

OPINION 6
WHY CONG OWES
AN ANSWER

MONEY 8
ADANI AWARDS AUD 100 MN OZ
RAIL CONTRACT TO MARTINUS RAIL

SPORTS 12
COMPLETE
WHITEWASH

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



the pioneer

www.dailypioneer.com



AM RATNAM LEADS
RACE TO FUND PK'S
COMEBACK FILM

Page 10

CJI Gogoi recommends Justice Bobde as successor

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

UP CM bans mobiles in all colleges

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

Guj-cadre IPS Anup Kumar is new NSG chief

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

TODAY
ALMANAC
Month & Paksham:
Ashwini & Krishna Paksha
Panchangam
Tithi : Panchami: 07:43 am
Nakshatram: Mrigashirsha: 05:41 pm
Time to Avoid: (Bad time to start any important work)
Rahukalam: 09:07 am - 10:34 am
Yamagantam: 01:27 pm - 02:54 pm
Varjyam: 02:09 am - 03:46 am
Gulika: 06:13 am - 07:40 am
Good Time: (to start any important work)
Amritakalam: 08:38 am - 10:16 pm
Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:37 am - 12:24 pm

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER
Forecast: Isolated Thunderstorms
Temp: 31/24
Humidity: 87%
Sunrise: 06:09
Sunset: 05:51
Current Weather Conditions
Updated October 18, 2019 5:00 PM

Formation Day to be celebrated on Nov 1

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

After five long years, the State government is all set to celebrate the Andhra Pradesh Formation Day on November 1 this year. A decision to this effect was taken by the government following the clearance by the Union Home Ministry. The MHA is learnt to have given the nod as the mother States can celebrate their original formation days. With this, Chief Secretary LV Subrahmanyam is under-



stood to have been convening a meeting on October 21 to discuss the preparations and arrangements for the celebrations across the State. Soon after bifurcation of combined Andhra Pradesh, the TDP government in 2014

LV Subrahmanyam is convening a meeting on Oct 21 to discuss arrangements for the celebrations across the State

had asked the Union Home Ministry for clarification, in turn, the latter had said that the truncated State could retain its original Formation Day, i.e; November 1. However, the TDP government started celebrating June 2 as the Nava Nirmana Deeksha Day.

Mangalagiri ideal for capital: RK

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Location of Amaravati capital city is back into focus with YSRCP MLA Alla Ramakrishna Reddy expressing his opinion that Mangalagiri is the most suitable place for the construction of structures required for governance of the State.

In a letter written to Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy on Friday, he said although the Srikrishna Committee had felt that Tullur



and Tadikonda were not ideal for the construction of the capital city, the TDP govern-

Ramakrishna Reddy said the Naidu government had forced the farmers to part with their lands for the capital project

ment headed by Chandrababu Naidu went ahead with the project at these places. Ramakrishna Reddy said the Naidu government had

PCI takes suo motu cognizance of scribe's murder

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Press Council of India (PCI) Chairman Justice Chandramouli Kumar Prasad has noted with concern murder of K Satyanarayana, journalist of a vernacular daily, for his reportedly alleged critical writings against anti-social elements.

In a press release, the PCI Chairman took suo motu cognizance and directed the Andhra Pradesh government through the Chief Secretary, Secretary (Home) and the Director General of Police, Andhra Pradesh, to submit a report on the facts of the case.

forced the farmers to part with their lands for the capital project.

Stating that 10,000 acres of government land is available in Mangalagiri, Ramakrishna Reddy said he would suggest to the newly-constituted committee on the capital city construction that Mangalagiri is the most ideal location for the project.

He demanded that the notification issued for pooling by the previous TDP government be withdrawn.



NPCIL for fleet mode atomic reactors

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

To increase standardisation and bring modularity in building atomic power reactors, the Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) is going for fleet mode construction for future projects, DAE Secretary K N Vyas said on Friday.

Speaking at the India Energy Forum's Nuclear Conclave, he said 17 new reactors are now in the pipeline, with seven already under construction.

"We are going in for fleet mode for construction, thereby reducing construction costs and speeding up construction time," Vyas, who is also the Chairman of the Atomic Energy Commission, said. He said India is an old player in the nuclear energy sector with the first research reactor in Asia being commissioned in the country.

PREVIEW OF PUBLIC TENDERS

Statutory judicial panel receives first case

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The statutory Andhra Pradesh Judicial Commission, which is mandated to conduct a preview of public tenders for all works over Rs 100 crore in value, received its first case related to engagement of a service provider to run the 108 ambulance service for judicial scrutiny.

The Medical and Health Department has submitted the tender proposal to the judicial commission, headed by retired High Court judge B Siva Sankara Rao, for scrutiny.

The State government will pay more than Rs 100 crore per annum to the service provider for operating the 108 ambulance service across the State.

There are over 600 ambulances in the State now and the government has been paying Rs 1.35 lakh per month to run



Justice B Siva Sankara Rao

each of these. A sum of over Rs 97.20 crore is being paid by the State government to the private service provider every year to run the service.

The government has decided to increase the fleet by at least 100 ambulances and the maintenance expenditure will proportionately go up over Rs 100 crore per

annum, official sources said. Hence, the tender has been referred to the judicial commission for preview, the sources added.

"The Commission has sought some clarifications and we have given the replies. The tender will be put up online for public perusal next week," Medical and Health Principal Secretary K S Jawahar Reddy said here on Friday.

The AP Infrastructure (Transparency through Judicial Preview) Act, 2019, passed by the state Legislature in July, mandates putting any government tender for infrastructure works of Rs 100 crore and more for judicial scrutiny before awarding the contracts.

Judges' recommendations will be binding on the government, as per the legislation.

Continued on Page 3



Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy speaking at a review meeting of the Medical and Health Department in Vijayawada on Friday

Feeder ambulances in remote tribal areas

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy directed officials to provide medical services in remote and tribal areas through feeder ambulances (apart from establishing maternity centres in every district). He also asked officials to implement YSR Kanti Velugu for college students besides carrying out health tests to all starting with school-children.

During a review meeting of the Medical and Health Department here on Friday, he asked officials to start all the development and renovation works in the community hospitals, area hospitals and district hospitals from December and complete the work by December 2020. Health hub centre works will start from May, 2020.

He instructed officials to extend YSR Kanti Velugu programme to college students and the preliminary round should be completed within a month. Like Kanti Velugu, all the health tests should be done to the people starting from school students.

The government has approved to start Aarogya Sri services from November 1 in

The CM asked officials to start all the development works in area hospitals and district hospitals from Dec and complete the work by Dec 2020

150 hospitals in Hyderabad, Bengaluru and Chennai. The government is also set to buy new vehicles for 108 and 104 and Aarogya Sri cards will be given from December 21. Sanitary workers' pay in hospitals would be hiked to Rs 16,000.

The State will provide financial assistance of Rs 5,000 per month or Rs 225 every day from December 1 as a post-surgery allowance till the date of recovery as recommended by the medical doctor. He ordered officials to include Thalassaemia, Haemophilia, Sickle Cell Anaemia patients under the financial aid of Rs 10,000 that is being provided to kidney patients.

He asked officials to include four more diseases in the Rs 5,000 pension category from January 1.

Continued on Page 3

And now, Haj pilgrimage from Amaravati: Basha

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Deputy Chief Minister Amzath Basha said that Muslims can undertake their Haj pilgrimage from Amaravati from next year.

Speaking at a media conference here on Friday, Basha said Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy had held several discussions with the Centre and made this possible. On the occasion, he released a brochure on the Haj pilgrimage.

Stating that the full quota of Haj quota for Andhra Pradesh is not being used for the past three years, he said the Centre had further increased the quota to 2,600 and taken steps to ensure that Hajis will make use of the opportunity. For this, the government is conducting an extensive campaign.

Basha said as per the instructions of the Chief Minister, plans are being drawn up to see that financial assistance is given to Hajis from the State. "If the Haji's annual income is Rs 3 lakh, he will get Rs 60,000. If the income is above Rs 3 lakh, an assistance of Rs 30,000 will be given," he said.

Continued on Page 3



Deputy Chief Minister Amzath Basha

TS braces up for shutdown today

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Telangana State is bracing up for a total shutdown on Saturday, with the TSRTC Joint Action Committee calling for "Telangana bandh" in support of its 14-day-old strike that has moral and vocal support of all opposition parties, employees, students' unions and civil society organizations. JAC convenor Ashwathama Reddy on Friday urged all sections of people to extend their support to Saturday's shutdown and make it a big success.

