

ARMY POUNDS TERROR CAMPS ALONG LOC

● 3 terror camps destroyed in PoK, 6-10 Pak soldiers killed: Army chief Rawat ● Pakistan rejects reports

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a major counter-offensive after Pakistan's unprovoked firing, the Indian Army on Sunday carried out heavy artillery strikes targeting four terror launch pads and several Pakistani military positions in Neelam Valley in PoK, killing 6-10 of their soldiers and as many terrorists, according to Army Chief Bipin Rawat.

The Indian retaliation came a day after Pakistan military resorted to firing in Tangadhar sector of Jammu and Kashmir along the Line of Control to assist infiltration by terrorists, killing two Indian Army personnel and a civilian. Three others were also injured in the attack. A highly-placed source, meanwhile, said at least 20 terrorists were killed in the Indian artillery fire, adding the figure may be quite high.

The retaliation has caused

substantial harm to the terrorist infrastructure across the Line of Control (LoC), Rawat told reporters on the sidelines of an event. "So far, as per the information available with us, 6-10 Pakistani soldiers have been killed and nearly as many terrorists," the Army Chief said, adding that more information on terrorist casualty was being obtained. "Three terror camps have been destroyed and on the fourth one also, we have caused severe damage," he said.

If Pakistan continued with such activities, the Indian Army would not hesitate to retaliate, the Army chief asserted. The

sources said the four terror launch pads were in Neelam Valley, opposite the Tangdhar sector, and that 10-15 terrorists were staying in each of the facilities at the time of the attack, the most significant offensive since India carried out the Balakot strike in February. Defence Minister Rajnath Singh spoke to the Army Chief following the Indian offensive and he has been keeping an eye on the evolving situation along the LoC, government sources said.

Meanwhile, Pakistan Foreign Office spokesman Mohammad Faisal denied that the Indian

Army targeted terror camps in the Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) and said it can arrange a visit of diplomats from P5 nations to the area to expose Indian "falsehood".

Spokesperson of Pakistan Military Major General Asif Ghafoor, in a series of tweets, claimed a total of five Pakistani civilians were killed in the Indian strikes.

Pakistan also summoned Indian envoy Gaurav Ahluwalia to condemn the firing by Indian troops. "Targeting innocent civil-

ians by Indian Army is an attempt to justify their false claims of targeting alleged camps," Ghafoor alleged and also claimed that nine Indian soldiers killed and two Indian bunkers were destroyed by Pakistan Army.

A senior Indian Army official rejected Ghafoor's allegations and claim. In a statement, the Indian Army said Pakistani Army initiated unprovoked cease fire violations to assist infiltration by terrorists into Indian territories in the Tangadhar sector last evening.

"As a result calibrated escalation of area weapons was undertaken by the Indian side in which terrorist launch pads and several Pakistan Army posts giving incidental protection to these launch pads and certain gun positions were hit," it said.

Continued on Page 3



File photo

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— BIPIN RAWAT, Army Chief



\$20 fee holds up online pilgrim registration for Kartarpur

NEW DELHI: The online registration of devotees visiting Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur could not be started on Sunday as India and Pakistan have not yet agreed upon a number of issues, including Islamabad's insistence of charging USD 20 from each pilgrim, officials said. India and Pakistan were supposed to sign a pact on Saturday on a few unresolved issues of the pilgrimage, but that did not happen yet.

"Since some issues are yet to be resolved, the online registration for the Kartarpur pilgrimage could not be started on Sunday," an official privy to the development said. Key unresolved issues include Pakistan's insistence of charging USD 20 from each pilgrim and the timing of the pilgrimage every day (first entry and last exit time).

On October 16, Chairman of the Land Ports Authority of India and Additional Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs Govind Mohan had said the online registration for pilgrims visiting Gurdwara Darbar Sahib Kartarpur is expected to commence on October 20, provided a pact is signed on remaining issues.

Schools to reopen today after a record 23-day Dasara break

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Schools and colleges in Telangana will reopen on Monday, after an extended Dasara break necessitated by the TSRTC strike. The Dasara vacation for schools started on September 28.

Schools and colleges were scheduled to reopen on October 14. However, the holidays were extended by a week as the private vehicles belonging to schools and colleges

were being used for public transportation. The strike, which entered 16th day on Sunday, however, will continue.

The government has hired temporary drivers and conductors to run RTC buses besides engaging the services of private buses.

However, parents and students are not sure whether student bus passes will be valid with temporary conductors on board.

Continued on Page 3



No urgency for RTC talks

L VENKAT RAM REDDY
■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao is understood to have indicated to Transport Minister Puvvada Ajay and senior officials that there is no urgency on the part of either state government or TSRTC management to initiate talks with striking RTC employee. KCR reportedly pointed out that the government has time till October 28 to submit a report to the High Court on the outcome of talks mandated between government and RTC unions.

KCR held a meeting at Pragathi Bhavan on Sunday with the Transport Minister and senior officials to take stock of the RTC strike, which entered 16th day.

The Minister and officials are waiting for the Chief Minister's nod to begin talks with RTC staff in line with the directions of the High Court on Friday last.

Official sources revealed that when the Minister and officials referred to the "High Court order", pat came the CM's response: "Show me the



High Court order copy. Have you read the order copy?"

When they pleaded ignorance, the Chief Minister asked them how the government could proceed on this issue without knowing what exactly the High Court has instructed it. After KCR made it clear that any future course of action on RTC strike can be taken only after going through the order copy thoroughly, officials told him that the government may receive the HC order copy on Monday.

At this, the CM reportedly told them that he would be

● Time given till October 28 to submit report in High Court comes in handy for govt

● Govt yet to receive HC order copy

● Talks likely after Huzurnagar bypoll

busy monitoring the Huzurnagar byelection polling pattern on Monday. So, officials expect the Chief Minister to hold meeting on RTC strike on Tuesday or Wednesday after going through High Court order copy expected to be received on Monday.

In any case, officials expect the talks to begin with RTC unions only after the Huzurnagar election result on October 24.

The issue of TSRTC's pathetic financial condition also came up for discussion at the meeting, sources said.

Continued on Page 3

RTC JAC plans Sakala Janula Samarabheri

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

TSRTC JAC on Sunday set itself on a collision course with the State government by sounding the bugle for its 'Sakala Janula Samarabheri' on October 30 and declaring that five lakh people would attend its show(down) in the State capital. The venue of the meeting is yet to be finalised.

After a meeting with leaders of opposition parties in Hyderabad on Sunday, JAC leaders unveiled the run-up to its Sakala Janula Samarabheri. The 10-day action plan prior to the showdown is designed to progressively step up pressure on the government, which has defied even the orders of the High Court to hold talks with the striking RTC unions.

"In spite of the High Court's orders, the government has not started talks with RTC employees. Therefore, RTC unions have discussed with leaders of all parties on the future course to be taken up and devised a



Ashwathama Reddy

10-day action plan. As part of the action plan, we will carry out several protests and programmes to gather support to our strike from across the sections and mount pressure on the government. On the final day of our 10-day schedule, we will hold Sakala Janula Samarebheri with more than 5 lakh people. It was RTC employees who played a key role in making Sakala Janula Samme successful during the Telangana movement.

Continued on Page 3

London Mayor condemns plans to hold anti-India march over Kashmir on Diwali

PNS ■ LONDON

London Mayor Sadiq Khan has condemned plans to hold an anti-India march here on the Kashmir issue on Diwali next Sunday, saying it would deepen divisions in the UK capital and called on the organisers and prospective participants to cancel the protest rally.

According to Met Police details on the permissions sought for the proposed march, an estimated 5,000-10,000 protesters plan to commence their march from Richmond Terrace near Downing Street and con-



verge outside the Indian High Commission in London.

In response to a letter by Indian-origin London Assembly

member Navin Shah, Mayor Khan said, "I absolutely condemn the plans for a protest march to take place on the auspicious day of Diwali, in the vicinity of the Indian High Commission in London."

This march will only deepen divisions at a time when Londoners need to come together. That is why I am calling on those organising the march and all those considering taking part in it to think again and cancel their plans, said the Pakistan-origin London Mayor in the letter dated Oct 18.

He said that his City Hall

office would be working with Scotland Yard to ensure a robust policing plan was in place for such a march. In response to Shah's request to consider seeking permission to ban the protest due to public disorder fears, he added: As you know, the power to ban marches of this nature lies solely with the Home Secretary, not with me as the Mayor of London. I am copying this letter to both the Home Secretary, Priti Patel, and the Metropolitan Police Commissioner, Cressida Dick, so they can clearly see the extent of my concerns about this march."

IIT Foundation for Accreditation to accredit engineering colleges

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Engineering colleges in the country will no longer be accredited by the National Board of Accreditation (NBA) and the role will be taken over by a new company — IIT Foundation for Accreditation and Assessment (IFAA).

The company established recently, having IIT Madras, IIT Delhi and IIT Kharagpur as founding partners, is now looking for a CEO.

The HRD Ministry had proposed formation of a Section-8 Company under Companies



Act, 2013 for the purpose of undertaking accreditation, through participation of IITs and IIMs and a company by the name of IFAA has been established.

"The company incorporated will attempt to expedite the

accreditation process, operating in a self-sustainable mode, a senior official, who is member of the IIT Council said.

The CEO appointed from amongst the serving or superannuated IIT Faculty, will be responsible for overall operation, academic, administrative and financial functions of the company, in developing an objective framework for assessment, which shall be efficient and transparent to undertake accreditation needs of colleges and universities offering engineering and science education, the official added.

Govt likely to float bids for Air India sale next month

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government is planning to invite preliminary bids for 100 per cent stake sale in Air India next month and already some entities have expressed interest in the national carrier, sources said. The airline is sitting on a debt pile of around Rs 58,000 crore, besides huge accumulated losses running into thousands of crores.

Some entities have already expressed interest in buying Air India, the sources said, adding the Expression of Interest (Eoi) document is being given the final touches. Eoi inviting bids for 100 per cent stake sale are



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likely to be floated either this month-end or next month, they added. Bidding for the national carrier will be carried

out through a newly developed e-bidding system. Last week, Civil Aviation Secretary Pradeep Singh Kharola took a

review meeting of Air India ahead of the airline's board meet, which scheduled to be held on October 22 for clearing the consolidated account statement for the fiscal ended March 2019.

Earlier this month, Air India management held a meeting with its trade unions on the proposed privatisation of the loss-making carrier.

Majority of its unions are opposed to the move, fearing job losses. As part of efforts to clean up the balance sheet of Air India, around Rs 30,000 crore of its debt is to be repaid by way of proceeds from the issuance of bonds by its special

purpose vehicle, Air India Asset Holding Ltd (AIAHL).

AIAHL was set up for warehousing accumulated working capital loans not backed by any asset along with four subsidiaries — Air India Air Transport Services Ltd, Airline Allied Services Ltd, Air India Engineering Services Ltd (AIESL) and Hotel Corporation of India Ltd (HCL) — and non-core assets, including paintings and artefacts.

It has already so far mopped up a total of Rs 21,985 crore by way of bond issues since September 16 and the proceeds would be utilised to pare the debt of the national carrier.

FPIs pour in Rs 5,072 cr into Indian capital markets in Oct

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) have infused a net sum of Rs 5,072 crore into the Indian capital markets in October so far amid the government's efforts to revive domestic demand.

In the preceding month, FPIs had invested a net Rs 6,557.8 crore in the domestic capital markets (both equity and debt). This came following net outflows in July and August.

As per the latest deposito-

ries data, foreign investors put in a net sum of Rs 4,970 crore in equities and a net Rs 102 crore in the debt market during October 1-18, taking the cumulative net investment to Rs 5,072 crore. Reacting to the inflow of funds in October, head of research at Samco Securities, Umesh Mehta said, "The worst seems to be behind us and markets have started to discount the forward looking Budget and revival of consumption."



TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:
Ashwin & Krishna Paksha

Tithi : Sapthami: 06:44 am,
Ashtami: 05:25 am (Next Day)

Nakshatram: Punarvasu: 05:33 pm

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

Rahukalam: 07:40 am – 09:07 am

Yamagandam: 10:34 am – 12:00 pm

Varjyam: 01:15 am – 02:47 am

Gulika: 01:27 pm – 02:53 pm

Good Time: (to start any important work)

Amritkalam: 03:11 pm – 04:45 pm

Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:37 am – 12:23 am

HYDERABAD WEATHER

Forecast: Thunderstorm

Temp: 27/22

Humidity: 98%

Sunrise: 06:10

Sunset: 05:51

Current Weather Conditions
Updated October 20, 2019 5:00 PM

Governor Tamilisai is quickly gaining the reputation of being a proactive person and a doer of things. She has taken up several issues of people's interest with the state government in the short while that she has been Governor of TS. So whether it is the TSRTC employees strike that has lingered on for a fortnight now or the matter about asking university Vice-Chancellor to make sure they utilise Rusa funds or even calling upon cab drivers to call off their strike, she has been in the thick of things. Social media users and Netizens are all gung-ho about this sort of approach. It's a far cry from the staid position that for Governor Narasimhan would take in such situations. He liked to be a tad laid-back and was even seen as somewhat inclined towards the state ruling party. Tamilisai in that sense is alert and agile. Now, whether she's being seen as leaning towards the ruling party at the Centre is a very different matter.

Wine shops buzz beats drab by-poll talk

By-poll electioneering has saturated northern parts of rural Telangana over the last month or so, overwhelming villages with VIP visits, campaign rallies etc. A look at the political operators from close quarters must help them make an informed choice on polling day. But if you think elections are at the top of people their minds, you couldn't be more wrong. The talk in the villages for the past one week has been wine

Tamilisai, a proactive Governor

shop tenders that the government has sought - in other words, how many liquor outlets will open in their vicinity and when. Look, these guys are worldly-wise and smart, and politics is too mundane to hold their interest for long. The buzz is that a lot of traders have shown interest in the business and submitted their tenders. The competition over liquor licenses is keen in these parts. Even in a small district like Jangaon has some 41 wine shops in one assembly segment limits, and an impressive 1,300 applications filed for licenses. Traders are said to have spent money like water to secure a license. Before the draw of lots was held in the district headquarters, a lot of money changed hands. The really keen paid massive sums to get others to withdraw their bids. And for many, the announcement of the winning bids was a bigger occasion to celebrate than an election verdict.

Vijayashanthi snipes at CM's chopper

TPCC Campaign Committee chairperson Vijayashanthi seized the opportunity to take potshots at Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao when KCR couldn't make it to Huzurnagar on October 17 for a by-poll rally planned for TRS candidate Sanampudi Saidi Reddy. The official reason stated that the weather

was too inclement for the CM to fly in a chopper. But Vijayashanthi couldn't hold herself back and said it had nothing to do with weather, etc. The CM was feeling cornered by the RTC strike and feared facing the public in a foul mood because of the strike, she jibed. Vijayashanthi, however, herself also didn't travel for campaigning in Huzurnagar for Congress candidate Uttam Padmavathi, despite taking the necessary permission from the Election Commission. Stay put in your place, and snipe at others leisurely. That's arm-chair politicking at its best from the halls of Gandhi Bhavan.

Praveen Prakash bypassing CS?

A recent GO issued by IAS officer Praveen Prakash, principal secretary to AP Chief Minister YS Jagan, has created a furore in administrative circles. Grapevine has it that Prakash issued the order unilaterally and even bypassed his superior LV Subramanyam, the Chief Secretary. The order instructs heads of all departments to remove retired staff who draw more than Rs 40,000 salary by the month-end. Praveen Prakash also holds additional charge as principal secretary, GAD (Political). Normally, GOs are issued in the name of the chief secretary, but in this case it was issued in the name of Prakash in his capacity as principal secretary of GAD.



This shocked bureaucrats, who in their internal discussions claimed that the CS was not even aware of the GO and Praveen Prakash issued the order without his approval. Some even say that this was done on the instructions of CM Jagan. Questions are now being raised in bureaucratic circles whether this GO, issued in deviation of the norms, will stand the legal scrutiny if any affected party approaches the court challenging the termination of their service. The retired staffers were taken on deputation by the previous TDP government with the aim of utilising their vast experience in administrative matters, besides addressing the staff crunch situation existing then. Jagan wants to remove them as he feels that they have become a burden on the state exchequer by drawing over a salary of Rs 40,000 a month.

'Unpredictable' Jagan baffles babus!

Bureaucrats working with AP CM YS Jaganmohan Reddy are a worried lot. They feel Jagan is becoming more unpredictable each

passing day. Their concerns range from Jagan cutting their role in the administration, undertake a reshuffle of their portfolios, shunt out an officer who is supposed to be in his good books, who will be favoured and who will fall out, etc. Soon after becoming CM, Jagan majorly propped up retired IAS officer Ajeya Kallam, who was chief secretary in the previous TDP government headed by N Chandrababu Naidu. The favour was the result of Ajeya Kallam taking up a massive campaign exposing TDP government's 'corruption' at various forums by organising meetings in AP and Telangana just before AP Assembly polls. Jagan rewarded him with the post of principal advisor' with Cabinet minister-rank.

