



Southwest monsoon withdrawal continues in AP

HYDERABAD: Withdrawal line of the South-West monsoon began covering some parts of Coastal AP and some more parts of Telangana. As per IMD, Conditions will become favourable for withdrawal of southwest monsoon from the remaining parts of the country and simultaneous commencement of northeast monsoon rains over southeast India during subsequent 48 hours. The withdrawal line of Southwest Monsoon passes through Tuni, Hanamkonda, Bidar, Solapur, Ratnagiri.

In its update on Tuesday IMD said Conditions are becoming favourable for further withdrawal of southwest monsoon from some more parts of central Bay of Bengal, some more parts of south India, remaining parts of west India and some more parts of central Arabian Sea during next 24 hours.

Continued on Page 3

Kerala HC serves notice to Mohanlal in ivory case

KOCHI: The Kerala High Court on Tuesday served a notice to superstar Mohanlal on a petition that the permission granted to him to keep elephant tusks should be cancelled.

The Chief Justice S Manikumar after hearing the petition filed by a former Forest Service official ordered the notice to be served to the superstar and posted the case for further hearing after two weeks. The case first surfaced in 2011, following an income tax raid at the superstar's home in Kochi, when it came to light that he was in possession of elephant tusks and the Forest department took up the case.

Class one student dies of heart attack

RANCHI: A class one student died of a heart attack in Jamshedpur on Tuesday, police said. According to the police, class one student Vaishnavi fell on the ground during prayer time on Tuesday. She was taken to hospital where she died during treatment. The doctors said that the girl died due to a heart attack. According to her parents she was a heart patient and was undergoing treatment.

The incident took place at Shiksha Niketan school of Jamshedpur. "During prayer time a staffer saw the girl falling on the ground in the classroom. She was rushed to Tata Motors hospital by principal Sushmita Dey and Vice Principal Rajani Pandey.

TODAY

ALMANAC

Month & Paksham:

Ashwin & Krishna Paksha

Tithi : Tritiya: Full Night

Nakshatram: Bharani: 02:22 pm

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

Rahukalam: 12:01 pm – 01:28 pm

Yamagandam: 07:39 am – 09:07 am

Varjyam: 03:07 am – 04:49 am

Gulika: 10:34 am – 12:01 pm

Good Time: (to start any important work)

Amritkalam: 09:12 am – 10:55 am

Ahijit Muhurtham: Nil

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Thunderstorm
Temp: 31/24
Humidity: 81%
Sunrise: 06:09
Sunset: 05:53

Current Weather Conditions
Updated October 15, 2019 5:00 PM

Fulfilling every promise made to people: CM Jagan

● Launches 'Rythu Bharosa' scheme in Nellore

PNS ■ NELLORE

Fulfilling a major poll promise, Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy on Tuesday launched 'YSR Rythu Bharosa' scheme-PM Kisan's scheme under which each farmer will get Rs 13,500 as input assistance every year.

The Chief Minister launched the flagship scheme at Kakutur in Nellore district by handing over cheques to beneficiaries. The scheme is expected to benefit 54 lakh farmers, including tenant farmers across the State. The amount will be deposited in the bank accounts of the beneficiaries. Addressing a public meeting on the occasion, the Chief Minister said though YSR Congress Party (YSRCP) during the elections had promised financial assistance of Rs 12,500 per year, the government has decided to increase it by Rs 1,000.

The Chief Minister said despite financial constraints, his government was committed to implement the scheme for



Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy lifting a plough by donning a turban during the launch of Rythu Bharosa scheme in Nellore district on Tuesday

● CM YS Jaganmohan Reddy said despite financial constraints, his government was committed to implement the scheme for five years

● From next year, every beneficiary will get Rs 7,500 in May at the beginning of Kharif sowing season, Rs 4,000 in October for harvesting Kharif crop or for Rabi needs. The remaining Rs 2,000 will be paid on the occasion of Sankranti

five years. He said though the previous government had identified 43 lakh beneficiaries, the YSRCP government has conducted a transparent survey to include all those eligible bene-

ficiaries, who were left out during the previous survey.

He claimed that Andhra Pradesh is the only State to implement such a huge financial assistance scheme for tenant

farmers. Three lakh tenant farmers belonging to Scheduled Castes (SC), Scheduled Tribes (ST), backward classes and minority communities are among 54 lakh beneficiaries.

He said YSRCP had promised to implement the scheme from May 2020, but it has advanced the implementation by eight months. Beneficiaries under PM Kisan Nidhi scheme of the Centre will get Rs 6,000, while the remaining amount will be paid by the State government. Those not covered under the Centre's scheme will get the entire assistance from the State.

He said beneficiary farmers were given Rs 2,000 each in June and now they will get Rs 9,500. Another Rs 2,000 will be paid during 'Sankranti'.

From next year, every beneficiary will get Rs. 7,500 in May at the beginning of Kharif sowing season, Rs 4,000 in October for harvesting Kharif crop or for Rabi needs. The remaining Rs 2,000 will be paid on the occasion of 'Sankranti'.

ED to quiz Chidambaram, will arrest if required

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

A Delhi court Tuesday allowed the Enforcement Directorate (ED) to interrogate former finance minister P Chidambaram in Tihar jail tomorrow, and arrest him if necessary, in connection with the INX Media money laundering case. The senior Congress leader's judicial custody in the INX Media corruption case, which was filed by the CBI, ends on October 17. Since his arrest on August 21, he has till Tuesday spent 54 days in custody — both of the CBI as well as judicial — in nine spells.

The court said three ED officials can interrogate Chidambaram on Wednesday after 8:30 am and asked the jail superintendent to make arrangements in this regard.

Seven K'taka pilgrims die as mini-bus falls into valley

PNS ■ KAKINADA

Seven pilgrims died on the spot and five sustained injuries when the mini-van in which they were travelling fell into the valley near Maredumilli in East Godavari agency ghat road on Tuesday. The incident occurred went the pilgrims from Chellangeri in Chitradurga district of Karnataka were on their way to Annavaram temple in East Godavari in a mini-van after having darshan of Bhadradi temple at Bhadrachalam in neighbouring Telangana State.

On reaching Vali- Sugriva turning en route from Chintur to Maredumilli in East Godavari, the driver of the mini-bus lost control while negotiating a curve, resulting in the mini-bus fall into the gorge about 40 feet below from the ghat road.

The deceased were identified as Meda Srinivasulu, Meda Madhurakshmma, Meda Gayatramma, Meda Sweta, Meda Ramalakshmi, Kuncham Ramesh, Kuncham Amrutavani. The injured were Meda Jagannadham, K Sweta, K Geetalakshmi, N Venkata Chlapati. A two-year-old girl child Jnana Sri, however,



The mangled mini-bus, which fell from ghat road into the valley, seen at Maredumilli in East Godavari agency on Tuesday

escaped unhurt. The relatives of these, who were travelling in another mini bus, were safe.

In all, 26 pilgrims in two mini-buses were to reach Annavaram in the afternoon on Tuesday and from there to Vasavi Maata temple at Penugonda in West Godavari later on the day. Relatives of two families are on temple tourism from Karnataka.

According to Rampachodavaram ASP, Vakul Zindal, out of the total five injured the condition of one of them is critical. All these are undergoing treat-

ment at area hospital in Rampachodavaram.

All bodies of all the seven deceased were sent to Rajamahadravaram government hospital for postmortem, the ASP said. Chief Minister Y S Jagan Mohan Reddy spoke to East Godavari district officials over phone and enquired about the accident, a release from his office here said. He directed the district authorities to ensure proper treatment to the injured. Leader of the Opposition N Chandrababu Naidu expressed grief over the accident and conveyed his condolences to the bereaved families.

Farmers thank CM for 'Bharosa'

PNS ■ NELLORE

There have been many firsts besides innovations and trend settings which could be seen as the main feature of YSRCP that has received overwhelming public support in 2019 general elections and much before.

Encouraging participatory politics during public meetings and events became the hallmark of YSRCP. During the numerous dharnas and deekshas party president YS Jaganmohan Reddy has taken up since the inception of the party, audience was always given prominence and was given the mike to speak on every single occasion.

When farmers were given mike at the launch of Rythu Bharosa-PM Kisan here on Tuesday, two of them - Chand Pasha and Ramana Reddy - thanked the Chief Minister for the help they have received.

This has been the pattern that was well received by the civil society and comes like a whiff



CM YS Jaganmohan Reddy giving cheque to a farmer during the launch of Ruthu Bharosa scheme in Nellore district on Tuesday

of fresh air to see the beneficiaries talking and the chief guest listening to them.

The CM also makes it a point to go round the stalls at every function and interact with the people working at ground level which shows his down-to-earth approach.

During the launch of Village Secretariats and before that, while giving away the certificates to the Village Volunteers, he had given the mike to the participants and they had the opportunity to

speak their mind out. At the Vahana Mitra launch, auto drivers shared the dais with the CM and spoke about themselves and the welfare scheme. During the YSR Kanti Velugu, where screening tests began to school children, it was a moving sight to see a visually impaired boy speak his mind out and equally moving was the scene when a young girl has asked for the provision of sanitary napkins at government schools.

Continued on Page 3

Rs 6K cr power dues pending from govt depts

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

About Rs 6,000 crore power dues are pending from various government departments in the State, according to Chief Secretary LV Subrahmanyam.

Addressing officials of various departments at the Secretariat on Tuesday, he said the dues should be paid by making use of the resources available in various departments. He said Water Resources Department owes Rs 2,000 crore followed by the

LV Subrahmanyam said Water Resources Department owes Rs 2,000 crore followed by the Rural Development Department with Rs 500 crore dues. Panchayats should pay the dues by drawing funds

Rural Development Department with Rs 500 crore dues. Panchayats should pay the dues by drawing funds

from the General Funds. He asked Rural Development Principal Secretary Gopalakrishna Dwivedi to take appropriate steps in that direction.

Subrahmanyam suggested to the Water Resources Department to arrange payment of arrears drawing funds from the Water Grid scheme. The Chief Secretary directed Principal Secretary of Finance Department SS Rawat to approve the pending proposals.



LV Subrahmanyam, Chief Secretary

Village Volunteers removing our votes: TDP complains to CEO

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The TDP team led by former minister K Atchannaidu met Chief Electoral Officer K Vijayanand and complained that with the help of Village Volunteers, the YSRCP is removing votes of TDP followers. They explained that volunteers are doing the work of BLOs (Booth Level Officials) and tampering with voters' list.

They stated in the complaint that in the name of voter verification programme, votes of TDP followers were removed by Village Volunteers. They

stated that YSRCP has recruited their party cadre as Village Volunteers and influencing the voter verification programme. They quoted the YSRCP MP VJayasai Reddy's statement in which he has mentioned that 90% of volunteers are of YSRCP workers.

Atchannaidu explained to the CEO that Village Volunteers have taken over the work of voter verification from BLOs. They hatched a conspiracy to remove the votes of TDP supporters in a systematic manner, he alleged.

Continued on Page 3

BJP may propose Bharat Ratna for Godse: D Raja

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Slamming the Maharashtra BJP for mooted Bharat Ratna award for V D Savarkar, Communist Party of India general secretary D Raja on Tuesday said the ruling party may even propose the honour for Mahatma Gandhi's killer Nathuram Godse.

The election manifesto of Maharashtra BJP, released on Tuesday said the party will ask the NDA government at the Centre to confer India's highest civilian award on Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, popularly known as Veer Savarkar.

Forest dept to go online for permits

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The forest department is planning to set up an online system for issuing various permits regarding disposal of timber and other products. This decision is made to bring transparency in the permit system and to clear corruption allegations against the forest staff. The forest department doesn't deal directly with people in many issues and it only comes into the picture when the people deal with the timber.

All the permits for selling and transporting of wood should be permitted by the forest department. This process is being delayed in many places across the State. Now, the online system is also expected to bring down the waiting time for the



N Prateep Kumar

people, who are buying, selling and transporting the wood. Forest department officials have to issue permissions for sawmills for buying, importing and transporting the wood. Usually, sawmills apply for Form-2, while Form-4 will be applied for permits of transport-

- Selling and transporting of wood should be permitted by the forest department
- This process is being delayed in many places across the State
- Now, the online system is expected to bring down the waiting time for the people, who are buying, selling and transporting the wood

converted wood within the municipal limits. Other permission includes cutting of trees like teak and other trees.

The process of permits is actually taking about 15 days and being delayed many a time. To issue permits there will be one inspection and two levels of file

processing. Sawmills applying for permits will be inspected by the range officer and the file will be processed in the range and at the DFO level. So, the forest department is also expecting that the online permits would help to reduce the file processing time.

Principal Chief Conservator of Forests N Prateep Kumar said, "We are planning to bring all the permits under online system. This will give more transparency and corruption-free permits for the people. Our teams are already studying the online procedure of the commercial departments. Based on the reports, we will launch the online method. We are also expecting that applying online would speed up the process. The Chief Minister has clearly directed us to make everything transparent."

Jagan's bid to thwart BJP's expansion in AP dicey

The political situation in Andhra Pradesh is slowly, but surely taking a curious turn with the two major political players in the state making strategic moves.

While the ruling YSR Congress Party is wary of the machinations of a buoyant BJP that has made no bones about its expansion plans by involving its national leadership, the Telugu Desam Party, after biting the dust in the elections, is desperately trying to regain its lost strength by mending fences with the saffron party.

TDP was solely responsible for breaking its ties with BJP in the pre-poll scenario on the assumption that Modi had lost his charisma. TDP supremo Chandrababu Naidu projected himself as a powerful coordinator and

guide to all anti-Modi forces in the country.

The Telugu Desam Party is now convinced that it can't face YSR Congress in future, given the present state of affairs in AP. That is why it appears to be cozying up to the saffron party for reestablishing friendship and taking it to the 1999 level when TDP was a crucial supporter of the then NDA government headed by Atal Behari Vajpayee. Therefore, Naidu seems to be exploring all options to re-establish a 'reliable link' with Modi!

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy, on the contrary, is believed to be thinking of ways in which BJP's expansion plans can be thwarted in Andhra. Jagan has been interacting with leaders of various constituencies with a

The Bharatiya Janata Party has targeted the YSRC government as it wants to cash in on the growing popularity of the Modi government with regard to abrogation of Article 370 in J&K. BJP has sketched plans for possible expansion in AP by highlighting Modi government's welfare schemes and pitting the YSRC government as an obstacle to progress

view to streamlining the party's organizational setup. As part of the exercise, he may have to rub BJP on the wrong side due to various reasons.

For instance, prominent political couple D.Puradheswari and 'Dr D.Venkateswara Rao (daughter and son-in-law of NTR) contested the general election on behalf of two separate parties. Purandeswari contested on BJP ticket from the Visakhapatnam LS seat and Venkateswara Rao was in the fray on YSRC ticket from the Prachur Assembly seat in

Prakasam district. Both lost in the elections.

While the husband remained calm thereafter, the wife has been actively participating in BJP programmes. She is behind none in criticising Jagan's government and its 'anti-people policies'. She entered politics



M D RATNA KUMAR
Senior Journalist

in 2004 and successfully contested the Lok Sabha elections on Congress ticket for two consecutive terms and became Union minister at the behest of the then Congress president Sonia Gandhi. She and her husband chose different parties to continue their political journey after having served the Congress.

Purandeswari has been given a nominated post at the national level (Director, Air India) by the Modi government and she is working for her better future in BJP. The Bharatiya Janata Party has targeted the YSRC government as it wants to cash in on the growing popularity of the Modi government with regard to abrogation of Article 370 in J&K.

BJP has sketched plans for possible expansion in AP by

highlighting Modi government's welfare schemes and pitting the YSRC government as an obstacle to progress.

In these circumstances, YSRC leadership reportedly asked the couple to be in 'one party', implying Puradheswari should join YSRC. This development has raised many questions among the cadres of both parties: With what intention the leadership of YSRC has 'specified' like that? What would be the fate of 'hidden friendship' that has continued till now? Is the YSRC leadership preparing to settle scores with BJP? Is it really possible for YSRC in its present politically precarious and sensitive condition, considering Chief Minister Jagan Reddy is facing serious cases of economic offences being probed by central investigat-

ing agencies like CBI & ED?

Interestingly, similar attempts made by YSRC were thwarted by the central leadership of BJP in the pre-election scenario. The present president of BJP AP unit and former minister Kanna Lakshminarayana had made all arrangements to join YSRC then. BJP central leadership, however, asked YSRC not to admit its leaders. It was a big shock, yet YSRC conceded. Now, a similar situation prevails following Jagan's move to bring Purandeswari into YSRC with specific assurances regarding their son's political future! YSRC feels that organisational strength is essential for retaining power in 2024. Hence, the ruling party has to gingerly curtail the attempts of BJP to expand its base in AP.

Revive licensing system for passenger boat drivers

PNS ■ KAKINADA

The Godavari Launch Workers Union under the aegis of AITUC demanded the state port authorities for immediate issuance of driving licence to passenger boat drivers and helpers, who have been associated with ferrying of passengers in water ways in the district.

The issue of licence to the boat drivers, who are engaged in carrying of passages in water ways, attained significance after the Kuchhuluru tourism boat mishap, in which 64 tourists lost their lives and 12 others, went missing in the incident at Kuchhuluru in Devipatnam mandal of East Godavari on September 15.

The representatives of Godavari Launch Workers Union alleged that because of non-issuance of licences on a seniority basis, those whole have no proper licence were appointed as drivers of passenger carriers resulting in tragedy such as the tourist boat incident in the River Godavari.



■ The issue of licence to the boat drivers, who are engaged in carrying of passages in water ways, attained significance after the tourism boat mishap, in which 64 tourists lost their lives and 12 others, went missing in the incident at Kuchhuluru in Devipatnam mandal of East Godavari on September 15

They disclosed that the licensing system, which was under irrigation department, has been transferred to AP State Port Authorities in 2018. Port authorities since then not issued any licences. Representatives alleged that this has affected the liveli-

hood of 250 families, who depended on boats driving and as helpers for several years.

When contacted, Kakinada State Port Officer Captain Adinarayana said that the licensing authority has been transferred to the port department form irrigation department in 2018.

The port officer said that he took charge as the port officer recently after the boat mishap in the River Godavari in September.

The officer said that he has been travelling to various ferries in the district where the passenger boats are in operation right from Narasapuram to several other places in East Godavari. Meanwhile, "We approached All India Institute of Inland Water Management in Patna and sought their services to train the drivers at SIFT in Kakinada."

"Soon the training for drivers will be started in association with SIFTS (State Institute of Fisheries Technology) and we will issue the certificates for drivers on merit," Captain Adinarayana said.

Special daily train for Araku

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In order to clear extra rush of tourists to Araku, East Coast Railway will run special express trains between Visakhapatnam and Araku from October 16 to December end as it is getting good patronisation.

The special express train will leave Visakhapatnam at 08.10 am and reach Araku at 11.30 am on the same day.

In return direction, the train will leave Araku at 2.30 pm and reach Visakhapatnam on the same day at 6 pm. This pair of trains will stop at Simhachalam, Kottavalasa, S Kota and Borraguhalu between Visakhapatnam and Araku. The train comprises one third coach, one sleeper coach, eight general second class and two second class cum luggage coaches.

