



# the pioneer

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UPASANA'S  
GENTLE NOTE  
TO MODI  
Page 11

## ARMY POUNDS TERROR CAMPS ALONG LOC

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

The retaliation has caused

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In a statement, the Indian Army said Pakistani Army initiated unprovoked cease fire violations to assist infiltration by terrorists into Indian territories in the Tangadhar sector last evening.

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

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File photo



### Blast near CM's residence triggers panic

PNS ■ GUNTUR

A blast occurred in a house near the official residence of Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy in the wee hours of Sunday. A woman was severely injured in the blast. She was identified as Pydamma and was rushed to the government hospital in Vijayawada with severe burns.

The blast, which occurred at a house in Prakashnagar of Tadepalli region of Guntur district, was so powerful. Under its impact, the gates and doors of the house went flying for some distance. The blast ripped through the house.

Continued on Page 4

### ANGRAU V-C held

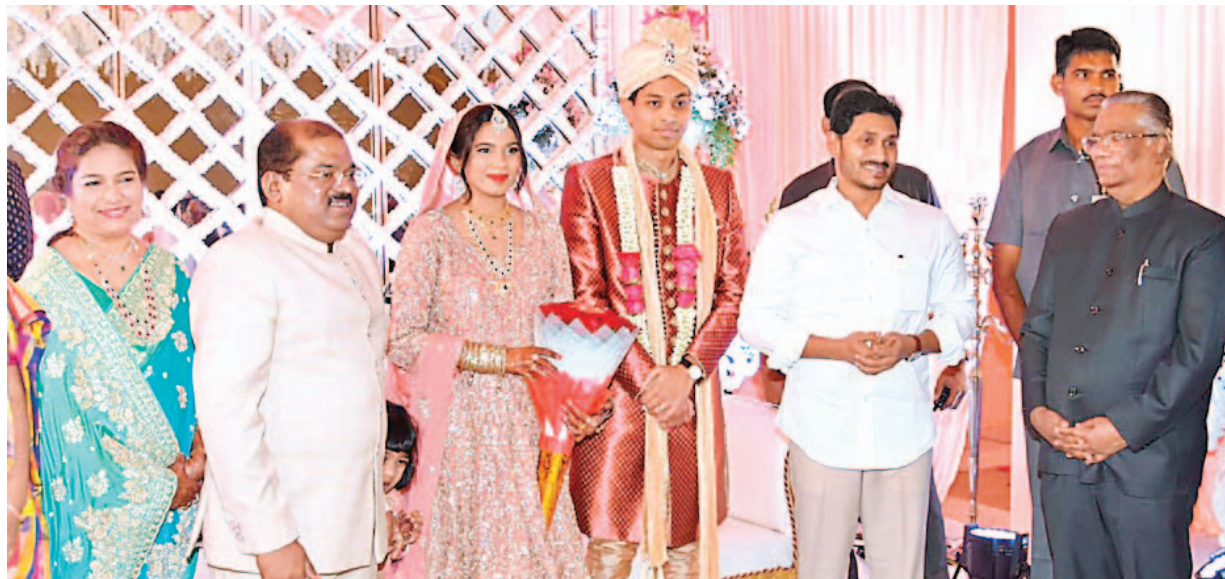
PNS ■ GUNTUR

Vice-Chancellor of Acharya NG Ranga University Damodar Naidu was arrested here under the SC/ST (Prevention of Atrocities) Act. The arrest was made by the Mandadam police following a complaint lodged by an outsourcing employee.

### TODAY

**ALMANAC**  
Month & Paksham: Ashwin & Krishna Paksha  
Tithi : Saptami: 06:44 am, Ashtami: 05:25 am (Next Day)  
Nakshatram: Punarvasu: 05:33 pm  
Time to Avoid: (Bad time to start any important work)  
Rahukalam: 07:40 am - 09:07 am  
Yamagandam: 10:34 am - 12:00 pm  
Varjyam: 01:15 am - 02:47 am  
Gulika: 01:27 pm - 02:53 pm  
Good Time: (to start any important work)  
Amritakalam: 03:11 pm - 04:45 pm  
Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:37am-12:23am

**VIJAYAWADA WEATHER**  
Forecast: Mostly Cloudy  
Temp: 30/24  
Humidity: 94%  
Sunrise: 06:10  
Sunset: 05:51  
Current Weather Conditions  
Updated October 20, 2019 5:00 PM



Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy at the wedding of daughter of Krishna District Collector MD Imtiyaz in Vijayawada on Sunday

## Jagan for Delhi today, likely to meet Union Ministers

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy will visit Delhi on Monday. He is likely to meet several Union Ministers, including Home Minister Amit Shah during his tour.

The deepening financial crisis in the State, Central grants under the AP Reorganisation Act, Power Purchase Agreements (PPAs), funds release for execution of the Polavaram Project may come up for discussion during his meeting with Union Ministers.

Jaganmohan Reddy's latest Delhi tour assumes significance in the wake of BJP central leadership favouring the Union government's takeover of execution of the Polavaram project.

The AP government's stand on PPAs would also figure prominently as it appears to be taking a confrontationalist position over the issue. It may be recalled that the AP government

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● The AP government's stand on PPAs would also figure prominently as it appears to be taking a confrontationalist position over the issue. It may be recalled that the AP government had obtained a stay on the Central government order on issue of Letters of Credit (LoCs) in respect of PPAs

had obtained a stay on the Central government order on issue of Letters of Credit (LoCs) in respect of PPAs. Earlier in the day, Jaganmohan Reddy will participate in a programme to be conducted on the occasion of the Police Commemoration Day at the IGMC Stadium in Vijayawada at 8 am. He will pay tributes to police

martyrs. He is scheduled to take a flight at the Vijayawada Airport at 10 am and reach Delhi by 1 pm. He will make an overnight stay in Delhi On October 22 and will arrive in Visakhapatnam around 7 pm and attend the reception of Araku MP Gotteti Madhavi. He will return to Tadepalli late in the night.

### One more body traced near ill-fated boat

PNS ■ KAKINADA

One more body surfaced near the ill-fated boat Royal Vasista at Kuchhuluru in Devipatnam mandal in East Godavari on Sunday. It may be recalled that the boat salvaging operation was restarted on Wednesday and the operators Dharmadi Satyam of Balaji Marine could able bring a part of railing on Thursday.

According to East Godavari special branch DSP, Sunkara Murali Mohan, the surfaced decomposed body on Sunday was yet to be identified.

With this, the number of missing persons has come down to 11. Out of total tourists in the boat, which capsize, 26 were rescued by local people and the bodies of 38 recovered at various places in the River Godavari during last one month.

## Governor hails heroic efforts of cops to bring harmony in society

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Participating in a peace candle rally on the eve of Police Commemoration Day, Governor Biswa Bhusan Harichandan paid tributes to great souls, who sacrificed their lives to protect people. "I extend my solidarity with the families of police martyrs. Service to society is divine. Nar hi Narayan and their service is divine service. Preserving law and order and protecting people's rights is a difficult task for which the police have been relentlessly rendering their services. Police is the ubiquitous form of government", he opined.

This is very unfortunate to say that since 1969 total 601 police personnel hailing from Visakhapatnam sacrificed their

lives. In which 10 personnel are from Visakhapatnam only. The Ashoka Chakra, the Indian highest peacetime military decoration award for valour, courageous action or self sacrifice away from battlefield was awarded to Karanan Varaprasad of Visakhapatnam.

"Violence must be prevented, or must be curbed. I recognise and congratulate the heroic efforts of our AP police in bringing harmony in society. Policing has been changing rapidly as the crime has been changing radically. They meet new challenges and evolve themselves to address them efficiently. Friendly police, Mahila Mitra, She teams, Cyber Cells are the novel thoughts of the police to serve the every section of society. I observed the

change in the mindset of public towards police compared to earlier days. I wish the police will continue their efforts to serve the people better. Once again, I pay my sincere homage to the great souls, who sacrificed their lives during their services to mother land," he added.

This is the occasion not only to remember the sacrifices of martyrs, but also to stand by the families of martyrs. It was an irreparable loss to those families. They fought against extremism, violence, and factionalism. Their valour, mettle and audacity are remarkable. Their love towards society is immense and awe inspiring. Their families must be looked after. They must be given priority and provided with all the needful facilities.



Governor Biswa Bhusan Harichandan, Minister for Tourism Muttamshetty Srinivasa Rao, MP MVV Satyanarayana, VMRDA Chairman Dronamraju Srinivasa Rao, Police Commissioner RP Meena taking part in candle light rally to mark the Police Commemoration Week at the RK Beach in Visakhapatnam on Sunday

## Govt nominates new Dist In-charge Ministers

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

The government on Sunday issued an order nominating members of the Council of Ministers as District In-charge Ministers.

According to order, Civil Supplies and Consumer Affairs Minister Kodali Venkateswara Rao will be the In-charge Minister of Srikakulam district, while Minister for Endowments Vellampalli Srinivasa Rao will be In-charge Minister of Vizianagaram district. Similarly, Minister for Agriculture and Cooperation Kurasala Kannababu is nominated as In-charge Minister of Visakhapatnam district, Minister for Animal Husbandry, Fisheries & Marketing Mopidevi Venkata Ramana is nominated to East Godavari district, Minister for Transport, Information & Public Relations Purni

Venkataramaiah to West Godavari district, Peddireddy Ramachandra Reddy, Minister for Panchayat Raj and Rural Development, Mines & Geology to Krishna district, Minister for Minister for Finance & Planning, Legislative Affairs Buggana Rajendranath to Prakasam district, Minister for Energy, Forest, Environment, Science & Technology Balineni Srinivasa Reddy to SPS Nellore district, Minister for Irrigation (Water Resources) Anil Kumar Poluboina to Kurnool district, Minister for Education Audimulapu Suresh to YSR Kadapa district, Minister for Municipal Administration and Urban Botcha Satyanarayana to Anantapur district and Minister for Industries and Commerce and Information Technology Mekapati Goutham Reddy to Chittoor district.

