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WHO IS
AN INDIAN?

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‘GEMS, JEWELLERY EXPORTS MAY
DECLINE 5-10% THIS YEAR’

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EYE
OPENER

HYDERABAD, FRIDAY OCTOBER 18, 2019; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer

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MANCHU MANOJ
CONFIRMS
DIVORCE WITH
PRANATHI

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First AI varsity launched in Abu Dhabi

DUBAI: The UAE has set up an artificial intelligence university, claimed to be the first in the world, in Abu Dhabi. The Mohamed bin Zayed University of Artificial Intelligence (MBZUAI) was inaugurated and it offers courses for undergraduate students.

It is also accepting applications for its first masters and PhD programmes this month. All admitted students will be given full scholarship plus benefits such as a monthly allowance and accommodation. "AI is already changing the world, but we can achieve so much more if we allow the limitless imagination of the human mind to fully explore it. The university will bring the discipline of AI into the forefront, molding and empowering creative pioneers," said Sultan Ahmed Al Jaber, UAE Minister of State, who has been appointed chair of the MBZUAI Board of Trustees and is spearheading the university's establishment.

Pak: Bid by India to divert water would be 'aggression'

ISLAMABAD: Pakistan said on Thursday that it has "exclusive rights" over three Western rivers and any attempt by India to divert the flow of these rivers would be considered an "act of aggression". Foreign Office spokesperson Mohammad Faisal made the remarks during his weekly media briefing here in response to a question regarding Prime Minister Narendra Modi's recent remarks to stop water flowing to Pakistan.

Addressing an election rally in Haryana early this week, Modi reportedly said that his government would stop the water flowing to Pakistan. Faisal said that Pakistan had "exclusive rights" over the waters of three Western rivers under the Indus Water Treaty.

Bihar man jumps inside lion enclosure in Delhi zoo

NEW DELHI: A 28-year-old man jumped inside the enclosure of a lion in the Delhi zoo on Thursday, but escaped unhurt as the alert zoo staff acted quickly and tranquillised the animal, official sources said. The incident happened at beat number 17 at around 12.30 pm. The situation is under control now, zoo sources said. Rehan Khan, a native of Bihar's East Champaran district, was in an inebriated state, the sources said, adding that the man was rescued by the zoo staff and handed over to the police.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:

Ashwini & Krishna Paksha

Panchangam

Tithi : Chaturthi: 07:28 am

Nakshatram: Rohini: 05:00 pm

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

Rahukalam: 10:34 am – 12:01 pm

Yamagandam: 02:55 pm – 04:22 pm

Varjyam: 08:37 am– 10:18 am

10:45 pm – 12:24 am

Gulika: 07:40 am – 19:07 am

Good Time: (to start any important work)

Amritakalam: 01:39 pm – 03:19 pm

Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:37 am – 12:24 pm

HYDERABAD

WEATHER

Forecast: Isolated Thunderstorms

Temp: 29/22

Humidity: 94%

Sunrise: 06:09

Sunset: 05:52

Current Weather Conditions

Updated October 17, 2019 5:00 PM

Guv Tamilisai steps in to end TSRTC impasse!

● KCR feels the heat of Raj Bhavan for the first time

L VENKAT RAM REDDY
■ HYDERABAD

Ostensibly in a bid to break the impasse with regard to the 13-day-old RTC strike, Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan on Thursday intervened personally and called up Transport Minister Puvvada Ajay to know the steps taken by the State government to end the stir. She reportedly asked the Minister to come over to Raj Bhavan and brief her about the RTC strike.

Interestingly, the Minister was with Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao at a review of the RTC strike at Pragathi Bhavan when the Governor's call landed. The minister, who could not visit Raj Bhavan due to the review, deputied transport secretary Sunil Sharma to brief the Governor on the status of the RTC strike and the measures being taken by the state gov-



The Governor's intervention assumes significance in the backdrop of the state government and RTC unions remaining adamant on their respective stance with no solution in sight for the two-week-long deadlock in talks

ernment to end the strike and restore RTC bus services.

The Governor's intervention assumes significance in the backdrop of the state government and RTC unions remaining adamant on their respective stance with no solution in sight for the two-week-long deadlock

in talks. The RTC strike has crippled public transportation across the state since October 5th, causing severe hardships to common people. Even the High Court had sought an affidavit from the RTC management on the steps taken to mitigate hardships to people.

Guv decries Govt's failure to utilize RUSA funds

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan expressed anger over the failure of the state government in utilizing Centre's RUSA funds for the development of universities in state. Governor held a review meeting at Raj Bhavan on Thursday with officials of RUSA.

She directed the vice-chancellors of seven universities, that were selected for RUSA funding, to take steps immediately to utilize RUSA funds without any lapse by March 2020.

When VCs brought to her notice about the failure of the state government in releasing its matching grant to avail RUSA funds released by the Centre, due to which there is a risk of Centre's RUSA funds getting lapsed by March 2020, she expressed anger and directed VCs to take steps to secure matching grant from the state government and fill vacant faculty positions in universities.

Noticeably, this is the first time in Telangana State that a Governor has deemed it appropriate to personally intervene in an issue being handled by the state government. The previous Governor, ESL Narasimhan, never intervened in affairs concerning governance.

Continued on Page 2

Present state govt's arguments strongly in HC today, AG told

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao has directed the advocate-general (AG) to effectively present arguments on behalf of the state government in the High Court during hearing of the case relating to TSRTC strike on Friday.

The Chief Minister held a review on Thursday, along with Transport Minister Puvvada Ajay and senior officials from transport and law departments, in view of the hearing of TSRTC strike case in the High Court on Friday.

Officials are understood to have informed KCR that the High Court had only made certain 'observations' on RTC strike two days ago and that it did not issue any directions to the government.

The High Court had asked

Officials are understood to have informed KCR that the High Court had only made certain 'observations' on RTC strike two days ago and that it did not issue any directions to the government



government and RTC unions to resume talks to end strike and to appoint managing director for TSRTC;

hence, they were in nature of 'observations' and not 'directions' by the High Court, the officials reasoned. In this backdrop, KCR asked the officials to gather information so as to help the AG present strong arguments over why the state government had to adopt a tough stance on RTC strike.

Continued on Page 2



The venue of Chief Minister K Chandrasaker Rao's public meeting in Huzurnagar decked up on Thursday

KCR cancels H'nagar rally due to bad weather

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The crucial public meeting of TRS president and Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao at Huzurnagar on Thursday was cancelled ostensibly due to 'adverse weather conditions'.

KCR was scheduled to address a huge rally in the evening as part of the party's campaigning for the October 21st by-election to the Huzurnagar Assembly seat, which was vacated by TPCC chief N Uttam Kumar Reddy upon his election to the Lok Sabha. Leaders of TRS had made elaborate arrangements for the meeting, since they were tasked to mobilise at least one lakh people. However, an official release from the Chief Minister's Office on Thursday said KCR's meeting at Huzurnagar has been cancelled.

The office release was

accompanied by a copy of a letter written by Director of Aviation V N Bharat Reddy to the CMO, stating that it was not advisable for the Chief Minister to fly to Huzurnagar due to adverse weather conditions.

The letter said there would be heavy rain and thunderstorms in Huzurnagar and surrounding areas, accompanied by lightning, squally winds, and a possible cloudburst. "There will be reduced flight visibility and weather conditions are detrimental to flight safety. Hence, it is not advisable for the CM to fly to Huzurnagar," Bharat said in the letter.

The CMO said the weather conditions were adverse and heavy rain, accompanied by lightning and storms, were forecast in Huzurnagar. It also said the Aviation Department had not given clearance for operating the helicopter in which the Chief Minister was scheduled to fly to Huzurnagar from the Begumpet airport.

Draw of lots for liquor shops today

● TS earns Rs 968 cr through application fees

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The draw of lots to select licencees for setting up liquor shops in Telangana will be held on Friday across the state. The draws will be held at all the district headquarters in the presence of respective district collectors.

The State government has invited applications to set up 2,216 liquor shops for a two year period — from November 1, 2019 to October 31, 2021. The deadline to submit applications ended on Thursday. Each applicant was required to furnish a non-refundable deposit of Rs 2 lakh towards application fees. The State government earned a whopping Rs 968 crore by way of application fees as 48,301 applications were submitted for the 2,216 liquor shops.

Digital hundis helping temples go cashless

NAVEENA GHANATE
■ HYDERABAD

With digital transactions increasing at most of the religious places, digital hundis have become the need of the hour.

The Tirumala Tirupati Devasthanams (TTD) recently announced that cashless transactions were picking up in Tirumala, be it for accommodation or other purchases. In this context, Chief Secretary Dr S K Joshi on Thursday tweeted that it was important to make hundis cashless. Seeking suggestions, Dr.Joshi said: "Certain media reports have stated that cashless transactions are on the rise in the religious places. Now the challenge is to make the Hundis cashless while protecting the spirit of secret donations (gupt danam). It is important to achieve the goal. Suggestions are welcome."



Devotees in Telangana have been at the forefront in doing digital transactions at temples and some villages have already adopted the cashless path to hundis.

For instance, in Mukhra, a village of just 650 people in Adilabad district, during the Dussehra festival in 2017, villagers donated money by scanning QR codes placed at the temple hundi. Even priests are of the view that donations

Devotees in Telangana have been at the forefront in doing digital transactions at temples and some villages have already adopted the cashless path to hundis

in any form are good - cash or cashless.

M Pavan Kumar Sharma, convener of Telangana Brahmana Association, said, "Donations can be given in any form and in anyway. People put money in hundi for punyam or dravya shuddhi or other reasons. How the donation is done shouldn't be of concern".

Continued on Page 2

50K cab drivers in TS to go on indefinite strike from Saturday

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana State Taxi and Drivers Associations' JAC on Thursday announced that 50,000 Ola, Uber and IT companies' cab drivers will launch an indefinite strike on October 19. The cabbies have called the strike in support of their list of six demands given on August 8th to the Transport

Ministry as well as Uber, Ola and IT sector companies.

The drivers are seeking better living and work conditions by pegging the minimum fare at Rs 22 per kilometer. They claim that they are being exploited by cab aggregators as they are being paid a maximum Rs 14 per km even during periods involving surge pricing.

Continued on Page 2



Growth of wealth of ultra rich slows down in 2018

● Number of ultra rich falls to 2.56 lakh in 2018 from 2.63 lakh: Report



PNS ■ NEW DELHI

High networth individuals have seen their wealth growth slowing down in 2018 to 9.62 per cent from 13.45 per cent a year ago, while their number has de-grown, says a report.

High networth individuals are those with an investible surplus of over \$1 million, and their number has crimped to 2.56 lakh in 2018 from 2.63 lakh in 2017, according to the data collated by Karvy Wealth Management.

According to the Karvy report, these 2.63 lakh ultra rich are worth Rs 430 lakh crore in 2018, up from Rs 392 lakh crore in 2017.

The report comes even as

more eye brows are being raised repeatedly over the rising inequality in the country, where the rich are getting richer and the poor, becoming poorer and at a faster clip.

As much as Rs 262 lakh crore of the wealth possessed by the high networth individuals are in the form of financial assets, while the rest are parked in physical assets, it said, adding the ratio has remained broadly the same at 60:40.

Among financial assets, direct equity exposure is the largest at Rs 52 lakh crore, but growth in this segment plunged to 6.39 percent from a high 30.32 percent in 2017. In line with broader trends,

growth in fixed deposits and bonds rose 8.85 percent to Rs 45 lakh crore in 2018 from 4.86 percent growth in the previous year. Insurance is the third biggest component among financial assets at Rs 36 lakh crore, while bank deposits are worth Rs 34 lakh crore.

Much to the chagrin of the policymakers, gold is the most preferred asset class among physical assets for the rich as well, with nearly Rs 80 lakh crore of their wealth parked in the yellow metal.

In line with market trends, growth in value of real estate holdings, second biggest asset class worth Rs 74 lakh crore, slipped to 7.13 percent from 10.35 percent in 2017.

Need to rewrite history from India's point of view: Shah

PNS ■ VARANASI

The First War of Independence in 1857 would have been regarded as a revolt had it not been for Veer Savarkar, said Home Minister Amit Shah said here on Thursday amid a row over the BJP suggesting that the Hindutva icon be given the Bharat Ratna.

Stressing the need to rewrite history from India's point of view, Shah credited Savarkar for calling the 1857 rebellion as India's first independence struggle.

Shah said had it not been for him, the rebellion of 1857 would have become history and India would have seen it from the British point of view.

His remarks came two days after the Maharashtra BJP unit said in its election manifesto that the party would ask the Centre to confer the Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian award, on Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, popularly known as Veer Savarkar.

"Had it not been Veer Savarkar, the 1857 'kranti' (revolt) would not have become history and we would have been seeing it from the British point of view," the



home minister said. "It was Savarkar who gave the name First War of Independence to the 1857 'kranti', otherwise, our children would have known it as a revolt," he said, inaugurating a two-day international seminar here on 'G u p t v a n s h a k - V e e r : Skand Gupta Vikramaditya' at Banaras Hindu University (BHU).

A large number of historians, scholars and political thinkers from India and abroad attended the seminar.

Referring to eminent historians in the audience and on the dais, he said, "It is my request to all that there is a need to rewrite the Indian history from India's point of view but without blaming anyone."

Telangana set for record Kharif crop harvest: Errabelli

PNS ■ WARANGAL

Panchayath Raj and Rural Development Minister Errabelli Dayakar Rao on Thursday exhorted the officials and people's representatives in the district to work together for attaining the remunerative prices for the Cotton produce for the farmers.

The Minister along with the former Deputy Chief Minister Kadiam Srihari and MLAs Aroori Ramesh, Challa Dharma Reddy and Peddi sudarshan Reddy participated in an awareness programme at Ambedkar Bhavan.

Collectors Haritha and Prashanth Jeevan Patil, officials along with ZPTCs, MPPs, Society chair persons, and representatives of Rythu Samanvaya Samithi participated in the programme.

The meeting laid emphasis on the paddy and cotton produce for the Kharif season of 2019-20 in the district and Kadiam Srihari detailed how the produce may surpass the expected targets during the current year in the districts.

Since a bumper season of monsoons was evident, the districts have transplanted paddy and cotton in extensive areas, he said and added that the cultivation extent has surpassed the limits and the pro-

Minister Errabelli Dayakar Rao exhorted the concerned officials in the district to work for remunerative prices for cotton produced by the farmers

duce is likely to surpass the existing targets, he said. "The government would take necessary steps to provide remunerative prices for the farmers," the Minister said. On the cotton purchases, the CCI was advised to take necessary steps and since Warangal erstwhile district tops the production graphs in the entire state, the CCI should take the responsibility of accomplishing the purchases, he said. The Minister advised the officials to appoint special officers for CCI pichade points and IKP centres and for monitoring these purchases he suggested the district administration to allocate supervising authorities at the mandal level.



Finance Minister T Harish Rao inspects paddy after inaugurating a procurement centre in Gajwel on Thursday

Harish inaugurates procurement centres

PNS ■ SIDDIPET

Siddipet MLA and Finance Minister T Harish Rao on Thursday inaugurated paddy and cotton procurement centres at Gajwel Market Yard along with MP Kotta Prabhakar Reddy, MLC Farooq Hussain and others.

Promising purchase of commodities at MSP, he asked farmers to dry their produce before bringing them to market yard under the present dispensation, which he called as pro-farmer.

He said paddy will be purchased at Rs 1,835 a quintal, while cotton is procured at Rs 5,550 a quintal. He asked

The government will purchase paddy at Rs 1,835 a quintal, while cotton will be purchased at Rs 5,550 a quintal

HARISH RAO
Finance Minister

farmers to make use of the facility. Groundnut seeds are being sold at a subsidised price of Rs 42 a kg. The government is making available five types of seeds, including paddy, maize and sun flower, on subsidy.

The government subsidy on the cost of seeds is 35 per cent. He put the MSP for maize at Rs 1,760

a quintal. If necessary, more procurement centers will be opened soon, he said. The capacity of godowns has increased from 3,000 tonnes to 50,000 tonnes in Gajwel constituency, soon after KCR became the CM, he said.

He distributed Kalyana Lakshmi and Shaadi Mubarak cheques worth Rs Rs 1 crore among the beneficiaries. In all, 850 cheques pertaining to Kalyana Lakshmi and Shadi Mubarak have been kept pending and these would be released in 4 or 5 days. He asked the Finance Department officials to not to keep Kalyana Lakshmi and Shaadi Mubarak cheques pending.



Minister Errabelli addresses the media in Warangal on Thursday

Guv Tamilisai steps in to end TSRTC...

Continued from Page 1

He titular head of state he remained aloof even when the entire municipal staff and sanitary workers across Telangana went on 12-day strike in 2015 demanding pay hike, leaving the entire state stinking as all streets and roads turned garbage dumpyards.

Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao and Governor Narasimhan displayed unusual bonhomie, right from June 2014 to September 2019, when ESL relinquished his post, following the appointment of Tamil Nadu BJP chief Tamilisai Soundararajan as Governor of Telangana.

In fact, KCR created a record of sorts in visiting the Raj Bhavan to meet Narasimhan. He used to visit ESL almost every week and in some cases even twice. Ever since Tamilisai took over as Governor, KCR has avoided the Raj Bhavan. KCR visited Raj Bhavan only once on September 9, and that too to attend the swearing-in-ceremony of Tamilisai as Governor in the morning and for the swearing-in ceremony of his cabinet ministers since he expanded his team the same day.

KCR never met Governor later, except on October 2, on the occasion of 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. KCR met Governor on October 2, when both of them offered floral tributes to Gandhi at Babu Ghat in Langar Houz on the outskirts of the city.

Grapevine in political circles has it that KCR was comfortable with Narasimhan as Governor who was a 'bureaucrat', but is unable to adjust with Tamilisai, who is a pucca political leader, having headed Tamil Nadu state wing BJP.

Moreover, she assumed charge at a time when the ruling TRS and BJP are engaged in a bitter political battle. Post Lok Sabha results in May, the BJP, having bagged four Lok Sabha seats and trounced KCR's daughter Kavitha in Nizamabad Lok Sabha seat, has been positioning itself as an alternative to TRS in the state.

With palpable support from central leaders, BJP state unit leaders have been sketching plans to dislodge TRS in the 2023 Assembly polls.

No wonder, Telangana BJP leaders are visiting Raj Bhavan frequently and lodging complaints against KCR and TRS government on several issues.

AG asked to argue well in HC on TSRTC strike

Continued from Page 1

J He asked officials to bring to the notice of the High Court how the State government had increased salaries for RTC staff by 67 per cent in 2015 and how the government infused Rs 3,000 crore funds to strengthen RTC.

KCR wanted the AG to let the court know why it was not possible to meet the demand of RTC unions for merger of TSRTC with state government.

He directed officials to inform the court about the efforts made by the state government to ensure operation of about 75 per cent of RTC buses despite RTC staff and the plans made to achieve 100 per cent bus services in another two days to mitigate the problem of commuters.

KCR wanted officials to let the court know that the government is ready for talks with RTC unions anytime, if they withdraw their strike and sit across the table for talks to resolve the matter amicably.



Cops launch unique awareness drive

PNS ■ MAHABUBNAGAR

As part of the martyr's memorial week, the Mahabubnagar police officials have launched a unique awareness programme here on Thursday. On the occasion, Yasani Venkateshwarlu, a magician, performed blindfold driving.

