

**ANALYSIS 7**  
A DOUBLE-EDGED  
SWORD

**CELEB TALKS 10**  
RAJINIKANTH'S FASCINATION  
FOR UTTARAKHAND

**SPORTS 12**  
NO POLITTICS BEHIND MY  
SELECTION AS BCCI CHIEF: GANGULY

HYDERABAD, WEDNESDAY OCTOBER 16, 2019; PAGES 12 ₹3



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CHIRU AS A  
CRUSADER AGAINST  
TEMPLE  
ENCROACHMENTS?

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## Southwest monsoon withdrawal continues in TS

**HYDERABAD:** Withdrawal line of the South-West monsoon began covering some parts of coastal Andhra Pradesh and some more parts of Telangana. As per IMD, conditions will become favourable for withdrawal of SW monsoon from the remaining parts of the country and simultaneous commencement of North-East monsoon rains over south-east India during subsequent 48 hours. The withdrawal line of South-West Monsoon passes through Tuni, Hanamkonda, Bidar, Solapur, Ratnagiri.

In its update on Tuesday, IMD said conditions are becoming favourable for further withdrawal of South-West monsoon from some more parts of central Bay of Bengal, some more parts of south India, remaining parts of west India and some more parts of central Arabian Sea during the next 24 hours.

Continued on Page 3

## Kerala HC serves notice to Mohanlal in ivory case

**KOCHI:** The Kerala High Court on Tuesday served a notice to superstar Mohanlal on a petition that the permission granted to him to keep elephant tusks should be cancelled.

The Chief Justice S. Manikumar after hearing the petition filed by a former Forest Service official ordered the notice to be served to the superstar and posted the case for further hearing after two weeks. The case first surfaced in 2011, following an income tax raid at the superstar's home in Kochi, when it came to light that he was in possession of elephant tusks and the Forest department took up the case.

## Class one student dies of heart attack

**RANCHI:** A class one student died of a heart attack in Jamshedpur on Tuesday, police said. According to the police, class one student Vaishnavi fell on the ground during prayer time on Tuesday. She was taken to hospital where she died during treatment. The doctors said that the girl died due to a heart attack. According to her parents she was a heart patient and was undergoing treatment.

The incident took place at Shiksha Niketan school of Jamshedpur. "During prayer time a staffer saw the girl falling on the ground in the classroom. She was rushed to Tata Motors hospital by principal Sushmita Dey and Vice Principal Rajani Pandey.

### TODAY

#### ALMANAC

##### Month & Paksham:

Ashwin & Krishna Paksha

**Tithi:** - Tritiya: Full Night

**Nakshatram:** Bharani: 02:22 pm

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

**Rahukalam:** 12:01 pm - 01:28 pm

**Yamagandam:** 07:39 am - 09:07 am

**Varjyam:** 03:07 am - 04:49 am

**Gulika:** 10:34 am - 12:01 pm

**Good Time:** (to start any important work)

**Amritkalam:** 09:12 am - 10:55 am

**Abhijit Muhurtham:** Nil

#### HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Thunderstorm

Temp: 30/22

Humidity: 80%

Sunrise: 06:09

Sunset: 05:53

Current Weather Conditions

Updated October 15, 2019 5:00 PM

# HC asks Govt, RTC staff to end strike through talks

● Directs Govt to submit report within two days on steps taken to end protest

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana High Court on Tuesday directed the state government and striking employees of the state road transport corporation to set aside their differences and work towards an amicable settlement.

A division bench, comprising Chief Justice Raghuvendra S Chauhan and Justice A Abhishek Reddy, hearing a batch of petitions on the strike, said the standoff was causing hardship to the public.

The state government cannot ignore the inconvenience caused to the public, the court said. The chief justice advised the government to appoint a permanent managing director for the Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC) as a prelude to open



**The chief justice advised the government to appoint a permanent managing director for TSRTC as a prelude to open a debate with workers even as he opined that the present crisis should be resolved within the parameters of Industrial Disputes Act**

a debate with workers even as he opined that the present crisis should be resolved within the parameters of Industrial Disputes Act.

Counsel for the corporation informed the court that the government was in no mood to go for conciliation as Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao had declared that many of the striking employees were

deemed to have been dismissed from their service.

In such a scenario, it would not be possible nor advisable for the court to ask only the workers to call off the strike as a precondition for negotiations, the counsel said.

To this, the chief justice said he too has read the news reports and that such utterances should be taken as once

made during a heated exchange of words.

He also expressed agony over the suicide committed by the employees and said the strike left indelible scars in the mind of the workers.

The chief justice advised the workers to show a sense of accommodation to have the discussions with the government. The division bench adjourned the matter to October 18 with a direction to both the parties to inform the court about the steps taken by them towards resolving the issue. To this, TSRTC-JAC (joint action committee) leader E Ashwathama Reddy said they were ready to hold talks with the government provided the unions were invited, until then the strike would go on.

Continued on Page 4

## UP govt dismisses 25K home guards

PNS ■ LUCKNOW

The Uttar Pradesh government is doing away with 25,000 home guards, saying the state cannot afford the new allowances the Supreme Court has asked it to pay.

The daily allowance for the home guards is now Rs 672, up from the Rs 500 before the court order in July.

The government said this would have cost the state an extra expenditure of Rs 10 to Rs 12 crore every month.

It, therefore, decided not to deploy home guards meant for security at police stations and traffic signals. The home guards are not permanent employees and are recruited on a casual basis. Officials said a large number were taken on in April. The Supreme Court in July, however, meant a hike in the cost of deploying them.

The home guards were deployed through a government order dated April 3.

## TRS and BJP in war of words over UP home guards losing jobs

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The sacking of about 25,000 home guards by the Uttar Pradesh government on Tuesday removed home guards deployed across police stations and traffic signals in the State, numbering over 25,000, reportedly due to fund crunch.

This decision came after the budget of the department started to go haywire, with payments to home guards being hiked on par with the pay given to police personnel on the basis of an order issued by the Supreme Court.

The 25,000 home guards in question were recruited last



year. A decision to end their services was taken apparently in August. Further, more than 99,000 home guards are likely to lose regular employment, as the state government has cut the number of days required to report for duty from 25 to 15 days.

With Telangana witnessing similar situation, TRS and BJP supporters began a war of words. It may be mentioned here that Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao has gone on record that 48,000 striking employees were self-dismissed' as they did not report for duty before the 'deadline' set by him-6-00 pm on October 5th.

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Telangana Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan met Prime Minister Narendra Modi in New Delhi on Tuesday

## Guv Tamilisai briefs Modi, Amit Shah on RTC strike

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan on Tuesday rushed to New Delhi and met Prime Minister Narendra Modi as well as Union Home Minister Amit Shah to brief them about the ramifications of the 11-day-old TSRTC strike.

The State has been going

through tumultuous times since October 5, when the stir was launched ahead of the Dasara festival, against the ominous warnings of Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao. KCR has since hardened his stance against the striking RTC employees and over 40,000 of them are now deemed to have been sacked.

Continued on Page 2

## Two-yr-old boy dies after consuming spiked cola

PNS ■ MANCHERIAL

In a tragic incident, a two-year old boy died and another child's condition was stated to be serious as they consumed cool drink laced with a pesticide at Perkapalli village, in Bellampalli mandal on Monday night. The incident came to light on Tuesday.

The deceased was identified as Banoth Arun, son of Tirupath, a farmer from Perkapalli. The other child, Banoth Aishwarya (4), daughter of the farmer, was hospitalized. Arun died while undergoing treatment at a hospital in Karimnagar on Monday evening around 7 pm. He and Aishwarya fell ill after drinking the cool drink that their father brought from his agriculture field. They were immediately rushed to a hospital in Mancherial and later shifted to another hospital in Karimnagar as their condition deteriorated.

Continued on Page 2

## TRS hopes high on KCR's magic in Huzurnagar

● Plans big public meeting on October 17

K VENKATESHWARLU  
■ HYDERABAD

The ruling Telangana Rashtra Samiti (TRS) party is banking heavily on party supremo and Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao's magic to work in the Huzurnagar bypoll. Hence, it has pulled out all stops for the October 17 public meeting in which KCR is expected to take part. The idea is to swing the votes during the October 21 by-elections.

Towards this end, TRS has deployed more than 700 leaders, apart from its 20 star campaigners, for making an impact. The party is using the services of activists from Suryapet, Miryalaguda, Thungathurthy and Nalgonda constituencies for campaigning.

Apart from KCR and party working president as well as IT Minister KT Ramarao, the star campaigners on field include: G Jagdeesh Reddy, Sathyavathi Rathod, Puvvada Ajay Kumar and Palla Rajeshwar Reddy



(MLC), Sheri Subhash Reddy (MLC), Thakkallapally Ravinder Rao, Babu Rathod (MLA), Pochampally Srinivas Reddy (MLC), Maloth Kavitha (MP), Karne Prabhakar (MLC), Bhanuprasada Rao (MLC), Gadari Balamallesh, Shankar Naik (MLA), Bhaskar Rao (MLA), Nannapaneni Ravinder (MLA), Banda Prakash (MP), council chief whip Bodakunti Venkateshwarlu and Assembly chief whip Vinay Bhaskar.

However, the party is relying mainly on KCR's public meet-

ing to influence voters as the constituency is the stronghold of Congress, with TPCC chief and Nalgonda MP N Uttam Kumar Reddy winning three times consecutively. This time TRS has to counter the influence of BJP and TDP candidates too. TRS leaders have alleged that BJP is helping Congress in this bypoll indirectly to consolidate perceived 'anti-KCR votes'.

For TRS, winning the seat has become a prestige issue. Although CPI initially agreed to extend its support to TRS, the latter's stance on the ongoing RTC strike threw cold water on the plan. CPI has since withdrawn its offer to support the ruling party in the Huzurnagar by-election.

The TRS is therefore afraid of the impact of these two factors on the outcome of bypoll in Huzurnagar. Therefore, according to sources, TRS may solve RTC problem before October 20, if possible much before that date.

Continued on Page 2



## SC to conclude hearing on Ayodhya today

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The hearing in Ayodhya title dispute case is likely to end on October 16 instead of October 17, with Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi hinting that the argument in the 70-year-old dispute will come to an end on Wednesday itself.

On the final day of the hearing, the Chief Justice has allocated initial 45 minutes to Hindu parties followed by one hour to Muslim side, and then four slots of 45 minute each to assorted parties involved in the matter. This is then likely to be followed by mouliding of relief in the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid dispute.

## Baby's severed head dragged out of graveyard by dogs

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a gory sight, the severed head of a newborn baby girl was recovered from a secluded place near a graveyard at Banjara Hills late on Monday night by cops. CCTV footage revealed that the head of the child was brought to the location by stray dogs. Police officials ruled out the possibility of black magic behind the death of the child,

considering that the severed head did not have any signs of being operated upon by a surgical instrument.

The severed head was spotted initially by residents at around 9 pm on Road Number 13 in Banjara Hills. "The head appears to have been torn off the corpse by dogs. There is a practice of disposing of stillborn and aborted babies at the graveyard. But, the burial was not done

properly and dogs found the body," said police inspector N Kalinga Rao, adding that the baby was barely 20 days old. Following a probe, the police registered a case under Section 317 of the IPC. "We are still investigating the case and are reviewing CCTV footage," said Rao. In January, a couple from Uppal area of Rachakonda was arrested for sacrifice of a three-month-old female child.

According to the police, Rajashekar had kidnapped a baby girl, killed her by chopping her head off on the Musi river banks, and brought the severed head of the baby home on the night of January 31. He then left the severed head on the terrace so it would catch the moonlight as part of a black magic ritual. The couple believed that human sacrifice would help them better their health.

## After Savarkar, BJP may propose Bharat Ratna for Godse: D Raja

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Slamming the Maharashtra BJP for mooted Bharat Ratna award for V D Savarkar, Communist Party of India general secretary D Raja on Tuesday said the ruling party may even propose the honour for Mahatma Gandhi's killer Nathuram Godse.

The election manifesto of Maharashtra BJP, released on Tuesday said the party will ask the NDA government at the Centre to confer India's highest civilian award on Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, popularly known as Veer Savarkar.



"This is biggest irony of our times that while we are all celebrating the birth centenary of Gandhiji, the BJP is seeking Bharat Ratna to Savarkar, who was an accused in his assassination case," Raja said.

"The day may not be far off for BJP to demand Bharat Ratna to Gandhiji's assassin Nathuram Godse. This is part of their agenda," the CPI leader said.

CPI is contesting 16 of the 288 seats in the October 21 Maharashtra Assembly elections, Raja said. "Our primary objective is to defeat the BJP and its allies," he added.



# Jagan's bid to thwart BJP's expansion in AP dicey

**PIN POINT** The political situation in Andhra Pradesh is slowly, but surely taking a curious turn with the two major political players in the state making strategic moves.

While the ruling YSR Congress Party is wary of the machinations of a buoyant BJP that has made no bones about its expansion plans by involving its national leadership, the Telugu Desam Party, after biting the dust in the elections, is desperately trying to regain its lost strength by mending fences with the saffron party.

TDP was solely responsible for breaking its ties with BJP in the pre-poll scenario on the assumption that Modi had lost

his charisma. TDP supremo Chandrababu Naidu projected himself as a powerful coordinator and guide to all anti-Modi forces in the country.

The Telugu Desam Party is now convinced that it can't face YSR Congress in future, given the present state of affairs in AP. That is why it appears to be cozying up to the saffron party for reestablishing friendship and taking it to the 1999 level when TDP was a crucial supporter of the then NDA government headed by Atal Behari Vajpayee.

Therefore, Naidu seems to be exploring all options to re-establish a 'reliable link' with Modi!

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy, on the contrary, is believed to be thinking of ways in which BJP's expansion

**The TDP is now convinced that it can't face YSR Congress in future, given the present state of affairs in AP. That is why it appears to be cozying up to the saffron party for reestablishing friendship and taking it to the 1999 level when TDP was a crucial supporter of the then NDA government headed by Atal Behari Vajpayee**

plans can be thwarted in Andhra. Jagan has been interacting with leaders of various constituencies with a view to streamlining the party's organizational set-up. As part of the exercise, he may have to rub BJP on the wrong side due to various reasons.

For instance, prominent political couple

D.Puradheswari and Dr D.Venkateswara Rao (daughter and son-in-law of NTR) contested the general election on behalf of two separate parties. Purandeswari contested on BJP ticket from the Visakhapatnam LS seat and Venkateswara Rao was in the fray on YSRC ticket from the Parchur Assembly seat in



Prakasam district. Both lost in the elections.

While the husband remained calm thereafter, the wife has been actively participating in BJP programmes. She is behind none in criticising Jagan's government and its 'anti-people policies'. She

entered politics in 2004 and successfully contested the Lok Sabha elections on Congress ticket for two consecutive terms and became Union minister at the behest of the then Congress president Sonia Gandhi. She and her husband chose different parties to continue their political journey after having served the Congress.

Purandeswari has been given a nominated post at the national level (Director, Air India) by the Modi government and she is working for her better future in BJP. The Bharatiya Janata Party has targeted the YSRC government as it wants to cash in on the growing popularity of the Modi government with regard to abrogation of Article 370 in J&K.

BJP has sketched plans for

possible expansion in AP by highlighting Modi government's welfare schemes and pitting the YSRC government as an obstacle to progress.

In these circumstances, YSRC leadership reportedly asked the couple to be in "one party", implying Puradheswari should join YSRC. This development has raised many questions among the cadres of both parties: With what intention the leadership of YSRC has 'specified' like that? What would be the fate of 'hidden friendship' that has continued till now? Is the YSRCP leadership preparing to settle scores with BJP? Is it really possible for YSRC in its present politically precarious and sensitive condition, considering Chief Minister Jagan Reddy is facing serious cases of economic offences being probed by cen-

tral investigating agencies like CBI & ED?

Interestingly, similar attempts made by YSRC were thwarted by the central leadership of BJP in the pre-election scenario. The present president of BJP AP unit and former minister Kanna Lakshminarayana had made all arrangements to join YSRC then. BJP central leadership, however, asked YSRC not to admit its leaders. It was a big shock, yet YSRC conceded.

Now, a similar situation prevails following Jagan's move to bring Purandeswari into YSRC with specific assurances regarding their son's political future! YSRC feels that organisational strength is essential for retaining power in 2024. Hence, the ruling party has to gingerly curtail the attempts of BJP to expand its base in AP.

## Cong lodges complaint against Mahamood Ali

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Congress has filed a complaint with Central Election Commission Observer in Huzurnagar alleging that the TRS party leaders have violated the Election Code of Conduct.

Congress election agents - K Prabhakar Reddy and SA Sampath Kumar, in their complaint, alleged that the Home Minister, Mahamood Ali, along with his convoy and escort vehicles, visited villages bordering Huzurnagar Assembly constituency and convened a meeting with voters.

"The Home Minister addressed the gathering of his community, met every Huzurnagar voter personally thereby influencing the voters. RDO was seen present there and was observed to be silent and calm," the Congress leaders alleged in their complaint. "On knowing that the Home Minister's convoy was coming, the police checked every vehicle promptly but to the surprise, the check post was removed and no police was found when Home Minister's convoy reached the constituency," they alleged.

## KTR bats for green action plan

Asks Collectors to implement plans similar to '30-day action plan' in municipalities

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

IT and MA&UD Minister KTR held a video conference with District Collectors from the Secretariat here on Tuesday. During the video conference, the Minister directed the Collectors to come up with a comprehensive sanitation plan, green action plan and a water usage plan within one week for all new Municipalities. Minister asked the Collectors to provide information about the process of collection of waste material, recycling, etc in the plan.

Minister stated that the recently held 30-day action plan gave positive results in the gram panchayats. He said that similar plans should be introduced in the municipalities for improving sanitation. Like gram panchayat workers, the municipal staff should also be provided with insurance facilities, said Minister KTR.

Minister instructed the



MA & UD Minister KT Rama Rao at a video conference with Collectors on Tuesday

Collectors to identify locations for dump yards, Faecal Sludge Treatment Plants, composting centers, dry resource collection centers, and sewage treatment plants in the new municipalities. He also asked the Collectors to ensure the replacement of streetlights with LEDs in the new municipalities and also identify sites to develop urban lung spaces.

Keeping in mind the increasing population in the

municipalities, the Minister asked the Collectors to increase the number of public toilets and She toilets. Minister stated that the government has already provided Swatch autos for collection of garbage from door to door. He asked the collectors to increase the staff and vehicles. MA&UD Principal Secretary Arvind Kumar, CDMA Director TK Sridevi, and HMWSSB MD Dana Kishore participated.

## Man lynched on suspicion of temple theft

PNS ■ NIZAMABAD

A 25-year-old man was allegedly lynched by a group of villagers on suspicion of committing a theft at a temple in Nizamabad district, police said on Tuesday. The man, who works as a mason, was on Monday thrashed by the group after he was caught allegedly trying to steal from the place of worship, a senior police official said.