## Govt likely to float bids for Air India sale next month

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

Some entities have already expressed interest in buying Air India, the sources said, adding the Expression of Interest (EoI) document is being given the final touches. EoI inviting bids for 100 per cent stake sale are likely to be floated either this month-end or next month, they added. Bidding for the national carrier will be carried out through a newly developed e-bidding system.



# ‘Strict surveillance on fire cracker-making units’

PNS ■ KAKINADA

The East Godavari administration has initiated surveillance measures to check implementation of norms in fire cracker making units and wholesale stock points in the district. Special teams were formed consisting of revenue, police, fire service and pollution control authorities to check the strict implementation of these rules.

It is said that special measures have been initiated in the wake of two blasts that occurred in cracker units in the district particularly G Medapadu of Kakinada revenue division on September 28 and on October 18. In the first incident six women workers died due to blast occurred while making crackers and in the second incident, 10 sustained burn injuries two of them seriously on October 18 in a similar type of blast.

According to sources, there are 59 crackers making units and five wholesale agents registered in East Godavari. At the joint meet organised at the Collectorate with revenue, police, fire and pollution control department authorities, it was decided for strict implementation of fire safety rules. These include strict observa-



tion of distance, which should be away from households and 45 metres away from the main road. In addition to these, manufacturing units should be in cement concrete buildings only. Those in asbestos structures and in thatched huts have been ordered to close with immediate effect.

The meeting also permitted four employees to work in each unit and employing of women, children and differently abled persons was barred. Working hours should be between 7.30 am and 5.30 pm strictly.

Collector D Muralidhar Reddy presided over the meeting, district additional SP SV Sridhar Rao, DFO Ch Ratna

Babu and DRO Ch Satti Babu attended the meet.

According to DFO of fire and disaster management department Ch Ratna Babu, the implementation of this special drive started on Saturday itself and those units which fail in implementing these norms will be asked to close. The result of this special drive is expected to yield results in the present Diwali season.

As a part of this special drive, licences issued by the revenue, the NOC by the fire and disaster management department and the permissions issued by police will be checked thoroughly, the DFO added.

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# Tab come in handy for loco pilots during emergencies

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Reaping the benefits of digitalisation, the South Central Railway (SCR) has reduced the burden on loco pilots by introducing Android-based tabs (tablet PCs), implementing the Common Line Box system.

The role of loco pilots is vital in train operations. Generally, loco pilots before reporting for duty, have to undergo rigorous training on technical and safety aspects. To update their knowledge, they need to carry reference books like General and Subsidiary Rules, Troubleshooting Manual on Electrical Engines & Diesel Engines, Accident Manual, Working Time Tab and Rough journal for writing the detailed data while on run. During emergencies, they refer to these books to take appropriate action. Each of all these manuals weigh around 10 kg, making it difficult for loco pilots to search for the reference manually in the books during emergencies.

In order to provide easy access with single reference, the SCR has developed an in-house Android app and loaded the same in the Tablet PC, along with all reference manuals. Whenever they need any reference on any subject related to their working, loco pilots can simply type the key word or phrase of the subject in the



**In order to provide easy access with single reference to loco pilots, the SCR has developed an in-house Android app and loaded the same in the Tablet PC, along with all reference manuals**

search box of the Tablet PCs to get entire details on the subject. Moreover, it hardly weighs 300 grams and is easy to carry.



# Tirumala dams brimming with water

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Due to the recent rainfall, various dams in Tirumala are brimming with water. The current water position in various dams at Tirumala, including Kalyani Dam at Tirupati, will suffice the needs for the next 295 days.

While the total capacity of water storage in different dams at Tirumala is 5,047 million litres, the present capacity is 2,164 million litres.

The average consumption of water every day in Tirumala is 14 million litres, which will be reached by water sources, including Papavinasanam, Akasa Ganga, Kumaradhara and Pasupudhara, Gobarbhram dams at Tirumala besides Kalyanidam at Tirupati.

With the recent rains over 50 per cent of water needs have been met. When the total capacity of all dams is 5,312 lakh gallons, the present level in all dams is 3,892 lakh gallons.

## CAPSULE



## Pavitra Samarpana performed at Chandragiri

**VIJAYAWADA:** The second day religious event of Pavitra Mala Samarpana took place in Sri Kodanda Rama Swamy temple at Chandragiri on Sunday. As a part of the annual Pavitrotsavams, sacred threads were decorated to deities, gopuram, dhvajastambham and other important areas in the temple amidst chanting of Vedic hymns by temple priests. Temple deputy executive officer Subramanyam and others were also present.

## RPF Martyrs' Day today

**VIJAYAWADA:** Railway Protection Force, Vijayawada Division, South Central Railway, will conduct the Martyrs Day at RPF office, UP Yard near Milk Factory, Chittoor, Vijayawada at 7.30 am on October 21. Sachin Bhalode, Sr. Divisional Security Commissioner, Vijayawada Division, South Central Railway, will be the chief guest.



## Sexual assault on minor

**GUNTUR:** An 18-year-old man sexually assaulted a six-year-old girl in Pedagarlapadu when the victim was alone. He fled the place when neighbours spotted him in the act. Tension prevailed in Pedagarlapadu on Sunday following the incident. Relatives of the victim staged a dharna in front of the police station apprehending political interference to save the skin of the offender in the case. Earlier, parents lodged a complaint with the Dacheppalli police against the youth. The youth was identified as Narendra Reddy, 18, of Garlapadu in Dacheppalli mandal.

# Meet on ‘Ambedkar’s thought & Dalits’ future’

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

National conference on 'Ambedkar's thought- Indian Constitution- Dalits' future' is being held on November 23 and 24 at Deichmann Auditorium, Acharya Nagarjuna University, Guntur. It is being jointly organised by Ambedkar Chair, Acharya Nagarjuna University and Forum for Dalits Studies, Visakhapatnam.

Speaking about two organisations, Prof P Arun Kumar said Dr BR Ambedkar Chair of Acharya Nagarjuna University, Guntur, was established in 1993 and carrying on the philosophy of Dr Ambedkar, the great visionary of India and Chairman of the Drafting Committee of the Indian Constitution, in the form of seminars, conferences at national and international levels, carrying on research activity. Forum for Dalit Studies is an apolitical organisation conducting seminars and discussions on Dalit issues, he said.

About the conference, Prof Arun Kumar said Dr Ambedkar's thought was instrumental in bringing out revolutionary changes in society. Dr Ambedkar as a philosopher had laid the thought of socio-political and economic change in society and his thoughts and actions are equally responsible for democratic



socialisation in society, which was based on principle of graded inequality.

Dr Ambedkar channelised all his dynamics towards the building of democratic society and polity in India, on the footing of very democratic principle of liberty, equality and fraternity.

The main objective of the conference was to spread real thought of Dr Ambedkar in practice to various Ambedkarite groups, associations, organisation, individuals, academics, intellectuals and Dalit masses and realise and implement the thought of Dr Ambedkar in the present day contemporary politics in Indian polity in the context of Constitutional Day-2019.

Prof KS Chalam, Dr K Asaiah, Prof. Muzaffer Assadi, Prof Vivek Kumar, Prof Ganta Chakrapani, Prof Srinivasulu, judges and civil servants will speak on the occasion.

# Yellow metal retains its shine

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

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

The outlook for gold during the next year as predicted by the London Bullion Market Association is positive and the yellow metal is expected to register an appreciation of 11%. However, considering the higher price level of gold prevailing at present, except the big market players others are likely to put their stakes. Similarly, platinum and palladium also remained firm and closed at \$ 893.50 (per oz) and \$ 1,805.05 (per oz), Copper stood at Rs. 440.85 (per kg) respectively.

Other economic parameters barring Brent and Crude oil remained firm. Brent closed at US \$ 59.30 (per barrel), while Crude oil was quoted at Rs. 3,324 (per barrel). Gold MCX stood at Rs.38,090 (per 10 gms) and Silver MCX at Rs. 45,490 (per kg). BSE Sensex and Nifty 50 closed at 39,298.38 and 11,661.85 points respectively.

Leading foreign currencies' exchange rates were: US \$: Rs.71.09, British Pound: Rs.

92.31, Euro: Rs. 79.37, Singapore \$: Rs. 52.12, Canadian \$: Rs.54.15, Swiss Franc: Rs.72.27, Australian \$: Rs. 48.73, Saudi Rial: Rs. 18.95, Kuwaiti Dinar: Rs. 234.35, Omani Rial: Rs. 184.63 and UAE Dinar: Rs.19.35.

At home, the acceleration in trading activity in view of the current festival season is yet to see the desired momentum. While the yellow metal appreciated by Rs. 240 on buying support and closed at Rs. 38, 540 (per 10 gms), ornament gold too moved up in tandem and was quoted in the range of Rs. 36,610- 36,710 on the closing day. Silver too (0.999), recorded an appreciation of Rs. 300 and closed at Rs. 45,500 (per kg).