VIJAYAWADA BULLION RATES	
GOLD	
₹ 38,237 (10 gm)	
₹ 63	
SILVER	
₹ 45,565 (1kg)	
₹ 265	

CHICKEN RATES ₹/kg	
Dressed/With Skin	₹136
Without Skin	₹155
Broiler at Farm	₹94

EGG RATES ₹/100	
HYDERABAD	390
VIJAYAWADA	422
VISAKHAPATNAM	420
RETAIL PRICE (in Hyderabad)	₹4.22

SCR to run Diwali, winter, specials

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

In order to clear extra rush of passengers during Diwali and winter season, the South Central Railway will run 19 special trains between Kakinada town and Tirupati; Kakinada town - Secunderabad and Villupuram - Secunderabad.

Train No. 07210 Kakinada Town - Tirupati Special Train will depart Kakinada Town at 21:00 hrs on October 26 and arrive in Tirupati at 08.20 hrs next day.

In the return direction, Train

No. 07209 Tirupati - Kakinada town special train will depart Tirupati at 19:30 hrs on October 27 and arrive in Kakinada town at 07:30 hrs next day. En route, these special trains will stop at Samalkot, Dwarapudi, Rajahmundry, Nidadavolu, Tanuku, Bhimavaram town, Kaikaluru, Gudivada, Vijayawada, Tenali, Chirala, Ongole, Nellore, Gudur, and Renigunta stations in both directions.

These special trains consist of AC II Tier, AC III Tier and sleeper class coaches.

Religious fervour marked the annual Sirimanotsavam of presiding deity of Vizianagaram town Sri Pydithalli Ammavaru, the biggest annual festival in north Andhra on Tuesday.

Over two lakh devotees from various parts of north coastal Andhra and neighbouring Odisha and Chhattisgarh visited Vizianagaram to seek blessings of the presiding deity.

As per the schedule, the procession of Sirimanu was started at 4 pm at Chaduru Gudi of Pydithalli and moved slowly towards the fort.

The chief priest of temple Bantupalli Venkata Rao was perched on top of 40 feet high pole (Sirimanu) and paraded from the temple to the fort three times before returning to the temple.

Devotees believe that the priest is possessed and threw bananas at him. Lakhs of devotees, who occupied every available space along the road and every rooftop in the fort city, too, stayed put to watch till the end of Sirimanotsavam.

Vizianagaram civic body authorities put up public toilets near the fort, bus station and a few other places. Also, the banana skins, which were thrown over the temple and the priest during the procession, were cleared immediately to keep the road free from debris.

In the morning, people performed pujas at Pydithallamma temple and sought Her blessings. A spiritual and philosophical discourse was also organised to educate people on the reason for worshipping the local



A sea of humanity at Sirimanotsavam in Vizianagaram on Tuesday. Minister for Municipal Administration Botsa Satyanarayana carrying silk clothes to offer to Goddess Pydithalli, along with his wife Botsa Jhansilakshmi

- ◆ Locals said that the festival was started in 1757 had a sorrowful background. The then Vizianagaram Maharaja Vijayarama Gajapathi Raju's sister Pydimamba committed suicide by jumping into the local tank. She took the extreme step after knowing about her brother's death in the historic fight at Bobbili fort on January 23, 1757
- ◆ The chief priest of temple Bantupalli Venkata Rao was perched on top of 40 feet high pole (Sirimanu) and paraded from the temple to the fort three times before returning to the temple
- ◆ In the morning, people performed pujas at Pydithallamma temple and sought Her blessings
- ◆ However, she reportedly told Raja's aide Pativada Appala Naidu that she would protect the town as Goddess Pydimamba
- ◆ Later, her idol was found in the tank and a temple was constructed in her name. For this reason, all the families connected to the episode play a key role in 'Sirimantotsavam' which has been continuing for the past 260 years

deity. The locals said that the festival was started in 1757 had a sorrowful background. The then Vizianagaram

Maharaja Vijayarama Gajapathi Raju's sister Pydimamba committed suicide by jumping into the local

tank. She took the extreme step after knowing about her brother's death in the historic fight at Bobbili fort on January 23, 1757.

Anticipating the outcome of the battle, she warned her brother not to go for war when she and other family members were ill with plague. Her sudden demise was a big shock for the family and people of Vizianagaram. However, she reportedly told Raja's aide Pativada Appala Naidu that she would protect the town as Goddess Pydimamba. Later, her idol was found in the tank and a temple was constructed in her name. For this reason, all the families connected to the episode play a key role in 'Sirimantotsavam' which has been continuing for the past 260 years.



Restore milk supply to Anganwadis, says Forum

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Child Rights Protection Forum State president Dr Gondu Sitaram and other Forum members, who visited Anganwadi at Isukathota, were surprised to find non-availability of milk to the children. Sitaram said milk supply and Bala Sanjeevani scheme were vital for the improvement of nutritional level in kids.

"This will affect 1.85 lakh children of less than six years of age and 53,000 pregnant women in the district," Sitaram told reporters here on Tuesday.

He further stated that non-availability of milk has been happening quite frequently, but contractors are being blamed in this regard. The activist demanded immediate restoration of milk supply to all Anganwadi centres in the district. Another activist and neuro surgeon Dr B Ramesh Babu said milk plays an important role in maintenance of balanced diet as it contains milk proteins, iron, zinc, vitamin A and vitamin B12 and minerals. Milk plays vital role in the protein metabolism of body and rich source of vitamin D. It will also boost the immune status of children, he added.

State committee members of CRPF B Skunthala, B Laxman Reddy and Sekhar were present.

New device shows promise in Type 2 diabetes treatment

IANIS ■ LONDON

Researchers have found that a newly tested medical device, called 'Sleeveballoon', mimics the effects of traditional bariatric surgery in rodents and produces impressive results on body weight, fatty liver and diabetes control.

Sleeveballoon is a device that combines a balloon with a connected sleeve, which covers the initial parts of the small intestine. It is inserted into the stomach and bowel during minimally invasive surgery under general anaesthetic.

For the study, published in the journal EBioMedicine, researchers compared the effects of the Sleeveballoon and traditional bariatric surgery on 30 rodents fed with a high-fat diet, achieving very similar results.

Results were also compared to rats, with the new device reducing food intake by 60 per cent and resulting in a 57 per cent reduction in fat mass.

The effect on diabetes was similarly impressive with blood



glucose levels dropping by 65 per cent.

"Gastric bypass surgery is a highly effective treatment of obesity and type 2 diabetes. However, very few eligible patients, only around one per cent, are offered surgery and some also prefer less invasive approaches," said study's lead author Geltrude Mingrone, Professor at King's College London.

During the study, the

research team found that the metabolic effects of the Sleeveballoon device are similar to those of the gastric bypass but have distinct advantages over the traditional method.

In both, insulin sensitivity and heart functions improved.

"However, while gastric bypass causes a rapid rise in post food blood glucose levels which can cause hypoglycaemia, the Sleeveballoon

- For the study, published in the journal EBioMedicine, researchers compared the effects of the Sleeveballoon and traditional bariatric surgery on 30 rodents fed with a high-fat diet, achieving very similar results.
- Results were also compared to rats, with the new device reducing food intake by 60 per cent and resulting in a 57 per cent reduction in fat mass.
- The effect on diabetes was similarly impressive with blood glucose levels dropping by 65 per cent

induces a slowing down of digestion which has a steady effect on blood sugar levels," Mingrone said.

"This helps control appetite and hunger, keeping the person fuller for longer and substantially reduces weight," he added.

Death resulting from mosquito bite not accidental: Consumer Forum

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Mosquito bite leading to death due to dengue fever cannot be construed as an accidental death, opined Disputes Redressal Forum-I in Vizag, which dismissed that accidental insurance claim (accidental death benefit) of a deceased's wife.

According to reports, Rahul Anand had obtained a Life Insurance policy from state-run Life Insurance Corporation (LIC) for Rs 10 lakh with a premium of Rs 14,825 per year on July 23, 2016. Anand's wife Puja is a nominee of the policy, they can claim the maturity benefits from LIC in 2037.

The 27-year-old widow Puja, a resident of Chinavaltair in Vizag city, has filed a unique case in the Consumer Forum. Puja in her petition mentioned that her husband Rahul Anand was admitted to a private hospital in Vizag, he was diagnosed with dengue and breathed his

last due to cardio-respiratory arrest on September 19, 2018.

When she approached the insurance firm with all the documents, the insurance firm had paid Rs 13.5 lakh to Puja on January 1, 2019, towards the eligible death benefit under the policy. The insurance firm refused to pay the accidental claim citing that death due to dengue fever cannot be treated as an accidental death.

However, she has filed a petition in the Consumer Forum against LIC under Section-12 of Consumer Protection Act seeking the forum to direct the insurance firm to pay the accidental death claim of Rs 10 lakh under the policy and to pay Rs 50,000 towards compensation for rejecting her claim and Rs 10,000 towards legal expenses of the litigation.

In her complaint against LIC,

she mentioned that as such, being bitten by a mosquito is an unforeseen eventuality and should be regarded as an accident.

The insurance firm has rejected her claim saying that dengue death can't be treated as accidental as per the as per Clause No 11 of the policy bond, wherein it is clearly mentioned about the definition of accident such as "an accident is a sudden, unforeseen and involuntary event caused by external, violent and visible means".

So, dengue fever does not satisfy the features and the fever is not visible means. Therefore, the dengue fever does not come under accident as per the accidental clause mentioned in the policy bond itself. The forum led by president D Leelavathi and member KVR Maheswari opined that death due to dengue fever can't be treated as an accidental death so that there is no deficiency of service on the part of the insurance firm. The forum dismissed the complaint.

CAPSULE

60-YEAR-OLD HELD FOR IMPREGNATING MINOR GIRL

Vijayawada: Police arrested a sixty-year-old man here on Tuesday for luring a minor girl and making her pregnant. According to police, a minor girl was living at New Rajarajeswaripeta with her parents. The 60-year-old person, who was living near her house, befriended the minor girl, by offering gifts and money and had a sexual relationship. According to Ajit Singh Nagar police, when the girl fell ill her father took her to a hospital where she was found pregnant. Parents came to know about the elderly man and lodged a complaint with police. Based on the complaint, police arrested the accused by registering a case and shifted the minor to the government hospital for medical tests.

GIRL ATTEMPTS SUICIDE AT IIT-ONGOLE

Vijayawada: Lahari, who is studying at IIIT, Ongole campus, made a bid to commit suicide on Tuesday. She hails from Krishna district and studying first year IIT. After coming to the campus for holidays, she jumped from the college building. She is undergoing treatment at the government hospital and her condition is stated to be stable, according to doctors. Lahari purportedly left a suicide note in which she stated that she is committing suicide due to ill-health. She said sorry to her parents in the letter and requested her sister and brother to study well and take care of parents.

JUNIOR ASSISTANT IN ACB NET

Vijayawada: Junior Assistant of VMC was caught by the ACB at Circle-3 Municipal Corporation Office on Tuesday. Ponnappally Surya Bhagavan is working as a junior assistant in revenue section at Assistant Commissioner Office of Circle-3, Patamata. K Sailaja approached him for the mutation of three flats in her name, in the place of her father's name, submitting the support documents, including tax receipts. But, the Junior Assistant has demanded her Rs 9,000 bribe. The complainant complained against the junior assistant. Then, the ACB laid a trap and asked her to meet him with currency notes, which were laced with chemicals. Surya Bhagwan has received the amount and kept it in the desk. ACB sleuths raided and caught the accused red-handed. They recovered currency notes from the desk and tested chemically. After getting confirmation, they registered a case against the junior assistant.

Corporate hospitals fleecing patients

G RAVI KIRAN
■ VIJAYAWADA

Of late, treatment has become so costly, the poor, lower middle class and middle class are unable to afford treatment at private and corporate hospitals.

Adding insult to injury, corporate hospitals are charging in-patients heavily in the name of medicines. A social activist disclosed margins of medicines being sold by corporate hospitals' in-house medical shops. The Drug Control Authority turned a Nelson's eye towards irregularities, Prajarogya Vedika has alleged.

Corporate hospitals start fleecing patients the moment they are admitted to an ICU. Initially, they will ask for a deposit of at least Rs 50,000. After eight hours, a call will come from the billing section to the attendant of that patient. They will say 'Sir, your deposit was over. You have to pay more. Now, you pay Rs 50,000 more, if you don't have, at least pay Rs 30,000 and then tomorrow pay the balance."

The attendant will be surprised and will ask for the clarification of the billing, then service charges of the hospital, room charge all will be less, but the major amount will be for

■ Charging hefty price for medicines

■ Nallamotu Sreedhar, a technical expert and social activist, exposed the margin of medicines being sold by corporate hospitals

■ He posted details on his Facebook wall. He explained difference between medicine being sold at corporate hospitals and the same medicine (composition) of other company being sold at medical shops outside corporate hospitals



Dr Ramanaiah, Convenor, Prajarogya Vedika, said: "This practice is going on in all corporate hospitals. The same composition with different names will be available at corporate hospitals for high prices and outside drug dealers at a cheaper price"

medicines. With no way, the attendant will pay the amount. This is the routine experience of anybody, who goes to the corporate hospital in an emergency condition.

In the recent past in Vijayawada, a dengue patient was admitted to a private hospital. After one week, the patient died. Till then, relatives of the patient have paid Rs 3 lakh. But, the management of the hospital has given Rs 7 lakh bill to them and demanded that they pay the balance of Rs 4 lakh. How come anybody expects Rs 7 lakh bill for a dengue patient's treat-

ment? Nallamotu Sreedhar, a technical expert and social activist, exposed the margin of medicines being sold by corporate hospitals.

He posted details on his Facebook wall. He explained difference between medicine being sold at corporate hospitals and the same medicine (composition) of other company being sold at medical shops outside corporate hospitals.

He mentioned in that post about Creatine 700T's actual cost as Rs 2,051, but it was being sold for Rs 28,416 at a corporate hospital. He has given almost 484

medicines list with details of costs being charged by corporate hospitals and druggists outside. He demanded that the vigilance department and drug control monitor medicines' sale at corporate hospitals.

Dr Ramanaiah, Convenor, Prajarogya Vedika, said: "This practice is going on in all corporate hospitals. The same composition with different names will be available at corporate hospitals for high prices and outside drug dealers at a cheaper price. A drug used for post transplant patients will be charged at corporate hospital for five times the

Expedite construction of houses for poor, says Chief Secretary

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Secretary LV Subrahmanyam has called upon officials to expedite construction of houses sanctioned under rural and urban housing schemes.

Addressing a meeting of officials at the Secretariat on Tuesday, he asked officials to make use of services of the staff at Village/Ward Secretariats in completing the work. About 25 lakh shelterless poor should be able to get houses by March next year, he said.

The Chief Secretary said steps should be taken to ensure that individual houses are built in 40 days and multi-storeyed apartments in 150 days. The houses should be built with the funds released by the Central and State governments. The beneficiaries can raise loans by mortgaging the pattas allotted to them, to banks.

The houses should be built in time and the loans should be paid promptly, the Chief



Secretary said and added that by doing so the beneficiaries can cultivate the habit of saving, thereby achieving economic stability.

Principal Secretary of Housing Ajay Jain said six lakh houses are being built under the PMAY by various urban local bodies and urban development authorities in the State.

Earlier, APITIDCO MD Diwan Moideen made a PowerPoint presentation on agendas. Municipal Administration Secretary Syamala Rao, Andhra Bank DGM Nancharaiha, CCLA Secretary Chakravarthy and others were present.

Action plan for utilisation of Rs 1,750 cr Campa funds

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The forest department has prepared an action plan for utilisation of funds of Compensatory Afforestation Fund Management and Planning Authority (Campa). Principal Chief Conservator of Forests N Prateep Kumar informed that there are about Rs 1,750 crore under Campa for Andhra Pradesh.

Prateep Kumar visited Kambalakonda in Vizag on Tuesday, along with Chief Conservator of Forests Rahul Pandey and other officials. Speaking to media persons, he said, "The State has about Rs 1,750 crore under Campa funds. We have created an action plan for works around Rs 323 crore. Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy has promised that there will be a green channel budget for Campa that can be used at any time."

He also said the Chief Minister also agreed to equip new vehicles for the staff and other welfare activities for which Rs 40 crore were already sanctioned for the same.

He said there were about 56 per cent vacancies in the department and requested the



Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy has promised that there will be a green channel budget for Campa that can be used at any time

Chief Minister for filling at least 50 per cent vacancies. He has directed to fill all the vacancies.

Similarly, plantations will be taken up across the State to

have 33 per cent green cover. Other departments are also being asked to take up plantation activities on a large scale.

Responding on the wildlife protection, the PCCF said, "We will take special measures for the protection of the wildlife."

We have one of the biggest tiger reserves in the country. Protection of tigers will be our prime agenda. The Chief Minister has ordered us to develop eco-tourism in the State. We already have about 29 ecotourism projects in the State. Strengthening the existing ones, we will bring new projects."

the youth in the State. They discussed about providing Andhra University students internships in Singapore and launching joint courses in genetic engineering and mechatronics. The Vice-Chancellor also asked them to work on Uddanam kidney disease issue in Srikakulam.

"We will invite faculties working in Singaporean varities as distinguished professors to Andhra University," said Prof Reddy. The visitors were impressed with the Fine Arts department.



on Tuesday. Prof Reddy chaired a meeting and asked them to extend their technology to train

ATM offender held, Rs 5.46 lakh recovered

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Gannavaram police arrested ATM offender Ch Suresh for cheating women and senior citizens at ATMs. The modus operandi of Suresh was to cheat women and senior citizens, who find it difficult to withdraw money from the ATM machine. Police recovered Rs 5.46 lakh from his possession.

The accused was produced before the media on Tuesday by DCP Harshavardhan, ACP Surendranath Reddy and CI Srinivas Rao.

Suresh was arrested when a woman (building workers

Cases were registered against Suresh in 2017 at Guntur III Town Police Station, Vijayawada GRP Police Station, in 2018, three cases were registered at Krishnalakna Police Station and was sent to prison

contractor) filed a cheating case against Suresh for cheating her when she visited SBI ATM at cinema hall centre at Gannavaram to draw money. Suresh cheated her by saying that he would help her in drawing money from the ATM machine and later said

that the ATM machine was not functioning. In the meantime, he changed the ATM card and returned another ATM card to the woman. Later, Suresh withdrew Rs 71,000 from her account.

Suresh is the native of Anaparthi in East Godavari

district and relocated to Krishnalakna, Vijayawada in 2003. He worked as a security guard, as he was addicted to liquor and other bad habits, he started earning money by cheating people.

Cases were registered against Suresh in 2017 at Guntur III Town Police Station, Vijayawada GRP Police Station, in 2018, three cases were registered at Krishnalakna Police Station and was sent to prison. After coming out, he was involved in 16 cases in Gannavaram, Hanuman Junction, Gudur, Nuzvid and Agaripalli areas.

Month-long free eye camp from today

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Amaravati Eye Hospital and Drusya Opticals will organise a month-long free eye camp from October 16 to November 15, according to city-based ophthalmologist Dr Nadella.

Addressing a press conference at Gayatrinagar here on Tuesday, Dr Nadella called upon the people to make use of the opportunity.

Dr Nadella said the health camp is being organised to mark the inauguration of the new branch of Amaravati Eye Hospital at Gayatrinagar and as a part of the social service activity of the Drusya Opticals.

Prominent ophthalmologists in the city will examine the patients. Cataract and Lasik & ICL surgeries will also be performed free of cost during the camp. Patients can make use of the opportunity between 10 am and 8 pm on all working days during the camp. For more details, patients can contact phone Nos. 0866 2491458 or 0866 2491459.

