

OPINION 6
CHINA'S
HIMALAYAN PLOY

VIJAYAWADA 9
THE RISE OF
WEBCOMICS

SPORTS 12
2-0! INDIA
WIN SERIES

VIJAYAWADA, MONDAY OCTOBER 14, 2019; PAGES 12 ₹3



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THE BIG
BOX-OFFICE
FIGHT

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Rs 5,510 cr released for Rythu Bharosa

AMARAVATI: The State government released Rs 5,510 crore for its prestigious YSR Rythu Bharosa scheme. A Government Order to this effect was issued on Sunday. The government has issued orders for crediting the bank accounts of eligible farmers with cash benefits under the scheme.

Pope elevates Mariam Thresia, four others to sainthood

VATICAN CITY: Indian nun Mariam Thresia and four others were declared Saints by Pope Francis at a grand ceremony at the Vatican City on Sunday.

Mariam Thresia, who founded the Congregation of the Sisters of the Holy Family in Thrissur in May 1914, was raised to the highest position within the centuries-old institution during the ceremony at the St Peter's Square. The nun from Kerala was canonised along with English Cardinal John Henry Newman, Swiss laywoman Marguerite Bays, Brazilian Sister Dulce Lopes and Italian Sister Giuseppina Vannini.



World Bank warns India of 'severe' slowdown

NEW DELHI: The World Bank on Sunday slashed its growth forecast for India's current fiscal year to 6 per cent, down from 7.5 per cent, warning that the 'severe' slowdown could further weaken the country's stuttering financial sector.

In its last forecast in April, the bank had said that India's economic outlook was strong and expected growth of 7.5 per cent during the current fiscal year that began in April.

But the country is currently growing at its slowest pace in six years, expanding by just 5 per cent in the April-June quarter, hit by flagging consumer demand and a slackening in government spending. India's industrial output also shrank at its fastest rate in more than six years in August, data released last week showed, indicating that a slew of government measures had yet to underpin a recovery.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:
Ashwini & Sukla Paksha
Panchangam

Tithi: Pratipada: 04:29 am (Next Day)
Nakshatram: Revati: 10:21 am

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

Rahukalam: 07:39 am - 09:07 am
Yamagandam: 10:34 am - 12:02 pm

Varjyam: NIL

Gulika: 01:29 pm - 02:56 pm

Good Time: (to start any important work)

Amritakalam: 07:42 am - 09:28 am

Ahijit Muhurtham: 11:38 am - 12:25 pm

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Isolated Thunderstorms

Temp: 32/24

Humidity: 87%

Sunrise: 06:08

Sunset: 05:55

Current Weather Conditions
Updated October 13, 2019 5:00 PM

Registrations to be totally transparent from Nov 1

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

The Jaganmohan Reddy government in the State is poised to bring in major reforms in the Stamps and Registration Department.

As part of the reforms, the government is planning to make transactions as transparent as possible. In order to achieve this goal, the government is introducing cashless transactions through online system.

A facility to prepare their own documents will be created for buyers and sellers. The government has prepared 16 models for this purpose in both English and Telugu languages. The documents can be uploaded to the Stamps and Registration Department and a time slot will be allotted for registration of properties. As many as 16 models of sale deeds, sale agreements, mortgage registrations, gift deeds, GPA and others related to



houses, commercial complexes and agricultural lands will be made available for people on the department's website.

All that buyers and sellers have to do is fill the appropriate document and print it. Then, they should approach the Stamps and Registration Department where the officials will scan it and initiate the registration process. The system is being implemented as a pilot project in Krishna and Visakhapatnam district. In

order to know problems in implementing the new system, the officials are supervising it.

It is learnt that some loopholes have been identified in the system and the officials have plugged them accordingly.

The new system will be implemented across the State from November 1.

Commissioner of the Stamps and Registration Department, Siddhartha Jain is

organising awareness camps on the new system across the State. Two teams have been constituted for the purpose. The camps will be held at Kurnool and Vizianagaram on October 14, Anantapur and Srikakulam on October 15, Kadapa and Visakhapatnam on October 16, Chittoor and East Godavari on October 17, Nellore and West Godavari on October 18, Prakasam and Krishna on October 19 and Guntur on October 21. The government is inviting lawyers, doctors, realtors, builders, prominent persons in the districts and the general public to take their feedback and suggestions.

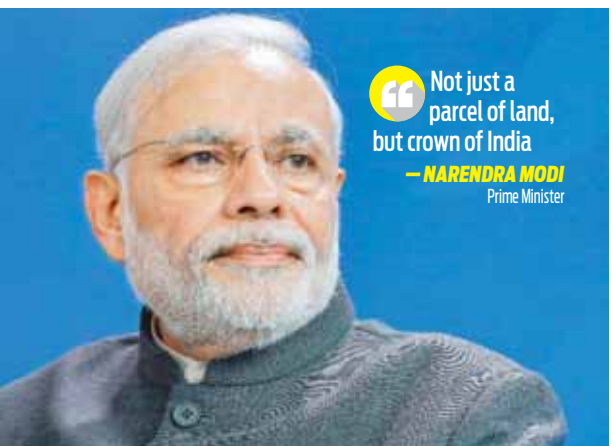
As per the new system, buyers and sellers can go in appeal if the documents are rejected for registration. They can submit an application to the District Registrar under Acts 73 and 74. He, in turn, will give reply in the stipulated time period.

Modi dares Opposition to bring back Article 370

PNS ■ JALGAON

Stepping up attack on the Congress and NCP over abrogation of Article 370, Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Sunday dared them to declare in their manifesto that they will bring back the provisions which gave special status to Jammu and Kashmir. Addressing his first rally ahead of the October 21 Maharashtra Assembly polls, Modi said Jammu and Kashmir was 'not just a parcel of land, but crown of India', and assured it will not take more than four months to normalise the kind of situation that prevailed there for 40 years. He accused the opposition parties of politicising the issue of Article 370 and charged them with "speaking on the same lines as that of the neighbouring country".

The prime minister lavished praise on the Devendra Fadnavis-led Maharashtra government for its five-year performance, which he said, was "corruption-free" and inspired confidence among all, including farmers and



industries. Attacking the Congress and NCP, Modi said it was "unfortunate" that they were "politicising" the "unprecedented" decision of scrapping of Article 370. Their leaders thought exactly opposite of what the entire nation feels about Jammu and Kashmir, he said. "You look at the statements made by Congress, NCP of late... They seem to be speaking one lines of the neighbouring country," Modi said, without naming the

leaders as he apparently referred to Pakistan.

Accusing the opposition leaders of shedding crocodile tears on the issue of Article 370, he said, "I challenge them, if they have guts, declare in their manifesto for state election and future polls too, that they will bring back Article 370 and 35A, which the BJP, the Modi government scrapped...that they will change the August 5 decision."

Government to buy farm produce at MSP from tomorrow

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

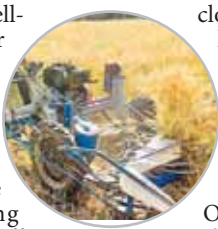
The State government will purchase farm produce at the Minimum Support Price (MSP) from procurement centres from October 15.

Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy had given an assurance during the elections to establish the Price Stabilisation Fund of Rs 3,000 crore. He had instructed the officials to set up purchase

centres before the crop is harvested help farmers not face any delay in selling their produce. The Marketing Department has already made arrangements to set up purchase centres following instructions to that effect by the CM. Every farmer should register his produce

with e-Crop. The purchase centres will be set up close to the farmers' habitations.

As part of the plan, the government will set up black gram and green gram purchase centres on October 15. The Marketing Departments has announced the MSP for various crops.



PROCUREMENT NORMS	
Name of the crop	MSP per quintal
Paddy(Normal)	Rs 1,815
Paddy(Grade A)	Rs 1,835
Sorghum	Rs 2750
Sorghum(hybrid)	Rs 2550
Bajra	Rs 2,000
Ragi	Rs 3,150
Maize	Rs 1,750
Red gram	Rs 5,800
Green gram	Rs 7,050
Black gram	Rs 5,700
Groundnut	Rs 5,090
Chick pea	Rs 4620
Coconut	Rs 2030
Jute	Rs 3,700
Cotton	Rs 5255
Cotton (long)	Rs 5550

Social media, pranayam part of UGC's 'life skills'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ethics and etiquettes of social media, how to use Google search better, yoga and pranayama and resume writing are part of the "life skills" curriculum developed by the University Grants Commission (UGC).

The commission had recently launched "Jeevan Kaushal", a life skills programme in the curriculum for under-graduate courses across the country.

The programme, which carries eight credit points, can be accommodated in any semester and is aimed at inculcating emotional and intellectual com-



petencies in students and develop verbal and non-verbal communication skills.

"Today when we talk about writing skills and communication skills, we cannot ignore writing on social media. The social media websites are a good medium to connect but

The programme, which carries eight credit points, can be accommodated in any semester and is aimed at inculcating emotional and intellectual competencies in students and develop verbal and non-verbal communication skills

students must know the advantages and disadvantages.

"There have to be some ethics and etiquettes of social media and the curriculum will teach them the same. There is also a module on how to use Google search better," a senior UGC official said.

The official said often students do not know the difference between a curriculum vitae (CV), resume and a bio-data. Writing a good resume is also a life skill which every student must learn before entering the professional world.

"What will learners gain if

STRIKE IN TELANGANA ENTERS NINTH DAY

TSRTC driver succumbs to burns, protests break out

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

A 55-year-old TSRTC driver died on Sunday, a day after he set himself ablaze, even as the strike by the transport employees in Telangana entered the ninth day. D Srinivas Reddy, who was part of the group of employees on a state-wide strike for the last nine days, died of burn injuries, hospital sources here said.

The driver had doused himself with kerosene and set himself ablaze near his house in Khammam, about 190 km from here, reportedly in protest against the government not acceding to the demands of striking employees. However police said they were investigating the reason behind his suicide.

As news about Reddy's death spread, a large number of striking employees of Telangana State Road Transport Corporation gathered near the hospital, but



police at the spot whisked them away in police vehicles. Protests also broke out in different parts of the city and

other places, with employees raising slogans and holding the state government responsible for Reddy's death. The employees have been on strike since the last nine days, demanding merger of RTC with the government and recruitment to various posts, among others.

Continued on Page 4

Naidu's cheap tactics won't work, says Parthasaradhi

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) official spokesman and MLA Kolusu Parthasaradhi has come down heavily on TDP president and Opposition Leader N Chandrababu Naidu saying the latter is stooping so low in criticising the Jaganmohan Reddy government.

Addressing a press conference at Tadepalli, near here, on Sunday, he said the TDP chief is unable digest the thumping victory people gave to YSRCP in the last General Elections. He is worried about the recent exodus of TDP leaders into YSRCP and his inexperienced son Lokesh. Besides, he is frustrated over corruption-free and transparent governance by chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy. He is speaking cheaply forgetting his experience and seniority, Parthasaradhi said.

The YSRCP spokesman said Naidu is morally degraded



and his statements prove the pathetic situation of TDP. "Chandrababu Naidu and other TDP leaders will never learn lessons even if they suffer great setbacks," he said.

Normally, a party that tasted a humiliating defeat at the hands of YSRCP would go into introspection mode and try to find out the cause for the debacle and rejuvenate the party, but Naidu is resorting to unnecessary criticism of the new government, Parthasaradhi said.

Continued on Page 4

KCR pet's death case: RTI query rejected by Hyderabad police

NAVEEN KUMAR ■ HYDERABAD

The Banjara Hills police have rejected an RTI query seeking a certified copy of FIR filed in a case pertaining to the death of Telangana Chief Minister's pet dog Husky.

In response to the query, the official reason cited by the police was that it might 'impede'

investigation or 'influence the fare investigation' (sic).

The Banjara Hills police inspector Kalinga Rao confirmed that the

RTI query was indeed rejected, as investigation in the case was still under way.

Early in September, the police booked a case against a veterinary doctor for alleged neg-



ligence that resulted in the death of Husky, a pet dog at Pragati Bhavan, the official residence of Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao.

The 11-month-old dog belonged to the Hulk breed, which is a cross between a pit bull terrier and a bulldog. Husky died allegedly after the veterinarian administered an injection on September 11.

Continued on Page 4

Naidu trying for friendship with BJP, Janasena: Ummareddy

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Opposition leader Ummareddy Venkateswarlu lashed out at TDP Chief N Chandrababu Naidu, alleging the leader is trying to get back in good terms with BJP and Janasena.

Speaking to media persons in Vizag on Sunday, Ummareddy said, "The statements passed by TDP chief Chandrababu Naidu indicates that he is trying to

root friendship with the BJP and the Janasena again."

It may be recalled that Naidu in his recent meeting in Vizag said that they have lost the election only because of cutting ties with the BJP and the Janasena.

Instead of rectifying his mistakes, Naidu is on a touring spree and is using filthy language to criticise the YSRCP chief YS Jagan Mohan Reddy.



Continued on Page 4

Over 2000 cops for VZM Sirimanu Utsav

NO SALE OF LIQUOR FOR TWO DAYS

PNS ■ VIZIANAGARAM

The authorities will be deploying over 2,100 police personnel including 172 Armed police as a security measure for major folk festival Sirimanotsavam, to be held on Tuesday.

The police said that Sirimanotsavam is the major event of the presiding deity of Vizianagaram Town Sri Pydithalli Ammavari Jatara (festival).

Deputy Inspector General (Visakha Range) LVK Ranga Rao and Vizianagaram Police Chief B Raja Kumari said that the entire Vizianagaram Town will be under the surveillance of over 50 CCTV cameras which will be monitored from the command and control room. He said, there will be no sale of liquor from October 14 to October 16, both days inclusive.

The police said that over six lakh devotees from parts of North Andhra and neighboring Odisha and Chattisgarh will witness the Sirimanotsavam.

The entire Vizianagaram Town will be under the surveillance of over 50 CCTV cameras which will be monitored from the command and control room

Going by the tradition, the festival is celebrated on the first Tuesday after Dussera. The Vizianagaram district administration has completed necessary arrangements for the biggest folk festival in north-coastal Andhra Pradesh.

The temple authorities expect a crowd of more than six lakh this time for the festival, where the priest of the temple is carried on a long pole, called Sirimanu, hoisted on a wooden chariot, all around the Vizianagaram Fort.

The Sirimanu procession is scheduled to start at around 3.30 pm on October 15 which will cover the thoroughfares from the Vizianagaram Fort to the Pydithalli temple.

The bomb disposal teams and sniffer dogs have already been pressed into service to ensure the safety of devotees and people of Vizianagaram. There will be four special mobile teams at strategic places for crowd control and also nab the suspect during the festival.

“We will be inducting four drones during the festival to identify the trouble zones and also to monitor the crowd. We will be imposing certain traffic restrictions on October 14 and 15 for the smooth conduct of the festival,” said Raja Kumari.

District Collector Dr M Hari Jawahar Lal said that there will be temporary toilets all around



the important areas near the fort and temple for convince of the devotees and the district

administration has been taking all the steps for providing some facilities to the devotees.

Bitfury to set up Blockchain innovation centre in Hyd

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Bitfury Group, the largest full-service blockchain technology company in the world, will establish a Blockchain research and innovation centre in Hyderabad.

Bitfury, a billion-dollar tech giant, on Saturday entered into a partnership with Telangana's Blockchain District in this regard.

It will also offer courses, necessary incubation and mentoring support to all associated members.

Blockchain District on Saturday forged new partnerships with Bitfury and Indian School of Business (ISB).

ISB will be offering co-working space, access to investor network, business expertise and many more benefits to Blockchain District startups.

Jayesh Ranjan, Principal Secretary, Information Technology, Electronics and Communications Department, Government of Telangana launched Blockchain District logo and website on the occasion.

Ranjan said that after several rounds of consultations with industry and academia, the government conceptualized



ISB will be offering co-working space, access to investor network, business expertise and many more benefits to Blockchain District startups

“Blockchain District provides a platform which enables the stakeholders to collaborate, co-create and build solutions in blockchain technology, which today is at a nascent stage, but has enormous potential in the coming years,” said Ranjan.

“Telangana being the hub of innovation and technology would always strive to be the first mover in tech-domains,” he added.

Government of Telangana, IITTH, C-DAC and Tech Mahindra are the founding members of Blockchain District.

MLR Institute of Technology was also onboarded to extend support in research and development and incubation.

Blockchain District, which aims to be among the world's top 10 leading Blockchain technology ecosystem by proactively driving key initiatives for developing talent pool, infrastructure, research and innovation and community building.

Run-up to police commemoration Day launches

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The police commemoration week will be commencing from October 15 and the ceremony will be conducted on October 21 at Indira Gandhi municipal stadium in Vijayawada. DGP Gautam Sawang has released the schedule and details of the programme. **Day 1:** Oct 15, Open house at district/unit level and painting competition for school children and essay competition. **Day 2:** Oct 16, Blood donation camp in all unit headquarters. Elocution and essay writing competitions for children of police personnel. **Day 3:** Oct 17, Unit level marathons at all district headquarters. Open house at district/unit level. Blood Donation (spillover, if any). Elocution and essay writing competition for police personnel. **Day 4:** Oct 18, State-level marathon at Visakhapatnam. Workshops at district/unit headquarters with various sections of the society and police on reflection of people's views on police vis-à-vis difficulties faced by police in the discharge of professional responsibilities. **Day 5:** Oct 19, Seminars in educational institutions (universities and colleges) on the need for joining hands with the police for better law and order. **Day 6:** Oct 19 Health camps at district headquarters. Meeting with martyrs' families and cultural programmes. **Day 7:** Oct 20 State-level commemoration parade.

US-China trade talks lower value of yellow metal

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

With the successful conclusion of the fresh first round of trade negotiations between US and China on October 10, 2019, the hopes for resolution of the trade war between these two super powers have been kindled. Consequently the yellow metal, which was hovering around US \$ 1,500, came down to the level of \$ 1,488.87 on the closing day of Saturday. Silver followed suit and closed at \$ 17.65. Similarly, platinum and palladium also declined and closed at \$.896.60 (per 10 gms) and \$ 1,703.25 (per 10 gms), copper stood at Rs 443.15 (per kg) respectively.

Other economic parameters, barring Brent and Crude oil, remained firm. Brent closed at US\$ 60.29 (per barrel), while Crude oil was quoted at Rs.3,869 (per barrel). Gold MCX stood at Rs.37,845 (per 10 gms) and Silver MCX at Rs.45,171 (per kg). BSE Sensex and Nifty 50 closed at 38,127.08 and 11,305.05 respectively. Leading foreign currencies' exchange rates were: US \$: Rs.71.02, British Pound: Rs. 89.88, Euro: Rs. 78.40, Singapore \$: Rs. 51.74, Canadian \$: Rs.53.81, Swiss Franc: Rs.71.29, Australian \$: Rs.48.20, Saudi Rial: Rs. 18.93, Kuwaiti Dinar: Rs.233.91,

Omani Rial : Rs. 184.54 and UAE Dinar : Rs.19.34.

At home, trading gradually picked up in view of the ongoing festival season. While the yellow metal appreciated by Rs. 90 on buying support and closed at Rs. 38,300 (per 10

gms), ornamental gold too, moved up in tandem and was quoted in the range of Rs. 36,420- 36,520 on the closing day. Silver (0.999), recorded its marginal decline of Rs. 200 and closed at Rs. 45,200 (per kg).