COM-MODITIES

The

**WEEKLY MARKET REVIEW**

sentiment in the principal wholesale commodity markets in the twin cities remained unchanged. Rythu Bazaars and the various commodity markets located in Begum Bazar, Kishangunj, Mukthyargunj, Risala Abdullah, Mir Alam Mandi, Dilsukhnagar, Kukatpally, Bowenpally,

General Bazar recorded brisk trading.

According to market sources the import of vegetable oils during the period prompt November 2018 to September 2019, was to higher by 3%. The reduced import of palm oil has drawn flak from Malaysia, following the acrimony between India and that country. In Malaysian trade circles tremors have been felt.

During the week, common pulses such as tuar dal, moong dal, urad dal and masoor dal remained unchanged, while staple food grains and common edible oils remained steady.

The prices of common vegetables, onions in particular, continue to rule high. Some glut was reported from tomato-growing areas where farmers are finding it difficult to dispose of their produce at remunerative prices.

In Hyderabad, the NECC wholesale egg price declined by Rs. 41 and closed at Rs. 370 (per 100). The highest price of Rs. 450 was recorded at Lucknow, while Hospet closed at the lowest price of Rs. 350.

# CP Dwaraka flags off Mini-Marathon



PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Mini-Marathon 3K Run was organised here on Sunday by the Police Department as part of the Police Commemoration Week. Commissioner of Police Dwaraka Tirumala Rao has flagged off the marathon. Police personnel and sportsmen participated in the marathon.

The marathon was started from Gunadala and ended at Sarada College on BRTS Road. Along with police personnel, college, school students participated in large numbers.

Commissioner of Police Dwaraka Tirumala Rao said: "We are paying tributes to all the heroes, who sacrificed

their lives for the protection of the country and people."

"As part of Police Commemoration week, we organised Open House in which functioning of police station, bomb squad, dog squad, NDRF, SDRF, Octopus, city security wing, traffic and other wings explained to visitors in order to create awareness," he said.

After conducting 3K run, prizes were distributed to winners by the Commissioner. Later, students performed cultural programmes. DCP (Admin) Harikrishna, DCP Harshavardhan Raju, Inspectors and other officials participated in the programme.

# Ayodhya tangle: Time to accept verdict honourably

HC UPADHYAY ■ HYDERABAD

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

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

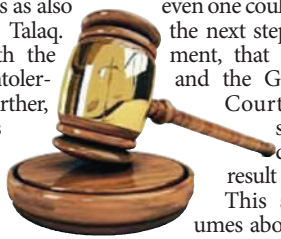
Let's hope that people would heed the appeals for peace. The Hindu population, which has to its credit appreciable history of tolerance amidst all odds, will expectedly remain calm and composed, irrespective of the fact whether the judgement would be to its liking or not. But the same cannot be said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

Therefore, post-Ayodhya verdict period will be an acid test for the country. In fact, this will provide a rare opportunity to nationalist forces to unite and stand like a rock before divisive, terrorist, fanatical and anti-national elements. Under no circumstances, sinful polarisation of such elements should be allowed.

## Judges' result, love all: Gujarat HC

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

This speaks volumes about the sorry state of affairs in the legal field. The common man considers lawyers and judges as the last ray of hope for justice. The declining standards in judiciary have been debated time and



**LEGAL ROUNDUP**

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

## Extension of time no proof of readiness :SC

Mere extension of time cannot ipso facto be construed as otherwise demonstrating readi-

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

In Ravi Setia vs. Madan Lal and others, the bench comprising Justice Navin Sinha and Indira Banerjee noted that the trial court and the first appellate court found 'readiness and willingness' on the part of plaintiff from his singular plea that he was present at the Sub-Registrar's Office on the date specified in the agreement for execution of deed. That apart,

no other evidence was adduced to prove his contention. The Supreme Court, dealing with this aspect, observed:

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

## Telangana HC: Rowdy-sheet only against habitual offenders

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

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



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

#### Wine shops buzz beats drab by-poll talk

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

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

#### Vijayashanthi snipes at CM's chopper

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

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

#### Praveen Prakash bypassing CS?

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



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

#### 'Unpredictable' Jagan baffles babus!

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

passing day. Their concerns range from Jagan cutting their role in the administration, undertake a reshuffle of their portfolios, shunt out an officer who is supposed to be in his good books, who will be favoured and who will fall out, etc. Soon after becoming CM, Jagan majorly propped up retired IAS officer Ajeya Kallam, who was chief secretary in the previous TDP government headed by N Chandrababu Naidu. The favour was the result of Ajeya Kallam taking up a massive campaign exposing TDP government's 'corruption' at various forums by organising meetings in AP and Telangana just before AP Assembly polls. Jagan rewarded him with the post of principal advisor' with Cabinet minister-rank. More importantly, he was given full powers in CMO and all officers in the CMO were asked to report to him. This is unusual by any standards, as in no state does a retired IAS officer boss over in-service IAS officers in the CMO. But things started changing recently, with Jagan slowly clipping Ajeya Kallam's wings for unknown reasons. Jagan took away GAD and energy portfolios held by Kallam and handed over these to another IAS officer in CMO, Praveen Prakash. Jagan appointed another senior IAS officer PV Ramesh as Additional Secretary to CM following his retirement from service as

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

#### Another probe, another eyewash?

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

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

#### Metro travels from joy to sorrow

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

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

### CAPSULE

#### RTC driver dies of heart attack

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

#### Man, son-in-law electrocuted

**VIZIANAGARAM:** In a tragic incident, a man and his son-in-law died on the spot when they were electrocuted by a boiler due to a short circuit at his chicken shop in Cheepurupalli town in Vizianagaram district on Sunday. The victims were identified as Sheikh Basha (45) and Sheikh Saidu(30). According to reports, the incident took place when Saidu suffered shock due to a short circuit to the boiler and Basha rushed to the spot to save him but both died on the spot. Local people and customers informed the police who rushed to the spot and began investigation.

#### DGP lauds blood donors

**VIJAYAWADA:** More than 14,000 people donated blood as part of Police Commemoration Week. DGP Gautam Savang informed at the mega blood donation camp conducted here on Sunday. Almost 600 police personnel donated blood on the occasion. The DGP lauded police personnel, who came forward to donate blood. He stated that there is a friendly environment between people and police. Replying to a query, he assured that they will provide protection for journalists.

#### YSRCP appoints 30 spokespersons

**AMARAVATI:** The YSRCP will have 30 official spokespersons. The recently-elected legislators are also included in the list in addition to seniors. SC, ST, BC, Minority and other communities were accommodated. In a press release, the party list out the spokespersons. They are: Undavli Sridevi, Merugu Nagarjuna, Tellam Balaraju, Rajanna Dora, Vidadala Rajini, Dharmana Prasada Rao, K Parthasarathy, Jogi Ramesh, C Appalaraju, Adeep Raj, Mohd Iqbal , Ambari Rambabu, Gudivada Amarnath, Kilaru Rosayya, Jakkampudi Raja, Abbaya Choudary, Malladi Vishnu, Kakani Goverdhan Reddy, G Srikanth Reddy, Bhumana Karunakar Reddy, Anam Ramanarayana Reddy, Bathula Brahmananda Reddy, Naramalli Padmaja, Kakumanu Rajasekhar, A Narayana Murthy, Nagarjuna Yadav, Rajeev Gandhi, K Ravichandra Reddy, Eeda Rajasekhara Reddy, P Siva Sankar Reddy and Rajiv Gandhi.

# Focus on green energy research: Governor to IIPE

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Concerned about the current global warming scenario, Governor Biswa Bushan Harichandan advised the Indian Institute of Petroleum and Energy (IIPE) to focus on the green energy research and eco-friendly infrastructure development.

"Countries like Norway, Finland are travelling towards eco-friendly energy technologies. It is known that the developed western countries are yet to shift to eco-friendly technologies and thus they are to be treated as leading polluting countries. However, India is now planning towards alternative energy sources," he said.

Harichandan said that the pollution has to be reduced considerably to lower levels by depending on the eco-friendly energy sources such as solar and wind. The government is also encouraging such eco-friendly steps by giving larger discounts on those products,



Governor Biswa Bushan Harichandan inaugurating the Indian Institute of Petroleum and Energy Foundation Day fete by lighting the lamp in Visakhapatnam on Sunday

such that the organisations have to extend their hand in making the country a pollution free zone.

Globally, the fossil fuel resources are on the wane, the need for exploring alternative energy resources is the top most priority in the present scenario, hence, the non-conventional sources like solar, wind and tidal energies are to be tapped with the application of nano technology designs to

meet the energy requirements of the world comfortably.

The Governor was addressing the students of IIPE on the occasion of its fourth year Foundation Day celebrations held here on Sunday. He asked the IIPE management to educate the students by delivering practical knowledge. He directed to take them to petroleum and gas industries to gain field-level experience. The institute will shift to its

**Governor Biswa Bushan Harichandan said that the pollution has to be reduced considerably to lower levels by depending on the eco-friendly energy sources such as solar and wind**

new campus at 200-acre land in Vangali village, Sabbavaram mandal of the district within one or two-year period with the support from the Centre and State governments. He assured to resolve the remaining problems, if any, in handing over the alienated land to the institute to proceed further in the construction activities.

## Heavy rain fails to dilute spirit of Pinkathon crusaders

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Braving the heavy rain, over 400 participants ran on the Beach Road here to mark the 2nd edition of Pinkathon. With the mantra 'Fit women, Fit Family', the day was celebrated promoting fitness and health for all women at beach road here on Sunday.