The villagers later informed the police who got the man shifted to the government hospital in Nizamabad but he died without responding to treatment, the official said. The victim's wife told TV channels she received a phone call on Monday night saying her husband was caught allegedly trying to commit a theft and beaten up before being shifted to a hospital.

The caller then asked her to visit the hospital. "I told the caller they could have informed the police about her husband instead of beating him up. When I reached the hospital on Monday morning, I found my husband dead," the wailing woman, holding her two-month-old baby in her arms, said. Based on a complaint from her, a case of murder has been registered and an investigation to identify the accused was on, the official added.

## Don't trust TRS' fake promises, says Uttam

PNS ■ HUZURNAGAR

Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) president and Nalgonda MP Uttam Kumar Reddy has urged the voters of Huzurnagar Assembly constituency not to trust the fake promises being made by TRS leaders in their campaign for by-election, to be held on October 21.

Addressing a series of meetings in Mellacheruvu, Nallabandagudem and other places on Tuesday, Uttam Kumar Reddy said more than 700 TRS leaders, including Ministers, MPs, MLAs, MLCs and corporation chairmen were camping in Huzurnagar to mislead the voters.

"Don't trust their fake promises. None of them were able to bring any development in their own constituencies. Many TRS MLAs have went on record in Assembly complaining lack of development in their areas and denial of funds. They are not in a position to tour their own constituencies due to poor performance. But they are thronging to your localities seeking votes. Don't trust their words as none of them will ever return to your locality after by-elections. They will completely vanish after end of poll campaign," he said.

Uttam said as the MLA of Huzurnagar since 2009 he has brought immense development by executing projects and schemes worth more than



TPCC president Uttam Kumar Reddy at a campaign in Huzurnagar on Tuesday

**The TPCC chief, Uttam Kumar Reddy, said the TRS government has failed on all fronts and not a single section of society was satisfied with the performance of Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao**

Rs. 3,000 crore. Similarly, he said Congress candidate and his wife Padmavathi Reddy had a great track record in serving the people of Huzurnagar.

Stating that they had no children, Uttam Kumar Reddy said they had considered people of Huzurnagar as their children and family members and dedicated their entire lives for their service. "We've not changed in the last three decades and remained accessible and accountable to our people. We believe in ethics and moral based politics. We

will pursue the same in future," he said. The TPCC chief said that the TRS government has failed on all fronts and not a single section of society was satisfied with the performance of Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao. He said KCR has neglected all sections and did deliberate injustice with many groups. He condemned KCR for not giving any representation to Madiga community in his cabinet. He accused CM KCR of insulting over 40 lakh Madiga population who constitute nearly 12% of State's population.

## Harish distributes milch cattle

PNS ■ SIDDIPET

Siddipet MLA and Finance Minister T Harish Rao has distributed over 200 milch cattle here on Tuesday. On the occasion, the Minister felicitated farmers, who have succeeded in producing maximum yields through organic farming.

He further said that a total of 273 cows were selected for the distribution and on Tuesday a total of 202 were distributed. The Minister said an insurance coverage of one lakh would be given to each cow and the premium will be borne by the government. He suggested the farmers to take to the organic farming in a systematic manner.

Meanwhile, he further said that the farmers in Siddipet have cultivated paddy in a



Finance Minister Harish Rao at a programme in Siddipet on Tuesday

whopping 1.24 lakh acre land. Speaking at a review meeting, the Siddipet MLA said that the government is expecting around 3 lakh tonnes of paddy

harvest this Kharif season. He asked the concerned officials to procure the paddy from 159 procurement centres from October 17 onwards and

said the district requires 83 lakh of gunny bags to procure the paddy this year.

He further informed that the district has already got 50 lakh gunny bags. Stating that the State government was expecting a bumper paddy harvest this Kharif, the Minister said that farmers in Telangana cultivated paddy in a record 32 lakh acre.

Stating that the government was expecting 80 lakh metric tonne of paddy harvest in the State, Rao said the administration was prepared to spend over Rs 7 crore on arrangements alone for paddy procurement. District Collector P Venkatrami Reddy, PD, DRDO, Ch Gopal Rao, Agriculture Officer, Sravan and other officials were present.

## Guv Tamilisai briefs Modi, Amit Shah on RTC strike

Continued from Page 1

The State government has ruled out merger of RTC staff with the government, though it is the main demand of RTC unions, which have two dozen other demands as well. Talks between the government-appointed panel and the RTC Unions' JAC have reached a deadlock. At least, two RTC employees have ended their lives and hundreds of others are believed to be going through harrowing experiences.

The Governor's unscheduled meeting with the Prime

Minister and the Home Minister assumes significance because it comes just a day after RTC JAC leaders met her at Raj Bhavan and complained against the mishandling of their demands by the TRS government headed by KCR. They cited the suicides by RTC employees and their protests across the state as the consequences of mishandling by KCR and sought her intervention to resolve the deadlock.

Telangana BJP leaders also met the Governor and complained against KCR for "pushing TSRTC into crisis" with his lopsided policies which led to

strike by RTC employees and crippling of the public transportation system in the state for the past 10 days, causing untold hardships to people across the State.

Sources said that the Governor submitted a detailed report to Modi and Shah on the RTC strike and the consequences thereof. Her meeting with Modi lasted nearly 40 minutes, signifying that the Centre is keen on tracking developments in Telangana and is serious about breaking the impasse. It is understood that Modi and Shah took stock of the developments in the

State. BJP has taken on the ruling TRS in Telangana aggressively on the issue of TSRTC strike. The saffron party registered its presence among RTC employees protesting statewide. Its leaders urged Tamilisai Soundararajan to interfere, saying KCR has been acting arrogantly and complicating the problem.

RTC JAC leaders, on their part, have remained unfazed by KCR's threat to sack the striking employees summarily. They are coordinating with the saffron brigade in all their protests and taking support of BJP state leaders at every possible step.

## 'Terrorism biggest obstacle to development'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister of State for Home Affairs G Kishan Reddy addressed the National Conference of Chiefs of ATS/STFs organised by the National Investigation Agency (NIA). Speaking on the occasion, Kishan Reddy congratulated the NIA and called terrorism a major challenge for the country, a curse for any civilized society and the biggest obstacle to modern development.

He added that India has always been capable of meeting such challenges. He outlined the importance of NIA in the context of a detailed investigation of terrorist incidents and said that the organization was vital to ensure national security. Detailing the agency's work,



Union Minister of State for Home Affairs G Kishan Reddy at a meet on Tuesday

Kishan said that the NIA has registered 286 serious terrorism cases during its tenure of 10 years since its inception. Out of these, a professional investigation of 210 cases has been successfully submitted in the NIA Special Courts.

He noted that the success achieved by NIA in such a short time and the work it has

done in the field of counter-terrorism has emerged as a veritable signature. He also congratulated the NIA for exposing Pakistan's role in Pathankot, Uri, Banihal and Handwara cases of terrorist attacks and in the manufacturing and circulation of fake Indian currency.

He remarked that India's

**"I congratulate NIA for exposing Pakistan's role in Pathankot, Uri, Banihal and Handwara cases of terrorist attacks and in the manufacturing and circulation of fake Indian currency"**

**G KISHAN REDDY**  
Union Minister of State for Home Affairs

national security challenges were functions of its unique geography, diversity and regional as well as global developments. He enumerated fundamentalism, separatism movements, extremism, communalism and Maoist violence as the major internal security challenges faced by India. He emphasized that all problems and grievances should be solved peacefully within the constitu-

tional provisions of the nation. Giving the example of Jammu and Kashmir, Reddy said that the state of Jammu and Kashmir, despite being in India, was acting as a separate sovereign state due to disruptive and separatist activities. He added that the Government of India has merged the state of Jammu and Kashmir with India by removing Article 370. He noted that with the abrogation of Article 370, the Government has succeeded in crushing cross border sponsored terrorism to and there would be all-round development of J&K as well as Ladakh.

Reddy said that the biggest challenge before the Government was to ensure a peaceful environment in the country so that the fruits of development reach everyone.

## 2-year-old boy dies after consuming spiked cola

Continued from Page 1

It is learned that Tirupath found the bottle of cool drink, left by some unidentified person, at his field and brought it home to give to his children. He had kept it in the refrigerator, from where the kids grabbed it.

Later, it turned out the cool drink was spiked with a pesticide. The parents were devastated to lose their son.

The body of Arun was brought to Perkapalli on Monday at 12.30 pm. The incident created a flutter in the district.

Police have booked a case of suspicious death and taken up investigations. Cops are focusing on the crucial questions of who dumped the bottle in the agriculture field of Tirupath and who was the target of the poisoned drink.

**GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA**  
Olo Chief Engineer - II, Mission Bhagiratha Department, Hyderabad.

**e-Procurement Tender Notice 3<sup>rd</sup> Call**

Letter No.AEE/IDE/ETWSP/Metro/HWS &SB/Staff Quarters/2019, Dt: 14.10.2019  
Tender Notice No. 17/18/19/CE-II/MB/2019, Notice No. 17/18/19/CE-II/MB/2019 Dt. 14.10.2019 Construction of Staff Quarters for Engineers at Jangam, Palakurthy & Ghansur (Stn). Under the project of providing drinking water supply to 11 mandals in Warangal District and 1 mandal in Nalgonda District from HMWSSB (Metro) Segment. Approx Value in Lakhs 30.00, 60.00 & 55.00. Tender documents are available in e-procurement market and accepted Dates: 21-10-2019 to 28-10-2019 upto 3.00 p.m. Opening Technical Bid from 28-10-2019 at 4.00 p.m. Financial Bid Opening Date: 31-10-2019 at 11.30 a.m., 28-10-2019 at 4.00 p.m. & 28-10-2019 at 4.00 p.m. The bidders are requested to furnish the details in Zip format. Further details can be obtained from e-procurement market place on <https://tender.telangana.gov.in/> the bidders are requested to contact Superintending Engineer for any details.

Sd/- Chief Engineer - II, MB, Hyderabad.

**P.O. No: 767-DPCL-AGENCY/ADVT/11/2019-20**



CRIME CORNER

Missing man's body found

**HYDERABAD:** The body of a man who was reported missing for the last four days was found on the campus of Osmania University on Tuesday. He is suspected to have committed suicide by consuming poison, police said. The deceased was identified as Ramesh Goud, 33, who worked in a private firm in Ramnagar. Goud was missing for the last four days and a case related to it was booked in Musheerabad police station. Police sources said Goud's body was found amidst bushes on 'C' Ground of the university. Officials found an empty liquor bottle and a soft drink bottle beside the body. No suicide note was found. Osmania University police booked a case and are investigating. The body was shifted to the Gandhi Hospital for an autopsy.

ACB nets two treasury officials

**SANGAREDDY:** Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) sleuths caught two treasury department officials while they were taking Rs 8,000 bribe from a government teacher in Andhole on Tuesday. A team of ACB officials led by DSP Ravi Kumar caught Assistant Treasury Officer Devendra Kumar and Senior Assistant, Chary, at the Treasury office. They were insisting on a bribe when the retired teacher visited the office for his post-retirement benefits. The teacher has approached the ACB which laid a trap to nab the accused.

Man gets lifer for sexually violating minor daughter

**HYDERABAD:** A 42-year-old man was sentenced to life imprisonment for sexually violating his 14-year-old daughter at their residence in Chaderghat by a child-friendly court on Tuesday. The accused committed the heinous crime in November 2016 and threatened the child with dire consequences that he would kill her mother and younger brother if she told anybody. Based on a complaint lodged by the girl's mother, police booked a case against the accused and arrested him. The court sentenced the accused, a driver, to life imprisonment under Section 42 of POCSO Act.

# Land regularisation scheme announced

90-day time limit for LRS; scheme applicable only for plots renewed on or before March 30, 2018

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana government on Tuesday announced land regularisation scheme (LRS) to regularise unapproved and illegal layouts for the newly-constituted municipal corporations and municipalities. The scheme will be applicable to plots renewed on or before March 30, 2018.

The government started taking applications for regularisation on Tuesday and will process these online only. It has given 90 days' time for submission of LRS applications.

Penal charges are linked to land value i.e. more penal amount for plots having higher market value and lower penal amount for plots having lower market value. Applicants will have to pay proportionate charges in case they have not made provision for the mandated open space for parks.

The HMDA will regularise plots that fall in municipalities or municipal corporations limits, while the others will be reg-



HMDA will regularise plots that fall in municipal corporations limits, while others will be regularised by DTCP

ularised by DTCP. Applications have to be made to the respective ULB or UDA. Only 10 per cent of total amount or Rs 10,000, whichever is less, has to be paid as initial payment along with the

application.

Plots in the bed of water bodies like river or nalas, and in the Full Tank Level (FTL) or Buffer Zone of any lake, pond, Cheruvu or Kunta and in Shikam lands and other prohibited categories will not be regularised. Also, sites which are earmarked for Industrial Use Zone or Recreational Use Zone or water body or open space use in notified Master Plans or Zonal Development Plans will not be regularised.

The LRS approval will be given within six months from the date of payment of full amount.

## GHMC to serve notices on illegal structures online

New measure pre-empts errant builders going to court for stay order

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

To avoid delay in serving notices on builders of illegal structures, the GHMC has decided to serve notices of demolition of such structures online. The move also pre-empts errant builders going to court for stay orders.

The GHMC is supposed to serve notices of demolition thrice on the builders of illegal structures. The earlier practice of serving notices through post allowed errant builders to deny receipt of notice on time or claim to not have received the notice at all, and eventually let them approach courts for litigation.

The town planning officials identified 500 illegal structures four months ago. They also identified encroachments on footpaths and other government public spaces at 3,700 locations in the city.

Now, the notices will be issued through the DPMS



system which records information like the date of issue of notice etc. Besides, it facilitates the notice to include photographic evidence like the extent of deviation in the structure. Authorities feel that it will have an immediate impact on illegal construction activity.

There are allegations that some GHMC staff who are hand-in-glove with builders

do not carry out demolition of structures in spite of issuance of notices for the demolition.

Online issue of notices is expected to help officials verify the progress on notices. Provision has also been made to punish officials in cases where action is not taken in the stipulated time.

Authorities are trying to introduce online notice system

this month itself, and are also keen on posting information about the cases pending in courts.

Commenting on the move, chief city planner Devender Reddy said they wanted to place property tax notice, TDP bank details and such other data in the computer systems.

As regards pulling down illegal structures, the town planning rules say that a show-cause notice should be served as per the Section 452 (1) of the relevant Act and a second notice issued as per Section 452 (2) and a final notice as per the Section 636, a senior GHMC official said.

The state government had introduced a building regularization scheme (BRS) four years ago. Over 1.27 lakh had applied to regularise their structures. But even after the expiry of the BRS, the illegal construction activity did not stop.

## Vijaya Dairy to open 500 more outlets in city soon

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Minister for Animal Husbandry Talasani Srinivas Yadav, who chaired the Vijaya Dairy Board meeting here on Tuesday, decided to set up 500 more outlets of Vijaya Dairy under GHMC and HMDA limits.

He asked the concerned officials to set up the outlets on either side of highways and display huge hoardings advertising the outlets. The Minister further said that he would soon call on Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao to get an order issued for use of Vijaya Dairy products in all government offices and organisations.

Pricing of Vijaya dairy product vis-à-vis the private dairy products would be considered



Vijaya Dairy board members at the meeting on Tuesday

soon, he said and added that measures to use Vijaya ghee in all temples will be taken soon. During the forthcoming Sammakka-Sarakka festival, 150 Vijaya dairy outlets would be set up to boost sales.

He called for giving wide publicity to Vijaya Dairy prod-

ucts in theatres and through electronic media and social media. Vijaya Dairy Chairman Lok Bhuma Reddy, MD Srinivasa Rao, principal secretary to animal husbandry department Sandeep Kumar Sultania and others were present.

## 1EME centre celebrates Corps' Day

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Army's 1EME centre celebrated 77th Electronics and Mechanical Engineers (EME) Corps Day at Secunderabad in the city on Tuesday. Lt General Paramjit Singh, Commandant of MCEME and Senior Colonel Commandant, Corps of EME and Brigadier Sandeep Bhalla, Commandant, 1EME centre paid tribute to martyrs of Corps of EME who laid down their lives for the country. The occasion commemorated the soldier craftsman's solemn pledge to the fallen brethren that the corps will uphold their legacy and bring glory to the country. The ceremony was attended by serving and retired members of Eagles Fraternity.

## BE SAFE AND HEALTHY



A GHMC sanitation worker receives a safety kit from Valji Bhai Zala, national commissioner for Safai Karmacharis. Kits were presented to all sanitation employees of the GHMC in the city on Tuesday

## GHMC failed to bail out TSRTC despite being told

Civic body was directed to bear loss incurred on buses servicing the city, but it rarely did so

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Unlike the claims of the ruling TRS that the GHMC has been paying for the losses in TSRTC, the civic body has never bailed out the corporation since 2016. Since the TSRTC employees took up fight, TRS leaders have been repeating that the Chief Minister was large-heartedly making GHMC pay for the losses of RTC in Greater Hyderabad limits. Greater Hyderabad Zone (GHZ) of TSRTC records Rs 43 crore losses per month at the rate of Rs16 for every km that an RTC bus runs.

In December 2015, the GHMC general body agreed to pay Rs 137.95 crore towards losses incurred by TSRTC in 2014-15. The then GHMC Commissioner handed over a cheque towards reimbursement of losses sustained by the TSRTC in city operations. Sources point out that even that cheque was not processed and payments otherwise were a rarity. In GHZ, the RTC operates about 3,747 buses, but is reportedly down to 700 due to strike.

The State government had earlier directed that the

## GHMC was asked to bear the losses suffered by TSRTC in Hyderabad, as city services suffer losses due to low productivity levels

GHMC should bear the losses suffered by TSRTC in Greater Hyderabad limits, as city services are generally known to suffer losses due to the relatively-low productivity levels, despite higher occupancy ratio in buses. The government's directive to the GHMC to keep funding the TSRTC to run the city services has turned out to be an eye-wash.

Transport researcher GSR Chaitanya said, "There was a mention of money due to TSRTC twice in 2015. In December 2015, the General Body agreed to pay Rs 137.95 crore for losses in 2014-15. This is the only time they actually paid. I guess they were bound to do so because of the Government Order. The same General Body refused to cover RTC's losses in 2016."

## Global EduFest for students in city tomorrow

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Institute of Management & Foreign Studies (IMFS) will host the 'Global Edu-Fest' for students wanting to pursue educational programmes at foreign universities. The one-day programme, which will have representation from 70 universities from eight countries, will be held at Hotel Marigold on Thursday.

The Global EduFest will be inaugurated by Dr DN Rao, chairman of VNR Vignay Jothi Educational Trust. Dileep Konatham, director of Digital Media of Govt of Telangana and PVRK Murthy, chairman of Gayatri Education Institutions will attend the inauguration as 'Guests of Honour'.

Education fair Global EduFest is being organised for the seventh year in a row by IMFS, India's leading overseas education consultancy. Global Edufest brings on to one platform all the stakeholders in the vertical 'Study Abroad' viz, students, universities, financial institutions, agencies like British Council which hold standardised tests like IELTS etc. Representatives of US Consulate and Education US too will conduct an information session on Study in US and the US visa process. University representatives will hold seminars on various topics of interest of visiting students.