COMMODITIES

The sentiment in principal wholesale commodity markets in the twin cities was moderate. Rythu Bazars and the various commodity markets located in Begum Bazar, Kishangunj, Mukthiyargunj, Risala Abdullah, Mir Alam Mandi, Dilsukhnagar, Kukatpally, Bowenpally and General Bazar continued to be from moderate to strong.

During the week, common pulses such as tuar dal, moong dal, urad dal and masoor dal recorded an appreciation in the range of 10 per cent to 12 per cent, while staple food grains and common edible oils, except groundnut oil, remained steady at the previous week's closing levels.

There is good news from the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) which has predicted higher output of oil seeds in India at 377.89 lakh tones during the year 2019 - 2020 as against 365.01

lakh tons in the year 2018-2019. However, the USDA as predicted higher import of edible oils during the same period.

According to it, the import of edible oils by India during the year 2019-2020 is expected to be 165 lakh tons as against 157.68 lakh tons in the previous year.

The prices of common vegetables, onions and tomatoes in particular, flared up considerably during the week, thanks to the excessive rains in the vegetable-growing areas. Common vegetables such as cabbage, cauliflower, ribbed gourd, snake gourd, lady's fingers, cucumber, potatoes, tomatoes and French beans, along with other leafy vegetables, recorded considerable increase in prices in the range of 20 per cent to 28 per cent.

In Hyderabad, the NECC wholesale egg-price further appreciated by Rs. 33 and closed at Rs.411 (per 100). The highest price of Rs. 466 was recorded at Mumbai, while Hospet closed at the lowest price of Rs.390.

‘Much needs to be done on health front’

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The figures reveal that school-age children and adolescents are still at risk of malnutrition and a lot of ground still needs to be covered

India has made some progress in reducing child malnutrition, but a lot needs to be done, according to the first Comprehensive National Nutrition Survey (CNNS) survey. Government schemes have been able to prevent Vitamin A and iodine deficiency among children aged 1-4 years.

But, according to the UNICEF, the rising childhood obesity is adding to the growing threat of non-communicable diseases, like diabetes, among school-aged children and adolescents.

The Ministry of Health and Family Welfare released the result conducted during 2016-18 in 30 states/Union Territories with technical support of the UNICEF.

It's one of the largest micronutrient surveys conducted across the globe covering anthropometric assessments of 1,12,000 children aged 0-19 years. It also included over 51,000 biological samples on children's micronutrient status and risk factors for non-communicable diseases.

Yasmin Ali Haque, UNICEF India Country Representative, said, “The CNNS is an amazing wealth of information. It's time for evidence-driven policy and action to save children and help them fulfil their potentials.”

The Poshan Abhiyaan 2018-22 has set goals to reduce child under-nutrition (stunting and underweight) and low birth weight by 2 per cent a year, and anaemia across age groups by 3 per cent, and create a mass movement for good nutrition in the country. The figures reveal that school-age children and adolescents are still at risk of malnutrition and a lot of ground still needs to be covered.

According to the UNICEF, the high number of anaemic children, adolescents and

women remains a concern for India. Studies suggest poor eating habits (not eating enough iron and vitamin C-rich foods, including fruits and vegetables) and limited access to healthcare are main causes of anaemia.

According to the CNNS, anaemia affects young children and female adolescents the most. Anaemia was significantly higher at 41 per cent in children aged 1-4 years against other age groups. At 40 per cent, prevalence of anaemia in female adolescents, aged 10-19 years, was two times higher than male adolescents (18 per cent).

According to the study, one in four adolescents, aged 10-19 years, remains thin for their age, and 5 per cent of adolescents, aged 10-19 years, overweight or obese.

9,648 volunteer posts to be filled by Dec

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The state government will issue a fresh notification to fill 9,648 Village/Ward Volunteer posts which have remained vacant on account of the selected candidates opting out of the jobs.

According to sources, the officials are submitting the district-wise details of vacancies to the government.

The government has selected 1,94,592 candidates

for the post of Village/Ward Volunteers.

Out of them, 1,84,944 candidates have joined the duties. Each one of them is supposed to provide certain services to 50 families in the village/ward.

The vacant posts will be notified by October-end and filled by December.

Once the government gives its permission, the officials will issue notifications district-wise.



Mahabalipuram summit: Were there any takeaways?

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Beyond the optics, did the Mahabalipuram summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping achieve anything tangible in smoothening the ruffles of the bilateral relationship?

According to experts, the fact that the two leaders spent a lot of time together and displayed a very positive body language shows that there is a good understanding between them, and they are prepared to invest in the bilateral relationship.

Besides the high-level economic and trade dialogue mechanism to deepen economic cooperation and sort out the concerns pertaining to bilateral trade issues, there was nothing substantive, feel some experts.

Former diplomat Ashok Sajjanhar told IANS that the fact that the Mahabalipuram meeting did take place at a time when the relationship between the two nations was passing through a rather stressed and tensed time was important.

“The fact that both the leaders decided to invest so much time, effort and energy is

demonstrative of the importance that both attach to this partnership. Both have found it (informal summit) a useful format, without any pressure of agenda or joint declaration. And they have decided to continue to take it forward,” he said.

Harsh V. Pant, Director of Studies, Observer Research Foundation (ORF), told IANS that the “intent behind these informal summit conversations is now well understood and has had its impact. When the top leadership is communicating to each other, there is less possibility of entering into a crisis like situation.”

However, Pant added, “By and large, I am underwhelmed by the outcome of the Mahabalipuram summit. If you see the statement post Wuhan, it was more ambitious, there was talk of India-China collaborating in third countries, but this time it is very amorphous. The only concrete thing they have done is to create a new mechanism on trade to sort out trade differences, which is very welcome, and there is some recognition in China that the trade deficit is a real problem, which needs to be sorted out.”

HC UPADHYAY
■ HYDERABAD

The oft-repeated provocative and abusive missiles against the mammoth Hindu majority community in the country by fanatical, communal and pseudo-secular elements have the potential to trigger Hindu upsurge any time. And, certainly this is not just a figment of imagination!

Going by the irresponsible and unwarranted utterances of some self-styled leaders of minorities and crest-fallen opposition parties in the electoral battle, it appears that the day is not far away when the Hindus, accounting for 80-plus per cent of the population, would strike back and emphatically demand that India be declared as 'Hindu Rashtira'.

In fact, the authors of the Constitution knew it very well that this country has been and will be the permanent abode of Hindus and therefore, had refrained from adding the word 'secular' in it. However, the

successive Congress governments were fully aware of the fact that the masses were deeply religious and devoted to the principles and practices of Hindu religion, which has the glorious history of evolution over thousands of years. Therefore, year-year political leaders desisted from tinkering with Hindu sentiments. Though no stone was left unturned to suppress the cravings of the Hindus for their political identity through Constitutional diktat, the flame of Hindu Rashtira remained burning brightly throughout. The Partition on the lines of religion and the genocide of Hindus that ensued added fuel to fire.

During these years, despite opposition from all quarters, including the governments, the Hindus are yet to be convinced about non-declaration of the country as the Hindu Rashtira. During the regime of Indira Gandhi the

In fact, the authors of the Constitution knew it very well that this country has been and will be the permanent abode of Hindus and therefore, had refrained from adding the word 'secular' in it

words, 'secular' and 'socialist' were added to the Preamble of the Constitution in an apparent bid to appease minorities and Communists at home and abroad. In this exercise, which radically changed the basic structure of the Constitution, it is noteworthy that no Hindu organisation or Hindu religious leader was consulted, leave alone taking them in confidence. The Preamble of the Constitution of India was amended against the rulings of the Supreme Court which laid down that Parliament cannot alter the 'basic structure' of the Constitution. Obviously, the addition of the words, 'secular' and 'socialist' in the Preamble to the Constitution amounted to changing the 'basic structure' of the Constitution. Most importantly, no hue and cry was raised by the protagonist of the

Constitution who swear by it, day in and day out. On the other hand, this lobby celebrated the change.

In view of this historic background, there is no reason to oppose or fume over any move to bring back the status quo by similar Constitutional amendment. Besides, dropping the words 'secular' and 'socialist', the preamble needs to be rightfully amended with the insertion of the words 'Hindu Rashtira' to honour and assuage the feelings of the vast majority of the Hindus, living in India and abroad.

Only such a step can bring true communal harmony in the country. Further, by doing so, a loud and clear message would go to the anti-Hindu and anti-nation forces that, if they indulge in violence or hurling abuses towards

the Hindus, Jains, Sikhs and Buddhists, they won't be spared from the harshest punishment. The people belonging to the minority communities know it very well that they can live happily and peacefully only by winning the goodwill of the majority Hindus and not by fighting with them or antagonising them.

The Geneva Convention on minorities also clearly lays down that the minorities should mingle with the majority community and earn the goodwill of majority community first; then, it shall be the duty of the majority community to protect and promote the interests of the minorities.

The writing on the wall is clear for all so-called secular forces and self-styled leaders of minorities: it would be in their own interests to extend unstinted support to declare India as the Hindu Rashtira. More Hindu-bashing will only accelerate the process.

Traffic offences traile under both IPC & MV Act : SC

The recent verdict of the apex court on traffic offenders,

if implemented strictly, will go a long way to curb the increasing road accidents in the country.

The Supreme Court has held that traffic rules violators causing accidents by rash and negligent driving could be tried and punished separately under the Indian Penal Code and the Motor Vehicle Act.

A division bench, comprising Justice Indu Malhotra and Justice Sanjay Khanna, observed that ingredients of offences under both laws are different and an offender can be tried and punished independently under them.

Making an exception to the principle that the M.V Act being special law, it should prevail over the IPC, which is the general law, the bench said that the MV Act is a beneficial piece of legislation whose primary objective is to provide a statutory scheme for compensation of victims of accidents. On the other hand, the IPC is different in nature, having the object of punishing the offenders.

Congress, already on shaky grounds in Telangana, also finds itself ill at ease about which side to back in the TSRTC strike. While some state leaders like Revanth Reddy and Seethakka have backed the striking RTC employees, many others are holding their horses and hedging their bets before backing the strike in view of the looming Huzurnagar Assembly by-elections. They aren't sure if the strike really has large-scale popular support among people and are not willing to commit one way or the other. Some of them fear conceding advantage to TRS by allowing it to lay blame of inconveniencing commuters at their doorstep. BJP, on the other hand is not in two minds about the strike. Its leaders, both at the state and

Cong can't strike a balance over RTC stir

central level, have clearly thrown their lot with the striking RTC workers and called the government handling highhanded and arbitrary. Strikingly different from the Congress position where the likes of Revanth Reddy and others are taking part in RTC employees' dharnas, some other partymen don't want to be seen anywhere near the dharna sites.

Cheeky, point-blank salvos from VH

There are occasions where you tactfully avoid confrontation with rivals, work your way around but

end up conceding vital space to opponents. There's this other way where you say it upfront, hold your ground and also have your way. Senior Congress leader V Hanumantha Rao apparently takes this no-nonsense approach of saying it like it is. He has in the past spoken his mind about former governor ESL Narasimhan being allegedly a little slow in exercising authority and a little inactive. That was then. VH has now trained guns on the new Telangana governor Tamilisai Soundararajan too. He recently said Tamilisai does not give an audience to



Congress leaders and avoids them. This was right in the face of the Governor who was on the dais right there along with leaders of all political parties at an Alay-Balay function a week ago. If that was not blunt enough, VH even took on Himachal Pradesh governor Bandaru Dattatreya who had him-

self organised the Alay-Balay as part of his annual calendar. Pointing at the flexis put up at the function, Hanumantha Rao told Dattatreya he was unhappy not to see a single Congress leader's face on the banners, not even part president Sonia Gandhi's. Awkward moments for Dattatreya and Tamilisai, but VH did make a point when it mattered.

Governor dashed Netizens' hope

The more you are seen and heard at public functions the bigger a power centre you seem. This

may or may not be the case, but it's exactly how commoners see it and look up to you to resolve issues. Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan's experience has been such thus far. Plus, she is also active on the social media where most of the chatter happens and perceptions are developed. Lately, Netizens have been flooding the Governor's SM handle with scores of public issues. Up till now, the chatterati on the Net used to typically tag Minister KTR or other officials for issues that concerned the general public. Now they are looking at Tamilisai for help. But

alas, the Guv doesn't respond to appeals made on social media. Many a Netizen has sought her intervention in the ongoing TSRTC strike over the past week but here has been no response from her.

This probably has to do with social media spreading the word that she was mulling to start the Praja Darbar tradition at Raj Bhavan, which the media also ran reports about. Once bitten, twice shy. That could be why Tamilisai is being very wary of social media, and request and speculations made on it.

(Contributed by PV Kondal Rao, Kolishetty Venkateswarlu, Naveena Ghanate)

Raid on brothel, gambling den

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The City Task Force personnel on Sunday raided a house in Muralinagar under Kancharapalem police station which was being run as a brothel and arrested three persons. Two women were rescued and sent government home.

The arrested organizers were Hanumanthu Govindamma, Gangu Ammulu and Kanchuvani Adi Lakshmi. One customer Manyapuri Praveen Kumar of Kapparada, Kancharapalem, Visakhapatnam was also held. The CTF staff rescued two victims Suravarapu Jyothi and Kottapalli Priyanka. They seized cash of Rs 5,300, Room Key and five mobiles from their possession..

The Task Force personnel also raided two places under Gopalapatnam and Airport police station limits. They raided place backside of Kallupakalu, Baji Junction and apprehended four persons and seized cash of Rs 30,430, gaming stone and coins.

The second raid was near Moodu Gullu, Yellapuvanipalem, Gopalapatnam where nine persons were arrested. They seized cash of Rs. 30,430 and coins.

Global meet on space laws ends, call for sustainable development

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Prof Tamma Suryanarayana Sastry, Vice-Chancellor, Tamil Nadu, Dr Ambedkar Law University, Chennai; while speaking about the nature of international law and super power domination since a long time, emphasized on the concept of sustainable development as enshrined in various international treaties and conventions. He also spoke about the catastrophic effects of the expeditions in outer space and that one must realize them well within time to prevent humankind from devastation. Sastry also said the nations must take note of the problems associated therein and act in the right direction to avoid them.

He was chief gust at the valedictory function of International Conference on Super Powers Dominion in Outer Space and Global Sustainable Development organized by Damodaram Sanjivayaa National Law University in collaboration with Global Network against Weapons and Nuclear Power in Space.

Two technical sessions were held during the day which were chaired by Prof Peter Kuznick, Professor of History and Director of Nuclear Studies Institute at American University.



Professor Dr Tamma Suryanarayana Sastry, Vice-Chancellor, Tamil Nadu Dr. Ambedkar Law University being honoured on the occasion of international conference on super powers dominion in outer space and global sustainable at Damodaram Sanjivayaa National Law University, in Visakhapatnam on Sunday

DSNLU Vice-Chancellor Prof S Surya Prakash was extremely happy about the conference and the results it bore, since it had involved some meaningful discussion and insights from foreign delegates from USA and UK

In his address, the Vice-Chancellor of DSNLU, Prof S Surya Prakash was extremely happy about the conference and the results it bore, since it had involved some meaning-

ful discussion and insights from foreign delegates from USA and UK. He emphasised that as responsible nations and citizens, one must work towards creation of a globally

sustainable world and must not tolerate militarization or commercialisation of outer space, which is a shared natural resource. He hoped for continuity in the saga of such events, where we may indulge in more meaningful discussions.

R Bharath Kumar, assistant professor, Registrar Prof C M Rao of DSNLU also spoke on the occasion.

The conference is attended by academicians, students, research scholars and delegates from across the world.

Residents protest against bar location

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Residents of NGGOs Colony in Kapparada layout staged a dharna on Sunday at 48 Bus Stop in the colony against the proposed location of bar and restaurant close to a temple and school.

President of the NGGOS Colony Welfare Association G Prasada Rao, who called and organized the dharna, said there was a need to protect the sanctity of the Vaibhava Rajeswari Temple located in the colony and vitiate the atmosphere of the school which is amidst the colony and the close to the proposed bar and restaurant.

"The sale of liquor will have an impact on the thousands of the employees living in the colony and leading a peaceful life. Anti-social elements after consuming liquor might indulge in riots and harass the women passing through the Bar," Rao said.

People from nearby colonies and women from the residential area participated in the

People from nearby colonies and women from the residential area participated in the dharna which was held from 9 am to 12 noon

dharna which was held from 9 am to 12 noon.

Similar protests were held in Arilova and other workers colony in the city where women launched the agitation for location of wine shops and bars in the residential areas.

City convener of AIDWA PN Madhavi said the chief minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy need to be appreciated for regulating the wine shops and curbing the belt shops.



Naval personnel carrying the body of havaladar Ramesh Ruppa at Visakhapatnam Airport on Sunday evening

Army man's body arrives Vizag

PNS ■ KAKINADA

Floral tributes were paid to the mortal remains of Havaladar Ramesh Ruppa on arrival at the Visakhapatnam Airport on Sunday evening. The funeral is scheduled to be held at his native place, Gedelavanipeta, Kasimualasa, Srikakulam today.

Wreath laying ceremony with

The funeral is scheduled to be held at his native place, Gedelavanipeta, Kasimualasa, Srikakulam today

military honours was conducted at Shradhanjali Sthal at Airport by G Swaroopa Rani ACP(West), Revenue Officer KP Kishore from District Administration, Lt Cdr A

Kandwal from Eastern Naval Command and Col DK Rai the Station HQs (Army) Visakhapatnam as a mark of respect to the deceased with a ceremonial guard of the Navy.

Fire tender's brakes fail, crew hurt

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Crew members of a fire tender belonging to Naval Dockyard sustained minor injuries when the vehicle brakes failed and the rolled into the valley while coming down from Dolhin Hill near Yarada on Sunday morning. Reports said the vehicle after the brakes failed, hit an electric police glided into the valley. All the injured persons were admitted into INS Kalyani Naval Hospital.

The fire tender was carrying water for the Naval Dockyard employees who organized a function atop the hill. The incident took place after the vehicle returning to the station after supplying water to the employees. The employees stated that two school buses from Anakapalle met with an accident and 30-children were injured.

Valmiki Jayanti celebrated at EG collectorate

Participating in the programme district collector D Muralidhar Reddy, after paying his respects to Valmiki, called upon the youth, particularly student community, to read about great people like Maharishi Valmiki and follow their teachings

PNS ■ KAKINADA

The birth anniversary of Maharishi Valmiki was organized here under the aegis of BC Welfare Department at East Godavari collectorate on Sunday.

Participating in the programme district collector D Muralidhar Reddy, after paying his respects to Valmiki, called upon the youth particularly student community to observe and read about the great people like Maharishi Valmiki and the



East Godavari collector D. Muralidhar Reddy and others paying their respects to Maharshi Valmiki on his birth anniversary at a programme organized at district collectorate on Sunday

services extended by such great saints for the welfare of mankind after transforming as saint.

The collector on this occasion asked the students to read and observe the life histories of Gautama Budha, Jyotirao Pule, Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Ambedkar and how they served poor and downtrodden and the needy in the society. MLC Chukkala Ramachandra Rao, Deputy Director BC Welfare Hari Prasad, ZP CEO M Jyoti and others participated.