This is an international event, powered by founded by Milind Soman and sponsored by Pond's Skin Fit see participation of more than 25,000 women and their families in a 3/5 km run on the same day across 75 cities in the country and 10 other countries. Pinkathon was started as a



Participants strike a pose after taking part in the second edition of Pinkathon in Visakhapatnam on Sunday

running event, but it is now a grassroots movement, with people across the country taking up the cause and spreading the message of health and fitness for all. Using communi-

ty running as a tool, Pinkathon and its ambassadors have empowered and enabled thousands of women across India to bring positive change into their lives.

## ‘BCs can improve their lot only by capturing political power’

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Justice Chandra Kumar has said that Backward Classes, who account for more than 50 per cent of the country's population, can improve their lot only by capturing political power.

Speaking at a meeting here on Sunday by the Pradesh BC Welfare Association, he said BCs continue to be oppressed even after 72 years of Independence. He said BCs were getting less reservations though they are more in numbers.

He said political parties claim to do a lot for the uplift of BCs before coming to power, but



BC Welfare Association leaders and others join hands to display their unity at a meeting in Vijayawada on Sunday

after forming the government they are ignoring these sections. "Backward Classes should join hands with SCs, STs and lower income groups of upper castes

to come to power. Only then, justice will be done to BCs," he added.

Noted film-maker and actor R Narayana Murthy said that

## It's realty show in garb of reverse tendering in State: Devineni

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Continuing his tirade against the State government, former minister Devineni Umamaheswara Rao has alleged that a realty show is going on in the State in the name of reverse tendering.

Addressing a press conference at the TDP office here on Sunday, he claimed that the previous TDP government had spent Rs 73,622 crore on development, but the present government led by Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy has not grounded a single project.

Stating that the Polavaram project works were embroiled in High Court cases, the senior TDP leader said the government had failed to clear the pending bills.

Referring to the boat capsized incident in the River Godavari near Kachuluru of East



Godavari district, he said the State government had failed to retrieve the launch even though one month has elapsed since the incident took place.

In this connection, he claimed that the previous TDP government had been successful in cutting the rock at a depth of 300 feet in the Godavari to carry out Polavaram project diaphragm works. "CM Jaganmohan

Reddy has been spending his time only on Delhi tours," he added.

Jaganmohan Reddy has no guts to come before the public and tell why he is going to Delhi. Umamaheswara Rao alleged that the money distributed to farmers under the Rythu Bharosa scheme is not being credited to the accounts of beneficiaries.

He alleged that YSRCP activists are selling liquor after 8 pm when the government outlets are closed. The Cabinet has issued a note on the GO No 938 only to see that no one talked about all these issues, he added.

The plight of 30 lakh construction labourers is pathetic as they have lost their livelihood due to sand scarcity, he said and alleged that thousands of sand-laden lorries are going to Hyderabad and Bengaluru.

#### Minister opens container restaurant

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Minister for Tourism and Culture Muttamsetti Srinivasa Rao inaugurated container restaurant near Erramatti Dibbalu (Red Ravines) on the Bhimili Beach Road on Sunday.

Speaking at a gathering, the minister said more development activities would be taken up all along the Beach Road up to Bhimili to make the stretch internationally famous.

The container restaurant, close to the sea, was built at a cost of Rs 2 crore by the AP Tourism Development Corporation.

He said another restaurant would be opened at Pandrangi under Padmanabham mandal, the birth place of Alluri Seetharama Raju. A beautiful garden would also be developed.

#### Rural SP visits Vakapalli



Visakhapatnam Rural SP Attada Babujee posing for a picture with tribal women at Vakapalle in Visakhapatnam agency on Sunday

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Visakhapatnam Rural Police Superintendent Attada Babujee, along with his senior officials, conducted Sadbhavana Yatra to create confidence among tribals at Vakapalle village under G Madugula mandal in the Visakhapatnam agency on Sunday. This is for the first time an officer of superintendent rank visited the village after the gang rape incident.

This small remote village made national news when Greyhound personnel allegedly gang raped 11 tribal women in the wee hours of 2009 and the Supreme Court taking a serious view of the delay in the trial of the case. Presently, the case under trial in a special court in Visakhapatnam.

While interacting with them, some of the tribals told him that there was some development in the village but lot more to be done. There was unemployment and the village require basic facilities.

The SP told them that he would talk to the Collector and get the works done in the village and regarding employment, the SP told them that he would organise skill development training for them so that the youth could get jobs.

The village has 200 house-

**The SP told them that he would talk to the collector and get the works done in the village and regarding employment, the SP told them that he would organize skill development training for them so that the youth could get jobs**

holds and 600 people live in it. A medical camp was organised and around 300 people underwent tests and given medicines. Later, a volleyball tournament was conducted and six teams participated. Winners were given prizes and volleyball kits.

The SP after having lunch with them told the youth not to indulge in any anti-social and criminal activities. He reiterated that he would take up with the government and the collector about the village development, training for youth and employment for the youth.

Additional SP operations B Krishna Rao, DSP of Paderu Raj Kamal, inspectors and others participated in the event.



CAPSULE

1 kg gold seized from three persons at RGIA

**HYDERABAD:** The Air Intelligence Unit of the Customs department on Saturday seized gold weighing around 1 kg from three passengers at the Rajiv Gandhi International Airport in Shamshabad. Sources said that all three cases were detected by the Air Intelligence Unit of Hyderabad Customs Wing and 915.17 grams of gold, worth a total of Rs 35,50,858 was seized from them. According to Customs officials, the three passengers who arrived at the airport by a Singapore Airlines flight from Jeddah were intercepted at the international arrivals area on Saturday night. The seizure was made based on a credible input of gold being smuggled in the form of bars. On inquiry, it was found that the passengers were carrying gold bars concealed in clothes in their hand baggage, said officials. The three gold bars each weighed 295.3, gm, 303.360 gm and 316.510 gm. Further inquiry revealed that they were smuggling gold bars and were supposed to hand it over to an unknown receiver outside the airport. Three cases have been registered and the three passengers were arrested. Further investigation is underway.

Man hacked to death by son, brother in Panjagutta

**HYDERABAD:** In a daylight murder, an auto driver who was out on bail for the last 10 days, was hacked to death by his family members at the busy Nagarjuna circle road at Panjagutta on Sunday. The Hyderabad city police swiftly placed three men under arrest shortly after the incident. Police said the victim Mir Raiyasath Ali Razvi alias Sujju, a resident of MS Makta, had allegedly killed another auto rickshaw driver Anwar over an extra-marital relationship three months ago. The accused were identified as Abdul Rahman, 40, Sujju's brother, Mohammed Azhar, 19, his son, and Abdul Aleem, 27, another relative, said police. Two others, Syed Amjad, 22, and Mohammed Hasan alias Babu, 20, were reportedly absconding. Police seized five sickles used in the murder. An Omni van and a bike were also seized from the accused, said Anjani Kumar, police commissioner of Hyderabad. According to police, the accused men bore a grudge against Sujju after the murder offence. He was arrested last month and was released on bail on October 10.

Army pounds terror camps along LoC

Continued from Page1

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

Rawat said, "Ever since the abrogation of special provisions (for Jammu and Kashmir), we are getting repeated inputs about infiltration by terrorists from across the border. The sources said Pakistan has been trying to push terrorists into Kashmir to trigger unrest.

Soon after government announced its decision to reorganise Jammu and Kashmir on August 5, the Army was put on high alert along the LoC to effectively repulse any possible Pakistani misadventure.

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

On February 26, India carried out an aerial strike on a terrorist training camp of the Jaish-e Mohammad terror group in Pakistan's Balakot, in response to Pulwama terror attack in which 40 CRPF personnel were killed. Pakistan Air Force retaliated the next day by trying to target military installations but it was repulsed. The PAF downed a MiG-21 Bison in an aerial combat besides capturing IAF pilot Varthaman, who was handed over to India on March 1. Varthaman had shot down an F-16 of Pakistan before his Mig21 Bison was hit.

HUZURNAGAR TO VOTE TODAY

TRS, Congress locked in neck and neck fight

PNS ■ HUZURNAGAR

It's likely to be neck-and-neck fight in Monday's by-election to Huzurnagar Assembly constituency, with ruling TRS keen to wrest it from Congress while the opposition party is determined to continue its winning streak. TRS and Congress candidates are locked in a direct fight though the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and Telugu Desam Party (TDP) candidates are also hoping to pull it off.

First by-polls since Lok Sabha polls, it is expected to be an acid test for the ruling party as it is being held amid the ongoing indefinite strike by employees of state-owned Telangana State Road Transport Corporation (TSRTC), which has brought the opposition parties and other anti-TRS forces together.

Little over 2.36 lakh voters, nearly half of them women, will decide the political fortunes of 28 candidates including 15 Independents. Authorities have set up 302 polling centres in the constituency located in Suryapet district, once considered a Congress stronghold.

Huzurnagar came into existence as a result of delimitation of constituencies in 2009. Congress party's

N Uttam Kumar Reddy won the seat in successive elections in 2009, 2014 and 2018. Following his election to Lok Sabha from Nalgonda constituency, Uttam Kumar Reddy resigned from Assembly, necessitating the by-election for Huzurnagar. Congress has fielded his wife Padmavati Reddy in the by-election.

As Uttam Kumar Reddy is also the president of Congress party's state unit, the bypoll is a prestige battle for him. Leading the party campaign, he sought votes on the basis of development works undertaken by him in the constituency during last decade.

