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FEED MILLIONS

**MONEY 8**  
BSE SEEKS EXPLANATION  
FROM INFOSYS

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HYDERABAD, THURSDAY OCTOBER 24, 2019; PAGES 12 ₹3



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ON VOGUE COVER

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## BSNL, MTNL to be merged

NEW DELHI: The government on Wednesday decided to merge loss-making telecom firms MTNL and BSNL as part of a revival package that includes raising sovereign bonds, monetising assets and VRS for employees.

Briefing reporters on decisions taken by the Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Telecom Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said the government will put in Rs 29,937 crore for revival of the two state-owned telecom companies. The revival package includes raising of Rs 15,000 crore sovereign bonds and monetising Rs 38,000 crore of assets in next four years. Also, voluntary retirement will be offered to employees to cut cost, he said.

He said BSNL and MTNL will be merged. Pending this, MTNL will act as a subsidiary of BSNL.

## Congress to boycott TV debates today

NEW DELHI: With the much awaited results of the Haryana and Maharashtra Assembly elections on Thursday, the Congress has decided to boycott television debates. But party leaders will be available to give solo interviews where there is no panel. The boycott is in continuation with the Congress' strategy not to send spokesperson on TV debates after the poll debacle in the general election in May.

The party had lost the general election badly and could not cross double digits. It is upset as the debates are on India-Pakistan ties and along communal lines.

Party spokesperson will also be available in AICC headquarters.

## Ready to conduct municipal polls any time: KCR

HYDERABAD: Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao has instructed the officials concerned to be prepared for conducting the municipal elections as and when the State Election Commission sets the date.

The Chief Minister held a review on Wednesday consequent to the green light given by the High Court to conduct the municipal elections. Municipal Minister KT Rama Rao, Principal Secretaries S Narsing Rao, Arvind Kumar, Government Chief Advisor Rajiv Sharma and others attended the meeting.

The Chief Minister said that the Government was prepared to conduct the municipal elections in the state and that it would inform the Election Commission about its preparedness.

# Google claims breakthrough in quantum processing

● Says its Sycamore will change computing completely

PNS ■ CALIFORNIA

Google said it has achieved a breakthrough in quantum computing research, saying an experimental quantum processor has completed a calculation in just a few minutes that would take a traditional supercomputer thousands of years. The findings, published Wednesday in the scientific journal Nature, show that "quantum speedup is achievable in a real-world system and is not precluded by any hidden physical laws," the researchers wrote. Quantum computing is a nascent and somewhat bewildering technology for vastly sped-up information processing. Quantum computers might one day revolutionize tasks that would take existing computers years, including the hunt for new drugs and optimizing city and transportation planning.

The technique relies on quantum bits, or qubits, which can register data values of zero and one - the language of modern computing - simultaneously. Big tech companies including Google, Microsoft, IBM and Intel are avidly pursuing the technology.

"Quantum things can be in multiple places at the same



Google's findings, however, are already facing pushback from other industry researchers. A version of Google's paper leaked online last month and researchers caught a glimpse before it was taken down

time," said Chris Monroe, a University of Maryland physicist who is also the founder of quantum startup IonQ. "The rules are very simple, they're just confounding."

Google's findings, however, are already facing pushback from other industry researchers. A version of Google's paper leaked online last month and researchers caught a glimpse before it was taken down.

puter 10,000 years to do the same thing. But IBM researchers say that Google underestimated the conventional supercomputer, called Summit, and said it could actually do the calculation in 2.5 days. Summit was developed by IBM and is located at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory in Tennessee. Google has not commented on IBM's claims.

Whether or not Google has achieved "quantum supremacy" or not may matter to competitors, but the semantics could be less important for the field of quantum research. What it does seem to indicate is that the field is maturing. "The quantum supremacy milestone allegedly achieved by Google is a pivotal step in the quest for practical quantum computers," John Preskill, a Caltech professor who originally coined the "quantum supremacy" term, wrote in a column after the paper was leaked. It means quantum computing research can enter a new stage, he wrote, though a significant effect on society "may still be decades away." The calculation employed by Google has little practical use, Preskill wrote, other than to test how well the processor works. Monroe echoed that concern.

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# Govt's offer fails to break deadlock over TSRTC strike

L VENKAT RAM REDDY  
■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister K Chandrasekar Rao's offer, made late on Tuesday night, that a high-level panel would consider the charter of demands of TSRTC employees unions barring the one for merger of the corporation with the government failed to break the deadlock even as the strike entered 19th day on Wednesday.

The TSRTC JAC, which is spearheading the strike, as well as a few other RTC employees' unions shrugged off KCR's offer and asserted that 'merger' would continue to be their major demand and that the fight would continue till they achieved their goal. When 'merger' was possible in the neighbouring Andhra Pradesh, there was no justification in TS government's claim that it would not be possible in Telangana, they asserted. Meanwhile, the six-member committee constituted by the state government, following the directions of KCR to examine the demands of RTC unions and submit a report to government within three days, sprung into action on Wednesday.

The committee members met at Bus Bhavan, the RTC's headquarters, and sought details from the RTC manage-



ment over the financial implications on the corporations if the unions' demands were met so as to be in a position to segregate the 21 demands into 'practical' and 'impractical'.

The committee decided to submit the report to the Chief Minister on Thursday. Thereafter, the Chief Minister is expected to take a call on which of the demands could be met by the government to amicably resolve the prolonged RTC strike.

Continued on Page 2

# H'NAGAR BYPOLL Counting of votes today

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The counting of votes polled in the by-election to Huzurnagar Assembly constituency in Telangana would be taken up on Thursday. The administration has made elaborate arrangements for the counting to be held at Agriculture Market Committee Godown at Suryapet.

The polling held on October 21 was incident-free and a good 84.76 per cent electors turned up for voting. The bypoll, the first after last year's assembly elections in the state, has been necessitated due to the resignation of state Congress president N Uttam Kumar Reddy following his election to Lok Sabha. His wife N Padmavati, a former MLA, is the Congress candidate, while TRS has again fielded S Saide Reddy, who lost to the PCC president in the Assembly polls. Kota Rama Rao, a medical doctor, and Chava Kiranmayi are the candidates of BJP and TDP respectively. Though 28 candidates are in the fray, the contest is among the candidates of ruling TRS, Congress, BJP and TDP. TRS enjoys a massive majority in the assembly having a strength of 100 in the 120-member House.

Continued on Page 2



Vanteru Pratap Reddy met Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao on Wednesday after being appointed as chairman of TSFDC

# KCR rewards once bete noire Vanteru with TSFDC chairman post

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao has rewarded his once bete noire Vanteru Pratap Reddy by appointing him as chairman of the Telangana State Forest Development Corporation (TSFDC).

Vanteru Pratap Reddy had contested against KCR in the Gajwel constituency on behalf of the Congress party, giving a tough fight in the Assembly elections. During the heat of campaigning in the run-up to the 2018 Assembly polls, he had

hurled even personal abuses at KCR. However, after KCR came back to power, Vanteru Pratap Reddy joined TRS, much to the shock of everyone. Now, it appears he has been rewarded for switching loyalties. Pratap Reddy will have two years' term as Chairman of the Forest Development Corporation.

TRS party insiders say that Pratap Reddy has been rewarded mainly to whittle down Finance Minister Harish Rao's influence and stature in Gajwel constituency and Siddipet district.

Continued on Page 3

## MOUNTING DENGUE CASES

# HC raps TS govt for failure to take preventive steps

● Summons CS, principal secretaries of health and MAUD

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana High Court on Wednesday expressed its dismay at the inefficacious steps initiated by the state government for prevention of the outbreak of dengue fever in spite of the directions issued by the court on September 25 in this regard.

Taking serious note of the callous attitude of the state, a division bench of the High Court asked the Chief



Secretary, the principal secretaries of the Municipal Administration and Urban Development Department and the Health Department to appear before it in person on

Thursday. The court passed these orders, while dealing with a batch of PIL petitions filed by two concerned citizens of the state Dr. M. Karuna and Rapolu Bhaskar.

The HC said that the state government had completely failed in checking dengue cases. It also said that the state government did not create awareness among the people of the state by erecting holdings and posters.

Continued on Page 2

# PIL filed on closure of Numaish

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Telangana High Court on Wednesday asked the state government and the management of the Exhibition Society to file counter affidavits in a Public Interest Litigation (PIL) petition filed by a city-based advocate Khaja Aijazuddin. In his petition, Khaja sought the closure of the upcoming popular annual All India Industrial Exhibition, better known as Numaish, scheduled to be conducted from January 1, 2020 due to non-compliance of statutory norms like Fire NOC, GHMC permission, Hyderabad City Police permissions. He urged the court



to restrain the Exhibition Society from conducting the exhibition if it failed to obtain the statutory permissions.

A division bench of the High Court posted the matter for hearing on Nov 12. It may be noted that the petitioner also urged the court to direct the society to pay Rs.2,51,38,71 accrued dues to the GHMC for the erection of temporary stalls last year.

# Not withdrawn merger demand: Ashwathama Reddy

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

TRSTC JAC convenor Ashwathama Reddy has asserted that, contrary to the claim made by the state government on Tuesday, the striking RTC unions have not withdrawn their demand for merger of TSRTC with government. The unions would continue to stress on the need to fulfil their main demand during talks with the government, Ashwathama Reddy said on Wednesday. He slammed Chief

“The government is giving statements that are hurting the sentiments of RTC employees and leading to suicides. Instead of losing heart and resorting to suicides, RTC employees should fight against the government”

—ASHWATHAMA REDDY, TRSTC JAC convenor

Minister K Chandrasekar Rao for making statements that "hurt RTC employees".

"Government is sending signals that RTC employees themselves have withdrawn the demand of merger, which is completely wrong. RTC JAC

will put forward all the 26 demands before the government's representatives, including the demand for the merger of RTC with the government. Also, the government is giving statements that are hurting the sentiments of RTC

employees and leading to suicides. Instead of losing heart and resorting to suicides, RTC employees should fight against the government." said Ashwathama Reddy, speaking at the Dhoom Dham program held at Dilukhanagar depot in Hyderabad on Wednesday.

Leaders from Congress, BJP, CPI and other parties and representatives from civil society organisations took part in the programme in large numbers.

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**TODAY**

**ALMANAC**

Month & Paksham: Ashwini & Sukla Paksha Panchangam

Tithi: Tritiya: 01:54 pm

Nakshatram: Swati: 02:21 pm

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

Rahukalam: 03:03 pm - 04:32 pm

Yamagandam: 09:07 am - 10:36 am

Variyam: 07:36 pm - 09:06 pm

Gulika: 12:05 pm - 01:34 pm

Good Time: (to start any important work)

Amritakalam: 06:20 am - 07:48 am

Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:43 am - 12:29 pm

**HYDERABAD WEATHER**

Forecast: Isolated Thunderstorms

Temp: 28/22

Humidity: 94%

Sunrise: 06:06

Sunset: 06:05

Current Weather Conditions Updated September 30, 2019 5:00 PM

# Where is data on mob lynchings?

● While the NCRB had collected the data and decided to publish it, the final report makes no mention of it

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A whole new variety of violent and fatal crime has emerged in our society over the last few years - lynchings. The nature and motives of this violence doesn't need introduction for the killings are all too obvious for what they are. There have also been unpteen reports in the media on it coming in from across the country, particularly north, east and western parts. Yet, when the NCRB published its data on crime for year 2017, there was no mention of lynching. As if they didn't happen at all.

This is borne out by the crime data for 2017 released by



the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) on October 21. It is just silent on the subject. For its part, the bureau had identified a few new sections of nature of crime and even promised to publish it, but when the figures were released, data on these was missing. The

Sources said the NCRB had compiled and analysed the data on mob lynching etc, but surprisingly this was not published

data collected under the sub-heads of mob lynching, murder by influential people and killing ordered by Khap Panchayat have not been published by the NCRB. To be sure, NCRB director Ish Kumar had decided to categorise the data under these new sub-sections because of a

series of incidents of mob killings across the country. Lynchings have occurred for a variety of reasons, including suspicion of cattle theft or smuggling, rumours of child lifting, etc. In a majority of cases, particularly those perpetuated by self-styled 'gau rakshaks', Muslims and Dalits have been the victims.

In July 2018, Union minister Hansraj Ahir had told the Rajya Sabha that the Centre does not have any data on lynching incidents because the NCRB does not collect it. Well, the case is that data has indeed been collected by NCRB, but the government has not allowed it to publish it.

# Women's panel rudderless without chief

● Post vacant for over a year ● Commission deprived of basic facilities

NAVEENA GHANATE  
■ HYDERABAD

While states like Karnataka, Kerala and Punjab have taken steps to empower their respective State Commissions for Women, Telangana State has kept its women's panel rudderless for almost 15 months. The last incumbent, Tripurana Venkataratnam, demitted office as chairperson in July 2018. Leave alone tall claims about the shift to a 'digital Telangana', even a website to enable people to register complaints with the panel is yet to see the light of the day. The Chief Minister of Telangana needs to take steps for appointing the full complement members constituting the Telangana state women's com-



mission. The current view in some circles is that no request from activists or petition from people would move the state and that only the state High Court orders would mend matters. They cite the HC's recent comments against the state government for not appointing TSRTC MD.

The response to an RTI query filed by social activist Spruthi Kolipaka reveals that 102 cases

## CASES BEFORE WOMEN'S PANEL

Year	Received	Solved
2019-20	172 (upto Aug-19)	70
2018-19	215	160
2017-18	232	232

filed this year so far and 55 cases carried over from the previous year are pending.

Spruthi, expressing disappointment over the apathy of the government, said, "Rise in crimes against women doesn't affect the government in any way. It's like women are at their mercy again for protection."

Continued on Page 2

# A CAMPAIGN OF CONTRADICTIONS

While I begin by paying my respects to the two TSRTC employees who committed suicide during the strike, the Union representatives have said in court that they are ready to drop their primary demand - that of merger of the transport corporation with the government - which is exactly what the average RTC staffer held very dear.

The climb-down on the merger demand is intriguing for this issue was the very basis on which the Union incited workers to go on strike in the first place. The RTC Union leaders were hellbent on this single demand and not willing to compromise, opposition parties weaved conspiracy theories and hurled a lot of lies at the state government for political motives and wanted the strike to persist.

Congress leaders' histrionics played out on streets and TV for all to see. Uttam Kumar Reddy even hopes to cash in on

the impact of the strike by bagging the Huzurnagar by-poll for his wife, the Congress candidate. RTC Union leaders have been demanding on news debates for the Centre to intervene and declare an Emergency in the state and even impose President's Rule. Revanth Reddy went a step further to claim that Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao feared a backlash from RTC employees and hence called off the election rally at Huzurnagar, despite the fact that it was the aviation authorities who said it wasn't safe for the CM to fly in a helicopter due to bad weather on that day.

The Congress and BJP came up with some interesting lies in their campaigns which need to be highlighted.

**If a court verdict of 2007, which allowed private buses to enter into RTC, is anything to go by, the Corporation is already privatized. As for merger with government, that will need an amendment in the Concurrent List in Parliament, which will bind all state governments**

## Assets of RTC:

Congress state president Uttam Kumar attributes a certain figure to the assets of RTC, Revanth Reddy has his own set of figures, and BJP state chief Dr Laxman also bandies about some figure. These people don't realise that the Sheela Bhide committee

constituted by Government of India has still not put its report on the assets of RTC, which anyway have to be shared between Telangana and Andhra Pradesh. Former AP CM Chandrababu Naidu had even asked for a share in 13 assets of the RTC in Telangana including the Bus Bhavan.

The Opposition, however, alleges that KCR wants to corner RTC's assets. But the fact is it is KCR who himself adamantly demanded that Telangana will not part RTC's 13 assets and will pay a monetary compensation instead of sharing the Bus Bhavan. In fact the opposite is also true that RTC's assets were given away on lease during the TDP and Congress regimes.

Surprisingly, BJP's Dr Laxman has also joined in and falsely claims that KCR was 'grabbing' the assets, while the truth of it all is available in the public domain.

## Privatisation:

While Chief Minister is being accused of privatising RTC, the fact is that RTC was already pri-

vatized. Yes it is. Quoting a case between the National Mazdoor Union of RTC vs the APSRTC in 2007, the petitioners NMU prayed against privatisation of RTC by hiring 700 private buses by then Congress government and the corporation. Justice Sri Nagarjuna Reddy, who was hearing the petition at that time, gave a judgment stating that hiring of private buses could not be stopped. We must acknowledge that private buses entered into RTC in 2007. Later, ex-CM Kiran Kumar Reddy also hired private buses. Why is KCR then being dragged into to an already privatised RTC.

## Merger:

This is the only demand resounding in the speeches of the politicians and RTC Union

leaders. The RTC Management and the government have been soft about the workers' 21-odd demands, but the Unions were insisting on the merger demand, which the government is not ready to consider at all. Now, the Unions have informed the Telangana High Court that they are ready to let go of their merger demand. With this, the RTC Management is ready for talks. But have the Unions realised that their primary demand was not a justified one nor was it constitutionally possible. Even if Andhra Pradesh government has done such a thing, is it really a merger of the Corporation? If so, how can a corporation, which is a part of the Concurrent List, be merged

without any consent of the central government? In this case, the BJP needs to spell out its stand -- are they willing to merge RTCs in all state governments? If so, they will have to pass an amendment in Parliament to bring changes in the 35th Amendment of the Concurrent List.

Quite likely, the BJP will not bet on that. As for Congress, it knows very well that its own previous government in undivided AP gave out RTC's assets on lease. RTC employees must be careful not to fall for political concocted campaigns and continue to ignore historical wrongs. Or else, the strike and politics being played over it will only remain 'A Campaign of Contradictions'.

**- Krishank**  
(Research Scholar, Osmania University)  
(Views expressed by the author are personal)

## High Court raps TS govt for failure to take preventive steps

Continued from Page 1

There was no impact on the state government, despite a steep increase in the number of dengue fever cases, the court said. The HC asked the state government to submit a detailed report on the steps initiated by it to control dengue fever cases and the limitations it has to prevent them.

In its orders made earlier, the HC asked the state government to create a wider and stronger awareness among the people by using the print, electronic and social media with regard to preventive and curative steps to be taken with regard to dengue. The government was asked to take concrete steps by using all the machinery at its disposal to eradicate the menace of mosquito breeding, prioritize areas in the city and elsewhere across the State where such preventive steps need to be taken, and ensure that fogging is carried out in GHMC areas as frequently as possible. The court had asked GHMC to consider the use of drone technology for the welfare of the people, besides asking it to increase the number of portable fogging machines, portable sprayers, etc.

# BHAROSA CELEBRATES FIRST YEAR ANNIVERSARY

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Cyberabad Police has celebrated the first year anniversary of Bharosa centre located at district area hospital in Kondapur on Wednesday.

The re-united families along with the police officers inaugurated the programme by watering a plant, symbolising the growth of a happy family. Women & Child Safety Wing, Cyberabad, DCP C Anasuya spoke about the inception and objectives of Bharosa, Kondapur and thanked the NGOs, alcoholism and drug de-addiction centre in Hyderabad and SCSC Margdarshak. SCSC general secretary M Krishna Yedula commended the support of Bharosa Centre program in reuniting couples through counseling and extended his support to Bharosa.

Cyberabad Commissioner of Police VC Sajjanar congratulated the Bharosa team which has resolved about 350 cases related to marital disputes and thanked Alcoholic Anonymous - a drug de-addiction centre and other support Centres for partnering with Bharosa to



**Bharosa Support Center for Women & Children is intended to support women affected by violence in private and public spaces**

bring families together. He appreciated and thanked SCSC for the extended support for Bharosa, six She Shuttles, Margdarshak Program, ICC workshops and creating awareness on women's safety for about 3.5 working women in the IT and adjunct areas.