AP, TS want official celebration in New Delhi

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Valmiki Jayanti was celebrated by AP and Telangana States on a grand scale in New Delhi on Sunday. Governments of both the Telugu State have given a call to celebrate the event officially in New Delhi.

With this, AP Bhavan In-charge Resident Commissioner Bhavana Saxena and Telangana Bhavan Resident Commissioner Vedantham Giri organised

the celebrations. They inaugurated the celebrations by paying floral tributes to Valmiki.

Speaking on the occasion, Bhavana Saxena said Valmiki was a great sage who was born in a tribal family living in forest and rose to the level of penning the Ramayana, the epic loaded with wisdom. After becoming the Maharshi, Valmiki undertook a journey to South India through Dandakaranya. He also toured Sri Lanka. During his rest period, he wrote 23,000

slokas, in seven 'kandalams', she added.

Telangana Resident Commissioner Vedatham Giri said Valmiki, who hailed from the lowest rung of the society, is the first poet to write the Ramayana in verse.

Telangana Bhavan Deputy commissioner G Rammohan, APIC Special Officer Kancharla Jaya Rao and AP Bhavan Assisatant Commissioner Dr K Linga Raju were among those present.

2 HELD IN CRACKERS BLAST CASE

PNS ■ KAKINADA

Two persons were arrested in connection with blast in unauthorized fire cracker making unit by the Peddapuram division police in East Godavari on Saturday evening. The arrested were Palacharla Sai Ram, the owner of Bhavni Fire Cracker Works and Bobbarada Satti Babu the lessee on this unauthorized cracker making unit.

The incident took Place at G. Medapadu village im Samarlakota Mandal in the district on September 28.

It may be recalled that in total six women workers all from SC social section succumbed to burn injuries four days after the incident while undergoing treatment at a private hospital in Kakinada. The other three sustained simple burn injuries.

According to Kakinada RDO and sub divisional magistrate A G Chinnikrishna,



According to Kakinada RDO and sub divisional magistrate A G Chinnikrishna, compensation of Rs 5 lakh in the form of cheques out of the total Rs 10 lakh sanctioned was handed over to the kin of the bereaved families

compensation of Rs 5 lakh in the form of cheques out of the total Rs 10 lakh sanctioned was handed over to the kin of the bereaved families. The remain-

ing Rs 5 lakh would be paid to the kin of the deceased separately in next few days due to technical reasons. The three women workers who sustained

minor burn injuries have been paid Rs 3 lakh each, the RDO said.

Regarding the unauthorized making of fire crackers, a detailed report was sent to the district administration, he added.

Peddapuram sub division police officer (DSP) A Srinivasa Rao revealed that SC, ST Atrocities (prevention) case was booked against Sai Ram the owner of Bhavani fire cracker unit. As the lessee B Satti Babu also belonged this social section, he was spared.

East Godavari DFO and Fire and Disaster Management department official Ch Ratna Babu said that Bhavani Fire Workes obtained NOC from their department for the year 2017 only.

It is mandatory to get NOC every year, the official clarified. The works were being conducted at a place 500 meters away from the permitted place, the DFO clarified.

Mahesh Babu opens jewellery showroom

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Tollywood Superstar Mahesh Babu inaugurated Bhima — a jewellery showroom — in Vijayawada on Sunday.

Fans came in large numbers to catch a glimpse of the Tollywood hero.

Bhima launched its business in 1925 when it started its first showroom. Now, it has 45 showrooms across the country. Bandar Road in the city witnessed a huge traffic jam as hundreds of Mahesh Babu's fans thronged the place.

The Tollywood said he is always happy to visit Vijayawada. "Most of the functions organised to celebrate the



Actor Mahesh Babu at the inaugural of the jewellery showroom in Vijayawada

victory of my films were held in the city. My new flick is due for release around Sankranti. It

is being made in such a way that my fans will feel proud," he said.



ICRISAT to host meet on Big Data in agri

PNS ■ SANGAREDDY

Over 500 delegates are set to discuss the issues of trust in digital agriculture and explore ways to build it at the third annual convention of CGIAR platform for Big Data in agriculture.

The three-day 2019 'Big Data in Agriculture Convention: TRUST: Humans, Machines' will be hosted by ICRISAT (International Crop Research Institute for Semi-arid Tropics) between October 16 and 18, Hyderabad.

Talking about the theme of convention, coordinator for the BIG DATA Platform, Brian King, highlighted the opportunities machines and machine-to-machine systems offer for accelerating food security solutions at a time when climates and ecosystems are under threat. He underlined the importance of ensuring that ethical frameworks and institutions stay abreast of the rate of changes these digital technologies present.

"The global calls for digital trust are intensifying even as the need for comprehensive, multifaceted solutions for global food security grows," said King. "We need to increase production, but we also need to preserve and renew ecosystems, manage climate extremes, and deal with depleting soil and land resources. Trustworthy digital solutions may be the most important tool we have to rise to the challenge-if we can build them."

Telangana State and its capital city, Hyderabad, have had a prominent role to play in expanding India's digital footprint. K T Rama Rao, Minister for Information Technology, is expected to deliver the keynote address during the convention's inaugural session.

Naidu's cheap tactics won't work, says Parthasaradhi

Continued from Page 1

"The irregularities committed by the TDP's Janmabhoomi committees during the last five years were a clear example of Naidu's bad governance," Parthasaradhi said and observed that Naidu is not speaking a word when asked to comment on why the people rejected TDP in villages. He alleged that Naidu is not talking about the corruption done by his son Lokesh, TDP MLAs and ministers. "He is not speaking a word against his party men who had looted public money by diverting. Who is responsible for all this?" he asked.

Parthasaradhi said Naidu is not discussing why SCs, STs, BCs and Minorities, who supported TDP during the NTR's rule, had dis-

YSRC dividing farmers based along caste lines: Narendra

PNS ■ GUNTUR

Former TDP MLA Dhulipalla Narendra has alleged that YSRC has brought about a caste divide among farmers through the YSR Rythu Bharosa scheme. Speaking to media on Sunday at Guntur, he stated that in the last four months, about 150 farmers have committed suicides.

Dhulipalla Narendra has alleged that the government has imposed conditions to eliminate farmers from the beneficiaries list. "If two to three tenant farmers own a land, then the scheme will be implemented for only one tenant farmer. How is this correct? They have mentioned that the list of beneficiaries belonging to SC community must be listed first, followed BCs. Only then will others benefit from the scheme. It means if the number of SC farmers are



YS Jaganmohan Reddy has promised for Rs 12,500 per annum, but is giving only Rs 6500 on behalf of the state and forwarding Rs 6000 from the Centre under his scheme, he has explained. He was citing the statement of minister Kanna Babu. Last year, the union government had paid Rs 6000 for 45 lakh farmers in the state

more, then other farmers will not get to benefit."

He also questioned the government about how the number of beneficiaries is 40 lakh, despite there being over one crore farmers in the state.

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forwarding Rs 6000 from the Centre under his scheme, he has explained. He was citing the statement of minister Kanna Babu. Last year, the union government had paid Rs 6000 for 45 lakh farmers in the state.

When Kanna Babu was questioned why only 40 lakh farmers were beneficiaries, he

AS STRIKE TURNS INTO A LAW AND ORDER...

KCR softens stand on TSRTC strike

L VENKAT RAM REDDY ■ HYDERABAD

Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, despite his uncompromising stance on TSRTC strike from Day-1, is now having second thoughts and may soften his stand in the days ahead as he is understood to be under tremendous pressure from all sides with the 10-day-old stir snowballing into a major law and order issue.

According to highly-placed sources, the government has withheld its plan to serve dismissal orders to the sacked staff. The government is now planning to hold talks with RTC unions again. Although KCR may not be part of the direct talks with RTC unions initially, the confabulations are likely to be held at the cabinet

- Orders for dismissal of striking staff put on hold
- Govt to win over RTC unions ahead of Huzurnagar bypoll
- Pressure of united oppn and mounting resentment among govt staff
- Poor response to RTC mgmt drive for temporary recruitment

sub-committee level.

The death of RTC driver Srinivas Reddy on Sunday, who on Saturday immolated himself to protest the state government's tough stand on RTC strike, attracted nation-wide media attention and drew flak from various sections, putting the state government in a fix.



The multiple suicide attempts elsewhere in the state, violent incidents near bus depots and bus stations, the unified opposition taking on the government through protests on streets with the support of social organizations, increasing resentment among government employees over the government's tough stance on RTC strike are among the factors that influenced KCR to modify his stand

on RTC strike. With the Huzurnagar bypoll just a week away, the political implications of stretching RTC strike till then or beyond are also being factored in by the TRS leadership. So, KCR is expected to win over the striking RTC unions ahead of the bypoll.

Over the past 10 days of strike, the situation at the ground level has only worsened, mainly because of the government's decision to sack 48,000 RTC employees on strike. The government is likely to clarify its stance on the strike by October 15 in the High Court, which had issued directions asking the state government and RTC management to give details of the steps taken to mitigate the hardships of people in the wake of the strike.

TS taking rapid strides in farm mechanisation

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana has recorded a rapid growth of about 82 per cent growth in farm mechanisation within five years since it was formed in 2014. The number of tractors alone increased from 1.5 lakh to 2.87 lakh, recording 90 per cent growth during the period, besides a steady growth in farm trailers and harvesters.

The state government, which adopted a holistic approach to ensure overall development of the agriculture sector, has been focusing on farm mechanisation to increase productivity, reduce cost of production and increase extent of land under cultivation. On the directions of Chief Minister K Chandrashekar Rao, the agriculture department officials charted out an action plan and collected mandal-wise data enumerating required agriculture machinery.

Besides providing a subsidy of 75 per cent to SC/ST farmers and 50 per cent to other



Tractors in state up from 1.5 lakh five years ago, to 2.87 lakh now; Govt focuses on productivity increase, cost reduction

farmers, the state government has been encouraging farmers to purchase machinery of their requirement and choice. "Awareness camps as well as demonstration workshops on usage of machinery for various purposes, including seed sowing, weed removal and crop cutting, were conducted to

encourage farmers purchase farm machinery," officials of the agriculture department said.

The state government spent about Rs 110 crore in 2017-18 to promote farm mechanisation and enhanced the allocations to Rs 328.83 crore during previous fiscal of 2018-19. In the current financial year of 2019-20, the government allocated Rs 304.34 crore towards subsidies under farm mechanisation scheme.

Following the efforts of the agriculture department, the population of farm vehicles has increased considerably over last five years.

The agricultural vehicular population increased from 2.75 lakh in 2014 to 4.99 lakh in 2019, registering an increase of about 82 per cent with 2.23 lakh additional vehicles. Interestingly, general vehicular population in the State, including farm vehicles, recorded a growth rate of 71.4 per cent during the period from 71.52 lakh to 122.58 lakh (1.22 crore).

Govt should set up more DWCRA Bazaars: Vanga Geetha

It is a happy augury that the DWCRA Bazaar has done a business of Rs 3.5 crore in just 10 days," she said.

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Kakinada MP Vanga Geeta, who visited 'Saras' - the all India DWCRA Bazaar - 2019 at the Swaraj Maidan Rythu Bazaar in Vijayawada on Sunday, said this is the second biggest DWCRA bazaar in the country. She said 370 stalls were set



up by 450 Self-Help Groups (SHGs) hailing from 22 States in the country. "It is a happy augury that the DWCRA Bazaar has done a business of Rs 3.5 crore in just 10 days," she said.

Geeta said that the State government should set up more such bazaars to encourage SHGs in the State. She said in order to empower women, such bazaars should be set up in all districts in the State.

Man held for two-wheeler theft

Hyderabad: property Offender involved in a two-wheeler theft case was apprehended by the Habeebnagar police on Sunday. The police recovered a Honda Activa from his possession. According to the police, the suspect was identified as Mohd Saddam, 23, of Muradnagar in Asifnagar. "The modus operandi (MO) of the suspect is to move around in the localities during night time and commit theft of motorcycles parked outside the houses," said J Shiva Kumar, Detective Sub Inspector, Habeebnagar police station.

Social media, pranayam part of UGC's 'life skills'

Continued from Page 1

The curriculum has three electives — integral human being, yoga and pranayama and gratitude.

While the first elective talks about obligation to self, parents and society besides a module on living with others with their acceptance, the module on gratitude is about duty versus rights. "The module on yoga talks about difference between yoga and pranayama and their inter-relatedness. What should be the asanas performed before examination or a presentation? All these things are listed in the curriculum," the official said. "The curriculum has been developed by an expert committee with an aim to support our graduates to unlock and discover their true potential and making them social responsive citizens," the official added.

Giving KCR an earful at CM's grievance cell

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

An audio recording of the purported conversation between an angry complainant and the person who received it at the Grievances Cell of CMO went viral on social media platforms on Sunday.

The 2.56-minute audio pertains to a complaint from one Ranjith Kumar, 33, hailing from Karimnagar mandal in Karimnagar district, against none other than Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao

for extending the 16-day-long Dasara vacation for students by a week. In the audio clip, Ranjith is heard saying: "What is going on in the State? The state is fully in disturbed mood. Children already forgot everything. Once again the government is extending holidays one more week. The RTC employees are doing their strike. The Chief Minister is arrogantly behaving. In-between the two (RTC employees and Chief Minister) we are facing troubles. We are suffering a lot. Whether a Chief Minister, who is in pivotal position, would talk like that? The Chief Minister says run the buses to ensure that the people not to face troubles. Are we not facing troubles? Whether the government uses the school children buses? The Chief Minister has to discuss with them to solve their problem? Why such arrogance? Chief Minister of the State means he is like a father to the people. Father has to teach a lesson to the children. It is not correct on the part of Chief Minister to say that if you want to go...go...we will remove. Chief Minister is getting ready for fight. Is it a way to the

Chief Minister? Chief Minister has to convince the RTC employees in presence of State government employees. Will RTC employees don't get anger if Chief Minister says that he will remove 50,000 employees? Chief Minister is not giving value to the RTC employees. The RTC employees will come a step down if Chief Minister gives value to them. We are getting irritation while seeing the behavior of Chief Minister. Take this as complaint and tell. We are suffering between RTC employees and Chief Minister. RTC is for us and Chief Minister is for us. We the people are facing lose if they fight each other. One thing is the Chief Minister's arrogance to be decreased against employees or people. Chief Minister also scolds the people, saying that they are becoming groups here and there. Chief Minister scolds people and workers. Whose sake his rule? Whose sake we achieved Telangana state? Telangana achieved with waging movements, but now the government is suppressing the movements in the same Telangana. Is it correct? Was Telangana possible if Andhra rulers suppressed the movements in this manner? Where KCR would have become as Chief Minister? KCR has to remember all these things and he has to look after the people and workers as his own children. Chief Minister has to (back) down as a father, who downs for his children and sacrifices, for his children. Not to say 'I will not listen... I will not do' because it is democracy. Bring this issue to the notice of Chief Minister."

The receiver said that he will send the complaint.

Teachers plan pen-down strike in support of TSRTC workers

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Panchayat Raj Teachers' Union (PRTU) on Sunday expressed its solidarity with the cause of striking RTC workers and announced its decision to observe pen-down strike upon the reopening of schools after the extended Dasara vacation, which is scheduled to end on October 19.

At a meeting here on Sunday, PRTU resolved to support the fight for merger of RTC with the government. PRTU leaders pledged their support to RTC workers. Apart from PRTU, 22 teachers' unions will support RTC strike, they said.

The PRTU leaders believe that the extension of Dasara vacation is intended to weaken the RTC strike. So, once

the vacation ends, PRTU would join hands with other employees' associations and collectively fight for RTC workers' cause.

According to PRTU leaders, Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao, by unilaterally extending the Dasara vacation, has made it clear that he is acting like a dictator. They breathed fire at the government for trying to weaken education system. That is why, the vacation has been extended, they reasoned.

The leaders of PRTU said they were ready for another round of Sakala Janula Samme to end the dictatorial style of functioning of the government and questioned KCR's authority to extend Dasara vacation in the first place.

KCR pet's death case: RTI query rejected by Hyderabad police

Continued from Page 1

Based on a complaint filed by Asif Ali Khan, who handles pet dogs at Pragati Bhavan, the police registered a case and launched a probe. The complainant had alleged that the dog died due to negligence by the doctor and the doctor in-charge of the private veterinary clinic, where the dog was rushed when its condition worsened following

the injection. The police reply to RTI police said, "On receipt of your petition, verified the available records and it is revealed that the said case was under investigation. As such the disclosure of evidence at this juncture would impede the process at investigation or it may influence the fare investigation. Hence such information cannot be provided U/Sec 8(1) (h) of Right to Information Act. Hence

your application has been rejected."

According to the FIR, a case under section 429 (Mischievous by killing or maiming cattle) of the Indian Penal Code (IPC) and Section 11 (4) of the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act was booked against Dr Ranjit and the in-charge of a private veterinary clinic, Dr Laxmi Srinivasan, at Banjara Hills Police Station.

SHORT READS



Farmer hangs self wearing BJP poll T-shirt in Buldhana

BULDHANA: In an incident that is likely to embarrass the Devendra Fadnavis government, a farmer allegedly committed suicide on Sunday morning in Maharashtra's Buldhana district while wearing a BJP promotional T-shirt. Incidentally, Fadnavis is in the east Maharashtra city where he is scheduled to address three rallies during the day for the October 21 Assembly polls. Police said 38-year-old farmer, Raju Talware, was found hanging at around 11 am at his residence in Khatkhed in Shegaon taluka, part of Jalgaon (Jamod) Assembly seat. "He was wearing a BJP T-shirt with the caption 'punha aaliya aaple sarkar' (let's bring our government to power again)," said an official. Maharashtra labour minister Sanjay Kutte is the BJP candidate and sitting MLA from Jalgaon (Jamod) Assembly seat.

Our schemes are for people's welfare, says UP CM Adityanath

AURANGABAD: Initiatives of BJP-Shiv Sena government in Maharashtra are about people's welfare while those of previous governments were about grabbing public money for the benefit of a few, Uttar Pradesh Chief Minister Yogi Adityanath said at a poll rally in Maharashtra's Hingoli district on Sunday. Maharashtra Assembly polls are slated for October 21 and results will be announced on October 24. "Funds allocated for schemes and farmers were grabbed. Deals were cut while providing jobs. Development was limited to development of a family," Adityanath said attacking the opposition. Speaking on the revocation of provisions of Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir, he said the move by Prime Minister Narendra Modi was a tribute to icons like Babasaheb Ambedkar and Chhatrapati Shivaji who fought for justice.

Four arrested for printing, circulating fake currency

COIMBATORE: A fake currency-printing unit was busted here on Sunday and four people have been arrested, police said. Currencies with a face value Rs 14 lakh in different denominations were seized, the police said. The printers fell into the dragnet when some shopkeepers caught two persons trying to circulate the fake currencies late Saturday evening and handed them over to the police. On interrogation, the duo, one of whom is taking up coaching for IAS examination, is said to have confessed to circulating the fake notes for the last one month, police said. Based on the information, police caught Dhanraj, the kingpin of the unit, in the early hours of Sunday and learned that he was printing the notes in a rented house and circulating them with the help of three people. Another person was also held in connection with the racket.