Addressing this programme, Superintendent of Police Rema Rajeshwari said the police were taking up a unique service task of providing security to the society as part of protecting the country's pride. The SP said the police were holding several service-oriented programmes as part of seven-day martyr's memorial week and on Thursday, the traffic police have organised

blindfold driving by a magician. "The police are successfully holding awareness programmes in guiding the people about achieving a peaceful atmosphere from the clutches of the anti-social and naxalite elements in the state," she said.

She detailed that how the police laid down their lives for the sake of society and how they were targeted by the extremists. The SP called upon the people and police forces to pay rich tributes to the martyrs. Stating that the society is being lent a supportive role by each and every individual, the SP said the police forces too were offering the service in the same fashion for protecting the interest of the society.

‘Focus on uplift of SCs’

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

]Minister for Welfare Koppula Eshwar has urged the officials of the Welfare Department to compile data on how many students benefited to what extent under state government's scheme for overseas education.

Reviewing the implementation of minority development and SC welfare departments' activities at his office here on Thursday, he said that the government wants students to achieve empowerment through education. He asked officials to take steps to improve employment opportunities of the unemployed by imparting training to them in various skills.

The Minister said that funds would be allotted to the state government's overseas education scheme so that it would benefit many more students. The Welfare Department gave guarantee to banks so that many drivers could obtain loans to purchase cars under the government's subsidy scheme, he said asking officials to prepare a plan to extend



Minister Koppula Eshwar and others at a review meeting on Thursday

Kopula Eshwar also directed officials to complete installation of bio-metric system of recording attendance in social welfare schools

similar loans to people of rural areas.

The officials were told to complete installation of bio-metric system of recording attendance in social welfare residential schools and hostels. The Minister said that his ministry would be arranging a

meeting with various industrial organisations to help SCs set up small-scale and medium-scale industries.

He asked the officials to ensure that there should be no complaints from eligible that the fruits development did not reach them.



Man, paramour commit suicide in Nalgonda

PNS ■ NALGONDA

A man along with his paramour committed suicide by consuming pesticide at Thalikal village of Narekal mandal in Nalgonda district on Thursday. The duo was identified as Karingu Saidulu (41) and Yakala Bhavani (30), both residents of Thatikal village. Saidulu was married and has two children, while Bhavani's husband died a few years ago. She was living alone as she didn't have any children.

According to Circle Inspector of Nakrekal PND Prasad, the two were into an illicit relationship for the last three years. When they went missing a year ago, police booked a missing case following a complaint lodged by their family members.

They were tracked down and handed over to their relatives subsequently. Heated arguments broke out between the relatives of Saidulu and Bhavani on the issue of their extra martial affair. Following this, the two committed suicide by consuming pesticide mixed with soft drink on the outskirts of the village. The villagers found their bodies on Thursday morning and informed the police. A case has been registered.

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana has taken several steps in coordination with the Maharashtra government to assist that State in the smooth conduct of the Maharashtra Assembly elections on October 21, Chief Secretary SK Joshi has said.

During a video conference with officials from the Election Commission of India in New Delhi, Joshi said particular attention was being paid to the four bordering districts of Gadchiroli, Nanded, Chandrapur and Yavatmal and the 14 check-posts on roads connecting Telangana and Maharashtra.

Joshi informed the ECI officials that a coordination meeting was already held with Maharashtra officials.

50K cab...

Continued from Page 1

JAC said that a tab should be kept on the number of cabs attached to aggregator marketplaces in order to guarantee minimum business to all drivers.

They also sought reinstatement of off-boarded drivers. Shaikh Salauddin, chairman of the Telangana State Taxi and Drivers' JAC (TSTD JAC), said that the taxi drivers would refrain from work and switch off their phones as a mark of their protest.

Digital hundis helping temples go cashless

Continued from Page 1

However, there is another view that feelings of divinity and peace at religious places will be lost if people use their phones at hundi which are typically placed at various spots.

Another priest called for removal of hundis and creation of Daily Puja Fund.

Chilkur Chief Priest C S Rangarajan said, "The whole concept of hundi is not part of our religion as there cannot be a transaction between God and devotee. At Chilkur, we follow the method of Daily Puja Fund, a corpus where people can make online donations, and it is digital to ensure

we can meet the needs of the temple. In fact, the Chilkur model of Daily Puja Fund for small temples was also accepted by the Supreme Court when my father presented the idea in 1996."

Chilkur doesn't have a hundi on its premises. He said, "Public sector banks can act as enablers by making 'Daily Puja Fund' financial instrument as per SC order. They can ease opening this account in the name of deities and ease devotees' donations to this fund with a provision that the principal can never be withdrawn. PSBs can give guaranteed interest to be provided every year to temple."

HYDERABAD BULLION RATES	
GOLD	
₹ 38,590 (10 gm)	
₹ 20	▲
SILVER	
₹ 45,100(1kg)	
₹ 200	▲
CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG	
Dressed/With Skin	₹138
Without Skin	₹157
Broiler at Farm	₹97
EGG RATES ₹/100	
HYDERABAD	370
VIJAYAWADA	416
VISAKHAPATNAM	415
RETAIL PRICE	₹4.06
(IN HYDERABAD)	

PNS ■ WARANGAL

Municipal Administration and Urban Development (MAUD) Principal Secretary Arvind Kumar on Thursday said the statues of Ganapathi Devudu, Rudram Devi and Pratharudrudu would be installed at the Gundam Cheruvu.

"We are trying to get funds from the State tourism department," he said, during a visit to Fort Warangal here. Accompanied by former deputy mayor Katte Saraiah, he also visited Keerthi thoranams, Swabhu Shambuni temple, Gundam cheruvu park, Kushmahal and other places. He said that the government was taking steps to place Fort

Warangal on the country's tourist map.

He stressed on the need to improve the amenities at the Fort Warangal as shootings of the movies and short films are taking place at the hillock near Gundam Cheruvu. When Katte Saraiah said that there was a need to acquire private lands as there are statues and idols located in the middle of some houses, he said that he would look into the matter. He said that steps would be taken to promote Fort Warangal at the international level to attract foreign tourists.

Later, he planted saplings along with Collector PJ Patil on the premises of the camp office of the GWMC commissioner.



MA & UD Principal Secretary Arvind Kumar and others during their visit to the Warangal Fort on Thursday

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CRIME CORNER

Woman dies, cause of death suspect

HYDERABAD: A 24-year-old woman was found dead under suspicious circumstances at her residence in NBT Nagar at in Banjara Hills Road 12 on Thursday. The deceased woman has been identified as P Geeta. Police who reached the spot said that she is suspected to have committed suicide. However Geeta's family alleged that harassment from her husband and in-laws forced her to end her life. The body was shifted to the Osmania General Hospital morgue for an autopsy to ascertain the cause of death.

TV9 CEO in police custody

HYDERABAD: Former TV9 CEO V Ravi Prakash was taken into custody by Cyberabad police on a prisoner transit warrant from Chanchalguda prison in connection with a pending case. Ravi Prakash is presently in judicial remand after the Banjara Hills police arrested him for illegally withdrawing Rs 18 crore of company funds in the name of bonus and ex-gratia. Meanwhile, police booked another case against Ravi Prakash under the relevant provisions of the IT Act for creating a fake ID in the name of Natarajan. According to sources, the police booked a case against Ravi Prakash under Section 406/66 of Information Technology Act, for allegedly creating a fake identity card in the name of Natarajan, working for I-Labs. Police picked up Ravi Prakash from Chanchalguda jail on PT warrant and produced him before a local court at Miyapur, which sent him to judicial remand. However sources said that Ravi Prakash was granted bail in the fake ID case but was still in judicial remand for the previous cases filed against him.

Banned foreign cigarettes seized

Hyderabad: Police raided a godown in Begum Bazaar and arrested its owner on charges of procuring banned foreign cigarettes. Cigarettes worth Rs 6 lakh were seized from him. The arrested person was Santosh Dave (46), owner of Mahalaxmi Marketing and a resident of Osman Shahi in Afzalgunj. According to the police, he used to procure foreign cigarettes -- which did not have the mandatory pictorial warnings and violated the guidelines of Cigarette and Other Tobacco Product Act -- from unknown sources in neighbouring states. The foreign cigarettes contain a very high content of tobacco dust which is hazardous to health. The accused was handed over to the Shah Inayat Gunj police for investigation.

BHEL staffer kills self, suicide note talks of abuse by DGM

Deceased Neha Chouksey's suicide note stated that she was harassed by male and female colleagues

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A 32-year-old woman, an accounts officer in BHEL, committed suicide by hanging herself at her residence in Miyapur on Thursday. The deceased woman has been identified as Neha Chouksey, a native of Madhya Pradesh, who was transferred from Bhopal to BHEL's unit in Ramachandrapuram in June this year.

According to the police, her husband Sunil found her hanging from the ceiling fan in their house in Bhanu township in Miyapur in the afternoon. Officials said a suicide note found at her residence stated that some officers in BHEL were harassing her. "Apart from naming a few senior level officers, she also said that her phone was hacked and she was being monitored. She wrote that an officer who had hacked her phone was black-mailing her with her personal



Neha Chouksey

details for favours," said a police official. The suicide note contained names of quite a few people in BHEL Ramachandrapuram as well as Bhopal. "She wrote that Kishore Kumar, a deputy general manager (DGM) had hacked her phone and was harassing her. She said that

According to the police, her husband Sunil found her hanging from the ceiling fan in their house in Bhanu township in Miyapur

Kishore had also hacked her husband's phone and had on many occasions planned and threatened to kill her," said an official from Miyapur police who is investigating the case. Mohanlal Soni, Sitharam Pentakota, Mahesh Kumar are a few other names of male employees in BHEL Ramachandrapuram who had harassed her. Obscene remarks made against her also figured in the letter. Apart from writing about harassment from male employees, Neha also wrote that

Neelima, Ruchita, Kalpana, Swathi and Neha working in BHEL Bhopal had mentally harassed her, police said. According to the suicide note, Neha had earlier complained to the Miyapur police about her phone being hacked. She said the Miyapur police directed her to file a complaint with the Cyber Crime Police in Cyberabad. After approaching the CCP, she said that she didn't get satisfactory response and was disappointed. However, police said that Neha, who had sought transfer to BHEL Ramachandrapuram from Bhopal had stated the same reasons earlier too. "She was paranoid about her phone being hacked and monitored, and had sought transfer from Bhopal on the same grounds," said the police official. A case has been registered under section 306 of the IPC (abetment to suicide) and the police are investigating the incident.

Int'l walk against slavery on Oct 19; 6,000 to take part

Event to be flagged off from YMCA in Secunderabad; to be held at 450+ locations in 50 countries worldwide

NAVEEN KUMAR ■ HYDERABAD

The DCP of West Zone, B Sumathi IPS, will flag off the world's largest event to raise awareness against human trafficking being held in Hyderabad for the first time on October 19.

The event will take place at 450 plus locations across 50 countries simultaneously. The Walk for Freedom, hosted by 'The Movement India', an NGO, is being held in India for the third year in a row. Over 6,000 participants from 10 Indian cities -- Hyderabad, Mumbai, Pune, Delhi, Kolkata, Shillong, Chennai, Kochi, Bengaluru and Panjim - have signed up to take part in the event. The event is a silent walk where participants pledge to help end human trafficking in their lifetime. Globally, the Walk is organized by A21, an international NGO in the fight against modern-day slavery. The walk in the city will start from and end at YMCA in Secunderabad, and travel via SD Road and Sangeet Lane.



DCP B Sumathi

In the lead up to the event, The Movement India has conducted over 40 awareness workshops about human trafficking reaching over 4,000 participants across India in the last 1.5 months. "The common public is extremely unaware of the magnitude of the issue. We want to spread awareness on the forms of trafficking - bonded labour, organ rackets and sexual exploitation. We want people to recognise indicators of trafficking. So these awareness programmes will help identify cases of trafficking in their daily life," said Biju Thampy, founder of The Movement

The silent walk, where participants pledge to help end human trafficking in their lifetime, is led by international NGO A21 which fights against modern-day slavery

India. "There are millions of slaves in the world-but there are billions of us who can bring change. Not all of us can do everything, but each of us can choose to do something," said Christine Caine, A21 founder. According to the International Labour Organisation (2016), 40.3 million are caught in various forms of modern-day slavery globally. Of these, right now, there are 8 million people trafficked in India for sex, labor, organs, forced marriages and domestic servitude, according to the Global Slavery Index 2018.

Man pushes wife to death from 3rd floor

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A 23-year-old woman was allegedly pushed down from the third floor of a building in Vanasthalipuram by her husband.

Seema, a native of Madhya Pradesh, succumbed during treatment on Thursday morning. According to the police, Seema got married to Dilip, 25, about 15 days ago in MP and the couple came to Hyderabad in search of a job. Following an argument on late Wednesday night, Dilip allegedly took her to the third floor at their apartment and beat her. He then pushed her down from there. She suffered serious injuries on the head, waist and legs. The area locals rushed and shifted her to a nearby clinic, where the doctors advised them to shift her to Osmania Hospital. She succumbed to injuries there later, said the police. Following a complaint filed by Seema's relative against Dilip, a case was booked under section 302 (murder) of the IPC and an investigation was taken up. Dilip is reportedly absconding.

Foreign shores calling: Over 2k students throng Edu Fest

About 75% of Indian students plan to do Bachelor's programmes abroad, finds study

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Institute of Management & Foreign Studies (IMFS) hosted its 7th annual Global Edu Fest in the city on Thursday. Over 2,000 students aspiring for foreign education attended the event, which saw 70 universities from eight countries -- US, UK, Australia, Canada, UAE, Singapore, Ireland and Germany -- interacting with students. The one-day event was inaugurated by Dr DN Rao, chairman of VNR Vigyan Jyothi Educational Trust, while Dileep Konatham, director of Digital Media of the Telangana govt and PVRK Murthy, chairman of Sri Gayatri Education Institutions were the 'Guests of Honour'. Representatives of the US Consulate and Education US were also present and conducted an informative session on various aspects for studying in the US along with the visa application process. KP Singh, founder of IMFS said that over the last few years, we have been witnessing an increase in the number of students preferring to go abroad to pursue undergraduate programmes. The reasons being multi-fold viz., rise in incomes of middle-class families, young global citizen work



Students collect course literature at the Edu Fest in the city on Thursday

force, easy availability of financial support through Institutional loans and increasing number of international schools in India, which offer education equal to international curriculum in addition to greater commitment levels and superior pedagogy. "However, with the availability of number of options there comes the confusion in taking the right decision. Every student needs to consider many factors while choosing a right university for their study. These factors include budget, future, jobs, languages known, etc. So, we as experts in the field are trying to guide them through this fest," Singh said. According to Pienews, a study portal which is widely

followed by international education professionals and universities, a survey conducted by heads of International Baccalaureate schools and academic coordinators and career counsellors at residential day-schools across the country reveals that more than 75% of students planning to study abroad are interested in bachelor's programmes. An interesting aspect of the study is that 90% of respondents preferred engineering course, while business commerce was mentioned by 87%, putting it before computer science and IT, listed by 80% of respondents. Humanities & arts and biology, biotechnology & life science were each listed by 50% of respondents.

Three-day spell of rain forecast in TS

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The cyclonic circulation continues to bring rain in the Telugu speaking states. Light to moderate rain or thunder showers are likely at some places in TS. However, IMD issued a heavy rainfall warning at isolated places in the districts of Mahabubabad, Badraddi Kothadugem, Nagar Kurnool, Suryapet, Khammam, Mahabubnagar, Wanaparthi, Nalgonda and Jogulamba Gadwal on Thursday. Thunder storm accompanied with lightning are likely at isolated places in TS. South-west monsoon though has completely withdrawn from the state. The city witnessed a drop in temperature on Wednesday due to the onset of the northeast monsoon south of peninsular India with the mercury plummeting to 25.6 degree Celsius, while on Thursday the temperature again rose to 30.0 degree Celsius. The IMD said, "A trough

runs from the above cyclonic circulation over Maldives to Telangana across Kerala, south interior Karnataka and Rayalseema, between 3.1 and 5.8 km above mean sea level. The trough in easterlies from southwest Bay of Bengal off south Tamil Nadu coast to west central Bay of Bengal has become less marked."Parts of Hyderabad witnessed heavy rainfall - areas such as Serilingampally, Santosh Nagar, Charminar and Malakpet received more than 20 mm rain. According to Telangana State Development and Planning Society weather forecast update, "The weather conditions over the state suggest light to moderate rain/thunder showers at a few places for next three days (October 17-20). Maximum temperatures are expected to be in the range of 31 degree Celsius to 33 degree Celsius, while the minimum in the range of 21 degree Celsius to 24 over the next three days."



14 of 127 held for ISIS links were from city

Terror outfit used internet to radicalise recruits: Security agencies

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

As many as 14 of the 127 persons with suspected ISIS links arrested from all over the country in recent years were from Hyderabad. According to reports, most of the 130-odd people arrested by security agencies in India for suspected ISIS links were inspired by the speeches of controversial Islamic preacher Zakir Naik, a top official of National Investigation Agency (NIA) Alok Mittal told a conference of anti-terror forces recently. The largest number of persons were arrested from Tamil Nadu, 33, Uttar Pradesh, 19 and Kerala, 17, Telangana 14, Maharashtra 12, Karnataka 8 and Delhi 7. The other states from where ISIS suspects have been arrested are Uttarakhand, West Bengal, Jammu and Kashmir, Rajasthan, Gujarat, Bihar and Madhya Pradesh. Sharing data at the NIA National Conference of chiefs of the Anti-Terrorism Squads (ATS) and Special Task Forces (STF), NIA Inspector General Alok Mittal said the internet is being systematically exploited by ISIS sympathisers for terrorist purposes. "The international terrorist organisation has exploited internet in a very organised way for its every terror-related activity like radicalisation,

training, recruitment, planning and execution," he said. IG Mittal said it was common in all the modules busted in Hyderabad, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh or Delhi that the leader of the local outfit was in contact with a "foreign handler" who channelised the module. Preacher Zakir Naik, the Mumbai-born founder of the controversial 'Peace TV', has been living in Malaysia since 2017. He has run into some trouble in Malaysia too which banned him from delivering public talks. But the Malaysian government has indicated that it was reluctant to deport him to India, and yet was open him to send him to any other country that was willing to take him. In his speech at the conference of counter-terror officials, NIA director YC Modi also outlined the emerging terror challenges before the country. He also noted that the Bangladesh-based terror outfit Jamaat-ul-Mujahideen Bangladesh (JMB) has expanded its footprints in Kerala, Karnataka and Maharashtra. JMB started activities in West Bengal in 2008, when two of its senior leaders crossed over to West Bengal to evade arrest and persecution in Bangladesh.

Rs 1 lakh penalty slapped on Paradise over hygiene

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The GHMC on Thursday levied a penalty of Rs 1 lakh on Paradise Food Court Private Limited's restaurant at Secunderabad for unhygienic conditions in the kitchen, vegetables found in rotten conditions in the premises and usage of single use plastic. On Wednesday, a customer lodged a complaint with GHMC regarding quality of the food following which a team of officials including food inspectors, veterinary and vigilance wings inspected the restaurant. "During our inspection, we



noticed unhygienic conditions in the kitchen and found rotten vegetables. Despise a ban on single use plastic, the management was found to be rampantly using the single use plastic," said GHMC food inspector Sudershan.