He felicitated and congratulated the re-united couples through Bharosa Family & counselling centre. He also released a set of moral values story books in the form of stories for the benefit of child victims.

The guests present were Archana & team of My Choices NGO, Nageswara Rao, Dr

Kavitha, Civil surgeon, Kondapur Area Hospital, Nageswara Rao, Alcoholic rehabilitation centre, etc.

"Bharosa" -Support Center for Women & Children is intended to support women affected by violence in private and public spaces, within the family, community and at the workplace. Aggrieved women facing any kind of violence due to sexual harassment, sexual assault, domestic violence etc. will be provided with integrated assistance through Police, Medical, Legal and Prosecution Services along with Psycho therapeutic Counseling apart

from relief and rehabilitation as per her requirements.

Apart from this Bharosa team counsels the children who are victims in POCSO cases with help of Clinical Psychologist so that the incident shall not impact their future psychological well being. The Cyberabad Bharosa Center was set up in October 2018 and is instrumental in handling various cases. Total 124 families have been reunited by Bharosa center, Cyberabad during this period. 355 various domestic violence cases pertain to Cyberabad Commissionerate has been dealt during this period.



Major General RK Singh, General Officer Commanding, Telangana and Andhra Sub Area calls on Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan at Raj Bhawan on Wednesday

## Engineer Ramya's body remains missing

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Even after salvaging the capsized boat Royal Vashishta at Kachchaluru in East Godavari district and recovery of over eight bodies, the body of sub-engineer Karukuri Ramya, 23, remained missing a day after the successful recovery operation.

Three bodies are yet to be traced in the boat tragedy incident that occurred on Engineers' Day on September 15.

A full 39 days after the tragedy, the relatives have no clue about the body and have been experiencing anxious moments.

Ramya's father works as a sub-station operator in electricity department, while her mother is a home maker. Ramya, who did BTech, got job as sub-engineer in Kumuram Bhim Asifabad district recently. Along with her colleagues, she set out for a tour of Papikondalu from Warangal, where she had gone as part of her office work, on the fateful day.

The boat got capsized at Kachchaluru in Godavari River with nearly 70 passengers on board.

Ramya's parents, who



**A full 39 days after the tragedy, the relatives have no clue about the body and have been experiencing anxious moments**

believe that the body might have been washed away by flood waters, observed her last rites on the banks of River Godavari on September 25.

The Dharmadi Satyam team, engaged in salvaging the boat, made hectic efforts since the last three days and finally managed to salvage it on Tuesday. Eight highly decomposed bodies of the tourists were retrieved from the ill-fated boat, but these did not include that of Ramya.

## Counting of votes today

Continued from Page 1

Yet, the Huzurnagar bypoll is crucial for TRS to reaffirm its dominance in state politics after the party had suffered an unexpected setback in the Lok Sabha polls. Amid expectations that it would sweep the polls, the party ended up with only 12 of the 19 Lok Sabha seats in the state.

BJP, which could win only one seat in the assembly elections in December last, made impressive gains, netting four Lok Sabha seats.

Congress, which suffered a shock defeat in the assembly polls, recovered and won three seats in the Parliament elections. A win in Huzurnagar is important for Congress also as it seeks to take on the ruling TRS in the coming years.

Buoyed by its gains in Lok Sabha polls, BJP has announced grand plans to emerge as the alternative to TRS in the state and a success in the bypoll would help it.

TDP, pushed to the margins in Telangana after a number of its leaders joined the TRS during the last several years, is also keen on putting up a decent performance in the Huzurnagar by-election to revive itself in the state.

## Women's panel rudderless without chief

Continued from Page 1

The law is ignored blatantly. They just don't care and it's being run by men with token representation from women --two. The annual reports have not been published for the past six financial years. People say the previous chairperson did good work, but RTI clearly reveals that hardly anything was done. Be it TDP or TRS, nobody cares".

According to the RTI response, the Commission has requested the government to set up a website and "it is under process". They did not give any time frame for completion. In fact, the government is blatantly violating Section 4(2) of the Right to

Information Act, 2005, which makes provision of a website a legal mandate.

The government can take cues from Delhi, Uttar Pradesh, Karnataka and Kerala to create a mechanism for women to file complaints without there being any need to go to the police.

It is a different matter that some activists have taken some cases to social media, apart from reaching out to officials, and are actively seeking to address the core issues over several months. Although the Commission takes note of issues brought to its notice personally, the lack of an online portal is forcing many women to approach the police each time to report a crime.

## Man washed away in NSP canal, 12 gates lifted

PNS ■ NALGONDA

A villager got swept away in the gushing waters of the left canal of the NSP near Haliya village, according to reports reaching here after 12 crest gates of the project were lifted on Wednesday morning. The villager, identified as Rambabu slipped and fell into the canal while bathing.

Inflows into the Nagarjuna Sagar project were reported as 2,24,811 cusecs and out flow was 2,24,811 cusecs. The water level in the project has reached 589.5 feet as against 590 feet. Present water storage was also recorded as 310.44 tmc as against gross storage capacity of 312 tmc.

## Not withdrawn merger demand: Ashwathama

Continued from Page 1

"Government is spreading misinformation that one of the RTC employees' unions is in touch with government to join duties. This is absolutely fake news, spread by government to dishearten employees and create divisions among RTC employees," he observed. Regardless of the efforts made by the government to dishearten RTC employees, they would stand united and would not budge until all the demands were met, he said. "Our agitation is not just for our salaries, but to save RTC and public transport organisation," Ashwathama Reddy remarked.

Ashwathama Reddy

# GHIAL under probe for unfair biz ways

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Competition Commission of India has ordered a detailed probe against Hyderabad international airport operator GHIAL for alleged abuse of dominant position and denial of market access to a leading MRO services provider.

The order against GMR Hyderabad International Airport Ltd (GHIAL) has come on a complaint filed with the watchdog by Air Works India (Engineering) Pvt Ltd.

Air Works is into providing maintenance, repair and overhaul (MRO) services of aircraft to airlines and general aviation. "... the facts of the present case prima facie suggest denial of market access to the infor-



mant coupled with exclusionary motive by GMR to favour its own group entity (i.e. GAT). Owing to its dominance in the upstream market and its presence in the downstream market, GMR seems to have distorted the level playing field," the regulator said in a 21-page order. The complaint was filed

against GHIAL and GMR Aero Technic Ltd (GAT), a wholly-owned subsidiary of GMR Aerospace Engineering Ltd. The latter is a wholly-owned subsidiary of GMR.

It was alleged that GMR owing to its sole control over the Hyderabad airport premises has denied access to Air

**The complaint was filed against GHIAL and GMR Aero Technic Ltd (GAT), a wholly-owned subsidiary of GMR Aerospace Engineering Ltd. The latter is a wholly-owned subsidiary of GMR**

Works for providing the Line Maintenance Services with an intent to give advantage to GAT at the aerodrome.

Line Maintenance Services can include activities like trouble shooting, defect rectification, component replacement, schedule maintenance and/or checks, minor repairs and modifications and visual inspections. Such service is required to be provided during

the time between the landing and take-off of any aircraft to declare it airworthy and make it fit for departure.

To assess the complaint, Competition Commission of India (CCI) considered the markets for 'provision of access to airport facilities/premises' and 'provision of Line Maintenance Services' at the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport (RGIA).

## Govt's offer fails to break...

Continued from Page 1

The committee, along with Transport Commissioner, plans to invite RTC unions for talks on Saturday and Sunday and enable the government to submit the report to the HC on October 28 -- the deadline fixed by the High Court for the purpose.

However, going by the mood of the RTC unions and the statements of their leaders, the merger demand will continue to be

a sticking point. The chances of the RTC unions calling off their strike are bleak.

The unions are planning to attend the talks, but are determined to walk away abruptly if merger is not on the table. Their considered view is that by adopting this strategy they will have complied with the orders of the HC to hold talks with the government before October 28 without compromising on their main demand.

**GOVERNMENT OF TELANGANA**  
Roads and Buildings Department  
**e-PROCUREMENT TENDER NOTICE**

1. On-line tenders are invited under e-procurement platform for one road work under Special Development Fund (SDF 2018-19) pertaining to Bhadrachalam District, Khammam Circle vide NIT No. 6/CE (R&B) RR/SE (D&P-1) / EE (D&P) / DEE-1 (RR) / AEE-2 (RR) / SDF / 2019-20, dt. 21-10-2019. 2. Tenders can download the tender schedules from e-market place i.e. <https://tender.telangana.gov.in/> from 28-10-2019 from 4.00 PM onwards. The last date and time of receipt of tenders is on or before 11-11-2019 up to 4.00 PM. Further details can be seen at e-procurement market place i.e. <https://tender.telangana.gov.in/>

For Chief Engineer (R&B), Rural Roads, Hyd  
DIPR No.: 807-DP/CL-AGENCY/ADVT/1/2019-20  
Date: 23-10-2019

CRIME CORNER

Film producer Bandla Ganesh served notice

The Jubilee Hills police have served notices of cheating, trespassing and criminal intimidation against film producer turned politician Bandla Ganesh on Tuesday for threatening film producer Potluri Prasad at his home in Hyderabad. According to a complaint given to the police, Prasad said that people who had claimed to be sent by Ganesh, showed up at his residence on Thursday. The Jubilee Hills Police filed a case under sections 420 (cheating), 448 (house trespass) and 506 (criminal intimidation) of the IPC. Prasad in his complaint also requested the police to provide protection as his life was under threat. Apparently, Bandla Ganesh also filed a complaint alleging Prasad has been threatening to abduct him for the past 10 days with the Banjara Hills Police. Police said that the issue arose because Bandla Ganesh allegedly owes Potluri Prasad Rs 7 crore. Ganesh had borrowed Rs 34 crore from Prasad to make 'Temper', a Tollywood film starring Jr. NTR which released in 2015. However, Ganesh claims that he had paid the full amount and Prasad was demanding interest. Kalinga Rao, Inspector of Police, Banjara Hills, said that action would be taken on Ganesh's complaint after seeking legal advice.

Youth booked for 'AP CM Jagan' as number plate

An engineering graduate in Hyderabad was booked for having the car's number plate as, 'AP CM JAGAN'. The Cyberabad police arrested the 27-year-old Muppidi Hari Rakesh, who conceived the idea to get "exemption at toll gates, easy access at crowded places, and avoid police checks". The youth was booked when a team from Jeedimetla traffic police station was conducting a vehicle checking and they noticed a vehicle with the wrong number plate. "The car was intercepted for further inquiry. On investigation, police found the car had a different registration number, and it is owned by Rakesh's uncle Yesu Reddy who lives in Kakinada" police said. Rakesh started using the vehicle a few weeks ago, and since then he concealed the vehicle's original number plate with a customised one.

KCR rewards once bete noire Vanteru with TSFDC chairman post

Continued from Page 1

TRS working president and IT and Municipal Minister KT Rama Rao was instrumental in bringing Pratap Reddy into TRS fold. "Though CM represented Gajwel Assembly constituency, it was Harish Rao who used to call shots and monitor administrative and political activities in the constituency. As Harish Rao is being gradually sidelined in the party, his significance is also being cut short even in Siddipet district. Therefore, Vanteru Pratap Reddy has been given a plum post and is being given importance to cut short Harish Rao's influence in Gajwel constituency," said a senior TRS leader from undivided Medak District. It is said that Pratap Reddy has already been given a free hand in the constituency by KCR. By appointing him as TSFDC chairman, KCR has sent across a message to people in Gajwel that the turnout leader means more to him than his nephew Harish.

Crime against children rising in southern states

NCRB REPORT

TS records highest number of PoCSO cases; K'taka continues with its bad record of crimes against children; number of cases rises in Andhra Pradesh from 1,992 in 2015 to 2,397 in 2017

NAVEEN KUMAR ■ HYDERABAD

As per the latest statistics published by the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), a distressing trend can be seen when it comes to crimes against children. The offences have been steadily increasing in the five southern states from 2015 to 2017.

Throughout the country, crimes against children under IPC and Special and Local Laws (SLL) have increased from 94,172 in 2015 to 1,06,958 in 2016, and 1,29,032 in 2017. The overall rate of crime against children in India in 2017 was 28.9 per one lakh children, as compared to 24 in 2016.

This rise in numbers could be attributed to the increased awareness about crimes against children, with a higher number of people reporting it.

At 14.8 per cent each, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh recorded the highest number of crimes against children, as per the latest numbers.

Telangana has recorded the highest number of cases of murder of children with rape/Protection of Children Under Sexual Offences (POCSO), with 10 victims. Meanwhile, Karnataka had the highest number of children murdered (case registered under section 302 of the IPC) among southern states at 109, and fourth highest in India after Uttar Pradesh (392), Maharashtra (161) and Madhya Pradesh (115). Karnataka also had the highest incidence across India of children kidnapped for the purpose of begging, with 60 victims.

Among the southern states, Karnataka consistently reported a higher number of crimes against children since 2015 - a trend that held true in 2017. Going up from 3,961 in 2015 to 4,455 in 2016, the state registered 5,890 crimes against minors in 2017. The state's capital Bengaluru also had the most child victims among southern metros, and was the fourth highest in India with



1,582 cases.

In Andhra Pradesh, from 1,992 cases registered for crimes against children in 2015, the number rose to 2,397 in 2017. For Kerala, with 3,562 cases of crimes against children in 2017, the hike from 2016 was by 683 cases. Telangana and Tamil Nadu reported 3,580 and 3,529 crimes against children under various local laws and IPC sections for 2017.

Tamil Nadu recorded the highest number of girls kidnapped for forcing them into marriage, among the southern states. However, all southern states recorded lower numbers in this regard compared to 2016.

None of the southern metropolitan cities factored into the report - Bengaluru, Chennai, Coimbatore, Hyderabad, Kochi, Kozhikode - registered a single case of foeticide.

Three southern states figured in the 10 Indian states with the highest number of POCSO cases. Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh performed worst with 5,248 and 4,895 incidents respectively. The other states among the ten were West Bengal (2,131), Karnataka (1,956), Gujarat (1,697), Chhattisgarh (1,676), Telangana (1,632), Tamil Nadu (1,587), Madhya Pradesh (1,569) and Bihar (1,356). And while Kerala was not among these, it did see the greatest number of sexual assaults on children among the southern states, and sixth highest overall.

Delhi had the highest number of POCSO cases among

Indian metros at 1,521, followed by Mumbai, Pune and Bengaluru respectively. In 93.6 percent cases of aggravated penetrative sexual assault on children, the perpetrator was known to the victim. The most common perpetrators were family members/friends/neighbours/other known persons. Further, increasing reports of child sexual abuse material (referred in other media as child pornography) online across platforms like WhatsApp, TikTok and others, over the last of couple of years, the NCRB numbers do not reflect this. Save seven, Indian states report no cases regarding publication or transmission of material depicting children in sexually explicit acts. Nowhere has more than one case been registered.

PoCSO cases against male victims



In the cases recorded under the Protection of Children from Sexual Offences (PoCSO) Act, the NCRB document has demarcated how many cases had male victims. Telangana stands in fifth place in the country, the stats reveal.

The states among the top-10 were West Bengal (2,131), Karnataka (1,956), Gujarat (1,697), Chhattisgarh (1,676), Telangana (1,632), Tamil Nadu

(1,587), Madhya Pradesh (1,569) and Bihar (1,356).

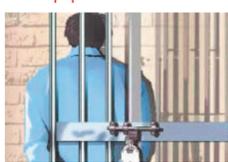
Further in 93.6 percent of the cases of aggravated penetrative sexual assault on children, the perpetrator was known to the child victim. This is in line with 2016's NCRB figures, where the number was at 94.6 percent.

The total number of POCSO cases registered in 2017 stood at 32,608. When it comes to male child sexual abuse, there hasn't been a comprehensive study in India save one in 2007 by the Ministry of Women and Child Welfare, supported by United Nations Children's Fund, Save The Children and Prayas, which found that out of the 53.22 percent of children who were found to have been sexually abused, 52.94 percent were boys.

The difference between the numbers of girl and boy victims is quite vast indeed. 2017's NCRB numbers further break down POCSO statistics based on which sections the crimes were registered under, which reveals the following.

While there were 17,597 girl victims of penetrative sexual assault (sections 4 and 6), for boys, the number was 183. While 117 cases registered for aggravated penetrative sexual (section 8 and 10) assault had male child victims, there were 11,899 cases reported were girls were victims. As compared to 1,322 girls, 37 boys were reported to be sexually harassed (section 12) in 2017. Child sexual abuse material (under sections 14 and 15; also referred to as child pornography) had 339 girl victims, compared to 43 boys. The only place where there were more male victims (512) were girls (152) was in cases where section 377 of the IPC was read with POCSO Act.

Prison population under control



The prison population in central jails was manageable at the end of 2017, that is as on 31st December, 2017, in 9 States and 2 UT as the occupancy rate in these States/UTs remained less than 100 percent. The NCRB report showed that Telangana stands top in the line among others.

These States and UTs are Telangana (93.6 percent), Mizoram (91.83 percent), Assam (84.30 percent), Tamil Nadu (76.25 percent), Manipur (72.15 percent), Jammu & Kashmir (70.15 percent), Goa (67.31 percent), Tripura (50.80 percent), Nagaland (20.33 percent), Chandigarh (86.34 percent) and Puducherry (68.33 percent).

The Occupancy rate of Central Jail at National level is 117.50 which shows overcrowding in jails but overcrowding may differ on day to day and jail to jail basis. At the end of the year 2017 (as on 31st December, 2017), 18 States and 1 UTs have reported more than 100% occupancy rate. Chhattisgarh has reported the highest overcrowding (191.52%) followed by Maharashtra (155.95%), Delhi (155.61%) and Uttar Pradesh (149.30%).

Dramatic rise in cyber crimes in 2017



The number of cyber crimes increased dramatically in 2017 as compared to 2016, and nearly every fifth cyber crime in 2017 was committed against a woman, NCRB stats reveal. The cyber crimes cases in the country, the number of cyber crimes committed per 1,00,000 population - in 2017 was 1.7, the report shows. Though most of the offences cyber crimes were committed in Karnataka in 2017; Telangana was next, with a rate of 3.3 cyber crimes

per 1,00,000 population, followed by Maharashtra and Uttar Pradesh.

UP, the most populous state, registered the largest number of cyber crimes (4,971), followed by Maharashtra (3,604), and Karnataka (3,174). Among the Union Territories, the most cyber crimes in 2017 were registered in Delhi (162).

Of the 21,796 cyber crimes registered in the country in 2017, 4,242 - about 19.5 percent - were committed against women, and 88 against children. The cyber crimes against women were related to cyber blackmail or threats, cyber pornography or hosting or publishing obscene sexual materials, cyber stalking or cyber bullying of women, defamation, or morphing and indecent representation of women, etc.

Crimes against children included Internet crimes committed through online games, etc. This is the first time that NCRB has compiled data on the nature of cyber crimes against women and children.

In 2017, a total of 11,601 persons were arrested for cyber crime cases, 8,306 were chargesheeted, and only 162 were convicted.

Crime against women up by 6%

The number of crimes committed against women has increased in 2017 by 6 percent compared to 2016 and by 9 percent compared to 2015. Among metropolitan cities, Hyderabad accounted for among the crime rates of 2.7 percent of the overall national figure. With 1,278 cases of 'cruelty by husband or his relatives' being registered in 2017, Hyderabad stands in second position in the country, next to Delhi which recorded 2,450 cases.