‘Man with ‘56-inch chest’ did what previous PMs couldn’t

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Sunday heaped praise on Prime Minister Narendra Modi for abrogating Article 370, saying the previous governments never had the courage shown by the "man with 56-inch chest" in integrating Jammu and Kashmir with India's mainstream. Addressing an election rally in Maharashtra's Kolhapur district, he said people should ask Congress and NCP leaders, when they come to seek votes, whether they support the NDA government's decision to abrogate the provisions that gave special status to Jammu and Kashmir.

He targeted Congress leader Rahul Gandhi and NCP chief Sharad Pawar for questioning the government's move to abrogate Article 370.

"After people of the country and Maharashtra voted him for the second term, Modi did something for which the entire country was waiting for 70



years...he abrogated Article 370 on August 5 and joined Jammu and Kashmir with the country's mainstream," Shah said.

Shah said since the days of Jan Sangh, they have been hearing that there cannot be two prime ministers, there cannot be two symbols and two constitutions, but "it was the Congress which, by imposing Article 370, stopped the process of integrating Jammu and Kashmir with

India for several years".

"As a result, thousands of our people lost their lives due to terrorism, but still there was no intention of any party to remove Article 370," he said.

"Several governments came and went, several prime ministers came and went, no one had the courage to abrogate Article 370. But, the man with the 56-inch chest scrapped it in one go," Shah said.

After people of the country and Maharashtra voted him for the second term, Modi did something for which the entire country was waiting for 70 years...he abrogated Article 370 on August 5 and joined Jammu and Kashmir with the country's mainstream

— SURESH, founder of Bamboo

He said during the UPA rule, terrorists from Pakistan used to infiltrate and kill Indian soldiers.

"They used to decapitate our soldiers, but the then prime minister 'Mouni baba' Manmohan Singh never used to utter a single word. But after the Uri and Pulwama attacks, Modi showed the courage of killing terrorists in their den through surgical strike and air strikes," he said. He further hit out at the opposition over the government's decision to ban the practice of triple talaq.

Illegal immigrants responsible for 80% crimes in Delhi: Manoj

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Delhi BJP president Manoj Tiwari on Sunday held illegal immigrants responsible for 80 per cent crimes in the national capital, referring to the incident of chain snatching with Prime Minister Narendra Modi's niece in the city.

Tiwari said his demand for national register for citizens (NRC) exercise in Delhi is for identifying and evicting such illegal immigrants involved in crimes. "As many as 80 per cent crimes involve illegal immigrants in Delhi. That's why I have been demanding NRC but whenever I do so, Arvind Kejriwal rises as their shield," he said. Recently, Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal on a question about NRC implementation in Delhi said Tiwari will be the first to be evicted if the exercise is started in the city.

Tiwari said the responsibility of law and order and crime control lied with the Delhi Police and he was not trying to protect it by naming the illegal immigrants.

"But it needs to be worked out how is the Delhi Police going to control crime in Delhi when a large number of illegal immigrants are living in different parts of the city," he said.



Damayanti Ben Modi, daughter of the prime minister's brother Prahlad Modi, became a victim of snatching in the national capital with her purse containing cash of Rs 50,000 and two mobile phones wrenched from her grasp by two persons when she was alighting from an auto-rickshaw on Saturday. The incident occurred a few kilometres away from the residence of Lieutenant Governor Anil Bajjal and Chief Minister Kejriwal. Two persons on a scooter snatched the woman's purse containing Rs 50,000, two mobile phones, some documents and other valuables around 7 am when she got down at the Gujarati Samaj Bhawan in North Delhi's Civil Lines area, a senior police officer said.

Modi has time to ‘campaign’ for US Prez but not for flood-hit

PNS ■ BENGALURU

Senior Congress leader Siddaramaiah on Sunday hit out at Prime Minister Narendra Modi, alleging he had time to campaign for US President Donald Trump, seeking a second term in the general elections there in 2020, but not to visit flood-ravaged Karnataka.

Terming the BJP as "fascist" and "dictatorial," the former Chief Minister accused the state government of 'colluding with the Assembly Speaker in restricting the media from covering the proceedings of the House.

"This time it was unprecedented floods in the state along with drought in some parts.. central government gave aid only after 60 days that too Rs 1,200 crore.. according to me damage suffered is more than Rs 1 lakh crore," Siddaramaiah said.

Speaking to reporters in Chikkamagaluru, he said, "Modi did not visit Karnataka, he instead was touring foreign countries and had gone to campaign for US President Donald Trump."

".. Narendra Modi tweets as soon as there were floods in Bihar, expressing sympathy.

In Karnataka when there were about 90 deaths and four to five people are still missing due to floods, he did not express

This time it was unprecedented floods in the state along with drought in some parts.. central government gave aid only after 60 days that too Rs 1,200 crore.. according to me damage suffered is more than Rs 1 lakh crore

— SIDDARAMIAH, Senior Congress leader



Siddaramiah

sympathy," he added.

As many as 2,798 villages in 103 taluks of 22 districts in the state were affected by floods, in which around seven lakh people were shifted to safe areas.

About 3400 cattle and 91 people died during rains and floods in August.

Further attacking the Prime Minister, Siddaramaiah said, "Narendra Modi claims to have a 56-inch chest.. what is the use of having a big chest without a motherly heart inside it?

Having a heart that cares for

Bengal BJP to take out 10-day Gandhi Sankalp Yatra

PNS ■ KOLKATA,

The BJP leadership in West Bengal will be taking out rallies across the state from October 15 to 26, as part of the party's nationwide 'Gandhi Sankalp Yatra' initiative to propagate the ideals of the Father of the Nation.

Addressing a press meet here on Sunday, BJP state unit chief Dilip Ghosh said party MPs, MLAs and panchayat pradhans will take part in the rallies, each of which will be preceded by a tableau projecting Mahatma Gandhi's contributions.

"The yatra was launched on October 2 elsewhere in the country, on the occasion of Gandhiji's 150th birth anniversary. Here, we had to postpone the date in view of the ongoing festive season," he said. In all, the rallies will cover a distance of 6,500 km in the state over a period of 10 days," Ghosh stated, adding the administration would be informed about the yatra and its course in advance.

Asked if the party was



anticipating any restriction by the state administration, Ghosh said, "This yatra is being taken out by the BJP to preach Gandhi's ideals of non-violence and cleanliness to the present generation."

"I think the ruling dispensation will not be opposed to the initiative. However, if there is any such development we will act accordingly," the BJP MP from Midnapore said.

The state government had last year slammed brakes on the saffron party's rath yatra, citing possible breakdown in

law and order. The upcoming yatra, Ghosh maintained, will boost the prime minister's 'Swachh Bharat Mission'.

To a question if it will also raise the issue of alleged killings of BJP party workers in Bengal, Ghosh said, "We are taking out separate rallies to protest the murder of democracy in the state."

"Only yesterday (Saturday), we organized a sit-in in the city against the spiralling political violence and the triple murder in Murshidabad's Jiaganj," the BJP state unit chief added.

‘Those thinking of forming govt in Haryana will be in Oppn’

PNS ■ RATIA (HARYANA)

In a veiled attack on the ruling BJP in Haryana, SAD chief on Sunday said those who are expecting to form the next government in the state will sit in the opposition.

"The situation is changing too fast in Haryana. Those who are thinking of forming government will sit in opposition," Badal told reporters while campaigning for SAD candidate Kulwinder Singh Kunal from Ratia seat in Fatehabad district. Asked about BJP's poll manifesto released in Chandigarh, he said, "When (a BJP) government is not going to be formed then what comments should I make."

The BJP has set a target of 75 plus seats in the state election to be held on October 21.

There's unease between the SAD and the BJP in Haryana after the Akali Dal accused the saffron party of backtracking on its commitment to contest Haryana Assembly polls together. Later, it announced an alliance with the Indian National Lok Dal on three assembly seats.

Last month, Badal had taken a strong exception to the induction of Akali MLA Balkaur Singh into BJP and had



The situation is changing too fast in Haryana. Those who are thinking of forming government will sit in opposition

— SUKHBIR SINGH BADAL, SAD chief

described it as "unethical."

The SAD has an alliance with the BJP in Punjab. Earlier Sunday, addressing a public meeting in Dariaapur, the SAD chief said it was a "misconception" that there was a pro-BJP wave in Haryana. There is a misconception that there is a wave in favour of BJP today. It (BJP) will not win a single seat in Sirsa and Fatehabad, Badal claimed.

Modi, media distracting attention from core issues

PNS ■ LATUR

Congress leader Rahul Gandhi on Sunday accused Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Union Home Minister Amit Shah and the media of distracting people's attention from core issues.

Addressing an election rally at Ausa in Maharashtra's Latur district for the upcoming state polls, Gandhi said when the youth ask for jobs, the government tells them to watch the moon, in an apparent reference to ISRO's recent



lunar mission, Chandrayaan-2. He also sought to know if Modi, during his recent meet-

ing with Chinese President Xi Jinping, asked the latter about the 2017 Doklam standoff.

He was referring to the alleged incursion of Chinese troops into the Indian territory in 2017.

Gandhi also alleged that Rs 5.5 lakh crore debt of "15 rich people" was waived off by the Modi government.

"The work of media, Modi and Shah is to distract people's attention from core issues. The media is silent on farmers' distress, lack of jobs. The media is mum on loan

waiver to rich as it is owned by them," he alleged.

He said the objective of demonetisation, and implementation of the Goods and Services Tax (GST) was to take money from pockets of the poor and give it to the rich.

"When the youth ask for jobs, the government tells them to watch the moon. The government speaks about (abrogation of) Article 370 and moon, but is silent on problems plaguing the country," Gandhi said.

NRC across India will have lethal consequences: CPI(ML)

PNS ■ BALLIA

If the NRC is implemented across India, it will have lethal consequences and the country's atmosphere will become like that of Kashmir, the CPI(ML) Liberation has said.

The Left party has also alleged that the poor and Dalits are being targeted through the National Register of Citizens (NRC).

Speaking to reporters here on

Saturday, Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist) Liberation general secretary Dipankar Bhattacharya said, "If the NRC is implemented across India, it will have lethal consequences and the atmosphere of the country will become like that of Kashmir."

Terming the BJP-led Centre "anti-public", he alleged that it

was following the footsteps of German dictator Adolf Hitler and aiming to implement the NRC in the country to serve its political interest.

"This is a ploy to divide the country. Through the NRC, the poor and Dalits are being targeted," Bhattacharya said.



Rising above religious lines: A Nirgun morning at folk fest

MANISH SAIN ■ JODHPUR

A nip in the air, calmness in the atmosphere and the right notes of soulful folk music playing in the backdrop, a dawn concert here at the ongoing 12th edition of Rajasthan International Folk Festival (RIFF) music festival was the stuff that dreams are made of.

In Jaswant Thada, the royal cenotaph that offered an impressive view of the rising sun, music blended with spiritual message filled the air as singers of folk singers like Mahesha Ram, Baghe Khan and Gemra Ram rose above the bounds of religion and serenaded not the gods, but the idea that is "Nirgun Bhakti".

"Nirgun doesn't have a body, or a soul. There is no beginning to it as there is no end. It goes above and beyond religion, caste, and community," Baghe Khan, the famous Manganiyar



singer said. "Nirgun or nirakar is something that doesn't have a form, or colour. It isn't born, it doesn't die. It doesn't have anything to do with anyone, it doesn't believe in a religion, or even a family," he added.

Nirgun bhakti, propagated by Indian mystic poet and saint Kabir, the idea of a formless and benign divinity, a friend figure.

Like many other practitioners of spiritualism, Kabir too believed in the "formlessness" of God, which is reflected in his poetry.

The artistes while playing traditional instruments like tambura, kamaicha, manjira, and dholak, gave emotive rendition of many Nirgun bhajans like "Joban dhan pavna, do hi din chaar" or "Papi mohe raj karan-

Nirgun bhakti, propagated by Indian mystic poet and saint Kabir, the idea of a formless and benign divinity, a friend figure. Like many other practitioners of spiritualism, Kabir too believed in the "formlessness" of God, which is reflected in his poetry

ta dekha", which talked about the futility of taking pride in youth, and how even evil rulers eventually have to deal with the fate of time, respectively.

Talking about the relevance of songs written by 15th-century poet Kabir and other Bhakti movement proponents, Gemra Ram, a folk artist from the Meghwal community, said the growing "hatred towards each other" is the reason why we need these songs today more than ever. "These days people take offense over so many things, religion or what not. They hate each other for their opinions. The one

who follows Nirgun does not feel anger, does not feel hatred for others. Since he doesn't believe in such divides, nothing of it affects him," the 60-year-old vocalist said.

Though agreeing with his co-artist in describing Nirgun as someone who is above everyone else, folk singer Mahesha Ram said the importance of guru stands true in this belief too and is not forgotten one bit.

"We have songs that are sung to welcome the guru, or to alarm others that the guru has arrived, bhajans about what he has brought for everyone and

what he'll take from us," he said. Having sung these bhajans for a larger part of their lives -- 48 years for Gemra Ram alone -- many of the artistes, though hesitantly, did admit that the popularity of traditional folk songs is on decline.

But then nothing of that disheartens a pragmatist like Baghe Khan.

"Everything that has come into this world will cease to exist one day. Same goes with these songs too, that were written hundreds of years ago. That's how life goes on," Khan, also a folk singer, said.

The five-day annual event, kick-started on October 10, will see a total of over 250 artistes this year, not just from the desert state but all over the country together with international artistes from Poland, Hungary, Armenia, Cuba, Ireland, Switzerland, Reunion Island, Israel and Mali.

RSS’ outfit to protest for rain-hit farmers

PNS ■ BHOPAL

The RSS-affiliated Bharatiya Kisan Sangh will hold a protest in Madhya Pradesh capital Bhopal on Tuesday as it accused the Kamal Nath government of ignoring farmers who suffered crop and property damage during heavy rains this season, a functionary said on Sunday.

Madhya Pradesh had one of the most robust monsoons this year with rainfall being 30 per cent in excess of the annual average. "Kharif (July-October sowing season) crops were destroyed due to heavy rains. We submitted memorandums to the administration demanding compensation but the state government has done nothing in the past two months," BKS state chief Rambharose



Basotiya and secretary Mahesh Choudhary told reporters here. "We will organise a one-day dharna on Tuesday. We want the government to give relief to rain-affected farmers and waive off loans of Rs 2 lakh as announced earlier," Choudhary said.

The BKS leaders claimed farmers had become loan defaulters with banks as they stopped repayment after the state government announced the waiver.

Finding an old connect

Modi and Xi have settled down on a new grammar of negotiation despite trust issues over historical baggage



There were optics aplenty, of sipping coconut water, sightseeing tours of heri-tage sites, lavish local dinner, culture shows, long walks and an umbrella swamp of Indian hospitality. But Chinese President Xi Jinping, a hard-boiled supreme leader of his nation with aspirations to be the hegemonic anchor of an Asian century, is hardly expected to find India incredible enough. However, he does realise its materiality in the Chinese design and its bridge value with the rest of the world. Yes the informal summit in Mamallapuram, as it did in Wuhan, did enable both him and Prime Minister Narendra Modi to use their personal equation as a showpiece of neighbourhood understanding and co-existence. It did help in simmering down tension, then over Doklam and now Kashmir, but this relationship hereon will be one based on realism rather than expectation, need-based practicality rather than high-sounding hyperbole. To that extent, there's a new "connect" as Modi said and a "heart-to-heart" candour as Xi admitted. India cannot expect China to abandon Pakistan on its terms. Xi has to stand by his all-weather ally and cannot de-couple Kashmir to the extent that its changed status and talk of reoccupying lost territories in Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) have left it worried about Shaksgam Valley, which Pakistan ceded, and Aksai Chin. But now that India has the larger world opinion on Kashmir as its internal matter, including that of the US, China realises its strategic theft. It further realises that pushing the People's Liberation Army (PLA) mischievously for border incursions won't work anymore. Which is why Modi, too, confidently announced that there would be no further escalation of disputes. India has now stared back at that threat to its territorial integrity and even resisted all attempts to be encircled by China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). Not only that, by engaging with multi-lateral fora like the Quad and even Southeast Asian nations bilaterally, India has subtly but determinedly challenged China's diplomatic sway in the region. Besides, Xi had watched the "Howdy Modi" event in the US closely and wanted a counter-optics, if not a counterweight. Given its trade tussle with the US, China also needs India's absorptive market to keep its momentum. Besides, it is itself under international scanner on its rights issues with the Uighur Muslims, Hong Kong and Tibet and does not want to face a counter-charge of violating UN resolutions, considering that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in Gilgit-Baltistan is in disputed territory, too. No wonder Xi kept away from mentioning Kashmir. While China realises that Pakistan can only be Kashmir-centric, forcing it into embarrassing posturing, he has figured out larger issues for the bilateral arc. Without mentioning Pakistan, Modi and Xi did discuss combatting terrorism and radicalisation. This is a small but forward-looking tweak.

Trade is the biggest takeaway despite China's simultaneous breakthrough with the US on the subject. The mutual deficit there is nearly \$400 billion and President Donald Trump would want to appear tough in an election year. So China would still need a big market like ours. Xi seems ready for sincere action to address our trade deficit, which stands at \$53.56 billion out of a two-way trade of \$87 billion. In its desperation to make India sign the mega free-trade pact, Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), China has agreed to a high-level, trade-facilitator mechanism. From China, it will be led by the Vice Premier, Hu Chunhua, and from India it will be Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman. At least now, there is a seriousness about a give-and-take rather than a dump-your-goods formula. There will also be an attempt to fatten up the import basket from India. Besides defence cooperation is what China is looking for as a lucrative option. Of course, New Delhi has to look into byproducts like a glut of Chinese goods in an open market scenario, issues of security and spying if allowing Huawei and so on. Much depends on the volume and nature of Indian goods and services that China allows in its home market. Still, there is a consensus on both sides that confrontation between the two economies could only harm both. Also, by citing historical trade routes, both nations feel that they can together command the world economy like they did in the past. What is good about Mamallapuram is that there is an open acceptance of wrinkles in the silk that Modi gifted and also a solution offered in the form of "strategic communication" which both sides want to continue. Of course, they must be implemented, too. Trust may not be easy to earn given the baggage of boundary issues but surely there is a new grammar of negotiation.

Superhuman feat

Kenya's Kipchoge broke a marathon record by running 42.195 km in less than two hours. This is remarkable



Relatively healthy adult human can keep up a pace of around a kilometre every 10 minutes for half-an-hour. Those with a degree of physical training can go faster and for a longer duration. Yet, normal human beings tire out — the build-up of lactic acid in our muscles makes them ache and pain — but some, particularly long-distance runners, manage to fight this. A physically fit person, who can traverse 42.195 km of a marathon in around four hours, would be considered very fit indeed. Athletes, particularly those primed for long-distance running, usually complete marathons in just over two hours. Even the best long-distance runners from East Africa clock that time, which is why what the Kenyan runner Eliud Kipchoge has achieved in Vienna is the "four-minute mile" of our era — he ran the marathon in less than two hours. Sure, it was a race specifically designed for him to break the record. Kipchoge had no competitors to worry about and other runners in the field were there to ensure he kept his pace up. Even they melted away as the kilometres piled on but Kipchoge carried on and on, relentlessly, never seeming to run out of energy like a long-lasting human battery. This superhuman achievement was cheered on by the crowds in Vienna, who realised the magnitude of what was happening. This was indeed heartening to see. And thankfully, the organisers did not have plans for the event to happen behind closed doors with the public and a worldwide audience giving Kipchoge wings.