GHMC fines KLM Rs 3L, Café Bahar Rs 1L

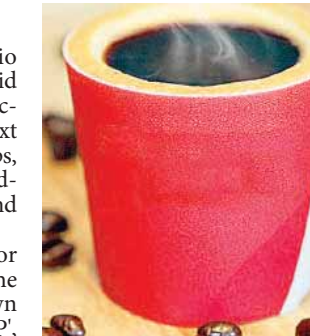
GHMC has slapped a fine of Rs 3 lakh on KLM shopping mall in Chandanagar for illegal video display. The mall however continues to play the videos on its façade. GHMC imposed the penalty for the third time again on Thursday. It also imposed a fine of Rs 1 lakh on hotel Cafe Bahar at Alekhya Towers on Sagar Ring Road. Officials inspected and noticed unhygienic conditions apart from non-segregation of waste and lack of trade license. In another instance, GHMC issued penalty of Rs 10,000 on pan shop owner and Rs 20,000 on Agarwal Agency in Fathenagar for littering.

City firm set to launch ‘edible cups’

Plans to set up unit to make eco-friendly alternative to plastic and paper cups

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

City-based Genome Labs Bio Private Limited on Thursday said it planned to set up a manufacturing plant in the city within next 10 months to produce edible cups, touted as an environment-friendly alternative to both plastic and paper cups. Company executive director Suresh Raju said they were in the process of setting up their own plant to manufacture 'EAT CUP', currently being imported, on a nine acre site in Shamirpet and have sought necessary permis-



sion from the government. EAT CUP was not only eco-friendly and biodegradable, but

also beneficial to diet, he claimed. EAT CUP is made from natural grain products and is completely edible, crunchy and delicious to taste. Rich in fibre, it is also a good dietary supplement... (you can) eat the cup after finishing the beverage, Raju told reporters announcing launch of the product. As of now EAT CUP was being imported through Europe-based manufacturing partner of Genomelabs, a manufacturer of nutrition, fitness, wellness and lifestyle products, he said. Raju said that once the government gave its approval, the unit

will be set up and start production in the next nine to ten months with a capacity of 10 lakh cups per day. EAT CUP was a step forward in reducing negative ecological impact and massive carbon footprint, he said adding it was suitable for all kinds of hot and cold beverages, soups, desserts and yoghurt and would not get soggy for up to 40 minutes. According to him, even the disposable paper cups were polyethylene-lined, and pose a risk to the environment as they are not biodegradable.

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA

Revenue (Land Acquisition) Department

Collector, Rangareddy District

NOTIFICATION

File No. G2/982/2018.

Gazette R.R. No. 80

(Land Acquisition Act 30/ 2013 & Amended Act 21/ 2017 Section 19(7))

Dated. 20-09-2019

Dated.20-09-2019

The notification issued under section 11(1) of Land Acquisition to an extent of Ac. 23-11½ gts. in Madgul Mandal, Aourpally Village for public purpose namely ormdation of Tail End Distributory D82 of Package-29 under MGKLIS Project through the Collector, Ranga Reddy District Preliminary Notification No. G2/ 982/ 2018, dated. 14.08.2018 and Gazette No. 127, dated. 16.08.2018.

The Preliminary Notification is issued for the area of Ac. 23-11½ gts. If the land acquisition work is not completed within (12) months from issue of Preliminary Notification as per land acquisition Act. 30/ 2013 (Amended Act 21/2017) Section 19(7), time period (duration) of Preliminary Notification may be extended for another (12) months. The following are the reasons for extension of duration:

1. The R.D.O & L.A.O, Ibrahimpatnam is busy with the General Election to the Lok Sabha (Buvanagiri Parliament Constituency) and commencing in the month of Feb. 2019 and completed in the month of June 2019 since the RDO was appointed and A.R.O. to the above Parliamentary Constituency. The RDO Ibrahimpatnam and his staff were busy on the above election work due to which further action could not be taken on time.

2. The large extent of patta land to an extent of Ac. 7461-37 gts., and Government land to an extent of Ac. 535-10 gts is involved under acquisition on various projects i.e., Hyderabad Green Pharmacy, Dindi Lift Irrigation Scheme, Expansion of Ramoji Film City, NPA, NIA etc., for which L.A. proceedings have to be initiated. Out of which, the land to an extent Ac. 2034- 34 gts., of PN proposals in Form-C U/ s 11 (1) were submitted to the District Collector, Ranga Reddy District and the same were approved and notified.

In view of the above said reasons, under section 19(7) of Land Acquisition Act the Collector, Ranga Reddy District Preliminary Notification No. G2/ 982/ 2018, dated. 14.08.2018 and Gazette No. 127, dated. 16.08.2018 duration is extended to another (12) months.

Sd/-

District Collector (FAC),

Ranga Reddy District.

DIPR Ro.No.916/LA/PP/Agency/2019-20



Mee Seva collecting excess user fee: Kishan

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Union Minister of State for Home Affairs G Kishan Reddy expressed ire on Mee Seva centres in the state for allegedly collecting excess and illegal charges from consumers.

Taking serious note of the widespread discrepancies and illegalities at Mee Seva centres, Kishan Reddy ordered Telangana Mee Seva Commissioner to crack down on the erring Mee Seva agents and submit an action taken report to Union Home Ministry.

Though Mee Seva Centres were brought in by the Telangana government to ensure transparency and speed in delivering various government services online, these citizen services delivery centres have been making news for several wrong reasons of late. Large number of complaints are being made by people, about the excessive delay in delivery of services and also collection of user charges illegally.

"It has been brought to the notice of Union Home Ministry that for Pattadar Passbook authentication, Mee Seva Centres are charging between Rs 50 to 100 for each passbook, though Telangana government has decided to deliver this service free of cost. Mee Seva Centres are collecting Rs 100 but giving receipt to people for zero amount. Union Minister G Kishan Reddy desires that the Commissioner of Mee Seva takes appropriate action on the agents collecting user charges illegally and presents an action taken report," stressed a letter sent to Telangana Mee Seva Commissioner from Union Home Ministry on Thursday.

No end in sight to RTC strike impasse

With no initiative from either TSRTC management or the govt for talks, over 48,000 employees continue their protests

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The indefinite strike by employees of Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC) entered 13th day on Thursday as no end appears in sight to the impasse despite High Court directions to both the government and employees to find a negotiated settlement. With no invitation from either TSRTC management or the government for the talks, over 48,000 employees were continuing the strike.

The striking employees staged protest in front of bus depots to prevent the buses from coming out but they were arrested by the police. Security has been further tightened at the depots and bus stations as TSRTC has stepped up efforts to restore normal operations with the help of temporary employees.

TSRTC officials said they were operating 75 per cent of bus services and would soon be restoring full operations to ensure that there is no inconvenience to people. Making it clear that there is no change in his stand, Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhara Rao told a meeting of officials late on Wednesday that there will be no talks with the striking employees.

He also ruled out taking back the employees who failed to report to duty before the expiry of the deadline. The meeting with Transport Minister P. Ajay and senior officials lasted for five hours. While unlike after the previous meetings, no statement was issued from the Chief Minister's Office (CMO), official sources said the chief minister ruled out any talks or compromise with the striking employees.

KCR, as the Chief Minister is popularly known, noted that the strike during festival time has caused a loss of Rs 150 crore to TSRTC, adding to its financial woes. Pointing out that his government provided Rs 3,300 crore to the transport utility in last five years, KCR said there was 67 per cent



Police arrest student union leaders during a protest in Hyderabad on Thursday

'CM post not permanent'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Convener of JAC of RTC workers Aswathama Reddy has alleged that his phone is being tapped. Speaking to media at the TMU office here on Thursday, he felt that intelligentsia keeping mum on RTC strike does not augur well for society. He, therefore, urged Ministers Etela Rajender, T Harish Rao and Jagadish Reddy to break their silence.

Reiterating the JAC's willingness to participate in negotiations with the government, he and the other JAC leaders would explain the government the feasibility of merger of the RTC with the government, provided the government invites the



JAC leaders for talks.

In an indirect reference to Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao, he said that dictatorial tendencies would not do in Telangana state, which is the result of sacrifices by many. The JAC leader reminded the ruling party that the CM post is not permanent. He was afraid of a constitutional deadlock surfacing in the state if the strike remained unresolved.

jump in the salaries of the employees.

KCR asked officials to go ahead with recruitment of temporary drivers and also hire more private buses. Meanwhile, striking employees in Karimnagar tried to lay siege to the residence of state minister Gangula Kamalakar to protest what they called his provocative statements on the strike. Police arrested the protesters.

Joint Action Committee

(JAC) of striking employees has called for 'dhoom dhaam' or protests with the display of folk arts across the state on Thursday. Student bodies will also take out rallies in support of the employees. A rally is planned from Osmania University later in the day. The JAC is also going ahead with its plans for Telangana shutdown on Saturday. Opposition parties and several trade unions have declared support to the shutdown.

Solve issues or we will also strike, TNGO, TGO warn TRS govt

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Non-Gazetted Officers (TNGO) and Telangana Gazetted Officers (TGO) leaders have said that there is no word like 'Self Dismiss' and made it clear that the state government employees too will go on strike if the government failed to solve the demands before the time given to them. Hoping that the state government will solve their problems, the TNGO leaders also made it clear that they will participate in the RTC's proposed state bandh to be held on October 19.

TNGO president Karam Ravinder Reddy, TGO president Mamatha met the Chief Secretary SK Joshi on Thursday and submitted a memorandum on interim relief (IR). Later speaking to the media at Secretariat, Ravinder Reddy urged the RTC employees not to lose

Extending support, the TNGO, TGO leaders also made it clear that they will participate in the RTC's proposed state bandh on October 19

confidence. The state government employees are extending their support to the RTC strike.

"We explained about the ongoing RTC strike to CS. The High Court too directed the state government to solve the RTC issue. We gave the memorandum with 17 demands. The revenue employees are also facing lot of pressure. The government has to bring Telangana employees work-

ing with Andhra Pradesh state immediately to Telangana. The government has to increase the retirement age of employees besides solving pension issue. Chief Secretary responded in positive manner. We are hoping that the problems of all employees will be solved by this month end. We will participate in the RTC proposed state bandh on October 19. We also urged the government to solve the problems before given time. If not, we are also ready to go on strike. There is no word like self dismiss. We didn't become part of the RTC discussions held with government," he said.

Mamatha said that they requested the CS to solve the RTC employees issue immediately. Several departments including revenue are facing severe pressure. The government has to solve the problems of the employees immediately.

Maoists extend support for Oct 19 bandh

PNS ■ KARIMNAGAR

The official spokesperson of CPI Maoists, Jagan on Thursday called upon the people to support the bandh call given by the striking RTC workers on October 19.

In a statement, he exhorted the RTC workers to continue their stir until they succeed in the withdrawal of Privatisation proposal of the RTC.

Terming RTC workers were fighting in a democratic manner for their demands, the Maoist leader called upon the people to lend a supportive role to the fighters in achieving the long pending demands. The statement came down heavily on the state government and the TRS leadership for its anti-workers stand and criticised the approaches adopted by the government to weaken the spirit of the working class.

Left parties' leaders on fast in support of stir

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Leaders of the Left parties and people's organisations observed a day-long fast here on Thursday in support of the strike by employees of the Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC), which entered its 13th day. Several leaders and activists of Communist Party of India (CPI), Communist Party of India-Marxist (CPI-M), other Left parties and people's organisations participated in the mass hunger strike to show solidarity with the striking employees.

CPI-state Secretary Chada Venkat Reddy, CPI-M state Secretary Tammineni Veerabhadram and other lead-



ers paid tributes to two employees, who committed suicide earlier this week to protest the government's decision to sack 48,000 striking employees.

Professor Nageshwar, eminent academician Chukka Ramaiah, TSRTC Joint Action

Committee leader Ashwathama Reddy also addressed the participants.

The speakers blamed the government for the TSRTC running into huge losses. Ashwathama Reddy pointed out that the government is collecting Rs 300 crore as tax on

diesel every year. He demanded that the state government waive the tax on diesel as done in Tamil Nadu. They said that while private buses are allowed to operate on profit-making routes, the TSRTC buses are run on loss-making routes.

Professor Nageshwar said the strike by employees was not for their salaries but for protection of the TSRTC. He alleged that the government is carrying out a false propaganda to blame employees for the TSRTC's losses. Meanwhile, police arrested scores of students at Osmania University when they were trying to take out a rally to Pragathi Bhavan, the official residence of the Chief Minister.

Huzurnagar result will change TS politics: Uttam

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) president and Nalgonda MP N Uttam Kumar Reddy said that the victory of Congress party in Huzurnagar by-elections, to be held on October 21, would decide the future of politics in Telangana State.

Addressing a press conference along with Telangana Jana Samithi president Prof M Kodandaram, Congress MLA T Jeevan Reddy, former Minister Damodara Reddy and other leaders, at Huzurnagar on Thursday, Uttam said that the victory of Congress candidate Padmavathi was essential not only for the people of Huzurnagar constituency, but for the entire State.

He said that people's verdict in Congress party's favour would send a strong message to Chief Minister that his arrogance and dictatorial style of functioning was no longer



TPCC chief Uttam Kumar Reddy at a rally in Huzurnagar on Thursday

appreciated by people.

He said defeat in Huzurnagar might force TRS Government to focus on fulfillment of electoral promises and inculcate a fear that it would face similar rejection in all other constituencies in the State. He said that the results of Huzurnagar by-elections would play a major role in

restoration of democracy in the State and pressurise the government to act in a responsible and accountable manner.

Uttam said it would be highly unfortunate for the people if TRS wins the by-polls. He warned that TRS leaders would turn Huzurnagar constituency into a den of mafia activities if they win the by-elections.

TS to develop crop colonies

PNS ■ SANGAREDDY

Telangana would utilise Big Data in agriculture to create crop colonies across the State. Jayesh Ranjan, Principal Secretary, Industries, Commerce and Information and Technology, said.

Stating that the concept of crop colonies was a process that was under progress in the youngest State in India, Jayesh Ranjan said the government will work closely with International Crop Research Centre for Semi-arid Tropics (Icrisat) and other stakeholders to utilise Big Data in agriculture to bring precision in agriculture activities in Telangana.

Addressing delegates from across the world at the inaugural function of a three-day convention on Big data in Agriculture-2019 at the Icrisat campus, he said the State government believes that Big Data tools will certainly enhance the yield and incomes of farmers.

Even nature is against KCR, says Sravan

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

All India Congress Committee (AICC) national spokesperson Dr Dasoju Sravan expressed happiness over the cancellation of TRS public meeting, which was to be addressed by Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao, in Huzurnagar on Thursday due to heavy rains.

Addressing a press conference in Huzurnagar, Sravan said even nature has turned against Chief Minister and prevented him from boarding a helicopter to reach Huzurnagar. "While the rough weather in Hyderabad forced KCR to abort helicopter ride, for the first time during the campaign, it rained heavily at the public meeting venue leading to its cancellation. This was nothing short of a God's miracle. The Almighty wanted to prevent people of Huzurnagar from listening the speech of a habitual liar. These are clear signs that even God and his nature were against KCR and TRS Government," he said.

Sravan said if there was a



AICC spokesperson D Sravan addresses the press at Huzurnagar on Thursday

public meeting, then KCR would have spoken a bundle of lies consisting of false claims and hollow promises. Therefore, God saved the people by sending heavy rains both in Hyderabad and Huzurnagar, he said. "KCR is facing the curse of RTC employees, jobless youth and other sections of the society whom he betrayed. He did not show any sympathy or concern towards anyone and did utter

injustice with everyone in a brutal and dictatorial manner. Therefore, God prevented his entry into Huzurnagar to save the people from further manipulation," he said adding that the way nature rejected KCR, TRS would face similar rejection by people on October 21 when they would vote in favour of Congress candidate Uttam Padmavathi.

The AICC Spokesperson strongly condemned the Chief

4 KCR is facing the curse of RTC employees, jobless youth and other sections of the society whom he betrayed. He didn't show any sympathy towards anyone

DR DASOJU SRAVAN
AICC national spokesperson

Minister for not obeying the orders of High Court on RTC strike. He said KCR has reportedly refused to initiate talks with the RTC employees or process their September salaries on the grounds that High Court had not given any written orders.

He said that the victory of Congress party in Huzurnagar by-elections was essential and in the interest of people of Telangana. "If TRS candidate Saidi Reddy wins, he will be just another 'Kaurava in Dhuryodhana Sabha' and one among many slaves of KCR. In TRS party, even ministers have no access to the Chief Minister and MLAs have no authority to raise their voice," he said.

HUZURNAGAR BY-POLL

Revanth, Vijayashanthi to wrap up campaign

K VENKATESHWARLU
■ HYDERABAD

TPCC working president and Malkajigiri MP A Revanth Reddy and TPCC Campaign Committee chairperson Vijayashanthi are all set to give a finishing touch to the Huzurnagar by-elections campaign by participating in the campaign on last two days - on October 18 and 19.

According to sources, both the leaders would participate in campaign for two days and hold public meetings in all seven mandals of the constituency. However, Vijayashanthi's participation is not yet confirmed as she is busy with her Mahesh starrer Telugu film 'Sarileru Neekevuru'.

According to sources, she is interested in participating in



campaign at least on the final day of the campaign i.e. on October 19 as her film producer is not accepting her to allow in participating in the campaign. On the other hand, the TPCC leaders were trying to get permission from the Election Commission on Thursday for the sake of her participation in election campaign by submitting a requisition letter to the EC.



The senior leaders are hoping that she will come to Huzurnagar at least on final day. Vijayashanthi failed to lift the phone when this reporter contacted her.

Already, TPCC general secretary and Revanth Reddy's programme coordinator Manavatha Roy released the road map couple of days ago at Huzurnagar. Revanth Reddy

will participate in road shows and public meetings in all seven mandals-Huzurnagar, Neredcherla, Garidepally, Mattapally, Mellachervu, Chinthalapalem, Palakaveedu in his two day tour in Huzurnagar constituency.

The Congress leaders earlier thought that Revanth Reddy, who created a controversy by proposing Chamala Kiran Kumar Reddy's name for Huzurnagar by-poll, may not join the campaign. However, Revanth Reddy's announcement that he would participate in the campaign will put an end to all the rumours of rift within the leaders.

"No doubt Revanth Reddy's campaign will work as a catalyst to the winning prospects of Congress candidate in these by-elections. People are eager-

ly waiting for his speeches in Huzurnagar constituency", said Manavatha Roy.

The party is keeping high hopes on Vijayashanthi's participation in campaign. The party leaders are thinking that her campaign may help the party in a great manner as she will be a crowd puller as an actor-turned-politician, TPCC working president Jetty Kusuma Kumar, who is busy participating in campaign in Mellachervu mandal, said.

Interestingly, both the leaders are firebrands and makes sharp criticism against TRS and Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao. Already, party senior leaders Jana Reddy, Komatireddy Venkat Reddy, Bhatti Vikramarka, D Sridhar Babu, Seethakka and several others are participating in campaign rigorously.



Industries Minister KT Rama Rao on Thursday expressed displeasure over the tardy progress in reviving the Ballarpur Industries Limited (BILT) at Kamalapur in Warangal district.

He spoke his mind to BILT Chief Operating Officer Nehar Agarwal, Chief General Manager Hariharan when they called on the Industries Minister here on Thursday to apprise him of the progress.

The Minister said that the progress was tardy in spite of the government extending various concessions to it for its revival in the interest of the workers. He found fault with the style of functioning of the company. The government is firm on protecting the interests of the workers and livelihood.

The Minister reviewed the agreement the company

reached with the workers on payment of arrears. The company had agreed to give

Rs 10,000 to each of the workers towards Diwali festival advance.