HIGH FIVE AMID SOLEMNITY



DGP Gautam Sawang in a cheerful mood at an exhibition of weapons of the Police Department under Open House programme organised in Vijayawada on Tuesday ahead of Commemoration Week

AU to introduce bar coding system

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Andhra University Vice-Chancellor Prof PVGD Prasad Reddy said the university will introduce bar coding system in the upcoming semester exams from October 17.

In a press release issued here on Tuesday, Prof Reddy asked students to attend the exams in a stress-free manner. The results should reflect the potential and talent of the varsity students. The introduction of the optical mark recognition (OMR) sheet-based

exam system is aimed at automating the evaluation process. Currently, scores of a student are totalled and entered manually into the computer systems. Under the new system, the marks for each question are awarded in an OMR sheet. Later, the OMR sheets will be sent for the machine valuation without any human intervention. This will help release the results in a very short span, said Prof Reddy.

On the other hand, members of the Singapore Business Federation visited the varsity



on Tuesday. Prof Reddy chaired a meeting and asked them to extend their technology to train

Village Volunteers removing our votes: TDP complains to CEO

Continued from Page 1

TDP leaders alleged that the State government has skipped the process of giving a schedule for voter enrolment and verification after conducting an all-party meeting with an intention to remove TDP voters. "We request you to restore old electoral process duly excluding the role of Village/Ward Volunteers".

Atchannaidu stated "Earlier, before Assembly elections, the YSRCP had tried to remove many votes and were restored with our alertness. Now again, before Municipal and Panchayat elections, they planned to remove the votes of TDP supporters

Farmers thank CM for 'Bharosa'

Continued from Page 1

Students, weavers, farmers, women and all sections of people were given the opportunity to speak in most of the functions and meetings addressed by YS Jaganmohan Reddy. It was YSRCP, which was the first political party, to show audio visual clippings in press conferences and public meetings to effectively counter the opponents and nails their lies.

Agriculture Minister K Kanna Babu said it was the launch of Village Secretariats, which has given a hope to Yuvajana (youth) followed by Kanti Velugu to Shramika (auto, taxi and maxi cab drivers) and Rythu (farmers) welfare that has been looked after by the government and all this happened in just one month's time, he said.

Southwest monsoon withdrawal continues in TS

Continued from Page 1

South West Monsoon has been weak over Telangana and, IMD predicts Light to moderate rain or thunder showers at a few places over TS. However, IMD issued heavy rainfall warning with Thunderstorm accompanied with at isolated places over South TS for Tuesday. Mainly low level Easterly winds prevail over the state. For Hyderabad, IMD predicts Rain or thundershowers towards evening or night over the next four days.

For Andhra Pradesh, IMD issued Heavy rain warning with Thunderstorm and lightning at isolated places in the districts of Krishna, Guntur, Prakasham and Nellore OF Coastal Andhra Pradesh and in all districts of Rayalaseema.

US Consul General launches 'Safe Village' prog

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Hundreds of people have enrolled as volunteers and Rakshaks (protectors) for the 'Safe Village' programme launched at Sabbavaram near Kakinada in East Godavari district by Joel Reifman, Consul General, US Consulate General, Hyderabad.

Sponsored by the US Consulate General, Hyderabad, the programme is being managed by My Choices Foundation. It is a holistic initiative aimed at sensitizing 'at-risk' community members about human trafficking, its causes and risk factors, creating awareness about ways to prevent trafficking from happening, sustaining the awareness and conducting vulnerability-reduction workshops. To run the programme, 'Operation Red Alert' - a division partner of My Choices Foundation, has partnered with local NGOs that work on issues of women



Joel Reifman, Consul General, US Consulate General, Hyderabad, launches 'Safe Village' programme' at Sabbavaram near Kakinada in East Godavari district on Tuesday

and trafficking, trains them on Safe Village programme, and appoints them as official 'Implementing Partners'. These implementing partners conduct Safe Village programmes under the management of 'Operation Red Alert'. Only the staff trained by 'Operation Red Alert' are eligible to conduct the programmes.

There are three stages in a

Sponsored by the US Consulate General, Hyderabad, the programme is being managed by My Choices Foundation. It is a holistic initiative aimed at sensitizing 'at-risk' community members about human trafficking

Safe Village programme: Pre-visit, two days Safe Village programme and the follow-up. As

a part of the pre-visit, volunteers visit the targeted villages and collect data to confirm the

vulnerability and trafficking risk and get a deeper assessment of the issue. Volunteers then discuss the issue with the authorities, including sarpanch and NGOs, seeking their partnership in the programme. Other partners in this mission are school headmasters, Anganwadi workers and ASHA workers. After obtaining the consensus and assurance from stake-holders, the 'Operation Red Alert' designs the programme schedule for a particular village. During this intensive programme, volunteers speak about the signs of potential traffickers, potential vulnerable people and the strategies traffickers adopt to lure innocent people.

During the course of the programme, volunteers distribute fliers and material among the masses with emergency phone numbers to alert the police when they suspect any trafficking activity, child abuse or child marriage in the village.

CAPSULE

HYDERABAD TO HOST 'GLOBAL EDUFEST' TOMORROW

Hyderabad: The Institute of Management & Foreign Studies (IMFS) will be hosting the first-of-its-kind 'Global Edu-Fest' for students wanting to pursue various educational programmes at foreign universities. The one-day programme to be attended by 70 Universities from 8 countries will be held at Hotel Marigold on Thursday, October 17th. The Global EduFest will be inaugurated by Dr D N Rao, Chairman, VNR Vigyan Jothi Educational Trust. Dileep Konatham, Director, Digital Media, Govt of Telangana and PVRK Murthy, Chairman, Gayatri Education Institutions will attend the inauguration as 'Guests of Honour'. Global EduFest is an education fair that is being organised for the seventh year in a row by IMFS, India's leading Overseas Education Consultancy. Global Edufest brings on to one platform all the stakeholders in the vertical 'Study Abroad' viz, students, universities, financial institutions, agencies like British Council which hold the standardised tests like IELTS etc. Representatives of the US Consulate and Education USA too will be present and a information session on Study in USA and also about the US Visa process will be conducted by them. University representatives will hold seminars on various topics of interest to the visiting students.

Cong issues ultimatum to govt

‘RESOLVE RTC STRIKE BY OCT 19’

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The Congress has set October 19 as the deadline for Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao to resolve the RTC strike issue. Else, the Congress leaders warned that they would lay siege to CM's official residence Pragathi Bhavan on October 21. This was announced in a joint press conference at Gandhi Bhavan on Tuesday by TPCC working president and MP A Revanth Reddy, former Minister and ex-Leader of Opposition in Telangana Legislative Council Mohammed Ali Shabbir, ex-Deputy CM Damodar Rajanarasimha and other leaders.

Revanth Reddy alleged that the provocative statements of Chief Minister and his Ministers drove many RTC employees to suicide and they failed to find a solution despite the strike entering 11th day on Tuesday. He said the Chief Minister was more sympathetic to the dog of Pragathi Bhavan than the common people.

He said that a serious case that might result in five years imprisonment was booked against a veterinary doctor following death of CM's dog. However, no action was taken when RTC employees committed suicide following Ministers' provocative statements.

He said Ministers Errabelli Dayakara Rao and Talasani Srinivas Yadav should be



Revanth Reddy alleged that the provocative statements of Chief Minister and his Ministers drove many RTC employees to suicide and they failed to find a solution despite the strike entering 11th day on Tuesday

booked under Section 306. He described the suicide by RTC employees as institutional murders. Former Minister Shabbir Ali alleged that TRS leaders were giving contradictory and confusing statements on the RTC employees strike.

He said that at one side Chief Minister K Chandrashekhara Rao has been insisting that more than 48,000 RTC employees were 'self-dismissed' and they were no more part of the corporation. On the other side, TRS Ministers and TRS Secretary General K Keshava Rao are giving

statements appealing RTC workers to call off the strike. "If the Chief Minister is correct and over 48,000 employees are 'self dismissed', then to whom Ministers and TRS MP are appealing to call off the strike and talk with the government," he said.

Shabbir Ali urged CM and other TRS leaders to stop giving contradictory statements to create confusion among people, especially the employees. Keshava Rao apparently offered to mediate the talks while the fact is he himself has no access to the Chief Minister and latter

is not willing to talk with anyone on the issue, he said.

The Congress leader said that the TRS government was not only playing with the lives of thousands of RTC employees, but also with the lives of common people. Those not capable of riding a motor-cycle were being allowed to drive RTC buses. Consequently, there has been a rise in number of bus accidents and more than 15 people got injured in different accidents so far. By deploying inexperienced drivers, CM KCR has turned all roads prone to accidents. Shabbir Ali said that the Congress party has been supporting the RTC employees from day one onwards and the support would continue till their problems are resolved. He said although TPCC President Uttam Kumar Reddy was busy in campaign for Huzurnagar bye-elections, other Congress leaders have been supporting the protest by RTC employees across the State.

He appealed to the people to support the RTC JAC's Telanana Bandh on October 19.

Ex- Deputy CM Damodar Rajanarasimha alleged that Telangana was witnessing the worst aristocratic form of government in the country. He said that the Central Government should intervene into the matter and hoped that Governor Tamilisai Soundararajan, who is presently on Delhi's tour, would enlighten the Centre on the issue.

KTR bats for green action plan

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

IT and MA&UD Minister KTR held a video conference with District Collectors from the Secretariat here on Tuesday. During the video conference, the Minister directed the Collectors to come up with a comprehensive sanitation plan, green action plan and a water usage plan within one week for all new Municipalities. Minister asked the Collectors to provide information about the process of collection of waste material, recycling, etc in the plan.

Minister stated that the recently held 30-day action plan gave positive results in the gram panchayats. He said that similar plans should be introduced in the municipalities for improving sanitation. Like gram panchayat workers, the municipal staff should also be provided with insurance facilities, said Minister KTR.

Minister instructed the



Thirty days action plan gave positive results in the gram panchayats

KTR Minister for IT

Asks Collectors to implement plans similar to '30-day action plan' in municipalities

with LEDs in the new municipalities and also identify sites to develop urban lung spaces.

Keeping in mind the increasing population in the municipalities, the Minister asked the Collectors to increase the number of public toilets and the She toilets. Minister stated that the government has already provided Swatch autos for collection of garbage from door to door. He asked the collectors to increase the staff and vehicles MA&UD Principal Secretary Arvind Kumar, CDMA Director TK Sidevi, and HMWSSB MD Dana Kishore participated.

Man lynched on suspicion of temple theft

PTI ■ NIZAMABAD

A 25-year-old man was allegedly lynched by a group of villagers on suspicion of committing a theft at a temple in Nizamabad district, police said on Tuesday. The man, who works as a mason, was on Monday thrashed by the group after he was caught allegedly trying to steal from the place of worship, a senior police official said. The villagers later informed the police who got the man shifted to the government hospital in Nizamabad but he died without responding to treatment, the official said. The victim's wife told TV channels she received a phone call on Monday night saying her husband was caught allegedly trying to commit a theft and beaten up before being shifted to a hospital.

The caller then asked her to visit the hospital. "I told the caller they could have informed the police about her husband instead of beating him up. When I reached the hospital on Monday morning, I found my husband dead," the wailing woman, holding her two-month-old baby in her arms, said. Based on a complaint from her, a case of murder has been registered and an investigation to identify the accused was on, the official added.



This temple in Mancheri earns Rs 2.83 L in a day

PNS ■ MANCHERIAL

The ancient Sri Sathyanarayana Swamy temple of Gudem village in Dandepalli mandal saw an income of Rs 2.83 lakh through offerings and sale of tickets for various services at the holy place on full moon day of Hindu calendar year's Ashwayuja month. Counting of hundis was held on the premises of the shrine on Monday.

Executive officer T Narayana said that the temple earned Rs 94,843 by way of offerings by devotees and sales of tickets belonging to various services fetched Rs 1,88,889 for the abode of Lord Sathyanarayana Swamy regarded as Annavaram of Telangana.

Several hundreds of pilgrims thronged the temple on the auspicious day.

The abode of Lord Satyanarayana Swamy is a major pilgrim centre of Mancheri district. It is thronged by pilgrims belonging to not only various parts of State, but also neighbouring Maharashtra. It is located on the right bank of Godavari. As customary ritual, couples perform Sri Satyanarayana Swamy vratham at the temple.

Endowments Department's Nirmal division inspector R Ravikishan Goud, members of the governing body of the shrine Akula Tirupathi and volunteers of Sri Sathyanarayana Swamy Seva Samithi and the priests were present.

Bhagiratha water to Karimnagar from Jan 1

PNS ■ KARIMNAGAR

BC Welfare and Civil Supplies Minister Gangula Kamalakar on Monday said Mission Bhagiratha water will be supplied daily to the residents of Karimnagar town from January 1, 2020. The Minister was speaking at a review meeting with Mission Bhagiratha engineers on the progress of MB works in urban and rural mandals at the District Collectorate here.

Stating that 90 per cent of the Mission works had been completed, he instructed the officials to complete the remaining 10 per cent works as early as possible. He also instructed the officials to conduct test runs after completing urban work by December 15 and rural works by the end of November. Repair works should be taken up if there were any leakages, he added.

Kamalakar also directed the officials to give connections to water tanks constructed at Satavahana University, Housing Board Colony and Marked areas as part of the MB scheme. He instructed the engineers to speed up laying of pipelines since Karimnagar Smart City works were set to commence. Mission officials, Karimnagar Municipal Corporation and Public Health department should work in coordination to complete pending works.

Stating that public money should not be wasted by digging



The Minister stated that 90% of the Mission works had been completed, he instructed officials to complete the remaining 10% soon. He instructed them to conduct test runs after completing urban work by Dec 15 and rural works by the end of November. Repair works should be taken up if there were any leakages

roads where they are already laid, the Minister warned of serious action if any department dug roads after completion of road laying works. Kamalakar instructed the KMC officials to shift vegetable vendors to Rythu Bazar and roadside vendors to new shops constructed behind the

bus stand. He wanted the authorities to speed up road works at the Collectorate-LIC office-Ambekar Stadium, and bypass road.

KMC commissioner G Venugopal Reddy, Superintendent Engineer Badraiah and others participated in the meeting.

Terror biggest obstacle to progress: Kishan Reddy

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Union Minister of State for Home Affairs G Kishan Reddy addressed the National Conference of Chiefs of ATS/STFs organised by the National Investigation Agency (NIA). Speaking on the occasion, Kishan Reddy congratulated the NIA and called terrorism a major challenge for the country, a curse for any civilized society and the biggest obstacle to modern development.

He added that India has always been capable of meeting such challenges. He outlined the importance of NIA in the context of a detailed investigation of terrorist incidents and said that the organization was vital to ensure national security.

Detailing the agency's work, Kishan said that the NIA has registered 286 serious terrorism cases during its tenure of 10 years since its inception. Out of these, a professional investigation of 210 cases has been successfully submitted in the NIA Special Courts.

He noted that the success achieved by NIA in such a short time and the work it has done in the field of counter-terrorism has emerged as a veritable signature. He also congratulated the NIA for exposing Pakistan's role in Pathankot, Uri, Banihal and Handwara cases of terrorist attacks and in the manufacturing and circulation of fake



Kishan Reddy remarked that India's national security challenges were functions of its unique geography, diversity and regional as well as global developments

Indian currency. He remarked that India's national security challenges were functions of its unique geography, diversity and regional as well as global developments. He enumerated fundamentalism, separatism movements, extremism, communalism and Maoist violence as the major internal security challenges faced by India. He emphasized that all problems and grievances should be solved peacefully within the constitutional provisions of the nation.

Giving the example of Jammu and Kashmir, Reddy said that the state of Jammu and Kashmir, despite being in India, was acting as a separate sovereign state due to disruptive and separatist activities.

‘TikTok effective platform for govt campaigns’

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

TikTok App can be an effective social media platform for various government outreach campaigns and initiatives. A 'Training Workshop on TikTok' was held for Government PROs in association with Digital Media wing of the ITE&C Department, Government of Telangana.

Talking at the session, Nitin Saluja, Director of Public Policy, TikTok India, said, "Success of social campaigns such as #CleanIndia #Skills4all and #EduTok are testimony to the fact that content platforms such as TikTok have the potential to successfully engage users to spread awareness on various social issues. Through these campaigns, TikTok has taken a step towards contributing to societal good and empowering citizens through the power of its technology."

Detailing on the utility, safety, security and the in-app grievance redressal mecha-



Nitin Saluja, Director of Public Policy, TikTok India, said, "Success of social campaigns such as #CleanIndia #Skills4all and #EduTok are testimony to the fact that content platforms such as TikTok have the potential to successfully engage users to spread awareness on various social issues

nisms that the platform offers, Saluja stated that the App has 200 million users in India.

TikTok has carried out several online and offline campaigns on the effective and safe

usage of the App; strengthened it with 13 Industry leading safety features.

Director, Digital Media Dileep Konatham has in his initial remarks explained how the Telangana Government has been utilising social media platforms to connect with citizens and engage them for the dissemination of information.

"ITE&C Department has been hosting trainings, work-

shops and awareness programmes for the Government officials, staff and other stakeholders on various social media platforms including Facebook, Google, Twitter, ShareChat. Off late, TikTok has become popular among the social media users, and hence Government wanted to conduct a session on its proper and effective usage. Government entities should find ways to prepare content for these platforms as lakhs of citizens are present there. Local bodies, Public Utilities, Departments like Police and those implementing flagship programmes like Haritha Haram are immediate candidates for TikTok usage," he opined.

Chief Minister's PRO Ramesh Hazari, Rachakonda Police Commissioner PRO Dayakar, Cyberabad Police Commissioner PRO Kiran Kumar, Telangana DGP PRO Harsha Bhargavi and PROs from Tourism Dept., Forest Dept., GHMC and HMWSSB have attended the Workshop.

RTC workers say the losses due to govt's failure

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

The RTC trade unions accuse Chief Minister K Chandrasekhara Rao of adopting use and throw policy as far as the RTC workers are concerned. The TRS used RTC workers during Sakala Janula Samme, but now declaring RTC workers' strike as illegal.

They felt let down as the CM used their services during the course of Telangana agitation and trying to ditch them now going back on his promise to merge the RTC with the Government.

The TRS government is also accused of defaulting payment of Rs 1052 crore to the TSRTC after collecting motor vehicles tax.

Dismissing the existing RTC staff and asking the new recruits not to join any union show the dictatorial face of the CM.

The RTC workers suspect a conspiracy to loot the RTC assets through encouraging benamis to file tenders.

The Telangana movement was fought on the grounds of due share in water, funds and appointments. But the RTC workers state that many of the drivers and conductors are sometimes working double shifts at the cost of their health since there were no recent recruitments in the RTC, which has been affecting their health.

The losses of the RTC are attributed to the government's failure in running the transport undertaking.

In 2014, the RTC staff strength was 57,000. These many employees helped the RTC operate buses to 125 crore KM. Even after retiring of 6000 employees from service subsequently, 50,000-odd



The RTC workers suspect a conspiracy to loot the RTC assets through encouraging benamis to file tenders.

workers helped the transport undertaking run its buses to 132 crore KM, which is a sure sign of increasing the production.

In spite of this, the RTC has been sustaining losses only because of the government's failure to run it on profitable lines, say the agitating RTC workers. But, the government is slinging mud on the RTC workers.