The national capital maintained its record as crime capital with 40.4 percent of the crimes in metros occurring in the city. Bengaluru with 8.9 percent, Mumbai with 7.2 percent, and Chennai with 3.6 percent contributed sig-

nificantly to the crime statistics in the metros.



"Majority of cases under crimes against women were registered under 'Cruelty by Husband or his Relatives' (27.9 percent) followed by 'Assault on Women with Intent to Outrage Her Modesty' (21.7 percent), Kidnapping & Abduction of Women' (20.5 percent) and 'Rape' (7.0 percent)," the report said. As per the report, 58,880 incidents of rioting were reported, of which the maximum incidents were reported from Bihar - 11,698, followed by Uttar Pradesh - 8,990 and Maharashtra - 7,743.

TS registers highest number of convicts

A total of 583 convicts were lodged in various jails of the country for committing offences against women related acts under Special and Local Laws (SLL) as on 31st December, 2017. Telangana has reported the highest number of convicts (84) followed by Jharkhand (69) and Maharashtra (65) accounting for 14.41 percent, 11.84 percent and 11.15 percent of the total convicted inmates lodged under SLL which are specific to crimes against women respectively.

A total of 498 convicts were lodged in various jails of the country for committing offences against SC/ST-related acts under Special and Local Laws (SLL) as on 31st December, 2017. Uttar Pradesh has reported the highest number of convicts (211) followed by Rajasthan (61) and Tamil Nadu (53), accounting for 42.37%, 12.25% and 10.64% of the total convicted inmates lodged under SLL crimes which are specific to crime against SC/ST respectively.

GHMC to collect scrap from your doorstep



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

If you have scrap or any bulky disposable items in your house, do not dump them on the road if they can't fit in the garbage can at home. Personnel of the Greater Hyderabad Municipal Corporation (GHMC) will collect them from your doorstep, including broken furniture, old mattresses, electronic items, coolers, cushions, blankets or whatever, if they are of no use to you. Following directions issued by MA&UD Minister K T Rama Rao, GHMC personnel will conduct a special drive during November 3 to 12 to collect all such material.

The idea is to prevent people from dumping all such material at odd places in such a manner that they ultimately find their way to drains (nalas),

empty spaces and roads. Often sewer lines and manholes are getting blocked due to indiscriminate dumping of waste, leading to sewage spills on the roads that have become increasingly common in the city.

The drive to collect scrap comes in the wake of GHMC's successful campaign for collecting plastic that yielded 150 metric tonnes of plastic. Thanks to the initiative, the amount of plastic waste found in drains and manholes has come down.

The drive to collect scrap will be taken up with the help of residential welfare associations, charities and community groups. For this purpose, the GHMC will make a special arrangement involving RWAs, NGOs and MLAs.

7,000 MT GARBAGE PICKED UP EVERY DAY

Collection increases after additional vehicles are deployed in each circle

About 7,000 metric tonnes (MT) of garbage is being collected by GHMC and disposed at Jawaharnagar dump yard every day. GHMC attributes the increase in garbage collection from 5,000 MT to 7,000 MT to addition of vehicles in each circle.

Every circle was recently equipped with four additional mini-tippers and two Bobcats. At present, GHMC collects garbage from home using 2,500 Swachh autos and sends it to 17 transfer stations. In addition, GHMC vehicles are also disposing of the waste generated by sweeping the roads.

GHMC is currently using 532 vehicles to send garbage to its transfer stations. The garbage collected at Transfer Stations is transported to Jawaharnagar Dumping Yard through tertiary fleet and the garbage dumped at transfer stations is cleared to nearby



100% on daily basis.

The Transport Wing of GHMC is designated with the work of providing vehicles for collection of garbage from the 30 Circles of GHMC using Secondary Transportation Vehicles (for field level sanitation) and transportation of the collected garbage from various Transfer Stations in GHMC limits to Jawaharnagar Dumping Yard through Tertiary Transportation vehicles

Due to festival season and heavy rainfall, more garbage is being generated and director of transport Viswajit Kamapati said "Previously, around 5000 MT - 6000 MT garbage was transported to Jawaharnagar Dumping yard on daily basis and presently, with the existing fleet, the garbage transported to Jawaharnagar Dumping yard has crossed over 7000 MT ensuring effective clearance of garbage at Transfer Station i.e. Zero garbage".

GHMC cracks whip on hostels in Ameerpet



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

GHMC sealed seven hostels, including one ladies hostel, in Ameerpet on Wednesday. Officials were left aghast by the sight of rotten vegetables, stale food in the fridge, lack of silt chambers, and hostels operating without any trade license.

GHMC officials conducted inspections on a number of

hostels in SR Nagar on Monday. Almost all hostels used rotten vegetables and stored food. Officials issued notices to the hostels and the kitchens of the hostels for disposal of waste water on these roads without the construction of silt chambers in the hostels. Khairatabad Medical Officer Bhargav Narayana led the team which inspected a total of seven hostels.



TS Prisons gets a new head

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The state government has relieved senior IPS officer Sandeep Shandilya from the additional charge of DG Prisons and Correctional Services. Shandilya is currently Additional DG, Railways and Road Safety, Principal Secretary (Home) Rajiv Trivedi was given the additional charge with immediate effect. The orders were issued on Tuesday.

Similarly, Ravi Gupta, IPS, Additional Director General of Police (Technical

Services), has been transferred and posted as Principal Secretary to the government (Home department) vice Rajiv Trivedi, IPS, transferred.

The decision has been made after the High Court issued a green signal to conduct municipal elections in the state. However, the municipal elections will be held after resolving 70 pending cases in the courts on municipalities. Meanwhile, the election commission is gearing up for the municipal elections.

KTR inspects 2-BHK houses at Kollur

Amenities like water, electricity; solid waste management, parks accessed

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

MA&UD Minister KT Rama Rao inspected the 2-BHK dignity housing project site which is nearing completion at Kollur on Wednesday.

The self-contained township has 15,660 housing units. The Minister said that the township will soon become a role model dignity housing project in the country. He instructed officials to take steps to ensure the township becomes a safe, smart and

sustainable habitation.

KTR later reviewed the provision of various amenities like water, electricity, solid waste management, parks, healthcare, education, and transport facilities. Mayor Bonthu Ram Mohan, Additional Chief Secretary for Housing, Chitra Ramachandran, MA&UD Secretary Arvind Kumar and GHMC Commissioner Lokesh Kumar and Senior officials from various departments were present.



Metro shuttle link between BRK Bhavan, Lakdikapul

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Secretary SK Joshi flagged off Metro shuttle services between BRK Bhavan and Lakdi ka Pul Metro station here on Wednesday at BRK Bhavan.

Speaking on the occasion, the Chief Secretary has appealed to the secretariat employees to make use of the facility of shuttle service provided by the HMRL. He also advised MD, HMRL to provide similar facility from other

metro stations.

Adhar Sinha, Spl CS, GAD said this facility would provide much convenience to women employees in particular and thanked the service providers and HMRL for conceding their request to provide a shuttle service for Secretariat employees.

The shuttle services will be operated for every 15 minutes daily between BRK Bhavan and Lakdi ka Pul from 8.30 am to 11 am, and 5 pm to 7 pm, he said.

# Striking RTC staff resort to sit-in protests, meet MLAs

UNION LEADERS SAY READY FOR TALKS WHENEVER GOVT INVITES THEM

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Sit in protests and meeting MLAs to submit their representations formed part of the continuing stir of the employees of the Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC), which entered the 19th day on Wednesday.

"The employees held sit-in protests and met MLAs at some places to submit representations on their agitation," Raji Reddy, a leader of one of the RTC employees unions, said.

He reiterated that the unions were ready for talks whenever they are invited by the government.

The government on Tuesday said it has decided to examine other demands of the striking employees as unions themselves had withdrawn their demand for TSRTC's merger with the government.

The Road Transport Corporation Managing Director has appointed a committee, comprising Executive Directors of the Corporation to examine the demands, the Chief Minister's Office had said in a release.

The government has also decided to submit a report to the state High Court as per the committee's report, which would be submitted in one or two days, it said.

Chief Minister K Chandrababoo Naidu held a meeting with transport minister Puvvada Ajay Kumar and senior officials following the high court's directive to RTC and employees to hold discussions and settle their disputes before October 28.

The union leaders had initially said they would hold talks only if an announcement over merger of RTC with the government was made, but during the hearing in the high court, said they would not insist on it.

This amounted to the employees withdrawing the demand for merger, the release quoted Rao as having said.

The Chief Minister also noted that the court had urged that 21 issues among the employees' demands be considered, as per its orders and directed officials to study them.

Different employees and workers unions of TSRTC began an indefinite strike from October 5 across Telangana on



Police haul away an ABVP student activist from a protest site in the city on Wednesday

## JAC members stream to houses of elected representatives with pleas

PV KONDAL RAO ■ WARANGAL

Striking RTC employees and JAC members in Warangal and other districts on Wednesday met MLAs and MPs at their residences in the city premises.

Since morning, RTC employees in Warangal got into different groups and met the local public representatives with their charter of demands. The RTC JAC members initially went to Rajya Sabha member Banda Prakash Residence on Hunter Road area and appealed to him to prevail upon the Chief Minister KCR for resolving the impasse of the RTC employees immediately.

The employees also went in a group to Warangal MP Pasunuri Dayakar's residence in

a call by the JAC of the corporation, demanding its merger with the government and recruitment to various posts, among others.

The employees, workers of opposition parties and others

## RTC staff attack bus in Medak

**MEDAK:** In a first aggressive act on temporary staff of the RTC, striking RTC employees attacked an RTC bus in T Lingampalli village of Tegide mandal in Narayanahed segment on Tuesday night and decamped with Rs 6,000 from the temporary conductor. The RTC staff threatened the private employees not to run

buses since the regular employees were taking the risk of strike and were spending sleepless nights. They stopped the bus near Lingampalli village. They asked the driver and conductor to get down from the bus before decamping with the collected money. Police registered a case in this connection.

Rokalla Shayampet area and submitted a representation to him to influence the CM to take up the issues confronted by RTC employees immediately. Similarly the Warangal east MLA Nannapuneni Narendar's residence was also stormed by the RTC JAC members who sought his cooperation to solve

the problem of the employees. RTC JAC members then went to Balasamudram area of the city to the residence of the Chief Whip Dasyam Vinayabhaskar and urged him to bring the matters of the working class to the notice of CM KCR so that the impasse is resolved soon.

have since then been organising protests all over the state in support of their demands.

Ruling out discussions with the unions, the TRS government had termed the stir as "illegal" as they caused

immense inconvenience to public.

The High Court had directed the RTC management and the employees to the negotiating table and settle all their disputes before October 28.

PRAGATI BHAVAN SIEGE

## Case filed against Revanth for pushing aside cop

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A non-bailable case has been registered against Malkajgiri MP Revanth Reddy for obstructing a policeman on duty during the Congress party's recent siege on Pragati Bhavan. The case has been registered under Sections 341, 332 and 353 of the IPC following a complaint against the MP by sub-inspector Naveen Reddy.

Congress leaders have been taking part in the strike expressing solidarity with the RTC workers. As part of extending the support, the Congress called for laying siege to Pragati Bhavan. To thwart the attempts of the Congress, the police house arrested Congress leaders, confining them to their own houses.

In the process, the police were deployed in strength near the house of Revanth Reddy on Road No 48, Jubilee Hills. He was prevented from leaving the house. However, he along with a bunch of his followers came out of his house rather forcefully and moved towards Pragati Bhavan pillion-riding a waiting motorcyclist. The SI Naveen Reddy tried to prevent Revanth Reddy from leaving, but the MP pushed the police aside and managed to reach Pragati Bhavan. The related video became viral on the Internet. However, Naveen Reddy lodged a case with the Jubilee Hills police that he was injured when he was pushed by Revanth.



Revanth Reddy talking to the media after the protest. (File photo)



Agriculture Minister Niranjan Reddy at the meeting on Wednesday

## Minister asks agri officials to prep for procurement season

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Minister for Agriculture S Niranjan Reddy has called upon agriculture department officials to take all precautions while making purchase of paddy from farmers at the MSP.

Addressing officials of agriculture department in a meeting held on 'MSP operations kharif marketing season 2019-20' here on Wednesday, he asked them to get the moisture measuring instruments checked up and keep ready paddy processing machinery. Besides, he wanted the officials to keep enough number of tarpaulins ready. He advised the officials to install flexi banners at all notified ginning mills about the timings of purchase of cotton and the banners should also specify the MSP for cotton according to the moisture content.

The banners should also highlight the documents that the farmer should bring along with him to sell cotton at the ginning mills.

Banners should also be displayed at the mills on various charges that the farmers should pay to weigh bridge officials, hamalis and so on. Facilities like drinking water, toilets, power and so on should be provided at the market yards. The rest houses for farmers should be kept ready by getting them cleaned up properly.

## Need stressed for more veggie markets in city

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Agriculture Minister Singireddy Niranjan Reddy directed marketing department officials to prepare proposals to locate markets in all four corners of the city for benefit of the public as well as farmers, and felt that the number of markets in the city should increase in keeping with the demand.

The minister was visiting the market Bowenpally vegetable market here on Wednesday accompanied by officials. He interacted with the hamalis and farmers and enquired them about their problems and

assured to resolve them. The market is one of the main vegetable markets in the city which receives at least 1500-2000 tonnes of vegetables, nearly half of the vegetable imports to city markets, from 13 states daily.

The minister asked the officials to apply to the state government on taking the LIC's site, adjacent to the market, on lease since there is every need to expand the existing market for benefit of consumers. He also inspected Mana Kuragayalu project and issued several suggestions for expanding the project.



The agriculture minister at the Bowenpally vegetable market

## Ginning mills told to co-op with farmers

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Agriculture Minister S Niranjan Reddy on Wednesday asked ginning mills' state association representatives to reach agreements with Cotton Corporation of India and assured them to take their

problems to the notice of the CM and see to it that dues to them from the government are released.

He told them to be liberal in procuring the cotton with moisture content and asked them not to give trouble to farmers. He promised full support to

them on behalf of the government.

Agriculture principal secretary C.Parthasarathi, president of the association of ginning mills Bommineni Ravinder Reddy, general secretary K Ramesh, treasurer Ch Sridhar Reddy and others were present.



Sanampudi Saidireddy

## H'nagar TRS nominee booked for ticking off cop

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A case was registered against TRS candidate Sanampudi Saidireddy on October 21, the day of polling in the recent by-poll in Huzurnagar, for issuing warning to a sub-inspector on security duty.

On polling day, Saidireddy was entering the polling booth at Kalmalacheruvu in Garidepalli mandal along with the local leaders, but the SI Raghavender Reddy did not allow him to enter the booth and asked him to observe the election commission rules.

Responding to this, the TRS candidate giving vent to his ire said, "Stop overacting and talking the way you like. Do you consider yourself a hero? You always say outsider, outsider. Just calm down."

As the video about the contestant's behavior became viral, several complaints were lodged against Saidireddy. The opposition accused Saidireddy of behaving in a high-handed manner with the SI since he is a ruling party contestant and felt that his behavior was justified.

Cases were registered against Saidireddy under Sections 356 and 504 for obstructing Raghavender Reddy from discharging his duties.

## Cases to be booked against cracker traders

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Following the Supreme Court clarification that harmful metals like antimony, lithium, mercury, arsenic, and lead should not be used in the manufacture of firecrackers to prevent air pollution, the PCB (Pollution Control Board) has started inspecting the fire-work shops in Hyderabad and to file criminal cases on the sellers who violate the rules. The Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organization (PESO) has issued similar guidelines as the SC.

The PCB inspections have been initiated to crack down on crackers that contain heavy metals in the city. It warned that if such crackers were



caught, criminal cases would be filed against the sellers.

Along with PCB officials, police have said that criminal cases will be filed against traders who are selling such crackers and causing environmental damage and suggested people to come forward and celebrate eco-friendly Diwali with by encouraging made in India crackers.

## Teenager, married man fall in love, end lives in Mancherial

The two consume pesticide after elders raise objection

PNS ■ MANCHERIAL

A teenaged girl and a married man, who reportedly fell in love, committed suicide by consuming pesticide on the outskirts of Rasoolpalli in Jaipur mandal on Wednesday after their elders turned down their wish to marry.

Jaipur Sub-Inspector K Vijender said Srividya (18) an Intermediate 2nd year student and daughter of Rajiah, a private teacher from Mandamarri town, had fallen in love with Venkatesh, (30) a married man and car driver belonging to Tilaknagar in Godavarikhani town of Peddapalli district.

**Venkatesh died on the spot and Srividya breathed her last while being shifted to a hospital**

Venkatesh has two sons aged below eight years.

Venkatesh died on the spot and Srividya breathed her last while being shifted to a hospital in Mancherial district headquarters after they consumed some pesticide at a

secluded place on Mancherial-Chennur road at around 6 am. Some passersby noticed the two and alerted cops who rushed to the spot and tried to save the girl, but in vain.

Sources said Venkatesh and Srividya came into contact during her visits to her maternal uncle's place in Godavarikhani. Later, Venkatesh went to Mandamarri to attend a function where he met her and the two exchanged phone numbers, resulting in friendship. He might have trapped her by constantly speaking to her or sending messages, suspected an investigating officer.



Telangana Legislative Assembly Speaker Pocharam Srinivasa Reddy greets Lok Sabha Speaker Omprakash Birla during his brief stay in Hyderabad on Wednesday

## Speaker highlights role of mines in development

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Assembly Speaker Pocharam Srinivasa Reddy has underscored the importance of mines in country's development and noted that material needed to lay roads or to build project should be sourced from mines.

He was speaking at the Chief Guest on the international conference on "Mining - present and future - investments, issues and challenges" held at Institute of Engineers here on Thursday.

Pocharam Srinivasa Reddy put the undivided AP's earnings from sale of sand during 2004-13 at Rs 13.66 crore, but it increased to Rs 2,383 crore with the

advent of TRS government in Telangana state.

In the decade preceding 2014, the revenue to AP from mines was Rs 12,000 crore, he said adding that it sharply increased to Rs 16,000 crore in Telangana since 2014.

There are excellent opportunities in Telangana's mining sector. People's representatives and officials should work together to work wonders in this sector, he said.

During his stint as mining minister in 1999 in undivided AP, he said that revenue from mines to almost tripled to Rs 450 crore.

Home Minister Mahmood Ali, President of Federation of Indian Industries Dr TM Guna Raja and others took part in the conference.

## Talasanani lays stone for two-bedroom houses

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Minister for Animal Husbandry Talasani Srinivas Yadav has responded positively to the suggestion made by Mangal Haat division corporator for construction of shops in front of double bed-room houses for livelihood for the poor.

He was speaking after laying the foundation stone for 145 2BHK houses, to be built at a cost of Rs 12.32 crore, in Sivalal Nagar in Mangal Haat Division on Thursday.

The state government is building the houses and allotting them to enable the poor to live with self-respect, he said.

He inaugurated the Bansilal Vyas Park in Raheempura in the division. He ordered officials to take steps to set up an



open gym in the place opposite to government school at Muchukunda Nagar.

When locals brought to his attention to the reeking smell from a waste adjacent to the PHC

in Maharaj Gunj, he ordered officials to take steps to immediately clear the garbage.

