



**OPINION 8**  
CHINA'S  
HIMALAYAN PLOY

**HYDERABAD 11**  
THE RISE OF  
WEBCOMICS

**SPORTS 16**  
2-0! INDIA  
WIN SERIES

HYDERABAD, MONDAY OCTOBER 14, 2019; PAGES 16 ₹3

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THE BIG  
BOX-OFFICE  
FIGHT

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## Pope elevates Mariam Thresia, four others to sainthood

VATICAN CITY: Indian nun Mariam Thresia and four others were declared Saints by Pope Francis at a grand ceremony at the Vatican City on Sunday.

Mariam Thresia, who founded the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Family in Thrissur in May 1914, was raised to the highest position within the centuries-old institution during the ceremony at the St Peter's Square. The nun from Kerala was canonised along with English Cardinal John Henry Newman, Swiss laywoman Marguerite Bays, Brazilian Sister Dulce Lopes and Italian Sister Giuseppina Vannini.

## World Bank warns India of 'severe' slowdown

NEW DELHI: The World Bank on Sunday slashed its growth forecast for India's current fiscal year to 6 per cent, down from 7.5 per cent, warning that the "severe" slowdown could further weaken the country's stuttering financial sector.

In its last forecast in April, the bank had said that India's economic outlook was strong and expected growth of 7.5 per cent during the current fiscal year that began in April. But the country is currently growing at its slowest pace in six years, expanding by just 5 per cent in the April-June quarter, hit by flagging consumer demand and a slackening in government spending. India's industrial output also shrank at its fastest rate in more than six years in August, data released last week showed, indicating that a slew of government measures had yet to underpin a recovery.

## FPIs pull out over Rs 6,200 cr in October so far

NEW DELHI: Foreign portfolio investors withdrew over Rs 6,200 crore from Indian capital markets in the first two weeks of October, as global recession fears and trade war concerns weighed on sentiments.

Foreign investors pulled out a net amount of Rs 4,955.2 crore from the equities and Rs 1,261.9 from the debt segment, taking the total net withdrawal to Rs 6,217.1 crore during October 1-11, as per latest depositaries data.

Overseas investors were net buyers in the preceding month and had infused a net sum of Rs 6,557.8 crore in the domestic capital markets (both equities and debt), according to the data.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:

Ashwini & Sukla Paksha

Panchangam

Tithi : Pratipada : 04:29 am (Next Day)

Nakshatram: Revathi : 10:21 am

Time to Avoid: (Bad time to start

any important work)

Rahukalam: 07:39 am - 09:07 am

Yamagandam: 10:34 am - 12:02 pm

Variyam: NIL

Gulika: 01:29 pm - 02:56 pm

Good Time: (to start any important work)

Amritakalam: 07:42 am - 09:28 am

Ahijit Muhurtham: 11:38 am - 12:25 pm

HYDERABAD  
WEATHER

Forecast: Isolated Thunderstorms

Temp: 29/22

Humidity: 94%

Sunrise: 06:08

Sunset: 05:55

Current Weather Conditions

Updated October 13, 2019 5:00 PM

STRIKE ENTERS NINTH DAY

## TSRTC driver succumbs to burns, protests break out

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A 55-year-old TSRTC driver died on Sunday, a day after he set himself ablaze, even as the strike by the transport employees in Telangana entered the ninth day.

D Srinivas Reddy, who was part of the group of employees on a state-wide strike for the last nine days, died of burn injuries, hospital sources here said. The driver had doused himself with kerosene and set himself ablaze near his house in Khammam, about 190 km from here, reportedly in protest against the government not acceding to the demands of striking employees.

However police said they were investigating the reason behind his suicide.

As news about Reddy's death



RTC Cantonment depot employees protesting half-naked at Jubilee Bus Station in Secunderabad on Sunday

spread, a large number of striking employees of Telangana State Road Transport Corporation gathered near the hospital, but police at the spot whisked them away in police vehicles. Protests also broke out in different parts of the city and

other places, with employees raising slogans and holding the state government responsible for Reddy's death.

The employees have been on strike since the last nine days, demanding merger of RTC with the government and recruit-

### Another RTC employee ends life

Another RTC employee killed himself by hanging at his residence in Langer House area on Sunday. The deceased, identified as Surender Goud, has served TSRTC as conductor for 14 years. Sources said that Goud had taken a loan to build a house. He could not pay the installments and cheques issued by him started bouncing. He slipped into depression and took the extreme step. The Kulsumpura police booked a case and shifted the body for post-mortem examination.

ment to various posts, among others.

Continued on Page 4

## Modi dares Opposition to bring back Article 370

PNS ■ JALGAON

Stepping up attack on the Congress and NCP over abrogation of Article 370, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday dared them to declare in their manifesto that they will bring back the provisions which gave special status to Jammu and Kashmir. Addressing his first rally ahead of the October 21 Maharashtra Assembly polls, Modi said Jammu and Kashmir was "not just a parcel of land, but crown of India", and assured it will not take more than four months to normalise the kind of situation that prevailed there for 40 years. He accused the opposition parties of politicising the issue of Article 370 and charged them with "speaking on the same lines as that of the neighbouring country".

The prime minister lavished praise on the Devendra Fadnavis-led Maharashtra government for its five-year performance, which he said, was "corruption-free" and inspired confidence among all, including farmers and industries.



Attacking the Congress and NCP, Modi said it was "unfortunate" that they were "politicising" the "unprecedented" decision of scrapping of Article 370. Their leaders thought exactly opposite of what the entire nation feels about Jammu and Kashmir, he said.

"You look at the statements made by Congress, NCP of late...They seem to be speaking one lines of the neighbouring country," Modi said, without

naming the leaders as he apparently referred to Pakistan.

Accusing the opposition leaders of shedding crocodile tears on the issue of Article 370, he said, "I challenge them, if they have guts, declare in their manifesto for state election and future polls too, that they will bring back Article 370 and 35A, which the BJP, the Modi government scrapped...that they will change the August 5 decision."

## Ravi Prasad withdraws comments linking economy's health with Bollywood collections

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Facing flak after he cited Rs 120 crore business done by three movies on a single day to rebut suggestions of an economic slump in the country, Union minister Ravi Shankar Prasad on Sunday withdrew his comments. Prasad's comments in Mumbai on Saturday coupled with his criticism of an NSSO report on high unemployment rate and IMF's report

of a slowdown in India had attracted flak and the senior BJP leader was also trolled online.

In a statement issued on Sunday, Prasad claimed that one part of his statement had been "completely twisted out of context", and said "being a sensitive person, I withdraw this comment".

"My comments made yesterday in Mumbai about three films making Rs 120 crore in

a single day- the highest ever, was a factually correct statement. I had stated this as I was in Mumbai- the film capital of India. We are very proud of our film industry which provided employment to lakhs of people and contributes significantly by way of taxes.

"I had also explained in detail about the various measures the government has taken as pro-people move to strengthen our economy.



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## KCR likely to soften his stand on RTC strike

L VENKAT RAM REDDY  
■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, despite his uncompromising stance on TSRTC strike from Day-1, is now having second thoughts and may soften his stand in the days ahead as he is understood to be under tremendous pressure from all sides with the 9-day-old stir snowballing into a major law and order issue.

According to highly-placed sources, the government has withheld its plan to serve dismissal orders to the sacked staff. The government is now planning to hold talks with RTC unions again. Although KCR may not be part of the direct talks with RTC unions initially, the confabulations are likely to be held at the cabinet sub-committee level.

The death of RTC driver Srinivas Reddy on Sunday, who on Saturday immolated



● Orders for dismissal of striking staff put on hold

● Govt to win over RTC unions ahead of Huzumagar bypoll

● Pressure of united oppn and mounting resentment among govt staff

● Poor response to RTC mgmt drive for temporary recruitment

himself to protest the state government's tough stand on RTC strike, attracted nationwide media attention and

drew flak from various sections, putting the state government in a fix.

Continued on Page 2

RTI QUERY IN CM PET DOG'S DEATH CASE

## Hyderabad police declines to give FIR copy

NAVEEN KUMAR  
■ HYDERABAD

The Banjara Hills police have rejected an RTI query seeking a certified copy of FIR filed in case pertaining to the death of Telangana Chief Minister's pet dog Husky.

In response to the query, the official reason cited by the police was that it might 'impede' investigation or 'influence' the fare investigation' (sic). The Banjara Hills police inspector Kalinga Rao confirmed that the RTI query was indeed rejected, as investigation in the case was still under way.

Early in September, the police booked a case against a veterinary doctor for alleged negligence that resulted in the death of Husky, a pet dog at Pragati Bhavan, the official residence of Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao.

The 11-month-old dog belonged to the Hulk breed, which is a cross between a pit bull terrier and a bulldog.



The Banjara Hills police inspector Kalinga Rao confirmed that the RTI query was indeed rejected, as investigation in the case was still under way

Husky died allegedly after the veterinarian administered an injection on September 11.

Based on a complaint filed by Asif Ali Khan, who handles pet dogs at Pragati Bhavan, the police registered a case and launched a probe.

Continued on Page 3

## DMK claims 30 EVMs for bypoll in TN shifted suddenly

PNS ■ CHENNAI

The DMK on Sunday alleged 30 Electronic Voting Machines (EVMs) meant for the October 21 Nanguneri Assembly bypoll in Tamil Nadu have been "suddenly shifted" for "unknown reasons."

DMK Organisation Secretary and party's Rajya Sabha member R S Bharathi wrote to Chief Election Commissioner Sunil Arora



and Tamil Nadu Chief Electoral Officer Satyabrata Sahoo seeking an enquiry into the matter. He urged the EC that the EVMs be restored back to their original place and

be kept under adequate protection without giving room "for any suspicious activities."

According to information from the chief agent of Congress candidate Ruby R Manoharan, "30 EVMs which were kept for bye-election at Nanguneri Taluk Office are suddenly shifted to Tirunelveli Collectorate for unknown reasons during the mid-night of October 12," Bharathi said in his letter.

## Social media, pranayam part of UGC's 'life skills'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ethics and etiquettes of social media, how to use Google search better, yoga and pranayama and resume writing are part of the "life skills" curriculum developed by the University Grants Commission (UGC).

The commission had recently launched "Jeevan Kaushal", a life skills programme in the curriculum for under-graduate courses across the country.

The programme, which carries eight credit points, can be accommodated in any semester and is aimed at inculcating emotional and intellectual competencies in students and develop verbal and non-verbal communication skills.

"Today when we talk about writing skills and communica-



The programme, which carries eight credit points, can be accommodated in any semester and is aimed at inculcating emotional and intellectual competencies in students and develop verbal and non-verbal communication skills

tion skills, we cannot ignore writing on social media. The social media websites are a good medium to connect but students must know the advantages and disadvantages.

"There have to be some ethics and etiquettes of social media and the curriculum will teach them the same. There is also a module on how to use Google search better," a senior UGC

official said. The official said often students do not know the difference between a curriculum vitae (CV), resume and a bio-data. Writing a good resume is also a life skill which every student must learn before entering the professional world.

"What will learners gain if they practice love and compassion? What will they lose if they don't? What are the listening skills one must practice as a team member and how differ-

ent they should be as a team leader? All these skills the students should be trained in," the official said. Personal skills like empathising and trusting colleagues for improving interpersonal relations, projecting a good personal image to have a positive impact on one's career, networking and negotiation skills besides personal and professional moral codes of conduct are part of the curriculum.

The curriculum has three

electives — integral human being, yoga and pranayama and gratitude.

While the first elective talks about obligation to self, parents and society besides a module on living with others with their acceptance, the module on gratitude is about duty versus rights.

"The module on yoga talks about difference between yoga and pranayama and their inter-relatedness. What should be the asanas performed before examination or a presentation? All these things are listed in the curriculum," the official said.

"The curriculum has been developed by an expert committee with an aim to support our graduates to unlock and discover their true potential and making them social responsive citizens," the official added.

## Audio clip on complaint against CM goes viral

K VENKATESHWARLU  
■ HYDERABAD

An audio recording of the purported conversation between an angry complainant and the person who received it at the Grievances Cell of CMO went viral on social media platforms on Sunday.

The 2.56-minute audio pertains to a complaint from one Ranjith Kumar, 33, hailing from Karimnagar mandal in Karimnagar district, against none other than Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao for extending the 16-day-long Dasara vacation for students by a week.

In the audio clip, Ranjith is

heard saying: "What is going on in the State? The state is fully in disturbed mood. Children already forgot everything. Once again the government is extending holidays one more week. The RTC employees are doing their strike. The Chief Minister is arrogantly behaving. In-between the two (RTC employees and Chief Minister) we are facing troubles. We are suffering a lot. Whether a Chief Minister, who is in pivotal position, would talk like that? The Chief Minister says run the buses to ensure that the people not to face troubles.

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Congress, already on shaky grounds in Telangana, also finds itself ill at ease about which side to back in the TSRTC strike. While some state leaders like Revanth Reddy and Seethakka have backed the striking RTC employees, many others are holding their horses and hedging their bets before backing the strike in view of the looming Huzurnagar Assembly by-elections. They aren't sure if the strike really has large-scale popular support among people and are not willing to commit one way or the other. Some of them fear conceding advantage to TRS by allowing it to lay blame of inconveniencing commuters at their doorstep. BJP, on the other hand is not in two minds about the strike. Its leaders, both at the state and

## Cong can't strike a balance over RTC stir

central level, have clearly thrown their lot with the striking RTC workers and called the government handling highhanded and arbitrary. Strikingly different from the Congress position where the likes of Revanth Reddy and others are taking part in RTC employees' dharnas, some other partymen don't want to be seen anywhere near the dharna sites.

### Cheeky, point-blank salvos from VH

There are occasions where you tactfully avoid confrontation with rivals, work your way around but

end up conceding vital space to opponents. There's this other way where you say it upfront, hold your ground and also have your way. Senior Congress leader V Hanumantha Rao apparently takes this no-nonsense approach of saying it like it is. He has in the past spoken his mind about former governor ESL Narasimhan being allegedly a little slow in exercising authority and a little inactive. That was then. VH has now trained guns on the new Telangana governor Tamilisai Soundararajan too. He recently said Tamilisai does not give an audience to



Congress leaders and avoids them. This was right in the face of the Governor who was on the dais right there along with leaders of all political parties at an Alay-Balay function a week ago. If that was not blunt enough, VH even took on Himachal Pradesh governor Bandaru Dattatreya who had him-

self organised the Alay-Balay as part of his annual calendar. Pointing at the flexis put up at the function, Hanumantha Rao told Dattatreya he was unhappy not to see a single Congress leader's face on the banners, not even part president Sonia Gandhi's. Awkward moments for Dattatreya and Tamilisai, but VH did make a point when it mattered.

### Governor dashed Netizens' hope

The more you are seen and heard at public functions the bigger a power centre you seem. This

may or may not be the case, but it's exactly how commoners see it and look up to you to resolve issues. Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan's experience has been such thus far. Plus, she is also active on the social media where most of the chatter happens and perceptions are developed. Lately, Netizens have been flooding the Governor's SM handle with scores of public issues. Up till now, the chatterati on the Net used to typically tag Minister KTR or other officials for issues that concerned the general public. Now they are looking at Tamilisai for help. But

alas, the Guv doesn't respond to appeals made on social media. Many a Netizen has sought her intervention in the ongoing TSRTC strike over the past week but here has been no response from her.

This probably has to do with social media spreading the word that she was mulling to start the Praja Darbar tradition at Raj Bhavan, which the media also ran reports about. Once bitten, twice shy. That could be why Tamilisai is being very wary of social media, and request and speculations made on it.

(Contributed by  
PV Kondal Rao,  
Kolishetty Venkateshwarlu,  
Naveena Ghanate)

# BITFURY TO SET UP BLOCKCHAIN INNOVATION CENTRE IN HYD

CITY TO HAVE EXCLUSIVE BLOCKCHAIN DISTRICT, LOGO AND WEBSITE LAUNCHED

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Bitfury Group, the largest full-service blockchain technology company in the world, will establish a blockchain research and innovation centre in Hyderabad.

Bitfury, a multibillion-dollar tech giant, on Saturday entered into a partnership with Telangana's Blockchain District in this regard. It will also offer courses, necessary incubation and mentoring support to all associated members.

Blockchain District on Saturday signed new partnerships with Bitfury and Indian School of Business (ISB). The ISB will be offering co-working space, access to investor network, business expertise and many more benefits to Blockchain District start-ups.

Jayesh Ranjan, Principal Secretary, Information Technology, Electronics and Communications Department, launched the Blockchain District logo and website on the occasion. Ranjan said that after



several rounds of consultations with industry and academia, the government conceptualised Blockchain District, which aims to be among the world's top 10 leading blockchain technology

ecosystem by proactively driving key initiatives for developing talent pool, infrastructure, research and innovation and community building.

"Blockchain District provides a platform which enables

the stakeholders to collaborate, co-create and build solutions in blockchain technology, which today is at a nascent stage, but has enormous potential in the coming years," said Ranjan. "Telangana being the hub of

**The Indian School of Business will offer co-working space, access to investor network, business expertise and many more benefits to Blockchain District start-ups**

innovation and technology would always strive to be the first mover in tech-domains," he added.

The Telangana government, IIIT-Hyderabad, C-DAC and Tech Mahindra are the founding members of Blockchain District. MLR Institute of Technology was also taken on board to extend support in research and development and incubation.

## KCR likely to soften ...

Continued from Page 1

The multiple suicide attempts elsewhere in the state, violent incidents near bus depots and bus stations, the unified opposition taking on the government through protests on streets with the support of social organisations, increasing resentment among government employees over the government's tough stance on RTC strike are among the factors that influenced KCR to modify his stand on RTC strike.

With the Huzurnagar bypoll just a week away, the political implications of stretching RTC strike till then or beyond are also being factored in by the TRS leadership. So, KCR is expected to win over the striking RTC unions ahead of the bypoll.

Over the past 10 days of strike, the situation at the ground level has only worsened, mainly because of the government's decision to sack 48,000 RTC employees on strike. The government is likely to clarify its stance on the strike by October 15 in the High Court, which had issued directions asking the state government and RTC management to give details of the steps taken to mitigate the hardships of people in the wake of the strike.

## Teachers to resort to ...

Continued from Page 1

According to PRTU leaders, Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, by unilaterally extending the Dasara vacation, has made it clear that he is acting like a dictator. They breathed fire at the government for trying to weaken education system. That is why, the vacation has been extended, they reasoned. The leaders of PRTU also questioned KCR's authority to extend Dasara vacation in the first place.

## Musi project gate fixed, permanent solution soon

PNS ■ NALGONDA

Engineers on Sunday finally managed to fix a stop log gate in place of a displaced regulatory gate of Musi project and succeeded in stopping water from flowing away.

Power Minister G Jagdish Reddy was on site supervising the fixing of the new gate while engineers began working on the gate on Saturday evening. The original plan was to replace the damaged gate with one brought from Kalyani dam in Andhra Pradesh, but its size did not match that of Musi project's regulatory gates which are 15 feet tall and 40 feet wide. Following this, officials had a new one fabricated at a factory in Hyderabad in eight sections



of two feet into 40 feet dimensions that were put together at the project site and fixed on the dam. Regulatory gate No 5 of Musi project was displaced on October 5 resulting in water flowing out. As a consequence, water level at the project fell

from 644.8 feet to 615.5 feet in the past eight days.

After the completion of work, Jagdish Reddy told reporters that permanent measures would be taken up to avoid recurrence of such incidents.

## City to host meet on Big Data in agri

PNS ■ SANGAREDDY

Over 500 delegates are set to discuss the issues of trust in digital agriculture and explore ways to build it at the third annual convention of CGIAR platform for Big Data in agriculture.

The three-day 2019 'Big Data in Agriculture Convention: TRUST: Humans, Machines' will be hosted by ICRISAT (International Crop Research Institute for Semi-arid Tropics) between October 16 and 18, Hyderabad.

Talking about the theme of convention, coordinator for the BIG DATA Platform, Brian King, highlighted the opportunities machines and machine-to-machine systems offer for accelerating food security solutions at a time when climates and ecosystems are under threat. He underlined the

**The three-day 2019 'Big Data in Agriculture Convention: TRUST: Humans, Machines' will be hosted by ICRISAT in Hyderabad between October 16 and 18**

importance of ensuring that ethical frameworks and institutions stay abreast of the rate of changes these digital technologies present.

"The global calls for digital trust are intensifying even as the need for comprehensive, multifaceted solutions for global food security grows," said King. "We need to increase production, but we also need to preserve and renew ecosystems, manage climate extremes, and deal with depleting soil and land resources.



Trustworthy digital solutions may be the most important tool we have to rise to the challenge-if we can build them."

Telangana State and its capital city, Hyderabad, have had a prominent role to play in expanding India's digital footprint. K T Rama Rao, Minister for Information Technology, is expected to deliver the keynote address during the conven-

tion's inaugural session.

"Hyderabad is a very pertinent setting for this significant convention. The city hosts some of the world's leading digital institutions and agriculture organisations," KTR said. "The discussions around trust cannot wait for tomorrow. Trust is needed today to rely on the union of digital and agriculture to feed a fast growing world." Leading experts in data science, research scientists, policymakers and local farmers will deliberate over the problems and solutions related to expanding technologies that can help build a food secure future.

The convention aims to help delegates tackle complex themes of trust-building in frameworks that holistically manage ethics, multi-stakeholder coordination and data-driven action.

# Hindu-bashing will only stoke Hindu Rashtra stir

HC UPADHYAY  
■ HYDERABAD

The oft-repeated provocative and abusive missiles against the mammoth Hindu majority community in the country by fanatical, communal and pseudo-secular elements have the potential to trigger Hindu upsurge any time. And, certainly this is not just a figment of imagination!

Going by the irresponsible and unwarranted utterances of some self-styled leaders of minorities and crest-fallen opposition parties in the electoral battle, it appears that the day is not far away when the Hindus, accounting for 80-plus percent of the population, would strike back and emphatically demand that India be declared as 'Hindu Rashtra'.

In fact, the authors of the Constitution knew it very well that this country has been and will be the permanent abode of Hindus and therefore, had refrained from adding the word 'secular' in it. However, the

successive Congress governments were fully aware of the fact that the masses were deeply religious and devoted to the principles and practices of Hindu religion, which has the glorious history of evolution over thousands of years. Therefore, yesteryear political leaders desisted from tinkering with Hindu sentiments. Though no stone was left unturned to suppress the cravings of the Hindus for their political identity through Constitutional diktat, the flame of Hindu Rashtra remained burning brightly throughout. The Partition on the lines of religion and the genocide of Hindus that ensued added fuel to fire.

During all these years, despite opposition from all quarters, including the governments, the Hindus are yet to be convinced about non-declaration of the country as the Hindu Rashtra. During the regime of

Indira Gandhi the words, 'secular' and 'socialist' were added to the Preamble of the Constitution in an apparent bid to appease minorities and Communists at home and abroad. In this exercise, which radically changed the basic structure of the Constitution, it is noteworthy that no Hindu organisation or Hindu religious leader was consulted, leave alone taking them in confidence. The Preamble of the Constitution of India was amended against the rulings of the Supreme Court which laid down that Parliament cannot alter the 'basic structure' of the Constitution. Obviously, the addition of the words, 'secular and socialist' in the Preamble to the Constitution amounted to changing the 'basic structure' of the Constitution. Most importantly, no hue and cry was raised by



LEGAL  
ROUNDUP

**In fact, the authors of the Constitution knew it very well that this country has been and will be the permanent abode of Hindus and therefore, had refrained from adding the word 'secular' in it**

the protagonist of the Constitution who swear by it, day in and day out. On the other hand, this lobby celebrated the change.

In view of this historic background, there is no reason to oppose or fume over any move to bring back the status quo by similar Constitutional amendment. Besides, dropping the words 'secular' and 'socialist', the preamble needs to be rightfully amended with the insertion of the words 'Hindu Rashtra' to honour and assuage the feelings of the vast majority of the Hindus, living in India and abroad.

Only such a step can bring true communal harmony in the country. Further, by doing so, a loud and clear message would go to the anti-Hindu and anti-

nation forces that, if they indulge in violence or hurling abuses towards the Hindus, Jains, Sikhs and Buddhists, they won't be spared from the harshest punishment. The people belonging to the minority communities know it very well that they can live happily and peacefully only by winning the goodwill of the majority Hindus and not by fighting with them or antagonising them.

The Geneva Convention on minorities also clearly lays down that the minorities should mingle with the majority community and earn the goodwill of majority community first; then, it shall be the duty of the majority community to protect and promote the interests of the minorities.

The writing on the wall is clear for all so-called secular forces and self-styled leaders of minorities: it would be in their own interests to extend unstinted support to declare India as the Hindu Rashtra. More Hindu-bashing will only accelerate the process.

**Traffic offences can be tried under IPC & MV Act : SC**

The recent verdict of the apex court on traffic offenders, if implemented strictly, will go a long way to curb the increasing road accidents in the country.