It was 75 years ago when Roger Bannister broke the four-minute barrier for running one mile. Kipchoge's pace was only slightly slower than Bannister's but he maintained it over 26 times the distance and still managed to crack a smile and give interviews afterwards. Several physiological experts believed that two hours were an unbreakable mark and many had predicted that Kipchoge would never achieve his vision. But through his willpower and sheer physical determination, he did break the record. May be one day, someone will shatter his mark of 1 hour 59 minutes and 40 seconds but until that day comes, all of humanity should celebrate this superhuman feat. One that will become as legendary as the breaking of the "four-minute mile." Kipchoge's name will be remembered much like Bannister's is to this day.

Missing out on deliverables

Despite informal summits like Mamallapuram, both India and China will have to live with certain realities, which are seemingly irrevocable even though they breed mistrust



VIVEK MISHRA

It wasn't surprising that the just-concluded informal summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping was high on optics and low on concrete deliverables, which is why it holds the potential to remarkably transform the bilateral relationship between both nations. Given the choice of the locale in the picturesque, the ancient heritage and coastal city of Mamallapuram, India's historical connect with China, together with the UNESCO recognition to the southern city, provided a fitting landscape for overwhelming optics. On the other hand, the meeting was expectedly low on deliverables, owing to the fraught nature of bilateral issues like trade, border dispute and now China's open support to Pakistan on the internal reorganisation of the former State of Jammu & Kashmir — all of which require more than a quick-paced informal meeting to be resolved.

As such, the Mamallapuram summit builds on the tradition of informal engagements between the two countries after the Wuhan summit in 2018 and can be seen as an overarching framework to further Confidence-Building Measures (CBMs). The eased setting of such summits has the potential to create grounds for discussions on issues that could otherwise irk the other nation. The decision to issue separate statements on the summit defends its "informal" nature and, therefore, calls for both nations to not make every minute details of the meet public.

Even though the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), India, described the visit of the Chinese President as "highly productive", doubts remain regarding countable deliverables specific to this visit. In his brief to the media, Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale said that from the Wuhan summit in 2018 to the Mamallapuram summit in 2019, India and China have made "visible progress." If one were to deconstruct the ambiguous reference to "progress", the only visible stride appears in the area of trade through a "mechanism" proposed by President Xi. Joint assurances to fighting terrorism and radicalism, which were part of the discussion, have been referred to in the past, too, through forums such as BRICS and the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO). Therefore, they do not necessarily qualify as "progress."

India's need for greater market access from China and lowering its trade deficit found traction in this summit mainly because the Middle Kingdom is already under pressure on the trade front, owing to its ongoing trade dispute with the US. The Trump administration in no mood to step back. As such, granting larger market access to India could be the prominent and possibly the only countable deliverable in the near term from this summit. Progress on issues such as India joining the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), 5G technology involving Huawei and Kashmir, even if discussed, is hard to imagine. During the Wuhan summit, both nations



agreed to jointly cooperate on projects in third countries. Although cooperation between the two sides in Afghanistan has shown potential, little progress has been made. The lack of substantial progress in Afghanistan from the last agreement must have prevented any further discussion on this issue.

Resolution of disputes and big-ticket outcomes were not expected in this summit as in matters concerning bilateral issues of Indian concern, China is either at an advantageous position *vis-a-vis* India or has a clearly different position than us. In trade, too, numbers are highly favourable to China, leaving India to seek balance. On the issue of border dispute, Beijing has little appetite for resolution, which was very much evident by the progress made in the talks held by the Special Representatives of both nations.

The lack of any joint communicate also signals a conscious projection of optics over substance. It is evident that China's projected intentions in Mamallapuram can be seen as distinct from an otherwise different Chinese State behaviour. This was on display hours even before the Modi-Xi meeting took place, especially apropos China's stand and steps on the Kashmir issue. This strand in the Chinese behaviour is also evident in the

nuanced dichotomy between its stated positions and actions on ground *vis-a-vis* India. For instance, there is a clear disjuncture in its projections at the border — in subtle ways through certain elements of the Chinese military — which is in variance with Beijing's stated position. This allows China to either deny or distance itself from the activities of such actors, with the State itself having tacitly approved such behaviour.

While the Mamallapuram summit gracefully displayed India's cultural diplomacy girded up by elements of *Atithi Devo Bhava* (the guest is equivalent to god), it tacitly legitimised the acceptance of China's flip-flopping positions on issues sensitive to India, especially Kashmir. This is important both in the context of China's recent steps and rhetoric on Kashmir as well as from the point of view of current geopolitics, where diplomacy, to a great extent, is also about symbolism, optics and messaging. China's growing relations with Pakistan are increasingly dragging India in bilateral dynamics. The summit could have been used to send a subtle message to China *vis-a-vis* the latter's relations with Pakistan.

As such, when dealing with China, India should continue to assert the principles that it stands for and unflinchingly project its

standard positions on issues that are of global concern. To be sure, for China, Pakistan is a strategic leverage point, bound as they are by economics and not an iron-clad alliance. That China had to finally relent on its move to block the listing for Masood Azhar as a terrorist at the UN, shows that the China-Pakistan relationship has scope for tweaks when there is enough international pressure and criticism.

The short history of China's relations with Pakistan has shown that when India puts its foot down on an issue, China is likely liberal in its relations with Pakistan, to the disadvantage of Islamabad. This is exactly how most relations of dependence between affluent and manipulative major powers and developing economies have shaped themselves through history.

The pros and cons of such relationships get affected by the extent of separation between major powers' affluence and their manipulative intentions and the state of economic, political and military clout of the dependent State. China's investments in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and their consequences have blurred the line that separates strategic intentions and economic goals for China in Pakistan. For the latter, the state of its economy, which lies in an uncertain zone —

between that of a Least Developed Economy and a developing economy — has made the terms of engagement with China more unfavourable for itself.

Despite informal summits like Mamallapuram, both India and China will have to live with certain realities, which are seemingly irrevocable, even though they breed mistrust. Just as India's decision to internally reorganise the former State of Jammu & Kashmir has become China's concern but cannot be rescinded, so have China's investments in the CPEC for India, parts of which pass through the Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) region. India's relations with China will have to factor in a continued tenuous relationship on the one hand and sustained bilateral trade on the other. These dynamics will continue to have substantive scope of scepticism from either side.


What has also come to the fore is the need for an uplift in India's international diplomacy with regards to China. While Beijing has upped the ante against us and has taken unprecedented steps, India remains painstakingly accommodating of such criticism. It is time India's regional and global aspirations and role match its pitch in international diplomacy.

(The writer is Research Fellow, Indian Council of World Affairs)

SOUNDBITE


If you say anything to an establishment or a person, will they like it? I cannot think of an establishment which, when criticised, feels happy about it.

Lyricist-writer
—Javed Akhtar




Both streaming and cinema can happily co-exist. It's ultimately what the viewers want and what we know is that they want both.

Actor
—Ajay Devgn




Pakistan has an important role to play in stabilising Afghanistan, engaging in robust counter-terrorism efforts and strengthening the global economy.

US Senator
—Maggie Hassan



India's meaningful engagement with China started with (former) Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi's visit in 1988 and his dialogue with then Chinese leader.

Congress spokesperson
—Anand Sharma



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Draining public money

Sir — That the State Bank of India (SBI) has written off bad loans amounting to ₹76,600 crore is not so welcoming for the simple reason that a sizeable amount of taxpayers' money has been pocketed by 220 defaulters. Likewise, there may be many other banks, which have their share of bad loans to write off. Political meddling in the lending policy is one of the main causes of bad loans. How come banks lend money without adequate collateral security? A startling revelation is that 980 borrowers have been listed by the Reserve Bank of India, whose debts of more than ₹100 crore each have to be written off. Of these, 220 accounts — more than one-fifth of the total number — belonged to the SBI. Taxpayers would feel cheated if the Government uses the tax collected for loan waivers and bad loan write-offs at a later date. The Government should use the taxpayers' money to create infrastructure and strengthen national security.

KV Seetharamaiah
Hassan

The Kashmir conundrum is far from over

This refers to the editorial, "Polls to what end?" (October 11). No doubt, our security forces have done well to maintain peace post the abrogation of Article 370 in Jammu & Kashmir but the clampdown in the Valley, the arrest of political leaders and grass-root workers and the alleged rights violations have undermined the core values of Indian democracy. The moot point is not that the detention of top leaders in Kashmir discredits Indian democracy but that the Abdullahs and others of their ilk considered Jammu & Kashmir as their fiefdom with loyalty to India subject to enjoying power. However, for the restoration of normalcy, the Centre should let political activism take wings and hold elections to the Assembly. But winning locals round to back New Delhi once again may now be difficult. Pakistan is all out to disturb India's hold on the Valley. Entrusting the task of restoration of tranquility to novices has its own pros and cons. Under such circumstances, usher-



ing competitive politics is indeed imperative to restore peace. Meanwhile, the common man can only pray that good sense prevails all around...hoping the Centre is on the right track and the "change" will be tangible, paving the way for people's rule.

J Akshobhya
Mysuru

Low-key affair

Sir — The atmosphere for the Modi-Xi informal meet in Mamallapuram was far from ideal. China's support for Pakistan on the Kashmir issue has put a big strain on New Delhi-Beijing ties. The long shadow of Pakistan continues to disrupt India-China ties. Despite going ahead with the

second informal summit, Pakistan will be the elephant in the room.

China and Pakistan have been close strategic allies since independence. Now, with the construction of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), the centre-piece of Xi's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative, and China's commitments on Jammu & Kashmir, the

relationship has grown even stronger.

Unlike in Wuhan where the Modi-Xi meeting led to de-escalation in Doklam, this time nothing dramatic happened. At best, both Prime Minister Modi and Chinese Premier Xi Jinping remained focussed on improving ties in areas such as trade.

K S Jayatheertha
Hassan

Respect the elderly

Sir — President Ram Nath Kovind was right when he said that elderly citizens symbolise our legacy. Speaking at an event marking the International Day of Older Persons, Kovind said that only by respecting senior citizens can the younger generation and the nation progress.

The President's words provide a valuable lesson. Whatever we are today is because of the love, care and sacrifices of our elders. It is, therefore, our duty to make sure that they are cared for.

It is unfortunate that nowadays many old people have to find a place in old age homes owing to the nuclear family system and the lack of time among youngsters, who are busy chasing greener pastures. Let the old Indian tradition of respecting the elderly not die out. Let us make them feel that their contributions to the family, the society and the nation have indeed been very useful.

M Pradyu
Kannur

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

Fight professional fatigue

There is a dire need to restore the passion and purpose in jobs supporting strategy formulation for the country



VINAYSHIL GAUTAM

Methods of calculation of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP), developmental indicators and chartered accountancy are again in focus and suggestions on how to make them more reliable are few. Auditing itself often serves as a threat held out by the powerful in running an organisation. It is often used to keep the recalcitrant at bay rather than creating new organisational or developmental patterns. A discussion with policy analysts is in many ways enlightening on the differing psyche of finance and accounting experts. In an era where the corporate world feels extremely stressed, chartered accountancy breeds monotony. It is, therefore, understandable that a lot of chartered accountants feel depleted. In a dualism of the order enumerated above, it's very difficult to be a strategist with a role in driving business or development forward.

There is a need to restore the passion and purpose in professions supporting strategy formulation. How deep the tedium runs can be gauged by the fact that there is a three-day summit in Sri Lanka, starting today and ending on October 16, on the theme of "Finding your mojo: A journey of self-discovery." This is meant for chartered accountants. Mojo is widely understood to indicate internal magic that translates to external success. Nothing would move without mojo. On October 18, the Institute of Internal Auditors, Delhi chapter, is holding a conference on strategic risk management and the topic is: "Enhancing strategy selection through risk management." The outcome will show the worth of the effort but the effort itself is worth it. Passion is the biggest source of energy but like everything else, it has a price. Those who are not passionate about their work deeply resent the style of those who are. Those who are passionate are often intolerant of the sluggishness of the routine approaches. The catch 22 here, of course, is how does one save oneself from becoming a victim of professional sluggishness?

At the end of the day, much of strategy formulation is a political process. Those who reject the approach of the leader (if not the chief himself) will resent the idea of the head being carried through. The ability to conspire to prevent is often higher than the ability to plan for strategic optimisation.

The times also call for unorthodox methodologies. Audit as a profession is known to work on algorithms to find the delicate balance between creating breakthroughs and pulling formula. This is a complicated one. It is heartening to see that sometimes people get together to create a passion for attempting it, nevertheless. The number of accountants and auditors is rising and so is the doubt, at times, in their ability to deliver.

It is obvious, that in the current context, financial analysts and chartered accountants are facing multiple challenges in performing their roles in and outside policy confabulations/board rooms. The need to update knowledge is universal and financial analysts and gatekeepers are no exception. At the end of the day, the individual often feels left out in observing the mandate of the so-called directives of the "institute."

It is obvious that business prosperity cannot be made surrogate to outdated principles. Similarly, reliability and conviction must continue to call the shots. The possible direction of the financial analysts and auditors is often far beyond the broadband of auditing principles. There are sectoral imperatives and nuances of functionality. Consider for example plantation management. The initiatives by top management dealing with the agro business must build into it, on behalf of the owners, considerations of climate. An assessment of internal and external productive environment — rooted in time tested principles of achieving of goals — has some strange touchstones of success. In an era where goals themselves become variable, the enunciation of strategy becomes sticky. It does not just remain a science but becomes an art. Business execution and administration become the wheels on which strategy rolls and would impact operations in marketing and finance.

This has to be leavened by competencies, which alone can formulate winning strategies. Among them, the prominent ones would include pattern recognition and isolation of exceptions using machine learning. This would include all relevant patterns to be examined for root cause; continuous elimination of root causes using continuous auditing; regular reporting of "unusual" transactions and in all things keeping the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) apprised of the developments. This is unlikely to happen unless preventive action, continuous monitoring, discipline and continuous forward planning are in sync. Not strangely, all this gets ensconced in the calculation and rollout of GDPs and strategy formulation at the national policy level. The impact of regional and national policy on specialised, sectoral performance is immense. The price of misguidance can be huge and it often becomes the cause of ill-founded doubts at the policy level.

(The writer is a well-known management consultant)

SANDEEP SENT ME A LETTER AND I FORWARDED IT TO THE CONGRESS PRESIDENT. THERE IS NOTHING PERSONAL. IT'S A POLITICAL CONVERSATION. —AICC IN-CHARGE PC CHACKO



THIS IS A BETRAYAL OF FAITH. WE WERE AGHAST TO SEE THE LETTER BEING DISCUSSED. WE HAD ASKED HIM NOT TO PASS COMMENTS ON SHEILAJI. —DELHI CONGRESS LEADER KIRAN WALIA

China's Himalayan ploy

Though the bonhomie between Nepal and China may seem minimal compared to India's age-old ties, the message to the global community is not in our favour



RISHI GUPTA

Chinese President Xi Jinping's two-day trip to Nepal, coming on the heels of the informal summit with Prime Minister Narendra Modi in India, reflects the priority Beijing accords to the little Himalayan kingdom. The visit, which was closely watched by New Delhi, too, was the first by a Chinese President in 23 years since Jiang Zemin landed in Kathmandu in 1996.

Nestled between India and China, Nepal is a strategically critical neighbour for the two big nations and in the last 60 years, New Delhi and Beijing have interacted with it differently.

Geographically, Nepal has worked as a safeguard for India from any aggression that could possibly come from the north. During the brutal expedition launched by China in Tibet in 1950, there were fears that Chinese aggression might reach Nepal, too. However, India asserted that any offensive against the Himalayan neighbour would be treated as an aggression against it. With Tibet falling into Chinese clutches, Nepal had approached India for help in training the Royal Nepal Army as well as for arms and ammunition. Though the two nations did not forge a formal defence relationship, an informal security umbrella from India to Nepal was agreed upon with the signing of the Treaty of Peace and Friendship in 1950.

Prior to the Tibet saga, the two century-long reign of the ruling Shah family was threatened by the control of the Rana Prime Minister. As a result, King Prithvi Narayan Shah had escaped to India and sought help. With India's assistance, a new political order was established in the Himalayan country. Though India was at the forefront of re-establishing the Shah dynasty, it had ensured respect for the sovereignty of Nepal, leading to the "special relationship" between the two nations.

On the other hand, China from day one of its arrival in Tibet, has been attempting to gain political and strategic clout in Nepal. While Prithvi Shah was wary of Chinese intentions, his successor King Mahendra began to change the course of Nepal's diplomatic ties and formalised relations with China in 1955. After the demise of King Mahendra, his son Birendra, too, had tried to alter Nepal's equation with India.

Advised by China to review the Treaty of Peace and Friendship with India, Birendra had invited global leaders to recognise Nepal as a "Zone of Peace" (ZoP). Despite it being endorsed by more than 50 countries, India had declined to accept the ZoP citing the 1950 treaty because an endorsement of the ZoP would have threatened India's security, especially from the north.

Having battled for more than 15 years to bring India on board, Birendra had to shelve the plan. Again in 1988, China supplied arms to Nepal in complete violation of India's security concerns that had been accommodated in the 1950 treaty. During this time India-Nepal diplomatic ties touched a low and from 1955 to 1990, Chinese leaders intensified efforts to marginalise New Delhi's "special relations" with Kathmandu.

In the post-Cold War era, significant economic reforms were carried out in India and a broader regional economic integration also took place. After the South Asian Association

“THE CHINESE APPROACH IN NEPAL HAS BEEN BASED ON GAINING STRATEGIC DEPTH BY OPENING UP ITS DEEP POCKETS AND ALSO SUBVERTING INDIA'S RELATIONS WITH KATHMANDU. CLEARLY, THESE ACTS BY CHINA ARE INTENDED TO ENSURE ITS STRONG POSITION IN NEPAL, PRECISELY TO KEEP A CLOSE VIGIL ON SOUTH ASIAN COUNTRIES, INCLUDING INDIA”



for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was established in 1985, India reiterated its responsibilities towards the region. This was reflected in the "Gujral Doctrine" based on the principles of unconditional cooperation to neighbours without expecting reciprocity. The doctrine considerably is one of the most significant milestones in India's approach towards its neighbours, which is being continued by the present Government in its "Neighbourhood First Policy." The deep India-Nepal relations have been based on close cultural, religious, people-to-people ties and respect for democratic values and non-aggression towards each other.

But over the last 30 years, political developments in Nepal have been marred by instability in governance. The introduction of the first democratic system in Nepal in the 1990s had opened the gateway for greater public participation. However, Maoist insurgency from 1994 to 2006 led the country into more profound political instability. In 2008, Nepal emerged as a democratic country, marking a complete end of the monarchical system and India was one of the few countries to have played a crucial role in supporting this transition.