Later, he inspected 208 2BHK houses built at Markas at a cost of Rs 16.12 crore. Officials told the minister that

**Later, he inspected 208 double bedroom houses built at Markas at a cost of Rs 16.12 crore**

the houses should be provided with power, drinking water and the colony with internal roads. Warning the people against encroaching the government land, the minister asked Revenue Divisional Officer Srinivas Reddy to identify encroached lands in the division, if any, and take possession of such lands.

When people of the division brought to the minister's notice the problems being faced by them for want of pucca drainage system, he directed officials to initiate measures to

solve the people's problems. Under the limits of the Urban Health Post in Maharaj Ganj, several have been facing health problems. When the problem was brought to the minister's notice, he asked officials to take up urgent remedial measures.

On restoration of community hall, lacunae in drainage system, road development and other problems and so on in Gyan Bagh, the minister asked officials to take up drainage issue first and later take steps to lay the roads.

SHORT READS



**IAS officer in Udaipur falls victim to cyber fraud, duped of Rs 6.10 lakh**

**JAIPUR:** A conman committed a cyber fraud with an IAS officer posted in Udaipur by sending a fake Know Your Customer (KYC) link on her mobile phone and allegedly siphoned-off Rs 6.10 lakh from her bank account. Dr T Shubhamangla, presently posted as sub-divisional magistrate in Jhadol of Rajasthan's Udaipur district, had received a message link on her mobile phone on October 21. The incident had happened on Monday. I had filled personal information on the KYC link which appeared to be from SBI bank and suddenly Rs 6.10 lakh was withdrawn from my bank account in three different transactions," Shubhamangla told PTI. She said that she had complained about the matter to Jhadol police and Udaipur cyber cell immediately but as the bank account was in Bengaluru she had to lodge complaint with the cyber cell there which is investigating the case.

**Burst eco-friendly firecrackers for 2 hours on Diwali: UP gov't**

**LUCKNOW:** To curb any major spike in pollution, the Uttar Pradesh government has allowed only eco-friendly firecrackers to be burst for two hours from 8pm on Diwali. A notification to this effect was issued by it in light of a Supreme Court order, official sources said on Wednesday. They said people have been asked to buy firecrackers that cause less pollution only from licensed outlets and not e-commerce platforms. Local authorities have been asked to sensitize people on the dangers of firecrackers. Strict action will be taken against Station House Officers if the guidelines are not followed, the sources said. Diwali will be celebrated on Sunday.

**Killers shot Kamlesh, stabbed him multiple times: Autopsy**

**LUCKNOW:** The two alleged killers of Hindu outfit leader Kamlesh Tiwari had not only opened fire at him but repeatedly stabbed him brutally, according to the post-mortem report. A bullet wound, and 15 cut and stab wounds were found on the body of Tiwari during the post-mortem examination, which shows the brutality by the assailants, a senior officer said on Wednesday. Tiwari, 45, was shot once on his face and the bullet was found stuck below his chin. He also had multiple injuries on his face and neck. The Hindu Samaj Party leader was found dead in a pool of blood at his residence in Khurshidbag locality in Naka Hindola area of Lucknow last Friday.

**Ministry of Ayush to study efficacy of ayurvedic drugs in pregnant women**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

An apex body for Ayurvedic research under the Ministry of Ayush is all set to undertake a study to assess the efficacy of Ayurvedic drugs in pregnant women for management of anaemia and other complications. The study conducted by the Central Council for Research in Ayurvedic Sciences (CCRAS) will cover 9000 pregnant women.

As part of the study pregnant women will be given medicines made of herbs, put on a specific diet and made to follow a particular lifestyle as per requirement to prevent various complications during pregnancy like edema, constipation, nausea, backache and control anaemia and attain normal birth weight of baby, Dr N Srikanth, Deputy Director General in the CCRAS said.

The aim is also to help in



augmentation of milk after delivery, he said. The two-year long study will be conducted at 30 primary health care centres of Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra.

"The normal birth weight of a new born ranges between 2.7 and 3.2 kgs. To ensure that the baby attains this normal birth weight, mothers are given six different types of Ayurvedic

medicines. The expected outcomes of the study are reducing complications in pregnant women and their babies," Srikanth said.

The participants of the study will be divided into two groups. One comprising 4,500 pregnant women will receive conventional ante-natal care under the existing national schemes of the government while the second group

**The aim is also to help in augmentation of milk after delivery, he said. The two-year long study will be conducted at 30 primary health care centres of Gadchiroli district of Maharashtra**

comprising of same number of women will be given Ayurvedic medicines, diet and lifestyle advocacy along with conventional ante-natal care regimen.

The women included in the study belong to the age group of 18 to 40 years. A senior Ayush ministry official said the project staff including Ayurveda doctors and senior research fellows, pharmacists have already been deployed at primary health centres for the study purpose. "We will also provide health education to these women on hygiene and pregnancy care. The study will go

on for two years," he said.

The current study was based on a pilot study conducted on 2,465 pregnant women in Himachal Pradesh by the CCRAS in collaboration with the Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) and the state government in 2000-2005.

"The outcomes of the previous study were encouraging. We managed to achieve the normal birth weight of babies, there was significant increase in haemoglobin levels in mothers and deliveries were normal ones with lesser number of complications.



**Case against NCP polling agent**

**'TRANSFER' OF NCP VOTES TO BJP**

PNS ■ PUNE

An offence was registered against an NCP "polling agent" for spreading "false information" that votes cast in favour of the party nominee automatically got transferred to his BJP opponent through a "malfunctioned" EVM during the Satara Lok Sabha bypoll in Maharashtra on October 21, police said on Wednesday.

The officials have identified the polling agent as Deepak Raghunath Pawar, hailing from Navlewadi village in Satara district in western Maharashtra.

Villagers had claimed that votes cast in favour of the NCP nominee Srinivas Patil were going into the "account" of BJP candidate Udayanraje Bhosale. Though the claim was denied by poll officials, Kirti Nalawade, the returning officer for the Koregaon Assembly segment under which Navlewadi is located, had said that the Electronic Voting Machine (EVM) was replaced.

He, however, clarified that the replacement had "nothing to do" with the vote transfer claims. The complaint against Deepak Pawar was lodged with Pusegaon police by G G Gaikwad, the assistant administrative officer who was the presiding officer at the polling booth. A police officer said a non-cognisable offence was registered against Pawar under section 505(1)(b) (with intent to cause, or which is likely to cause, fear or alarm to the public, or to any section of the public whereby any person may

**Though the claim was denied by poll officials, Kirti Nalawade, the returning officer for the Koregaon Assembly segment under which Navlewadi is located, had said that the EVM was replaced**

be induced to commit an offence against the State or against the public tranquillity) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC).

"Pawar gave wrong and false information to media persons that votes cast in favour of NCP candidate were going to the BJP. He tried to create misunderstanding about the election procedure in the society," said V B Ghodke, Assistant Police Inspector, Pusegaon police station. Ghodke said the police will seek permission of court for further investigation.

NCP legislator Shahshikant Shinde had said he was witness to the "vote transfer" in favour of the BJP candidate when he visited the polling booth at Navlewadi village.

He had claimed that when he raised the issue with the election officials from the polling booth, they hurriedly changed the EVM machine.

**Panel to review suspensions of non-gazetted staff in J-K**

PNS ■ JAMMU

A four-member committee has been set up to review suspension cases of non-gazetted officials belonging to the Jammu and Kashmir Secretariat (subordinate) service involved in vigilance and other cases, a government order said.

The suspension cases of employees of other departments would be reviewed by the appointing authorities concerned in terms of provisions of the J&K Civil Services (Classification, Control and Appeal) rules, the order issued by the Under Secretary to the government, General Administration



The administrative secretary to the government, GAD, has been appointed as the chairman of the committee with special secretary (Law) GAD, additional secretary GAD (establishment) and additional secretary GAD (Vigilance) as its members

Department (GAD), Iftikhar Rasool Hamdani said on Tuesday.

The administrative secretary to the government, GAD, has been appointed as the chairman of the committee with special secretary (Law) GAD, additional secretary GAD (establishment) and additional secretary GAD (Vigilance) as its members.

The terms of reference of the committee will be to review the suspension cases of non-gazetted officials belonging to the J&K Secretariat (Subordinate) service involved in vigilance and other cases, the order read.

**Advani, Sharmila participate in event on stroke prevention**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Veteran BJP leader LK Advani and film actress Sharmila Tagore on Wednesday took part in an event organised here for raising awareness about stroke and its prevention.

Stroke is the second leading cause of death, with globally one stroke occurring every two seconds and claiming one life every six seconds, according to Dr Vinit Suri, president of the Indian Stroke Association.

"Stroke impact can be reduced significantly if the patient can be managed in the first few hours called the 'golden hours'," he said.

The event was held jointly by the Institute of Neurosciences, Apollo Hospital and Indian Stroke Association, a body of over 800 neurologists from government and other hospitals, ahead of the World Strokes Day which falls on October 29.

**Centre should abolish assets criteria for EWS quota: Gehlot**

PNS ■ JAIPUR

Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot said on Wednesday that the Centre should take a decision to abolish the assets-related conditions for candidates seeking reservation under the economically weaker sections (EWS) category.

The state has recently decided to abolish the conditions for EWS reservation in state services and educational institutes.

"The decision we took (in the state) should be taken by the Centre so that people across the country could be benefited. With the existing conditions, candidates will have to face many difficulties in obtaining EWS certificates," Gehlot told reporters here.

The chief minister said those who are eligible for the EWS reservation might not get the benefit due to assets-related existing conditions.

A candidate whose family owns five acres of agricultural land and above, or a residential flat of 1,000 sq ft and above, or



**The decision we took (in the state) should be taken by the Centre so that people across the country could be benefited. With the existing conditions, candidates will have to face many difficulties in obtaining EWS certificates**

— ASHOK GEHLOT  
Rajasthan Chief Minister

a residential plot of 100 sq yards and above in notified municipalities or a residential plot of 200 sq yards and above in areas other than the notified municipalities is excluded from being identified as an EWS candidate.

The Gehlot government had last week decided to abolish these conditions and consider gross family income up to Rs 8 lakh as the only criteria for getting the EWS reservation in state government jobs and educational institutions of the state. He was talking to reporters after paying homage to former

vice president Bhairon Singh Shekhawat in the assembly building on his birth anniversary.

Remembering the stalwart BJP leader and former chief minister, Gehlot said Shekhawat's life inspires politicians today and he would be remembered forever.

"Shekhawat had a long struggling life. Right from the formation of the Jana Sangh, he went on to become the chief minister and was elevated to the post of vice president of the country. It is a matter of pride," Gehlot said.



**Normal life hit in Kashmir, markets shut; no public transport**

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

Normal life remained affected in Kashmir for the 80th consecutive day on Wednesday with main markets shut and public transport off the roads, officials said.

Some shops opened for a few hours early in the morning in some areas, including in the commercial hub of Lal Chowk in the city here, but downed their shutters around 11 am, they said.

The officials said main markets and other business establishments were however shut. Private transport was plying and the number of vehicles was higher than Sunday, leading to traffic jams at various spots in the city, they said.

Auto-rickshaws and a few inter-district cabs were also seen plying in some areas of the Valley, they added.

However, the other modes of public transport were off the roads. There was huge rush of private vehicles in some areas of the city, including commercial hub of Lal Chowk and Jehangir Chowk, causing massive traffic jams in some areas, prompting authorities to press in more police personnel to regulate the movement of the vehicles, the officials said.

Internet services -- across all platforms -- continued to be snapped in the Valley, they said.

Schools and colleges were open, but students stayed away as parents continued to keep their wards at home due to apprehensions about their safety, the officials said.

While landline and post-paid mobile phone services have been restored across the Valley, all internet services continue to remain suspended since August 5 when the Centre announced its decision to abrogate Article 370 of the Constitution and divide the state into two union territories.

Most of the top level and second rung separatist politicians have been taken into preventive custody while mainstream leaders, including two former chief ministers -- Omar Abdullah and Mehbooba Mufti, have been either detained or placed under house arrest.

Another former chief minister and sitting Lok Sabha MP from Srinagar Farooq Abdullah has been arrested under the controversial Public Safety Act, a law enacted by his father and National Conference founder Sheikh Mohammad Abdullah in 1978 when he was the chief minister.



**Exhibition to showcase rare, heritage textiles**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A wide variety of beautiful silks, ikats, patolas, Banarasi sarees, together with a range of colourful dupattas will be among the several antique and heritage textiles showcased at the 'Vastra Shobha' exhibition here starting Thursday. The three-day exhibition, featuring a rich textile collection -- including the exquisite antique borders, stoles and veils -- by Indian impresario Shobha Deepak Singh, will be held at the SBKK.

Singh, who acquires textiles and fabrics from across the country, said some of the textiles displayed in the exhibition are "almost 100 years old". "If they are in a good condition, I purchase them but even if they are not, I know how to restore them," said the self-taught expert.

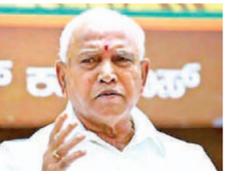
**"It seems our stars are not good": CM BSY on rain fury again**

PNS ■ BENGALURU

As rains pounded the regions battered by flood havoc two months back, Karnataka Chief Minister B S Yediyurappa wondered on Wednesday whether the stars are to be blamed for nature's fury again. "There was downpour last time. It seems our stars are not good," he said.

"Once again the Rain God (Varuna) is furious and is pounding many districts, submerging many villages. Deaths have taken place and vehicles have been swept away," hetold reporters. The heavy downpour in August this year in Karnataka led to floods in 22 districts, leading to the deaths of 84 people in rain related incidents.

About 5.5 lakh acres of land were inundated, while crops in about 2.3 lakh acres was completely ruined. About 1.5 lakh houses were destroyed in



August's flood and heavy rains. Yediyurappa said he was holding discussions with the district authorities and video conferencing with them on providing relief to the rain affected people.

The Chief Minister said whatever support was extended to the flood victims two months ago would be provided to the affected people this time also. Belagavi, Bagalkote, Vijayapura, Kalaburagi, Gadag, Hubballi-Dharwad, parts of Mysuru, Kodagu and Chikkamagaluru bore the brunt of heavy downpour once again.

**Funeral procession sparks violence: 200 booked, 33 held in Mumbai**

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Nearly 200 people have been booked and 33 of them arrested by Mumbai Police for allegedly attacking policemen and damaging vehicles during the funeral procession of a man who committed suicide after being unable to trace his teen daughter, an official said on Wednesday.

Around seven police personnel were injured in the attack on Tuesday, he said.

Pancharam Rithadiya, 44, allegedly committed suicide last week by jumping in front of a running train at Tilak Nagar railway station here after not being able find his 17-year-old daughter missing since some months.

In the suicide note, he purportedly mentioned that the police did not help him in tracing his daughter.

After his death, Wadala GRP registered an offence of abate-



**A police van, a taxi, a car, 10 to 12 motorcycles and three auto-rickshaws were damaged in the incident, another police official said**

ment to suicide against five persons.

During his funeral procession to a crematorium in suburban Chembur on Tuesday, mourners allegedly hurled stones at the police and also vandalised a police van and some other vehicles. Additional Commissioner of Police (east region) Lakhmi Gautam told PTI.

"Seven police personnel, including four officers, were injured in the attack," he said. A police van, a taxi, a car, 10

to 12 motorcycles and three auto-rickshaws were damaged in the incident, another police official said.

The police lodged an FIR late Tuesday night against nearly 200 people and arrested 33 of them, Gautam said.

"Till now, 33 people have been arrested. We are analysing the CCTV footage and some videos which have gone viral on social media to identify the others involved in the violence," he said.

The accused have been

**Government hikes wheat MSP by Rs 85/qtl; pulses up to Rs 325/qtl**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Wednesday increased the minimum support price (MSP) for wheat by Rs 85 to Rs 1,925 a quintal and for pulses by up to Rs 325 per quintal, official sources said. A decision in this regard was taken at the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on Economic Affairs (CCEA), headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi.

The CCEA has approved the MSPs of all rabi (winter-sown) crops for the 2019-20 crop year (July-June) as recommended by the government's farm price advisory body CACP, the sources added. MSP is the rate at which the government buys grains from farmers.

According to sources, the CCEA has approved Rs 85 per quintal hike in wheat MSP to Rs 1,925 per quintal for the 2019-20 rabi crop, up from Rs 1,840



per quintal last year.

Barley MSP has also been increased by Rs 85 to Rs 1,525 per quintal for the current year from Rs 1,440 per quintal last year. To encourage cultivation of pulses, the support price of masoor has been increased by Rs 325 to Rs 4,800 per quintal for this year from Rs 4,475 per quintal last year. Similarly, the MSP of gram has been hiked by Rs 255 to Rs 4,875 per quintal for this year from Rs 4,620 per quintal last year.

## Criminal lapses

The recently released NCRB report is neither updated nor inclusive of controversial crimes



Systematic and reliable data are important for citizens to gauge where we stand as a nation, both at home and the world. Usually, the ones awaited with much expectation concern the state of the economy and the quality of governance. But it is the database on crime that we should be worried about, considering it measures the state of society and is a reactive assessment of the many other benchmarks we might want to tom-tom. This is why the National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB), which has been collating the crime

database for three decades now, is significant. Bearing the government's stamp of credibility, it has been considered bonafide and reflective of the former's intent to strengthen correctives. But the panel, which has been enriching policy-makers, civil society organisations and the media alike with credible insights, allowing them to analyse the country's social map, has faltered on several counts in recent years. The most alarming lapse is that ever since its first publication in 1954, the report had a data gap of two consecutive years — 2017 and 2018. With the police and security agencies working with 2016 figures, no predictive or preventive models could be worked upon. Also with changes in social dynamics, it was difficult to establish comparative profiles to spot a trend. So when the data was finally released after a delay of an extra year, it was surprising that the authorities had done the listing for 2017 and skipped 2018 completely. Which means that the NCRB database is still not updated. What is also incomprehensible is the panel's selective approach while releasing data for sub-categories. As much as the inclusion of certain new chapters is welcome, it is baffling that data related to controversial events like mob lynchings, murders by men in power, killings ordered by khap panchayats and murders committed for religious reasons among others, did not make it to the final document. This, when the Government had itself cited the collection and correction of errors for these sub-categories as the reason for the delay in the release of NCRB data. This then raises serious doubts about the Government's will to deal with mob violence. In the case of lynching, for example, it has shown utter disrespect to the Supreme Court's directive to frame specific laws on the subject. How then can we expect it to come clear on facts, the absence of which allows the Government to live in continued denial of lynching as a serious matter of concern? In yet another instance, farm suicide statistics were not published even for 2016. When most crimes go under-reported in this country, the lack of exact data can only complicate matters and goad unscrupulous offenders to operate outside the law. This oversight can even lead to needless stereotyping of perceptions.

The available data is also not encouraging and the Government must introspect on certain spirals, like that of violence against women, particularly in Uttar Pradesh. There has been a 77 per cent rise in fake currency after demonetisation. Overall violent crimes marginally improved in 2017 compared to 2016. While 4.29 lakh cases of violence were reported in 2016, 4.27 were registered in 2017. Delhi, despite taking significant strides in making the city safe, has not been able to rid itself of the unwanted appellation as the crime capital of India. On an average, 1,050 police cases per lakh population were registered in 2017 even as the national average stood at 238. This makes it clear enough that it needs to double its efforts in securing its streets. The fact that eastern States like Odisha, West Bengal and Assam, which already held the dubious distinction of recording all kinds of heinous crimes, have recorded a higher number of murders is equally worrisome. Particularly Bengal is now high on the crime index, closer to Uttar Pradesh, usually perceived as the wild west. The crux of the problem is that multiple agencies record data for the NCRB, each in its own way. Worse still, as the latest report has shown, even when data has been collected, it is difficult to be extracted. The NCRB's method of calculating data itself has come under the scanner as it relies on old census data. Its methodology to compute crime rates has not been consistent across years. And for all talk of digital interventions, the crime records are yet to be available at the click of a button. The Government must understand that concealment or manipulation of data has no upside, only downsides, which will ultimately lead to the erosion of public trust.