The woman conductors are working more than eight hours elsewhere in the state, barring the Hyderabad city, as their duty does not end in 8 hours.

RTC workers are braving 48 degrees hot sun during peak summers working double shifts. Some of the employees succumbed to sun stroke exhibiting their loyalty to the organization.

In spite of putting such hard work, the RTC is closing

down many of its facilities like tyre rebutton shed in Warangal and invited tenders from private parties. The RTC also closed down its printing press. Security services have been outsourced, depot audit has been outsourced. Did the TRS fought for statehood to Telangana only to make appointments on the basis of outsourcing of services. Now the government is embarked on a plan to outsource bus services.

How can the RTC workers be held accountable for the RTC's accumulated losses. If the workers should be blamed, the RTC would not ended up winning so many awards in reduction of accident rate, conserving fuel and so on.

The annual hike in fuel price would burden the RTC to the tune of Rs 25 crore. The RTC consumes at least 25 crore liters of fuel per annum.

SHORT READS



Congress spreading rumours over Article 370: Modi

CHARKHI DADRI (HARYANA): Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Tuesday accused Congress leaders of spreading rumours over Article 370 in India and the world. While addressing a rally at Charkhi Dadri in poll-bound Haryana, Modi said the people of the state have decided to put their stamp on the clean and transparent administration of the BJP government and bring it back to power. "People of Haryana have decided to bring BJP back to power," Modi said. With wrestler Babita Phogat entering into the political 'dangal' as the BJP candidate for the Dadri assembly seat, Modi said daughters of Haryana have proved their mettle in all fields. "During an informal meeting, Chinese President Xi Jinping told me he has seen Dangal movie," Modi said. "Mahre Choreo Choroon Say Kam Hey Ke," he said in Haryana.

Maharashtra unit of BJP proposes Bharat Ratna for Savarkar

MUMBAI: Maharashtra BJP unit on Tuesday said it will ask the party-led NDA government at the Centre to confer Bharat Ratna, India's highest civilian award, on Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, popularly known as Veer Savarkar. In its election manifesto, released by BJP working president J P Nadda, the state unit also sought the honour for social reformers Jyotiba Phule and Savitribai Phule, a party leader said. The manifesto speaks of "pursuing the matter with the Central government," the leader said. Many BJP leaders look up to Savarkar for inspiration although he was a member of the Hindu Mahasabha and not the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), the ideological parent of the BJP.



White tiger dies at Odisha's Nandankanan Zoo

BHUBANESWAR: A five-year-old white male tiger died at the Nandankanan Zoological Park here on Tuesday due to liver-related ailments, a senior official said. 'Subhranshu', who was a major attraction at the zoo, died at about 10.15 am following month-long liver ailment, said Nandankanan Zoo deputy director Jayant Kumar Das. "The white tiger suddenly collapsed on Saturday and stopped eating. He was treated by experts from the Odisha University of Agriculture and Technology (OUAT) but didn't survive," Das said. Subhranshu was born to Royal Bengal Tiger Mahesh and white tigress Sneha on July 25, 2014. With the death of Subhranshu, the tiger population at the zoo has come down to 25, out of which 12 are male and 13 are females. The white tiger's death came weeks after the death of four elephants at the zoo due to Herpes Virus infection.

Manmohan to meet press and eminent personalities in Mumbai

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In the run up to Maharashtra elections, the Congress is pitching high on slowdown in Indian economy. The party has decided to field former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh on October 17 to lend a credible voice against the government's policies on the economic issues.

The party has sent an invitation, titled "Words of Wisdom on Indian Economy by Dr. Manmohan Singh". The venue is Garware Club Banquets at Wankhede Stadium, Mumbai.

The former Prime Minister will be addressing a Press Conference and will meet eminent personalities of the



The party has sent an invitation, titled "Words of Wisdom on Indian Economy by Dr. Manmohan Singh". The venue is Garware Club Banquets at Wankhede Stadium, Mumbai

state. The list is being finalised, a source told IANS. Important people from all walks of life are being invited to meet Manmohan Singh, a source said.

The party is engaged in high-pitched battle with the incumbent BJP-Shiv Sena in

Maharashtra. The Congress is also fighting an internal battle, as many leaders have defected to the ruling combine. The infighting is out in the open with Sanjay Nirupam accusing Delhi leaders of sidelining him. The Former Congress

President Rahul Gandhi has also targeted the Modi Government on economic slowdown. He said that the government is not interested in providing jobs, but is only diverting attention of the public by talking something else.

Piyush Goyal flags off nine Sewa Service trains

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a bid to achieve last-mile connectivity for people traveling between small towns and major cities, Railways Minister Piyush Goyal on Tuesday flagged off nine 'Sewa Service' trains saying the national transporter is taking transformational steps for the future.

According to railways, out of these, five trains will run on a daily basis, whereas the rest of them will run six days a week. The Ministry of Railways had recently approved 10 trains under its 'Sewa Service' initiative for better connectivity between smaller towns and important cities.

Speaking at the flagging off ceremony here along with Union Ministers Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Dharmendra Pradhan and Minister of State for Railways Suresh C. Angadi, Goyal said: "Indian Railways is taking transformational steps today. I would like to thank Prime Minister Narendra Modi that he gave a vision to the railways, and provided funds for the progress of the railway through the budget."

Hailing the Prime Minister, Goyal said: "He (Modi) always gives a suggestion how to make maximum use of the resources and system of railways. And people demand that trains reach small cities, and for this we have 'Sewa



The tea-seller at that Vadnagar station has become the Prime Minister of the country, by connecting Vadnagar with Mahesana, railways has given a gift to Modiji, Railways Minister Piyush Goyal said

Service' trains concept." Goyal said without spending anything and without making any new investment, railways has started these nine trains today from the available resources. "And further the trains which are standing will be used for the public," he said.

He said for the Prime Minister's vision for the country, railways will play an important role for the future. The Minister also thanked the railway employees for showing dedication to improve railway facilities.

Goyal further said that of these 9 trains, a train will also go from Vadnagar to Mehsana.

The tea-seller at that Vadnagar station has become the Prime Minister of the country, by connecting Vadnagar with Mahesana, railways has given a gift to Modiji," he said.

The 'Sewa Service' daily trains have been introduced between Delhi and Shaml, Bhubaneswar and Nayagarh town, Murkongselex and Dibrugarh, Kota and Jhalawar city, and Coimbatore and Palani. While the other 'Sewa Service' Trains that will run six days a week will run from Vadnagar to Mahesana, Asarya to Himmatnagar, Karur to Salem, Yesvantpur to Tumkur and Coimbatore to Pollachi.

ARTICLE 370 ABROGATION

‘Decisive battle’ against proxy war and terror in Kashmir: Amit Shah

PNS ■ GURGAON

The abrogation of Article 370 provisions is a "decisive battle" waged by the Narendra Modi government to end years of Pakistan-sponsored proxy war and terrorism, and it will bring long-lasting peace in Jammu and Kashmir, Union Home Minister Amit Shah said on Tuesday.

Attending the 35th Raising Day celebrations of the counter-terror force NSG as the chief guest here, Shah said the recent decision to repeal special provisions in J and K will help "completely eradicate" Pakistan-supported terrorism from the Kashmir Valley.

The minister said his govern-



I believe that with the abrogation of Article 370, we have initiated a decisive battle against years of proxy war and terror acts perpetrated by our neighbour and this step will ensure long-lasting peace in Kashmir and the region, he said

ment is firm on the policy of "zero tolerance" on terrorism and to defeat all its forms.

The National Security Guard (NSG) is an important instrument to achieve this goal, the minister said.

"I believe that with the

abrogation of Article 370 by PM Narendra Modi, we have initiated a decisive battle against years of proxy war and terror acts perpetrated by our neighbour (Pakistan) and this step will ensure long-lasting peace in Kashmir and the region," Shah said at the NSG garrison in the Manesar

area here. He said India has been facing terrorism for many years and there would be very few countries across the globe who have waged such a long battle against terrorism. Terrorism is a curse on any civilised society and the biggest impediment to development, he said.

When Abhijit Banerjee spent 10 days in Tihar jail

Abhijit Banerjee, the Indian-origin economist who won the Nobel prize on Monday, spent 10 days in Delhi's Tihar jail for participating in a protest as a student of Jawaharlal Nehru University.

In a scenario not unlike the 2016 JNU sedition row, a bunch of JNU students was arrested and "beaten up" by the police in 1983 for "gheraoing the vice-chancellor in his house for the umpteenth time" for expelling the president of the student union.

In an article, published in Hindustan Times in 2016, Abhijit Banerjee shared that he and his friends were kept in Tihar jail for 10 days and were beaten up. "We were beaten (I was) and thrown into Tihar jail, charged not quite with sedition, but attempt to murder and the rest. The charges were eventually dropped thank God but not before we spent 10 days or so in Tihar," he said in



the article.

The world-renowned economist, recognised for his work on global poverty alleviation, says in the article that the police action was backed by Congress government at the Centre and Left-leaning faculty. He said there were allegations that the student body president was expelled to instigate protests, which could be used to change admission policy, which gave weightage to students from rural areas. "What it undoubtedly was is

The world-renowned economist, recognised for his work on global poverty alleviation, says in the article that the police action was backed by Congress government at the Centre and Left-leaning faculty

an attempt by the State to establish the lines of authority. We are the boss they were telling us, shut up and behave," Abhijit Banerjee said in the 2016 article.

Drawing parallels to the JNU sedition row, hitting headlines at the time, Abhijit Banerjee said that the government intervention in the matter once again said that it wants to establish authority over the university campus.

Judges' vacancies in high courts on the rise: Law Ministry data

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

While the Supreme Court is working with its full sanctioned strength, vacancy of judges is on the rise in the 25 high courts of the country, according to latest Law Ministry data.

The figures released by the ministry on October 1 show that the high courts faced a shortage of 420 judges -- the highest till now this year.

As on October 1, the high courts were working with 659 judges as compared to the sanctioned strength of 1079.

In September, a total of 414 posts of judges are vacant in the 25 high courts.

Over 43 lakh cases are pending in the high courts. The figure was 409 in August and 403 in July, according to the data available in public domain.

A three-member Supreme Court collegium recommends names of candidates for appointment as high court

judges. In case of appointments to the Supreme Court, the collegium consists of five top judges of the top court.

High court collegiums short list candidates for their respective high courts and send the names to the law ministry.

The ministry, along with background check reports by the Intelligence Bureau, forwards it to the Supreme Court collegium for a final call.

The government has maintained that appointment of judges in the high courts is a "continuous collaborative process" between the Executive and the Judiciary, as it requires consultation and approval from various constitutional authorities. Vacancies keep arising on account of retirement, resignation or elevation of judges and increase in judges' strength. In June, the vacancy position stood at 399, while it was 396 in May.

In April, 399 posts of judges were vacant, while the figure was 394 in March.



Indian bizman in Dubai buys tickets to send 13 foreign prisoners home



PNS ■ DUBAI

A Dubai-based Indian businessman has bought one-way tickets for 13 foreign prisoners, including from Pakistan, Bangladesh, China and Afghanistan to return home after they were released from prison here, a media report said on Tuesday.

Joginder Singh Salaria, the chairman and managing director of Pehal International Transport and founder of Pehal Charitable Trust (PCT Humanity) purchased one-way flight tickets in coordination with Dubai Police authorities for the prisoners who were released from a jail on Monday, the Khaleej Times reported. The prisoners are from Pakistan, Bangladesh, Uganda, Afghanistan, Nigeria, China, and Ethiopia, it said.

Won't allow Bharat to become 'Hindu Rashtra': Owaisi

PNS ■ THANE

AIMIM president Asaduddin Owaisi has said Bharat is "not a Hindu Rashtra" and they will also not let it become so.

His comments came after RSS chief Mohan Bhagwat last week said the Sangh is firm on its vision that "Bharat is a Hindu Rashtra".

Addressing an election rally on Monday night in Kalyan town of Maharashtra's Thane district for party candidate Aiaz Moulavi, Owaisi said a section of society wants to paint the entire country in one colour, but "we see Hindustan in multiple colours, it is the beauty of Hindustan".

"Bharat is not a Hindu Rashtra, and Inshallah, we will not allow it to become so," he said.



Alleging that the Shiv Sena was against the green colour, he said, "Change your spectacles and you will see the green colour in the national flag also."

He said Bharat is unique because of itssecularism and pluralism. There is no other country in the world as Bharat

and "we are proud of it". "I want to tell those in the RSS that we are not living here on your sympathy. If you want to measure the index of my happiness or sorrow, you and we should see what the Constitution has given to us," Owaisi said.

He also said that the All India Majlis-e-Ittehad-ul-Muslimeen (AIMIM) has established itself in Aurangabad because of its own efforts.

"We will spread to other parts of the state also. You cannot stop us," he said.

Owaisi also said that the NDA government was patting its own back by banning the practice of triple talaq, but was not aware of the woes of members of the Muslim community.

HC refuses bail to 3 activists, says they are ‘active members’ of CPI (Maoist)

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Bombay High Court refused bail on Tuesday to activists Sudha Bharadwaj, Arun Ferreira and Vernon Gonsalves, arrested for allegedly inciting caste-based violence at Koregaon-Bhima in Pune and Maoist links, noting that they were "active members" of banned outfit CPI (Maoist).

Justice Sarang Kotwal rejected the bail pleas of the three civil liberties activists, observing that there was prima facie evidence against them. In three separate orders, the judge said the accused were active and senior members of the banned Communist Party of India (Maoist), and arranged funds for the organisation and recruited cadres.



Sudha Bharadwaj



Arun Ferreira



Vernon Gonsalves

The three were initially placed under house arrest by Pune police in August last year and later, taken into custody on October 26 after a sessions court in Pune rejected their bail pleas. The accused, who are in jail since then, approached the high court last year.

The state's armed forces were treated as enemy forces by the organisation," the court said.

The three were initially placed under house arrest by the Pune police in August last year and later, taken into custody on October 26 after a sessions court in Pune rejected

manage and distribute funds in the banned organisation and he occupied an important position in the outfit.

"Ferreira's work towards achieving some of the objectives of the banned organisation was not only appreciated by it, but, he was given specific directions on some occasions. This all shows that the applicant was an active member of the banned organisation," the court said. "There is material in the chargesheet to show that prima facie the applicant (Ferreira) had actively worked towards fulfilling that responsibility," the court said.

It also noted that Gonsalves' act of recruiting cadres for the banned outfit and being its active member was punishable

under the provisions of the UAPA.

"Facts sufficiently establish prima facie that the applicant (Vernon Gonsalves), on instructions of the banned organisation, was recruiting cadres from institutions like TISS (Tata Institute of Social Sciences)," the court said.

It added that the evidence put forward by the prosecution showed that Gonsalves was an important and active member of the CPI (Maoist) and was part of the "larger conspiracy". "One of the important tasks was recruiting cadres and there is material in the chargesheet to show that prima facie the applicant (Gonsalves) had actively worked towards fulfilling that responsibility," the court said.

Pakistan slips up

Though it may not be blacklisted, it does slide further on compliances required for countering terror at FATF



Pakistan may not be blacklisted by the Financial Action Task Force (FATF), the inter-governmental forum that links terror funding to freezing international aid, but India's persistent campaign against it nursing terror hubs has clearly paid off. It now appears that Pakistan could slip into the "dark grey" list, a severe warning to take correctives, as it has but fulfilled only six of the 27 conditions of compliance to evade curfew altogether. Besides, the common cause on terror hubs impacting domestic politics that India has man-

aged to drum up around the world, particularly winning US endorsement on this effort, means Pakistan has few friends. In August, the FATF's Asia Pacific sub-group placed it in the "enhanced blacklist" for its failure to meet global standards. Yet its Prime Minister Imran Khan has been lobbying hard for the overall FATF vote, diverting attention from the terror factory at home to Kashmir, forging a new Islamic alliance with Turkey and Malaysia for a crusade-like stance against the Western world, still dangling the Taliban sword to keep the US invested in its relevance for Afghanistan and playing on Chinese anxieties about the Indo-US axis. And while Pakistan may scrape through this time, requiring just three members' support to escape a funding ban, it has still got away by being a strategic counterweight for others' geo-political concerns rather than attempting any course correction at home. What else explains the renewed push for militancy in Kashmir? That problem continues and can only be beaten by now normalising life in the Valley. Discontent cannot be allowed to fester under lockdown for Pakistan's no-risk benefit schemes.

So what are India's obstacles? The recent incremental push in bilateral relations with China has meant that it has come around to agreeing with our viewpoint of combatting terror without referencing Pakistan. How else could it justify its own clampdown on Uighur Muslims? And though it dragged its feet at the UN, it did assent to designating Masood Azhar as a global terrorist. But as the new president of the FATF, China isn't expected to ignore concerns of its all-weather friend Pakistan. It has wriggled a bit here and there but cannot abandon its ally given its strategic interests in the region. Direct transactional benefits with China will frankly take a long time to mature as significant tradeoffs on Pakistan. Of course, there are two more nations, Turkey and Malaysia, to deal with. Both are now spearheading a new-Islamic axis as India has stepped up diplomatic engagement and is building on mutual understanding with the UAE and Saudi Arabia. In fact, India has made significant inroads in the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), which has traditionally been opposed to it on Kashmir. But with the UAE and Saudi Arabia inviting India as an "observer" in its last edition, the OIC has warmed up a bit albeit Malaysia and Turkey continue to support Pakistan. In fact, Khan is now advocating a trilateral forum for a neo-Islamic world distinct from the traditional pan-Islamism. This leadership challenge to religious legacies has not gone down well with even Saudi Arabia of late. India, too, has now given up the charm offensive with both Turkey and Malaysia and is hitting back economically. It is reviewing imports of palm oil and other products from Malaysia in response to its Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammed's United Nations General Assembly (UNGA) speech on Kashmir. With that country hosting radical Indian Islamic preacher Zakir Naik, there are some creases of discomfort. Reports say that following Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan's address on the Kashmir issue, India pulled out of discussions with Anadolu Shipyard, which intended to tie up with with us for building a 45,000-tonne fleet support ship. Simultaneously, India is also building bridges with the ring states around Turkey and Malaysia — Cyprus, Armenia and Greece around the former and Indonesia around the latter. India is now pegging its diplomacy on sound economic sense and that's delivering results, particularly in one-on-one negotiations in a multilateral world. It is demanding that sensitivities be shown to it in return, considering some of these nations are defaulting on rights records too — Turkey in Syria and China in Hong Kong, Tibet and in Uighur-dominated Xinjiang. In fact, India has stayed away from commenting on these issues until now, when it has condemned Turkey's action against Syria. Smart reasoning and corresponding posturing might change the way the world perceives our concerns.

