lunar south pole, before losing communication with the lander.

A national level committee

consisting of academics and ISRO experts, headed by V Narayanan, Director of the space agency's Liquid Propulsion Systems Centre, has analysed the cause of communication loss with the lander.

The members of the panel included those from VSSC and U R Rao Satellite Centre.

"This committee has pinpointed as to what went wrong. They have prepared a voluminous report and are believed to have submitted it to the Space Commission," an ISRO official said. "It's expected to be put in the public domain after the approval of the PMO," the official said.

Sabarimala takeaways

By referring its order that allows women entry into the shrine to a larger Bench, SC is buying time, not giving in



Faith over women's rights? A regressive over a progressive society? Religion justifying patriarchy or not? The Supreme Court needs more time, investigations and a larger bench to give answers on who can pray at Sabarimala, knowing that its ruling will become a precedent for all time to come and should, therefore, be well-considered. That it will affect 50 per cent of the nation's population, namely women, who could always interpret justice as hostage to a brute majoritarian force. Till then, its earlier order allowing women of reproductive age into the shrine holds. There were assumptions that the Supreme Court's verdict on Ayodhya, which relied heavily on the faith of believers and their continued practice of it, would influence it to review its own order. Simply because the patriarchal servitors of the house of Lord Ayyappa, the celibate God, had codified belief that women of a certain age group would bring temptation to a sacred space, if not the lord himself. As if menstruation and procreation were sins rather than the law of the universe. With their early hold on interpreting religion, they appropriated primacy by unequal means and solidified it as an ordained custom. They monopolised godliness when faith is a soul concern, irrespective of gender. They even equated the deity's rights to that of Ram *lalla's*, humanising the claims of the God-kings to be treated as private individuals in their own homes. Such has been the sanctity of this practice in the public domain that even Judge Indu Malhotra, during the earlier ruling, had wondered if the ban should be respected as the ritualistic right of a sect to keep to its customs as a secular allowance. The apex court doesn't usually admit a review plea but given the confusion, it did so despite a 3:2 verdict, with justices Rohinton Nariman and DY Chandrachud against another relook. Though petitioners may claim an admission of oversight is implicit in this decision, there are layered takeaways. One, it is intended to defer another ruling of landmark proportions so soon after the Ayodhya verdict and control the fallout. Second, the top court has suggested widening the ambit of a woman's devotional rights across religions, including the entry of women into mosques and Parsi shrines and the practice of female genital mutilation in the Dawoodi Bohra community. This could work both ways. For one, the localised appeal by a sect could be circumvented and made a subset of a larger ruling on democratic rights of women across religions. Or the Hindu sect could be treated at par with the other groups with a right to practise their socially sanctioned faith and attendant rituals. Last but not the least, the deferment helps most mainstream political parties, which do not want to deal with the ramifications before the Kerala elections in 2021. For the BJP, which has thrown its weight behind a review of the order allowing women inside the shrine, its stance has so far not yielded results, the party failing to win either a seat or increase its vote-share during the Lok Sabha elections. The Congress, in fact, has gained for endorsing the same line, that the hill shrine be entitled to its own traditions. So the court's need to study the objections raised is a reprieve for all parties concerned.

Yet it raises a vital question. Why do we need the highest judicial authority of the land to lay down the code of societal evolution and dynamism when we should be reforming practices and executing them ourselves? Why are we still hesitant to acknowledge that we need to look at women as they are without being referenced by the patriarchal gaze, be it social or religious. Lord Ayyappa himself as a fountainhead of divinity would not have discriminated between his people. The Hindu pantheon has always prided the sacredness of both the masculine and feminine as essential attributes of spiritual enlightenment and has made women the originator of *shakti*. Our early Vedic texts are replete with examples of women scholars and priests. Believers maintain that Lord Ayyappa had sworn not to marry till his earthly mission was fulfilled and women devotees who understand empathise with the woman who still waits for him. But Ayyappa is also the most democratic god there is. Devotees dress uniformly in black, symbolising a renunciation of worldly pleasures and donning a garb of equality beyond caste and other social hierarchies. A Dalit can lead the prayers if he is the group leader and a Brahmin follower must touch his feet, too. Nowhere in Hindu rituals is such liberalism on display. So lord Ayyappa himself would not turn away the genuine seeker, be it a woman or man. When will we understand this?

Setback for Congress

The SC dismissal of the Rafale plea has given the BJP fresh ammunition to target the party



Now that the Rafale jets have made their way to India and their indispensability has been proven to our forces, the Supreme Court was expected to dismiss a review petition against their acquisition. Politically though, it gave the BJP weather-beaten by the latest round of Assembly results, some ammunition to beat the Congress with all over again. The latter was in for some embarrassment, not because its poll plank on the questionable nature of the Rafale deal was battered electorally, but because the court warned the party's former chief Rahul Gandhi for justifying his "chowkidar chor hai" jibe, citing court observations that were never made. While the court exempted him from a contempt case, the BJP used the severity of its warning to demand a national apology from the Gandhi scion for insulting Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The "chowkidar chor hai" slogan wasn't just in bad taste but gave the BJP an opportunity to crest public opinion by taking a high moral ground. It, in fact, turned the slogan on its head to make its most effective brand slogan of "Main bhi chowkidaar." The Congress, therefore, will have no manoeuvring space in its self-defence now and the BJP won't let go of a chance of cornering Rahul on this. Union Law Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad lost no time in reminding that not only did Rahul call the Prime Minister a thief, he lied about the former French Prime Minister's statements and misquoted the Supreme Court. Without a cogent defence on the sliding economy and other pressing issues, the BJP is expected to use the Rafale ruling to animate much of the discussions in Parliament. The Congress may want to shy away from being reminded about its follies but cannot walk away from them either, considering that Rahul continued with the Rafale bandwagon in the run-up to the Maharashtra polls. He may be now demanding a JPC probe and the Congress, as chairman of the Public Accounts Committee, may keenly vet the CAG (Comptroller and Auditor-General) report on Rafale but there's no political capital to be made. Already facing a crisis of confidence, the Congress now needs to be careful in choosing its target and subject. It needs to work on specifics and choose issues that impact everyday life rather than blustering against the monolithic consistency of Modi. It has an existing grassroots matrix to revive its local presence in States first, championing local issues. That seems to be working. Anti-Congressism is now a convenient excuse for everybody and the party must now think whether it really wants to be an excuse in Indian politics or be something else.

Pay heed to warning signs

It is unfortunate that the Government has failed to take cognisance of the deteriorating law and order situation in the country when one expected it to act responsibly



AJOY KUMAR

A little less than two weeks ago, the national capital witnessed unprecedented protests by hundreds of policemen. The personnel gheraoed their headquarters, demanding intervention and support of senior officers with respect to the clash that took place between them and the lawyers at the Tis Hazari district court complex. On their part, the lawyers have been on a strike and have threatened to continue with it unless their demands are heard to protect them from what they call the high-handedness of the police.

While the origin of the dispute is unclear, it has been reported that the clash was over a parking dispute. Whatever be the reason, the scuffle between them escalated into something much more serious. It was reported that three lawyers were shot and as a result of the struggle, more than 30 people were severely injured. Police vans and vehicles were set on fire and the lawyers' chambers were ransacked. The dispute continues to linger till the date of writing this article and peaceful ground between the police and the lawyers looks far away. Both sides have stuck to their guns, holding the other side responsible for the scuffle.

Almost a year ago, a similar dispute had erupted, which had led to the breakdown of the law and order situation. Again, a Central Government agency was involved. In October last year, an internal rift between the then Director of the Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) Alok Verma and his number two, Rakesh Asthana, had become a public spectacle. Both Asthana and Verma hurled corruption charges against each other and approached the courts to ensure protection against legal action. In an extraordinary move, the Union Government sent both officers on leave and with effect, divested the CBI Director of all duties. This move was extraordinary because the CBI Director enjoys a tenure of two years after his appointment by a high-profile committee, which includes the Leader of Opposition.

However, this committee was bypassed to remove Verma, who among other voices, had cast aspersions on the Government for subverting investigations into significant cases. While I have written about the crisis of credibility in the past, the reason I want to recount this incident is because both the present crisis involving the police and lawyers as well as the last incident involving the CBI have two things in common: First, both situations make a mockery of the law and water down safeguards that are essential for a democracy to thrive. Second, in both cases no one from the Government took responsibility for the mess or showed interest to ensure that the situation is diffused in a responsible manner.

The failure to maintain law and order is unfortunately becoming more frequent over the last few years in the country. The law has been abused by individual lawmakers in power. It seems the rule of law has now changed to the law of rulers.



Therefore, I will not go through these details again.

The fact, however, is that we now live in a country where we have been immunised against impropriety in general. This is not necessarily always in the form of cases like Swami Chinmayanand and the Uttar Pradesh Police's handling of the rape case against the said BJP leader. Sometimes, mockery takes different forms. For example, the unilateral manner in which demonetisation was pressed upon the citizens and the lack of scientific examination into it that has had a tectonic impact on the country's economy.

Another example is how the Right to Information (RTI) Act was watered down or how fake news and hate speech have been allowed to thrive on social media. All of these instances, while completely unconnected at the first blush, have a disconcerting common thread running through them: They are all symptoms of a weakening democracy. The clash between the police and the lawyers is only the latest symptom of a more serious problem.

Now let's talk about the second issue, which relates to the fact that no one from the Government has taken responsibility for or ensured that the stand-off between the Delhi Police, which comes under the Union Home of Ministry, and the lawyers, is settled responsibly. It is here that questions about

WHEN THE GOVERNMENT IS FACED WITH A CRISIS, WE DO NOT SEE ANY OFFICIAL OFFER AN EXPLANATION OR PROVIDE REASSURANCE. IN A FEW INSTANCES WHERE WE HAVE SEEN MINISTERS TAKING QUESTIONS DURING DIFFICULT SITUATIONS, WE HAVE BEEN CONCERNED THAN REASSURED

leadership arise. Through the entire dispute we saw senior police officials stepping in. We have seen numerous voices throw their inputs into the mix. But what we did not see was the intervention of the Union Home Minister on this issue. We have seen the Lieutenant Governor of Delhi in the front and centre but none from the Union Government intervened. This is especially disappointing because it follows a trend where during the good times — typically election victories — we get to hear many representatives of the Government speaking on television for great lengths.