## Needlessly undemocratic

Should digital platforms have their users uniquely linked to their identities with the Government?



It is a matter of serious conjecture whether technology, particularly the internet, has been good or bad for democracy. There is little doubt that the internet, especially social media, has opened up a floodgate of opinions. Traditional gatekeepers and voices have been swamped under the tsunami enabled by platforms like Twitter. At a level, it is not bad that the thought control, which the powers that be sought to maintain on the public, was through the media. This marked the end of access journalism and allowed the public at large to question the dominant media narrative. However, it also allowed stupid, silly and often downright dangerous ideas to gain prominence. It further gave oxygen to conspiracy theories that had long been buried under the sand. And worst, the rise of social media led to the rise of hate speech and abuse online. The challenge Governments and courts across the world are facing is how to cut the negative elements of social media and the internet without attacking the fundamentals of free speech. One must understand that across the world, freedom of expression does not include the right to abuse and spread lies. India is no exception, which is why the Supreme Court is hearing a petition to link online identities with a Government-approved offline identity. This is exactly what happens in China where every online persona has an identifiable individual behind it. However, free speech advocates have argued that doing so will ruin the essence of the internet. That said, one must not forget that unlike the US, the Indian Constitution does not guarantee absolute freedom of speech. There is another problem: Will the linkage of offline identities to online profiles violate the right to privacy that the top court itself guaranteed a few months ago?

The fact is that for an overwhelming majority of people in India, this will make little or no difference. Most people have little to hide. Besides, the Government already verifies mobile phones and bank accounts through Know Your Customer (KYC) norms. Some, however, are deeply upset with the idea that the Government is considering this, even though they themselves recognise that there has been a proliferation of hate speech and fake information online, let alone the constant barrage of abuse that women face on the internet. But the longer one studies the problem, there appears to be no middle path. It will be an interesting case for the judges of the apex court to consider and one that will be closely monitored across the world not just by judicial systems but also by tech companies.

# Could we have won the war?

Had the Nehru Government paid heed to Wing Commander Nath's learnings about Chinese military build-up on the Tibetan plateau, there would have been no scar on India's psyche



CLAUDE ARPI

Wing Commander Jag Mohan (Jaggi) Nath of the Indian Air Force (IAF) is the first of six Indian officers to have twice been awarded the Maha Vir Chakra (MVC), India's second highest war-time military decoration. For 11 years, the 90-year-old Wing Commander had the privilege to fly the famous Canberras, out of which, for eight years, he worked for the top-secret 106 Squadron. He received his first MVC for his role in reconnaissance missions over the Aksai Chin and Tibet between 1960 and 1962.

Even during the Sino-Indian War (October-November 1962), he regularly flew over Tibet. The MVC citation says: "[He] fulfilled a number of hazardous operations involving flying over difficult mountain terrain, both by day and night, in adverse weather conditions and in complete disregard of his personal safety."

His missions proved immensely useful to learn about the Chinese military build-up on the Tibetan plateau in the years preceding the 1962 war but unfortunately, the political leadership refused to believe the hard evidence gathered during his sorties and draw logical conclusions from the information gathered.

Nath's conclusions were that in 1962, China had no Air Force worth the name on the Tibetan plateau. The fate of the Sino-Indian war could have been totally different had India used its own Air Force but the then Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru and VK Krishna Menon, the Defence Minister, chose to ignore the findings of the daring airman.

In an interview, the Wing Commander told this writer: "If we had sent a few airplanes into Tibet, we could have wiped the Chinese out and everything could have been different in the 1962 war. The political leadership did not believe me that China had no Air Force. Can you imagine what would have happened if we had used the IAF at that time? The Chinese would have never dared to do anything." It is one of the greatest tragedies of India's modern history.

The Wing Commander remembered: "The job of the 106 Squadron was to survey these areas." He recalled his first reconnaissance flight with 106 Squadron over the Aksai Chin: "My Commanding Officer [later Air Marshal] Randhir Singh was on leave at that time, I was alone. I was briefed by the Western Air Command to go, find out from where the Chinese have come and take photographs."

One day, at the end of 1960, Air-Vice Marshal DAR Nanda, then IAF's Deputy Chief, told him: "You go and take pictures and I will send an escort with you." Another Canberra escorted Nath to protect him while he was taking pictures of Daulat Beg Oldi (DBO) at the edge of the Aksai Chin in Ladakh.



Nearly 60 years after the events, he is still very emotional. "I kept going down and suddenly, I saw the Chinese there. I took photographs of the Chinese soldiers all over the place. I could have taken their portraits. They were all around." After he returned to Delhi, he went straight to the office of Krishna Menon with Nanda and in his words: "Krishna Menon did not ask anything, he just said 'Did you see the Chinese soldiers?' I answered 'Yes Sir, I saw them.' That's alright, you can go." Nath knew that Menon later passed the information to Nehru. No reaction either.

On September 8, 1962, the Dhola Post in the Tawang sector was surrounded by some 600 Chinese soldiers; the Indian Army responded aggressively. Six weeks later, Mao's Liberation Army massively attacked the 7 Infantry Brigade headquartered on the Namkha chu (river). The debacle which followed is well known. What is not known is the extent of knowledge the IAF had about the People's Liberation Army (PLA)'s deployment and the absence of the Chinese Air Force in Tibet.

On October 11, 1962, a note by China's Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Beijing was given to the Embassy of India in China. It brings more light on the reconnaissance work done by the 106 Squadron before (and during) the war.

**“NATH'S CONCLUSIONS WERE THAT IN 1962, CHINA HAD NO AIR FORCE WORTH THE NAME ON THE TIBETAN PLATEAU. THE FATE OF THE SINO-INDIAN WAR COULD HAVE BEEN DIFFERENT HAD INDIA USED ITS OWN AIR FORCE BUT JAWAHARLAL NEHRU AND VK KRISHNA MENON CHOSE TO IGNORE HIS FINDINGS”**

The Chinese note says: "In the night of October 10, 1962, an Indian aircraft intruded into China's air space over the suburbs of Lhasa at 20.15 hours for reconnaissance and then flew northward along the Qinghai-Tibet (Qinghai-Tibet) highway to Damshune [Damchung] where it made reconnaissance circlings over a Chinese airfield and then flew away in the direction of India."

Damchung, north of Lhasa, was the only airport used by the Chinese in Tibet at that time; it had no air defence.

The note from the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs continued: "The deep intrusion of Indian aircraft into China for flagrant reconnaissance over the capital city of, and an airfield in Tibet, was obviously an action coordinated with the current military attacks by the aggressive Indian troops in the eastern sector of the Sino Indian border. The Chinese Government... warns the Indian side that it must give serious thought to the grave consequences of such increasingly frantic activities of aggression."

What to conclude? China had no Air Force able to counter the Indian reconnaissance flights and no air defence able to shoot down the planes. Had India extensively used its Air Force, what could have been different? We would have probably won the 1962 war.

One can also imagine that casualties would have been less on the Indian side and more on the Chinese. Further, the number of Indian POWs, who suffered for seven months in Tibet, would have been far less. The Line of Actual Control would have remained where it was in September 1959 and the border dispute with China would not be as acute as today. The Shaksgam Valley would not have been offered to China by Pakistan in 1963. There would have been no scar on India's psyche as there is today.

The fate of the Tibetan people would have certainly been different. In China, Mao Zedong would have lost his job and perhaps no Cultural Revolution would have taken place three years later. As a result, China would have been completely different today.

In 1965, Pakistan would perhaps have thought twice before venturing into Operation Gibraltar to create insurgency against Indian rule in Jammu & Kashmir, ultimately resulting in the Indo-Pakistan War of 1965. Three years later, India learnt its lesson that the Air Force can be useful...and by that time, there was a more decisive Chief of Air Staff (Marshal of the Air Force Arjan Singh). It is when Nath was awarded his second MVC. But sadly, history can't be rewritten.

(The writer is an expert on India-China relations)

## SOUNDBITE

Virat Kohli is the most important man in Indian cricket, we will listen to him. Mutual respect will be there, opinions will be there.



**BCCI chief**  
—Sourav Ganguly

Great scripts are the ones that make great movies. Research about the subject matter of the film is important to understand the nuances of the role.



**Actor**  
—Kalki Koechlin

The UN is saying a firm no to hatred of any kind and will continue to focus on real problems of people at this time of turbo-charged change.



**UN Secretary-General**  
—Antonio Guterres

We may argue, we may agree, or we may not agree. But we cannot deny the essential prevalence of multiplicity of opinion.



**Former president**  
—Pranab Mukherjee

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Tough times ahead

Sir — Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) chief Amit Shah seems to have a hand on the pulse of the voters. His prediction — that his party will win hands down in Maharashtra — seems to be as good as that of four out of six pollsters, who are giving the saffron combine more than 200 seats. If the exit polls are anything to go by, though they are known to be wrong in the past, Devendra Fadnavis, Prime Minister Narendra Modi's handpicked Chief Minister, is due for a second coming. Fadnavis had already set the record of becoming the first Chief Minister in Maharashtra to complete a full five-year term in nearly 50 years.

That said, if the results indeed reflect the exit polls, the more significant takeaway is for the Opposition. Rarely in recent Indian democratic history has the electoral contest been as one-sided as it is now. A strong Opposition party at the Centre can certainly change the way politics is being played out in the national theatre. The BJP could have faced a tougher Opposition headed by a strong national party. And the Congress, too, could

### The UN, its role and challenges

The United Nations (UN) charter came into existence in 1945 and since 1948, the UN day is celebrated by all member states on October 24. After the world was ravaged by World War-II, the necessity of a robust and widely-accepted peace-keeping body was felt by global leaders. It is from here that the UN grew from strength to strength to encompass 193 nations today. India became a member of this body in 1945 and its bid for a permanent membership of the UN Security Council (UNSC) is gradually gathering momentum with four of the five members in our support. Promotion of peace and cooperation along with prevention of war are the key functions of the body. Issues related to climate change, refugees and migrants, doing justice to member nations, upholding democratic principles, tackling global health crises, prevention of violence against children and women rank high on its agenda.

However, the world body is not immune to criticism. The main grouse against it is that it is facing the worst liquidity crunch in its history, according to its Secretary General António Guterres. The US is responsible for a significant portion of the UN's bud-



get — in 2017, it contributed more than \$10 billion to the UN, roughly one-fifth of the organisation's entire budget. With the Trump Administration considering a cut in its contribution, the UN is faced with a tricky situation. As many as 64 countries owe approximately 10,000 thousand crores to the UN until October 4. India, thankfully, has paid all its dues.

**Ganapathi Bhat**  
Akola

have enjoyed a more assertive role and a larger maneuvering space in the Opposition bloc. Many parties would have dared not discount the Congress' ability to take on the BJP in these tough times.  
**J Akshobhya**  
Mysuru

### Learn from Assam

Sir — In a landmark decision that will bring great changes in the social milieu, the Assam Cabinet has decided to deny Government jobs to people with more than two

children. It may be recalled that in September 2017, the Assam Assembly had passed the "Population and Women Empowerment policy of Assam," which specified that candidates with two children would be eligible for Government employ-

ment and the existing Government staff were to strictly follow the two-child family norm. Assam Finance Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma, who was pushing for the population policy to be adopted, recently said, "While the State's population rose by 46 lakh from 2.66 crore in 2001 to 3.12 crore in 2011, a preliminary analysis has shown that it has increased by one crore in 16 years between 2001 and 2017. This increase is not only alarming but also unacceptable."

The alarming increase in population was due to the early marriage in communities living in char (riverine), tea gardens and tribal areas. Girls in these areas marry between 14 and 16 years, while boys have been found to be marrying between 16 and 20 years. Thus, the reason for the alarming increase in population being early marriage, the Government must strictly implement existing rules to forestall early marriage among people. Taking a cue from Assam, the Central Government, too, can implement this idea.

**TK Nandanam**  
Chennai

Send your feedback to: [letterstopioneer@gmail.com](mailto:letterstopioneer@gmail.com)

**FIRST COLUMN**

## Hurdles in Ayushman Bharat

There are questions that don't have to be answered now in detail but clarifying a vision is important to stakeholders who are going to make investments



RAJEEV AHUJA

Former Niti Aayog Vice-Chairman Arvind Panagariya considers Ayushman Bharat (AB) to be one of the major successes of the Narendra Modi Government. Obviously, he has in mind only one of the AB pillars, that is the Pradhan Mantri Jan Arogya Yojana (PMJAY) which entitles free hospitalisation benefits of up to ₹5 lakh every year to nearly 11 crore vulnerable households. PMJAY has been able to treat nearly 50 lakh people at an average cost of ₹17,000 per treatment in its first year. The other pillar of AB relates to Health and Wellness Centres (HWCs) aimed at providing comprehensive primary care and serving as a platform for integrated delivery of various services. The Government plans to develop 150,000 HWCs across the country by 2023. This pillar hasn't met with the similar success as the PMJAY. Till now, the Government has been able to develop 20,000 HWCs and aims to have at least 40,000 HWCs functional by the end of this fiscal year. However, not much is known or discussed about their performance.

Both the components of the AB are at an early stage of implementation but the PMJAY is moving faster and has greater political traction. But it's the HWCs that are considered a high priority by some experts, so much so that they call them the foundation on which the PMJAY stands. Regardless of how AB is conceptualised, both the pillars need a few years before one can start talking about their "success" as it not only depends on numbers but also sustainability. Both are still evolving and will undergo significant technical refinements over the years. With the PMJAY, it is easy to show "quick wins" as the Government is giving free entitlements to the needy and offering a scope for additional revenue to hospitals. But the real success of the programme lies in getting it stabilised. A year of implementation has given rise to various distortions which need to be addressed as the programme advances. Following are the four key distortions:

First, higher income States like Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Kerala and Karnataka have benefited disproportionately more than the poorer States of Bihar, Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. The reasons for this distortion are not difficult to understand as the poorer States have lower levels of awareness and they also have fewer hospital beds in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities. As per a National Health Authority (NHA) survey, only 10-15 per cent of the population is aware of the programme in Bihar while in Tamil Nadu awareness is as high as 80 per cent. Getting the message out to beneficiaries is easy but increasing the number of hospital beds is hard. The Government is yet to announce an incentive package for private hospitals to boost availability of beds in Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities.

Most big corporate hospitals have been empanelled under PMJAY. This is surprising, given that these hospitals are designed to serve the creamy layers of society and high-paying international medical tourists. They are not suited for providing "affordable" care which is the focus of PMJAY as these rates wouldn't be profitable even if they are assured of a higher number of patients. PMJAY rates are appropriate for hospitals with low-cost structures. It's no wonder that big hospitals have been complaining about the reimbursement rates. Given that more than 50 per cent of PMJAY empanelled hospitals are private, they have a strong bargaining power and sooner or later they will assert it. They will either ask for a hike in reimbursement rates or opt out or abuse the system, all of which would be detrimental.

Third, instances of fraud and corruption are a distortion too. Despite heavy reliance on technology in controlling them, such instances have surfaced in the first year itself. The NHA has confirmed over 1,200 cases of fraud that forced it to take action against 340 hospitals. Any scheme that suffers from leakages loses credibility and eventually loses Government support, too. Although, the NHA's graded response includes levying penalty, de-empanelling hospitals, naming and shaming the fraudsters, it needs to prevent it through better use of technology as well as higher deterrence by hiking penalties.

Last but not the least, an overarching vision and goal of the programme is yet to be defined. Further, from a policy perspective a few important questions remain unanswered. For example, will the informal economy (non-poor) households be brought under the fold of PMJAY? Will it be integrated with other public health insurance programmes in the spirit of one country, one programme? Just like the Goods and Services Tax (GST) Council, will there be a governance structure comprising the Centre and States, that will oversee this programme? These and related questions don't have to be answered now in detail but clarifying a vision is important to stakeholders who are going to make investments. Both pillars of AB have their respective trajectories, are in their infancy and will take a few years to mature. How well this journey is negotiated by the decision-makers and those implementing it on the ground will define their success.

(The writer is a development economist)

**POINT COUNTERPOINT**

INSTEAD OF THE SIX-YEAR CLAUSE, IF PEOPLE ARE COMING HERE, THEY SHOULD SUBMIT AN AFFIDAVIT AND CAN BE GIVEN CITIZENSHIP POST VERIFICATION.

— WEST BENGAL BJP GENERAL SECRETARY  
**SAYANTAN BASU**



BOTH THE NRC AND CAB SHOULD BE SCRAPPED. WHY DOES A PERSON NEED TO PROVE HIS IDENTITY AFTER 70 YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE?

—TMC SECRETARY GENERAL  
**PARTHA CHATTERJEE**

# End food wastage, feed millions

India produces enough food to meet the needs of its entire population, yet it is unable to provide nourishment to starving women and children due to criminal wastefulness



MOIN QAZI

India is booming but its children are starving. Here is a remarkable tolerance of inequity and human suffering. Despite the spectacular strides made in economic growth and the technological boom, the country still continues to struggle to attain freedom from hunger. It is bearing witness to a triple burden of malnutrition — the co-existence of undernutrition, micronutrient deficiencies and overnutrition.

India has slipped from 95th rank in 2010 to 102nd in 2019 on the Global Hunger Index (GHI), with the increase in prevalence of wasting (low weight for height) among children under five contributing the most to the country's poor performance. Over a longer-term horizon, the fall in the country's rank is sharper: From 83rd out of 113 countries in 2000 to 102nd out of 117 now. India is the lowest ranked South Asian country, even behind Pakistan, which is ranked 94th.

India accounts for more than three out of 10 stunted children globally, largely owing to a lack of good quality food, poor care and feeding practices, inadequate water, sanitation and health services. Other than increased susceptibility, the chronic impact of long-term malnutrition in human and economic terms is well-known. Undernourishment is highly damaging to children and overshadows their childhood, impairs their mental and physical development and damages the country's economic prospects.

Malnutrition threatens a child's physical as well as mental well-being for many years to come. For many children, chronic malnutrition begins in the womb, with 20 per cent having a low birth weight. As 90 per cent of our brain develops in the first two years of birth, the quality of nutrition during this stage determines the long-term physical health, learning ability and future productivity. Undernourishment can lower a child's IQ, increase the risk of diet-related non-communicable diseases such as diabetes and heart diseases and reduce productivity.

Proper sanitation facilities are essential to prevent child infections on account of related ailments like diarrhoea and pneumonia, which impair nutrient absorption. Fortification of staple food vehicles such as flour, salt, oil and milk is now being seen as a crucial component for tackling food and nutrition security as well as child malnutrition. Since several staple foods produced, procured and consumed in the organised sector are not easily amenable to fortification, the Government must mandate the use of fortifiable commodities in all its food-based schemes, including the Mid-Day Meal Scheme (MDMS) in schools, the Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) and the Public Distribution System (PDS).

The full impact of the various interventions can be amplified if we adopt a multi-sectoral and integrated approach looking at maternal and infant health, water and sanitation, poverty alleviation, and behavioural change communications as inter-related challenges.