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



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

leader Mallu Bhatti Vikramarka asked TRS leaders K Keshava Rao and others to participate in the bandh. He said TRS leaders should decide whether they want to stand by people. He alleged that Chief Minister K Chandrasekhar Rao was scheming to sell RTC's and other government assets to

private persons. He condemned the preventive arrests of various leaders. He said that the Telangana Congress would approach the Centre and meet the Governor of the state on the issue very soon. Telangana Jana Samithi (TJS) chief Prof Kodandaram opined that the bandh was very

■ Oppn parties, revenue dept and other govt employees, teachers, students' unions, civil society organizations extend support to bandh called by RTC unions

■ TNGOs, TGOs to stage demonstrations during lunch hour

important. Businessmen would observe it voluntarily, he said.

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

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

PNS ■ CHENNAI

In a massive search operation covering 40 premises of religious trusts and other entities that preach about "oneness philosophy" and run wellness centres, the Income Tax Department has found Rs 500 crore of undisclosed income and links to investments in tax havens. The tax authorities have seized cash amounting to Rs 43.9 crore during the search operations. Foreign currencies worth \$2.5 million (Rs 18 crore) and about 88 kg of gold have also been discovered and seized.

"Total value of seizure so far is approximately Rs 93 crore. The undisclosed income of the group detected so far is esti-



mated at more than Rs 500 crore," the Tax Department said in a release.

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

Varadaiahpalem," the tax department said.

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

Continued on Page 3

CAPSULE

NASA ASTRONAUTS CONDUCT FIRST ALL-WOMEN SPACE WALK

Washington: NASA astronauts Christina Koch and Jessica Meir ventured out of the International Space Station on Friday for the first all-women space walk to replace a failed power controller, also known as a battery charge-discharge unit (BCDU). Koch and Meir ventured out into the vacuum of space at 7.38 a.m. EDT (5.08 p.m. India time) for the space walk, according to NASA. It is the first time that all space walkers are women and the 43rd space walk to include women. This is Koch's fourth space walk and Meir's first. The space walk is the 221st in support of station assembly, maintenance and upgrades and the eighth outside the station this year. An all-women space walk, involving Koch and NASA astronaut Anne McClain, was originally scheduled for March. But that was scuttled because properly fitted spacesuits could not be readied in time for both astronauts. Space.com reported. So far, the 15 women who have conducted a space walk did so with a male companion. The first all-women space walk is a milestone worth noting as NASA looks forward to putting the first woman and next man on the Moon by 2024 with the agency's Artemis lunar exploration programme. Space walks are not easy. Astronauts typically describe them as the most physically challenging thing they do. "In the end, I do think it's important, and I think it's important because of the historical nature of what we're doing. In the past women haven't always been at the table," Koch was quoted as saying by NASA when asked in an interview about the importance of conducting her mission and the first all-female space walk. Koch and Meir went out into the vacuum of space to replace a battery charge/discharge unit that failed to activate after new lithium-ion batteries were installed on the space station's exterior structure on October 11. The unit is one of several that regulate the charge put into the batteries collecting energy from the station's solar arrays. Though the unit's failure has not affected station operations or crew safety, it does prevent the new batteries from providing increased station power, NASA said.

'Skill sets must match technology'

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chairman of the Andhra Pradesh State Council of Higher Education (APSCHE) Prof K Hemachandra said that even though more engineering students are completing their graduation every year in the country, the growth of technology is outpacing the skill sets of graduates. The educational institutions play a major role in bridging these skills gap. Addressing the 42nd edition of 'ICT Academy Bridge 2019', the largest industry-institute interaction event in Asia here on Friday, he said the current industry scenario demands the students to acquire knowledge in the cross functional domains. For example, one of the major mistakes that the students make is assuming that a Computer Science degree is a must for learning the right skill sets for AI and its various subsets. Actually to land in an AI/ML job a statistics degree is precise choice of major. ICT Academy Bridge, the event that connects government policy-makers, industry experts and academic leaders, focused on the theme "Augmenting Skills, Accelerating Growth" to set an agenda for leaders to help people upgrade their skills and future-proof themselves, which is going to be the defining challenge of our time. Prof Hemachandra said in terms of developing the core



Prof Hemachandra said in terms of developing the core skills, the Government of Andhra Pradesh is planning to establish 25 Skill Development Centres to enrich technical skills of students of Andhra Pradesh.

Prof Hemachandra said in terms of developing the core skills, the Government of Andhra Pradesh is planning to establish 25 Skill Development Centres to enrich technical skills of students of Andhra Pradesh. The government has also established an IT Task Force to design a policy document for skill development, he added.

skills, the Government of Andhra Pradesh is planning to establish 25 Skill Development Centres to enrich technical skills of students of Andhra Pradesh. The government has also established an IT Task Force to design a policy document for skill development, he added.

M Sivakumar, Chief Executive Officer of ICT Academy, said, "Giving back to society is the trait I learned through my 10 years of journey with ICT Academy. Bridge is the flagship event of ICT Academy, and was initiated to bridge the gap between industry and academia. This is the

eye-opener for academicians to get insights on the trending technologies, its impact on the job market and preparing the student for the same. " Later, ICT Academy Partners in Growth Awards 2019 were presented to Swarnandhra College of Engineering and Technology, Narsapur, Andhra Pradesh, PB Siddhartha College of Arts and Science, Vijayawada, and VR Siddhartha Engineering College, Vijayawada, for their outstanding partnership and active participation in initiatives of ICT Academy. Dr. Kumar Visvanathan, Head - People Shared Services, Mindtree, M Sivakumar, Chief Executive Officer, ICT Academy, Jude Xavier, Vice President & Head - HR, Technosoft Global Services, Sharath Babu T, Director - Product Development, Oracle, Lakshminarasimhan N, General Manager - HR, Brakes India, Dr. Anand Gurupatham, DGM, Renault Nissan Technology & Business Centre, Mayank Gupta, Director Human Resources, Unitedhealth Group, Surya Prakash, Global Head- Talent Transformation and Learning & Development, Wipro, Krithivasan S, Lead - India Campus Hiring, Virtusa, Arumugam T, Factory HR Head, Kone Elevators, and B Anbuthambi, Executive Vice President, ICT Academy were also present.

The government has also established an IT Task Force to design a policy document for skill development, he added. 42nd edition and is an eight hours event for sharing the knowledge and enriching the teaching community through sessions by tech experts and policymakers. This will be an



Tirumala reception wing wins hearts of pilgrims

- Pilgrims welcome trendy transformation reception of wing
- Cashless card payments improve at Tirumala

PNS ■ TIRUMALA

The reception wing of TTD in Tirumala is marching ahead with latest trends to win the hearts of the multitude of visiting pilgrims. Pilgrims are also welcoming this new trendy transformation and lauding the efforts of TTD towards cashless transactions to enhance transparency in the accommodation system.

The reception wing in Tirumala is categorised into R1, R2 and R3 with the R1 dealing with VIP accommodation, while the remaining two comprising five Pilgrims Amenities Complexes (PACs), over 7,000 rooms in the tariff ranging between Rs 50 and Rs 1,500 will be available for all the pilgrims. There are mini Kalyana Kattas, Food Courts and Jalaprasadam units in these areas to cater to the needs of the pilgrims.

In PACs only locker facility is available for the pilgrims. There are 1,256 lockers available in PAC 1, 3,300 in PAC 2, 1,850 in PAC 3, in PAC 4 812 at Padmanabha Nilayam located in RTC bus stand. All these lockers are allotted to pilgrims through Locker Allotment System (LAS) application on a transparent manner.

ACCOMMODATION KITS The kits introduced in the accommodation areas and PACs has been receiving a huge response from the pilgrims in the recent times. These kits include pillows with covers, blankets and mats, which will be provided by TTD to the pilgrims on the additional payment of Rs 10 for a pair of pillows with cov-



ers, Rs 10 for two mats, a blanket at Rs 10 and a woolen rug at Rs 20.

SWIPING MACHINES The introduction of swiping machines in accommodation areas to encourage cashless transactions is also gaining good response from pilgrims. When the VIP reception area, including Padmavathi and MBC are recording cent per cent card payments, the areas covered under R2 and R3, including CRO General, TBC, Koustubham, Nandakam, Saptagiri Satralu, which are allotted to common pilgrims, are also showing good signs of improvement day by day with the percentage recorded between 55% and 60%.