The Supreme Court has held that traffic rules violators causing accidents by rash and negligent driving could be tried and punished separately under the Indian Penal Code and the Motor Vehicle Act.

A division bench, comprising Justice Indu Malhotra and Justice Sanjay Khanna, observed that ingredients of offences under both laws are different and an offender can be tried and punished indepen-

dently under them.

Making an exception to the principle that the M.V Act being special law, it should prevail over the IPC, which is the general law, the bench said that the MV Act is a beneficial piece of legislation whose primary objective is to provide a statutory scheme for compensation of victims of accidents. On the other hand, the IPC is different in nature, having the object of punishing the offenders.

The court observed: "... if the IPC gives way to the MV Act and the provisions of Cr.PC succumb to provisions of the MV Act, even the cases of culpable homicide not amounting to murder and causing death or grievous hurt or simple hurt by rash and negligent driving would become compoundable. Such an interpretation would have the consequence of letting an offender get away with a fine by pleading guilty, without having to face any prosecution for the offence committed."



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

With the successful conclusion of the fresh first round of trade negotiations between US and China on October 10, 2019, the hopes for resolution of the trade war between these two super powers have been kindled. Consequently the yellow metal, which was hovering around US \$ 1,500, came down to the level of \$ 1,488.87 on the closing day of Saturday. Silver followed suit and closed at \$ 17.65. Similarly, platinum and palladium also declined and closed at \$ 896.60 (per 10 gms) and \$ 1,703.25 (per 10 gms), copper stood at Rs 443.15 (per kg) respectively.

Other economic parameters, barring Brent and Crude oil, remained firm. Brent closed at US\$ 60.29 (per barrel), while Crude oil was quoted at Rs.3,869 (per barrel).

Gold MCX stood at Rs.37,845 (per 10 gms) and Silver MCX at Rs.45,171 (per kg). BSE Sensex and Nifty 50 closed at 38,127.08 and 11,305.05 points respectively.

Leading foreign currencies' exchange rates were: US \$: Rs.71.02, British Pound: Rs. 89.88, Euro: Rs. 78.40, Singapore \$: Rs. 51.74, Canadian \$: Rs.53.81, Swiss Franc: Rs.71.29.

At home, trading gradually picked up in view of the ongoing festival season. While the yellow metal appreciated by Rs. 90 on buying support and closed at Rs. 38,300 (per 10 gms), ornamental gold too, moved up in tandem and was quoted in the range of Rs. 36,420- 36,520 on the closing day. Silver (0.999), recorded its marginal declined of Rs. 200 and

WEEKLY MARKET REVIEW

closed at Rs. 45,200 (per kg).

### COMMODITIES

The sentiment in principal wholesale commodity markets in the twin cities was moderate. Rythu Bazar and the various commodity markets located in Begum Bazar, Kishangunj, Mukthiyargunj, Risala Abdullah, Mir Alam Mandi, Dilsukhnagar, Kukatpally, Bowenpally and General Bazar continued to be from moderate to strong.

During the week, common pulses such as tuar dal, moong dal, urad dal and masoor dal recorded an appreciation in the range of 10 per cent to 12 per cent, while staple food grains and common edible oils, except groundnut oil, remained steady at the previous week's closing levels.





## Treda property show in city from Oct 18-20

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Real Estate Developers Association (Treda) will organise the 10th edition of its property show at HITEC Exhibition Centre in the city from October 18-20.

Over 100 builders, developers, building material suppliers, research and technology development institutes and financial institutions will be showcasing their products and technologies at the upcoming Treda Property Show.

Hyderabad is fast becoming the most attractive destination for IT and ITes companies in India. While the city has become a favourite choice for some of the multinational companies to set up their operations, it has also grown manifold in providing necessary services to global companies.

The infrastructure and availability of a large talent pool is a prime consideration. With the support of the Telangana government's incentives, schemes and policies such as the single-window mechanism for the registration of businesses and integrated IT ecosystem, Hyderabad has become a flagship destination in the country.

The Treda Property Show, being organised by the real estate community consisting of developers, builders and promoters, is a platform for all buyers and sellers to meet under one roof and explore buying and selling options of a wide range of properties.

Treda president R Chalapathi Rao said, "This year marks a special occasion

**While the city has become a favourite for some of the multinational companies to set up their operations, it has also grown fast in providing necessary infra**

for us as we celebrate the 10th anniversary of the Treda Property Show. Over the last decade, the property show has become a benchmark for all other property shows in the city and is undoubtedly the biggest in any year. Our vision has always been to encourage growth of the real estate sector and represent and support Government in framing conducive policies that help the growth of Hyderabad and Telangana state at large."

Real estate companies will display their range of properties i.e., apartments, villas, plots suited to various classes of customers. Suppliers will display products and services integral to the real estate industry.

Financial institutions such as State Bank of India, LIC Housing Finance Ltd, Axis Bank, Bank of Baroda, HDFC, ICICI Bank, Sundaram BNP Paribas Home Finance and IIFL Home Finance will offer home loan products at the event.

## 8,900 kg explosives seized, 2 held

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a joint operation, Keesara police of Rachakonda and SOT (Special Operation Teams) of Malkajgiri seized two vehicles containing explosive materials from Harsha stone factory at Keesara on Saturday night and took custody of two persons for violation of explosives rules. Officials seized 8,900 kg of explosives and 165 non-electric detonators from their possession.

Speaking about the case, Rachakonda Police Commissioner Mahesh Bhagwat said one Sharvan

Reddy, 29, of Ghatkesar was running a business in the name of Venkateshwara Enterprises and has a license for explosives running magazine at Mallaram in Chinna Kodur of Siddipet. Another person, Narayana of Badvel also runs a business in the name of Sri Laxmi Narayana Constructions with a valid license and having explosive magazine at Mukkavaripalli Village of YSR Kadapa.

However, both supplied explosive materials to stones crusher factories by violating explosive rules and recently. Both were separately ordered to supply stock to Regenesi

## Child rights NGO questions extension of school hoidays

■ BALALA HAKKULA SAYS THERE IS CONFUSION AS PVT SCHOOLS OPEN ON MONDAY

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Balala Hakkula Sangham has demanded the state government to give an explanation on why it extended Dasara holidays up to October 19 when private educational institutions have asked their students to attend school from Monday onwards.

Balala Hakkula Sangham honorary president Achyutha Rao on Sunday said the state government announced it was extending Dasara holidays up to October 19, but private schools are asking children to attend school from Monday. He said that private school managements are warning their teachers that their salary would be cut if they failed to attend schools from Monday.

He alleged that the private schools are considering the government order papers as waste papers neglecting the orders. The private managements are openly stating that they don't have any relation with the government's extension of holidays.



He said that the students and teachers are in dilemma about whose orders to follow, the government's or school managements'. He sought the government to give clear explanation in this regard.

**The private managements are openly stating that they don't have any relation with the government's extension of holidays**

## Hyderabad police declines to give FIR copy

Continued from Page 1

The complainant had alleged that the dog died due to negligence by the doctor and the doctor in-charge of the private veterinary clinic, where the dog was rushed when its condition worsened following the injection. The police reply to RTI police said, "On receipt of your petition, verified the available records and it is revealed that the said case was under investigation. As such the disclosure of evidence at this juncture would impede the process at investigation or it may influence the fare investigation. Hence such information cannot be provided U/Sec 8(1) (h) of Right to Information Act. Hence your application has been rejected."

## Water supply shut down in Hyderabad areas

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Water supply will be affected during the shutdown in some of the areas in the city, the HMWS&SB said on Sunday. The shutdown has been necessitated as the water board is attending to leakage on 3000 mm diameter pumping line at Nustulapur. The shutdown will occur from 6.00 am on October 16 to 6.00 pm on Oct. 18.

Water supply will be affected in the following areas during the shutdown: Operations and management (O&M) Division VI: Erragadda, Borabanda, Ellareddy Guda, Yousuf guda, SR Nagar, Ameerpet, Banjara hills, Sanathnagar, Jubilee hills areas.

O&M Dn IX: Kukatpally, KPHB, Moosapet, Bala Nagar, Bhagya Nnagar, Bharath Nagar, Sanath Nagar Borabanda Reservoir command areas.

O&M Dn XII: Chinthal, Jeedimetla, Shapur Nagar, Suraram, Jagadgiri Gutta Quthbullapur Petbasheerabad areas.

O&M Dn XIII: Defence Colony, Goutham Nagar, Prashant Nagar, Chanikyapuri, Malkajgiri, Fatherbalainagar and Alwal areas.

O&M Dn XIV: New OUT Colony, Kailasagiri areas.

O&M Dn XV: Hafeezpet, Miyapur, Matrusri nagar, Mayurinagar, Chanda nagar, R.C Puram Patancheru, Boloram Mayurinagar areas.



**The shutdown has been necessitated as the water board is attending to leakage on 3000 mm diameter pumping line at Nustulapur. The shutdown will occur from 6.00 am on Oct 16 to 6.00 pm on Oct**

O&M Dn XVIII: Nizampet, Pragathi nagar, Bachupally, Bollram, Ameenpur, Mallampet areas.

O&M Dn XIX: Jawahar nagar, Balaji nagar, Keesara, Dammai guda, Nagaram, Cheryal, RGK Ahmadguda, Devaryanjai, Tumkunta areas.

O&M Dn XI: NFC, Pocharam, SingapurTownship, Moula ali, Lallapet & Tarnaka areas.

O&M Dn XXI: CRPE, MES (Trishul Lines, Gunrock, Contonment Board (Rudranagar, Gunrock, Risala Bazar) & Turkapally Biotech park areas.

## Ditched by fiancé, woman drinks poison

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A 24-year-old woman killed herself by consuming poison on Sunday in Jawahar Nagar. Sources said she allegedly went into depression after learning about her fiancé marrying another woman.

According to police, the deceased, identified as Gorla Malleshwari, a private employee, was engaged to a relative Maram Sudhakar in front of their elders earlier this year. However, Sudhakar later told her that he was not interested in marrying her, following which the family lodged a complaint with Jawaharnagar police and a case of cheating booked against him.

Sudhakar later promised to marry Malleshwari before a 'panchayat' held in the presence of elders of the families. However on October 8, to everyone's dismay Sudhakar sent a WhatsApp message to a relative of Malleshwari stating that he was getting married to another woman at Penchalakona temple in

**Sudhakar conveyed this to the woman's relative via WhatsApp**

Nellore district of Andhra Pradesh, and that he wanted her family to his clandestine marriage.

"On coming to know about this, Malleshwari consumed some poisonous substance at her house on Friday morning and fell unconscious. The family members rushed her to Gandhi Hospital where she succumbed on Sunday morning," said G Mohan, sub-inspector of Jawaharnagar police station. The police shifted the body for an autopsy after which it was handed over to the family. On a complaint lodged by victim's parents, the Jawaharnagar police registered a case against Sudhakar under section 306 (abetment to suicide) of the IPC and are investigating the matter.

## Artworks stolen by 'con artist' remain untraceable

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The police are still clueless about the 'con artist' who fled the country with the artwork of a famous Hyderabad-based artist, who makes crystal paintings of well-known personalities about two months ago. Sayed Azmathullah, the 72-year-old artist, was allegedly cheated by a man claiming to be a Qatar national, who took his paintings on the pretext of exhibition and showcased them as his own.

In 2017, I was approached by Abdul Salam Al-Qadi, 45, a Hyderabad from old city, claiming to be a Qatari national art lover. Between October 2017 and April 2018, Abdul allegedly procured 11 paintings from me, stating that he would showcase them and also share a monetary profit with me, said the artist, adding that he was paid for five painting and was blocked.

"The government officials in the United Kingdom informed him that various Gulf-based media has reported mentioning Abdul as the artist of two paintings: the Dome of the Rock in the Old City of Jerusalem and another of Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan. I was invited to the UK Parliament to showcase my work and they were the ones who informed me that someone else does similar artwork. That's when I got to know that Abdul has passed off some of my work as his own. Even my signature was replaced with his name," said the artist" said Sayed, who uses Swarovski crystals imported from Austria for his paintings, which take over a



**Between October 2017 and April 2018, Abdul allegedly procured 11 paintings from me, stating that he would showcase them and also share a monetary profit with me, said the artist, adding that he was paid for five painting and was blocked**

week to create.

Two of the paintings, composed of crystals, were even allegedly gifted to President Erdogan by Abdul as a gift from Qatar to Turkey. After learning about Abdul's alleged duplicity, Sayed approached the Hussaini Alam police station in Hyderabad earlier this month on August 8, with a complaint against Abdul.

Speaking about the issue, the Police Inspector of Hussaini Alam Ramesh Kotwal said that the alleged accused Abdul is not a Qatari national but a local from Hyderabad. "He is not present in the country anymore. We learnt that he is shifted to Sharjah and are

probing the case," said the official, adding that there are no major headways made into the probe yet.

"My work was never meant to be commercialised. I even wrote to the Turkish consulate in Hyderabad, which alerted the Qatar embassy in Turkey of Abdul's duplicity, he claims. However, there has been no response from the Embassy of Qatar. After repeated attempts of reaching out to Abdul, I even warned him before approached the police and my lawyer. I am yet to receive an update from the police on the investigation" concluded a helpless Sayed.

### THREE-DAY HANDLOOM MELA FROM OCT 16

## The TFMC fair aims to reach out to 25K techies

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana Facilities Management Council (TFMC) will organise a three-day IT Handloom Mela at Salarpuria Sattva Knowledge City at Inorbit Mall Road at Madhapur from October 16 to 18.

The Mela, being organised in association with IT department and Endowments and Charity department of the state government, will feature Ikkat Pattu sarees, handicraft products, handloom kurthas and other items.

An initiative of TFMC, it is organized as part of the series of IT Handloom Melas. The council has urged IT professionals to utilise this opportunity to buy handloom clothes and wear them on Mondays every week.

The three-day Mela, the 16th edition this year, aims to reach out to 25,000 IT professionals with the aim of furthering the cause of handlooms and motivate IT employees to adopt handloom clothes.



TFMC president Satyanarayana Mathala said the response to earlier editions of the mela has been overwhelming. Wearing handloom clothes once a week on Monday goes a long

way in protecting the weaving art form and helping those dependent on it, he said.

The 250-strong FMC team has organised several handloom melas, cycle rallies, fash-

ion shows to create awareness and promote handloom clothes for the past several months. The Handloom melas have registered a footfall of two lakh IT professionals so far.



## APJ Abdul Kalam award for Hyd CP

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Commissioner of Hyderabad Police Anjani Kumar, IPS, was on Saturday honoured with Dr APJ Abdul Kalam Award for Excellence in Police Administration for the year 2019. The award was presented to Anjani Kumar by the Deshabhimani Charitable Society, a New Delhi-based NGO, at a function organized on Saturday at the Constitution Club of India in New Delhi.

The annual award was instituted in 2001. The committee which selected Anjani Kumar for this award consisted of Justice Iqbal Ahmed Ansari, Dr. Anurag Batra and other legal luminaries from Delhi. "In total, there were 23 awards in various categories like health, primary education, new business, art and creations, poetry and literature for Police administration. Anjani Kumar, IPS, CP of Hyderabad, was given this award in the police category," sources said.



## RWAs meet Kishan over cantonment issues

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The United Federation of Residents Welfare Associations (U-FERWAS) Executive Committee members met Union minister G Kishan Reddy here on Sunday. The U-FERWAS representatives discussed about the Army roads closure, resent restrictions on AOC roads and pending MMTS phase II issues.

In response to the issues, Kishan Reddy said that he has already taking up this issue with local Military authorities and as well with union defense

minister.

Upon bringing few other issues like army's objection over laying the second railway track in MMTS Phase II development work by RVNL at four-km stretch between Suchitra and Sanathnagar for Moula-Ali - Santhnagar - Hitechcity MMTS connectivity he said he is not aware of this and definitely put all his efforts to resolve the problem. But he also said that the main reason for MMTS Phase II delay because of the pending 400-plus cores contribution from Telangana state government.



# Suspect in killing of three found dead in tank

PNS ■ KAMAREDDY

A day after the killings of three members of a family -- Bandela Balaiah, his daughter Latha and niece Chandana -- by the man's brother came to light in Bhiknoor mandal of Nizamabad district, the body of the suspected perpetrator of the crime, Balaiah's brother Bandela Ravi, was discovered by some villagers in the Jangampally village tank on Sunday.

It is suspected that Ravi committed suicide by jumping into the tank after killing his brother, Latha and his own daughter Chandana on Friday night. The Domakonda police, who were informed about the body, took it out of the tank and confirmed that it was of Banela Ravi. Police registered a case of murder and possible suicide and are conducting an enquiry.

The police believe that Ravi committed the crime because he was unhappy with Balaiah's eldest daughter marrying a

**Police believe Bandela Ravi may have committed suicide a day after killing his brother and kin**

young man she was in love with an event Ravi believed that the marriage hurt the family's prestige.

After killing Balaiah, Latha and Chandana, Ravi committed suicide by jumping into the Gundal Cheruvu tank, near the murder spot next to a temple on the Domakonda forest fringe. Ravi's motorcycle was recovered by the police from near the tank on Saturday. According to Balaiah's wife Manemma, Ravi always tried to impose his will on the rest of the family and when things did not go his way, he would get very angry with the rest of the family.

## HUZURNAGAR BY-ELECTION

# CPI calls it quits finally, snaps alliance with TRS

Left party struck deal with ruling TRS on Oct 1 for Huzurnagar by-poll

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The alliance between ruling TRS and left party CPI ended after a mere 13 days of striking a deal on October 1. The CPI has announced on Sunday that it is withdrawing its support to the ruling TRS party in the upcoming Huzurnagar by-election.

Party state secretary Chada Venkat Reddy announced the decision at Manchirial when he visited RTC JAC dharna to extend solidarity to the striking RTC employees. The CPI was in alliance with the TRS for just 13 days.

Chada said that the CPI is extending its full support to the RTC employees. He made it clear that the party is with-



drawing its support in the by-election. The CPI alleged the TRS government was taking a stubborn attitude towards the RTC strike in Telangana, a state which was born out of popular movements. The party said KCR is not responding on the RTC workers' demands and is planning

to privatise the transport corporation.

He said that the RTC employees are resorting to extreme steps like sacrificing their lives owing to stress after the Chief Minister announced that he would remove 48,000 employees. He said that the people had

**Party state secretary Chada Venkat Reddy announced the decision at Manchirial when he visited RTC JAC dharna to extend solidarity to the striking RTC employees**

taught a befitting lesson to then CM N Chandrababu Naidu when he tried to privatise RTC and Singareni in united Andhra Pradesh state. KCR will face the same fate, Chada said.



# Mid Manair project checked for safety

PNS ■ SIRICILLA

Irrigation officials have undertaken further quality checks of the left side of the earthen bund of Mid Manair reservoir in an attempt to put at rest any doubts over the structure's safety following allegations of leakages from the dam.

Officials said that they would be digging to a depth of 10 metres over a 200 metre stretch of the left side of the dam to study the structure's integrity and ensure its safety. As part of this work, the stone lining of the dam would be removed and once the inspections are completed, the holes will be refilled and the stone paving will be restored, the

officials said. Officials are also collecting soil samples and taking photographs of the bund to study its condition.

Last month, eight borewells to a depth of 30 metres were dug at Bogam Orre, a natural spring near the dam to test the water pressure following alleged leakages. It was alleged by Congress party leaders that though the dam was designed to hold 25.8 TMCft of water, leakages began occurring when the storage capacity touched 15 TMCft some weeks ago. Officials, in a bid to ease possible pressure on the dam, released water from Mid Manair to Lower Manair by lifting 25 gates of the Mid Manair dam on August 30.

# Cong alleges RTC driver's death is 'govt murder'

■ Employees' strike taking serious turn, akin to Telangana movement intensifying after self-immolation of Srikantha Chary

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Congress leaders have described the suicide by self-immolation of RTC driver Srinivas Reddy as "murder by state government". Congress leaders have demanded Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao to own responsibility for the suicide of Srinivas Reddy.

Claiming that KCR is not responding on the RTC strike, Congress leaders urged RTC employees not to take extreme steps. They assured the RTC employees that their party would stand by them. The leaders said that Telangana movement intensified with the self-immolation of Srikantha Chary, and likewise the RTC strike would also gain public sympathy with the suicide of Srinivas Reddy. Senior leader Ponnala Laxmaiah claimed that already five RTC employees had died due to the apathy of KCR, he said the CM enjoyed Dasara festival with full enthusiasm leaving RTC employees to deal with their plight during the festival days.

He alleged that the RTC is facing losses due to heavy taxes and the funds that are outstanding from the state government. Ponnala Laxmaiah said KCR must own up responsibility of the losses in RTC as the losses increased only during his rule. "KCR, who dismissed 50,000 RTC employees by uttering just a



RTC employees sit on a dharna in the city on Sunday

**Ponnala said RTC is facing losses due to heavy taxes imposed on it and non-payment of funds that are outstanding from the state govt. He said KCR must own up responsibility of the losses in RTC as they increased only during his rule**

few words, himself takes Rs 4.20 lakh monthly salary as Chief Minister. He also never comes to Secretariat," Laxmaiah said. Expressing dismay over RTC driver Srinivas Reddy's death, Bhongir MP Komatireddy Venkat Reddy

asked RTC employees not to be worried about the safety of their jobs. "Your jobs will not go anywhere. Do not to lose confidence and don't resort to extreme steps," he said, assuring them that the Congress would stand by them.

Consoling the Srinivas Reddy's family at DRDO Hospital on Sunday, Malkajigiri MP A Revanth Reddy demanded the police to file cases against KCR and Ministers Puvvada Ajay Kumar and Talasani Srinivas Yadav for making provocative statements against RTC employees. He alleged that Srinivas Reddy committed suicide due to state government's rigid and negligent attitude towards RTC employees. "KCR made RTC employees feel worried when he used the word 'self dismissed'," Revanth Reddy alleged.

# OU student unions' plan protest today

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Osmania University Student Unions' JAC has announced that it will take up various protest programs in support of the ongoing RTC strike. The JAC said that it will lay siege on Ministers' offices on October 14. The unions said they will organise a huge rally at Osmania University on October 16, observe a bandh at all Telangana educational institutions on

October 19 and protest at Pragathi Bhavan on October 21.

On Sunday, Osmania University students staged a Vanta-Varpu programme on the roads as part of their support to RTC strike. The students raised slogans in support of RTC employees and displayed placards with slogans like 'RTC Bhachao... KCR ko Hatao', 'Do not to play games with the lives of RTC workers' among others.



OU students stage Vanta-Varpu programme in the city on Sunday

# TSRTC driver succumbs to burns, protests break out

Continued From Page 1

Union Minister of State for Home G Kishan Reddy condoled the death and said the incident has pained him very much.

"Suicide is not the solution. Nobody should resort to such steps in future," he said.

Reddy urged the Telangana Government to resolve the RTC strike issue amicably by holding talks with the unions.

He also extended his condolences to the bereaved family.

Leaders of the opposition Congress and BJP in Telangana also condoled Reddy's death and conveyed their condolences to the bereaved family members.

Nearly 48,000 workers of employees and workers unions of TSRTC began an indefinite strike from October 5 on a call by the Joint Action Committee of TSRTC.

On Sunday, Telangana Panchayat Raj Minister Errabelli Dayakar Rao alleged that some political parties were provoking the union leaders and claimed it was a "political conspiracy" against the government.

"Congress or BJP did nothing for RTC employees. Did any BJP government in other states merge their state transport corporations? Parties should stop the dramas," he said.

Minister for BC Welfare and Civil Supplies Gangula Kamalakara alleged that political parties were instigating the unions for their political gains.

He cautioned the workers not to fall prey to such vicious

attempts and added that the government had never said it would privatise RTC.

The ministers further said the government never promised to merge RTC with the government and it (merger of RTC) was neither the government's policy nor in the party's manifesto.

The JAC of TSRTC has given a Khammam 'bandh' call for Monday and Congress Legislature Party leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka said his party supported the shutdown call.

Meanwhile the union leaders appealed to striking workers not to resort to suicides and said condolence meetings would be held on Monday at all depots in the state.

Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao on Saturday had said there was no question of having talks with the striking employees or taking them back.

Rao also directed officials to restore bus services and if need be, recruit employees, utilise the services of retired RTC and Police department drivers.

The government, he said, would not recognise the "illegal and unlawful" strike under any circumstances and there was no question of having any talks with those on strike.

"The striking employees will not be taken back, come what may", an official release quoted him as having said.

Rao, who chaired a review meeting on the situation on Saturday, directed officials to pay salaries for the month of September to those who were not participating in the strike.

# 'KCR may continue Dasara holidays till Sankranthi'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The TPCC campaign committee chairperson Vijayashanthi has said that it was unfortunate that RTC driver Srinivas Reddy laid down his life over RTC workers' demands, much like late Srikantha Chary's sacrificed his life during the Telangana agitation, but Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao seems

to be willing to throw the state to the winds and unconcerned about solving people's problems.