## BJP advocate files case against KCR over driver's death

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A police complaint was registered against Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao with the Kanchanbagh police on Tuesday by BJP advocate K Karuna Sagar.

The advocate requested to register an abetment to suicide case against KCR and Transport Minister P Ajay Kumar. He alleged that Khammam driver Srinivasa Reddy committed suicide as he was upset over the CM's statement that the striking employees were dismissed from service.

On October 12, TSRTC driver D Srinivas Reddy, depressed after losing his job, attempted self-immolation at his residence situated at Raparthi, Khammam, by pouring petrol on himself. His son was also injured while trying to save him. The driver's condition turned critical and he was shifted to Apollo (DRDO) Hospital in Kanchanbagh where he passed away on Sunday.

"The driver went into depression after Chief

## He alleged RTC driver Srinivasa committed suicide as he was upset over CM saying striking workers were sacked

Minister KCR made a statement that 48,000 striking employees dismissed themselves by not joining the duty before the expiry of the government deadline, and ruled out taking back these employees into TSRTC roles. The chief minister rejected all the demands of the striking employees including the main demand for merger of TSRTC with the government. The extreme step due to the government's decision to dismiss striking TSRTC employees, which makes it clear that the suicide was committed only due to the abetment by none other than the statements given by the Chief Minister and Transport Minister" said Sagar in the complaint.

## Bi-polar disorder suspected in techie suicide incident

Police say Raghuram was suffering from the condition for the last 13 yrs and was on medication

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

An employee of an IT giant working as a software engineer committed suicide by jumping from a building on Monday. Police officials said that the techie suffered from Bi-polar disorder.

The deceased person, 35-year-old Palaparathi Raghuram, was an employee of Infosys. He was married to Palaparathi Sridevi (32) and they have a daughter, Pragna (6). Police said that Raghuram and Sridevi worked in the same company, Infosys. While Sridevi is a software engineer, Raghuram was a team lead. The couple lived in Chandanagar.

According to the police, Raghuram was suffering from the Bi-polar condition for the past 13 years and was under medication for the condition. His father, Venkateswarlu, also suffers from the same illness and is bed-ridden.

The Police said that Raghuram told his wife multiple times over the past few months that he wanted to end his life, but after her persuad-



Palaparathi Raghuram

ing him to do so, he promised her he wouldn't. "On Sunday, Raghuram again told his wife about his intention to end his life following which Sridevi began crying. Seeing his wife crying, he promised her that he won't take the step. On Monday morning, the couple went to their office in the same cab at 9 am," said Gachibowli inspector R Srinivas.

"Sridevi called Raghuram around 10 am and he told her that he had come out to have

tea with friends. However, Sridevi received a call soon after informing her that her husband leapt to death from an apartment building nearby," added the official.

Sources said that Sridevi was aware of Raghuram's condition before the marriage itself. She said that Raghuram was a loving husband and took care of her and the child very well.

"The disorder is associated with episodes of mood swings ranging from depressive lows to manic highs. The condition is very common in India with more than 10 million cases reported every year. Treatment can help with the condition, but it can't be cured. It is a chronic condition that can last for years or be lifelong," said Shiny Sresta, a psychologist.

It is estimated that nearly thirty per cent of those diagnosed with bipolar disorder will attempt suicide at least once in their lives. The suicide rate for people with bipolar disorder is twenty times that of the general population, added the psychologist.

## Case against Cinepolis multiplex over ads

Complainant says showing ads that encroach into movie time is unethical, misuse of patrons' time

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The KPHB police booked a case against Cinepolis in Kukatpally following a complaint about the management delaying the screening of a film. The complainant, Sai Teja, from the Forum Against Corruption (FAC) mentioned it as an "unfair trade practice" under the Telangana State Cinema Regulations Act, 1955. "Committing a time to the



patrons and making them watch advertisements to generate higher revenue during the time when the show is supposed to start, is highly unethical,

## Making patrons watch advertisements to generate higher revenue during the time when the show is supposed to start is highly unethical, said Sai Teja

ical of the multiplex management and disrespecting of the time of the patrons. This is pure deficiency of service and affects the plans made for the patrons," Sai Teja wrote in his complaint to the KPHB police

on Tuesday.

Sai Teja, who filed a police complaint on October 9, said that he had visited the theatre on October 8 for a movie that was supposed to start at 4.30 pm. An FIR was filed on

October 14. "I spoke to the management and they said that they were playing the advertisements to generate revenue. It was after this that I approached the police," said Sai Teja, who is head of PR & social media in FAC.

A case has been registered with the KPHB police names the management of Cinepolis India Private Ltd and the operations manager of the mall as accused.

## Southwest monsoon withdrawal continues...

Continued from Page 1

South-West Monsoon has been weak over Telangana, and IMD predicts light to moderate rain or thunder showers at a few places over TS. However, IMD issued heavy rainfall warning with thunderstorm accompanied with at isolated places over south TS for Tuesday. Mainly low level easterly

winds prevail over the state. For Hyderabad, IMD predicts rain or thundershowers towards evening or night over the next four days.

For Andhra Pradesh, IMD issued heavy rain warning with thunderstorm and lightning at isolated places in the districts of Krishna,Guntur, Prakasham and Nellore of coastal Andhra Pradesh and in all districts of Rayalaseema.



# RTC PROTEST REMINISCENT OF TS AGITATION

WITH THE EMPLOYEES OF TSRTC USING THE SAME PRESSURE TACTICS FOR THEIR ONGOING STRIKE, HISTORY APPEARS TO BE REPEATING ITSELF IN TELANGANA

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Suicides, shutdowns, 'Vanta varpu' or cooking on roads and 'Dhoom Dham' or the cultural programme were all part of the movement for statehood to Telangana. With the employees of state-owned Road Transport Corporation (RTC) using the same tactics for their ongoing strike, history appears to be repeating itself in Telangana.

K Chandrashekhar Rao, under whose leadership the Telangana movement used all these tools as part of the strategy, is now at the receiving end. Over 48,000 employees of RTC along with their family members on Sunday participated in 'Vanta varpu'. They cooked the food and ate it by the roadside. The scenes were reminiscent of the Telangana agitation between 2009 and 2013.

The same day a RTC driver set himself ablaze in Khammam as he was depressed over the Chief Minister sacking all the striking employees. The next day a conductor hanged himself in Hyderabad as he, like all other striking employees, had not received the salary for September and a cheque he had issued towards his EMI for home loan had bounced.

At least three other employees tried to commit suicide, giving a serious turn to the strike that began on October 5. The decision of Joint Action Committee (JAC), comprising RTC employee unions, to launch indefinite strike was the first major challenge to KCR in six years. They had a list of 26



demands, the main being RTC's merger with the government.

Acting tough, KCR issued an ultimatum to workers to return to work by 6 pm on October 5 but only a few did. The TRS boss did not like the open defiance, saying trade unions which went on strike under previous governments can't dare to use the same weapon against his government.

He hit back by declaring that only 1,200 employees remained in RTC. For him, all other employees stood self-dismissed for not joining the duty before the expiry of the deadline. "His stern warning was ridiculed as no one returned to work. In fact his statement that there are only 1,200 in RTC proved grand success of the strike," political analyst Telakapalli Ravi said.

Often criticized by his opponents for dictatorial attitude, KCR ruled out taking back the striking employees and announced that no talks will be held with them. Further angering the striking employees, he unveiled plans to recruit temporary drivers and other employees and use more private buses. He directed the police chief to deal firmly with any attempt to disrupt the bus services being operated by RTC with the help of temporary staff.

The analyst says KCR stood exposed for his double standards on strike. "His stand on strikes was different earlier. He changed the stand as it suits him. He also proved his eagerness to privatise RTC," said Ravi. By not paying September salaries to employees, especially during the festival time,

KCR invited more criticism from the employees and the opposition who called him 'arrogant'.

The occasion provided an opportunity to all his rivals including those who were with him during Telangana movement to come on a common platform. This was something never witnessed since formation of Telangana. Student groups too joined the protest in support of the striking employees to corner KCR. Telangana Jana Samithi (TJS) leader M. Kodandaram, who was with KCR during Telangana movement, also called for another 'Sakala Janula Samme' or the mass strike which had lasted for six weeks in 2011 mounting pressure on the Centre.

Sensing that government employees could also join hands with RTC employees, the



(Left) Police arrest leaders of student unions during a protest at Bus Bhavan in Hyderabad on Tuesday. (Right) File picture of Osmania University students at a 'Vanta Varpu' programme on the varsity premises

chief minister adopted 'divide and rule' policy by inviting the leaders of the government employees and promising to address their pending issues including pay revision. The daily protests by striking RTC employees had started rattling the TRS. The party leaders were also worried over the impact this could have on the party's prospects in October 21 by-election to Huzurnagar Assembly seat.

With the situation turning grim following suicide of two employees, KCR showed signs of softening his stand. Through his trusted aide and advisor K. Keshav Rao, he sent the feelers to the striking employees that the government is ready for talks. "From refusing to take back the striking employees to now urging them to call off the strike and come forward for

talks, it is a big climb-down by KCR," said a political analyst.

With JAC too showing readiness to accept Keshav Rao's mediation, this may be construed as a victory of the striking employees, irrespective of the outcome of talks. Analysts say the strike by RTC employees broke the myth that no one can challenge KCR. "There is no doubt that KCR stands his authority challenged as never before. He may not be Ivan the Terrible anymore," said Ravi, who believes that other employees in the state may take a cue from their counterparts in RTC.

Ravi also believes that the strike has given the opposition much need shot in the arm. Major opposition parties may now try to assert themselves and this could begin with Huzurnagar bypoll.

## We'll stand by you, Warangal Bar association tells RTC staff

PNS ■ WARANGAL

In a major boost to the RTC strike, the Warangal Bar association has extended its support to the striking employees here on Tuesday. They even announced free legal aid to the employees who are facing job threat after the Chief Minister's announcement that they were 'self-dismissed'.

Hundreds of advocates, representing the Warangal bar, led by the Bar association president Lekkala Jalandhar Reddy, took part in a solidarity march from the court premises to the Kaloji statue area and called upon the striking RTC employees not to feel disturbed as they have got legal remedies to deal with their issues.

The Bar association called upon the RTC employees not to commit suicides and advised the families of RTC workers to maintain peace and support to the employees who are fighting for their just rights. On Tuesday, the RTC employees took out a massive rally in Hanamkonda city on Tuesday morning and they organised a road blockade at the Kaloji junction area. Communist parties, Congress leaders and BJP leaders representing the

**Hundreds of advocates, representing Warangal Bar association took part in a solidarity march from the court premises to the Kaloji statue area**

Warangal urban district took part in the rally, dharna and road blockades in the city. The normal traffic in the city was paralysed for about an hour in the Bus depot Kaloji junction limits and the rally commenced at the Bus depot area and passed through the Balasamudram area to the Kaloji Junction limits.

Addressing the striking employees, the political leaders asserted that they would question the unilateral decision of the government, sacking all the employees, seriously. The leader of CPM Prabhakar Reddy said the stand of government was ultimately harming the interests of the workers and it is in a way taking them towards a negative side.

## Cabs make a killing as buses remain off road

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Ignoring diktats of the Transport Department, cab service providers - Uber, Ola and so on - have been collecting peak hour fare and surcharges on those who hire the cab services taking advantage of the skeletal services being operated by the RTC in view of the strike by the RTC workers.

In adequate services and curtailed frequency of services, which are returning to depot by 6 or 7 pm daily, and cancellation of night services, cabs and three-wheelers have a field day in exploiting the general public.

The cab services are accused of collecting additional fare in the name of the peak hour services and collecting surcharges citing non-availability of cab services as requested by commuters. The inflated cab fare became unbearable and travel within the city has become burdensome. The auto-rickshaw drivers, who collect higher fare even on normal days, are looting the commuters taking advantage of the bus strike.

The Transport Department initiated no

measures against the erring cab and auto-rickshaw services. Of the 1.40 lakh three-wheelers plying on roads under GHMC limits, 85 per cent of them did not have any meters. The commuter has no option to fulfill the demands of the auto drivers. Similarly, cab services have been collecting inflated fares. As it is inevitable, the commuters are availing the cab services.

The fare being collected from Dilsukhnagar to Secunderabad is Rs 300-350 for the past 10 days as against the normal fare of Rs 225. Now the fare has become Rs 650, rue commuters. As against the normal fare of Rs 120 the Uber cab service collected Rs 220 from a passenger to take him to Lingampalli from Manikonda, misusing the peak hour fare. Most of the people rely on Uber and Ola for their needs, in spite of there are many new players in the field, because of their popularity.

People commuting to far off places like Hi-tech city, Madapur, Financial District, Kondapur and other IT corridors have been facing many problems because of the RTC strike.



**MAKING IT COUNT:** In solidarity with the RTC employees, Osmania University JAC member-students stage a unique protest 'Jai Deeksha' in Landscape Garden on the varsity premises, on Tuesday

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The RTC trade unions accused Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao of adopting use and throw policy as far as the RTC workers are concerned. The TRS used RTC workers during 'Sakala Janula Samme', but now declaring RTC workers' strike as illegal, they said.

They felt let down as the CM used their services during the course of Telangana agitation and trying to ditch them now by going back on his promise to merge the RTC with the government. They even accused the govt of defaulting payment of Rs 1,052 crore to the TSRTC after collecting motor vehicles tax.

Dismissing the existing RTC staff and asking the new recruits not to join any union show the dictatorial face of the Chief Minister. The RTC

**RTC workers alleged that the government is adopting use and throw policy with regard to their issues. They even said that the TRS used RTC workers during 'Sakala Janula Samme', but now declaring RTC workers' strike as illegal**

workers suspect a conspiracy to loot the RTC assets through encouraging benamis to file tenders.

The Telangana movement was fought on the grounds of due share in water, funds and appointments. But the RTC workers state that many of the drivers and conductors are sometimes working double shifts at the cost of their health since there were no recent recruitments in the RTC, which has been affecting their health.

The losses of the RTC are attributed to the government's failure in running the transport

undertaking. In 2014, the RTC staff strength was 57,000. These many employees helped the RTC operate buses to 125 crore KM. Even after retiring of 6,000 employees from service subsequently, 50,000-odd workers helped the transport undertaking run its buses to 132 crore KM, which is a sure sign of increasing the production.

In spite of this, the RTC has been sustaining losses only because of the government's failure to run it on profitable lines, say the agitating RTC workers. But, the government is slinging mud on the RTC

## BJP MP Bandi Sanjay held

PNS ■ KARIMNAGAR

The police have arrested Karimnagar MP Bandi Sanjay and others during a protest in the town on Tuesday. The saffron party staged a protest in Karimnagar in support to the RTC strike.

BJP activists organised a massive rally from Telangana Chowk to Bus station along with MP Bandi Sanjay. The police blocked the rally near Karimnagar bus stand, which led to a clash between police

and BJP activists. MP Bandi Sanjay was taken into custody by the police. Police escorted him in a special vehicle, which he had been carrying among the activists. Activists shouted slogans against the government during the move. A total of 150 activists, including the MP, were arrested by the police. The MP alleged



that the TRS regime was trying to scuttle agitations with the aid of police and asserted that the BJP would intensify stir.

## Trade unions blame govt for losses in RTC

### CPM faults TRS over strike

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

CPM leader Raghavulu on Tuesday found fault with the TRS government's stand on the RTC workers' issue. Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao's refusal to invite the JAC leaders for talks demonstrates his egoistic nature, he said.

He charged the CM with trying to gift away the RTC to his followers. "TRS claims to have achieved Telangana through movements, but is acting in an inimical way towards the RTC workers, who are observing strike in support of their demands," he said. It was not right on the part of the government to find fault with the RTC workers without first inviting them for talks, he said and pledged the CPM's support to October 19 bandh.

also closed down its printing press. Security services have been outsourced, depot audit has been outsourced. Did the TRS fought for statehood to Telangana only to make appointments on the basis of outsourcing of services. Now the government is embarked on a plan to outsource bus services.

How can the RTC workers be held accountable for the RTC's accumulated losses. If the workers should be blamed, the RTC would not ended up winning so many awards in reduction of accident rate, conserving fuel and so on.

The annual hike in fuel price would burden the RTC to the tune of Rs 25 crore. The RTC consumes at least 25 crore liters of fuel per annum. Even if the hike in fuel price per year is Re 1, the burden would be at least Rs 25 crore.

## TRS hopes high on KCR's magic...

Continued from Page 1

At the same time, the party leaders are making elaborate arrangements for the public meeting to attract voters and translate them into votes to ensure the victory of their candidate.

Election in-charge Palla Rajeshwar Reddy said on Tuesday that the party was making arrangements in a grand manner. "The people of Huzurnagar are eagerly waiting to see and listen to the speech of KCR," he said. All sections of the constituency people were getting ready to attend the KCR's public meeting. It would be a trend-setter, he said.

People of Huzurnagar were fortunate as they wanted development. TRS would find permanent solution to the problems of Pulichinthala victims and issues concerning the Revenue Department, he said.

## Raise seed spice crops, ryots told

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Agriculture Minister S Niranjan Reddy on Tuesday declared that the State government would urge the Center to locate the spices research center in Telangana as these crops are specific to Asian countries alone because of the climatic conditions.

Participating as chief guest at a state-level seminar on spices held at Red Hills here, he identified the current trend as cultivation of organic crops. He wanted farmers to cultivate only those crops which meet people's needs.

Crops can be exported to anywhere in the world, he said. CM K Chandrashekhar Rao went on record on the floor of the state legislative Assembly that the TRS government would go to any length for the welfare



Minister Niranjan Reddy addresses a gathering at a programme in Hyderabad on Tuesday

of farmers. He asked farmers to cultivate spices and leave the responsibility of marketing them to the government.

He encouraged the farmers to raise species crops and assured them to supply fertilizers and seeds on subsidy. The CM focused special attention on marketing of crops. Quoting the experience of

a farmer, he said that cultivation of coriander as an inter-crop in an acre of cotton field netted Rs 60,000. He advised farmers to tend country chicken. Claiming himself to be a farmer, he said that he would cultivate spices and share the experience with the farmers.

Only when farmers cultivate crops to meet food demands of world, the agri-

culture would become profitable, he said. Agriculture principal secretary C Parthasarathi, horticulture director Venkatrami Reddy, national research center for seed spices director Dr Gopal Lal and farmers from Nirmal, Adilabad, Vikarabad, Kamareddy, Sangareddy and Nalgonda districts took part in the conference.

## TRS and BJP in war of words over UP homeguards losing jobs

Continued from Page 1

BJP in Telangana has come out in full support of TSRTC strike and its leaders have been on ground supporting the employees. TRS supporters are pointing out that BJP, which had stood up against sacking of RTC employees, was supporting termination in a state ruled by the saffron party. TRS followers dubbed BJP's support to RTC strike as 'crocodile tears' as the BJP-ruled state is no different.