KALYANA MANDAPAMS Apart from the common pilgrim accommodation allotment, the reception wing of TTD takes care of the allotment of Kalyana Mandapams to the pilgrims, who wanted to wed in Tirumala on a nominal rent. There are in total 10 such Kalyana Mandapams in Tirumala with the rentals ranging between Rs 200 and Rs 500.

Expert delivers lecture on rock mechanics

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Dr DS Subramanyam Director, National Institute of Rock Mechanics (NIRM), Bengaluru, delivered a lecture on the role of geologist in the studies of rock mechanics and engineering geology, organised by the department of geology, Andhra University here on Friday. Dr DS Subramanyam, who is an expert in these fields, has been known in the country for his excellent contribution in the field of rock mechanics and engineering geology. Dr Subramanyam gave an elaborate lecture on various aspects of rock mechanics and engineering geology and their appli-

cations in the hydroelectric projects, tunnels, reservoirs, dams, underground storage, defence installation and other vital sectors. His vast experience in the Himalayan terrain in the construction of hydroelectric projects has been presented with excellent slides. Prof Jagannadha Rao, along with others felicitated Dr Subramanyam, on behalf of the department. The professor expressed his happiness for visiting the department and promised that being an old student of this department, he wanted to help the students of department to get hands on experience in rock mechanics.

RINL signs MOA with NRDC

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

A Memorandum of Agreement was signed between RINL and National Research Development Corporation, a leading technology transfer organisation under the Ministry of Science and Technology, here on Friday. The MOA facilitates rendering consultancy services to RINL in the filing of patents, copyrights, trademarks and design applications both in India and abroad and also for licensing of said technologies on case to case basis for commercial exploitation.

KV Vidya Sagar, Executive Director (Works), RINL, and Dr H Purushotham, CMD, NRDC, inked the MOA. The



KV Vidya Sagar, Executive Director (Works), and H Purushottam, CMD, NRDC, exchanging the MOA documents in Visakhapatnam on Friday

NRDC has been serving the nation for over six decades for the development, promotion and transfer of technologies/knowhow/Intellectual Property (IP) emanating from R&D organisations and academic institutions. This will provide the necessary thrust to RINL in supporting and improving upon its innovation activities.

Workshop on research methodology at AMC

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The department of community medicine, Andhra Medical College, launched a two-day workshop on research methodology and biostatistics for the second and third year Post Graduates of various specialties like General Medicine, General Surgery, ENT, and Ophthalmology. The aim of the workshop was to facilitate the PGs in conducting research in a scientific manner and doing their dissertation.

Dr PV Sudhakar, Principal, AMC, inaugurated the programme on Friday. Later, addressing students, he emphasised the need for quality



research from the institute and spoke on the importance of ethics in medical research. Dr B Devi Madhavi, professor and head of community medicine and the course director, informed that the work-

shop covered topics like importance of research, how to choose research topic, study design, sampling techniques, study instrument development, protocol writing, data analysis reporting results and discus-

The aim of the workshop was to facilitate PGs in conducting research in a scientific manner and doing their dissertation

sion and referencing.

All the sessions were planned to be interactive and involved group activities. Dr P Kranthi, coordinator, and Dr Ravi Kiran, co-coordinator for the programme, and all faculty of community medicine were the resource persons.

South India ready with its own Shahi Litchi in winter

PNS ■ MUZZAFARPUR

Shahi litchi, the luscious fruit of Bihar, is now readying to get a new home in South India. What's even better, the litchi from the South will be available in winter.

Vishal Nath, director of the National Litchi Research Institute told IANS: "Litchi produce will now be grown in Kerala, Karnataka and Tamil Nadu. We've been preparing for this for the past seven years. In 2012-13, we had sent thousands of litchi saplings to these areas. Now these saplings



have become trees that are ready to bear fruits."

Nath said one ripe litchi from these trees is likely to weigh around 40 grams. He said he had in August done a survey of the areas under litchi cultivation in South India. "A team from the institute will soon visit these areas again to

understand the problems of the growers," he said.

Litchi cultivation has been started in Wayanad, Idukki and Kalpet in Kerala, Kodagu, Chikmagalur and Hassan in Karnataka, and Palani Hills and Ooty in Tamil Nadu after training fruit growers in these areas. According to Nath, the weather in these areas is ideal for readying the produce in winter months of November and December. Especially famous for its sweet flavour and fragrance, Bihar's Shahi litchi is a brand in itself with a GI tag of its own.





Army veterans to be trained for IT sector jobs

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The Indian Army and the National Association of Software and Services Companies (NASSCOM) will come together in Bengaluru next week to orient veterans to the modern industrial needs in the IT sector in order to tap their expertise and potential by offering them jobs.

The initiative has been planned as several multinational firms, which have in the past, failed to hire Army veterans, despite their keenness, because of technological and cultural differences with the corporate world. The move, as per experts in the IT sector, will have far-reaching implications in the industry. The initiative has been taken up jointly by the Indian Army, the NASSCOM and the US-based multinational financial services firm Wells Fargo, which is also being supported by the multi-national e-Commerce firm Amazon India.

"NASSCOM is looking for a single-point contact where it can get all details of Army veterans in the IT sector. We are organising a two-day conference in Bengaluru on October 22 and 23 where we can deliberate on how to take this forward," said Major General Deepak Sapra, MD, Army Welfare Placement Organisation. A statement from the Indian Army said while Army will assess industrial needs during the two-day event, NASSCOM will help Army in orienting to the modern industrial needs in the IT sector.

VIJAYAWADA BULLION RATES	
	GOLD
₹ 38,550 (10 gm)	
₹ 40	↓
	SILVER
₹ 45,100 (1kg)	
₹ 200	↑
CHICKEN RATES ₹/KG	
	
Dressed/With Skin	₹128
Without Skin	₹145
Broiler at Farm	₹88
EGG RATES ₹/100	
	
HYDERABAD	370
VIJAYAWADA	395
VISAKHAPATNAM	420
RETAIL PRICE	₹3.95
(IN VIJAYAWADA)	

PNS ■ AHMEDABAD

In Asia's largest milk producing district--Banaskantha, when everything failed to bring out children from the throes of malnutrition, a dairy model made it possible. According to UNICEF India, one of their pilot projects has shown signs of achieving the target which many techniques, schemes and money failed to do.

In their attempts to reach out to maximum households and convince them to leave their 'orthodox' practices and create awareness amongst the general public, UNICEF decided to collaborate with an organisation that had a very strong bond with the rural Gujarat - Banas Dairy. With over four lakh members, Banas Dairy is Asia's largest milk union. The dairy as many say has very strong hold in the Banaskantha district and even in

nearby areas, which prompted UNICEF to shake hands with the Banas Dairy.

"We observed that the dairy farmers here have one of the best cattle rearing practices in the world. They ensure breastfeeding, immunisation and all required practices for their cattle, while the same practices is not followed for their child," Laxmi Bhawani, Chief, UNICEF Gujarat told IANS, while narrating the cause of malnutrition in most of the children in Gujarat.

Bhawani, said that Banad Dairy has several field staff, who were already working with farmers' families to educate them about farming practices, helped UNICEF spread knowledge on nutrition and care to be taken during adolescent age, pregnancy and post the birth of child by citing examples of cares they take of livestock at their homes.



"Under Poshan Vandana programme, we trained 421 field staff on importance of nutrition for children, mother and adolescent with life-cycle approach. Each field staff holds meeting at village dairy cooperative society level and shows videos regarding nutrition and cares to be taken during adolescent age, pregnancy and post the birth of child by

citing examples of cares they take of livestock at their homes," Bhawani told IANS.

One of the members of this field staff, Babi Ben, who is also the project coordinator of this pilot initiative told IANS, that most of the households in the area raised their children with orthodox techniques, as some believed that a new born must be

given goat's milk, while some were reluctant on using THR (Take Home Ration) in their daily diet, which was a big issue in the area and it needed an idea that could change people's mind set and motivate them to use already available schemes and technique to raise their children. "Many households in the area were reluctant on using the

THR, they felt packaged item was not good for their children, while on the contrary it was the best way to provide nutrition to a child. Many houses in the area also opposed breast feeding in initial days of child birth as they believed goat milk was better, this created an issue," Babi Ben told IANS. However, now after about eight months of this pilot project came to life, the weight registers in Anganwadis have started to witness less red marks as scores of children have witnessed weight gain and are healthier now, though the number would be available only after some time, but the ground staff of UNICEF, Banas Dairy and even the Anganwadi workers in Banaskantha believe that the families have started to utilise already available government schemes, bring children out of malnutrition.