No country has ever succeeded in reducing poverty without having the active engagement of the Government in creating the proper conditions and opportunities for individuals to rise from poverty. As author Pallavi Aiyar has written in her excellent book *Smoke and Mirrors: An Experience of China*, "if born rich, it is better to be Indian, if born poor, it is better to be Chinese."

Studies have shown that malnutrition and



INDIA NEEDS TO MOBILISE LARGE-SCALE INVESTMENTS IN COLD STORAGE METHODS, REFRIGERATED TRANSPORT AND OTHER LOGISTICS TO MODERNISE ITS FOOD SUPPLY CHAIN. APART FROM THIS, A STRONG WILL BY THE POLITICAL CLASS AND AN IMAGINATIVE THINKING ON THE PART OF POLICY-MAKERS ARE NEEDED

hunger impede children's ability to grasp even basic skills and they fail to develop to their full cognitive potential. Even though India has a host of schemes to fight hunger, structural deficiencies have left a large number of poor in the country at a risk of malnourishment.

There is also growing evidence of the benefits to mother and infant if breastfeeding is initiated within one hour of birth. This ensures skin-to-skin contact, which is important in preventing hypothermia and establishing the bond between the mother and baby. It also reduces a mother's risk of post-partum haemorrhage, one of the leading causes of maternal mortality.

Contemporary research has confirmed the crucial importance of nutrition in the first 1,000 days of a child's life. The nutrition provided in the period between conception and the child's second birthday is critical for its optimum cognitive and physical development. Breastfed infants are more likely to have better physical and mental health, well into adulthood.

Much less investment is required to maintain adequate nourishment for children than is required to repair broken children. A package of basic measures — including programmes to encourage mothers to exclusively breast-feed their children for up to six months, fortifying basic foods with essential vitamins and minerals and increased cash transfers targeted at the poorest families — can turn the tide.

Fortification of staple food vehicles such as flour, salt, oil, and milk is now being seen as a crucial component for tackling food and nutrition security as well as child malnutrition. Since several staple foods produced, procured and consumed in the organised sector are not easily amenable to fortification, the Government must mandate the use of fortifiable commodities in all its food-based schemes, including the MDMS, the

ICDS and the PDS.

The tragedy is that India produces enough food to meet the needs of its entire population and has at its disposal arable land that has the potential to produce food surplus for export. Yet, it is unable to feed millions of its people, especially women and children. As you trudge through the mire of any Government-run food auction yard or wholesale food market, you will find piles of supposedly fresh produce lying everywhere, rotting in the sun and competing with mangy dogs and scampering mice for attention. A lack of education on post-harvest practices often results in poor quality control and food being damaged during handling. One of the major ways of enhancing food security in India is by simply controlling wastage and through better processing and recycling.

Imagine a land mass greater than China. Now imagine that land is only used to produce food. Then suppose all the crops and produce from those 2.5 billion acres are not eaten and left to rot. Imagine all of that — and you get an idea of the amount of food the world wastes every year. It is almost a third of the world's total food supply.

The Food Corporation of India (FCI) was set up in 1964 to offer impetus to price support systems, encourage nationwide distribution and maintain sufficient buffer of staples like wheat and rice but its performance has been woefully inadequate, in comparison to the needs of the country. Around one per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) gets shaved off annually in the form of food waste. The FCI has neither the warehouse capacity nor the manpower to manage this humongous stockpile of foodgrains.

Every year, the Government purchases millions of tonnes of grain from the farmers to ensure that they get a good price for their produce, for numerous food subsidy programmes and to main-

tain an emergency buffer. The cruel truth, however, is that most of the produce is left out in the open, vulnerable to rain and attacks by rodents or stored in makeshift spaces, covered by tarpaulin sheets, thus increasing the chances of spoilage. Several countries are now using metal grain silos to guard against fungus attacks on the grain stock.

Added to the wastage of food, there is a depletion of precious resources involved in its production. According to the United Nations, India is estimated to use more than 230 cubic kilometres of fresh water annually, for producing food items that will be ultimately wasted. To put this into context, this amount of water is enough to provide drinking water to 100 million people every year. Besides this, nearly 300 million barrels of oil used in the process are also wasted.

Reforming the faltering PDS which supplies subsidised grain to the poor and modernising other areas, such as computerisation of outlets and satellite control over the movement of transport vehicles can go a long way in plugging the leakages of foodgrains for the poor.

In recent years, numerous initiatives and interventions have been undertaken by the Government and local and international actors to target food loss and wastage across the agricultural value chain. The Government is seeking to streamline and modernise agricultural value chains, through reformation of the PDS to reduce the waste associated with the distribution and storage of grain.

India needs to mobilise large-scale investments in cold storage methods, refrigerated transport and other modern logistics to modernise its food supply chain. Apart from this a strong will by the political class to act and an imaginative thinking on the part of the policy-makers are needed.

(The writer is Member, NITI Aayog's National Committee on Financial Literacy and Inclusion for Women.)

# Innovation can break stranglehold of plastic

Fundamentally, companies need to re-imagine their business models based on the recognition that we cannot continue to produce disposable packaging that is used for seconds but pollutes our planet for generations



KOTA SRIRAJ

Every environmentally-conscious Indian is aware of the threat that plastics pose to natural habitats. Our streets, mountains, lakes, oceans, rivers and even sewers are clogged with this non-degradable material that does not get recycled fast enough, even as more and more of it continues to be pushed into the environment. Though we are well aware of its detrimental effects, yet it is still the most favoured "go to" item for consumers and manufacturers alike.

Quite clearly, environmental concerns take a back seat over convenience and bottom lines. What else can explain the fact that despite the numerous bans initiated against its use over the years, plastic continues

to pervade every aspect of our lives? Though the recent effort of the Government to end single-use plastic is one more welcome step, whether it will succeed in its objective of dissuading the common man from it is anybody's guess. Yet, if the Government's ambitious plan of doing away with single-use plastic works, it may actually pave the way for much larger restrictions on the use of all types of plastic.

This weaning away is vital as the scale of plastic proliferation and the harm that it does to the environment, especially to the marine ecology is mind-numbing. The equivalent of a truckload of plastic enters the ocean every single minute. Once in the marine environment, plastic breaks into smaller and smaller pieces and according to studies, there are an estimated 50 trillion plastic particles in our oceans today. These are often ingested by marine animals, who, then die horribly painful deaths because of it. In response to growing public concern over conventional plastics, many companies are



swapping single-use plastics derived from fossil fuels with bio-based plastics that are made from renewable resources like corn, potatoes, rice, soy, sugarcane, wheat, and vegetable oil instead of non-renewable petroleum-based resources. Bio-based plastics are made by creating plastic polymers from these materials, through either chemical or biological processes.

Though these are often erroneously promoted as biodegradable

or compostable, the fact is that these plastics are as difficult to biodegrade or recycle as conventional plastic.

One again, corporate profitability is taking the lead over environmental responsibility and concerns. The Government, too, seems to be at sea when it comes to pinning down the exact sources of plastic proliferation. Due to this ambiguity, even the incidence of the recently-banned single-use plastic is now steadily creeping up.

The plastic pollution crisis will only be resolved when companies that profit from single-use plastic declare a state of "peak plastic" and commit to urgent reductions in the amount of single-use disposable packaging units they sell. An obvious first step is immediately eliminating unnecessary and excessive packaging, such as coffee capsules. Firms will also need to adopt a publicly available, comprehensive plan to invest in new ways to bring products to consumers in reusable and refillable packaging that is durable, affordable and more responsibly produced. Many diverse reuse and refill options exist currently and with innovation, more could be developed. Fundamentally, companies also need to reimagine their business models based on the recognition that we cannot continue to produce disposable packaging that is used for seconds but pollutes our planet for generations.

India must script a re-use revolution that will eventually transcend borders and set international bench-

marks in reducing, reusing and recycling. As a priority, the Government must first call for the reduction of units sold in single-use packaging and at the same time encourage investment in solutions focussed on reusing, refilling and so on, that are not dependent on disposables.

Ultimately companies need to rethink how products are delivered to the consumer and this is what the Government must facilitate. In transitioning from throwaway plastic, India must visualise replacing virgin plastic with non-toxic. Recycled and recyclable plastic only has a limited role in addressing the plastic over-production problem. However, there is no silver bullet, one-size-fits-all option for new reusable or refillable packaging that will be applicable to every company, product or geography. Therefore, it is pertinent that fast moving consumer goods (FMCG) firms and retailers urgently prioritise investment into the delivery of reuse and refill options.

(The writer is an environmental journalist)



**FOREIGN EYE**



**HOPE TRUDEAU LEARNS A LESSON**

The voting in national polls did not demonstrate any immediate threat to Canadian unity from the grievances of the Prairie Provinces or nationalism in Quebec, both of which are permanent features of the political landscape. Nor did it demonstrate a turn away from the admirably liberal, inclusive and humane policies that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau brought to office in 2015. Let us hope that Trudeau returns to office chastened and wiser.

(The NYT editorial)

CAPSULE



**Bajaj Auto Q2 profit rises 21 pc to Rs 1,523.32 cr**

**NEW DELHI:** Bajaj Auto on Wednesday reported 21.23 per cent increase in its consolidated profit after tax at Rs 1,523.32 crore in the second quarter ended September. The company had posted a consolidated net profit of Rs 1,256.57 crore in the same period last fiscal. Bajaj Auto said in a regulatory filing. Total revenue from operations was down 4.09 per cent at Rs 7,707.32 crore as compared to Rs 8,036.34 crore in the year-ago quarter, it added. Total vehicle sales in the second quarter stood at 11,73,591 units as against 13,39,444 units in the same period last fiscal, down 12 per cent, Bajaj Auto said. Motorcycle sales were also down 13 per cent during the period under review at 9,84,240 units as compared to 11,26,542 units in the same quarter a year ago. Commercial vehicle sales stood at 1,89,351 units as compared to 2,12,902 units in the second quarter last fiscal, down 11 per cent.



**Arvind Fashions Q2 net loss at Rs 45.35 cr**

**NEW DELHI:** Arvind Fashions Ltd on Wednesday reported a consolidated net loss of Rs 45.35 crore in the second quarter ended September 30. The company had posted a consolidated net profit of Rs 7.08 crore in the corresponding period of the previous financial year, Arvind Fashions said in a regulatory filing. Revenue from operations in the second quarter stood at Rs 1,119.45 crore as compared to Rs 1,209.05 crore in the year-ago period, it added. The company said its board has approved issue of equity shares up to Rs 300 crore on rights issue basis to meet its general corporate purposes including capital expenditure and working capital requirements and to reduce the levels of borrowing. In the second quarter, the company said, it continued to make progress on its stated goal of exiting non-strategic emerging brands, reducing exposure to long payment-cycle customers and aligning primary sales more closely with secondary sales.

NON-DISCLOSURE OF WHISTLEBLOWER COMPLAINT

**BSE seeks explanation from Infosys**

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Leading exchange BSE on Wednesday asked Infosys to explain why it did not make a disclosure about a whistleblower complaint which alleged that the company's top executives were following "unethical practices" to shore up profits through irregular accounting ways.

On Tuesday, Infosys Chairman Nandan Nilekani said the whistleblower complaint dated September 20 had been placed before the audit committee on October 10. There was an undated complaint which has also been placed before the committee.

One of its board members had received the complaints on September 30, according to Nilekani's statement submitted to the stock exchanges on Tuesday. Nilekani had said that both the complaints were placed before the company's non-executive board members on October 11, also the day when Infosys announced its second quarter results.

"Infosys Ltd vide an announcement dated October 22, 2019, titled 'Statement',



submitted Statement attributable to Nandan Nilekani, Chairman of Infosys Ltd, wherein it is mentioned that Infosys Ltd had received whistleblower complaints.

"However, it is observed that Infosys Ltd had not made any disclosures under Regulation 30 of Sebi (LODR) Regulations, 2015, w.r.t. receipt of whistleblower complaint mentioned in the announcement," the company said in a filing to the bourses on Wednesday.

The exchange has sought clarification from Infosys for

"non-disclosure of the information about the whistleblower complaint", the filing said.

According to the BSE, a reply from the company is awaited. Following reports of whistleblower allegations, the IT major, on Monday, informed

That both the complaints were placed before the company's non-executive board members on October 11, also the day when Infosys announced its second quarter results.

**NANDAN NILEKANI**, Infosys Chairman

the stock exchanges that it has received anonymous whistleblower complaints alleging certain unethical practices and that the same have been placed before the audit committee.

Against the backdrop of Nilekani's statement on Tuesday and the company's filing to the bourses a day before, the BSE has sought clarification.

Nilekani had also said the audit committee has retained law firm Shardul Amarchand Mangaldas & Co to conduct an independent investigation into the issue.

In the letter, dated September 20 and signed by 'Ethical Employees', it was alleged that CEO Salil Parikh as well as Chief Financial Officer Nilanjan Roy engaged in forced revenue recognition from large contracts

not adhering to accounting standards.

The letter, addressed to the board, claimed that recent big deal wins carried negligible margins and that Roy directed certain people to make wrong assumptions to show margins.

On Tuesday, shares of Infosys plunged over 16 per cent on Tuesday, wiping out Rs 53,450.92 crore from its market valuation. The scrip gained over one per cent in afternoon trade on the BSE and the NSE.

US-based Rosen Law Firm has said it is preparing a class action lawsuit to recover losses suffered by Infosys investors in the US.

In 2017, Infosys had witnessed a protracted standoff between its high-profile founders and the previous management over allegations of governance lapses and issues relating to severance package doled out to former executives, including ex-CFO Rajiv Bansal.



**Hyundai launches anniversary edition of Santro**

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Hyundai Motor India Ltd (HMIL) on Wednesday launched an anniversary edition of its compact car Santro priced up to Rs 5.75 lakh (ex-showroom).

The anniversary edition will be a limited edition based on two variants - Sportz MT and AMT priced at Rs 5,16,890 and Rs 5,74,890 respectively, the company said in a statement.

The limited edition will come gun metal grey wheel cover with black painted door handles and black outside rear view mirrors, while on the interiors there will be new seat fabric and front side AC vents with aqua teal inserts, it added.

Commenting on the launch, HMIL National Sales Head Vikas Jain said: "The anniversary edition will entice our customers and continue to strengthen Santro's legacy on the pillars of global technology, stylish design and world class features."

**Sportz MT and AMT priced at Rs 5,16,890 and Rs 5,74,890 respectively, the company said**

The company said the Santro has been developed to meet the needs of the Indian families. It was re-launched last October in a new avatar after the previous version of the model was discontinued in December 2014.

The company has seen improvement in speed for ground transportation of its packages and increased reliability for packages transported through the railways network, it said.

With the initial learnings, Amazon India is working with the Railways to build an e-commerce transportation product that would enhance capacity planning, contract payment methods, infrastructure and security of freight movement via the rail network, the release said.



in the e-commerce industry to enable the Railways build an e-commerce product for freight transport via rail, the release said.

The partnership is the first

**Sensex ends 95 pts higher**

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Equity benchmark BSE Sensex rose 95 points on Wednesday, led by gains in IT and auto stocks, amid mixed cues from global markets. After swinging over 330 points in a choppy session, the 30-share BSE Sensex ended 94.99 points, or 0.24 per cent, higher at 39,058.83. It hit an intra-day high of 39,196.67 and a low of 38,866.08.

The broader NSE Nifty too advanced 15.75 points, or 0.14 per cent, to settle at 11,604.10.

HCL Tech was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, rising 2.93 per cent, ahead of its quarterly results.

Maruti Suzuki, SBI, HDFC, Hero MotoCorp and Infosys too

**The broader NSE Nifty too advanced 15.75 points, or 0.14 per cent, to settle at 11,604.10**



gained up to 2.55 per cent.

On the other hand, Bharti Airtel, Vedanta, ONGC, RIL, Kotak Bank and Yes Bank shed up to 3.59 per cent.

According to traders, domestic investors were cautious tracking global stocks after British Prime Minister Boris Johnson lost the crucial Brexit bill timetable vote on

Tuesday, leaving in doubt his vow to exit the European Union by the end of the month.

Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Shanghai, Hong Kong Tokyo and Seoul ended on a mixed note.

Equities in Europe were also trading on a choppy note in their respective early deals.



**HDFC Life Insurance Q2 profit up 7%**

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

HDFC Life Insurance Company on Wednesday posted 7.5 per cent rise in standalone net profit to Rs 308.69 crore for the second quarter ended September 30.

The company's net profit in the year-ago period stood at Rs 286.98 crore.

Total income of the insurance firm rose to Rs 8,661.56 crore from Rs 7,902.10 in the same quarter a year ago, HDFC Life said in a regulatory filing.

The asset under the management of insurance firm rose to Rs 1.3 lakh crore.

"We have delivered strong performance across all key metrics and have continued to sustain our profitability. Despite a challenging macro-environment, we have grown by 35 per cent on individual weighted received premium, compared to industry growth of 11 per cent," HDFC Life Insurance Managing Director Vibha Padalkar said.

**'Housing sales up 16% during Jan-Sep across 7 cities'**

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Housing sales rose by 16 per cent in value terms during January-September period of this year to Rs 1.54 lakh crore across seven major cities, according to property consultant Anarock.

Sales increased to nearly 2.02 lakh units during the period under review from 1.78 lakh units last year, it added.

"Despite depressed consumption sentiment, the top seven cities saw homes worth about Rs 1.54 lakh crore sold in the first three quarters of

**Bengaluru saw a 7 per cent dip in housing sales at Rs 28,160 crore during the same period last year**

2019, rising yearly by 16 per cent," Anarock Property Consultants Chairman Anuj Puri said.

"The overall value of units sold in the corresponding period of 2018 was approx Rs 1.33 lakh crore," he added.

In value terms, the Mumbai Metropolitan Region (MMR) topped the list with housing

sales worth Rs 62,970 crore, up 33 per cent from Rs 47,240 crore in the corresponding period of 2018.

Bengaluru saw a 7 per cent dip in housing sales at Rs 28,160 crore during the same period last year.

However, Pune witnessed a 32 per cent jump in overall housing sales to Rs 17,530 crore from Rs 13,275 crore during January-September 2018.

Housing sales in NCR were valued at Rs 24,860 crore till September this year as against Rs 21,600 crore in the three quarters of 2018.



**Amazon India, Rlys tie up on transport of e-commerce packages**

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Amazon India on Wednesday announced that it has partnered with the Indian Railways for pilot programme to carry out inter-city transport of e-commerce packages.

Amazon India would transport customer packages with the Railways on three routes from New Delhi to Mumbai, Mumbai to New Delhi and New Delhi to Kolkata, the company said in a press release.

The partnership is the first

**Dr Reddy's recalls all its ranitidine**

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Dr Reddy's Laboratories on Wednesday said it has initiated a voluntary nationwide recall of all its ranitidine medications sold in the US due to contamination with probable cancer causing N-Nitrosodimethylamine (NDMA).

The recall started on October 1 after the United States Food and Drug Administration (USFDA) found the presence of NDMA in certain ranitidine products



above the permissible levels.

NDMA is classified as a probable human carcinogen based on results from laboratory tests. NDMA is a known environmental contaminant and found in water and foods, including meats, dairy products, and vegetables.

The recall has been initiated at the retail level for over-the-counter products and at the consumer level for prescription products of all of its ranitidine medications sold in the US due to confirmed contamination with NDMA above levels established by the USFDA, Dr Reddy's said in a filing to the BSE.

This recall follows the USFDA's caution note alerting patients and healthcare professionals that NDMA was found in certain samples of ranitidine, it added.

**IIFL Securities Q2 profit before tax drops 33 pc**

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

IIFL Securities has reported a 33 per cent plunge in its profit before tax at Rs 48.6 crore for the July-September quarter of the current financial year.