Wild chase

The aberrant behaviour by a lion at a wildlife park in Karnataka shows why we need a tourism protocol



As if the existing threats to wildlife in the form of illegal poaching, encroachments and culling were not enough, a new provocation comes from intrusive tourism. Unknowingly or out of curiosity, tourists are heckling animals so much during safaris that the latter are now displaying aberrant behaviour. The latest such instance was captured by one of the passengers aboard a jeep at the Atal Bihari Vajpayee Zoological Park in Bellary, Karnataka, in August, which went viral this week. An aggressive male lion is seen chasing a jeep full of visitors until the driver accelerated enough to outpace him. It was sheer luck that the tourists managed to escape the wrath of the lion, who was hellbent on pouncing upon them. Now the king of the jungle is usually gentle when not on the hunt, even unperturbed by human behaviour. Besides, by virtue of park tourism, lions have become quite immune to human attention. So it was quite strange that Keshri, the lion in question, would become hostile unless he was teased or provoked. Turns out he had just been brought to the park and was yet to settle down. Clearly, he was not used to tourist behaviour and should not have been exposed to visitors either. Particularly, when he was yet to demarcate his territoriality and be sure of his limits, he was but expectedly insecure. In the age of daring selfies and their virality, tourists are not just happy taking routine shots but want a dramatic film sequence. And when they cross limits of admissibility, they run the risk of a chase or attack. Be it big cats or elephants, several videos of them raging after tourists have circulated on social media. In July, a similar video was captured as bikers were chased by a tiger at the Muthanga Wildlife Sanctuary in Wayanad, Kerala.

Our big cats are stressed in their fragmented habitats, some of which do have enough roaming stretches, prey bases or transit corridors to deeper forests. Human encroachment and development have resulted in frequent man-animal conflicts. Hemmed in from all sides, such aberrant behaviour is being reported all too frequently now, even from reserves like the Kruger National Park. Tourist behaviour, therefore, should be respectful of protocol and mindful of the peace any sanctuary guarantees the wild. For example, protocol calls for the visitors to maintain a certain distance from the animals during an encounter, which is definitely not followed either by them or unscrupulous tour operators hellbent on selling a "sighting." With greater interest comes greater responsibility.



The great wall of nature

The proposal for a 1,400km-long green corridor along the Aravalli range, which is still in the planning stage, is a remarkable step forward in greening the country



RK PACHAURI

Former Prime Minister of India IK Gujral was one of the most scholarly and well-read leaders we have had. At a public function organised by this writer, he mentioned that the battle of Panipat took place at that location only because it was the southernmost location, which had an open area suitable for warfare. According to him, right from the Khyber Pass to Panipat, the entire terrain was heavily forested where conventional warfare of that period was not possible.

A recent news report mentioned that the Government is planning to build a 1,400 kilometre-long "great green wall" of India. If this project receives official sanction and is backed by innovative institutional arrangements for its implementation, it would mark a remarkable step forward in greening India because we, as a nation, have failed to seize the importance of greening our degraded and deforested land.

The Green India mission was one of the eight key missions included in the National Action Plan on Climate Change. The purpose of this operation was to protect, enhance and restore India's decreasing forest cover and act on the growing extent of climate change through a combination of mitigation and adaptation measures. Unfortunately, the mission has been grossly under-funded. A report by the Parliamentary Committee, titled, 'Performance of the National Action Plan on Climate Change (NAPCC) pertaining to Ministry of Environment, Forest & Climate Change (MoEFCC)', quotes MoEFCC as stating that the "budget allocation of ₹47.80 crore for FY 2017-18 is grossly insufficient. The committed liability of FY 2015-16 and 2016-17 is ₹89.53 crore, which is more than the budget allocation of FY 2017-18."

Expansion of population and encroachments by humans on forest land and the habitat of other species have not only reduced forest cover since independence but has also led to poor forest density even in those areas, which are regarded as forest land. The proposed "green wall" of India is planned to establish a green belt from Porbandar to Panipat and would help restore degraded land through afforestation, particularly along the Aravalli hill range, which covers Gujarat, Rajasthan, Haryana and Delhi.

It is well-known that the Aravallis have been heavily degraded in several areas, particularly in Haryana, as a result of the nexus between politicians and the builders' lobby. The establishment of the "green wall" would provide an effective barrier for dust coming from the deserts in Western India and Pakistan. It is now well-established that dust from deserts can travel large distances as has been seen with dust from Saudi Arabia travelling to northern parts of Europe. This writer has always advised officials in the Middle East, including a former Saudi Oil Minister, "Please convert your oil wealth to soil health."

Recently, the Conference of the Parties (COP 14) of the United Nations Convention



to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) was held in India and as a follow-up to that event, India can and should set an example for other countries that are threatened with desertification.

The UNCCD is an agreement to combat desertification and mitigate the effects of drought, based on long-term strategies and national programmes, supported by international cooperation and partnership arrangements. It was in 2006 that in order to gather support for the convention, the UN declared that year as the "International Year of Deserts and Desertification."

The convention has thus far been ratified by 190 States and the European Union (EU). However, on March 28, 2013, Canada became the first country to withdraw from it but reversed this arrangement on March 21, 2017.

In hosting COP14 of the convention, India made a major impact on this expanding problem in different countries of the world. Prime Minister Narendra Modi in his address to this conference stated: "I call upon the leadership of UNCCD to create a global water action agenda, which is central to land degradation neutrality strategy."

The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) recently published a special report on climate change, desertification, land degradation, sustainable land management, food security and greenhouse gas

fluxes in terrestrial ecosystems. The report states, "The level of risk posed by climate change depends both on the level of warming and on how population, consumption, production, technological development and land management patterns evolve. Pathways with higher demand for food, feed and water, more resource-intensive consumption and production and more limited technological improvements in agriculture yields result in higher risks from water scarcity in drylands, land degradation, and food insecurity."

It further states: "Many activities for combating desertification can contribute to climate change adaptation with mitigation co-benefits as well as to halting biodiversity loss with sustainable development co-benefits to society...Preventing desertification is preferable to attempting to restore degraded land due to the potential for residual risks and maladaptive outcomes."

The UN system, as is widely known, is currently underfunded and is actually facing a serious crisis. For several years now, there has been a growing realisation that the UN system needs to be restructured and reformed, starting, of course, with the composition of the permanent members of the Security Council, of which India should have been admitted as a member years ago.

In the case of the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC),

IT IS WELL-KNOWN THAT THE ARAVALLIS HAVE BEEN HEAVILY DEGRADED IN SEVERAL AREAS, PARTICULARLY IN HARYANA, AS A RESULT OF THE NEXUS BETWEEN POLITICIANS AND THE BUILDERS' LOBBY. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE 'GREEN WALL' WILL PROVIDE AN EFFECTIVE BARRIER FOR DUST COMING FROM THE DESERTS

SOUNDBITE

It is biggest irony of our times that while we are celebrating Gandhiji's birth centenary, the BJP is seeking Bharat Ratna for Savarkar, an accused in his assassination case.



CPI general secretary —D Raja

Professionally, it has been a very special year for me. Both the successes have only motivated and encouraged me to keep following my instincts and work hard.



Actor —Hrithik Roshan

The global security situation is in a flux. There is concern over the inherent dangers in nuclear brinkmanship pursued by countries as a cover for cross-border terrorism.



Indian diplomat —Pankaj Sharma

When a ship sinks in the middle of a sea, the captain evacuates everyone safely but Gandhi is a captain who himself left after seeing the Congress sinking.



AIMIM chief —Asaduddin Owaisi

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Together, we can win

Sir — A large number of climate strikes have recently erupted around the world, directing attention to issues such as climate change and global warming. It is also interesting to note that many indigenous tribes have been praying for the protection of the Amazon rainforest as thousands of wildfires continue to destroy it. People often turn to prayer in difficult times. Such prayers not only lead to positive results but also strengthen relationships among people. The prayers for the Amazon and the protests have attracted the attention of the global population. One hopes that such admirable activities continue to inspire people around the world.

P Senthil
Via email

Misleading policy

Sir — Economists have forever been negotiating between the twin poles of wealth and poverty. In 1776, Adam Smith postulated that the existence of economic prosperity, more than the persistence of poverty, must be

paid attention to. An eon was spent on identifying the conditions necessary for wealth creation. Then an era was spent on the distribution of income between capital and labour.

Finally, Nobel Prize-winning economist Angus Deaton delved into the cause, spread and measurement of poverty. But looks like Indian-American economist Abhijit Banerjee has analysed

the problem with poverty with an experimental approach. The randomised controlled field trials (RCTs) adopted by him has helped find out what works and what doesn't to fight poverty.

The traditional way of measuring wealth on account of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is misleading. It probably further skews the distribution of wealth and accentuates income dis-

parity. We have journeyed long from exploring the creation of wealth to the distribution of income to now Nobel prize winner Abhijit Banerjee's treatise on poverty.

Strangely, it is seen that deeper the democratic mores, as it is in the US, the sharper has been the turn to the right wing ideology of wealth inequality. It may take ages for the socio-economists, much less the Governments, to

The historic China connect

This refers to the editorial, "Finding an old connect" (October 14). The second informal summit between Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Chinese President Xi Jinping was historically significant. The choice of Mamallapuram as the venue of the meet was important on account of its historical links with China, which dates back to the seventh century. Mamallapuram, named after Narasimhavarman I of the Pallava dynasty, is an ancient port town that has a strong mercantile history with China. It was also part of China's silk route and India's spice route. In fact, the origins of Kanchipuram's silk industry can be traced back to the import of raw silk from China via Mamallapuram. Sino-India links in the region can be traced back as far as 2,000 years. Chinese coins discovered in the region further establish the age-old link between the two nations. This rich history made Mamallapuram a befitting venue for this summit.

China has seen an exponential growth in cutting-



edge technology, leaping far beyond India. Electronic goods manufactured by it, which were once frowned upon, have now become much sought after. As India is a big market for Chinese goods, it is unlikely that Xi will take a harsh stand against India on the issue of Kashmir.

TK Nandanam
Kochi

move away from a trite GDP to even grasp the concept of creation and distribution of happiness.

R Narayanan
Navi Mumbai

Challenges ahead

Sir — This refers to the editorial, "Bangla pride" (October 15). The appointment of former cricket team captain Sourav Ganguly as the head of the Board of Control for Cricket in India (BCCI) is welcome. In fact, he may just be the person the cricket administration needs right now to set things right. It's good to learn that on his priority list are first class players, who are the foundation for a strong pool of talent for the national team. Other issues like the absence of an Indian umpire in the middle of a sea, and reducing the gulf between women and men in cricket should be given importance. Ganguly must also ensure that financial management in the BCCI becomes more transparent. He has his task cut out.

Bal Govind
Noida

Send your feedback to:
letterstopioneer@gmail.com



FIRST COLUMN

Fight pollution collectively

Carpooling, using public transport, segregating waste to reduce burning, choosing not to burst firecrackers at Diwali can make a big difference



NAVDDHA MALHOTRA

The Diwali season comes with many debates: Does a ban on firecrackers make a difference? Could we have prepared better? Has the national Capital's air pollution decreased? What can Delhiites do to help bring it down?

This year the Aam Aadmi Party (AAP) Government announced a series of measures to tackle air pollution, including the odd-even vehicle rationing scheme; distribution of masks to prevent PM10 intake; a community pyrotechnic show for Diwali; mechanised road-sweeping; a tree plantation drive and a pollution plan for 12 hot spots. In September, Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal said that according to the air quality data of the last four years, the pollution levels in Delhi had reduced by 25 per cent. While the data is still being examined, this indicates a positive step in the fight for a cleaner Delhi.

In the past, there have been many claims and counter-claims over the impact of the odd-even scheme implemented in the Capital. While some studies indicated that it was a success, others claimed that there was no impact, and still others contended that it was impossible to isolate vehicular pollution from Delhi's data sets. However, the one thing all studies agree on is that the odd-even scheme will not succeed without a robust public transport system and without restrictions placed on heavy vehicles and two-wheelers, which make up the majority of Delhi's vehicular traffic. In the past, the scheme provided exclusions for two and three-wheelers, trucks, taxis and cars used by VIPs. These exemptions, and the limited hours of the odd-even scheme, made it harder to define the success of the project, especially as two-wheelers have the highest emissions levels. At the moment, the Delhi Metro and bus fleet are not equipped to keep up with the existing demand from commuters, let alone the demand that will be generated during vehicular rationing days. However, the undeniable benefit of the scheme is decreased congestion on the city's roads. This cuts down the number of hours citizens spend in their cars and the pollution caused by congestion. The scheme is a step in the right direction but it alone cannot solve the problems of vehicular pollution.

Given these concerns, the next logical solution would be to consider electric vehicles (EVs) and particularly electric public transport. Several cities around the country have committed to electric bus fleets and feeder buses and should these measures be implemented, they will certainly have a positive impact on air pollution. However, cutting down on tailpipe emissions is only half the battle. As long as EVs are powered by traditional electricity, they still contribute to fossil fuel emissions, just perhaps not in the same city they are driven in. EVs are a step in the right direction but not enough to tackle the air pollution crisis, unless they become solar powered in the future.

Like the different sources of the problem, the solutions to our air quality issues are also varied and complex. Pollution does not acknowledge State or city boundaries and our solutions must transcend these as well. Central and State Governments must work together to ensure heavy industrial and vehicular activity is kept outside cities; equitable and environmental solutions for stubble burning are implemented as quickly as possible; industrial activity is heavily regulated and fuel emission standards for vehicles continue to advance. Most importantly, this Government needs to ensure that air quality is monitored adequately and that the data is shared so that the benefits of schemes like odd-even can be evaluated.

At the moment, the Central Pollution Control Board (CPCB) has a woefully incomplete monitoring network, with data gaps for many pollutants and locations. The newly-released National Clean Air Plan (NCAP) fails to include many of the Indian cities that require policy action and doesn't give local authorities the enforcement power they need to penalise offenders. As citizens, it often feels like there is little we can do beyond voting for the right candidate every few years. Installing air purifiers, limiting physical activity and wearing masks outside allows those who can afford it a break from the air pollution but it does not solve the issue. Each individual can take certain proactive actions: Carpooling and using public transport cut vehicular emissions. Ensuring that waste is segregated before it is discarded cuts down waste burning as does limiting open garbage and leaf burning in the winter. During Diwali, choosing not to burn firecrackers can make a massive difference, as we have seen in the last decade in New Delhi.

However, it is clear that only stringent policy can create the kind of widespread change that is needed to tackle air pollution. To make this happen, citizens must encourage their representatives to take action through their votes and their voice. Elections will be held in several States soon, including Delhi. We must make our priorities known to our leaders by raising our voices and demanding a better standard of air quality from our representatives.

(The writer is a social campaigns manager)

CONGRESS NE KHODA PAHAD, NIKLI CHUHIYA. WOH BHI MARI HUI. (THEY DUG A MOUNTAIN, ONLY TO FIND A MOUSE. THAT TOO A DEAD ONE). —HARYANA CHIEF MINISTER MANOHAR LAL KHATTAR

POINTCOUNTERPOINT



THINK IN WHAT LIGHT DO THESE REMARKS SHOW WOMEN. BECAUSE OF PEOPLE WITH YOUR MINDSET, HARYANA IS KNOWN AS THE CRIME CAPITAL. —HARYANA CONGRESS PRESIDENT KUMARI SELJA

A double-edged sword

While cities that experimented with free public transport achieved positive results for a while, sustaining them beyond a few years proved to be a problem



MEGHA KUMAR

Delhi Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal's announcement on offering free public transport to women has sparked off a debate across the country about the financial performance and pricing of public transport. As cities across the world struggle to keep the Mass Rapid Transit System (MRTS) and other modes of public transport financially viable, scholars and operators alike are trying to arrive at an economically sound formula for operations.

According to an estimate by the Delhi Transport Corporation and the Delhi Metro, women constitute around 30 to 35 per cent passengers in both buses and the trains. This comes to about 14 lakh women per day on the buses and 800,000 women per day on the metro. The Delhi Government is assuming that the scheme will see a rise of 50 per cent in female ridership, resulting in a decrease in the number of vehicles on the city's roads and improved safety for those vulnerable sections who cannot afford public transport otherwise.

Impact studies in cities that have experimented with a free public transport policy indicate tangible benefits such as higher ridership, less traffic congestion, better air quality, savings on printing, ticket-punching technology and the people engaged in ticket sales. Free public transport promises intangible benefits, too, such as a stronger democracy, higher citizen participation, better liveability and a vibrant economy.

However, it is easier said than done. Cities like Tallinn in Estonia and Châteauroux and Aubagne in France experimented with free public transport in the past and achieved positive results for a while. Sustaining the results beyond a few years, however, proved to be a problem. Also, while the combined effect of free service and happier commuters can significantly increase ridership, public transport can also experience a rebound effect, resulting in crowding and poor service quality due to a large demand response. Such a response can result in a higher tax burden for the transport agency.

The key to operating a free public transport is to identify alternate sources of revenue to finance it. Sustaining a free transport policy in the long-term, especially during times of economic volatility, can be highly strenuous. The city of Châteaurouxin, France could generate returns on public transport in 2003, 2004, 2005 and 2007. However, 2008 onwards, the returns declined. The city of Hasselt in Belgium had to wind up its free public transport policy after a few years as the Government could no longer support its financing.

So, the big question is, can Indian cities afford free transport for their citizens, given the burgeoning population of the country?

Cities in India face a severe shortage of public transport. City peripheries and low-income neighbourhoods often remain unserved and even if a network of buses and local trains and so on exists, the frequency of service is low, rendering it ineffective. Free or otherwise, the absence of public transport results in last-mile connectivity problems for the poor. Addressing the inadequacies of the country's public transport network will require huge capital investments and considering the amount of expenditure it entails, it could



be too much of a burden on the State Governments to then generate funds for operating expenses.

However, the good news is that, though it appears impossible at present, there are solutions worth exploring. Given that State Governments are finding it difficult to provide even partial support in the form of subsidies and grants to public transport agencies, relying on budgetary support to fund a free transport policy seems very difficult at present. Running free public transport may or may not be possible but every city must have at least an affordable transport system. There are a few strategies for long-term funding and cost-cutting that could be explored for achieving this.

Cross-utility subsidy: Although it's not very popular in the country, cross-utility financing is prevalent in many parts of the world, including Europe and North America.

There are many ways to enforce a cross-utility subsidy like imposing a levy on utility use or cross-subsidising a loss-making utility by a profit-making one. The loss-making transport department of the Brihanmumbai Electric Supply & Transport (BEST), for instance, was, for a long time, cross-subsidised by revenues generated by the profitable electricity department. If implemented in a prudent manner, cross-utility subsidy can offer a long-term solution for funding public transport.

Targeted subsidy: Grants often fail to benefit the desired user groups. So, the solution lies in introducing selective subsidisation for carefully identified beneficiaries. It is a difficult thing to pull off but one can take heart from the fact that over 10 million customers in India gave up their Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) subsidy in response to the Government's plea. If people are made aware about the purpose of a subsidy, there will be many who will give it up if they don't require it. At any rate, the Government should explore targeted subsidies to offer affordable public

THE KEY TO OPERATING A FREE PUBLIC TRANSPORT IS TO IDENTIFY ALTERNATE SOURCES OF REVENUE TO FINANCE IT. IF IMPLEMENTED IN A PRUDENT MANNER, CROSS-UTILITY SUBSIDY CAN OFFER A LONG-TERM SOLUTION FOR FUNDING PUBLIC TRANSPORT

lic transport to the needy and the vulnerable.

Dedicated transport fund: Many experts have emphasised the need to exempt public bus transport corporations from the motor vehicle tax. For many bus corporations, the operational losses are almost equal to what they pay as motor vehicle tax. While there is a sound rationale behind taxing vehicles that generate huge negative externalities like emissions and congestion, imposing a similar tax on public buses is draconian. On a "per passenger kilometre" basis, public transport is more efficient and causes lower emission and congestion than private vehicles. Moreover, the tax gets directly passed on to the commuters as part of the fares they pay. Foregoing the tax will also make fares more affordable and improve the financial accessibility of public transport.