However, a chain of events in the last five years damaged India's image in the Himalayan kingdom. While India was the first country to have provided help during the 2015 earthquake in Nepal, it was in the same year that a blockade at the Indo-Nepal border had affected emergency supplies, leading to an anti-India movement on social media like #GoBackIndia.

Kathmandu had also accused India of causing delay in the implementation

of a new Constitution. As soon as the draft of the Constitution was tabled in the Constituent Assembly, people belonging to Nepal's southern belt, the Madhesis, had led a violent movement against the Government on grounds of poor representation and alleged human rights violations. Fearing an exodus to Bihar and Uttar Pradesh, due to the Madhesi movement, India had sent the then Foreign Secretary S Jaishankar to raise India's security concerns in Kathmandu. However, this did not go down well with the people of Nepal. Ever since then, Kathmandu has been attempting to shift from its "special relations" with India to "new relations" with China. The Belt and Road Initiative (BRI) and joint military exercises between Chinese and the Nepal Army are the latest examples of this shift.

Though the recent bonhomie between Nepal and China may seem minimal compared to India's age-old ties, the message to the global community is not in our favour and New Delhi needs to be cautious in this regard. On the other hand, the Chinese approach in Nepal has been based on gaining strategic depth by opening up its deep pockets and also subverting India's relations with Kathmandu. Clearly, these acts by China are intended to ensure its strong position in Nepal, precisely to keep a close vigil on South Asian countries, including India.

To do so, it has exploited every low phase in India-Nepal relations, including by supplying arms to Nepal in 1987 and providing \$1 million military assistance along with truckloads of weapons to King Gyanendra in 2005 for suppressing people's demand to introduce full democracy.

At present, amid global criticism of its alleged neo-colonist \$60 billion BRI, China is leaving no stone unturned to ensure its success globally and in the region. Other than India and Bhutan, every South Asian country has joined the BRI. In fact, India has made it amply clear that the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is in complete violation of its sovereignty as it passes through disputed areas with Pakistan; hence, it cannot be part of any such initiatives.

In Nepal, the proposal to construct the trans-Himalayan corridor, connecting Kathmandu with Tibet has been in discussion for the last two years. However, considering the high terrain of the two countries, implementation of the project will be a litmus test for the economy of Nepal.

The leadership in Nepal needs to carefully look at the Chinese master plan on its soil and consider the viability and mood of the people as Chinese assistance is a debt-trap rather than being a grant-in-aid.

A key example of this strategy is the Hambantota Port that was built with Chinese assistance in Sri Lanka. The port is now under Chinese control after Sri Lanka failed to pay off loans that were taken from Beijing for building it.

Xi's recent visit to Nepal came at a critical hour to ensure the success of the BRI and its other strategic interests there. Hence, Nepal needs to put the aspirations and well-being of its people at the forefront instead of going by interests of individuals and political parties. It also has a responsibility to ensure regional balance and harmony.

(The writer is doctoral candidate, Centre for South Asian Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University)

Pak must go beyond banter about extremism

Imran Khan's rhetoric against extremism abroad can only find traction if it is balanced by taking initiatives towards ending the harassment and violence that minority communities face at the hands of radicalised elements within the country's majority religious community



NADEEM PARACHA

Many moons ago, when I was a kid living with my parents and grandparents in a house in Karachi's Bath Island area, we had a neighbour who everyone called "Kachra chacha" (Garbage uncle). Of course, no one called him that to his face but I am sure he knew. This middle-aged man had this curious habit of scolding everyone he would come across about the manner in which they disposed their garbage. It was actually an admirable trait but strangely enough, in his own house, he was not practising what he preached.

I remember when my cousins and I would visit his house to play with his nephews, there would be lit-

ter strewn all over his garden and piles of trash in the large round balcony which stood just above the garage. I have no idea why this was so but the memory of this gentleman came to mind immediately after watching Prime Minister Imran Khan's impassioned speech at the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) on September 27. I must admit, I was impressed by the way the Prime Minister addressed the issue of State repression being faced by Muslims living in Kashmir. But I'm afraid, a lot else about the same speech triggered that obscure memory of "Kachra Chacha."

It is rather easy to negate and contradict much of what Khan said in his speech and in the interviews he gave to the media in the US. His critics have already done that, questioning the current state of repression being faced by the Pakistani media and against Khan's political opponents in the country.

They have also called him out for doing precious little to address the harassment and violence that the

country's various minority communities continue to face at the hands of radicalised elements within the country's majority religious community.

Therefore, his detractors believe that Khan's pleas against hate speech, racial and religious bigotry and especially, Islamophobia in Western societies ring hollow.

They fear that such views will never be able to find any worthwhile traction in the West or from outside his excitable constituencies in Pakistan. How can one point at garbage outside his home when he cannot (or refuses to) do much about the garbage piled up inside his own house?

Nevertheless, as I mentioned above, the way the Prime Minister sweepingly condemns issues such as Islamophobia in the West and repression on the basis of ideology and faith against Muslims outside Pakistan, it is rather easy to counter such condemnations by simply putting forth the many episodes of violence against members of minor-

ity groups in Pakistan and also between Muslim sects that have been reported for decades now.

It is a fact that even when a Pakistani Prime Minister or President was willing to actually do something about this, he or she could not (and cannot), because the nature of certain laws and clauses within the country's constitution — mostly penned in the document between 1974 and 1986 — is such that initiating effective reform in this context is next to impossible.

This is why, even while one can argue that certain Western countries, infested with problems such as Islamophobia and racial bigotry, do not have the right to point fingers at Muslim countries such as Pakistan for failing to curb religious violence and harassment against minorities, one can always stress the fact that, unlike Pakistan, their constitutions do not have laws that can encourage and even shield acts and actors hell bent on inflicting violence in the name of faith.

Khan has been diluting his oth-

erwise impactful narrative on Kashmir and the Narendra Modi regime's "fascism" by coupling it with rhetorical spiels about Islamophobia. Apart from being riddled by the inherent contradictions discussed above, this is largely woven from a hodgepodge understanding of Edward Said's idea of post-colonialism, which is now struggling to stay relevant in a rapidly changing world.

More disconcerting is the possibility that the narrative being erected by Khan may as well be the result of either the complete failure and discarding of a narrative which the State and Government was trying to build (to counter radicalisation and the spread of extremism) through the National Action Plan (NAP); or Khan was never really on board when the plan was authored and approved by the military and political parties in January 2015.

Indeed, it is clear that the Modi regime's arrogance towards Pakistan has generated the need within the State and Government of Pakistan

to intensify their rhetoric on the issues of Kashmir and Hindu nationalism. But this can only be effective if it is balanced by initiatives which would show Pakistan as doing more to curb extremism in its own backyard compared to India, where Hindu extremism has been allowed to infiltrate mainstream politics and society.

Otherwise, it will only end up being nothing more than a bantering game between two countries infested by extremism, with one labelling the other "a terrorist State," and the other responding by calling it "fascist."

It is surprising that, despite the fact that the Pakistan Tehreek-e-Insaf (PTI) dedicated a lot of space to the NAP in its manifesto for the 2018 election, Khan has frequently negated the nature of reforms suggested in that document. First, by continuously claiming that the war which the Pakistan military fought against religious extremist groups was "not our war," Khan is undermining the chaos and destruction

created by the extremists.

This sentiment is also dismissive of the manner in which the extremists were tackled by the military.

There is absolutely nothing new or insightful about lecturing the US about how it had helped Pakistan create Islamic militants in the 1980s (before dumping them). The US Government itself has repeatedly admitted this ever since former US Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited Pakistan in 2011.

Most of Khan's ideas are still cemented in the many apologetics that emerged from a muddled potpourri of anti-West narratives developed during the last three decades. These were narratives that aided those who were unwilling to recognise their own incompetence, complacencies and mistakes, by putting the blame on others regarding extremism. This can be a popular way of explaining things on Twitter, but it can certainly not — and should not — become part of the State and Government policy.

(Courtesy: The Dawn)

CAPSULE



Life insurers' new premium income in Sep up 15% at Rs 20,057 cr

NEW DELHI: The new premium income of life insurers rose 15 per cent to Rs 20,056.70 crore in September, data from Irdai showed. All 24 life insurance companies had a collective new business premium income of Rs 17,490.68 crore in September 2018. The state-owned Life Insurance Corporation (LIC), the largest life insurer, recorded a 18.37 per cent rise in its new premium during the month at Rs 12,759.24 crore as against Rs 10,778.81 crore in the same month a year earlier, the data showed. The rest of the private sector players had a total new premium income of Rs 7,297.46 crore during the month, an increase of nearly 9 per cent from a year ago, the data on monthly business figures released by the Insurance Regulatory and Development Authority of India (Irdai) showed.



NRL to invest Rs 62cr in CSR activities in Assam

GUWAHATI: North East India's largest refiner Numaligarh Refinery Ltd on Sunday said it will pump in over Rs 60 crore in various developmental projects under its corporate social responsibility (CSR) activities during 2019- 20. Of the total spending under the CSR head, the miniratna PSU in Assam's Golaghat district has earmarked 60 per cent funds for school education, health and nutrition programmes. "In 2019-20, our CSR budget is Rs 62 crore. In this fiscal, a few aspirational districts are under consideration for undertaking developmental activities apart from other programmes," NRL Managing Director S K Barua told PTI here.The developmental programmes in these aspirational districts will be other than the "local areas" of the plant as defined in the CSR and Sustainability Policy of NRL, he added.

Airbus Helicopters awaiting early Pawan Hans disinvestment

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Airbus Helicopters hopes the central government will resolve the situation regarding the disinvestment of Pawan Hans Limited "very quickly" so that the national helicopter company can move ahead on its fleet expansion plans, a senior executive of the global aerospace manufacturer said.

Airbus Helicopters had signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Pawan Hans Limited (PHL) in Paris in June for collaboration in introducing two new categories of its helicopters - H145 and H225 - in the national

E-commerce firms asked to cut single-use plastic in packaging

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The commerce and industry ministry has advised e-commerce companies to gradually slash single-use plastic in packaging of products being sold through their platforms, in line with the government's commitment to reduce use of such material, an official said.

The companies have also been advised by the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT) to develop sustainable packaging material which will contribute to reducing India's plastic footprint globally.

E-commerce companies have been asked for discarding plastic used in packaging, which accounts for more than 40 per cent of non-fibre plastic, according to the official.

"With an earnest ambition to stop consumption of single use plastic, these companies are being advised to consider gradually curtailing use of single-use plastic in packaging products being sold through their e-commerce platform," the official said.

When asked about the issue, Amazon spokesperson said the company is commit-



E-commerce companies have been asked to discard plastic used in packaging, which accounts for more than 40 % of non-fibre plastic, according to the official

ted to a sustainable supply chain that leverages technology to build solutions that optimise the use of packaging material, reduce waste and create eco-friendly packaging. "We have been relentlessly working on reducing single-use plastic in our supply chain. Today, less than 7 per cent of our packaging mate-

rial consists of single use plastic and we are working towards eliminating usage of them completely in our buildings in India by June 2020," the spokesperson said.

Rajneesh Kumar, Chief Corporate Affairs Officer, Flipkart, said that some of the focus areas for the company is usage of electric vehicles in logistics, waste management and efficient packaging, including reduction of single use plastic.

"Earlier this year, we announced and outlined our vision of eliminating single-use plastic in our packaging by March 2021...As of 1st August, we have already achieved a 25 per cent reduction in usage of single-use plastics through various initiatives across our packaging value chain, and we are aggressively moving towards 100 per cent recycled plastic consumption in our supply chain by March 2021," he said.

Creating alternatives for single-use plastic packaging is one of the significant steps we have taken towards fulfilling our commitment to creating a sustainable ecosystem, he added.

Giriraj Singh want's dairy out of RCEP trade deal

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister Giriraj Singh has asked the commerce ministry to keep dairy sector out of the proposed RCEP free trade pact, voicing reservation on possible import of milk produced by cattle that are given animal feed.

Opening of free trade in dairy sector will affect farmers of India, which is the world's largest producer of milk, the dairy and animal husbandry minister said.

The Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) - a mega free trade agreement being negotiated among 10 ASEAN countries with their six FTA partners (India, China, Japan, South Korea, Australia and New Zealand). The proposed deal is expected to be finalised and signed by the next month.

Last week, RCEP member countries met in Bangkok for three days of negotiations, perhaps for the last time to conclude the deal.

Explaining reasons why dairy sector should be kept out of the ambit of the proposed RCEP trade pact, the minister said: "I have objection on two issues. We will not accept the milk produced by cattle that are given animal protein. Our condition is milk imported should have not any animal feed".

Banks are expected to present report card on partial credit guarantee scheme and fund raising from market to enhance their capital base

Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman will hold a review meeting with CEOs of public sector banks (PSBs) on Monday to discuss various issues, including progress on credit offtake, as part of efforts to prop up the economy. The meeting is expected to review fund flow to stressed NBFC and MSME (micro, small and medium enterprises) sectors, sources said. Banks are expected to present report card on partial credit guarantee scheme and fund raising from market to enhance their capital base.

The Centre in August issued guidelines on operationalising Rs 1 lakh crore partial guarantee scheme under which PSBs can purchase high-rated pooled assets of financially sound non-banking finance companies (NBFCs). NBFCs, including housing finance companies (HFCs),



came under stress following a series of defaults by the group companies of IL&FS in September last year. Besides, the meeting will also assess the progress of first phase of outreach programme held across 226 districts across the country. This will be the second meeting of Sitharaman with CEOs of PSU banks in less than a month.



As the disinvestment process has begun, PHL has put its fleet expansion plans on hold

company's fleet in the future.

However, on July 11, the central government issued the Preliminary Information Memorandum to sell 51 per cent of its stake in PHL. As the disinvestment process has begun, PHL has put its fleet

expansion plans on hold.

Since July 11, the Centre has deferred the deadline regarding submission of expression of interest for PHL three times. On September 25, the Centre extended the last date in this regard to October 10.



Union Minister for Petroleum & Natural Gas and Steel, Dharmendra Pradhan chairing the 3rd meeting of the International Think Tank, in New Delhi on Sunday. The Secretary, Ministry of Petroleum & Natural Gas, Dr. M.M. Kutty is also seen

‘\$60 bn investment coming in gas infrastructure’

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

India is investing over USD 60 billion in developing natural supply and distribution infrastructure as it chases the target of more than doubling the share of natural gas in its energy base to 15 per cent by 2030, Oil Minister Dharmendra Pradhan said on Sunday.

Natural gas currently constitutes 6.2 per cent of all energy consumption in the country. Stating that the government has laid emphasis on developing a gas-based economy, he said natural gas is gradually becoming a bridging fuel for low carbon economy in India.

The government is giving special impetus to develop gas infrastructure across the length and breadth of the country connecting north to south and east to west parts of India, he said.

"I am happy to inform you that as we speak, an estimated investment of 60 billion US

I am happy to inform you that as we speak, an estimated investment of 60 billion US dollars is underway in building gas pipeline and terminal infrastructure that are nearing or in advanced stages of completion

—DHARMENDRA PRADHAN, Oil Minister

dollars is underway in building gas pipeline and terminal infrastructure that are nearing or in advanced stages of completion," he said in his opening remarks at the third International Think Tank Meeting (ITT) here.

City gas distribution network will soon cover 70 per cent of India's population, he said. "Our government is exploring strategic partnerships for overall development of oil & gas sector. The role of private sector - both domestic and from abroad, for bringing in investments with necessary innovations for future energy landscape in the country, will remain crucial".

CEOs of energy firms at the meeting stated that India will continue to increase consumption of fossil fuels in its energy mix, and there is an urgent need for an integrated energy policy cutting across all forms of energy.

Pradhan said energy is integral to achieving the target of early doubling the size of Indian economy to USD 5 trillion by 2024. Talking of key challenges confronting the energy sector, he said: "The foremost challenge of our time is the Energy Trilemma. It is about providing sustainably, securely, and affordably-sufficient energy to our growing population".

Secondly, in recent times, significant uncertainty and challenge were witnessed in the global energy markets. "We have seen the most disruptive developments. US sanctions on Iran and Venezuela, attacks on Saudi oil processing units, volatile conditions in Strait of Hormuz, unrest in the Middle-East, and US-China trade war, to name a few," he said.

"These developments have an enormous impact on India's energy security and also on our economic, budgetary and investment dimensions," he said, adding India's import dependency on crude oil and LNG continues to rise unabated. Import dependence is now over 84 per cent for crude and 45 per cent for natural gas.

"Going forward, it is expected to increase further. Such excessive import dependency does make us vulnerable to external developments more than ever before," he said.

PNB, UBI AND OBC

Outside expert may be roped in to decide merger

PTI ■ KOLKATA

With three state-run lenders - Punjab National Bank (PNB), United Bank of India (UBI) and Oriental Bank of Commerce (OBC) -- heading for an amalgamation, an outside expert may be engaged to decide the logo of the merged entity, an official said.

The proposed merger, expected to be effective from April 1 next year, will lead to the creation of the country's second-largest lender after State Bank of India, with a total business volume of about Rs 18 lakh crore.

"The new name and logo of the merged entity will be decided after inviting sugges-



tions from all and sundry. However, an outside expert may be engaged to decide on the new logo," a top official of UBI told PTI.

He said the logo is "very important" for creating identity of the new lender.

"The managing directors and executive directors of the

three banks will meet next week. Talks on name and logo of the merged entity are high on the agenda," he said.

It is "very crucial" to finalise the administrative structure of the entity as the three banks are having different set-ups at the moment, the UBI official maintained.

Air India to resolve Fuel payment issues with oil PSUs

PTI ■ MUMBAI

State-owned Air India on Sunday said the aviation jet fuel payment issues are being sorted out and will be resolved soon with the oil PSUs, which have warned the carrier of snapping supplies at six key airports if it does not make monthly lump sum payment by October 18.

The airline also "assured" its customers of smooth operations, saying it has taken all the measures in the eventuality of the two sides failing to reach an understanding on the issue. "The issues with oil companies are being sorted out and would be resolved early," Air India spokesperson Dhananay Kumar said in a statement.

In a letter sent to Air India

last Thursday, the three government-owned oil marketing firms — Indian Oil Corporation Ltd (IOCL), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL) and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) — said the outstanding had not come down considerably in the absence of the committed monthly lump sum payment.



PAYMENTS SERVICE SHOULD BE ON IN TWO MONTHS

WhatsApp close to meeting data localisation norms: NPCI

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Facebook-owned instant messaging giant WhatsApp will be compliant with data localisation norms over the next two months, post which it can roll out its much-delayed payments service here, says the National Payments Corporation.

Even after the launch of WhatsApp's payments service, it will take at least two years to reduce the cash dominance in the economy as the user base of digital payments must at least treble to 300 million to have any tangible impact on paring cash usage, the RBI-created NPCI's chief executive Dilip Asbe told PTI in an interview.

WhatsApp has been running a beta version of its payments service since last year in the country, and its official launch is being keenly watched by stakeholders, including its over 300 million users. Many think WhatsApp can help India emulate China's WeChat story, and help achieve the cashless payments objectives.

"There are still a couple of intermediaries where work is in progress. One is Google, second is WhatsApp. We believe WhatsApp will be fully compliant in the next two months' time," Asbe said.