BJP supporters said that home guards were a voluntary force and that they were hired recently on need basis. The saffron party maintained that home guards were paid on daily basis and not on monthly salary like in the case of RTC employees; so, it was like comparing apples with oranges. However, two wrongs don't make a right.

## HC asks Govt, RTC staff to end strike through talks

Continued from Page 1

The strike by nearly 48,000 employees of different unions of the TSRTC demanding fulfillment of their demands began on October 5 across the state resulting in its buses staying off the roads, causing inconvenience to commuters.

Since the strike began, two employees have ended their lives and three attempted suicide. The chief minister had ruled out talks with the employees or taking them back, terming the agitation as illegal.

Meanwhile, a police complaint was filed by advocate K Karuna Sagar

accusing Chief Minister Rao and Transport Minister P Ajay of abetting the suicide of TSRTC driver Srinivas Reddy who committed self-immolation in Khammam last week and sought registration of a case against them.

The complainant alleged the driver went into depression after the chief minister made a statement that the striking employees got themselves 'self-dismissed' by not joining duty before the October 5 deadline.

A police official said a case over the driver's death had already been registered by the Khammam district police and the lawyer's complaint was forwarded to them.



SHORT READS



Congress spreading rumours over Article 370: Modi

**CHARKHI DADRI (HARYANA):** Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday accused Congress leaders of spreading rumours over Article 370 in India and the world. While addressing a rally at Charkhi Dadri in poll-bound Haryana, Modi said the people of the state have decided to put their stamp on the clean and transparent administration of the BJP government and bring it back to power. "People of Haryana have decided to bring BJP back to power," Modi said. With wrestler Babita Phogat entering into the political 'dangal' as the BJP candidate for the Dadri assembly seat, Modi said daughters of Haryana have proved their mettle in all fields. "During an informal meeting, Chinese President Xi Jinping told me he has seen Dangal movie," Modi said. "Mahre Choreo Choroan Say Kam Hey Ke," he said in Haryana.

Maharashtra unit of BJP proposes Bharat Ratna for Savarkar

**MUMBAI:** Maharashtra BJP unit on Tuesday said it will ask the party-led NDA government at the Centre to confer Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian award, on Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, popularly known as Veer Savarkar. In its election manifesto, released by BJP working president J P Nadda, the state unit also sought the honour for social reformers Jyotiba Phule and Savitribai Phule, a party leader said. The manifesto speaks of "pursuing the matter with the Central government," the leader said. Many BJP leaders look up to Savarkar for inspiration although he was a member of the Hindu Mahasabha and not the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the ideological parent of the BJP.



White tiger dies at Odisha's Nandankanan Zoo

**BHUBANESWAR:** A five-year-old white male tiger died at the Nandankanan Zoological Park here on Tuesday due to liver-related ailments, a senior official said. 'Subhranshu', who was a major attraction at the zoo, died at about 10.15 am following month-long liver ailment, said Nandankanan Zoo deputy director Jayant Kumar Das. "The white tiger suddenly collapsed on Saturday and stopped eating. He was treated by experts from the Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT) but didn't survive," Das said. Subhranshu was born to Royal Bengal Tiger Mahesh and white tigress Sneha on July 25, 2014. With the death of Subhranshu, the tiger population at the zoo has come down to 25, out of which 12 are male and 13 are females. The white tiger's death came weeks after the death of four elephants at the zoo due to Herpes Virus infection.

Manmohan to meet press and eminent personalities in Mumbai

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In the run up to Maharashtra elections, the Congress is pitching high on slowdown in Indian economy. The party has decided to field former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh on October 17 to lend a credible voice against the government's policies on the economic issues.

The party has sent an invitation, titled "Words of Wisdom on Indian Economy by Dr. Manmohan Singh". The venue is Garware Club Banquets at Wankhede Stadium, Mumbai.

The former Prime Minister will be addressing a Press Conference and will meet eminent personalities of the



The party has sent an invitation, titled "Words of Wisdom on Indian Economy by Dr. Manmohan Singh". The venue is Garware Club Banquets at Wankhede Stadium, Mumbai

state. The list is being finalised, a source told IANS. Important people from all walks of life are being invited to meet Manmohan Singh, a source said.

The party is engaged in high-pitched battle with the incumbent BJP-Shiv Sena in

Maharashtra. The Congress is also fighting an internal battle, as many leaders have defected to the ruling combine. The infighting is out in the open with Sanjay Nirupam accusing Delhi leaders of sidelining him. The Former Congress

President Rahul Gandhi has also targeted the Modi Government on economic slowdown. He said that the government is not interested in providing jobs, but is only diverting attention of the public by talking something else.

Piyush Goyal flags off nine Sewa Service trains

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a bid to achieve last-mile connectivity for people traveling between small towns and major cities, Railways Minister Piyush Goyal on Tuesday flagged off nine 'Sewa Service' trains saying the national transporter is taking transformational steps for the future.

According to railways, out of these, five trains will run on a daily basis, whereas the rest of them will run six days a week.

The Ministry of Railways had recently approved 10 trains under its 'Sewa Service' initiative for better connectivity between smaller towns and important cities.

Speaking at the flagging off ceremony here along with Union Ministers Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Dharmendra Pradhan and Minister of State for Railways Suresh C. Angadi, Goyal said: "Indian Railways is taking transformational steps today. I would like to thank Prime Minister Narendra Modi that he gave a vision to the railways, and provided funds for the progress of the railway through the budget."

Hailing the Prime Minister, Goyal said: "He (Modi) always gives a suggestion how to make maximum use of the resources and system of railways. And people demand that trains reach small cities, and for this we have 'Sewa



The tea-seller at that Vadnagar station has become the Prime Minister of the country, by connecting Vadnagar with Mahesana, railways has given a gift to Modiji, Railways Minister Piyush Goyal said

Service' trains concept."

Goyal said without spending anything and without making any new investment, railways has started these nine trains today from the available resources. "And further the trains which are standing will be used for the public," he said.

He said for the Prime Minister's vision for the country, railways will play an important role for the future. The Minister also thanked the railway employees for showing dedication to improve railway facilities.

Goyal further said that of these 9 trains, a train will also go from Vadnagar to Mehsana.

The tea-seller at that Vadnagar station has become the Prime Minister of the country, by connecting Vadnagar with Mahesana, railways has given a gift to Modiji," he said.

The 'Sewa Service' daily trains have been introduced between Delhi and Shaml, Bhubaneswar and Nayagarh town, Murkongselex and Dibrugarh, Kota and Jhalawar city, and Coimbatore and Palani. While the other 'Sewa Service' Trains that will run six days a week will run from Vadnagar to Mahesana, Asarya to Himmatnagar, Karur to Salem, Yesvantpur to Tumkur and Coimbatore to Pollachi.

ARTICLE 370 ABROGATION

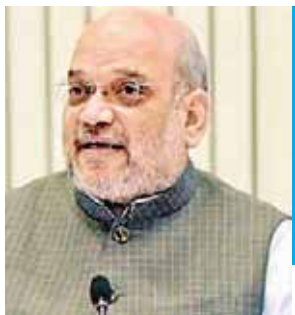
‘Decisive battle’ against proxy war and terror in Kashmir: Amit Shah

PNS ■ GURGAON

The abrogation of Article 370 provisions is a "decisive battle" waged by the Narendra Modi government to end years of Pakistan-sponsored proxy war and terrorism, and it will bring long-lasting peace in Jammu and Kashmir, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Tuesday.

Attending the 35th Raising Day celebrations of the counter-terror force NSG as the chief guest here, Shah said the recent decision to repeal special provisions in J and K will help "completely eradicate" Pakistan-supported terrorism from the Kashmir Valley.

The minister said his govern-



I believe that with the abrogation of Article 370, we have initiated a decisive battle against years of proxy war and terror acts perpetrated by our neighbour and this step will ensure long-lasting peace in Kashmir and the region, he said

ment is firm on the policy of "zero tolerance" on terrorism and to defeat all its forms.

The National Security Guard (NSG) is an important instrument to achieve this goal, the minister said.

"I believe that with the

abrogation of Article 370 by PM Narendra Modi, we have initiated a decisive battle against years of proxy war and terror acts perpetrated by our neighbour (Pakistan) and this step will ensure long-lasting peace in Kashmir and the region," Shah said at the NSG garrison in the Manesar

area here.

He said India has been facing terrorism for many years and there would be very few countries across the globe who have waged such a long battle against terrorism. Terrorism is a curse on any civilised society and the biggest impediment to development, he said.

When Abhijit Banerjee spent 10 days in Tihar jail

Abhijit Banerjee, the Indian-origin economist who won the Nobel prize on Monday, spent 10 days in Delhi's Tihar jail for participating in a protest as a student of Jawaharlal Nehru University.

In a scenario not unlike the 2016 JNU sedition row, a bunch of JNU students was arrested and "beaten up" by the police in 1983 for "gheraoing the vice-chancellor in his house for the umpteenth time" for expelling the president of the student union.

In an article, published in Hindustan Times in 2016, Abhijit Banerjee shared that he and his friends were kept in Tihar jail for 10 days and were beaten up. "We were beaten (I was) and thrown into Tihar jail, charged not quite with sedition, but attempt to murder and the rest. The charges were eventually dropped thank God but not before we spent 10 days or so in Tihar," he said in



the article.

The world-renowned economist, recognised for his work on global poverty alleviation, says in the article that the police action was backed by Congress government at the Centre and Left-leaning faculty. He said there were allegations that the student body president was expelled to instigate protests, which could be used to change admission policy, which gave weightage to students from rural areas. "What it undoubtedly was is

The world-renowned economist, recognised for his work on global poverty alleviation, says in the article that the police action was backed by Congress government at the Centre and Left-leaning faculty

an attempt by the State to establish the lines of authority. We are the boss they were telling us, shut up and behave," Abhijit Banerjee said in the 2016 article.

Drawing parallels to the JNU sedition row, hitting headlines at the time, Abhijit Banerjee said that the government intervention in the matter once again said that it wants to establish authority over the university campus.

Judges' vacancies in high courts on the rise: Law Ministry data

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

While the Supreme Court is working with its full sanctioned strength, vacancy of judges is on the rise in the 25 high courts of the country, according to latest Law Ministry data.

The figures released by the ministry on October 1 show that the high courts faced a shortage of 420 judges -- the highest till now this year.

As on October 1, the high courts were working with 659 judges as compared to the sanctioned strength of 1079.

In September, a total of 414 posts of judges are vacant in the 25 high courts.

Over 43 lakh cases are pending in the high courts. The figure was 409 in August and 403 in July, according to the data available in public domain.

A three-member Supreme Court collegium recommends names of candidates for appointment as high court

judges. In case of appointments to the Supreme Court, the collegium consists of five top judges of the top court.

High court collegiums short list candidates for their respective high courts and send the names to the law ministry.

The ministry, along with background check reports by the Intelligence Bureau, forwards it to the Supreme Court collegium for a final call.

The government has maintained that appointment of judges in the high courts is a "continuous collaborative process" between the Executive and the Judiciary, as it requires consultation and approval from various constitutional authorities. Vacancies keep arising on account of retirement, resignation or elevation of judges and increase in judges' strength. In June, the vacancy position stood at 399, while it was 396 in May.

In April, 399 posts of judges were vacant, while the figure was 394 in March.



Indian bizman in Dubai buys tickets to send 13 foreign prisoners home



PNS ■ DUBAI

A Dubai-based Indian businessman has bought one-way tickets for 13 foreign prisoners, including from Pakistan, Bangladesh, China and Afghanistan to return home after they were released from prison here, a media report said on Tuesday.

Joginder Singh Salaria, the chairman and managing director of Pehal International Transport and founder of Pehal Charitable Trust (PCT Humanity) purchased one-way flight tickets in coordination with Dubai Police authorities for the prisoners who were released from a jail on Monday, the Khaleej Times reported. The prisoners are from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Uganda, Afghanistan, Nigeria, China, and Ethiopia, it said.

Won't allow Bharat to become 'Hindu Rashtra': Owaisi

PNS ■ THANE

AIMIM president Asaduddin Owaisi has said Bharat is "not a Hindu Rashtra" and they will also not let it become so.

His comments came after RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat last week said the Sangh is firm on its vision that "Bharat is a Hindu Rashtra".

Addressing an election rally on Monday night in Kalyan town of Maharashtra's Thane district for party candidate Aiaz Moulavi, Owaisi said a section of society wants to paint the entire country in one colour, but "we see Hindustan in multiple colours, it is the beauty of Hindustan".

"Bharat is not a Hindu Rashtra, and Inshallah, we will not allow it to become so," he said.



Alleging that the Shiv Sena was against the green colour, he said, "Change your spectacles and you will see the green colour in the national flag also."

He said Bharat is unique because of itssecularism and pluralism. There is no other country in the world as Bharat

and "we are proud of it". "I want to tell those in the RSS that we are not living here on your sympathy. If you want to measure the index of my happiness or sorrow, you and we should see what the Constitution has given to us," Owaisi said.

He also said that the All India Majlis-e-Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen (AIMIM) has established itself in Aurangabad because of its own efforts.

"We will spread to other parts of the state also. You cannot stop us," he said.

Owaisi also said that the NDA government was patting its own back by banning the practice of triple talaq, but was not aware of the woes of members of the Muslim community.

HC refuses bail to 3 activists, says they are ‘active members’ of CPI (Maoist)

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court refused bail on Tuesday to activists Sudha Bharadwaj, Arun Ferreira and Vernon Gonsalves, arrested for allegedly inciting caste-based violence at Koregaon-Bhima in Pune and Maoist links, noting that they were "active members" of banned outfit CPI (Maoist).

Justice Sarang Kotwal rejected the bail pleas of the three civil liberties activists, observing that there was prima facie evidence against them.

In three separate orders, the judge said the accused were active and senior members of the banned Communist Party of India (Maoist), and arranged funds for the organisation and recruited cadres.



Sudha Bharadwaj



Arun Ferreira



Vernon Gonsalves

The three were initially placed under house arrest by Pune police in August last year and later, taken into custody on October 26 after a sessions court in Pune rejected their bail pleas. The accused, who are in jail since then, approached the high court last year

with the use of weapons and by forming a people's army.

"The state's armed forces were treated as enemy forces by the organisation," the court said.

The three were initially placed under house arrest by the Pune police in August last year and later, taken into custody on October 26 after a sessions court in Pune rejected

manage and distribute funds in the banned organisation and he occupied an important position in the outfit.

"Ferreira's work towards achieving some of the objectives of the banned organisation was not only appreciated by it, but, he was given specific directions on some occasions. This all shows that the applicant was an active member of the banned organisation," the court said.

"There is material in the chargesheet to show that prima facie the applicant (Ferreira) had actively worked towards fulfilling that responsibility," the court said.

It also noted that Gonsalves' act of recruiting cadres for the banned outfit and being its active member was punishable

under the provisions of the UAPA.

"Facts sufficiently establish prima facie that the applicant (Vernon Gonsalves), on instructions of the banned organisation, was recruiting cadres from institutions like TISS (Tata Institute of Social Sciences)," the court said.

It added that the evidence put forward by the prosecution showed that Gonsalves was an important and active member of the CPI (Maoist) and was part of the "larger conspiracy". "One of the important tasks was recruiting cadres and there is material in the chargesheet to show that prima facie the applicant (Gonsalves) had actively worked towards fulfilling that responsibility," the court said.



## Pakistan slips up

Though it may not be blacklisted, it does slide further on compliances required for countering terror at FATF



Pakistan may not be blacklisted by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), the inter-governmental forum that links terror funding to freezing international aid, but India's persistent campaign against it nursing terror hubs has clearly paid off. It now appears that Pakistan could slip into the "dark grey" list, a severe warning to take correctives, as it has but fulfilled only six of the 27 conditions of compliance to evade curfew altogether. Besides, the common cause on terror hubs impacting domestic politics that India has man-

aged to drum up around the world, particularly winning US endorsement on this effort, means Pakistan has few friends. In August, the FATF's Asia Pacific sub-group placed it in the "enhanced blacklist" for its failure to meet global standards. Yet its Prime Minister Imran Khan has been lobbying hard for the overall FATF vote, diverting attention from the terror factory at home to Kashmir, forging a new Islamic alliance with Turkey and Malaysia for a crusade-like stance against the Western world, still dangling the Taliban sword to keep the US invested in its relevance for Afghanistan and playing on Chinese anxieties about the Indo-US axis. And while Pakistan may scrape through this time, requiring just three members' support to escape a funding ban, it has still got away by being a strategic counterweight for others' geo-political concerns rather than attempting any course correction at home. What else explains the renewed push for militancy in Kashmir? That problem continues and can only be beaten by now normalising life in the Valley. Discontent cannot be allowed to fester under lockdown for Pakistan's no-risk benefit schemes.

So what are India's obstacles? The recent incremental push in bilateral relations with China has meant that it has come around to agreeing with our viewpoint of combatting terror without referencing Pakistan. How else could it justify its own clampdown on Uighur Muslims? And though it dragged its feet at the UN, it did assent to designating Masood Azhar as a global terrorist. But as the new president of the FATF, China isn't expected to ignore concerns of its all-weather friend Pakistan. It has wriggled a bit here and there but cannot abandon its ally given its strategic interests in the region. Direct transactional benefits with China will frankly take a long time to mature as significant tradeoffs on Pakistan. Of course, there are two more nations, Turkey and Malaysia, to deal with. Both are now spearheading a new-Islamic axis as India has stepped up diplomatic engagement and is building on mutual understanding with the UAE and Saudi Arabia. In fact, India has made significant inroads in the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), which has traditionally been opposed to it on Kashmir. But with the UAE and Saudi Arabia inviting India as an "observer" in its last edition, the OIC has warmed up a bit albeit Malaysia and Turkey continue to support Pakistan. In fact, Khan is now advocating a trilateral forum for a neo-Islamic world distinct from the traditional pan-Islamism. This leadership challenge to religious legacies has not gone down well with even Saudi Arabia of late. India, too, has now given up the charm offensive with both Turkey and Malaysia and is hitting back economically. It is reviewing imports of palm oil and other products from Malaysia in response to its Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammed's United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) speech on Kashmir. With that country hosting radical Indian Islamic preacher Zakir Naik, there are some creases of discomfort. Reports say that following Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's address on the Kashmir issue, India pulled out of discussions with Anadolu Shipyard, which intended to tie up with with us for building a 45,000-tonne fleet support ship. Simultaneously, India is also building bridges with the ring states around Turkey and Malaysia — Cyprus, Armenia and Greece around the former and Indonesia around the latter. India is now pegging its diplomacy on sound economic sense and that's delivering results, particularly in one-on-one negotiations in a multilateral world. It is demanding that sensitivities be shown to it in return, considering some of these nations are defaulting on rights records too — Turkey in Syria and China in Hong Kong, Tibet and in Uighur-dominated Xinjiang. In fact, India has stayed away from commenting on these issues until now, when it has condemned Turkey's action against Syria. Smart reasoning and corresponding posturing might change the way the world perceives our concerns.