More importantly, he was given full powers in CMO and all officers in the CMO were asked to report to him. This is unusual by any standards, as in no state does a retired IAS officer boss over in-service IAS officers in the CMO. But things started changing recently, with Jagan slowly reducing Ajeya Kallam's responsibilities for unknown reasons. Jagan took away GAD portfolio held by Kallam and handed it over to another IAS officer in CMO, Praveen Prakash. The energy portfolio, earlier handled by Additional Chief Secretary PV Ramesh, was handed over to Prakash. Jagan had appointed

senior IAS officer PV Ramesh as Additional Secretary following his retirement from service as Special Chief Secretary in August. Then two months later, Jagan took back a few portfolios held by Ramesh and gave them to Praveen Prakash. Bureaucrats are puzzled as to why Jagan changed his stand on two of the most senior IAS officers and reduced their significance in CMO in the space of just two months. They are also baffled about why Jagan has been according such high prominence to Prakash over the two other senior retired officers.

Another probe, another eyewash?

From raising the demand for a CBI probe into land scams that took place in Visakhapatnam three years ago, the YSRCP government has now gone ahead and constituted its own SIT on the issue. Unlike a CBI investigation, setting up an SIT to probe the scam has raised doubts among the public that it would face the same fate as the one formed by the previous Telugu Desam government on the issue. At that time, a senior TDP leader had demanded an SIT to bring to account his own colleague who, along with many of his friends, was accused of grabbing government lands worth several thousand crores. But the former CM Naidu never took the probe to its logical end fearing a backlash in the general elections. Many local

leaders wonder if the new government will actually fix responsibility on the senior leader and present MLA accused of perpetrating the scam. Activists have suggested the CM Jaganmohan should have constituted a judicial inquiry headed by a retired high court judge or asked for a CBI probe, like he did three years ago, to get to the bottom of the scam.

Metro travels from joy to sorrow

Since its launch, Hyderabad Metro has constantly been news for good or bad reasons. But of late, Metro Rail has been making headlines over safety concerns. Even before public memory faded about the incident where a woman lost her life when a chunk of plaster fell on her head, another accident occurred this week. The cabin of a Metro train came off, sending shivers down the spine of passengers onboard. Clearly, safety issues have to be prime focus of Metro authorities at the moment. However, Metro officials continue to be in another orbit and have their sights fixed on promoting the facility as an entertainment and shopping destination. Much to the chagrin of Hyderabadis, Metro Rail MD NVS Reddy during a visit to Miyapur station seemed to only see how much people were enjoying Metro rides and its spacious stations.

(Contributed by Naveena Ghanate, PV Kondal Rao, Kolishetty Venkateshwarlu, L Venkat Ram Reddy, KMP Patnaik and Deepthi Nandan)



Minister Niranjan Reddy gives away a cheque to a group of women in Wanaparthi

Paddy procurement all set to begin

Minister Niranjan Reddy asks farmers to bring quality paddy

PNS ■ WANAPARTY

Agriculture Minister S Niranjan Reddy has said that 120 paddy procurement centres have been set up in the district and predicted the paddy arrivals to the market would be around 75 lakh tonnes. Addressing an awareness programme for farmers here on Sunday, the Minister exhorted the farmers to bring quality paddy to the market to get MSP of Rs 1,835 a quintal for A-grade variety and Rs 1,815 for normal variety.

He warned of severe action if under weighing of the paddy and other misdeeds are reported from any of the procurement centres. He wanted the rice millers and IKP procurement centre representatives

to check the moisture content of paddy before purchasing the commodity.

He called for greater coordination among the officials to transport paddy and insisted that the commission payable to hamalis at the procurement centre should be uniform throughout the district. The Minister presented a cheque for Rs 1,36,17,825 to IKP groups for the paddy procured during the last Rabi. He also released a wall poster on paddy procurement.

District Collector Sweta Mohanty, ZP Chairman Loknath Reddy, civil supplies manager Lakshmaiah, ASP Srujana, RDP Chandra Reddy, DRDO Ganesh, Marketing AD Swarna Singh and others were present.

KTR seeks financial aid for Hyderabad Pharma City

Writes letter to Centre to provide Rs 3,000 crore as 'Grant In Aid'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana government has urged the Centre to provide financial assistance of Rs 3,418 crore for Hyderabad Pharma City proposed to be developed near here.

IT and Industries Minister KTR wrote letters to Union Minister of Commerce & Industry, Piyush Goyal and Union Minister of Petroleum and Natural Gas & Steel, Dharmendra Pradhan requesting the Centre to provide 'Grant in Aid' of Rs 1,318 crore for implementation of external infrastructure linkages and Rs 2,100 crore for the project towards Phase-1 internal infrastructure development.

The Hyderabad Pharma City project has been integrated as a priority node of proposed Hyderabad - Warangal Industrial Corridor project and feasibility study for the same has also been completed as per the NICDIT guidelines. Minister KTR stated that the project will be first-of-its-kind featuring state-of-the-art infrastructure, common facilities including Zero Liquid Discharge (ZLD) based Common Effluent Treatment Plant (CETP), Integrated solid waste management facility, District heating & cooling systems, Logistic Parks, Global Pharma University, Regulatory



The pharma city project has been integrated as a priority feature of the proposed Hyd - Warangal Industrial Corridor project

facilitation cells, Common Drug Development & Testing Laboratories, Startup/SME Hub etc.

The overall master planning for 19,333 acres, detailed master planning and detailed designs for the Phase-1 (8,400 acres) have been completed and as a major milestone in the development of the project. Environmental clearance has been already accorded by MoEF&CC. Government of

Telangana has already constituted SPV in the name of Hyderabad Pharma City Limited and the implementation of Phase-1 has been initiated. "You will be pleased to note that the project has received overwhelming response from both domestic and global companies to set-up manufacturing units," said KTR

Highlighting the HPC, KTR mentioned that overall investment potential of the project is estimated to be around Rs. 64,000 crore with employment generation of 5.6 lakh jobs. He also stated that the Hyderabad Pharma City promises to position India as the global manufacturing hub for pharmaceuticals. In order for a project of this nature and scale to succeed, it is imperative to have the strong support from

Government of India.

In the letter to Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, KTR stated that the industrial units currently operating in Pharma sector are primarily using Coal as their fuel for generation of steam. Given the National importance of the project, the Minister requested the centre to provide Natural Gas allocation on Preferential Tariff Basis & Reliable Supply for Project Operations.

Minister KTR stated that the Hyderabad Pharma City (HPC) is the "World's Largest Integrated Pharma Park" to promote domestic manufacturing of pharmaceuticals in line with the "Make in India" initiative of the Government of India and to consolidate the leadership position of India in the pharmaceutical sector. Minister also stated that the Central government has already recognised Hyderabad Pharma City project as a project of National Importance and has accorded in-principle approval as "National Investment and Manufacturing Zone". "Government of Telangana reassures its commitment towards the development of a world class Hyderabad Pharma City and promoting competitive domestic manufacturing of pharmaceuticals under the Make in India initiative of GOI," said Minister KTR.

Yellow metal retains its shine

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Even as the trade war with China is on, the Trump administration has dealt a severe blow on the European nations by imposing \$ 7.5 billion tariff duty. Consequently the yellow metal retained its shine during the week ended Saturday and finally closed at \$ 1,490.43 (per oz). Silver followed suit and closed at \$ 17.51 (per oz).

The outlook for gold during the next year as predicted by the London Bullion Market Association is positive and the yellow metal is expected to register an appreciation of 11%. However, considering the higher price level of gold prevailing at present, except the big market players others are likely to put their stakes. Similarly, platinum and palladium also remained firm and closed at \$ 893.50 (per oz) and \$ 1,805.05 (per oz). Copper stood at Rs. 440.85 (per kg) respectively. Other economic parameters barring Brent and Crude oil remained firm. Brent closed at US \$ 59.30 (per barrel), while Crude oil was quoted at Rs. 3,324 (per barrel). Gold MCX stood at Rs.38,090 (per 10 gms) and Silver MCX at Rs. 45,490 (per kg). BSE Sensex and Nifty 50 closed at 39,298.38 and 11,661.85 points respectively. Leading

foreign currencies' exchange rates were: US \$: Rs.71.09, British Pound: Rs. 92.31, Euro: Rs. 79.37, Singapore \$: Rs. 52.12, Canadian \$: Rs.54.15, Swiss Franc: Rs.72.27, Australian \$: Rs. 48.73, Saudi Rial: Rs. 18.95, Kuwaiti Dinar: Rs. 234.35, Omani Rial: Rs. 184.63 and UAE Dinar: Rs.19.35.

At home, the acceleration in trading activity in view of the current festival season is yet to see the desired momentum. While the yellow metal appreciated by Rs. 240 on buying support and closed at Rs. 38,540 (per 10 gms), ornamental gold too moved up in tandem and was quoted in the range of Rs. 36,610-36,710 on the closing day. Silver too (0.999), recorded an appreciation of Rs. 300 and closed at Rs. 45,500 (per kg). C O M - MODITIES The sentiment in the principal wholesale commodity markets in the twin cities remained unchanged. Rythu Bazars and the various commodity markets located in Begum Bazar, Kishanganj, Mukthiyargunj, Risala Abdullah, Mir Alam Mandi, Dilsukhnagar, Kukatpally, Bowenpally, General Bazar recorded brisk trading.

The import of vegetable oils during the period prompt November 2018 to September 2019, was to higher by 3%.



Army jawan killed in Warangal

PNS ■ WARANGAL

An army jawan was killed in a quarrel during a friend's birthday party in Warangal Rural district on Saturday night, police said.

The incident occurred at Narsampet town in the district when Prem Kumar (28) was attending birthday party thrown by one of his friends. A quarrel broke out on some issue between two groups at the party. Prem Kumar intervened to sort out the issue but a couple of youth entered into an argument with him and stabbed him. The jawan sustained critical injuries and died while being shifted to Hyderabad for treatment. According to Prem Kumar's family members, he was serving in Kashmir and had come home on leave three days ago. Police registered a case and launched investigations. It set up a special team to track down the accused.

Ayodhya tangle: Time to accept verdict honourably

Apparently the longest litigation in Indian history, the Ram Temple case has had all the trappings of a melodrama with punches, satires, acrimony, emotions and socio-politico-religious fervour. The grand finale in the Supreme Court witnessed bonhomie of sorts among distraught warring parties, though the septuagenarian lawyer representing a litigant lost his cool and tore off a copy of map given to him by his counterpart representing another litigant. Rightly, the advocates at large were quick to demand 'stern' action against the arrogant, short-tempered and undisciplined senior lawyer.

Now all eyes are set on the apex court, which is likely to pronounce verdict in the first fortnight of November. Peace-makers and all well-meaning people are doing their best by issuing appeals to the people to accept the court-verdict honourably and maintain peace in the aftermath of the judgement.

Let's hope that people would

heed the appeals for peace. The Hindu population, which has to its credit appreciable history of tolerance amidst all odds, will expectedly remain calm and composed, irrespective of the fact whether the judgement would be to its liking or not. But the same cannot be said about the Muslims, particularly Mullas, Moulvis and communal politicians as has been their history. The verdict in the Shah Bano case was opposed tooth and nail by these fanatical elements as also the verdict on Triple Talaq. History is replete with the instances of Muslim intolerance and barbarism. Further, these fringe elements get financial, moral and logistic support from Pakistan, IS and other terrorist groups.

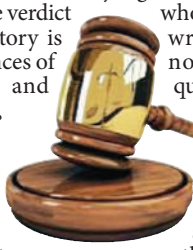
Therefore, post-Ayodhya verdict period will be an acid test for the country. In fact, this will provide a rare opportunity to nationalist forces to unite and stand like a

rock before divisive, terrorist, fanatical and anti-national elements. Under no circumstances, sinful polarisation of such elements should be allowed.

JUDGES' RESULT, LOVE ALL: GUJARAT HC

Believe it or not, but it is true! In the recently held written examination for the recruitment of 40 District Judges in Gujarat, out of 119 working judges and 1,372 advocates who appeared for the written examination, not even one could qualify for the next step in recruitment, that is interview and the Gujarat High Court was constrained to declare the result as nil.

This speaks volumes about the sorry state of affairs in the legal field. The common man considers lawyers and judges as the last ray of hope for justice.



LEGAL ROUNDUP

Peace-makers and all well-meaning people are doing their best by issuing appeals to the people to accept the court-verdict honourably and maintain peace in the aftermath of judgement

The declining standards in judiciary have been debated time and again on various forums. Former Chief Justice TS Thakur had even expressed the view that legal profession should not become the dump yard for good for nothing fellows among students. Legal education should produce future lawyers and judges with high intellect and knowledge on par with those produced by medical and engineering colleges. The Bar Council of India too has often expressed the need for high quality education and training of law students.

EXTENSION OF TIME NO PROOF OF READINESS: SC

Mere extension of time cannot ipso facto be construed as

otherwise demonstrating readiness and willingness on the part of the plaintiff, the apex court observed, while dealing with an appeal against the judgement of the High Court, thereby setting aside the concurrent findings of courts below which decreed the suit for specific performance of sale agreement.

In Ravi Setia vs. Madan Lal and others, the bench comprising Justice Navin Sinha and Indira Banerjee noted that the trial court and the first appellate court found readiness and willingness' on the part of plaintiff from his singular plea that he was present at the Sub-Registrar's Office on the date specified in the agreement for execution of deed. That apart, no other evidence was adduced

to prove his contention. The Supreme Court, dealing with this aspect, observed:

"Undoubtedly, the time for deposit could be extended under Section 28 of the Act. But the mere extension of time for deposit does not absolve the plaintiff of his obligation to demonstrate readiness and willingness coupled with special circumstances beyond his control to seek such extension" and added, "the failure of the plaintiff to offer any explanation why the balance consideration was not deposited within the time granted, the filing of the application for extension of time after expiry of the prescribed period with the frivolousness of the grounds taken in the application for extension that the money would lie in the bank without earning interest, are all but evidence of incapacity on part of the plaintiff to perform his obligations under the agreement and reflective of lack of readiness and willingness."

TS HC: ROWDY-SHEET ONLY AGAINST HABITUAL OFFENDERS

Holding that opening of rowdy sheet in the name of the petitioner and continuance of the same thereafter is in violation of the life and liberty rights as guaranteed under the Constitution of India, (more so after 2014) when no fresh crimes are registered against the petitioner, the High Court of Telangana quashed the rowdy-sheet opened in the name of the petitioner by the Dabeerpura Police Station in Hyderabad.

Justice P. Keshava Rao, in his judgement, dated September 30 in W.P. No. 31462 of 2015 filed by one, Mir Saber Ali, after quoting a catena of judgements held that once there is a long interval between involvements in different criminal cases, such a person cannot be termed a 'habitual offender' within the meaning of Standing Order 601 of A.P Police Manual Standing Orders.

Man hacked to death by son, brother

Accused had grudge against victim, who was himself a murder convict out on bail

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

In a daylight murder, an auto driver who was out on bail for the last 10 days, was hacked to death by his family members at the busy Nagarjuna circle road at Panjagutta on Sunday. The Hyderabad city police swiftly placed three men under arrest shortly after the incident.

Police said the victim Mir Raiyasath Ali Razvi alias Sujju, a resident of MS Makta, had allegedly killed another auto rickshaw driver Anwar over an extra-marital relationship three months ago.

The accused were identified as Abdul Rahman, 40, Sujju's brother, Mohammed Azhar, 19, his son, and Abdul Aleem,



Police with the accused whom they arrested within hours of the incident on Sunday

27, another relative, said police. Two others, Syed Amjad, 22, and Mohammed Hasan alias Babu, 20, were reportedly absconding.

Police seized five sickles used in the murder. An Omni van and a bike were also seized from the accused, said Anjani

Kumar, police commissioner of Hyderabad.

According to police, the accused men bore a grudge against Sujju after the murder offence. He was arrested last month and was released on bail on October 10. The men kept track of his activities and knew

that he went out from 7am to 9 am for tea at a nearby stall. On Sunday, the accused followed him and attacked him with sickles and fled the place in an Omni van. They had bought the weapons from Sanath Nagar area. Sujju, who lay in a pool of blood, was

The victim, Mir Raiyasath, had allegedly killed another person over an extra-marital relationship three months ago

rushed to a hospital, where he succumbed to injuries, police said. Following a complaint, the Panjagutta police booked cases against the men and arrested them on Sunday afternoon. Efforts are on to trace the absconding accused.