However, just as often, during times when the Government is faced with a crisis, we do not see any official offer an explanation or provide reassurance. In a few instances, where we have seen Ministers taking questions during difficult situations, we have been left a little concerned than reassured. One example of this was how the Finance Minister responded and reacted to the economic crisis. While taking questions on the slowdown of the auto industry, Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman deflected the blame to cab aggregators like Ola and Uber for the plummeting sale of cars. A response like this seems to be disconnected from reality and displays a desire to deflect blame rather than taking responsibility to fix the situation. Not one person can be

held completely responsible for a crisis. In an economic/job crisis, for example, external factors matter, too. However, as things stand today, there should be little debate on the fact that there are internal governance issues, which have exacerbated the problem further. It would have been nice to see the Finance Minister talk about redressing these issues rather than worrying about image management. The former is the kind of leadership that can help India steer itself through crisis.

The showdown between the police and lawyers calls for a brand of leadership where people are reassured that the Government is capable of taking steps to ensure that the crisis is averted with minimum loss and with maturity. I am fortunate to see the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) at work. I have seen it taking steps while at the same time encouraging brand of leadership. No doubt, there will be instances where we may fall short, too, but I am optimistic that we will not shy away from the problem, no matter how uncomfortable.

I will instead face the problem head-on. This is frankly what our voters expect from us. Similarly, I think we should not be shy of demanding same standards from other political leaders, too.

(The writer is a former IPS officer, an MP and currently a member of the AAP)

SOUNDBITE

I generally do not comment on constitutional posts, but a few people (Governors) are acting just like BJP mouthpieces.

West Bengal CM — Mamata Banerjee

I have certain responsibilities as a filmmaker. I don't want to make mindless entertainment. As a filmmaker, I have to be socially relevant.

Filmmaker — Ananth Mahadevan

Kashmiris, who came to Pakistan for training, received a hero's reception. We used to train them and support them.

Ex-Pakistan President — Pervez Musharraf

Some of the top court's recent verdicts must be studied studiously. If somebody says some verdicts are in favour of an ideology, he cannot be blamed.

CPI(M) general secretary — Sitaram Yechury

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Being watchful

Sir — Post the news that the Israeli spyware, Pegasus, targeted over 100 members of civil society, including journalists and human rights activists, WhatsApp, the Facebook-owned messaging app, is now banning global users if they are found to be part of group chats with malicious or suspicious names, in some cases permanently.

It's welcome that at least some action is being taken to address the problem of the spread of false information. Further, the social media giant must roll out an upgraded version of its app that is secured from the spyware. This way, it can be stopped from affecting more phones.

It is a matter of grave concern that Pegasus has had an impact on around 1,400 devices globally. The violation of one's privacy is a grievous offence. People may start feeling compelled to use other messaging apps if WhatsApp proves to be vulnerable to the malware. Something is better than nothing at all.

Tushar Anand Patna

Maharashtra saga continues

The riveting turn of events in Maharashtra politics since the Assembly poll results has been a study in the possibility of political realignments. The fast-paced developments have validated the proposition that "politics is the art of the possible." The "divorce" between the Shiv Sena and the BJP — after "cohabiting" as ideological peers for more than a quarter century following their inability to hammer out a mutually acceptable power-sharing formula — has given the Nationalist Congress Party (NCP) and the Congress to try and form a three-party coalition Government. The imposition of President's Rule has attracted criticism that it presaged "Operation Kamal" by the BJP to outwit its opponents and "manufacture a majority" for itself. The BJP cannot claim itself to be "a party with a difference" since it is not against horse-trading if it helps in seizing power. By the way, turncoats betray a staggering contempt for decency in public life. The Assembly is now kept "in suspended animation"; it means the doors for revocation of Central rule and the formation of a new State Government are wide open. There is now ample time for parties to try out all sorts of manoeuvres in the game of politics.

Talks are now said to be under way among the Shiv Sena, the NCP and the Congress on the contours of the Government, terms of power-sharing and a common minimum programme. Interestingly, the NCP is now said to ask for "rotational chief ministership", something that caused

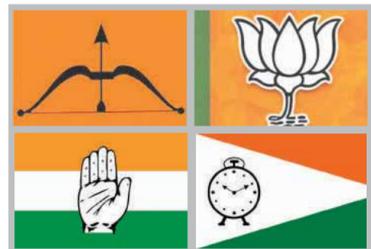
Prepare an action plan

Sir — With air quality index breaching the 900-mark, bad air is severely affecting the health of

the residents of Delhi and the National Capital Region (NCR).

It is sad that though the reasons that contribute to air pollution are well-known, we have

been unable to alter the situation. One of the causes for such high level of pollution is the burning of crop residue by farmers in the neighbouring States of Punjab,



the severance of Shiv Sena-BJP ties. It is evident from the non-committal positions of the NCP and the Congress over joining hands with the Shiv Sena and the speculation over the remote possibility of reconciliation between the erstwhile saffron allies that the current political scenario in Maharashtra is in a state of flux. We will watch with keen interest how things take shape. There is never a dull moment when news breaks split second by split second. However, how long will it take for the denouement of the political thriller in the "great State" is hard to tell.

G David Milton Maruthancode

Haryana and Uttar Pradesh.

The lack of seriousness on part of the respective State Governments as well as the Central Government to devise an action plan has led to the present saga of people suffering from "severe" category of air pollution. The Government must proactively work with all stakeholders concerned to bring down air pollution levels.

Devendra Khurana Bhopal

Piecemeal measures

Sir — The problem of air pollution is not new to the capital city. It is also a fact that policy measures kick in at the nick of the time when health is at stake. Besides, much of the policies do little to address the heart of the problem, which is stubble burning. Bans, incentives and targeted subsidies are only temporary solutions. If indeed we intend to tackle the problem, behavioural changes are needed.

Sunita Via email

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Clear roadblocks to innovation

India and the US must address key digital issues and help their trade relationship reach its full potential



JASON OXMAN

Innovation does not happen in a vacuum. The constant free flow of ideas and data across the globe fuels the development of the new chip that powers our smartphones and the apps we use to learn, play and connect with loved ones. But to ensure that these advancements and technological breakthroughs not only continue but thrive, nations must embrace an environment of cross-border cooperation and competitiveness. And few trading relationships hold as much promise as the partnership between the United States (US) and India. The US and India are positioned to gain more than all other markets from a significant reduction in global barriers to services trade, according to a study recently cited by the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Further, the strengths of India and America's technological sectors are complementary and allow both countries to innovate and excel. The Indian Information Communications Technology (ICT) sector employs around 3.5 million workers and contributed 9.5 per cent to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) in 2014. India is the second-largest exporter of IT services and now has over 550 million internet connections and over 500 million smartphone users, making it the fastest-growing telecom market in the world. In addition, India has a vibrant start-up ecosystem, which is growing at a rate of 12-15 per cent annually. In fact, the nation saw the emergence of 1,200 startups in 2018 itself.

Similarly, the technology sector is essential for America's innovation, job creation and economic growth. Technology companies account for 10.2 per cent of the US economy and 7.6 per cent of its workforce, with application of technology products and services spanning all sectors. Every day, US companies work with partners and research hubs in cities around the world to create and bring to market new products and services that drive commerce and support jobs in the country.

By leveraging these strengths through international cooperation, both nations can pursue a meaningful digital future together. However, current policies in India challenge that growing relationship. Even where well-intentioned, Indian Government measures may inadvertently cut off Indian companies from collaborating with and benefiting from US partners. High tariffs, coupled with regulatory barriers, limit companies from importing products and components that drive local business and innovation. Potential digital barriers, such as restrictions on the movement of data and data localisation requirements, would compound investment uncertainty. The ongoing US-India trade talks provide an important opportunity for both countries to find solutions to long-standing technology trade issues, thus encouraging a robust, integrated and mutually beneficial trade relationship. As negotiators work toward a trade package, there are two essential issues to raise, which would elevate the promise of the bilateral innovation partnership. First, India's import barriers must be eased. ICT products are a key enabler of technology adoption and utilisation and an essential element of India's development as a technological leader. Reducing burdensome testing and conformity assessment programmes and high tariffs on ICT products would not only facilitate US sales, but would also allow India to buy the best equipment at the lowest cost. Additionally, breaking down these barriers would support job growth in both the US and India, and push the country further up the World Bank's Ease of Doing Business Index, a key objective of the Indian Government. This would be a win-win for both the countries.

Second, the US and India must create a concrete and continuing dialogue to discuss digital issues. The Indian Government is considering a range of new policies, including a potential data protection law with restrictive elements and a broad framework for data governance. These are valid issues to consider and India is asking many good questions about how data should be handled to ensure that the economic benefits can be realised by all, including through finding ways for the Government to access data across borders to enforce the law and protect national security. However, if data policies in both the countries diverge so significantly that companies are unable to operate across borders, this will stifle innovation and economic benefits on both sides. A standing dialogue would provide a regular forum to discuss and inform digital strategies and help both sides avoid unintended consequences of new policies. The value of increased US-India trade is clear. Already, greater Indian openness to trade has led to economic growth and higher rates of economic inclusivity and educational attainment. The path to greater innovation starts with clearing existing roadblocks and ensuring that new ones do not emerge. The Information Technology Industry (ITI) council hopes that both Governments capitalise on the important opportunity of bilateral trade talks to address key digital issues and help the US-India trade relationship reach its full potential.

(The writer is CEO and president ITI council)

POINT COUNTERPOINT

THE PREVIOUS SPEAKER RAMESH KUMAR HAD CONSPIRED ALONG WITH SIDDARAMAIAH. THE APEX COURT HAS GIVEN A CLEAR DECISION ON IT.

—KARNATAKA CHIEF MINISTER
BS YEDIYURAPPA



THE SC'S DECISION HAS EXPOSED BJP'S 'OPERATION KAMAL.' KARNATAKA GOVERNMENT IS ILLEGITIMATE IN LAW AND MUST BE DISMISSED IMMEDIATELY.

—CONGRESS SPOKESPERSON
RANDEEP SURJEWALA

Understand the burning issue

With a robust combination of the right policies, economic incentives and awareness campaigns, the problem of managing crop residue in an environment-friendly manner can be addressed



SPOORTHY RAMAN

Delhi, one of the world's most polluted cities, is in the news again for its worsening air quality as the Government has been forced to close schools and declare a health emergency. The much-loved winter months in other parts of the country are a nightmare for the residents of Delhi-NCR as the area gets enveloped in a blanket of toxic haze.

With the Air Quality Index (AQI) reaching new levels each year and going as high as 1,200+ (classified 'Hazardous') this month, the city is suffocating, literally. Apart from coal and construction dust, vehicular emissions and smoke from Diwali firecrackers, stubble burning by farmers in the States of Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh (UP) are cited as the primary reason for this crisis.

While the Delhi Government has been trying to bring down pollution levels through its vehicle rationing odd-even scheme and by closing polluting factories and coal-based power plants among other things, biomass burning is something it has failed to stop. For this, it needs the cooperation of its neighbouring States and has no control over the farmers there.

