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WHY CONG OWES
AN ANSWER

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ADANI AWARDS AUD 100 MN OZ RAIL
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WHITEWASH

HYDERABAD, SATURDAY OCTOBER 19, 2019; PAGES 12 ₹3



the pioneer



AM RATNAM LEADS
RACE TO FUND PK'S
COMEBACK FILM

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CJI Gogoi recommends Justice Bobde as successor

NEW DELHI: Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi on Friday sent a letter to the Centre recommending Justice S A Bobde, who is next in seniority, as his successor. Official Sources told PTI that Justice Gogoi wrote a letter to the Ministry of Law and Justice recommending Justice Bobde to be the next chief justice. Justice Gogoi, who was sworn in as the 46th Chief Justice of India on October 3, 2018, will demit office on November 17. Official sources said the chief justice has gone by the convention to recommend the name of the next senior judge after him as his successor.

UP CM bans mobiles in all colleges

LUCKNOW: The Yogi Adityanath government in Uttar Pradesh has banned the use of mobile phones in colleges and universities in the state. A circular to this effect has been issued by the Directorate of Higher Education in Uttar Pradesh. The circular mentions a blanket ban on the use of mobile phones inside universities and colleges. Students will no longer be allowed to take or use mobile phones inside universities and colleges. The ban is also applicable to teachers across all universities and colleges in the state. The ban on the use of mobile phones is also applicable to teaching faculty of all UP universities and colleges.

Guj-cadre IPS Anup Kumar is new NSG chief

NEW DELHI: Senior IPS officer of Gujarat cadre Anup Kumar Singh has been appointed as director general of the National Security Guard (NSG), an official order said on Friday. The appointment of Singh, a 1985-batch IPS officer, as the DG of the 'black cats commando' force was approved by the Appointments Committee of the Cabinet (ACC) led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi. The post was lying vacant for over two months after the retirement of Sudeep Lakhtakia, a 1984-batch Indian Police Service (IPS) officer of Telangana cadre. "The appointment (of Singh) will be from the date of joining the post and up to September 30, 2020 i.e. date of his superannuation or till further orders, whichever is earlier," an order issued by the Department of Personnel and Training said.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:

Ashwini & Krishna Paksha

Panchangam

Tithi : Panchami: 07:43 am

Nakshatram: Mrigashirsha: 05:41 pm

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

Rahukalam: 09:07 am - 10:34 am

Yamagandam: 01:27 pm - 02:54 pm

Variyam: 02:09 am - 03:46 am

Gulika: 06:13 am - 07:40 am

Good Time: (to start any important work)

Amritakalam: 08:38 am - 10:16 pm

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

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Thunderstorms

Temp: 28/22

Humidity: 90%

Sunrise: 06:09

Sunset: 05:51

Current Weather Conditions

Updated October 18, 2019 5:00 PM

ENOUGH IS ENOUGH

HC asks TS Govt to initiate talks with RTC staff

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Even as the State is bracing up for a bandh on Saturday, called by RTC unions that have been on strike since October 5th, the Telangana High Court on Friday ordered the State government to immediately initiate talks with TSRTC employees' unions and rapped the government for its indifferent attitude despite the hardships caused to people across the state by the stir. Surprisingly, the HC even specified the time to start talks at 10-30 am. The state government has been told to complete the talks and submit a report thereon to the Court on October 28.

Taking serious note of the government's disdain for RTC strike, the High Court sought to know why no steps were taken by the government to initiate talks with RTC employees' unions and put an end to the strike, though the agitation has been continuing for two weeks. The court rapped the government for not appointing TSRTC's Managing Director; underlining that had the MD been appointed, it would have instilled confidence among RTC employees.



- Raps government for its callousness towards people, striking employees
- Sets 10-30 am today as time to begin discussions
- Gives time till Oct 28 for report on outcome of talks

"People are powerful in a democracy. If they revolt, no one can stop them. Why the government did not initiate talks with TSRTC employees unions, though employees have been agitating for more than two weeks? Even political parties and employees unions have come in support of RTC strike. If the government does not act, strike might lead to a bigger crisis," the HC is said to have observed during the hearing, while highlighting how strikes have derailed the economy of the Philippines.

The HC also questioned the stance and steps taken up the government in the wake of RTC JACs' call for a statewide bandh on Saturday.

When advocate-general Ramchandra Rao said that the government had not been able to fulfil RTC employees' demands as TSRTC's financial position was poor, the HC pointed out that most of the demands raised by RTC employees are not related to the financial aspect and came down heavily on the government's callousness on the issue.

Temporary RTC driver arrested for bid to molest lady conductor

PV KONDAL RAO
■ ADILABAD

A temporary driver of RTC was booked by the Jaipur police here for his alleged bid to molest a woman conductor in Mancherial district on Thursday night. The driver, Srinivas, was operating a bus from Chennai town to Mancherial in the Jaipur Police Station limits. The incident reportedly took place when the bus was passing through the forest belt.



Srinivas

It was alleged that the driver deliberately took the bus to the spot and began to molest the conductor. The conductor, hired temporarily, raised a hue

After being alerted by the villagers, the Jaipur police came to the rescue of the conductor and booked a case of misbehaviour against the driver

and cry. The residents of the village then tried to catch hold of the driver.

After being alerted by the villagers, the Jaipur police came to the rescue of the conductor

Chidambaram conspired with son: CBI

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Former finance minister P Chidambaram "misused his official position" in granting approval to a FDI proposal of INX Media and INX News Pvt Ltd in lieu of "illegal gratification" in India and through off-shore payments, the CBI claimed in its charge sheet filed against him and 13 others in the INX Media corruption case. The charge sheet in which 74-year-old Chidambaram, his son Karti and 12 others including bureaucrats were accused of causing loss to the exchequer by committing offences under the Prevention of Corruption (PC) Act was filed in a court on a day the Supreme Court reserved its verdict on the Congress veteran's plea against the Delhi High Court order denying him bail in the corruption case.

Besides Chidambaram and Karti, the final report also named S Bhaskararaman, Karti's Chartered Accountant and Peter (Pratim) Mukherjee, the then director of INX Media Limited.

The name of Indrani Mukerjee, a former promoter of INX Media and an accused-turned approver, also appears in the final report.

Telangana braces up for shutdown today

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana State is bracing up for a total shutdown on Saturday, with the TSRTC Joint Action Committee calling for 'Telangana bandh' in support of its 14-day-old strike that has moral and vocal support of all opposition parties, employees, students' unions and civil society organizations.

JAC convener Ashwathama Reddy on Friday urged all sections of people to extend their support to Saturday's shutdown and make it a big success.

All opposition parties-- BJP, Congress, TDP, TJS, CPI, CPM; TNGOs and TGOs; students' unions, including OU JAC, civil society organizations and various caste-centric organizations have urged people to make the bandh a huge success.

Congress Legislature Party leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka asked TRS leaders K Keshava Rao and others to participate in the bandh. He said TRS leaders should decide whether they want to stand by people. He alleged that Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao was scheming to sell RTC's and other government assets to private persons. He condemned the preventive arrests of various leaders. He said that the Telangana Congress would approach the Centre and meet the Governor of the state on the issue very soon.

Telangana Jana Samithi



Advocates' JAC burning an effigy of the govt as part of 'Chalo Bus Bhavan' at Nampally Court in Hyderabad on Friday

- Oppn parties, govt employees, teachers, students' unions, civil society organizations extend support to bandh called by RTC unions
- TNGOs, TGOs and revenue dept to stage demonstrations during lunch hour

(TJS) chief Prof Kodandaram opined that the bandh was very important. Businessmen would observe it voluntarily, he said.

TTDP chief L Ramana alleged that KCR had been provoking RTC workers by making irresponsible statements. The state government should divert the Rs.900 crore revenue it had earned through liquor tenders to mend matters in RTC, he suggested. He commented that Ministers Errabelli Dayakar Rao and Gangula Kamalakara were speaking like 'adda koolis'.

House and preventive arrests

Late on Friday night the police were reportedly preparing to make house arrests of prominent persons and take several other people into preventive custody for obviating major trouble on Saturday. Besides, special police forces have been deployed at bus stations and depots to protect RTC's assets.

CPM state secretary Thammineni Veerabhadram and CPI state leaders Sudhakar, CPI (ML) state leader Rangarao and others said that strike had the support of entire Telangana.

Continued on Page 2



I-T raids on Kalki trusts reveal Rs 500 cr black money

PNS ■ CHENNAI

In a massive search operation covering 40 premises of religious trusts and other entities that preach about 'oneness philosophy' and run wellness centres, the Income Tax Department has found Rs 500 crore of undisclosed income and links to investments in tax havens.

The tax authorities have seized cash amounting to Rs 43.9 crore during the search operations. Foreign currencies worth \$2.5 million (Rs 18 crore) and about 88 kg of gold have also been discovered and seized.

"Total value of seizure so far is approximately Rs 93 crore. The undisclosed income of the group detected so far is estimated at more than Rs 500

crore," the Tax Department said in a release.

The search proceedings are still in progress. "The search action which is still in progress has covered about 40 premises located in Chennai, Hyderabad, Bangalore and Varadiahpalem," the tax department said.

The group of trusts and companies run by a spiritual guru has been found to be investing in a number of companies in India and abroad including in tax havens.

As per the income tax (I-T), some of these companies based in China, the US, Singapore, the UAE, etc have been receiving payments from foreign clients who attend the various residential 'wellness' courses offered in India.

Continued on Page 2

Power sector leads in job creation: Transco CMD

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

TS Genco and Transco CMD Devulapalli Prabhakar Rao, credited with transforming the power sector in Telangana, has said the Electricity Department has emerged as the top job creator in the state by providing employment to 34,808 people over the past five years.

"Electricity Department has created the highest number of jobs in Telangana, after the formation of new state. TS Genco and Transco have together created 34,808 jobs after formation of Telangana. 2000 more jobs will be filled soon. Thus Electricity Department has emerged as the number one department in Telangana. On an average, 7,000 jobs are



MD Devulapalli Prabhakar Rao

being created in Electricity Department per year. No other state, including neighbouring Andhra Pradesh, has filled up these many jobs. 9 percent of revenue is spent on employees by the electricity department in

Telangana, while power utilities in other states spend between 5 to 7 percent. These new jobs were created due to the vision of CM K Chandrashekar Rao," Prabhakar Rao said.

While 1,17,177 jobs were filled by all the departments after formation of Telangana, the Electricity Department accounted for 29 percent of the jobs. TS Genco and Transco provided more jobs than TSPSC, he added.

In a press release issued on Friday, Prabhakar Rao said that the Electricity Department, by creating a large number of jobs, had enabled increase in power generation, thus contributing to development of agriculture and industry in the State.

37.7% of milk samples fail to meet quality norms

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Processed milk, including of major brands, have failed to meet the prescribed quality norm in 37.7 per cent of the total samples tested, according to an FSSAI study.

In safety parameters too, 10.4 per cent of the processed milk samples were non-compliant, much higher than 4.8 per cent in raw milk.

Adulteration was found in only 12 of the total samples surveyed with maximum reported in Telangana, followed by Madhya Pradesh and Kerala, the study said.

The FSSAI study collected a total 6,432 milk samples from

The FSSAI study collected a total 6,432 milk samples from 1,103 towns and cities between May and Oct 2018 in all states and union territories

1,103 towns and cities between May and October 2018 in all states and union territories. About 40.5 per cent of the total sample was processed milk, while the rest was raw milk.

To check this, the regulator has directed the organised dairy sector to strictly start

complying with the quality norms, and put in place 'testing and inspection' at entire value chain by January 1, 2020.

"Common man believes that adulteration is more in milk. But our study shows that contamination was more a serious problem than adulteration. It is unacceptable to see contaminants in processed milk including in big brands," Food Safety and Standards Authority of India (FSSAI) CEO Pawan Agarwal said after releasing the study.

More than adulteration, contaminants was a serious problem as sub-

stances such as Aflatoxin-M1, antibiotics and pesticides -- were found more in the processed milk, he said.

On adulteration, Agarwal said, "While, there is concern, but this dispels wide spread speculation that liquid milk in the country is largely adulterated".

Sharing the find-

ings of the study, the CEO said as far as the safety parameter was concerned, about 10.4 per cent of the total processed milk samples (of 2,607) failed to comply with the FSSAI norm as contaminants like aflatoxin-M1, antibiotics and pesticides were found.

"The problem of Aflatoxin-M1 is more dominant in processed milk than the raw milk. Tamil Nadu, Delhi and Kerala were top three states where Aflatoxin residue was found maximum," Agarwal said.



NPCIL for fleet mode atomic reactors: Vyas

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

To increase standardisation and bring modularity in building atomic power reactors, the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) is going for fleet mode construction for future projects, DAE Secretary K N Vyas said on Friday. Speaking at the India Energy Forum's Nuclear Conclave, he said 17 new reactors are now in the pipeline, with seven already under construction.

"We are going in for fleet mode for construction, there-



by reducing construction costs and speeding up construction time," Vyas, who is also the Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, said.

Continued on Page 2

‘IoT will be a game changer’

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

When IoT becomes mainstream, it will be a game changer for not only enhancing the economy but also the lives of people, said Jayesh Ranjan, IT Principal Secretary here on Friday.

He was speaking at Asia's largest LoRaWAN conference, The Things Conference India 2019 held at HICC Hyderabad. In his keynote, Jayesh said, "The Government of Telangana has been actively adopting IoT and the 100 smart cities initiative is one such example. Pilots in Telangana have seen tremendous results in many sectors including power-saving, healthcare, weather-monitoring. LoRaWAN plays a crucial role in making IoT sustainable and affordable. I congratulate iB Hubs and CyberEye for hosting such conferences. This year, the conference is much bigger with richer insights, inviting the best of industry leaders."

Focused on IoT and LoRaWAN, and bringing together global leaders and government bodies, this 2-day global conference drives India



Jayesh Ranjan, IT Principal Secretary and others at Asia's largest LoRaWAN conference in Hyderabad on Friday

to become a smart nation at a low cost. Wienke Giezeman, the Founder and CEO of 'The Things Network' said "We're in India for the second time and it's great to see the entrepreneurial energy and high technological competence spreading across the region. It's an honour to see individuals and companies embracing LoRaWAN and building solutions to drive business value.

The Things Network is an open network to build IoT applications. It is becoming a global movement with more than 1,00,000 developers and many companies aggressively adopting LoRaWAN technology".

Experts from organizations, including ISRO, Microchip, MultiTech, ARM, The Things Industries came together to discuss the possibilities with

IoT and LoRaWAN. The event was presented by CyberEye, a technology company with a vision to build a smart, secure and sustainable planet. CyberEye is supported end-to-end by iB Hubs.

Kavya, CEO of iB Hubs said, "We want to see India as a global leader in Industry 4.0 technologies. When we have such an ecosystem, innovations flourish and startups thrive. To

The Government of Telangana has been actively adopting IoT. The 100 Smart Cities initiative is one such area, said the IT Principal Secretary Jayesh Ranjan

foster the adoption of Industry 4.0 worldwide and bring advanced technologies to India, we are very proud to announce iB Hubs Global Tech Valley - The World's largest Upskilling Centre - our 1130 acre campus in California, USA." More than 60+ speakers from 10+ countries and 700+ delegates from across the world have joined this International conference in India.

Don't cultivate red jowar, ryots urged

PNS ■ NIZAMABAD

District Collector MRM Rao appealed to farmers in the district not to cultivate red jowar since there was no demand for this crop in the market. "If any farmer wants to cultivate red jowar, they should do so only after signing an agreement with seed companies on the price and procurement of the yield," he said, at a review meeting with agriculture officials here.

Urging farmers to go for other crops which will bring profits, Rao also instructed the agriculture officials to create awareness among the farmers about the need to avoid red jowar cultivation and go for other revenue generating crops. Nizamabad Joint Collector Venkateshwarlu, In-charge JDA Wajeed, Nizamabad RDO Venkateshwarlu, Armoor RDO Srinivas and agriculture officers participated in the meeting.



Collector calls for making Peddapalli plastic-free

PNS ■ PEDDAPALLI

District Collector A Sri Devasena on Friday said it was the responsibility of every citizen to eradicate plastic and make the district a plastic-free zone.

As part of Swachh Friday, Collector along with local MLA Dasari Manohar Reddy and others collected plastic material strewn from Rangampalli to Shanthinagar on Rajiv Rahadari here.

Speaking on the occasion, she said that more than 10 quintals of plastic was collected within a few hours. "It is possible to remove plastic from the district if all sections of society are involved," she averred.

Besides damage to environment, people have been affected by chronic diseases like cancer and asthma with the usage of plastic material. So, government has banned the usage of single use plastic, she informed.

Municipal Administration Minister KT Rama Rao has also instructed to take up spe-



Collector A Sri Devasena along with local MLA D Manohar Reddy collecting plastic material in Peddapalli on Friday

cial sanitation driver in urban areas too on the lines on 30 days action plan.

As part of Swachha-Hi-Seva programme, government officials and public representatives have taken up plastic collection programme in all four municipalities of the district.

Informing that awareness programme have been taken up to educate the people about

the danger of plastic use, she appreciated public representatives for participating in plastic eradication programmes.

Manohar Reddy opined that plastic free Peddapalli was possible only with the involvement of public. Advising the people to follow the instruction of the officials, he wanted the public to stop usage of plastic materials.

Diagnostic labs face music

PNS ■ WANAPARTHY

The District Medical and Health department officials have raided various diagnostics laboratories and have shut down two of them for conducting lab investigations on patients who were referred by RMPs, to receive commissions from the laboratory operators. "These laboratories are being run by unqualified persons. In one case, a LIC agent was conducting tests on patients. These were supposed to be run by a doctor with a MBBS qualification," said Dr Srinivasulu.

"Of the lab testing fee, nearly 40 per cent goes to the RMPs, who referred patients to these labs," he further said and added that higher antibiotics were being given to patients by RMPs, which was not at all needed in most of the cases and stressed that only primary and first-aid was supposed to be given by RMPs. In Pebbair, the health department had also received information about a case of illegal abortion and caught the parents doing so red-handed recently.

NPCIL for fleet mode atomic...

Continued from Page 1

He said India is an old player in the nuclear energy sector with the first research reactor in Asia being commissioned in the country.

"Our learning curve was steep and we could ramp up the reactor construction to 22 reactors over the last few decades, the seventh largest fleet in the world," Vyas added.

Though the overall contribution to the electrical grid does appear insignificant, this has been due to the smaller capacity reactors built initially to gain experience in this

complex technology, without international support, he noted.

Participating in the event, Minister of State in the Prime Minister's Office Jitendra Singh said awareness needs to be created among the public about busting the myths associated with the use of nuclear energy.

Vyas said nuclear energy is a source of energy to meet the rising energy demands of the country and it is an instrument of 'ease of living' in one's day-to-day life.

Former Atomic Energy Commission Chairman Anil Kakodkar said the access to the

imported uranium can accelerate the nuclear programme's size as well as large scale thorium deployment.

Referring to the waiver of the Nuclear Suppliers Group (NSG) to India in 2008, he said the nuclear programme now has much less constraints.

DAE Secretary Vyas further talked about short-term actions on the part of Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) such as early movement on the Fast Breeder Reactor (FBR) deployment and early deployment of indigenous Light Water Reactors.

Prisoners sell plate of idly at Rs 5!

PNS ■ MAHABUBNAGAR

The Mahabubnagar district jail authorities have come up with a unique initiative to reform prisoners and generate revenue. In this regard, the authorities have set up an idly centre near the jail premises, which will be maintained by the prisoners.

The initiative has been receiving huge response from the public, who have been thronging the tiffin centre in

large numbers, which is being sold for a mere Rs 5 per plate.

According to the authorities, the tiffin centre generated revenue between Rs 7,000 and Rs 9,000 in the first two days after being set up. After deducting operational costs, the department was able to save around Rs 3,000 per day. Not just the tiffin centre, Mahabubnagar District Jail authorities have also been running a petrol bunk and also a store to sell utility items.