Army pounds terror camps along LoC

Continued from Page 1

It said Indian Army retains the right to respond at a time and place of its choosing in case Pakistan Army continues to assist terrorist activities across Indian borders.

Rawat said, "Ever since the abrogation of special provisions (for Jammu and Kashmir), we are getting repeated inputs about infiltration by terrorists from across the border.

The sources said Pakistan has been trying to push terrorists into Kashmir to trigger unrest. Soon after government announced its decision to reorganise Jammu and Kashmir on August 5, the Army was put on high alert along the LoC to effectively repulse any possible Pakistani

misadventure.

The sources said the pounding of Pakistani positions and terror camps cannot in any way be compared to surgical strikes carried out by the Indian Army in September 2016 on terror launch pads across the Line of Control. However, the offensive was the most significant one after India carried out the Balakot strike in February.

On February 26, India carried out an aerial strike on a terrorist training camp of the Jaish-e Mohammad terror group in Pakistan's Balakot, in response to Pulwama terror attack in which 40 CRPF personnel were killed.

Pakistan Air Force retaliated the next day by trying to target military installations but it was repulsed.

Schools to reopen today after...

Continued from Page 1

It may be recalled that Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao said on October 12 that student bus passes would be valid.

Transport Joint Commissioner and Secretary J Pandurang Naik reiterated that bus passes are valid, "The bus passes are certainly valid and the bus fare would also remain the same. There will be no difference in the fare. If someone is caught taking more money than the usual fare, they will face police action," he said.

In the last two weeks, several people have complained that temporary conductors overcharge passengers. The police then took note of these incidents and conducted random checks to book such offenders.

As TSRTC employees on strike have been dismissed, buses are being run by temporary drivers and conductors hired by the government. Private vehicles are also being used by the government to accommodate passengers.

Last week, the Chief Minister asserted that the government would resolve the crisis within a week and run all the TSRTC fleet from October

21. The TSRTC has 10,000-odd buses. However, since the strike, only 6,000 buses have been operational.

The TSRTC employees have been on strike since October 5th over 26 demands.

The government has hired temporary drivers and conductors to run RTC buses besides engaging the services of private buses. However, parents and students are uncertain if their bus passes will be valid or if they will be charged by the temporary conductors. Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao said on October 12 that the bus passes are valid.

Transport Joint Commissioner and Secretary J Pandurang Naik reiterated that bus passes are valid, "The bus passes are certainly valid and the bus fare would also remain the same. There will be no difference in the fare. If someone is caught taking more money than the usual fare, they will face police action," he said.

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TRADITIONAL TOUCH



Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan lights the lamp at a 'Kalolsavam' event organised by the All India Malayalee Association in Hyderabad on Sunday

Trader booked for supplying adulterated oil to jail

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A trader who was allegedly supplying adulterated oil to the management of Central Prison Chanchalguda was booked by the Dabeerpura police on Saturday.

According to the police, the Central Prison Chanchalguda superintendent had made a complaint against a trader and tagged along a report of the State Food Laboratory chief public analyst. The trader got the contract for supply of sunflower oil to the Chanchalguda prison.

However, jail authorities sent the samples of the oil to the State Food Laboratory for a quality check. The report furnished by the jail authorities along with the complaint stated that the oil was not sunflower, but a mix of palmolein oil, said police.

On a complaint made by prison superintendent D Srinivas, a case was registered against the trading company.

The jail authorities cook food for nearly 6,500 every day using the oil supplied by the trader. Sources in the prison department said that the contractor was supplying the adulterated oil for last three years.

Heavy rains lash city, more likely

Downpour so deep into October unheard of, puts off Diwali shoppers

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Heavy rain lashed the city on Sunday afternoon causing inconvenience to holiday makers and Diwali shoppers. The city dwellers have been, in fact, fed up with the continuous rains falling like never before in October.

Several areas of the city including Jubilee Hills, Banjara Hills, Masab Tank, Mehdiapatnam, Tolly Chowki, Asif Nagar, Lak-di-ka pul, Nampalli, Kothi, Abids, Begum Bazar, Malakpet, Khairatabad, Ameerpet and Punjagutta witnessed heavy downpour in the afternoon. Water-logging was reported from various parts of the city affecting movement of the traffic.

The Met office has forecast that the city will experience rains for another two or three days. Since heavy gales are blowing across the Telugu states from eastern and south eastern directions, heavy to very heavy rains expected.

The Met also monitored a low-pressure area that has been built up to a height of over 4.5 km in the East Central Arabian Sea. Under its influence, a trough has been



formed up to a height of 2.1 km from East Central Arabia Sea to Vidarbha and North Interior Karnataka. Heavy to very heavy rains are likely under its influence in Telangana, coastal AP, Yanam and Rayalaseema region. The Met office cautioned people living in low-lying areas and cautioned people against standing near electric poles as thunder storms are likely.

During the current rainy season, the greater hyderabad region recorded a rainfall of over 630 mm. The rainfall incident in 650 square KM region in and around greater Hyderabad equals several hundreds of crores liters. But only 7% of the incident water seeped into the soil. About 20-30 per cent of rain water evaporates and the rest of the water flows waste into gutters. The municipal employees have been making efforts to divert the rain water into drains.

Metro turns lifeline of Hyd

Bus strike helps Metro claim its rightful place under sun

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Hyderabad Metro Rail has turned lifeline for city residents as the RTC employees' strike entered its third week on Sunday.

Commuter numbers on the Hyderabad Metro have seen a drastic jump in the wake of the bus strike, with a whopping 50,000 more passengers taking the ride daily on average. To cater to the sudden increase in rush, Hyderabad Metro Rail Limited (HRML) officials have increased the frequency of trains on all routes.

The RTC management has been claiming that temporary arrangements have been made to minimize inconvenience to commuters, most city buses have been off the road since the start of RTC strike. They have now begun to depend on Metro trains.

"While about 3 lakh commuters use the Metro daily, at least 50,000 more people are traveling by Metro trains due to the RTC strike. We have been tracking the passenger



demand from time to time and increasing the number of train services accordingly to cater to the rush. RTC strike was an unexpected event for us but we ensured that Hyderabadis had a lifeline to depend on," said HMRL MD NVS Reddy.

Hyderabad Metro chipped in from day-one of TSRTC strike and operated about 100 additional trips daily with six extra trains and enhanced frequency. All the Metro routes, either it is between LB Nagar and Miyapur or Ameerpet to HiTec City or Nagole to Secunderabad, witnessed heavy rush as people thronged to stations in the absence of TSRTC's city bus service.

"No big city can survive

without a Metro train service. The importance of Hyderabad Metro is being realised now. Metro Rail chipped in during RTC strike. By pointing towards some minor incidents that happened recently, we should not diminish the significance of Metro and scare people in the process. Hyderabad Metro Rail is absolutely safe and no other city has as spacious Metro stations like ours," said NVS Reddy during his visit to Miyapur Metro Station on Sunday.

With government reopening schools from Monday, the Metro is expected to see a further rise in commuters this week.

RTC JAC plans Sakala Janula Samarabheri

Continued from Page 1

Now once again we are taking up Sakala Janula Samarabheri to save not just RTC, but democracy in Telangana," said TSRTC JAC convener Ashwathama Reddy.

"Government is intentionally resorting to violence and oppression in case of RTC strike. More than 100 women workers have been arrested. Attack on New Democracy leader Potu Ranga Rao also has been done intentionally. Instead of acting adamantly, the government should initiate talks with RTC unions. We also request temporary bus drivers and conductors to support our strike and not to impact our livelihood forever for their temporary gain," Ashwathama Reddy said, while disapproving of the government's attitude.

According to the JAC convener, RTC strike would continue, along with talks and legal battle, even if the government comes forward for discussions. TSRTC employees will hold protests before all depots, along with family members, and reach out to people from all sections to garner support. Rasta Rokos on highways as well as protests by lady conductors and children of RTC employees form part of the action plan.

TJS chief Prof Kodandaram, TTDP chief L Ramana, CPM leader Tammineni Veerabhadram and others took part in the meeting with JAC at Sundarayya Vignana Kendram here.



1 kg gold seized from 3 persons at RGIA

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Air Intelligence Unit of the Customs department on Saturday seized gold weighing around 1 kg from three passengers at the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport in Shamshabad. Sources said that all three cases were detected by the Air Intelligence Unit of Hyderabad Customs Wing and 915.17 grams of gold, worth a total of Rs 35,50,858 was seized from them.

According to Customs officials, the three passengers who arrived at the airport by a Singapore Airlines flight from Jeddah were intercepted at the international arrivals area on Saturday night. The seizure was made based on a credible input of gold being smuggled in the form of bars. On inquiry, it was found that the passengers were carrying gold bars concealed in clothes in their hand baggage, said officials.

The three gold bars each weighed 295.3 gm, 303.360 gm and 316.510 gm. Further inquiry revealed that they were smuggling gold bars and were supposed to hand it over to an unknown receiver outside the airport. Three cases have been registered and the three passengers were arrested. Further investigation is underway.

724 gms gold seized at airport

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Officials of the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) seized smuggled gold weighing 724 gm from the rectum of a domestic passenger at RGI Airport on Friday. The value of the gold is around Rs 27.87 lakh.

The arrest was made following a tip-off when DRI officials stopped a passenger who arrived on a flight from Mumbai and checked him. A body scan found three elliptical capsules concealed in the rectum of the passenger. The gold capsules were covered with black adhesive tape to avoid detection. The gold weighed 724 gm, said DRI officials. A case was registered. Inquiries revealed that he was entrusted with the job of carrying the gold which was given to him by one of his friends in Mumbai. The gold has been seized under the Customs Act, 1962 and the passenger was arrested. Further investigation is on.

No urgency for RTC talks

Continued from Page 1

Officials informed KCR that TSRTC currently has a bank balance of just Rs 8 crore and it is not in a position to pay salaries to staff by

itself unless the state government provides financial support. They told the Chief Minister that RTC had suffered Rs 125 crore losses due to the strike, which began on October 5.

They said RTC registered earnings of Rs 4,882 crore per year but the expenditure was much more at Rs 5,811 crore, due to which RTC was plunging deeper into financial crisis year after year.

Cops donate blood at camp

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

On the eve of Police Commemoration Day observed, the Rachakonda Police have organised a mega blood donation camp, in association with Indian Red Cross Society, at CAR headquarters at Amberpet on Sunday.

Inaugurating the camp, Rachakonda police commissioner Mahesh Bhagwat said that police martyrs are a source of inspiration for the entire force. They have sacrificed their lives for our better tomorrow, he said.

At least 330 police officers and personnel turned out for the camp and donated blood.

Later, a CD of songs written and sung by Nagar Mallu, inspector of LB Nagar traffic police, in honour of the martyrs was released.

Addressing the media, Bhagwat spoke about the various programs organised throughout the Commemoration week in Rachakonda. He said the



Rachakonda police commissioner donates blood at the camp

Traffic wing and She Teams have conducted several awareness programmes in schools, colleges and orphanages. SHOs visited the families of police martyrs to express solidarity.

He said Rachakonda police have won the 'Best Blood Donor' award given by the

Governor for last two years for registering the highest number of blood donations on a single day. He said the police donate blood whenever required to Thalassemia patients, emergencies and accident victims.

Dr K Pichi Reddy of Indian Red Cross Society helped organise the camp.

5K-run held to spread bone health awareness

About 500 people were screened for bone density at free camp held on the occasion

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

On the occasion of the 'World Osteoporosis Day 2019', SLG Hospitals, fast emerging as one of the largest healthcare facilities in South India, on Sunday organised a 5K run and a free health camp to spread awareness on 'Osteoporosis' and risks involved due to weak bone quality among the ageing population. As many as 500 people got screened for bone density and quality as part of the free camp organised in the hospital premises.

Worldwide, one in three women and one in five men aged 50 years and above are at the risk of suffering an osteoporotic fracture. Osteoporosis causes bones to become weak and fragile, so that they break easily - even as a result of a minor fall, a bump, a sneeze, or a sudden movement. Fractures caused by osteo-



A participant undergoes a check-up at the bone density camp

porosis can be life-threatening and a major cause of pain and long-term disability.

Commenting on the run and the free screening camp, Dr Ram Paparao, CEO, and Dr Jagan Mohan Reddy, Sr Consultnat, Orthopedics, SLG Hospitals said, "SLG Hospitals

is a socially responsible healthcare institution. In addition to treating people for the ailments, SLG Hospitals works proactively towards creating awareness on various aspects of health. Our free camp on Osteoporosis is very crucial mainly for the aged section of



Runners weave their way through city streets on Sunday

our society, who often tend to ignore the risks due to lack of awareness. We are happy that hundreds of people of all age groups were beneficiaries of the camp, and this will help turn preventive towards the risks."

Fractures due to

Osteoporosis have a devastating impact on millions of people worldwide and results in enormous socio-economic costs to society and healthcare systems. Despite effective medical advances to reduce fractures, very few people actually receive the treatment.

CAPSULE

Nagam lashes out at CM over graft

HYDERABAD: Former Minister and Congress leader Nagam Janardhan Reddy has charged Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao with looting the state and pushing the cash rich Telangana into debts. Addressing the media here on Sunday, Nagam vowed to fight till the Chief Minister was lodged behind the bars for allegedly indulging in corruption. He alleged that the Chief Minister was trying to award Rs 24,000 crore contract for laying the black-top roads to a single contractor. The other day during the course of movement for Telangana, K Chandrashekhara Rao accused the people of Andhra of looting Telangana. But, now the KCR is allowing the Andhra contractors to loot the state. Nowhere else in the country did we come across the scale and extent of corruption that has been taking place in Telangana, he alleged.

Blast near Jagan's residence triggers panic

GUNTUR: In a blast that occurred near the official residence of Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy in the wee hours of Sunday, a woman was severely injured. The woman, identified as Pydamma, was rushed to the government hospital at Vijayawada with severe burns. Following the blast, a deafening sound was heard by people living in the vicinity. They were at a loss of comprehension about the source of the blast. Tadepalli police rushed to the scene and suspecting that the gas leak from the refrigerator could have triggered the blast. The police are investigating the case.

Sri Ram Sagar Project brims FRL

NIZAMABAD: In the view of continuous rains along river Godavari, Sri Ram Sagar Project (SRSP) reached nearly its Full Reservoir Level (FRL) and receiving 38,216 cusecs inflows. With these inflows, the project with the storage capacity of 90.3 tmc ft, reached nearly 85.091 tmc ft water and another 6 tmc ft short to reach its Full Reservoir Level which is 1091 ft. Now the water level at the project is metred at 1090 ft. According to Sri Ram Sagar Project officials, the project would reach its FRL by Monday morning and the project gates would be lifted to discharge the waters depending on receiving inflows from upper catchment area from Maharashtra and local catchment area. Now project is receiving nearly 30,000 cusecs and the irrigation officials releasing 6,000 cusecs to the Kakatiya canal. If the inflows increase, the officials would be readying to lift the SRSP gates and release water into river the Godavari.

TRS lodges complaint against Uttam for violating MCC

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The TRS has lodged a complaint with the Election Commission alleging that TPCC chief N Uttam Kumar Reddy is not leaving the Huzurnagar constituency as per Election Commission rules. The TRS party general secretary M Srinivas Reddy, in a complaint, alleged that Nalgonda MP Uttam Kumar Reddy is a resident and voter of Kodad town, which is situated outside the Huzurnagar constituency. This is evident from Uttam Kumar Reddy's affidavit filled with Election Commission on the occasion of filling of the nomination to the Parliamentary elections held to Lok Sabha-2019. He has stated on oath that he is a resident of Kodad village and mandal and Suryapet district with his name enrolled as voter in Kodad Assembly constituency which is outside Huzurnagar constituency. This position continues to be same till today without any change. Srinivas Reddy mentioned

Over to ballot box in Huzurnagar today

TRS, CONGRESS LOCKED IN NECK-AND-NECK FIGHT

K VENKATESHWARLU ■ HYDERABAD

The stage is set for the by-election to the Huzurnagar Assembly constituency, to be held on Monday. The two main political parties - TRS and Congress campaigned extensively in the constituency for the last one-month and the election would witness a neck-to-neck fight. The ruling TRS is keen to wrest the seat from the Congress, while the opposition is determined to show its dominance in the constituency.

The ruling TRS took the by-election prestigiously and had roped in several leaders to campaign in the constituency, to defeat the TPCC president and Nalgonda MP Uttam Kumar Reddy's spouse Uttam Padmavathi Reddy. The TRS had fielded over 700 leaders, besides deploying its cadre from Kodad, Miryalaguda, Nalgonda, Suryapet, Thungathurthi.

On the other hand, the Congress too had deployed all its leaders from the lower rung to the top brass, to retain the seat, at any cost. The Congress has given a call to protect the democracy by ensuring the victory of the Congress candidate Padmavathi Reddy. Uttam Kumar Reddy, who resigned from the seat following his victory as MP from Nalgonda constituency, won the Huzurnagar seat in successive elections in 2009, 2014 and 2018.