New performance indicators: There is also a need to develop new performance indicators for evaluating public transport corporations. These indicators must mainstream social and environmental goals. Currently, public transport operations in the country are guided primarily by financial parameters like earnings and cost-per-kilometre. Now, more emphasis needs to be placed on the intangible socio-economic benefits such as time savings, improved productivity, lower congestion and improved livelihood opportunities that public transport enables. Changing the way public transport corporations are assessed will also change the manner in which they operate and the goals they prioritise in service delivery.

While financial performance is critical for operating public transport, increasing the fare is not the best solution. The approach to the problem will change once it is realised that the objective of operating public transport is not to generate revenue but to offer affordable services to citizens. The need of the hour is to find innovative solutions to make public transport affordable for all.

(The writer is Area Convenor, Centre for Sustainable Mobility, TERI)

Will the Thackeray clan see a s(o)nrise?

The timing is perfect for Thackeray scion Aditya to make his electoral debut with the BJP-Sena alliance poised to win the Assembly polls. The young Thackeray represents the changing political scenario and the Sena's evolving culture



KALYANI SHANKAR

How would the late Sena chief Bal Thackeray have reacted to the idea of his grandson Aditya entering electoral politics when the Thackeray clan had scrupulously kept out of it for decades? He would have chuckled.

So far, the family has run a powerful political party in Maharashtra without contesting elections. The youngest Thackeray, Aditya breaks that tradition in the forthcoming Maharashtra Assembly elections by contesting from the Worli seat in Mumbai.

Balasahab had once told me he had taken three decisions — he would not contest elections, would

not write his autobiography and would not take any Government post and he had stuck to them till the end of his life.

After the first Shiv Sena-Bharatiya Janata Party Government (BJP) was formed in 1995, Balasahab often quipped that he ruled the State via "remote control." Balasahab's son Uddhav Thackeray surprisingly not only kept the party alive but also followed the "remote control" policy of his father.

However, the 29-year-old Aditya is different in this sense and he represents the aspirational Maharashtrian youth. His image-makers are trying to project him as a suave, English-speaking Sena leader. Nine years ago, Balasahab himself introduced his grandson to the political world in October 2010 and also named Aditya the head of the party's newly-created youth wing.

The timing is perfect for the Thackeray scion to make his electoral debut, with the BJP-Sena alliance poised to win the Assembly polls this month.



Aditya stated the obvious in an interview recently, "I chose this election because I thought this was the right time." There is a vacuum in the youth leadership in Maharashtra, which he hopes to fill.

As a child, Aditya used to travel with his father and grandfather and became interested in politics from then on. "If you have to do something good for society, politics is the way. I have been thinking of my journey for the last five years. We did several agitations. How to serve Maharashtra better, Shiv Sena style? I have always thought that I should join my party legislators," says Aditya.

Prior to this electoral contest, he had undertaken a *Jan Ashirwad*

yatra in July to thank the voters for the 2019 success but his real intention was to gauge the public mood for his own debut.

The young Thackeray represents the changing political scenario and also the evolving culture of the Sena. Much has changed since the days of Balasahab. The party's clout in Maharashtra politics has certainly diminished. Politics has changed, the voters have changed and the Sena, too, has become a junior partner in the coalition, as compared to the earlier days of dominating the Sena-BJP alliance.

Aditya is experimenting with a different kind of politics, trying to change the old narrative. The Sena's image has been that of a muscular political party and he would have to change this if he wants to succeed. The Sena is no more a rabble-rousing party.

In the past it used to launch agitations against the South Indians, Gujaratis, Biharis and Muslims. Today, in a bid to woo non-Maharashtrian voters, his campaign

has multi-lingual posters. He does not mention religion or Hindutva and instead prefers to raise bread and butter issues like employment and development.

He talks about the ban on plastic, beach cleaning and the environment. Aditya is more cosmopolitan, modern and open to new-age electoral politics. He is accused of being comfortable with the Page 3 set but he is also trying to appeal to the ordinary youth.

Second, Aditya is emulating his grandfather by building a base among the youth. The senior Thackeray had a devoted youth following all his life. As long as he was alive, every Vijayadasami day, thousands of youth had attended his meeting at the Shivaji Park. Now, Aditya is targeting the millennial voters. He is being projected as a sensitive, modern, young leader, who is flexible and open to new ideas.

Third, it was the family's considered decision to support Aditya's electoral plunge. Bal Thackeray could run the Government through remote

control. Uddhav, too, managed to do that but Aditya, encouraged by his mother Reshmi, believes that the days of "remote control governance" are over and one needs to be in the system.

Above all, the Sena wants to strengthen itself on the ground fearing that the BJP might subsume the party. The family feels that the junior Thackeray's presence in the next Cabinet would give them some control.

Aditya is poised to win the Worli seat, if Dame Luck smiles at him, he might even become the Deputy Chief Minister. Though Uddhav says now, "The first step in politics doesn't mean that you have to become the Chief Minister of the State. He has just entered politics, this is just the beginning." He would push for his son when the time comes.

Aditya wants to prove that he is not just another son of a powerful political family but a grassroots leader in his own right. The Assembly contest will be his acid test. (The writer is a senior journalist)



A TIME OF RECKONING

Though some fossil fuel companies now promote renewable projects, they continue to expand their operations in the face of overwhelming evidence that their actions will drive ecosystem collapse and make much of the planet uninhabitable. It is difficult to confront the full implications of irresponsibility on such a monumental scale. But we, and our politicians, now have no choice but to try. (The Guardian editorial)

CAPSULE



Gold up marginally by Rs 5, silver falls Rs 91

NEW DELHI: Gold witnessed muted trading on Tuesday, rising marginally higher by Rs 5 to Rs 39,105 per 10 gram in the national capital as a weaker rupee kept the downside limited, according to HDFC Securities. "Spot gold prices for 24 Karat in Delhi were trading marginally up by Rs 5 at Rs 39,105 as weaker rupee kept the downside limited. Spot rupee was trading 10 paise weaker against the dollar during the day," Tapan Patel, senior analyst - commodities, HDFC Securities said. The yellow metal had closed at Rs 39,100 per 10 gram in the previous trade here. Silver, however, fell by Rs 91 to Rs 46,809 per kilogram from Rs 46,900 per kilogram on Monday. In the global market, gold was trading higher at USD 1,493.30 an ounce, while silver too firmed up at USD 17.62 per ounce.



Sensex spurts 292 pts; auto, metal stocks drive rally

MUMBAI: Extending its gains for the third consecutive session, market benchmark BSE Sensex rallied about 292 points on Tuesday driven by gains mainly in auto, metal and banking stocks. After soaring 421 points during the day, the 30-share Sensex ended 291.62 points, or 0.76 per cent, higher at 38,506.09. It hit an intra-day high of 38,635.19 and a low of 38,238.27. The broader NSE Nifty too rose 87.15 points, or 0.77 per cent, to settle at 11,428.30. Top gainers in the Sensex pack included Vedanta, M&M, ONGC, Hero MotoCorp and Maruti, rising up to 3.79 per cent. On the other hand, Bharti Airtel, Infosys, Tata Motors, HCL Tech and Tech Mahindra fell up to 2.53 per cent. Elsewhere in Asia, bourses in Shanghai, Hong Kong ended in the red, while those in Seoul and Tokyo ended higher.



Lectro E-Mobility Solutions launches e-bicycle

NEW DELHI: Lectro E-Mobility Solutions, a part of Hero Cycles, on Tuesday launched a new electric bicycle, priced at Rs 30,999. Townmaster, a throttle e-bike, can be charged from a regular plug point and does not need special charging stations, much like other products under the Lectro range and can go for 30-40 km on a single charge of around three hours. "There is new emerging category of consumers in India who is fitness-oriented while also being environmentally-conscious about reducing their carbon footprint." This category of consumers is leading the demand for alternative and clean transport options that are viable for different kinds of trips – be it short distance or long distance," Lectro E-Mobility Solutions Director Aditya Munjal said in a statement.

'No trade disputes with US, only few disagreements'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Commerce Minister Piyush Goyal on Tuesday said India and the US do not have any trade disputes and both nations have huge bilateral trade and investment potential.

Speaking during a ministerial panel discussion at India Energy Forum here, Goyal said, "There is no (trade) dispute (with the US). We had certain disagreements, but I don't think that there is... any relation where there are no disagreements at all. I think we welcome some 'nok jhok' (argument). Little bit of uncertainty helps in taking things forward."

Goyal's comments assumes significance in view of recent withdrawal of Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) or



Piyush Goyal

trade tariff incentives on Indian products by the US, especially when both countries are negotiating a trade agreement.

Goyal was of the view that his discussion with his US counterpart helped improve the bilateral relations further.

Goyal's comments assumes significance in view of recent withdrawal of Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) or trade tariff incentives on Indian products by the US, especially when both countries are negotiating a trade agreement

Referring to the withdrawal of GSP by the US, Goyal said, it could be a "dispute in the eyes of some, but I think it opened up an opportunity for me to have a dialogue with my colleague (US trade representative). We had some wonderful discussions."

About the business potential with US Energy firms he said, "There is huge potential on the gas side and also in nuclear energy. The US and India have

a robust relationship, which has huge potential going forward... We should not look at incremental growth in our relationship. We should be looking at a quantum leap. We have set half-trillion-dollar (trade) target (with the US)."

Goyal said that there is huge potential of energy exports from the US to India and business is going on with the US on oil, gas and nuclear fronts.

Veg oil imports fall 13 pc in Sep; Malaysian shipments drop

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Vegetable oil imports fell by 13 per cent to 13.03 lakh tonnes in September from same month last year, due to large carry-over stock and imposition of safeguard duty on palm oil originating from Malaysia, industry body SEA said on Tuesday.

The Solvent Extractors Association of India (SEA) highlighted that many traders are shifting to Indonesia for imports of palm oil amid reports that India might curb shipments from Malaysia which used strong words in the United Nations on India's decision to abrogate Article 370 in Jammu & Kashmir.

"The government imposed 5 per cent safeguard duty on RBD Palmolein/Palm Oil of Malaysian origin with effect from September 4. In view of this, now the duty difference between crude and refined palm oil has increased to 10 per cent irrespective of any origin," the association said.

Although the import of RBD palmolein remained more or less same in September, the quantity of imports from Malaysia reduced to one-third from previous month's import, it added. SEA's Executive director BV Mehta attributed the fall in vegetable oil imports to carry-over stock and imposition of safeguard duty.

"Secondly, recent report appeared in Media, that



SEA's Executive director BV Mehta attributed the fall in vegetable oil imports to carry-over stock and imposition of safeguard duty

Government of India may take some action to curtail imports of palm oil from Malaysia following the hostile attitude of Malaysia at the UN in September when Malaysia charged that India invaded and occupied J&K. Fearing some action by Government of India in retaliation, many importer/refiners shifting their buying from Malaysia to Indonesia for November-December shipment," the statement said.

Imports of vegetable oils (comprising edible and non-edible oil) during September declined by 13 per cent to 13,03,976 tonnes compared to

14,91,174 tonnes in the year-ago period.

Imports of edible oil fell to 12,54,443 tonnes in September 2019, from 14,22,003 tonnes in the year-ago period, while non-edible oil imports fell to 49,533 tonnes from 69,171 tonnes during the period under review.

However, the overall imports of vegetable oils during November 2018 to September 2019 went up by 3 per cent to 14.17 million tonnes, SEA said in a statement.

During November 2018 to September 2019, SEA said imports of refined oil (RBD palmolein) increased to 26,12,394 tonnes from 19,98,813 tonnes in same period of last year, due to lower duty on palmolein imported from Malaysia.

This resulted in lower imports of crude oil which stood at 109,69,087 tonnes from 113,43,273 tonnes during the same period of last year, reducing capacity utilization of domestic industry.

Mylan working to launch new TB drug in India

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Multinational pharmaceutical company Mylan is working with Drug Controller General of India (DCGI) to launch pretomanid, a medicine used to treat drug-resistant tuberculosis (TB), a top official of the US drug major has said.

Non-profit drug developer TB Alliance and Mylan NV had in April announced a global collaboration to make the experimental drug pretomanid for cure of pulmonary tuberculosis.

"We have submitted the new drug application to the office of DCGI. We are in an advanced stage of discussion and are working with the office of DCGI... Mylan will be in a position to launch the product in India soon after receiving approvals from DCGI," Mylans global president and executive director Rajiv Malik told PTI during his recent visit to India.

This drug is important for India because Prime Minister Narendra Modi said India would get rid of tuberculosis by 2025, he added.

Also, Modi launched a campaign to eradicate TB from India by 2025, five years ahead of a globally-set deadline.

TB Alliance was currently advancing the development of pretomanid in three ongoing late-stage clinical trials, Mylan had said in April.

'Despite inflation rise, RBI may cut rates in Dec'

PNS ■ MUMBAI

The Reserve Bank will continue to be accommodative and deliver one more rate cut in the December policy review despite the 'surprising' spike in headline inflation for September, say analysts.

Some analysts also wonder if the economy is headed towards 'stagflation', which is characterised by persistently high inflation and low economic and jobs growth.

Official data released on Monday showed consumer price inflation for September racing to 3.99 percent, up from 3.3 percent in August. Under the inflation targeting framework, the RBI is bound to keep the price index at 4 percent with a 2 percentage points either way.

Analysts on Tuesday attributed the sharp spike in the headline number to a rise in food prices, particularly onions



which alone accounted for 0.43 percentage points of the jump.

Foreign brokerage Bank of America Merrill Lynch's economists said the sudden spurt in inflation is "temporary" and expects it move up further to 4.6 percent in October.

But despite this, it expects the RBI to continue with its rate cuts and deliver a 0.25 percentage points reduction in the December review.

It said the RBI will take this

Foreign brokerage Bank of America Merrill Lynch's economists said the sudden spurt in inflation is "temporary" and expects it move up further to 4.6 percent in October

view because the liquidity crunch that began this time last year is still hurting the economy and also with an eye on the August industrial production numbers, which showed a contraction by 1.1 percent--the steepest in seven long years.

If growth continues to head south or remain slow, the RBI will cut rates by a further 0.40 percent to take the repo rate down to 4.5 percent by next September, it added.

Japanese brokerage Nomura wondered if the economy is entering a "stagflation" stage, and warned that a combination of weaker-than-expected growth and higher inflation makes for a tough policy call for the monetary policy committee.

"We believe the larger deviation of growth from target vis-a-vis inflation target will likely lead the MPC to continue with an accommodative policy stance and deliver another rate cut of 0.15 percent in December," it said.

Singaporean bank DBS also expects the rate-setting panel is likely to look past food inflation and not put brakes on the easy money policy.

It can be noted that the RBI has cut rates by a cumulative 1.35 percent in five consecutive rate cuts in 2019, to prop up growth amid the legroom created by softer inflation and falling growth numbers.

Warehousing space sees USD 500 mn investment since 2017

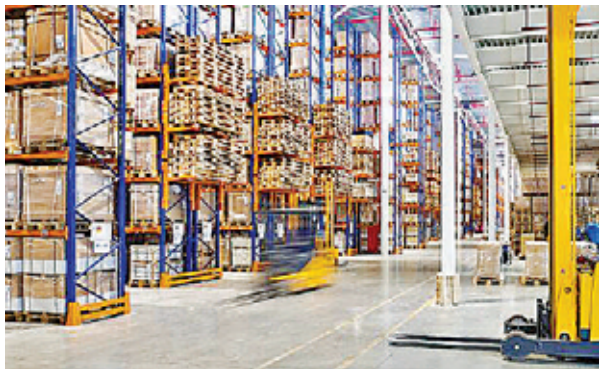
PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The industrial and logistic segment has attracted USD 500 million (about Rs 3,500 crore) investment since 2017, as demand for quality warehousing space is growing rapidly post the implementation of GST, property consultant CBRE said on Tuesday.

In its report, the consultant highlighted that several policies (both proposed and implemented), along with the grant of infrastructure status to the logistics sector, led to more than USD 500 million being invested in acquiring industrial and logistics assets in India during 2017-H1 2019.

In its survey of warehousing clients post GST, CBRE found that almost 70 per cent of respondents indicated an improvement in ease of doing business mainly on account of e-way billing, which has removed a lot of bottlenecks in cargo storage and transport processes.

About 80 per cent of respondents felt that the taxation system improved after



On outlook of this sector, CBRE said demand for warehousing will strengthen and estimated that leasing will be about 10-15 per cent higher this year at 25-30 million sq ft compared to last year

the implementation of GST, while 40 per cent respondents indicated that they will increase the number of warehouses in the post-GST era.

On outlook of this sector, CBRE said demand for warehousing will strengthen and estimated that leasing will be about 10-15 per cent higher

this year at 25-30 million sq ft compared to last year.

CBRE had earlier reported that leasing of warehousing spaces went up by 31 per cent to over 13 million sq ft across eight major cities in the first half of this year, driven mainly by demand from third party-logistic and e-commerce firms.

Irani nudges India Inc to adopt more women-friendly policies

PNS ■ MUMBAI

Union minister Smriti Irani on Tuesday pointed out that challenges before the government lies in getting corporate India implement the laws specially enacted for women and children. Government has taken various initiatives and introduced laws for the safety of women and children so that they get justice faster, the minister noted.

"The real challenge is actually bridging government policies with those of companies so that we collectively deliver the benefits of the laws to women at large," she told a Bloomberg event here.

Irani, who heads the textile ministry, said government has been taking initiatives towards better childcare as well pointed to the enhanced maternity/paternity leaves

"Companies need ensure that women do not feel left out especially in areas where they feel they can be promoted to the next level," she said, adding government has not just codified the labour laws but has also ensured that laws make women feel secured in their workplaces in both in the organised as well as unorganised sectors.

Noting that woman and child security is not an issue of a particular country, she said the government has passed



Smriti Irani

Irani, who heads the textile ministry, said government has been taking initiatives towards better childcare as well pointed to the enhanced maternity/paternity leaves

laws to protect children from sexual offences.

"For the first time, we have brought a law where child pornography, especially in the online space, is dealt with seriously," she added.

Irani further said the only issue on which political parties of all hues have one view is regarding women and children, and as a result, the country could move, especially in the past five years, to a women-led development model from women's development.

TRAI's IUC review will harm users, punish efficient telcos: Jio

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Terming TRAI's review of call connect charges "retrograde", Reliance Jio has said the regulator's consultation paper is neither warranted nor sustainable and that retention of such charges will harm subscribers and punish efficient operators.

Jio alleged that any deferment of sunset clause for inter-operator termination charges will end up rewarding "designed defaulters" who have deliberately stayed away from new and efficient technologies.



Jio has shot off a letter to TRAI saying the present Consultation Paper "subsidises and incentivises the telecom service providers who, by design and astute planning, do not want to shift to IP based technology".

Non-life insurers see 28% rise in premium

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Non-life insurance companies witnessed 28.3 per cent rise in their collective new premium at Rs 24,563.24 crore in September, according to Irdai data.

All the 34 non-life insurers had collected business premium of Rs 19,141.65 crore in the same month a year ago.

Among these, 25 general insurers reported a rise of 39.3 per cent in their combined premium during the month at Rs 20,145.46 crore as against Rs 14,463.60 crore in September 2018, as per the Insurance Regulatory and Development



Authority of India (Irdai) data. The seven stand-alone private sector health insurance companies clocked Rs 1,115.75 crore premium in September this year, up 21.6 per cent from Rs 917.38 crore in the year-ago period.