‘TREDA Property Show’ begins on grand note

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Minister for Roads and Buildings Vemula Prashanth Reddy has inaugurated the three-day 'TREDA Property Show' here at HITEC Exhibition Ground on Friday. Over 100 real estate companies, banks, financial institutions and suppliers are participating in the property show.

Real estate companies would be displaying their range of properties suited to various classes of customers. Well-known financial institutions like State Bank of India, LIC Housing Finance Ltd, Axis Bank, Bank of Baroda, HDFC Ltd, ICICI Bank Ltd, Sundaram BNP Paribas Home Finance Ltd, IIFL Home finance Ltd would be setting up



Minister for Roads and Buildings Vemula Prashanth addresses the gathering at the property show in Hyderabad on Friday

their stalls, offering their home loan products. Suppliers will display their products and ser-

vices integral to the real estate industry. R Chalapathi Rao, president - Telangana Real

Estate Developers Association (TREDA) said, "This year marks a special occasion for us

Good times ahead for Forest Dept: Indrakaran

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Minister for Forests, Environment, Law and Endowments Allola Indrakaran Reddy has inaugurated the two-day workshop of Forest Officers at Forest Academy, Dulapally here on Friday.

Speaking on the occasion, the Minister expressed happiness at the extended monsoon rains that really helped in the establishment of plantations. He appreciated the tradition of holding such workshop once in six-months so that officers can discuss various issues and together come up with practical solutions.

He mentioned that the support of Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao for Forest Department is unprecedented. The CM recently formed a five-Minister committee to look in to ways by which green cover/forest protection etc. in the state could be improved. The committee would be meeting very soon and chalk out a road map.

The Minister released the annual plan of operations for 2019-20 under CAMPA and said that approval is given for Rs 501 crore which is the largest in over the last ten years. He called up on the officers to utilise the fund effectively in view of the recent recruitment of over 67 Forest Range Officers, 90 section officers and 1,857 Beat Officers and with a total strength of



Minister Indrakaran Reddy at the two-day workshop of Forest Officers on Friday

“The support of Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao for the Forest Department is unprecedented. The officials should utilise the funds effectively in view of the recruitment of over 67 FROs, 90 section officers

INDRAKARAN REDDY, Forests Minister

nearly 7,000 manpower. Budget for other important items of works would also be presented to Finance Department again, he said.

He exhorted the officers to keep the goal as achieving 33% of green cover in the state. Responsibility of the forest officers is not only to raise good quality seedlings, but covers protection and survival of plants in an integrated manner. Three crores of Tall seedlings to be raised and plan for raising 100 crore seedlings for coming year.

The Minister emphasised that forest protection should

receive highest attention. Additional resources like use of Drones, CC cameras, etc would be provided. Boundary trench work would be continued to permanently mark forest boundaries and more than 2000 vehicles are sanctioned for the department for effective protection. PD Act would be used wherever required to curb smuggling of forest produce.

Special Chief Secretary Environment, Forest, Science & Technology Rajeshwar Tiwari highlighted that the government would provide all the support to the department.



NIMS gets new imaging equipment

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Health Minister Etela Rajender has inaugurated high-end medical equipment worth Rs 22 crore at NIMS here on Friday. The top of the line medical imaging devices will be specifically useful for poor patients who can now avail the facilities at affordable cost.

The imaging devices acquired by the NIMS include PET-CET scan, Single-Photon

Emission Computed Tomography (SPECT)-CT and a Dual Head SPECT gamma camera. All the medical equipment are imaging devices meant to detect cancer early which goes a long way in better treatment results.

"For the past few years, we have undertaken a lot of developmental activities at NIMS. We are in the process of upgrading each and every aspect of NIMS for the benefit of poor patients," he said.

National Science Exhibition in Nov

PNS ■ WARANGAL

In-charge District Education Officer (DEO) K Narayana Reddy appealed to the managements of all the schools in district to participate and make the 'Jawaharal Nehru national science, maths and environmental exhibition 2019-20' a big success. In a press release, the officer said that they were taking steps to organise the exhibition in the second week of November.

I-T raids on Kalki trusts...

Continued from Page 1

The department is investigating into diversion of income taxable in India to offshore entities by the group in this process.

Further, it has been revealed that one of the group trusts may be providing accommodation entries for other parties by receiving donations from them and then returning the money back under the garb of expenses and receiving a small percentage as fee.

"Instances have also been found where the group was not accounting for money received from foreign clients in cash in foreign currency and then exchanging the same in the grey market. All these leads are being pursued and investigation is in

progress," the Tax Department said.

The group which was founded by a spiritual guru in the 1980s with 'oneness' philosophy has also diversified into several sectors including real estate, construction, sports, etc in India and abroad.

It is presently managed and controlled by the spiritual leader who laid the foundation of the group and his son.

The courses attract residential customers from abroad and the group earns substantial receipts in foreign exchange. There was intelligence that the group had been suppressing its receipts which were ploughed into investment in huge tracts of landed property in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA, POLICE DEPARTMENT
Office of the Commissioner of Police, Hyderabad City.

No. 199/CTC-HYD/Tq/uniform/2019 (TENDER NOTIFICATION) Date: 17-10-2019.

Tenders are invited for stitching the uniforms/Dress material for Tentatively allotted (3887) SC/PTCs to all the training centres of Hyderabad City. Minimum 2 years experience in the profession of Stitching the uniforms/Dress material at any reputed Educational Training Centre/Private Companies, qualified Govt. Offices. Tender Schedule forms can be obtained from this office (Principal, CTC, Hyd, Nearby City College) on payment of Rs.100/- (Rupees One Hundred only) Tender schedule dates are as follows:- 1. Schedule Sale Opening Date & Time: 21.10.2019, 11.00 AM. 2. Schedule Sale Closing Date & Time: 28.10.2019, 3.00 PM. 3. Bid Submission Closing Date & Time: 30.10.2019, 5.00 PM. 4. Pre-Qualification Opening Date: 31.10.2019, 3.00 PM. 5. Technical Specifications Opening Date: 01.11.2019, 3.00 PM. 6. Price Bid Opening Date & Time: 01.11.2019, 4.00 PM. Further clarifications contact I Narasimha Murthy, RSI (Admin), Contact No 9490616637. DFR R.O. No: 786-DPCL-AGENCY/ADVT/1/2019-20 Sd/- Commissioner of Police, Hyderabad City.

GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA
O/o Superintending Engineer, PR Region Medak

"e" NIT No. HD/97-103/2019-20 e-Proc. Notice Dt:16.10.2019 of SE PR Medak

No. of Works (7) Name of Works: C/o Shopping Complex to Madina Masjid, Balance work of New MPP Building, and other Civil Works in undersigned. TOTAL ECV: 210 Lakhs. Tenders Schedules can be had from 19.10.2019, Last date for Downloading & Uploading of Tenders Documents: 28.10.2019. Cont.: 08452-29545, se_pr_mdks@nic.in, se_pr_mdks@gmail.com. For further details can be seen at e-procurement market place at https://tender.telangana.gov.in.

Sd/- Superintending Engineer, PR Region Medak. R.O. No.: 790-DP/CL-AGENCY/ADVT/1/2019-20 Date: 18-10-2019

CRIME CORNER

21-year-old arrested for theft

The Vanasthalipuram police arrested a 21-year-old man who stole valuables from an old age home on Thursday. Officials recovered cash, gold and valuables worth Rs 3 lakh from him. The arrested was identified as K Yuvaraju, a graduate from Khammam district. According to the police, he initially waited tables at hotels and restaurants and later took up the job as a caretaker for elderly persons in their houses after coming across an advertisement in a local newspaper. After he joined as a caretaker, he stole valuables and officials were able to identify two offences in Vanasthalipuram and one in Neredmet. Yuvaraju pledged the gold ornaments in finance companies and with pawn brokers for money. He was produced before court and remanded in judicial custody.

Asst. Professor found dead

An assistant professor working Awith Nizam College was found dead at his residence in Maitripuram Colony, Karmanghat on Wednesday. Officials suspect that the man might have suffered a cardiac arrest. The deceased was identified as 54-year-old Ramdasu Venkata Chary. Police said that he was not married and was living in an apartment flat for the past few years. According to the police, Chary's brother, Bhishma Chary, had come to visit him on Wednesday and found him dead. His brother immediately informed the cops. The police who rushed to the spot said that Venkata chary's body had no external injuries and was having health issues fro which he was taking treatment. The police, who suspect that Chary could have died of a heart attack are waiting on the autopsy report that will reveal the actual cause of death. Based on a complaint from Chary's brother, a case was booked and is being investigated.

Juvenile held for vehicle thefts

Officials of the Commissioner's Task Force, South Zone Team and the Chaderghat Police have nabbed a juvenile for theft in Hyderabad and Cyberabad commissionerates and recovered five two wheelers worth Rs 2.5 lakhs. The 17-year-old a native of Hyderabad, is addicted to alcohol, smoking and other vices, apart from having a passion for riding bikes. To keep up with his lavish spending, he started stealing two wheelers using duplicate keys. Officials said that he targeted motorcycles, which were parked in front of the houses and establishments. The accused was handed over to SHO, Begum Bazar PS for further action.



An electric wire protrudes from an electric pole on a narrow footpath on the Irummanzil-Khairatabad stretch, putting pedestrians' life at risk. Many such wires were seen hanging loosely on the stretch with some lying openly on the ground.

- Photo: K Ramya Sree

Innovation not confined to Hyderabad or elite: KTR

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

IT Minister KT Rama Rao on Friday praised the BJP-led NDA government for encouraging innovation. Speaking at the Telangana Industry Awards - MANEXE - 2019 event, KTR said, "Innovation and entrepreneurship today is not confined to just Hyderabad or elite. I don't think there is a better time in India in our lifetimes to actually be an entrepreneur (than now). We have government in Delhi which talks about Startup India, Stand up India. Never did a government in the past encouraged innovation as much."

KTR noted that if Micromax is facing challenge to find employees in state and is hiring from other places, means there are many more opportunities for Telangana youngsters.

Noting that same is the case with Telangana government, he said, "In fact much before (central) government said startup and standup, we (Telangana) already stood up and running. You have a fantastic platform today where governments are looking at you today with lot of interest to hand hold you, to help you understand the initial teething pains, to help you and guide you even provide a mentoring network."

Likewise, welcoming the corporate tax reduction announced by the Centre last



month, KTR said it is the best time to invest in manufacturing sector. He said, "After the corporate tax reduction recently from 34 per cent especially for manufacturing sector to 15-17 per cent, I don't think there is better time to invest in India and better time to invest in manufacturing than now. It cannot be better time to invest in manufacture sector be it textile, manufacturing, pharmaceuticals, electronics. Now you are on an even keel i.e. level playing field with countries like Cambodia, Vietnam, Malaysia, Indonesia, Ethopia which have been doing well. India is also on a level playing field."

He said that India can definitely feed off the trade/ traffic was between US and China - the large manufacturing bases. He said that any manufacturing

unit that will come in Telangana will be welcomed with red carpet and create more employment opportunities for locals.

He called upon the industry to work with the government, as the latter cannot solve employment puzzle as we have limited jobs. He asked TSCHE to work along with Industries department, to ensure that the students are industry ready. He said, "We cannot have engineers who are not ready to hit the ground. We cannot have them to have finishing school. CII and TSCHE should work with Industries department to create Industry ready workforce, to start apprenticeship model and give course credits. We are inviting people to come to TS, and we want to take care of our people." KTR asked companies to do more visible

44 After the corporate tax reduction recently from 34 per cent especially for manufacturing sector to 15-17 per cent, I don't think there is better time to invest in India

—KT RAMA RAO, IT Minister

CSR work. He said, "In India we don't have habit of celebrating capitalism, wealth distribution and wealth creation by the private sector. We are caught in a quagmire when it comes to that. Do CSR which is more visible and tangible - important for country."

Meanwhile, the Telangana government announced the winners of the 3rd Industry Awards 2019 where in 15 awardees were felicitated by KTR. He gave away awards for Intinta Innovators and industry awards in 4 categories for Best Financial Performance, Best Innovation Award, Best CSR Performance, Best Employee Practices.

Event saw attendance by NLN Raju, Convenor- CII Telangana Manufacturing Panel & Vice President - AsiaPac & MEA, Signode Industrial Group, Jayesh Ranjan IAS, Principal Secretary, D Raju, Chairman - CII Telangana and Malavika Jaggi, Associate Director GlobalLinker.

‘Saaho’ producers land in trouble

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The producers of 'Saaho' have been allegedly accused of cheating by Arctic Fox, a lifestyle brand that makes bags and other accessories, to the tune of Rs 1.38 crore. The complaint marked Vamshi Krishna Reddy, Pramod Uppalapati and Vikram Reddy of UV Creations as accused in the case.

According to the complainant, the Saaho producers promised to feature their product in the movie and his company had paid Rs 37 lakh for the product placement. However, the product was not featured in the film as agreed, he claimed.

Alleging that the filmmakers and celebrity firm partner, Kwan Entertainment (South), had cheated them, Arctic Fox's company representative filed the complaint. Vijay Rao said that they paid Rs 37 lakh to the filmmakers and Rs 1.49 lakh to Kwan Entertainment to feature the product. Further, they spent an additional Rs 1 crore towards promotions for the film along with their product.



Condensed water leaks inside Metro trains!

High humidity and temperature difference the reason

NAVEENA GHANATE

■ HYDERABAD

As if the technical snags to Hyderabad Metro due to pollution were not enough, now changes in weather are also impacting the trains. With the relative humidity in Hyderabad staying high at 80-90 per cent over the week, it also brought water leakage problems from ceiling of metro trains to the fore. Over the past one week, several passengers were left fuming as the water leaked inside the metro train during their journey.

Especially, passengers travelling towards Miyapur and Nagole have raised concerns over water leakage in metro train. A stream of water droplets is being noticed on the AC roofs. Commuters expressed irritation over water falling on them, their mobiles and other belongings apart from raising concerns about the type of water.

Some passengers even took to Twitter and posted photos and videos as well of water droplets falling during their journey. At least five complaints of water leakage were posted online by citizens in past two days

According to sources, high humidity and temperature difference during opening of the doors is causing condensation around AC units in the train. This is resulting in droplets of water dripping down. Additionally, the AC temperature is reduced during the rush hours. Even though L&T is getting the ACs in the trains checked on daily basis, hardly anything can be done about the natural process of condensation.

Some passengers even took to Twitter and posted photos and videos as well of water droplets falling during their

journey. At least five complaints of water leakage were posted online by citizens in past two days. Responding to one of the complaint L&THMRL said, "The leakage was due to the AC and there is no other safety threat. We request you to contact our helpline 040-2333 2555 for immediate action".

It may be mentioned here that Hyderabad Metro train reportedly experienced a technical snag on October 13, due to pollution because burning of garbage is causing a coating of pollutants to be formed on the equipment.

Woman falls in elevator pit, dies

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A 35-year-old woman died after falling into an elevator pit at Hussaini Alam in the city on Friday. The deceased was identified as Rubeena Bibi, who was working as a maid in an apartment.

According to the police, Bibi took the lift to reach the fourth floor but due to a power outage, the lift got stuck between the second and third floor. The flat owner and a few others tried to pull Rubina out of the lift and put a chair on the second floor and asked her to step on it. While doing so, she slipped and fell into the elevator pit. She was rushed to a hospital where doctors pronounced her dead said an official from Hussaini Alam police station.

In another incident, an eight-year-old girl died after she got stuck in the elevator of her apartment in LB Nagar. According to police, Lasya, a Class 3 student, was playing

■ According to the police, the victim, Rubeena Bibi took the lift to reach the fourth floor but due to a power outage, the lift got stuck between the second and third floor

near her house when the mishap occurred. While she was playing, she got into the elevator by herself and tried to close the iron grill door. While she was trying to pull the door shut, she got stuck between the grill door and the compartment. She suffered injuries and started crying. Her family members rushed to her rescue. She died while being taken to a nearby private hospital, the police further said. However, the police said no complaint was lodged.

NASI fellowship for two UoH Professors

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Prof Akhil K Sahoo, School of Chemistry, was selected for his significant contributions in organic chemistry and introducing the concept of reusable directing groups in the field of C-H activation while Prof Ch Venkata Ramana, Head, Department of Plant Sciences, got fellowship for his extensive work on bacterial diversity and their metabolism.

Prof Sahoo, before joining the varsity in 2007, worked as a scientist at Sai Advantium Pharma Limited. Prof Ramana works on bacterial diversity and metabolomics and is indexing the bacterial wealth of India and assessing the assets besides liabilities of bacteria and their metabolites.

The National Academy of Sciences, Allahabad, is the oldest of the three Science Academies of India. It was visualised by Prof Meghnad Saha at the Allahabad University in 1929 and founded in the year 1930 with the objective of providing a national forum for the publication of research work carried out by Indian scientists and to provide them opportunities for exchange of ideas/concepts among themselves.

The Academy has presently 1,755 members and 1,777 Fellows from all parts of the country including 16 Honorary Fellows and 97 Foreign Fellows from various disciplines of Science and Technology.

Man arrested for kidnap

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Commissioner's Task Force, North Zone Team, Hyderabad, on Friday nabbed a man who had kidnapped a two-year-old toddler from Secunderabad Railway station on Monday. The arrested person was identified as 30-year-old Sakali Raju, a native of Mahabubnagar.

According to the police, in the wee hours of Monday, after consuming liquor, Raju found the toddler sleeping

with her father and brother on platform no.10 at Secunderabad station.

Raju came out from Railway station with the toddler and near Bandimet area, the child started crying loudly. Raju then abandoned the child on the road near the Market Police Station and fled the scene. On Monday morning, passersby who saw the crying child, called the local police. The Market PS patrolling team rescued her safely and returned her to her father.

Theater booked for violating rules

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The officials of Legal Metrology booked cases against Sudarshan theatre on Friday for violating rules of Packaged Commodity Act. Based on a complaint, the District Inspector for Legal Metrology Hyderabad conducted inspections at Sudarshan theatres at RTC X Roads.

Following the raids, they registered a case against the

theatre under violation of Packaged Commodity (PC) act 2009. Consumer activist Srikanth Umesh Kumar filed the complaint. He alleged that the theatre is selling packaged food items without mentioning the mandatory declarations on the packet. Legal Metrology (Packaged Commodities) Act 2011 mentions, among other things, how and what declarations are to be made on a packaged

commodity meant for sale.

Umesh Kumar, founder of Know Your Rights, told the media "lack of mandatory details on the packaged commodity poses a threat to patrons. How can consumers complain about the product if contact information is missing? As it was evident that the trader is violating Legal Metrology rules, the department should take stringent action against the establishment."

Narayanadri Express now in swankier avatar

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Narayanadri Express, one of the important trains on the SCR Zone, running daily between Lingampalli - Tirupati connecting the capital cities of both the Telugu states with Tirupati, has got a swankier avatar.

The train is now provided with all new LHB coaches to improve the customer satisfaction while enhancing the safety. In addition, the speed of the train has also been increased by reducing its running time.

The new LHB coaches will provide better comfort in riding experience with jerk free journey to the passengers besides providing additional



AC coaches have been provided with in-built reading lamps, insulation against noise, automatic sliding doors and auto - closing vestibule door

facilities like ergonomically designed seats as per Indian anthropometrics data, large

windows with good visibility, wider luggage racks, anti-skid PVC flooring and no visible

The train is now provided with all new LHB coaches to improve customer satisfaction. In addition, the speed of the train has also been increased by reducing its running time

screws inside the interior of the coach.

These coaches are also built with Environment friendly bio toilets. In addition, AC coaches have been provided with in-built reading lamps, insulation against noise, automatic sliding doors and auto - closing vestibule door enhancing the travel experience of the passengers.