Corporation
for outsourcing
staff to be formed
PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The State government has framed policy and guidelines on the recruitment of persons on outsourcing/contract basis and also on engaging the agencies for outsourcing support services, along with emoluments.

According to the GO MS No 126 issued on Friday, during the implementation of the policy, several complaints have been received against engaging the services of outsourcing agencies, including these agencies not passing the full remuneration to the outsourced employees in many instances.

Against this backdrop, the government felt it necessary to incorporate a dedicated Corporation that will directly outsource manpower to various departments/organisations in the State as per their requirements. It will do away with the involvement of middlemen and other agencies, and create a transparent system for providing outsourced employees and services to the departments/organisations across the State, thereby extending maximum benefits to the outsourced employees. The Corporation will also hire agencies to provide services such as consultancy, security and facility management and other services such as housekeeping, vehicles etc. The Corporation will act as a one-stop-shop to the departments/organisations for centralised hiring of outsourced employees and services in the State.

The government accorded approval for incorporating the Andhra Pradesh Corporation for Outsourced Services under Section 8 of the Companies Act, 2013, as a non-profit organisation, which will be under the administrative control of the General Administration Department.

Dance of death on Eastern Ghat roads

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The death of two unidentified cattle smugglers on the ghat road at Saluru in Vizianagaram district and seven pilgrims of Karnataka at Chinturu village on the ghat road in East Godavari district prior to that has exposed the negligence of the government in up keeping the ghat roads that were laid during the British era.

Accidents are frequently happening and yet no government has so far given serious thinking to make it safe for the road travellers.

Sharp curves, bad roads and also poor lighting are the main reasons for the many fatal road accidents on the ghat roads. The authorities always blame the drivers either for drunken driving or working for longer hours without rest.

The exact cause for the Chinutur accident whether it is due to over-speeding or failure of brakes was yet to be ascertained. Police are suspecting that driver of the bus lost control over the vehicle as he failed to negotiate on the ghat road.

A senior police officer said that roads connecting Paderu, Chintapalle and Anantagiri in Visakhapatnam district and Maredumilli, Chinturu, Rampachodavaram and a few other areas in East Godavari district were identified as most dangerous stretches.

On an average, over 350 people died and 1,200 received severe injuries in a year in the fatal road accidents in Vizag Rural in a year. Of the total deaths, over 130 were reported on the ghats roads in Vizag Agency. Similarly, on an average over 100 people died in road accidents on the ghat roads in East Godavari in a year, said the police.

As most tourists' attractions were located in Agency areas in Vizag and East Godavari districts, tourists used to reach the tribal pockets through a stretch that snakes through dense forest of the Eastern Ghats.

S Venkateswara Rao, a senior officer with the Road Transport Authority (RTA), said that there are number of hairpin bends and the visibility at the curves is also low on the ghat roads in Vizag and East Godavari during monsoons and winter. Drivers need a lot of experience to negotiate at the steep bends. In most of cases, the drivers lose control over the vehicles, while negotiating the curves and they fail to observe the incoming vehicles on the ghat roads. Hence, most of the accidents have been reporting on the ghat roads, he added.

Apart from the sharp bends and steep incline, the other major factor that contributes to fatal accidents is overloading. Parapet walls on the ghat roads were too weak to give much protection in case of an accident.

Some of the parapet walls were damaged years ago, still remain unrepaired, said member of Road Safety Committee in Vizag, AH Khan.



est of the Eastern Ghats. S Venkateswara Rao, a senior officer with the Road Transport

Accidents are frequently happening and yet no government has so far given serious thinking to make it safe for the road travellers.

Sharp curves, bad roads and also poor lighting are the main reasons for the many fatal road accidents on the ghat roads. The authorities always blame the drivers either for drunken driving or working for longer hours without rest.



Some of the parapet walls were damaged years ago, still remain unrepaired, said member of Road Safety Committee in Vizag, AH Khan.

34,000 to appear for APSET

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Elaborate arrangements have been made for the Andhra Pradesh State Eligibility Test (APSET) to be conducted on October 20, said Andhra University Vice-Chancellor Prof PVGD Prasad Reddy.

Addressing a press conference here on Friday, Prof Reddy said that Paper-I will be conducted from 9.30 am to 10.30 am and Paper-II from 11 am to 1 pm. "A total of 34,000 candidates applied for the APSET. The examination will be held in eight regional centres- Visakhapatnam, Rajahmahendravaram, Guntur, Nellore, Anantapur, Tirupati, Kadapa and Kurnool. The APSET will be conducted in 30 subjects. The APSET is conducted for recruitment and promotions of lecturers/assistant professors in degree colleges," said Prof Reddy.

APSET Member Secretary Prof K Srinivasa Rao said Life Sciences stream received the maximum number of applications of 4,699.

At least one hour before the commencement of the exam. "I request the candidates to appear for the exam in a stress-free manner and give their best," said Prof Srinivasa Rao. Registrar Prof V Krishna Mohan, media relations dean Prof P Bobby Vardhan and others were present.

APSET Member Secretary Prof K Srinivasa Rao said Life Sciences stream received the maximum number of applications of 4,699.



EC institutes awards for scribes

VIJAYAWADAL: The Election Commission of India has decided to institute awards for journalists for creating awareness among voters. According to sources, journalists working in print, electronic, digital and social media are eligible for the awards. They can send their entries to the Election commission in English and any other Indian language. The scribes selected for their reports would be given awards on January 25 2020, on the Voter Awareness Day. Journalists working in the electronic media can send their reports in the forms of CDs, DVDs or through pen drives. The entries should be sent to Pawan Diwan, Under Secretary (Communication), Election Commission of India, Nirvachan Bhavan, Ashok Road, New Delhi before Oct 31, according to sources.

Govt harassing oppn leaders: Naidu

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Telugu Desam Party (TDP) supremo N Chandrababu Naidu has alleged that the YSRCP government has been harassing Opposition leaders physically, mentally and financially.

Speaking to party leaders in a tele-conference on Friday, he said the ruling party is looting the State in a big way. Naidu alleged that the government is threatening the journalists not to write negative reports even if it does anything wrong. He said though the government has no money, it is announcing schemes which cannot be implemented. The number of beneficiaries in various had come down substantially after the new government took over, he said.

Stating that the present government is inexperienced and had destroyed the State, he said it is leveling charges against the previous TDP government. "There is no development or income in the State. The government is not even focusing on wealth creation, but it has increased its expenditure," Naidu said. Later, addressing a press conference, Naidu said the State government is imposing restrictions on freedom of the press. He condemned the Cabinet note that gives more teeth to GO No.938 issued during the erstwhile Congress government headed by the late YS Rajasekhara Reddy.

"We had fought against the autocratic rule of Rajasekhara Reddy. We were successful in making him withdraw GO No. 938 issued as part of the Media Watch policy of his government," Naidu claimed.

He alleged that the question paper of Village/Ward volunteers examinations were leaked to coaching centres before hand. "How can it be a crime if it is exposed by journalists?" he



Naidu alleged that the question paper of Village/Ward volunteers examinations were leaked to coaching centres before hand. "How can it be a crime if it is exposed by journalists?"

added. The government is foisting cases against Opposition leaders for asking why it has closed down Anna Canteens and why the implementation of certain welfare schemes was stalled.

He alleged that the State government had created an artificial scarcity of sand. "Sand has become scarce in the places where it is available in abundance," he said. On account of non-availability of sand, about 30 lakh families had lost their livelihoods, he alleged.

The TDP President further alleged that the ruling YSRCP is continuing its attacks on TDP activists.



(Left) After the blast in fire cracker making unit at G Vemavaram in Tallarevu mandal in East Godavari district on Friday (right) One of the injured in cracker unit blast undergoing treatment at the Kakinada Government General Hospital

10 injured in fire cracker unit blast

PNS ■ KAKINADA

Ten persons sustained burn injuries two of them seriously when a blast occurred at cracker making unit at G Vemavaram in Tallarevu mandal of East Godavari district here on Friday.