Crop residue burning is a practice where farmers set their entire fields on fire after harvesting the rice crop, to make way for the next i.e. wheat. The sowing of rice is timed such that its intense water needs are met by the monsoon rains in the Indo-Gangetic plains and the crop is harvested just before winter starts. However, the result is a whopping 23 million tonnes of paddy residue in the fields that need to be cleared in a short span of 10 to 20 days, before the farms are readied for sowing wheat. If the farmers had more time between crops, they could have just left this biomass lie in the fields and let it turn to mulch, which is an excellent fertiliser. However, with such a short gap between the two crops, setting fields afire seems to be the easiest way to get rid of the stubble. This however severely degrades the ambient air quality of Delhi-NCR.

Taking cognisance of the consequences of stubble burning, the Government banned it in June, imposing fines on those who defied the diktat and recently the Supreme Court (SC) even pulled up the chief secretaries of the three neighbouring States and ordered them to ensure that farmers don't burn crop residue anymore.

Nevertheless, the practice seems to have continued as growers contend that feasible, affordable and scalable alternatives are lacking. In an effort to encourage farmers to find alternatives to burning the residue, the SC had also directed the three States to pay ₹100 per quintal of paddy straw to growers, but it doesn't seem to have worked.

The atmospheric factors at play: People often wonder how a practice followed a few 100 km from Delhi-NCR has big implications. Here is the science behind this phenomenon. During winter, the region sees low wind speeds and temperature inversion — an atmospheric phenomenon where the temperature of the air near the surface is lower than that of the air higher in the atmosphere. Hence, when the pollutants from vehicular emissions and crop burning are released into the air, they are not dispersed but trapped in the lower layers of the atmosphere. As a result, the air quality takes a deep dive.

IT ISN'T DELHI-NCR ALONE THAT TAKES THE HIT. OTHER TIER-2 CITIES IN THE REGION ALSO SEEM TO BE AFFECTED BY BIOMASS BURNING. A 2019 STUDY, WHICH INVESTIGATED THE SOURCE OF POLLUTANTS IN 20 INDIAN CITIES OTHER THAN DELHI, FOUND THAT IN PLACES LIKE AMRITSAR, CHANDIGARH AND LUDHIANA, CROP RESIDUE BURNING, ALONG WITH EMISSIONS FROM POWER PLANTS AND SEASONAL DUST STORMS CONTRIBUTED TO ABOUT 50-52 PER CENT OF PARTICULATE MATTER



"Air pollution in cities like Delhi may be attributed to the growth of the metro and the pollutants from sources far away that get carried to the national Capital by the moving air or environmental conditions, which are unfavourable for the dispersion of pollutants," said Prof Vinoy V from the Indian Institute of Technology (IIT), Bhubaneswar, talking about his study published in 2018. The study, among other things, had found that crop burning has been increasing at an alarming rate of 25 per cent since 2000.

It isn't Delhi alone that takes the hit; other tier-2 cities in the region also seem to be affected by biomass burning for similar reasons. A 2019 research, which investigated the source of pollutants in 20 Indian cities other than Delhi, found that in places like Amritsar, Chandigarh and Ludhiana, crop residue burning, along with emissions from power plants and seasonal dust storms contributed to about 50-52 per cent of particulate matter.

In essence, the timing of winter-related atmospheric phenomena, coupled with the surge in emissions when the fields are set on fire, is a perfect pollution cocktail.

The health and economic costs of stubble burning: It is well-known that inhaling polluted air can lead to severe health conditions like lung cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, asthma, bronchitis and dementia. Not just this, air pollution also adversely affects crop yields in India. But, what really is the economic cost of stubble burning in these maladies?

A study, published by researchers at USA's International Food Policy Research Institute and Oklahoma State University, pegs that number at \$30 billion, includ-

ing the economic loss and associated health costs. It found that about 14 per cent of acute respiratory infections, recorded in Haryana, Punjab and Delhi in 2013, could be attributed to stubble burning. Researchers estimate that living in areas where there is intensive crop burning increases the chance of acute respiratory infections three-fold, with children under the age of five being the most affected.

Crippled policies adding to woes: As most studies have pointed out, a robust combination of the right policies, economic incentives and awareness campaigns are the need of the hour to curb the "burning" problem of air pollution. Badly-designed policies could have unintended effects on air quality, as shown by a research from the International Maize and Wheat Improvement Center in India and Mexico and the Cornell University, USA. It showed that groundwater conservation policies, introduced in 2009 in Punjab and Haryana, could have contributed to the rise in stubble burning.

Although rice is a lucrative crop for farmers, it is water-intensive. Hence, the 'Punjab Preservation of Subsoil Water Act' and the 'Haryana Preservation of Subsoil Water Act' banned the transplantation of rice before monsoon to conserve groundwater. As the monsoon arrives in these States in July, the crop is harvested in early November, forcing farmers to clear their fields as soon as possible for wheat sowing. Using satellite data, the study found that prior to 2009, about 40 per cent of rice was harvested by late October and this number declined to 14 per cent after the law was enforced. The number of fires went up from 490 per day during late October prior to 2009, to 681 per day, peaking

around early November. The average daily PM2.5 concentrations in November were also found to be 29 per cent higher after the groundwater Acts were passed.

With the clamour for alternatives to stubble burning increasingly being heard, science may have solutions, as shown by a 2019 study. It analysed 10 alternatives to stubble burning and found that contrary to what farmers believed, these methods were not only environment-friendly, but also profitable. Among them is using Happy Seeder, a machine that can sow wheat despite the presence of rice straw in the fields. This yielded nearly 10-20 per cent increase in profits or about ₹11,498 per hectare on an average. The profits come from lower land preparation cost and the reuse of the crop residue, which increases soil moisture and benefits the long-term health of the soil.

However, these benefits come at a cost of ₹2.4 billion — necessary to produce about 16,000 Happy Seeders to cater to 50 per cent of the rice — wheat cultivation areas. With a meagre subsidy of ₹2,000 provided by the Government for purchasing machines to manage crop residue, machines like Happy Seeders are unaffordable to many farmers, leaving them with no options but to set fields on fire.

As most of these studies have pointed out, with a robust combination of the right policies, economic incentives and awareness campaigns, the pressing problem of managing crop residue can be addressed. It is about time that policymakers took note of such insights and acted to provide us all with clean air to breathe — a basic necessity of life.

(The writer is managing editor at a science portal)

The nuttiness of history in a nutshell

In analysing historical events, context provides uncomfortable perspectives that challenge simplistic versions of our understanding



NADEEM PARACHA

Histories, when confined to nutshells, become absolute facts devoid of context. They are turned into miniature caricatures, paraded as stripped actualities that anyone can dress in the manner they deem fit. This is particularly true in the age of social media, that only allows the exhibition of historical facts as end results. It completely ignores the complex historical processes which led to the end results.

For example, as miniaturised history, the 18th century French Revolution was an uprising of the poor against the rich. Just recently I heard someone say this in a podcast, positioning it as a "historical fact" which the podcaster said was aiming

at a "privileged, middle-class" foe. Indeed, the poor did rise up in France but the uprising was largely instigated and navigated by the middle-classes against common foes: The aristocratic/landed elite and the powerful clergy. The well-known historian Henry Heller, in *The French Revolution and Historical Materialism*, roots the revolution in the gradual growth of the middle-class in France.

According to Heller, by the 18th century, the political and economic aspirations and interests of the French middle class began to clash with those of the *ancien régime*, i.e., the monarchy, the feudal class and the church. This friction saw the middle-class intelligentsia strongly propagate the ideas of democracy, secularism and nationalism, which became the main ideological engines of the revolution. Another example is the American Civil War (1861-1865). In a nutshell, it is often explained as an armed conflict between the pro-slavery South and the anti-slavery North in the US. American economists M Thornton and RB Execlund write, in *The Economics of the Civil War*, that the

conflict was mainly due to economic tensions between the "industrialised North" and the "agricultural South." Prominent in this respect was the perception in the South that tax revenues collected there were largely being transferred to strengthen industrial interests of the North.

The anti-slavery position was adopted by the North and President Lincoln only after the Southern states declared their secession. Lincoln's original stance on slavery, which he displayed a year before the Civil War, was rather different. He had said: "I have no purpose to interfere with the institution of slavery where it exists. I believe I have no lawful right to do so, and I don't intend to."

There are numerous such examples from world history which, when carefully studied outside their nutshell versions, often add a deeper dimension to the end result. Many such examples are also present in Pakistan's history. Take for instance, the 1974 Second Constitutional Amendment and the 1986 Article 295-C in the country's penal code. The first ousted the Ahmadi community from the fold of Islam and the

second introduced the death penalty for those found to have committed blasphemy.

When explained in a nutshell, the Second Amendment is elucidated as the sole doing of the "socialist" regime of ZA Bhutto. Unlike various conventional religious groups that had opposed the creation of Pakistan, Punjab's Ahmadi community had backed Jinnah's call. They then became prominent in the country's State and Government institutions.

The Iranian-American author and academic Vali Nasr, in *The Vanguard of Islamic Revolution*, writes that soon after Pakistan's creation, radical religious groups in Punjab often "articulated economic grievances in Islamic terms." This contributed to the 1953 anti-Ahmadi movement when the provincial Government, headed by Mumtaz Daultana, failed to address an economic crisis. As a distraction, Daultana went on to tacitly support the movement. He was dismissed by the President after the movement was crushed by the military.

The 1973 international oil crisis badly hit world economies and Pakistan was no exception. Urdu

newspapers of this period are full of statements by religious parties expressing economic grievances in 'Islamic' terms. Then, an episode in Rawah, in which a group of Ahmadi youth clashed with the student-wing of Jamaat-i-Islami, suddenly triggered a brand new anti-Ahmadi movement in Punjab.

In his 1997 study of the Bhutto regime, Rafi Raza writes that Bhutto refused to allow the Opposition to discuss the issue in the Parliament. And when violence increased, he publicly threatened to crush the protests with the help of the military.

However, with the army already engaged in fighting an insurgency in Balochistan, Bhutto demurred. On the insistence of some of his party's members in the Punjab Assembly, the religious parties were finally allowed to table a Bill.

In an essay for *Political Power and Social Theory*, Sadia Saeed writes that the 1953 movement had largely been crushed on the insistence of the military and the bureaucracy but that, by the 1970s, both had been weakened and distanced from politics. She also writes that the pressure to allow the Opposition to table the

anti-Ahmadi Bill also came from the Left and liberal quarters. For example, Wali Khan's National Awami Party did not oppose the Bill, and a June 7, 1974 editorial in *Dawn* explained the Bill as the Opposition's "democratic right."