She alleged that KCR, who otherwise values sacrifices for political interests, will not respond to sacrifices of

the workers. She called upon the RTC employees to remain positive, not think in terms of sacrificing lives and wage

a movement to achieve their demands. This will also put an end to the dictatorial attitude of KCR, she alleged.

KCR's statement that the government had taken all alternative steps to neutralise the impact of RTC strike, but very buses are running and troubles of people have mounted.

—VIJAYASHANTHI  
TPCC campaign committee chairperson



# Audio clip on complaint against...

Continued From Page 1

Are we not facing troubles? Whether the government uses the school children buses? The Chief Minister has to discuss with them to solve their problem? Why such arrogance? Chief Minister of the State means he is like a father to the people. Father has to teach a lesson to the children. It is not correct on the part of Chief Minister to say that 'if you want to go...go...we will remove'. Chief Minister is getting ready for fight. Is it a way to the Chief Minister? Chief Minister has to convince the RTC employees in presence of State government employees. Will RTC employees don't get anger if Chief Minister says that he will remove

50,000 employees? Chief Minister is not giving value to the RTC employees. The RTC employees will come a step down if Chief Minister gives value to them. We are getting irritation while seeing the behavior of Chief Minister. Take this as complaint and tell. We are suffering between RTC employees and Chief Minister. RTC is for us and Chief Minister is for us. We the people are facing lose if they fight each other.

One thing is the Chief Minister's arrogance to be decreased against employees or people. Chief Minister also scolds the people, saying that they are becoming groups here and there. Chief Minister scolds people and workers. Whose sake his rule? Whose sake we achieved Telangana

state? Telangana achieved with waging movements, but now the government is suppressing the movements in the same Telangana.

Is it correct? Was Telangana possible if Andhra rulers suppressed the movements in this manner? Where KCR would have become as Chief Minister? KCR has to remember all these things and he has to look after the people and workers as his own children. Chief Minister has to (back) down as a father, who downs for his children and sacrifices, for his children. Not to say 'I will not listen... I will not do' because it is democracy. Bring this issue to the notice of Chief Minister.

The receiver said that he will send the complaint.

# TS taking rapid strides in farm mechanisation

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana has recorded a rapid growth of about 82 per cent growth in farm mechanisation within five years since it was formed in 2014. The number of tractors alone increased from 1.5 lakh to 2.87 lakh, recording 90 per cent growth during the period, besides a steady growth in farm trailers and harvesters.

The state government, which adopted a holistic approach to ensure overall development of the agriculture sector, has been focusing on farm mechanisation to increase productivity, reduce cost of production and increase extent of land under cultivation. On the directions of Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, the agriculture department officials charted out an action plan and collected man-



dal-wise data enumerating required agriculture machinery.

Besides providing a subsidy of 75 per cent to SC/ST farmers and 50 per cent to other farmers, the state government has been encouraging farmers to purchase machinery of their requirement and choice.

"Awareness camps as well as demonstration workshops on usage of machinery for various purposes, including seed sowing, weed removal and crop cutting, were conducted to encourage farmers purchase farm machinery," officials of the agriculture department said.

**The number of tractors has increased from 1.5 lakh in 2014 to 2.87 lakh now, recording 90 per cent growth, besides a steady growth in farm equipment**

The state government spent about Rs 110 crore in 2017-18 to promote farm mechanisation and enhanced the allocations to Rs 328.83 crore during previous fiscal of 2018-19. In the current financial year of 2019-20, the government allocated Rs 304.34 crore towards subsidies under farm mechanisation scheme.

Following the efforts of the agriculture department, the population of farm vehicles has increased considerably over last five years. The agricultural vehicular population increased

from 2.75 lakh in 2014 to 4.99 lakh in 2019, registering an increase of about 82 per cent with 2.23 lakh additional vehicles. Interestingly, general vehicular population in the State, including farm vehicles, recorded a growth rate of 71.4 per cent during the period from 71.52 lakh to 122.58 lakh (1.22 crore). While tractor population registered a growth of 90 per cent, number of trailers increased from 1.18 lakh in 2014 to 1.99 lakh in 2019 with a growth rate of 68 per cent.



SHORT READS



Farmer hangs self wearing BJP poll T-shirt in Buldhana

**BULDHANA:** In an incident that is likely to embarrass the Devendra Fadnavis government, a farmer allegedly committed suicide on Sunday morning in Maharashtra's Buldhana district while wearing a BJP promotional T-shirt. Incidentally, Fadnavis is in the east Maharashtra city where he is scheduled to address three rallies during the day for the October 21 Assembly polls. Police said 38-year-old farmer, Raju Talware, was found hanging at around 11 am at his residence in Khatkhed in Shegaon taluka, part of Jalgaon (Jamod) Assembly seat. "He was wearing a BJP T-shirt with the caption 'punha aaluya aaple sarkar' (let's bring our government to power again)," said an official. Maharashtra labour minister Sanjay Kutte is the BJP candidate and sitting MLA from Jalgaon (Jamod) Assembly seat.

Our schemes are for people's welfare, says UP CM Adityanath

**AURANGABAD:** Initiatives of BJP-Shiv Sena government in Maharashtra are about people's welfare while those of previous governments were about grabbing public money for the benefit of a few, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said at a poll rally in Maharashtra's Hingoli district on Sunday. Maharashtra Assembly polls are slated for October 21 and results will be announced on October 24. "Funds allocated for schemes and farmers were grabbed. Deals were cut while providing jobs. Development was limited to development of a family," Adityanath said attacking the opposition. Speaking on the revocation of provisions of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir, he said the move by Prime Minister Narendra Modi was a tribute to icons like Babasaheb Ambedkar and Chhatrapati Shivaji who fought for justice.

Four arrested for printing, circulating fake currency

**COIMBATORE:** A fake currency-printing unit was busted here on Sunday and four people have been arrested, police said. Currencies with a face value Rs 14 lakh in different denominations were seized, the police said. The printers fell into the dragnet when some shopkeepers caught two persons trying to circulate the fake currencies late Saturday evening and handed them over to the police. On interrogation, the duo, one of whom is taking up coaching for IAS examination, is said to have confessed to circulating the fake notes for the last one month, police said. Based on the information, police caught Dhanraj, the kingpin of the unit, in the early hours of Sunday and learned that he was printing the notes in a rented house and circulating them with the help of three people. Another person was also held in connection with the racket.

‘Man with ‘56-inch chest’ did what previous PMs couldn’t

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shahon Sunday heaped praise on Prime Minister Narendra Modi for abrogating Article 370, saying the previous governments never had the courage shown by the "man with 56-inch chest" in integrating Jammu and Kashmir with India's mainstream. Addressing an election rally in Maharashtra's Kolhapur district, he said people should ask Congress and NCP leaders, when they come to seek votes, whether they support the NDA government's decision to abrogate the provisions that gave special status to Jammu and Kashmir.

He targeted Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and NCP chief Sharad Pawar for questioning the government's move to abrogate Article 370. "After people of the country and Maharashtra voted him for the second term, Modiji did something for which the entire country was waiting for 70



years...he abrogated Article 370 on August 5 and joined Jammu and Kashmir with the country's mainstream," Shah said. Shah said since the days of Jan Sangh, they have been hearing that there cannot be two prime ministers, there cannot be two symbols and two constitutions, but "it was the Congress which, by imposing Article 370, stopped the process of integrating Jammu and Kashmir with

India for several years". "As a result, thousands of our people lost their lives due to terrorism, but still there was no intention of any party to remove Article 370," he said. "Several governments came and went, several prime ministers came and went, no one had the courage to abrogate Article 370. But, the man with the 56-inch chest scrapped it in one go," Shah said.

After people of the country and Maharashtra voted him for the second term, Modiji did something for which the entire country was waiting for 70 years...he abrogated Article 370 on August 5 and joined Jammu and Kashmir with the country's mainstream — SURESH, founder of Bamboo

He said during the UPA rule, terrorists from Pakistan used to infiltrate and kill Indian soldiers. "They used to decapitate our soldiers, but the then prime minister 'Mouni baba' Manmohan Singh never used to utter a single word. But after the Uri and Pulwama attacks, Modiji showed the courage of killing terrorists in their den through surgical strike and air strikes," he said. He further hit out at the opposition over the government's decision to ban the practice of triple talaq.

Illegal immigrants responsible for 80% crimes in Delhi: Manoj

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi BJP president Manoj Tiwari on Sunday held illegal immigrants responsible for 80 per cent crimes in the national capital, referring to the incident of chain snatching with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's niece in the city. Tiwari said his demand for national register for citizens (NRC) exercise in Delhi is for identifying and evicting such illegal immigrants involved in crimes. "As many as 80 per cent crimes involve illegal immigrants in Delhi. That's why I have been demanding NRC but whenever I do so, Arvind Kejriwal rises as their shield," he said. Recently, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on a question about NRC implementation in Delhi said Tiwari will be the first to be evicted if the exercise is started in the city. Tiwari said the responsibility of law and order and crime control lied with the Delhi Police and he was not trying to protect it by naming the illegal immigrants.

"But it needs to be worked out how is the Delhi Police going to control crime in Delhi when a large number of illegal immigrants are living in different parts of the city," he said.



Damayanti Ben Modi, daughter of the prime minister's brother Prahlad Modi, became a victim of snatching in the national capital with her purse containing cash of Rs 50,000 and two mobile phones wrenched from her grasp by two persons when she was alighting from an auto-rickshaw on Saturday. The incident occurred a few kilometres away from the residence of Lieutenant Governor Anil Bajjal and Chief Minister Kejriwal. Two persons on a scooter snatched the woman's purse containing Rs 50,000, two mobile phones, some documents and other valuables around 7 am when she got down at the Gujрати Samaj Bhawan in North Delhi's Civil Lines area, a senior police officer said.

Modi has time to ‘campaign’ for US Prez but not for flood-hit

PNS ■ BENGALURU

Senior Congress leader Siddaramaiah on Sunday hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi, alleging he had time to campaign for US President Donald Trump, seeking a second term in the general elections there in 2020, but not to visit flood-ravaged Karnataka. Terming the BJP as "fascist" and "dictatorial," the former Chief Minister accused the state government of 'colluding' with the Assembly Speaker in restricting the media from covering the proceedings of the House.

"This time it was unprecedented floods in the state along with drought in some parts.. central government gave aid only after 60 days that too Rs 1,200 crore.. according to me damage suffered is more than Rs 1 lakh crore," Siddaramaiah said.

Speaking to reporters in Chikkamagaluru, he said, "Modi did not visit Karnataka, he instead was touring foreign countries and had gone to campaign for US President Donald Trump." "Narendra Modi tweets as soon as there were floods in Bihar, expressing sympathy. In Karnataka when there were about 90 deaths and four to five people are still missing due to floods, he did not express

This time it was unprecedented floods in the state along with drought in some parts.. central government gave aid only after 60 days that too Rs 1,200 crore.. according to me damage suffered is more than Rs 1 lakh crore — SIDDARAMAIAH, Senior Congress leader



Siddaramaiah

sympathy," he added. As many as 2,798 villages in 103 taluks of 22 districts in the state were affected by floods, in which around seven lakh people were shifted to safe areas. About 3400 cattle and 91 people died during rains and floods in August. Further attacking the Prime Minister, Siddaramaiah said, "Narendra Modi claims to have a 56-inch chest.. what is the use of having a big chest without a motherly heart inside it? Having a heart that cares for

Bengal BJP to take out 10-day Gandhi Sankalp Yatra

PNS ■ KOLKATA,

The BJP leadership in West Bengal will be taking out rallies across the state from October 15 to 26, as part of the party's nationwide 'Gandhi Sankalp Yatra' initiative to propagate the ideals of the Father of the Nation.

Addressing a press meet here on Sunday, BJP state unit chief Dilip Ghosh said party MPs, MLAs and panchayat pradhans will take part in the rallies, each of which will be preceded by a tableau projecting Mahatma Gandhi's contributions.

"The yatra was launched on October 2 elsewhere in the country, on the occasion of Gandhiji's 150th birth anniversary. Here, we had to postpone the date in view of the ongoing festive season," he said. In all, the rallies will cover a distance of 6,500 km in the state over a period of 10 days," Ghosh stated, adding the administration would be informed about the yatra and its course in advance.

Asked if the party was



anticipating any restriction by the state administration, Ghosh said, "This yatra is being taken out by the BJP to preach Gandhi's ideals of non-violence and cleanliness to the present generation."

"I think the ruling dispensation will not be opposed to the initiative. However, if there is any such development we will act accordingly," the BJP MP from Midnapore said.

The state government had last year slammed brakes on the saffron party's rath yatra, citing possible breakdown in

law and order. The upcoming yatra, Ghosh maintained, will boost the prime minister's 'Swachh Bharat Mission'.

To a question if it will also raise the issue of alleged killings of BJP party workers in Bengal, Ghosh said, "We are taking out separate rallies to protest the murder of democracy in the state."

"Only yesterday (Saturday), we organized a sit-in in the city against the spiralling political violence and the triple murder in Murshidabad's Jiaganj," the BJP state unit chief added.

‘Those thinking of forming govt in Haryana will be in Oppn’

PNS ■ RATIA (HARYANA)

In a veiled attack on the ruling BJP in Haryana, SAD chief on Sunday said those who are expecting to form the next government in the state will sit in the opposition.

"The situation is changing too fast in Haryana. Those who are thinking of forming government will sit in opposition," Badal told reporters while campaigning for SAD candidate Kulwinder Singh Kunal from Ratia seat in Fatehabad district. Asked about BJP's poll manifesto released in Chandigarh, he said, "When (a BJP) government is not going to be formed then what comments should I make."

The BJP has set a target of 75 plus seats in the state election to be held on October 21.

There's unease between the SAD and the BJP in Haryana after the Akali Dal accused the saffron party of backtracking on its commitment to contest Haryana Assembly polls together. Later, it announced an alliance with the Indian National Lok Dal on three assembly seats.

Last month, Badal had taken a strong exception to the induction of Akali MLA Balkaur Singh into BJP and had



The situation is changing too fast in Haryana. Those who are thinking of forming government will sit in opposition — SUKHBIR SINGH BADAL, SAD chief

described it as "unethical." The SAD has an alliance with the BJP in Punjab. Earlier Sunday, addressing a public meeting in Dariaipur, the SAD chief said it was a "misconception" that there was a pro-BJP wave in Haryana. There is a misconception that there is a wave in favour of BJP today. It (BJP) will not win a single seat in Sirsa and Fatehabad, Badal claimed.

Modi, media distracting attention from core issues

PNS ■ LATUR

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and the media of distracting people's attention from core issues.

Addressing an election rally at Ausa in Maharashtra's Latur district for the upcoming state polls, Gandhi said when the youth ask for jobs, the government tells them to watch the moon, in an apparent reference to ISRO's recent



lunar mission, Chandrayaan-2. He also sought to know if Modi, during his recent meet-

ing with Chinese President Xi Jinping, asked the latter about the 2017 Doklam standoff.

He was referring to the alleged incursion of Chinese troops into the Indian territory in 2017.

Gandhi also alleged that Rs 5.5 lakh crore debt of "15 rich people" was waived off by the Modi government.

"The work of media, Modi and Shah is to distract people's attention from core issues. The media is silent on farmers' distress, lack of jobs. The media is mum on loan

waiver to rich as it is owned by them," he alleged.

He said the objective of demonetisation, and implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) was to take money from pockets of the poor and give it to the rich.

"When the youth ask for jobs, the government tells them to watch the moon. The government speaks about (abrogation of) Article 370 and moon, but is silent on problems plaguing the country," Gandhi said.

NRC across India will have lethal consequences: CPI(ML)

PNS ■ BALLIA

If the NRC is implemented across India, it will have lethal consequences and the country's atmosphere will become like that of Kashmir, the CPI(ML) Liberation has said.

The Left party has also alleged that the poor and Dalits are being targeted through the National Register of Citizens (NRC).

Speaking to reporters here on

Saturday, Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation general secretary D i p a n k a r Bhattacharya said, "If the NRC is implemented across India, it will have lethal consequences and the atmosphere of the country will become like that of Kashmir."

Terming the BJP-led Centre "anti-public", he alleged that it

was following the footsteps of German dictator Adolf Hitler and aiming to implement the NRC in the country to serve its political interest.

"This is a ploy to divide the country. Through the NRC, the poor and Dalits are being targeted," Bhattacharya said.



Rising above religious lines: A Nirgun morning at folk fest

MANISH SAIN ■ JODHPUR

A nip in the air, calmness in the atmosphere and the right notes of soulful folk music playing in the backdrop, a dawn concert here at the ongoing 12th edition of Rajasthan International Folk Festival (RIFF) music festival was the stuff that dreams are made of.

In Jaswant Thada, the royal cenotaph that offered an impressive view of the rising sun, music blended with spiritual message filled the air as words of folk singers like Mahesha Ram, Baghe Khan and Gemra Ram rose above the bounds of religion and serendad not the gods, but the idea that is "Nirgun Bhakti".

"Nirgun doesn't have a body, or a soul. There is no beginning to it as there is no end. It goes above and beyond religion, caste, and community," Baghe Khan, the famous Manganiyar



singer said. "Nirgun or nirakar is something that doesn't have a form, or colour. It isn't born, it doesn't die. It doesn't have anything to do with anyone, it doesn't believe in a religion, or even a family," he added.

Nirgun bhakti, propagated by Indian mystic poet and saint Kabir, the idea of a formless and benign divinity, a friend figure.

Like many other practitioners of spiritualism, Kabir too believed in the "formlessness" of God, which is reflected in his poetry.

The artistes while playing traditional instruments like tambura, kamaicha, manjira, and dholak, gave emotive rendition of many Nirgun bhajans like "Joban dhan pavna, do hi din chara" or "Papi mohe raj karan-

Nirgun bhakti, propagated by Indian mystic poet and saint Kabir, the idea of a formless and benign divinity, a friend figure. Like many other practitioners of spiritualism, Kabir too believed in the "formlessness" of God, which is reflected in his poetry

ta dekhya", which talked about the futility of taking pride in youth, and how even evil rulers eventually have to deal with the fate of time, respectively.

Talking about the relevance of songs written by 15th-century poet Kabir and other Bhakti movement proponents, Gemra Ram, a folk artist from the Meghwal community, said the growing "hatred towards each other" is the reason why we need these songs today more than ever. "These days people take offense over so many things, religion or what not. They hate each other for their opinions. The one

who follows Nirgun does not feel anger, does not feel hatred for others. Since he doesn't believe in such divides, nothing of it affects him," the 60-year-old vocalist said.

Though agreeing with his co-artist in describing Nirgun as someone who is above everyone else, folk singer Mahesha Ram said the importance of guru stands true in this belief too and is not forgotten one bit.

"We have songs that are sung to welcome the guru, or to alarm others that the guru has arrived, bhajans about what he has brought for everyone and

what he'll take from us," he said. Having sung these bhajans for a larger part of their lives -- 48 years for Gemra Ram alone — many of the artistes, though hesitantly, did admit that the popularity of traditional folk songs is on decline.

But then nothing of that disheartens a pragmatist like Baghe Khan.

"Everything that has come into this world will cease to exist one day. Same goes with these songs too, that were written hundreds of years ago. That's how life goes on," Khan, also a folk singer, said.

The five-day annual event, kick-started on October 10, will see a total of over 250 artistes this year, not just from the desert state but all over the country together with international artistes from Poland, Hungary, Armenia, Cuba, Ireland, Switzerland, Reunion Island, Israel and Mali.

RSS' outfit to protest for rain-hit farmers

PNS ■ BHOPAL

The RSS-affiliated Bharatiya Kisan Sangh will hold a protest in Madhya Pradesh capital Bhopal on Tuesday as it accused the Kamal Nath government of ignoring farmers who suffered crop and property damage during heavy rains this season, a functionary said on Sunday.

Madhya Pradesh had one of the most robust monsoons this year with rainfall being 30 per cent in excess of the annual average. "Kharif (July-October sowing season) crops were destroyed due to heavy rains. We submitted memorandums to the administration demanding compensation but the state government has done nothing in the past two months," BKS state chief Rambharose



Basotiya and secretary Mahesh Choudhary told reporters here. "We will organise a one-day dharna on Tuesday. We want the government to give relief to rain-affected farmers and waive off loans of Rs 2 lakh as announced earlier," Choudhary said.

The BKS leaders claimed farmers had become loan defaulters with banks as they stopped repayment after the state government announced the waiver.



# NORMAL LIFE CONTINUES TO BE HIT IN KASHMIR FOR 70<sup>th</sup> DAY

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

Normal life remained hit in Kashmir for the 70th consecutive day on Sunday since the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution as the main markets continued to be shut and public transport stayed off the roads, even as the weekly flea market here was open, officials said.

The weekly flea market, locally known as the "Sunday market", was open as several dozen vendors put up stalls on the TRC Chowk-Lal Chowk road, they added.

The market witnessed a huge rush of customers as people from different areas of the valley thronged it to buy clothes and other items in view of the approaching winter, the officials said.

The other markets and business establishments remained shut across the valley, even as a few shops were open here in the city till 10:30 am, they added.

Auto-rickshaws and a few inter-district cabs were seen plying here, but other modes of public transport were off the roads, the officials said, adding that the movement of private cars was less as compared to Saturday.

Mobile services remained suspended in Kashmir except in the Handwara and Kupwara areas in the north since the night of August 4. Internet services across all platforms also continued to be snapped in the valley, the officials said.

State government spokesperson Rohit Kansal told a press conference on Saturday that post-paid mobile phone services across all networks would be restored in Kashmir on Monday noon. He also said about 99 per cent areas in Jammu and Kashmir were free from restrictions on the movement of people.

On August 5, the Centre abrogated Article 370 of the Constitution, which gave a special status to Jammu and Kashmir, and bifurcated the state into Union territories.



## Security beefed up in Srinagar after grenade attack

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

Security was beefed up in several areas of Srinagar - the summer capital of Jammu and Kashmir - on Sunday following a grenade attack by suspected militants in a city market that left seven people injured, police said.

More security personnel, along with the flying squad, were deployed in Lal Chowk, Jehangir Chowk, Hari Singh High Street, Regal Chowk, TRC Chowk, Polo View and the areas around the city centre, a police official said.

He said random checking of vehicles and frisking of people was being done as part of the security drill.

The deployment of more security personnel was done in the wake of a grenade attack in Hari Singh High Street market a few hundred metres from the city centre - on Saturday in which seven people were



injured, the official said. He said the authorities wanted to give a sense of security to the people and the vendors who had set up stalls for the weekly flea market on Sunday.

While the flea market usually remains open only on Sundays, several vendors have continued with putting their stalls along the TRC Chowk-Polo View-Lal

Chowk road on daily basis for the last few weeks.

State government spokesperson Rohit Kansal, in a presser on Sunday, urged the businessmen, industrialists, traders, transporters, shopkeepers, hoteliers and contractors "not to be frightened by any threats by terrorists and separatists" and go about their normal activities.

## NPP urges Prez to uphold democracy in J-K

PNS ■ JAMMU

Accusing the BJP of weakening the democratic institutions in Jammu and Kashmir, the National Panthers Party (NPP) on Sunday sought the intervention of President Ram Nath Kovind to uphold "constitutional guarantees" in the state.

It also called for free and fair elections to the Block Development Councils (BDC), scheduled to be held on October 24, besides ensuring that reasonable political space is given to all opposition parties.

"There is widespread feeling in J&K that the state is heading towards one party system with the ruling BJP denying reasonable political space to the opposition parties. Democracy in the state is on a ventilator desperately gasping for breath," the NPP said in a petition submitted by its chairman and former minister Harsh Dev Singh to the Rashtrapati Bhavan.

"Not only are the political parties scared of the dictatorial regime but the people in general are invariably reluctant to ventilate their feelings for fear of reprisals," the petition said.

The NPP further claimed that the state has been the victim of the wicked politicking of successive regimes over the past seven decades.

It also said that several decisions which are the prerogative of an elected legislature have been taken by the executive by defying the set protocols and precedents.

"The elections to legislative Assembly continue to be postponed so as to suit the political expediencies of the ruling party at the centre.



## Jammu-Srinagar highway reopens for traffic after two days

PNS ■ JAMMU

The strategic Jammu-Srinagar national highway reopened for traffic on Sunday after remaining closed for the past two days due to a massive landslide in Ramban district, traffic department officials said.

Light motor vehicles (LMVs) were allowed to ply on the highway from both Jammu and Srinagar around 9.30 am after getting clearance from the agencies responsible for its maintenance, they said.

The 270-km highway, the only all-weather road linking Kashmir with the rest of the country, was closed late on Thursday following the landslide, which was triggered during widening of the road at Nihard -- two kms from Ramban towards Jammu.