The Congress fielded TPCC working president and Malkajigiri MP A Revanth Reddy for the campaign in the last two days. The Congress



Election staff make their way out from the Agricultural Market Yard godown in Huzurnagar after collecting polling material on Sunday evening

The ruling TRS is keen to wrest the seat from the Congress, while the opposition is determined to show its dominance in the constituency

experiment had succeeded in a great way as Revanth pulled the crowd in an unexpected manner. On the other hand, the TRS was a bit upset with the cancellation of Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao's public meeting supposed to be held on October 17. However, the TRS is banking on its poll management, which ensured power for

the second time in the state.

TRS will register victory in Huzurnagar if their poll management succeeds here. The party candidate, Saidi Reddy lost elections in 2018 with 7,466 votes in the hands of Uttam Kumar Reddy. What really means poll management? It is a process where the party's hard core workers cast their votes first. Later, they shift their focus on voters who benefitted from the government schemes such as Rythu Bandhu, Pension Scheme and others to cast their votes and at last, the party activists lure the opponent party followers.

The election campaign of ruling TRS in 2018 elections was not similar to present elections as the party didn't send any prominent leaders to the constituency. But this time, the TRS party deployed promi-

nent leaders from all communities to attract the voters.

However, the Congress is banking on the development it did in the constituency in the last three terms. The party is in upbeat mood following the cancellation of Chief Minister's public meeting besides CPI's withdrawal of its support to the ruling party.

More so, the Congress is hoping that the ongoing RTC strike would also help them win the elections easily as the party believes that the people are against the ruling party with the ongoing RTC strike and extension of holidays to schools. One of the close observer of these elections has said on condition of anonymity that even Uttam knows the pulse of people of the Huzurnagar constituency but the days performance decides the winner.

Cong to lay siege at Pragathi Bhavan today

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Senior leaders of Congress party discussed the strategy to be adopted for the proposed siege of 'Pragathi Bhavan', the official residence of Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao, on Monday in protest against TRS government's failure to resolve the problems of RTC employees who are on strike since October 5.

TPCC working president A Revanth Reddy, Bhongir MP Komatireddy Venkatreddy, AICC Member Daya Sagar and other senior leaders met at the residence of former Minister and ex-Leader of Opposition in Legislative Council Mohammed Ali Shabbir in Jubilee Hills on Sunday.

They discussed various issues, especially the protest plan to lay siege to 'Pragathi Bhavan'.

Speaking to media persons later, Shabbir Ali said that the Congress party had set October 19 as the deadline for the Chief Minister to resolve the RTC crisis. He said that the Congress had also warned that it would lay siege to 'Pragathi Bhavan' on October 21 if CM KCR fails to resolve the problems of RTC employees to end their strike. However, he said that the Chief Minister appears to be in no mood to change his adamant attitude. KCR has openly disobeyed the orders of High Court, which asked the government to initiate talks with the employees at

10.30 am on Saturday (October 19). "This is highly shocking that a Chief Minister is refusing to follow orders of the High Court. He did not even appoint a full-fledged Managing Director for RTC despite High Court ordering for the same a week ago. Are we living in a dictatorship or democracy?" he asked.

By showing utter disrespect to judiciary, Shabbir Ali alleged that KCR was giving a wrong message that he was above law. "By engineering large scale defections, KCR dismantled Legislature. He also reduced the importance of Executive by not consulting the IAS officers on important issues. Now he is targeting the judiciary by not following the directives of High Court. This is an alarming situation. Immediate corrective measures must be taken to restore democracy in Telangana," he said.

The Congress leader said that by dragging the RTC strike, KCR was indulging in vendetta politics wherein he wants to punish the RTC employees for disobeying his orders to end the strike. He said that the Chief



Invite JAC for talks: Kodanda asks govt

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana Jana Samiti president Prof Kodandaram has demanded the state government to invite the JAC of RTC leaders for negotiations honouring the Telangana High Court verdict. Addressing participants of the JAC and Opposition parties meeting held at Sundaraiah Vigyan Kendra here on Sunday, he exhorted everyone to take part in the protest programmes actively and save the RTC.

Veteran Congress leader V Hanumantha Rao pledged the Congress parties complete support to the RTC bandh. The support will continue till the RTC problems are resolved, he added. T-TDP president L Ramana blamed KCR for borrowing at least Rs 1,00,000 crore during his 65-day stint at the CM in the second term but did not repay the dues the government owed to the RTC. He demanded the TRS government to release a White Paper on the total borrowings of the state government.

He dubbed all suicides by

Minister was neither concerned about the inconvenience caused to general public nor bothered about the problems of RTC employees. KCR just want to satisfy his false ego and expects everyone to act like his slaves, he alleged.

Shabbir Ali said that the Congress party would continue to support the RTC employees till their demands are accepted. He announced that the Congress party would lay siege to 'Pragathi Bhavan' on Monday under all circumstances. He appealed all the Congress workers to participate in the protest and make it a success.

These villagers vote in Maharashtra too

PNS ■ KERAMERI

In all, around 2,663 voters of about 15 habitats of Kerameri mandal of Asifabad district are gearing up to exercise their right to franchise in Maharashtra Assembly polls too on Monday. The people of Paramdoli, Paramdoli Thanda, Kota, Muqaddamguda, Maharajguda, Sankar Loddi, Lendija, Antapur, Indra Nagar, Gowri, Bolapatar, Lendiguda, Narayanaguda, Esapur and Padnavati have been deriving benefits out of schemes of both the Government of Telangana and Maharashtra besides exercising their right to franchise in elections of both the states.

They vote for two MLAs, two MPs and two sarpanches, but development of their villages is still a far cry. As the villages are located at a higher altitude, the drinking water table recedes in summer. Still the tribals did not have pattas for lands being cultivated by them.

During the last Lok Sabha elections, the Election Commission made it clear that the voters should exercise their right to franchise either in Telangana or Maharashtra. So, some voted for LS member in Telangana, while some others gave their vote to Maharashtra Lok Sabha candidate. This time,

About 15 hamlets in Kerameri of Asifabad dist have been deriving benefits from schemes of both Telangana government and Maharashtra

there are no such problems since the elections are being held for Maharashtra Assembly.

The people of the villages demanded pattas for lands being cultivated by them. Their grouse is that no government is paying attention to their problems because their villages are located on the inter-state border. Absence of patta for their lands, making them ineligible to derive benefits under government schemes. They have been demanding issue of pahani documents to help them get loans from banks.

Former sarpanch of Bolapatar village Suryavamsi Parameshwar alleged that the political parties remember them only at the time of elections. He demanded the government to solve the border problem. He alleged that both the states have been showing step-mother love towards them.



Errabelli Dayakar Rao

Minister assures ryots of MSP

PNS ■ WARANGAL

Panchayath Raj and Rural Development Minister Errabelli Dayakar Rao assured cotton and paddy farmers of the Jangaon district a remunerative price for their produce this Kharif season. The Minister was addressing an awareness meeting of officials and Rythu Samanvaya Samithi leaders in Jangaon on Sunday. MP Pasunoori Dayakar, MLA Thatikonda Rajaiah and District Collector Vinay Krishna Reddy were also present.

The Minister advised the Rythu coordination committees to take up a key role in procuring farm produce and suggested them to procure till the last grain. He called upon the officials concerned to supply gunny bags and stipulate a time limit for the purchases and payment schedules. The Minister exhorted the officials to direct the persons concerned to provide the tarpaulins in case Raina are recorded in the procurement centres. The Minister expressed confidence that the present Kharif produce in Jangaon is likely to surpass the previous records as the state received bountiful rains this Monsoon.



BJP state unit chief K Laxman addresses a gathering in Warangal on Sunday

BJP asks RTC staff to intensify stir

PNS ■ WARANGAL

BJP state president Dr K Laxman alleged that the state government was unleashing a reign of terror by indulging in repressive tactics on the RTC workers. Addressing the striking RTC employees and workers in Warangal on Sunday, the BJP leader questioned the government for not showing any interest towards resolving the just demands of the RTC workers.

He asked the workers to up the ante against the government to fulfill their demands. Expressing concern over the increased repressive tactics of the state government, the BJP leader said that even a government of united Andhra Pradesh was not this much anti-democratic.

"People of entire Telangana are on one side while the Chief Minister as a dictator is standing on the opposite side," the BJP leader said. The BJP leader alleged that the Chief Minister was trying to grab the 80 odd-crore worth RTC properties and was trying to divert them to his relatives and

Another RTC driver dies of heart attack

PNS ■ JAGGAIAHPET

An RTC driver, identified as, Shaikh Qaza Miya died of heart attack at his residence here on Sunday. He was working with Sattupalli depot of the RTC. His relatives alleged that he died on account of the adamant attitude of the Government of Telangana. The TJAC leaders expressed shock at the death of the bus driver and conveyed their grievances to the bereaved family.

family members.

The BJP leader further questioned the silence of Ministers KT Rama Rao, Harish Rao and Etila Rajender over RTC strike. He even termed Transport Minister Ajay as a betrayer of Telangana.



Congress leader V Hanumantha Rao gives a cheque to the family members of Surrender Goud

SHORT READS



FIR against Bihar BJP chief Sanjay Jaiswal

Kishanganj (Bihar): An FIR has been lodged against Bihar BJP chief Sanjay Jaiswal and Sweety Singh, the party's candidate for Kishanganj assembly bypoll, for allegedly violating the model code of conduct, an official said. The FIR was registered at Sadar police station on Saturday evening following a written complaint by Kishanganj Sadar Circle Officer Shafi Ahmad, Sadar Sub-Divisional Magistrate (SDM) Shanaawaz Ahmad Niyazi said. The complaint was lodged after a video surfaced on social media purportedly showing Jaiswal exhorting businessmen to close their establishments on the polling day and promising to pay Rs 500 to each of their staff members in their firms and houses, the SDM said. Jaiswal allegedly made the remarks during a meeting of the local businessmen held on Thursday at the residence of Kishanganj Municipal Council vice chairperson Aanchi Devi.

'Uddhav' international dance festival in Gwalior from Oct 31

VBHOPAL: Over 1,000 artistes will take part in the four-day long international dance festival titled 'Uddhav', to be held in Gwalior from October 31. Uddhav Sanskritik Evam Kreedha Sansthan's Keshav Pandey on Sunday said dancers from Spain, Italy, Israel, Iran, Russia, Kirgizstan and Sri Lanka would participate in the event. "This is 16th year of the festival, in which dancers from various states of the country also participate along with international participants," Pandey told reporters here. "An important objective of this festival is to present the rich and vibrant cultural heritage of Gwalior to the international community," he said. The festival will formally begin with a carnival passing through the city streets, he added.

Lucky escape: Toddler falls from 2nd floor, lands on rickshaw

TIKAMGARH (MP): A three-year-old boy had a miraculous escape after he fell from the second floor terrace of a building and landed on the seat of a cycle-rickshaw passing by in Pradhanpura area here. The boy, Parv Jain, escaped without any injury in the incident that occurred on Saturday night. The video of the incident, which was captured on the CCTV cameras installed in the nearby buildings, has gone viral on social media. It shows a man walking and pulling his cycle-rickshaw with his hand on a narrow lane in a busy market area of Pradhanpura in Tikamgarh, when a child suddenly falls on its seat. Ashish Jain, father of the child, said, "The incident occurred at around 8.30 pm on Saturday night. My son, Parv, was playing on the second floor terrace, about 30-feet from the ground level. However, he lost balance and fell off the terrace. But luckily, a rickshaw puller Manohar Bhatt was passing on the road with his vehicle."

Voting in Maha, Haryana assembly polls today

● Bypolls to 51 assembly seats across the country

PNS ■ MUMBAI/CHANDIGARH

Polling will be held on Monday to elect Maharashtra and Haryana assemblies with the BJP and its allies seeking to retain power in the two states on the back of the recent Lok Sabha polls victory, while the opposition is hoping to turn the tide by taking advantage of any anti-incumbency. Bypolls will also be held to 51 assembly seats and two Lok Sabha constituencies spread across 18 states.

In Maharashtra, where the 'Mahayuti' alliance of BJP, Shiv Sena and smaller parties is against the 'Maha-agadhi' led by the Congress and the NCP, a total of 8,98,39,600 people, including 4,28,43,635 women, are eligible to vote. As many as 3,237 candidates, including 235 women, are contesting in 288 seats and 96,661 polling booths are in place with 6.5 lakh staff for the voting exercise. The ruling BJP is locked in a contest with the opposition Congress and the fledgling JJP for the 90 assembly seats in Haryana which has over 1.83 crore voters, including 85 lakh women and 252 transgender, while 19,578 polling stations have been set up.

Polling will be held from 7 am



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to 6 pm. Tight security arrangements have been made with deployment of more than three lakh personnel from state police and central forces in Maharashtra, while over 75,000 security personnel have been mobilised in Haryana.

Counting of votes will be on October 24. The high-voltage electioneering by the BJP saw participation of a galaxy of leaders led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his cabinet

colleagues Amit Shah and Rajnath Singh, as it continued to aggressively raise the nationalism plank by focusing on scrapping of Article 370 provisions on special status to Jammu and Kashmir and targeted the opposition on national security and corruption.

The opposition tried to corner the BJP governments at the Centre and in the states on the handling of the economy with Congress leader Rahul Gandhi

blaming the ruling party for the economic slowdown and unemployment and highlighting issues like "failure" of demonetisation and GST rollout.

The BJP, which is seeking a second straight term under Chief Minister Devendra Fadnavis in Maharashtra, is contesting 164 seats, which include candidates of smaller allies contesting on its lotus symbol, while Sena has fielded candidates on 126 seats.

On the other hand, the Congress has fielded 147 candidates and the ally NCP 121.

Among other parties, the Maharashtra Navnirman Sena (MNS), led by Raj Thackeray, has fielded 101 candidates, the CPI 16, the CPM 8. The BSP has fielded candidates in 262 constituencies. A total of 1400 Independents are also in the poll arena. The opposition campaign was, however, lacklustre as both the Congress and the NCP were plagued by infighting and desertions in the run-up to the polls. The bypoll for Satara Lok Sabha constituency will also be held on October 21. Former NCP leader and sitting MP Udayanraje Bhosale is in the fray from the seat on a BJP ticket against Shrinivas Patil of the Congress-NCP combine.

NTCA red-flags MP's move to increase tourism activities

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The National Tiger Conservation Authority (NTCA) has red-flagged the Madhya Pradesh government's move to increase tourism activities inside the state's tiger reserves in violation of the existing guidelines and asked it to take corrective steps.

This follows a complaint by Bhopal-based wildlife activist Ajay Dubey who has alleged that the state government has increased the tourism carrying capacity of the reserves by allowing in more numbers of vehicles carrying visitors.

He has also claimed that it was being done without making necessary changes in tiger conservation and eco-tourism plans. Following the complaint, the NTCA has issued a strict missive to the chief wildlife warden of the state and heads of all tiger reserves to refrain from increasing the carrying capacity for tourism, according to the letter shared with Dubey by the NTCA. The NTCA has also asked them to take necessary corrective steps and inform it



Following the complaint, the NTCA has issued a strict missive to the chief wildlife warden of the state and heads of all tiger reserves to refrain from increasing the carrying capacity for tourism

about the action taken in this regard.

Dubey alleged in his complaint that Madhya Pradesh's

principal chief conservator of forests (wildlife) had illegally raised the tourism carrying capacity of all the tiger reserves in the state in October 2018.

Based on an earlier complaint by Dubey, the NTCA had in December asked the state forest department to reverse its order. However, this directive was not adhered to, the wildlife activist said. After this, Dubey filed a complaint with the tiger conservation authority.

In its latest communique, the NTCA said the tourism carrying capacity should not be increased in Madhya Pradesh tiger reserves.

ACB lodges FIR in Rs 1,100 cr J&K Bank loan fraud case

PNS ■ JAMMU

The Anti-Corruption Bureau (ACB) lodged an FIR on Saturday in the Jammu and Kashmir Bank loan fraud case involving an amount of over Rs 1,100 crore, officials said.

The said amount was advanced by the bank to Rice Exports India (REI) Agro Ltd. Soon after the registration of the FIR, different teams carried out extensive searches at the houses of over a dozen accused bank officials, including its former chairman Mushtaq Ahmad Sheikh, at nine locations in Kashmir, four in Jammu and three in Delhi, an ACB spokesperson said in a statement here.