These coaches are designed

with anti-climbing structure and fire-retardant material to enhance safety and to reduce the damage and impact on the coach in case of any unusual occurrence. The added feature for this train is now the train is hauled by electric locomotive for the entire journey. Earlier due to non-electrified section between Pagidipalli-Guntur, the train is hauled by Diesel locomotive up to

Guntur and from there it is being hauled by Electric locomotive.

Introduction of Electric engine and LHB coaches has helped in introducing Head On Generation (HOG) system for lighting and air-condition in the coaches. Introduction of HOG has resulted in reduction of noise pollution and savings to Railways to a tune of Rs. 6 crores per annum in terms of fuel consumption besides reduction of carbon foot prints. All these measures incorporated in Narayanadri Express facilitated a smooth, comfortable and hassle-free journey for the rail users and pilgrim passengers travelling to the temple town Tirupati and back.

Revanth takes on KCR in Huzurnagar

Ridicules claims being made by TRS leaders that development would come if the pink party wins by-poll seat

PNS ■ HUZURNAGAR

With just a day left for the end of campaign for Huzurnagar by-elections, Congress senior leaders including TPCC president N Uttam Kumar Reddy, working president A Revanth Reddy, and other senior leaders stormed the streets of Huzurnagar with road shows, which drew huge crowd in the entire route.

Uttam, Revanth and other leaders launched their road show from Jana Pahad after offering special prayers at Jana Pahad Dargah. They boarded an open-top campaign vehicle and addressed the corner meetings en route. Technically, all the meetings they addressed were corner meetings at Jana Pahad, Palakeedu, Nereducherla, Garidepalli, Burugadda and Mathampally. But the size of gatherings at all these places was no less than massive public meetings. People displayed huge enthusiasms and energy in participating in those meetings. While all the streets were completely packed, a large number of people climbed on roof tops, walls and even trees to have a glimpse of their favourite leaders. They cheered for the leaders and shouted slogans in favour of Congress party and its leaders.

Addressing the meetings, Uttam said he was seeking votes for Congress candidate and his wife Uttam Padmavathi on the basis of his performance and achievements in Huzurnagar. He said every bit of development in Huzurnagar became a reali-



TPCC president Uttam Kumar Reddy, party working president and Malkajigiri MP Revanth Reddy greet the crowd at a campaign in Huzurnagar on Friday

ty due to his efforts as the MLA since 2009. However, he said TRS was trying to lure voters with money, liquor and other incentives. He asked people to be cautious for the next three days to foil the attempts by ruling party to tamper with and manipulate the election process. He said he has full faith in the people of Huzurnagar and they would ensure the victory of Uttam Padmavathi with a huge majority.

Uttam said that the TRS leaders were shamelessly seeking votes despite not fulfilling a single major promise they made with the people in previous two elections. Crop loan waiver of Rs 1 lakh, double bed room houses for poor, filling up of one lakh vacancies, unemployment allowance of Rs 3,016 per month for jobless

youth, three acres of land for Dalits, 12% reservation in jobs and education for Muslims and STs and innumerable other promises remained unfulfilled.

He said Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao has turned so arrogant that he dismissed more than 48,000 RTC workers in a single stroke and even defied orders of the High Court to hold talks with employees to resolve their issues. He said it was KCR who nurtured crisis in the RTC by resorting to deliberate neglect so as to privatise the same to benefit his family members and friends. He said that the Congress party would continue to support the RTC workers till their justified demands are fulfilled.

Addressing the meetings, Revanth Reddy launched a

scathing attack on TRS Government, especially CM KCR. He ridiculed the claims being made by TRS leaders stating that development would come if TRS wins Huzurnagar seat. He asked as to why there was no development in constituencies being represented by TRS MLAs. He said the development brought by Uttam in Huzurnagar was unmatched and incomparable.

He asked people to reject TRS propaganda. He said KCR targetted senior leaders like Jana Reddy, Komatireddy Venkatreddy, Geetha Reddy, Damodar Rajanarasimha and others promising development in their constituencies if TRS win the elections. He said people fell prey to misleading tactics and voted for TRS in last elections in those constituen-

All the streets were completely packed, a large number of people climbed on roof tops, walls and even trees to have a glimpse of Revanth and Uttam during their campaign

cies. He said development has come to a standstill in those constituencies. Therefore, he said people should not make the mistake of trusting TRS again.

Revanth Reddy said that Huzurnagar by-election was no ordinary by-polls. He said they were about the self-respect of people of Telangana. He said KCR escaped punishment for his mistakes, failures and arrogance. But now, the people of Huzurnagar got the opportunity to teach KCR a fitting lesson for his failed promises and cheating. Going by the people's response to the campaign, he claimed that Uttam Padmavathi would register a historic victory with a huge margin.

Despite heavy rains in the evening, hundreds of people were seen waiting at the streets for the arrival of Congress leaders. Uttam Kumar Reddy, Revanth Reddy and other leaders will hold Road Shows on the last day of the campaign on Saturday.

Revanth proven thief and clown attired like hunter: TRS

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Huzurnagar by-poll TRS party in-charge and MLC Palla Rajeshwar Reddy has described TPCC working president and Malkajigiri MP A Revanth Reddy as a "proven thief and clown attired like hunter ("dorik-ina donga and pittala dora").

Speaking at Huzurnagar on Friday, Palla observed that the Revanth, habituated to jail food as a jail bird, would go to prison again. Having

opposed Padmavathi's candidature for the Huzurnagar by-election, Revanth was shedding crocodile tears while participating in the election campaign, he said.

Mentioning that TRS had defeated Revanth Reddy in Kodangal, Palla suggested that Revanth should stop day-dreaming about becoming a big leader. He said that Congress senior leader and Bhongir MP Komatireddy Venkat Reddy had not

learned his lesson despite losing election from the Nalgonda Assembly constituency. "We will send Komatireddy Venkat Reddy to an addiction center if he speaks as he wished under the influence of alcohol," he observed.

Palla asked TPCC chief and Nalgonda MP N Uttam Kumar Reddy, whom he described as "the one who mortgaged the Telangana movement for minister post", to tell as to how he was seeking votes of Huzurnagar people for his wife. He alleged that Congress and BJP were colluding to defeat TRS.

The police were conducting searches at the houses of TRS activists at the behest of the Centre. However, they failed to find a single paisa. The cops had been creating havoc among TRS leaders over the last three days. Yet, finally the TRS candidate would be a clear winner, he asserted.



TSCHE to join hands with Harvard University



Telangana State Planning Board vice-chairman B Vinod Kumar and TSCHE chairman T Papi Reddy and others at a meeting in Hyderabad on Friday

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The State government is exploring partnership with The Lakshmi Mittal and Family South Asia Institute (LMSAI) at Harvard University to promote education and research in biosciences sector in the State. Plans are afoot to develop Telangana State as a hub for education and research through global partnerships in emerging areas of sciences, engineering, information technology and others.

LMSAI's representative and Building Bharat-Boston

Biosciences (B4) programme manager Savitha G Ananth visited Telangana State Council for Higher Education (TSCHE) on Friday and held discussions with Telangana State Planning Board vice-chairman B Vinod Kumar and TSCHE chairman T Papi Reddy, vice-chairmen V Venkata Ramana and R Limbadri, at the Council premises. Under B4 programme, efforts are being made to offer three unique programmes for students and young scientists.

Vinod Kumar suggested that LMSAI explore the possibility

of setting up of research centres in Hyderabad and work towards solutions to deal with unique diseases like Thalassemia which are mostly prevalent in tribal areas of Telangana State. He assured that the State government through TSCHE, will host the research scholars and faculty from Harvard University with active support of the LMSAI.

Plans to conduct workshops in the areas of Artificial Intelligence and neurosciences, among other issues, were also discussed.

Follow HC orders, Cong tells KCR

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Pradesh Congress Committee (TPCC) Treasurer Gudur Narayana Reddy on Friday demanded that Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao followed the directives given by High Court to deal with the RTC strike.

Gudur Narayana Reddy, in a media statement, said that the High Court has given clear directions to the State Government to invite RTC employees unions for talks at 10.30 am on Saturday, complete negotiation process in the next three days and appraise the court about the outcome by October 28. He feared that the Chief Minister might not obey the High Court directions as he did in the past. He advised KCR to set aside his personal ego and resolve the issues of RTC employees.

He pointed out that the High Court has made severe remarks against the State Government on various issues. The State Government was pulled up for not appointing a full-fledged Managing Director. He asked the Chief Minister to learn from mistakes at least now and behave in a democratic manner. He also appealed to Governor Dr. Tamilisai



Soundararajan to intervene and direct the State Government to implement the HC directives on RTC issue

He also appealed to the people to support the RTC strike which has been going on in a peaceful manner. He announced that the Congress party would support the Telangana Bandh call on Saturday given by the RTC JAC. He said all sections of the society should support the bandh and make it successful as it is intended to seek justice for thousands of RTC employees.

The Congress leader condemned KCR for saying that strike has caused losses of over Rs. 150 crore. He said why KCR did not feel the same when he wasted more than Rs. 300 crore on the construction of his official residence Pragathi Bhavan.

Gudur Narayana Reddy

Like in the past, Chief Minister K Chandrashekhar Rao might not obey the High Court directions, said Gudur Narayana Reddy. He advised the Chief Minister to set aside his personal ego and resolve the issues of RTC employees

said that the RTC workers were peacefully fighting for their rights by following the path of Mahatma Gandhi. However, he alleged that CM KCR was acting like a dictator and showing no inclination to resolve the issue by holding talks with the RTC employees. With his rude and dictatorial behaviour, he said KCR has distanced himself away from senior leaders like K. Keshava Rao.

He also demanded that the salaries of RTC workers for the month of September should be paid by Monday as directed by the High Court.

Tight security for TRS leaders ahead of bandh

PNS ■ MAHABUBNAGAR

The police officials of the erstwhile Mahabubnagar district advised the TRS party MLAs, MPs and senior leaders to take necessary precautions ahead of the bandh call given by the RTC employees on October 19.

Since the bandh was supported by the outlawed naxalites of CPI Maoists, the law enforcers suggested the ruling party leaders to inform about their movements.

Though the naxalites were reduced to the minimum in the recent years and their movements were completely wiped out in the erstwhile Mahabubnagar district, the law enforcers felt that they may indulge in startling attacks anytime to show their presence in the previous strongholds.

During the anti-uranium struggle, certain forces supporting the movement were identified as the frontal units supporting the naxalites and as those forces were extending solidarity to the bandh call of the RTC employees, the police exhorted the leaders of Nallamala belt not to move outside without prior information.

Similarly, the police suspect



that after the infliction of loss to the frontal units in the form of series of arrests on Wednesday in Gadwal, the naxalites would carry out offensive acts in the southern Telangana.

The police have called upon the MLAs to remain indoors from attending the routine programmes on Saturday. On the other hand, the police have made elaborate arrangements to meet the challenge of the bandh in the Mahabubnagar, Narayanpet, Gadwal, Nagarkurnool and Wanaparthy districts. They deployed forces in the areas where the RTC depots are located and assured that they would provide the needed security measures for the public on the bandh day.

TNGO, TGO extend support for bandh

PNS ■ MEDAK

With the TNGO and TGO extending support to the RTC strike, the district units of both these organisations joined the bandh brigade in Medak, Siddipet and Sangareddy districts on Friday.

The association leaders and employees in various departments took up lunch hour demonstration in support of the striking RTC employees and said the demands put forth by the employees of RTC were just in all respects.

The TNGOs and TGOs unions in these districts announced that the employees in all government departments would observe a demonstration in the lunch hours on Saturday. The leaders termed the RTC employees stir as a democratic step took up by the trade unions of the employees and workers and asserted that such agitations have to be amicably resolved by the governments by fulfilling the demands.

The bandh call of the RTC JAC was thoroughly supported by the employees unions and associations. Meanwhile the 'Ansgathatha Kaarmika Sanghaalu Samaakhya' announced its solidarity to the struggle of RTC employees and support to the Telangana bandh on Saturday.

Banking services to get hit as staff to go on strike on Oct 22

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Banking services will be hit as the Public Sector Banks staff will go on strike on October 22, protesting against the merger of PSBs by the government. While the All India Bank Employees' Association (AIBEA) and Bank Employees Federation of India (BEFI) have given a call for nationwide banks strike, several employees and workers unions from Telangana have announced their support to the bank employees strike.

"Central government's deci-

sion to merge 10 public sector banks into four will severely affect public sector banks and people. This move will benefit only corporates and private banks. Union government is taking up this step to weaken PSUs and privatise banking sector in the country. Bank employees from all over India will take part in the nationwide strike on October 22 to protest against government's decision. PSU banks staff in Telangana and Andhra Pradesh will also take part in the strike," said Rambabu general secretary of All India Bank Employees

Association, speaking at a round table conference held on the ill effects of the merger of public sector banks.

"With the Central government's move to merge PSU banks, the number of banks in the public sector will decrease to 12 from 27. Especially rural economy will be severely hit. Even the jobs in the banking sector will come down hugely leading to further unemployment. Employees unions and workers unions from all sectors need to lend support to bank employees strike," further said Rambabu.

Cong seeks clarity on extending holidays for schools

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Congress party on Friday urged the State government to give clarity on extension of Dasara holidays for school children in view of ongoing strike by RTC employees.

Hyderabad City Congress Committee (HCCC) Minorities Department Chairman Sameer Waliullah, in a media statement, alleged that the extension of Dasara holidays by six days till October 19 has completely upset the Academic Schedule. Accusing the TRS government of playing with the careers of lakhs of innocent school children, he said that lot of rumours were going rounds with regard to re-opening of schools. With October 20 being Sunday, schools will re-open on October 21. But what will happen if the strike continues on Monday? Will the government extend holidays for more time? Sameer pointed out that as per the Academic Calendar, the



Sameer Waliullah

Summative Assessment - SA1 is scheduled to be held from 21st to 26th October. This means that without any classes or preparation in the last one week, students will have to write exams on first day of re-opening of school.

The Congress leader slammed the State government for giving too many holidays to school children. He said children in Telangana lost 11 academic days when the schools were re-opened on June 12 instead of June 1 due to heat wave.

VH all praise for Tamilisai

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Congress senior leader V Hanumantha Rao was all praise for the Governor, Tamilisai Soundararajan for reacting on the ongoing RTC strike. He said that no previous Governor had reacted in this manner though several atrocities took place in the state.

"No previous Governor spoke to the Ministers like Tamilisai. Will the Ministers don't respond to the call of Governor? KCR government has no respect on constitution?," he asked urging the Governor to take the issue seriously.

Speaking at the Gandhi Bhavan after participating in a bike rally in support of RTC strike, organised by TSRTC JAC, from Falaknuma Bus Depot to Laldarwaza Nehru Statue, VH questioned the Chief Minister, K Chandrasekhar Rao, who seriously opposed the privatisation proposal of HMT, IDPL, Pragatools and others by then YSR government, to tell as to why he is trying to privatise the RTC now.

He slammed the Chief Minister saying that the latter is behaving like a dictator.



Congress leader V Hanumantha Rao and others at a bike rally on Friday

Why the KCR government is not reducing the 27.5 per cent VAT on the diesel being used by the RTC. Why the TRS government is thinking to abolish the workers unions in RTC as there are unions across the nation, he questioned alleging that KCR is implementing 'Dora rule' in the state.

The government failed to give salaries to the RTC employees yet though the High Court directed the state government to give salaries to them immediately. Seven employees had died due to RTC strike, he said demanding the state government to own

the responsibility of the deaths of employees.

Stating that KCR's fallout has begun, VH said that the leaders in TRS are pained with the attitude of the KCR. He alleged that the KCR government is not giving postings to the TRT selected candidates in residential schools.

He alleged that KCR is behaving like 'dora' in Telangana, while Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy is behaving like a dictator. He said that the RTC employees' peaceful fight will register victory in achieving their demands.

SHORT READS

Man held at IGI for smuggling gold worth Rs 36L from Dubai

NEW DELHI: A man has been arrested at Delhi airport upon his arrival from the UAE for allegedly smuggling gold bars worth more than Rs 36 lakh by hiding it in his shoes, a customs official said on Friday. On specific information, the Officers of the Air Customs Preventive at IGI Airport intercepted the passenger who arrived from Dubai on Tuesday, the statement quoting a custom official said. A detailed personal search resulted in the recovery of eight gold bars weighing 933 grams which were concealed inside the shoes worn by the person, he said. The market value of the seized gold bars was approximately Rs 36,48,030, according to the statement. The gold has been seized and the person arrested under relevant provisions of the Customs Act.

22 children hurt after school bus turns turtle

HOSHANGABAD: A school bus carrying 26 children overturned on Bandrabhan Road near here on Friday, an official said, adding that no child had suffered serious injuries in the mishap. As many as 22 students of Campion School were treated for minor injuries at the district hospital, area tehsildar (revenue officer) Shailendra Badonia said. Campion School director Vijay Seth said the bus driver lost control when a tractor-trolley overtook the vehicle at Sangakheda-Kala village, around 11 km from the district headquarters in Madhya Pradesh. According to eyewitnesses, the bus was being driven recklessly at the time of the incident. Babai area police are probing the accident.

BJP minister calls Abhijit Left-leaning

PUNE: Union minister Piyush Goyal on Friday dubbed Indian-American Abhijit Banerjee, who won the 2019 Nobel for Economics, as Left-leaning. Goyal made the remarks at a media briefing here. "I congratulate Abhijit Banerjee for winning the Nobel prize. You all know that his thinking is totally Left-leaning," Goyal said. "Banerjee supported 'Nyay' (poverty alleviation scheme of Congress) and people of India rejected his ideology," the BJP leader said. Banerjee recently said the Indian economy is on a shaky ground, adding data currently available does not hold any assurance for the country's economic revival anytime soon.

Poverty levels in Odisha dipped by 25% in 20 years: Patnaik

BHUBANESWAR: Odisha Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has claimed that poverty levels in the state have dropped by 25 per cent over the past 20 years, precisely the period he has been ruling the state. He said the state government reaffirms its commitment to intensify efforts in building an inclusive society. "Odisha's transformative initiatives and policies have resulted in the sharpest drop in poverty, about 25 per cent, bringing millions out of poverty in last two decades," the chief minister said.

AYODHYA CASE

Muslim parties express shock at reports on Sunni Waqf Board

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Muslim parties in the Ayodhya land dispute case on Friday issued a statement expressing shock over reports suggesting that the Sunni Waqf Board was withdrawing from the case.

Advocate Eijaz Magbool, who represented key Muslim litigant M Siddiq in the Ayodhya land dispute, said all Muslim parties, except the Sunni Waqf Board, have rejected settlement as the main Hindu parties to the dispute were not part of the mediation process and its purported settlement.

The Muslim parties, except the Sunni Waqf Board, issued a clarificatory statement to say they don't accept the Supreme Court appointed mediation panel's proposal on the purported settlement to amicably resolve the Ram Janmabhoomi Babri Masjid land dispute.

Modi questions Congress' chemistry with Pakistan

PNS ■ GOHANA/HISAR

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Friday lashed out at the Congress over its stand on Article 370, saying its statements are being used by Pakistan against India and asked what kind of "chemistry" it shares with the neighbouring country.

With the BJP making scrapping of Article 370 in J-K a big poll issue, Modi said parties like the Congress can neither understand sentiments of people nor respect sacrifices made by brave jawans.

Addressing a rally here, his fourth one for the October 21 polls, Modi asked the gathering, "Should I take decisions in national interest or not, should national interest be above politics or not? But the Congress is not able to understand this feeling of people of Sonipat and people of Haryana."

Making a stinging attack on the Congress, he said the party is in "pain" since August 5 when the Centre decided to abrogate special status of Jammu and Kashmir.

"Do you recall what happened on August 5? On that day such a thing happened which no one could have imagined, about which in a way the country had given up hope. On August 5, India's Constitution in entirety became applicable in J&K. For 70 years, what was stumbling block in development of J&K and Ladakh, we removed that."