Thousands of vehicles were left stranded on either side of the highway due to the blockade.

No passenger vehicle from Jammu or Srinagar was allowed on the highway on Friday and Saturday as the focus was on clearing the stranded vehicles, mostly trucks, the officials said.

Clearing the trucks took time due to continuous landslides and shooting stones from hills overlooking the highway, they said.

"The road was cleared of debris by the concerned agen-

**Thousands of vehicles were stranded on either side of the highway due to the blockade**

cies this morning, paving the way for the resumption of normal passenger traffic," the officials said, adding that traffic on the highway would be regulated in accordance with the new schedule.

According to the new schedule, LMVs would ply on both sides, from Jammu to Srinagar and vice-versa, during the day. Heavy motor vehicles (HMs) and load carriers from Zig (Qazigund) will ply between 7 pm to 11 pm and from Jakhni (Udhampur) between 6 am and 11 am, the officials said.

They said no HMs will be allowed after the cut-off timings. The traffic department headquarters also advised commuters to avoid travelling on the highway during night hours in view of the threat of landslides.

"The public is advised to undertake journey on the highway only after confirming the status of the road from traffic control units," the officials said.

### SHORT READS

#### PM Modi pens poem on his 'conversation' with ocean at Mamallapuram

**NEW DELHI:** The early morning stroll on the Mamallapuram beach brought out the poet in Prime Minister Narendra Modi. Modi said while strolling on the beach, he got lost in "conversation" with the ocean. "This conversation carries the world of my feelings. I am sharing the feeling with you in the form of a poem," he wrote on Twitter in Hindi on Sunday. Modi on Saturday had released a three-minute video of his plot on the beach where he was seen collecting waste and urged the people to ensure that public places are clean and tidy. In the eight-paragraph signed poem, Modi describes the ocean's relationship with the sun, the waves, and its pain. His collection of poems titled "A Journey" is already available.



#### 84-year-old woman killed by son over property in Kerala

**KOLLAM:** An 84-year-old woman reported missing since last month has allegedly been killed by her son after she refused to part with her property, and her body buried within the premises of their house near here, police said. Sunil(50) was arrested on Sunday following investigations into a complaint lodged by his sister that their mother had gone missing since September 3. Police said the man used to beat up his mother insisting that she transfer her property to him. The incident occurred at Chempumukku and police are on the look out for Sunil's accomplice, who is absconding, in connection with the killing.

#### Blackbuck skin recovered, eight held

**JAMNAGAR:** The forest department has recovered the skin of a blackbuck from Jamnagar town in Gujarat and arrested eight persons in this connection, an official said on Sunday. The blackbuck hide was recovered from two men on October 10 when they were trying to sell it, the official said. "Acting on a tip-off, officials of the Jamnagar forest department on Thursday held two persons trying to find customers for the blackbuck skin, used for black magic," he added. During their interrogation, the duo named six others, who were also arrested under relevant sections of the Wildlife (Protection) Act, the official said.

#### Minor among three killed in bus-van collision in UP's Etah

**EATH:** Three persons died and seven others suffered serious injuries on Sunday when a Uttar Pradesh Roadways bus collided with a van on GT Road in Malawan here, police said. The accident took place between Mahua Khera and Patharua villages under Malawan Police Station limits, they said. A 10-year-old was killed and the other two deceased are being identified, according to police. The injured have been admitted to the district hospital and the bodies were sent for post-mortem, they said.



OFFICIAL SAY OVERALL COUNT WILL BE LESS THAN 2018

## Punjab records 45% hike in farm fires

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The paddy harvesting season has started in Punjab and the state has already recorded a 45 per cent increase in stubble burning incidents till October 11, but the administration hopes the farm fire counts will come down gradually as a result of intensive interventions made this year.

The period between October 15 and November 15 is considered critical as maximum number of stubble burning incidents take place in this span in Punjab and adjoining states and is one of the main reasons for alarming spike in pollution in Delhi-NCR.

On Sunday, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said, "All the gains achieved so far on pollution front will be nullified. Whereas, we need to do a lot in Delhi and we are trying, however all governments and all agencies need to work to stop crop burning also (sic)."

The National Green Tribunal had also directed constitution of special cells in the office of chief secretary of Delhi and neighbouring states to monitor on daily basis this month the problem of air pollution by burning of crop residue.

According to data from the Punjab Pollution Control Board (PPCB), the state had recorded 435 incidents of stubble burning till October 11 last year. This year, the figure has shot up to 630.

Amritsar alone has report-

**Amritsar alone has reported 295 incidents of farm fires during the period. Tarn Taran and Patiala have recorded 126 and 57 cases, respectively**

ed 295 incidents of farm fires during the period. Tarn Taran and Patiala have recorded 126 and 57 cases, respectively.

Punjab Agriculture Secretary K S Pannu said the fires detected by satellites don't give a clear picture of the stubble burning incidents.

"Satellites data also include fires at cremation grounds and dump yards. The number of farm fires in Punjab at present is almost negligible. The overall count this year will be less than last year," he asserted.

Pannu said that according to the Centre's data, stubble burning incidents in Punjab from October 1 to 10 reduced from 1,714 in 2016 to 430 in 2019.

The Punjab government gave 28,000 farm implements, such as happy seeder, super straw management system, paddy straw chopper and mulcher, to farmers and cooperative societies on subsidised rates in 2018 and has sanctioned 23,000 more this year, he said.

## 12 arrested for pushing child porn through social media

PNS ■ THIVANANTHAPURAM

Twelve people have been arrested and cases registered against 20 people in Kerala for propagating child pornography through social media, police said here on Sunday.

The action follows raids conducted by the Counter Child Sexual Exploitation Unit of Kerala Police at 21 places in the state.

The CCSE works in coordination with the INTERPOL-Crimes against Children Unit and the International Centre for Missing and Exploited Children. The raids started at 6 AM on October 12 and ended at around 1 AM on Sunday, a senior police official told PTI.

Laptops, mobile phones, modems, hard disks, memory cards, computers and other electronic equipment were seized from those arrested, police said in a release.

## Tharoor slams Pak for raising Kashmir at Asian Parliamentary Assembly meet

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Senior Congress leader Shashi Tharoor on Sunday slammed Pakistan at the Asian Parliamentary Assembly meeting in Belgrade after it cited developments in Jammu and Kashmir for its inability to host the group's plenary, and said the country was attempting to politicise the forum by referring to an internal matter of India.

Tharoor, took the floor at the Asian Parliamentary Assembly convened on the sidelines of the Inter-Parliamentary Union annual meet, to deplore a letter from the chairman of the Pakistan Senate which blamed developments in Jammu and Kashmir for the country's inability to host the APA plenary scheduled for December 2020, sources said.

Tharoor hit out at the chairman of the Pakistan Senate, saying he has referred to an internal matter of India to



**Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of the Indian Union. There is nothing in the situation in Jammu and Kashmir that in any way affects the living and working conditions in his country, let alone in Islamabad**

—SHASHI THAROOR  
Senior Congress leader

"unnecessarily politicise the APA assembly".

"Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of the Indian Union. There is nothing in the situation in Jammu and Kashmir that in any way affects the living and working conditions in his country, let alone in Islamabad," the former minister of state for external affairs said.

"India's internal matters do not spill over its borders and do not impinge upon our neigh-

bours," Tharoor said.

"In the circumstances, it is unfortunate and strange that he expects this august assembly to accept such a far-fetched excuse for his inability or unwillingness to host the APA plenary in December in 2019," the MP from Thiruvananthapuram said.

Pakistan has tried to raise the Kashmir issue at several multilateral meets, but India has thwarted its efforts. A parliamentary delegation

## Tent city ready for Guru Nanak's 550<sup>th</sup> birth anniversary fete

PNS ■ CHANDIGARH

A massive tent city spread over 270 acres has been readied at Sultanpur Lodhi in Punjab to provide free accommodations to thousands of devotees who are expected to converge next month for the 550th birth anniversary celebrations of Guru Nanak Dev, the founder of Sikhism.

The tent city, which has a capacity of 35,000 people, will comprise big and small dormitories, family tents, cubical tents for two persons, VIP lounges, 'langar' (community kitchen) area, power back up and CCTVs, besides other basic amenities, according to Pankaj Sharma, the project manager.

Pilgrims from several parts of the country and abroad will be visiting the city, where the first Sikh Guru spent 14 years and attained enlightenment.

Indore based company Girdhari Lal and Sons, which had set up a tent city in Patna in Bihar on the occasion of



350th birth anniversary of Guru Gobind Singh in 2017, is undertaking the project at Sultanpur Lodhi. "The 90 per cent work on the setting up of tent city is complete," said Sharma.

The tent city, which is divided into three parts, will accommodate 35,000 devotees, Sharma told PTI.

An online registration system will be put in place for allocation of space starting from November 1, he said. The tent city will comprise 367 big dormitories (60 persons in each dormitory), 600 small dormitories (for 15 persons in each dormitory), 776 family tents (for four persons each) and 476

cubical tents (for two persons), he said adding that attached toilets will be provided with family and cubical tents.

A 'pandal' spread over 16,000 square metre will be set up where VIP lounges will be set up. Area has also been demarcated for 'langar' (community kitchen) in the tent city. Besides,

**Indore based company Girdhari Lal and Sons, which had set up a tent city in Patna in Bihar on the occasion of 350th birth anniversary of Guru Gobind Singh in 2017, is undertaking the project at Sultanpur Lodhi**

there will be cloak room, waiting lounge and 'Joda ghars' (place to keep shoes), he said.

"There is going to be hundred per cent power back up, RO water supply for drinking purposes and 250 CCTVs will be set up," he said adding that fire hydrants would also be arranged.

"Arrangements will be such that devotees face no problem during their stay," said Sharma. District authorities are expecting that 15 to 20 lakh will visit the city for the celebrations.

Congress MLA from Sultanpur Lodhi Navtej Cheema said villagers within seven to eight kilometres of this area were also being

requested to accommodate people at their houses as there was going to be a huge rush of devotees next month.

"Already we are witnessing a heavy inflow of devotees. That is why we are now making arrangements for them at marriage palaces, colleges, hotels and wherever we could find place for their stay," said Cheema.

The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee is also making arrangements for accommodating people at 'sarais' (inns) and some schools buildings. Arrangements for 'langar' (community kitchen) will also be made by the SGPC, an official said.



# Germany urges Turkey to immediately end Syria offensive

**Berlin:** German Chancellor Angela Merkel on Sunday urged Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan to halt Turkey's offensive in northern Syria immediately, warning it could spark further destabilisation of the region and a resurgence of the IS jihadist group.

In a phone call with Erdogan, Merkel "spoke in favour of an immediate end to the military operation", the chancellor's office said in a statement.

The operation threatens to drive large parts of the population from their homes, she said, noting that it would also risk 'destabilisation of the region and lead to a resurgence of the ISIS'.

Germany and France on Saturday said they were suspending arms exports to Turkey over its offensive in Syria against the Kurdish People's Protection Units (YPG).

Turkey sees the YPG as a terrorist off-shoot of Kurdish rebels in its own territory, but Western powers used the Kurds as the main ground force against the ISIS group in Syria. **AFP**

## Arms embargoes won't stop Turkey's Syria operation: Erdogan

**Istanbul:** President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Sunday that threats of sanctions and arms embargoes by Western powers would not stop Turkey's military offensive against Kurdish militants in Syria.

"After we launched our operation, we have faced threats like economic sanctions and embargoes on weapons sales. Those who think they can make Turkey turn back with these threats are gravely mistaken," Erdogan said in a televised speech.

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Turkey sees the YPG as a



terrorist off-shoot of Kurdish rebels in its own territory, but Western powers used the Kurdish forces as the main ground force against the Islamic State group.

Erdogan said the Turkish military and its Syrian proxies now controlled the border town of Ras al-Ain while Tal Abyad was being besieged from two directions. **AFP**

## Turkey and proxies advance deep into Syria

**Qamishli (Syria):** Turkish forces and their proxies pushed deep into Syria on Sunday, moving closer to completing their assault's initial phase, while Washington announced it was pulling out 1,000 troops from the country's north.

The Kurdish administration in northern Syria said that Turkish bombardment near a camp for the displaced led to nearly 800 relatives of IS members fleeing.

Fighting raged but Turkish-backed forces made significant progress along the border on the fifth day of an offensive that has provoked an international outcry and left dozens of civilians and fighters dead.

Kurdish authorities and foreign powers have warned repeatedly that the hostilities could undermine the fight against the Islamic State group (IS) and allow jihadists to break out of captivity.

Fighting has engulfed the area since Wednesday when Ankara launched a long-threatened offensive against the Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), who it considers "terrorists" linked to insurgents inside Turkey.

US Defence Secretary Mark Esper said Sunday that President Donald Trump had ordered the withdrawal of up to 1,000 troops from northern Syria.

"I can't give a timeline because it changes hourly. We want to make sure that we do so in a very safe, deliberate manner," he told the CBS network.

Trump has been accused of abandoning a loyal ally in the fight against IS after ordering American troops to pull back from the border, which Ankara took as a green light to move in.

The Syrian Observatory for Human Rights war monitor



Turkish-backed Syrian opposition fighters advance in Tal Abyad, Syria on Sunday

AP

reported on Sunday that 19 more civilians had been killed in fighting.

More than 50 civilians have now died on the Syrian side, with Turkish reports putting the number of civilians dead from Kurdish shelling inside Turkey at 18.

The Observatory said pro-Ankara fighters "executed" at least nine civilians on Saturday near the Syrian town of Tal Abyad. The Kurds said a female Kurdish party official and her driver were among those killed.

Aid groups have warned of another humanitarian disaster in Syria's eight-year-old war if the offensive is not halted.

The UN humanitarian agency OCHA said the exodus sparked by the fighting had grown to 1,30,000 people and it was preparing for that figure to more than triple.

"We have moved into a planning scenario where up to

4,00,000 people could be displaced within and across the affected areas," spokesman Jens Laerke told AFP.

Some 12,000 IS fighters — Syrians, Iraqis as well as foreigners from 54 countries — are detained in Kurdish prisons, according to official Kurdish statistics.

Displacement camps meanwhile host some 12,000 foreigners — 8,000 children and 4,000 women.

"The brutal military assault led by Turkey and its mercenaries is now taking place near a camp in Ain Issa, where there are thousands (of people) from families of IS," a Kurdish administration statement said.

"Some were able to escape after bombardments that targeted" the camp.

It said the Ain Issa camp was "now without guards" and 785 relatives of IS jihadists had fled.

The SDF, a coalition of Kurdish and Arab fighters, was the main partner on the ground in the US-led campaign against IS. According to the Observatory, at least 104 of its fighters have been killed since the start of the Turkish offensive.

## TRUMP RELEASES \$50 MILLION IN STABILISATION ASSISTANCE FOR SYRIA

**Washington:** US President Donald Trump on Saturday released \$50 million in stabilisation assistance for Syria to protect persecuted ethnic and religious minorities and advance human rights, the White House said.

This funding will provide emergency financial assistance to Syrian human rights defenders, civil society organisations and reconciliation efforts directly supporting eth-

nic and religious minority victims of the conflict, White House Press Secretary Stephanie Grisham said.

It will also go towards increasing accountability, removal of explosive remnants of war, community security, documenting human rights abuses and international humanitarian law violations and support for survivors of gender-based violence and torture, she said. **PTI**

SDF fighters have taken mounting losses against the vastly superior military firepower of Turkey, which has defied mounting international protests and the threat of US sanctions in pressing on with its offensive. **AFP**



Hundreds of protesters from the Kurdish community in Lebanon hold their party flags, one with a portrait of the jailed Kurdish guerrilla leader Abdullah Ocalan, as they chant slogans, during a demonstration against Turkey's military operation in northeastern Syria, at Martyrs' Square in downtown Beirut, Lebanon on Sunday

AP

## Trump backs Giuliani, but some aides wish he would cut ties

**Washington:** President Donald Trump on Saturday stood behind personal attorney Rudy Giuliani, one of his highest-profile and most vocal defenders, amid reports that federal prosecutors in the city Giuliani led as mayor are eyeing him for possible lobbying violations.

Behind the scenes, however, many of Trump's closest aides and advisers, inside and outside the White House, quietly wish the president would cut ties with Giuliani, whose leadership of New York after the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks earned him worldwide admiration and the moniker of "America's mayor." Giuliani was a force in Trump's defense during the lengthy Russia investigation by the special counsel.

Yet the effort to undermine special counsel Robert Mueller led Giuliani to Ukraine, which now entangles the former federal prosecutor and mayor in legal jeopardy and is central to the danger threatening the presidency he labored to protect.

The New York Times reported Friday, citing a pair of anonymous sources familiar with the matter, that the investigation is linked to Giuliani's efforts to undermine Marie Yovanovitch, formerly the US ambassador to Ukraine.

The US attorney's office in Manhattan has declined to comment on the Times report.

Two Florida businessmen with ties to Giuliani were charged Thursday with federal campaign finance violations.

Both played key roles in



Giuliani's efforts to get Ukraine to launch a corruption investigation into Democratic presidential contender Joe Biden and his son Hunter, who sat on the board of a gas company there. On Saturday, Trump deployed in Giuliani's defense the same two-word phrase — "Witch Hunt!" — he repeatedly used to attack the legitimacy of the special counsel investigation into Russian interference in the 2016 presidential election and now the House impeachment inquiry against him. "So now they are after the legendary 'crime buster' and greatest Mayor in the history of NYC, Rudy Giuliani," Trump tweeted while on the way to his northern Virginia golf club.

"He may seem a little rough around the edges sometimes, but he is also a great guy and wonderful lawyer." Later Saturday, he told Jeanine Pirro during a telephone interview broadcast on her Fox News Channel program that Giuliani continues as his lawyer.

"He's a great gentleman. He was a great mayor, one of the greatest, maybe the greatest mayor in the history of New

York," the president said. "He was a fantastic prosecutor. I know nothing about him being under investigation ... I can't imagine it."

"He's a man that looks for corruption and whatever he does I really believe he's a totally, I mean, I know he's an honorable man," Trump added.

A whistleblower complaint about Trump's dealings with Ukraine led Democratic House Speaker Nancy Pelosi to open an impeachment inquiry into the president. Three House committees taking depositions in the impeachment probe heard Friday from Yovanovitch.

The former ambassador has said she was fired from her post in May after insisting that Giuliani's requests to Ukrainian officials for investigations be relayed through official channels, according to a former diplomat who has spoken with her. The former diplomat spoke on condition of anonymity to discuss the private conversation. Trump seemed to try to create space between himself and Giuliani on Friday when reporters asked if Giuliani was still representing him.

"Well, I don't know. I haven't spoken to Rudy," Trump said as he left the White House for a trip to Louisiana, adding that the two spoke briefly on Thursday.

"He's a very good attorney, and he has been my attorney. Yeah, sure," Asked if he still represented Trump, Giuliani replied to The Associated Press with a one-word text message: "Yes." **AP**

## Typhoon leaves 33 dead as Japan continues rescue

**Tokyo:** Helicopters, boats and thousands of troops were deployed across Japan to rescue people stranded in flooded homes Sunday, as the death toll from a ferocious typhoon climbed to as high as 33.

One woman fell to her death as she was being placed inside a rescue helicopter.

Typhoon Hagibis made landfall south of Tokyo on Saturday evening and battered central and northern Japan with torrents of rain and powerful gusts of wind. The

typhoon was downgraded to a tropical storm on Sunday.

Public broadcaster NHK said 14 rivers across the nation had flooded, some spilling out in more than one spot.

The Tokyo Fire Department said a woman in her 70s was accidentally dropped 40 meters (131 feet) to the ground while being transported into a rescue helicopter in Iwaki city in Fukushima prefecture, a northern area devastated by the typhoon. **AFP**

## Britain's Johnson pushes for last-ditch Brexit deal

**London (United Kingdom):** Prime Minister Boris Johnson was to brief his Ministers on Sunday on progress in Britain's last-ditch efforts to strike a new Brexit agreement with the EU.

Negotiators went behind closed doors for intensive talks in Brussels after Johnson outlined a new set of divorce terms to Irish Prime Minister Leo Varadkar on Thursday.

But they have very little time to left succeed.

EU leaders will meet in Brussels on Thursday and Friday for a summit held under the pressures of the October 31 Brexit deadline just two weeks

away. They would ideally like to have a full proposal to vote on by then.

But the sides are trying to achieve in a few days what they had failed to in the more than three years since Britons first voted to leave the European Union after nearly 50 years.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel will discuss the available options with French President Emmanuel Macron late Sunday and Johnson is to brief his cabinet at lunchtime.

European officials said the bloc's Brexit negotiator Michel Barnier will also brief EU

ambassadors on the state of play on Sunday evening.

The few details that have leaked out suggest a compromise around the contentious Irish border issue that keeps Britain's Northern Ireland partially aligned with EU customs rules.

Whether such a fudge suits both Brussels and the more ardent Brexit backers in parliament who must still approve a deal should become clearer in the coming days.

Johnson rose to power in July on a promise not to extend Brexit for a third time — even for a few weeks. **AFP**

## XI JINPING WARNS DURING MAIDEN VISIT TO NEPAL

## Any attempt to split China will be 'crushed'

**Kathmandu:** President Xi Jinping warned on Sunday that anyone attempting to "split" China will be "crushed" as he held wide-ranging talks with Nepal's top leadership here and the two countries elevated their bilateral ties to strategic partnership and signed a slew of agreements, including a plan to build a trans-Himalayan railway line. During his meeting with Nepalese counterpart Bidya Devi Bhandari on Saturday, President Xi announced a support of 3.5 billion RMB equivalent to Nepalese Rs 56 billion to Nepal over the next two years to help the development pro-

grammes, officials said.

Xi, the first Chinese president to visit Nepal in 23 years, also pledged to upgrade the Arniko Highway linking Kathmandu with Tatopani transit point - which was shut down following the devastating earthquake of 2015 - and open more customs points facilitating connectivity. He said a feasibility study of trans-Himalayan railway will soon start and China will also support construction of the Kerung-Kathmandu tunnel road. During his meeting with Nepal Prime Minister KP Sharma Oli on Sunday, Xi said that "anyone attempting to split



China will be crushed and any external force backing such attempts will be deemed by the Chinese people as pipe-dreaming," China's official Xinhua news agency reported.

Xi's comments came as Beijing is putting pressure on Kathmandu to rein-in pro-

Dalai Lama Tibetans in Nepal.

Nepal shares a long border with Tibet and is home to around 20,000 Tibetan exiles. Every year some 2,500 Tibetans illegally enter Nepal crossing Tibetan border on their way to Dharamshala to meet the 84-year-old Dalai Lama.

Beijing views the India-based Dalai Lama, the spiritual leader of the Tibetan people, as a separatist trying to split the Himalayan region from China.

Oli said Nepal firmly supports China in safeguarding its sovereignty and territorial integrity and stands firm in upholding the one-China poli-

cy. Nepal, added Oli, will never allow any force to use its territory for separatist activities against China, the Xinhua report said. Xi stressed that his country appreciates Nepal for its firm adherence to the one-China policy and its staunch support for China on issues concerning China's core interests.

Calling Nepal and China true friends and partners, Oli said the two countries have always respected each other, supported each other and never interfered in the internal affairs of the other, adding that their traditional friendship is unbreakable. **PTI**

## GLOBE TROTTER

### 9 KILLED, 10 INJURED IN GAS EXPLOSION IN CHINA

**Beijing:** At least nine people were killed and 10 others injured on Sunday in a gas explosion at a street food restaurant in eastern China, official media here reported.

### 74 MIGRANTS RESCUED OFF LIBYAN COAST

**Rome:** Humanitarian groups on Sunday said they have rescued 74 migrants on a rubber boat in the Mediterranean Sea off the coast of Libya while Tunisian authorities reported blocking a smuggling boat carrying 110 migrants from setting off for Italy. The groups said six children were among those rescued.

**Hong Kong:** Riot police clashed with anti-government protesters across Hong Kong Sunday as masked activists vandalised businesses deemed sympathetic to Beijing in another weekend of chaos in the financial hub. Rallies erupted in multiple neighbourhoods, with some protesters blocking roads, sabotaging train tracks, and trashing pro-China businesses. Police said an officer was taken to hospital after his neck was slashed. Local television networks also broadcast footage of a man beaten bloody by protesters after they found a baton in his bag and suspected him of being an undercover officer.

Police have increasingly posed as protesters, scoring some tactical successes and sparking widespread paranoia among frontline demonstrators. During cat-and-mouse encounters on Sunday officers made dozens of arrests, but there were fewer protesters than have taken to the streets more recently during the four-month long protest movement.

In Mongkok, a bustling shopping district on the Kowloon peninsula, officers burst from an unmarked van over a blockade of bamboo scaffolding and quickly chased down multiple protesters. Later, an AFP reporter in the neighbourhood saw protesters beat a woman earlier accused of helping police clear barricades.