TRS, on the other hand, is determined to wrest the seat from Congress. It has once



Little over 2.36 lakh voters, nearly half of them women, will decide the political fortunes of 28 candidates including 15 Independents. Authorities have set up 302 polling centres in the constituency

again fielded Saidi Reddy, who lost to Uttam Kumar Reddy in December 2018 elections by a margin of 7,466 votes. The Congress party then had alliance with TDP, Communist Party of India (CPI) and Telangana Jana Samithi (TJS). This time it is going alone, enjoying the support of only TJS.

TDP, which had stayed away from Lok Sabha polls in Telangana, choose to field its candidate in the bye-election to send a message that it is alive in the state. Huzurnagar is one of the segments of Nalgonda Lok Sabha seat and in the Lok Sabha elections held in April, Congress had increased its majority to 12,993 votes.

The low-key campaign saw the ruling party urging people to vote for the development and the welfare schemes implemented in the state during last six years. After retaining power in December 2018 with a landslide victory, TRS suffered set-

back in Lok Sabha polls with BJP winning four and Congress three seats to deny it a clean sweep.

However, the ruling party staged a comeback to score massive victory in rural local body polls in June. It is confident of continuing the victory march. The TRS had to face some anxious moments in the campaign due to the strike by TSRTC employees, which entered its 16th day on Sunday. The strike brought together all opposition parties and those groups who have been opposing Chief Minister K. Chandrashekhara Rao. The state-wide shutdown called by the striking employees on Saturday was support by all anti-TRS forces.

The ongoing strike's tough handling by the government also had its impact on TRS as Communist Party of India (CPI) withdrew its support to the ruling party. CPI, which fought Assembly elections in

alliance with Congress, surprised all by declaring support to TRS earlier this month. However, the party reversed its decision within 15 days to protest the government's move to sack 48,000 striking employees of TSRTC.

TRS campaign also suffered set back as the Chief Minister and TRS president's only election rally was cancelled due to rains. His son K.T. Rama Rao, who is a cabinet minister and working president of the party, conducted road show. Another minister Jagdish Reddy, who comes from the same district, ran the party campaign along with other leaders.

TRS leaders see good prospects for their candidate as they believe both BJP and TDP will cut into anti-TRS votes. Political analysts say the bye-election is crucial for Congress as a victory in Huzurnagar could give it a moral boost against TRS, which not only lured 12 Congress MLAs to its ranks but also got them merged with the ruling party. Leaving with just six seats in 119-member Assembly, Congress lost the status of main opposition party. A victory in Huzurnagar may help Congress to put pressure on the defectors to quit and seek fresh election.

Minister assures ryots of remunerative price for paddy

PNS ■ WARANGAL

Panchayath Raj and Rural Development Minister Errabelli Dayakar Rao assured cotton and paddy farmers of the Jangaon district a remunerative price for their produce this Kharif season.

The Minister was addressing an awareness meeting of officials and Rythu Samanvaya Samithi leaders in Jangaon on Sunday. MP Pasunoori Dayakar, MLA Thatikonda Rajaiiah and District Collector Vinay Krishna Reddy were also present.

Speaking on the occasion,

the Minister advised the Rythu coordination committees to take up a key role in procuring farm produce and suggested them to procure till the last grain. He called upon the officials concerned to supply gunny bags and stipulate a time limit for the purchases and payment schedules. The Minister exhorted the officials to direct the persons concerned to provide the tarpaulins in case Raina are recorded in the procurement centres.

He called upon the officials and public representatives of local bodies to coordinate

themselves for accomplishing the targets set under the 30 days special action plan. He advised the officials to appoint officials to supervise IKP centres and mandal level procurement centres in the Jangaon district.

The Minister expressed confidence that the present Kharif produce in Jangaon district is likely to surpass the previous records as the state received bountiful rains this Monsoon. Since the paddy and cotton coverage areas were increased drastically, CCI and other purchase units were directed to take necessary steps in the district.

Cong to lay siege to Pragathi Bhavan today

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

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

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

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

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



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

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

Telangana," he said.

The Congress leader said that by dragging the RTC strike, KCR was indulging in vendetta politics wherein he wants to punish the RTC employees for disobeying his orders to end the strike. He said that the Chief Minister was neither concerned about the inconvenience being caused to general public nor bothered about the problems of RTC employees. KCR just want to satisfy his false ego and expects everyone to act like his slaves, he alleged.

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

BJP asks RTC staff to intensify stir

PNS ■ WARANGAL

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

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

"People of entire Telangana are on one side while the Chief Minister as a dictator is standing on the opposite side," the BJP leader said. The BJP leader alleged that the Chief Minister was trying to grab the

80 odd-crore worth RTC properties and was trying to divert them to his relatives and family members.

The BJP leader further questioned the silence of Ministers KT Rama Rao, Harish Rao and Etela Rajender over RTC strike. Continuing his scathing attack, the BJP state president alleged that a 'naya Nizam rule' has emerged under the KCR rule in the past 6 years. He termed

Transport Minister Ajay as a betrayer of Telangana. Dr Laxman further said the Chief Minister was playing a Nero role while

the Governor was showing concern on the issues confronted by the people. During his speech at the protest camp in Hanamkonda, the BJP state president predicted a political instability in the state soon and asserted the BJP was keen on taking up the issues of people in the state with a firm approach. A protest rally-cum-dharna of RTC employees was held in Hanamkonda at the Martyrs memorial.

BHS demands Govt not to extend holidays



PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Balala Hakkula Sangham (BHS) has demanded the state government not to extend holidays to the educational institutions in view of ongoing RTC strike as the rumours were already rounds that the state government may extend holidays up to 25 or this month end.

In a statement on Sunday, BHS honorary president Achyutha Rao asked the government not to extending holidays as children's valuable time will be wasted with it. It may be recalled that the state government extended holidays from October 14 to October 21 as it failed to make alternative arrangements in view of RTC strike.

He demanded the state government to make the education department to announce a statement saying that there won't be any extension of holidays. He also demanded the state government not to use the private educational institutions buses to public transport system.

KTR seeks financial aid for Hyd Pharma City

WRITES LETTER TO THE CENTRE TO PROVIDE Rs 1318 cr as 'GRANT IN AID'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

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

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



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

The overall master planning for 19,333 acres, detailed master planning and detailed designs for the Phase-1 (8,400 acres) have been completed and as a major milestone in the development of the project. Environmental clearance has been already accorded by MoEF&CC. Government of Telangana has already constituted SPV in the name of Hyderabad Pharma City Limited and the implementation of Phase-1 has been initiated. "You will be pleased to note that the project has received overwhelming response from both domestic

and global companies to set-up manufacturing units," said KTR.

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

In the letter to Minister Dharmendra Pradhan, KTR stated that the industrial units currently operating in Pharma sector are primarily using Coal

as their fuel for generation of steam. Given the National importance of the project, the Minister requested the centre to provide Natural Gas allocation on Preferential Tariff Basis & Reliable Supply for Project Operations.

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



SHORT READS



FIR against Bihar BJP chief Sanjay Jaiswal

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

'Uddhav' international dance festival in Gwalior from Oct 31

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

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

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

Voting in Maha, Haryana assembly polls today

● Bypolls to 51 assembly seats across the country

PNS ■ MUMBAI/CHANDIGARH

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

In Maharashtra, where the 'Mahayuti' alliance of BJP, Shiv Sena and smaller parties is against the 'Maha-agadhi' led by the Congress and the NCP, a total of 8,98,39,600 people, including 4,28,43,635 women, are eligible to vote.

As many as 3,237 candidates, including 235 women, are contesting in 288 seats and 96,661 polling booths are in place with 6.5 lakh staff for the voting exercise. The ruling BJP is locked in a contest with the opposition Congress and the fledgling JJP for the 90 assembly seats in Haryana which has over 1.83 crore voters, including 85 lakh women and 252 transgenders, while 19,578 polling stations have been set up.

Polling will be held from 7 am



In Maharashtra, where the 'Mahayuti' alliance of BJP, Shiv Sena and smaller parties is against the 'Maha-agadhi' led by the Congress and the NCP, a total of 8,98,39,600 people, including 4,28,43,635 women, are eligible to vote

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Eight killed in Uttarakhand landslide

PNS ■ DEHRADUN

Eight persons travelling on two motorcycles and a four wheeler have been killed after coming under the rubble of a landslide at Chandikadhar in Rudraprayag district, police said on Sunday.

The accident happened late on Saturday night when a heavy boulder fell along with the rubble of a landslide on the vehicles sweeping them into a 500 metre deep gorge, a police official said.

Five persons died on the spot, while three others succumbed to their injuries at the hospital, Rudraprayag police circle officer Ganesh Koli said. Four bodies have so far been recovered from the debris and efforts are underway to pull out the fifth, he said. The boulder is hard and heavy rock cutting equipment is being used to break it to recover the fifth body.

The vehicles were on their way to Rudraprayag from Sonprayag at the time of the mishap.

Hopeful Abhijit will give suggestions to overcome economic crisis: Dilip

PNS ■ KOLKATA,

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

Echoing similar sentiments, Rahul Sinha, a national secre-

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ BENGALURU

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

humanitarian. His personality and his works were revered worldwide.

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

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



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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



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

about the action taken in this regard.

Dubey alleged in his complaint that Madhya Pradesh's

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ JAMMU

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

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

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

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

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



'Values of India's civilisation can ensure peace and friendship'

PNS ■ MANILA

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

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

"Our community in the



Philippines has been a strong bond of friendship between our two countries for decades. The size of the diaspora has grown remarkably over the last few years," he said at the event.