## Wild chase

The aberrant behaviour by a lion at a wildlife park in Karnataka shows why we need a tourism protocol



As if the existing threats to wildlife in the form of illegal poaching, encroachments and culling were not enough, a new provocation comes from intrusive tourism. Unknowingly or out of curiosity, tourists are heckling animals so much during safaris that the latter are now displaying aberrant behaviour. The latest such instance was captured by one of the passengers aboard a jeep at the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Zoological Park in Bellary, Karnataka, in August, which went viral this week. An aggressive male lion is seen chasing a jeep full of visitors until the driver accelerated enough to outpace him. It was sheer luck that the tourists managed to escape the wrath of the lion, who was hellbent on pouncing upon them. Now the king of the jungle is usually gentle when not on the hunt, even unperturbed by human behaviour. Besides, by virtue of park tourism, lions have become quite immune to human attention. So it was quite strange that Keshri, the lion in question, would become hostile unless he was teased or provoked. Turns out he had just been brought to the park and was yet to settle down. Clearly, he was not used to tourist behaviour and should not have been exposed to visitors either. Particularly, when he was yet to demarcate his territoriality and be sure of his limits, he was but expectedly insecure. In the age of daring selfies and their virality, tourists are not just happy taking routine shots but want a dramatic film sequence. And when they cross limits of admissibility, they run the risk of a chase or attack. Be it big cats or elephants, several videos of them raging after tourists have circulated on social media. In July, a similar video was captured as bikers were chased by a tiger at the Muthanga Wildlife Sanctuary in Wayanad, Kerala.

Our big cats are stressed in their fragmented habitats, some of which do not have enough roaming stretches, prey bases or transit corridors to deeper forests. Human encroachment and development have resulted in frequent man-animal conflicts. Hemmed in from all sides, such aberrant behaviour is being reported all too frequently now, even from reserves like the Kruger National Park. Tourist behaviour, therefore, should be respectful of protocol and mindful of the peace any sanctuary guarantees the wild. For example, protocol calls for the visitors to maintain a certain distance from the animals during an encounter, which is definitely not followed either by them or unscrupulous tour operators hellbent on selling a "sighting." With greater interest comes greater responsibility.

# The great wall of nature

The proposal for a 1,400km-long green corridor along the Aravalli range, which is still in the planning stage, is a remarkable step forward in greening the country



RK PACHAURI

Former Prime Minister of India IK Gujral was one of the most scholarly and well-read leaders we have had. At a public function organised by this writer, he mentioned that the battle of Panipat took place at that location only because it was the southernmost location, which had an open area suitable for warfare. According to him, right from the Khyber Pass to Panipat, the entire terrain was heavily forested where conventional warfare of that period was not possible.

A recent news report mentioned that the Government is planning to build a 1,400 kilometre-long "great green wall" of India. If this project receives official sanction and is backed by innovative institutional arrangements for its implementation, it would mark a remarkable step forward in greening India because we, as a nation, have failed to seize the importance of greening our degraded and deforested land.

The Green India mission was one of the eight key missions included in the National Action Plan on Climate Change. The purpose of this operation was to protect, enhance and restore India's decreasing forest cover and act on the growing extent of climate change through a combination of mitigation and adaptation measures. Unfortunately, the mission has been grossly under-funded. A report by the Parliamentary Committee, titled, 'Performance of the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) pertaining to Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEFCC)', quotes MoEFCC as stating that the "budget allocation of ₹47.80 crore for FY 2017-18 is grossly insufficient. The committed liability of FY 2015-16 and 2016-17 is ₹89.53 crore, which is more than the budget allocation of FY 2017-18."

Expansion of population and encroachments by humans on forest land and the habitat of other species have not only reduced forest cover since independence but has also led to poor forest density even in those areas, which are regarded as forest land. The proposed "green wall" of India is planned to establish a green belt from Porbandar to Panipat and would help restore degraded land through afforestation, particularly along the Aravalli hill range, which covers Gujarat, Rajasthan, Haryana and Delhi.

It is well-known that the Aravallis have been heavily degraded in several areas, particularly in Haryana, as a result of the nexus between politicians and the builders' lobby. The establishment of the "green wall" would provide an effective barrier for dust coming from the deserts in Western India and Pakistan. It is now well-established that dust from deserts can travel large distances as has been seen with dust from Saudi Arabia travelling to northern parts of Europe. This writer has always advised officials in the Middle East, including a former Saudi Oil Minister, "Please convert your oil wealth to soil health."

Recently, the Conference of the Parties (COP 14) of the United Nations Convention



to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) was held in India and as a follow-up to that event, India can and should set an example for other countries that are threatened with desertification.

The UNCCD is an agreement to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought, based on long-term strategies and national programmes, supported by international cooperation and partnership arrangements. It was in 2006 that in order to gather support for the convention, the UN declared that year as the "International Year of Deserts and Desertification."

The convention has thus far been ratified by 190 States and the European Union (EU). However, on March 28, 2013, Canada became the first country to withdraw from it but reversed this arrangement on March 21, 2017.

In hosting COP14 of the convention, India made a major impact on this expanding problem in different countries of the world. Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his address to this conference stated: "I call upon the leadership of UNCCD to create a global water action agenda, which is central to land degradation neutrality strategy."

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) recently published a special report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security and greenhouse gas

fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems. The report states, "The level of risk posed by climate change depends both on the level of warming and on how population, consumption, production, technological development and land management patterns evolve. Pathways with higher demand for food, feed and water, more resource-intensive consumption and production and more limited technological improvements in agriculture yields result in higher risks from water scarcity in drylands, land degradation, and food insecurity."

It further states: "Many activities for combating desertification can contribute to climate change adaptation with mitigation co-benefits as well as to halting biodiversity loss with sustainable development co-benefits to society...Preventing desertification is preferable to attempting to restore degraded land due to the potential for residual risks and maladaptive outcomes."

The UN system, as is widely known, is currently underfunded and is actually facing a serious crisis. For several years now, there has been a growing realisation that the UN system needs to be restructured and reformed, starting, of course, with the composition of the permanent members of the Security Council, of which India should have been admitted as a member years ago.

In the case of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC),

IT IS WELL-KNOWN THAT THE ARAVALLIS HAVE BEEN HEAVILY DEGRADED IN SEVERAL AREAS, PARTICULARLY IN HARYANA, AS A RESULT OF THE NEXUS BETWEEN POLITICIANS AND THE BUILDERS' LOBBY. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE 'GREEN WALL' WILL PROVIDE AN EFFECTIVE BARRIER FOR DUST COMING FROM THE DESERTS

## SOUNDBITE

It is biggest irony of our times that while we are celebrating Gandhiji's birth centenary, the BJP is seeking Bharat Ratna for Savarkar, an accused in his assassination case.



CPI general secretary —D Raja

Professionally, it has been a very special year for me. Both the successes have only motivated and encouraged me to keep following my instincts and work hard.



Actor —Hrithik Roshan

The global security situation is in a flux. There is concern over the inherent dangers in nuclear brinkmanship pursued by countries as a cover for cross-border terrorism.



Indian diplomat —Pankaj Sharma

When a ship sinks in the middle of a sea, the captain evacuates everyone safely but Gandhi is a captain who himself left after seeing the Congress sinking.



AIMIM chief —Asaduddin Owaisi

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Together, we can win

Sir — A large number of climate strikes have recently erupted around the world, directing attention to issues such as climate change and global warming. It is also interesting to note that many indigenous tribes have been praying for the protection of the Amazon rainforest as thousands of wildfires continue to destroy it. People often turn to prayer in difficult times. Such prayers not only lead to positive results but also strengthen relationships among people. The prayers for the Amazon and the protests have attracted the attention of the global population. One hopes that such admirable activities continue to inspire people around the world.

P Senthil  
Via email

### Misleading policy

Sir — Economists have forever been negotiating between the twin poles of wealth and poverty. In 1776, Adam Smith postulated that the existence of economic prosperity, more than the persistence of poverty, must be

paid attention to. An eon was spent on identifying the conditions necessary for wealth creation. Then an era was spent on the distribution of income between capital and labour.

Finally, Nobel Prize-winning economist Angus Deaton delved into the cause, spread and measurement of poverty. But looks like Indian-American economist Abhijit Banerjee has analysed

the problem with poverty with an experimental approach. The randomised controlled field trials (RCTs) adopted by him has helped find out what works and what doesn't to fight poverty.

The traditional way of measuring wealth on account of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is misleading. It probably further skews the distribution of wealth and accentuates income dis-

parity. We have journeyed long from exploring the creation of wealth to the distribution of income to now Nobel prize winner Abhijit Banerjee's treatise on poverty.

Strangely, it is seen that deeper the democratic mores, as it is in the US, the sharper has been the turn to the right wing ideology of wealth inequality. It may take ages for the socio-economists, much less the Governments, to

### The historic China connect

This refers to the editorial, "Finding an old connect" (October 14). The second informal summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping was historically significant. The choice of Mamallapuram as the venue of the meet was important on account of its historical links with China, which dates back to the seventh century. Mamallapuram, named after Narasimhavarman I of the Pallava dynasty, is an ancient port town that has a strong mercantile history with China. It was also part of China's silk route and India's spice route. In fact, the origins of Kanchipuram's silk industry can be traced back to the import of raw silk from China via Mamallapuram. Sino-India links in the region can be traced back as far as 2,000 years. Chinese coins discovered in the region further establish the age-old link between the two nations. This rich history made Mamallapuram a befitting venue for this summit.

China has seen an exponential growth in cutting-



edge technology, leaping far beyond India. Electronic goods manufactured by it, which were once frowned upon, have now become much sought after. As India is a big market for Chinese goods, it is unlikely that Xi will take a harsh stand against India on the issue of Kashmir.

TK Nandanam  
Kochi

move away from a trite GDP to even grasp the concept of creation and distribution of happiness.

R Narayanan  
Navi Mumbai

### Challenges ahead

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Bangla pride" (October 15). The appointment of former cricket team captain Sourav Ganguly as the head of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) is welcome. In fact, he may just be the person the cricket administration needs right now to set things right. It's good to learn that on his priority list are first class players, who are the foundation for a strong pool of talent for the national team. Other issues like the absence of an Indian umpire in the middle of a sea, and reducing the gulf between women and men in cricket should be given importance. Ganguly must also ensure that financial management in the BCCI becomes more transparent. He has his task cut out.

Bal Govind  
Noida

Send your feedback to:  
letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

## Fight pollution collectively

Carpooling, using public transport, segregating waste to reduce burning, choosing not to burst firecrackers at Diwali can make a big difference



NAVDDHA MALHOTRA

The Diwali season comes with many debates: Does a ban on firecrackers make a difference? Could we have prepared better? Has the national Capital's air pollution decreased? What can Delhiites do to help bring it down?

This year the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Government announced a series of measures to tackle air pollution, including the odd-even vehicle rationing scheme; distribution of masks to prevent PM10 intake; a community pyrotechnic show for Diwali; mechanised road-sweeping; a tree plantation drive and a pollution plan for 12 hot spots. In September, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said that according to the air quality data of the last four years, the pollution levels in Delhi had reduced by 25 per cent. While the data is still being examined, this indicates a positive step in the fight for a cleaner Delhi.

In the past, there have been many claims and counter-claims over the impact of the odd-even scheme implemented in the Capital. While some studies indicated that it was a success, others claimed that there was no impact, and still others contended that it was impossible to isolate vehicular pollution from Delhi's data sets. However, the one thing all studies agree on is that the odd-even scheme will not succeed without a robust public transport system and without restrictions placed on heavy vehicles and two-wheelers, which make up the majority of Delhi's vehicular traffic. In the past, the scheme provided exclusions for two and three-wheelers, trucks, taxis and cars used by VIPs. These exemptions, and the limited hours of the odd-even scheme, made it harder to define the success of the project, especially as two-wheelers have the highest emissions levels. At the moment, the Delhi Metro and bus fleet are not equipped to keep up with the existing demand from commuters, let alone the demand that will be generated during vehicular rationing days. However, the undeniable benefit of the scheme is decreased congestion on the city's roads. This cuts down the number of hours citizens spend in their cars and the pollution caused by congestion. The scheme is a step in the right direction but it alone cannot solve the problems of vehicular pollution.

Given these concerns, the next logical solution would be to consider electric vehicles (EVs) and particularly electric public transport. Several cities around the country have committed to electric bus fleets and feeder buses and should these measures be implemented, they will certainly have a positive impact on air pollution. However, cutting down on tailpipe emissions is only half the battle. As long as EVs are powered by traditional electricity, they still contribute to fossil fuel emissions, just perhaps not in the same city they are driven in. EVs are a step in the right direction but not enough to tackle the air pollution crisis, unless they become solar powered in the future.

Like the different sources of the problem, the solutions to our air quality issues are also varied and complex. Pollution does not acknowledge State or city boundaries and our solutions must transcend these as well. Central and State Governments must work together to ensure heavy industrial and vehicular activity is kept outside cities; equitable and environmental solutions for stubble burning are implemented as quickly as possible; industrial activity is heavily regulated and fuel emission standards for vehicles continue to advance. Most importantly, this Government needs to ensure that air quality is monitored adequately and that the data is shared so that the benefits of schemes like odd-even can be evaluated.

At the moment, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has a woefully incomplete monitoring network, with data gaps for many pollutants and locations. The newly-released National Clean Air Plan (NCAP) fails to include many of the Indian cities that require policy action and doesn't give local authorities the enforcement power they need to penalise offenders. As citizens, it often feels like there is little we can do beyond voting for the right candidate every few years. Installing air purifiers, limiting physical activity and wearing masks outside allows those who can afford it a break from the air pollution but it does not solve the issue. Each individual can take certain proactive actions: Carpooling and using public transport cut vehicular emissions. Ensuring that waste is segregated before it is discarded cuts down waste burning as does limiting open garbage and leaf burning in the winter. During Diwali, choosing not to burn firecrackers can make a massive difference, as we have seen in the last decade in New Delhi.

However, it is clear that only stringent policy can create the kind of widespread change that is needed to tackle air pollution. To make this happen, citizens must encourage their representatives to take action through their votes and their voice. Elections will be held in several States soon, including Delhi. We must make our priorities known to our leaders by raising our voices and demanding a better standard of air quality from our representatives.

(The writer is a social campaigns manager)

CONGRESS NE KHODA PAHAD, NIKLI CHUHIYA. WOH BHI MARI HUI. (THEY DUG A MOUNTAIN, ONLY TO FIND A MOUSE. THAT TOO A DEAD ONE). —HARYANA CHIEF MINISTER MANOHAR LAL KHATTAR

POINTCOUNTERPOINT



THINK IN WHAT LIGHT DO THESE REMARKS SHOW WOMEN. BECAUSE OF PEOPLE WITH YOUR MINDSET, HARYANA IS KNOWN AS THE CRIME CAPITAL. —HARYANA CONGRESS PRESIDENT KUMARI SELJA

# A double-edged sword

While cities that experimented with free public transport achieved positive results for a while, sustaining them beyond a few years proved to be a problem



MEGHA KUMAR

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's announcement on offering free public transport to women has sparked off a debate across the country about the financial performance and pricing of public transport. As cities across the world struggle to keep the Mass Rapid Transit System (MRTS) and other modes of public transport financially viable, scholars and operators alike are trying to arrive at an economically sound formula for operations.

According to an estimate by the Delhi Transport Corporation and the Delhi Metro, women constitute around 30 to 35 per cent passengers in both buses and the trains. This comes to about 14 lakh women per day on the buses and 800,000 women per day on the metro. The Delhi Government is assuming that the scheme will see a rise of 50 per cent in female ridership, resulting in a decrease in the number of vehicles on the city's roads and improved safety for those vulnerable sections who cannot afford public transport otherwise.

Impact studies in cities that have experimented with a free public transport policy indicate tangible benefits such as higher ridership, less traffic congestion, better air quality, savings on printing, ticket-punching technology and the people engaged in ticket sales. Free public transport promises intangible benefits, too, such as a stronger democracy, higher citizen participation, better liveability and a vibrant economy.

However, it is easier said than done. Cities like Tallinn in Estonia and Châteauroux and Aubagne in France experimented with free public transport in the past and achieved positive results for a while. Sustaining the results beyond a few years, however, proved to be a problem. Also, while the combined effect of free service and happier commuters can significantly increase ridership, public transport can also experience a rebound effect, resulting in crowding and poor service quality due to a large demand response. Such a response can result in a higher tax burden for the transport agency.

The key to operating a free public transport is to identify alternate sources of revenue to finance it. Sustaining a free transport policy in the long-term, especially during times of economic volatility, can be highly strenuous. The city of Châteaurouxin, France could generate returns on public transport in 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2007. However, 2008 onwards, the returns declined. The city of Hasselt in Belgium had to wind up its free public transport policy after a few years as the Government could no longer support its financing.

So, the big question is, can Indian cities afford free transport for their citizens, given the burgeoning population of the country?

Cities in India face a severe shortage of public transport. City peripheries and low-income neighbourhoods often remain unserved and even if a network of buses and local trains and so on exists, the frequency of service is low, rendering it ineffective. Free or otherwise, the absence of public transport results in last-mile connectivity problems for the poor. Addressing the inadequacies of the country's public transport network will require huge capital investments and considering the amount of expenditure it entails, it could



be too much of a burden on the State Governments to then generate funds for operating expenses.

However, the good news is that, though it appears impossible at present, there are solutions worth exploring. Given that State Governments are finding it difficult to provide even partial support in the form of subsidies and grants to public transport agencies, relying on budgetary support to fund a free transport policy seems very difficult at present. Running free public transport may or may not be possible but every city must have at least an affordable transport system. There are a few strategies for long-term funding and cost-cutting that could be explored for achieving this.

**Cross-utility subsidy:** Although it's not very popular in the country, cross-utility financing is prevalent in many parts of the world, including Europe and North America.

There are many ways to enforce a cross-utility subsidy like imposing a levy on utility use or cross-subsidising a loss-making utility by a profit-making one. The loss-making transport department of the Brihanmumbai Electric Supply & Transport (BEST), for instance, was, for a long time, cross-subsidised by revenues generated by the profitable electricity department. If implemented in a prudent manner, cross-utility subsidy can offer a long-term solution for funding public transport.

**Targeted subsidy:** Grants often fail to benefit the desired user groups. So, the solution lies in introducing selective subsidisation for carefully identified beneficiaries. It is a difficult thing to pull off but one can take heart from the fact that over 10 million customers in India gave up their Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) subsidy in response to the Government's plea. If people are made aware about the purpose of a subsidy, there will be many who will give it up if they don't require it. At any rate, the Government should explore targeted subsidies to offer affordable public

THE KEY TO OPERATING A FREE PUBLIC TRANSPORT IS TO IDENTIFY ALTERNATE SOURCES OF REVENUE TO FINANCE IT. IF IMPLEMENTED IN A PRUDENT MANNER, CROSS-UTILITY SUBSIDY CAN OFFER A LONG-TERM SOLUTION FOR FUNDING PUBLIC TRANSPORT

lic transport to the needy and the vulnerable.