The injured have been shifted to the Kakinada Government General Hospital for treatment. The injured were identified as Yerramaneedi Satyam, Yerramaneedi Brahman, Naga Babu, Satyanarayana, Krishna Murthy, Govinda Raju, Nageswara Rao, Leela Venkatesh, Ramakrishna and Govindu.

The injured were identified as Yerramaneedi Satyam, Yerramaneedi Brahman, Naga Babu, Satyanarayana, Krishna Murthy, Govinda Raju, Nageswara Rao, Leela Venkatesh, Ramakrishna and Govindu.

Yerramaneedi Brahman, Naga Babu, Satyanarayana, Krishna Murthy, Govinda Raju, Nageswara Rao, Leela Venkatesh, Ramakrishna and

Govindu. According to sources, the incident occurred when the workers were engaged in making of fire crackers at the unit on Friday

afternoon. East Godavari District Fire Officer (DFO) of Disaster Management Department Ch Ratna Babu, who inspected the spot after the incident, said that the unit owned by one Yerramaneedi Anajanyulu had obtained NOC from the fire service department in 2018, which was lapsed by January 2019, but he did not renew the NOC from their department for 2019, the DFO clarified.

And now, Haj pilgrimage from Amaravati: Basha

- Continued from P1

Stating that Haj Committees will undertake campaign in all 13 districts of the State to encourage utilisation of full quota, Basha called upon Muslims to make use of the opportunity.

He said members of the Minority community, who are desirous of undertaking Haj yatra, should submit their applications before November 10. Minorities Welfare Department Principal Secretary Ilias Rizvi, Haj Committee executive officers and Muslim elders attended.

Statutory judicial panel receives first case

- Continued from P1

In all, 25 sectors like roads and bridges, urban development (including smart cities), health, ports, airports, water supply, inland water transport, telecommunications, highways and power, including projects under public-private partnership initiative, would be covered under the new law.

Innovation not confined to Hyd or elite: KTR

Hyderabad: IT Minister KT Rama Rao on Friday praised the BJP-led NDA government for encouraging innovation. Speaking at the Telangana Industry Awards - MANEXE - 2019 event, KTR said, "Innovation and entrepreneurship today is not confined to just Hyderabad or elite. I don't think there is a better time in India in our lifetimes to actually be an entrepreneur (than now)."

Fresh trouble for TDP as govt appoints new SIT

-Continued from P1

YSRCP supremo YS Jaganmohan Reddy had staged a protest in Vizag when he was in opposition against the lands scams in Vizag and demanded CBI inquiry into the land grabbing cases.

The political analysts said that YSRCP government's decision to form fresh SIT, would hit hard the TDP in the Vizag region. If the new SIT found TDP leaders behind the land scams, the TDP will lose in the upcoming GVMC elections and also face a tough time in recouping for the next general elections.

The new SIT tenure is only three months and it would submit a comprehensive report to the government within the same period. It was also given powers to appoint additional members.

The new SIT would focus on all cases, including the change of classification of government lands, assignments made to ex-servicemen, NOCs have been given for disposal of land to other lands grabbing cases by tampering of land records. The SIT has also powers to conduct an inquiry on any politician or officer and also examine any record pertaining to illegal land transactions.

It may be recalled that former BJP MLA and floor leader in the previous assembly P Vishnu Kumar Raju had demanded tabling of SIT report before the elections if the TDP was committed to corruption-free government.

Dy CM lauds KLU for providing fee concession

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Deputy Chief Minister and Minority Welfare Minister Amzath Basha here on Friday released the logos, brochures and pamphlets of various entrance examinations to be conducted by the KL Deemed to be University in 2020.

Later, addressing a press conference, Basha said KL University has occupied the first position in imparting world-class education. It is laudable on the part of the university to focus on providing employment to students by the time they complete their respective courses.

The university has been offering engineering education for the past 40 years and selecting students on the basis of entrance examinations. He appreciated the university management for providing fee concession to meritorious students. He also said the practice followed by the university to provide Rs 25 lakh cash awards



to national rankers is laudable. KLU Director of Admissions Dr J Srinivasa Rao said entrance examinations would be conducted twice every year for admission to B Tech and engineering courses. In the first phase, the online examinations will be conducted from December 16 to 22. In the second phase, the examinations will be conducted from April

13 to 20, 2020. Applications can be had either online or from the education centres of the university, he added.

Srinivasa Rao said B Tech courses are available in Biotechnology, Civil Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and Petroleum Engineering. Cash awards would be given to candidates earning 1st to 2000th ranks in

Basha said KL University has occupied the first position in imparting world-class education

It is laudable on the part of the university to focus on providing employment to students by the time they complete their respective courses

KLEEE-2020 examination. Candidates earning Rank No 1 to 5,000 in EAMCET and those securing 100 marks in JEE, those obtaining at least 96 per cent GPA in Intermediate and those getting 9.0 CGPA in CBSE and ICSE examinations would be given merit scholarships.

He said KLU is the only university, which is providing 100 per cent placement to students in the country by inviting corporate companies from campus recruitments.

Partnering with international universities, KLU is providing an opportunity for students

Candidates earning Rank No 1 to 5,000 in EAMCET and those securing 100 marks in JEE, those obtaining at least 96 per cent GPA in Intermediate and those getting 9.0 CGPA in CBSE and ICSE examinations would be given merit scholarships

to have foreign exposure, Srinivasa Rao said and added that the university has teaching programmes in French, Chinese, Japanese and German languages.

Chief Coordinating Officer of KL Deemed to be University Dr Jagadish, Assistant Directors BSN Murthy, Balaji, HSR Murthy and others were present.

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

- Continued from P1

As per the income tax (I-T), some of these companies based in China, the US, Singapore, the UAE, etc have been receiving payments from foreign clients who attend the various residential "wellness" courses offered in India.

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

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

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

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

It is presently managed and controlled by the spiritual leader who laid the foundation of the group and his son. The courses attract residential customers from abroad and the group earns substantial receipts in foreign exchange. There was intelligence that the group had been suppressing its receipts which were ploughed into investment in huge tracts of landed property in Andhra Pradesh and Tamil Nadu.

People, who are confined to a wheelchair with severe paralysis, those who do not have legs or arms, or have dysfunction, and those who are unable to work due to muscular atrophy. As a pilot project, from January 1, about 2,000 diseases will be added to Aarogya Sri services in West Godavari district and 1,200 diseases in the remaining districts. The Chief Minister instructed officials to include dengue and seasonal diseases in the services.

He is keen on removing alcohol shops on the national highways. "The road accident victims should get services in the hospital instead of waiting for money. Prepare a plan so that some amount can be paid on behalf of the government," he said.

He instructed officials to start the job recruitment process from January in the health Department.

Feeder ambulances in remote tribal areas

- Continued from P1

People, who are confined to a wheelchair with severe paralysis, those who do not have legs or arms, or have dysfunction, and those who are unable to work due to muscular atrophy. As a pilot project, from January 1, about 2,000 diseases will be added to Aarogya Sri services in West Godavari district and 1,200 diseases in the remaining districts. The Chief Minister instructed officials to include dengue and seasonal diseases in the services.

He is keen on removing alcohol shops on the national highways. "The road accident victims should get services in the hospital instead of waiting for money. Prepare a plan so that some amount can be paid on behalf of the government," he said.

He instructed officials to start the job recruitment process from January in the health Department.

SHORT READS

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

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

22 children hurt after school bus turns turtle

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

BJP minister calls Abhijit Left-leaning

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

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

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

AYODHYA CASE

Muslim parties express shock at reports on Sunni Waqf Board

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

Modi questions Congress' chemistry with Pakistan

PNS ■ GOHANA/HISAR

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

He said statements made by



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

'Cong has already accepted defeat in Haryana polls'

PNS ■ HISAR (HR)

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

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

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

insult of Haryana," Modi said.