The rest two specialised

PSU insurers -- Agricultural Insurance Company of India and ECGC -- saw a decline of 12.2 per cent in their premium income at Rs 3,302.02 crore compared to Rs 3,760.67 crore.

On a cumulative basis, premium collection of all non-life insurers during April-September this fiscal rose by 17.23 per cent to Rs 95,978.99 crore.

The 25 general insurers witnessed 16.84 per cent increase in their combined premium income at Rs 82,802.51 crore, and the seven stand-alone private sector health insurers registered rise of 6.35 per cent to Rs 6,096.98 crore.

IOC to raise Rs 3000 cr via rupee bonds

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Indian Oil Corp (IOC), the nation's biggest oil firm, plans to raise Rs 3,000 crore in rupee borrowings this month to meet its general corporate financing needs, IOC Director (Finance) Sandeep Kumar Gupta said on Tuesday.

"We plan to raise through a rupee denominated bonds issue up to Rs 3,000 crore. A similar amount may be raised later in the financial year," he said here.

The bond issue will be of Rs 1,000 crore with a greenshoe option of another Rs 2,000



crore, he said and added that "we may retain or not retain over-subscription of up to Rs 2,000 crore." The bond issue will be of 10 year tenure.

IOC plans to use the money raised through the bond issue for general corporate financing, he said adding the company had a borrowing of Rs 81,000 crore at the end of September quarter.

IOC plans to use the money raised though the bond issue for general corporate financing, he said, adding the company had a borrowing of Rs 81,000 crore at the end of September quarter

The company is aggressively expanding refining and petrochemical capacity and laying infrastructure to meet rising energy demand in the country. "We had a planned capital spending of Rs 25,000 crore during current fiscal. Of this, about Rs 8,000 crore was spent till August-end and

another Rs 1,500 crore would have been done in September," he said expressing confidence of fully spending the planned capex by March 2020.

The company, which subsidises cooking gas LPG and PDS kerosene, is yet to receive Rs 9,700 crore from the government in unpaid subsidies.

"The unpaid subsidies are coming down. They were Rs 19,000 crore at the beginning of the fiscal and have now come down to Rs 9,700 crore," he said. Gupta said, IOC has already announced plans to invest Rs 2 lakh crore in next 5-7 years to expand refining and petrochemical capacities in order to maintain leadership position. The plan is to almost double its oil refining capacity to 150 million tonnes per annum, expand fuels and LPG retailing network, jack up petrochemical production capacity and produce more crude oil and gas.



G. Naga Jyothi's enterprise, Plantae, is keen to help people lead healthier lives and provide a source of income for women farmers across Telugu states, finds V SATEESH REDDY



REPLACING MEAT AND SUGAR FOR FOODIES

Hyderabad-based G. Naga Jyothi is on a mission to inspire women farmers to grow mushrooms and Stevia (sugar substitute) as protein-rich alternatives for people who don't consume meat and natural sugar. She quit her bank job to rejoin the work she started in her graduation and since then has never looked back. "My agri-based enterprise Plantae is all about researching the plant kingdom. During research at my graduation level I realised that plants hold the solution to every medical problem we face. I have worked with farmers and artisans whose experiences gave me a lot of insight into this," she said. The idea of finding a meat alternative came to her when she read an article about how much non-vegetarians miss meat after they are forced to quit it for health reasons. So she researched on plant alternatives that provide protein as much as meat and also tastes good. Jyothi did her PG Agribusiness Management from MITCON Institute of

Management, Pune. In order to form her own company she later got trained at the ICAR-Directorate of Mushroom Research in Solan. "I started on a small scale by growing exotic medicinal mushrooms which are known to be alternatives for non-vegetarian diet. I also trained many women to grow different varieties of mushrooms," she said. She said finding a substitute for natural sugar is the need of the hour as one out of every ten teenagers in India has high levels of glucose in blood. "Many artificial sweeteners that are available in the market are produced from chemicals. Hence, I started promoting Stevia as it is a perfect natural sugar substitute," she said. "Stevia leaf extract is available in the market but many people are not aware of its benefits. While doing survey

in the city, I found that many felt Stevia leaf extract is like any other kind of artificial sweetener owing to the similarity in packing. Many stayed away from it fearing side effects. But scientists at the Central Institute of Medicinal and



“

Many artificial sweeteners that are available in the market are produced from chemicals. Hence, I started promoting Stevia as it is a perfect natural sugar substitute. Stevia extract is also available but not many people are aware of its benefits

G. NAGA JYOTHI
ENTREPRENEUR

Aromatic Plants informed me about about the plant, its extraction and its health benefits. Our aim is to have this wonder herb in every home

soon. The fresh leaves of Stevia can be used for sweetening many dishes. We also planning to start a nursery to supply these plants for people," she added displaying a packet of her Stevia's sugar substitute. She now has a team of five members who work on produce, package and market Stevia extract. She also collaborates with many women across Telugu states who produce Stevia at their homes.



THE IDEA OF FINDING AN ALTERNATIVE FOR MEAT CAME TO JYOTHI WHEN SHE READ ABOUT HOW MUCH NON-VEGETARIANS MISS MEAT AFTER THEY QUIT IT FOR HEALTH REASONS

Remembering Kishore Kumar

More than 100 music lovers came together to pay homage to legendary late playback singer Kishore Kumar



Dakshin Dhvani, a city-based karaoke group, whose musical journey began three years ago on October 13, coinciding with the 29th death anniversary of the late playback Kishore Kumar — the unchallenged icon of Hindi playback singing during the late 1960s — organised a musical event commemorating their group's formation. The group, which has grown from a family-run unit of six

members to 35 members from various age groups and background, organised their grand event 'Ik Raasta Hai Zindagi' at Our Sacred Space in Secunderabad. In all, 13 performers, including live guitar performances and a harmonica rendition, crooned both solos and duets from the vast collection of hits by Kishore Kumar. The audience, made of all age groups, applauded the singers for the musical evening. The performers

comprise people from corporate and professional background in the age group of 25 to 75 who put up soulful performances. With open and cultural spaces in Secunderabad shrinking, this kind of event was a breath of fresh air for the 100-odd crowd who attended the event. "This is our first anniversary programme that we performed in Secunderabad after we moved here. We are overwhelmed with their support we got from the people

here," said T. Balakrishnan, co-founder of the group and one of the performers. Anjna Puri Surath, a doctor and a music buff, said, "I am very happy that our group went the extra mile to stage this event in an acoustic-friendly venue to a supportive crowd. I loved their claps and whistles as I rendered the Kishore numbers from the 1960's which is easily the golden phase of Hindi cinema." The audience couldn't help but stay till the end of

the 200-minute long programme after which they interacted with the singers, thanking them for a memorable evening. The young singers were seen networking with the like-minded fans who also attended Dakshin Dhvani's previous event 'Are Deewano Mujhe Pehchano', an open mic session that was held at Nritya Forum for Performing Arts at Banjara Hills. As Prabha Naresh, who anchored the programme, said, "It was a double treat for music lovers of Hyderabad and Secunderabad. I am glad we pulled it off." T. Balakrishnan informed that they also held a musical programme at Cherlapally Prison recently as part of Prisoners Welfare Day in association with the Telangana Prisons Department. — VSR

LIVE GUITAR PERFORMANCES AND A HARMONICA RENDITION CROONED BOTH SOLOS AND DUETS FROM THE VAST COLLECTION OF HITS OF THE SINGER



Many sections of society are waking up to the fact on how important mental health is. The huge attendance at a recent event on mental health is a testament to that fact

Breaking mental barriers in society

The number of people who acknowledge (and also celebrate) World Mental Health Day, that falls on October 10, has been steadily increasing over the years. This shows that more and more people are accepting the importance of a healthy mind to achieve a good work-life balance. But taboo, prejudice and infamy surrounding the subject have put many people in the dark. To tear down the myths and misinformation surrounding mental health, Good Universe, an NGO vocal about social issues, conducted a mental health awareness programme recently. "It's ok to struggle; it's ok to ask for help; it's ok to not have all the answers and it's ok to not

be ok. This is our motto," said the organisers. The event, themed #flauntyourflaws, witnessed talks by many mental health experts who answered questions regarding the prejudice associated with mental health issues such as depression and addiction and their treatment. Many other people came forward to share their stories about mental health. A dance performance by Patruni Sastry, an expressionist, made everyone think about how terrible mental illnesses can be. Ashish, known for his happy-go-lucky and comedian attitude, opened up about his sensitive history of child abuse in such a poignant and respectful way that moved the audience to

tears. "It is true what they say. Sometimes the most happiest people go through the most toughest times. Ashish lived up to it by sharing his personal story as well as speaking against other shushed topics like dowry, harassment and inter-religious conflicts," said the organisers. Speakers at the event included Dr Purnima Nagraja from Dhriti foundation, Lucia Kankipati from Everyday Miracles and Dr Sneha Khelani from Dhriti foundation. Founder of Good Universe Kamal says, "Mental health is quite essential to the overall health and well being, and mental illnesses are common and treatable. What we need is more acceptance."



GEETA GANDBHIR

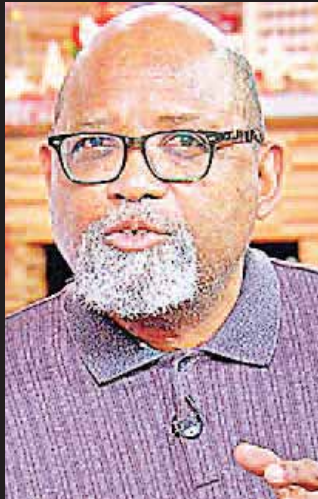
ALEX GIBNEY



OSCAR WINNERS' WHY WE HATE SERIES DEBUTS ON SUNDAY IN INDIA

Throughout history, hate and conflict have been a part of the human experience. From horrific extremes such as the Holocaust or the Rwandan genocide, when hate has fueled mass destruction, to everyday incidents like playground bullying or malicious trolling on social media, hate shapes our lives in myriad ways. And while all humans have the capacity to hate, few understand what sparks it and transforms it into a destructive force. Executive produced by filmmaking heavyweights Alex Gibney and Steven Spielberg and directed by Geeta Gandbhir and Sam Pollard (Emmy

winners for "When The Levees Broke: A Requiem in Four Acts"), *WHY WE HATE* explores one of humanity's most primal and destructive emotions — hate. At the heart of this timely series is the notion that if people begin to understand their own minds, they can find ways to work against hate and keep it from spreading. The six-part series will begin airing on Sunday, at 8 pm on Discovery Channel and Discovery HD world, with additional episodes airing each subsequent Sunday. In addition, many of Discovery's networks around the world will begin airing the series in October.



SAM POLLARD

STEVEN SPIELBERG



ZOE KRAVITZ CAST AS CATWOMAN IN THE BATMAN

Zoe Kravitz has been cast as Selina Kyle, a.k.a. Catwoman, in Matt Reeves' *The Batman*, an individual with knowledge of the project told *TheWrap*. Robert Pattinson will play the *Dark Knight* in the upcoming Warner Bros. film. Reeves and Mattson Tomlin wrote the screenplay, and the film is being produced by Reeves and Dylan Clark. Michael E. Uslan is executive producing. It is set to start filming in January in the U.K. Reeves took over as director after Ben Affleck stepped away from both that position and as the film's star, saying that he would be hanging up the cape for good. Reeves has since described the film as a "defining" and "very personal" story about the *Dark Knight*, rather than an origin story in the vein of Frank Miller's beloved *Year One* series. Jonah Hill was most recently reported to have been talks to play The Riddler, while Jeffrey Wright was in negotiations to star as Commissioner Gordon. Kravitz's most recent credits include *Mad Max: Fury Road*, *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*, *Rough Night*, *Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindelwald*, *Spider-Man: Into the Spider-Verse* and *Big Little Lies*. She also voiced the role of Catwoman in *The Lego Batman Movie*. She will next star in *Viena and the Fantomes* and the TV series *High Fidelity*. Kravitz is represented by Paradigm, Untitled Entertainment and Edelstein and Laird & Sobel. *The Batman* will be released on June 25, 2021.



RAJINIKANTH'S FASCINATION FOR UTTARAKHAND

Superstar Rajinikanth has a deep bond with Uttarakhand which brings him to the hill state almost every year. He says he finds

in its atmosphere. The southern star, who is regarded nothing less than a demigod by his millions of followers, this time arrived in Rishikesh on Sunday night with his daughter Aishwarya. He stayed at the Dayanand Ashram and attended the 'Ganga aarti' in the evening. He also prayed at the 'samadhi' of his guru. Later, he did meditation for some time. The Dayanand Ashram is situated on the banks of Ganga River and is a unique centre for the study of Vedas and Sanskrit. It is unique in the sense that the lessons are conducted in English. There is a temple dedicated to Lord Shiva. The ashram was established during the sixties by Swami Dayanand Saraswati, a



well known scholar of Sanskrit and Vedas. An office bearer at the ashram, who spoke on condition of anonymity, said, "Rajinikanth is a very pious man and whenever he comes here, he stays in one of the rooms and eats the food offered in the ashram. He is always keen to know about the activities and programmes in the ashram." Rajinikanth went out for a stroll on Monday morning and then left with his daughter for Kedarnath and Badrinath in a helicopter. He offered prayers at both the temples where he was welcomed by the temple officials. The superstar told reporters that he had come to seek the blessings of the Lord and his Guru for his upcoming film *Darbar*. "We have completed the shooting of *Darbar* and I am here to pray for the success of the film," he said. Last year, he had visited the temples to pray for the success of his film *2.0* before its release. He has also visited the place before the release of *Robot*. Rajinikanth seems to be fascinated by the serenity of Uttarakhand. Last year, in July, he had stayed in Mussoorie for the shooting of a film. He had visited the Swamiram Himalayan University in Jollygrant and had offered tributes at the 'samadhi' of Swamiram. According to sources, Rajinikanth has been visiting Uttarakhand since the past one decade and the actor says that he finds peace in the atmosphere here.

VAHBIZ DORABJEE SHEDS 13 KILOS FOR WEB SERIES

Actress Vahbiz Dorabjee has lost 13 kilos for her role in a new web series. "I have always maintained a fit lifestyle and hence working out has been a core part of my daily life. Recently I was also trying out intermittent fasting. Yoga, regular walks, etc have also been a part of my daily routine, not only to lose weight rather to be healthy and fit," Vahbiz said. Last week, she teased her fans on Instagram about the project. "They say when you really with your heart manifest something, the entire universe conspires to make it happen (yes, as filmy as it sounds)! But yes, my eyes had seen a dream, one which I had been working towards and I can finally see myself inching towards it! #Excited #NewBeginnings #Announcement ComingSoon," she wrote.



ALI FAZAL'S HOUSE ARREST GETS RELEASE DATE



Ali Fazal and Shriya Pilgaonkar's *House Arrest* will release on Netflix on November 15. Also featuring Jim Sarbh and Barkha Singh, *House Arrest* brings to life the concept of JOMO (Joy Of Missing Out). *House Arrest* is jointly directed by Shashanka Ghosh and Samit Basu. The film is produced by Trilok Malhotra and KR Harish of India Stories Media & Entertainment Private Ltd. It is the story of a man — trapped in his own fears — who locks himself at home, only to find that while he can restrict his interaction with the world, he can't keep the world from entering his domain. Ali feels *House Arrest* has a fantastic script. "It's witty, very fresh and for me, selfishly, the character is very arched and layered. So it was a fun time on sets to play this part. Even though it is a comedy, it is complex and I got to go on set everyday and do something new and fresh even though it was all one place," he said at the time of the announcement.

A proposal to remake Brochevarevaruraa for the Hindi belt has come my way. I didn't feel like revisiting the story. Moreover, I am not comfortable with Hindi. I would be required to depend on someone for help, which I don't want to do

“

VIVEK ATHREYA
WRITER-DIRECTOR

I can't force myself to write for stars: Vivek Athreya

It's rare for a Tollywood filmmaker not to succumb to commercial tropes of storytelling and emerge out in flying colours by doing what he believes in. Vivek Athreya did that twice. If his maiden directorial *Mental Madhilo* was a reasonable success despite glowing reviews, the enormous success of *Brochevarevaruraa* proved that his films can be a big box-office draw as well. No wonder his next move is being keenly watched. The writer-director is taking it slow and is presently penning a thriller and a romantic comedy. "The thriller runs as a social drama and I'm currently in the first draft. As far as the rom-com is concerned, it was an idea that

The writer-director is going slow and is presently penning a thriller and a romantic comedy, finds NAGARAJ GOUD

I had for sometime and I'm developing it. I am working on both the scripts simultaneously and I don't know which one will go to sets first," he told *The Pioneer* in an exclusive interview.

Shedding more light on the thriller-social drama, Vivek, who is in talks with premier production houses DVV Entertainment and Mythri Movie Makers for his next, added, "It would mostly fea-

ture an ensemble. I would ideally need eight to 10 popular faces to spearhead it, with four being top-league actresses. It would be mostly set in Hyderabad."

His two films have been with Sree Vishnu and he is not averse to the idea of teaming up with stars. "Some stars approached me and expressed their interest to work with me after *Brochevarevaruraa*. But as of now

I don't have scripts for them. I can't force myself and write for them. It's not good for me or them. I believe the writing should take its organic course," he declared.

Vivek, who has completed writing dialogues for good friend Pavan Sadineni's next with Bellamkonda Ganesh, also ruled out the possibility of directing the Hindi remake of *Brochevarevaruraa*.

"A proposal to remake it for the Hindi belt has come my way. I didn't feel like revisiting the story and waste my time. So, I couldn't take it up. Moreover, I'm not comfortable with Hindi. I would be required to depend on someone for help, which I don't want to do," he concluded.

CHIRU as a crusader against temple encroachments?

Launched last week, the filming of Megastar Chiranjeevi's next with Koratala Siva, kicks off next month. Except for the fact that it will be a signature Koratala social drama, the makers chose to keep a lid over the plotline.

But that's up until now. Multiple reports that are doing rounds point out that the film will be set in the backdrop of Endowments Department and the step-motherly treatment that has been meted out to it over the years. It is said that Chiru will be seen as an employee of the department who is unhappy with the state of some temples and decides to take matters in his own hands. His part primarily targets encroachers and political heavyweights who in the film are shown to be involved in grabbing of the land that belongs to the department and some Hindu religious institutions. Also, the leasees are

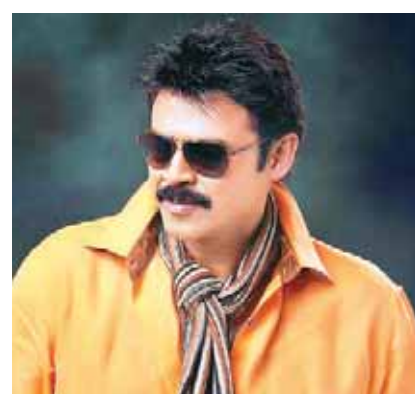
CHIRU WILL BE SEEN AS AN EMPLOYEE OF THE ENDOWMENTS DEPARTMENT WHO TARGETS ENCROACHMENTS ON TEMPLE LANDS

taking the temple lands at throw-away prices and in turn are giving them on sub-lease at market prices, resulting in huge loss to the department. The film will deal with these issues, it is widely speculated. For the untitled film — a joint venture between Konidela Production Company and Matinee Entertainments — Koratala has gathered a strong team. Thiru is the cameraman while Sreekar Prasad will be the editor. Suresh Selvarajan, whose work in *Bharat Ane Nenu* received rave reviews, will be the production designer.