He said the houses of REI Agro's chairman Sanjay Jhunjhunwala and vice president and managing director Sandeep Jhunjhunwala were also searched in Delhi. Further investigation into the matter was underway and three teams were continuing with the searches in the national capital,

the spokesperson added. The ACB registered a Preliminary Enquiry (PE) on allegations that the officials of the bank's branches at Mumbai's Mahim and Delhi's Ansal Plaza had sanctioned loans to the tune of Rs 800 crore in favour of REI

Agro on the basis of fake documents and in violation of the laid-down banking procedure between 2011 and 2013, which resulted in the accounts becoming NPAs in 2014, thereby causing a huge financial loss to the bank. It emerged during the PE that REI Agro, which had shown its head office in Kolkata and corporate office in New Delhi, approached the Mahim branch of the bank, even though it did not have an office in Mumbai, and got loans or advances worth Rs 550 cr sanctioned in its favour, the spokesperson said, adding that the Vasant Vihar branch of the bank in New Delhi also sanctioned Rs 139 cr in the firm's favour against the supplier bill discounting facility and takeovers.



Hopeful Abhijit will give suggestions to overcome economic crisis: Dilip

PNS ■ KOLKATA,

West Bengal BJP chief Dilip Ghosh on Sunday said he was hopeful that Nobel laureate Abhijit Banerjee, who has drawn criticism from a section of saffron party leaders, will give valuable suggestions for overcoming the economic crisis. Distancing himself from the unpleasant remarks made against Banerjee by some BJP leaders, Ghosh said people may have divergent views about the acclaimed economist. "He is a big personality and has made a huge achievement; many people are expressing their views, they are all entitled to their opinion," he said. Union Commerce minister Piyush Goyal, at a media briefing in Pune, recently described Banerjee as a "Left-leaning" person. Goyal on Friday also said Banerjee's suggestion of a minimum income scheme has been rejected by Indian voters and there was no need to "accept what he thinks".

Echoing similar sentiments, Rahul Sinha, a national secre-

He is a big personality and has made a huge achievement; many people are expressing their views, they are all entitled to their opinion
— **DILIP GHOSH**, West Bengal BJP chief



tary of the BJP, also claimed that Banerjee's economic theories have not been proved on the ground in India.

Ghosh, also a Lok Sabha MP from Medinipur, asserted that that he was among the first to congratulate the Indian-born American economist after the announcement.

"I am sure he will give good suggestions for overcoming the

economic crisis that the country as well as the entire world is going through," Ghosh said.

Leading a 'Gandhi Sankalp Yatra' at Kamarhati on the northern outskirts of the city, in which central minister Nityanand Rai also participated, Ghosh said apart from a social message, the saffron party is also "giving a call for a change" in the state through this programme. The yatra, which was launched in the state on October 16, is scheduled to cover all 42 Lok Sabha constituencies over a period of 10 days. "People want a change in the state as they are unhappy with the Trinamool Congress rule, which has led to an atmosphere of political violence and social upheaval. This is evident from the response that our programme has been getting throughout the state," he said.

Centre can bestow Bharat Ratna on Shivakumar Swamiji instead of Savarkar: Siddaramaiah

PNS ■ BENGALURU

Former Karnataka chief minister Siddaramaiah on Sunday suggested that instead of Hindu Mahasabha leader Veer Savarkar, the Central government should bestow the Bharat Ratna on Lingayat seer Shivakumar Swamiji, who passed away in January this year. The 111-year old seer, earned the fame of 'Walking God' was a philanthropist, educator and

humanitarian. His personality and his works were revered worldwide.

"Whatever is the opinion of BJP (regarding Bharat Ratna to Savarkar), but I believe that instead of Savarkar, Bharat Ratna should be conferred on Shivakumar Swamiji," Siddaramaiah told reporters in Mysuru amid row over his remarks a few days

ago that Savarkar was among the accused people in the Mahatma Gandhi assassination case. The BJP unit of poll-bound Maharashtra has promised in its election manifesto to bestow the Bharat Ratna on Veer Savarkar posthumously, which triggered a nationwide debate. Siddaramaiah reiterated that



Savarkar was one of the accused in the Mahatma Gandhi assassination case. However, it is a different matter that he has been acquitted, the former chief minister added. "There was no need to give Bharat Ratna to him now. We have been saying that the Bharat Ratna be given to Shivakumar Swamiji. Since he (Savarkar) was Hindutva proponent, we opposed it. Where's the controversy in it?" the Congress leader said.

PNS ■ MANILA

The values of India's civilisation can ensure peace and friendship among people and countries in the times of strife and violence, President Ram Nath Kovind said on Sunday, calling on the Indian community in the Philippines to promote the country's heritage.

Speaking at the Indian community reception in Manila, Kovind appreciated the contribution of the diaspora to the economy and society of the Philippines and to the image of India and Indians. The president is on a five-day visit to the Southeast Asian country. "Our community in the



Philippines has been a strong bond of friendship between our two countries for decades. The size of the diaspora has grown remarkably over the last few years," he said at the event. "To meet our people in far-away lands is an emotional and special experience for me, one

that you have when you meet your near and dear ones," he said. Appreciating the Indian community for maintaining its culture and traditions in the Philippines, Kovind said, "you must do your best to promote our heritage and knowledge for the well-being and happiness of all."

The president said that it is a matter of immense pride for us that wherever our community goes, it takes with it the values of "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam" - the whole world is one family.

"In these times of strife and violence, it is these values of our civilization that can ensure peace and friendship among peoples and countries," he said.

Body of DU professor found on railway tracks

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The decapitated body of a Delhi University professor was found on railway tracks and his mother was found hanging from a ceiling fan with her mouth stuffed with cloth at their flat in Pitampura, police said on Sunday.

Allen Stanley (27), who hailed from Kottayam in Kerala, was found dead on tracks at Sarai Rohilla railway station on Saturday. Earlier that day, his mother Lissy (55) was found hanging at the flat in Ashiana Apartment, they said.

Stanley was a guest professor at St Stephen's College, where

he taught Philosophy, and was also pursuing Phd from another institute. Police suspect Stanley committed suicide after killing his mother. However, no suicide note was recovered with Stanley's body, but a note written in Malayalam was found at the flat. Police said they are probing all angles.

They have registered a murder case under section 302 of Indian Penal Code at Rani Bagh police station after they found his mother dead at the flat. The mother-son duo were in depression because of an abetment-to-suicide case pending against them in Kerala, and both were on anticipatory bail.



POWER OF ART

Patna's Vidyut Bhawan facade turns into vibrant canvas

PNS ■ PATNA

Commuters passing by the Vidyut Bhawan on Patna's famous Bailey Road are now stopping to admire it as a team of Indian and foreign artists have transformed its dull facade into a vibrant thematic artwork with a subtle message on preserving nature.

Over the last three weeks, five artists, including two from Argentina, laboured on four separate wall arts spanning the facade of the high-rise building that houses offices of the power department of the Bihar government.

The most prominent among them is a 70 ft-high mural themed on preservation of environment and biodiver-



sity painted by Argentine duo Emmanuel Alaniz and Federica, roughly titled 'We are all light'.

The giant artwork on the side wall of the Bhawan is the first thing any visitor or pass-

er-by notices, which stands out in its colourful glory.

The wall divided by windows shaft in the middle, on the right depicts a girl in sarwar kameez, sporting plaited hair and holding a bird in her

The giant artwork on the side wall of the Bhawan is the first thing any visitor or passer-by notices, which stands out in its colourful glory

hand, in the backdrop of a tree, running stream and a bright sun, while a deer stands next to her.

The left portion portrays a boy holding a plant in his hand surrounded by lush vegetation, vibrant flowers and wildlife, including a monkey that hangs upside down from a tree branch, as depicted on the top of the wall. "Can art make people think? Can it hold their attention? We feel, it can, and that is why these messages have been embed-

ded into our work. The work portrays the desire to co-exist with nature, and the boy represents the flora while the girl represents fauna. So, we humans must respect flora and fauna," Emmanuel said.

His partner Federica who jointly executed the work, said, she and Emmanuel first took a little tour of Patna to understand the people and culture of the city and the wall art reflects those aspects. "The two characters are inspired from real life, and we met a

boy and a girl who are hearing-impaired, and these two characters in our painting represent them," he said.

The project is being executed by Mumbai-based art group St+Art, whose projects have literally transformed Lodhi Colony in Delhi into a 'Lodhi Art District'.

"Senior officials of the power department of Bihar government contacted us and they wanted a similar project done at Vidyut Bhawan. The project includes four separate wall arts, including the one on its main facade, and below which an art installation should be put up soon," Project Manager at St+Art, Ritesh Sharma said, adding the plastic paint has been provided by Asian Paints.

‘ACT-EAST POLICIES MUST BE PRACTICAL AND SUSTAINABLE’

He is one of the youngest Chief Ministers in the country. But then the way **CONRAD KONGKAL SANGMA** has turned Meghalaya around means that it has been easier for him to break out of the past and chart out an original course, free of expectation. It is not just his youth but also the legacy of his father, PA Sangma, that he is reverential about and wears almost like a talisman. During the course of the interview with **SAIMI SATTAR**, the Meghalaya CM does not mince words, articulates his ideas clearly and is focussed on efficiently bringing about a change in his State — things that could make one think that he was the CEO rather than a politician. He touches upon issues that matter and how with minimal investments he is trying to make the maximum impact

Has the attitude of the Centre changed towards North-Eastern states. Can you elaborate on the difference that you have witnessed as Chief Minister?

I just wait for the right moment and then say what I have to as the situation presents itself. But overall, this is something that I have seen happening during the last one-and-a-half years after taking over as Chief Minister. There are many senior people in my team and they tell me that there was a time when they went to Delhi but couldn't meet the officials, the minister concerned or the Prime Minister. But now we do not face any difficulty and there is accessibility in terms of human connectivity. There is a different sense of importance given to the North-East. The Prime Minister himself is very concerned. The last time I went and met a Minister to invite him to Shillong, his response was that, "Even if you don't call, I will have to go, or else PM *nahin chodenge hamein* (the PM would be displeased with us)." That is the kind of response that we get now, which indicates the pressure on every Ministry when it comes to any issue related to the region.

I am of the firm belief that you cannot get work done in Shillong while sitting in Delhi. You have to see what is happening at the grassroot level with your own eyes to understand what is needed. So when Ministers come here, they understand the requirements. That is what I meant when I said that there is a change. I am sure that more will happen in the coming years due to the approach of the Government.

■ The Government has formulated the Look East policy. Is there anything in particular that Meghalaya would like to focus on as part of this initiative?

It has moved ahead and has now been renamed as Act East. For Meghalaya, I have been very clear even before I became the Chief Minister that we need to "Look South" and "Act South" which means Bangladesh. I have been a strong advocate of this. Kolkata, the nearest Indian port to export our products, is 1,200 km away. Before Independence, it was Chittagong in Bangladesh which is half that distance at 650 km. If this was to open up, the exports from the North-East would go up tremendously. At the moment, the region comprises only one per cent of the total exports from the country.

I have proposed an eight-lane highway connecting Guwahati, Shillong, Dauki in India and Chittagong in Bangladesh. If needed, the Government should invest and fund this project so that the North-East gets accessibility. One very important and good thing that has happened recently is that Bangladesh has agreed to allow access of goods from the North-Eastern States to Chittagong port which wasn't there earlier. This is a big diplomatic achievement for the Indian Government.

In order to ensure that exports increase, many policy decisions need to be cleared. For instance, there is a rubber plant in Bangladesh, which is running at 50 per cent deficiency and sourcing raw material from Malaysia even though Tripura and Meghalaya, which grow rubber, are very close. The current policy means that if I have to export rubber to Bangladesh, I have to go through Kolkata, even though the factory in Bangladesh is 40 km away. A policy decision is needed to get over such hurdles.

Then there is connectivity in terms of telephony. If Airtel or Jio go 5 km into Bangladesh, and there is a complaint against them, they have to pay a fine of ₹5 lakh every time. So these service providers do not put up a tower near the Bangladesh border. As a result everyone, including the BSF personnel, uses the Bangladesh network. It is a massive security lapse. Of course there are a lot of challenges, including illegal infiltration, but we have to tackle those while looking at the positive side also.

I will be visiting Bangladesh along with a big delegation. I have suggested that all the Chief Ministers of the North-East can go together in a bus. We should drive rather than take a flight to focus on connected corridors of mutual benefit. Tura, my home town and constituency, is a four-hour drive from Dhaka. To put it in perspective, it takes equal time to reach Guwahati by road. So for me, the entire "Look and Act East" policy should be focussed on Bangladesh.

■ One of the important changes that you



have initiated is the Public Redressal Mechanism. How does it operate and reach out to people?

There are multiple layers. We realise that connecting with people is one part and can be done easily through a WhatsApp Complaint System but the more important challenge is how to address the problems and connecting them to the department concerned. We created a system where a code is generated for every problem and then a message goes to officials concerned, both at the ground level and the senior ones. If there is no reply, then reminders are given. It is not a very complex system where a lot of money is needed. However, we are trying to understand how to make the system more efficient, accountable and deliverable.

Since we started this, approximately 500-600 complaints have come to us. There were personal problems as well as complaints like a transformer had broken down and hadn't been repaired for months. We are trying to segregate the problem into delivery mechanism problems and those which are more personal in nature and dealing with them accordingly.

I am not satisfied because the system has never been response-oriented. Earlier, there was no concept of addressing complaints within a certain time period. I am hoping this will improve from the 50 per cent redressal rate that we have managed to achieve till date.

More importantly, I try to make it a point to connect with my officers all the time through two programmes. There is a departmental review that is done at my level through video-conferencing or physically when I am present. Another important programme is a block visit. In two

IN HEALTH, OUR FOCUS WAS ON MOTHERS GETTING ACCESS TO INSTITUTIONAL DELIVERY. INITIALLY, WE WERE OF THE OPINION THAT THEY WERE NOT OPEN TO THE IDEA BUT WE WERE WRONG. WE STARTED WITH ONE DISTRICT AND USED TECHNOLOGY TO MAP EVERY WOULD-BE MOTHER. SUCH BASIC TECHNOLOGICAL INTERVENTIONS WITHOUT HUGE FINANCIAL INPUTS HAVE IMPROVED HEALTH FACILITIES

years, I want to target all 46 blocks. I started this one month ago and have covered three blocks. So every month I hope to meet a similar target. Every time I have a meeting with my deputy commissioners (DCs), I keep telling them that I am not here to "catch you or find faults with your working, rather I want to find faults in the system and we will find a solution together. Let's work as a team." People-first is the crux of my approach.

■ You have signed MoUs to create smart villages. How do you intend to undertake the exercise considering rural people will always aspire to move to urban centres?

There are multiple objectives of making smart villages, including the one to stem migration to towns. People migrate in search of better facilities for health, education and employment opportunities. We can actually resolve these problems through technological interventions.

In health, for instance, our focus was on expectant mothers getting access to

institutional delivery. Initially, we were of the opinion that they were not open to the idea but we were wrong. We started with one district and used technology to map every would-be mother. There were 3,000 of them and after the exercise, we knew exactly which village they were from, which week the delivery would take place, the names of Asha volunteers taking care of them, the medical officer involved, the contacts of husbands and mothers-in-law and a shortlist of high-risk mothers due to blood pressure problems or diabetes. In each area, there is an ambulance driver covering a certain radius, who is connected with the expectant mothers and we give their phone numbers to him and his number to the next of kin. Additionally, we have connected auto-rickshaw drivers to the expectant mothers as a back-up ambulance and promised to give them ₹300 if they ferry mothers to hospitals. This has improved the overall institutional delivery in that district from a mere 40 per cent to 90 per cent in six months. That is how I

envision smart villages rather than with huge towers and buildings. Such basic technological interventions without huge financial inputs have improved health facilities.

Similarly, in education there are no fancy smart classes or thousands of crores of investments. We identified the bottom 20 per cent of the schools where the results were below a certain benchmark and launched a pilot project in one district where students from those schools, who were doing badly, were brought together in clusters. Incentives were given to teachers to bring in students and they were provided with additional tuitions on Saturdays.

It is not so difficult to improve the numbers from 20 to 60 per cent because if you are getting a 20 per cent pass percentage in any school, that means the modules there are simply not working. So just by making simple tweaks, you improve it to 60 per cent. The toughest is reaching the level of 80 to 100 per cent. But as of now, we are focussed on reaching 60 per cent and then we will think about moving ahead.

A third initiative is setting up a Self-Help Group (SHG) network of about three to four lakh women. My target is to have one woman in each household in an SHG. We use the National Rural Livelihood Mission (NRLM) funding patterns. Some money is collected and these SHGs will act as micro financing banks and give loans without paperwork. We are not just doing that but we are motivating women and giving them ideas about the industries that they can develop.