Now, to Article 295-C. In the nutshell version of its history, this Article was introduced by the reactionary General Zia dictatorship. It is true that this dictatorship introduced various controversial laws in the name of faith, but the fact is, Zia was actually not in favour of introducing the death penalty in this context.

According to a February 11, 2011 article by Khalid Ahmad in *The Express Tribune*, some journalists and lawyers from Punjab approached the Federal Shariat Court in 1984, petitioning it to introduce stern laws against blasphemy.

On June 8, 1986, some members of the National Assembly — which was formed after the 1985 elections — agreed to table a private Bill that would include the death penalty for blasphemy.

The Zia-backed Government of Mohammad Khan Junejo pre-empt-

ed the move and tabled a Bill that did not include the death penalty. However, during a debate, which included no more than six legislators, the death sentence was added. As a last-minute addition, the Government hastily added "death penalty or life imprisonment" in the Bill that was passed.

Upon emotional appeals, especially by those who had demanded the death penalty, Zia, as President, signed the Bill into law in October 1986.

The addition of the words "or life imprisonment" was challenged by the same politicians in 1987 in the Shariat Court. In 1990, the court ruled that the death penalty alone should be mandatory for blasphemy. It asked the then sitting Government of Nawaz Sharif to remove the words "or life imprisonment" from the law. The Government planned to challenge the decision in the Supreme Court but since those who had originally demanded the death penalty were by then part of Sharif's party and coalition Government (the Islami Jamhoori Ittehad), the regime withdrew the challenge. (Courtsey: *Dawn*)

CAPSULE



Retail inflation may average at 4% in FY20: SBI report

NEW DELHI: Surplus rainfall in August and September is likely to keep food and vegetable prices elevated going forward, and retail inflation may average at around 4 per cent in FY20, an SBI research report said. In October, inflation based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) spiked to a 16-month high of 4.62 per cent on costlier food items. In 2019 five states- Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, Gujarat, and Karnataka bore the brunt of excess rainfall and were affected by severe floods. The surplus rainfall during August and September seriously damaged many Kharif crops. "Going forward, thus, food and vegetable prices could remain elevated and inflation prints in November still may be on a higher side due to the low base in 2018.



Vodafone Idea shares crack over 20 pc; hit record low

NEW DELHI: Shares of Vodafone Idea nosedived over 20 per cent on Thursday amid reports that the DoT has issued notice to telecom operators to pay their revenue share dues within three months as directed by the Supreme Court. Vodafone Idea plunged 20.27 per cent to close at Rs 2.95 on the BSE. During the day, it tanked 21.62 per cent to its record low of Rs 2.90. The company's market valuation declined Rs 2,155.06 crore to Rs 8,476.94 crore on the BSE. Shares of Bharti Airtel also fell 1.59 per cent to close at Rs 362.65. The Department of Telecommunications (DoT) has issued notice to telecom operators to pay their revenue share dues within three months as directed by the Supreme Court, according to an industry source.



MMTC shares tumble over 7 pc on loss in Q2

NEW DELHI: Shares of MMTC on Thursday plunged over 7 per cent after the company reported a loss of Rs 47.78 crore in the second quarter ended September 30. MMTC's scrip declined 7.11 per cent to close at Rs 17.65 on the BSE. During the day, it tumbled 7.89 per cent to Rs 17.30. On the NSE, it dropped 7.34 per cent to close at Rs 17.65. The company had posted a consolidated net profit of Rs 36.92 crore in the corresponding quarter previous fiscal, a regulatory filing showed. It had a total income of Rs 6,787.19 crore in the July-September quarter compared to Rs 7,434.65 crore in the year-ago period.



Discussions on to find a solution for Manesar plant: HMSI

NEW DELHI: Honda Motorcycle & Scooter India (HMSI) on Thursday said discussions were going on with trade union members to find a solution for its Manesar plant, which has been shut indefinitely. The Japanese two-wheeler major decided to suspend operations at the manufacturing facility last week as workers protested for a over a week against the retrenchment of their 200 contractual colleagues.

INDIA WORLD'S 'MOST OPEN, INVESTMENT FRIENDLY' ECONOMY

Modi woos BRICS biz leaders

PTI ■ BRASALIA

India is the world's "most open and investment friendly" economy, Prime Minister Narendra Modi said here on Thursday as he urged the BRICS business leaders to invest in the country and take advantage of its "limitless" possibilities and "countless" opportunities.

The five countries' grouping has led to economic development despite the global slowdown, Prime Minister Modi said in his address to the BRICS Business Forum.

"India is the most open and investment friendly economy in the world due to political stability, predictable policy and business friendly reforms. By 2024, we want to make India a five trillion dollar economy. The infrastructure alone requires USD 1.5 trillion investment," he said.

Noting that India has "limitless" possibilities and "countless" opportunities, he urged the BRICS business leaders to take advantage of them.

"I invite the business of BRICS countries to build and grow their presence in India.

"BRICS countries account for 50 per cent of the world's economic growth. Despite the recession in the world, BRICS countries accelerated economic growth, drove millions of people out of poverty and achieved new breakthroughs in technology and innovation. Now 10 years after the founding of BRICS, this forum is a good platform to consider the direction of our efforts in the future," Modi said.



The Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi addressing the BRICS Business Forum, on the sidelines of BRICS Summit, in Brazil

India is the most open and investment friendly economy in the world due to political stability, predictable policy and business friendly reforms. By 2024, we want to make India a five trillion dollar economy. The infrastructure alone requires USD 1.5 trillion investment

—NARENDRA MODI, Prime Minister

Simplifying intra-BRICS business will increase mutual trade and investment, he said.

"Tax and customs procedures between us (the five countries) are getting easier. The business environment is getting easier with the collaboration between intellectual property rights, and banks. I request the BRICS Business Forum to study the necessary

business initiatives to take full advantage of the opportunities thus generated.

"I would also like to request that priority areas in business be identified among us for the next 10 years and based on them blue print of

intra-BRICS collaboration should be made," Modi said.

The Prime Minister said the market size, diversity and complementarities of the members of the BRICS countries were very beneficial to each other and urged the forum to map such complementarities in the five countries.

"If one BRICS country has technology, the other is related to raw materials or markets. Such possibilities are especially in electric vehicles, digi-

tal technology, fertilizer, agricultural products, food processing. I would urge the

forum to map such complementarities in five countries. I would also like to suggest that at least five such areas should be identified by the next BRICS Summit in which joint ventures can be formed between us on the basis of complementarities.

"The BRICS countries are well known for the hard work, talent and creativity of their people. Important initiatives like innovation BRICS Network, and BRICS Institution for Future Network will be considered during tomorrow's summit. I request the private sector to join these efforts focused on human resources. Connecting young entrepreneurs with these initiatives will also give more strength to business and innovation," Modi said.

There are possibilities of making tourism, business and employment between the BRICS (Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa) countries more easy, he said. Modi thanked Brazilian President Jair Bolsonaro for his government's decision to give Indians visa-free entry in his country.

"I thank the President of Brazil for deciding the visa free entry to Indians. We five countries should also consider mutual social security agreement," Modi said.

Modi is in Brazil for the 11th BRICS Summit which will focus on building mechanisms for counter-terrorism cooperation and strengthen India's ties with the world's five major economies.



'RBI to cut rates by 40 bps by February'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Headline inflation is bound to rise further to 5 per cent for November, but despite the pinch in price rise, the Reserve Bank will go for two consecutive rate cuts on growth concerns, a report said on Thursday.

The consumer price inflation fastened to 4.62 per cent for October in official data released on Wednesday, resulting in concerns over RBI's rate stance, given that the central bank is mandated to keep the number at 4 per cent.

GDP growth plummeted to a six-year low of 5 per cent for the June quarter and is expected to come lower for the September quarter and some analysts are also expecting it to slip below the 5 per cent for FY20.

Analysts at foreign brokerage Bank of America Merrill Lynch said the RBI will cut rates by 0.25 per cent in December, and follow it up with a 0.15 per cent in February. It can be noted that house economists at SBI have warned against rate cuts to push

It can be noted that house economists at SBI have warned against rate cuts to push up growth flagging the risk of "financial instability" that it can cause.

up growth flagging the risk of "financial instability" that it can cause. The higher inflation will be driven by base effects or lower inflation in the year-ago period when the same number had dipped to 2.2 per cent, and some pressure on onion prices, they said in a note.

It said the "fundamental drivers of inflation remain weak" which have resulted in the non-food and non-fuel core inflation getting limited to 3.3 per cent in October as against September's 3.7 per cent.

Sebi bars StarIndia proprietor from taking fresh clients

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Sebi has barred StarIndia Market Research proprietor Dharmendra Kumar from taking fresh clients for investment advisory services as he misrepresented the regulator his experience details at the time of seeking registration.

Besides, the markets regulator said Kumar defrauded investors by promising assured returns on investments in the securities market and charging them unreasonable fees.

The order comes following complaints received against StarIndia in SCORES portal wherein allegations with regard to fraud and non-rendering of services have been made against the investment advisor.

A Sebi probe, prima facie, found that Kumar did not meet the minimum requirement of five years' experience and knowingly misrepresented his experience details to the regulator while seeking registration.

"It can be, prima facie, held that the noticee (Kumar), by submitting incorrect information has obtained registration from Sebi as an investment adviser and has, prima facie, violated... the IA Regulations," the regulator said in an order passed on Wednesday.

"Further, there are also the, prima facie, findings that the noticee is defrauding investors by assuring returns on investments in the securities market and charging them unreasonable fees," it added.

Accordingly, Sebi said Kumar and "any other employee/ person working under him/



Besides, the markets regulator said Kumar defrauded investors by promising assured returns on investments in the securities market and charging them unreasonable fees

under his instructions shall cease and desist from soliciting/ acquiring any fresh clients for investment advisory services and undertaking the activity of acting and representing through any media (physical or digital) as an investment advisor, directly or indirectly, in any manner whatsoever till further directions".

Further, they have been asked to "cease and desist from offering any new investment advisory services to its existing clients for which fresh payment is required to be made by these client".

The services for which the existing clients have already made payment will be delivered to these clients and no renewal of these services have been permitted.

Apollo Hospitals Q2 net up 36 pc to Rs 86 cr

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Apollo Hospitals on Thursday reported a 36 per cent increase in consolidated net profit to Rs 86.2 crore for the second quarter ended on September 30, 2019.

The healthcare major had reported a net profit of Rs 63.5 crore in the July-September period of 2018-19. Revenues grew 18 per cent to Rs 2,840.7 crore during the period, as against Rs 2,412.4 crore in the year-ago period, Apollo Hospitals Enterprise said in a statement.