Mebaz launches wedding campaign with KIARA, VIJAY

Indian wear brand, Mebaz, from the house of Manyavar, announced the launch of its latest wedding campaign with Bollywood's glam-diva Kiara Advani and Tollywood's heartthrob Vijay Deverakonda. Launched through two television commercial films, the duo will be seen donning Mebaz's latest wedding-collection across print, outdoor, digital campaigns. Through the move, the brand hopes to widen its appeal amongst the millennial populace of the country.

Following the outstanding success of the Telugu movie *Arjun Reddy* and its Bollywood remake *Kabir Singh*, Vijay Deverakonda and Kiara Advani have won over the box office and millions of hearts. Recognised as the next generation actors, the duo with their impeccable charm and beauty have won everyone's hearts across the industry and social media. The stunning and graceful Kiara Advani, also known for her style and acting prowess has become a household name; while Vijay, with his smouldering looks and brooding charm has won over the audience repeatedly. Together, the duo shares a dynamic, youthful energy that resonates with the brand's ethos and its key message.



Venky is a punter

That Victory Venkatesh is playing the lead in Tharun Bhascker's next set in the backdrop of Malakpet race club is old news. The latest piece of information trickling in indicates that the veteran actor will be seen as a punter who bets on races. "Venky is always on the lookout for interesting characterisations and role in Tharun's film was one. His queries on character front were convincingly answered by Tharun. The actor was especially pleased with his role's graph.

The fact that it is giving him chance to speak Deccani was an added bonus. He was in splits going through some dialogues written by Tharun and is eager to reel them in front of the cameras," says a source.

The untitled film is presently in pre-production and Tharun will take it in front of the cameras once he completes promoting his acting gig *Meeku Maathrame Cheptha*, where he played a lead for the first time. Suresh Productions will be bankrolling the venture.

KK RADHAMOHAN TO DISTRIBUTE KHAIDI



Producer K.K. Radhamohan, who has burnt his fingers by distributing *NGK* and *Kalki* earlier, has acquired the Telugu dubbing rights of Karthi-starrer *Khaidi*. Despite the dismal show of his last, Dev, Karthi enjoys a decent market in Telugu. Radhamohan will be releasing the film for Diwali, wherein it will lock horns with Tamil superstar Vijay-starrer *Whistle*.

Khaidi, helmed by Lokesh Kanagaraj of *Maanagaram* fame, is an action-thriller and will see Karthi playing Dilli, an escaped life-convict on the run and his

journey with a cop who is on also on the run from a deadly smuggling gang. Dilli also should also meet his daughter whom he has never seen in life. This segment forms the emotional crux. Radhamohan said, "Khaidi is different from the regular cinema. It's a concept-driven film devoid of heroine or songs. It would be a pulsating affair and the teaser has received phenomenal response."

Shot completely during nights and peppered with intense chase sequences on the highway, the film sees Anjathay Narain, George, and Dheena in pivotal characters. C.S. Sam is the composer.



FOLLOWING THE OUTSTANDING SUCCESS OF THE TELUGU MOVIE *ARJUN REDDY* AND ITS BOLLYWOOD REMAKE *KABIR SINGH*, VIJAY DEVERAKONDA AND KIARA ADVANI HAVE WON OVER THE BOX OFFICE AND MILLIONS OF HEARTS. RECOGNISED AS THE NEXT GENERATION ACTORS, THE DUO WITH THEIR IMPECCABLE CHARM AND BEAUTY HAVE TAKEN THE INDUSTRY BY STORM.



Misbah disappointed with attitude of some players



PTI ■ KARACHI

Head coach-cum-chief selector Misbah-ul-Haq is extremely disappointed with the attitude of some Pakistani players, who shy away from proper training, lack discipline and don't adhere to professional standards.

Pakistan recently suffered a whitewash against Sri Lanka in the three-game T20I series at home and Misbah remains very disappointed at the way the top-ranked side capitulated to Sri Lanka in front of home crowds.

"What has disturbed Misbah the most in his first assignment as head coach and the chief selector is the reluctance of some players to follow directions of the management and do proper training to keep high fitness standards," one source said.

"He is unhappy that some players are just too relaxed and take training lightly and are not working on improving their cricket discipline. He has also not been encouraged by the attitude of captain, Sarfaraz Ahmed whom he feels shies away from taking responsibility when the chips are down."

Another source said that Misbah was surprised by the behaviour of three senior players — Wahab Riaz, Imad Wasim, and Haris Sohail.

"Several times he felt they were making excuses to shy away from training and proper nets. He got the feeling they had some sort of excuse ready to go easy on their training," the source said.

"Batsman, Haris Sohail has developed a painful habit of making excuses for having some niggling problem or pain when asked to push himself in training.

"Another problem which confronts Misbah is that most of the players don't appear to have the cricket discipline to follow and execute plans on the field which are discussed in the dressing room."

The source said at one stage Misbah even felt that the decision of former head coach Mickey Arthur to keep left-arm pacer Wahab Riaz out of the team was understandable.

The long-serving former Pakistan captain is also not pleased that some players are also not displaying the required professional standards.

"Two players bluntly informed their team's head coaches that they would reach for the National T20 Championship matches in Faisalabad on the morning of the games. When Misbah came to know about this he told the head coaches they should be more firm with the players and ensure they joined their provincial team a day before the matches," one source said.

Misbah is also surprised that Arthur and the ex-support staff didn't pay enough attention to developing proper batsmen in all formats and didn't look beyond Babar Azam.

"It is not a very happy situation now and one can expect Misbah to take some hard decisions as chief selector while selecting the T20 and Test squads for the coming tour of Australia," he said.

Zahid Mahmood, a leg-spinner who in the past has been ignored by the selectors and coaches, is now under the consideration of Misbah who is not satisfied with the form of current team leggies, Yasir Shah and Shadab Khan.

Similarly, Misbah is also on the lookout for some new pace bowlers and youngster Naseem Shah is under his scanner for the Australian tour.

The source said it will also be interesting to see whether Misbah supports Sarfaraz Ahmed to continue as a Test captain when the board meets to decide on the captains for the Australian tour.

No politics behind my selection as BCCI chief: Ganguly

SAUGAR SENGUPTA ■ KOLKATA

Even as Board of Control for Cricket in India president designate Sourav Ganguly returned to Kolkata amid a grand welcome the former Cricket India captain said there was no politics to be read into his getting nominated as the boss of Indian cricket.

Soon after landing at the NSI Airport the cricketing south-paw said, "there was no political pressure on me; neither is there any political deal," behind his getting the prized post. When asked as to whether he saw a shinning political future ahead of him particularly after the 2021 Bengal Assembly elections, he remained non-committal saying "there was no talk with anyone on my political future."

Incidentally hours before being tipped off to be the first cricketer to become a BCCI president Ganguly had a brief meeting with Home Minister Amit Shah which many critic saw as a prelude to his becoming the Board president.

On whether there was any offer from any political bench for



him he said "there is nothing wrong if any politician wants good people to join politics. There is nothing wrong if Mr Amit Shah or Mamata Didi want good people to join their parties."

On his future chemistry with BCCI secretary designate Jay Shah he said "Jay and I have been very good friends.

Both of us are young and both of us have experience and both of us want to do something for the Indian cricket. So it will be a great inning for both of us. There will not be lack of any

effort ... whether I will be successful or not I can't say but I can say that I will work to the best of my capability for the cause of Indian cricket."

Dwelling on his priorities as the BCCI chief he said "my first priority is the whole lot of first class cricketers. It is this pool of cricketers from where the top payers emerge. But the remaining lot of first class cricketers gets very little for them. So it will be my first priority to do something for them. We will work collectively and change their lives."

'Want to reverse losing trend in knock-out games of ICC events'

PTI ■ KOLKATA

Former India captain Sourav Ganguly, who is set to be the new BCCI president, wants the Virat Kohli-led national team to reverse the trend of losing the knock-out games in ICC events.

"India are a good team. I know they have not won a big tournament. But they play well in big tournaments except the semi-finals and the final. Hopefully, Virat can change it around. He is a champion player," Ganguly told reporters here on Tuesday.

India have not won an ICC event since the 2013 Champions Trophy. The team finished runner-up in the 2017 Champions Trophy final after losing to Pakistan.

In the World Cup earlier this year, India were one of the favourites to win the title but ended up losing the semifinal to New Zealand.

Smriti loses top spot

PTI ■ DUBAI

Injured India opener Smriti Mandhana has lost her number one status after being toppled by New Zealand's Amy Satterthwaite in the batting chart of the latest ICC ODI rankings.

Mandhana, who has 755 points, slipped to the number two spot after she missed India's recently concluded ODI series against South Africa due to injury.

The 23-year-old suffered a fracture in her right toe after being struck by a ball during a net session before the start of the ODI series against South Africa which India won 3-0.

Among others batters, skipper Mithali Raj moved down to the seventh spot while her Harmanpreet Kaur rose in the rankings to the occupy the 17th place.



Smriti Mandhana in a file picture PTI

In the bowlers' rankings, Jhulan Goswami, Shikha Pandey and Poonam Yadav moved down to be placed sixth, eighth and ninth respectively.

Among the all-rounders, Deepti Sharma has moved down to the third place while Shikha Pandey broke into the top 10.

Jaffer slams 'unfit' Vadodara pitches for Hazare trophy

PTI ■ MUMBAI

Domestic cricket stalwart and former India opener Wasim Jaffer on Tuesday slammed the "unfit" pitches being used in Vadodara for the Vijay Hazare Trophy.

Jaffer took to Twitter to vent out his frustration.

"Absolutely unfit pitches to play in 'List A' matches in Vadodara," he wrote.

Later Jaffer, who is the highest-run scorer in Ranji Trophy, said that the pitch at the Motibaug ground was "close to being dangerous".

"Yes, specially the pitch at Motibaug is close to being dangerous. Two-three players were hit by a ball and nobody is scoring more than 150-160 runs.

"Our tournament was (suppose) to start on 24th (September) but then there was rain for two

weeks. So, I don't know why the Baroda Cricket Association first of all took up (the job) to host Vijay Hazare," Jaffer said.

All the Group B matches have been played in Baroda and Jaffer's team Vidarbha won only two of their nine matches, losing four. Three of their games had no result. They are languishing at the 8th spot in the Elite Group B standings and 13th in the combined Group A and B standings.

"And the matches we are playing on, if you look at the scores, you will get to know what kind of wickets we are playing on. In Bengaluru, Jaipur and Dehradun they are getting good pitches to play (on), so its just feels very sad," Jaffer said.

A senior member of the Vidarbha's coaching staff believes that the match-referee should submit a detailed report about the condition of pitches to the BCCI.

Ireland, Scotland attempt to deny minnows 'dream'

AFP ■ DUBAI

Ireland captain Gary Wilson wants his side to ensure they finish "right at the top again" in the upcoming 2020 T20 World Cup qualifying tournament, but Nigeria and Jersey are among those chasing a "dream" appearance on the global stage.

Scotland are the highest-ranked team in the competition, with 14 nations vying for six places in the opening round of next year's World T20 in Australia, where they would join Bangladesh and Sri Lanka in attempting to reach the 'Super 12s'.

Ireland are the only Test team having to go through qualifying, which starts on Friday in the United Arab Emirates, and will be expected to book a sixth straight appearance in the tournament.

"We are here to compete at the world stage," said Irish skipper Wilson. "We have a great record in the Middle East and the boys are looking forward to a great tournament and ensure we finish right at the top again."

The winners of each group of seven will qualify automatically, with the four remaining spots to be decided in playoffs.

Scotland, 11th in the world T20 rankings, claimed their first-ever win at a global ICC tournament in the 2016 edition by beating Hong Kong, but will be looking to put the pain of agonisingly missing out on the 50-over World Cup earlier this year behind them.

They had two chances to secure a place during last year's qualifying in Zimbabwe, but lost to Ireland before rain cut short their tense run chase against two-time world champions the West Indies.



"We know every team is dangerous in this competition," said Scotland captain Kyle Coetzer. "It is vitally important not only for us as Scotland but for every team here."

JERSEY CHASING 'DREAM'

The Netherlands, who reached the 'Super 10' round in 2014, Oman, Hong Kong and hosts the UAE will all be among the favourites to qualify.

But the likes of Nigeria, Jersey and Singapore insist they are not going to just make up the numbers as they bid to give cricket a boost in their countries.

There was already a shock in the Asian regional qualifiers, with Singapore reaching this stage ahead of Nepal, the world's 13th-ranked outfit.

Island team Jersey are playing in their second consecutive qualifier, having fallen short four years ago despite surprise victories over Hong Kong and Nepal.

"For Jersey, it would probably be the biggest thing that has happened in our sporting history," admitted captain Charles Perchard.

"It's a dream of ours to potentially play in a World Cup next year... "We're a small island

and in a lot of sports we do punch above our weight, especially in cricket and qualification would be massive for our country."

Nigeria have reached the final stage of qualifying for the first time as cricket continues to grow in the African country, with their youth side booking a spot at next year's Under-19 World Cup in South Africa.

"It would be a great thing to be at the World Cup. It would be a great history for Nigeria," said their skipper Ademola Onikoyi, after his team took the place of Zimbabwe following their suspension by the ICC.

"Our juniors will be at the World Cup next year in South Africa, so we want to do that as well."

Singapore, led by Amjad Mahboob, are also debutants at the qualifying event, while Bermuda will be looking to repeat the heroics of their side who famously reached the 2007 World Cup.

The qualifiers get underway on Friday, with Scotland facing Singapore in the opening Group A game, while Ireland take on Hong Kong and the UAE play Oman in Group B.

Delhi eye maiden PKL final place

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

With the VIVO Pro Kabaddi League Season Seven entering its penultimate phase, the semi-finals, all eyes are on the star athletes who have pushed their teams towards the coveted title. Defending champions Bengaluru Bulls have rode on Pawan Sehrawat's raiding brilliance all season but they will be up against League toppers Dabang Delhi KC, who have with them another brilliant talent in raider Naveen Kumar. In the second semi-final, Bengal Warriors will face an in-form U Mumba side, who outclassed a strong Haryana Steelers unit in the Eliminators.

BATTLE OF RAIDERS

For most parts of this season, Pawan Sehrawat has looked the best Kabaddi player in the country, and he has carried that form into the crucial, knockout stages of the competition. His 20-point performance was vital in Bulls' comeback victory against UP Yoddha in the Eliminators and the defending champions will once again be reliant on the High-Flyer for the raid points against Delhi, especially with Rohit Kumar still looking troubled by his back injury. Pawan has 328 points from 23 matches this season, including 17 Super 10s, but the raider will be facing a familiar foe in Delhi's left corner Ravinder Pahar. Interestingly, the 'Hawk' has a better head-to-head history against Pawan in duels (8-7), and will take belief from Nitesh Kumar's performances for UP against the raider from the same position.

At the other end, Naveen Kumar will be keen to launch the wrecking ball onto a leaky Bulls' defence. Barring Mahender Singh, no defender looked convincing in their game against UP, and in Naveen they will be facing a raider of another class. The 19-year-old, a produce of the

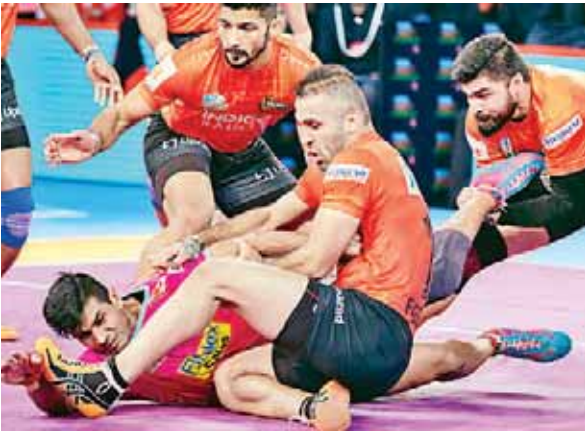


Future Kabaddi Heroes (FKH) programme, has 19 consecutive Super 10s this season (268 points from 21 matches), and will be a force to reckon with. With both the raiding departments looking strong, the match will most likely be won by the defence.

"WELL-BALANCED" SIDES

Bengal Warriors, arguably, have been the most complete side in Season 7, with their defence and attack firing hand in hand. But they will be facing a U Mumba, often called a defence-reliant team, who have discovered a new dimension through two young raiders — Abhishek Singh and Arjun Deshwah. The duo scored 32 points for the Mumbai side in their Eliminator round, and with U Mumba also peaking at the right time, the second semi-final will be a tactical warfare.

Baldev Singh (averaging 2.59 tackles per match) and Rinku Narwal have been in good form for the Warriors and they will be keen to make life difficult for Mumbai's young raiders. Maninder Singh's injury concerns will be a concern for the Bengal team though, especially with Mumbai corners of Fazel Atrachali (top scoring



defender in season seven with 81 points so far) and Sandeep Narwal in red-hot form. But in K Prapanjan and Mohammad Nabibakhsh, the Warriors have a great raiding unit to support Maninder.

The eliminator rounds were testimony to the fact that there can be no clear favourites in a Kabaddi match. Expect nothing short of fireworks as the most fiercely competed season of VIVO PKL enters the final stages.

The players had a take on the semi-final match:

Talking about the semi-finals Pawan Hi-Flyer Sehrawat, Captain of Bengaluru Bulls, said "It was a great match yesterday, I

have never played such a high quality match. During my school days I played a match which ended in a draw and after that I played a tied game in the knockout stage yesterday and it was a great experience to be part of it. I had lost hope of winning but then our coach motivated me and we had Rohit bhai's support also that kept me going. There were so many exciting moments in the match that in the end turned it turned in our favour. It was a complete team effort. Our match with Dabang Delhi KC is going to be challenging, they are a good and balanced team with good quality defenders and raiders and like the previous one it is going to be a close

call. A blockbuster of a Raid Fest for sure!"

Talking about the semi-finals Fazel Sultan Atrachali, Captain of U Mumba, said "The last match with Haryana was very difficult as Haryana had played us very recently and they knew our gameplan. They had strategized accordingly to ensure the best result. However, it was a very important time for me because in the last season, we qualified to the playoffs and then couldn't go further so I wanted to not repeat the same mistake. Yesterday's game was really good because we won such a tough match so the team is very motivated and confident. We have strategized focusing on defence and when we have a controlled defence we perform really well. Even Bengal Warriors has a good defence but I think we can overcome that. We need to concentrate on team work and not depend on any one player during the match, everyone has to support each other and play as a unit."

Talking about the semi-finals Joginder Narwal, Captain of Dabang Delhi, said "The season has been tough and the competition during the league stage is high. The team worked hard and emerged as table toppers, we wish to continue the momentum and give our best during the semi-finals. We have always taken one game at a time and will do so even for our match against Bengaluru Bulls. Our aim is to pick the cup this year, and we are working towards it."

Talking about the semi-finals Nabibakhsh, Bengal Warriors, said "U Mumba put up a good game, they were on point with their defence and offence. We are preparing for the semi-finals and practicing rigorously to make sure we keep the pressure on our opponent from the beginning. The match against U Mumba will be a neck-to-neck battle and we will give our best to make sure we emerge victorious and