The BILT management told the Minister that the company's consultants submitted a report to banks to get more and more loans. As part of the revival of the firm, IT network working work is going on, they said exuding confidence of the company going on stream by August next.

The Minister cautioned the BILT management that the deadline given to the company for revival already expired. If it failed to resume commercial operations by August next year, the government will have to open the doors for new management cancelling incentives offered to the existing management.

Erection of machinery should commence immediately, he directed the BILT representatives. He asked the Industries Secretary Jayesh Ranjan to take an undertaking from the company that the revival would be done within the revised deadline and supervise the progress from time to time.

The COO assured the Minister to complete the works within the deadline and attributed missing the deadline earlier to late commencement of the revival works.

SHORT READS

INX Media: Delhi court reserves order on ED plea for PC custody

NEW DELHI: A Delhi court Thursday reserved order on the plea of Enforcement Directorate seeking 14-day custodial interrogation of former finance minister P Chidambaram in the INX Media money laundering case. Special judge Ajay Kumar Kuhar is scheduled to pronounce the order shortly. The probe agency has sought 14-day custodial interrogation of the 74-year old senior Congress leader. The court had on Wednesday issued production warrant against him in the INX Media money laundering case lodged by Enforcement Directorate.

BJP disqualifies eight leaders for 'anti-party activities' in J-K

JAMMU: The BJP's Jammu and Kashmir unit on Thursday disqualified eight party leaders for filing their nominations as Independents against the official candidates for the Block Development Council (BDC) elections, scheduled to be held on October 24, a party spokesperson said. Meanwhile, the state Bharatiya Janata Yuva Morcha (BJYM) also discharged its senior leader Aqib Mir from his present party post of state secretary due to "breach of party discipline", he said. "Taking strong note of the filing of nominations as Independents by party leaders against the official candidates of the BJP for the BDC elections, the state BJP has disqualified them for indulging in anti-party activities," the spokesperson said.

JK admin orders abolition of legislative council

Jammu, Oct 17 (PTI) Ahead of the bifurcation of Jammu and Kashmir into two union territories later this month, the 62-year-old state legislative council came to an end with the state administration issuing orders for its abolition and asking its 116-member staff to report to the general department. The order was issued on Wednesday night, less than a fortnight before the state is split into two union territories -- Ladakh and Jammu and Kashmir -- on the midnight of October 31. Jammu and Kashmir will be a union territory with a state assembly.

27 yrs on, cops solve murder case only to find accused dead

THANE: Thane police in Maharashtra have cracked a 27-year-old case of killing of a sub-inspector, only to find that the accused died seven years ago, an official said on Thursday. On July 23, 1992, sub-inspector Mahendra Singh Patil, then attached to Mahatma Fule Chowk police station in Kalyan town, was stabbed to death by the accused, Iqbal alias Nanhe Khan, during a confrontation, crime branch's senior inspector Nitin Thakre said. After the killing, the accused, who was also wanted in connection with several robberies in the area, absconded and eluded the police for nearly three decades, he said.

HARYANA ASSEMBLY POLLS

Randeep eyeing hat-trick from Kaithal

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The All India Congress Committee (AICC) communication in-charge, Randeep Singh Surjewala, is eyeing a hat-trick from his stronghold of Kaithal in the October 21 Haryana assembly election.

A total of 18 candidates are in the fray from Kaithal, but it would be a direct contest between the Congress and BJP nominees.

The BJP has pitted former MLA Lila Ram Gujjar against Surjewala.

Lila Ram won as an INLD candidate in the 2000 election. Madan (BSP), Anil Kumar (INLD), Ramphal Malik (JJP), Shyam Lal (LSP), Jasvir (Sarvhit Party) are the other notable candidates.

Kaithal has 2.03 lakh voters -- 1.08 lakh males and 95,000 females.

‘Why talk about bringing back Article 370 now?’

PNS ■ NASHIK

NCP president Sharad Pawar on Thursday questioned Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "doob maro" jibe directed at the Opposition in connection with scrapping of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir.

Addressing a poll rally in Niphad here in North Maharashtra, Pawar asked Modi why he was daring Opposition leaders to bring back Article 370 of the Constitution after it was nullified by Parliament in August.

Pawar also hit out at Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman for saying that public sector banks had the "worst phase" under the combination of former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and RBI Governor Raghuram Rajan.

The Maratha strongman was a senior member of the



Sharad Pawar

Manmohan Singh-led cabinet.

Modi had on Wednesday slammed Opposition leaders, seeking a link between the scrapping of Article 370 and the Maharashtra Assembly polls, and told them to go down (doob maro) for criticising the nullification of the controversial provision that gave special status to Jammu and Kashmir.

Referring to the comment, Pawar said, "Parliament abrogated Article 370. Modi sahib took the initiative. We do not oppose that. Some people kept forth their views on the issue, but they were labelled by some as anti-national. They become anti-nationals?"

"How can they (Opposition) say that Jammu and Kashmir has nothing to do with Maharashtra? They should be ashamed of such thoughts. Don't they have any shame? Doob maro," the PM had said, using the two-word phrase in Hindi.

Referring to the comment, Pawar said, "Parliament abrogated Article 370. Modi sahib took the initiative. We do not oppose that. Some people kept forth their views on the issue, but they were labelled by some

as anti-national. They become anti-nationals?"

"The prime minister yesterday said doob maro. He dares us to bring Article 370 back. It was decided to scrap Article 370, Parliament scrapped it and now why are you now talking about bringing it back?" he questioned.

The former Union minister further said that there were several issues concerning the people, yet BJP leaders were consistently talking about defanging of Article 370.

Cong backed scrapping of A 370, but not BJP's high-handed way

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Congress does not need a certificate of patriotism from anyone, former prime minister Manmohan Singh said on Thursday, pointing out that it voted in favour of the abrogation of Article 370, but opposed the high-handed way in which it was done.

The economist-turned-politician also said that agencies such as the Enforcement Directorate (ED) should not be used to settle "political scores".

Singh's comments came at a time when prime minister Narendra Modi and the BJP have been attacking Congress on Article 370 during the campaign for the Maharashtra Assembly polls, while NCP leaders including Sharad Pawar and Praful Patel are being investigated by the ED in various cases.

Addressing a press conference here, Singh said the Congress opposes the "high-handedness" with which Article 370 of the Constitution -- which gave a special status to Jammu and Kashmir -- was



Manmohan Singh

introduced in Parliament.

Earning goodwill of the people of Jammu & Kashmir was necessary before such a move, the former prime minister said.

"Congress voted in favour of the move (the abrogation) in Parliament, not against it. Congress feels that Article 370 is a temporary measure, but if a change is to be brought, it has to be with the goodwill of the people of J&K," he said.

The ED, under the NDA regime, has got more powers than ever, and should not be used for political vendetta against leaders of "different

hues", Singh said.

"Our hope is these powers will be used not to settle political scores," he said, expressing confidence that the government will do justice to Praful Patel.

Asked about the BJP's poll promise to seek Bharat Ratna for V D Savarkar, who was an accused in the Mahatma Gandhi assassination case but was acquitted, Singh said the Congress only opposes Savarkar's Hindutva ideology.

Referring to the Hindu Mahasabha leader with a reverential "Savarkar-ji", Singh said former Congress prime minister, late Indira Gandhi had issued a postal stamp in Savarkar's memory.

"(But) we are not in favour of the Hindutva ideology that Savarkar-ji patronised and stood for," Singh said.

Singh also hit out against the NDA government's Citizenship Amendment Bill, calling it a divisive move that discriminates against the Muslims by facilitating Indian citizenship for persons of all faiths except Muslims.

‘Amarinder playing religious card’

PNS ■ PHAGWARA

Punjab BJP president Shwait Malik on Thursday accused Chief Minister Amarinder Singh of playing religious and divisive cards to vitiate the atmosphere in the state and divert people's attention from burning issues.

The Congress government in the state has failed on every front and Singh has not fulfilled even a single promise, Malik claimed as he predicted a landslide victory for the BJP-SAD combine in the bypolls to all the four Assembly seats, that will "prove to be a Waterloo for Amarinder Singh".

The Rajya Sabha MP also alleged that Singh's "weak policy" led to resurgence of militancy in Punjab.

Addressing a press conference here, Malik said, "The fact is that militancy is growing in the state. The chief minister wants to create fear psychosis among the people of the state in order to grind his political axe and derive political mileage."

Anand pens inspirational book for navigating life

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Chess legend Viswanathan Anand has authored an inspirational book where he looks back on his experience to share lessons on how to navigate life.

In "Mind Master: Winning Lessons from a Champion's Life" (as told to journalist Susan Ninan), Anand revisits his greatest games and worst losses, his unique experiences of playing against the best minds, and the methods he employs to prepare for wins, cope with disappointments and, simply, stay in the game.

The book, published by Hachette India, is releasing on December 11.

Currently playing in the Isle of Man International Chess Tournament, India's first grandmaster and five-time world champion said this book



Viswanathan Anand

has been an interesting journey.

"I have memories of the major events in my career and life, but when you put them down on paper, you suddenly have to organise your thoughts and are forced to think through them in detail. It allowed me to rediscover many interesting stories and incidents," he said.

"Above all, it made me realise that during my greatest

"I have memories of the major events in my career and life, but when you put them down on paper, you suddenly have to organise your thoughts and are forced to think through them in detail. It allowed me to rediscover many interesting stories and incidents," he said.

accomplishments failure was never far away, and in the lowest moments there were always things that lifted me up. Rather than just making this about my story, I've tried to distil in this book some of the lessons I learnt, the strategies that helped me perform better and tackle life as it happened," he added.

‘PM’s constituency must be cleanest’

PNS ■ VARANASI (UP)

Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath has asked the officials concerned to initiate a campaign to ensure that Prime Minister Narendra Modi's parliamentary constituency Varanasi is the cleanest in the country.

Modi had won the seat in the Lok Sabha elections held earlier this year by a huge margin of 4.79 lakh votes. He had not only retained the seat, but also saw his victory margin increase by nearly 1 lakh votes as compared to the 2014 general elections.

The chief minister held a review meeting of the development work and law and order situation in the state here on Wednesday night and instructed the officials to make "Kashi number 1 in the country" in terms of cleanliness.

According to an official spokesperson, he also asked the officials to launch special cleanliness drives in villages as well as urban areas before the festival of Diwali.

Roads, parks and vacant plots of land should be included in the campaign. In view of Chhath Puja, start a special campaign to clean the ghats of the Ganga, the chief minister said. Do something special so that Kashi remains illuminated



Yogi Adityanath

The chief minister held a review meeting of the development work and law and order situation in the state here on Wednesday night and instructed the officials to make "Kashi number 1 in the country" in terms of cleanliness

from Diwali till Dev Diwali, Adityanath said as he directed the PWD to make the roads free of potholes by October 30.

The government is committed towards the makeover of Kashi. Prime Minister Modi had laid the foundation stone of many projects in February 2019 out of which 13 have been completed and the remaining 25 will be completed in this financial year, he said.

Non-councillors can be chiefs of ULBs in Raj now

PNS ■ JAIPUR

Any person who is not a councillor can now become the chairperson of the urban local bodies in Rajasthan.

A gazetted notification in the regard was issued by the state government on Wednesday.

The notification amending the Rajasthan Municipalities Rules, 2019, was issued after the state cabinet in its meeting on Monday decided to hold indirect elections, reversing its earlier decision of holding direct elections to the post.

The elections to the urban local bodies in the state are due later this year.

As per the new rule, a person shall be eligible for being chosen as the chairperson if he is qualified under the provisions of the Act for election as a member of a municipality. The name of the candidate for the post of the mayor/chairperson can be proposed by a political party and they can be elected by councillors.

The first direct election to the post was held in 2009 when the Congress was in power.

Battle for Devi Lal's legacy in Haryana

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In the battle for Devi Lal's legacy, the young Dushyant Chautala seems to have trumped his uncle in Haryana.

The Dushyant Chautala-led JJP has managed to replace INLD, which is headed by his uncle Abhay Chautala, as the third force in the Haryana assembly elections with his party putting up a decent fight in many seats, reducing the Indian National Lok Dal (INLD) to the fringes of state politics which it once dominated.

In almost every seat where INLD, which was founded by former deputy prime minister



Devi Lal

Devi Lal, enjoyed influence, JJP has emerged as the inheritor of his legacy and has core support among voters.

Following a rift within the

Chautala family, INLD suffered a vertical split with former Hissar MP Dushyant Chautala floating his own party Jananayak Janata Party (JJP).

The name, incidentally draws from the popular image of Devi Lal, great grandfather of Dushyant, as Jananayak.

Presenting him as Devi Lal's true inheritor, Dushyant in his speeches talks about him and his model of politics but refrains from mentioning about his grandfather Om Prakash Chautala, who backed his uncle Abhay in battle of legacies. But at the same time doesn't attack them also in his rallies.

Patna cuts sorry figure before Netherlands king and queen

PNS ■ NEW DELHI/PATNA

The centuries-old Patna Collectorate, endowed with high ceilings, huge doors and hanging skylights, is one of the last surviving signatures of Dutch architecture in the Bihar capital whose fate currently hangs in the balance.

Patna, a historic city with over 2,500 years of uninterrupted civilisation, has a deep connection with the Netherlands going as far back as the 17th century, and the ongoing visit of the royal Dutch couple to India has made many local residents rue the "poor upkeep" of the "shared architectural heritage" of the two countries.

Octogenarian J K Lall, a veteran architect, and convenor of INTACH Patna Chapter said Netherlands King Willem-Alexander and Queen Maxima are on their first state visit to India, but how many even know about Patna's Dutch connection.

"The king and queen visited



Bombay yesterday and Gateway of India was lit up with a Dutch theme to celebrate the ties between the two countries. And next they visit Kerala which has a significant Dutch heritage. Patna could have been on their itinerary, if only we had preserved our heritage, instead they are either facing the axe or kept poorly," he rued.

The Bihar government in early 2016 proposed to demolish the Patna Collectorate,

parts of which are Dutch-era, including the iconic Record Room which has a colonnaded facade with Tuscan columns. The building also featured in 1982 Oscar-winning film 'Gandhi'.

After hearing two PILs filed by the Indian National Trust for Art and Culture (INTACH), the Patna High Court recently stayed the proposed demolition of the government complex while restraining the state authorities from "causing any

"Patna is one of the historic cities globally, and the collectorate along with Patna College's main administrative building, parts of the Government Press at Gulzarbagh and a few other buildings, should have been long back tied into a Dutch tourism circuit, but we allowed them to either decay ingloriously or slip into obscurity," Lall said.

harm to the collectorate building until further orders", bringing some relief among the heritage lovers.

"Patna is one of the historic cities globally, and the collectorate along with Patna College's main administrative building, parts of the Government Press at Gulzarbagh and a few other buildings, should have been long back tied into a Dutch tourism circuit, but we allowed them to either decay ingloriously or slip into obscurity," Lall said.

Kolkata-based photographer Rajiv Soni, who grew up in Patna said, the visit of the Dutch royals should make us revisit the "forgotten Dutch history of our city" and Patna should also recall and thank the then Ambassador of the Netherlands, Alphonsus Stoeltinga, who had written a letter to Chief Minister Nitish Kumar three years ago, appealing to him to spare the demolition and preserve it as a "shared heritage".

Stoeltinga is part of the Dutch delegation accompanying the

visiting king and queen. Recently, his book 'India: Land van de Toekomst' was launched in Amsterdam, according to an official at the Dutch Embassy.

In his 2016 letter to Kumar, he had said, "I came across reports about the possibility of this shared built heritage of India and the Netherlands being demolished anytime."

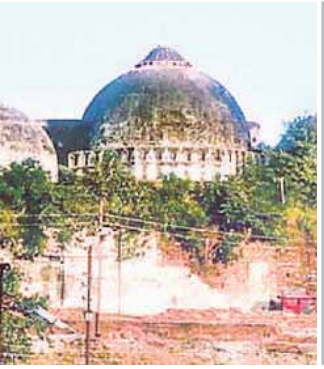
"I sincerely believe that this built heritage depicting the Indo-Dutch history can be restored and alternate uses can be planned. I am writing this letter to appeal to you to list the complex of buildings as per the norms of the state archaeological department," Stoeltinga said.

Aditya Jalan, a heritage enthusiast and a core member of a civil society-led movement 'Save Historic Patna Collectorate' started in April 2016, said Patna being a historical city had been on the itinerary of so many royals and VVIPs who have toured India, from British Raj era to post-independence period.



Ayodhya closure

The issue can hardly churn up emotions the way it did in the 1990s. Now that it has been flogged enough, what next?



A context effect is an aspect of cognitive psychology that describes the influence of environmental factors on one's perception of a stimulus. That's exactly what has happened in the Ram-Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid tussle at Ayodhya. At one time, it embodied the beginning of identity politics, the accommodative Hindu *versus* the appeased Muslim swiftly turning into a disparate equation based on denial for a new narrative. Therefore, the "rightist" Hindu wanted a historical revision of being the original claimants

of civilisational land, in this case the birthplace of one who defined the ultimate ethics of being human and behavioural propriety, *Maryada Purushottam*, or Lord Ram. One that had been ordained by faith than historical evidence and the mysticism of which, many felt, should override every human construct and depredation, in this case a mosque built in the Mughal era of Babar. That thought process, claimed by the BJP, posited itself against the liberal-secular matrix of the time as a bequeathed colonial legacy. It codified nationalism or *Bharatiyata* for a generation that was far removed from the freedom struggle and was fast finding its feet in a globalised world. What it also did was separate Hinduism, the philosophy, from Hindutva, the practice of it. That has come full circle and now that the BJP has got a mammoth verdict, it has legitimised the majoritarian discourse. To that extent, there is a general acceptance of the reality of the temple. Even residents of Ayodhya are tired of being circumscribed by a political context that doesn't help their aspirations and are accepting of any solution, so long as there is closure. With jobs and education on their mind, an entire generation, be it Hindu or Muslim, born under the shadow of the dispute is ready to cast away a beast of burden. This changed perspective then has dulled much of the appeal of Ayodhya.

Of course, the Supreme Court must be appreciated for stripping down the complexity of religiosity to the titular nature of land ownership and attempting a mediation. The three main parties — the Nirmohi Akhara, Ram Lalla Virajman and the Sunni Waqf Board — have presented their points of view. Nirmohi Akhara lays its claim by virtue of being servitors of Lord Ram for generations while the Sunni Waqf Board has based its case on the fact that the Babri Masjid stood till 1992. Yet some of its members have reportedly softened up to settle for an alternative mosque, a counter assurance that no other mosque will be touched and that ASI would restore other mosques in the area. Ram Lalla, who became a legal party in the title suit only in 1989 when former Allahabad High Court judge Deoki Nandan Agrawal moved the High Court, claimed the entire birthplace as divinity reincarnate. So, now the court has to sift through issues like memory, continuity, belief systems, tradition and historical evidence, howsoever little of the last. But weighing abstractions and perceptions may be an extremely delicate matter. The Ram Mandir was an emotionally galvanising force that had got the Sangh Parivar close to claiming political power through the BJP. And though the Atal Bihari Vajpayee era, by virtue of its coalition pressures, demanded pragmatism in governance, the current Narendra Modi regime has no such reason to compromise. There are also expectations of it to translate ideological reverence into action, considering it has to justify the core of its being, the committed Sangh Parivar cadres. The party brass is hoping it will at least be seen as attempting a closure within legal perimeters, even if not entirely successful. Perhaps, Modi is in a rush to foreground Hindutva concerns like abrogation of Article 370, Ram temple, immigrants and uniform civil code so that they do not remain irritants to his definition of the Hindu Rashtira and by implication development. That itself is fraught with grave challenges as without sales pitches and illusionary diversions, he will have to now walk the talk on real issues. Modi's bigger concern is the electorate which feels betrayed on livelihood and comprises the poor, both rural and urban, and the middle classes. That job is tougher if indeed the BJP pursues the idea of Ram Rajya. For Lord Ram willingly sacrificed Ayodhya's throne for harmony in the kingdom, avoided any criticism and stood firm on his principles. He also gave back Lankans their land after the war with Ravana. Yet the Ayodhya dispute has only entrenched divisiveness in the country. Perceived justice over historical injustice may not be walking in his path.