"But since then Congress and parties like them are in a pain that no medicine is able to cure. 'Congress ke pet mein dard Congress ki la ilaaj bemari ban gaya hai', he said.

"And Congress is suffering from such a disease that when we talk of Swachh India, surgical strike, they have a problem and if anyone takes Balakot's name, their pain increases," he said.

He said statements made by



Modi also attacked the Dushyant Chautala-led Jannayak Janta Party, stating that people of the state have rejected its politics and strategy

Congress leaders on scrapping Article 370 are being used by Pakistan.

"Now, the country knows why Congress goes through this pain, for whose sympathy, for whom it is. You have seen the statements Congress leaders made on Kashmir are helping whom, who is taking benefit of such statements and where these are used.

"Do you know who is taking benefit of these?," said Modi and when the crowds replied "Pakistan", Modi told them "you are correct".

"Now, Congress should reply why they are making such statements which are being liked by Pakistan. They should muster courage to say something which is liked by people of India (by supporting scrapping of the Article)," he said.

He said false claims, statements and language are used by the Congress to corner him and Pakistan is using these in the world to make its case strong.

"What kind of chemistry is this with Pakistan, whose chemistry is this and for whom. In these polls, you will have to find an answer to this," he said.

"I tell Congress that they can oppose Modi, can make as many accusations and speak as much lies they want," he said, adding as long as he has the

‘Cong has already accepted defeat in Haryana polls’

PNS ■ HISAR (HR)

Prime Minister Narendra Modi here on Friday hit out at the Congress, saying it has "already accepted defeat" in the Haryana assembly elections.

Addressing his second rally on Friday, Modi referred to a purported video in which three Congress leaders at the parliament complex were seen discussing prospects of the party in the polls.

"Have you seen a video that went viral and in which a Congress leader was looking down upon a leader from Haryana at the parliament complex? I was surprised that the Haryana leader was standing with folded hands. Have you seen the video? Will you accept the

people's blessings, it was not going to affect him. "Whatever good or bad you have to say about Modi, do that, but at

insult of Haryana," Modi said.

"It was clear in their talks in the video that they were saying that it would be enough if they win 10-15 seats. These are their words and made just before the elections. Those who have already accepted their defeat and gave up the ground can't do anything for Haryana," said Modi.

Modi also attacked the Dushyant Chautala-led Jannayak Janta Party, stating that people of the state has rejected its politics and strategy.

Lauding the five-year term of the Khattar-led government in the state, the PM told people that they would have to decide between those who delivered and those who indulged in misdeeds.

least respect 'Ma Bharti'. Don't cross the limits in the manner which causes harm to the country," he said.

‘Cong, DMK taking people for a ride over statehood’

PNS ■ PUDUCHERRY

Opposition AIADMK on Friday charged the Congress and its alliance partner the DMK here with taking people for a ride on the issue of statehood for Puducherry.

The leader of the legislature wing of the AIADMK A Anbalagan levelled this charge while talking to reporters on the sidelines of his campaign in the bypoll-bound Kamaraj Nagar constituency here.

During his campaign on Thursday, the DMK president M K Stalin had accused the Lieutenant Governor Kiran Bedi and the BJP of obstructing the efforts of the territorial Chief Minister V Narayanasamy to get statehood.

"This is absolutely a misleading and baseless allegation," Anbalagan said. "When the Congress was in power with the support of the DMK at the Centre why the Congress did not take any step to get statehood for Puducherry, the AIADMK leader said.



‘PM, FM should ‘steal’ Cong ideas to tackle economic mess’

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi alleged on Friday that the government is "clueless" about the economy and said Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman should "steal" ideas from his party's Lok Sabha poll manifesto to tackle the "mess".

Gandhi's attack on the government came over a media report which claimed rural consumption generally grows faster than urban consumption, but in this quarter the trend has been reversed with rural consumption being at its lowest in seven years for the quarter of September.

"Rural India is in severe distress. The economy has sunk and the govt is clueless about what to do," the former Congress president said in a tweet.

"PM & FM should steal ideas from manifesto.inc.in, where we had anticipated and set down detailed plans to tackle the mess," he also wrote on the microblogging site.

‘Indian Navy committed to enhance cooperation with like-minded navies’

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Navy Chief Admiral Karambir Singh on Friday said maritime threats like piracy and drug trafficking have a "trans-national" character, and pitched for harnessing "collective military competency" to mutually learn from the best practices of navies.

Addressing the fourth conclave of defence attaches here, he also said the Indian Navy is "committed to enhancing cooperation and engagement with like-minded navies in the Indian Ocean region".

"For seagoing forces, cooperation is a very important word, and the nature of the seas is such that they do not divide but unite and called the highways of connectivity. So, navy by nature operates in a cooperative domain," Singh said.

He said the vast expanse of the seas and oceans also makes a navy realise that one is not alone here, and, therefore "it becomes part of the naval DNA".

"Then there are various maritime threats and common challenges. Piracy, for example involves attack in one country and cargo perhaps of another. Then there is drug trafficking which we call narco-terrorism, and human trafficking and illegal fishing. these all have a trans-national or inter-regional character," the Navy chief said.

The Indian Navy is fully seized of its role in maritime cooperation to draw from other



The vast expanse of the seas and oceans also makes a navy realise that one is not alone here, and, therefore "it becomes part of the naval DNA"

— ADMIRAL KARAMBIR SINGH, Navy Chief

navies' strength or learn from their best practices, he said.

The day-long event held at the Constitution Club of India was themed on 'Enhancing Defence Capabilities Through Cooperation' and attended by defence attaches or military attaches of various countries.

"Navy is committed to enhance cooperation with like-minded navies in the Indian Ocean region, and our cooperation ethos is guided, as articulated by the prime minister, by the 5Ss -- Samman (honour), Samvad (dialogue), Sahyog (cooperation), Shanti (peace) and Samridhdhi (prosperity)," he said.

‘Patel ‘ruined’ AI; must be probed in PMC scam also’

PNS ■ NAGPUR

Union minister Prakash Javadekar on Friday accused NCP leader Praful Patel of "ruining" flag carrier Air India and sought a probe against him in the multi-crore scam at the Mumbai-based Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative Bank (PMC Bank).

The senior BJP leader also alleged huge loans were approved on phone calls during the Manmohan Singh government, which weakened the financial condition of state-run banks.

The Minister of Environment, Forests and Climate Change was talking to reporters here.

Without naming Patel, Javadekar said, "Certain person who is facing ED probe...his role in PMC Bank bankruptcy case should also be probed."

Patel, who was the Civil Aviation Minister in the UP government, on Friday went to the Enforcement Directorate (ED) office in Mumbai after being summoned by the agency in connection with a money laundering probe linked to the alleged illegal assets of late Iqbal Mirchi, an aide of underworld don and terror accused Dawood Ibrahim.

"Thisperson was regularly using the aeroplane belonging to some of the accused in the PMC bankruptcy case. Similarly, who gave the SRA



This person was regularly using the aeroplane belonging to some of the accused in the PMC bankruptcy case. Similarly, who gave the SRA development work near the Mumbai airport to the accused and why?

development work near the Mumbai airport to the accused and why?

"Hence, more investigation is required to find out who else is involved in the PMC bank scam," Javadekar said. The minister's statement was aimed

at the promoters of real estate group HDIL, Rakesh and Sarang Wadhawan, who are the prime accused in the PMC Bank scam. They are among the five arrested in the case.

The troubled realty firm was mainly into handling Slum Rehabilitation Authority (SRA) projects. It had bagged one such project near the Mumbai airport, but could not complete it.

HDIL allegedly accounted for 70 per cent of the cooperative bank's Rs 9,000 crore advances. According to the Mumbai Police's Economic Offences Wing, HDIL's loans turned Non-Performing Assets, but the bank management hid this from the RBI's scrutiny.

Replying to a query, Javadekar said Patel, as the aviation minister, completely "ruined" Air India, which is suffering losses and is on the block for disinvestment.

FSSAI steps up surveillance to curb adulteration during festive season

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Regulator FSSAI has intensified the surveillance on milk products like khoya and ghee to curb adulteration in 'mithai' during the festival season in Delhi-NCR, its CEO Pawan Agarwal said on Friday.

The FSSAI also released a guidance note on traditional milk products to help food business operators to ensure basic hygiene and sanitation in manufacturing of milk products particularly sweets.

The manufacturing and trading of traditional dairy products like paneer-based sweets is largely confined to Halwais in India. Such dairy products are more susceptible to adulteration during festival season particularly due to mismatch in demand and supply, the regulator said.

"We have started a surveillance exercise on milk prod-



ucts during the festival season in Delhi-NCR. 44 locations have been identified and samples are being collected and sent to our national lab at Ghaziabad," Agarwal told reporters while releasing the milk survey.

The samples will be tested until November 3 and the results will be announced in the first week of next month. "The purpose of this exercise

is to know adulteration in milk products and what kind of contaminants are present. Micro-biological analysis will also be done," Agarwal said.

In the guidance note released for food business operations, the FSSAI has suggested ways to ensure shelf-life of sweets, check quality by looking at the texture and flavour, besides providing consumer tips to test adulterants.

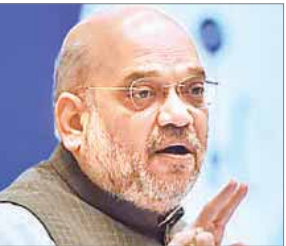
Amit to Rahul: What has your family done for tribals?

PNS ■ GADCHIROLI

Attacking the Congress, Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Friday asked its leader Rahul Gandhi what four generations of his family did for adivasis during their 70-year rule in the country and stressed the region will be free of Naxalism in the next five years.

Addressing a poll rally at Aheri in Gadchiroli district, Shah, also the BJP chief, said the Modi government did more works for the adivasis than the previous Congress and NCP governments at the Centre and in Maharashtra.

Shah reiterated the Congress did not scrap Article 370 – which he said caused spread of terrorism and subsequent killing of 40,000 peo-



ple in Jammu and Kashmir – for seven decades due to vote-bank politics, but it was Prime Minister

Narendra Modi who took the initiative to revoke the provision. The Union minister lambasted the Congress and NCP for asking what was the link between the Maharashtra Assembly polls and scrapping of Article 370 and asserted Kashmir was an integral part of the country.

NDA will win all seats in Bihar bypolls: Paswan

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

BJP ally and Union minister Ram Vilas Paswan said on Friday that the ruling NDA will win all seats going to Lok Sabha and Assembly bypolls in Bihar on October 21, asserting that a "divided and discredited" opposition stands no chance.

Polls will be held in five Assembly seats and the Lok Sabha constituency of Samastipur as incumbent MLAs were elected to Parliament during the recent general election while MP Ram Chandra Paswan died of a heart attack.

All three NDA parties -- BJP, JD(U) and LJP -- are involved in the elections. While the Chief Minister Nitish Kumar-led JD(U) is contesting in four Assembly seats, the BJP and the LJP have put up their candidate in an Assembly and the Lok Sabha seat respectively.

Cow protectionism is turning counter-productive as nobody is owning responsibility for increased stray cattle



It is ironic that in the most heightened time of their protection and vigilantism, cows are becoming pariahs more than ever before. The increasing mechanisation at farms has meant that bulls are no longer needed for heavy-lifting except for reproductive purposes. A ban on cattle slaughter and sales at animal fairs, coupled with the fear of being booked by cow vigilantes on some pretext or the other, have meant that non-lactating cows are now a stressed asset in the farm economy. The cow has, therefore, dropped off the value chain and many farmers, who frankly cannot afford the costly fodder, are turfing out the old and unproductive herd and abandoning them in open areas or outside village limits. In rural areas, this is creating havoc as starving bovines, out of sheer desperation, raid fields for food, their large numbers enough to wipe out crops of small holdings in no time. Fearing crop destruction, farmers have now added a night vigil on *machans* in their fields to their routine. Some farmers have even been driven to debts and depression with the sudden decimation of the season's produce. In the urban areas, wandering cattle are posing traffic hazards as they raid central verges for food and generally move around disoriented, causing traffic jams and accidents on busy roads. In the end, out of favour and unloved by their keepers, cow protection seems like a selfish human pursuit, good as long as the animals serve a purpose and evicted from a cultural consciousness, one that accords them the status of a mother or *Mata*, the moment they become unprofitable and old. Worse, dying out of starvation and thirst, theirs is a manufactured death routine. As it is, strict curbs on cow movement and use have meant that they are being substituted by buffaloes. With their castaway status following curbs, the indigenous cattle population has declined by 29 per cent from the last cow census seven years ago though that of the milch variety, including cross-breeds, is up by six per cent. *Rakshaks* are many for dead meat but there are none to save the cow. Or build a natural shelter where the old can be kept and fed to last out their lifetime.

Many cities have evolved their own ways to control stray cattle but they are mostly of a rudimentary nature, using cattle catchers to move them from one place to another. Cow sheds and *goshalas* are many, with new ones being set up following the government's renewed protectionism but are mostly unauthorised, overcrowded and closer to human settlements when they should be located near the outskirts to avoid man-animal conflicts. Besides, there must be a uniform code for dairies and sheds in both cities and villages, including the number of cattle and staff required to maintain them. For example, the longevity of their licences and permits must be correlated to the physical health of their cattle and ensuring they do not leave the precincts. Penalties for illegal dairies should be stricter, snapping their water and power lines. Besides, some corporations have also sought to impose fines on errant dairies who cannot rein in their herd and even barcoding cows to trace their keepers. State governments individually have resorted to their own methods. For example, the Uttar Pradesh (UP) Government has decided to make sex-sorted bovine semen available in large quantities so that most offspring is female. Both Madhya Pradesh and Haryana have made abandonment a punishable offence. Yet it is the UP Government, the most driven on cow protection and which had appointed a committee, where policies have been counter-productive. Its committee had suggested practical solutions like a fodder bank, State subsidies for stray shelters, grants for animal upkeep, controlled prices for products prepared from excreta and even asking MPs and MLAs to commit a part of their funds for a higher cause. But even this framework fell prey to bureaucratic corruption. Just recently, the government had to suspend a District Magistrate and four officials for irregularities; they deliberately over-reported the number of cattle in a shelter to misuse public funds. If we are indeed serious about cow protection, then we better look at nurturing cow health and welfare as we would any human resource. For the BJP may promote itself as protector but banning cow slaughter has been encoded in Article 48 of the Constitution. To convert the sacredness of a fundamental duty into political tokenism is the greatest disservice to Kamadhenu, the mother of all cows.

Bangla firing

On the face of it, the BSF-BGB shootout seems to be over smuggling but we cannot let it escalate for strategic reasons



Cross-border firing is something we associate with Pakistan from across the Line of Control (LoC). So when such a flare-up happens on our eastern borders, considering that the 4,000 km-long India-Bangladesh boundary has largely been peaceful for two decades, then it is a matter of concern. As it turns out, the Border Guards Bangladesh (BGB) opened fire at the Border Security Force (BSF) personnel, who had gone for a flag meeting to discuss the arrest of an Indian fisherman. A BSF head constable died while another trooper got wounded. Though the authorities on both sides were quick to intervene and neutralise the situation, describing it as a one-off aberration, it did remind us of the 2001 armed conflict between the BSF and the Bangladesh Rifles (BDR) that led to the deaths of 15 of our jawans and three of theirs. Coming as it does in the wake of the just-concluded meeting between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Bangladesh counterpart, Sheikh Hasina, during which the two countries struck crucial deals to further strengthen bilateral relations, and which has been largely cordial, questions arise if this was motivated. Speculations are rife if this was done to undercut the success of the recent trip where both sides smoothened some creases that had crept into the relationship in recent times. Truth be told, Dhaka has been a valuable ally in helping India build bridges with the Islamic world. Sheikh Hasina has largely been responsible for reining in militant groups operating along fluid border stretches. She has also negotiated the tricky binary between India and China by calling our ties organic and the latter economic. It is in acknowledgement that India has not only embarked on a new phase of economic cooperation with Hasina but has also promised that no immigrant, who doesn't make the cut in the National Register for Citizens (NRC), will be repatriated to Bangladesh. Perhaps, this incident was intended to tarnish her "win-win" sheen. The Opposition BNP (Bangladesh Nationalist Party) has been demonising her latest visit to India and the deals as "anti-state" and a "sellout."

This incident has also shed light on the larger issue of border management, which remains a challenge due to smuggling of fish, narcotics, cross-border human trafficking, cattle thefts and gun-running by cartels on both sides. Though cooperation on this has taken off with both sides conducting meetings biennially, they need to adopt a more humanitarian and interactive approach. The current shootout should not be allowed to aggravate and propel hostilities in a relationship which will get complex in a multi-polar

opinion06

Why Cong owes an answer

The Congress minus Sonia-Rahul-Priyanka is thinkable but Indian politics without it is unthinkable. The grand old party may be critically weakened but not wrecked as yet



DEBASISH BHATTACHARYYA

Political parties are central to the functioning of a representative democracy because a multi-party system generates different policy options for the public. The options thus considered are aimed at fulfilling the interests and aspirations of the electorate. The Opposition, especially inter-party coalitions, is a key concept in a liberal democracy. However, interestingly, political parties have one function in common: All of them seek political power to form a Government or to take the role of the Opposition.

The 2019 Lok Sabha elections are over. While the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP)-led National Democratic Alliance's (NDA's) roaring success in both 2014 and 2019 parliamentary elections has made it the largest party, the Congress has been facing debacle after debacle in successive elections. In this year's general election, the BJP won 303 seats and along with its allies, the NDA took its tally to 352 seats. The United Progressive Alliance-led Congress was reduced to 91 seats with it barely crossing the half-century mark with 52 seats. With the BJP's winning percentage reaching 70 per cent (it contested in 437 seats and won 303 of them), the main Opposition party, the Congress, stared at a major existential crisis. The BJP's spectacular win has left the Opposition, the Congress in particular, weak, clueless and irrelevant.

But why is the Opposition so significant? Its importance lies not just in providing a means to express negative reaction to the Government's decisions but to also tirelessly hold the ruling party to account, offer constructive criticism and project a progressive alternative to the Government. On this front, the Congress lacks comprehensive strategy and stamina to take on the might of the BJP's power duo of Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Home Minister Amit Shah.

It's true that people are often accused of seeing the world the way they want it to be rather than how it is. But do we really need binoculars to see the fall of a once great political party? Leaders from the top-level to the low-rung as well as legislators have been quitting the Congress. The prominent among them are airing their views against the party line. Indications are also there of deep intra-party disputes and conflicts. On a close look, however, one will find the real reason why the leaders took the decision to leave the party/air views. And it wouldn't be surprising for those who have a grasp of the reality.

Last April, I had mentioned in an article titled, *Congress Needs to Make a Comeback for Democracy to Sustain Itself*: "In the world's largest democracy, the shrinking political space of a 133-year-old national party is as disconcerting for the party as it is for democracy itself. And, therefore, the Congress' revival is crucial for the nation and challenging for its party leadership. The task is made tougher as sub-optimal leadership faces the task of rebuilding the party and restructuring its shattered image and appeal."



One and a half years later, the Congress' state of affairs is even worse than what people had feared. I had earlier explained the to-do list for the grand old party, which remains prerequisite till date.

■ The stark reality is that the Congress has, for far too long, functioned as an autocrat, denying many deserving party functionaries their rightful place in the organisation. Loyalty towards individuals doesn't necessarily imply loyalty towards the party. It should take serious note of it.

■ An internally-democratic political party is always good for a democracy. And, therefore, establishing intra-party democratic norms is no longer an option but a necessity. It's likely to prevent disintegration of the party, make politicians accountable and encourage meaningful deliberation.

■ It should get rid of self-seeking and corrupt old guards. There are capable young leaders, who can flush out the party's old, withered arteries.

■ Short-term political advantages have always assured long-term political disadvantages. Compromising politics had the Congress falling from 364 out of 489 Lok Sabha seats in the first-ever general election in 1952 to 44 out of 545 in 2014. While people's expectations from the party are really low, the need for it to rise has never been greater.