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

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

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

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

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

'Cong, DMK taking people for a ride over statehood'

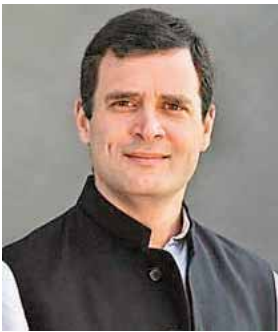
PNS ■ PUDUCHERRY

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

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

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

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



'PM, FM should 'steal' Cong ideas to tackle economic mess'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

'Indian Navy committed to enhance cooperation with like-minded navies'

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

'Patel 'ruined' AI; must be probed in PMC scam also'

PNS ■ NAGPUR

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

FSSAI steps up surveillance to curb adulteration during festive season

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

"We have started a surveillance exercise on milk prod-



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

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

"The purpose of this exercise

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

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

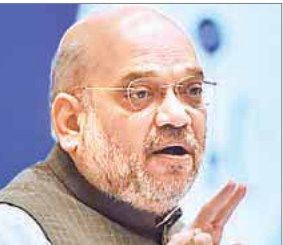
Amit to Rahul: What has your family done for tribals?

PNS ■ GADCHIROLI

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

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

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



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

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

NDA will win all seats in Bihar bypolls: Paswan

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

FIRST COLUMN

More to this than meets the eye

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



GWYNNE DYER

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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



UTTAM GUPTA

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

POINT COUNTERPOINT

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



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

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

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

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

Petroleum Corporation Limited (HPCL).

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Vital tools in India's healthcare delivery

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



NIKHILESH TIWARI

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

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

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

Technology has improved the complexity and accuracy of screening

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



BACK THE GREEN NEW DEAL

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

(The Guardian editorial)

CAPSULE



DHFL reports Q1 net loss of Rs 242 cr

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



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

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

Adani awards AUD 100 mn Oz rail contract to Martinus Rail

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



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

dards of project delivery across environmental and safety conditions."

He further said that Martinus Rail is a proud Australian-founded and operated company and it has always been highly focused on ensuring the work it delivers is resourced through regional areas that need it the most.

Adani Mining CEO added, "We now have our mining services contractor and one of our earthworks contractors for the rail project in place based in Rockhampton."

Martinus Rail will be our rail laying construction contractor also in based in Rockhampton, initial rail camp provision will be based in Collinsville, earthworks and civil works is coming from Townsville, fuel supply is from Townsville, telecommunications is from Mackay, and many other regional businesses across regional Queensland also have a piece of the pie."

Oil companies defer snapping fuelsupplies to Air India

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

its commitment, leading to the October 5 notice.

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

Cook meets Chinese regulator after HK app flak

AFF ■ BEIJING

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

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

Chinese state media said the app allowed protesters in



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

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

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

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

above human rights. According to a statement on the website of China's State Administration for Market

Sebi to auction 200 properties of Sai Prasad Group in Nov

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

Ex-director of Bishal Distillers barred from securities mkt

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Samsung admits Galaxy S10 access flaw

PTI ■ SEOUL

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

Sensex rallies for 6th day, rises 246 pts

PNS ■ MUMBAI

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

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

The broader NSE Nifty

too spurted 75.50 points, or 0.65 per cent, to settle at 11,661.85.

Yes Bank was the top gainer in the Sensex pack, rallying up to 8.44 per cent, followed by Maruti, PowerGrid, NTPC, L&T and SBI.

Shares of Reliance Industries ended 1.37 per cent higher ahead of its quarterly earnings, scheduled to be announced later in the day.

On the other hand, Tata Motors, Bajaj Auto, Bharti

Airtel, ICICI Bank, Axis Bank and Infosys fell up to 1.05 per cent.

Indian equities outperformed major global markets for the week. Equity markets witnessed a sharp rally on foreign investor buying, progress in US-China trade talks and as well as a deal being reached between UK and EU on Brexit," said Sanjeev Zarbade, VP PCG Research, Kotak Securities.

SINGLE-USE PLASTIC Govt throws a challenge to startups for alternative

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The government has launched a challenge for startups to develop an alternative for single-use plastic. The first winner will receive a cash prize of Rs 3 lakh for each problem statement, while the second winner will get Rs 2 lakh.

"The target of the single-use plastic grand challenge is to incentivise innovators and startups to develop design solutions," the department for promotion of industry and internal trade (DPIIT) said.

The challenge is open to all startups. The product should at least be in any of these stages



- minimum viable product, proof of concept or a deployed solution which requires further scaling up.

An interim jury of experts will review the eligible applications and shortlist the best entries on the basis of an evaluation criteria as set by the DPIIT. The result will be announced on October 31.

China's GDP growth slows to 6 per cent in Q3

PTI ■ BEIJING

China's growth slumped to 6 per cent in the third quarter of 2019, its lowest level in nearly three decades, as the world's second largest economy struggled to overcome the impact of a bruising trade war with the US and sluggish domestic demand, according to official data released on Friday.

The GDP figures emerged just one week after the US and China reached a tentative trade truce to avoid more damages to the world's two largest economies.

China's gross domestic product grew at 6 per cent in the quarter ended September, the weakest quarterly growth rate since 1992 and down from 6.2 per cent in the previous



quarter, according to data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS).

The slowdown comes despite government efforts to support the economy, including measures such as tax cuts. The latest figures mark a fur-

ther loss of momentum in the economy, which had already seen growth languishing at its slowest pace in around three decades.

This week the International Monetary Fund trimmed its 2019 growth forecast for China

China's gross domestic product grew at 6 per cent in the quarter ended September, the weakest quarterly growth rate since 1992 and down from 6.2 per cent in the previous quarter, according to data from the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS)

to 6.1 per cent from 6.2 per cent due to the long-running trade dispute and slowing domestic demand.

Meanwhile, China's GDP expanded 6.2 per cent year on year in the first three quarters of 2019 to about 69.78 trillion yuan (about USD 9.87 trillion), the NBS data showed.

The growth was in line with the government's annual target

of 6-6.5 per cent set for 2019, the official Xinhua news agency reported.

The Chinese economy has maintained overall stability, a senior official from the NBS said at a press conference, while acknowledging that China faces downward pressure amid slower global economic growth and more external uncertainties.

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

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

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

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

NEW GENERATION OF GREEN WARRIORS



Bhavin Patel

Inspiration, followed by perspiration, is the key to do anything.

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

"I once visited the dam area for walking. I found the place to be very dirty

and unhygienic with trash dumped all over. The Lower Manair Dam is one of the major tourist attractions in Karimnagar district. As nobody cared to clean the dam which is one of the major tourist attractions of the district, I have decided to clean it by myself and eventually I witnessed more people joining me in cleaning the dam," says Bhavin Patel to *The Pioneer*.

Bhavin goes to the dam area early in the morning every day to clean it. He also posts the same on social media to let others know about the change that is happening from his efforts. "After seeing my posts, my friends Surya Karan, Mounika Reddy and others joined me. The



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

number of people participating in the #CleanKarimnagardam is increasing," he shares.

But he believes that a lot more has to be done as he still sees trash being dumped even after the clean-up drive. He laments the lack of dustbins in the area due to which volunteers have to travel three km to dump the garbage.

"I used to dump the trash through my car but it was not easy and the trash keeps increasing every day," says Bhavin adding, after requesting the Municipal Commissioner for aid, the officials

now send a tractor every day to transport the garbage. He adds that many have come forward to distribute bins for the drive.

On a concluding note, Bhavin says, "We are active on Twitter about making the government accountable on keeping the dam clean. We are planning to meet the district collector and request bins in the dam area. Disposing garbage properly every day is important for cleanliness. Interested people can join us at the dam every day from 6 am onwards."

I once visited the dam area for walking. I found the place to be very dirty and unhygienic with trash dumped all over. The Lower Manair Dam is one of the major tourist attractions in Karimnagar district. As nobody cared to clean the dam, I decided to clean it by myself.

BHAVIN PATEL



All work and no sleep makes Jack A SICK BOY

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

When was the last time you had a good night's sleep? Or the last time you remember waking up well-rested? If it was anytime soon, consider yourself luckier than at least 25 per cent of the world population who suffer from various forms of sleep disorders. Yes, sleep is a big deal. Since we observed World Mental Health week recently, we look at how sleep disorders have become the new norm.

"Sleep disorders are mostly a neuropsychiatric issue. But what we witness these days is a form of a self-inflicted disorder that comes off as something that the society inflicts on individuals. Sleep deprivation is often the result of anxiety, depression, hypertension and other neuropsychiatric disorders," says Dr Purnima Nagaraja, psychiatrist, psychotherapist, mentor and a motivational speaker.