"To meet our people in far-away lands is an emotional and special experience for me, one

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

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

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

Body of DU professor found on railway tracks

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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



POWER OF ART

Patna's Vidyut Bhawan facade turns into vibrant canvas

PNS ■ PATNA

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



## Tale of returnees

The deportation of 311 Indians by Mexico shows that old and wily job cartels can no longer sell a golden dream



The US has its compelling reasons for enforcing strict norms to phase out illegal refugees and asylum seekers and bolster homeland security. But reverberations of the Trump Administration’s tough immigration rules are finally being felt back home, where cartels for years have resorted to underhand means to smuggle the lesser privileged aspirants from the hinterland into the US. This is why the deportation of 311 Indians, including a woman, from Mexico, is significant for it means old hoodwinking habits and unscrupulous border crossings will simply not work. Hopefully, it will also awaken migrants to be realistic and not entrust their lives and property to agents and human traffickers for the proverbial El Dorado, where they would rather do menial services on the recommendation of an acquaintance than earn a work permit legally. Hopefully, for the thousands of villagers in Punjab and Haryana, the overseas dream will not be their only aimless ambition. Each of the returnees reportedly bought illegal passage for ₹15 to ₹18 lakh, a sum that would have ensured them a decent livelihood in India itself had they invested it wisely. Now they are staring at a bleak future on home ground, too. The deportation of Indians from Mexico is a first. As per the National Migration Institute of Mexico, trans-Atlantic air transport to ferry deportees is unprecedented and is expected to continue. The move is not surprising considering that Mexico has been sending back migrants, especially Central Americans, in droves in line with its agreement with the US. It has vowed to significantly curb America-bound migration in exchange for averting US tariffs on Mexican exports. Reports suggest that the backlog of migrants in southern Mexico has grown as officials have stopped issuing permits for them to cross the country. They deported 25,069 Central Americans in January and February, almost double the number in the same period last year. Of these deportees, 3,289 were minors. Contrary to Asians, a majority of Central American migrants flee murderous gangs while others run from poverty or look to reunite with their parents working in the US. The dreams of Indians may have been shattered but they are fortunate to have survived the ordeal and escaped the horrendous detention centres.

An ideal US immigrant would evoke images of a young educated person, either wanting to go there for higher education or already a software professional, adding to the US talent pool, and by extension to the US economy and human resource. However, illegal immigrants are the polar opposite. All those sent back are between 18 and 27 years, hold a graduate degree and wanted to earn a livelihood as a taxi driver in the US. It is, therefore, not difficult to comprehend why despite knowing all the perils involved, they embarked on a risky journey. Obviously their gamble is rooted in the problem of shrinking job space and the comparatively low wages offered by both private and public companies in the country. For those unemployed, the lure of healthy earnings and the prospect of sending a large paycheck back home are enough to embark on a life-threatening journey overseas. It is this desire that scamsters encash. The fake job racket is now a booming industry in the country. And a very organised one at that. Operators engage some very creative minds and legal expertise to identify loopholes in existing rules. The higher the risk, the greater the fee. Then there are others who operate in legally grey areas by training immigrants in the art of bending the rules. Every Government will have to tackle the problem of illegal immigration. But the present incident must impress upon our Government the need to crack down on rogue agents who promise lucrative jobs. This seems to be a difficult flushout challenge in Punjab and Haryana where illegal trafficking networks are a sub-set of a larger matrix of gunrunners, drug smugglers and ganglord couriers. Simultaneously, a campaign must be launched to make the people aware of the dangers of falling prey to corrosive agents and the benefits of going through job services linked to embassies and high commissions.

## Gravity of bias

Two women astronauts of NASA completed the first all-woman spacewalk, literally claiming the gender space



In a small step for two women but a giant leap for womankind, two female astronauts from the US space agency National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) completed the first all-woman spacewalk on Friday. It was a moment frozen in the history of women empowerment as the two US astronauts, Christina Koch and Jessica Meir, floated out, feet-first, of the International Space Station’s (ISS) Quest airlock, tasked with replacing a failed power control unit. During the spacewalk, the coordinator on the ground was also a woman, astronaut Stephanie Wilson. In a test of endurance and grit of the two women, the spacewalk went on for six hours and 45 minutes, something which has so far been considered a male privilege and equal to his stamina. The figures say it all. Till now, only 14 women have done spacewalks compared to 213 men. The first woman to break the glass ceiling was Russian cosmonaut Svetlana Savitskaya, who went outside the USSR’s Salyut 7 in 1984. Meir became the 15th woman overall and 14th US woman to spacewalk.

How male-oriented NASA and other space programmes of the world are can be gauged by the fact that this spacewalk was to take place in March but had to be postponed as there was only one medium-sized spacesuit available at the ISS. As Christina Koch so aptly put it in an interview, “In the past women haven’t always been at the table.” This sentiment finds resonance with millions of women on Earth, who struggle to make their voices heard in male-dominated spheres and face discrimination and derision on a daily basis. The 40-year-old Koch is also setting another milestone as she will remain on the ISS until February, bringing her total time in space to 328 days, the longest single spaceflight by a woman and just short of astronaut Scott Kelly’s 340-day record. Till now, most of the bio-medical data on the impact of spaceflights is derived from male astronauts. Researchers are collecting extensive data about the impact on Koch’s body for the first time. The first all-woman spacewalk is also evidence of NASA’s own journey of empowerment. According to the space agency, this was something it had not planned but happened because there has been a marked increase in the number and aspiration of women astronauts. This is the same agency which did not admit women into the astronaut programme until 1978. Sally Ride went to space in 1983 but she was beaten to it by two Soviet women. Similarly, it was only in October 1984 that Kathryn Sullivan became the first American woman to finish a spacewalk. Now, the agency is planning to put the first woman on the Moon by 2024 with its Artemis lunar exploration programme and recently unveiled the prototype for a new spacesuit. That is a big step towards gender equality everywhere though it has taken a long time coming.

# opinion06

## The new Indian identity

India’s new fashion mantra is not about ethnocentrism or muscularity. But yes, it is robust, meaningful and confident



RINKU GHOSH

A few days ago, a mass men’s label launched the Nehru jacket as an assembly line product, as regular as corporate wear, and not an ethnic fancy meant for festive or ceremonial rituals. This signals a shift from the formal code of the Western suit as the only boardroom qualifier and legitimises the ethnic identity as an equally driven negotiator. Latest brand campaigns of other labels show the young flaunting ethnic wear unabashedly and one significant advertisement has designer Manish Malhotra, the man who set the grammar of popular fashion through the porous matrix of Hindi films, advising a young woman on how to wash the *zari* in the traditional silks and saris that she has proudly stacked up in her wardrobe. The assumption is clearly of these not being just occasion wear or a one-time statement but meant to be worn regularly and, therefore, frequently washed at home. This attribute of everydayness is freeing up Indian fashion from the dictates that we have so long assumed as a given.

For long, fashion has been the most visible barometer of anthropological studies. And by that measure, India’s millennial story is to be found in what we wear, rather how we live our mindset. One that has come full circle after liberalisation and opened us to the world. Post-WTO, there was a rush to co-opt a Western standard of brand consciousness and grammar. And no matter what the unease or inhibition, there was a willingness to engage with the currency of globalisation, even open acceptance of it. There was a McDonaldisation process as well that brought us out of our stiffness and made casual Friday dressing a linking code of behaviour, both in formal and informal spaces. The open democracy and gender neutrality of the casual wear market had a lasting social consequence, that of looking good everyday and being comfortable in a crowd. The exposure to refined silhouettes and minimalism of boutique fashion houses meant that we could structure our appearances better. It further meant that we could define the global Indian by what s/he wore and the accessories s/he carried; the tags could be identified anywhere. It was also the time when our designers sought international collaborations, using the luxurious heritage of our craftsmanship, to lend some accents to the ramps in New York, Milan and London.

Post-1990s, we were taking strides to be at one with the world. Almost three decades on, we are a significant player, our newfound politico-economical heft giving us the confidence to own our cultural identity. That’s why Banaras is not just about saris but has emerged as a concept and motif of one of our many identity markers. We have co-opted Western structures and silhouettes to the extent of blending them with our sensibility and becoming the Indian-global rather than the global Indian. Fashion today also has finally broken through the Western



concept of seasonality of spring-summer and fall-winter and decided its own timeline. Free-flowing drapes are in, khadi is in the middle of an evolutionary explosion and the *kurta-churidaar*-wasitcoat ensemble has become the most androgynous and modernist statement there is. Our designers, too, now see a potential in the domestic market and instead of international collaborations, are taking their craftsmanship to high streets in fashion capitals of the world, choosing to be an ethnic Indian label that is not just about identity but about philosophy, of handmade skills and originality, sustainability, vibrancy, colour and people. In the neo-Indian assertion of why the world ought to be at our feet, we are literally wearing it on our sleeves. And doing so with a refined sense of style that has finally taught us how fusion ought to be, a cultural memory blended with functional grammar, the deep-rooted knowledge of both now defining our body consciousness.

According to a study by Technopak, India’s ethnic wear industry is expected to grow to ₹ 1,26,210 crore at the end of this fiscal, 83 per cent of it in women’s wear. A survey by clothing brand Biba showed that ethnic wear is a preferred

outfit for women aged between 16 to 50 years, particularly in Tier II and Tier III cities.