"We are pleased to report a robust operational performance which continues to reflect the inherent strength of our service model that offers comprehensive care across multiple centres and formats," Apollo Hospitals Chairman Prathap C Reddy said.

The standalone revenues of the healthcare services division increased 15 per cent to Rs 2,463.3 crore in first half of the current fiscal, as compared to Rs 2,144.7 crore in the year-ago period.

In pharmacy segment, the company said its total store network as of September 30, 2019, stood at 3,607 outlets.

Shares of Apollo Hospitals on Thursday ended 2.03 per cent up at Rs 1,417.95 apiece on the BSE.



Gadkari suggests leather export industry to develop clusters in backward areas

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister Nitin Gadkari on Thursday suggested the leather export industry to develop clusters in backward areas as they can get land and manpower at affordable prices, with a view to boost shipments.

The road transport and highways and MSME minister said the government can think of giving incentives to such clusters, which will have all the facilities like labs and design centres, for the leather industry.

"You plan a policy for next 50 years. Develop clusters in backward areas because there, you will get land and manpower at cheap rates. We can give power, and logistics

cost will be less there. We will try our level best for low taxation because the area is backward," he said.

He was speaking at the CLE National Export Excellence Awards here.

The minister suggested the industry to explore options of buying land and develop clusters around the 22 new green expressways.

Citing example of the Delhi-Mumbai highway, he said that this will pass

though economically backward and tribal areas in Maharashtra, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan, and Haryana.

Land near Delhi and Kanpur is expensive, he said adding the industry should look at new locations now from the current hub in Kanpur, Agra and Chennai.

He also said the government would announce steps for the micro, small and medium enter-

prises (MSME) sector and by that, 99 per cent of leather units would come under the ambit of MSME sector from the current 92 per cent.

"I will make 99 per cent of the sector MSME. We have already taken up the decision and we will declare before November 18," Gadkari said.

He added that a cluster will have research, skill and training centres, besides laboratories and design centre and "we will help you for that and we can make scheme for that".



You plan a policy for next 50 years. Develop clusters in backward areas because there, you will get land and manpower at cheap rates. We can give power, and logistics cost will be less there

—NITIN GADKARI, Union Minister

HMSI launches BS VI-compliant SP 125 bike priced at Rs 72,900

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Honda Motorcycle and Scooter India (HMSI) on Thursday launched a new BS VI-compliant bike SP 125 with price starting at Rs 72,900 (ex-showroom Delhi).

The new bike replaces the company's 125cc model CB Shine SP. The Japanese two-wheeler major would, however, continue to sell BS IV CB Shine in the market.

Commenting on the launch, HMSI President, CEO and Managing Director Minoru Kato said the new model would



raise the bar for technology, style and performance in the 125 cc motorcycle segment.

The new model is around 11 per cent costlier than the out-

going model and, as per the company, delivers 16 per cent better fuel efficiency.

HMSI Senior Vice President, Sales and Marketing, Yadvinder Singh Guleria said the company has a market share of 39 per cent in the 125 cc bike category.

The company has already sold 80 lakh 125 cc units in the market till date, he added.

"The production of the SP 125 has begun and the model would start arriving at the dealerships by the end of this month," Guleria said.

Jet Privilege goes for brand revamp; to be known as 'InterMiles'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Loyalty and rewards management company Jet Privilege Pvt Ltd (JPPL) on Thursday unveiled a new brand identity 'InterMiles' as part of its growth strategy.

Carved out as a separate entity from the now-grounded Jet Airways more than five years ago, JPPL has close to 10 million members.

"InterMiles will encompass both the award-winning loyalty and rewards programme (previously, JetPrivilege) and the ubiquitous rewards and recognition currency (previously, JPMiles)," the company said in a release.

JPPL, part of Etihad Aviation Group which holds 50.1 per cent stake, said it offers the members the opportunity to

earn and redeem 'InterMiles' across more than 10 categories and over 150 programme partners.

Jet Airways, which is undergoing insolvency process, still holds 49.9 per cent shareholding in the company. The full service airline shuttered operations in April after running out of cash.

Noting that interchangeability is the key element, JPPL Managing Director Manish Dureja said there is only a brand change and new benefits and features will be part of the programme.

"For us, we have to run the business and grow the business.

As part of our strategy, we have decided to do it under a different brand... It is basically extending the strategy in the last five years of going forward," he told PTI.

When asked about the impact of Jet Airways insolvency, Dureja

said, "we are not impacted (by it)". JPPL was set up to manage and further develop JPMiles, a loyalty and rewards programme.

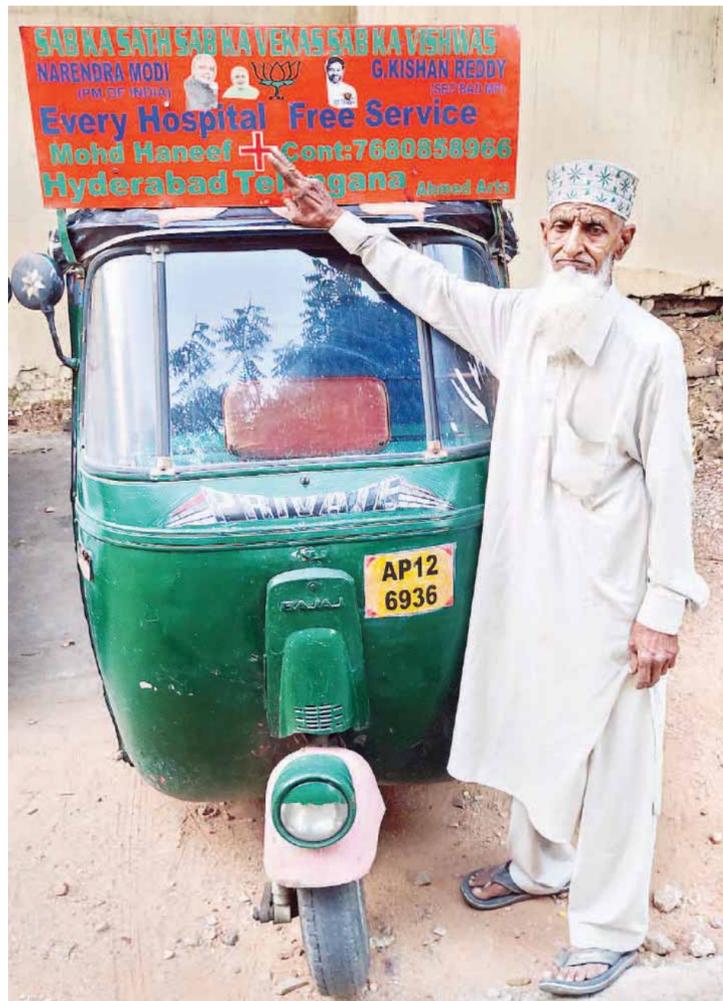
Even as Jet Airways faced turbulence before being forced to ground operations, JPPL has been a profitable venture. The

company's profit after tax rose to Rs 129.82 crore last year from Rs 121.64 crore in 2017, as per a document issued for prospective bidders of Jet Airways under the insolvency process.

According to the company, 'InterMiles' suggests the interchangeable nature of the rewards currency where it can be earned and redeemed across platforms including airlines,

hotels, dine, shop, and fuel. JPPL is on an exciting transformational journey over the last five years to expand from an airline-centric programme to emerging as an everyday travel-and-lifestyle rewards programme as discerning consumers have shifted beyond transactional rewards and cash-back, the release said.

"We are embarking on a new journey with InterMiles, built



NO BRAKES ON HELPING PEOPLE

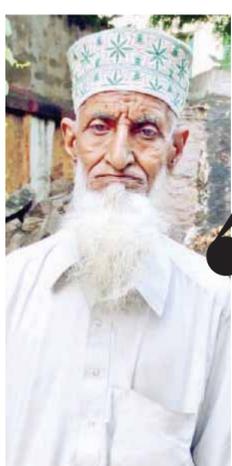
Charity begins with a wish to see a stranger's life change for the better. Mohammed Haneef Saheb and his auto have helped countless people in 20 years through free transport to hospitals, finds V SATEESH REDDY

Hyderabad-based 84-year-old auto driver Mohammed Haneef Saheb has been transporting accident victims, pregnant women and elders to hospitals for free for 20 years. Even at this age, he is always ready to start the auto and race ahead to help people in need.

"I have been an autorickshaw driver in Hyderabad for more than 50 years now. I have always spent my earnings on helping accident victims, pregnant women and elders reach hospital for free," Mohammed Haneef Saheb told *The Pioneer*. Haneef earns Rs 30,000 per month, out of which he spends around Rs 5,000 to Rs 10,000 on helping others.

He shares, "Every day, I transport more than 10 people for free to the hospitals, and I do this after I am done with picking and dropping off school-going children at their homes. I have six daughters and two sons and all of them are well settled in life. They have always encouraged me to provide free service. Helping the needy gives me utmost satisfaction."

Sharing about how he helped a pregnant woman, Haneef recalls, "In 2010, I saw a pregnant woman wait-



Every day, I transport more than 10 people for free to the hospitals, and I do this after I am done with picking and dropping off school-going children at their homes. My family has always encouraged me to provide free service. Helping the needy gives me the utmost satisfaction

— MOHAMMED HANEEF SAHEB, AUTO DRIVER

ing on the West Marredpally road for a transport to reach hospital. Immediately, I went to her and she told me that she has to go to the NIMS in Panjagutta for a check up. I helped her reach the hospital for free that made her happy. She thanked me for driving slowly keeping in mind her situation."

Recalling the incident when a youth met with an accident, Haneef shares, "Once when I was heading home I witnessed a man crash his bike at the Secunderabad station. No one came to help him so I took him in my auto and admitted him at the Gandhi Hospital. I also advised him on how to drive to avoid accidents."

Haneef says that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's *Sabka Saath Sabka Vikas* initiative, among many others, have inspired him to continue helping people.

He has a board in his auto where he displayed his phone number for anyone who needs emergency transportation to hospitals. He says he doesn't hesitate to go even if they call from a distant place.

Every Muslim's dream is to visit the Mecca Masjid in

Saudi in his or her lifetime. Haneef did his Mecca tour on his bicycle.

"I started my Mecca journey on August 7, 2006 from Haj Bhavan at Nampally. I reached the destination in nine months after crossing seven countries. It was a great journey and I will do it again with my bicycle soon. It is not easy to get permission for the Mecca journey on a bicycle but the then MP, Kishan Reddy, helped me get all permissions."

He shares, "The fact that I am 84 doesn't bother me at all. I will continue these free services till my last breath. I hope many will also come forward to help others." People in need of emergency transport can contact him at 7680858966.