Change is as constant a fea-

“FOR THE CONGRESS, THERE ARE ENOUGH POLITICAL OPPORTUNITIES. IT'S JUST ABOUT HOW TO MAKE AN OPPORTUNITY FIT, NOT THE OTHER WAY AROUND. IT'S ABOUT SEIZING OPPORTUNITIES IN THE RIGHT EARNEST AND AT THE RIGHT TIME”

ture in politics as it is in life, it is said. Those who resist such a change will find themselves pushing against a sea of opinion and positioned on the wrong side of history.

Most relevant for present-day Congress is an observation by Mohammed Ayooob, Professor, Michigan State University, who writes that even after two major electoral debacles, the dynasty refuses to give up control and deliberately fails to realise that it is destroying the chances of the Congress bouncing back. The equation of the party with the family has destroyed any possibility of its renaissance.

Buoyed by its stupendous victory in this year's parliamentary elections when the BJP is gearing up for the 2024 general election, targeting 333 MPs, the Congress is seen as a small, snivelling, struggling party. As a matter of fact, the Congress' decline began years ago but accelerated in 2014 with the election of Narendra Modi.

It's not that the BJP-led NDA Government is running flawlessly. Apart from the economic mess, the political culture born out of the personality cult, ultra-nationalism and hate politics concerns the common man the most. Besides, the Government has failed to address other critical issues: From agrarian distress to unemployment to dissatisfaction among the urban middle classes and the poor. India's rank in

the Global Hunger Index (GHI) has slipped further — from 95 in 2010 to 117 this year.

So, for the Congress, there are enough political opportunities. It's just about how to make an opportunity fit, not the other way around. It's about seizing opportunities in right earnest and at the right time.

By giving the reins of the party again to a family member, the Congress might have arrested disintegration within but it will commit a grave mistake if it thinks that it can emerge stronger anytime soon. The party leadership must recognise that something far bigger and deeper is at work in the intra-party realm of politics. In the prevailing political culture, for the Congress, if it wishes to be an alternative to the BJP, even disintegration would be a better option if a wider acceptability of the younger generation eludes the party rank and file.

INC, minus Sonia-Rahul-Priyanka, is thinkable but Indian politics minus the Congress is unthinkable and if indeed it happens, it would be sad and may be the most unfortunate turn, which may forever change who we are. The Congress may be critically weakened but it is not wrecked as yet.

(The writer is former Deputy General Manager, India International Centre, New Delhi, and General Manager, International Centre, Goa)

SOUNDBITE

Prime Minister Modi and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman should steal ideas from the Congress' Lok Sabha poll manifesto to tackle the economic mess.



Congress leader
—Rahul Gandhi

In the age of digital streaming and social media that is slowly but surely isolating us, MAMI binds us without boundaries, inhibitions and fear.



Actor
—Deepika Padukone

He (Erdogan) is a friend of mine and I'm glad we didn't have a problem because frankly, he's a hell of a leader and he's a tough man. He did the right thing.



US President
—Donald Trump

India is committed to peace and stability in the neighbourhood as also in the wider region. The Army will continue to partner with friends to confront any kind of emerging threat.



Army Chief
—Gen Bipin Rawat

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Wait for the verdict

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Ayodhya closure" (October 18). A five-judge Constitution bench, headed by Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi, has reserved its verdict on one of the most sensitive case of the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid land dispute in Ayodhya. What will follow next is a race against time as the verdict will be delivered in a month's time before Gogoi demits office.

In a democracy, any judicial verdict is premised on facts, which entail reliable evidence, satisfactory proof and eyewitnesses. If indeed a settlement is reached, it will be a victory for parties concerned and the mediators, too. Whatever decision the court takes must be accepted gracefully.

Finally, the country must move out from its past and focus on more important issues pertaining to the economy. The young generation is faced with a serious unemployment crisis. We need a strong economy and not court cases.

Azhar A Khan
Rampur

India's hunger crisis calls for a policy overhaul

This refers to the editorial, "Still too hungry" (October 18). Identical findings by the 2019 Global Hunger Index (GHI) and UNICEF's report titled, "The State of the World's Children 2019" prove beyond doubt that the incidence of malnutrition is alarmingly high in India. They also underline the enormous task before the National Nutrition Mission (NNM), which was launched last year, to fulfill its goal of a "malnutrition-free India" by 2022. That India is among the worst-performing countries on the acute under-nutrition parameter is particularly worrying. Further, over 90 per cent of the children aged between six months and two years are not fed a "minimally acceptable diet." UNICEF data put the stunting rate among India's under-fives at 37.9 per cent, an abysmal index that would be unacceptable for any country.

It is a proven fact that the diet — during the first 1,000 days after conception — lays the foundation for a child's physical growth and mental development. A proper diet in the early stages of life is half the battle won. Quality food and in adequate quantity is vital for a child's immunity and cognitive development. Malnutrition is most often a product of poverty, poor sanitation, unhygienic living conditions, lack of access to clean water and igno-



rance. It follows that the economic malaise afflicting the country has to be fought to make the fight against "serious levels of hunger" a success. It is a paradox of our times that while granaries overflow, people go hungry. Hunger at a time when more than the required food is available is a failure of the system to deliver. This calls for a strict implementation of the existing policies to ensure that the country's children are given nutritious food.

G David Milton
Maruthancode

Strict vigilance needed

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Lessons from PMC" (October 17). The purpose of setting up cooperative banks was to further economic development and social

life of the people. While these banks have been able to fulfill their role partially, a major impediment has been the elected members of borrowers, who are more concerned about furthering their own interests.

Cooperative banks offer

attractive deposit rates than commercial banks and this is why they strive on an ecosystem of small business, traders and petty service providers. In a country like ours, where financial literacy is not so high, it is essential that all banks come

under the purview of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI). The Central bank must maintain a strict vigil and audit all ailing banks so that scams like PMC never happen again and the faith of the depositor remains intact.

Harvinder Singh Chugh
Via email

Hunger challenge

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Still too hungry" (October 18). It is unfortunate that despite being the second-largest food producer, India ranks poorly on the hunger levels. To tackle the problem, there is a need for the Government to increase the budget for children's health.

The problem is all the more complex because the food basket differs from region to region. It is, therefore, essential that we have an efficient integrated system for food production, processing, preservation and distribution which can cater to the changing tastes of the nation.

Srishti Mathur
Ujjain

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

More to this than meets the eye

The Turkish-Syrian border drama could have been masterminded by Russia to get USA out and restore the Assad Govt's control over eastern Syria



GWYNNE DYER

Russia and its Syrian ally Bashar al-Assad win, the Kurds lose, and the United States (US) leaves in disgrace. It has been a hectic few days on the Turkish-Syrian border. After a phone call with Turkey's President Recep Tayyip Erdogan on October 7, Donald Trump abruptly abandoned America's Kurdish allies in Syria. As US troops pulled out of their positions along Syria's northern border, where they had been protecting the Kurds from a Turkish attack, Erdogan moved fast. The Turkish President declared that he would take over a big chunk of northern Syria to drive out the Syrian Democratic Forces (SDF), the Kurdish-dominated militia that has been America's key ally in the fight against the Islamic State (ISIS). Erdogan described the SDF as "terrorists" and a threat to Turkey but they are nothing of the sort.

Syrian Kurds are the majority population in the border region with Turkey. They created the SDF to resist the ISIS' attempts to conquer the region five years ago, after the Syrian regular army pulled out of the region to fight rebels elsewhere in the country. The SDF became America's key local ally in the fight against the ISIS. Over 10,000 Kurds died in that war, while the US gave them air support. By the end of last year they had destroyed ISIS and the whole region was at peace. The local Kurds and their Arab neighbours were running it themselves. The Kurds did want autonomy within Syria but they never demanded independence and they have made no attacks on Turkey, terrorist or otherwise. So why did Erdogan want to attack them?

Erdogan is paranoid about the Kurds, because one-fifth of Turkey's own population are ethnic Kurds, and some of them have waged a guerilla and terrorist struggle for decades, seeking an independent state. Other Kurdish minorities in the region, including those in Syria, are not at war with the Turks but Erdogan didn't like having the Kurdish-run SDF on his border.

Turkey invaded last Saturday and after about 36 hours the despairing Syrian Kurds did the obvious thing: they asked the Syrian army to come back and save them. They don't love Syria's dictator, Bashar al-Assad, but it's better than being invaded by Turkey and losing their homes permanently.

But there was something puzzling about all this. Why would Assad's Russian allies approve a Syrian army move that might bring it into direct conflict with the Turkish army? After all, Vladimir Putin has been courting Erdogan as a potential ally (even though Turkey is currently a North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) member).

The Syrian army is now driving back into the northeastern part of the country unopposed by the SDF. They will re-occupy the whole region (which is Syrian sovereign territory). The Syrian Kurds may still be able to negotiate an autonomy deal with Damascus, on the grounds that they are Syria's only non-Arab minority. In any case, they have no other alternative.

Erdogan can either back down and be humiliated, or he can press on and risk a war not only with the Syrian army but also the Russian air force. That's the way it looks on the surface and maybe that's all that's going on here. But we must also consider the possibility that the whole thing has been a charade, masterminded by the Russians, to get the Americans out of Syria and restore the Assad Government's control over all of eastern Syria.

First, Erdogan puts the frighteners on Trump in the famous phone-call, and Trump abandons the Kurds and starts pulling the US troops out. Then Erdogan launches the threatened invasion, and the Syrian Kurds understandably panic and make a deal with Damascus.

The Syrian army returns to the northern border for the first time in five years without having to fire a shot, carefully avoiding the points along the border where the Turks have already entered the country. Erdogan declares a ceasefire and eventually withdraws his troops, stating that he is satisfied that the Kurdish "threat" has been ended because the Syrian army, not the SDF, now controls the border. Even Iran is satisfied, because this eliminates the possibility that the US forces could be an obstacle to its planned secure corridor across Syria to Lebanon.

There's no proof of this but it makes sense. The Russians are smart enough and Trump is inept or compromised enough. It would explain why the Russians looked like they were backing the Syrians at the risk of alienating their new Turkish friend. Maybe there was no risk. Maybe Erdogan was in on the deal.

And don't worry about a revival of the ISIS. For the thousands of ISIS fighters now held prisoner by the Kurds, there can be no worse fate than falling into the hands of the Syrian army.

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

POINTCOUNTERPOINT

THE CONGRESS PARTY, WHEN THE BILL CAME IN PARLIAMENT ON ARTICLE 370, WHEN DISCUSSIONS CAME UP, VOTED FOR IT, NOT AGAINST IT.
—FORMER PRIME MINISTER
MANMOHAN SINGH



IN THE PAST SINGH SUPPRESSED FACTS AND PROVIDED COVER FOR THE CONGRESS. IT DOES NOT BEHOVE A FORMER PM TO MISREPRESENT FACTS.
—BJP SOCIAL MEDIA CELL CHIEF
AMIT MALVIYA



UTTAM GUPTA

Despite loud talk by successive Governments about increasing domestic production of oil and gas to make India self-sufficient in energy, we are producing less than 20 per cent of our requirement. The balance, over 80 per cent, continues to be imported. This heightens our vulnerability to a point whereby the slightest disruption in any of the major sources of imports (be it imposition of sanctions by the US against Iran or an attack on oil installations in Saudi Arabia) creates major ripples that have the potential to destabilise the country's economy.

The problem is not lack of resources. India has 26 Sedimentary Basins (SBs) covering an area of 3.14 million square kilometres (sq km). But, the lack of a conducive policy environment and cumbersome regulatory processes have deterred global firms (who have the technology, expertise and capital) from investing in their exploration, development and commercialisation. At present, only six SBs covering 0.518 million sq km or barely 16 per cent of the total area are under commercial exploitation. Even these six SBs are sub-optimally utilised.

An overwhelming share of throughput comes from fields discovered over four decades ago in the 1970s, namely Bombay High and the South Bassein fields and so on, with no major discoveries in recent times. The only exception were finds in the Krishna Godavari (KG) basin in the early 2000s, touted as ones that would contribute nearly 50 per cent of the country's total gas production. Even that turned out to be a damp squib with the high-profile KG-D6 operated by Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) ending up with meagre reserves of about two trillion cubic feet (Tcf) against an initial estimate of 10 Tcf.

The Narendra Modi Government has tried to entice global energy giants by assuring a higher price for difficult deep/ultra-deep water fields on the one hand and giving flexibility to operators in choosing new areas with freedom of pricing and marketing under the 2017 Hydrocarbon Exploration and Licensing Policy (HELP) on the other. It has also tried to simplify processes for approval and reduce bureaucratic red tape. But controls on supply, distribution and use remain, even as multiple pricing regimes, depending on the supply source and hydrocarbon type, give confusing signals.

In the absence of any major breakthrough in securing a jump in production from fields already given under the 1999 New Exploration and Licensing Policy (NELP) and given the lukewarm response to the first three rounds of bidding held under HELP, it is unlikely that India would be able to reduce dependence on imports even by 10 per cent as committed by the Modi Government. The Centre will, therefore, need to explore other options for meeting the country's oil and gas requirements.

The first option involves sourcing a major share of requirements under long-term arrangements with exporters, leaving a small gap, say 10-15 per cent, for buying spot to take advantage of price fluctuations, depending on global-demand supply at any given time.

India being the third-largest importer of oil and gas, we may leverage this to negotiate better prices. Joining hands with another major

THE MODI GOVERNMENT SHOULD ORCHESTRATE ITS STRATEGY COMBINING THE BEST OF ALL AVAILABLE OPTIONS LIKE BOOSTING DOMESTIC PRODUCTION, LONG-TERM CONTRACTS FOR SUPPLIES, LETTING GLOBAL OIL MAJORS OWN EQUITY IN THE COUNTRY'S REFINERS AND RETAILERS AND INDIAN COMPANIES ACQUIRING OIL ASSETS ABROAD FOR ENSURING ADEQUATE SUPPLIES OF CRUDE AND GAS TO MEET OUR GROWING REQUIREMENTS ON A SUSTAINED BASIS



buyer, say China, could further improve the country's bargaining power (but this is easier said than done). However, the threat of disruption always remains; due to the *force majeure* clause in such tie-ups.

A second alternative is for Indian companies to pick up equity stakes in foreign oil and gas assets with arrangements for buy-back. For instance, ONGC Videsh Limited (OVL), a Public Sector Undertaking (PSU), holds participating interest in over 40 assets in 20 countries. RIL, too, acquired assets in several jurisdictions. But this route is subject to a huge downside risk of erosion in the value of investment — as already experienced by both RIL and OVL.

A third alternative is one in which global behemoths such as Aramco — the Saudi Arabian Government-owned biggest petro giant and the world's largest oil exporter — pick up stake in Indian companies which are focussed on refining and marketing of oil products. This route is free from the vulnerabilities inherent under the above two options.

Already, in sync with Saudi Arabia's intent to invest \$ 100 billion in India's downstream sector, including refining, petrochemicals, retailing and so on, Aramco has proposed to acquire 25 per cent equity in the \$ 60 billion West Coast refinery (another 25 per cent will come from the Abu Dhabi National Oil Company-Adnoc) and petrochemical project in Maharashtra in which the other 50 per cent will be owned by Indian Oil Corporation Limited (IOCL), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Limited (BPCL) and Hindustan

Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL).

It is also contemplating picking up 20 per cent equity in oil and gas assets of RIL. The most crucial feature of this partnership/joint venture is assured supply of crude oil by Aramco to meet 50 per cent of the requirement of the West Coast refinery. The arrangement is mutually beneficial. While, on one hand, India gets what it needs the most, that is crude in desired quantities on a long-term basis without any disruption, on the other, Saudi Arabia also gets what it needs the most, which is an opportunity to diversify its sources of income, thereby reducing its over-dependence on crude alone. There could not be a more apt example of the two countries exploiting synergies to the advantage of both.

Indian companies can pursue similar arrangements with other major suppliers of crude oil like Iraq, Iran and the United Arab Emirates (UAE), who will also be very keen to reduce their over-dependence on crude alone and make their economies immune to vulnerabilities resulting from price fluctuations.

From our perspective, even if there is loss of output in their crude production facilities, being a co-owner in Indian firms, they won't cut supplies to the country. To take it a step further, the Government may even consider divesting its entire stake in oil refining and marketing PSUs to strategic investors who have ownership and control over crude assets.

As part of its ambitious programme of disinvestment to garner ₹105,000 crore during the current year, it has

decided to divest all of its 53.3 per cent shareholding in BPCL. If, it is sold to say Aramco or Adnoc, this will not only yield a whopping ₹57,000 crore (at current market capitalisation of ₹107,000 crore) but also ensure assured supplies of crude.

The Modi Government may also consider sale of HPCL — at present owned by ONGC which in turn is majority-owned by itself — to global energy majors. The sale of BPCL and HPCL won't face any legal hurdles as the relevant legislations, which led to the creation of these PSUs, have already been repealed in 2016.

While, pursuing these initiatives, India's political class needs to broaden its vision of oil security which should go beyond increasing indigenous production to cover arrangements for assured supplies of crude from all sources. It also needs to unshackle itself from the "socialist era" mindset that crucial assets such as oil must necessarily be owned by PSUs. In a world wherein supply chains are globally integrated, the focus should be on how best our economic interests are served rather than worrying about ownership.

The Modi Government should orchestrate its strategy combining the best of all available options like boosting domestic production, long-term contracts for supplies, letting global oil majors own equity in the country's refiners and retailers and Indian companies acquiring oil assets abroad for ensuring adequate supplies of crude and gas to meet our growing requirements on a sustained basis.

(The writer is a New Delhi-based policy analyst)

Vital tools in India's healthcare delivery

While equipment manufacturers have mostly focussed on improving the quality of care and life expectancy, they also need to increase affordability so that there is a largescale impact



NIKHILESH TIWARI

Successful healthcare delivery depends both on the availability of personnel and technologies. Medical devices are an important cog in the delivery system as they equip health service providers with the necessary tools to perform their job effectively. Though the country's healthcare industry has grown significantly over the last decade, our health ecosystem is plagued by the lack of availability and affordability of quality services. In fact, India lags behind Brazil, Russia, China and South Africa and a number of other developing countries in this regard. While technological advancements have expanded to encompass almost every stage of the healthcare contin-

uum, accessibility and democratic availability remains a hurdle. India faces a dual challenge as the rising burden of lifestyle diseases is added to the burden of communicable diseases such as tuberculosis. Non-communicable diseases are currently responsible for 61 per cent of the deaths in the country, a number that is only set to go up in the coming years. While both the Government and private participants have undertaken several measures to address the lack of quality services, these efforts have been executed in discrete silos.

In this scenario, medical appliances play a key role in offering better screening, diagnosis and treatment along with restoration and monitoring of health indicators to boost prevention. While equipment manufacturers have mostly focussed on improving the quality of care and life expectancy, they also need to increase affordability so that there is a large scale impact.

Technology has improved the complexity and accuracy of screening

of diseases. Portable/point-of-care accessories have made it possible to improve diagnostic mechanisms at the primary healthcare level, provide care at home and resulted in improved health outcomes and patient satisfaction. It has also improved the access to quality care in underserved and remote regions, while also making it possible for patients to avail treatment outside traditional healthcare facilities.

Technological advancements in surgical equipment have enabled doctors to treat highly complex and critical cases and reduce the length of extended hospital stays. It has increasingly made it possible for elective and complex operations such as knee replacement and bariatric surgery to be moved to short stay/outpatient surgery centres. For example, laproscopic surgery procedures remarkably improve outcomes; reduce length of hospital stays as well as cost of treatment.

Rehabilitative centres and hospitals are making it easier for patients to recuperate and return to a relatively

normal life with the help of advanced restorative and assistive devices. Advancements in curative technology have also allowed people with disabilities to lead productive lives.