The woman was struck with fists and umbrellas, and also had her face smeared with mud.

Protesters have increasingly

turned on their ideological opponents in recent weeks, while Beijing loyalists have attacked democracy activists throughout the summer.

Online forums used to organise the largely leaderless movement advertised Sunday as a "blossom everywhere" day, encouraging activists to gather in malls across the city.

Protests and clashes were reported in half a dozen neighbourhoods, with police saying they fired tear gas during two incidents.

While the crowds were thinner, the flashmob tactics stretched police resources and still brought chaos to parts of the city for a 19th consecutive weekend. Throughout the day, police found themselves berated and heckled by bystanders as they made arrests,

highlighting how the force has become loathed and pilloried by large parts of the population. "I'm furious," a female protester, who gave her surname as Chan, told AFP. "I want the government to disband the entire police force."

Hong Kong has been shaken by four months of massive democracy protests which have seen increasingly violent clashes between hardcore demonstrators and police, as well as regular transport disruptions.

The protests were sparked by opposition to a now-scraped proposal to allow extraditions to mainland China, but have since morphed into a larger movement for democracy and police accountability. **AFP**

Police chase a protester in Hong Kong on Sunday



AFP

AP



# Finding an old connect

Modi and Xi have settled down on a new grammar of negotiation despite trust issues over historical baggage



There were optics aplenty, of sipping coconut water, sightseeing tours of her-itage sites, lavish local dinner, culture shows, long walks and an umbrella swamp of Indian hospitality. But Chinese President Xi Jinping, a hard-boiled supreme leader of his nation with aspirations to be the hegemonic anchor of an Asian century, is hardly expected to find India incredible enough. However, he does realise its materiality in the Chinese design and its bridge value with the rest of the world. Yes the informal summit in Mamallapuram, as it did in Wuhan, did enable both him and Prime Minister Narendra Modi to use their personal equation as a showpiece of neighbourhood under-standing and co-existence. It did help in simmering down tension, then over Doklam and now Kashmir, but this relationship hereon will be one based on realism rather than expectation, need-based practicality rather than high-sounding hyperbole. To that extent, there's a new "connect" as Modi said and a "heart-to-heart" candour as Xi admitted. India cannot expect China to abandon Pakistan on its terms. Xi has to stand by his all-weather ally and cannot de-couple Kashmir to the extent that its changed status and talk of reoccupying lost territories in Pakistan-occu-pied Kashmir (PoK) have left it worried about Shaksgam Valley, which Pakistan ceded, and Aksai Chin. But now that India has the larger world opinion on Kashmir as its internal matter, including that of the US, China realises its strategic heft. It further realises that pushing the People's Liberation Army (PLA) mischievously for border incursions won't work anymore. Which is why Modi, too, confi-dently announced that there would be no further escalation of disputes. India has now stared back at that threat to its territorial integrity and even resisted all attempts to be encircled by China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Not only that, by engaging with multi-lateral fora like the Quad and even Southeast Asian nations bilaterally, India has subtly but determinedly challenged China's diplomatic sway in the region. Besides, Xi had watched the "Howdy Modi" event in the US close-ly and wanted a counter-optics, if not a counterweight. Given its trade tussle with the US, China also needs India's absorptive market to keep its momentum. Besides, it is itself under international scanner on its rights issues with the Uighur Muslims, Hong Kong and Tibet and does not want to face a counter-charge of violating UN resolutions, considering that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in Gilgit-Baltistan is in disputed territory, too. No wonder Xi kept away from mentioning Kashmir. While China realises that Pakistan can only be Kashmir-centric, forcing it into embarrassing posturing, he has figured out larger issues for the bilateral arc. Without mentioning Pakistan, Modi and Xi did discuss com-batting terrorism and radicalisation. This is a small but forward-looking tweak.

Trade is the biggest takeaway despite China's simultaneous breakthrough with the US on the subject. The mutual deficit there is nearly \$400 billion and President Donald Trump would want to appear tough in an election year. So China would still need a big market like ours. Xi seems ready for sincere action to address our trade deficit, which stands at \$53.56 billion out of a two-way trade of \$87 billion. In its desperation to make India sign the mega free-trade pact, Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), China has agreed to a high-level, trade-facilitator mechanism. From China, it will be led by the Vice Premier, Hu Chunhua, and from India it will be Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. At least now, there is a seriousness about a give-and-take rather than just a dump-your-goods formula. There will also be an attempt to fatten up the import basket from India. Besides defence cooperation is what China is looking for as a lucrative option. Of course, New Delhi has to look into byproducts like a glut of Chinese goods in an open market scenario, issues of security and spying if allowing Huawei and so on. Much depends on the volume and nature of Indian goods and ser-vices that China allows in its home market. Still, there is a consensus on both sides that confrontation between the two economies could only harm both. Also, by citing historical trade routes, both nations feel that they can together com-mand the world economy like they did in the past. What is good about Mamallapuram is that there is an open acceptance of wrinkles in the silk that Modi gifted and also a solution offered in the form of "strategic communica-tion" which both sides want to continue. Of course, they must be implement-ed, too. Trust may not be easy to earn given the baggage of boundary issues but surely there is a new grammar of negotiation.

# Superhuman feat

Kenya's Kipchoge broke a marathon record by running 42.195 km in less than two hours. This is remarkable



relatively healthy adult human can keep up a pace of around a kilometre every 10 minutes for half-an-hour. Those with a degree of physical training can go faster and for a longer duration. Yet, normal human beings tire out — the build-up of lactic acid in our muscles makes them ache and pain — but some, particularly long-distance runners, manage to fight this. A physically fit person, who can traVERSE 42.195 km of a marathon in around four hours, would be considered very fit indeed. Athletes, particularly those primed for long-dis-tance running, usually complete marathons in just over two hours. Even the best long-distance runners from East Africa clock that time, which is why what the Kenyan runner Eliud Kipchoge has achieved in Vienna is the "four-minute mile" of our era — he ran the marathon in less than two hours. Sure, it was a race specifically designed for him to break the record. Kipchoge had no competitors to worry about and other runners in the field were there to ensure he kept his pace up. Even they melted away as the kilometres piled on but Kipchoge car-ried on and on, relentlessly, never seeming to run out of energy like a long-last-ing human battery. This superhuman achievement was cheered on by the crowds in Vienna, who realised the magnitude of what was happening. This was indeed heartening to see. And thankfully, the organisers did not have plans for the event to happen behind closed doors with the public and a worldwide audience giv-ing Kipchoge wings.

It was 75 years ago when Roger Bannister broke the four-minute barrier for running one mile. Kipchoge's pace was only slightly slower than Bannister's but he maintained it over 26 times the distance and still managed to crack a smile and give interviews afterwards. Several physiological experts believed that two hours were an unbreakable mark and many had predicted that Kipchoge would never achieve his vision. But through his willpower and sheer physical determi-nation, he did break the record. May be one day, someone will shatter his mark of 1 hour 59 minutes and 40 seconds but until that day comes, all of humani-ty should celebrate this superhuman feat. One that will become as legendary as the breaking of the "four-minute mile." Kipchoge's name will be remembered much like Bannister's is to this day.

# Missing out on deliverables

Despite informal summits like Mamallapuram, both India and China will have to live with certain realities, which are seemingly irrevocable even though they breed mistrust



VIVEK MISHRA

It wasn't surprising that the just-conclud-ed informal summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping was high on optics and low on concrete deliverables, which is why it holds the potential to remarkably transform the bilateral relationship between both nations. Given the choice of the locale in the picturesque, the ancient heritage and coastal city of Mamallapuram, India's histor-ical connect with China, together with the UNESCO recognition to the southern city, provided a fitting landscape for overwhelm-ing optics. On the other hand, the meeting was expectedly low on deliverables, owing to the fraught nature of bilateral issues like trade, border dispute and now China's open support to Pakistan on the internal reorganisation of the former State of Jammu & Kashmir — all of which require more than a quick-paced informal meeting to be resolved.

As such, the Mamallapuram summit builds on the tradition of informal engage-ments between the two countries after the Wuhan summit in 2018 and can be seen as an overarching framework to further Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs). The eased setting of such summits has the poten-tial to create grounds for discussions on issues that could otherwise irk the other nation. The decision to issue separate statements on the summit defends its "informal" nature and, therefore, calls for both nations to not make every minute details of the meet public.

Even though the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), India, described the visit of the Chinese President as "highly productive", doubts remain regarding countable deliver-ables specific to this visit. In his brief to the media, Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale said that from the Wuhan summit in 2018 to the Mamallapuram summit in 2019, India and China have made "visible progress." If one were to deconstruct the ambiguous reference to "progress", the only visible stride appears in the area of trade through a "mechanism" proposed by President Xi. Joint assurances to fighting terrorism and radicalism, which were part of the discussion, have been referred to in the past, too, through forums such as BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). Therefore, they do not necessarily qualify as "progress."

India's need for greater market access from China and lowering its trade deficit found traction in this summit mainly because the Middle Kingdom is already under pres-sure on the trade front, owing to its ongoing trade dispute with the US. The Trump administration in no mood to step back. As such, granting larger market access to India could be the prominent and possibly the only countable deliverable in the near term from this summit. Progress on issues such as India joining the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), 5G technol-ogy involving Huawei and Kashmir, even if discussed, is hard to imagine.

During the Wuhan summit, both nations



agreed to jointly cooperate on projects in third countries. Although cooperation between the two sides in Afghanistan has shown potential, little progress has been made. The lack of sub-stantial progress in Afghanistan from the last agreement must have prevented any further discus-sion on this issue.

Resolution of disputes and big-ticket outcomes were not expected in this summit as in matters concerning bilateral issues of Indian concern, China is either at an advantageous position *vis-a-vis* India or has a clearly different position than us. In trade, too, numbers are high-ly favourable to China, leaving India to seek balance. On the issue of border dispute, Beijing has little appetite for resolution, which was very much evident by the progress made in the talks held by the Special Representatives of both nations.

The lack of any joint com-muniqué also signals a con-scientious projection of optics over substance. It is evident that China's projected intentions in Mamallapuram can be seen as distinct from an otherwise differ-ent Chinese State behaviour. This was on display hours even before the Modi-Xi meeting took place, especially apropos China's stand and steps on the Kashmir issue. This strand in the Chinese behaviour is also evident in the

nuanced dichotomy between its stated positions and actions on ground *vis-a-vis* India. For instance, there is a clear disjunc-ture in its projections at the bor-der — in subtle ways through cer-tain elements of the Chinese mili-tary — which is in variance with Beijing's stated position. This allows China to either deny or distance itself from the activities of such actors, with the State itself having tacitly approved such behaviour.

While the Mamallapuram summit gracefully displayed India's cultural diplomacy girded-up by elements of *Atithi Devo Bhava* (the guest is equivalent to god), it tacitly legitimised the acceptance of China's flip-flop-ping positions on issues sensitive to India, especially Kashmir. This is important both in the con-text of China's recent steps and rhetoric on Kashmir as well as from the point of view of current geopolitics, where diplomacy, to a great extent, is also about sym-bolism, optics and messaging. China's growing relations with Pakistan are increasingly drag-ging India in bilateral dynamics. The summit could have been used to send a subtle message to China *vis-a-vis* the latter's re-lations with Pakistan.

As such, when dealing with China, India should continue to assert the principles that it stands for and unflinchingly project its

standard positions on issues that are of global concern. To be sure, for China, Pakistan is a strategic leverage point, bound as they are by economics and not an iron-clad alliance. That China had to finally relent on its move to block the listing for Masood Azhar as a terrorist at the UN, shows that the China-Pakistan relationship has scope for tweaks when there is enough interna-tional pressure and criticism.

The short history of China's relations with Pakistan has shown that when India puts its foot down on an issue, China is like-ly liberal in its relations with Pakistan, to the disadvantage of Islamabad. This is exactly how most relations of dependence between affluent and manipula-tive major powers and develop-ing economies have shaped themselves through history.

The pros and cons of such relationships get affected by the extent of separation between major powers' affluence and their manipulative intentions and the state of economic, polit-ical and military clout of the dependent State. China's invest-ments in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and their consequences have blurred the line that separates strategic intentions and economic goals for China in Pakistan. For the lat-ter, the state of its economy, which lies in an uncertain zone —

between that of a Least Developed Economy and a devel-oping economy — has made the terms of engagement with China more unfavourable for itself.


Despite informal summits like Mamallapuram, both India and China will have to live with certain realities, which are seem-ingly irrevocable, even though they breed mistrust. Just as India's decision to internally reorganise the former State of Jammu & Kashmir has become China's concern but cannot be rescind-ed, so have China's investments in the CPEC for India, parts of which pass through the Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) region. India's relations with China will have to factor in a continued ten-uous relationship on the one hand and sustained bilateral trade on the other. These dynam-ics will continue to have substan-tive scope of scepticism from either side.

What has also come to the fore is the need for an uplift in India's international diplomacy with regards to China. While Beijing has upped the ante against us and has taken unprecedented steps, India remains painstaking-ly accommodating of such crit-icism. It is time India's regional and global aspirations and role match its pitch in international diplomacy.

(The writer is Research Fellow, Indian Council of World Affairs)


SOUNDBITE

If you say anything to an estab-lishment or a person, will they like it? I cannot think of an establishment which, when criti-cised, feels happy about it.




**Lyricist-writer**  
—Javed Akhtar

Both streaming and cinema can happily co-exist. It's ultimately what the viewers want and what we know is that they want both.




**Actor**  
—Ajay Devgn

Pakistan has an important role to play in stabilising Afghanistan, engaging in robust counter-ter-rorism efforts and strengthening the global economy.



**US Senator**  
—Maggie Hassan

India's meaningful engagement with China started with (former) Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's visit in 1988 and his dialogue with then Chinese leader.



**Congress spokesperson**  
—Anand Sharma

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

## Draining public money

Sir — That the State Bank of India (SBI) has written off bad loans amounting to ₹76,600 crore is not so welcoming for the simple reason that a sizeable amount of tax-payers' money has been pocketed by 220 defaulters. Likewise, there may be many other banks, which have their share of bad loans to write off.

Political meddling in the lending policy is one of the main causes of bad loans. How come banks lend money without ade-quate collateral security? A star-ling revelation is that 980 bor-rows have been listed by the Reserve Bank of India, whose debts of more than ₹100 crore each have to be written off. Of these, 220 accounts — more than one-fifth of the total number — belonged to the SBI.

Taxpayers would feel cheated if the Government uses the tax collected for loan waivers and bad loan write-offs at a later date. The Government should use the tax-payers' money to create infrastructure and strengthen national security.

**KV Seetharamaiah**  
Hassan

## The Kashmir conundrum is far from over

This refers to the editorial, "Polls to what end?" (October 11). No doubt, our security forces have done well to maintain peace post the abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu & Kashmir but the clampdown in the Valley, the arrest of political leaders and grass-root workers and the alleged rights violations have undermined the core values of Indian democracy. The moot point is not that the detention of top leaders in Kashmir discredits Indian democracy but that the Abdullachs and others of their ilk considered Jammu & Kashmir as their fiefdom with loyalty to India sub-ject to enjoying power.

However, for the restoration of normalcy, the Centre should let political activism take wings and hold elec-tions to the Assembly. But winning locals round to back New Delhi once again may now be difficult. Pakistan is all out to disturb India's hold on the Valley. Entrusting the task of restoration of tranquility to novices has its own pros and cons. Under such circumstances, usher-



ing competitive politics is indeed imperative to restore peace. Meanwhile, the common man can only pray that good sense prevails all around...hoping the Centre is on the right track and the "change" will be tangible, paving the way for people's rule.

**J Akshobhya**  
Mysuru

## Low-key affair

Sir — The atmosphere for the Modi-Xi informal meet in Mamallapuram was far from ideal. China's support for Pakistan on the Kashmir issue has put a big strain on New Delhi-Beijing ties. The long shadow of Pakistan continues to disrupt India-China ties. Despite going ahead with the

second informal summit, Pakistan will be the elephant in the room.

China and Pakistan have been close strategic allies since independence. Now, with the construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the centre-piece of Xi's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative, and China's com-ments on Jammu & Kashmir, the

relationship has grown even stronger.

Unlike in Wuhan where the Modi-Xi meeting led to de-esca-lation in Doklam, this time noth-ing dramatic happened. At best, both Prime Minister Modi and Chinese Premier Xi Jinping remained focussed on improving ties in areas such as trade.

**K S Jayatheertha**  
Hassan

## Respect the elderly

Sir — President Ram Nath Kovind was right when he said that elderly citizens symbolise our legacy. Speaking at an event marking the International Day of Older Persons, Kovind said that only by respecting senior citizens can the younger generation and the nation progress.

The President's words provide a valuable lesson. Whatever we are today is because of the love, care and sacrifices of our elders. It is, therefore, our duty to make sure that they are cared for.

It is unfortunate that nowa-days many old people have to find a place in old age homes owing to the nuclear family sys-tem and the lack of time among youngsters, who are busy chasing greener pastures. Let the old Indian tradition of respecting the elderly not die out. Let us make them feel that their con-tributions to the family, the society and the nation have indeed been very useful.

**M Pradyu**  
Kannur

Send your feedback to:  
letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

Fight professional fatigue

There is a dire need to restore the passion and purpose in jobs supporting strategy formulation for the country



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

Methods of calculation of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), developmental indicators and chartered accountancy are again in focus and suggestions on how to make them more reliable are few. Auditing itself often serves as a threat held out by the powerful in running an organisation. It is often used to keep the recalcitrant at bay rather than creating new organisational or developmental patterns. A discussion with policy analysts is in many ways enlightening on the differing psyche of finance and accounting experts. In an era where the corporate world feels extremely stressed, chartered accountancy breeds monotony. It is, therefore, understandable that a lot of chartered accountants feel depleted. In a dualism of the order enumerated above, it's very difficult to be a strategist with a role in driving business or development forward.

There is a need to restore the passion and purpose in professions supporting strategy formulation. How deep the tedium runs can be gauged by the fact that there is a three-day summit in Sri Lanka, starting today and ending on October 16, on the theme of "Finding your mojo: A journey of self-discovery." This is meant for chartered accountants. Mojo is widely understood to indicate internal magic that translates to external success. Nothing would move without mojo. On October 18, the Institute of Internal Auditors, Delhi chapter, is holding a conference on strategic risk management and the topic is: "Enhancing strategy selection through risk management." The outcome will show the worth of the effort but the effort itself is worth it. Passion is the biggest source of energy but like everything else, it has a price. Those who are not passionate about their work deeply resent the style of those who are. Those who are passionate are often intolerant of the sluggishness of the routine approaches. The catch 22 here, of course, is how does one save oneself from becoming a victim of professional sluggishness?

At the end of the day, much of strategy formulation is a political process. Those who reject the approach of the leader (if not the chief himself) will resent the idea of the head being carried through. The ability to conspire to prevent is often higher than the ability to plan for strategic optimisation.

The times also call for unorthodox methodologies. Audit as a profession is known to work on algorithms to find the delicate balance between creating breakthroughs and pulling formula. This is a complicated one. It is heartening to see that sometimes people get together to create a passion for attempting it, nevertheless. The number of accountants and auditors is rising and so is the doubt, at times, in their ability to deliver.

It is obvious, that in the current context, financial analysts and chartered accountants are facing multiple challenges in performing their roles in and outside policy confabulations/board rooms. The need to update knowledge is universal and financial analysts and gatekeepers are no exception. At the end of the day, the individual often feels left out in observing the mandate of the so-called directives of the "institute."

It is obvious that business prosperity cannot be made surrogate to outdated principles. Similarly, reliability and conviction must continue to call the shots. The possible direction of the financial analysts and auditors is often far beyond the broadband of auditing principles. There are sectoral imperatives and nuances of functionality. Consider for example plantation management. The initiatives by top management dealing with the agro business must build into it, on behalf of the owners, considerations of climate. An assessment of internal and external productive environment — rooted in time tested principles of achieving of goals — has some strange touchstones of success. In an era where goals themselves become variable, the enunciation of strategy becomes sticky. It does not just remain a science but becomes an art. Business execution and administration become the wheels on which strategy rolls and would impact operations in marketing and finance.

This has to be leavened by competencies, which alone can formulate winning strategies. Among them, the prominent ones would include pattern recognition and isolation of exceptions using machine learning. This would include all relevant patterns to be examined for root cause; continuous elimination of root causes using continuous auditing; regular reporting of "unusual" transactions and in all things keeping the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) apprised of the developments. This is unlikely to happen unless preventive action, continuous monitoring, discipline and continuous forward planning are in sync. Not strangely, all this gets ensconced in the calculation and rollout of GDPs and strategy formulation at the national policy level. The impact of regional and national policy on specialised, sectoral performance is immense. The price of misguidance can be huge and it often becomes the cause of ill-founded doubts at the policy level.

(The writer is a well-known management consultant)

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

SANDEEP SENT ME A LETTER AND I FORWARDED IT TO THE CONGRESS PRESIDENT. THERE IS NOTHING PERSONAL. IT'S A POLITICAL CONVERSATION. —AICC IN-CHARGE PC CHACKO



THIS IS A BETRAYAL OF FAITH. WE WERE AGHAST TO SEE THE LETTER BEING DISCUSSED. WE HAD ASKED HIM NOT TO PASS COMMENTS ON SHEILAJI. —DELHI CONGRESS LEADER KIRAN WALIA

China's Himalayan ploy

Though the bonhomie between Nepal and China may seem minimal compared to India's age-old ties, the message to the global community is not in our favour



RISHI GUPTA

Chinese President Xi Jinping's two-day trip to Nepal, coming on the heels of the informal summit with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in India, reflects the priority Beijing accords to the little Himalayan kingdom. The visit, which was closely watched by New Delhi, too, was the first by a Chinese President in 23 years since Jiang Zemin landed in Kathmandu in 1996.

Nestled between India and China, Nepal is a strategically critical neighbour for the two big nations and in the last 60 years, New Delhi and Beijing have interacted with it differently.

Geographically, Nepal has worked as a safeguard for India from any aggression that could possibly come from the north. During the brutal expedition launched by China in Tibet in 1950, there were fears that Chinese aggression might reach Nepal, too. However, India asserted that any offensive against the Himalayan neighbour would be treated as an aggression against it. With Tibet falling into Chinese clutches, Nepal had approached India for help in training the Royal Nepal Army as well as for arms and ammunition. Though the two nations did not forge a formal defence relationship, an informal security umbrella from India to Nepal was agreed upon with the signing of the Treaty of Peace and Friendship in 1950.

Prior to the Tibet saga, the two century-long reign of the ruling Shah family was threatened by the control of the Rana Prime Minister. As a result, King Prithvi Narayan Shah had escaped to India and sought help. With India's assistance, a new political order was established in the Himalayan country. Though India was at the forefront of re-establishing the Shah dynasty, it had ensured respect for the sovereignty of Nepal, leading to the "special relationship" between the two nations.

On the other hand, China from day one of its arrival in Tibet, has been attempting to gain political and strategic clout in Nepal. While Prithvi Shah was wary of Chinese intentions, his successor King Mahendra began to change the course of Nepal's diplomatic ties and formalised relations with China in 1955. After the demise of King Mahendra, his son Birendra, too, had tried to alter Nepal's equation with India.

Advised by China to review the Treaty of Peace and Friendship with India, Birendra had invited global leaders to recognise Nepal as a "Zone of Peace" (ZoP). Despite it being endorsed by more than 50 countries, India had declined to accept the ZoP citing the 1950 treaty because an endorsement of the ZoP would have threatened India's security, especially from the north.

Having battled for more than 15 years to bring India on board, Birendra had to shelve the plan. Again in 1988, China supplied arms to Nepal in complete violation of India's security concerns that had been accommodated in the 1950 treaty. During this time India-Nepal diplomatic ties touched a low and from 1955 to 1990, Chinese leaders intensified efforts to marginalise New Delhi's "special relations" with Kathmandu.

In the post-Cold War era, significant economic reforms were carried out in India and a broader regional economic integration also took place. After the South Asian Association

“THE CHINESE APPROACH IN NEPAL HAS BEEN BASED ON GAINING STRATEGIC DEPTH BY OPENING UP ITS DEEP POCKETS AND ALSO SUBVERTING INDIA'S RELATIONS WITH KATHMANDU. CLEARLY, THESE ACTS BY CHINA ARE INTENDED TO ENSURE ITS STRONG POSITION IN NEPAL, PRECISELY TO KEEP A CLOSE VIGIL ON SOUTH ASIAN COUNTRIES, INCLUDING INDIA”



for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was established in 1985, India reiterated its responsibilities towards the region. This was reflected in the "Gujral Doctrine" based on the principles of unconditional cooperation to neighbours without expecting reciprocity. The doctrine considerably is one of the most significant milestones in India's approach towards its neighbours, which is being continued by the present Government in its "Neighbourhood First Policy." The deep India-Nepal relations have been based on close cultural, religious, people-to-people ties and respect for democratic values and non-aggression towards each other.