**Dedicated transport fund:** Many experts have emphasised the need to exempt public bus transport corporations from the motor vehicle tax. For many bus corporations, the operational losses are almost equal to what they pay as motor vehicle tax. While there is a sound rationale behind taxing vehicles that generate huge negative externalities like emissions and congestion, imposing a similar tax on public buses is draconian. On a "per passenger kilometre" basis, public transport is more efficient and causes lower emission and congestion than private vehicles. Moreover, the tax gets directly passed on to the commuters as part of the fares they pay. Foregoing the tax will also make fares more affordable and improve the financial accessibility of public transport.

**New performance indicators:** There is also a need to develop new performance indicators for evaluating public transport corporations. These indicators must mainstream social and environmental goals. Currently, public transport operations in the country are guided primarily by financial parameters like earnings and cost-per-kilometre. Now, more emphasis needs to be placed on the intangible socio-economic benefits such as time savings, improved productivity, lower congestion and improved livelihood opportunities that public transport enables. Changing the way public transport corporations are assessed will also change the manner in which they operate and the goals they prioritise in service delivery.

While financial performance is critical for operating public transport, increasing the fare is not the best solution. The approach to the problem will change once it is realised that the objective of operating public transport is not to generate revenue but to offer affordable services to citizens. The need of the hour is to find innovative solutions to make public transport affordable for all.

(The writer is Area Convenor, Centre for Sustainable Mobility, TERI)

# Will the Thackeray clan see a s(o)nrise?

The timing is perfect for Thackeray scion Aditya to make his electoral debut with the BJP-Sena alliance poised to win the Assembly polls. The young Thackeray represents the changing political scenario and the Sena's evolving culture



KALYANI SHANKAR

How would the late Sena chief Bal Thackeray have reacted to the idea of his grandson Aditya entering electoral politics when the Thackeray clan had scrupulously kept out of it for decades? He would have chuckled.

So far, the family has run a powerful political party in Maharashtra without contesting elections. The youngest Thackeray, Aditya breaks that tradition in the forthcoming Maharashtra Assembly elections by contesting from the Worli seat in Mumbai.

Balasahab had once told me he had taken three decisions — he would not contest elections, would

not write his autobiography and would not take any Government post and he had stuck to them till the end of his life.

After the first Shiv Sena-Bharatiya Janata Party Government (BJP) was formed in 1995, Balasahab often quipped that he ruled the State via "remote control." Balasahab's son Uddhav Thackeray surprisingly not only kept the party alive but also followed the "remote control" policy of his father.

However, the 29-year-old Aditya is different in this sense and he represents the aspirational Maharashtrian youth. His image-makers are trying to project him as a suave, English-speaking Sena leader. Nine years ago, Balasahab himself introduced his grandson to the political world in October 2010 and also named Aditya the head of the party's newly-created youth wing.

The timing is perfect for the Thackeray scion to make his electoral debut, with the BJP-Sena alliance poised to win the Assembly polls this month.



Aditya stated the obvious in an interview recently, "I chose this election because I thought this was the right time." There is a vacuum in the youth leadership in Maharashtra, which he hopes to fill.

As a child, Aditya used to travel with his father and grandfather and became interested in politics from then on. "If you have to do something good for society, politics is the way. I have been thinking of my journey for the last five years. We did several agitations. How to serve Maharashtra better, Shiv Sena style? I have always thought that I should join my party legislators," says Aditya.

Prior to this electoral contest, he had undertaken a *Jan Ashirwad*

yatra in July to thank the voters for the 2019 success but his real intention was to gauge the public mood for his own debut.

The young Thackeray represents the changing political scenario and also the evolving culture of the Sena. Much has changed since the days of Balasahab. The party's clout in Maharashtra politics has certainly diminished. Politics has changed, the voters have changed and the Sena, too, has become a junior partner in the coalition, as compared to the earlier days of dominating the Sena-BJP alliance.

Aditya is experimenting with a different kind of politics, trying to change the old narrative. The Sena's image has been that of a muscular political party and he would have to change this if he wants to succeed. The Sena is no more a rabble-rousing party.

In the past it used to launch agitations against the South Indians, Gujaratis, Biharis and Muslims. Today, in a bid to woo non-Maharashtrian voters, his campaign

has multi-lingual posters. He does not mention religion or Hindutva and instead prefers to raise bread and butter issues like employment and development.

He talks about the ban on plastic, beach cleaning and the environment. Aditya is more cosmopolitan, modern and open to new-age electoral politics. He is accused of being comfortable with the Page 3 set but he is also trying to appeal to the ordinary youth.

Second, Aditya is emulating his grandfather by building a base among the youth. The senior Thackeray had a devoted youth following all his life. As long as he was alive, every Vijayadasami day, thousands of youth had attended his meeting at the Shivaji Park. Now, Aditya is targeting the millennial voters. He is being projected as a sensitive, modern, young leader, who is flexible and open to new ideas.

Third, it was the family's considered decision to support Aditya's electoral plunge. Bal Thackeray could run the Government through remote

control. Uddhav, too, managed to do that but Aditya, encouraged by his mother Reshmi, believes that the days of "remote control governance" are over and one needs to be in the system.

Above all, the Sena wants to strengthen itself on the ground fearing that the BJP might subsume the party. The family feels that the junior Thackeray's presence in the next Cabinet would give them some control.

Aditya is poised to win the Worli seat, if Dame Luck smiles at him, he might even become the Deputy Chief Minister. Though Uddhav says now, "The first step in politics doesn't mean that you have to become the Chief Minister of the State. He has just entered politics, this is just the beginning." He would push for his son when the time comes.

Aditya wants to prove that he is not just another son of a powerful political family but a grassroots leader in his own right. The Assembly contest will be his acid test. (The writer is a senior journalist)



## A TIME OF RECKONING

Though some fossil fuel companies now promote renewable projects, they continue to expand their operations in the face of overwhelming evidence that their actions will drive ecosystem collapse and make much of the planet uninhabitable. It is difficult to confront the full implications of irresponsibility on such a monumental scale. But we, and our politicians, now have no choice but to try. (The Guardian editorial)



CAPSULE



Gold up marginally by Rs 5, silver falls Rs 91

**NEW DELHI:** Gold witnessed muted trading on Tuesday, rising marginally higher by Rs 5 to Rs 39,105 per 10 gram in the national capital as a weaker rupee kept the downside limited, according to HDFC Securities. "Spot gold prices for 24 Karat in Delhi were trading marginally up by Rs 5 at Rs 39,105 as weaker rupee kept the downside limited. Spot rupee was trading 10 paise weaker against the dollar during the day," Tapan Patel, senior analyst - commodities, HDFC Securities said. The yellow metal had closed at Rs 39,100 per 10 gram in the previous trade here. Silver, however, fell by Rs 91 to Rs 46,809 per kilogram from Rs 46,900 per kilogram on Monday. In the global market, gold was trading higher at USD 1,493.30 an ounce, while silver too firmed up at USD 17.62 per ounce.



Sensex spurts 292 pts; auto, metal stocks drive rally

**MUMBAI:** Extending its gains for the third consecutive session, market benchmark BSE Sensex rallied about 292 points on Tuesday driven by gains mainly in auto, metal and banking stocks. After soaring 421 points during the day, the 30-share Sensex ended 291.62 points, or 0.76 per cent, higher at 38,506.09. It hit an intra-day high of 38,635.19 and a low of 38,238.27. The broader NSE Nifty too rose 87.15 points, or 0.77 per cent, to settle at 11,428.30. Top gainers in the Sensex pack included Vedanta, M&M, ONGC, Hero MotoCorp and Maruti, rising up to 3.79 per cent. On the other hand, Bharti Airtel, Infosys, Tata Motors, HCL Tech and Tech Mahindra fell up to 2.53 per cent. Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Shanghai, Hong Kong ended in the red, while those in Seoul and Tokyo ended higher.



Lectro E-Mobility Solutions launches e-bicycle

**NEW DELHI:** Lectro E-Mobility Solutions, a part of Hero Cycles, on Tuesday launched a new electric bicycle, priced at Rs 30,999. Townmaster, a throttle e-bike, can be charged from a regular plug point and does not need special charging stations, much like other products under the Lectro range and can go for 30-40 km on a single charge of around three hours. "There is new emerging category of consumers in India who is fitness-oriented while also being environmentally-conscious about reducing their carbon footprint. This category of consumers is leading the demand for alternative and clean transport options that are viable for different kinds of trips - be it short distance or long distance," Lectro E-Mobility Solutions Director Aditya Munjal said in a statement.

# 'No trade disputes with US, only few disagreements'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal on Tuesday said India and the US do not have any trade disputes and both nations have huge bilateral trade and investment potential.

Speaking during a ministerial panel discussion at India Energy Forum here, Goyal said, "There is no (trade) dispute (with the US). We had certain disagreements, but I don't think that there is... any relation where there are no disagreements at all. I think we welcome some 'nok jhok' (argument). Little bit of uncertainty helps in taking things forward."

Goyal's comments assumes significance in view of recent withdrawal of Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) or



Piyush Goyal

trade tariff incentives on Indian products by the US, especially when both countries are negotiating a trade agreement.

Goyal was of the view that his discussion with his US counterpart helped improve the bilateral relations further.

## Goyal's comments assumes significance in view of recent withdrawal of Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) or trade tariff incentives on Indian products by the US, especially when both countries are negotiating a trade agreement

Referring to the withdrawal of GSP by the US, Goyal said, it could be a "dispute in the eyes of some, but I think it opened up an opportunity for me to have a dialogue with my colleague (US trade representative). We had some wonderful discussions."

About the business potential with US Energy firms he said, "There is huge potential on the gas side and also in nuclear energy. The US and India have

a robust relationship, which has huge potential going forward... We should not look at incremental growth in our relationship. We should be looking at a quantum leap. We have set half-trillion-dollar (trade) target (with the US)."

Goyal said that there is huge potential of energy exports from the US to India and business is going on with the US on oil, gas and nuclear fronts.

# Veg oil imports fall 13 pc in Sep; Malaysian shipments drop

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Vegetable oil imports fell by 13 per cent to 13.03 lakh tonnes in September from same month last year, due to large carry-over stock and imposition of safeguard duty on palm oil originating from Malaysia, industry body SEA said on Tuesday.

The Solvent Extractors Association of India (SEA) highlighted that many traders are shifting to Indonesia for imports of palm oil amid reports that India might curb shipments from Malaysia which used strong words in the United Nations on India's decision to abrogate Article 370 in Jammu & Kashmir.

"The government imposed 5 per cent safeguard duty on RBD Palmolein/Palm Oil of Malaysian origin with effect from September 4. In view of this, now the duty difference between crude and refined palm oil has increased to 10 per cent irrespective of any origin," the association said.

Although the import of RBD palmolein remained more or less same in September, the quantity of imports from Malaysia reduced to one-third from previous month's import, it added. SEA's Executive director BV Mehta attributed the fall in vegetable oil imports to carry-over stock and imposition of safeguard duty.

"Secondly, recent report appeared in Media, that



## SEA's Executive director BV Mehta attributed the fall in vegetable oil imports to carry-over stock and imposition of safeguard duty

Government of India may take some action to curtail imports of palm oil from Malaysia following the hostile attitude of Malaysia at the UN in September when Malaysia charged that India invaded and occupied J&K. Fearing some action by Government of India in retaliation, many importer/refiners shifting their buying from Malaysia to Indonesia for November-December shipment," the statement said.

Imports of vegetable oils (comprising edible and non-edible oil) during September declined by 13 per cent to 13,03,976 tonnes compared to

14,91,174 tonnes in the year-ago period.

Imports of edible oil fell to 12,54,443 tonnes in September 2019, from 14,22,003 tonnes in the year-ago period, while non-edible oil imports fell to 49,533 tonnes from 69,171 tonnes during the period under review.

However, the overall imports of vegetable oils during November 2018 to September 2019 went up by 3 per cent to 14.17 million tonnes, SEA said in a statement.

During November 2018 to September 2019, SEA said imports of refined oil (RBD palmolein) increased to 26,12,394 tonnes from 19,98,813 tonnes in same period of last year, due to lower duty on palmolein imported from Malaysia.

This resulted in lower imports of crude oil which stood at 109,69,087 tonnes from 113,43,273 tonnes during the same period of last year, reducing capacity utilization of domestic industry.

# Mylan working to launch new TB drug in India

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Multinational pharmaceutical company Mylan is working with Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) to launch pretomanid, a medicine used to treat drug-resistant tuberculosis (TB), a top official of the US drug major has said.

Non-profit drug developer TB Alliance and Mylan NV had in April announced a global collaboration to make the experimental drug pretomanid for cure of pulmonary tuberculosis.

"We have submitted the new drug application to the office of DCGI. We are in an advanced stage of discussion and are working with the office of DCGI... Mylan will be in a position to launch the product in India soon after receiving approvals from DCGI," Mylans global president and executive director Rajiv Malik told PTI during his recent visit to India.

This drug is important for India because Prime Minister Narendra Modi said India would get rid of tuberculosis by 2025, he added.

Also, Modi launched a campaign to eradicate TB from India by 2025, five years ahead of a globally-set deadline.

TB Alliance was currently advancing the development of pretomanid in three ongoing late-stage clinical trials, Mylan had said in April.

# 'Despite inflation rise, RBI may cut rates in Dec'

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank will continue to be accommodative and deliver one more rate cut in the December policy review despite the 'surprising' spike in headline inflation for September, say analysts.

Some analysts also wonder if the economy is headed towards 'stagflation', which is characterised by persistently high inflation and low economic and jobs growth.

Official data released on Monday showed consumer price inflation for September racing to 3.99 percent, up from 3.3 percent in August. Under the inflation targeting framework, the RBI is bound to keep the price index at 4 percent with a 2 percentage points either way.

Analysts on Tuesday attributed the sharp spike in the headline number to a rise in food prices, particularly onions



which alone accounted for 0.43 percentage points of the jump.

Foreign brokerage Bank of America Merrill Lynch's economists said the sudden spike in inflation is "temporary" and expects it move up further to 4.6 percent in October.

But despite this, it expects the RBI to continue with its rate cuts and deliver a 0.25 percentage points reduction in the December review.

It said the RBI will take this

## Foreign brokerage Bank of America Merrill Lynch's economists said the sudden spike in inflation is "temporary" and expects it move up further to 4.6 percent in October

view because the liquidity crunch that began this time last year is still hurting the economy and also with an eye on the August industrial production numbers, which showed a contraction by 1.1 percent--the steepest in seven long years.

If growth continues to head south or remain slow, the RBI will cut rates by a further 0.40 percent to take the repo rate down to 4.5 percent by next September, it added.

Japanese brokerage Nomura wondered if the economy is entering a "stagflation" stage, and warned that a combination of weaker-than-expected growth and higher inflation makes for a tough policy call for the monetary policy committee.

"We believe the larger deviation of growth from target vis-a-vis inflation target will likely lead the MPC to continue with an accommodative policy stance and deliver another rate cut of 0.15 percent in December," it said.

Singaporean bank DBS also expects the rate-setting panel is likely to look past food inflation and not put brakes on the easy money policy.

It can be noted that the RBI has cut rates by a cumulative 1.35 percent in five consecutive rate cuts in 2019, to prop up growth amid the legroom created by softer inflation and falling growth numbers.

# Warehousing space sees USD 500 mn investment since 2017

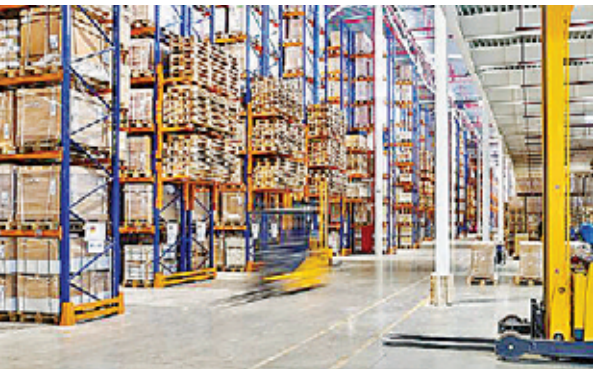
PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The industrial and logistic segment has attracted USD 500 million (about Rs 3,500 crore) investment since 2017, as demand for quality warehousing space is growing rapidly post the implementation of GST, property consultant CBRE said on Tuesday.

In its report, the consultant highlighted that several policies (both proposed and implemented), along with the grant of infrastructure status to the logistics sector, led to more than USD 500 million being invested in acquiring industrial and logistics assets in India during 2017-H1 2019.

In its survey of warehousing clients post GST, CBRE found that almost 70 per cent of respondents indicated an improvement in ease of doing business mainly on account of e-way billing, which has removed a lot of bottlenecks in cargo storage and transport processes.

About 80 per cent of respondents felt that the taxation system improved after



## On outlook of this sector, CBRE said demand for warehousing will strengthen and estimated that leasing will be about 10-15 per cent higher this year at 25-30 million sq ft compared to last year

the implementation of GST, while 40 per cent respondents indicated that they will increase the number of warehouses in the post-GST era.

On outlook of this sector, CBRE said demand for warehousing will strengthen and estimated that leasing will be about 10-15 per cent higher

this year at 25-30 million sq ft compared to last year.

CBRE had earlier reported that leasing of warehousing spaces went up by 31 per cent to over 13 million sq ft across eight major cities in the first half of this year, driven mainly by demand from third party-logistic and e-commerce firms.

# Irani nudges India Inc to adopt more women-friendly policies

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Union minister Smriti Irani on Tuesday pointed out that challenges before the government lies in getting corporate India implement the laws specially enacted for women and children. Government has taken various initiatives and introduced laws for the safety of women and children so that they get justice faster, the minister noted.

"The real challenge is actually bridging government policies with those of companies so that we collectively deliver the benefits of the laws to women at large," she told a Bloomberg event here.

Irani, who heads the textile ministry, said government has been taking initiatives towards better childcare as well pointed to the enhanced maternity/paternity leaves

"Companies need ensure that women do not feel left out especially in areas where they feel they can be promoted to the next level," she said, adding government has not just codified the labour laws but has also ensured that laws make women feel secured in their workplaces in both in the organised as well as unorganised sectors.

Noting that woman and child security is not an issue of a particular country, she said the government has passed



Smriti Irani

## Irani, who heads the textile ministry, said government has been taking initiatives towards better childcare as well pointed to the enhanced maternity/paternity leaves

laws to protect children from sexual offences.

"For the first time, we have brought a law where child pornography, especially in the online space, is dealt with seriously," she added.

Irani further said the only issue on which political parties of all hues have one view is regarding women and children, and as a result, the country could move, especially in the past five years, to a women-led development model from women's development.

# TRAI's IUC review will harm users, punish efficient telcos: Jio

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Terming TRAI's review of call connect charges "retrograde", Reliance Jio has said the regulator's consultation paper is neither warranted nor sustainable and that retention of such charges will harm subscribers and punish efficient operators.

Jio alleged that any deferment of sunset clause for inter-operator termination charges will end up rewarding "designed defaulters" who have deliberately stayed away from new and efficient technologies.