We will connect SHGs with people from Berkeley University to whom we have given seven challenges, including food processing as a part of the MoU. I have asked them to study every district of Meghalaya and zero down on certain products from the area and figure out which technological intervention at an affordable cost can be implemented to improve the livelihood of people and, also, where the products can be sold. A study of bamboo was undertaken by Berkeley and it highlighted that it was not the ply or the brush that would give margins. The highest profits, of about 25 per cent, would come from bamboo charcoal. The institution connected us to Chinese companies which make the machines to create bamboo charcoal and they gave us the cost and how much time it would take for the process. Berkeley developed an entire business plan and also, an end to end solution.

Besides food, researchers will study micro-financing, tourism, food processing, turmeric and more. We have to focus on our strengths and see what the requirements are outside and within the country. We need close to 2 lakh MT of milk whereas we produce 50,000 MT. We launched a milk mission at a cost of ₹250 crore. Then there is a huge requirement for pork not just locally, but also outside. In India, good quality pork is not available and we have to rely on imports. So we are seeing these gaps in local consumption and exports and plugging those. These are low-hanging fruits as there is an existing demand. We are doing the market research to figure out the requirements, giving money to the SHGs and training them but we let them do it on their own.

The key aspect of the SHG movement, which is so important to understand, is creating an institutional network. For instance, at three, the fertility rate is the highest in the country where some families have as many as seven or eight children. If we want to address the issue of fertility, we will have to talk about contraceptives. A lot of rural mothers have no say in when they wish to get pregnant, which is sad. Once these SHGs have a woman in every house, I can get a contraceptive network going with their help. The same applies to a nutrition programme. If we want to provide every child with one glass of milk, it is not just a doctor or a health specialist which can do this. The women in this institution can be roped in. If you pour anything on top of this network, it will trickle down. Health, social welfare, education — it will ensure all the benefits reach everywhere.

■ The first road with plastic waste was built in Meghalaya. You are also providing plastic to a cement factory. What are the other ways that you plan to incorporate sustainability in the Government's functioning?

There are more initiatives. Of course, plastic is an issue and we ensured that the CM

office and the Secretariat were plastic-free. However, it is essential to give people alternatives, otherwise they will go back to their old ways. We roped in cement companies which are providing people with bottles in place of plastic ones. While we do not have to spend money, these companies can advertise and put their logo on the bottle.

For all these initiatives, we are roping in NGOs and media houses as well and at the same time, trying to make it a fun activity. So when people see the Governor cleaning an area or the Chief Minister doing so, they are connected with the idea. It is a very powerful way to motivate people.

Our target is to make all Government offices fully sustainable in water and electricity. My first target is my own office and we will start it in the Secretariat in November. We are creating a rainwater harvesting system so that when the next rains come in, the Secretariat doesn't have to draw water from the Public Health Engineering Department (PHE).

In the energy segment, we have switched over to LED lights which reduced the cost by 50 per cent. So some part of the installation cost is getting covered by these savings.

In the meantime we have also talked to the Ministry of New and Renewable Energy (MNRE) and the Centre and they have sanctioned some funds for rooftop solar panels. The good thing about our offices is that they do not need a lot of light during their diurnal operations. We called in some experts who told us the number of panels and batteries to be set up after a survey of the roof. Even if we meet 50 per cent of our demand, it will be good. The programme will be gradually extended to the Secretariat and Additional Secretariat by the next financial year as well as the DC offices gradually.

■ Meghalaya has a lot of potential in tourism. There is history, since it was inhabited in the Neolithic age, wildlife and natural beauty. How do you plan to focus on tourism and at the same time make it sustainable?

We are looking at developing it in a sustainable manner and focussing on the strengths that we have. We would prefer to have a lesser number of tourists, who are looking at a niche experience. Something like the Bhutan model. It might not be as strict but our product line will move in that direction.

We are selecting areas that everybody connects to like Cherrapunji and have identified eight tourist spots. We want to pull the tourists there while developing them in an eco-friendly manner. We have built log houses, which give a local and natural feel in place of the cement and brick ones. Then there are events like the cherry blossom festival which is specific to the region and has become big over the years. People in the State are also fond of music, so we are building activities around such passions too.

Plans are already afoot for a hot air balloon experience so that you can see Cherrapunji and even Bangladesh from the sky. We are planning to develop chopper tourism, which will be a premium service. Tourists can see the double-decker root bridge more frequently as the chopper can land right next to it. This will naturally cater to a high-end market.

Then there is history. Geologists found a stalagmite in the Mawmluh Cave which was classified to be 4,200 years old and dated to what is called as the Meghalayan Age. Mawmluh is a 28 km long sandstone cave which is the longest in the world. There are other caves of varying lengths. We are developing a system where people can actually enter these. Some of the caves are massive and could hold an amphitheatre inside. You enter one and find yourself in a huge hall where the ceiling is 30-40 feet high. There are caves with rivers flowing inside them, almost like a swimming pool, and one where the entrance is hidden behind a waterfall and will remind people who love comics of Phantom's cave. To experience something like this, you can travel to Meghalaya or spend a lot of money to go to distant lands.

■ You love music and also perform...

All people in the North-East do. I used to be in a band in school. I played guitar, my brother was a singer. Earlier we played the music. Now, as Chief Minister, I face it (guffaws).

(Photo: Md. Meharban)

CAPSULE

SBI to conduct e-auction of 11 accounts

NEW DELHI: The State Bank of India (SBI) will conduct an e-auction of 11 bad loan accounts on November 7 to recover dues of Rs 466.49 crore. In terms of the bank's revised policy on sale of financial assets, in line with the regulatory guidelines, the bank will place 11 accounts for sale to ARCs/banks/NBFCs and FIs, SBI said in an auction notice. The bank said the financial assets were showcased on October 12 and the e-auction will take place on November 7. The major non-performing asset (NPA) accounts to be auctioned include Bhatia Global Trading (BGTIL), which has an outstanding of Rs 177.02 crore on the bank, Bhatia Coke & Energy Ltd (Rs 104.15 crore), Bhatia Coal Washeries (Rs 12.58 crore) and Asian Natural Resources (India) Ltd (Rs 2.18 crore).

IMF chief says 'peer pressure' building up

WASHINGTON: (AFP) With trade tensions undermining confidence and global growth, economic leaders are increasingly pushing each other to fix the shortcomings behind the disputes, IMF chief Kristalina Georgieva said Saturday. Trade is typically an engine of economic growth but with the United States and China engulfed in massive tariff battle and Britain's divorce from the European Union still not settled and a month-end deadline fast approaching, growth in international commerce has come to a virtual standstill, Georgieva said. "We need to look into what are the reasons we are not making more progress on trade and they are not just the relations between US and China," Georgieva told reporters.

Nine of top-10 firms add Rs 1.47 lakh crore in m-cap

NEW DELHI: Nine of the 10 most valued Indian companies together added a whopping Rs 1.47 lakh crore in market valuation last week, with RIL and TCS grabbing the limelight with the maximum gains. Barring Infosys, rest nine companies witnessed addition in their market capitalisation (m-cap) for the week ended Friday. RIL's valuation zoomed Rs 39,876.44 crore to Rs 8,97,179.47 crore. Reliance Industries (RIL) on Friday added another feather to its cap by becoming the first Indian firm to hit the Rs 9 lakh crore market valuation mark in intra-day trade. The m-cap of TCS soared Rs 26,379.27 crore to Rs 7,71,996.87 crore and that of HUL jumped Rs 21,962.02 crore to Rs 4,55,952.72 crore. HDFC Bank's valuation climbed Rs 16,767.89 crore to Rs 6,72,466.30 crore and that of HDFC advanced Rs 14,728.66 crore to Rs 3,61,801.97 crore. The m-cap of SBI went higher by Rs 13,521.15 crore to Rs 2,40,652.15 crore and that of ICICI Bank rose Rs 6,046.16 crore to Rs 2,82,783.39 crore.

Thai tourism hotspots slash prices

PHUKET: Hotels on Thailand's most popular holiday island have been forced to slash prices with rooms left vacant and beaches sparse as tourist chiefs struggle with a plunge in Chinese visitors caused by the US trade war and a stronger baht. Located on the Andaman Sea and known for its beaches and nightlife, sun-drenched Phuket was the most visited destination in the country last year after Bangkok and a good gauge of the state of its crucial travel industry. Tourism accounts for 18 percent of Thailand's gross domestic product and Chinese holidaymakers make up more than a quarter of total arrivals. But while 2.2 million people from the country visited in 2018, according to official figures. Claude de Crissey, Honorary Consul of France in Phuket and owner of about 40 rooms in the popular Patong Beach area, said Chinese tourists are usually present even during the current low season.

SAYS MOVE SABOTAGES PM'S DIGITAL INDIA VISION

Jio slams TRAI's IUC review as anti-poor

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Mukesh Ambani-led Reliance Jio has alleged that review of call connect charges by Trai "sabotages" the Prime Minister's vision for Digital India, and will hit not only the regulator's credibility but also investor confidence as the move protects vested interests of some old operators.

Continuing its relentless attack on the regulator and old operators over the contentious IUC (interconnect usage charge) issue that has polarised the industry, Jio alleged that Trai's move is arbitrary, bad in law, unwarranted, and anti-poor.

Any change in implementation of original timeline of January 1, 2020 will end the free voice regime and is likely to increase tariffs which is against consumer interest, Jio claimed.

Typically, a telecom operator pays for completing calls made by its subscribers to a rival network. This is done by paying the rival network an interconnect usage charge, which currently is 6 paise per minute.

Trai's move to reopen the



deadline for ending charges for terminating calls on rival networks beyond January 2020 had forced Jio to levy a 6 paise per minute charge on its users recently, effectively ending its free call regime.

Submitting its official response to the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (Trai) on the IUC matter, Jio alleged that "certain incumbent telcos" want their large body of 2G customers to forever remain digitally disempowered and deprived of the fruits of the digital revolution. Trai's consultation paper "protects and per-

petuates the vested interests" of such players, it added. Jio accused certain old operators of exploiting their 2G customers by charging "extortionist rates" for voice calls, which are offered free to all Jio's 4G-only customers.

"The Consultation Paper...undermines and sabotages Prime Minister's Digital India vision and mission," Jio said in its comment to Trai's consultation paper. It is unfortunate that instead of profiting the poor and marginalised sections of Indian society, the consultation paper has chosen to help profiteers in the telecom

Trai's move to reopen the deadline for ending charges for terminating calls on rival networks beyond January 2020 had forced Jio to levy a 6 paise per minute charge on its users recently, effectively ending its free call regime

business, Jio alleged.

The discussion paper wants India to remain technologically stagnant and backward, the company said. The move contradicts the authority's past decisions where it was represented that the zero termination charge regime would come into effect for all types of calls from January 1, 2020, Jio said.

It added that the ongoing review, which violates the principles of regulatory predictability, has been initiated with predetermined mind.

"...the present Consultation Paper has not been issued to address traffic asymmetry, but to address the claimed financial stress of one or two operators at the cost of the interests of the subscribers and the telecom sector, and also the credibility of

the authority," it said.

The latest entrant, known for its disruptive tariffs, argued the present trend indicates that traffic asymmetry (one of the key reasons for Trai's rethink on IUC) is expected to be reversed in a few months and the present receivers will become payers, and so deferring stated timelines is not going to steer any operator away from the purported financial stress. Moving to zero termination charge regime will reduce overall tariffs for customers, Jio said.

Jio said that had Trai "recalculated termination charges, it would be less than 1 paise per minute at this stage", and added that the small residual value by itself fully justifies the need for moving to zero termination charge regime.

India decries lack of support for IMF quota increase

PNS ■ WASHINGTON

India on Saturday expressed its disappointment over the lack of support to increase the quota structure of the International Monetary Fund (IMF).

IMF quotas, which are the primary source of IMF funds, determine voting shares. Quotas are supposed to be reviewed every five years although these reviews can be delayed.

India views "the lack of adequate support for a quota increase under the 15th GRQ (General Review of Quotas) as somewhat disappointing", Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said in her address to the annual meeting of the IMF here.

"We, however, consider this as a temporary setback. We hope that the discussions in the next (16th) Round of the GRQ would achieve success in terms of quota increase to take care of the Fund's resource adequacy," she said.

The quotas are distributed according to a four pronged formula that considers a member country's GDP, its economic openness, its "economic variability" and internation-



Nirmala Sitharaman

al reserves. India's quota is 2.76 per cent and China's is 6.41 per cent, while the US' quota is 17.46 per cent, which translates to a vote share of 16.52 per cent, giving it a unique veto power over crucial decisions at the IMF, many of which require a super majority of 85 per cent. The quota review, Sitharaman said, should also address the long-pending issue of under-representation of the EMDEs and the dynamic economies in the IMF's quota shareholding.

"The representation of member countries in the IMF should be in line with the changing economic realities for this institution to continue staying relevant," she said. Quota increases under the

India's quota is 2.76% and China's is 6.41%, while the US' quota is 17.46%, which translates to a vote share of 16.52%, giving it a unique veto power over crucial decisions at IMF

16th round and also in the future rounds should be seen as an opportunity to realign quota shares in favour of EMDEs to allow them a more meaningful role in the governance of this Institution, the finance minister said.

According to Sitharaman, to ensure the stability of the international monetary and financial system, it is imperative that the IMF continues to remain at the centre of the Global Financial Safety Net.

For this to happen, the IMF should be able to maintain its current lending capacity to meet the needs of its members as well as meet such needs should a financial crisis occur.

Many nations wary of crypto currencies

PNS ■ WASHINGTON

Many countries have cautioned against rushing into crypto currencies, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman said on Sunday, as Facebook's proposed virtual currency Libra became a buzzword during the annual meeting of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank. In fact, Reserve Bank of India Governor Shantikanta Das spoke about crypto currencies during one of the interventions this week. The RBI has banned the use of cryptocurrencies in India.

"On our side, the Reserve Bank Governor spoke about it during our turn to intervene. I got the sense that many countries were cautioning on rushing into this," Sitharaman told a group of Indian reporters in response to a question on the discussions on Libra, the proposed virtual currency from Facebook, which was one of the talked about topics this annual meeting. "Some of them (countries) of course even suggested that they shouldn't be using, all of us shouldn't be using the name stable currency because that's the expression they used.

RBI Governor spoke about crypto currencies during one of the interventions this week. It has banned the use of cryptocurrencies in India

Many cautioned to the extent saying even the name should not be stable currency, it should relate to virtual currency or something of the kind," she said.

Sitharaman said three or four different names were mentioned by different people but the overall sense was that "countries will have to show extreme caution much before anything is said or moved on this".

"In fact, this morning some of the presentations were also highlighting the strengths of such virtual currency. But equally everyone without fail spoke about the challenges together with talking about it as a if necessary step forward. So everyone was stepping cautiously on it," she said.

AAI to monetise 759 acres of land

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The AAI is planning to monetise 759 acres of land near eight major airports so that private companies are able to establish warehouses, hotels or restaurants, and the money generated is utilised to develop airport infrastructure, a senior official said.

"The AAI has identified the following land parcels of airports for city side development: 145 acres near Kolkata airport, 45 acres near Amritsar airport, Bhubaneswar airport, 35 acres near Jaipur airport, 60 acres near Varanasi airport, 217 acres near Lucknow airport, 80 acres near Raipur airport and 117 acres near Tirpuati airport," an official said.

"All the above land parcels are located at respective airport sites only...The non-traffic revenue thus generated (from land monetisation) shall be utilised for the airport infrastructure development in unconnected and under-served areas" the official clarified. The Airports Authority of India (AAI), which works under the Ministry of Civil

The AAI owns and manages 129 airports across the country, out of which 94 were running in loss in the financial year 2017-18

Aviation, owns and manages 129 airports across the country, out of which 94 were running in loss in the financial year 2017-18. "The (aforementioned) land is likely to be leased to any company or organisation for a period of 25-30 years for a fixed annual rental income," the official said.

The revenue generated from such land monetisation is classified as non-aeronautical revenues or non-traffic revenues.

The AAI is in the process of monetisation of its city side land as per the AAI Act for "planning, development, construction and maintenance of institutions/training centres, workshops, hotels, restaurants and rest-rooms.

'CCI proactive in ensuring market correction'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Stepping up efforts to clamp down on unfair business practices, Competition Commission Chairman Ashok Kumar Gupta has said the regulator has adopted a proactive approach in taking up cases on a suo motu basis to ensure market correction in a timely manner.

The watchdog, which keeps a tab on anti-competitive practices at market place, has so far dealt with more than 1,000 anti-trust cases across diverse sectors. According to him, for a growing economy like India more and more competition issues are likely to emerge.

Asserting that the Competition Commission of India (CCI) is "essentially an inquisitorial body and not an



Ashok Kumar Gupta

adversarial body", Gupta noted that it is vested with the responsibility to ensure market correction at large rather than confining itself to redressing individual grievances.

"This is the reason why it does not close a matter even if the parties settle the matter amongst themselves and do not pursue," he said.