Still too hungry

India has slipped from the 95th to the 102nd rank behind neighbours on a global index of nutrition



Digest this! According to estimates by the United Nations Development Programme, nearly 40 per cent of the food produced in India is wasted or lost and this costs the country one lakh crore rupees every year. And, yet, according to the Global Hunger Index (GHI), that measures the level of hunger and under-nutrition worldwide, India has slipped from the 95th rank in 2010 to the 102nd in 2019, behind its neighbours Nepal, Bangladesh and Pakistan. The four indicators for the index are undernourishment, child stunting, child wasting and child mortality. Alarming over one in every five children in India is "wasted" (low weight for height), the highest for any country. This damning report is full of irony as from being an importer of food in the 1960s, when India had to rely on shipments from the US, today the country has become the largest exporter of rice in the world. We are the second-largest producer of both rice and wheat. Between 2012 and 2015, three years, India exported 63 million tonnes of grains. Besides, now we have a smart buffering capacity to deal with shortages and crisis. Why then are we slipping on hunger targets?

First, we need to adopt better strategies for storage and avoid rotting. Latest data shows 4,135.224 metric tonnes of foodgrains were wasted. We could learn from advance food strategies of China, which has invested in state-of-the-art storage facilities. We need to curb food wastage at every level, right from harvesting, transporting, processing, packaging to consuming that is caused due to the loopholes in the transport and infrastructure system. Plus, we have the archaic public distribution system to blame for the inadequate and patchy supplies. Many times, even those who are the right candidates for the food subsidy are excluded on the basis of differential BPL (Below Poverty Line) status as the criteria for identifying a household is arbitrary and varies from State to State. Undoubtedly, several nutrition schemes are in operation but aren't properly implemented. For instance, in Bihar and Odisha, where the poverty ratio is very high, poor implementation of the Mid Day Meal Scheme has a major impact on food security. After 2024 we will have the largest population on this planet. The average household spends 40 to 45 per cent of its budget on food. So, for the next 30 years, the demand for food will spiral. If nothing is done at the policy level in terms of coordination and rationalisation, we will continue to hang our heads in shame and never be able to shed the tag of a nation with starving millions.



opinion

Who is an Indian?

06

Ghulam Dastagir, who saved hundreds of lives during the Bhopal gas tragedy, and Nobel Prize winner Abhijit Banerjee are true Indians who continue to inspire us



AJOY KUMAR

One of my favourite ways to travel around the country is to board a train. Unfortunately, due to pressing engagements and the urgency of modern life, I have not been able to take as much advantage as I would want of this uniquely Indian way of travelling. There's something quintessentially Indian about taking the train, getting to know the fellow passengers and chatting with them over a cup of tea as they head to their respective destinations. While writing these lines, there is a vivid image in my mind of one such journey I made and I'm certain, a similar image must have appeared in the minds of the readers, too.

An interesting aspect of train travel is the diversity on display during the journey. One gets to hear of so many languages, accents, smell a variety of food and absorb different perspectives. Once, it got me thinking about what it means to be an Indian.

Unlike other nations like Pakistan, India is not defined by a particular religion. Some may argue that being a Hindu-majority country, an Indian's identity is primarily driven by this majoritarian outlook. Such an argument does not hold ground because not only does India contain a multiplicity of religions but significantly also a multiplicity of castes. Therefore, a Brahmin Hindu (approximately five per cent of the Hindu community) can hardly claim to represent all Hindus. It's the same with languages as well.

The recent debate about Hindi becoming a "national" language does not hold water because of the variety of languages spoken in our country. If you do not believe me, just ask a Maharashtrian or a Tamilian about how they feel about "Hindi" being a national language. The truth really is that "Indian identity is forged in diversity and everyone of us is a minority", as Congress leader Shashi Tharoor put it eloquently.

But this still doesn't explain what it means to be an Indian. The story of Ghulam Dastagir, however, does. Dastagir was the deputy station superintendent on duty at the Bhopal Railway station on December 2, 1984 — the day when the Bhopal gas tragedy took place. By midnight, the railway station, which was extremely close to the Union Carbide plant, was filled with poisonous gases that killed everything in its path.

On that fateful night, the brave deputy station master stepped on the platform with itchy feeling in the throat and a burning sensation in his eyes. Immediately, he knew something was wrong. Unaware that 23 of his colleagues had already succumbed to the gas leak, he tried to get clarity on what was happening and sought further instructions.



With none forthcoming, Dastagir took matters into his own hands and informed his superiors to suspend all trains that were headed to Bhopal. He then summoned his staff. While he was barely able to stand or breathe and against all protocol, he directed his staff to clear the Gorakhpur train for departure even though 25 minutes were left for it to roll out. He assured his staff that he would take full responsibility for any blowback that may follow.

In doing so, Dastagir saved hundreds of lives. He did not, however, stop here. As terror spread across Bhopal, large crowds of the affected population descended on to the station in an attempt to escape the gas chamber. Dastagir went from platform to platform, attending to and consoling victims and sent an SOS to all nearby railway stations to send ambulances and doctors.

He himself suffered terribly due to the gas leaks. He died in 2003 and a large part of his life was spent in the hospital due to exposure to toxic fumes. He also lost his son in the tragedy. However, through his bravery and courage, he

“WE ARE TOLD TO FOCUS ON OUR DIFFERENCES RATHER THAN STRENGTHS AND OUR LEADERS REPEATEDLY SHOW DISDAIN FOR KNOWLEDGE WITH AN AFFINITY FOR DOGMA. THIS IS NOT THE IDEA OF INDIA WE CHERISH AND IT IS NOT WHAT IT MEANS TO BE AN INDIAN”



ensured that hundreds of fathers didn't suffer the same fate as he did.

Dastagir was a true Indian. In such moments, we forget about which religion a person belongs to, which caste he was born into or which language he speaks. All that we care about and all that we remember is the great sacrifice of an Indian brother. In reality, this is what it means to be an Indian. It means recognising that at the time of independence, we promised ourselves and our future generations that we would set aside all that divides, to forge a better India. The poignant story of Dastagir reminds us of this core value.

Another value that forms the core of being an Indian is the respect and admiration for knowledge. This is evident from the fact that whenever a book falls down to the ground, we almost unknowingly touch it to our forehead as a sign of respect. It is this core value that has enabled India to be blessed with brilliant minds. We have had leaders in the field of mathematics, literature, technology and philosophy among others and I believe that one of the prima-

ry reasons for our intellectual prowess is the manner in which our culture respects knowledge and the pursuit of the same.

The most recent example is that of Indian-origin economist Abhijit Banerjee, one of the winners of the Noble Prize for economics. His win adds to a very rich list of Indian luminaries.

Sadly, however, some of our leaders attempt to replace these values with those that are antithetical to Indian core values. We are told now to focus on our differences rather than strengths and our leaders repeatedly show disdain for knowledge with an affinity for dogma. This is not the idea of India we cherish and it is not what it means to be an Indian.

I imagine most of us swell with pride when we recount the story of Dastagir or when we talk about the contributions made by Banerjee to the field of economics. We must ensure that we retain our core values and try to inspire similar pride in others. After all, that's what it means to be an Indian.

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

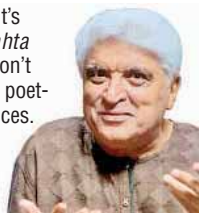
SOUND BITE

Both, me and Kantilal Bhuria have reached an age where we should retire. The time has come for youngsters to come forward.



Senior Congress leader —Digvijaya Singh

I am proud that whether it's Farhan's first film *Dil Chahta Hai* or Zoya's first, they don't have any reflection of my poetry. They are their own voices.



Screenwriter —Javed Akhtar

We've got a great new deal that takes back control. Now, Parliament should get Brexit done so that we can move on to other priorities.



UK Prime Minister —Boris Johnson

Parliament of India will not allow malicious efforts to succeed. We expect better from parliamentarians than vituperative mudslinging.



Congress leader —Shashi Tharoor

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Bridge the gap

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Bangla pride" (October 15). The Nobel Prize for Economics awarded to Indian-American Abhijit Banerjee, his French-American wife Esther Duflo and Michael Kremer for "their experimental approach to alleviating global poverty" underlines the renewed concern over global poverty and ways to alleviate it. The husband and wife have spent considerable time studying various poverty alleviation programmes. Welcome as much this is, we will perennially regret the decision of the wise men to deny a Nobel prize to the Mahatma despite the fact that he was nominated thrice.

We revel in the general feeling of happiness among Indians that one of them, albeit with an American passport, is a Nobel laureate yet again. Indians are competent to excel in any field but for that, a conducive environment is required, which unfortunately is not available in our universities. It is a sad fact that needs serious introspection by our politicians, academicians and policy makers.

JS Acharya
Hyderabad

Ganguly has an onerous task at hand

This refers to the editorial, "Bangla pride" (October 15). Sourav Ganguly is described as a good cricket tactician. His experience on the cricket field — as a batsman who played the game fearlessly and as a captain who groomed many a talent — has made him a legend. His aura can be gauged from the love and respect he commanded both on and off the field. Given his talent to spot and groom cricketers, his elevation as the head of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) bodes well for Indian cricket. Though his tenure is short, he can work wonders even in the 10 months he has at hand.

Ganguly's election has come at a crucial time when the BCCI's functioning needs to be streamlined. The cricket body has been hit by scandals, infighting and short-sightedness. Consolidation of affairs is what is required. The issue of "conflict of interest" has become a stick to ridicule and browbeat some famed cricketers. Imagine a man like Rahul Dravid being asked to quit his job at India Cements to retain the junior head coach post. What and what not constitutes a job for profit must be defined clearly. However, bringing in the much-required "trans-



parency" and "accountability" into the daily functioning of the BCCI must be Ganguly's priority. One hopes only professionals occupy the BCCI top post. Most importantly, Dada, as he is fondly referred to, has an onerous task of taking all stakeholders — players, coaches, State-level bodies and administrators — together.

Ganapathi Bhat
Akola

IRCTC's market debut

Sir — The great success of IRCTC, where its shares doubled overnight, calls for the issuance of long-term bonds by it to set up large-scale production units in every district of the country

for packaged water, confectionery items and other food products to replace cooked meal in trains and schools, where complaints of sub-standard food in unhygienic conditions are quite common.

The setting up of such big units in large numbers by IRCTC

with the help of long-term bonds will provide huge employment in the public sector, apart from giving sizeable profits to the public exchequer. Products can be sold in the open market so as to ensure that private players bring down their prices. Employment in the public

sector can go up, too, by retrieving unaccounted money through the Voluntary Disclosure Scheme, whereby those declaring may be asked to invest 50 per cent of the amount in other long-term infrastructural bonds with nominal interest to be issued by public sector undertakings like the IRCTC.

Madhu Agrawal
Delhi

Poll rhetoric

Sir — Prime Minister Narendra Modi's statement at an election rally that India will not allow its water to flow to Pakistan and instead put it to use here is yet another example of empty "poll promise." The Indus Water Treaty signed between India and Pakistan makes it clear that the former is bound to release water to the latter. It is strange that the Prime Minister raised an emotive issue just for votes, to the extent of showing no respect to existing bilateral agreements.

Swadha
Via email

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

Time for some ‘Freakonomics’

Would tweaking a few procedures actually help the country's economy recover? Maybe the answer lies in field trials



KUMARDEEP BANERJEE

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank have cut down India's growth forecasts to six per cent for the fiscal year 2019-20, from nearly seven per cent, riding on a weakening domestic demand. Industrial growth shrank 1.1 per cent in August, after a gap of 26 months, reinforcing fears of a slowing economy and deteriorating consumer sentiment. Industrial production, as measured by the Index of Industrial Production (IIP), had grown 4.8 per cent in August last year. Data released by the statistics office showed the April-August factory output growth at 2.4 per cent, well below the 5.3 per cent for the same period in the last fiscal. These numbers paint a rather grim picture of a long winter ahead for the economy of the country. So, is it time to use Randomised Controlled Trials (RCT) to test and/or tweak policies in select pockets to bring out better results?

For the uninitiated, RCTs are most commonly used in the field of medicine to check the impact of a particular chemical concoction on a randomly chosen group of patients with a condition. Two or three sets are “administered” or “not administered” different variations of the drug to see the beneficiary impact on health.

Coming from the creative soil of Kolkata, Nobel laureate Abhijit Banerjee chose to apply a similar model for solving big picture issues at the ground level. The economist and his co-awardees, through their trials, studies and experiments, argue that it is possible to arrive at optimal policy solutions based on empirical evidence, having tested their variables in controlled trials on a small target. This means breaking down macro problems such as poverty, malnutrition or an economic slowdown into smaller packets. Then pockets of focus target groups are subjected to policy trials, allowing faster results and direct solutions. It seems to be opening a host of possibilities for lawmakers and policy formulators, not to forget those who have to implement them.

Coming back to the deepening economic slowdown issues — if we consider this to be the real challenge for India in the short term — it would, with the will of the policy-makers, be possible to allow some controlled trials on select groups for a short period. This would be a test case for boosting demand in the particular micro-pocket of the economy. For example, if the Government wants to increase rural offtake for houses and two-wheelers or even four-wheelers, it can (at least in theory) offer a cashback /interest-free limited equated monthly installment (EMI) or an insurance free, with every loan sanctioned at the much talked about Loan Mela.

A particular pocket can be subjected to this or a variation (either all of the options or some) loan mela bonanza during the festival season, while the other can have plain vanilla bank offers meant for this region and sub-group of customers. The results emerging from this limited trial can throw some long-term solutions to tackling ghosting small-time borrowers and impacting or predicting consumption behaviour. Who knows, some far-reaching insights on the impact of demonetisation and the digital economy can also be found in the side alleys? Yes, it needs an economic scientist to honeycomb tons of data on consumer behaviour, have a clarity of thought and principle to arrive at effective solutions, before being put across the bureaucrat's desk to be formulated into a meaningful macro policy document.

Herein lies the critique of the now Nobel-awarded proof of breaking big problems into smaller, manageable questions and solving parts, for the “whole matrix”, in short, RCT.

The first being that such experiments reduce the scope of economic uncertainties by eliminating the possibility of manual selection. The second and perhaps more apt (if we were to look at the problem of the economic slowdown) is that small interventions and policy tweaks or a bit of additional benefits with a loan may increase offtake in the short-term and also perk up consumption. But it hasn't been proven to be of benefit for the larger economy. Perhaps the impact of a large population could be disastrous, which may delay consumption, for want of a better sop or cashback (if you will). Also the question of whether this will ultimately lead to overall prosperity and not really impact the macro monetary decisions of the Government will need hard thinking.

Now, with all this “Freakonomics” possibilities, we jump back to the consumption economy which is fast becoming a Doomsday prediction coming true. The Government is seen taking widespread reforms (not randomised) agenda, giving tax sops and announcing sectoral booster packages but the consumer is reluctant. Is it time for senior policy makers to actually start doing the rounds of the country to see the impact of the fiscal reforms on the ground? Would tweaking a few procedures actually help the economy recover? Maybe the answer lies in field trials.

(The writer is a policy analyst)

PUBLIC SECTOR BANKS DID NOT HAVE A WORST PHASE THAN WHEN THE COMBINATION OF SINGH AND RAJAN, AS PM AND RBI GOVERNOR, HAD.

—FINANCE MINISTER
NIRMALA SITHARAMAN

POINTCOUNTERPOINT



THE GOVERNMENT IS OBSESSED WITH TRYING TO BLAME ITS OPPONENTS, THUS IT IS UNABLE TO FIND A SOLUTION FOR REVIVAL OF THE ECONOMY.

—FORMER PRIME MINISTER
MANMOHAN SINGH

A stirred and shaken India

By pursuing an ultra-nationalist agenda, Modi has validated the two-nation theory that formed the rationale of dividing British India to create Pakistan as a Muslim homeland



BZ KHASRU

Colonial India's Muslim leaders shivered at the thought of being perpetually controlled by Hindus in a united India once the British left the country, unless there were safeguards enshrined in the Constitution. Prime Minister Narendra Modi has proven them right. By pursuing a populist ultra-nationalist agenda, he has unwittingly validated the much-maligned “two-nation” theory that formed the rationale behind dividing British India to create Pakistan as a Muslim homeland.

His policy pits Hindus against Muslims, an unfortunate schism that all of his predecessors fought against. Seven decades after the blood-soaked Partition, hyper-nationalist Modi won a landslide re-election victory in May, donning the saffron-coloured garb of Hindu gurus and allowing divisiveness based on Islamophobia.

His crown is made of two emotion-filled explosive elements: Kashmir and migration, both having a common thread of bias and suspicion against Muslims. They have roots in the century-old vision of Hindutva, or Hinduness, outlined in the 1920s by VD Savarkar, a violent revolutionary-turned-ultra-nationalist. Savarkar, a British-trained lawyer and avowed atheist, espoused several ideas to deal with India's minorities, mimicking Adolf Hitler's racist solution to Germany's Jewish question.

Since his re-election, Modi's administration has aggressively moved on both Kashmir and the alleged illegal migration from Bangladesh, which is India's most friendly neighbour. In early August, keeping local leaders in detention and deploying nearly a million security personnel in Kashmir, it abolished a decades-old law that granted Kashmiris special rights — their own flag, own laws and land rights. Meanwhile, India's Home Minister Amit Shah, who heads Modi's nationalist BJP and is widely expected to succeed him as Prime Minister, is pressing ahead with his agenda to deport fictitious 40 million illegal Bangladeshi migrants.

Clash over Muslim migrants: This idea has provoked a sharp backlash from Bangladesh. Home Minister Asaduzzaman Khan has dismissed the BJP's assertion, noting that Bangladesh's economy is at par with India's, so no one from his country's stays illegally in India. Still the matter turned acrimonious enough during Shah-Khan talks in Delhi in August to prevent them from issuing a customary joint statement.

India, nevertheless, seems determined to push ahead its agenda. It has started a campaign to round up Muslims unless they can prove they have lived in India way before 1971 when Bangladesh was created. They will be put in concentration camps, which ironically the migrants themselves are building now.

Of India's 1.3 billion people, 14 per cent are Muslim. Modi's party does not target migrant Bangladeshi Hindus, classifying them as refugees and minorities from neighbouring countries. But it seeks to deport Muslims. In fact, India has already deported Rohingya Muslim refugees to Myanmar and detained hundreds of them. Modi faced global criticism for the Godhra massacre in 2002 in his home State of Gujarat. He ruled Gujarat for 13 years before becoming Prime Minister in 2014.