State wins big in Asian Shooting Championship

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

At the 14th Asian Shooting Championship, that concluded at Doha, Qatar, participants from the Telangana State won laurels by bagging various medals including the gold in various categories.

Appreciating the efforts put by the winners, Amit Sanghi, President of the Telangana Rifle Association said that the juniors from the Telangana State dominated the Asian Games and that the country can expect more Olympic champions in the future.

While Esha Singh won three gold medals in individual, team and mixed events in 10 m air pistol in the junior category, Dhanush Srikanth also won three gold medals in the same events in the 10 m air rifle in the junior category.

Abid Ali Khan won the bronze and the gold in individual and team events for the 50 m Rifle Prone, in the junior category, Ayush Rudraraju won the gold for the clay pigeon skeet shooting in junior category. Kynan Chenai won Silver in the team clay pigeon trap shooting round.



Esha Singh



Ayush Rudraraju



Dhanush Srikanth

AMIT SANGHI, PRESIDENT OF TELANGANA RIFLE ASSOCIATION, CONGRATULATED AND APPRECIATED THE MEDAL WINNERS FROM THE TELANGANA STATE



SCALING NEW HEIGHTS

After meandering through villages, streams, ranges, people, vegetation, snow, rocks, and clouds of pristine and gigantic Himalayas for a week, a team of three girls and five boys from an international school in Hyderabad set foot on the base camp of Mount Everest

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

It's not the mountain we conquer, but ourselves," said Sir Edmund Hillary, the first man to have reached the summit of the tallest mountain in the world. That was precisely what drove the students from Indus International School to set foot on Everest base camp.

An expedition team

consisting of eight students (three girls and five boys) of grade 11 along with a leadership trainer trekked 110 km in seven days to complete the expedition — which had begun with disruptive weather conditions causing delay of four days from the planned schedule. The team, however, made up by walking non-stop in their journey.

The students displayed a high level of endurance and purpose, meandering through various villages, streams, ranges, people, vegetation, snow, rocks, and clouds of pristine and gigantic Himalayas to reach its tallest peak. They passed through many picturesque villages such as Tengboche, Deboche, Dingboche, Pheriche, Lobuche and Gorakshep. The crown jewel was the student-team unfurling the Indus School flag at 5,365 meters, on the Everest Base Camp (EBC).

"I don't think I was afraid even for a moment. I knew we would reach our destination. We had prepared hard for it, after all," said Zuzanna Wlazlo, a Class XI student who was part of the expedition team.

As part of the preparation, the school had run the students through a fitness regime to make the team mentally and physically ready. "It was a spiritual experience wherein the students not only experienced the vastness of the Himalayas, but also felt the vast potential within. We, in Indus, believe in empowering our students with the qualities of mental toughness, resilience, and goal mindedness. The expedition to Everest Base Camp was one such endeavour," said Mitesh Singh, expedition leader at the Indus School of Leadership.

"The expedition has proven that endurance and mental toughness had brought success to the team. At Indus, students are put through strenuous situations to move out of their comfort zone," said Col Sathya Rao, Director at Indus School of Leadership.





PINK CONFIRMS SHE IS TAKING A BREAK FROM MUSIC

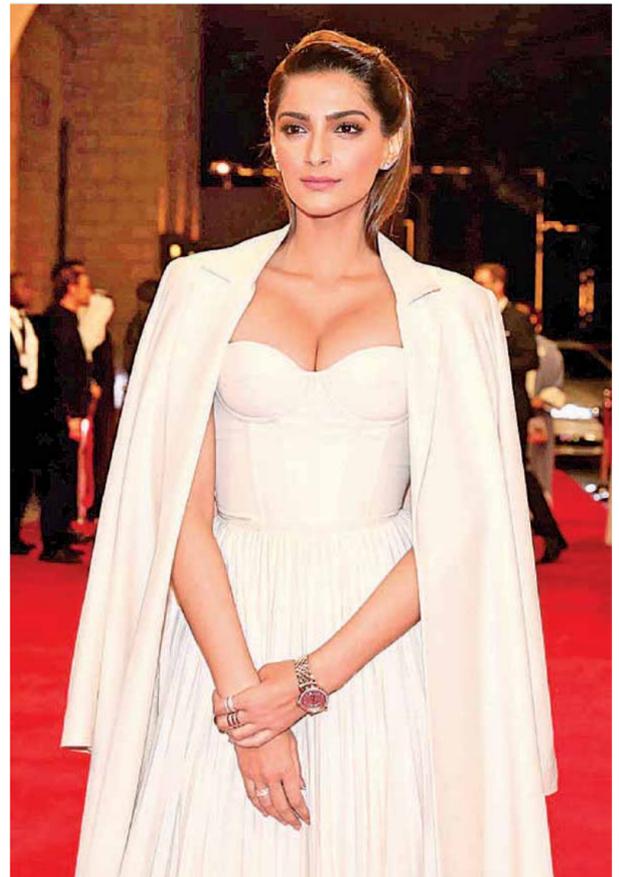
Singer Pink has confirmed that she will be taking a break from music for at least a year. The 40-year-old singer has spent the past two years on the road with her successful Beautiful Trauma World Tour and she is now looking in a different direction for her future, reports *mirror.co.uk*. Pink arrived at the Country

Music Association Awards for 2019 with her kids in tow as she and husband Carey Hart made the event a family affair. Speaking about her future on the red carpet, Pink said: "It's time to do something else for a minute." Ahead of the ceremony, Pink posed for pictures with Hart and their two kids, daughter Willow, 8, and son Jameson, 3.

RAKUL PREET EXCITED ABOUT CROSS-BORDER ROM-COM WITH ARJUN KAPOOR

Actress Rakul Preet Singh is excited about her upcoming cross-border romantic-comedy. She reveals shooting for the yet-untitled film that will start later this month. "The film is in the rom-com space, and it is the story of characters who belongs to India and Pakistan. So it's a cross-border, coming-of-age rom-com," Rakul said about the film, which sees her team up with Arjun Kapoor for the first time. "We have already kickstarted reading sessions for the film. We will start shooting in November after the release of *Marjaavaan*. I

hope it is going to be fun experience," said the actress, while interacting with the media at Golbal Spa Fit and Fab Awards. The film will be directed by debutant Kaashvie Nair and produced by Bhushan Kumar, Nikkhil Advani and John Abraham. Rakul will also be seen in Kamal Haasan's ambitious upcoming film *Indian 2*, which also stars Kajal Aggarwal and Vidhut Jammwal. "Shooting of *Indian 2* is going on well. (Director) Shankar sir takes a lot of time for his films and it is a 2021 release," she informed.



SONAM KAPOOR PLAYS BLIND CHARACTER IN 'FEMALE-HERO STORY'

Sonam K. Ahuja will play a blind character in the Hindi remake of the 2011 South Korean crime thriller *Blind*. Filmmaker Sujoy Ghosh, who will be the creative producer of the film, calls it an "out-and-out female-hero story". "A friend of mine, Shome Makhija, will be directing the film. It is an out-and-out female-hero story," Ghosh told the media. The *Kahaani* director feels that Sonam is the right fit for this role,

according to *bollywoodhungama.com*. Sonam was last seen on the big screen in *The Zoya Factor* this year. The film failed to have much critical or commercial impact upon release. She earlier told IANS, "I haven't done any action and horror films, so these are the two genres I would love to explore. It would be so different and exciting for me because I haven't done anything on action. So, one of these two genres would be interesting to try out." — IANS

FUN TIME

ARCHIE



CALVIN AND HOBBS



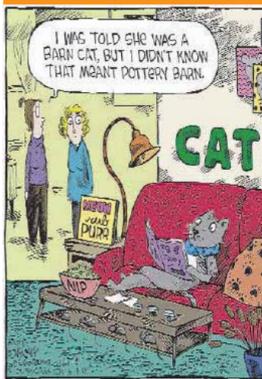
GARFIELD



REALITY CHECK



SPEED BUMP



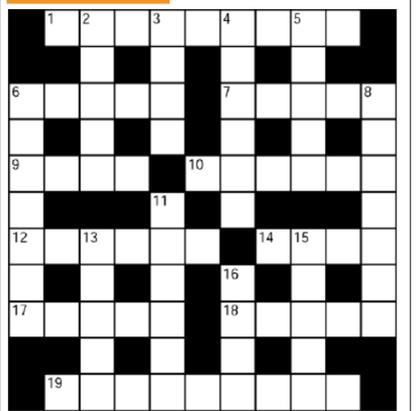
NANCY



GINGER MEGGS



CROSSWORD



ACROSS
1 This accompanies thunder
6 Welcomed
8 A weekday
11 Cloth
13 A large farm in America
15 One fifth of forty
16 Travel by yacht

DOWN
2 A sweet cake topping
3 Embraces
4 Norwegians live here

5 Time of darkness
6 A weekday
11 Cloth
13 A large farm in America
15 One fifth of forty
16 Travel by yacht

SOLUTION

O	T	B	A	U	R
R	I	G	H	T	F
C	E	A	E	H	
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E	S	N	P		
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SUDOKU

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Yesterday's solution

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

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.



New Telugu girl on the block

Harshita Chowdary, who is making her debut with *Tholubommalata*, a family drama spearheaded by Rajendra Prasad, says she didn't dream of becoming an actress, a reason why she never pushed hard to get film opportunities. Recalling how she landed her debut film, the mass communications student says, "I've featured in a handful of print advertisements and through a talent agent, my portfolio was forwarded to director Viswanth. He liked the pictures and later called me for the audition. I bagged the role soon after."

She continues, "My parents know the dark side of the industry well, so they were initially skeptical of my debut. The diktat they gave me was to pick good roles. As of now, I'm not in a position to pick my work but I want to choose the best on offer. I have my limitations when it comes to portraying intimacy on screen and the kind of attires I need to don, as I want my parents to watch films that I do. I would seek their opinion before committing to strong and bold roles."

In *Tholubommalata* she plays a software engineer

who is attached to her mother. She falls in love with her brother-in-law (Viswanth) from where the story takes a turn. A Telugu girl, she initially dubbed for her part. "My voice has a certain base and I can sound husky as well. The director liked my dubbing but after watching the film, he felt the voice was grabbing all the attention. Not keen to take a chance with the film being his first one, he later roped in a voice artiste for dubbing. Her experience kind of helped my role to come alive more," Harshita, a fan of Soundarya and Nithya Menen, concludes.