Advancements in screening devices have enabled patients to monitor their condition at home, keeping a close track on all major health indicators. Furthermore, smart appliances are being increasingly used to remotely monitor patients and diagnose life-threatening conditions early, reducing the need for hospital visits and bringing down the pressure on overburdened healthcare centres.

However, there is a need for a more congenial ecosystem for indigenous manufacturers as medical technology is a significant contributor to the cost of healthcare delivery. According to conservative estimates, medical equipment contributes to at least 30 per cent of the capital of setting up a secondary or tertiary care center. Moreover, diagnostics and medical devices contribute to at least 20 per cent of the cost of medical services. Unfortunately, the

ecosystem is not very conducive for the sector to drive affordability and accessibility. The Goods and Services Tax (GST) on devices currently stands at 12 per cent. On the other hand, customs duty is low. This tax policy negatively impacts indigenous production and supports imports, which is counter-intuitive to the 'Make in India' initiative. As the inverted duty structure favors bringing in finished goods over raw material, imports constitute 75 per cent of the industry's sales. As a result, local manufacturers make products at the lower end of the value chain.

The Government must consider revising its tax policy to help local manufacturers gain a larger share of the market. This will also help them make products at more affordable costs.

With a changing regulatory and economic environment, the medical device sector is set to grow in the future and there are a range of factors fuelling it. According to estimates, non-communicable diseases will cause

75 per cent of the deaths in the country by 2025, with an increasing number of people suffering from diabetes, heart disease and progressive lung diseases. The geriatric population is also set to increase and would require a higher need for quality healthcare and medical devices, both at homes and health facilities.

Apart from devising a more congenial tax structure, the country needs to strengthen its regulatory mechanisms and testing procedures to ensure highest standards of quality are met. According to news reports, the NITI Aayog has prepared a roadmap to ensure better regulation of medical equipment under which all devices — imported or locally manufactured — will have to be certified by the Central Drugs Standard Control Organisation (CDSCO). While improving regulation is welcome, the authorities must ensure that the process remains smooth, hassle-free and fast.

(The writer is director of a medical device marketing and distribution company)



BACK THE GREEN NEW DEAL

For many years, the World Bank and the IMF were the international manifestation of the New Deal. They backed expansionary economic policies and were mindful of the rights of individual countries to govern. There are now proposals, backed by the UN, for a global Green New Deal. It would be a good thing for global economy, the planet and for their own long-term prospects, if the IMF and World Bank chose to back the idea.

(The Guardian editorial)

CAPSULE



DHFL reports Q1 net loss of Rs 242 cr

NEW DELHI: Debt-ridden housing finance firm DHFL has reported a consolidated net loss of Rs 242.48 crore for the first quarter ended June of the current fiscal. The company had posted a net profit of Rs 431.71 crore in the corresponding April-June period of 2018-19. DHFL said the losses registered in Q1 of this fiscal were fully attributable to owners of the parent (company). Total income of the company fell to Rs 2,399.84 crore during the three months to June 2019, as against Rs 3,154.25 crore in the year-ago period, it said in a late night regulatory filing. DHFL said the company is undergoing substantial financial stress since the second half of the previous financial year.. The company has suffered consistent downgrades in its credit ratings since February 2019. "On 5th June 2019, the credit rating was reduced to default grade despite there being no default till that date. As a result, the company's ability to raise funds has been substantially impaired and the business has been brought to a standstill with there being minimal/virtually no disbursements," the company said.



L&T to buy Old Lane's stake in subsidiary for Rs 48 cr

NEW DELHI: Larsen & Toubro on Friday said it has signed an agreement to buy the entire stake of Old Lane Mauritius III Ltd in L&T Infrastructure Development Projects (L&T IDPL) for Rs 47.9 crore. The share purchase agreement was executed on Thursday, the company said in a filing to BSE. L&T will buy 2.55 per cent stake (81,90,000 shares) of Old Lane in L&T IDPL. "At the request of Old Lane, subject to completion of certain conditions precedent, L&T has agreed to purchase its small holding in L&T IDPL as a gesture of goodwill towards a longtime investor," the filing said. Post the completion of this acquisition, L&T will have 100 per cent shareholding in L&T IDPL.

Adani awards AUD 100 mn Oz rail contract to Martinus Rail

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Adani Group on Friday said it has awarded a rail contract worth over AUD 100 million to Australia-based Martinus Rail, as part of efforts to boost infrastructure to support its mining services.

Adani Mining CEO Lucas Dow said that contracts worth over 450 million Australian dollars (AUD) had already been awarded on the Carmichael Project, the majority to regional Queensland areas.

The contractor will base itself out of Adani's newly opened Rockhampton Business Centre, ensuring Rockhampton businesses and people will be in prime position to participate in the contract delivery, the company said in a statement.

"We have always promised Queenslanders that we will deliver jobs and economic benefits for the regions, and it's



a great feeling that we are now able to convert the promises into actions that are producing outcomes for regional communities," Dow said.

"Since receiving our approvals we have not wasted a moment. Construction on the Carmichael mine and rail Project is well and truly underway on site, and our big con-

tracts are now also lined up as we ramp up activity," he said.

Martinus Rail Managing Director Treaven Martinus said, "Adani's commitments to regional jobs for Queensland is a good fit for our business, and we're pleased to partner with a company like Adani that understands the importance of supporting regional communities, while also upholding the highest stan-



Since receiving our approvals we have not wasted a moment. Construction on the Carmichael mine and rail Project is well and truly underway on site, and our big contracts are now also lined up as we ramp up activity

LUCAS DOW, Adani Mining CEO

Oil companies defer snapping fuel supplies to Air India

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

State-owned oil companies on Friday decided to defer snapping fuel supplies to Air India after the national carrier promised to adhere to the schedule of clearing past outstanding dues, officials said.

Indian Oil Corp (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corp Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corp Ltd (HPCL) had on October 5 written to Air India that they will stop supplying aviation turbine fuel (ATF) to its aircraft at six major airports from October 18 if it didn't honour its payment commitments.

"It (Air India) has made a request not to stop supplies and promised to make regular payments. In view of their commitment, we have decided to defer the decision to terminate supplies," an official at one of the fuel retailers said.

Air India owes the three firms over Rs 5,000 crore in past fuel bills and had first in June and again in September agreed to pay this amount in monthly installments of Rs 100 crore. But Air India failed to honour



Air India buys about Rs 25-26 crore worth of fuel every day from the three oil companies

Air India owes IOC about Rs 2,700 crore in unpaid fuel bills. This includes Rs 450 crore of interest. It's outstanding towards the three oil firms is about Rs 5,000 crore including interest.

Air India buys about Rs 25-26 crore worth of fuel every day from the three oil companies.

On August 22, IOC, BPCL and HPCL had stopped fuel supplies to Air India at six airports of Kochi, Mohali, Pune, Patna, Ranchi and Vizag over payment defaults. The supplies were resumed on September 7 after the intervention of the Ministry of Civil Aviation.

its commitment, leading to the October 5 notice.

IOC Director (Finance) Sandeep Kumar Gupta had earlier this week stated that the Rs 100 crore monthly payment was beside the airline being put on cash-and-carry where it was given fuel only against cash payment.

Cook meets Chinese regulator after HK app flak

AFP ■ BEIJING

The CEO of Apple has met with the top market regulator in China, a statement said Friday, a week after the tech giant faced heavy criticism over an app Beijing accused of supporting Hong Kong protesters.

Apple removed HKmap.live from the App Store after a barrage of criticism by Beijing, which is stepping up pressure on foreign companies deemed to be providing support to the pro-democracy movement in the semi-autonomous city.

Chinese state media said the app allowed protesters in



Hong Kong to track police -- but the move to withdraw it prompted accusations the firm was putting business interests

above human rights.

According to a statement on the website of China's State Administration for Market

Regulation, Tim Cook met with Xiao Yaqing, the director general of the State Administration for Market Regulation, on Thursday in Beijing.

"The two sides had in-depth exchanges on a wide range of topics including expanding investment and business development in China, protecting consumer rights and interests, and fulfilling corporate social responsibility," the statement said.

Communist Party mouthpiece The People's Daily said last week in an opinion piece that by stocking the app, Apple was "mixing business with politics, and even illegal acts".

mjunction to conduct e-auction of raw lignite for NLC

PTI ■ KOLKATA

B2B e-commerce major mjunction services limited on Friday said it has been appointed to conduct e-auction of raw lignite and minor minerals for NLC India Limited.

The e-commerce firm will carry out e-auction of raw lignite and minor minerals from mines of the erstwhile Neyveli Lignite in Tamil Nadu, the company said in a statement.

The white and other clay from NLC India's mines at Barsingsar in Rajasthan will also auctioned by the company.

The 'Navratna' PSU, NLC India Limited, has the vast reserves of raw lignite in the country, ensuring uninterrupted supply of the resource to its consumers across various sectors.

The company sells the resource only through e-auction.

The online platform of mjunction will help the state-run company to connect with various buyers, and facilitate e-selling of raw lignite in a "fair and convenient manner", the statement said.

Sensex rallies for 6th day, rises 246 pts

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Domestic equity market extended its gains for the sixth straight session on Friday, with the benchmark Sensex rising 246 points on sustained buying across sectors.

The 30-share BSE Sensex ended 246.32 points, or 0.63 per cent, higher at 39,298.38. It hit an intra-day high of 39,361.06 and a low of 38,963.60.

The broader NSE Nifty

Sebi to auction 200 properties of Sai Prasad Group in Nov

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Markets regulator Sebi on Friday said it will auction nearly 200 properties of Sai Prasad Group firms and three of its directors next month in order to recover funds worth thousands of crores raised by the entity through illicit collective investment schemes.

The regulator has been auctioning properties of the group's companies and their directors for the past two years. Besides, it had put up on sale, jewellery, ornaments and other valuables of Sai Prasad Group.

In separate notices, Sebi said it will auction 90 properties in Madhya Pradesh, 62 in Odisha and 46 in Maharashtra at a total reserve price of over Rs 74 crore. The auction will be conducted on November 22.

The companies whose properties will be auctioned are Sai Prasad Corporation, Sai Prasad Properties and Sai Prasad Foods, while the directors are Balasaheb Bhapkar, Shashank Bhapkar and Vandana Bhapkar.

The properties to go under the hammer include agricultural land, land parcels, office space and commercial premises across the three states.

The regulator has asked the intending bidders to make their own independent enquiries regarding the measurement, nature, type, classifications, encumbrances, litigations, attachments and liabilities of the properties put on auction.



The properties to go under the hammer include agricultural land, land parcels, office space and commercial premises across the three states

Ex-director of Bishal Distillers barred from securities mkt

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Acting against the illegal mobilisation of funds, regulator Sebi barred the former director of Bishal Distillers from the securities market for four years.

The Securities and Exchange Board of India (Sebi), in a probe, found that the firm had mobilised Rs 4 crore by issuing redeemable preference shares (RPS) to 238 persons without complying with the public issue norms.

The funds were mobilised in 2011-12, and former director Prabir Chowdhury held the position from 2012 to 2013, the order passed by the regulator noted.

Sebi said "though the noticee was not the director of the company during the period when the fund mobilisation by the company ...

took place, however, as the company had incurred the liability to refund the money collected by it which it failed to discharge, therefore, any person who is or becomes director of such company also becomes liable for ensuring refund by the company."

While restraining Chowdhary from accessing securities market, Sebi on Thursday said that he shall be banned "for a period of four years from the date of this order or till the expiry of four years from the date of completion of refunds to investors as directed in the order dated May 16, 2016, whichever is later."

In May 2016, markets regulator had ordered the company and its directors to refund the illegally mobilised investors' money along with an interest amount of 15 per cent per annum.

Samsung admits Galaxy S10 access flaw

PTI ■ SEOUL

Tech giant Samsung Electronics on Friday acknowledged a major flaw with its fingerprint system that allows other people to open its top-end smartphones, advising users to delete all registered prints.

Samsung is the flagship subsidiary of the giant Samsung Group and crucial to South Korea's economic health. The conglomerate is by far the biggest of the family-controlled empires that dominate business in the world's 11th-largest economy.

But it has a history of humiliating setbacks with major products, most notably a worldwide recall of its Galaxy Note 7 devices in 2016 over exploding batteries, which hampered its reputation.

Earlier this year it had to delay the launch of its first foldable smartphone, the Galaxy Fold, after pre-release users found faulty screens.

Samsung's latest problem emerged after a user in the UK told the Sun newspaper earlier this week her Galaxy S10



smartphone could be unlocked by someone else simply by putting on a screen protector and applying an unregistered fingerprint.

The flaw meant anyone who got hold of her phone could transfer funds using her financial apps, the user told the British paper. In a statement released Friday, Samsung said the issue involved "fingerprint sensors unlocking devices after recognising three-dimensional patterns appearing on certain silicone screen protecting cases as users' fingerprints." The firm advised users of the Galaxy Note10, 10+ and Galaxy S10, S10+, and S10 5G to "delete all previous fingerprints" and register their data anew.



Gold falls by Rs 145 on weak global trends, strong rupee

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Gold prices on Friday declined Rs 145 to Rs 38,925 per 10 gram in the national capital on weak global trends and a strong rupee, as per HDFC Securities.

On Thursday, the precious metal had closed at Rs 39,070 per 10 gram.

"Spot gold price for 24 Karat in Delhi was trading down by Rs 145 to Rs 38,925 on weak global prices and a stronger rupee. The spot rupee was trading 5 paise stronger against the dollar during the day," HDFC Securities Senior Analyst - Commodities, Tapan Patel said.

Silver also lost ground and fell by Rs 315 to Rs 46,325 per kg from the previous close of Rs 46,640 per kg.

In the international market, gold was ruling lower at USD 1,488 an ounce and silver at USD 17.46 per ounce.

"The international gold prices traded lower on easing worries over Brexit deal," he added.

'Saudi Aramco to delay IPO'

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Saudi Aramco plans to push back its initial public offering, which had been expected to be launched next week, a person familiar with the situation said Thursday.

The move could delay stock market trading of the oil giant to December or January instead of November, the person said. The company is expected to be valued at between \$1.5 and \$2 trillion, making it the biggest ever.

Sources had told AFP in mid-September that the IPO could be pushed back after an attack on Saudi oil facilities curtailed output. The IPO is part of Riyadh's efforts under Crown Prince Mohammed bin Salman to diversify its economy away from petroleum. Aramco has envisioned a two-stage public listing, with about two percent of the capital trading on the Tadawul exchange in Saudi Arabia and an additional listing on a foreign exchange, sources say.

Every powerful movement starts with one person. That's exactly what Bhavin Patel has achieved through his dedication to see the Karimnagar's Lower Manair Dam free of garbage, finds V SATISH REDDY

NEW GENERATION OF GREEN WARRIORS



Bhavin Patel

Inspiration, followed by perspiration, is the key to do anything. Karimnagar-based Bhavin Patel is inspiring his locals to clean the Lower Manair Dam, which has been filled with trash for years. He started the #CleanKarimnagardam campaign on September 28 this year all by himself and after witnessing his attempts to make the dam area a hangout place, many of his friends and locals joined him. The cleanliness drive has completed 21 days and sees no signs of slowing down. "I once visited the dam area for walking. I found the place to be very dirty

and unhygienic with trash dumped all over. The Lower Manair Dam is one of the major tourist attractions in Karimnagar district. As nobody cared to clean the dam which is one of the major tourist attractions of the district, I have decided to clean it by myself and eventually I witnessed more people joining me in cleaning the dam," says Bhavin Patel to *The Pioneer*. Bhavin goes to the dam area early in the morning every day to clean it. He also posts the same on social media to let others know about the change that is happening from his efforts. "After seeing my posts, my friends Surya Karan, Mounika Reddy and others joined me. The



BHAVIN GOES TO THE DAM AREA EARLY IN THE MORNING EVERY DAY TO CLEAN IT. HE ALSO POSTS UPDATES ON SOCIAL MEDIA TO LET OTHERS KNOW ABOUT THE CHANGE THAT IS HAPPENING FROM HIS EFFORTS

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BHAVIN PATEL



number of people participating in the #CleanKarimnagardam is increasing," he shares. But he believes that a lot more has to be done as he still sees trash being dumped even after the clean-up drive. He laments the lack of dustbins in the area due to which volunteers have to travel three km to dump the garbage. "I used to dump the trash through my car but it was not easy and the trash keeps increasing every day," says Bhavin adding, after requesting the Municipal Commissioner for aid, the officials

now send a tractor every day to transport the garbage. He adds that many have come forward to distribute bins for the drive. On a concluding note, Bhavin says, "We are active on Twitter about making the government accountable on keeping the dam clean. We are planning to meet the district collector and request bins in the dam area. Disposing garbage properly every day is important for cleanliness. Interested people can join us at the dam every day from 6 am onwards."

All work and no sleep makes Jack A SICK BOY

Sleep offers the quiet escape from our overwhelming work-life schedule. But we are being deprived of that escape, sometimes by our own doing, reports ANUSHKA PRADEEP

When was the last time you had a good night's sleep? Or the last time you remember waking up well-rested? If it was anytime soon, consider yourself luckier than at least 25 per cent of the world population who suffer from various forms of sleep disorders. Yes, sleep is a big deal. Since we observed World Mental Health week recently, we look at how sleep disorders have become the new norm. "Sleep disorders are mostly a neuropsychiatric issue. But what we witness these days is a form of a self-inflicted disorder that comes off as something that the society inflicts on individuals. Sleep deprivation is often the result of anxiety, depression, hypertension and other neuropsychiatric disorders," says Dr Purnima Nagaraja, psychiatrist, psychotherapist, mentor and a motivational speaker. "If I were to make a count of all the reported cases, the number of patients who suffer from abnormal sleep pat-

terns has only increased. Given the hectic work schedules, the advent of technology and the boom in the IT sector, the ideal sleep cycles have gone haywire. Lack of sleep has become so common that people force themselves to take caffeinated drinks and make harmful lifestyle changes to keep themselves awake, thus purposely inducing a sleep disorder. And sadly even children these days suffer from various forms of sleep disorders," says Dr Purnima, who also is also the director of Dhriti health services such as their wellness clinic, rehabilitation centre and a day-care. While adults are constantly trying to keep up with the demands and responsibilities of being an adult by sacrificing various aspects of their health, we try to understand what is keeping the children also up at night. "While it is true that adults are subjected to an incredible amount of stress in their day-to-day life, children these days too have to

deal with their share of stress which more often than not induced by the adults around them seconded by peer relationships," says Dr Juhi Choudhary, who is a Counsellor, Educational Therapist, specialising in counseling children. "Insomnia from stress related to education, peer relationships and radiation from electronic gadgets are the most common reasons for sleep disorders among children. Sleep deprivation results in low productivity and lack of proper social engagement which once again results in spending more nights awake to attain better results. This puts them on the road of a never ending vicious circle," says Dr Juhi Chowdary. It is true that most Indian parents expect their child to stay up late or wake up quite early to finish the last chapter or even the entire syllabus during the week of exams. The pursuit of good grades costs children their health, the effects of which would only be visible as time passes.



KALEEM SHAIK
PHOTOGRAPHER

After facing sleep issues for years, now, at the age of 31, I am a victim of several physical ailments including hypothyroidism, which comes with its own problems like chronic fatigue and restless leg syndrome. This hinders my productivity.