The CCI, which keeps a tab on anti-competitive practices at market place, has so far dealt with more than 1,000 anti-trust cases across sectors

"Also, we would not like to constrain ourselves by restricting to matters which are brought before us by the informants. There can be various matters involving serious competition concerns where no one may come forward with an information for various reasons including commercial compulsions.

CONTAINING POLLUTION

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

To curb alarming pollution levels in north India, especially during winter months, CII on Sunday said it has adopted over 100 villages and 100,000 acres of farm area in Punjab and Haryana to enable zero crop residue burning.

The industry body has adopted Ludhiana, Barnala and Patiala districts in Punjab, and Rohtak, Sirsa and Fatehabad in Haryana.

The Confederation of Indian Industry (CII) has created an ecosystem to engage stake-



holders, including experts, corporates, state governments, village community and farmer groups, to implement possible solutions to the issue of stub-

ble burning, the chamber said in a statement.

CII is proactively engaging with over 15,000 farmers to provide farm machinery,

UNIMARK REMEDIES RESOLUTION

'Umpire' to finalise split verdict

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

An umpire single-member bench of the National Company Law Tribunal will now give finality to a split verdict by NCLT's two-member bench over the resolution plan for debt-ridden pharma company Unimark Remedies, said NCLAT.

The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal (NCLAT) has directed to refer to a third member the split orders passed by a two-member Mumbai NCLT bench on the resolution plan.

The appellate tribunal has directed the resolution professional (RP) of the company to bring the facts to the notice of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) president about the split orders passed by NCLT's Mumbai Bench on August 30, 2019.

In the order, member (judicial) had sought a fresh valuation of the company, while member (technical) dissented through a separate order.

The NCLAT observed that none of the dissenting members has referred the matter to the NCLT president for referring it to a third member.

"In the facts and circumstances, we are of the view that RP should bring this fact to the notice of the said bench of the adjudicating authority comprising of same members... who will take steps to refer the matter to the third member in accordance with law and if so required, after necessary permission of the president, NCLT," said an NCLAT bench



In the order, member (judicial) had sought a fresh valuation of the company, while member (technical) dissented through a separate order

headed by Chairperson Justice S J Mukhopadhyaya.

It further said: "The RP will also bring this fact to the notice of the President, NCLT who may pass the appropriate order to place the matter before the third member."

NCLAT's direction came over the petition filed by the resolution professional (RP) of the company, who had preferred an appeal after a split verdict.

"In view of the fact that there is a dissenting order passed by the two members, we are not considering the question of legality and propriety of the order or the adverse remarks passed against the RP, which is left open for determination by the third member and if so required later it may be decided by this appellate tribunal," the NCLAT further said.

Alliance Air flights on new routes soon

PNS ■ CHENNAI

Alliance Air, the wholly-owned subsidiary of Air India has chalked out aggressive expansion plans which include launch of flights to newer destinations, a top official has said.

Alliance Air recently launched its maiden overseas flight from Chennai to Jaffna making it the 55th destination connected by the airline.

Alliance Air CEO C S Subbiah said the airline would connect various cities including Jagdalpur, Raipur, Gulbarga and Hubli among others.

"We are look at flying to Jagdalpur, Gulbarga. These are the two new routes. The flight from Gulbarga will connect to Bengaluru and later to Chennai," he told PTI.

Jagdalpur route would be connected from Hyderabad then later to Raipur and then it would go to Bhopal, he said.

Subbiah said Alliance Air was utilising the Centre's UDAN scheme one hundred per cent and added that they were "forerunners" operating under the scheme.

UDAN (Ude Desh Ka Aam Naagrik) scheme commenced in 2017, is a regional airport development and Regional Connectivity Scheme (RCS) aimed at making air travel affordable. Under the scheme, 50 per cent seats in aeroplanes are offered at concessional rates to passengers.

Elaborating on the proposal to launch new flights, Subbiah said, "In 2015 we were hardly in 15 stations. Under (Air India CMD) Lohani's leadership we are now connecting 54 destinations. The 55th route was Chennai to Jaffna."

On the launch of new routes



C S Subbiah

UDAN scheme commenced in 2017, is a regional airport development and RCS aimed at making air travel affordable

in the country, he said, there are plans to connect cities in the North-East. "We are also planning to connect from Guwahati to Dimapur (Nagaland) and then Imphal (Manipur)," he said.

To a query, he said the airline launching routes in Gulbarga, Jagdalpur and Hyderabad-Hubli would be with new flights (ATR-72 flights) to operate in the region.

From Chennai, he said, the airliner would look at connecting Madurai and Tiruchirappalli.

"In Madurai we have lot of businessmen while in Tiruchirappalli there are lot of resettled families," he added.

To a query on the launch of service in Western parts of the country, he said, "we are starting Nashik to Pune.

The industry body has adopted Ludhiana, Barnala and Patiala districts in Punjab, and Rohtak, Sirsa and Fatehabad in Haryana

organise technical trainings and massive awareness drives in the adopted villages of Punjab and Haryana, it said.

Air quality monitors have been installed to monitor village level air pollution data, to measure the impact of reduced stubble burning. Over 3,000 school students in Punjab, and youth and corporate volunteers are joining CII in this movement to enable zero stubble burning, the chamber said. The intervention is supporting farmer groups to procure a range of farm machineries, including Happy Seeder, Zero Till, Mulcher, among others, and make these available to farmers on a nominal rent.



It is important to place quality over quantity. And this idea has to be spread further. As I mainly design wedding attire, I often suggest my clients to invest in smart and eco-friendly wear. And it's important to understand that clothing doesn't need to be elaborate. Instead it's actually advisable if one's individuality and creativity can be expressed through their attire by experimenting with their wardrobe and looking for new ways to mix and match clothing. This will make their wardrobe functional, interesting and long-lasting

GANESH NALLARI, FASHION AND TEXTILE DESIGNER



FASHION IN TUNE WITH ENVIRONMENT

What we wear is not just a personal fashion statement anymore. From designing to production to marketing, a new fashion philosophy is slowly emerging that puts quality over quantity, reports ANUSHKA PRADEEP



experts in their fields. It was followed by a pop-up exhibition that featured some of the most social conscious fashion brand in the industry.

Nishat Fatima, former editor in chief of Harper's Bazar and a nationally renowned name in the fashion industry, Dr Justina Fernandez, Psychologist and Therapist, Sridevi Jasti, Holistic Nutritionist, Sucharita, Owner of Alive Cafe, Ganesh Nallari, Fashion Designer, Seetha Anand Vaidyam, Academician and Environmentalist were members of the panel.

The panel discussion explored several avenues key to making the fashion industry more sustainable as well as minimising waste in our day-to-day lives. In answer to a question from the audience on making sustainable fashion more affordable, Ganesh Nallari suggested that, "It is important to place quality over quantity. And this idea has to be spread further. As I mainly design wedding attire, I often suggest my clients to invest in smart and eco-friendly wear. And it's important to understand that clothing doesn't need to be elaborate. Instead it's actually advisable if one's individ-

uality and creativity can be expressed through their attire by experimenting with their wardrobe and looking for new ways to mix and match clothing. This will make their wardrobe functional, interesting and long-lasting." Ganesh Nallari owns a fashion studio in the city where he designs and produces tailor-made clothes with minimal wastage.

Nikhath Khan, who is founder of the Nico brand also one of the key organisers of the event, says, "After doing shows all across the Middle East for over 15 years, when I moved back to India, my first instinct was to launch a fash-

ion revolution akin to what is happening in the West. With the Slow Fashion Collective, we want to start a conversation about it in Hyderabad by giving a platform to sustainable brands to talk about their design, philosophy and also showcase their products."

Sridevi Jasti, in an exclusive interview with *The Pioneer*, spoke about what it would take to incorporate the idea of sustainability and mindfulness in the lives of people who are not yet aware of or are hesitant to take adequate steps for the cause. "The key is to embrace the change enthusiastically and educating people about

the cause. And I have to emphasise on the importance of being compassionate when offering advice and only then will what one preaches be seen as an inspiration by the people," she said.

"Fashion is a reflection of the society and with the Slow Fashion Collective we are trying to bring about a change in the way fashion is consumed. We are encouraging consumers to be more thoughtful when they buy products and look for quality over quantity while purchasing clothes," says Madhulika Jhawar, who is part of the PR team of Mango Juice Marketing.

Some of the brands that showcased their products at the event were Cancelled Plans, Sublimely, Pikalove, Dipti Mrinalini, Biophilika, Bhakti Reddy, The Conscious Storey, Naushi's Closet, Ilaamra Label and others. The motive behind the collective was to start a conversation on sustainability while also offering a wide variety of products that are of good quality. It can be summed up with the show's motto that reads, "Fashion should not cost the earth".

THE PANEL DISCUSSION EXPLORED SEVERAL AVENUES KEY TO MAKING THE FASHION INDUSTRY MORE SUSTAINABLE AS WELL AS MINIMISING WASTE IN OUR DAY-TO-DAY LIVES



UPASANA'S GENTLE NOTE TO MODI

Hours after Prime Minister Narendra Modi tweeted about his interaction with B Town stars, Upasana penned a subtle note to Modi about the existence of south film industry, writes K RAMYA SREE

Hours after Prime Minister Narendra Modi interacted with top Bollywood stars, Upasana Kamineni Konidela, Apollo family scion and Tollywood star Ram Charan's wife sent a veiled message to Prime Minister on Instagram and said he was being partial towards Hindi film stars while not promoting the South Indian Film Industry. When it comes to interacting with the film industry, Modi is always seen clicking pictures with Bollywood

stars. Is this ignorance towards the South Indian film industry is a debate for another day though. Modi interacted with members of the film industry on Saturday at his residence in Delhi which was attended by Bollywood icons like Shah Rukh Khan, Aamir Khan, Kangana Ranaut, Sonam Kapoor, Jacqueline Fernandez and filmmakers like Imtiaz Ali, Ekta Kapoor, Anurag Basu and Boney Kapoor. The meeting with the Indian film fraternity was to discuss initiatives to mark the

150 birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. Modi urged the film industry to channelise its energy and come up with initiatives to motivate ordinary citizens. He also promised that his government will extend full support to the film industry for its overall development. However, according to reports, no one from the South film industry were invited to the event except for Dil Raju. This was aptly pointed out by Upasana Kamineni. Upset over his actions, she took a screenshot of his tweet — which had

him posing with Bolly stars — and subtly reminded him that there is a film industry in the South too. She said, "Dearest Narendra Modi ji. We in South of India admire you and proud to have you as our Prime Minister. With all due respect, we felt that the representation of leading personalities and cultural icons was limited only to Hindi artists and the South film industry

was neglected. I express my feelings with pain and hope it is taken in the right spirit." This post has garnered a lot of attention from netizens and is now doing the rounds on social media with people questioning Modi's biased attitude. A point worth mentioning is that many Tollywood directors are directing big budget Bollywood movies with the stars.



PRESERVING CLASSICAL MUSIC

All India Radio has been an enduring platform for promoting Indian classical music since 1954. Musical performances hosted by the AIR recently have left music aficionados awestruck, reports ARUN DANIEL YELLAMATY

The All India Radio (AIR) has played one of the most important roles in nourishing India's heritage and culture. Started in 1954, it has been helping in preserving our diverse culture by providing a platform for promotion of classical music through Akashvani Sangeet Sammelan concerts. As a part of this, for this year's annual event, the AIR put together a one-of-a-kind event where over 177 musicians performed in over 24 cities simultaneously including Hyderabad. The audience were mesmerised with the performances at the two-hour event driven by the music talent highly respected artists and it was surely a night to remember. The first set of the concert was performed by renowned carnatic Gotuvadyam musician, Vidwan Allam Durga Prasad, who was accompanied...

Continued on page 10



Continued from page 9

by H.K.Venkatram on the violin, Vidwan V.Kamalakra Rao on themridangam, Vazhapally R. Krishna Kumar on the ghatam. They began their set with the Siddhi Vinayakam — Shanmukhapriya Rupakam and the artists went on to play few more instrumental sets like the Guruleka — KhandaChapu, Deva Deva — MayamalavaGowla and others.

“As a Telugu speaking person, it was my honour to play in a Telugu city. Playing the Gotuvadyam is always difficult as there are a very few people in the world who play this instrument. I am hoping that through this Akashvani event many more will take interest in playing the instrument,” says Vidwan Allam Durga Prasad.

Allam Durga Prasad's father Allam Koteswara Rao was a renowned Gotuvadyam exponent and his first guru. Durga Prasad later underwent advanced musical training from Kalasikhamani A. Narayanalyer. In addition to being graded among the top artists by the AIR and the Doordarshan, Durga Prasad performed at many illustrious concerts. He well known among many for his traditional style, tonal purity and rhythmic balance.

The second part of the concert was performed by popular Hindustani musician, Ustad Iqbal Ahmad Khan from Dilli Gharana. He was the recipient of SangeetNatak Akademi award in 2014. He is a celebrated khyalgayak and is



PRESERVING classical music

equally proficient in singing sufighazals, thumris, dadras andbhajans.The Ustad and was supported by classical singer Vivek Kumar Prajapati accompanied by Babar Lateef on the tabla, Padam Shree UstadMoinudd in Khan on thesarangi and ZakirDholpuri on the harmonium. The setput together by Ustad was the Anand Bihag and Maru Bihag.

The event enthralled people of all age groups. A. Sravani, a student and music enthusiast, says, “Attending such concerts have become a traditional event for our

family, I attend this event every year with my family and we all love it. It's a rare opportunity where you get to hear and watch legends perform and it is simply unmissable.”

A 70-year-old, music enthusiast, K. Ramana, says, “Even though it's a struggle for me to come to these concerts at my age, I come each year. I hope to see more young people enjoying such classical music events in the future.”

Speaking on the occasion, AIR Deputy Director General (P), M.

SailajaSuman, says, “The Akashvani Sangeet Sammelan Concerts were launched in 1954 with a glorious tradition spanning over six decades and has evolved into a unique calendar event of All India Radio. Music lovers enjoy it and the artists await it. These music concerts are organised all over the country and feature eminent artists and talented young musicians of Hindustani and Carnatic Classical light and folk music. The agenda of the event was always to bring the entire music forms

together so that we all unite on this special day. It's also a beautiful exchange of music and culture across the country.”

For people who missed the chance of watching the concert you still have a chance. “This event will be telecast on Doordarshan Channel and also on AIR across the country for the entire month in November,” adds Dr Nagasuri Venugopal, Assistant Director of AIR, Hyderabad.

Among the prominent artists who performed in the Sangeet Sammelan included music stalwarts like M.S. Subbulakshmi, Pt. D.V. Paluskar, Ustad Bade Gulam Ali Khan, Ustad Amir Khan, Ustad Ali Akbar Khan, Pt. Ravi Shankar, Ustad Bhismillah Bismillah Khan, Pt. Pannalal Ghosh, Pt. Kumar Gandharv, Gandharva, Dagar Bandhu, Dr. Mallikarjun Mansoor, Dr.Basvaraj Rajguru, Dr. Gangubai Hangal and many others.

CITY GUIDE

COMEDY

COMEDY CRACKERS

● Funny side up in association with Comedy Central India presents a new material night show — Comedy Crackers — with Hyderabad's very own Rohit Swain and Saikiran where they perform many of their new jokes some good, some bad, mostly interesting. At CLOwork on October 27 at 11.30 am



SPLENDOR OF KASHMIR

● On popular demand, Ms Varuna Anand is back with her NEW Heirloom Collection — splendor of Kashmiran — exclusive collection of luxurious Pashmina shawls along with her other wide range of hand embroidered and hand woven shawls. To meet the ever increasing demand, this year she is also showcasing Kalamkari shawls and fusing it with classic embroidered borders to enhance the look of these shawls. The collection will be showcased at Taj Krishna Pearl room on October 22 and 23 between 11 am and 7 pm.

SKEPTICISM

● The play Skepticism, written & directed by Amaan Ahmud will be staged on October 24 at Lamakaan from 7.30 pm. It is a psychological and philosophical play, which touches the elements of absurdism, surrealism and skepticism. The story revolves around a psychologically disturbed artist who's going through an existential crisis.



ART AND CULTURE

POWER OF EMOTIONS

● Goethe-Zentrum in collaboration with Salar Jung Museum is conducting a photography exhibition, 'The Power of Emotions' till October 31 at Salar Jung Museum between 10 am and 5 pm.



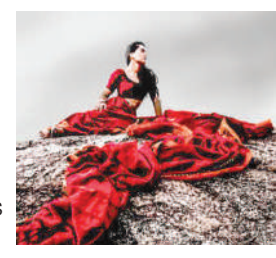
OPEN ART COMPETITION

● An NGO, Cultivating Art is conducting the second edition of Hyderabad Open Art Competition on November 10 at Phoenix Arena from 10 am onwards. It is a platform to encourage everyone to practice art, explore ideas from school children, encourage all budding artists.