In comparison, the company had posted a profit before tax of Rs 72.32 crore in second quarter ended September 30, 2018.

The company's total revenues declined to Rs 184.86 crore in the quarter under review from Rs 244.05 crore in the same period preceding fiscal.

"The broking industry has been facing headwinds for the last few months. We have seen a steep decline in the volume and price of small- and mid-cap stocks, which affected retail sentiments," IIFL Securities Managing Director R Venkataraman said in a statement.

"Post the reform measures announced by the government, we are optimistic that the market will pick up in the second half of the financial year," he added.

IIFL Securities primarily offers advisory and broking services, financial products distribution, institutional research and investment banking services.

**IMF sees Indian economic growth rebounding to 7% next fiscal**

PTI ■ SINGAPORE

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) sees Indian economic growth rebounding to around 7 per cent in the next financial year, supported by measures like monetary policy stimulus and corporate income tax cuts.

"We see the Indian economy rebounding from our projected 6.1 per cent growth this fiscal year to something like 7 per cent in the next fiscal year (2020). We see the factors that will support growth, including monetary policy stimulus, working their way through the pipeline," Jonathan Ostry, Deputy Director, Asia Pacific Department at the IMF, told reporters.

The recent tax cuts, government's progress in addressing



lingering weaknesses in the financial sector and measures to support growth sectors as seen as factors underpinning growth in the near term, Ostry said.

Talking about the slowdown in Indian economy in recent quarters, he said: "indeed (it) took many of us by surprise, including the IMF."

"There wasn't a single cause for the slowdown... there were many different causes at work including corporate and regulatory environmental uncer-

**The recent tax cuts, government's progress in addressing lingering weaknesses in the financial sector and measures to support growth sectors are seen as factors underpinning growth in the near term, Ostry said**

ainties, the stresses in the non-bank financial sector, (and) stresses in the rural sector, among others," he said.

Asked about the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), which India is reportedly cautious to sign as the multi-lateral trade pact negotiations are widely expected to be concluded in the coming months, he underlined the importance of having services included in the free-

trade partnership agreement.

Much greater attention to integration type issues is essential to sustain growth in south Asia, he said, adding "This needs to include not only goods trade, but more importantly services trade - which could provide a substantial engine of growth for India and other south Asian economies going forward," said Ostry.

There is a need to take steps to invigorate the deliberation

process and structural reforms more generally because India has a potential enormous demographic dividend over the next couple of decades through which about 150 million people will be entering the workforce, he pointed out.

"We consider services as an important source of growth and productivity to enhance investments in the period ahead," he underlined.

India's success in the service sector has been especially remarkable as its share of the world's information and communication technologies service exports almost tripled in a decade, from 6.3 per cent in 2000 to 17.8 per cent in 2010, recording the largest increase globally for the sector, according to the IMF report.

## CELEBRITIES CREATING A

# NEW NICHE

Fashion has long been the apple of people's eye, commoners and celebrities alike. But it is fascinating to see a shift from celebrities creating their clothing line to makeup and healthcare products, finds ANUSHKA PRADEEP



**A**part from spreading the glitz and glam of the movie and music industry, celebrities worldwide have also taken up spearheading other businesses as well. The fashion industry seems to top the 'go-to' list of ventures for several top-notch celebrities. Some of the famous brands are Be it Fenty by Rihanna, Ivy Park by Beyonce, Draper James by Reese Witherspoon, Good American by Khloe Kardashian or brands like Nush by Anushka Sharma, Rheson by Kapoor sisters — Sonam and Rhea and Style Cracker by Alia Bhatt here in India.

The biggies across the world seem to be taking their love for beauty a step further by launching full-fledged make-up and healthcare collections taking advantage of the brand they have built over the years.

Internationally, several celebrities like Rihanna, Kylie Jenner, Gwyneth Paltrow, Drew Barrymore and Eva Mendes, Miranda Kerr, Jessica Alba, Salma Hayek and others boast of their own range of makeup and healthcare products.

Kylie Jenner's triumphant crowning as the *Forbes* Highest Paid Woman through her multi-million cosmetics line is just one in the laundry list of celebrities who are creating their own products.

Celebrities often represent someone else's product while they are on screen to emerge in a glitzy, celebrity-approved avatar. Indian superstars are now getting savvy and are catching up with the celebrity make up and health care retail trend. This means not simply being the face of a product, but banking on their names and business acumen to spin off a company. Joining the ranks of Sunny Leone, Shilpa Shetty Kundra and Lara Dutta Bhupathi, who have their names on makeup and skin care lines respectively, is Kay by Katrina.

The most sought-after model and actress has launched her make-up line 'Kay by Katrina' recently which included a range of cosmetics from lip crayons to eye liners, making it accessible to all levels of people, be it pricing or its availability in the market.

While businesses may be used to competing with other stores in their niche, the celebrity retailer is becoming a force to be reckoned with. They have name recognition, the financial backing and — not to be underplayed — social media followings that give them a direct line to their potential customers.

Former Miss Universe and actress Lara Dutta announced the launch of her skincare range, Arias, in early 2019. Similarly, Sunny Leone's brand, Starstruck, came into being with the aim of creating a line which provides audience with long lasting good quality makeup products, in the year 2018.

This demand to pursue an altogether different field depicts the willingness of celebrities to experiment with their career choices and cater to the needs of the public through their products speaks of their openness to taking risks.

Shilpa Shetty also contributed her bit by investing in a line of natural and organic healthcare products for the whole family with Mamaearth.

"I am happy to be representing a brand that understands the worries and struggles of parents and is heavily invested in creating natural and non-toxic and chem-

ical-free products to solve their problems. I feel a deep sense of responsibility towards the environment and Mamaearth, as a brand, resonates that," says Shilpa Shetty Kundra.

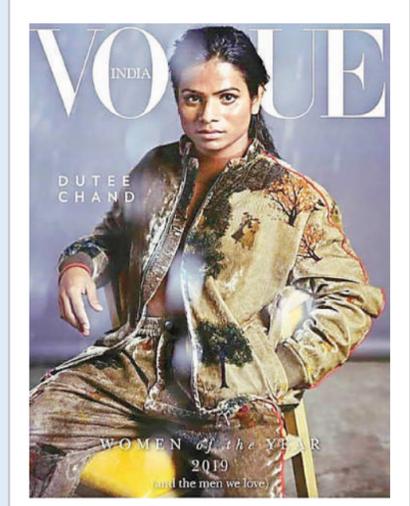
"I always had this thought and dream more than anything to start a beauty brand. Right from the time I started as a model, make-up has always been something I have understood, I played with it a lot and I experimented a lot. It was just natural progression," Katrina said about foraying into the make-up industry.

It is to be seen if Katrina's products will be able to compete with the other existing and established products.

When we speak about surviving the competition, the face of the product and their promotions go hand-in-hand. Keeping this mind and to address a larger audience, the actress collaborated with South 'Lady Super Star' Nayantara to promote her brand.

While commoners find the marketing aspect of their product the hardest, celebrities seem to have this aspect covered with ease. "This makes the category of fashion brands particularly well suited for celebrities. Depending upon the celebrity, the core target for the brand would overlap with the fan-base of the celebrity itself," says Samit Sinha, brand expert and managing partner at Alchemist Brand Consulting.

"Celebrities we see today are more conscious and aware of the brand or line they represent. This is especially the case with those who endorse beauty and skincare products. When the commonfolk use the products endorsed by celebrities they find themselves moving a step closer to their celebrity. Hence, celebrities feel responsible toward the brands they choose to represent," says Sachin Dakoji, celebrity hair and makeup artist, creative head of Manea group of Salons.



## Dutee is first Indian lesbian athlete to feature on *Vogue* cover

**A**ce sprinter Dutee Chand has added another feather to her wings by becoming the *Vogue* India Sportsperson of the year 2019.

Just over a month ago, Chand was awarded Gold in 100 metres at the World University Games in Naples, making her the first-ever Indian woman track and field athlete to do so, setting her record clocking 11.32 seconds. While she experienced a lot of pressure with her life on the field, a bigger ordeal faced by Dutee was that of keeping her identity hidden all through her life up until this year when she finally decided to step out of the closet when she became the India's first-ever openly lesbian athlete in India.

Dutee Chand took to Instagram to share a photograph of the cover page of *Vogue* where she can be seen sporting an H&M ensemble designed by Suket Dhir.

Earlier this year, *Cosmopolitan* had also featured Dutee on their digital cover for July, soon after which she became the first Indian sportsperson to openly declare that she's in a same-sex relationship. Several high profile celebrities commended Dutee on various platforms including the immensely popular talk-show host Ellen DeGeneres.

A small-town girl born in Chaka Gopalpur in Odisha to a family of cotton weavers, Dutee's ultimate aim is to bring home the gold medal for India in the 2020 Tokyo Olympics. — PNs



“Celebrities we see today are more conscious and aware of the brand they represent. This is especially the case with those who endorse beauty and skincare products. When the commonfolk use the products endorsed by celebrities they find themselves moving a step closer to their celebrity. Hence, celebrities feel responsible toward the brands they choose to represent

SACHIN DAKOJI



## Shawls have always been a mark of royalty and respect that an individual receives from many. The pride of owning a Pashmina shawl only takes the honour a step further, reports V SATEESH REDDY

# Celebrating the JEWEL OF KASHMIR



**P**ashmina shawls, the pride of Kashmir, have always been the sign of royalty and the affluent. Most of the rare Pashmina shawls are stored in museums for future generations. In her first exhibition in the city, The Splendor of Kashmir, textile designer Varuna Anand is showcasing the various types of handlooms made by the craftsmen from Jammu and Kashmir, thereby highlighting its rich cultural heritage.

"I studied textile designing in Delhi and used to make sarees. After my marriage, I moved to Kashmir where I noticed the differences between the shawls in

Delhi and the shawls from Kashmir. The quality of Kashmiri shawls is high compared to other parts of India. Pashmina is not for everyone as it is expensive. The product is designed for kings and businessmen. My husband encouraged me to start the business in 2011," Varuna Anand told *The Pioneer*, talking about her all-India tour to promote the shawls.

The uniqueness of the handicraft comes from the fact that the wool used to make the shawl is derived only from a particular animal which lives only in Ladakh region. Varuna said that the kings of Jammu and Kashmir always loved the shawls and used to be a

“Till date, our target audience are celebrities and businessmen. Now, we are planning to take the product to others by collaborating with other private players, such as corporate companies, and incorporate these shawls into their gifting culture

VARUNA ANAND

gift from the kings to their guests. She shared, "The minimum cost for a Pashmina shawl is about Rs 10,000. Some costs around lakhs. The product is very expensive but you can see the difference between Pashmina material and other products. The shawl is known to become a family heirloom in many households where women inherit Pashmina shawls from their mothers-in-law



thus continuing the legacy." Even with the reputation that Pashmina shawls have, not many turned up for the three-day exhibition in the city. This exclusive collection along with other wide range of hand embroidered and hand-woven shawls made by master craftsmen from Jammu and Kashmir at

the exhibition had no proper audience to appreciate. The main reason is the price of the product. Common folk can hardly afford shawls that range from Rs 10,000 to some lakhs. With such exorbitant rates, when asked about how she plans to cater her products for everyone she said, "Till date,

our target audience are celebrities and businessmen. Now, we are planning to take the product to others by collaborating with other private players, such as corporate companies, and incorporate Pashmina shawls into their gifting culture. We are doing our best to reach out to as many people as possible."

**PARTY**

**TRENDY AFFAIR**

Socialites, fashion aficionados and celebrities had a gala time at the two-day Rufflez Expo that featured exclusive fashion jewellery, contemporary clothes, sarees, sparkling diamonds and various accessories crafted by more than 70 fashion designers from all over India. The attendees were seen interacting with the designers to learn more about their work.



● Nikita Tiwari



● Bina Mehta



● Manjulatha



● Mansi



● Neetu



● Renu



● Kritika

Photos by SV Chary

**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



**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.



**PETEX INDIA**



● India's largest exhibition on pet care products, Petex India 2019, will be held at HICC from November 1 to November 3 between 10 am and 8 pm.

**SKEPTICISM**

● The play Skepticism, written & directed by Amaan Ahmad will be staged today 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.



**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.



**THE BIG SHORT**

● Cinephiles Film Club will be screening the movie The Big Short at Lamakaan on October 30 from 7 pm. The film is based on the 2010 book, The Big Short: Inside the Doomsday Machine, by Michael Lewis showing how the financial crisis of 2007-2008 was triggered by the United States housing bubble.



**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](mailto:features.pioneer@gmail.com)

**FUN TIME**

**ARCHIE**



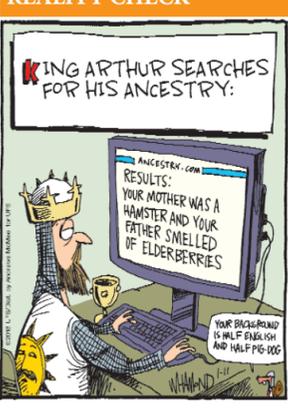
**CALVIN AND HOBBS**



**GARFIELD**



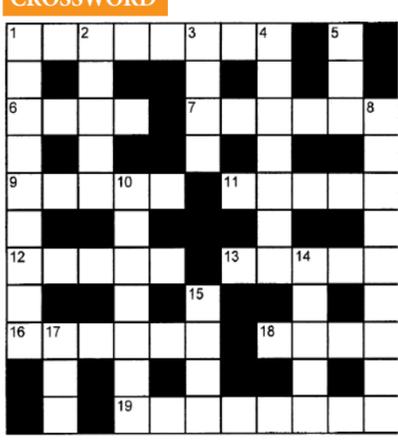
**REALITY CHECK**



**SPEED BUMP**



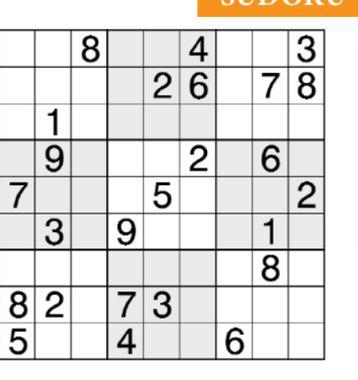
**CROSSWORD**



**NANCY**



**SUDOKU**



**Yesterday's solution**  
6 2 4 7 3 5 8 1 9  
9 3 7 6 1 8 4 2 5  
8 5 1 2 4 9 7 6 3  
4 7 8 5 6 3 2 9 1  
3 1 6 9 2 4 5 8 7  
2 9 5 8 7 1 6 3 4  
5 4 9 1 8 6 3 7 2  
7 8 3 4 9 2 1 5 6  
1 6 2 3 5 7 9 4 8

**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 Beaten in battle  
6 Following immediately after  
7 Film theatre  
9 A student's written composition  
11 Money paid for doing a job  
12 A stage drama performed in song  
13 Jumps a spinning rope  
16 A digging tool  
18 Molten rock coming out of a volcano  
19 Least heavy

**DOWN**  
1 Very unsafe  
2 Repairs

**SOLUTION**  
K V E S C  
U N D E R N E A T H  
C O I D F  
O F T E N S T E A M  
M A A E I  
P H O T O G R A P H S  
A E E C T  
N O U N S C H A I R  
I S S E G U I V  
O P E R A T I O N S  
N D M N T

**GINGER MEGGS**



# Life in a metro for ANAND DEVERAKONDA

Vijay Deverakonda is known for playing roles that steer off the typical Tollywood hero image. His brother, Anand, is also trying to go off the beaten track and leave a mark, finds NAGARAJ GOUD in a one-on-one conversation with director Damodara Attada

**A**nounced during Dasara, Anand Deverakonda's next with debutant Damodara Attada will go to sets next month-end. A comedy thriller, the duo of Vijay Mattapally and Pradeep Errabelli will be producing it under Tanga Productions LLP banner. Speaking to *The Pioneer*, Attada said that the film is packed with a lot of humour while also dealing with a social issue. "I drew inspiration from observing the society and penned it into a comedy thriller. All the characters will be relatable. Anand will be seen as a government school teacher and the film dwells on his personal issues. He will be a young and decent mathematics teacher with rural roots dealing with life in a metropolitan like Hyderabad. Around 70 to 80 per cent of the shoot will take place in Hyderabad, while the rest will be filmed across East Godavari. The plan is to wrap it up in 45 days in two to three schedules," the Visakhapatnam lad Attada, who has an MBA degree from Andhra University, said. Attada has many praiseworthy short films like *Kamalini* and *Vodka with Varma* to his name that have garnered many



views on streaming sites. Describing how the project took shape, the director said, "I knew Vijay Deverakonda even before *Yevade Subramanyam*. We even travelled together for some time and unsuccessfully pitched a story to many producers in 2015. Though Vijay got



I watched *Dorasaani* and was left impressed with Anand's acting skills. I met Anand and narrated the story and he agreed to do it. He fared well in his screen test raising our hopes that he is right for the role. We are planning to conduct a workshop for a couple of weeks next month to get his nuances right.

DAMODARA ATTADA, DIRECTOR

busy with his films later, his father Vardhan Deverakonda remained in touch often asking about my projects. He was the one who suggested that I pitch this film to Anand. I watched *Dorasaani* and was left impressed. I met Anand and narrated the story and he agreed to do it. He fared well

in his screen test raising our hopes that he is right for the role. We are planning to conduct a workshop for a couple of weeks next month to get his nuances right. Composers Amit Dasani, Siddharth Sadashivuni and Ram Miriyala have already recorded five songs."



## Buzz around Jr NTR-Atlee film gets louder

**N**ews about Jr NTR and Tamil filmmaker Atlee in talks for a possible collaboration has been doing rounds for the past couple of years. If the latter's statement on Wednesday is anything to go by, then the pro-

ject might be a reality soon. "My long time dream is to direct a Telugu film. It is going to happen soon," the young Tamil sensation said at the promotional event of *Whistle* in Hyderabad on Wednesday. *Whistle* is the Telugu dubbed version of Atlee's most anticipated Tamil action entertainer *Bigil*, starring Vijay. Mahesh S. Koneru will be releasing the film for Telugu audience here. When the little attendance at the event alluded to NTR being the hero of his Telugu film, Atlee nodded in agreement. "We will come with an announcement soon. Every time I had a release in Tamil, Jr NTR sir would call me up and extol the film. He is a sweetheart and I have enormous love for him."

Speaking about Mahesh, he said, "He has been very kind and affectionate towards me. I haven't helped him on the promotional front as I was occupied with the post-production work of *Bigil*. He told me that *Whistle* will release in 700 screens here, which is massive. That is another reason for me to consider making a Telugu film."

*Whistle*, he said, is dedicated to women. "It's an action-drama primarily that also revolves around football. It deals with women empowerment. I'm an emotional person in general and as a writer I believe in saying something to the society. Atrocities towards girl child stirred me to pen *Whistle*. I believe it will work big time in Telugu than Tamil. The emotions will resonate with everyone," he added. Speaking about Vijay, he said, "I'm nothing without *Anna* (Vijay). He made me. I am where I am because of him."

— NG

## Priya Varrier in talks for A1 EXPRESS

**W**ink girl, Priya Prakash Varrier, who will be making her Telugu debut with Chandrasekhar Yeleti's next, starring Nithiin, has also been named in final round of negotiations for the leading lady of Sundeeep Kishan-starrer *A1 Express*. The movie was announced earlier this month. "The makers felt that a fresh pairing for Sundeeep is ideal for the film and so decided to approach Priya. Some other names too

have been consulted. Priya liked the film's storyline and it's most likely that she will be the film's leading lady. However, an official confirmation to this end will be out in a couple of days," confirmed a source close to the development. If Priya indeed comes on board, she will be seen as a hockey player in the film. It's a full-length role.