Online newsletter *Medical News Today* explains the adverse changes the body goes through due to sleep deprivation. This includes obesity and type 2 diabetes. "Not getting enough sleep prevents the body from strengthening the immune system and producing more cytokines to fight infection. A lack of sleep can affect two important hormones in the body, leptin and ghrelin, which control the feelings of hunger and satiety or fullness thus resulting in obesity. Sleep deprivation is known for increasing the risk of type 2 diabetes." What do sleep disorders do if left unchecked for several years? "Some days I can



DR PURNIMA NAGARAJA
PSYCHIATRIST

If I were to make a count of all the reported cases, the number of patients who suffer from abnormal sleep patterns has only increased. Given the hectic work schedules, the advent of technology and the boom in the IT sector, the ideal sleep cycles have gone haywire

sleep for 6 to 7 hours and on some days for 2 to 3 hours. My sleep patterns are unpredictable and sleeplessness has become my normal. This has been my case for past 14 years now," says Kaleem Shaik, who is a well-known photographer in the city. "After facing sleep issues for years, now, at the age of 31, I am a victim of several physical ailments including hypothyroidism, which comes with its own problems like chronic fatigue and restless leg syndrome. This hinders my productivity. Being a photographer I need to be on the move all the time and these problems prove to be a huge issue," he adds. The problem lies with stress. It leads to lack of sleep



DR JUHI CHOUDHARY
EDUCATIONAL THERAPIST

While it is true that adults are subjected to an incredible amount of stress in their day-to-day life, children these days also have to deal with their share of stress which more often than not induced by the adults around them seconded by peer relationships

which in turn results in the physical, emotional and/or mental illnesses. This illness-disorders then lead to more stress and thus creating a vicious circle. "Stress is the biggest culprit. Being stress-free as much as possible is one of the most important steps to a peaceful sleep and proper health," says Kaleem.

SOME STUDIES EXPLAIN ADVERSE CHANGES THE BODY GOES THROUGH DUE TO SLEEP DEPRIVATION. THIS INCLUDES OBESITY AND TYPE 2 DIABETES

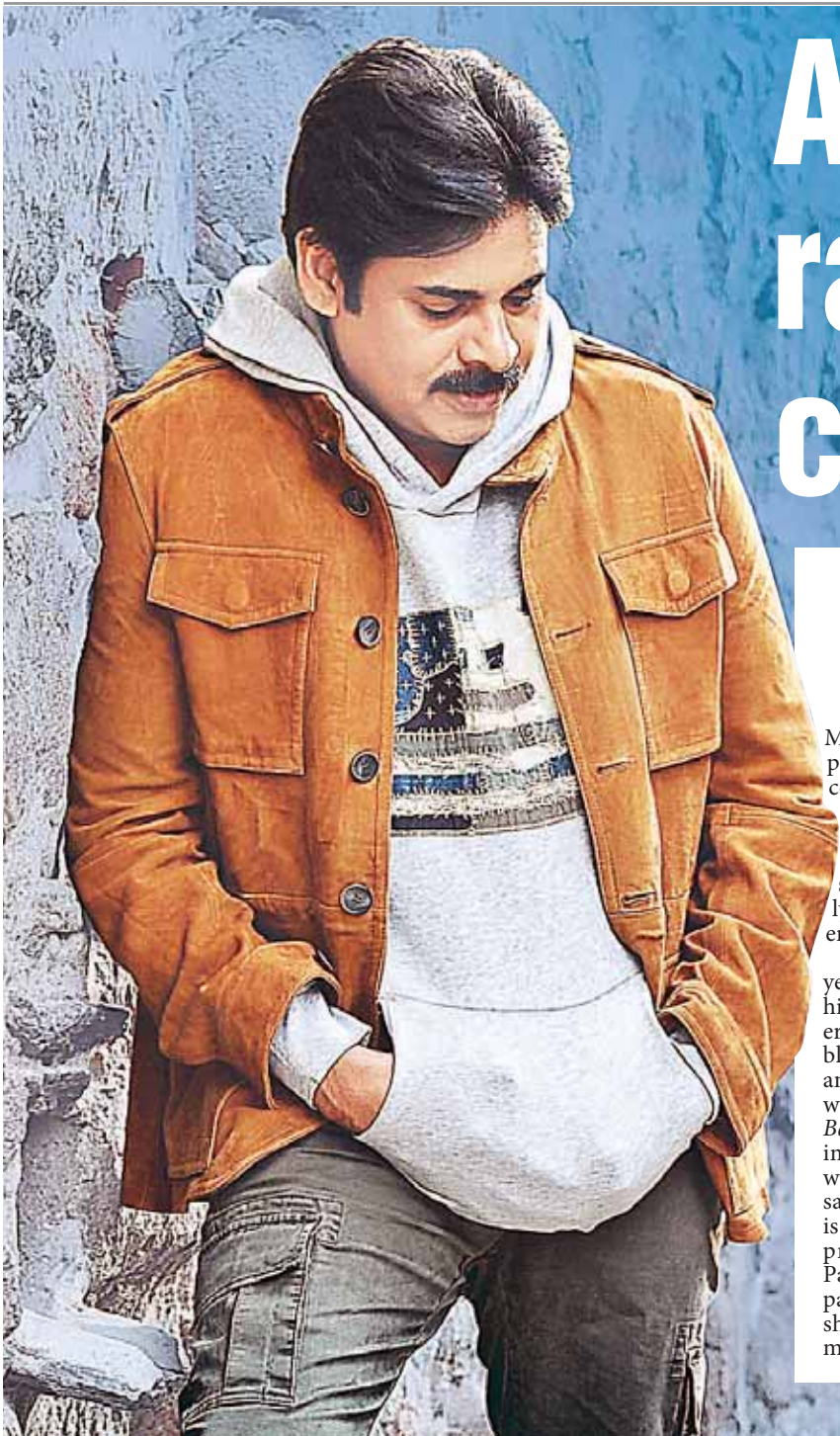
Much awaited AKASHVANI Sannam today

All India Radio has played a stellar role in nurturing India's heritage and helped portray and preserve its diverse culture. Launched in the year 1954 with a glorious tradition spanning over six decades, All India Radio is back this year with its unique calendar event Akashvani Sangeet Sannam. These music concerts are organised all over the country and feature talents from all walks of life, from eminent artists to talented young musicians. Renowned artists such as MS Subbalakshmi, Pt. Ravi Shankar, Voleti Venkateshwarlu, Pt. Jasraj, Ustad Zakir Hussain are known to have performed at the Sangeet Sannam in the previous years. Akashvani Sangeet Sannam concerts, this year will be held across India in 24 cities involving about 177 musicians from all over the country at different venues simultaneously on October 19 2019. The Sannam in Hyderabad will be held at 6 pm at NTR Kalamandir, Potti Sriramulu Telugu University, Nampally. Among performers at the event this year prominent artists such as Artist and Composer Allam

Durgaprasad, Hindustani Vocal Artist Ustad Iqbal Ahmed Khan the recipient of the prestigious National Sangeet Natak Akademi Award for the year 2014 and others are also expected to grace the occasion with their presence and mesmerize the audience with their performance.



AM Ratnam leads race to fund PK's comeback film



We've already informed you that a host of filmmakers like A.M. Ratnam, Krish, Hari, Y. Naveen and Y. Ravi Shankar of Mythri Movie makers, met actor-turned-politician Pawan Kalyan in the past couple of months, adding fuel to rumours about Pawan's comeback to cinema. While an official word to this end is awaited, sources close to him told us that he is carefully weighing options about his re-entry.

"If he plans to start the film next year, the first person who would get his vote is A.M. Ratnam, the producer who gave him the blockbuster *Khushi*, and later went on to work with him on *Bangaram*. Krish has impressed the actor with a social message-driven story and is likely have Ratnam produce the film. Pawan had participated in the muhurat shoot of a Ratnam movie (the remake of

Tamil monster hit *Vedalam*) in October 2016, which was later shelved. The actor is keen to honour his commitment to the ace producer. The others can wait for now," a well-placed source close to the development told *The Pioneer*.

The same source, however, warned that the possibility of the film being made depends on the current state of affairs in Andhra Pradesh, where the actor is politically active. "Pawan is looking at a lot factors before making up his mind. He wants to balance his political work with films. He has built his party from scratch and so is keen to devote time to political life whenever necessary — even if it means sacrificing a day or two from the schedule of his film," the source added.



Pawan's last film was 2018's Sankranti release, *Agnyaathavaasi*, which was directed by his good friend Trivikram Srinivas. Released under sky-high expectations, it failed to light up the box-office.

While Pawan tries to find a balance between his political career and love for films, NAGARAJ GOUD throws light upon the directors and producers who are eagerly waiting for the power star's nod



Balayya mourns little fan's demise

Nandamuri Balakrishna on Friday expressed grief over the death of his little fan, master Gokul Sai. A resident of Madanapalle in Chittoor, Gokul passed away due to complications from dengue. He gained prominence by flawlessly imitating Balayya's famous dialogues that won him praise from the actor himself. He had even participated in TV shows. "I'm saddened by the death of Gokul. He had a bright future. I would feel joyful every time I saw the way he went about uttering my dialogues. May his soul rest in peace and I extend my deep condolences to his family," Balayya said.



U.S. TOUR FOR A GOOD CAUSE

Tollywood personalities like Ali, Taraka Ratna, Siva Balaji, Venu, Dhanraj, Archana Veda, Sai Karthik among others will be participating in multiple entertainment programmes aimed at the Telugu diaspora in the USA. Beginning with Virginia on December 20, the four-state tour will culminate in Chicago on December 31. The events include dance performances, stand-up comedy, ramp walk, Ali's special show and a quiz. Veranica Entertainments, in association with Cloud Nine Events, is organising the whole tour to raise funds for Adharana, a non-profit organisation, which sponsors education and well-being of 300 poor students.

At a curtain raiser in Hyderabad, Siva Balaji said that the concept of the whole show, which

is devoid of unnecessary speeches, appealed to him. "I will be doing a live talk show with my wife Madhu and our part will end with a jig to a romantic retro number," he said.

Archana, an expert dancer, said she is planning to groove to the fusion of classic and western music. *Jabardasth* fame actors Venu and Dhanraj will be performing new skits on the show while singer Madhupriya said she will entertain the audience with Telangana folk numbers.

Nela Ticket girl signs her second film

The cast of *Thadam* remake, starring Ram, has got a new addition. After roping in Nivetha Pethuraj to play a cop sometime back, director Kishore Tirumala now has the nod of *Nela Ticket* girl, Malvika Sharma, to play the other leading lady. "Although she was offered multiple projects after *Nela Ticket*, Malvika was on the lookout for a part that will showcase the actor in her. She liked how Kishore Tirumala gave Malvika — who will play a journalist in the film — more screen time and has decided to hop on board," said a source.

The film, to be produced by Sravanthi Ravi Kishore, will move to floors in the second week of November. The pre-production is in full swing. Featuring Arun Vijay in a dual role of a software engineer and a gangster, the original, which released earlier this March, narrates the confusion that prevails when an accused in a murder case turns out to have a look alike.

"Except for bringing in some situational humour, Kishore hasn't tweaked the script much," added the source. Ravi Kishore is looking to release the film for next summer.

MALVIKA LIKED HOW KISHORE TIRUMALA GAVE HER MORE SCREEN TIME IN THE SCRIPT



Nama parts with George Reddy's Nizam rights

Producer-distributor Abhishek Nama, who was quick to grab the distribution rights of *George Reddy* after its trailer went viral on Dussehra, has given away the Nizam rights of the film to Global Cinemas. An announcement to this end was made on Friday. Both the distribution parties will now decide the release date together and a little birdie tells us that they are looking at a November release.

"Although a date hasn't been zeroed in on yet, the makers want to make the most of the buzz the film has generated from the trailer and release it at the earliest. They've told director Jeevan Reddy to be ready with the film by the first week of December and even asked him to get his cast ready for a promotional blitzkrieg beginning this month-end. Both the producers are considering releasing it in the second half of next month," said a source.

Featuring *Vangaveeti* fame Sandeep Madhav, the film, a production venture of Appireddy under Mic Movies in collaboration with Silly Monks and Three Lines Cinema, is a biopic of student leader George Reddy who was killed on Osmania Campus in 1972. Devika, Satyadev, Manoj Nandam, Meesala Laxman, Chaitanya Krishna, Shatru and Jay Kay (*Padi Padi Leche Manasu* cinematographer) have played supporting roles in the film. The film has been shot by *Sairat* cinematographer Sudhakar Yakkanti.



PENPED BY CHANDRABOSE AND COMPOSED BY ANUP RUBENS, THE FILM'S SONG WAS SHOT AT A SPECIALLY ERCTED SET IN KOKAPET FOR FOUR STRAIGHT NIGHTS

The makers of Karthikeya-starrer *90 ML*, directed by Sekhar Reddy Yerra, have recently wrapped up the shooting of the song *Yinipinchukoru Yinipinchukoru Ammailassale Yipinchukoru* in Hyderabad. Penned by Chandrabose and composed by Anup Rubens, the song was filmed at a specially erected set in Kokapet for four straight nights under the supervision of Jaani master. According to the makers, the film's talkie portions have been completed except for a couple of songs. Expressing happiness over the response the song has garnered on social media, film's producer Ashok Reddy Gummakonda said the unit will travel to Azerbaijan to complete the remaining two songs.

Shedding light on Karthikeya's role in the commercial entertainer laced with humour and action in equal measure, director Sekhar noted, "Karthikeya, who is an MBA gold medalist in the film, will be seen as this generation's Devadas. The reason why he turned into an alcoholic forms the gist of the film. The film has elements that will attract family audience as well."

In the film, Ravi Kishan will be seen as Karthikeya's bête noire, while Rao Ramesh, Ajay, Posani Krishna Murali, Praveen and Ali form the supporting cast. Newbie Neha Solanki is the leading lady.

90 ML Romance in Azerbaijan

Makers of this Karthikeya-starrer travel to picturesque Azerbaijan for shooting two songs



PRIYANKA CHOPRA, PARINEETI ENTER THE 'FROZEN' WORLD

Actress Priyanka Chopra Jonas along with her sister and actress Parineeti Chopra will be dubbing for the Hindi version of Hollywood animated movie *Frozen 2*.

Disney India has roped in Priyanka to dub for Elsa and Parineeti will voice for Anna in the upcoming sequel of hit film *Frozen*.

"Elsa is a fictional character who's known to be strongly-opinionated and level headed, traits that I deeply connect with. This not only made me want to be part of the film, but also gives me a wonderful opportunity to present one of the most-successful animated films to our local audiences," Priyanka said.

"My happiness just goes up

a notch knowing that Parineeti will be voicing Anna's character. The two of us have never worked together before and this seems like a perfect movie to come together and an experience that I am going to cherish forever," she added.

Talking about entering the *Frozen* world, Parineeti said, "You don't need to be an actress to dream of being a Disney princess!! I absolutely loved the first film, it's my favourite animation film but never thought that I'd get to voice Anna.

"But of course the real cherry on the cake is that I've been cast in a film about sisters with my real life sister!! While dubbing we would keep laughing about the fact that we are actually like our characters in real life! Mimi didi is totally like Elsa and I'm totally like Anna! This is why this movie will always be special. I can't wait for

the audience response."

The second part of the Disney franchise promises to be more intense as it traces the pasts of Princesses Anna and Elsa, voiced by Kristen Bell and Idina Menzel in Hollywood version, respectively, and piece together their present.

With Elsa being filled with intrigue as to why was she born with magical powers, her sister Anna is the happy-go-lucky forever optimist.

Priyanka and Parineeti fits perfectly into giving Elsa and Anna the much-needed depth to their voices.

"With Elsa and Anna, both sisters, boasting their own fan following amongst young girls world over, having Priyanka and Parineeti to voice these two felt no less than perfect. From being just a character, Elsa has grown to be

no less than a superhero that girls around the world now connect with. She, along with Anna, continue to empower girls owing to their powerful personalities. The bond between the two is so strong that we wanted to bring in a real sibling duo for these two roles. The chemistry that we are looking for is something that Priyanka and Parineeti bring with them and is sure to elevate the film-watching experience," said Bikram Duggal, Head — Studio Entertainment, Disney India. Directed by Chris Buck and Jennifer Lee, *Frozen 2* will release in India in English, Hindi, Tamil and Telugu on November 22.

This comes close on the heels of another announcement where Aishwarya Rai Bachchan has dubbed for Angelina Jolie's character in *Maleficent: The Mistress of Evil*.



KEVIN JONAS DEBUTS SUCKER TATTOO DEDICATED TO WIFE

Singer Kevin Jonas has paid tribute to his wife Danielle with a new tattoo.

The eldest Jonas Brother, 31, got a tattoo to commemorate Danielle's cameo in the *Sucker* music video, reports *pagesix.com*.

"Brand new addition to the fam. So proud of this time in our life and getting to remember this with @daniellejonas forever!" Kevin captioned a photograph of his new ink, which was done by celebrity tattoo artist Winterstone.

The image of a woman in a big dress was inspired by the scene in the music video in which Danielle, 33, wears a voluminous Giambattista Valli gown while walking a gaggle of corgis through the outdoor grounds of Hatfield House in England, Queen Elizabeth I's childhood home.

The video is particularly special, not only because the Jonas Brothers' wives — including Sophie Turner and Priyanka Chopra Jonas — made surprise appearances as the love interests, but also because it was the first single the reunited band released after their six-year hiatus.

This isn't Kevin's first family-focused tattoo; he has *Dani* tattooed on his left ring finger, along with four doves symbolising himself, his wife and their two children Alena, 5 and Valentina, 2.

Most recently, Kevin had his daughter's favourite stuffed animals tattooed on his forearm ahead of the Happiness Begins tour.



ROBERT PATTINSON 'BEAT HIMSELF UP' ON THE SET

Hollywood star Rober Pattinson used to beat himself up on the set while shooting the *The Lighthouse*.

In an interview to Mr Porter, Pattinson's co-star Willem Dafoe shared that Pattinson used to beat himself up on the sets to get into character for the horror drama, reports *metro.co.uk*.

He said, "He's not interested in craft, I think. He wants to throw himself into deep water and he

feels like it will only be true if he's drowning. For me that seemed wacky. But I'm not trying to judge. He has a good sense of the visual, of what's needed in a close-up. Sometimes he'd beat himself up so bad. He'd stick his fingers down his throat, things like that."

Pattinson had previously opened up on what he put himself through in order to personify Ephraim, who slowly descended into madness after mundane task, after mundane task in the *The Lighthouse*.

He used to carry out chores such as cleaning, scrubbing floors and carrying coal.



SOPHIE ELLIS: CAMEO IN GAME OF THRONES WAS A LITTLE ABSURD

Singer Sophie Ellis, who played a cameo in the popular American show *Game Of Thrones*, feels it was a little absurd to be an extra on the hit series.

On Lorraine Kelly's show, Ellis spoke about her role and shared her shooting experience with her husband Richard Jones, reports *dailymail.co.uk*.

"Richard and I are really big fans of the show and we knew a couple of other musicians that had also become extras. We just asked! It was the third episode of the last series where they had the massive battle."

"At the time it was the most expensive single piece of television ever filmed, so even if you don't watch the programme, just seeing enterprise on that level and walking into a room full of extras, 300 men with beards on was really funny," she said.

And the *Murder on the dancefloor* hitmaker added that the moment was so surreal, that it was "slightly absurd".

She added, "It was definitely fun, there was a lot of giggles as it was slightly absurd. It was a very dark battle so we couldn't see ourselves at all. But we were there in spirit."

The eighth and final season of *Game Of Thrones* aired earlier this year, bring to an end the much-loved fantasy drama series.

Ryan Reynolds confirmed the arrival of his third child with Blake Lively with a photo of the two parents snuggling up with what appeared to be their new bundle of joy in British Columbia, Canada.

"I love B.C.," the Canadian-born actor, 42, said in a tweet Wednesday urging people to vote for climate policy.

"I want my daughters to experience the same natural playground I grew up in," he said in the tweet revealing the sex of his baby.

The photo accompanying the Deadpool star's tweet featured the couple smiling at each other with their child, presumably their latest little one, in a baby carrier worn by her dad, but her face had been blurred out and a smiley face drawn over her real face. The trio stood on a forest trail with sunlight glinting through the massive trees, and Reynolds sweetly placed his hand on Lively's head as the two parents beamed at each

other.

Reynolds and Lively, 32, are also parents to daughters Inez, 2½, and James, 4½.