Jio has shot off a letter to TRAI saying the present Consultation Paper "subsidises and incentivises the telecom service providers who, by design and astute planning, do not want to shift to IP based technology".

# Non-life insurers see 28% rise in premium

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Non-life insurance companies witnessed 28.3 per cent rise in their collective new premium at Rs 24,563.24 crore in September, according to Irdai data.

All the 34 non-life insurers had collected business premium of Rs 19,141.65 crore in the same month a year ago.

Among these, 25 general insurers reported a rise of 39.3 per cent in their combined premium during the month at Rs 20,145.46 crore as against Rs 14,463.60 crore in September 2018, as per the Insurance Regulatory and Development



Authority of India (Irdai) data. The seven stand-alone private sector health insurance companies clocked Rs 1,115.75 crore premium in September this year, up 21.6 per cent from Rs 917.38 crore in the year-ago period.

The rest two specialised

PSU insurers -- Agricultural Insurance Company of India and ECGC -- saw a decline of 12.2 per cent in their premium income at Rs 3,302.02 crore compared to Rs 3,760.67 crore.

On a cumulative basis, premium collection of all non-life insurers during April-September this fiscal rose by 17.23 per cent to Rs 95,978.99 crore.

The 25 general insurers witnessed 16.84 per cent increase in their combined premium income at Rs 82,802.51 crore, and the seven stand-alone private sector health insurers registered rise of 6.35 per cent to Rs 6,096.98 crore.

# IOC to raise Rs 3000 cr via rupee bonds

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Indian Oil Corp (IOC), the nation's biggest oil firm, plans to raise Rs 3,000 crore in rupee borrowings this month to meet its general corporate financing needs, IOC Director (Finance) Sandeep Kumar Gupta said on Tuesday.

"We plan to raise through a rupee denominated bonds issue up to Rs 3,000 crore. A similar amount may be raised later in the financial year," he said here.

The bond issue will be of Rs 1,000 crore with a greenshoe option of another Rs 2,000



crore, he said and added that "we may retain or not retain over-subscription of up to Rs 2,000 crore." The bond issue will be of 10 year tenure.

IOC plans to use the money raised through the bond issue for general corporate financing, he said adding the company had a borrowing of Rs 81,000 crore at the end of September quarter.

## IOC plans to use the money raised though the bond issue for general corporate financing, he said, adding the company had a borrowing of Rs 81,000 crore at the end of September quarter

The company is aggressively expanding refining and petrochemical capacity and laying infrastructure to meet rising energy demand in the country. "We had a planned capital spending of Rs 25,000 crore during current fiscal. Of this, about Rs 8,000 crore was spent till August-end and

another Rs 1,500 crore would have been done in September," he said expressing confidence of fully spending the planned capex by March 2020.

The company, which subsidises cooking gas LPG and PDS kerosene, is yet to receive Rs 9,700 crore from the government in unpaid subsidies.

"The unpaid subsidies are coming down. They were Rs 19,000 crore at the beginning of the fiscal and have now come down to Rs 9,700 crore," he said. Gupta said, IOC has already announced plans to invest Rs 2 lakh crore in next 5-7 years to expand refining and petrochemical capacities in order to maintain leadership position. The plan is to almost double its oil refining capacity to 150 million tonnes per annum, expand fuels and LPG retailing network, jack up petrochemical production capacity and produce more crude oil and gas.





G. Naga Jyothi's enterprise, Plantae, is keen to help people lead healthier lives and provide a source of income for women farmers across Telugu states, finds V SATEESH REDDY



## REPLACING MEAT AND SUGAR FOR FOODIES

Hyderabad-based G. Naga Jyothi is on a mission to inspire women farmers to grow mushrooms and Stevia (sugar substitute) as protein-rich alternatives for people who don't consume meat and natural sugar.

She quit her bank job to rejoin the work she started in her graduation and since then has never looked back. "My agri-based enterprise Plantae is all about researching the plant kingdom. During research at my graduation level I realised that plants hold the solution to every medical problem we face. I have worked with farmers and artisans whose experiences gave me a lot of insight into this," she said.

The idea of finding a meat alternative came to her when she read an article about how much non-vegetarians miss meat after they are forced to quit it for health reasons. So she researched on plant alternatives that provide protein as much as meat and also tastes good.

Jyothi did her PG Agribusiness Management from MITCON Institute of

Management, Pune. In order to form her own company she later got trained at the ICAR-Directorate of Mushroom Research in Solan. "I started on a small scale by growing exotic medicinal mushrooms which are known to be alternatives for non-vegetarian diet. I also trained many women to grow different varieties of mushrooms," she said.

She said finding a substitute for natural sugar is the need of the hour as one out of every ten teenagers in India has high levels of glucose in blood.

"Many artificial sweeteners that are available in the market are produced from chemicals. Hence, I started promoting Stevia as it is a perfect natural sugar substitute," she said.

"Stevia leaf extract is available in the market but many people are not aware of its benefits. While doing survey

in the city, I found that many felt Stevia leaf extract is like any other kind of artificial sweetener owing to the similarity in packing. Many stayed away from it fearing side effects. But scientists at the Central Institute of Medicinal and



“

Many artificial sweeteners that are available in the market are produced from chemicals. Hence, I started promoting Stevia as it is a perfect natural sugar substitute. Stevia extract is also available but not many people are aware of its benefits

G. NAGA JYOTHI  
ENTREPRENEUR

Aromatic Plants informed me about about the plant, its extraction and its health benefits. Our aim is to have this wonder herb in every home

soon. The fresh leaves of Stevia can be used for sweetening many dishes. We also planning to start a nursery to supply these plants for people," she added displaying a packet of her Stevia's sugar substitute.

She now has a team of five members who work on produce, package and market Stevia extract. She also collaborates with many women across Telugu states who produce Stevia at their homes.



**THE IDEA OF FINDING AN ALTERNATIVE FOR MEAT CAME TO JYOTHI WHEN SHE READ ABOUT HOW MUCH NON-VEGETARIANS MISS MEAT AFTER THEY QUIT IT FOR HEALTH REASONS**

## Remembering Kishore Kumar

More than 100 music lovers came together to pay homage to legendary late playback singer Kishore Kumar



Dakshin Dhvani, a city-based karaoke group, whose musical journey began three years ago on October 13, coinciding with the 29th death anniversary of the late playback Kishore Kumar — the unchallenged icon of Hindi playback singing during the late 1960s — organised a musical event commemorating their group's formation. The group, which has grown from a family-run unit of six

members to 35 members from various age groups and background, organised their grand event 'Ik Raasta Hai Zindagi' at Our Sacred Space in Secunderabad.

In all, 13 performers, including live guitar performances and a harmonica rendition, crooned both solos and duets from the vast collection of hits by Kishore Kumar.

The audience, made of all age groups, applauded the singers for the musical evening. The performers

comprise people from corporate and professional background in the age group of 25 to 75 who put up soulful performances.

With open and cultural spaces in Secunderabad shrinking, this kind of event was a breath of fresh air for the 100-odd crowd who attended the event. "This is our first anniversary programme that we performed in Secunderabad after we moved here. We are overwhelmed with their support we got from the people

here," said T. Balakrishnan, co-founder of the group and one of the performers.

Anjna Puri Surath, a doctor and a music buff, said, "I am very happy that our group went the extra mile to stage this event in an acoustic-friendly venue to a supportive crowd. I loved their claps and whistles as I rendered the Kishore numbers from the 1960's which is easily the golden phase of Hindi cinema."

The audience couldn't help but stay till the end of

the 200-minute long programme after which they interacted with the singers, thanking them for a memorable evening.

The young singers were seen networking with the like-minded fans who also attended Dakshin Dhvani's previous event 'Are Deewano Mujhe Pehchano', an open mic session that was held at Nritya Forum for Performing Arts at Banjara Hills.

As Prabha Naresh, who anchored the programme, said, "It was a double treat for music lovers of Hyderabad and Secunderabad. I am glad we pulled it off."

T. Balakrishnan informed that they also held a musical programme at Cherlapally Prison recently as part of Prisoners Welfare Day in association with the Telangana Prisons Department.

— VSR

**LIVE GUITAR PERFORMANCES AND A HARMONICA RENDITION CROONED BOTH SOLOS AND DUETS FROM THE VAST COLLECTION OF HITS OF THE SINGER**



Many sections of society are waking up to the fact on how important mental health is. The huge attendance at a recent event on mental health is a testament to that fact

## Breaking mental barriers in society

The number of people who acknowledge (and also celebrate) World Mental Health Day, that falls on October 10, has been steadily increasing over the years. This shows that more and more people are accepting the importance of a healthy mind to achieve a good work-life balance.

But taboo, prejudice and infamy surrounding the subject have put many people in the dark. To tear down the myths and misinformation surrounding mental health, Good Universe, an NGO vocal about social issues, conducted a mental health awareness programme recently.

"It's ok to struggle; it's ok to ask for help; it's ok to not have all the answers and it's ok to not

be ok. This is our motto," said the organisers.

The event, themed #flauntyourflaws, witnessed talks by many mental health experts who answered questions regarding the prejudice associated with mental health issues such as depression and addiction and their treatment.

Many other people came forward to share their stories about mental health.

A dance performance by Patruni Sastry, an expressionist, made everyone think about how terrible mental illnesses can be.

Ashish, known for his happy-go-lucky and comedian attitude, opened up about his sensitive history of child abuse in such a poignant and respectful way that moved the audience to

tears. "It is true what they say. Sometimes the most happiest people go through the most toughest times. Ashish lived up to it by sharing his personal story as well as speaking against other shushed topics like dowry, harassment and inter-religious conflicts," said the organisers.

Speakers at the event included Dr Purnima Nagraja from Dhriti foundation, Lucia Kankipati from Everyday Miracles and Dr Sneha Khelani from Dhriti Counseling and also Shyamankthak Kiran.

Founder of Good Universe Kamal says, "Mental health is quite essential to the overall health and well being, and mental illnesses are common and treatable. What we need is more acceptance."







GEETA GANDBHIR

ALEX GIBNEY



## OSCAR WINNERS' WHY WE HATE SERIES DEBUTS ON SUNDAY IN INDIA

**T**hroughout history, hate and conflict have been a part of the human experience. From horrific extremes such as the Holocaust or the Rwandan genocide, when hate has fueled mass destruction, to everyday incidents like playground bullying or malicious trolling on social media, hate shapes our lives in myriad ways. And while all humans have the capacity to hate, few understand what sparks it and transforms it into a destructive force. Executive produced by filmmaking heavyweights Alex Gibney and Steven Spielberg and directed by Geeta Gandbhir and Sam Pollard (Emmy

winners for "When The Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts"), *WHY WE HATE* explores one of humanity's most primal and destructive emotions — hate. At the heart of this timely series is the notion that if people begin to understand their own minds, they can find ways to work against hate and keep it from spreading. The six-part series will begin airing on Sunday, at 8 pm on Discovery Channel and Discovery HD world, with additional episodes airing each subsequent Sunday. In addition, many of Discovery's networks around the world will begin airing the series in October.



SAM POLLARD

STEVEN SPIELBERG



## ZOE KRAVITZ CAST AS CATWOMAN IN THE BATMAN

**Z**oe Kravitz has been cast as Selina Kyle, a.k.a. Catwoman, in Matt Reeves' *The Batman*, an individual with knowledge of the project told *TheWrap*. Robert Pattinson will play the *Dark Knight* in the upcoming Warner Bros. film. Reeves and Mattson Tomlin wrote the screenplay, and the film is being produced by Reeves and Dylan Clark. Michael E. Uslan is executive producing. It is set to start filming in January in the U.K. Reeves took over as director after Ben Affleck stepped away from both that position and as the film's star, saying that he would be hanging up the cape for good. Reeves has since described the film as a "defining" and "very personal" story about the *Dark Knight*, rather than an origin story in the vein of Frank Miller's beloved *Year One* series. Jonah Hill was most recently reported to have been talks to play The Riddler, while Jeffrey Wright was in negotiations to star as Commissioner Gordon. Kravitz's most recent credits include *Mad Max: Fury Road*, *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*, *Rough Night*, *Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald*, *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* and *Big Little Lies*. She also voiced the role of Catwoman in *The Lego Batman Movie*. She will next star in *Viena and the Fantomes* and the TV series *High Fidelity*. Kravitz is represented by Paradigm, Untitled Entertainment and Edelstein and Laird & Sobel. *The Batman* will be released on June 25, 2021.



## RAJINIKANTH'S FASCINATION FOR UTTARAKHAND

**S**uperstar Rajinikanth has a deep bond with Uttarakhand which brings him to the hill state almost every year. He says he finds

in its atmosphere. The southern star, who is regarded nothing less than a demigod by his millions of followers, this time arrived in Rishikesh on Sunday night with his daughter Aishwarya. He stayed at the Dayanand Ashram and attended the 'Ganga aarti' in the evening. He also prayed at the 'samadhi' of his guru. Later, he did meditation for some time. The Dayanand Ashram is situated on the banks of Ganga River and is a unique centre for the study of Vedas and Sanskrit. It is unique in the sense that the lessons are conducted in English. There is a temple dedicated to Lord Shiva. The ashram was established during the sixties by Swami Dayanand Saraswati, a

well known scholar of Sanskrit and Vedas. An office bearer at the ashram, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said, "Rajinikanth is a very pious man and whenever he comes here, he stays in one of the rooms and eats the food offered in the ashram. He is always keen to know about the activities and programmes in the ashram." Rajinikanth went out for a stroll on Monday morning and then left with his daughter for Kedarnath and Badrinath in a helicopter. He offered prayers at both the temples where he was welcomed by the temple officials. The superstar told reporters that he had come to seek the blessings of the Lord and his Guru for his upcoming film *Darbar*. "We have completed the shooting of *Darbar* and I am here to pray for the success of the film," he said. Last year, he had visited the temples to pray for the success of his film *2.0* before its release. He has also visited the place before the release of *Robot*. Rajinikanth seems to be fascinated by the serenity of Uttarakhand. Last year, in July, he had stayed in Mussoorie for the shooting of a film. He had visited the Swamiram Himalayan University in Jollygrant and had offered tributes at the 'samadhi' of Swamiram. According to sources, Rajinikanth has been visiting Uttarakhand since the past one decade and the actor says that he finds peace in the atmosphere here.



## VAHBIZ DORABJEE SHEDS 13 KILOS FOR WEB SERIES

**A**ctress Vahbiz Dorabjee has lost 13 kilos for her role in a new web series. "I have always maintained a fit lifestyle and hence working out has been a core part of my daily life. Recently I was also trying out intermittent fasting. Yoga, regular walks, etc have also been a part of my daily routine, not only to lose weight rather to be healthy and fit," Vahbiz said. Last week, she teased her fans on Instagram about the project. "They say when you really with your heart manifest something, the entire universe conspires to make it happen (yes, as filmy as it sounds)! But yes, my eyes had seen a dream, one which I had been working towards and I can finally see myself inching towards it! #Excited #NewBeginnings #Announcement ComingSoon," she wrote.



## ALI FAZAL'S HOUSE ARREST GETS RELEASE DATE



**A**li Fazal and Shriya Pilgaonkar's *House Arrest* will release on Netflix on November 15. Also featuring Jim Sarbh and Barkha Singh, *House Arrest* brings to life the concept of JOMO (Joy Of Missing Out). *House Arrest* is jointly directed by Shashanka Ghosh and Samit Basu. The film is produced by Trilok Malhotra and KR Harish of India Stories Media & Entertainment Private Ltd. It is the story of a man — trapped in his own fears — who locks himself at home, only to find that while he can restrict his interaction with the world, he can't keep the world from entering his domain. Ali feels *House Arrest* has a fantastic script. "It's witty, very fresh and for me, selfishly, the character is very arched and layered. So it was a fun time on sets to play this part. Even though it is a comedy, it is complex and I got to go on set everyday and do something new and fresh even though it was all one place," he said at the time of the announcement.





A proposal to remake *Brochevarevaruraa* for the Hindi belt has come my way. I didn't feel like revisiting the story. Moreover, I am not comfortable with Hindi. I would be required to depend on someone for help, which I don't want to do

VIVEK ATHREYA  
WRITER-DIRECTOR

# I can't force myself to write for stars: Vivek Athreya

It's rare for a Tollywood filmmaker not to succumb to commercial tropes of storytelling and emerge out in flying colours by doing what he believes in. Vivek Athreya did that twice. If his maiden directorial *Mental Madhilo* was a reasonable success despite glowing reviews, the enormous success of *Brochevarevaruraa* proved that his films can be a big box-office draw as well. No wonder his next move is being keenly watched. The writer-director is taking it slow and is presently penning a thriller and a romantic comedy. "The thriller runs as a social drama and I'm currently in the first draft. As far as the rom-com is concerned, it was an idea that

The writer-director is going slow and is presently penning a thriller and a romantic comedy, finds NAGARAJ GOUD

I had for sometime and I'm developing it. I am working on both the scripts simultaneously and I don't know which one will go to sets first," he told *The Pioneer* in an exclusive interview. Shedding more light on the thriller-social drama, Vivek, who is in talks with premier production houses DVV Entertainment and Mythri Movie Makers for his next, added, "It would mostly fea-

ture an ensemble. I would ideally need eight to 10 popular faces to spearhead it, with four being top-league actresses. It would be mostly set in Hyderabad." His two films have been with Sree Vishnu and he is not averse to the idea of teaming up with stars. "Some stars approached me and expressed their interest to work with me after *Brochevarevaruraa*. But as of now

I don't have scripts for them. I can't force myself and write for them. It's not good for me or them. I believe the writing should take its organic course," he declared. Vivek, who has completed writing dialogues for good friend Pavan Sadineni's next with Bellamkonda Ganesh, also ruled out the possibility of directing the Hindi remake of *Brochevarevaruraa*. "A proposal to remake it for the Hindi belt has come my way. I didn't feel like revisiting the story and waste my time. So, I couldn't take it up. Moreover, I'm not comfortable with Hindi. I would be required to depend on someone for help, which I don't want to do," he concluded.



## CHIRU as a crusader against temple encroachments?

Launched last week, the filming of Megastar Chiranjeevi's next with Koratala Siva, kicks off next month. Except for the fact that it will be a signature Koratala social drama, the makers chose to keep a lid over the plotline. But that's up until now. Multiple reports that are doing rounds point out that the film will be set in the backdrop of Endowments Department and the step-motherly treatment that has been meted out to it over the years. It is said that Chiru will be seen as an employee of the department who is unhappy with the state of some temples and decides to take matters in his own hands. His part primarily targets encroachers and political heavyweights who in the film are shown to be involved in grabbing of the land that belongs to the department and some Hindu religious institutions. Also, the leasees are

**CHIRU WILL BE SEEN AS AN EMPLOYEE OF THE ENDOWMENTS DEPARTMENT WHO TARGETS ENCROACHMENTS ON TEMPLE LANDS**

taking the temple lands at throw-away prices and in turn are giving them on sub-lease at market prices, resulting in huge loss to the department. The film will deal with these issues, it is widely speculated. For the untitled film — a joint venture between Konidela Production Company and Matinee Entertainments — Koratala has gathered a strong team. Thiru is the cameraman while Sreekar Prasad will be the editor. Suresh Selvarajan, whose work in *Bharat Ane Nenu* received rave reviews, will be the production designer.