What is most disturbing in this government's

“FOLLOWING HIS RE-ELECTION, THE NATIONAL REGISTER OF CITIZENS, WHICH VERIFIES CITIZENSHIP, AFTER SEVERAL FLAWED COUNTS, HAS CLASSIFIED NEARLY TWO MILLION LONG-TERM RESIDENTS AS NON-CITIZENS OR STATELESS. MOST OF THEM ARE AT THE BOTTOM OF THE ECONOMIC LADDER. THEY WILL BE DETAINED IN CAMPS WITH LIMITED RIGHTS



policy is its anti-minority agenda. It is this very posture of the professedly secular Indian National Congress party and its paramount leaders — Jawaharlal Nehru and Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel — that propelled British India's Muslims to demand a separate homeland as they feared that the Hindus would perpetually control the Muslims once the British left.

The Congress balked at granting special rights and Britain created Pakistan in 1947. But problems surfaced soon afterward with semi-autonomous princely States, including Kashmir. The picturesque Himalayan region encompasses roughly 135,000 square miles, almost Germany's size, with about 18 million people. India controls 85,000 square miles, Pakistan 33,000 and China 17,000. Both Pakistan and India claim the entire area as their own.

In 1948, after a Indo-Pakistan fight, India raised Kashmir in the United Nations Security Council, which called for a referendum on the territory's status. It asked Pakistan to withdraw troops and India to cut military presence to a minimum. A ceasefire came into force but Pakistan refused to pull out. Kashmir has remained partitioned ever since.

Until Hindutva swept Modi to power, India assuaged minorities by pursuing a policy that emphasised on national unity. In contrast, Modi began his tenure by killing a centuries-old Muslim marriage law. Even the Mughals and the British left Indian personal law untouched. The government voided the Muslim law but kept simi-

lar laws for other minorities intact.

What's behind Hindutva politics? To boost his re-election bid, Modi fired up his anti-Muslim rhetoric and took the crusade to India's north-eastern State of Assam, plagued by a half-century-long hate-based politics. The politics that originated with a demand to drive out non-Assamese quickly turned into an anti-Bangladeshi outcry at the BJP's instigation. Modi has vowed to rid the State of all the alleged Bangladeshi migrants.

Following his re-election, the National Register of Citizens, which verifies citizenship, after several flawed counts, has classified nearly two million long-term residents as non-citizens or stateless. Most of them are at the bottom of the economic ladder. They will be detained in camps with limited rights, considering that the government has promised not to send anybody back to Bangladesh, which fears a reverse influx.

Unfortunately for the Hindutva brigade, the citizenship count has become a boomerang. Of the two million designated non-citizens, 1.2 million unexpectedly turned out to be Hindu. Modi's followers are now crying foul, demanding a recount. The BJP had expected to find four million migrants in Assam, most of them Muslim.

Assam's neighbour West Bengal, which shares a common language and a rich culture with Bangladesh, is gearing up to play political hotball against the BJP. The hardliners want to replicate the citizenship drill in West Bengal but Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee's

party has vowed to fight it. State BJP chief Dilip Ghosh, who is seeking to deport the alleged migrants, remains adamant because rhetoric is the magic wand for his party to win votes.

Muslims foresee the BJP's game: Ironically, while Ghosh wishes to expel them to an unnamed country — presumably Bangladesh — Modi is urging Hindus to flock to Muslim-majority Kashmir, which barred non-Kashmiris from owning land until New Delhi scrapped its autonomy in August.

The BJP prescription to push more Hindus into Kashmir is intended to change the demographic balance in the restive territory of 12 million people. Modi's arbitrary action is the mother of several repugnant ideas. This is exactly the kind of capriciousness on the part of the overwhelming Hindu majority that British India's Muslim leaders feared most.

One of those leaders, Liaquat Ali Khan, the right-hand man of Pakistan's founder, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, articulated this concern while talking with George Merrell, then America's highest-ranking diplomat in India, on December 27, 1946. Liaquat believed that the Congress was “determined to seize power without regard for Muslim rights.” Now, 73 years later, Modi's Hindutva agenda, which calls for a Muslim-free India, has proven Liaquat right. By scrapping Kashmir's status, the Prime Minister has taken a highly risky gamble in challenging the secular matrix and embedding a majoritarian consciousness.

(The writer is an established author on Bangladesh-related issues.)

Can Delhi GRAPple with pollution?

In the absence of a cohesive collaboration strategy with neighbouring States, the Graded Response Action Plan might end up being just another knee-jerk reaction to the pollution onslaught in winters



KOTA SRIRAJ

The fast-approaching winter months have now become synonymous with a worsening air quality in the Delhi-National Capital Region (NCR). The pollution reaches unmanageable levels, largely due to the smoke emanating from crop residue burning in the neighbouring States of Punjab, Haryana and Uttar Pradesh (UP), blowing over to Delhi-NCR.

Incidents of stubble burning have already begun increasing in Punjab and Haryana and are likely to peak in the next 10-12 days as the harvest season picks up in Sangrur, Patiala, Ludhiana and Fatehabad districts. Here, the tradition of open field burning is rampant and contin-

ues unabated in spite of the activity being deemed illegal. According to a report by the Centre-run System of Air Quality and Weather Forecasting and Research (SAFAR), this biomass burning is likely to add nine per cent to Delhi's PM 2.5 concentration.

In spite of all this, enforcement of the law pertaining to crop burning in Punjab has been lax, to say the least. This toxic mix of smoke and vehicular pollution has resulted in Delhi-NCR's Air Quality Index (AQI) plummeting to alarming levels. However, all is not lost as a bevy of efforts undertaken by the Government and authorities concerned has had a positive impact on an otherwise grim scenario.

First, awareness regarding the quality of the air we breathe in through regular publicity of the AQI has made people conscious. Second, the introduction of the much-cleaner BS-VI fuel ahead of schedule has also instilled confidence among the citizens. Furthermore, the closure of coal-based power plants and fall in



the sales of diesel vehicles have helped salvage the situation in Delhi and the situation now is much better than what it was five years ago.

But clearly much more needs to be done. Probably, keeping this in mind, the Delhi Government has introduced the Graded Response Action Plan (GRAP) early this year to handle pollution in an incremental manner, depending on the level of severity, especially in the winters.

GRAP came into force from October 14 with the objective to curb

air pollution in Delhi-NCR, by proactively rolling out measures like discouraging private vehicles on the city's roads, stopping trucks from outside, using diesel generators, closing brick kilns and stone crushing units. It seemed a timely step as on October 13, the AQI was “very poor” with the level going beyond the 300-mark. On October 14, the AQI improved by around 50 points but the situation has continued to oscillate between “poor” and “very poor” over the last few days.

Even though experts have hailed GRAP for the gradual reduction in pollution levels over the years and for fixing accountability — as it clearly marks the agency responsible for each action to be taken — the efficacy of the plan is yet to be proven.

This is because many of the pollution-triggering factors are beyond the purview of the Arvind Kejriwal administration and the Delhi Government needs active cooperation and collaboration of the State Governments of UP, Haryana and Punjab. In the absence of a cohesive collaboration strategy, the GRAP might just end up being a knee-jerk reaction to the pollution onslaught.

The gaps in the fight against pollution are becoming visible with generators being used in Gurugram with impunity due to the exceptional power cuts the city faces. Similarly, many questions were raised on the GRAP's efficacy in January 2019.

This is because toxic levels of air pollution monitored over Delhi almost every week, from November

1, 2018 to January 6 this year, showed that the Government's emergency plans to tackle the city's annual crisis had failed, according to a report of the United Residents' Joint Action (URJA), a collective of the city's resident welfare associations.

The report summarised the findings of 45 Right to Information (RTI) applications filed at 14 Government departments. Responses were sought from Central, State and municipal bodies to assess the effectiveness of GRAP. The analysis of data collected by URJA for 68 days showed that except for one day in Central Delhi's ITO, the national Capital's air quality was continually above permissible limits.

The GRAP initiative for this year cannot be allowed to be a rerun of last year. The Government must undertake necessary steps to overcome possibilities of failure and achieve the objective of curbing pollution levels effectively.

(The writer is an environmental journalist)



FOREIGN EYE



BREXIT DEAL NOT A GAME OF CHESS

Brexit involves choices that will shape the strategic direction of Britain for generations and affect millions of livelihoods. Any deal Prime Minister Boris Johnson can strike now is just the vehicle for withdrawal; what matters most is the eventual destination. The rhetoric he has relied upon, the fanatics he flatters and the political trajectory of his career all indicate a plan to take Britain in the wrong direction.

(The Guardian editorial)



SENSEX CLOSES ABOVE 39,000-MARK

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Extending its gains for the fifth consecutive session, equity benchmark BSE SENSEX rallied 453 points on Thursday as global investors cheered a Brexit deal reached between Britain and the EU. Domestic traders were also enthused after Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman hinted at more stimulus measures as she urged international investors to pump funds into India.

After opening on a subdued note, the 30-share SENSEX surged in afternoon trade to close at 39,052.06, up 453.07 points, or 1.17 per cent.

On the other hand, HCL Tech, Vedanta, PowerGrid, Kotak Bank, Infosys, ONGC, Tech Mahindra, L&T and HDFC Bank fell up to 1.04 %

The broader NSE Nifty too spiked 122.35 points, or 1.07 per cent, to settle at 11,586.35.

Yes Bank was the biggest gainer in the SENSEX pack, soaring 15.19 per cent, followed by Tata Motors, IndusInd Bank, SBI, Bajaj Auto, Asian Paints, Axis Bank, Tata Steel and Maruti, rising up to 9.82 per cent. On the other hand, HCL Tech, Vedanta,

PowerGrid, Kotak Bank, Infosys, ONGC, Tech Mahindra, L&T and HDFC Bank fell up to 1.04 per cent. According to traders, domestic market followed European equities that rallied after Britain and the European Union said they have struck an outline Brexit deal after prolonged negotiations.

The deal, however, must still

be formally approved by the bloc and ratified by the European and UK parliaments.

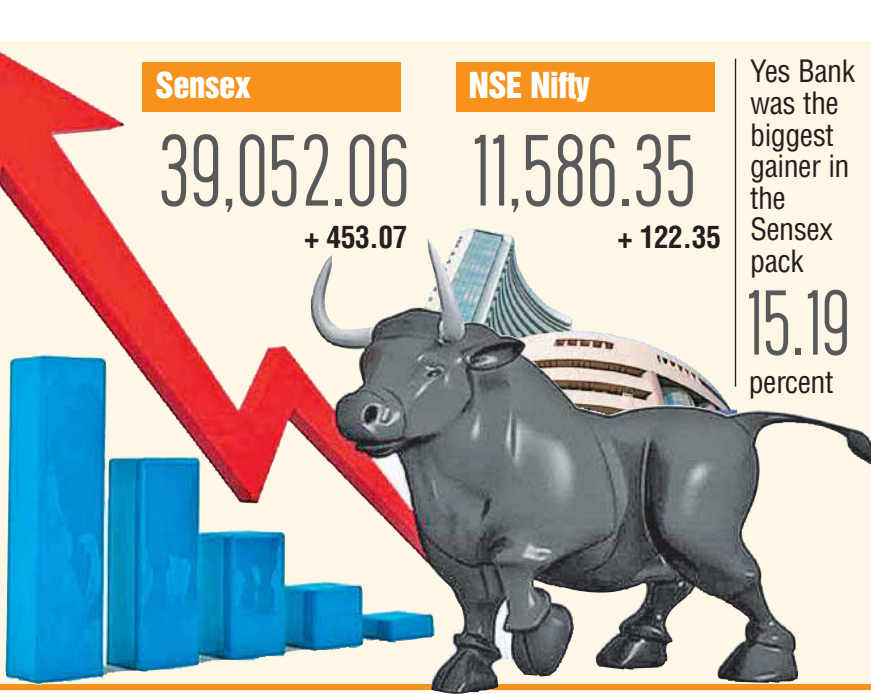
"Government's intention to provide further fiscal stimulus in the future as per the needs of the economy lifted the market sentiment today. Easing trade tension and positive development on Brexit provided further boost to the market.

"Risk taking ability is improving in the market with optimism over recovery in the economy led by stimulus, festive demand, good monsoon and lower interest rate," said Vinod Nair, Head of Research, Geojit Financial Services.

Sectorally, BSE auto, bankex,

finance, energy, FMCG, metal, healthcare and power index rose up to 2.93 per cent. Broader BSE midcap and smallcap indices gained up to 1.77 per cent.

Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Shanghai, Hong Kong, Seoul and Tokyo ended on a mixed note. Further, the Chinese government's appeal to Washington to negotiate a quick end to their tariff war also buoyed market sentiment. Meanwhile, the Indian rupee appreciated 24 paise to 71.19 against the US dollar intra-day. Brent crude futures, the global oil benchmark, fell 0.24 per cent to USD 59.28 per barrel.



CAPSULE



Gold falls Rs 105 on stronger rupee, weak cues

NEW DELHI:) Gold prices on Thursday declined Rs 105 to Rs 38,985 per 10 gram in the national capital on a stronger rupee and weak global cues, according to HDFC Securities. However, silver surged by Rs 509 to Rs 46,809 per kg here from its previous close of Rs 46,300 per kg. On Wednesday, gold closed at Rs 39,090 per 10 gram. "International gold prices traded weak on Brexit hopes and the US-China trade deal optimism," HDFC Securities Senior Analyst - Commodities Tapan Patel said. Gold was trading lower at USD 1,488 an ounce in the international market, while silver quoted higher at USD 17.45 per ounce.



Air India Assets Holding raises another Rs 7,985 cr

NEW DELHI: Raising funds for the third time in little over a month, Air India Assets Holding Ltd (AIAHL) on Thursday raised Rs 7,985 crore through bond sale, which was oversubscribed. A special purpose vehicle of Air India, AIAHL has mopped up a total of Rs 21,985 crore by way of bond issues since September 16 and the proceeds would be utilised to repay debt of the national carrier. The civil aviation ministry on Wednesday said the third bond issue of AIAHL was fully subscribed. The issue of 10-year tenure bonds worth Rs 1,000 crore with a green shoe option of Rs 7,064 crore received bids to the tune of Rs 15,100 crore. These bonds have been subscribed at a rate of 7.39 per cent. "The company received bids worth Rs 15,100 cr.



Volvo selects HCL for IT services

NEW DELHI:) IT major HCL Technologies on Thursday said it has been selected by Volvo Cars as one of the suppliers for IT services and its digital transformation programme. "The engagement is an expansion of a collaboration that began in 2016 and will see HCL support the global premium car company in its ongoing digital transformation initiatives," a statement said. This large-scale transformation programme includes organisation-wide technology shifts that will help Volvo Cars to capitalise on new opportunities to improve internal business processes and customer experiences, it added. The collaboration between the two organisations is expanding to include several aspects of digital transformation including product orientation, DevOps and application integration the statement said.

Housing sales down 25% across nine cities: Prop Tiger

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Housing sales declined 25 per cent in nine major cities to 65,799 units during July-September quarter, while new launches fell 45 per cent as consumers sentiments and demand remained subdued, according to property brokerage firm PropTiger.

Earlier this month, Anarock and JLL India also reported 18 per cent and one per cent, respectively, decline in housing sales during July-September period across seven major cities.

In its report 'Real Insight', News Corp-backed PropTiger said that housing sales declined to 65,799 units during July-September 2019 from 88,078 units in the same period last year.

New launches fell to 33,883 units from 61,679 units during the period under review.

These cities are -- Mumbai Metropolitan Region (including Navi Mumbai & Thane), Pune, Noida (including Greater Noida & Yamuna Expressway), Gurugram (including Bhiwadi, Dharuhera & Sohna), Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad, Kolkata and Ahmedabad.



"New launches continued to show a downward trend in the September quarter even as the government continues to move towards a solution to the ongoing NFBC issue, a problem that has dried up a key source of finance for real estate developers in India. As buyers postponed their purchase decisions to time it with the festive season, sales numbers also fell during the quarter," said Dhruv Agarwala, Group CEO, Elara Technologies.

Singapore-based Elara is full

stack real estate technology platform that owns PropTiger.com, Housing.com and Makaan.com.

"While new launch numbers might continue to fall in the coming quarters due to the liquidity crunch, we expect home sales numbers to improve in the subsequent quarter, factoring in the higher purchase activity that normally takes place during the

Earlier this month, Anarock and JLL India also reported 18 per cent and one per cent, respectively, decline in housing sales during July-September period across seven major cities

festival season," he added.

According to the data, housing sales in Mumbai region fell to 21,985 units during July-September 2019 from 28,563 units in the year-ago period. In Pune, sales fell to 13,644 units from 16,946 units.

In Bengaluru, demand declined to 7,772 units from 10,929 units. Housing sales in Hyderabad went down to 6,141 units from 6,783 units.

Housing sales in Ahmedabad fell to 3,951 units from 5,413 units, while demand dipped in Chennai to 3,656 units from 4,898 units. Kolkata saw sales of 3,081 units as against 4,030 units.

Gurugram witnessed sales of 2,742 units as against 3,988 units, while Noida saw sales of

2,827 units compared to 6,528 units during the period under review.

PropTiger said that unsold inventory declined 13 per cent year-on-year, primarily because new launches fell at a faster clip than sales did.

As of September, builders in India's nine top markets have an unsold stock consisting of 7,78,627 units. Notably, more than half of this unsold inventory is affordable stock.

Barring Hyderabad where property prices have seen a jump of 15 per cent y-o-y, prices have undergone only slight changes in other markets.

However, only two markets have seen a downward movement in pricing in the past one year, Gurugram (4 per cent) and Chennai (1 per cent). Other markets saw prices appreciation by 2 to 4 per cent y-o-y.

SECL aims at 262 MT coal production by 2025-26

PNS ■ KOLKATA

South Eastern Coalfields Limited (SECL) is expected to produce 262 million tonnes (MT) by 2025 -26, contributing 26 per cent to the one billion tonne coal production target of Coal India, officials said on Thursday.

The subsidiary of the coal behemoth aims at playing a lead role to meet the production goal with its new rail corridor being built at a cost of Rs 3,055 crore, the officials said.

"The 136 km East Rail Corridor from Kharsia-Korichapar - Dharamjaygarh-Korba will play a key role to meet the production goal, Coal India officials said.

The miner had also decided to procure rakes of its own to expedite supplies of the fuel through the mode of railways.

In 2018-19, SECL had produced 153 million tonne of coal and the new railway tracks will help coal evacuation from greenfield and existing mines, the miner said.

In the first phase, the 44-km



of new railway line in Chhattisgarh between Kharsia and Korichapar has been made operational from October 12.

"Already, two rakes a day are being loaded but this will be increased, and coal is now supplied to power stations of Maharashtra and Gujarat," an official said.

East Rail Corridor is developed by the Chhattisgarh East Railway Limited (CERL), a Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) between SECL, Chhattisgarh government and IRCON International at a cost of Rs 3,055 crore for laying

down a 136 km rail line from Kharsia - Korichapar - Dharamjaygarh-Korba.

While SECL holds a stake of 64 per cent in this tri-partite SPV, Chhattisgarh government and IRCON have 10 per cent and 26 per cent holding respectively.

The next phase of the 30 km railway line between Korichapar and Dharamjaygarh is likely to come up by middle of 2020 and from Dharamjaygarh to Korba, a stretch of 62 kms, is expected to be linked by end by 2022.

Vodafone Idea extends pact with TCS for 5 yrs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Vodafone Idea Ltd has extended its partnership with Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) for an additional five years, the country's largest IT services firm said on Thursday.

"TCS and Vodafone Idea Ltd (VIL) have extended their decade-long strategic partnership for a further five years. VIL is adopting the latest technologies for customer experience enhancement, as it undertakes the world's largest network integration in India," TCS said in a regulatory filing.