But over the last 30 years, political developments in Nepal have been marred by instability in governance. The introduction of the first democratic system in Nepal in the 1990s had opened the gateway for greater public participation. However, Maoist insurgency from 1994 to 2006 led the country into more profound political instability. In 2008, Nepal emerged as a democratic country, marking a complete end of the monarchical system and India was one of the few countries to have played a crucial role in supporting this transition.

However, a chain of events in the last five years damaged India's image in the Himalayan kingdom. While India was the first country to have provided help during the 2015 earthquake in Nepal, it was in the same year that a blockade at the Indo-Nepal border had affected emergency supplies, leading to an anti-India movement on social media like #GoBackIndia.

Kathmandu had also accused India of causing delay in the implementation

of a new Constitution. As soon as the draft of the Constitution was tabled in the Constituent Assembly, people belonging to Nepal's southern belt, the Madhesi, had led a violent movement against the Government on grounds of poor representation and alleged human rights violations. Fearing an exodus to Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, due to the Madhesi movement, India had sent the then Foreign Secretary S Jaishankar to raise India's security concerns in Kathmandu. However, this did not go down well with the people of Nepal. Ever since then, Kathmandu has been attempting to shift from its "special relations" with India to "new relations" with China. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and joint military exercises between Chinese and the Nepal Army are the latest examples of this shift.

Though the recent bonhomie between Nepal and China may seem minimal compared to India's age-old ties, the message to the global community is not in our favour and New Delhi needs to be cautious in this regard. On the other hand, the Chinese approach in Nepal has been based on gaining strategic depth by opening up its deep pockets and also subverting India's relations with Kathmandu. Clearly, these acts by China are intended to ensure its strong position in Nepal, precisely to keep a close vigil on South Asian countries, including India.

To do so, it has exploited every low phase in India-Nepal relations, including by supplying arms to Nepal in 1987 and providing \$1 million military assistance along with truckloads of weapons to King Gyanendra in 2005 for suppressing people's demand to introduce full democracy.

At present, amid global criticism of its alleged neo-colonist \$60 billion BRI, China is leaving no stone unturned to ensure its success globally and in the region. Other than India and Bhutan, every South Asian country has joined the BRI. In fact, India has made it amply clear that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is in complete violation of its sovereignty as it passes through disputed areas with Pakistan; hence, it cannot be part of any such initiatives.

In Nepal, the proposal to construct the trans-Himalayan corridor, connecting Kathmandu with Tibet has been in discussion for the last two years. However, considering the high terrain of the two countries, implementation of the project will be a litmus test for the economy of Nepal.

The leadership in Nepal needs to carefully look at the Chinese master plan on its soil and consider the viability and mood of the people as Chinese assistance is a debt-trap rather than being a grant-in-aid.

A key example of this strategy is the Hambantota Port that was built with Chinese assistance in Sri Lanka. The port is now under Chinese control after Sri Lanka failed to pay off loans that were taken from Beijing for building it.

Xi's recent visit to Nepal came at a critical hour to ensure the success of the BRI and its other strategic interests there. Hence, Nepal needs to put the aspirations and well-being of its people at the forefront instead of going by interests of individuals and political parties. It also has a responsibility to ensure regional balance and harmony.

(The writer is doctoral candidate, Centre for South Asian Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University)

Pak must go beyond banter about extremism

Imran Khan's rhetoric against extremism abroad can only find traction if it is balanced by taking initiatives towards ending the harassment and violence that minority communities face at the hands of radicalised elements within the country's majority religious community



NADEEM PARACHA

Many moons ago, when I was a kid living with my parents and grandparents in a house in Karachi's Bath Island area, we had a neighbour who everyone called "Kachra chacha" (Garbage uncle). Of course, no one called him that to his face but I am sure he knew. This middle-aged man had this curious habit of scolding everyone he would come across about the manner in which they disposed their garbage. It was actually an admirable trait but strangely enough, in his own house, he was not practising what he preached.

I remember when my cousins and I would visit his house to play with his nephews, there would be lit-

ter strewn all over his garden and piles of trash in the large round balcony which stood just above the garage. I have no idea why this was so but the memory of this gentleman came to mind immediately after watching Prime Minister Imran Khan's impassioned speech at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on September 27. I must admit, I was impressed by the way the Prime Minister addressed the issue of State repression being faced by Muslims living in Kashmir. But I'm afraid, a lot else about the same speech triggered that obscure memory of "Kachra Chacha."

It is rather easy to negate and contradict much of what Khan said in his speech and in the interviews he gave to the media in the US. His critics have already done that, questioning the current state of repression being faced by the Pakistani media and against Khan's political opponents in the country.

They have also called him out for doing precious little to address the harassment and violence that the

country's various minority communities continue to face at the hands of radicalised elements within the country's majority religious community.

Therefore, his detractors believe that Khan's pleas against hate speech, racial and religious bigotry and especially, Islamophobia in Western societies ring hollow.

They fear that such views will never be able to find any worthwhile traction in the West or from outside his excitable constituencies in Pakistan. How can one point at garbage outside his home when he cannot (or refuses to) do much about the garbage piled up inside his own house?

Nevertheless, as I mentioned above, the way the Prime Minister sweepingly condemns issues such as Islamophobia in the West and repression on the basis of ideology and faith against Muslims outside Pakistan, it is rather easy to counter such condemnations by simply putting forth the many episodes of violence against members of minor-

ity groups in Pakistan and also between Muslim sects that have been reported for decades now.

It is a fact that even when a Pakistani Prime Minister or President was willing to actually do something about this, he or she could not (and cannot), because the nature of certain laws and clauses within the country's constitution — mostly penned in the document between 1974 and 1986 — is such that initiating effective reform in this context is next to impossible.

This is why, even while one can argue that certain Western countries, infested with problems such as Islamophobia and racial bigotry, do not have the right to point fingers at Muslim countries such as Pakistan for failing to curb religious violence and harassment against minorities, one can always stress the fact that, unlike Pakistan, their constitutions do not have laws that can encourage and even shield acts and actors hell bent on inflicting violence in the name of faith.

Khan has been diluting his oth-

erwise impactful narrative on Kashmir and the Narendra Modi regime's "fascism" by coupling it with rhetorical spiels about Islamophobia. Apart from being riddled by the inherent contradictions discussed above, this is largely woven from a hodgepodge understanding of Edward Said's idea of post-colonialism, which is now struggling to stay relevant in a rapidly changing world.

More disconcerting is the possibility that the narrative being erected by Khan may as well be the result of either the complete failure and discarding of a narrative which the State and Government was trying to build (to counter radicalisation and the spread of extremism) through the National Action Plan (NAP); or Khan was never really on board when the plan was authored and approved by the military and political parties in January 2015.

Indeed, it is clear that the Modi regime's arrogance towards Pakistan has generated the need within the State and Government of Pakistan

to intensify their rhetoric on the issues of Kashmir and Hindu nationalism. But this can only be effective if it is balanced by initiatives which would show Pakistan as doing more to curb extremism in its own backyard compared to India, where Hindu extremism has been allowed to infiltrate mainstream politics and society.

Otherwise, it will only end up being nothing more than a bantering game between two countries infested by extremism, with one labelling the other "a terrorist State," and the other responding by calling it "fascist."

It is surprising that, despite the fact that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) dedicated a lot of space to the NAP in its manifesto for the 2018 election, Khan has frequently negated the nature of reforms suggested in that document. First, by continuously claiming that the war which the Pakistan military fought against religious extremist groups was "not our war," Khan is undermining the chaos and destruction

created by the extremists.

This sentiment is also dismissive of the manner in which the extremists were tackled by the military.

There is absolutely nothing new or insightful about lecturing the US about how it had helped Pakistan create Islamic militants in the 1980s (before dumping them). The US Government itself has repeatedly admitted this ever since former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited Pakistan in 2011.

Most of Khan's ideas are still cemented in the many apologetics that emerged from a muddled potpourri of anti-West narratives developed during the last three decades. These were narratives that aided those who were unwilling to recognise their own incompetence, complacencies and mistakes, by putting the blame on others regarding extremism. This can be a popular way of explaining things on Twitter, but it can certainly not — and should not — become part of the State and Government policy.

(Courtesy: The Dawn)



CAPSULE



Life insurers' new premium income in Sep up 15% at Rs 20,057 cr

**NEW DELHI:** The new premium income of life insurers rose 15 per cent to Rs 20,056.70 crore in September, data from Irdai showed. All 24 life insurance companies had a collective new business premium income of Rs 17,490.68 crore in September 2018. The state-owned Life Insurance Corporation (LIC), the largest life insurer, recorded a 18.37 per cent rise in its new premium during the month at Rs 12,759.24 crore as against Rs 10,778.81 crore in the same month a year earlier, the data showed. The rest of the private sector players had a total new premium income of Rs 7,297.46 crore during the month, an increase of nearly 9 per cent from a year ago, the data on monthly business figures released by the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai) showed.



NRL to invest Rs 62cr in CSR activities in Assam

**GUWAHATI:** North East India's largest refiner Numaligarh Refinery Ltd on Sunday said it will pump in over Rs 60 crore in various developmental projects under its corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities during 2019-20. Of the total spending under the CSR head, the miniratna PSU in Assam's Golaghat district has earmarked 60 per cent funds for school education, health and nutrition programmes. "In 2019-20, our CSR budget is Rs 62 crore. In this fiscal, a few aspirational districts are under consideration for undertaking developmental activities apart from other programmes," NRL Managing Director S K Barua told PTI here. The developmental programmes in these aspirational districts will be other than the "local areas" of the plant as defined in the CSR and Sustainability Policy of NRL, he added.

E-commerce firms asked to cut single-use plastic in packaging

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The commerce and industry ministry has advised e-commerce companies to gradually slash single-use plastic in packaging of products being sold through their platforms, in line with the government's commitment to reduce use of such material, an official said.

The companies have also been advised by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) to develop sustainable packaging material which will contribute to reducing India's plastic footprint globally.

E-commerce companies have been asked for discarding plastic used in packaging, which accounts for more than 40 per cent of non-fibre plastic, according to the official.

"With an earnest ambition to stop consumption of single use plastic, these companies are being advised to consider gradually curtailing use of single-use plastic in packaging products being sold through their e-commerce platform," the official said.

When asked about the issue, Amazon spokesperson said the company is commit-



**E-commerce companies have been asked to discard plastic used in packaging, which accounts for more than 40 % of non-fibre plastic, according to the official**

ted to a sustainable supply chain that leverages technology to build solutions that optimise the use of packaging material, reduce waste and create eco-friendly packaging.

"We have been relentlessly working on reducing single-use plastic in our supply chain. Today, less than 7 per cent of our packaging mate-

rial consists of single use plastic and we are working towards eliminating usage of them completely in our buildings in India by June 2020," the spokesperson said.

Rajneesh Kumar, Chief Corporate Affairs Officer, Flipkart, said that some of the focus areas for the company is usage of electric vehicles in logistics, waste management and efficient packaging, including reduction of single use plastic.

"Earlier this year, we announced and outlined our vision of eliminating single-use plastic in our packaging by March 2021...As of 1st August, we have already achieved a 25 per cent reduction in usage of single-use plastics through various initiatives across our packaging value chain, and we are aggressively moving towards 100 per cent recycled plastic consumption in our supply chain by March 2021," he said.

Creating alternatives for single-use plastic packaging is one of the significant steps we have taken towards fulfilling our commitment to creating a sustainable ecosystem, he added.

Giriraj Singh want's dairy out of RCEP trade deal

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister Giriraj Singh has asked the commerce ministry to keep dairy sector out of the proposed RCEP free trade pact, voicing reservation on possible import of milk produced by cattle that are given animal feed.

Opening of free trade in dairy sector will affect farmers of India, which is the world's largest producer of milk, the dairy and animal husbandry minister said.

The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) - a mega free trade agreement being negotiated among 10 ASEAN countries with their six FTA partners (India, China, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand). The proposed deal is expected to be finalised and signed by the next month.

Last week, RCEP member countries met in Bangkok for three days of negotiations, perhaps for the last time to conclude the deal.

Explaining reasons why dairy sector should be kept out of the ambit of the proposed RCEP trade pact, the minister said: "I have objection on two issues. We will not accept the milk produced by cattle that are given animal protein. Our condition is milk imported should have not any animal feed".

FM to meet CEOs of PSU banks today

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will hold a review meeting with CEOs of public sector banks (PSBs) on Monday to discuss various issues, including progress on credit offtake, as part of efforts to prop up the economy. The meeting is expected to review fund flow to stressed NBFC and MSME (micro, small and medium enterprises) sectors, sources said. Banks are expected to present report card on partial credit guarantee scheme and fund raising from market to enhance their capital base.

The Centre in August issued guidelines on operationalising Rs 1 lakh crore partial guarantee scheme under which PSBs can purchase high-rated pooled assets of financially sound non-banking finance companies (NBFCs). NBFCs, including housing finance companies (HFCs),

**Banks are expected to present report card on partial credit guarantee scheme and fund raising from market to enhance their capital base**

came under stress following a series of defaults by the group companies of IL&FS in September last year. Besides, the meeting will also assess the progress of first phase of outreach programme held across 226 districts across the country. This will be the second meeting of Sitharaman with CEOs of PSU banks in less than a month.



Airbus Helicopters awaiting early Pawan Hans disinvestment

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Airbus Helicopters hopes the central government will resolve the situation regarding the disinvestment of Pawan Hans Limited "very quickly" so that the national helicopter company can move ahead on its fleet expansion plans, a senior executive of the global aerospace manufacturer said.

Airbus Helicopters had signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Pawan Hans Limited (PHL) in Paris in June for collaboration in introducing two new categories of its helicopters - H145 and H225 - in the national



**As the disinvestment process has begun, PHL has put its fleet expansion plans on hold**

company's fleet in the future. However, on July 11, the central government issued the Preliminary Information Memorandum to sell 51 per cent of its stake in PHL. As the disinvestment process has begun, PHL has put its fleet

expansion plans on hold. Since July 11, the Centre has deferred the deadline regarding submission of expression of interest for PHL three times. On September 25, the Centre extended the last date in this regard to October 10.



Union Minister for Petroleum & Natural Gas and Steel, Dharmendra Pradhan chairing the 3rd meeting of the International Think Tank, in New Delhi on Sunday. The Secretary, Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas, Dr. M.M. Kuty is also seen

'\$60 bn investment coming in gas infrastructure'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India is investing over USD 60 billion in developing natural supply and distribution infrastructure as it chases the target of more than doubling the share of natural gas in its energy base to 15 per cent by 2030, Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said on Sunday.

Natural gas currently constitutes 6.2 per cent of all energy consumption in the country. Stating that the government has laid emphasis on developing a gas-based economy, he said natural gas is gradually becoming a bridging fuel for low carbon economy in India.

The government is giving special impetus to develop gas infrastructure across the length and breadth of the country connecting north to south and east to west parts of India, he said. "I am happy to inform you that as we speak, an estimated investment of 60 billion US

**44** I am happy to inform you that as we speak, an estimated investment of 60 billion US dollars is underway in building gas pipeline and terminal infrastructure that are nearing or in advanced stages of completion

—DHARMENDRA PRADHAN, Oil Minister

dollars is underway in building gas pipeline and terminal infrastructure that are nearing or in advanced stages of completion," he said in his opening remarks at the third International Think Tank Meeting (ITT) here.

City gas distribution network will soon cover 70 per cent of India's population, he said. "Our government is exploring strategic partnerships for overall development of oil & gas sector. The role of private sector - both domestic and from abroad, for bringing in investments with necessary innovations for future energy landscape in the country, will remain crucial".

CEOs of energy firms at the meeting stated that India will continue to increase consumption of fossil fuels in its energy mix, and there is an urgent need for an integrated energy policy cutting across all forms of energy.

Pradhan said energy is integral to achieving the target of early doubling the size of Indian economy to USD 5 trillion by 2024. Talking of key challenges confronting the energy sector, he said: "The foremost challenge of our time is the Energy Trilemma. It is about providing sustainably, securely, and affordably-sufficient energy to our growing population".

Secondly, in recent times, significant uncertainty and challenge were witnessed in the global energy markets. "We have seen the most disruptive developments. US sanctions on Iran and Venezuela, attacks on Saudi oil processing units, volatile conditions in Strait of Hormuz, unrest in the Middle-East, and US-China trade war, to name a few," he said.

"These developments have an enormous impact on India's energy security and also on our economic, budgetary and investment dimensions," he said, adding India's import dependency on crude oil and LNG continues to rise unabated. Import dependence is now over 84 per cent for crude and 45 per cent for natural gas.

"Going forward, it is expected to increase further. Such excessive import dependency does make us vulnerable to external developments more than ever before," he said.

PNB, UBI AND OBC

Outside expert may be roped in to decide merger

PTI ■ KOLKATA

With three state-run lenders - Punjab National Bank (PNB), United Bank of India (UBI) and Oriental Bank of Commerce (OBC) -- heading for an amalgamation, an outside expert may be engaged to decide the logo of the merged entity, an official said.

The proposed merger, expected to be effective from April 1 next year, will lead to the creation of the country's second-largest lender after State Bank of India, with a total business volume of about Rs 18 lakh crore.

"The new name and logo of the merged entity will be decided after inviting sugges-



tions from all and sundry. However, an outside expert may be engaged to decide on the new logo," a top official of UBI told PTI.

He said the logo is "very important" for creating identity of the new lender. "The managing directors and executive directors of the

three banks will meet next week. Talks on name and logo of the merged entity are high on the agenda," he said.

It is "very crucial" to finalise the administrative structure of the entity as the three banks are having different set-ups at the moment, the UBI official maintained.

Air India to resolve Fuel payment issues with oil PSUs

PTI ■ MUMBAI

State-owned Air India on Sunday said the aviation jet fuel payment issues are being sorted out and will be resolved soon with the oil PSUs, which have warned the carrier of snapping supplies at six key airports if it does not make monthly lump sum payment by October 18.

The airline also "assured" its customers of smooth operations, saying it has taken all the measures in the eventuality of the two sides failing to reach an understanding on the issue.

"The issues with oil companies are being sorted out and would be resolved early," Air India spokesperson Dhananay Kumar said in a statement.

In a letter sent to Air India

last Thursday, the three government-owned oil marketing firms — Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOCL), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) — said the outstanding had not come down considerably in the absence of the committed monthly lump sum payment.



PAYMENTS SERVICE SHOULD BE ON IN TWO MONTHS

WhatsApp close to meeting data localisation norms: NPCI

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Facebook-owned instant messaging giant WhatsApp will be compliant with data localisation norms over the next two months, post which it can roll out its much-delayed payments service here, says the National Payments Corporation.

Even after the launch of WhatsApp's payments service, it will take at least two years to reduce the cash dominance in the economy as the user base of digital payments must at least treble to 300 million to have any tangible impact on paring cash usage, the RBI-created NPCI's chief executive Dilip Asbe told PTI in an interview.

WhatsApp has been running a beta version of its payments service since last year in the country, and its official launch is being keenly watched by stakeholders, including its over 300 million users. Many think WhatsApp can help India emulate China's WeChat story, and help achieve the cashless payments objectives.

"There are still a couple of intermediaries where work is in progress. One is Google, second is WhatsApp. We believe WhatsApp will be fully compliant in the next two months' time," Asbe said.

WhatsApp has capped the number of payment service users at 1 million now as it is yet to fully meet RBI's data localisation norms which



require foreign companies to store transaction and user data within the country and delete the same from foreign servers within 24 hours.

According to Asbe, a third-

party audit by a firm empaneled by the RBI is currently underway to ascertain WhatsApp's compliance. "Once the auditors complete their probe, we will review the same

**Increased use of NPCI-developed UPI platform by intermediaries like WhatsApp will help grow the digital payments scene**

and will see how to go ahead," he said. Asbe also clarified that he did not meet the WhatsApp leadership team when they visited the city recently. He also said that other applicants like Xiaomi, Amazon Pay and Truecaller have not been able to launch their payments ser-

vices because of data localisation rules. Citing a Niti Aayog survey, Asbe said over three-fourths of the financial transactions are under Rs 100 and this is the space where unified payments interface (UPI) has to make inroads to replace cash and one step in this regard has been increasing the acceptance points. He hoped increased use of NPCI-developed UPI platform by intermediaries like WhatsApp will help grow the digital payments scene.

Currently, there are only 100 million users of digital payments and this must touch at least 300 million to have any material impact on cash in circulation, he said, underlining this as the real challenge.

First meeting of panel on GST collections tomorrow

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A high-level panel constituted by the government to suggest measures to augment GST revenue collection will hold its first meeting on Tuesday, a senior official said.

The government last week constituted the panel of officers to suggest steps to expand tax base and check evasion in the backdrop of falling revenue collections under GST.

Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections dropped sharply to a 19-month low in September to Rs 91,916 crore, reflecting the slowdown in the economy. "The first meeting of the committee is scheduled to be held on Tuesday, October 15," GST Council Special



Secretary Rajeev Rajan told PTI. The committee has been given 15 days time to submit its report, he said. This is going to be the first comprehensive review of GST after it was rolled out on July 1, 2017. The 12-member panel, comprising of state-level GST commissioners and central officials, has been asked to suggest urgent measures to arrest fall in tax revenues and steps to be taken to improve revenue collection.



It was that time of the year again when fans of the comic book came together to celebrate the fantastic tales that inspired millions across the globe, reports ARUN DANIEL YELLAMATY



## THE FLIGHT OF IMAGINATION AT COMIC CON

No amount of routine rainfall could hold the comic fans this year as Comic Con 2019 witnessed heavy rush with almost 15,000 people from all age groups attending the two-day event dressing up as dope comic heroes. The weekend made a perfect getaway for the young parents who escorted their children and painted the place red with their geeks on. More than thousand people donned in their favourite superhero costumes. This colourful and splendid superhero phenomenon all around the world, has received mixed reactions from the youth in the city. Even though many were excited about dressing up as their favourite Marvel or DC superhero, many were unhappy with the costly entry price and also that they

were stopped from taking selfies with international and national cartoonists who attended the event. Dressing up as a comic character, or cosplaying, has evolved into an art, an inclusive hobby and a creative pursuit. This year, the event saw many cosplayers in elaborate costumes move from stall to stall followed by 'ooohs' and 'aaaahs' from awed onlookers who couldn't wait to take selfies with them. Shirley Bobby, who cosplayed as Luna Lovegood, says, "My friends and I get dressed and attend the comic con every year. This year we got dressed as a few characters from the Harry Potter series. We had a really good time, like every year, we had a ball at the event. It's nice to see so many people from the cosplay community coming together to keep our comic heroes alive through us.

Looking forward to attend the event next year." One of the visitors, Emmanuel Sudhir, an engineering student says, "I am attending Comic Con for the first time and the energy here is amazing. After seeing many people coming in various superhero costumes, I too feel like doing the same next year." Jemia, who was cosplaying as Tartelette, won the grand prize worth Rs 50,000 on the conclusion day. The stalls were decked with merchandise from top to bottom making sure no superhero fan base is left out. One of the popular stalls was a dummy wrestling ring where people could pose for a picture with a wrestling championship belt. Another major attraction was a life size mannequin of Gal Gadot's Wonder Woman where people lined to flex their inner superhero and

take selfies. Over 30 stalls which included a bird of prey experience centre *Terminator*, *Frozen 2*, *Vikings* with AXN, *Lego: Batman* with Sony Pix, the maleficent wings kept the audience busy apart from the superhero merchandise and cloth stores. Some of the well-known stand up comedians such as Sapan Verma, co-founder of East India Comedy, Rajashakar Mamidana and Vivek Murlidharan were seen keeping audience engaged with their quirky content. The event also had a dance act by Live Wire crew who got the audience dancing to their special performances. With all the joy comes some disappointment too as attendees felt there were some aspects in the event that upset them, with the hiked entry ticket being the major letdown.