WhatsApp has capped the number of payment service users at 1 million now as it is yet to fully meet RBI's data localisation norms which



require foreign companies to store transaction and user data within the country and delete the same from foreign servers within 24 hours.

According to Asbe, a third-

party audit by a firm empaneled by the RBI is currently underway to ascertain WhatsApp's compliance. "Once the auditors complete their probe, we will review the same

Increased use of NPCI-developed UPI platform by intermediaries like WhatsApp will help grow the digital payments scene

and will see how to go ahead," he said. Asbe also clarified that he did not meet the WhatsApp leadership team when they visited the city recently. He also said that other applicants like Xiaomi, Amazon Pay and Truecaller have not been able to launch their payments ser-

vices because of data localisation rules. Citing a Niti Aayog survey, Asbe said over three-fourths of the financial transactions are under Rs 100 and this is the space where unified payments interface (UPI) has to make inroads to replace cash and one step in this regard has been increasing the acceptance points. He hoped increased use of NPCI-developed UPI platform by intermediaries like WhatsApp will help grow the digital payments scene.

Currently, there are only 100 million users of digital payments and this must touch at least 300 million to have any material impact on cash in circulation, he said, underlining this as the real challenge.

First meeting of panel on GST collections tomorrow

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

A high-level panel constituted by the government to suggest measures to augment GST revenue collection will hold its first meeting on Tuesday, a senior official said.

The government last week constituted the panel of officers to suggest steps to expand tax base and check evasion in the backdrop of falling revenue collections under GST.

Goods and Services Tax (GST) collections dropped sharply to a 19-month low in September to Rs 91,916 crore, reflecting the slowdown in the economy. "The first meeting of the committee is scheduled to be held on Tuesday, October 15," GST Council Special



Secretary Rajeev Rajan told PTI. The committee has been given 15 days time to submit its report, he said. This is going to be the first comprehensive review of GST after it was rolled out on July 1, 2017.

The 12-member panel, comprising of state-level GST commissioners and central officials, has been asked to suggest urgent measures to arrest fall in tax revenues and steps to be taken to improve revenue collection.

It was that time of the year again when fans of the comic book came together to celebrate the fantastic tales that inspired millions across the globe, reports ARUN DANIEL YELLAMATY



THE FLIGHT OF IMAGINATION AT COMIC CON

No amount of routine rainfall could hold the comic fans this year as Comic Con 2019 witnessed heavy rush with almost 15,000 people from all age groups attending the two-day event dressing up as dope comic heroes. The weekend made a perfect getaway for the young parents who escorted their children and painted the place red with their geeks on. More than thousand people donned in their favourite superhero costumes.

were stopped from taking selfies with international and national cartoonists who attended the event. Dressing up as a comic character, or cosplaying, has evolved into an art, an inclusive hobby and a creative pursuit. This year, the event saw many cosplayers in elaborate costumes move from stall to stall followed by 'oohs' and 'aaahs' from awed onlookers who couldn't wait to take selfies with them. Shirley Bobby, who cosplayed as Luna Lovegood, says, "My friends and I get dressed and attend the comic con every year. This year we got dressed as a few characters from the Harry Potter series. We had a really good time, like every year, we had a ball at the event. It's nice to see so many people from the cosplay community coming together to keep our comic heroes alive through us.

Looking forward to attend the event next year." One of the visitors, Emmanuel Sudhir, an engineering student says, "I am attending Comic Con for the first time and the energy here is amazing. After seeing many people coming in various superhero costumes, I too feel like doing the same next year." Jemia, who was cosplaying as Tartlette, won the grand prize worth Rs 50,000 on the conclusion day. The stalls were decked with merchandise from top to bottom making sure no superhero fan base is left out. One of the popular stalls was a dummy wrestling ring where people could pose for a picture with a wrestling championship belt. Another major attraction was a life size mannequin of Gal Gadot's Wonder Woman where people lined to flex their inner superhero and

take selfies. Over 30 stalls which included a bird of prey experience centre *Terminator*, *Frozen 2*, *Vikings* with AXN, *Lego: Batman* with Sony Pix, the maleficent wings kept the audience busy apart from the superhero merchandise and cloth stores. Some of the well-known stand up comedians such as Sapan Verma, co-founder of East India Comedy, Rajashekar Mamidana and Vivek Murlidharan were seen keeping audience engaged with their quirky content. The event also had a dance act by Live Wire crew who got the audience dancing to their special performances. With all the joy comes some disappointment too as attendees felt there were some aspects in the event that upset them, with the hiked entry ticket being the major letdown.



"The most disappointing aspect of the event was that the entry price was hiked. The tickets cost around Rs 599 to Rs 699 and that is a lot of to expect from students. Another upsetting



MERCHANDISE STALLS WERE MORE THAN THE NUMBER OF STORES SELLING COMICS. THIS IS IRONICAL CONSIDERING THAT THE MARVEL MERCHANDISE AND MOVIES ARE BASED ON COMIC BOOKS



thing was that we were not allowed to click pictures with the guest artists at their stalls. Some of the organisers were also behaving rudely. I wasn't that happy with the event overall," says Rohit

Kumar. Some attendees that *The Pioneer* spoke to suggested that the event must have more counters that sells old popular comic books. The number of stalls selling mer-

chandise outnumbered the number of stores selling comic books. This is ironic considering that the most popular Marvel merchandise and the movies rose to popularity through comic books.



The rise of WEBCOMICS



With the rise in social media gave opportunities to artists from all around the world to showcase their work. Among the famous International artists who flew down to Hyderabad to attend the event here were Nathan W. Pyle — creator of the insanely funny out-of-the-world and yet relatable comic, *Strange Planet* — and Jonathan Kunz — who created the quirky everyday universe of *War and Peas*. Nathan's webcomics gained 2,50,000 followers on Instagram in just 3 weeks. Both these artists have a combined follower base of more than 15 lakh fans. Speaking about his journey as an artist, Nathan says, "I moved to New York which was very expensive like many big cities in India too. When you move to expensive cities you try to find ways to make ends meet, so I started to draw and make T-shirt designs for a company. That was my real first entry to

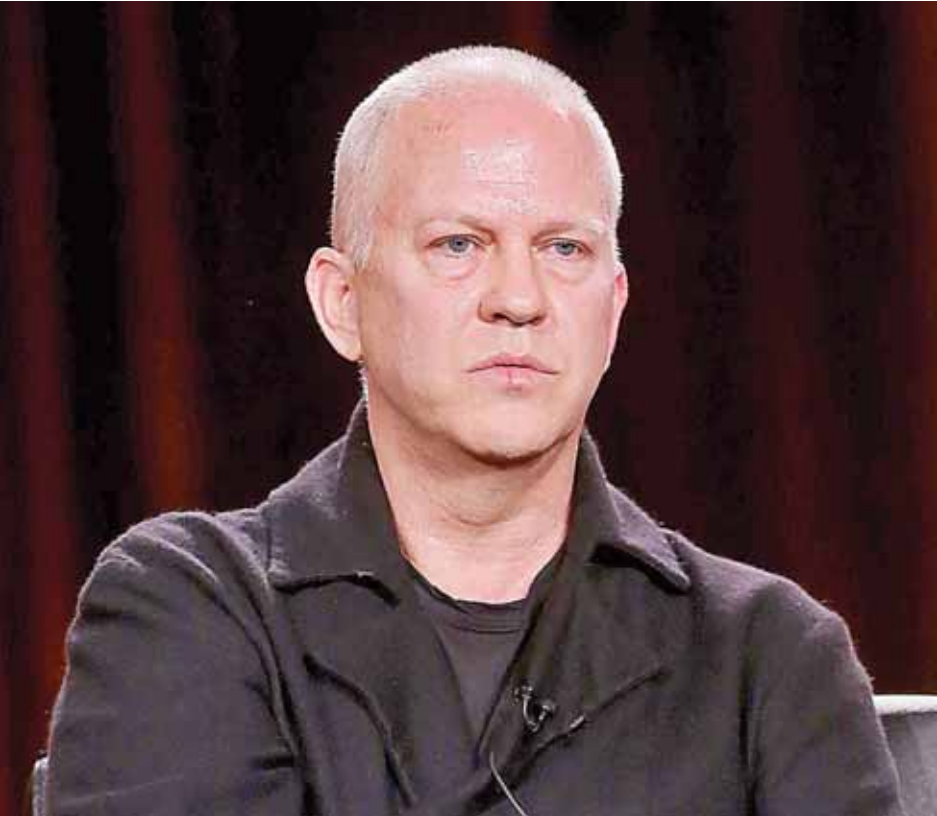
internet art and I realised that there are so many people who enjoy sharing images back and forth on Internet. Smartphones were starting to get big back then so everyone had these phones and images were everywhere. It's been 11 years since I started drawing for the internet and *Strange Planet* was the result for a lot of trial and error." Nathan tells *The Pioneer* that he enjoyed the trip to Golconda Fort and Pedammama Gudi on his first trip to Hyderabad this time. He says he was happy to meet his fans in the city because their knowledge of comics is more robust than those in the United States. Jonathan says he found people here in the city well informed about world's pop



it was just comics and then finally we put together as a properly structured comics." Both the artists say that using their work they were able to speak on various issues as well. "Empathy is something both Jonathan and I share. It is something I really appreciate when I heard him speak about empathy with warranties. I think we have such an opportunity to talk about something we care about. In one of my comics we talk about when someone is new to a school and you just invite them to sit with you. That is something that I continue to think is one of the most important messages in *Strange Planet* which is curiosity," says Nathan. Both Nathan and Jonathan are planning to bring out another collection of their webcomics as a book next year. Sharing tips on creating webcomics, Nathan says "Wherever you are create a world around you and think about how that world will function. For example, if you have a bottle and a cup, what would their relationship be and how would they interact? Put eyes and a face on them in your mind and everything around you. Just create a world you enjoy thinking about it! That's what will help you draw better. Pixar does this so well. It is just like how compelling the movie *Toy Story* was for me growing where I believed that the toys are alive. That's what will create a spark in you to get invested in your work."

culture, especially webcomics. "Here in India, people read comics from all over the world, including the famous ones from America and also their local Indian comics which is so cool. There is a lot of energy in the crowd here which is very nice." "It's my first time to India as well, and I really like the place, I don't know what to expect apart from the food, people are nice here. They are very interested to learn about comics and look passionate," he adds. Jonathan says that he had no idea that *War and Peas* would become such a big hit. He was pleasantly surprised how the popularity of the webcomics grew organically over the years. "When Elizebeth and me started we didn't have any idea that we were going to start something like *War and Peas*. Our whole idea was to put a website together, but later people started to read and then it grew organically and then we started to have the content in German. Later, I shifted to English and then sometimes





RYAN MURPHY'S SON IS CANCER FREE

American filmmaker Ryan Murphy's five-year-old son Ford has beaten cancer.

Last year, the 53-year-old *American Horror Story* creator revealed Ford, who he shares with husband David Miller, had been diagnosed with neuroblastoma as a toddler.

"Ford went through a six hour surgery and years of intense exams which required hours and hours of anaesthesia. I cannot express

to you in this room how difficult this was on him, how difficult this was for our family," Murphy said at the Variety Power of Women Luncheon, where he was presenting Ford's godmother Dana Walden an award for her work with the UCLA Jonson Comprehensive Cancer Center, reports [aceshowbiz.com](#).

While adding he has yet to "emotionally recover" from the battle, he said, "Ford has... I am so proud to proclaim that he is cancer free."

Following Ford's diagnosis, Murphy and his family donated \$10 million to the cancer facility, which helped created a wing that specialises in helping children access the best treatment.

Announcing the news about his son's health last year, Ryan honoured his partner as his "rock", adding, "(He was) strong and patient and loving (I was always a trembling wreck)."

The couple, who wed in 2012, also share six-year-old son Logan Phineas.

WHEN RAJKUMMAR SOLD A PEN TO LEONARDO DICAPRIO

Bollywood actor Rajkummar Rao, who plays a Gujarati entrepreneur Raghu Mehta in his forthcoming film *Made In China*, has shared a funny Instagram video of himself selling a pen to Hollywood star Leonardo DiCaprio.

In the video captioned, "When Raghu Bhai met Leo Bhai. #MadeInChina" that Rajkummar shared on Saturday, he gives a hilarious spin to DiCaprio's final scene from the movie *The Wolf of Wall Street*.

The video begins with the clip of the movie where the *Titanic* star asks a person to sell him a pen.

Adding a twist in the scene, Rajkummar enters with the clip. "Leo Bhai kem chho! Arre Leo Bhai this pen is your story but the refill is the hero. So sell the hero," he says in Hindi.

The one-minute clip ends with DiCaprio applauding the skills of the businessman.

Rajkummar's video currently has 1,49,406 views. The actor's girlfriend and actress Patralekhaa took to the comment section, where she dropped some laughing emojis. *Made In China* narrates the business journey of *jugaadu* entrepreneur. Many scenes have been shot in China, and the actor took inspiration from his own experiences to add to his character.

Dinesh Vijan presents *Made In China* in association with Jio Studios. A Maddock Films production, the film also stars Mouni Roy, Paresh Rawal and Gajraj Rao. It is written and directed by Mikhil Musale, who is making his Hindi directorial debut with the film. It is slated to release around Diwali.



SWARA, DIVYA COME TOGETHER FOR A BEAUTIFUL ODE TO LOVE

After missing from the big screen for a brief amount of time, actress Swara Bhasker is back with her next film. Joining Swara, is actress Divya Dutta in the lead role for their film titled *Sheer Qorma*. The first poster of the film was released on Sunday. The film which revolves around a same-sex love story shows the two actresses holding each other's hand in a heartfelt gesture in its first poster. Their *hijab* and *henna* looks are unmissable.

Helmed by Faraz Arif Ansari, also stars Shabana Azmi in the supporting role. Sharing the film's poster on Instagram, Swara captioned it, "So proud to play @farazarifansari's gentle and shining Sitara in #sheerqorma the film.. A beautiful ode to love, love that binds is all. Notwithstanding gender, race, religion, generation or sexuality.. thank you Faraz! I'm so proud to have been part of this amazing project. Not to mention the honour and dream of sharing screen space with the legendary @azmishabana18 and icon-ic @divyadutta25! #loveislove #futterwackeningfilms."



'OVERWORKED BUT UNDERPAID' HASHTAG IS WHAT DESCRIBES ME, FEELS PC

Priyanka Chopra Jonas is all over the headlines, right from her movie to her work, and all that she has been doing. PeeCee made her return to Bollywood with *The Sky Is Pink* co-starring Farhan Akhtar, Zaira Wasim, and Rohit Saraf. The movie has received decent reviews so far, however, it did not open to very good numbers and one might hope that the numbers are likely to go up over the weekend, thereby giving the movie a decent opening.

During her movie promotions, PeeCee has gone all out with her interactions, and more, and when she had a chat with Twitter, she did go on to reveal little somethings we might not know, or must have never thought of. For instance, when Priyanka was asked about the hashtag that best describes her, she went on to say 'overworked but underpaid' and one might agree given how she has been all over the place.

During the same chat, Priyanka was also asked who followed whom first on Twitter, given their love story started from there, and that is when she revealed it was Nick who followed her and slid into her dm, asking her to hang out together some-time. Well, they do have the perfect love story after all, don't they? A few weeks, and they'll complete a year.

GRAMMY WINNER DJ ZEDD 'PERMANENTLY BANNED FROM CHINA' FOLLOWING 'SOUTH PARK' CONTROVERSY

Grammy-winning DJ Zedd was "permanently banned" from China after he liked a tweet from *South Park*, the adult animated show caught in a feud with the Communist government of the country.

The DJ shared the same on Twitter writing, "I just got permanently banned from China because I liked a

South Park tweet." Zedd's claim was confirmed by German musician's publicist, Adam Guest to CNBC.

"This is true, yes, but we don't have any more info to give you at this time," *Fox News* quoted him as saying.

However, the DJ whose real name is Anton Zaslavski, didn't clarify if he was denied entry into the country or only his was music was censored.

This comes after a controversy between the show's creators and the government about its 300th episode titled *Band in China*, which surfaced last Wednesday.

In the following episode, Randy, a character in the animation, tries selling marijuana to China, which leads him to end up being sent to a work camp.

There, encounters Winnie the Pooh, also a political prisoner because he drew physical comparisons to Chinese President Xi Jinping.

Meanwhile, another group of characters — Stan, Jimmy, Kenny, and Butters — formed a metal band, which caught the attention of a Hollywood manager who wanted to produce a film about them but constantly modified the script in order for the movie to be distributed in China.

This led the government to reportedly cancel the show and stop its broadcast on media platforms including Weibo, Youku among others.





THE BIG FIGHT



With *Venky Mama* producers eyeing an Sankranti release, *Ala Vaikunthapuramlo* and *Sarileru Neekevvaru* are set to hit screens on the same day, finds
NAGARAJ GOUD

The battle lines are clearly drawn for the two big budget Sankranti releases and turned out to be a direct fight between Mahesh Babu starrer *Sarileru Neekevvaru* and *Ala Vaikunthapuramlo*. On Saturday evening, the makers of both the films announced that they would be hitting screens on January 12. Initially, the direct clash was never on the cards, with the Mahesh Babu-starrer planning for January 9 or 10 and Allu Arjun-starrer for January 14. Last month, we've learnt about Allu Aravind and S Radha Krishna, producers of *Ala Vaikunthapuramlo*, targeting January 12. Why the sudden announcement on Saturday evening? We hear it has

something to do with long-delayed *Venky Mama*. Apparently, producer Suresh Babu, who is a heavy hitter in the industry, has told his regular distributors over the weekend that he is looking to pitch his production *Venky Mama*, starring Venkatesh and Naga Chaitanya, for Sankranti. The film is a big production for Suresh and he feels that Sankranti might be the best bet to get his returns. Getting screens wouldn't be a problem for him as he holds a chain of theatres and is also partners with Asian Cinemas. Our sources close to both Suresh Productions and co-producer People Media Factory have confirmed to us that *Venky Mama* is coming for Sankranti. The tentative date

is January 14. So, with Suresh speaking to his distributors, word has spread out in the industry corridors about his Sankranti move, prompting the makers of both *Sarileru Neekevvaru* and *Ala Vaikunthapuramlo* to immediately announce the release date that they've withheld from the past three months. "Sankranti can take in three big films but over here superstar Rajinikanth-starrer *Darbar* too is waiting to fly into the cinema halls on January 10. While it might get good number of screens on day 1 but on day 3, it will stare at losing more than 80 per cent of the screens, to accommodate Mahesh and Allu Arjun films. There's also Kalyanram's *Entha Manchi Vaadavuraa* scheduled for

Sankranti. However, as things

stands now, the chances of it arriving for the festive season are bleak, as the

film's producers don't command clout similar to that of Suresh and Raju. It will be interesting to see how the season pans out. If both Mahesh and Arjun's films eat out into each other's revenue, they can always pin the blame on Suresh for scheduling *Venky Mama* for the festival," said a trade analyst.

Battle or no battle, one thing's for sure is that there are plenty of options for moviegoers to choose from this Sankranti!