People confirmed on October 4 that the couple had welcomed their third child, but no details about the baby's sex, name or birth details were released at the time.

Lively debuted her baby bump at the premiere for her husband's movie *Pokémon: Detective Pikachu* in May, dazzling fans in a fitted yellow dress that highlighted her growing bump.

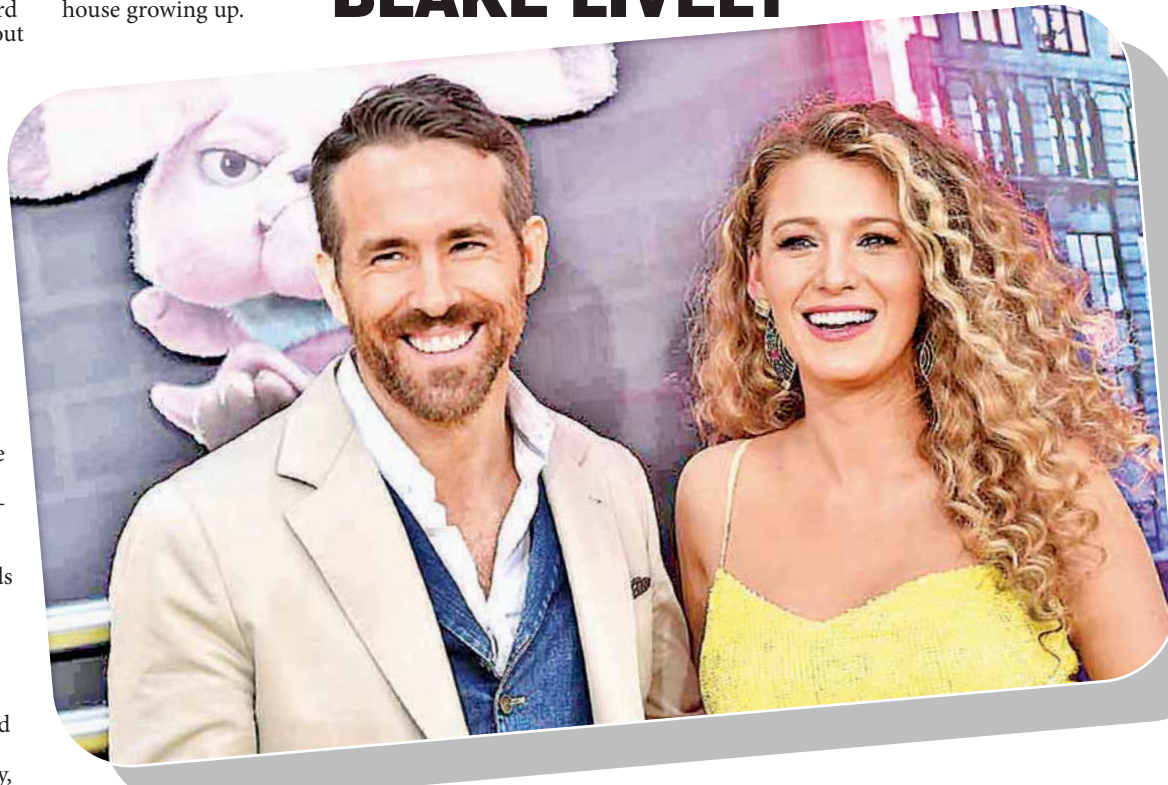
"They are so happy and excited about having another baby," a source told *People* at the time. "They really are the most in-love and in-tune couple, and very hands-on parents. They'd have a dozen kids if they could."

It's no secret that Reynolds loves being a father to girls, and told Entertainment Weekly Radio in 2016 "if I could have nine daughters, I would be thrilled. Really,

like I genuinely would be."

He added at the time that part of the reason he didn't want boys was because he grew up with three brothers, which caused some chaos in the house growing up.

IT'S A GIRL FOR RYAN REYNOLDS AND BLAKE LIVELY





Indian captain Virat Kohli, right, and teammate Rohit Sharma, center, listen to coach Ravi Shastri during a training session ahead of 3rd Test

Complete Whitewash

In last outing before Diwali, Virat & boys go for Proteas hunt with aim to consolidate lead at top in Test Championship

PTI ■ RANCHI

It would have been a dead rubber but with valuable World Test Championship points on offer, India would be eyeing victory while South Africa would be desperate for some consolation in a wretched tour when the third and final Test starts here today.

There are 40 points on offer and a 3-0 series whitewash, both of which India would be targeting against the hapless visitors.

India, who have 200 points from four games, have a massive 140-point lead over nearest rivals New Zealand and Sri Lanka in the WTC standings. Skipper Virat Kohli has also made it clear that there is plenty to play for in the final Test and the team cannot afford a drop in intensity. Going into the game, India have very few holes to plug, be it their batting or bowling.

The home team could not have asked for more from their top-order with Rohit Sharma showing why he is such an impact player as he feasted on the South African bowlers with twin hundreds in the first Test while opening for the first time.

The *Mumbaikar's* opening partner Maynak Agarwal on the other hand went on to convert his maiden hundred into a double in Visakhapatnam and followed it up with another century in Pune.

Then it was the turn of 'King Kohli' who came to the party in the Pune with a career-best double hundred — a majestic 254 not out — and made it look like a routine job.

Rohit will be eyeing a big score after not firing in the first innings

India vs South Africa
Live from 9:30am IST
STAR SPORTS 1 NETWORK

of the Pune Test while Cheteshwar Pujara, who has scored two fifties in the series, would be looking to cross the three-figure mark.

That India have lost only 16 wickets while routing South Africa in both the Tests sums up their dominance.

Toss has also been kind to India so far and things are likely to get more exciting if the stroke of luck favours Faf du Plessis in the final Test.

The last time South Africa toured the India, rank-turners had welcomed the side but this time both the pacers and spinners have been able to extract something out of the pitch.

Umesh Yadav made a fine comeback in the Pune Test to return with fine figures of 3/22 with some brief hostile spells as wicketkeeper Wriddhiman Saha who took some breathtaking catches to aid to the pacer's tally.

Kohli played an extra pacer in Umesh at Pune by benching Hanuma Vihari but only time will tell what combination he chooses for the final Test.

South African captain Faf du Plessis has already predicted the Ranchi pitch to be a turner, bringing a third spinner into picture.

Since Kuldeep Yadav has been ruled out of the match due to a shoulder injury, left-arm spinner Shahbaz Nadeem has been drafted into the squad and he might sneak

into the playing XI as well.

South Africa batsmen showed some fight in Visakhapatnam but they let themselves down in Pune.

It was only the tailenders who showed some character and frustrated the Indian bowling. Du Plessis has urged experiences players like Dean Elgar, Quinton De Kock and Temba Bavuma to bat with responsibility.

Their batting woes are further compounded by the absence of opener Aiden Markram who has been ruled out of the third Test with an injury.

The pace attack comprising Kagiso Rabada, Vernon Philander and Anrich Nortje has also not been as effective as expected while the Indian pacers have managed to provide the breakthroughs.

With their senior-most spinner Keshav Maharaj also ruled out, South Africa will find it tougher to stop the Indian juggernaut.

SQUADS

India: Virat Kohli (c), Maynak Agarwal, Rohit Sharma, Cheteshwar Pujara, Ajinkya Rahane (vc), Hanuma Vihari, Wriddhiman Saha, Ravichandran Ashwin, Ravindra Jadeja, Shahbaz Nadeem, Mohammed Shami, Umesh Yadav, Ishant Sharma, Rishabh Pant, Shubman Gill.

South Africa: Faf du Plessis (c), Temba Bavuma (vc), Theunis de Bruyn, Quinton de Kock, Dean Elgar, Zubayr Hamza, George Linde, Senuran Muthusamy, Lungi Ngidi, Anrich Nortje, Vernon Philander, Dane Piedt, Kagiso Rabada, Rudi Second.



Wriddhiman Saha & Rishabh Pant BCCI

I share good understanding with Pant: Saha

PTI ■ RANCHI

The cut-throat competition for a place in India's playing XI has not affected Wriddhiman Saha's relationship with his understudy Rishabh Pant as the duo try to help each other with notes on glove-work.

Saha was out of the Indian team for 20 months due to a shoulder surgery but his now back to his best as a keeper with some stunning catches in the second Test in Pune.

Six days short of his 35th birthday, the sprightly Saha is often seen helping Pant with keeping drills after his own training, something that has been directed by the team managed.

Ask him if he is mentoring Pant and the ever-reticent Saha replied in negative.

"There's nothing (mentoring) like that. We just discuss normally the way the wicketkeepers discuss. With Sridhar and Pant, we three jointly decide on how to go about our wicketkeeping on a particular type of wicket," he said.

The co-ordination and rapport between them helps it easier for them to work together.

"We always observe each other's wicket-keeping. We work hard in our practice sessions and have a good understanding and co-ordination among ourselves. We always try to point out each other's mistakes. It's been going well so far," he said.

While his keeping has been rated as the best in world cricket, even BCCI president-elect Sourav Ganguly has spoken about the need to improve on his batting averages.

"Whoever plays in the team wants to contribute. As a wicket-keeper, I look to get sometime in the middle and if I get time I try to build a partnership and score a fifty or so. Everyone tries like that. Sometime it works, sometime it does not," Saha said.

Leading 2-0, Saha said, it's time to complete a whitewash against South Africa.

"I have good memory of the last match. I made 117 in the last match. I remember how I approached the innings. I also remember the Steve Smith incident. If you see we drew it last time. We are 2-0 up in the series so this time we will try to make it 3-0 this time," he concluded.

Faf wants to 'bat big' like India 'Someone else' at the toss



PTI ■ RANCHI

South African captain Faf du Plessis has urged his embattled batsmen to take a leaf out of India's book and "bat big" like the hosts in order to salvage pride in the third and final Test.

"For me it's important that the guys don't feel like there is one week left in India and almost when you get on that plane to South Africa, the Test

series we play now is for Test championship, there is points still up for grabs every Test match. So for me the challenge is more mental," the South African skipper told reporters.

The Proteas' batting showed some fight in Visakhapatnam but disappointed in the second Test. Urging his batsmen to convert their starts, Du Plessis said: "For all of us it is just about converting and I am not different to

any one of those players when I get to 50, I want to get a hundred.

"The fact that I have done it twice already this series, there is no reason for me not to go and get a big one. That's a challenge for myself because I understand that sixties is not going to win Test matches for us. I need to bat big like the Indian team has done and score big runs."

Du Plessis also asked

his bowlers to buck up as India lost only 16 wickets in two Tests, clearly reflecting their dominance.

"From the bowling point of view how can we get 20 wickets, we haven't done that this series. If we do those things then we will compete with India. It is tough when we are losing. We are very competitive people so for us it does take a dent out of your confidence," he said.

RANCHI: Having lost nine successive tosses in Asia, an exasperated South Africa captain Faf du Plessis won't mind sending "someone else" in his place for the toss of the coin in the third and final Test.

South Africa have struggled in Indian conditions and not winning the toss in the first two Tests has only made things tougher for them.

Opting to bat in Visakhapatnam and Pune, India put up 500-plus totals to virtually bat the visitors out

of the game. "We really want to make sure that we compete with this team in their own conditions. We have done it in stages in the first Test. So, hoping that we can start with the toss tomorrow."

"Probably we will change... Send someone else to the toss tomorrow. I can give you that... Because my records so far has not been great," said du Plessis, in a lighter vein, on the eve of the game. Du Plessis said "anything is

possible" if his side get to bat first.

"If you put big runs in the first innings, that's where it need to stop. Then anything from there is possible. Hopefully that will unfold in the next couple of days and hopefully we can put some runs on."

"The pitch looks a little bit drier and crustier so first innings runs will be vital and then anything from there is possible in the second innings," Faf added.

PTI

SINGLES

MODRIC, BALE TO MISS MALLORCA TRIP

MADRID: Real Madrid will be without both Gareth Bale and Luka Modric for this weekend's Liga match against Real Mallorca, Zinedine Zidane confirmed on Friday. Modric and Bale both picked up injuries during the Euro 2020 qualifier between Croatia and Wales. Bale is suffering with cramp in his calf while Modric is recovering from heavy bruising in his right thigh. "Modric is not fit for tomorrow," said Zidane in a press conference. "Gareth Bale is not going to be with us, neither Toni Kroos nor Lucas Vazquez. We have to accept it. There are other players." Kroos injured his foot playing for Madrid against Granada while Vazquez has a calf problem.

JUNIOR BOXERS NOTCH UP 21 MEDALS

NEW DELHI: Indian boxers packed quite a heavy punch at the Asian Junior Championships, clinching a bumper tally of 21 medals, including six Gold and nine Silver, to end with the best medal haul among 26 competing countries in Fujairah, United Arab Emirates. The Indian men's squad fetched two Gold, three Silver and an equal number of Bronze, while the women claimed four Gold, six Silver and three Bronze medals to round off a stupendous performance on Thursday evening. The team ended top in terms of medals won but finished second behind Uzbekistan (20) which had a better Gold count of eight.

ENG ROPE JEETAN AS CONSULTANT

LONDON: Former New Zealand spinner Jeetan Patel has been appointed as spin-bowling consultant of England for the upcoming five-match T20I series against the Black Caps. Patel, the native-born New Zealander, who is contracted to Cricket Wellington, has been given dispensation to miss the first three matches of the Plunket Shield season. He will join up with the England squad when they arrive in Christchurch next week. "

BULGARIA COACH QUILTS AFTER RACISM ROW

SOFIA: Bulgaria's coach quit Friday over the 6-0 loss to England in a Euro 2020 qualifier which was overshadowed by racist abuse that sparked a storm of protest. Monkey chants and apparent Nazi salutes during Monday's match caused indignation in the football world and led to the resignation of Bulgaria's football federation chief. Bulgaria coach Krasimir Balakov, who took over the team in May, said he handed in his resignation during a meeting of the Bulgarian Football Union (BFU) executive committee. "I said that if I am the problem of Bulgarian football, I am handing in my resignation. There is no way back," the former midfielder told reporters after the meeting. AGENCIES

Sarfraz sacked as Test & T20 captain Babar to lead in T20s while Azhar Ali appointed as red-ball skipper

PTI ■ KARACHI

Sarfraz Ahmed was on Friday sacked as Pakistan's Test and T20 captain with Azhar Ali and Babar Azam elevated to leadership roles for the upcoming tour of Australia.

In an official announcement on Friday, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) said that experienced batsman Ali would lead the Test side in the two Tests in Australia while Babar Azam would be the captain in the three T20 matches Down Under.

Sarfraz has been captain in all three formats of the game since the last two years and led Pakistan to the 2017 ICC Champions Trophy title.

In Tests and ODIs, Pakistan's ranking has slipped under his captaincy while they were whitewashed in the recent T20 home series against Sri Lanka.

Sarfraz, who was the toast of the nation after Pakistan beat India in the Champions Trophy final, has had a torrid time in the Test and ODI formats in the last two years.

He came under fire recently when a depleted Sri Lankan team swamped Pakistan 3-0 in the T20 series in Lahore.

With his own form suffering with the bat, speculations were rife that the new head coach cum chief selector Misbah-ul-Haq would move to make changes in the captaincy in the three formats but no one was expecting Sarfraz to be sacked so quickly.

The PCB said the squad for the Australian tour would be announced on October 21.

The PCB also released a short statement from Sarfraz.

"I wish the best for both Azhar and Babar in their new endeavours and I must



Newly appointed Pak Test captain Azhar Ali PCB

thank my coaches, fellow players and the selectors for having supported me a lot in my tenure as captain," Sarfraz said.

This is the first experience for Babar, 25, to lead the national team in any format.

He has been Pakistan's leading scorer in the last two years in the white ball formats and is also slowly establishing himself in Test cricket.

Azhar, 34, who has played in 73 Tests and 53 ODIs led Pakistan in One-day Internationals between April 2015 and February 2017, winning 12 and losing 18 matches.

He stepped down as ODI captain and was replaced by Sarfraz in February 2017 after a 1-4 loss in Australia.

PTI ■ RANCHI

He has quit longest format five years back but local boy Mahendra Singh Dhoni is expected to watch the third and final Test against South Africa beginning here today, his manager Mihir Diwakar confirmed. "Mahi will definitely come and you will see him during the first day's proceedings tomorrow (today). I was there with him in Mumbai and he will fly down tomorrow (Saturday) morning," Dhoni's manager and one-time Jharkhand teammate Diwakar said.

The Jharkhand State Cricket Association president, Nafis Khan, has personally sent an invitation to Dhoni's family.

"We have sent an invitation to his family. *Yeh to unka hi stadium hai* (It's his stadium

Dhoni to watch today's proceedings



only). He is most welcome anytime," Khan said. However his friend, Diwakar, who is the founder of Aarka Sports that runs MS Dhoni Cricket Academy, said Dhoni is likely to come alone as the Indian

team is likely to have dinner at his sprawling farmhouse in Simaliya, in outskirts of Ranchi.

Dhoni has moved from his Harmu residence about two years back and lives with his parents at his farmhouse about 30 kilometres from the city.

Post India's World Cup semi-final exit, Dhoni's whereabouts has been a matter of speculation as the 'Captain Cool' took a sabbatical and opted out of the series against West Indies and South Africa, fuelling retirement speculations.

Dhoni is certainly not going to be picked for the upcoming series against

Bangladesh.

Diwakar said nobody knows about Dhoni's cricket decisions.

"All cricketing decisions are solely made by him. No one other than him knows about his cricketing decisions. You have seen how he stopped playing Tests. It's difficult to predict, and we don't discuss that matter. What will be the difference between common public and friends if we start asking him the same questions?"

Dhoni's childhood coaches Keshav Ranjan Banerjee and Dr Moti Prasad, who is still the sports teacher at the DAV School, also feel people should leave him alone.

Minister should not be involved in selection of players: Rijiju

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Sports Minister Kiren Rijiju on Friday steered clear of the controversy triggered by boxer Nikhat Zareen's demand for a trial bout against the celebrated M C Mary Kom, saying he "should not" get involved beyond advising the federation to make the best choice.

Zareen had written a letter to Rijiju on Thursday, demanding that she be given a trial bout against Mary Kom before the Indian squad for next year's Olympic qualifiers in China is decided.

This was after the Boxing Federation of India (BFI) stated that it

intends to pick six-time world champion Mary Kom (51kg) for the event in China on the back of her recent Bronze medal at the world championships in Russia.

"I'll surely convey to Boxing Federation to take the best decision keeping in mind the best interest of the NATION, SPORTS & ATHLETES. Although, Minister should not be involved in the selection of the players by the Sports Federations which are autonomous as per OLYMPIC CHARTER," Rijiju tweeted in response to Zareen's letter.

Responding to Rijiju's post, Zareen said she hopes for a fair chance.

"Thank you so much sir for your immediate action. I just hope favouritism and nepotism doesn't take place for athletes who all work very hard to bring laurels for our country," she tweeted.

The BFI introduced a point-based selection system last year under which boxers are now being picked on the back of their performances in various graded tournaments and the national camps.

Trial bouts, a norm earlier, are being conducted only in those weight categories in which the coaches and selectors find the competition to be exceptionally close.

**Nikhat Zareen** @nikhat_zareen · 1d

All I want is a fair chance.If I'm not given the opportunity to compete what am I training for. Sports is about FairPlay & I don't want to loose faith in my country.Jai Hind @KirenRijiju @RijijuOffice

**Kiren Rijiju** @KirenRijiju

I'll surely convey to Boxing Federation to take the best decision keeping in mind the best interest of the NATION, SPORTS & ATHLETES. Although, Minister should not be involved in the selection of the players by the Sports Federations which are autonomous as per OLYMPIC CHARTER

**Nikhat Zareen** @nikhat_zareen · 5h

Replying to @KirenRijiju

Thank you so much sir for your immediate action. I just hope favouritism and nepotism doesn't take place for athletes who all work very hard to bring laurels for our country.