This is significant since it reflects the empowerment of women in the social, economic and political space and their emergence as a sizeable chunk of the market. It also points to their greater buying capacity by virtue of their increased participation in the workforce. Particularly in the boardroom, where the woman had to be seen mannish in every aspect, be it in approach or power dressing to break the glass ceiling, the rules of appearance have changed completely. Women are keeping to their traditional preferences and body types with different cuts and drapes. The *salwars* have transformed to palazzos and long-flowing skirts, the embellishment streaks through short *kurtis*, the *anarkali* is becoming an asymmetrical cape, the *kurtas* are now long floor-length dresses while saris are being structured as cocktail gowns. Fusion wear, in fact, is now about day, casual and even evening wear. The Indo-Western genre has emerged as a good option for the youth who may still want the cool quotient of the university jeans and T-shirt routine and want to look ethnic at the same time.

A new consciousness about where we come from has meant a renewed interest in the sari, fabrics and our metals. Online sari-wearing challenges have translated into a revivalist search of the diversity of fabric and design and a rediscovery of cotton. This has helped designers and cooperatives rescue weaving clusters and organise the local market. India’s metal and mineral wealth has also fuelled a demand for tribal jewellery as standout avant-garde statements. The comfort with drapes and flowing lines has been directly proportional to a greater embrace of “otherness”, be it of the LGBTQ community or even men themselves, who have been strait jacketed so far by colonialism but are now at home with civilisational logic in sartorial choices, that we need to use organic and breathable fabrics and feel light and easy in a tropical land. Fluidity is in.

Fashion then has become the most accurate reflection of the empowerment of the mind beyond causes or politics. In fact, it has become a tapestry of our neo-consciousness. One that is proud of expressing personal experiences and narratives, localised contexts, embroidery and fabrics (like Bhagalpur silk and Assam *muga*) and even architectural motifs from our

heritage sites and structures.

Of course, in climate challenged times, matching India’s initiatives in environment politics, Indian fashion has emerged as one of the most sustainable choices there is as creators reuse, re-engineer and recycle heirlooms. Be it zero-waste production processes, locally-sourced and woven linen or use of natural dyes, sustainability is gradually becoming the wardrobe mainstay. Particularly, fair-trade practices and the direct sourcing from and benefits to weavers’ and craft clusters have meant that social responsibility is dominating popular choice. Designers are now working independently with craft clusters, often picking out the under-utilised ones, value-adding to their dead stock and joining hands with other societies/groups that are known for mastering a particular craft. This Gandhian essence of the grassroots, that mirrors the primacy of rural India in the political space, has made our fashion industry truly inclusive in its sense of purpose.

In fact, India’s new fashion mantra is not about ethnocentrism or muscularity. But yes, it is robust, meaningful and confident.

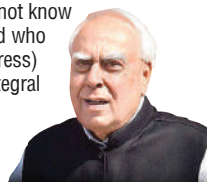
(The writer is Associate Editor, The Pioneer)

## SOUNDBITE

Modiji only remembers

(Article) 370. He does not know when Pakistan split and who did it. It was we (Congress) who split Pakistan’s integral part from it...

Congress leader  
—Kapil Sibal



To me, fitness is about complete well-being, psychological, emotional and physical. I eat well but mindfully and work out consistently.

Actor  
—Shriya Pilgaonkar



We believe that India and China should correctly view their differences and never let differences negatively affect the overall effort of bilateral cooperation.

Chinese Ambassador  
—Sun Weidong



In spite of the Congress being in power for so many years, why aren’t the people siding with its ideology? Because national interest is foremost for the people.

BJP leader  
—Radhakrishna Vikhe Patil



## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Rally controversy

Sir — This refers to the report, “Sonia gives Haryana rally a miss...fill void” (October 19). Congress president Sonia Gandhi’s son Rahul cited his mother’s viral fever to be the reason behind her inability to turn up at an election rally in Haryana. However, Sonia has not been attending any public functions of late, apparently on the advice of her doctors.

Officially, the rally in Mahendragarh was the only one which she was to address. There could be two reasons for scheduling the rally for Sonia by the Congress’ campaign managers despite knowing about her poor health. First, they might have hoped she would be up and about in time to address the rally. Second, since Sonia remains the tallest leader in the Congress with a crowd-pulling potential, party bosses continued bandying her name about till the last minute to gain maximum traction and build up expectations. Of course, it fuelled speculation about the old vs new war.

Navin Chawla  
Chandigarh

### Safeguard bank depositors

This refers to the editorial, “Lessons from PMC” (October 17). The collapse of the Punjab and Maharashtra Cooperative (PMC) Bank has put the focus back on the need for effective regulation modules. It is the responsibility of the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) to regulate lesser banks. It cannot escape questions each time an institution regulated by it fails for public money is involved. With banking scams becoming the new normal now, it is increasingly becoming clear that the RBI must own up to its failure as a monitor. The PMC scandal should be a wake-up call for developing an early warning system.

As has been seen, it is because of the rich scamsters, who loot the banks, that the middle classes, who toil day and night to save money for future needs, are left in the lurch. The bigger question is how to compensate the hapless victims of bank frauds. The Government as also the RBI must collaborate and find a solution. On its part, the Central bank must do all it can to sense early



warning signals of a fraud and carry out pre-emptive strikes. Proper response triggers are the only way to save the common man from predators.

Pragya Jain  
Via email

### Learn from Bangladesh

Sir — This refers to the editorial, “Still too hungry” (October 18). The UNICEF’s State of World’s Children and the Global Hunger Index report for Indian children are not too surprising. It only states the truth that India has not made much headway in reducing malnutrition and is

wasting food. Yes, natural calamities do play havoc and compound this situation. But when we can strive for 100 per cent electrification and complete polio eradication, why not target this menace, too, with the same zeal? If Bangladesh can do it, why can’t we? India needs to learn. What it needs is great political will.

Bal Govind  
Noida

### Save the banks

Sir — This refers to the editorial, “Lessons from PMC” (October 17). Increasing instances of bank scams in India mean that fraudsters are looting the public money with impunity. These scams are the brightest examples of how the poor account holders are being cheated out of their hard-earned

money deposited in safe custody of banks. No doubt, higher officials have mastered the art of fudging books to play around with the poor depositors’ money. Both the Union and State Governments must take credible, pragmatic and effective steps for expeditious solution of the crisis-ridden PMC.

Nimai Charan Swain  
Bhubaneswar

### Unsafe Capital

Sir — This refers to the report, “Snatchers have free run! Secy to Delhi Speaker latest victim” (October 19). Instances of chain, purse and mobile snatching are on an alarming rise in the national Capital. So much so that one has stopped wearing chains, necklaces and carrying mobiles in hand when out on the street. And girls are concentrating more on clutching their purses while travelling. It’s high time the authorities resort to technology and camera devices to track gangs.

Shristi  
Via email

Send your feedback to:  
letterstopioneer@gmail.com



# ‘ACT-EAST POLICIES MUST BE PRACTICAL AND SUSTAINABLE’

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**■ One of the important changes that you**



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

(Photo: Md. Meharban)



CAPSULE

SBI to conduct e-auction of 11 accounts

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

IMF chief says 'peer pressure' building up

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

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

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

Thai tourism hotspots slash prices

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

SAYS MOVE SABOTAGES PM'S DIGITAL INDIA VISION

Jio slams TRAI's IUC review as anti-poor

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

Trai's move to reopen the



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

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

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

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

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

business, Jio alleged.

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

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

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

the authority," it said.

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

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

Many nations wary of crypto currencies

PNS ■ WASHINGTON

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

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

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

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

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

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

‘CCI proactive in ensuring market correction’

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



Ashok Kumar Gupta

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

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

India decries lack of support for IMF quota increase

PNS ■ WASHINGTON

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

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

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

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

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



Nirmala Sitharaman

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

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

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

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

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

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

Quota increases under the



AAI to monetise 759 acres of land

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

UNIMARK REMEDIES RESOLUTION

‘Umpire’ to finalise split verdict

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

headed by Chairperson Justice S J Mukhopadhyaya.

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

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

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

Alliance Air flights on new routes soon

PNS ■ CHENNAI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

On the launch of new routes



C S Subbiah

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

ble burning, the chamber said in a statement.

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





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

GANESH NALLARI, FASHION AND TEXTILE DESIGNER



## FASHION IN TUNE WITH ENVIRONMENT

The hall was lined with stalls of clothes, accessories, healthcare materials, food products and many others on one end. The other end was packed with people seated in rows, their faces lit up with intrigue and anticipation about the event that has unfolded in front of them. This was the scene at the Slow Fashion Collective '19 hosted by Nico's Open House, the brainchild of Nikhath Khan, in association with Mango Juice Marketing on October 19 and 20.

The aim was to promote a fashion revolution bringing together the best of slow, sustainable and upcycled fashion and several other environmental and health-friendly products to Hyderabad.

The event kicked off with a riveting panel discussion featuring some of the most prominent

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"Fashion is a reflection of the society and with the Slow Fashion Collective we are trying to bring about a change in the way fashion is consumed. We are encouraging consumers to be more thoughtful when they buy products and look for

quality over quantity while purchasing clothes," says Madhulika Jhawar, who is part of the PR team of Mango Juice Marketing.

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

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



## UPASANA'S GENTLE NOTE TO MODI

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

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

stars. Is this ignorance towards the South Indian film industry a debate for another day though.

Modi interacted with members of the film industry on Saturday at his residence in Delhi which was attended by Bollywood icons like Shah Rukh Khan, Aamir Khan, Kangana Ranaut, Sonam Kapoor, Jacqueline Fernandez and filmmakers like Imtiaz Ali, Ekta Kapoor, Anurag Basu and Boney Kapoor.