"If I were to make a count of all the reported cases, the number of patients who suffer from abnormal sleep pat-

terns has only increased. Given the hectic work schedules, the advent of technology and the boom in the IT sector, the ideal sleep cycles have gone haywire. Lack of sleep has become so common that people force themselves to take caffeinated drinks and make harmful lifestyle changes to keep themselves awake, thus purposely inducing a sleep disorder. And sadly even children these days suffer from various forms of sleep disorders," says Dr Purnima, who also is also the director of Dhrithi health services such as their wellness clinic, rehabilitation centre and a day-care.

While adults are constantly trying to keep up with the demands and responsibilities of being an adult by sacrificing various aspects of their health, we try to understand what is keeping the children also up at night.

"While it is true that adults are subjected to an incredible amount of stress in their day-to-day life, children these days too have to

deal with their share of stress which more often than not induced by the adults around them seconded by peer relationships," says Dr Juhi Choudhary, who is a Counsellor, Educational Therapist, specialising in counseling children.

"Insomnia from stress related to education, peer relationships and radiation from electronic gadgets are the most common reasons for sleep disorders among children. Sleep deprivation results in low productivity and lack of proper social engagement which once again results in spending more nights awake to attain better results. This puts them on the road of a never ending vicious circle," says Dr Juhi Chowdhary.

It is true that most Indian parents expect their child to stay up late or wake up quite early to finish the last chapter or even the entire syllabus during the week of exams. The pursuit of good grades costs children their health, the effects of which would only be visible as time pass-

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

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

What do sleep disorders do if left unchecked for several years? "Some days I can

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

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

The problem lies with stress. It leads to lack of sleep

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

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

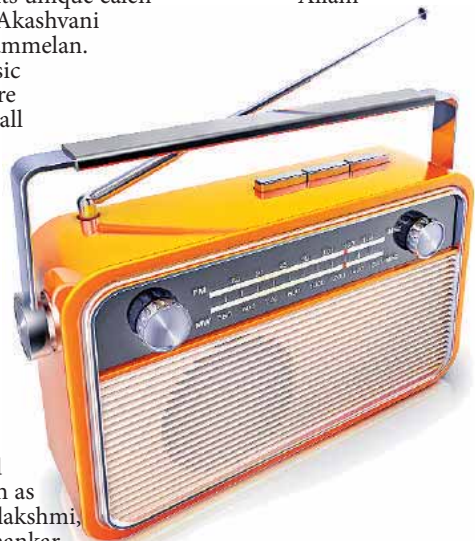
SOME STUDIES EXPLAIN ADVERSE CHANGES THE BODY GOES THROUGH DUE TO SLEEP DEPRIVATION. THIS INCLUDES OBESITY AND TYPE 2 DIABETES

Much awaited AKASHVANI Sammelan today

All India Radio has played a stellar role in nurturing India's heritage and helped portray and preserve its diverse culture. Launched in the year 1954 with a glorious tradition spanning over six decades, All India Radio is back this year with its unique calendar event Akashvani Sangeet Sammelan. These music concerts are organised all over the country and feature talents from all walks of life, from eminent artists to talented young musicians. Renowned artists such as MS Subbalakshmi, Pt. Ravi Shankar, Voleti Venkateshwarlu, Pt. Jasraj, Ustad Zakir Hussain are known to have performed at the Sangeet Sammelan in the previous years.

Akashvani Sangeet Sammelan concerts, this year will be held across India in 24 cities involving about 177 musicians from all over the country at different venues simultaneously on October 19 2019. The Sammelan in Hyderabad will be held at 6 pm at NTR Kalamandiram, Potti Sriramulu Telugu University, Nampally. Among performers at the event this year prominent artists such as Artist and Composer Allam

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



AM Ratnam leads race to fund PK's comeback film

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

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

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

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

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

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



Balayya mourns little fan's demise

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



U.S. TOUR FOR A GOOD CAUSE

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

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

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

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



Nela Ticket girl signs her second film

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

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

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

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



Nama parts with George Reddy's Nizam rights

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

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

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



90 ML Romance in Azerbaijan

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

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

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

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



PRIYANKA CHOPRA, PARINEETI ENTER THE 'FROZEN' WORLD

Actress Priyanka Chopra Jonas along with her sister and actress Parineeti Chopra will be dubbing for the Hindi version of Hollywood animated movie *Frozen 2*.
Disney India has roped in Priyanka to dub for Elsa and Parineeti will voice for Anna in the upcoming sequel of hit film *Frozen*.
"Elsa is a fictional character who's known to be strongly-opinionated and level headed, traits that I deeply connect with. This not only made me want to be part of the film, but also gives me a wonderful opportunity to present one of the most-successful animated films to our local audiences," Priyanka said.
"My happiness just goes up

a notch knowing that Parineeti will be voicing Anna's character. The two of us have never worked together before and this seems like a perfect movie to come together and an experience that I am going to cherish forever," she added.
Talking about entering the *Frozen* world, Parineeti said, "You don't need to be an actress to dream of being a Disney princess!! I absolutely loved the first film, it's my favourite animation film but never thought that I'd get to voice Anna.
"But of course the real cherry on the cake is that I've been cast in a film about sisters with my real life sister!! While dubbing we would keep laughing about the fact that we are actually like our characters in real life! Mimi didi is totally like Elsa and I'm totally like Anna! This is why this movie will always be special. I can't wait for

the audience response."
The second part of the Disney franchise promises to be more intense as it traces the pasts of Princesses Anna and Elsa, voiced by Kristen Bell and Idina Menzel in Hollywood version, respectively, and piece together their present.
With Elsa being filled with intrigue as to why was she born with magical powers, her sister Anna is the happy-go-lucky forever optimist.
Priyanka and Parineeti fits perfectly into giving Elsa and Anna the much-needed depth to their voices.
"With Elsa and Anna, both sisters, boasting their own fan following amongst young girls world over, having Priyanka and Parineeti to voice these two felt no less than perfect. From being just a character, Elsa has grown to be

no less than a superhero that girls around the world now connect with. She, along with Anna, continue to empower girls owing to their powerful personalities. The bond between the two is so strong that we wanted to bring in a real sibling duo for these two roles. The chemistry that we are looking for is something that Priyanka and Parineeti bring with them and is sure to elevate the film-watching experience," said Bikram Duggal, Head — Studio Entertainment, Disney India. Directed by Chris Buck and Jennifer Lee, *Frozen 2* will release in India in English, Hindi, Tamil and Telugu on November 22.
This comes close on the heels of another announcement where Aishwarya Rai Bachchan has dubbed for Angelina Jolie's character in *Maleficent: The Mistress of Evil*.



KEVIN JONAS DEBUTS SUCKER TATTOO DEDICATED TO WIFE

Singer Kevin Jonas has paid tribute to his wife Danielle with a new tattoo.
The eldest Jonas Brother, 31, got a tattoo to commemorate Danielle's cameo in the *Sucker* music video, reports *pagesix.com*.
"Brand new addition to the fam. So proud of this time in our life and getting to remember this with @daniellejonas forever!" Kevin captioned a photograph of his new ink, which was done by celebrity tattoo artist Winterstone.
The image of a woman in a big dress was inspired by the scene in the music video in which Danielle, 33, wears a voluminous Giambattista Valli gown while walking a gaggle of corgis through the outdoor grounds of Hatfield House in England, Queen Elizabeth I's childhood home.
The video is particularly special, not only because the Jonas Brothers' wives — including Sophie Turner and Priyanka Chopra Jonas — made surprise appearances as the love interests, but also because it was the first single the reunited band released after their six-year hiatus.
This isn't Kevin's first family-focused tattoo; he has *Dani* tattooed on his left ring finger, along with four doves symbolising himself, his wife and their two children Alena, 5 and Valentina, 2.
Most recently, Kevin had his daughter's favourite stuffed animals tattooed on his forearm ahead of the Happiness Begins tour.



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

Singer Sophie Ellis, who played a cameo in the popular American show *Game Of Thrones*, feels it was a little absurd to be an extra on the hit series.
On Lorraine Kelly's show, Ellis spoke about her role and shared her shooting experience with her husband Richard Jones, reports *dailymail.co.uk*.
"Richard and I are really big fans of the show and we knew a couple of other musicians that had also become extras. We just asked! It was the third episode of the last series where they had the massive battle."
"At the time it was the most expensive single piece of television ever filmed, so even if you don't watch the programme, just seeing enterprise on that level and walking into a room full of extras, 300 men with beards on was really funny," she said.
And the *Murder on the dancefloor* hitmaker added that the moment was so surreal, that it was "slightly absurd".
She added, "It was definitely fun, there was a lot of giggles as it was slightly absurd. It was a very dark battle so we couldn't see ourselves at all. But we were there in spirit."
The eighth and final season of *Game Of Thrones* aired earlier this year, bring to an end the much-loved fantasy drama series.