"The most disappointing aspect of the event was that the entry price was hiked. The tickets cost around Rs 599 to Rs 699 and that is a lot of to expect from students. Another upsetting



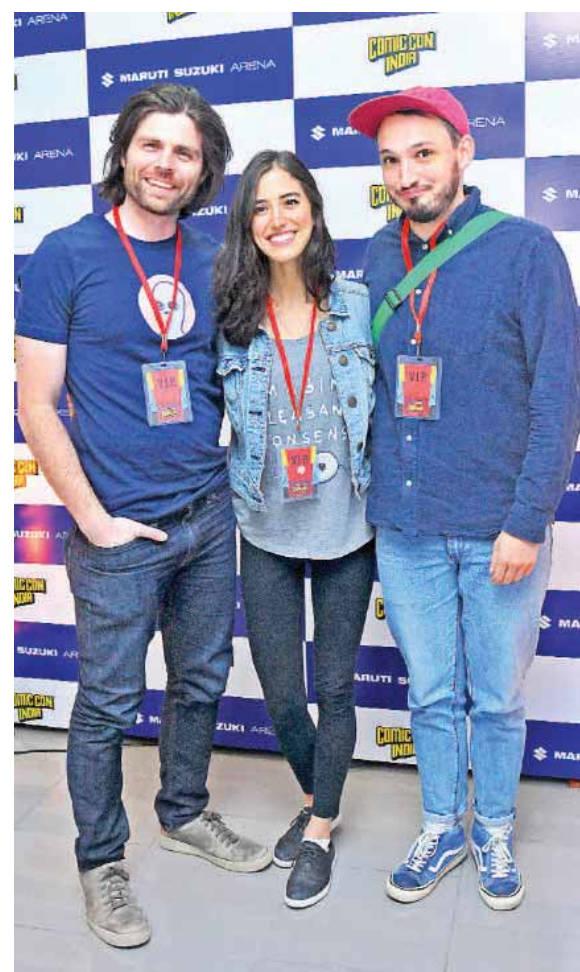
**MERCHANDISE STALLS WERE MORE THAN THE NUMBER OF STORES SELLING COMICS. THIS IS IRONICAL CONSIDERING THAT THE MARVEL MERCHANDISE AND MOVIES ARE BASED ON COMIC BOOKS**



thing was that we were not allowed to click pictures with the guest artists at their stalls. Some of the organisers were also behaving rudely. I wasn't that happy with the event overall," says Rohit

Kumar. Some attendees that *The Pioneer* spoke to suggested that the event must have more counters that sells old popular comic books. The number of stalls selling mer-

chandise outnumbered the number of stores selling comic books. This is ironical considering that the most popular Marvel merchandise and the movies rose to popularity through comic books.



## The rise of WEBCOMICS



With the rise in social media gave opportunities to artists from all around the world to showcase their work. Among the famous International artists who flew down to Hyderabad to attend the event here were Nathan W. Pyle — creator of the insanely funny out-of-the-world and yet relatable comic, *Strange Planet* — and Jonathan Kunz — who created the quirky everyday universe of *War and Peas*. Nathan's webcomics gained 2,50,000 followers on Instagram in just 3 weeks. Both these artists have a combined follower base of more than 15 lakh fans. Speaking about his journey as an artist, Nathan says, "I moved to New York which was very expensive like many big cities in India too. When you move to expensive cities you try to find ways to make ends meet, so I started to draw and make T-shirt designs for a company. That was my real first entry to

internet art and I realised that there are so many people who enjoy sharing images back and forth on Internet. Smartphones were starting to get big back then so everyone had these phones and images were everywhere. It's been 11 years since I started drawing for the internet and *Strange Planet* was the result for a lot of trial and error." Nathan tells *The Pioneer* that he enjoyed the trip to Golconda Fort and Pedammamma Gudi on his first trip to Hyderabad this time. He says he was happy to meet his fans in the city because their knowledge of comics is more robust than those in the United States. Jonathan says he found people here in the city well informed about world's pop



it was just comics and then finally we put together as a properly structured comics." Both the artists say that using their work they were able to speak on various issues as well. "Empathy is something both Jonathan and I share. It is something I really appreciate when I heard him speak about empathy with warranties. I think we have such an opportunity to talk about something we care about. In one of my comics we talk about when someone is new to a school and you just invite them to sit with you. That is something that I continue to think is one of the most important messages in *Strange Planet* which is curiosity," says Nathan. Both Nathan and Jonathan are planning to bring out another collection of their webcomics as a book next year. Sharing tips on creating webcomics, Nathan says "Wherever you are create a world around you and think about how that world will function. For example, if you have a bottle and a cup, what would their relationship be and how would they interact? Put eyes and a face on them in your mind and everything around you. Just create a world you enjoy thinking about it! That's what will help you draw better. Pixar does this so well. It is just like how compelling the movie *Toy Story* was for me growing where I believed that the toys are alive. That's what will create a spark in you to get invested in your work."

culture, especially webcomics. "Here in India, people read comics from all over the world, including the famous ones from America and also their local Indian comics which is so cool. There is a lot of energy in the crowd here which is very nice." "It's my first time to India as well, and I really like the place, I dint know what to expect apart from the food, people are nice here. They are very interested to learn about comics and look passionate," he adds. Jonathan says that he had no idea that *War and Peas* would become such a big hit. He was pleasantly surprised how the popularity of the webcomics grew organically over the years. "When Elizebeth and me started we didn't have any idea that we were going to start something like *War and Peas*. Our whole idea was to put a website together, but later people started to read and then it grew organically and then we started to have the content in German. Later, I shifted to English and then sometimes









# THE BIG FIGHT



With *Venky Mama* producers eyeing an Sankranti release, *Ala Vaikunthapuramlo* and *Sarileru Neekevvaru* are set to hit screens on the same day, finds

NAGARAJ GOUD



**T**he battle lines are clearly drawn for the two big budget Sankranti releases and turned out to be a direct fight between Mahesh Babu starrer *Sarileru Neekevvaru* and *Ala Vaikunthapuramlo*. On Saturday evening, the makers of both the films announced that they would be hitting screens on January 12. Initially, the direct clash was never on the cards, with the Mahesh Babu-starrer planning for January 9 or 10 and Allu Arjun-starrer for January 14. Last month, we've learnt about Allu Aravind and S Radha Krishna, producers of *Ala Vaikunthapuramlo*, targeting January 12. Why the sudden announcement on Saturday evening? We hear it has

something to do with long-delayed *Venky Mama*. Apparently, producer Suresh Babu, who is a heavy hitter in the industry, has told his regular distributors over the weekend that he is looking to pitch his production *Venky Mama*, starring Venkatesh and Naga Chaitanya, for Sankranti. The film is a big production for Suresh and he feels that Sankranti might be the best bet to get his returns. Getting screens wouldn't be a problem for him as he holds a chain of theatres and is also partners with Asian Cinemas. Our sources close to both Suresh Productions and co-producer People Media Factory have confirmed to us that *Venky Mama* is coming for Sankranti. The tentative date

is January 14. So, with Suresh speaking to his distributors, word has spread out in the industry corridors about his Sankranti move, prompting the makers of both *Sarileru Neekevvaru* and *Ala Vaikunthapuramlo* to immediately announce the release date that they've withheld from the past three months. "Sankranti can take in three big films but over here superstar Rajinikanth-starrer *Darbar* too is waiting to fly into the cinema halls on January 10. While it might get good number of screens on day 1 but on day 3, it will stare at losing more than 80 per cent of the screens, to accommodate Mahesh and Allu Arjun films. There's also Kalyanram's *Entha Manchi Vaadavuraa* scheduled for

Sankranti. However, as things

stands now, the chances of it arriving for the festive season are bleak, as the

film's producers don't command clout similar to that of Suresh and Raju. It will be interesting to see how the season pans out. If both Mahesh and Arjun's films eat out into each other's revenue, they can always pin the blame on Suresh for scheduling *Venky Mama* for the festival," said a trade analyst. Battle or no battle, one thing's for sure is that there are plenty of options for moviegoers to choose from this Sankranti!



## RAKESH VARRE is a happy man

**A**ctor Rakesh Varre, who has gone solo with *Evvariki Cheppoddu*, is glad with the response the film has cut across. A love story peppered with humour, deals with how Harathi's (played by Gargeya Ellapradada) father's obsession over caste spells trouble for Hari (Rakesh), who is in love with Harathi. The interesting and comical turns that unfold in the young couple's lives from this point forms the crux of the film. "The response has been very good. As the film opened on Tuesday, we've been a bit skeptical. But, thankfully, it has been running to very good occupancy in multiplexes, while in single screens, the footfalls have been on a steady rise. Mass audience has stayed away from it but other sections have given their

thumbs-up. College-going students are expected to fill in the theatres in big numbers in the coming days," the actor, best remembered for his turns in *Badrinath* and *Baahubali: The Conclusion*, states. He adds that after *Baahubali*, he was determined to make a good film by himself. "I had been to the New York Film Academy and learnt filmmaking there for a year. With the knowledge and experience, I became confident to make a film. I returned to Hyderabad and heard about 47 scripts but none caught my fancy. Later, I came to know about Basava Shankar, who by then had committed to direct a couple of films. I displayed my showreels to him and requested him to keep me in mind before he embarks on the casting of his films. A couple of months later, he came to me with *Evvariki*

*Cheppoddu*," he says. "For authenticity, we shot the Kalahasthi scenes at that place itself. For a song at Himayalas, we meticulously planned how it can be wrapped up in short span of time. Also, instead of planes, we traveled by train and buses." Talking about how he convinced Dil Raju to distribute it, he says, "Since time didn't permit him, he recommended the script to some other producer, before advising me not to produce it myself. But I had to do the producer's hat eventually, as no one was coming forward to produce it because I am relatively new, and caste is a sensitive issue. But we knew that the treatment would be sensible and careful. After the film was made, Raju garu watched it and told me he'd release it," Rakesh says, revealing that he hasn't signed any new movie yet. — NG



## ANNAPURNA Studios to partner with Swapna Cinema

**W**ith his maiden directorial *Seethamma Andalu Ramayya Sitrulu* in 2016 failing to light up the box-office, Srinivas Gavireddy has gone back to the drawing board to come up with a watertight script for his second shot. He got the nod of actor Raj Tarun again and shepherding the project on the production front will be none other than superstar Akkineni Nagarjuna. *The Pioneer* has learnt that Annapurna Studios think-tank — Nag, Supriya and Naga Chaitanya — loved the script by Gavireddy and asked him to get going with pre-production. "The film, set in Bhimavaram, entertains with the unique characterisation of Raj Tarun. Portions of the film will be shot in Hyderabad as well. The filming will most likely roll towards the year-end and it will be wrapped up in 60 days," informed a source. We've been further told that chances of the film being a joint production venture cannot be ruled out. "Swapna Dutt might partner with Annapurna Studios. Nag rates Swapna very high and was pleased with the way she executed *Devadas*," added the source. —NG



## SAM UNVEILS HER LOOK AS JANU

**A**ctress Samantha Akkineni unveiled her look as Janu from the highly anticipated '96 Telugu remake on Sunday as she wrapped up shooting her portions for the film. Dubbing the romantic drama as another special one in her career after *Oh! Baby*, she tweeted, "And its a wrap!! Another special film and a role that has challenged me to be better than I was yesterday. Thankyou to my director Prem and costar Sharwanand for being a dream team. #Janu. living my best life.

Grateful always (sic)." Samantha is reprising Trisha's role from the original, which tells the story of two high school sweethearts (played by Vijay Sethupathi and Trisha) who meet at a reunion after 22 years and reminisce about their past. Trisha has received accolades for the film, even prompting Sam to say that the film shouldn't be remade at all. It's another story that producer Dil Raju later convinced her to take up the film. The remake is set in Vizag and has music by Govinda Vasantha. Raju hasn't revealed the release date yet.

## '80s choreographer Srinu no more

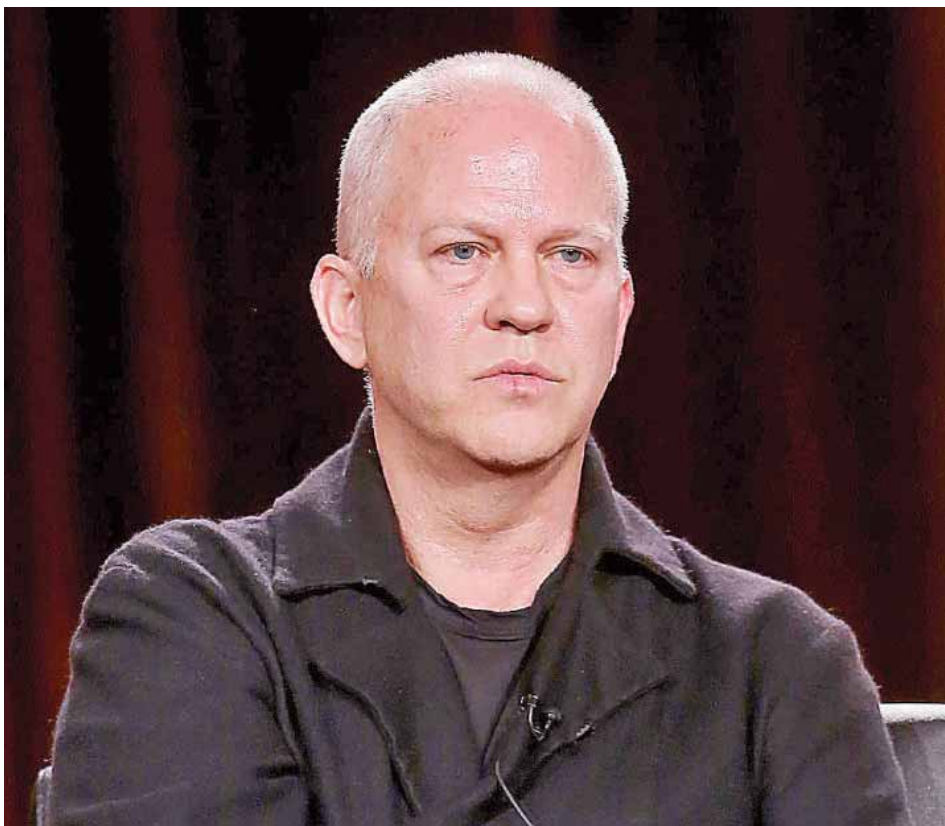
**S**rinu master, popular choreographer of '80s and '90s, with multiple Nandi awards to his name, passed away at this residence in Chennai on Sunday morning. He suffered a heart stroke. He was 82-years-old. A native of Adoni, Srinu started off his dance career by learning Kathak under Guruprasad Sundar. He

later practiced Kathakali from Vishwam. He branched out to films by assisting his brother-in-law Heeralal in 1956. His first film as a dance choreographer was 1969 release *Nenante Nenu* and there was no looking back ever since. *Mahabaludu*, *Bakthakannappa*, *Edurulenti Manishi*, *Yugapurushudu*, *Yugandhar* were some of his notable films over a career

spanning more than 35 years, with more than 1,700 films to his credit. He was one of the most sought-after choreographers in '80s. For his work in films like *Swarnakamalam*, *Radhagopalam* and *Sri Ramarajyam*, he was awarded the Nandi. He is survived by wife Uma Devi, two daughters and a son. His last rites have been performed in Chennai on Sunday evening.







## RYAN MURPHY'S SON IS CANCER FREE

American filmmaker Ryan Murphy's five-year-old son Ford has beaten cancer.

Last year, the 53-year-old *American Horror Story* creator revealed Ford, who he shares with husband David Miller, had been diagnosed with neuroblastoma as a toddler.

"Ford went through a six hour surgery and years of intense exams which required hours and hours of anaesthesia. I cannot express

to you in this room how difficult this was on him, how difficult this was for our family," Murphy said at the Variety Power of Women Luncheon, where he was presenting Ford's godmother Dana Walden an award for her work with the UCLA Jonson Comprehensive Cancer Center, reports [aceshowbiz.com](#).

While adding he has yet to "emotionally recover" from the battle, he said, "Ford has... I am so proud to proclaim that he is cancer free."

Following Ford's diagnosis, Murphy and his family donated \$10 million to the cancer facility, which helped created a wing that specialises in helping children access the best treatment.

Announcing the news about his son's health last year, Ryan honoured his partner as his "rock", adding, "(He was) strong and patient and loving (I was always a trembling wreck)."

The couple, who wed in 2012, also share six-year-old son Logan Phineas.

## WHEN RAJKUMMAR SOLD A PEN TO LEONARDO DICAPRIO

Bollywood actor Rajkumar Rao, who plays a Gujarati entrepreneur Raghu Mehta in his forthcoming film *Made In China*, has shared a funny Instagram video of himself selling a pen to Hollywood star Leonardo DiCaprio.

In the video captioned, "When Raghu Bhai met Leo Bhai. #MadeInChina" that Rajkumar shared on Saturday, he gives a hilarious spin to DiCaprio's final scene from the movie *The Wolf of Wall Street*.

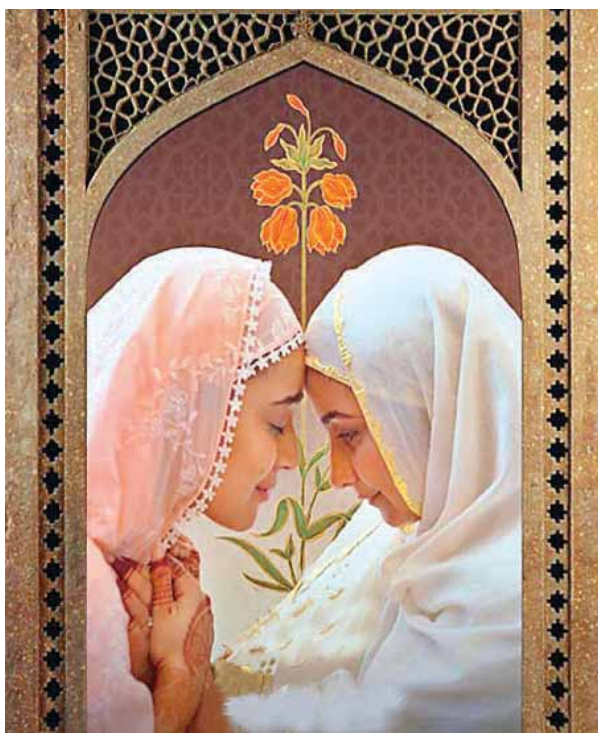
The video begins with the clip of the movie where the *Titanic* star asks a person to sell him a pen.

Adding a twist in the scene, Rajkumar enters with the clip. "Leo Bhai kem chho! Arre Leo Bhai this pen is your story but the refill is the hero. So sell the hero," he says in Hindi.

The one-minute clip ends with DiCaprio applauding the skills of the businessman.

Rajkumar's video currently has 1,49,406 views. The actor's girlfriend and actress Patralekhaa took to the comment section, where she dropped some laughing emojis. *Made In China* narrates the business journey of *jugaadu* entrepreneur. Many scenes have been shot in China, and the actor took inspiration from his own experiences to add to his character.

Dinesh Vijan presents *Made In China* in association with Jio Studios. A Maddock Films production, the film also stars Mouni Roy, Paresch Rawal and Gajraj Rao. It is written and directed by Mikhil Musale, who is making his Hindi directorial debut with the film. It is slated to release around Diwali.



## SWARA, DIVYA COME TOGETHER FOR A BEAUTIFUL ODE TO LOVE

After missing from the big screen for a brief amount of time, actress Swara Bhasker is back with her next film. Joining Swara, is actress Divya Dutta in the lead role for their film titled *Sheer Qorma*. The first poster of the film was released on Sunday. The film which revolves around a same-sex love story shows the two actresses holding each other's hand in a heartfelt gesture in its first poster. Their *hijab* and *henna* looks are unmissable.

Helmed by Faraz Arif Ansari, also stars Shabana Azmi in the supporting role. Sharing the film's poster on Instagram, Swara captioned it, "So proud to play @farazarifansari's gentle and shining Sitara in #sheerqorma the film.. A beautiful ode to love, love that binds is all. Notwithstanding gender, race, religion, generation or sexuality.. thank you Faraz! I'm so proud to have been part of this amazing project. Not to mention the honour and dream of sharing screen space with the legendary @azmishabana18 and iconic @divyadutta25 ! #loveislove #furtherwakeningfilms."



## 'OVERWORKED BUT UNDERPAID' HASHTAG IS WHAT DESCRIBES ME, FEELS PC

Priyanka Chopra Jonas is all over the headlines, right from her movie to her work, and all that she has been doing. PeeCee made her return to Bollywood with *The Sky Is Pink* co-starring Farhan Akhtar, Zaira Wasim, and Rohit Saraf. The movie has received decent reviews so far, however, it did not open to very good numbers and one might hope that the numbers are likely to go up over the weekend, thereby giving the movie a decent opening.

During her movie promotions, PeeCee has gone all out with her interactions, and more, and when she had a chat with Twitter, she did go on to reveal little somethings we might not know, or must have never thought of. For instance, when Priyanka was asked about the hashtag that best describes her, she went on to say 'overworked but underpaid' and one might agree given how she has been all over the place.

During the same chat, Priyanka was also asked who followed whom first on Twitter, given their love story started from there, and that is when she revealed it was Nick who followed her and slid into her dm, asking her to hang out together sometime. Well, they do have the perfect love story after all, don't they? A few weeks, and they'll complete a year.

## GRAMMY WINNER DJ ZEDD 'PERMANENTLY BANNED FROM CHINA' FOLLOWING 'SOUTH PARK' CONTROVERSY

Grammy-winning DJ Zedd was "permanently banned" from China after he liked a tweet from *South Park*, the adult animated show caught in a feud with the Communist government of the country.

The DJ shared the same on Twitter writing, "I just got permanently banned from China because I liked a

South Park tweet." Zedd's claim was confirmed by German musician's publicist, Adam Guest to CNBC.

"This is true, yes, but we don't have any more info to give you at this time," *Fox News* quoted him as saying.

However, the DJ whose real name is Anton Zaslavski, didn't clarify if he was denied entry into the country or only his was music was censored.

This comes after a controversy between the show's creators and the government about its 300th episode titled *Band in China*, which surfaced last Wednesday.

In the following episode, Randy, a character in the animation, tries selling marijuana to China, which leads him to end up being sent to a work camp.

There, encounters Winnie the Pooh, also a political prisoner because he drew physical comparisons to Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Meanwhile, another group of characters — Stan, Jimmy, Kenny, and Butters — formed a metal band, which caught the attention of a Hollywood manager who wanted to produce a film about them but constantly modified the script in order for the movie to be distributed in China.

This led the government to reportedly cancel the show and stop its broadcast on media platforms including Weibo, Youku among others.







Manju Rani (in red) punches Ekaterina Paltceva during World Championship final PTI

PTI ■ ULAN-UDE

Indian boxer Manju Rani's stupendous debut run at the Women's World Championships ended with a Silver medal on Sunday after she lost the light flyweight (48kg) final to Russia's Ekaterina Paltceva here. The Haryana-boxer, who was seeded sixth, went down 1-4 to the second-seeded local favourite in the first half of the day. Rani, who turns 20 on Saturday, was the lone Indian to make the

## Manju's run ends with Silver

finals after six-time champion M C Mary Kom (51kg), Jamuna Boro (54kg) and Lovlina Borgohain (69kg) settled for Bronze medals. In case of Borgohain, it was her second successive third-place finish. There was very little separating Rani and her rival, both of whom looked to attack in the first round. The Russian stood out for her near

perfect left hooks in the opening three minutes. In the second round, the Indian connected some good straights and seemed to have the upperhand over the crowd favourite. The proceedings slowed down in the final three minutes when both the boxers adopted a cautious approach. There was quite a bit of

holding, requiring the referee's intervention quite a few times. However, at the end of it the Russian emerged victorious perhaps for her a shade sharper reflexes. The Indian contingent was however visibly upset after the Paltceva's hand was raised as the victor. Rani broke into the national camp only this year by winning the

national crown for Punjab after not getting the selection nod in Haryana. Earlier this year, she won a Silver medal on debut at the prestigious Strandja Memorial Tournament, one of Europe's oldest and most competitive boxing events. Rani hails from Rithal Phogat village in the Rohtak district of Haryana. The youngster lost her father, a Border Security Force officer, to cancer in 2010.



Joginder Narwal (Dabang Delhi), Fazel Atrachali (U Mumbai), Pawan Sehrawat (Bluru Bulls), Nitesh Kumar (UP Yoddha), Dharmaraj Cherlathan (Haryana Steelers), Esmail Nabilakhsh (Bengal Warriors) pose with the PKL-7 trophy before the start of knockouts

**SANJAY FINDS BRACE IN INDIA'S WIN**  
**JOHOR BAHRU:** Sanjay struck twice in Indian junior hockey team's dominating 8-2 win over New Zealand in Sultan of Johor Cup, here on Sunday. Apart from Sanjay (17', 22'), Dilpreet Singh (6'), Shilanand Lakra (14'), Mandeep Mor (22'), Suman Beck (45'), Pratap Lakra (50') and Sudeep Chirmako (51') scored for India while Dylan Thomas (28', 44') notched two goals for New Zealand. It was India's second win in the tournament and they face Japan in their next round robin league-stage match on Tuesday.

**UK ROUT SIKKIM BY 253 RUNS**  
**DEHRADUN:** Medium pacer Sunny Rana returned with a career-best 5/26 as Uttarakhand bowlers bundled out Sikkim for just 52 to script a massive 253-run victory in their Plate Group Vijay Hazare Trophy fixture here on Sunday. A target of 306 proved too big for the Sikkim batsmen who tumbled like a pack of cards to fold their innings in 21.1 overs with Rana being the wrecker-in-chief and was well-supported by Mayank Mishra (2/2) and Pradeep Chamoli (2/15). Uttarakhand (26 points) jumped to the top of the Plate Group standings with a two-point lead over Pondicherry, who however have a match in hand.