TCS has been VIL's technology partner in this journey, managing all of its customer-facing applications, it added. However, the statement did not disclose any financial details.

TCS' earlier partnership was with Vodafone India.



ARM Holdings ties up with Maker Village

PNS ■ KOCHI

Semiconductor and software design multinational giant ARM Holdings has tied up with Kerala's Maker Village, enabling India's largest electronic hardware incubator to reinforce its presence at the global level.

Kochi-based Maker Village, which functions under the Union government with Kerala Startup Mission as the supporting partner, will thus hold special training and guidance programmes under the UK-headquartered ARM, designer for 90 per cent of electronics semiconductor and mobile gadgets in the market, according to a release here on Thursday.

As the first step towards the collaboration, Maker Village this week hosted a workshop on 'Secure Device Management at Scale' at the facilities premises in Kalamassery near here.

"The sessions were led by experts comprising ARM India Vice-President Kuttappa



The sessions were led by experts comprising ARM India Vice-President Kuttappa Bittiananda

—KUMAAR GUHAAN
Principal Engineer

Bittiananda," Principal Engineer Kumar Guhaan and software engineer Sanjit Panigrahi.

ARM University Regional Manager (Program) Apurva Varma was the coordinator.

The next move in the collaboration will be facilitation of networking between the incubating firms at an international range, according to Maker Village CEO Prasad Balakrishnan Nair.



TVS Motor Q2 net up 15 pc at Rs 256.88 cr

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

TVS Motor Co on Thursday reported a 15 per cent increase in consolidated net profit at Rs 256.88 crore for the second quarter ended September 30.

The Chennai-based company had posted a consolidated net profit of Rs 223.19 crore in the corresponding period last fiscal, TVS Motor Co said in a regulatory filing.

Revenue from operations stood at Rs 4,960.27 crore in the second quarter as compared to Rs 5,466.94 crore in the year-ago period, down 9.27 per cent.

TVS Motor said its overall two-wheeler sales, including exports, were at 8.42 lakh units during the quarter ended September 2019 as against 10.49 lakh units in the same quarter last fiscal, a decline of 19.73 per cent.

Motorcycle sales for the quarter under review were at 3.42 lakh units as against 4.20 lakh units in the year-ago period, down 18.57 per cent.

Scooter sales for the second quarter were at 3.33 lakh units as against 3.88 lakh units in the same period last fiscal, a decline of 14.18 per cent, the company said.

Total exports grew 6 per cent to 2.11 lakh units in second quarter from 1.99 lakh units in the same period last fiscal, the company added.

In the first half (April-September) of the fiscal, consolidated net profit was at Rs 408.12 crore as compared to Rs 383.24 crore in the year-ago period, the company said.

Revenue from operations in the first half of the ongoing fiscal stood at Rs 9,978.61 crore as against Rs 10,082.73 crore in the same period last fiscal.

Office space leasing up 23%, may reach record 60 mn sq ft

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Office space leasing rose 23 per cent to 15.4 million sq ft in the July-September quarter across nine major cities, and may touch an all-time high this year at over 60 million sq ft as tech corporates and co-working players continue to expand their operations, according to property consultant CBRE.

The cumulative absorption or leasing of office space has increased by over 30 per cent to cross 47 million sq ft in the first nine months of 2019 calendar year, the consultant said in its India Office MarketView Q3 2019 report.

India's commercial real estate segment has been performing well even as overall property market, especially housing, is facing a multi-year demand slowdown.



According to the data, office space leasing jumped over two-fold in Hyderabad to 4.1 million sq ft during July-September from 1.7 million sq ft in the year-ago period.

Chennai also witnessed more

than two-time increase in leasing at 1.8 million sq ft from 0.7 million sq ft, while Pune saw a marginal increase to 1.4 million sq ft from 1.3 million sq ft.

The demand for office space in Mumbai fell to 1.5 million sq

India's commercial real estate segment has been performing well even as overall property market, especially housing, is facing a multi-year demand slowdown

ft from 1.7 million sq ft, while Bengaluru saw leasing activities declining to 4 million sq ft from 4.4 million sq ft. In Kochi, demand fell to 0.01 million sq ft from 0.1 million sq ft.

Office space leasing remained flat in NCR, Kolkata and Ahmedabad at 2.3 million sq ft, 0.2 million sq ft and 0.1 million sq ft, respectively.

"...we expect further strengthening of occupier sentiment in the medium to long term, backed by corporates looking to expand or consoli-

date their operations," said Anshuman Magazine, Chairman & CEO, India, South East Asia, Middle East and Africa, CBRE.

Favourable government initiatives, transparency in real estate sector and right reforms will improve investor sentiments greatly in the coming quarters, he added.

"Similar to last year, we expect that occupiers would put in greater efforts to incorporate flexibility in their portfolios due to changes in the

business environment," Magazine said.

According to the report, tech corporates, accounting for about a third of the leasing activity, drove office space leasing in the country during July-September 2019, followed by research, consulting & analytics companies (19 per cent) and flexible space operators (15 per cent).

The rise in share of flexible space (co-working) operators (10 per cent in Q2 2019) was primarily a result of their continued expansion across almost all cities. These operators took up both primary and secondary spaces in mostly core locations across cities.

Other sectors such as engineering & manufacturing (7 per cent) and BFSI (7 per cent) also contributed to the increase in leasing activity.

Stand-up comedy as an art form took a while to pick up in India. While many people aspire to become stand-up comics, there are very few who actually make it big. Vir Das is among those select few. He has been in the comedy scene in India right from its nascent stage. Ahead of his show in Hyderabad, he tells ARUN DANIEL YELLAMATY about the comedy scene in the country, the changes it has undergone, his love for Hyderabad, upcoming projects and more

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Actor-comedian Vir Das thinks that Indian audiences are louder than their western counterparts. The Indian comedian who has been busy touring the world on his present series, *Love Tour*, speaks about how the Indian audience is different. He says, “The difference between the Indian and the western audience is not really that different at all. We are all watching Netflix and Amazon. We are all the same, but the Indian audience take time to open up, and when they do they are way louder than the western audiences. I think we are much better here when it comes to stand-up comedy and as an

audience. We understand that this is one of the last forms of raw expression out there and we are supporting it.” Opening up about his upcoming *Love Tour* in Hyderabad for the Funnnybuzzness-comedy gig series, he said, “The idea behind the tour is that it’s a comedian asking himself if he’s good at love? That is something we all grapple with in different stages of our life. But it’s not just romantic love, it is love for your parents, your country, your dog, your fellow countrymen, for freedom of expres-

sion to tell jokes, for travel and much more. There is a huge variety here.” Vir, who is popular for doing intelligent and witty shows, said that this is a different kind of show. “This is the most internationally relatable material I have ever written. It’s worked just as well as in Hong Kong as it did in the US. It’s deeply personal but mainly about the emotions that you experience. It’s some of the edgiest material I have ever written as

opposed to politics, religion, or something you cannot hold back.” “There are enough comics now in India that the novelty of being a comedian has gone and people expect you to be good at it. So only those who are innovative can survive,” he adds. When asked how he ended up doing comedy, he said, “I didn’t choose this career, it chose me. After years of rejection from women and vodka, this career chose me. This is what I wanted to do all my life and I am happy doing it.” For Vir, Hyderabad has always been very special. He said, “The comedy scene in Hyderabad is amazing. I love coming down to Shiplakala Vedika. I have been coming to Hyderabad for a decade and it’s always been good to me. I am as much a fan of the biryani as for the comedy.” Advising future comedians he said, “Don’t take tips from older comics. Just do your own thing.” Sharing about his upcoming project, he said, “There is a lot going on. I have a Netflix special, an Amazon show, a World tour, then a series on a platform and then two movies. Those are my major plans right now. I plan to take a vacation with my wife and dog and sleep 8 hours, because that sounds really nice.” When asked about how he handles it when people get offended, he said, “I speak whatever is on my heart and mind at that particular moment. Sometimes that’s an issue for people, sometimes it isn’t. I am not actively going out there to speak about issues. They generally backfire when the joke is not funny. But a comedian should be able to talk about whatever they want to talk about.” Catch Vir Das on the October 20, Sunday at HICC, Novotel. Tickets available on Bookmyshow.

“This is the most internationally relatable material I have ever written. It’s worked just as well as in Hong Kong as it did in the US. It’s deeply personal but mainly about the emotions that you experience. It’s some of the edgiest material I have ever written as opposed to politics, religion, or something you cannot hold back

VIR DAS, ACTOR-COMEDIAN



Ever wondered how it would be like to eat like a king or a queen? Get ready as dishes from the history books have now come alive

DINE LIKE ROYALTY

In this day and age to understand how the erstwhile royal families in India lived all we have are monuments and artifacts. But, what if you can taste the rich and delicious food from the royal kitchens just like how it was served to the kings and queens back in the day when their rule used to be the norm of the land? The royal heirs of some of those kingdoms preserved those hundred-year-old recipes and continued their legacy by treating the present generations to lavish dinners. One such event has been put together by the ITC Kakatiya who will be offering a 10-day royal treat from the traditional royal kitchens of Thanjavur. Thanjavur is popularly known for the great thousand-year-old Brihadeeswarar temple, which is also a UNESCO World Heritage site. Few know that the Maratha king Shivaji’s legacy lives on in Thanjavur. However, the only visible Maratha influence today is seen there in the City Palace, where the royal family continues to be in residence.

The royal family consists of the Maharaja of Thanjavur, Babaji Rajah Bhonsle Chattrapathy, his brother, Abaji Rajah Bhonsle and his wife, A. Dhanashree. Rajah Bhonsle, along with chef Praveen have curated a special royal menu, to get the Thanjavur food to Hyderabad. This cuisine will give a great mix of food of Maratha and Tamil Nadu dishes. “This is one of those rare times when we bring out the food, made by a chef who works in the royal kitchens, directly to a restaurant on a commercial scale. We have not changed any of the original ingredients. In fact, we got with us a few ingredients from the palace. We have been traveling with our own chefs who cook for us to ensure the same royal taste is served to everyone,” the Maharaja told *The Pioneer*. The heirloom recipes are preserved in Sarabendra Pakashastra, an ancient text which was written in Modi script (script used to write Marathi), and contains details of the foods cooked in the palace. It was Rajah Serfoji II who began documenting the recipes in the book in 1812. “Sarabendra

Pakashastra is a treasure for all and is kept at the Saraswathi Mahal Library in Thanjavur. The book gives an insight into the working of the royal kitchens,” said S. Abaji Rajah Bhonsle. For the next few days, the Dakshin at ITC Kakatiya will offer an array of exclusive heirloom recipes from the royal kitchen. Some of the dishes that come highly recommended from the Maharaja himself are: the ‘Mashyache Kebab’, Murrel fish fillets made in green chili and pan-fried in ghee; the ‘Komdiche Kebab’, chicken kebab made with coriander, pepper, and ginger; ‘Kesari Maas’, mutton mince soaked in saffron and a few select spices and the ‘Komda Pulao’, a popular Tanjore special chicken pulao and a must-try from the menu. There are enough choices for people who prefer vegetarian food with dishes such as the ‘Khendatta’, a vegetable curry with four kinds of pulses; ‘Porathi Kozhambu’, curry made of brinjal with coconut and chilies; ‘Shakar Biranji’, sweetened pulao with almonds, coconut and sultanas. These are

just some of the dishes that will transport the city folk back in time. When asked about his favourite dish, the Maharaja said “I like our traditional sambar and idly. Not many know that that was sambar was originated in the kitchen of Thanjavur Maratha.” Digging into history we get to know that during the reign of Shahuji, the royal kitchens were busy creating a dish called Amti using toor dal instead of moong dal and tamarind extract for kokum. Later this dish was named ‘sambhar after’ Sambhaji who was the second emperor of the Maratha Empire. However, this origin story remains a topic of contention among the food historians. Whether it originated in Tamil Nadu or Maharashtra, all we know today is that sambar has become a staple item in many households. The restaurant has also gone the extra mile of creating the royal ambience for the visitors. The royal food will be served till October 20 at the Dakshin, ITC Kakatiya at Begumpet. So hurry up and book your table before the royal food heads back to the palace. — ADY



Festival movie releases are always tricky to navigate as everyone wants to have their movie reach the audience first. Here is how the makers of *Venky Mama* dealt with this dilemma, reports **NAGARAJ GOUD**

An eventuality that could have led to the clash of titans was averted when better sense prevailed. The makers of *Venky Mama*, starring Victory Venkatesh and Naga Chaitanya, have decided to stay away from the Sankranti release date, leaving the festive season for other biggies like *Sarileru Neekevvaru* and *Ala Vaikunthapuramlo*. Last week, producer Suresh Babu, who has

CLASH OF THE TITANS AVERTED

jointly produced *Venky Mama* along with People Media Factory, decided to release the film during Sankranti keeping in mind the holidays. The film is made on a budget of Rs 50-55 crore. Realizing Babu's plans, the makers of *Sarileru Neekevvaru* and *Ala Vaikunthapuramlo* rushed to occupy the January 12th slot. But in a latest development, *The Pioneer* has learnt that Suresh is now looking to release his film early, whose shoot is over except for two days of work in December.

So what has led the leading producer to change his mind? A source close to *Venky Mama*'s production team confirmed to us that, "Producers Dil Raju, Anil Sunkara and S. Radha Krishna met Suresh Babu recently and asked him if he can reschedule his release. The chief of Suresh Productions told them he believes in a win-win situation and if he gets a solo window, he is happy to change the release date of *Venky Mama*. Radha Krishna and Raju have also moved their productions, *Bheeshma* and the '96 Telugu remake, to early next year



instead of December." "Likewise, *Disco Raja*, the distribution rights of which are with Asian Cinemas and Suresh Productions, has been deferred to the second half of January. So December is relatively less occupied now compared to what it was a couple of weeks ago. *Venky Mama* will now arrive in December. Suresh Babu will decide the exact date on Monday. Now, it remains to be seen whether both Mahesh Babu's and Allu Arjun's films will fight it out for January 12 or will one of them come a couple of days early," they added.

RAJASEKHAR in two minds over Pradeep's thriller drama?

The story is really good. And the screenplay has shaped up really well. The narration will be thrilling and entertaining, Dr Rajasekhar had said last month about his next with Tamil filmmaker Pradeep Krishnamoorthy. An emotional thriller, it was to be produced by G. Dhananjayan under his Creative Entertainers & Distributors. The makers even prepared a schedule and the idea was to wrap it up in a start-to-finish schedule in Hyderabad and Chennai. However, according to the grapevine, the actor has developed cold feet about featuring in the project. Unhappy with this, the makers seem have knocked on actor Sumanth's door. The project is said to be the official remake of Kannada hit *Kavuladaari*, a crime thriller, though the makers have gone on record.

The Pioneer has reached out to the executive producer of Pradeep's film, Siva Prasad, to check its status. He said, "We wanted to do one script initially with Rajasekhar sir but the team decided to do another one now. Dr Rajasekhar and the film's team will decide upon it shortly."

— NG



Krishna Vamsi to cast Prakash Raj, Ramya Krishna



Buzz about Krishna Vamsi directing the Telugu remake of Marathi super hit *Natsamrat* has been on rounds for the past two years. But the filmmaker has never commented on it. However, on Wednesday evening, an official word about the film went public: Krishna Vamsi will helm the project and Prakash Raj and Ramya Krishna will spearhead the project. Titled *Ranga Marthaanda*, the film



will be a joint production venture between Abhishek Jawkar and Madhu Kalipu. While not many details in the open, it is said that Uttej, Vamsi's frequent collaborator, has been tasked to adapt the script to Telugu 'sensibilities'. "By retaining the soul of the original, Vamsi is keen on giving a complete new spin to the narrative," a source close to the unit said.

This would be the second time that Vamsi, in his illustrious career, would be handling a remake. His *Chandralekha*

(1998), starring Nagarjuna, was a remake of a Malayalam hit of the same name directed by Priyadarshan. *Natsamrat* told the story of a veteran Shakespearean actor (played by Nana Patekar) who retires from the stage into the painful tragedy of old age, facing his ungrateful family alone. The film was the screen adaptation of noted Marathi playwright Kusumagraj's iconic Marathi play *Natsamrat* which was first staged in 1970. Prakash Raj will be stepping into the shoes of Patekar.

KEERTHY goes make up free for Kukunoor's film

Keerthy Suresh's first look from her film, a light-hearted sports drama laced with romance, with acclaimed director Nagesh Kukunoor was unveiled by the makers on Thursday in tune with her 27th birthday celebrations. For the first time in a film of hers, the actress has gone with make up and hairdo. "She has also shot for the film completely without make up and hairdo. It's just Keerthy in her truest form. I'm proud that I partly brought that side of her for the audience. She just looks breathtaking. With this film, just like *Mahanati*, her fame will transcend boundaries," film's co-producer Shravya Varma told *The Pioneer*.

The next schedule of the film will commence from November 11. "We have songs and climax that will be shot in this leg of filming and by December 1. The entire shoot will be completed soon after leaving us with a good two-month period for post-production. The shoot will take place in Pune, Hyderabad, Vikarabad and possibly in Bengaluru for a couple

of days. We are looking at January 31 for the film's release but we will confirm it mostly after the shoot ends. We will scale up promotions beginning Diwali post which we will unveil the first looks of Jagapathi Babu, Aadi Pinisetty and Rahul Ramakrishna. The film will be dubbed into Tamil as well," she said. — NG



MANCHU MANOJ confirms divorce with Pranathi

Speculations about Manchu Manoj and his wife Pranathi heading for a divorce did rounds for more than a year. Last June, the actor even denied the news. However, on Thursday, Manoj confirmed that he and his wife have divorced. In a lengthy post on Twitter, he said, "With a heavy heart I would like to inform that my divorce has come through and we have officially ended what was a beautiful and well-cherished relationship. We had our differences and we went through a lot of pain. After much introspection, we've decided to have our separate lives going forward. We always were and are two individuals who have all the respect and care towards each other. (sic)"

"Since my heart was not in the right place I couldn't act or concentrate on work. I wouldn't have survived this storm without the help of my family, friends and especially my fans who stood by me in my absence," he said and added from here on he would dedicate his life to acting. Manoj had married Pranathi in May 2015.



KGF ACTRESS TO MAKE TAMIL DEBUT WITH VIKRAM

KGF actress Srinidhi Shetty, who made her acting debut via Kannada film *KGF*, is all set to foray into Tamil filmdom with Vikram's next yet-untitled project. An official announcement from the makers is yet awaited.

It is learnt from reliable sources that Srinidhi is most likely to be pared with Vikram in the project, current dubbed Chiyaan Vikram 58. Priya Bhavani Shankar is believed to be playing one of the leads as well.

To be produced by 7 Screen Studio in association with Viacom 18 Studios, the project went on the floors recently and the makers plan to release it in April 2020.

"This film will be a pan-Indian project catering to the Tamil, Hindi and Telugu audience. It will be produced on a massive scale in association with Viacom 18 Motion Pictures. The cast and technicians will have big names of all industries collaborating for this film," reads a statement from the makers.

The project marks the maiden collaboration of Vikram

and director Ajay Gnanamuthu, who is best known for helming Demonte Colony and last year's Imaikka Nodigal starring Nayanthara.

Talking about the project, Ajay said, "The only thing I can divulge right now is that Vikram's role will be a challenging one. Of course, he has always taken up challenging roles, but I think this one will be better than all of those."