REKHA, SRIDEVI TO GET ANR NATIONAL AWARD

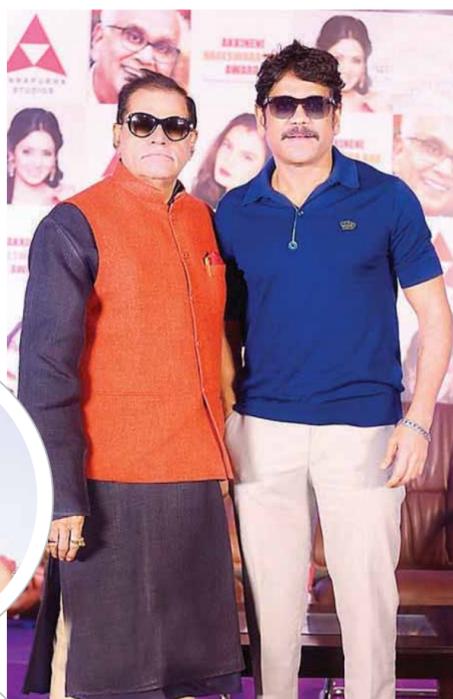
T Subbarami Reddy says it was ANR *garu's* wish to present Sridevi with the award in his last years as she is a Telugu girl who became a pan-India star. Rekha's mother tongue is Telugu, finds NAGARAJ GOUD

Bollywood actors (late) Sridevi and Rekha have been chosen for the prestigious Akkineni Nageswara Rao (ANR) National Award for 2018 and 2019. The awards will be handed over in the presence of Megastar Chiranjeevi, VC's of JNSFAU and JNTU at a glittering ceremony in Annapurna Seven Acres, Hyderabad this Sunday, actor and ANR's son Nagarajuna said. While Boney Kapoor and her children Janhvi and Khushi will be accepting the award on Sridevi's behalf, Rekha will be flying down to the city.

At a presser in Hyderabad on Thursday, Rajya Sabha Member and industrialist T Subbarami Reddy, who is chairman of the selection committee, said the awards couldn't be given in the last two years as Nagarajuna was working round the clock. "Which is why, we are giving two awards this year. It was ANR *garu's* wish to present Sridevi with the award in his last years as she is a Telugu girl who became a pan-India star.



Rekha's mother tongue is Telugu," he informed. Nagarajuna said when he rang Rekha to share the news; she said that she shares a bond with ANR and that she sought guid-



ance on the film industry from him. "She expressed her happiness to accept the award," he said. He added that she will be also presenting graduation certificates to 70 students from Annapurna College of Film and Media. Earlier recipients of the award include Dev Anand (2005), Shabana Azmi (2006), Anjali Devi (2007), Vijayantimala Bali (2008), Lata Mangeshkar (2009), K. Balachander (2010), Hemamalini (2011) and Shyam Benegal (2012),

Amitabh Bachchan (2014) and SS Rajamouli (2017). It comes with a memento, a citation and a cash prize of Rs 5 lakhs. The award was instituted by the Akkineni International Foundation in 2005 with intent to recognize the contribution of stalwarts to the Indian film industry.



RAVI TEJA IS 'KRACK'

Mass Maharaja Ravi Teja's next with director Gopichand Malineni has been titled as *Krack*. The actor is reteaming Malineni after successful ventures like *Don Sreenu* and *Balupu* for the flick that was launched in Hyderabad on Thursday. Leading producer Allu Aravind sounded the clapper-board for the first shot as writer Paruchuri Venkateswara Rao switched on the camera. Veteran director K Raghavendra Rao directed the honorary first shot. A bevy of noted faces like Suresh Babu, NV Prasad, Dil Raju, Surender

Reddy, Naveen Yerneni, Bogavalli Prasad and Ram Talluri graced the muhurat. Speaking later, Malineni said, the film is inspired by incidents that happened in both the Telugu states and that it will be an intense action thriller. "It will go to floors this month itself, with intent of arriving next summer. It will tell the story of a powerful police officer and will have all elements that one expects from a Ravi Teja film. At the same time, I'm approaching it very realistically," he mentioned. Shruti Haasan will cast opposite Ravi Teja, while the likes of Samuthirakani, Varalakshmi Sarath Kumar, Devi Prasad, Pujita Ponnada and Chirag Jani are playing supporting roles. On the technical front, SS Thaman is on board for music, while Mersal and Whistle cameraman GK Vishnu is the cinematographer. A production venture of Tagore Madhu under Saraswathi Films Division, Sai Madhav Burra has penned the film's dialogues.

NANI reschedules Hanu's film; likely to team up with a debutant next

For the past three years, Nani has planned his career in a way that after completing a present project, he would immediately dive headlong into the shoot of his next without wasting his time. However, this time around, after he wraps up Indraganti Mohana Krishna's *V*, which is in the final leg of its production, he hasn't given his nod to anyone yet. He was supposed to team up with Hanu Raghavapudi for an action-drama but due to reasons best guarded, he deferred the film to some other time. He has been hearing to stories of other directors for the past three months. Buzz about him teaming up with *Nimnu Kori* director Shiva Nirvana has made the rounds for a while but we hear he wasn't completely convinced with the script of Shiva. The latest is that Srikanth, a for-

mer assistant of Sukumar, has impressed him with a whacky story. He has given his in-principle nod and it will be more or less his next. *Padi Padi Leche Manasu* Sudhakar Cherukuri is tipped to produce it. Nani will be completing the filming of *V* by December-end or January; post which he will shift attention to Srikanth's film. — NG

NANI HAS GIVEN HIS IN-PRINCIPLE NOD AND IT WILL BE MORE OR LESS HIS NEXT PRODUCED BY PADI PADI LECHE MANASU SUDHAKAR

NIKHIL breathes a sigh of relief

Nikhil Siddhartha, who has been patiently waiting for the release of *Arjun Suravaram* for over seven months, has finally breathed a huge sigh of relief. The film's makers have announced that it will now be releasing on November 29. While it remains to be seen whether they will stick to it or not, Nikhil on his part has started promot-

ing the film on his social media pages. He hasn't even started his new film yet, although he officially confirmed that his next is *Karthikeya 2*. In *Arjun Suravaram*, a remake of 2016 Tamil hit *Kanithan*; Nikhil will be seen as a journalist who exposes a fake certificate scam after being falsely implicated for cheating banks. Lavanya Tripathi is cast as his romantic interest. It is directed by original director TN Santosh.

It has been cleared with a 'U/A' certificate earlier this summer.

NIKHIL WILL BE SEEN AS A JOURNALIST WHO EXPOSES A FAKE CERTIFICATE SCAM IN HIS NEXT



Injury-time goal saves India



PTI ■ DUSHANBE

India escaped with a 1-1 draw after an injury-time goal saved them from a 2-0 defeat against Afghanistan in their FIFA World Cup Qualifier match here on Thursday.

The result meant the 106-ranked India remained winless in their qualifying campaign so far.

When the visitors seemed headed for their second defeat, substitute Seiminlin Doungel (90+3) provided India with a lifeline, outjumping his markers to head one into the far post.

Afghanistan had taken the lead through Zelfagar Nazary's strike (45+1), putting India on the backfoot.

India remained at the fourth position in Group E with three points from four

matches, while Afghanistan continued to be on the third with four points.

Starting the away game, being played in extremely cold conditions at the Central Republican Stadium, on a bright note, India conceded a goal in the first half's injury time (45+1).

Afghanistan went into lead after a fine move saw David Najem play a square ball to Zelfagar Nazary at the centre of the box, and the mid-fielder's attempt breached the Indian defence before finding the back of the net.

It wasn't really a home match for Afghanistan either, but wins here against Cambodia and B'desh, followed by draws with Tajikistan and Jordan have given them much-needed confidence ahead of the clash against Igor Stimac's 106-ranked India.

And the 149-ranked Afghanistan car-

ried that confidence into the game on a chilly evening when the temperature dropped to nine degree celsius.

The hosts looked the better of the two sides in the first half and the goal, in the added time of first session, was not inappropriate.

On and off, Afghanistan managed to put pressure on the Indian defence manned by Mandar Rao Desai, Adil Khan, Rahul Bheke and Pritam Kotal. With their enterprise, the likes of striker Ahmad Omran and mid-fielder Fayal Shayesteh kept India on their toes, forcing Bheke and Adil to make a few clearances in the first quarter.

India looked to take on the opposition but they could not create any clear chances, and the couple of half chances in the opening minutes failed to test the Afghan custodian.

There was a change straightaway for India after the break as Stimac substituted Mandar with Farukh Choudhary.

The visitors showed urgency and looked desperate for an equaliser. They had a chance in the 58th minute but skipper Sunil Chhetri's header off a cross from right back Pritam Kotal was saved by Azizi. At the other end, Gurpreet Singh Sandhu made a diving save.

While he will be disappointed to end the match in a stalemate, Stimac's decision to bring in Doungel in place of Kotal paid dividends.

Stimac made three changes to the lineup that drew against Bangladesh last month, starting with Kotal, Brandon Fernandes and Pronay Halder in place of Anas Edathodika, Anirudh Thapa and Manvir Singh.

Henry to coach Montreal Impact

AFP ■ MONTREAL

Former Arsenal star Thierry Henry was Thursday appointed coach at MLS franchise Montreal Impact on a two-year contract as he gets a new chance of management after a disastrous spell at Monaco.

"Welcome to Montreal @ThierryHenry!" the Major League Soccer (MLS) club tweeted.

Henry, whose baptism by fire as a manager ended in his firing by French club Monaco in January, will coach Impact for a minimum of two seasons.

"Henry signed a two-year deal, with an option for 2022," the club said on its website.

Henry, 42, who helped France win the World Cup in 1998, is familiar with the MLS, having played from 2010 to 2014 with the New York Red Bulls.

He scored 51 goals and had 42 assists in 122 games with the club.

"It's an honour to coach the Montreal Impact and return to MLS," said Henry. "It's a league I know well, in which I had some very nice moments. I've always kept an eye on the club and now I'm here."

Henry becomes the seventh coach of the Montreal Impact in just eight years, succeeding Colombian Wilmer Cabrera, who was acting coach for two months after the dismissal in August of French coach Remi Garde after 10 months in charge.

Henry made his name as a world-class player at Arsenal where he scored 228 goals in 377 appearances, making him the English club's record goalscorer.

After winning the World Cup on home soil in 1998, he played in three further World Cups in 2002, 2006 and 2010.

He is also France's all-time leading scorer with 51 goals in 123 games, in front of Michel Platini.



Paes, top-players return for Pak tie

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India on Thursday picked an unprecedented eight-member Davis Cup squad for the tie against Pakistan, including most of the top stars who refused to travel to Islamabad along with those who made themselves available irrespective of the venue.

Seasoned veteran Leander Paes returned to the Indian team after more than a year along with top players Sumit Nagal, Ramkumar Ramanathan, Sasi Kumar Mukund and Rohan Bopanna for the tie to be held at a yet-to-be-finalised neutral venue on November 29 and 30.