CHALAM'S MAIDANAM

● Samahaara Theatre Co-operative is staging a play, Chalam's Maidanam on November 2 at Phoenix Arena from 7.30pm. It is one of the most famous and most controversial of Chalam's novels, dramatises his ideas on marriage, freedom and the moral issues involved in them.



DONGA DONGA

● Samahaara Theatre Co-operative presents Donga Donga, a hilarious Telugu comedy, directed by Rathna Shekar at Phoenix Arena, Hitec City. Donga Donga is a hilarious farce adapted from two short plays written by Shri. Shankaramanchi Partha Saradhi. The play is scheduled to be held on October 25 at 7.30 pm.



GLENGARRY GLEN ROSS

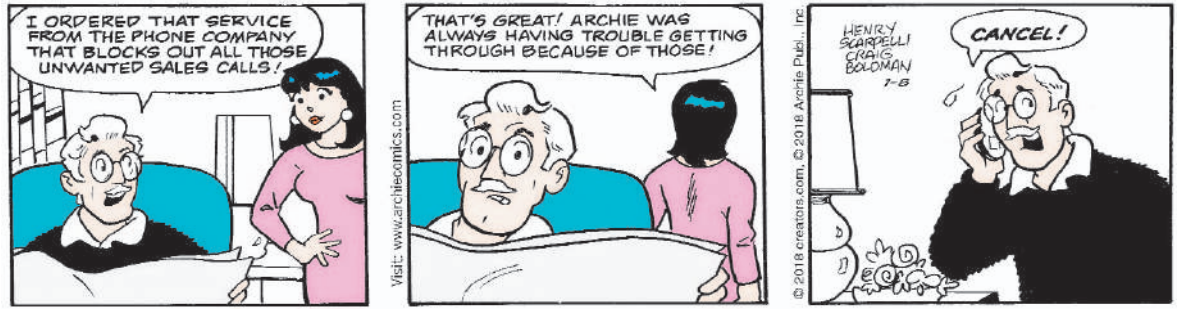
● Cinephiles Film Club will be screening the movie Glengarry Glen Ross at Lamakaan on October 23 at 7 pm. The plot revolves around an office full of New York City real estate salesmen who are given the news that all but the top two will be fired at the end of the week.



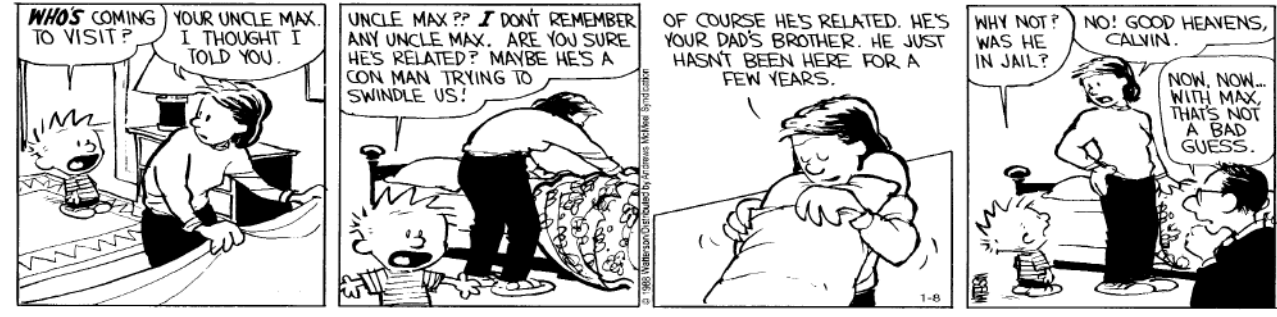
GET YOUR EVENT LISTED: To get your events listed, please send your details along with a poster and contact number to features.pioneer@gmail.com

FUN TIME

ARCHIE



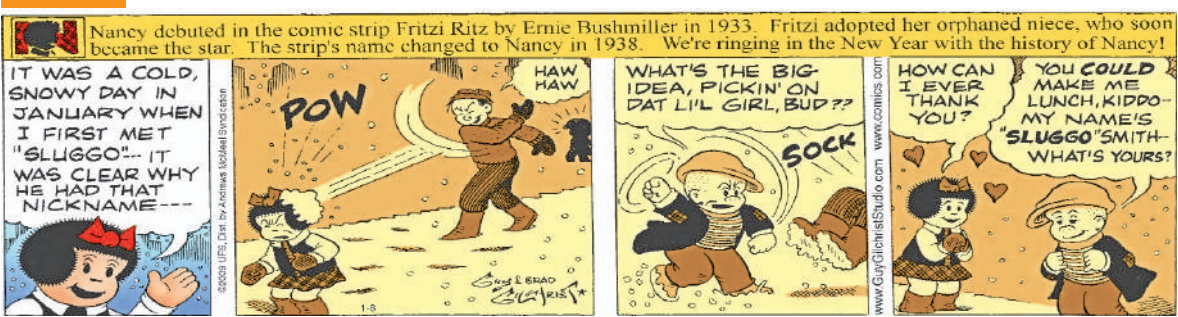
CALVIN AND HOBBS



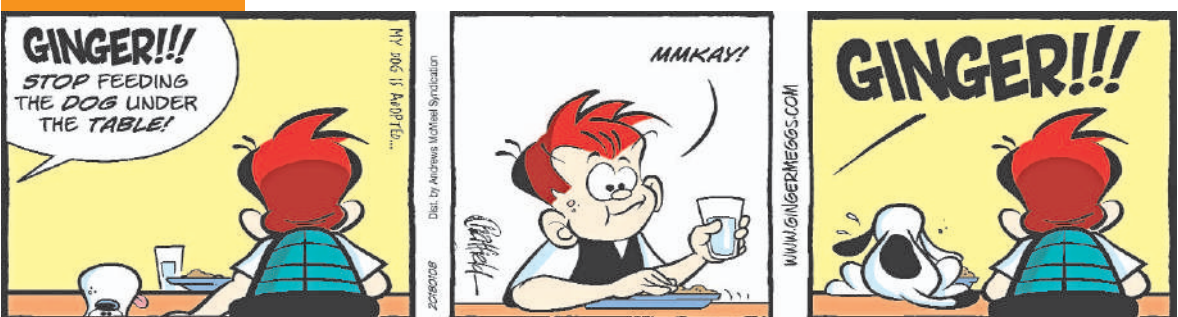
GARFIELD



NANCY



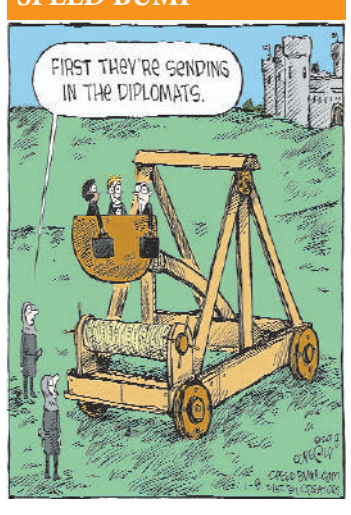
GINGER MEGGS



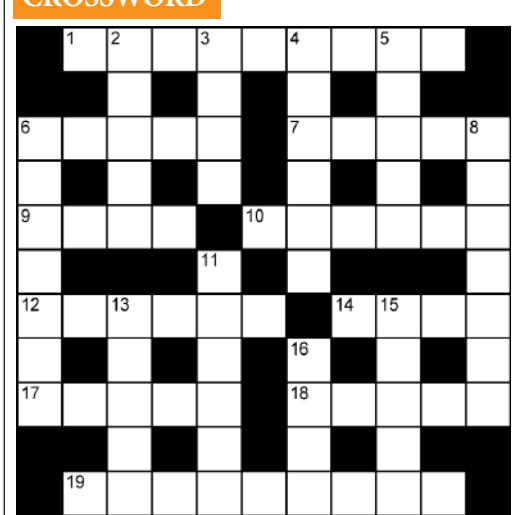
REALITY CHECK



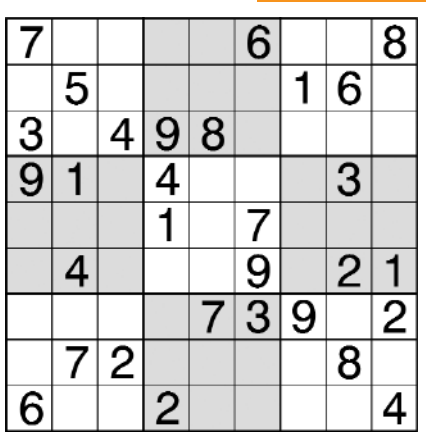
SPEED BUMP



CROSSWORD



SUDOKU



Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

- Each row and column can contain each number (1 to 9) exactly once.
- The sum of all numbers in any row or column must equal 45.

ACROSS

- 1 A large group of musicians
- 6 The steps of a ladder
- 7 Do this when you are thirsty
- 9 Knotted
- 10 Opposite of newest
- 12 Mend
- 14 A holder for cut flowers
- 17 A slow-moving creature
- 18 Jewellery for fingers
- 19 People who hide on ships to avoid paying a fare

DOWN

- 4 A seat on a horse
- 5 Lift up
- 6 Goes back to a place
- 8 Baby cats
- 11 Rest your head on this
- 13 Pigtail
- 15 Pester
- 16 The people working on a ship or aircraft





Tollywood is going beyond hero-centric movies to issue-centric scripts. Actor-turned filmmaker Srinivas Avasara is doing his bit to be a part of this new legacy, reports **NAGARAJ GOUD**

AVASARALA TAKES ON BODY SHAMING

Actor-turned-filmmaker Srinivas Avasara's new film *Nootokka Jillala Andagaadu* was launched in Hyderabad over the weekend. Avasara has written the film, which will mark eminent production houses — Sri Venkateswara Creations of Dil Raju and the First Frame Entertainments of Krish and Rajeev Reddy — joining forces for the first time as partners. To be directed by debutant

Rachakonda Vidyasagar, who earlier assisted Avasara for *Jo Achyutananda*, the film, a social satire, will go on sets shortly. Ruhani Sharma, who made an impressive debut with *Chi La Sow* last year, is the film's leading lady.

Speaking to *The Pioneer* exclusively, Avasara said that he cracked the film's idea while he was in the US, shooting for the film *NRI-Nayana Rara Intiki* earlier this year. "I approached Rajeev Reddy as I have been waiting to work with him on a solo project since *Kanche*. He liked the idea and the synopsis but wanted me to narrate it to Krish and Dil Raju as well. Krish endorsed it straightway but Raju *garu* wanted a completed screenplay. Soon, I shared the screenplay with Raju and he gave his nod too. I'm currently on my fourth draft and I'll lock the script after the fifth draft," said Avasara.

"I am not expecting any production hassles," he said with a grin. "Also, I've seen the way Rajeev operates. Luckily, *Nootokka Jillala Andagaadu* happened at the right time. Rajeev believes in giving free hand to his creative team, something I admire in him the most," Avasara added.

Shedding light on the film, he shared, "The movie deals with the standards of beauty and the corresponding body shaming that happens in TV shows and life in general. If you turn on the TV you will get an impression that being dark skinned is a terrible thing. Many households even if they don't have money to buy furniture or other important items they will still spend money on fairness products. The same goes for being fat. When they see a fat person, they automatically assume that he or she eats a lot and

shame them for it. It doesn't make sense."

"The movie is about a guy who is insecure about his appearance but over the journey of the film learns to gets comfortable with

movie is also packed with plenty of humour.

"I'm actually excited about the number of laughs in the film. If given a choice I will always choose drama over humour. But humour complements drama and brings it to forefront," he asserted.

Part of the reason why he gave the script to Vidyasagar is because he is yet to finish shooting his directorial with Naga Shaurya, Malavika Nair and Akanksha Sharma. The other reason, he insisted, is to see talent around him grow. "Vidyasagar and me are on the same page creatively. I've identified people who are dying to tell a story but things are not happening for them. He is one among them. I want to groom a set of filmmakers and writers. I believe that if someone is eager to tell a story with conviction it would augur well for the industry,"



who he is. It's set in Hyderabad and the protagonist works for a construction company. I wanted the film to have an urban backdrop because city life contributes to body shaming more than rural areas," he added, assuring that the

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The movie is about a guy who is insecure about his appearance but over the journey of the film learns to gets comfortable with who he is. It's set in Hyderabad and the hero works for a construction company. I wanted the film to have an urban backdrop because city life contributes to body shaming more than rural places

SRINIVAS AVASARALA
ACTOR, FILMMAKER

THREE LADIES FOR GANESH'S DEBUT FILM GET ONBOARD

Filmmaker Pavan Sadineni is ramping up the cast for his yet-to-be-titled film with Bellamkonda Ganesh, son of producer Bellamkonda Suresh. The latest about the film, which was launched earlier this month in Hyderabad in a glitzy affair, is that the director got the three leading ladies onboard. Sources said that the film has the scope to feature even five female leads as it traces the journey of Ganesh's life from a teenager to a married man, narrating his romantic encounters. "It is a relatively new cast. It includes Daksha (*Hora Hori* fame), Natasha (debutant) and Ananya Agarwal, who was seen as a young cricketer in Naga Chaitanya-starrer *Majili*. All the girls will play a key role in dri-

ving the narrative forward," confirmed a source.

After shooting in Hyderabad for a couple of months starting next month, Sadineni and his crew is planning to leave for US in January for a 30-day schedule where 70 to 75 per cent of filming will be completed. They will return to Hyderabad in February and complete the pending portions. Scheduled for a summer release, the film is a joint production venture between Lucky Media and Betel Leaf Productions. Radhan is the music composer and Vivek Athreya has penned dialogues.

— NG



VAISSHNAV TEJ'S Uppena shoot starts today

Megastar Chiranjeevi's nephew and Sai Dharam Tej's younger brother, Vaishnav Tej, is getting ready for his film *Uppena* where he plays the lead role. Buchi Babu Sana, an assistant director to Sukumar, will be directing the film, whose shooting will commence from October 21 in Puri. The shoot will later move to Kolkata and Gangtok. The entire schedule will

be completed in 20 days. Newcomer Krithi Shetty will also be debuting with Vaishnav Tej. Another highlight of the film is that it will feature Tamil star, Vijay Sethupathi, in an important role. Devi Sri Prasad has agreed to compose music for the film while Shamdat Sainudeen will handle the cinematography. Mythri Movie Makers is producing *Uppena* in association with Sukumar Writings banner and will start promotions soon.

INDIAN 2 swings into action

Having finished shoot in Sriperumbudur and Rajahmundry, the unit of Shankar's *Indian 2*, starring actor-turned-politician Kamal Haasan, has moved to Bhopal recently. In this outing, which will go on for a little over two weeks, Shankar is planning to film a massive action sequence. Reports from Chennai indicate that the action sequence has been allocated Rs 40 crore by Lyca Productions as it is set on a lavish scale involving 2,000 junior artistes. National award winning stunt choreographer Peter Heins will be choreographing the sequence. After the completion of this schedule, the unit will travel to Taiwan and Europe for filming where Shankar will shoot flashback portions.

In the sequel, Kamal will be seen as a morally upright freedom fighter Senapathy, who now is 90-years-old, while Siddharth, Kajal Aggarwal and Rakul Preet Singh will be seen in significant roles. The supporting cast is stacked up with the likes of Vivekh, Nedumudi Venu, Samuthirakani, Delhi Ganesh and Vidyut Jamwal. It will be an Anirudh Ravichander musical.



FIRST LOOK

Here is Sushanth's first look from Allu Arjun-starrer *Ala Vaikunthapuramlo*. The actor is playing a supporting role in the family entertainer directed by Trivikram. "He has a pleasant smile that can flatter anyone and there is princely vibe to his attitude as well. Introducing our Raj @iamSushanthA from #AlaVaikunthapuramuloo family (sic)," read a Twitter post from Geetha Arts and Haarika & Hassine Creations on Sunday. Both the premier production houses are jointly producing the film, which is slated to fly into the cinema halls on January 12.



Cracks in MAA resurface



The differences in MAA (Movie Artists Association) have come to the fore again in Hyderabad on Sunday. A casual meeting convened by executive vice-president Rajasekhara and general secretary Jeevitha drew ire of MAA president Naresh. Members siding with him had a showdown with members siding with Rajasekhara. Veteran Paruchuri Gopalakrishna staged a walkout after not being allowed to voice his opinions. The meeting was convened to discuss the issues plaguing MAA.

"Rajasekhara and Jeevitha believe that ever since the new members of MAA took oath nine months ago, the film body hasn't made any rapid strides. Naresh is giving little time to MAA and has also not raised any funds yet which is of grave concern. Rajasekhara is keen on pushing Naresh do good to the role he has in the organisation but the latter is hardly obliging. The functioning of MAA is managed with a meagre fund of Rs 5.5 crore which is disheartening," said a source.