**MAHARASHTRA BEAT HP BY 3 WICKETS**  
**VADODARA:** Azim Kazi produced a timely half century to guide Maharashtra to a thrilling three-wicket win over Himachal Pradesh in a Group B match of the Vijay Hazare. After Maharashtra suffered a top-order batting collapse while chasing a modest 202, Azim scored 84 off 82 balls to take side past the finish line. After his dismissal, Nikhil Naik (32 not out) and Shamshuzama Kazi (21 not out) played a late cameo to took the side home with eight balls to spare at the Gujarat State Fertilizer Corporation Ground. Arpit Guleria (2/24) was the pick of the bowlers for Himachal Pradesh.

**22 PALYERS NAMED FOR NAT'L CAMP**  
**NEW DELHI:** Hockey India on Sunday named 22 players for the national coaching camp ahead of the crucial FIH Olympic Qualifiers to be held on November 1 and 2 in Bhubaneswar. The players will report to chief coach Graham Reid for the camp that commences from today at the Kalinga Stadium in Bhubaneswar. The team is coming from a successful Belgium Tour where they beat the hosts thrice (2-0, 2-1, 5-1) and also emerged victorious twice against Spain (6-1, 5-1). They will take on Russia in the crucial two-match Tokyo Olympic Qualifiers next month.

**JAPAN FLOOR SCOTS TO REACH WC Q/F**  
**YOKOHAMA:** Japan's "Ferraris" hit top gear on Sunday as the hosts beat Scotland 28-21 in a barnstorming Rugby World Cup clash to create history by reaching the quarter-finals. Rampaging wingers Kotaro Matsushima and Kenki Fukuoka did the damage for Japan, who survived a late fightback to advance as Pool A winners along with Ireland. The Brave Blossoms will face two-time world champions South Africa in Tokyo next weekend after making it a perfect four wins out of four, roared on by a crowd of 67,000. AGENCIES

## Dutee closes season with 200m Gold

PTI ■ RANCHI

Dutee Chand completed a sprint double in the season-ending 59th National Open Athletics Championships, clocking the fastest time in 200m by an Indian this year with a 23.17 second burst here on Sunday. Having set a national record in the 100m on Friday, Dutee added the half-lapper Gold to her collection, showing her challenger Archana Suseendran (23.41) a clean pair of heels. The Odisha athlete not only topped Archana's time of 23.18 seconds clocked in the AFI Grand Prix in Patiala on August 16 but also came up with her own second fastest time behind the 23.00 timed in the Asian Games last year. Dutee was also adjudged the best female athlete while shot putter Tajinderpal Singh Toor, who broke his own national record on Saturday, was named best athlete in the men's category. There was intense competition at the triple jump pit, even in Asian Games Gold medalist Arprinder Singh's absence. Abdulla Aboobacker challenged his Services team-mate Karthik Unnikrishnan till the very last jump in an event that saw the top six competitors cross the 16m mark. Karthik Unnikrishnan, who took the lead with a 16.61m in the third round, leapt 16.78m on his final try to



Dutee Chand celebrates after win PTI

win the Gold. Chinta Yadav emerged a surprise winner of the women's 3000m steeplechase, outstripping her Railways team-mate Parul Chaudhary in a time of 10 minutes 11.70 seconds. Railways' PU Chitra was another athlete who completed the double, adding the women's 800m crown to the 1500m title she won earlier this week. With Lili Das dropping out, Chitra did not have to worry much in winning the two-lap race in 2 minutes 04.59 seconds.

AFP ■ ROME/OSLO

Italy became the second team to qualify for Euro 2020 after a 2-0 win over Greece on Saturday, while three-time champions Spain edged closer to the finals despite conceding a stoppage-time equaliser away to Norway. Chelsea midfielder Jorginho dispatched a second-half penalty as Italy, wearing green kits for just the second time in history, registered a seventh straight win in Group J.

The Azzurri, who failed to qualify for the 2018 World Cup, added a second in Rome on 78 minutes through a deflected strike from Juventus forward Federico Bernardeschi.

Roberto Mancini's side joined Belgium in the draw for next year's finals, where Italy will play their first two group games at the Stadio Olimpico. "We managed to create a team in a short period of time. It wasn't easy but you have to thank the players, who have quickly developed an understanding between themselves," said Mancini, who took over as Italy coach 18 months ago.

"It's a team with character that fights and plays with the ball but one that must also improve. Now we have a year to try and get better.

"We have a lot of work but we're not very far from the best European teams. I'm happy and proud to have helped the national team come through a tough patch."

Spain dropped their first points in Group F as Joshua King converted a 94th-minute spot-kick to rescue a 1-1 draw for Norway following a foul by Kepa Arrizabalaga on Omar



Italy teammates Marco Verratti and Lorenzo Insigne stare each other before the start of second half of play during Euro 2020 qualifiers AP

Elabdellaoui. The visitors led when Saul Niguez slammed home from 20 yards moments after half-time but Spain were denied a seventh win in a row as King's equaliser kept Norway in the running. "It's a real pain to lose points in the final seconds. It's complicated

to play against a team who knew that if they lost they were pretty much out," said Spain captain Ramos. Norway last qualified for a major tournament at the 2000 European Championship and are fourth in the group, four points adrift of neighbours Sweden with

three games to play. Sebastian Larsson netted two spot-kicks as Sweden cruised to a 4-0 rout of Malta to reclaim second place behind Spain. Marcus Danielson broke the deadlock on 11 minutes in Ta' Qali and home skipper Andrei Agius also scored an own goal.

## Neymar limps off in friendly draw

AFP ■ SINGAPORE

Neymar's return to Champions League action may be delayed after the Paris Saint-Germain forward limped off after just 12 minutes of Brazil's friendly against Nigeria on Sunday. The 27-year-old, who played the full 90 minutes against Senegal on Thursday, clutched his hamstring after eight minutes and was replaced by Philippe Coutinho shortly after. Neymar, who was playing his 101st international, is now a doubt for PSG's Champions League meeting with Club Brugge on October 22. He has missed the first two rounds



Neymar returns to dugout after getting injured

AFP ■ SUZUKA

Valtteri Bottas jumped from third to first with an electric start to win the Japanese Grand Prix on Sunday ahead of Ferrari's Sebastian Vettel and Mercedes teammate Lewis Hamilton. With only Bottas now able to overtake Hamilton in the standings, Mercedes clinched an unprecedented sixth successive drivers'-constructors' world championship double. "I'm happy, very happy," said flying Finn Bottas, who ended a six-month wait for his third victory of 2019 after winning the season-opener in Australia and the Azerbaijan Grand Prix in April. "Starting third isn't easy. I had a really nice start, managed to get the lead and then the pace was super good, I could really control the race," he added. "I'm really proud to be part of the team. A sixth title is really impressive." "Firstly congratulations to the team," said Hamilton, who now leads the drivers' standings by 64 points from Bottas. "That's the main point. I just wanted to bring home good points for the team." Emotional Mercedes team principal Toto Wolff dedicated his team's achievement to Formula One legend Niki Lauda, who died earlier this year. "We want to dedicate this to Niki because he's just been such an important part from the beginning of the journey," said Wolff.

## Victorious Valtteri

Bottas wins Japanese Grand Prix as Mercedes clinch record sixth constructors' title



Winner Valtteri Bottas, right in white cap, and third placed Lewis Hamilton, left, celebrate with Mercedes crew at their garage after the Japanese F1 Grand Prix at Suzuka Circuit in Suzuka AP

Ferrari had enjoyed a front row lock-out in the morning qualifying session caused by Typhoon Hagibis but that was as good as "Super Sunday" got for them as their race unravelled right from the start. Vettel twitched before the lights went out and his hesitation enabled the fast starting Bottas to leapfrog from third into the lead.

"It was my mistake," admitted Vettel who escaped a penalty for his false start. "It was worse than a poor start. It was a really poor start. With the lack of pace today, second place today was probably the maximum." Meanwhile Leclerc's miserable day was completed by being relegated from sixth place to seventh behind Daniel Ricciardo's Renault.

## Ramos sets Spain record

AFP ■ OSLO

Sergio Ramos broke the Spanish international appearances record on Saturday as he won his 168th cap in a 1-1 draw against Norway to overtake Iker Casillas. The Spain captain was named in the starting line-up in Oslo for the Euro 2020 qualifier by coach Robert Moreno, 14 years since making his debut in a 3-0 friendly win over China. The 33-year-old was part of the Spain sides which lifted the 2010 World Cup, Euro 2008 and Euro 2012 titles. He took over the Spain captaincy in 2016 after goalkeeper Casillas' final match. The centre-back equalled

Casillas' mark of 167 games last month against the Faroe Islands. "All that is personal is a little secondary," said Ramos after the game. "I would have happily traded this 168th cap for a victory. It was not the case. But this record is a great reward after so many years and it's a great source of huge pride. "I am emotional every time I put on this shirt. That will not change and I hope to continue doing so for many years." Ramos is now only eight caps short of the European record held by Italian stopper Gianluigi Buffon (176) and 16 adrift of Egyptian Ahmed Hassan's world record of 184.

Romania remain a point behind Sweden following a 3-0 win in the Faroe Islands secured by second-half goals from George Puscas, Ionut Mitrita and Claudiu Keseru.



**SCHMEICHEL STARS**  
Kasper Schmeichel produced a series of excellent saves as Denmark defeated Switzerland 1-0 to climb level with the Republic of Ireland in Group D. Leicester City goalkeeper Schmeichel pulled off superb stops to deny Granit Xhaka, Admir Mehmedi and Ricardo Rodriguez before Yussuf Poulсен grabbed an 84th-minute winner. The Danes moved up to 12 points alongside group leaders Ireland, who drew 0-0 away to Georgia, while Switzerland are

four points off the pace but with a game in hand. Mick McCarthy's Ireland couldn't establish any momentum earlier in the day in Tbilisi and were left frustrated by wayward finishing from their few opportunities to break the deadlock. Bosnia and Herzegovina reignited their qualification hopes in Italy's group with a 4-1 win over second-placed Finland. A brace from Juventus midfielder Miralem Pjanic and goals from Izet Hajrovic and Armin Hodzic pushed Bosnia to within two points of Finland. Armenia blew the chance to move level with the Finns as Liechtenstein substitute Yanik Frick cancelled out Tigran Barseghyan's effort in a 1-1 draw in Vaduz.

## Player coordination will be key in playoffs

The experience of playing with Haryana Steelers in Pro Kabaddi League season seven has been simply incredible and we are very excited to play against U Mumbai in the playoffs in Ahmedabad today. The team has gelled very well throughout the season and our hard work has paid rich dividends. We have gone through ups and downs, but the important thing is that all players have always believed in their ability.

We had hopes of finishing in the first two spots when the team had a long winning streak during the league, but unfortunately, we couldn't achieve direct qualification for the semi-finals. However, it doesn't make a big difference for us as we can win the quarter-finals and reach the last four stage. All teams are equal in this competition, so it doesn't matter which opponent we face at whichever stage of the tournament. We will try to do our best in every match we play. There is certainly a different feel to a playoff match. We have to be mentally ready for the fact that we can be out of the tournament after a single loss. We cannot afford to make too many mistakes in the knockouts. These are crucial matches. So, we have to be very careful with the way we approach each and every move during the matches. We will work out our strategies and follow them properly. There will be a slight change in our training regime for the playoff matches. We have played exceedingly well during the tournament, so we don't need to change much in our game. We will just focus on what we have been doing right throughout this edition and we are confident that we will pull through in all tough situations. Our captain Dharmaraj Cheralathan keeps talking and motivating us during tight



—PRASHANTH KUMAR RAI

matches. The players of the team have also gained experience as the season has progressed, so all of them have also become equipped to thrive in pressure situations. Our offense and defense has been terrific throughout the season. We will rectify our mistakes after every match. However, if I have to point out one aspect which should work on is coordination between the players. I feel coordination on the mat will be the key in the playoffs. The team which coordinates well with each other has been triumphant most times in PKL-7. So, we will focus on talking to each other during the playoff matches. I was in the Haryana team in the fifth season. I have played with Vikash Kandola and Dharmaraj Cheralathan for a few years, so I have a great understanding with them on the mat. All of us complement each other very well. We will try our best to reach the final. After working so hard throughout the tournament, we shouldn't stumble in the last stage. The team has made multiple comebacks in this edition and therefore we are aware that a match is never over until the final whistle. (The writer represents Haryana Steelers in Pro Kabaddi League season 7)



# 2-0! India win series

## Virat & Co crush South Africa by an innings and 137 runs to seal record consecutive 11th series at home

PTI ■ PUNE

The Indian juggernaut continued to roll as the hosts humiliated South Africa by an innings and 137 runs in the second Test to clinch a record 11th consecutive series victory at home, here on Sunday.

The struggling South Africa batsmen surrendered yet again against the Indian bowlers, who asserted their supremacy in all conditions.

The comprehensive victory, coming on the fourth day, has consolidated India's top position in the World Test Championship table. India now have 200 points in their kitty, a handsome 140 points away from nearest-rival New Zealand.

Competing in his 50th Test as captain, Virat Kohli has now led India to their 11th consecutive series at home, a world record.

After being asked to follow-on, South Africa were all-out for 189 in 67.2 overs just after the tea break.

Following a superb effort from the batsmen, it was an all-round effort from India's five-pronged bowling unit with comeback man Umesh Yadav claiming 3 for 22.

Ravindra Jadeja (3/52), Ravichandran Ashwin (2/45), Mohammed Shami (1/34) and Ishant Sharma (1/17) played their part in the comprehensive victory.

Like in the first innings, Vernon Philander (37) and Maharaj (22) again came together to delay the inevitable adding 56 runs in 21.2 overs.

Once Philander was caught down the leg-side by Wriddhiman Saha, the resistance was over in a flash.

In the morning, the stodgy Dean Elgar (48 off 72 balls) put up some stiff resistance before Ravichandran Ashwin (2/45) snuffed him out, in what was a decisive blow to the Proteas, just before lunch.

After going wicket-less in the first innings, Ishant Sharma (1/17 struck with the very second delivery of the morning, a full-length indipper that struck Aiden Markram's pads (0) and umpire Nigel Llong had no hesitation in raising his finger.

The opener had the ignominy of bagging a 'pair' in this Test.

However it was Wriddhiman Saha's superb keeping skills that had everyone on the edge of their seats. He showed why he is so highly-rated in world cricket.

On the third morning during South African first innings, poor Theunis de Bruyn (8) had suffered trying to play an expansive cover drive off Umesh Yadav (1/14 off 5



Indian captain Virat Kohli, center, celebrates with teammates after winning the second Test against South Africa in Pune on Sunday

AP

MOST CONSECUTIVE TEST SERIES WINS AT HOME					
Team	Series			Period	
India	11			Feb2013-Oct 2019	
Australia	10			Nov 1994-Nov 2000	
Australia	10			July 2004-Nov 2008	
West Indies	8			March 1976-Feb 1986	
England	7			May 2009-May 2012	
South Africa	7			March 1998-Nov 2001	
MOST WINS AS SKIPPER IN FIRST 50 TESTS					
Skipper	P	W	L	D	Success%
Steve Waugh (AUS)	50	37	8	5	79.00
Ricky Ponting (AUS)	50	35	6	9	79.00
Virat Kohli (IND)	50	30	10	10	70.00
Faisel Features					

## Linde in for Maharaj

PTI ■ PUNE

Left-arm spinner George Linde will replace an injured Keshav Maharaj in South Africa's squad for the third Test in Ranchi, starting on Saturday.

According to a CSA media release, Maharaj sustained an injury to his right shoulder while fielding on day two of the second match and MRI results revealed that he will not be fit in time to play in the final Test match.

"An MRI scan revealed that Keshav has sustained an injury to a muscle in his right shoulder. He was re-assessed this morning, particularly with regards to bowling, and he showed significant discomfort in this latter discipline," team doctor Ramjee Hashendra commented.

"Based on this morning's assessment and the findings of the scan, the medical team feels, he will not be fit in time for the next Test match in six days' time. The nature and extent of the injury would mean that he will probably return to play in 14 to 21 days based on his progress during the rehabilitation phase."

## WE'LL GO FOR 3-0 SERIES WIN: KOHLI



Virat Kohli, right, celebrates with teammates after India win the second Test

AP

PTI ■ PUNE

Sounding a warning to the rivals, India captain Virat Kohli on Sunday said they will not "take their feet off the gas" and will aim for a whitewash when the final Test begins in Ranchi.

"Looking at the larger picture of the Test championship, every game has value, whether it is at home or away, that is the format. So, we're not going to take our foot off the gas in the third Test," Kohli said at the post-match presentation.

"No one is going to relax at any stage, we are going to go for a result in the third Test and hopefully make it 3-0, that's a guarantee," he said.

South African captain Faf du

Plessis conceded that India are deserving series winners and his side was found wanting in the contest.

"They are very tough to beat at home, their record speaks for itself. We know in the subcontinent your first innings is really important. The runs you put on the board gives you a chance," he said.

"But the way India batted, especially Virat with 250, it takes a lot of mental toughness. Two days in the field can wear you down. Especially that second evening, the batsmen were a bit weak in the mindset. From then it's playing catch-up."

He said Kohli was too good and his hunger for runs stood out. He was not satisfied with 100, 150"

**VIRAT KOHLI BECAME THE FIRST INDIAN CAPTAIN TO ENFORCE A FOLLOW-ON AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA. ENGLAND WERE THE LAST SIDE THAT HAD ENFORCED A FOLLOW-ON AGAINST THE PROTEAS IN JULY 2008 AT LORD'S**

overs) that Saha had plucked from thin air in-front of the first slip.

On the fourth morning, De Bruyn tried playing a delicate glance after Umesh had drifted on the pads. To his horror, he saw an airborne Saha pull off an acrobatic

stunner that left everyone stunned.

Elgar and skipper Faf du Plessis (5 off 54 balls) added 49 runs and were ready to show patience, especially the skipper, who was presenting dead bat.

However, the ultra defensive tactic didn't work for a lengthy period as Du Plessis got out trying to drive an Ashwin off-break. The bat-pad inside edge kept low but Saha's sharp reflexes meant that he pounced it on the fourth attempt.

Elgar, who lost a bit of concentration, tried to play a lofted shot but didn't get his timing right as Umesh ran back from his mid-off position to take a fine running catch as India got the decisive breakthrough.

## Can't replace AB & Amla overnight: Faf

PTI ■ PUNE

South Africa captain Faf du Plessis on Sunday acknowledged that the difference between his team and India in the ongoing Test series has been the "inexperience" of the Proteas as it's not possible to replace world class players like Hashim

Amla and AB de Villiers overnight.

"I think, it's purely a case of inexperience. I said before this Test series, your best Test teams are the teams with the most experience. When it comes to this Indian team, there's a lot of experience in that dressing room, there's a lot of Test matches

behind their names," a dejected Du Plessis said after losing the series and Gandhi-Mandela Trophy.

"We are at this stage where we have lost almost all of our experience. Dale Steyn, Morne Morkel, Hashim Amla, AB de Villiers, all of them were seasoned campaigners. You

don't replace those guys overnight.

"And now it's a new group of guys, who have played 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, 15 Test matches. That will take time. If you take the best players out of any team, they would find the same challenges," Du Plessis explained.

He put his hands up and

said that as captain he needs to show the way along with Quinton de Kock and Dean Elgar.

"For us, it is important as a senior player group to make sure that we put in performances ourselves. Myself, Deano (Elgar), Quinny (De Kock), we can't expect other guys to make

runs.

"We need to make sure we make the runs first and then the others guys to chip in with us. In a time like this, it is important that your big guys really, really take control and make sure that they put in the bulk of the work," said Du Plessis, putting across his point clearly.

## Youngsters need to be better than us'

**PUNE:** There is no dearth of talent in India but the youngsters have a fair idea that they have to be better than the existing bunch of seasoned campaigners to break into the national side, reckons Umesh Yadav.

The Vidarbha speedster feels that the current lot has gained rich experience over the years and is setting the benchmark for the next batch of players.

"Most of the boys in this set-up, at least 7-8 have played 40 plus Tests. So when the youngsters, who are coming up, see the kind of hard yards seniors are putting in, it's not easy for them. They know that they need to get better than us to be in the side," Umesh said after the match. **PTI**

## Lakshya wins Dutch tourney

PTI ■ ALMERE

Rising Indian shuttler Lakshya Sen on Sunday clinched his maiden BWF World Tour title by winning the Dutch Open men's singles title after beating Yusuke Onodera of Japan in the summit clash here on Sunday.

The 18-year-old Indian rallied from a game deficit to defeat his world No 160 opponent 15-21, 21-14, 21-15 in a final that lasted 63 minutes.

The Dutch Open is a BWF World Tour Super 100 tournament.

In the opening game, Lakshya fell behind early on and could not erase the deficit, despite coming as close as 10-11 and 13-14. Onodera managed to keep his nose ahead and pocketed the opening game to earn the bragging rights. The second game started on a competitive note with the pair trying to outwit each other. The Indian grabbed a 8-5 lead at one stage but the Japanese clawed his way back.

Lakshya again managed to move to 12-8 with four straight points. Onodera narrowed it



Lakshya Sen in a file picture BWF/Fanste

down to 11-12 but Lakshya jumped to 18-11 and then roared back into the contest.

In the decider, Lakshya came up with a clear strategy and managed to keep his rival at a distance. He led 9-4 before making it 11-8 at the break. After the interval, Lakshya continued to move ahead and slowly marched ahead to shut the door on Onodera.

Lakshya, currently ranked 72nd, had won the Belgian Open last month and reached the finals of Polish Open this year.

## Medvedev seals Shanghai Masters | Biles extends record to 25 world medals

AFF ■ SHANGHAI

Daniil Medvedev won his fourth title of a spectacular year with a thumping 6-4, 6-1 victory over Alexander Zverev in the Shanghai Masters final on Sunday.

Victory for the 23-year-old Russian, contesting a sixth final in a row, was more evidence that he is the prime contender to join the "Big Three" of Novak Djokovic, Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer.

The US Open finalist is also able to say that he has finally beaten the German Zverev, another young contender at 22, at the fifth attempt. This was an emphatic statement from the world number four, needing just 74 minutes to seal the crown.

"I think the stadium was full today and you guys are amazing support, starting from my first match," Medvedev told the crowd.

"You gave me good energy to win this tournament. Thank you very much, Shanghai will always be a



Daniil Medvedev and Alexander Zverev pose with their trophies

AP

special place in my heart."

Zverev, long touted as the best of the new generation of men's tennis stars, was error-prone, but had no complaints.

"As I said yesterday, you are probably the best player in the world right now," the world number six told Medvedev. "How you are playing is unbelievable."

The next generation has stamped its authority on

Shanghai with Djokovic and Federer — beaten by Zverev — both going out in the quarter-finals.

Medvedev said that he is a better player than he was at the start of the year, but has really sparked since the summer. Starting with Washington, DC, in July, the Russian has reached six finals on the spin — including the US Open — winning three of them.

## First WTA title for Coco

AFF ■ LINZ

Teenage prodigy Coco Gauff won her first WTA title on Sunday following a 6-3, 1-6, 6-2 win over Jelena Ostapenko in the final in Linz that saw her hold her first trophy aloft aged 15.

Gauff, who only entered the field as a lucky loser after failing to qualify, completed a dream week in Linz in front of a supportive crowd to become the youngest player to win a WTA event since Czech Nicole Pietrangeli, who triumphed in Vancouver and Tashkent two months apart in 2004. "I'll remember this day for the rest of my life," the delighted Gauff said after receiving a minutes-long standing ovation from 3,000 spectators.

"I had an amazing week and I hope to be back in the future."



Simone Biles performs during Worlds

AP

AFF ■ STUTTGART

All conquering American gymnast Simone Biles won her fifth Gold, her second of the day, at the world championships on Sunday in the women's floor final to extend her own all-time record to 25 worlds medals.

Having earlier won the beam final, the 22-year-old also extended her own record of 19 world championships Golds after success earlier this week in Stuttgart in the team, all-round

and vault events with the USA.

Biles was crowned world floor champion for the fifth time in her career after winning the final by a full point from team-mate Sunisa Lee, who earned Silver with Russia's Angelina Melnikova taking Bronze. Her double Gold success came within a two-hour spell after earlier winning the beam final with China's Liu Tingting, 19, taking Silver with 16-year-old team-mate Li Shijia in Bronze place.

Her victories on the beam and floor makes Biles the most decorated gymnast in history, surpassing the previous all-time record of 23 world medals won by men's star Vitaly Scherbo of Belarus in the 1990s.

This is the first time Biles has finished a world championships with five Gold medals having said she is "99 percent" sure Stuttgart will be the fifth and final worlds of her career. The only blot on Biles' near-perfect record in south-west Germany came in Saturday's uneven bars final when she finished fifth.