*A1 Express*, a new-age sports entertainer dotted with humour, family emotions and romance in equal measure, marks the directorial debut of Visakhapatnam lad Dennis Jeevan Kanukolanu, who did a series of short films earlier. A joint production venture between G. Vishwa Prasad, Abhishek Agarwal, Sundeeep Kishan and Daya Pannem, it will roll in the first week of November. The likes of Murli Sharma, Priyadarshi, Rahul Ramakrishna and Srinivas Avasarala round off the supporting cast, while Hiphop Tamizha is the film's tunesmith. — NG



## Keeravani's younger son to debut with a whodunit

**T**he first look of Mythri Movie Makers next, *Mathu Vadhulara*, was unveiled by Jr NTR on his Twitter handle on Wednesday. The film sees composer M.M. Keeravani's younger son Sri Simha debuting as the lead actor, while his older son Kaala Bhairava, a noted singer, will compose music for the first time. "Time flies and how! My brothers are all grown up! It gives me immense pleasure to release #Mathu-VadularaFirstLook featuring Simha @Simhakoduri2302 in the lead role and Bhairi @kaalabhairava7 as the music director. Wishing them the very best on their debut. Good luck to the team! (sic)," Jr NTR tweeted.

According to film's producer, Cherry, who is also the CEO of Mythri Movie Makers, the film is a whodunit laced with a lot of humour. "The film has been well conceived by debutant director Ritesh Rana. Since the content and the plot line appealed to us, we decided to back fresh talent from such newcomers," he said. Besides Simha, first timers, Naresh Agastya and Athulya Chandra, will be seen in important roles, while Suresh Sarangam

will be debuting as a cinematographer. Presently in post-production stage, the makers are planning to release the teaser shortly. The trio — Satya, Vennela Kishore and Bramahaji — are the popular actors in the film.



## NOW, THARUN TURNS TO EDITING

**A**fter featuring in guest roles in *Mahanati* and *Sammohanam*, Tharun Bhasker played a prominent role in Vishwak Sen's *Falaknuma Das*, winning accolades from all over. As he is now awaiting the release of *Meeku Maathrame Cheptha*, which centers around his role, the director-turned-actor has now turned his attention to editing. Well, at least not on a full time basis. Impressed with the film *Pressure Cooker*, directed by NRI brothers' duo of Sujoi and Sushil, Tharun decided to cut the film's teaser, which will be released later this week. The romantic-comedy features Sai Ronak, Preethi Asrani, Rahul Ramakrishna, Rajai Rowan in lead roles. "I liked the film immensely. It talks about the parental pressure that youngsters from middle class families are subjected to after they complete engineering. It is told in a sensitive and hilarious way. I requested the directors' duo to let me edit the teaser and they've readily accepted," Tharun said.

# Dadagiri unlimited

In his first media interaction after becoming BCCI president, former Indian skipper Sourav Ganguly vows to run the board the way he led Men in Blue during his captaincy days

## Captain takes charge: Ganguly becomes BCCI president

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Former India captain Sourav Ganguly on Wednesday took charge as the BCCI president, easily the most high-profile name to head the world's richest cricket board that has been mired in administrative turmoil for the past three years. The 47-year-old Ganguly was officially entrusted with the task of heading Indian cricket for the next nine months at the BCCI's General Body meeting here, ending a controversial 33-month reign of the Supreme Court-appointed Committee of Administrators (CoA).

His appointment as the BCCI's 39th President was finalised last week. He succeeds C K Khanna, who was the interim head of the Board since 2017. "It's an honour that I have been asked to take this role. It's a new start for the BCCI," said Ganguly, clad in his India blazer which was given to him during the time he served as India captain.

"I find myself in a position where I can make a change and it's a challenge," he added.

In the meeting that was also a reunion of sorts for some of the familiar faces associated with the board before the CoA's institution, Union Home Minister Amit Shah's son Jay Shah was made the secretary.

During his tenure, Ganguly will look to coordinate with old guard such as former President N Srinivasan and ex-Secretary Niranjan Shah, whose children are now part of the BCCI.

Mahim Verma of Uttarakhand became the new vice-president. Former BCCI president and current junior finance minister Anurag Thakur's younger brother Arun Dhumal became the treasurer while Kerala's Jayesh George took the joint secretary's position.

"It's a very young group. We will have to do a lot of hard work to understand what's been going on. There have been no AGMs, no working committees in the last three years, so we have no idea how it has been done. We will take note of everything," Ganguly said.



Former Indian captain Sourav Ganguly takes charge as BCCI's new President, at board headquarters PTI

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Clad in his captain's navy blue blazer, Sourav Ganguly on Wednesday promised a "corruption-free, same-for-all BCCI", a philosophy that, he said, guided his tenure as India skipper from 2000 to 2005.

Elected unopposed to the top position in the world's richest cricket board, the bespectacled 47-year-old also gave enough indications that he would run the show the way he wants and is unlikely to be influenced.

"I will do it the way I know, I will do it the way which I feel is best for the BCCI with no compromise on credibility. Corruption-free and same for all BCCI. That's the way I led India and that's the way I will take this organisation forward," said the man with more than 18,000 international runs under his belt.

Hard to miss at his maiden press interaction after taking charge was the India blazer that he was wearing. "I got it when I was captain of India but I did not realise that it is so loose. But

I decided I will wear it," he said as scribes chuckled.

He will be at the helm for nine months because the Supreme Court-mandated reforms require a cooling off period after a six-year run as an office-bearer. Ganguly has already been Cricket Association of Bengal Secretary and President.

Ganguly couldn't help but recall the time he took over as team captain.

The sport's integrity was in tatters that year after the 2000 match-fixing scandal and Ganguly was handed the responsibility of resurrecting it.

Resurrection is once again what is required after three years of administrative limbo, incidentally also caused by corruption — the 2013 IPL spot-fixing scandal.

Ironically, Mohammed Azharuddin was at the centre of the 2000 scandal and will now be his Board colleague as Hyderabad Cricket Association President. The two former teammates hugged each other after Wednesday's meeting.

"Coincidentally, fortunately or unfortunately, there was a similar situation when

I took over as captain and captained India for six years," Ganguly said referring to, what are widely considered, the dark days of Indian cricket.

"It's a similar sort of a situation where things need to be brought back to place, reforms need to be done, huge amount of money to be paid to state associations so it's a lot of work," he added.

Laying down his immediate priorities, Ganguly said a call to current skipper Virat Kohli is in order.

"Virat Kohli is the most important man in Indian cricket, we will listen to him. I will speak to Virat Kohli tomorrow, we will support him in every possible way, whatever he wants," he said.

"We are here to work for Indian cricket. We will do that to the best of our ability," he added.

He reiterated his commitment to improving the domestic cricket structure.

"The structures are there, the tournaments are there. In the last three years the matches have doubled actually. When I played for Bengal and some of my colleagues played for the other states there were about 1000 games to be played at. Now there are 2000 games between states and the affiliates.

"So we have to account for it. We have to make sure the best tournament in the country is competitive, and it remains important to everyone now because that's where you get the Kohli's and MS Dhoni's, Ajinkya Rahane's and Rohit Sharma's of Indian cricket," he said.

## Maharaj's new team



Newly-elected BCCI president Sourav Ganguly, center, Secretary Jay Shah, left, and Treasurer Arun Dhumal pose for photo during press conference AP

PTI ■ MUMBAI

BCCI president Sourav Ganguly needs no introduction but the four other office-bearers who were elected unopposed here on Wednesday do. Following is the synopsis of their journey in cricket administration.

**Jay Shah**, (secretary): The 31-year-old is the youngest office-bearer in the BCCI. Jay, who is Home Minister Amit Shah's son, has been with

the Gujarat Cricket Association (GCA) since 2009. He was elected GCA joint-secretary in September 2013.

**Arun Singh Dhumal**, (treasurer): He too hails from a political family with his elder brother Anurag Thakur currently being a Minister of State (Finance and Corporate Affairs). Thakur was removed as BCCI president in January 2017. Dhumal, 44, served as vice-president of Himachal

cricket body, HPCA between 2012 and 2015 when Thakur was its president.

Dhumal also led a three-member ad-hoc committee which was formed to run HPCA in the wake of Lodha panel recommendations to reform Indian cricket. He also has the experience of representing HPCA in the BCCI.

**Jayesh George**, (joint secretary): The 50-year-old has years of experience in cricket administration, having been part of Kerala Cricket Association (KCA) as its secretary, joint secretary, treasurer and most recently the president. He has been part of the KCA since 2005.

**Mahim Verma**, (vice-president): His father P C Verma has served as secretary of the Cricket Association of Uttarakhand (CAU). Mahim, 45, himself was CAU's joint-secretary for 10 years until September when he was elected the association's secretary, soon after the body got BCCI's recognition.

## Till I am around, everybody will be respected: Sourav

**MUMBAI:** BCCI president Sourav Ganguly said the matter of Mahendra Singh Dhoni's future in international cricket will be addressed but vowed to accord the two-time World Cup winning captain respect during his tenure.

Ganguly said he doesn't know what is in Dhoni's mind but promised that a player of his stature will be given respect.

"It depends on him. You know champions don't finish quickly. I don't know what's in his mind and what he thinks about his career. So we will deal with that you know," he said.

"He is one of the greats of the game and India is proud to have MS Dhoni over a period of time. If you even sit down and take a note of what he has done, you say, 'Wow, MS Dhoni,'" Ganguly said. Legends of the game have often had unceremonious exits and Ganguly knows it more than anyone else how it feels to fight speculations and criticism.

"Till I am around, everybody will be respected and that doesn't change," he added. PTI

## Kohli is the most important man

Ganguly promises all possible support to captain asserting 'I am here to make Kohli's life easier, not difficult'

PTI ■ MUMBAI

BCCI President Sourav Ganguly on Wednesday called Virat Kohli "the most important man in Indian cricket" and promised the captain all possible support to make his life "easier and not difficult".

After taking charge as the BCCI boss, Ganguly said he will be speaking to the Indian skipper on Thursday to discuss the way forward.

"I will speak to him tomorrow (Thursday). He is the most important man in Indian cricket as captain of India. I look at it that way. So we will have a word with him and as I said we will support him in every possible way, he wants to make this team the best in the world. It has been a great team to be honest with

the way they have played in the last three to four years," said Ganguly.

Ganguly said he will also sit with the team management which also includes head coach Ravi Shastri.

"It will be a proper discussion and everything will be mutually discussed but be rest assured, we are here to make their life easier, not make their life difficult. Everything is on the basis of performance," the BCCI president was clear.

"Performance is the most important thing and will decide the future of Indian cricket. Virat is the most important man in the entire context. We will support him, we will listen to him. I have been a captain myself so I understand. Mutual respect will be there, opinions and discussions will be there and we will do what is best for the game."

## Samson, Dube on line for place in T20 squad



Sanju Samson & Shikhar Dhawan run between wickets during India 'A' fourth game against South Africa 'A' at Trivendrum Sanju/Twitter

PTI ■ MUMBAI

India skipper Virat Kohli's workload could be a topic of discussion while Rishabh Pant could have prolific Sanju Samson for cover during three T20s when the selection committee picks the squad for the upcoming series against Bangladesh here today.

Kohli has featured in 48 out of the 56 games India have played across formats since October 2018. However, the selection committee will leave it to Kohli to decide whether he needs a break or continue playing.

There is expected to be serious discussions about rookie Mumbai all-rounder Shivam Dube, who might replace an injured Hardik Pandya for the all-rounder's slot, primarily based on his big-hitting prowess.

Apart from the three-match T20 series which starts in New Delhi on November 3, followed by matches at

Rajkot and Nagpur, Bangladesh will also play two Tests as a part of the World Championship in Indore and Kolkata.

Samson, who recently hit a double hundred for Kerala in the Vijay Hazare Trophy, is expected to come in but only as second option to Pant for the time being.

"There is no harm if both Rishabh and Sanju are there in the team. They have played together in IPL also. Rishabh has had limited success in shorter formats but he is a long-term investment and we need to persist with him," a BCCI official privy to developments in selection committee said.

"At the same time, Sanju is a player with game-changing abilities. Keeping World T20 in mind, the team management needs to check other options also as everyone knows that it's time to look beyond Mahendra Singh Dhoni," the source added.

With Kohli not there in the squad, Samson is being seen as a back-up batsman but it will be interesting to see if Manish Pandey retains his place in the squad that played against South Africa.

Mumbai all-rounder Dube has now pipped Vijay Shankar as the second choice all-rounder in the shortest format, based on big-hitting prowess.

It is unlikely that the famed wrist spin duo of Kuldeep Yadav and Yuzvendra Chahal will get a look in as Rahul Chahar and Washington Sundar are set to get another opportunity.

K L Rahul, after his good show in Hazare Trophy, is likely to retain his place in the side.

Veteran opener Shikhar Dhawan has been horribly out of form but the selectors might continue with him for one more series.

In case there is a question of dropping Dhawan, Mayank Agarwal could be a choice as reserve opener. Deepak Chahar, Navdeep Saini and Khaleel Ahmed are expected to be the three frontline pacers.

## After ODI & T20s, Rohit enters top 10 in Tests

PTI ■ DUBAI

Rohit Sharma has become the third India batsman to reach the top 10 of ICC rankings in all three formats after a memorable series against South Africa in which he donned the new role of Test opener.

Rohit emulated captain Virat Kohli and retired opener Gautam Gambhir as his knock of 212 in the third Test in Ranchi helped him advance 12 places to 10th position in the ICC Test Player Rankings.

Ajinkya Rahane's knock of 116 in Ranchi has helped him equal his career-high rank of fifth place, achieved earlier in November 2016. He remains the third-best Indian batsman in terms of Test rankings after Kohli and Cheteshwar Pujara.

With Mayanka Agarwal in



Rohit Sharma congratulates Mayank Agarwal after he scores his first ton PTI

18th position, India have finished the series with five batsmen in the top 20.

Rohit's player of the series effort of 529 runs helped him make huge strides from 44th place before the series. The 'Hitman' has held a career-high ranking of second in ODIs (in February 2018) and seventh in T20Is (November 2018).

Kohli has been number one in all three formats while Gambhir has been at the top in Tests and T20Is and eighth in ODIs.

Fast bowlers Mohammad Shami and Umesh Yadav have ended the series with their highest-ever rating points tally. Shami is on 751 points and only one place below his career-best ranking of 14th achieved in March 2018, while Yadav is on 624 points, three below his best of 21st in July 2016.

## K'taka, TN to play Hazare final

PTI ■ BENGALURU

K L Rahul hit 88 (111 balls, 6 fours, 1 six) and shared a century partnership with fellow opener Devdutt Padikkal (92) to power Karnataka to a nine wicket over Chhattisgarh and into the final of the Vijay Hazare Trophy here on Wednesday, where it will face Tamil Nadu, which beat Gujarat by five wickets in the other semi-final.

Chasing 224 for victory, the host romped home in 40 overs as Rahul and Padikkal and then Mayank Agarwal (47, 33 balls, 3 fours, 4 sixes) toyed with the Chhattisgarh attack.

For Chhattisgarh, Amandeep Khare (78, 102 balls, 4 fours) held fort and Sumit Suresh Rao Raikar (40, 37 balls, 1 four, 2 sixes) helped cause with some late hitting before the innings ended in the final over at 223.

While Kaushik finished with 4 wickets, Mithun (2/44), offie K Gowtham (2/30) and leggie Pravin Dubey (2/43) were among the wicket-takers.



Tamil Nadu batsman Shikhar Khan, right, celebrates after scoring fifty during Vijay Hazare game PTI/File Pic

rival's 177 for 9 in a game reduced to 40 overs due to a late start owing to overnight rain and a wet outfield, with an over to spare, thanks to an enterprising half-century by the talented M Shikhar Khan.

Gujarat couldn't recover from the early loss of their batting mainstays-Parthiv Patel and Priyank Panchal and could only make 177 for 9 in 40 overs.

Dhruv Raval was the top-scorer with 40 while Axar Patel (37) and tail-ender C T Gaja (24) were the other important contributors.

For Tamil Nadu, medium-pace M Mohammed with 3 for 33 was the best bowler, while Washington Sundar, R Ashwin and leggie Murugan Ashwin (1/33) and T Natarajan scalped a wicket each.

In reply, Abhinav Mukund (32, 65 balls, 3 fours), who has been in good form in the league phase and Dinesh Karthik (47, 47 balls, 5 fours) steadied the ship.

However, the loss of three quick wickets put Tamil Nadu under pressure before Washington Sundar (27 not out, 43 balls, 2 fours) and the young M Shikhar Khan (50 not out, 46 balls, 3 fours, 3 sixes) took the team home in style, winning with an over to spare. The final will be played tomorrow.

## SINGLES

**DRAVEEN BAGS GOLD IN WORLD C'SHIP**  
**SHANGHAI:** Praveen Kumar on Wednesday became the first Indian man to win a wushu World Championships Gold, beating Russel Diaz of Philippines in the 48kg category. The Indian saw off his Filipino opponent 2-1 in the men's sanda event. In 2017, Pooja Kadian became the first Indian to be crowned world champion in wushu after she defeated Evgeniya Stepanova of Russia in the women's 75kg sanda event. Among other Indians in the fray, Poonam (women's 75kg) and Sanathoi Devi (women's 52kg) secured Silver medals while Vikrant Balyan bagged the Bronze in the men's 60kg category.

**SMITH ELECTED MCC LIFE MEMBER**  
**LONDON:** Former South Africa skipper Graeme Smith has been elected an Honorary Life Member of the Marylebone Cricket Club (MCC), custodians of the game's law. The MCC took to Twitter to announce the membership. "MCC has today announced the election of @OfficialCSA legend @GraemeSmith49 as an Honorary Life Member of the Club," the MCC tweeted on Tuesday. Smith, who has an impressive record in One-Day International cricket for his country, scoring 6,989 runs including ten centuries, expressed his excitement on being bestowed upon the honour. "Thank you @HomeOfCricket and the MCC for this incredible honour. I have so many amazing memories there and I'm excited to share more with you in the future," Smith tweeted.

**WFI TAKES BENTINIDIS UNDER ITS WINGS**  
**NEW DELHI:** The Wrestling Federation of India (WFI) has brought Bajrang Punia's coach Shako Bentinidis under its wings by offering him a contract till the 2020 Tokyo Olympics and also appointed Russian Murad Gaidarov to help out Deepak Punia and Ravi Dahiya. Bentinidis was attached with the JSW and the WFI was always interested in having the services of the Georgian. Bentinidis had refused the offer earlier but was left with no option but to bow down to the Federation since it was not happy with him and was contemplating getting Bajrang a new coach.

**2 MORE GOLDS IN MILITARY GAMES**  
**WUHAN:** India added two more Gold medals to its kitty with para-athletes Anesh Kumar Surendran Pillai and Virender bagging the top honours in their respective events at the seventh CISM World Military Games. Pillai won the Gold in the disabled men's shot put IF1 category with a best throw of 12.76 metres which he registered in the fourth of his six attempts. Virender added one more yellow metal, when he emerged winner in the men's disabled shot put IF5 category with a best effort 11.43m. India narrowly missed a Bronze medal in the 25m Center Fire Pistol Men team event after the trio of Yogesh Singh, Gurpreet Singh and Omkar Singh finished fourth behind Ukraine, Korea and China. AGENCIES