The first look poster, which was released in June, features what appears to be Vikram in multiple avatars he will be seen in the film. There are rumours that Vikram might be seen playing a photographer in the film which will be an out-and-out action-thriller.

The industry grapevine is that Vikram will be seen sporting 25 different looks in the film.

The makers have approached a US-based to design Vikram's different looks in the film. The first look poster, which was released in June, features what appears to be Vikram in multiple

avatars he will be seen in the film.



NICOLE, ALEXANDER TO REUNITE FOR ROBERT EGGERS' THE NORTHMAN

With his latest film *The Lighthouse* set to bow this week-end, Robert Eggers' next film has cast two leads, *Big Little Lies* alums Nicole Kidman and Alexander Skarsgård. The pic, titled *The Northman*, is described as a Viking revenge saga set in Iceland at the turn of the 10th century. In talks to join Kidman and Skarsgård are *The Witch's* Anya Taylor-Joy, *It's Bill Skarsgård* and Oscar nominee Willem Dafoe. Eggers will direct the film from a script he co-wrote with Icelandic poet and novelist Sjón. *Midsummer* producer Lars Knudsen will produce, with New Regency financing. Skarsgård can next be seen in tentpole *Kong vs Godzilla*, and recently booked the plum part of Randall Flagg in CBS All Access' adaptation of Stephen King's *The Stand*. He is reppped by CAA. Kidman recently starred in the second season of *Big Little Lies* — her work in the first season earned her a Primetime Emmy for best actress — and will star as Gretchen Carlson opposite Charlize Theron and Margot Robbie in awards season contender *Bombshell*, which opens this December. Taylor-Joy recently wrapped a starring turn in *Last Night in Soho* for Edgar Wright and next stars in Working Title's adaptation of Jane Austen's *Emma*. *The Lighthouse* opens on October 18 and stars Dafoe alongside Robert Pattinson.

Why exactly Hill is passing the role is currently unknown. Insiders told *variety.com* that when the news was initially reported, it was very early in the negotiations and that a deal was far from closing. The news comes after Zoe Kravitz was recently tapped to play Selina Kyle, also known as Catwoman, in the Matt Reeves-directed movie that also stars Robert Pattinson as the Caped Crusader. One of the points brought up in negotiations was whether Hill would play the Penguin or Riddler, and now Reeves and Warner Bros. will have to go back to the drawing board to see which actors will take on those roles.

Hill starred opposite Emma Stone in Netflix's sci-fi series *Maniac* and made his directorial debut last fall with *MID90S*, which he also wrote. He most recently appeared alongside Matthew McConaughey in *Beach Bum*, which hit theatres in March. Pre-production on the Warner Bros.-DC Comics movie is expected to start this summer. An official start date has not yet been set, although a source said that filming could start in late 2019 or early 2020. *The Batman* is scheduled to hit theatres on June 25, 2021.



JONAH HILL REFUSES TO DO THE PART IN 'THE BATMAN'

BRITNEY SPEARS BACK WITH SIGNATURE BLONDE LOOK

Hollywood star Britney Spears is back with her signature blonde look. Spears, who has returned home after vacationing in Maui, recently shared a video where she flaunts her new

hair colour, reports *daily-mail.co.uk*. Along with the video, she wrote: "So maybe blondes do have more fun...It's not professional fun... but hey it's make-up ... but hey it's real and I'm watching Vacation !!! ...P.S. Just got

out of pool so hair is wet ... sorry." Dressed in a white tube top and shorts while sitting on a couch in her Los Angeles home, Spears looks directly into the camera and flashes facial expressions as if to say: "Oops... I did it again."



LINDA SHEDS WEIGHT FOR ROLE IN TERMINATOR

Looks like actor Linda Hamilton took her training sessions for the role in the upcoming *Terminator: Dark Fate* way too seriously. In order to reprise her role as Sarah Connor in the flick, the actor has lost huge amount of weight, reported *Fox News*.

"There were no carbs in my life for a year. I got so lean, when I arrived they had to build me a butt," Hamilton admitted while appearing on ITV's *Lorraine* Wednesday (local time). The 63-year-old actor added, "They added to the bottom, something you don't ever see coming — who wants more bottom? — but apparently... I shouldn't give my secrets away!"

Hamilton, who is returning to the silver screen with her iconic role also talked about the type of training she has been receiving. "Time off was military training, Spanish lessons, scuba, we had to do it all. There was never a moment we weren't learning something or acting," she said.

The *Separate Lives* star's co-actor, Mackenzie Davis, also agreed with her about how intense it is to work in *Terminator: Dark Fate*. "It was so hard making this god damn movie," she said. While comparing the male and the female cast, Hamilton jokingly said that the women are tougher than Arnold Schwarzenegger, who also returned to play the futuristic half human-half robot.

"We get to do some really good work together this time rather than just running from him," she said of reuniting with the action hero. The film which also stars Natalia Reyes, Diego Boneta, and Gabriel Luna is set to hit big screens on November 1, 2019



Eye opener

Proteas opener Elgar says India tour is a good learning curve for him

PTI ■ RANCHI

South Africa opener Dean Elgar says he got “stretched” as a cricketer and learned a lot more about himself during what has been a humbling India tour, part of which included visiting “smaller places and staying in hotels” not that good.

After managing a 1-1 draw in the T20 series, South Africa suffered big defeats in the first Two Tests of the three-match rubber against a dominant outfit led by Virat Kohli.

“It’s a challenging tour. You get stretched as a person, you get stretched as a cricketer, I think you get to know yourself quite a lot as a person when you come to the smaller places where the hotels are maybe not as good, and you get challenged on the field,” Elgar said.

“It’s always a good learning curve coming to India.”

The introduction of the World Test Championship means South Africa still have “quite a lot to play for” in the third Test despite conceding the series, Elgar said.

“Back in the day it was always a bit of a dead rubber game but now with the World Test Championships around, we still have points to play for,” Elgar said.

“We can still get 40 points by fol-



South Africa's Dean Elgar bats during fourth day of second Test between India and South Africa in Pune

AP

lowing our process against India in the last Test. That’s something we can’t neglect going into this game. There is still a lot to play for,” he added. Elgar, who became the first South African batsman to score a

hundred in India after nine years during the opening Test, said the Proteas batsmen will have to go back to the basics to tackle the Indian bowlers in the final game.

“It’s no secret that it’s been a bit

of a challenge for all of us. We haven’t played our greatest cricket, consistent cricket. But we are trying to be positive. The senior players are trying to keep the guys motivated. We are still representing our country

which is an immensely proud moment for every player.

“We still motivate everyone within our squad. It has been a challenging few weeks but it’s still not too gloomy for us. We are upbeat, the

morale in the camp is still very good.

“We still have one game and we can actually change quite a lot. We are still pretty hopeful and pretty positive going into the last Test,” he asserted.

India sans Kohli sweat it out at optional practice

PTI ■ RANCHI

Skipper Virat Kohli and opener Rohit Sharma skipped the optional practice session but spinner Kuldeep Yadav looked to hone his batting skills ahead of India’s third and final Test against South Africa here on Thursday.

Kuldeep, who sat out of the first two Tests, made full use of the net session displaying some elegant cover drives in their afternoon practice which was also attended by Ajinkya Rahane, Cheteshwar Pujara, Mayank Agarwal and Ishant Sharma among others.

Earlier chief coach Ravi Shastri and bowling coach Bharat Arun had a close look at the pitch which wore a dry look, indicating that it would have something for the spinners.

Spin duo of Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja have been the key bowlers for India, bagging 14 and 10 wickets each and Kuldeep’s inclusion will only be at the cost of a pacer.

The pacers too have made crucial contributions with Mohammed Shami claiming eight wickets at a strike rate of 41 and Umesh snapping six wickets at an even better strike rate of 21 and it remains to be seen if Kohli tinkers with his winning combination.

The Proteas trained in the morning session with focus on their batsmen.

South Africa’s training was attended by skipper Du Plessis, Temba Bavuma, Theunis de Bruyn, Quinton de Kock, Senuran Muthuswamy as they faced the net bowlers.

Vernon Philander was seen among the bowlers but the new-ball bowler was mostly seen honing his batting skills.



Self-destruction

‘Frustrated’ Markram punches object, injures wrist to be ruled out of 3rd Test

his injury.”

Markram has had a mixed tour of India. While he scored two hundreds in the practice games, he couldn’t carry forward his form into the Test series. After scoring 5 and 39 in the first Test, he was dismissed for a pair in the second.

He left for South Africa on

Thursday morning. The team management hasn’t called up any replacement.

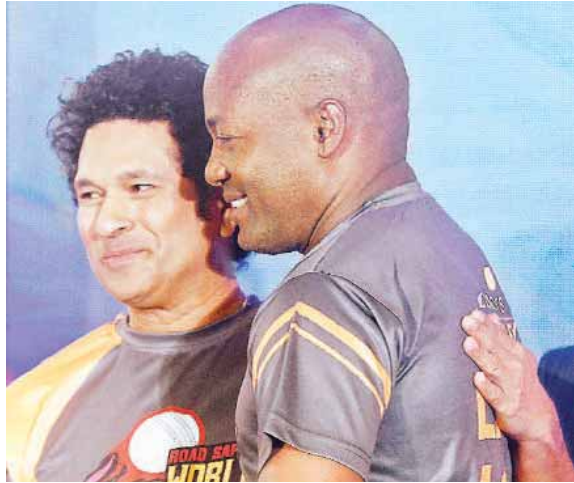
A disappointed Markram admitted he has let his team down and said, “It’s sad to be going home on this note and I completely understand what I’ve done wrong and take full accountability for it.”



PTI ■ RANCHI

“frustrated” South African batsman Aiden Markram was on Thursday ruled out of the third and final Test against India, having sustained a wrist injury after punching a solid object.

As per Cricket South Africa’s media release, “The injury took place following the opener’s dismissal in the second innings of the match. In a moment of frustration with his own performance, he lashed out at a solid object, resulting in



Indian pace attack reminds Lara of old Windies

PTI ■ MUMBAI

West Indian batting great Brian Lara on Thursday praised the current Indian pace attack, which reminded him of the deadly West Indian attacks of yore.

The Indian pace trio of Jasprit Bumrah, Ishant Sharma and Mohammed Shami, in 2018, picked the record 142 wickets among them in Test matches.

Asked what makes Indian team special, Lara said: “It’s the Indian pace attack. Unbelievable. I saw them in the West Indies. When you look at the quality — (Jasprit) Bumrah, (Mohammed) Shami, (Umesh) Yadav — all these guys, and the guys on the sidelines, like Bhuvni (Bhuvneshwar Kumar) are unbelievable.”

“It reminds me a little bit of the (pace bowling) strength that the West Indies had in the 80s and 90s. The reserve strength is very important in assessing a team’s ability. It means that your attack has quality,” Lara added.

Lara, who had scored 11,953 Test runs, was also lavish in his praise for Virat Kohli, whom he termed the ‘Ultimate Captain’.

“He’s (Kohli) the ultimate captain. In terms of his performances, he leads by example. And I mean that in all facets of the game, and off the field too. He is came off very well in the background of MS Dhoni, who laid the foundation, and did things in a different way.

“So, I think Indian cricket, as we all know, is headed in the right direction. It’s influenced by some of the best people, and is reaping the benefits of it,” Lara told reporters here.

Lara also seemed happy that a player of Rohit Sharma’s calibre is set to play regularly across formats.

“I think that Rohit is an awesome player in all formats of the game. Obviously, in the limited overs game, he’s been very successful. I don’t see any reason why he should not be in Test cricket. It seems that he has the passion to play and wants to prove himself on that stage (Test cricket) as well.

“To exclude a player like that (from the Test team) will be very difficult, with the talent that I see. So, hopefully, he will be successful. He is a gifted batsman,” said Lara.

Lara, who holds the record for highest individual run scorer in Tests, also welcomed the ICC move of Test Championship, saying it has provided contest to the game.

“I think (World Test Championship should have started earlier). In terms of Test Championship, where there is an end, it culminates into a team becoming Championship, that is something that should have happened a long time ago and happy to see it now. Even if you play against the minnows—Afghanistan, Bangladesh — it means something.

Al-Amin back in B’desh T20 team

PTI ■ DHAKA

Left-arm spinner Arafat Sunny and pacer Al-Amin Hossain were recalled as Bangladesh on Thursday announced a 15-member squad for next month’s three-game T20I series against India.

Opener Tamim Iqbal also made a comeback after a break during which he missed the tri-series at home involving Afghanistan and Zimbabwe.

Both Sunny and Hossain have been out of contention for a long time having played their last T20I in 2016.

The 33-year-old Sunny, who has taken 12 wickets in 10 T20Is, was suspended during the 2016 ICC World Twenty20 for an illegal bowling action. He had also spent two months in jail after being arrested in 2017 for his involvement in a family dispute.



Al-Amin Hossain in a file picture

The 29-year-old Hossain also last featured in the 2016 ICC World Twenty20.

“We have recalled Sunny because we need someone experienced for India, which is a tough country. Al-Amin comes

into the squad as some of our other fast bowlers are injured,” said chief selector Minhajul Abedin.

The selectors also decided to drop Sabbir Rahman, Nazmul Hossain Shanto, Rubel Hossain and Taijul Islam from the team of the last T20 Bangladesh played during the tri-nation series at home.

The T20I series will begin with the first match on November 3 at Arun Jaitley stadium in New Delhi. The next two games are at Rajkot and Nagpur on November 7 and 10 respectively.

Squad: Shakib Al Hasan (C), Tamim Iqbal, Liton Das, Soumya Sarkar, Naim Sheikh, Mushfiqur Rahim, Mahmudullah Riyad, Afif Hossain, Musaddek Hossain, Aminul Islam Biplob, Arafat Sunny, Mohammad Saifuddin, Al-Amin Hossain, Mustafizur Rahman, Shafiul Islam.

Reputed coach can help Indian sprinters: Carmelita

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Three-time Olympic medallist Carmelita Jeter is impressed with India’s Dutee Chand and said a reputed coach can guide the country’s talented sprinters reach the highest level in future.

“I have seen Dutee Chand compete at the Olympic Games. She has done some remarkable things. I hope more young ladies will step up and represent the country,” said Jeter, who is the international event ambassador at the 15th edition of the Airtel Delhi Half Marathon.

“I feel that all sprinters need good coaches. If a big name coaches Indian athletes, then you will certainly see a rise of Indian sprinters in the future,” said Jeter.

The fastest woman alive, Jeter is delighted to see over 40,000 participants ready to give it their all at the Half Marathon, which is an IAAF Gold Label Road Race, on Sunday.

A world record holder, Jeter had finished with a winning time of 10.64 seconds at the Shanghai Golden Grand Prix in 2009, giving her a spot in history as the second-fastest woman ever



in the 100 meters.

Carmelita Jeter was a part of the historic 4x100m USA team which set the world record at the 2012 Olympics. The American said that sharing a medal with three other women was even more special than an individual medal.

“It was a moment for the USA team. It was a special team out there. People think that four of the fastest runners form a good 4x100m group, but no, a team has to have four people who trust each other and have chemistry. It was great to share a Gold medal with a team. Winning a medal with three other women was even more special,” she said.

Marsh set to miss Pak Test

AFP ■ SYDNEY

All-rounder Mitchell Marsh is set to miss the opening Test against Pakistan after fracturing his right hand punching a wall, with Australian coach Justin Langer branding him “an idiot”.

The Western Australia captain took his frustrations out in the changing rooms after he was dismissed for 53 in a Sheffield Shield match against Tasmania on Sunday.

Scans revealed a fracture, and an apologetic Marsh said he faced up to six weeks on the sidelines.

That would almost certainly rule him out of the opening Test against Pakistan in Brisbane starting on November 21.

“It’s my middle finger, just below the wrist — a fracture straight through



the bone,” Marsh, who was sporting a cast on his arm, told reporters.

Marsh had only been recalled to the Test side for the final game of the Ashes against England last month after a long period out of favour and there are no guarantees he will win a spot back.

“It’s a good lesson for me. Hopefully it’s a good lesson for other people as well,” added Marsh, whose blunder could open the door for Marcus Stoinis in Brisbane.

“At the end of the day, it’s a game of cricket. Sometimes you get beaten, sometimes you get out, and you can’t be punching walls.”

SL names T20 squad for Aus tour

AFP ■ COLOMBO

Sri Lanka’s T20 skipper Lasith Malinga along with Kusal Perera and Niroshan Dikwella, who skipped the recent Pakistan tour citing security fears, were on Thursday included in a 16-man squad to play against Australia.

The opening match will be at the Adelaide Oval on Oct 27 with the second at Gabba on Oct 30 and the final game at the MCG on November 1.

The squad: Malinga, K Perera, K Mendis, D Gunathilaka, A Fernando, Dikwella, D Shanaka, S Jayasuriya, B Rajapaksa, O Fernando, W Hasaranga, L Sandakan, N Pradeep, L Kumara, I Udana & Kasun Rajitha.

India’s campaign end in Denmark

PTI ■ ODENSE

India’s campaign at the \$ 775,000 Denmark Open came to a disappointing end with the trioka of PV Sindhu, B Sai Praneeth and Sameer Verma — all exiting after suffering straight-game losses, here on Thursday.

World Champion Sindhu, seeded fifth, yet again struggled to buck the trend of recent early exits as she was knocked out after she lost 14-21, 17-21 to Korea,s An Se Young in a 40-minute second-round women,s singles clash at the BWF World Tour Super 750 event.

It turned out to be a dismal day for Indian shuttlers in general as B Sai Praneeth, Sameer Verma, and men’s doubles pair of Satwiksairaj Rankireddy and Chirag Shetty also went down in straight games in their second rounds.

While Praneeth was outclassed by two-time World Champion Kento Momota of Japan 6-21, 14-21 in yet another dominating show, Sameer lost 12-21, 10-21 to Olympic champion Chen Long of China. Thailand Open champions Satwik and Chirag also suffered a 16-21 15-21 defeat against sixth seed Chinese combination of Han Cheng Kai and Zhou Hao Dong in men’s doubles.

Later in the day, Pranaav Chopra and N Sikki Reddy put up a gallant fight before going down 24-26 21-13 11-21 to fourth seeded Malaysian pair of Chan Peng Soon and Goh Liu Ying in the mixed doubles competition.

Wawrinka reach Antwerp quarters



Stan Wawrinka celebrates after win

AGENCIES ■ ANTWERP

Stan Wawrinka was made to work hard at the European Open on Wednesday as the Swiss veteran outlasted Feliciano Lopez 6-7(4) 6-4 7-6(4) to reach the quarter-finals in Antwerp.

The 34-year-old Wawrinka, seeking his first ATP trophy since he lifted the title in Geneva two years ago, served 17 aces — one less than Lopez — and converted one out of four break-point opportunities to edge the tight match.

Up next for the world number 18 is unseeded Gilles Simon, who powered past his French compatriot Jo-Wilfried Tsonga 6-4, 7-5.

Wawrinka has beaten Simon four times in seven meetings but the Frenchman prevailed in straight sets the last time they played each other on the hardcourts of Shanghai in 2016.

Argentina,s Guido Pella joined the duo in the last eight after beating South Korea,s Kwon Soon-woo 7-5, 7-5 to set up a clash with Ugo Humbert or second seed David Goffin.

In first-round action, Pablo Cuevas beat Hugo Dellien 6-4, 6-3 and will take on Briton Andy Murray next. American Frances Tiafoe overcame Germany’s Yannick Maden 7-6(7), 6-3.