Nagal, Bopanna, Ramanathan and Mukund had reservations about travelling to Pakistan due to security concerns, the basis of the International Tennis Federation's decision to change the venue.

"It's a special case this time. We do not pick such a big travel party but we did not want the players who were ready to go Pakistan, to feel left out. So we had to create a balance," Zeeshan Ali, who is on the selection panel and is also the India coach said.

In the squad announced by the All India Tennis Association (AITA) selection committee, Jeevan Nedunchezhiyan, Saketh Myneni and Siddharth Rawat also found a place in the team. All these players were willing to travel to Islamabad when the others had refused.

AITA usually names five-member main squads along with one or two reserve players.

While the ITF is still considering the Pakistan Tennis Federation's appeal against the decision to shift the tie out of Islamabad, AITA has gone ahead with the team selection.

"We wanted the players to be mentally ready. They can make their respective schedules now. We did not want them to wait more to know if they will be picked or not. Irrespective of the venue, only these players will be a part of the tie, wherever it is played," said non-playing captain Rohit Rajpal.

"Not all of them would get to play but at least the new players will get a feel of what it is like being on the Indian Davis Cup squad. It will be a kind of experience for the new generation players like Rawat. We have to prepare the next rung," added Rajpal.

It has been learnt, that the ITF will stick with its decision to have the tie at a neutral venue. The world body is expected to announce its final decision by November 18.

In the absence of top player Prajnesh Gunneswaran, India's singles challenge will be led by the in-form Nagal (ranked 127) and Ramanathan (90). Mukund (250) and Myneni (267) will be the back-up singles players.

Perhaps for the first time, the squad has three doubles specialists in Bopanna, Paes and Nedunchezhiyan.

Divij Sharan and Prajnesh, who were part of the five-member squad, which was announced earlier when the tie was to be held on September 14 and 15 are now unavailable for personal reasons.

While Sharan is taking a two-week break after his wedding reception on November 23, Prajnesh is getting married on November 28, a day before the start of the tie.

Tsitsipas reaches ATP Finals semis



Stefanos Tsitsipas celebrates winning a point against Alexander Zverev
AFP ■ LONDON

Stefanos Tsitsipas coasted past defending champion Alexander Zverev in straight sets to advance to the last four of the ATP Finals on Wednesday after Rafael Nadal came back from the dead to keep his title hopes alive.

The Greek tyro, 21, broke his big-serving German opponent three times in the Group Andre Agassi match to seal a 6-3, 6-2 win at London's O2 Arena.

The straightforward victory, which took Tsitsipas's head-to-head record against Zverev to 4-1, was in sharp contrast to the earlier match, in which Nadal produced an astonishing comeback to beat Daniil Medvedev.

The Spanish top seed was on the brink of defeat when facing a match point at 5-1 down in the deciding set but stormed back to win 6-7 (3/7), 6-3, 7-6 (7/4).

"Today is one of those days that one out of 1,000 you win and it happened today," said a delighted Nadal.

The 19-time Grand Slam champion, who also beat Medvedev in the US Open final, said earning a break back in the deciding set had infused him with confidence.

Both players were under intense pressure after losing their opening round-robin matches on Monday.

6 TEAMS UNVEILED FOR ATP CUP

SYDNEY: A Grigor Dimitrov-led Bulgaria was among the final six teams announced on Thursday for the ATP Cup in Australia.

Chile, Poland, Uruguay, Moldova and Norway were the other countries to make the grade, based on the ranking of their number one singles player at the second entry deadline of November 13.

The rest of the 24-nation field was announced in Sept, although Switzerland later pulled out after Roger Federer opted to skip the tournament. The field will be split into six groups across Sydney, Brisbane and Perth.

As the highest-qualifying country at the second deadline, Bulgaria replace the Swiss and join Belgium and the Andy Murray-led Great Britain in Group C in Sydney. The championship takes place from January 3-12 in the lead-up to the year's first Grand Slam, the Australian Open in Melbourne.

Eight teams — with up to five players each — will emerge from the round-robin stage to compete in the knock-out phase in Sydney until one is left standing with ties comprising two singles and one doubles match. **PTI**



Bryan brothers to retire in 2020

AFP ■ LOS ANGELES

US men's doubles duo Bob Bryan and Mike Bryan said on Wednesday they will retire at the end of the 2020 season, bringing the curtain down on one of the most successful pairings in tennis history.

The 41-year-old twins said in a statement they planned to hang up their racquets after taking part in next year's US Open, where they made their Grand Slam championship debut in 1995.

Since that first Slam appearance, the Bryans have racked up a record 118 trophies including 16 Grand Slam doubles titles. They also won Olympic Gold at the 2012 London Games.

Bob Bryan said the duo had opted to end their 2019 season after the US Open in order to remain fresh for next year.

"We decided that it would be best to rest our minds and strengthen our bodies in preparation for 2020 which will be our final season on the ATP Tour," Bob Bryan said in a statement.

"It has truly been a magical ride," he added. "However, we want to end this great ride while we're healthy and we can still compete for titles."

At their peak, the Bryans were a formidable doubles duo, rising to No 1 in the rankings for the first time in 2003.

They spent a total of 438 weeks at the top of the rankings and ended 10 seasons as the No 1 team.

'Go back to baseball' Ibrahimovic confirms LA Galaxy exit

AFP ■ LOS ANGELES

Swedish star Zlatan Ibrahimovic confirmed his departure from the Los Angeles Galaxy on Wednesday, but gave no clue over his future plans or possible retirement.

The 38-year-old striker's departure from the Galaxy had been widely expected following the club's elimination from the Major League Soccer playoffs last month.

Ibrahimovic, who joined the Galaxy in the opening months of the 2018 campaign, announced the end of his Californian sojourn in a characteristically enigmatic post on Twitter.

"I came, I saw, I conquered. Thank you @lagalaxy for making me feel alive again," Ibrahimovic wrote. "To the Galaxy fans — you wanted Zlatan, I gave you Zlatan. You are welcome."

"The story continues... Now go back to watch baseball!"

The Galaxy said in a brief statement the club had parted company with Ibrahimovic by mutual agreement.

"We would like to thank

Zlatan for his contributions to the LA Galaxy and Major League Soccer," said LA Galaxy President Chris Klein.

"Since his arrival in 2018, Zlatan has positively influenced the sport of soccer in Los Angeles. We are grateful for his work ethic and passion. We thank Zlatan for his professionalism and immeasurable impact on the Los Angeles community and the soccer community in North America as a whole."

Ibrahimovic has been strongly linked with a return to Italian club AC Milan, where he played for two seasons between 2010 and 2012, scoring 42 goals in 61 league appearances.

Although Ibrahimovic was unable to help Los Angeles Galaxy return to the pinnacle of Major League Soccer, the Swede has been one of the most successful foreign players ever to grace the league, scoring 53 goals in 56 regular season appearances.



PTI ■ HONG KONG

World champion P V Sindhu exited the \$400,000 Hong Kong Open in the pre-quarterfinals but Kidambi Srikanth made the quarters for the first time in seven months after claiming a thrilling win in men's singles here on Thursday.

It was also curtains for H S Prannoy and Parupalli Kashyap after they suffered contrasting losses in the second round.

World number 6 Sindhu went down 18-21, 21-11, 16-21 to world number 18 Busanan Ongbamrunghan of Thailand in 69

Sindhu poor show continues

minutes to continue her recent dismal run in international circuit. It was Sindhu's first loss to the Thailand player in 11 meetings.

Earlier, former world number 1 Srikanth, who slipped to the 13th spot in the latest BWF rankings this week, emerged as the only Indian survivor after notching up a 21-11, 15-21, 21-19 win over compatriot Sourabh Verma in the men's singles second round. Srikanth had last

reached the quarter-finals at the Singapore Open in April. The Guntur shuttler, who received a first-round bye from world number 1 Kento Momota of Japan, will face Olympic champion Chen Long of China next.

Earlier, H S Prannoy suffered a 12-21, 19-21 loss to sixth seed of Indonesian Jonatan Christie in the second round.

Former Commonwealth Games

champion Kashyap played his heart out before going down narrowly to world number 2 Chou Tien Chen of Chinese Taipei 21-12, 21-23, 10-21 in a match that lasted exactly an hour.

In other results, fourth seeded Japanese pair of Arisa Higashino and Yuta Watanabe beat Indian pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Ashwini Ponnappa 21-19, 21-12 in 42 minutes in the mixed doubles.

I'm coming for the One Championship World Title: Ritu

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Indian wrestling superstar Ritu Phogat is set to make her professional mixed martial arts debut when she takes on Korea's Nam Hee Kim in an atomweight contest. The pair faced-off on Thursday at an open workout and are scheduled to meet in the One Championship ring at One: Age Of Dragons, which takes place on 16 November, at the Cadillac Arena in Beijing, China.

Ahead of her first foray into the mixed martial arts arena, the 25-year-old details how she envisions her path unfolding in a new sport, her ultimate goal, and how she plans to accomplish the mission she has set for herself.

"No question, I want to become a mixed martial arts World Champion, and everything I'm doing



now is preparing me for that," said Phogat. "I made the decision to jump into this with my full heart and will. My goal is to become the first Indian woman to win a mixed martial arts World Championship. I believe I'm in a great position to represent my country and I want to inspire as many women as I can. It's an honor."

Phogat is already an accomplished athlete, having garnered multiple accolades throughout her competition career. She is a Commonwealth Wrestling Championships Gold Medallist, World U23 Wrestling World Championships Silver Medallist, Asian Wrestling Championships Bronze Medallist, and multiple-time Indian National Wrestling Champion.

Already a recognizable face in her home country, Phogat now enters the international arena.

She looks to make her presence known. "One of my goals is to bring honor to Indian martial arts. I think it's really important that we celebrate my country's culture and history and I really hope I can represent that well on the global stage," said Phogat. "I have big plans, but first, I have to

take care of business against an opponent who wants to spoil the party. I've prepared well for this, but this is my first time, and we'll have to see where I'm at after this fight."

Ritu Phogat will make her professional mixed martial arts debut tomorrow and how she performs against her opponent, Nam Hee Kim, will be a great indicator as to how far she has yet to climb the mountain until she reaches the top. Reaching the pinnacle of the sport is something she is completely focused on. For Phogat, it's only a matter of time. "I'm in no rush."

I'm young, I'm strong, and I'm hungry," Phogat concluded. "Give me a few fights, let me get a feel for this and I'll be contending for a World Title soon. I promise my fans I'll give them something to cheer about. I want to make my country proud."