RAKESH VARRE is a happy man

Actor Rakesh Varre, who has gone solo with *Evvariki Cheppoddu*, is glad with the response the film has cut across. A love story peppered with humour, deals with how Harathi's (played by Gargeya Ellapradada) father's obsession over caste spells trouble for Hari (Rakesh), who is in love with Harathi. The interesting and comical turns that unfold in the young couple's lives from this point forms the crux of the film. "The response has been very good. As the film opened on Tuesday, we've been a bit skeptical. But, thankfully, it has been turning to very good occupancy in multiplexes, while in single screens, the footfalls have been on a steady rise. Mass audience has stayed away from it but other sections have given their

thumbs-up. College-going students are expected to fill in the theatres in big numbers in the coming days," the actor, best remembered for his turns in *Badrinath* and *Baahubali: The Conclusion*, states. He adds that after *Baahubali*, he was determined to make a good film by himself. "I had been to the New York Film Academy and learnt filmmaking there for a year. With the knowledge and experience, I became confident to make a film. I returned to Hyderabad and heard about 47 scripts but none caught my fancy. Later, I came to know about Basava Shankar, who by then had committed to direct a couple of films. I displayed my showreels to him and requested him to keep me in mind before he embarks on the casting of his films. A couple of months later, he came to me with *Evvariki*

Cheppoddu," he says. "For authenticity, we shot the Kalahasthi scenes at that place itself. For a song at Himayalas, we meticulously planned how it can be wrapped up in short span of time. Also, instead of planes, we traveled by train and buses." Talking about how he convinced Dil Raju to distribute it, he says, "Since time didn't permit him, he recommended the script to some other producer, before advising me not to produce it myself. But I had to don the producer's hat eventually, as no one was coming forward to produce it because I am relatively new, and caste is a sensitive issue. But we knew that the treatment would be sensible and careful. After the film was made, Raju garu watched it and told me he'd release it." Rakesh says, revealing that he hasn't signed any new movie yet. — NG



ANNAPURNA Studios to partner with Swapna Cinema

With his maiden directorial *Seethamma Andalu Ramayya Sitrulu* in 2016 failing to light up the box-office, Srinivas Gavireddy has gone back to the drawing board to come up with a watertight script for his second shot. He got the nod of actor Raj Tarun again and shepherding the project on the production front will be none other than superstar Akkineni Nagarjuna. *The Pioneer* has learnt that Annapurna Studios think-tank — Nag, Supriya and Naga Chaitanya — loved the script by Gavireddy and asked him to get going with pre-production. "The film, set in Bhimavaram, entertains with the unique characterisation of Raj Tarun. Portions of the film will be shot in Hyderabad as well. The filming will most likely roll towards the year-end and it will be wrapped up in 60 days," informed a source. We've been further told that chances of the film being a joint production venture cannot be ruled out. "Swapna Dutt might partner with Annapurna Studios. Nag rates Swapna very high and was pleased with the way she executed *Devadas*," added the source. —NG



SAM UNVEILS HER LOOK AS JANU

Actress Samantha Akkineni unveiled her look as Janu from the highly anticipated '96 Telugu remake on Sunday as she wrapped up shooting her portions for the film. Dubbing the romantic drama as another special one in her career after *Oh! Baby*, she tweeted, "And its a wrap!! Another special film and a role that has challenged me to be better than I was yesterday. Thankyou to my director Prem and costar Sharwanand for being a dream team. #Janu.. living my best life.

Grateful always (sic)." Samantha is reprising Trisha's role from the original, which tells the story of two high school sweethearts (played by Vijay Sethupathi and Trisha) who meet at a reunion after 22 years and reminisce about their past. Trisha has received accolades for the film, even prompting Sam to say that the film shouldn't be remade at all. It's another story that producer Dil Raju later convinced her to take up the film. The remake is set in Vizag and has music by Govinda Vasantha. Raju hasn't revealed the release date yet.

'80s choreographer Srinu no more

Srinu master, popular choreographer of '80s and '90s, with multiple Nandi awards to his name, passed away at this residence in Chennai on Sunday morning. He suffered a heart stroke. He was 82-years-old. A native of Adoni, Srinu started off his dance career by learning Kathak under Guruprasad Sundar. He

later practiced Kathakali from Vishwam. He branched out to films by assisting his brother-in-law Heeralal in 1956. His first film as a dance choreographer was 1969 release *Nenante Nenu* and there was no looking back ever since. *Mahababaludu*, *Bakthakannappa*, *Eduruleni Manishi*, *Yugapurushudu*, *Yugandhar* were some of his notable films over a career

spanning more than 35 years, with more than 1,700 films to his credit. He was one of the most sought-after choreographers in '80s. For his work in films like *Swarnakamalam*, *Radhagopalam* and *Sri Ramarajyam*, he was awarded the Nandi. He is survived by wife Uma Devi, two daughters and a son. His last rites have been performed in Chennai on Sunday evening.



2-0! India win series

Virat & Co crush South Africa by an innings and 137 runs to seal record consecutive 11th series at home

PTI ■ PUNE

The Indian juggernaut continued to roll as the hosts humiliated South Africa by an innings and 137 runs in the second Test to clinch a record 11th consecutive series victory at home, here on Sunday.

The struggling South Africa batsmen surrendered yet again against the Indian bowlers, who asserted their supremacy in all conditions.

The comprehensive victory, coming on the fourth day, has consolidated India's top position in the World Test Championship table. India now have 200 points in their kitty, a handsome 140 points away from nearest-rival New Zealand.

Competing in his 50th Test as captain, Virat Kohli has now led India to their 11th consecutive series at home, a world record.

After being asked to follow-on, South Africa were all-out for 189 in 67.2 overs just after the tea break.

Following a superb effort from the batsmen, it was an all-round effort from India's five-pronged bowling unit with comeback man Umesh Yadav claiming 3 for 22.

Ravindra Jadeja (3/52), Ravichandran Ashwin (2/45), Mohammed Shami (1/34) and Ishant Sharma (1/17) played their part in the comprehensive victory.

Like in the first innings, Vernon Philander (37) and Maharaj (22) again came together to delay the inevitable adding 56 runs in 21.2 overs.

Once Philander was caught down the leg-side by Wriddhiman Saha, the resistance was over in a flash.

In the morning, the stodgy Dean Elgar (48 off 72 balls) put up some stiff resistance before Ravichandran Ashwin (2/45) snuffed him out, in what was a decisive blow to the Proteas, just before lunch.

After going wicket-less in the first innings, Ishant Sharma (1/17 struck with the very second delivery of the morning, a full-length in-dipper that struck Aiden Markram's pads (0) and umpire Nigel Llong had no hesitation in raising his finger.

The opener had the ignominy of bagging a 'pair' in this Test.

However it was Wriddhiman Saha's superb keeping skills that had everyone on the edge of their seats. He showed why he is so highly-rated in world cricket.

On the third morning during South African first innings, poor Theunis de Bruyn (8) had suffered trying to play an expansive cover drive off Umesh Yadav (1/14 off 5



Indian captain Virat Kohli, center, celebrates with teammates after winning the second Test against South Africa in Pune on Sunday



Umesh Yadav celebrates after taking wicket of Kagiso Rabada during fourth day play

I owe Saha treat for stunning catches: Umesh

PTI ■ PUNE

Paceman Umesh Yadav said he owed Wriddhiman Saha a "treat" since the wicketkeeper plucked catches out of thin air when his leg-side deliveries could have gone to the boundary line, in the second Test.

Umesh returned figures of 3 for 22 in South Africa's second innings and the pacer admitted that the credit for his first two wickets entirely goes to Saha for his brilliant display behind the stumps.

"I think I should treat him for those wickets down leg-side and that first catch, and I think those two wickets are Wriddhi bhai's wickets," Umesh said after the match.

Saha's superb keeping skills once again stole the show. On the third morning during South African first innings, poor Theunis de Bruyn (8) tried playing an expansive cover drive off Umesh but a diving Saha held a sensational catch in-front of the first slip.

And on the fourth day again, Saha pulled off two stunners down the leg-side off Umesh's bowling in South Africa's second innings to dismiss De Bruyn and Vernon Philander.

"When you put the ball outside leg stump you think it'll be a boundary, but if there is a little bit chance to convert a catch, we know he will take it," Umesh said of Saha.

Meanwhile Saha, who was making a comeback in the Test playing XI after being sidelined for more than a year, said keeping against quality pacers at nets makes life easy for him during match situations.

"The ball wobbles for all three — Umesh, Ishant, Shami. We practice for that. But ultimately you have to come into the match and do it," he said.

"Our trainers help us out with stretches, ice-baths, and we are trained for the match-day really well, so credit to them for my fitness as well as my wicket-keeping performance," added Saha.

Youngsters need to be better than us'

PUNE: There is no dearth of talent in India but the youngsters have a fair idea that they have to be better than the existing bunch of seasoned campaigners to break into the national side, reckons Umesh Yadav. The Vidarbha speedster feels that the current lot has gained rich experience over the years and is setting the benchmark for the next batch of players.

"Most of the boys in this set-up, at least 7-8 have played 40 plus Tests. So when the youngsters, who are coming up, see the kind of hard yards seniors are putting in, it's not easy for them. They know that they need to get better than us to be in the side," Umesh said after the match.

PTI

MOST CONSECUTIVE TEST SERIES WINS AT HOME					
Team	Series	Period			
India	11	Feb2013-Oct 2019			
Australia	10	Nov 1994-Nov 2000			
Australia	10	July 2004-Nov 2008			
West Indies	8	March 1976-Feb 1986			
England	7	May 2009-May 2012			
South Africa	7	March 1998-Nov 2001			
MOST WINS AS SKIPPER IN FIRST 50 TESTS					
Skipper	P	W	L	D	Success%
Steve Waugh (AUS)	50	37	8	5	79.00
Ricky Ponting (AUS)	50	35	6	9	79.00
Virat Kohli (IND)	50	30	10	10	70.00
Faisel Features					

VIRAT KOHLI BECAME THE FIRST INDIAN CAPTAIN TO ENFORCE A FOLLOW-ON AGAINST SOUTH AFRICA. ENGLAND WERE THE LAST SIDE THAT HAD ENFORCED A FOLLOW-ON AGAINST THE PROTEAS IN JULY 2008 AT LORD'S

overs) that Saha had plucked from thin air in-front of the first slip.

On the fourth morning, De Bruyn tried playing a delicate glance after Umesh had drifted on the pads. To his horror, he saw an airborne Saha pull off an acrobatic

stunner that left everyone stunned.

Elgar and skipper Faf du Plessis (5 off 54 balls) added 49 runs and were ready to show patience, especially the skipper, who was presenting dead bat.

However, the ultra defensive tactic didn't work for a lengthy period as Du Plessis got out trying to drive an Ashwin off-break. The bat-pad inside edge kept low but Saha's sharp reflexes meant that he pounced it on the fourth attempt.

Elgar, who lost a bit of concentration, tried to play a lofted shot but didn't get his timing right as Umesh ran back from his mid-off position to take a fine running catch as India got the decisive breakthrough.

Linde in for Maharaj

PTI ■ PUNE

Left-arm spinner George Linde will replace an injured Keshav Maharaj in South Africa's squad for the third Test in Ranchi, starting on Saturday.

According to a CSA media release, Maharaj sustained an injury to his right shoulder while fielding on day two of the second match and MRI results revealed that he will not be fit in time to play in the final Test match.

"An MRI scan revealed that Keshav has sustained an injury to a muscle in his right shoulder. He was re-assessed this morning, particularly with regards to bowling, and he showed significant discomfort in this latter discipline," team doctor Ramjee Hashendra commented.

"Based on this morning's assessment and the findings of the scan, the medical team feels, he will not be fit in time for the next Test match in six days' time. The nature and extent of the injury would mean that he will probably return to play in 14 to 21 days based on his progress during the rehabilitation phase."

WE'LL GO FOR 3-0 SERIES WIN: KOHLI



Virat Kohli, right, celebrates with teammates after India win the second Test

PTI ■ PUNE

Sounding a warning to the rivals, India captain Virat Kohli on Sunday said they will not "take their feet off the gas" and will aim for a whitewash when the final Test begins in Ranchi.

"Looking at the larger picture of the Test championship, every game has value, whether it is at home or away, that is the format. So, we're not going to take our foot off the gas in the third Test," Kohli said at the post-match presentation.

"No one is going to relax at any stage, we are going to go for a result in the third Test and hopefully make it 3-0, that's a guarantee," he said.

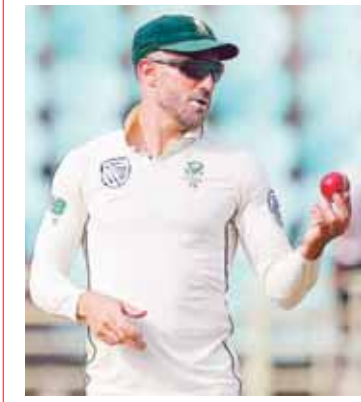
South African captain Faf du

Plessis conceded that India are deserving series winners and his side was found wanting in the contest.

"They are very tough to beat at home, their record speaks for itself. We know in the subcontinent your first innings is really important. The runs you put on the board gives you a chance," he said.

"But the way India batted, especially Virat with 250, it takes a lot of mental toughness. Two days in the field can wear you down. Especially that second evening, the batsmen were a bit weak in the mindset. From then it's playing catch-up."

He said Kohli was too good and his hunger for runs stood out. He was not satisfied with 100, 150."



PTI ■ PUNE

South Africa captain Faf du Plessis on Sunday acknowledged that the difference between his team and India in the ongoing Test series has been the "inexperience" of the Proteas as it's not possible to replace world class players like Hashim

Amla and AB de Villiers overnight.

"I think, it's purely a case of inexperience. I said before this Test series, your best Test teams are the teams with the most experience. When it comes to this Indian team, there's a lot of experience in that dressing room, there's a lot of Test matches

behind their names," a dejected Du Plessis said after losing the series and Gandhi-Mandela Trophy.

"We are at this stage where we have lost almost all of our experience. Dale Steyn, Morne Morkel, Hashim Amla, AB de Villiers, all of them were seasoned campaigners. You

don't replace those guys overnight.

"And now it's a new group of guys, who have played 5, 6, 10, 11, 12, 15 Test matches. That will take time. If you take the best players out of any team, they would find the same challenges," Du Plessis explained.

He put his hands up and

said that as captain he needs to show the way along with Quinton de Kock and Dean Elgar.

"For us, it is important as a senior player group to make sure that we put in performances ourselves. Myself, Deano (Elgar), Quimmy (De Kock), we can't expect other guys to make

runs.

"We need to make sure we make the runs first and then the others guys to chip in with us. In a time like this, it is important that your big guys really, really take control and make sure that they put in the bulk of the work," said Du Plessis, putting across his point clearly.

Lakshya wins Dutch tourney

PTI ■ ALMERE

Rising Indian shuttler Lakshya Sen on Sunday clinched his maiden BWF World Tour title by winning the Dutch Open men's singles title after beating Yusuke Onodera of Japan in the summit clash here on Sunday.

The 18-year-old Indian rallied from a game deficit to defeat his world No 160 opponent 15-21, 21-14, 21-15 in a final that lasted 63 minutes.

The Dutch Open is a BWF World Tour Super 100 tournament.

In the opening game, Lakshya fell behind early on and could not erase the deficit, despite coming as close as 10-11 and 13-14. Onodera managed to keep his nose ahead and pocketed the opening game to earn the bragging rights. The second game started on a competitive note with the pair trying to outwit each other. The Indian grabbed a 8-5 lead at one stage but the Japanese clawed his way back.

Lakshya again managed to move to 12-8 with four straight points. Onodera narrowed it



Lakshya Sen in a file picture

down to 11-12 but Lakshya jumped to 18-11 and then roared back into the contest.

In the decider, Lakshya came up with a clear strategy and managed to keep his rival at a distance. He led 9-4 before making it 11-8 at the break. After the interval, Lakshya continued to move ahead and slowly marched ahead to shut the door on Onodera.

Lakshya, currently ranked 72nd, had won the Belgian Open last month and reached the finals of Polish Open this year.

Medvedev seals Shanghai Masters

AFP ■ SHANGHAI

Daniil Medvedev won his fourth title of a spectacular year with a thumping 6-4, 6-1 victory over Alexander Zverev in the Shanghai Masters final on Sunday.

Victory for the 23-year-old Russian, contesting a sixth final in a row, was more evidence that he is the prime contender to join the "Big Three" of Novak Djokovic, Rafael Nadal and Roger Federer.

The US Open finalist is also able to say that he has finally beaten the German Zverev, another young contender at 22, at the fifth attempt. This was an emphatic statement from the world number four, needing just 74 minutes to seal the crown.

"I think the stadium was full today and you guys are amazing support, starting from my first match," Medvedev told the crowd. "You gave me good energy to win this tournament. Thank you very much, Shanghai will always be a



Daniil Medvedev and Alexander Zverev pose with their trophies

special place in my heart."

Zverev, long touted as the best of the new generation of men's tennis stars, was error-prone, but had no complaints.

"As I said yesterday, you are probably the best player in the world right now," the world number six told Medvedev. "How you are playing is unbelievable."

The next generation has stamped its authority on

Shanghai with Djokovic and Federer — beaten by Zverev — both going out in the quarter-finals.

Medvedev said that he is a better player than he was at the start of the year, but has really sparkled since the summer. Starting with Washington, DC, in July, the Russian has reached six finals on the spin — including the US Open — winning three of them.

First WTA title for Coco

AFP ■ LINZ

Teenage prodigy Coco Gauff won her first WTA title on Sunday following a 6-3, 1-6, 6-2 win over Jelena Ostapenko in the final in Linz that saw her hold her first trophy aloft aged 15.

Gauff, who only entered the field as a lucky loser after failing to qualify, completed a dream week in Linz in front of a supportive crowd to become the youngest player to win a WTA event since Czech Nicole Pietrangola, who triumphed in Vancouver and Tashkent two months apart in 2004. "I'll remember this day for the rest of my life," the delighted Gauff said after receiving a minutes-long standing ovation from 3,000 spectators.

"I had an amazing week and I hope to be back in the future."

Biles extends record to 25 world medals



Simone Biles performs during Worlds

AFP ■ STUTTGART

All conquering American gymnast Simone Biles won her fifth Gold, her second of the day, at the world championships on Sunday in the women's floor final to extend her own all-time record to 25 worlds medals.

Having earlier won the beam final, the 22-year-old also extended her own record of 19 world championships Golds after success earlier this week in Stuttgart in the team, all-round

and vault events with the USA.

Biles was crowned world floor champion for the fifth time in her career after winning the final by a full point from team-mate Sunisa Lee, who earned Silver with Russia's Angelina Melnikova taking Bronze. Her double Gold success came within a two-hour spell after earlier winning the beam final with China's Liu Tingting, 19, taking Silver with 16-year-old team-mate Li Shijia in Bronze place.

Her victories on the beam and floor makes Biles the most decorated gymnast in history, surpassing the previous all-time record of 23 world medals won by men's star Vitaly Scherbo of Belarus in the 1990s.

This is the first time Biles has finished a world championships with five Gold medals having said she is "99 percent" sure Stuttgart will be the fifth and final worlds of her career. The only blot on Biles' near-perfect record in south-west Germany came in Saturday's uneven bars final when she finished fifth.