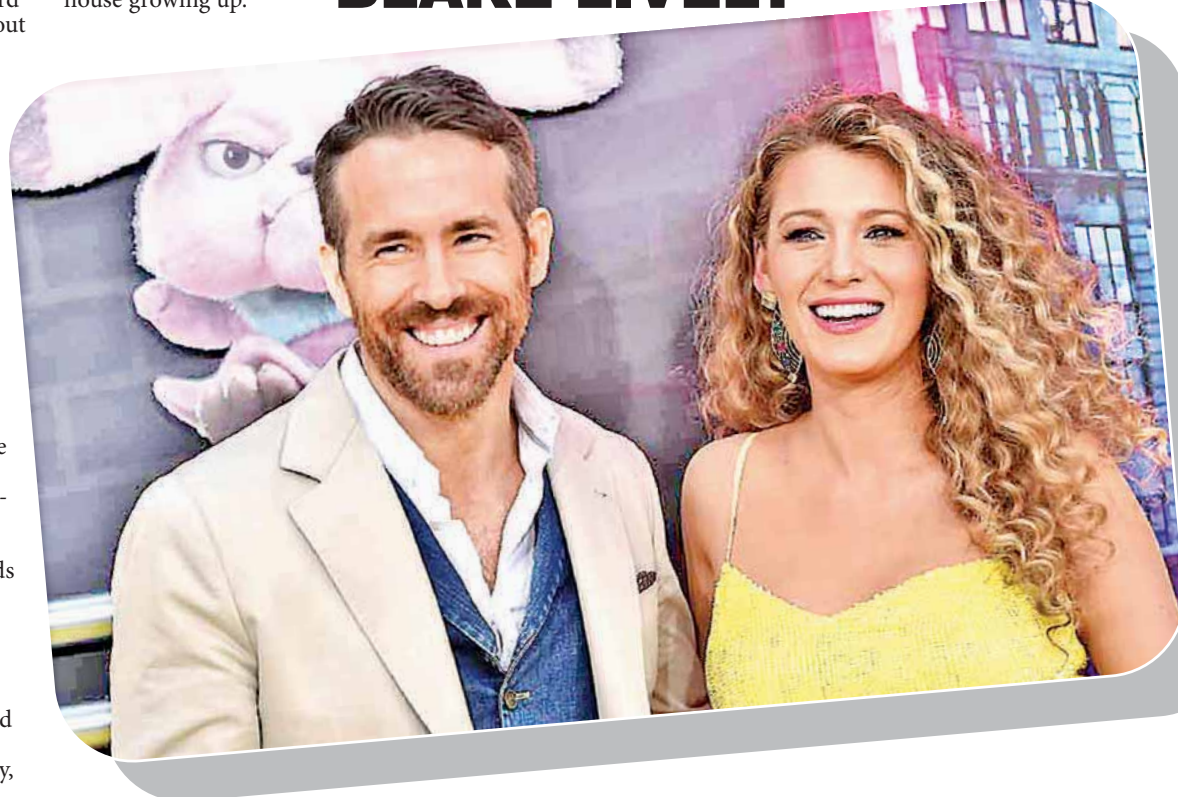


ROBERT PATTINSON 'BEAT HIMSELF UP' ON THE SET

Hollywood star Robert Pattinson used to beat himself up on the set while shooting the *The Lighthouse*.
In an interview to Mr Porter, Pattinson's co-star Willem Dafoe shared that Pattinson used to beat himself up on the sets to get into character for the horror drama, reports *metro.co.uk*.
He said, "He's not interested in craft, I think. He wants to throw himself into deep water and he feels like it will only be true if he's drowning. For me that seemed wacky. But I'm not trying to judge. He has a good sense of the visual, of what's needed in a close-up. Sometimes he'd beat himself up so bad. He'd stick his fingers down his throat, things like that."
Pattinson had previously opened up on what he put himself through in order to personify Ephraim, who slowly descended into madness after mundane task, after mundane task in the *The Lighthouse*.
He used to carry out chores such as cleaning, scrubbing floors and carrying coal.

IT'S A GIRL FOR RYAN REYNOLDS AND BLAKE LIVELY

Ryan Reynolds confirmed the arrival of his third child with Blake Lively with a photo of the two parents snuggling up with what appeared to be their new bundle of joy in British Columbia, Canada.
"I love B.C.," the Canadian-born actor, 42, said in a tweet Wednesday urging people to vote for climate policy.
"I want my daughters to experience the same natural playground I grew up in," he said in the tweet revealing the sex of his baby.
The photo accompanying the *Deadpool* star's tweet featured the couple smiling at each other with their child, presumably their latest little one, in a baby carrier worn by her dad, but her face had been blurred out and a smiley face drawn over her real face. The trio stood on a forest trail with sunlight glinting through the massive trees, and Reynolds sweetly placed his hand on Lively's head as the two parents beamed at each other.
Reynolds and Lively, 32, are also parents to daughters Inez, 2½, and James, 4½.
People confirmed on October 4 that the couple had welcomed their third child, but no details about the baby's sex, name or birth details were released at the time.
Lively debuted her baby bump at the premiere for her husband's movie *Pokémon: Detective Pikachu* in May, dazzling fans in a fitted yellow dress that highlighted her growing bump.
"They are so happy and excited about having another baby," a source told *People* at the time. "They really are the most in-love and in-tune couple, and very hands-on parents. They'd have a dozen kids if they could."
It's no secret that Reynolds loves being a father to girls, and told Entertainment Weekly Radio in 2016 "if I could have nine daughters, I would be thrilled. Really,





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

Complete Whitewash

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

PTI ■ RANCHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

into the playing XI as well.

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

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

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

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

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

SQUADS

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

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



I share good understanding with Pant: Saha

PTI ■ RANCHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



PTI ■ RANCHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

Du Plessis also asked

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

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

RANCHI: Having lost nine successive tosses in Asia, an exasperated South Africa captain Faf du Plessis won't mind sending "someone else" in his place for the toss of the coin in the third and final Test. South Africa have struggled in Indian conditions and not winning the toss in the first two Tests has only made things tougher for them. Opting to bat in Visakhapatnam and Pune, India put up 500-plus totals to virtually bat the visitors out

of the game. "We really want to make sure that we compete with this team in their own conditions. We have done it in stages in the first Test. So, hoping that we can start with the toss tomorrow. "Probably we will change... Send someone else to the toss tomorrow. I can give you that... Because my records so far has not been great," said du Plessis, in a lighter vein, on the eve of the game. Du Plessis said "anything is possible" if his side get to bat first. "If you put big runs in the first innings, that's where it need to stop. Then anything from there is possible. Hopefully that will unfold in the next couple of days and hopefully we can put some runs on. "The pitch looks a little bit drier and crustier so first innings runs will be vital and then anything from there is possible in the second innings," Faf added.

PTI

SINGLES

MODRIC, BALE TO MISS MALLORCA TRIP

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

JUNIOR BOXERS NOTCH UP 21 MEDALS

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

ENG ROPE JEETAN AS CONSULTANT

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

BULGARIA COACH QUILTS AFTER RACISM ROW

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

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

PTI ■ KARACHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The PCB also released a short statement from Sarfraz.

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



Newly appointed Pak Test captain Azhar Ali

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ RANCHI

He has quit longest format five years back but local boy Mahendra Singh Dhoni is expected to watch the third and final Test against South Africa beginning here today, his manager Mihir Diwakar confirmed.

"Mahi will definitely come and you will see him during the first day's proceedings tomorrow (today). I was there with him in Mumbai and he will fly down tomorrow (Saturday) morning," Dhoni's manager and one-time Jharkhand teammate Diwakar said.

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

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

Dhoni to watch today's proceedings



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

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

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

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

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

Bangladesh.

Diwakar said nobody knows about Dhoni's cricket decisions.

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

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

Minister should not be involved in selection of players: Rijiju

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Nikhat Zareen @nikhat_zareen · 1d

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



Kiren Rijiju @KirenRijiju

Replying to @KirenRijiju

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



Nikhat Zareen @nikhat_zareen · 5h

Replying to @KirenRijiju

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