## KK RADHAMOHAN TO DISTRIBUTE KHAIDI



Producer K.K. Radhamohan, who has burnt his fingers by distributing *NGK* and *Kalki* earlier, has acquired the Telugu dubbing rights of Karthi-starrer *Khaidi*. Despite the dismal show of his last, *Dev*, Karthi enjoys a decent market in Telugu. Radhamohan will be releasing the film for Diwali, wherein it will lock horns with Tamil superstar Vijay-starrer *Whistle*.

*Khaidi*, helmed by Lokesh Kanagaraj of *Maanagaram* fame, is an action-thriller and will see Karthi playing Dilli, an escaped life-convict on the run and his journey with a cop who is on also on the run from a deadly smuggling gang. Dilli also should also meet his daughter whom he has never seen in life. This segment forms the emotional crux. Radhamohan said, "Khaidi is different from the regular cinema. It's a concept-driven film devoid of heroine or songs. It would be a pulsating affair and the teaser has received phenomenal response." Shot completely during nights and peppered with intense chase sequences on the highway, the film sees Anjathay Narain, George, and Dheena in pivotal characters. C.S. Sam is the composer.

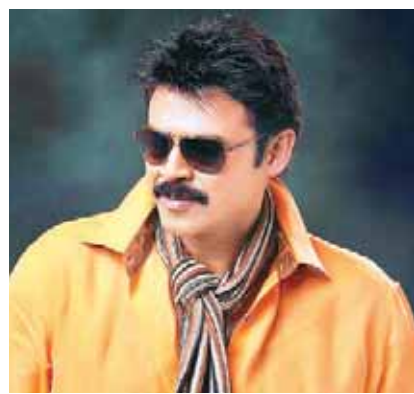


## Mebaz launches wedding campaign with KIARA, VIJAY

Indian wear brand, Mebaz, from the house of Manyavar, announced the launch of its latest wedding campaign with Bollywood's glam-diva Kiara Advani and Tollywood's heartthrob Vijay Deverakonda. Launched through two television commercial films, the duo will be seen donning Mebaz's latest wedding-collection across print, outdoor, digital campaigns. Through the move, the brand hopes to widen its appeal amongst the millennial populace of the country. Following the outstanding success of the Telugu movie *Arjun Reddy* and its Bollywood remake *Kabir Singh*, Vijay Deverakonda and Kiara Advani have won over the box office and millions of hearts. Recognised as the next generation actors, the duo with their impeccable charm and beauty have won everyone's hearts across the industry and social media. The stunning and graceful Kiara Advani, also known for her style and acting prowess has become a household name; while Vijay, with his smouldering looks and brooding charm has won over the audience repeatedly. Together, the duo shares a dynamic, youthful energy that resonates with the brand's ethos and its key message.



**FOLLOWING THE OUTSTANDING SUCCESS OF THE TELUGU MOVIE ARJUN REDDY AND ITS BOLLYWOOD REMAKE KABIR SINGH, VIJAY DEVERAKONDA AND KIARA ADVANI HAVE WON OVER THE BOX OFFICE AND MILLIONS OF HEARTS. RECOGNISED AS THE NEXT GENERATION ACTORS, THE DUO WITH THEIR IMPECCABLE CHARM AND BEAUTY HAVE TAKEN THE INDUSTRY BY STORM.**



## Venky is a punter

That Victory Venkatesh is playing the lead in Tharun Bhascker's next set in the backdrop of Malakpet race club is old news. The latest piece of information trickling in indicates that the veteran actor will be seen as a punter who bets on races. "Venky is always on the lookout for interesting characterisations and role in Tharun's film was one. His queries on character front were convincingly answered by Tharun. The actor was especially pleased with his role's graph. The fact that it is giving him chance to speak Deccani was an added bonus. He was in splits going through some dialogues written by Tharun and is eager to reel them in front of the cameras," says a source. The untitled film is presently in pre-production and Tharun will take it in front of the cameras once he completes promoting his acting gig *Meeku Maathrame Cheptha*, where he played a lead for the first time. Suresh Productions will be bankrolling the venture.



Misbah disappointed with attitude of some players



PTI ■ KARACHI

Head coach-cum-chief selector Misbah-ul-Haq is extremely disappointed with the attitude of some Pakistani players, who shy away from proper training, lack discipline and don't adhere to professional standards.

Pakistan recently suffered a whitewash against Sri Lanka in the three-game T20I series at home and Misbah remains very disappointed at the way the top-ranked side capitulated to Sri Lanka in front of home crowds.

"What has disturbed Misbah the most in his first assignment as head coach and the chief selector is the reluctance of some players to follow directions of the management and do proper training to keep high fitness standards," one source said.

"He is unhappy that some players are just too relaxed and take training lightly and are not working on improving their cricket discipline. He has also not been encouraged by the attitude of captain, Sarfaraz Ahmed whom he feels shies away from taking responsibility when the chips are down."

Another source said that Misbah was surprised by the behaviour of three senior players — Wahab Riaz, Imad Wasim, and Haris Sohail.

"Several times he felt they were making excuses to shy away from training and proper nets. He got the feeling they had some sort of excuse ready to go easy on their training," the source said.

"Batsman, Haris Sohail has developed a painful habit of making excuses for having some niggling problem or pain when asked to push himself in training."

"Another problem which confronts Misbah is that most of the players don't appear to have the cricket discipline to follow and execute plans on the field which are discussed in the dressing room."

The source said at one stage Misbah even felt that the decision of former head coach Mickey Arthur to keep left-arm pacer Wahab Riaz out of the team was understandable.

The long-serving former Pakistan captain is also not pleased that some players are also not displaying the required professional standards.

"Two players bluntly informed their team's head coaches that they would reach for the National T20 Championship matches in Faisalabad on the morning of the games. When Misbah came to know about this he told the head coaches they should be more firm with the players and ensure they joined their provincial team a day before the matches," one source said.

Misbah is also surprised that Arthur and the ex-support staff didn't pay enough attention to developing proper batsmen in all formats and didn't look beyond Babar Azam.

"It is not a very happy situation now and one can expect Misbah to take some hard decisions as chief selector while selecting the T20 and Test squads for the coming tour of Australia," he said.

Zahid Mahmood, a leg-spinner who in the past has been ignored by the selectors and coaches, is now under the consideration of Misbah who is not satisfied with the form of current team leggies, Yasir Shah and Shadab Khan.

Similarly, Misbah is also on the lookout for some new pace bowlers and youngster Naseem Shah is under his scanner for the Australian tour.

The source said it will also be interesting to see whether Misbah supports Sarfaraz Ahmed to continue as a Test captain when the board meets to decide on the captains for the Australian tour.

## No politics behind my selection as BCCI chief: Ganguly

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Even as Board of Control for Cricket in India president designate Sourav Ganguly returned to Kolkata amid a grand welcome the former Cricket India captain said there was no politics to be read into his getting nominated as the boss of Indian cricket.

Soon after landing at the NSI Airport the cricketing south-paw said, "there was no political pressure on me; neither is there any political deal," behind his getting the prized post. When asked as to whether he saw a shinning political future ahead of him particularly after the 2021 Bengal Assembly elections, he remained non-committal saying "there was no talk with anyone on my political future."

Incidentally hours before being tipped off to be the first cricketer to become a BCCI president Ganguly had a brief meeting with Home Minister Amit Shah which many critic saw as a prelude to his becoming the Board president.

On whether there was any offer from any political bench for



him he said "there is nothing wrong if any politician wants good people to join politics. There is nothing wrong if Mr Amit Shah or Mamata Didi want good people to join their parties."

On his future chemistry with BCCI secretary designate Jay Shah he said "Jay and I have been very good friends."

Both of us are young and both of us have experience and both of us want to do something for the Indian cricket. So it will be a great inning for both of us. There will not be lack of any

effort ... whether I will be successful or not I can't say but I can say that I will work to the best of my capability for the cause of Indian cricket."

Dwelling on his priorities as the BCCI chief he said "my first priority is the whole lot of first class cricketers. It is this pool of cricketers from where the top payers emerge. But the remaining lot of first class cricketers gets very little for them. So it will be my first priority to do something for them. We will work collectively and change their lives."

'Want to reverse losing trend in knock-out games of ICC events'

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Former India captain Sourav Ganguly, who is set to be the new BCCI president, wants the Virat Kohli-led national team to reverse the trend of losing the knock-out games in ICC events.

"India are a good team. I know they have not won a big tournament. But they play well in big tournaments except the semi-finals and the final. Hopefully, Virat can change it around. He is a champion player," Ganguly told reporters here on Tuesday.

India have not won an ICC event since the 2013 Champions Trophy. The team finished runner-up in the 2017 Champions Trophy final after losing to Pakistan.

In the World Cup earlier this year, India were one of the favourites to win the title but ended up losing the semifinal to New Zealand.

## Smriti loses top spot

PTI ■ DUBAI

Injured India opener Smriti Mandhana has lost her number one status after being toppled by New Zealand's Amy Satterthwaite in the batting chart of the latest ICC ODI rankings.

Mandhana, who has 755 points, slipped to the number two spot after she missed India's recently concluded ODI series against South Africa due to injury.

The 23-year-old suffered a fracture in her right toe after being struck by a ball during a net session before the start of the ODI series against South Africa which India won 3-0.

Among others batters, skipper Mithali Raj moved down to the seventh spot while her Harmanpreet Kaur rose in the rankings to the occupy the 17th place.



Smriti Mandhana in a file picture PTI

In the bowlers' rankings, Jhulan Goswami, Shikha Pandey and Poonam Yadav moved down to be placed sixth, eighth and ninth respectively.

Among the all-rounders, Deepti Sharma has moved down to the third place while Shikha Pandey broke into the top 10.

## Jaffer slams 'unfit' Vadodara pitches for Hazare trophy

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Domestic cricket stalwart and former India opener Wasim Jaffer on Tuesday slammed the "unfit" pitches being used in Vadodara for the Vijay Hazare Trophy.

Jaffer took to *Twitter* to vent out his frustration.

"Absolutely unfit pitches to play in 'List A' matches in Vadodara," he wrote.

Later Jaffer, who is the highest-run scorer in Ranji Trophy, said that the pitch at the Motibaug ground was "close to being dangerous".

"Yes, specially the pitch at Motibaug is close to being dangerous. Two-three players were hit by a ball and nobody is scoring more than 150-160 runs."

"Our tournament was (suppose) to start on 24th (September) but then there was rain for two

weeks. So, I don't know why the Baroda Cricket Association first of all took up (the job) to host Vijay Hazare," Jaffer said.

All the Group B matches have been played in Baroda and Jaffer's team Vidarbha won only two of their nine matches, losing four. Three of their games had no result. They are languishing at the 8th spot in the Elite Group B standings and 13th in the combined Group A and B standings.

"And the matches we are playing on, if you look at the scores, you will get to know what kind of wickets we are playing on. In Bengaluru, Jaipur and Dehradun they are getting good pitches to play (on), so its just feels very sad," Jaffer said.

A senior member of the Vidarbha's coaching staff believes that the match-referee should submit a detailed report about the condition of pitches to the BCCI.

## Ireland, Scotland attempt to deny minnows 'dream'

AFP ■ DUBAI

Ireland captain Gary Wilson wants his side to ensure they finish "right at the top again" in the upcoming 2020 T20 World Cup qualifying tournament, but Nigeria and Jersey are among those chasing a "dream" appearance on the global stage.

Scotland are the highest-ranked team in the competition, with 14 nations vying for six places in the opening round of next year's World T20 in Australia, where they would join Bangladesh and Sri Lanka in attempting to reach the 'Super 12s'.

Ireland are the only Test team having to go through qualifying, which starts on Friday in the United Arab Emirates, and will be expected to book a sixth straight appearance in the tournament.

"We are here to compete at the world stage," said Irish skipper Wilson. "We have a great record in the Middle East and the boys are looking forward to a great tournament and ensure we finish right at the top again."

The winners of each group of seven will qualify automatically, with the four remaining spots to be decided in playoffs.

Scotland, 11th in the world T20 rankings, claimed their first-ever win at a global ICC tournament in the 2016 edition by beating Hong Kong, but will be looking to put the pain of agonisingly missing out on the 50-over World Cup earlier this year behind them.

They had two chances to secure a place during last year's qualifying in Zimbabwe, but lost to Ireland before rain cut short their tense run chase against two-time world champions the West Indies.



"We know every team is dangerous in this competition," said Scotland captain Kyle Coetzer. "It is vitally important not only for us as Scotland but for every team here."

JERSEY CHASING 'DREAM'

The Netherlands, who reached the 'Super 10' round in 2014, Oman, Hong Kong and hosts the UAE will all be among the favourites to qualify.

But the likes of Nigeria, Jersey and Singapore insist they are not going to just make up the numbers as they bid to give cricket a boost in their countries.

There was already a shock in the Asian regional qualifiers, with Singapore reaching this stage ahead of Nepal, the world's 13th-ranked outfit.

Island team Jersey are playing in their second consecutive qualifier, having fallen short four years ago despite surprise victories over Hong Kong and Nepal.

"For Jersey, it would probably be the biggest thing that has happened in our sporting history," admitted captain Charles Perchard.

"It's a dream of ours to potentially play in a World Cup next year... "We're a small island

and in a lot of sports we do punch above our weight, especially in cricket and qualification would be massive for our country."

Nigeria have reached the final stage of qualifying for the first time as cricket continues to grow in the African country, with their youth side booking a spot at next year's Under-19 World Cup in South Africa.

"It would be a great thing to be at the World Cup. It would be a great history for Nigeria," said their skipper Ademola Onikoyi, after his team took the place of Zimbabwe following their suspension by the ICC.

Singapore, led by Amjad Mahboob, are also debutants at the qualifying event, while Bermuda will be looking to repeat the heroics of their side who famously reached the 2007 World Cup.

The qualifiers get underway on Friday, with Scotland facing Singapore in the opening Group A game, while Ireland take on Hong Kong and the UAE play Oman in Group B.

## Delhi eye maiden PKL final place

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With the VIVO Pro Kabaddi League Season Seven entering its penultimate phase, the semi-finals, all eyes are on the star athletes who have pushed their teams towards the coveted title. Defending champions Bengaluru Bulls have rode on Pawan Sehrawat's raiding brilliance all season but they will be up against League toppers Dabang Delhi KC, who have with them another brilliant talent in raider Naveen Kumar. In the second semi-final, Bengal Warriors will face an in-form U Mumba side, who outclassed a strong Haryana Steelers unit in the Eliminators.

BATTLE OF RAIDERS

For most parts of this season, Pawan Sehrawat has looked the best Kabaddi player in the country, and he has carried that form into the crucial, knockout stages of the competition. His 20-point performance was vital in Bulls' comeback victory against UP Yoddha in the Eliminators and the defending champions will once again be reliant on the High-Flyer for the raid points against Delhi, especially with Rohit Kumar still looking troubled by his back injury. Pawan has 328 points from 23 matches this season, including 17 Super 10s, but the raider will be facing a familiar foe in Delhi's left corner Ravinder Pahar. Interestingly, the 'Hawk' has a better head-to-head history against Pawan in duels (8-7), and will take belief from Nitesh Kumar's performances for UP against the raider from the same position.

At the other end, Naveen Kumar will be keen to launch the wrecking ball onto a leaky Bulls' defence. Barring Mahender Singh, no defender looked convincing in their game against UP, and in Naveen they will be facing a raider of another class. The 19-year-old, a produce of the



Future Kabaddi Heroes (FKH) programme, has 19 consecutive Super 10s this season (268 points from 21 matches), and will be a force to reckon with. With both the raiding departments looking strong, the match will most likely be won by the defence.

"WELL-BALANCED" SIDES

Bengal Warriors, arguably, have been the most complete side in Season 7, with their defence and attack firing hand in hand. But they will be facing a U Mumba, often called a defence-reliant team, who have discovered a new dimension through two young raiders — Abhishek Singh and Arjun Deswal. The duo scored 32 points for the Mumbai side in their Eliminator round, and with U Mumba also peaking at the right time, the second semi-final will be a tactical warfare.

Baldev Singh (averaging 2.59 tackles per match) and Rinku Narwal have been in good form for the Warriors and they will be keen to make life difficult for Mumbai's young raiders. Maninder Singh's injury concerns will be a concern for the Bengal team though, especially with Mumbai corners of Fazel Atrachali (top scoring



defender in season seven with 81 points so far) and Sandeep Narwal in red-hot form. But in K Prapanjan and Mohammad Nabibakhsh, the Warriors have a great raiding unit to support Maninder.

The eliminator rounds were testimony to the fact that there can be no clear favourites in a Kabaddi match. Expect nothing short of fireworks as the most fiercely competed season of VIVO PKL enters the final stages.

The players had a take on the semi-final match:

Talking about the semi-finals Pawan Hi-Flyer Sehrawat, Captain of Bengaluru Bulls, said "It was a great match yesterday, I

have never played such a high quality match. During my school days I played a match which ended in a draw and after that I played a tied game in the knockout stage yesterday and it was a great experience to be part of it. I had lost hope of winning but then our coach motivated me and we had Rohit bhai's support also that kept me going. There were so many exciting moments in the match that in the end turned it turned in our favour. It was a complete team effort. Our match with Dabang Delhi KC is going to be challenging, they are a good and balanced team with good quality defenders and raiders and like the previous one it is going to be a close

call. A blockbuster of a Raid Fest for sure!"

Talking about the semi-finals Fazel Sultan Atrachali, Captain of U Mumba, said "The last match with Haryana was very difficult as Haryana had played us very recently and they knew our gameplan. They had strategized accordingly to ensure the best result. However, it was a very important time for me because in the last season, we qualified to the playoffs and then couldn't go further so I wanted to not repeat the same mistake. Yesterday's game was really good because we won such a tough match so the team is very motivated and confident. We have strategized focusing on defence and when we have a controlled defence we perform really well. Even Bengal Warriors has a good defence but I think we can overcome that. We need to concentrate on team work and not depend on any one player during the match, everyone has to support each other and play as a unit."

Talking about the semi-finals Joginder Narwal, Captain of Dabang Delhi, said "The season has been tough and the competition during the league stage is high. The team worked hard and emerged as table toppers, we wish to continue the momentum and give our best during the semi-finals. We have always taken one game at a time and will do so even for our match against Bengaluru Bulls. Our aim is to pick the cup this year, and we are working towards it."

Talking about the semi-finals Nabibakhsh, Bengal Warriors, said "U Mumba put up a good game, they were on point with their defence and offence. We are preparing for the semi-finals and practicing rigorously to make sure we keep the pressure on our opponent from the beginning. The match against U Mumba will be a neck-to-neck battle and we will give our best to make sure we emerge victorious and