The meeting with the Indian film fraternity was to discuss initiatives to mark the

150 birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi. Modi urged the film industry to channelise its energy and come up with initiatives to motivate ordinary citizens. He also promised that his government will extend full support to the film industry for its overall development.

However, according to reports, no one from the South film industry were invited to the event except for Dil Raju. This was aptly pointed out by Upasana Kamineni. Upset over his actions, she took a screenshot of his tweet — which had

him posing with Bollywood stars — and subtly reminded him that there is a film industry in the South too.

She said, "Dearest Narendra Modi ji. We in South of India admire you and proud to have you as our Prime Minister. With all due respect, we felt that the representation of leading personalities and cultural icons was limited only to Hindi artists and the South film industry

was neglected. I express my feelings with pain and hope it is taken in the right spirit."

This post has garnered a lot of attention from netizens and is now doing the rounds on social media with people questioning Modi's biased attitude.

A point worth mentioning is that many Tollywood directors are directing big budget Bollywood movies with the stars.



## PRESERVING CLASSICAL MUSIC

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

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

The first set of the concert was performed by renowned carnatic Gotuvadyam musician, Vidwan Allam Durga Prasad, who was accompanied...

Continued on page 10





Continued from page 9

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

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

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

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



## PRESERVING classical music

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Trash4Cash can fetch you entry to LALALAND FEST!

Old newspapers, empty cigarette packets and ubiquitous packets of potato chips can fetch you a ticket to a jamboree, the "LalaLand Festival" in Goa, which is aimed at promoting crossover art forms, sustainable innovations, new experiences and global trends.

The unique "Trash4Cash" model can fetch a festival ticket worth Rs 499 in exchange for 15 old newspapers and 20 empty cigarette or chips packs, according to festival director Noreen van Holstein, a Dutch artist settled in Goa.

Speaking to IANS, Holstein said, the festival to be held on November 1-2 in North Goa, among other things includes a novel power generation mechanism for some sections of the event.

"The power required for some sections will be generated manually. There will be power as long as people cycle and run. That energy will be converted into electrical energy, which will power some parts of the event," Holstein said.

LaLaLand is billed as an affordable festival of magic and happiness, circus and madness, with 20 plus acts on three different stages. The performances include circus and acrobatics, fire dances, magic shows, dramatic performances, silent disco, alcohol and local, as well as global cuisine and music.

The festival can be accessed by a "payment in kind", specifically trash. "The idea is simple. With the collected trash one can buy a one-day festival ticket worth of Rs 499. All you need is to bring 15 old newspapers and 20 empty cigarette or chips packs (clean) to our collection points before the event to earn your tickets," she said.

Holstein was at the forefront of India's first waste bar earlier this year, where patrons could exchange cigarette butts and other trash for beer. At that time, a lot of trash was collected, but there was no back-end plan to process them.

The Lalaland Festival has scaled up its systems now to add value to the collected trash. The trash, she said, would be processed into articles of

value, like lamps.

"Unless trash is leveraged with economic value, rather than purely a philanthropic or environment push, there may not be an grassroots movement for its efficient disposal," van Holstein said.

According to her, garbage, in general, is an issue not just in Goa or India, but worldwide. The entire system needs to change. Waste either needs to be reduced or it should be altered from something non-valuable into an object of value. "Only when trash has an economic incentive, it will be disposed of in a more efficient manner," she said.

A sustainable business model should be worked out, not just from an environment point of view, but one that was also economically viable, she said.

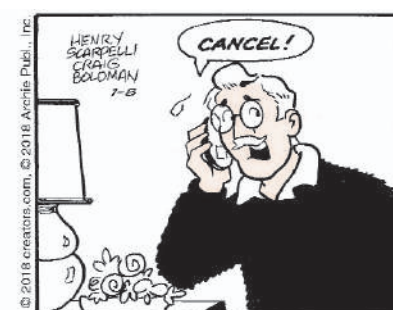
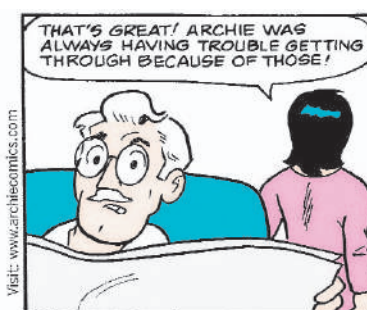
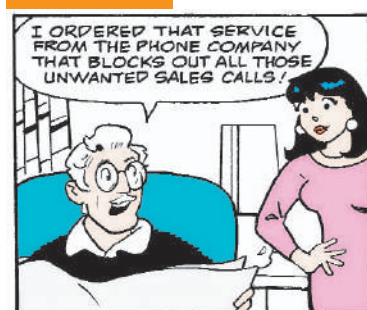
Plastic chips packets for example, Holstein said, had no value once used and thus they were one of the most common article of trash disposed in the open. "But we are turning the packets that we collect as part of Trash4Cash into lamps," she said.

The festival has also listed "silent disco" as one of its signature events.



## FUN TIME

### ARCHIE



### CALVIN AND HOBBS



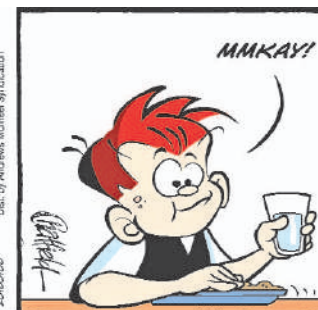
### GARFIELD



### NANCY



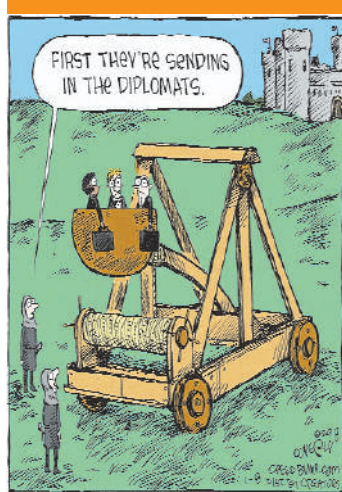
### GINGER MEGGS



### REALITY CHECK



### SPEED BUMP



## SUDOKU

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

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

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

## CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4	5			
6				7			8
9				10			
				11			
12		13				14	15
17						16	
19							

### ACROSS

- A large group of musicians
- The steps of a ladder
- Do this when you are thirsty
- Knotted
- Opposite of newest
- Mend
- A holder for cut flowers
- A slow-moving creature
- Jewellery for fingers
- People who hide on ships to avoid paying a fare

### DOWN

- A seat on a horse
- Lift up
- Goes back to a place
- Baby cats
- Rest your head on this
- Pigtail
- Pester
- The people working on a ship or aircraft

SOLUTION							
S	A	V	E	N	E	R	
E	A	G	L	E			
P	E	N	S	E	P		
T	I	S	S	E			
E		E	F			A	
M	I	N	D		C	A	
B	I	E	S				
E	N	E	M				
R	C	E	E		R	G	
M	E	A	S				





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

# AVASARALA TAKES ON BODY SHAMING

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

movie is also packed with plenty of humour.

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

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

“

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

SRINIVAS AVASARALA  
ACTOR, FILMMAKER

## THREE LADIES FOR GANESH'S DEBUT FILM GET ONBOARD

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

ving the narrative forward," confirmed a source.

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

— NG



## VAISSHNAV TEJ'S Uppena shoot starts today

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

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

## INDIAN 2 swings into action

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

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



## FIRST LOOK

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



## Cracks in MAA resurface



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

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





# ‘Hit Man’s’ Superhit Show

After India declared on 497/9, Shami and Umesh reduced South Africa to 9 for 2

PTI ■ RANCHI

Rohit Sharma once again provided unbridled joy with his maiden Test double hundred before India's pacers dented an already scarred South Africa top-order to gain complete control in the third and final match here on Sunday.

Revelling in his new avatar, the stylish Mumbaier smashed his way to 212 off 258 balls in the company of vice-captain Ajinkya Rahane (115), as India declared their first innings at 497 for nine.

Before bad light stopped play on the second day, South Africa were reduced to nine for two in five overs. Mohammed Shami and Umesh Yadav removed Dean Elgar (0) and Quinton de Kock (4) respectively in their single over bursts, creating all sorts of discomfort.

The second day again belonged to Rohit, who scored his first double century in the longest format, having scored 176 and 127 in his 'debut' as Test opener in Visakhapatnam.

His innings had 28 boundaries and six sixes but, more importantly, it was the languid grace that stood out. The extra second to play those square cuts and the pull shots were exactly what a sparse Sunday crowd needed to rejuvenate themselves.



Batting on 199, the effortlessness with which he dispatched an express delivery from Lungi Ngidi into the mid-wicket stands with a front-foot pull, was worth a million dollars. His double hundred completed, Rohit, as if to taunt the pacer, repeated the shot and the result was same.

Rahane, who has been back in form since the tour of the West Indies, also looked solid during his 11th Test hundred and the first in India in three years — the last coming against New Zealand (October, 2016) in Indore.

The duo added 267 runs for the fourth wicket to set a solid platform before Ravindra Jadeja (51 off 119 balls) and Umesh Yadav (31 off 10 balls with five sixes) provided the final impetus.

Rohit, who has already broken the world record for most number of sixes in a series, has so far amassed 529 runs to become only the fifth Indian opener to score 500-plus runs in a bilateral face-off. Gavaskar had achieved it five times in his Test career and Sehwa was the last Indian to achieve the feat, having scored 544 runs against Pakistan in a three-Test series at home in 2004-05.

Rohit also joined Sachin Tendulkar, Virender Sehwa and Chris Gayle to notch 200-plus scores in both ODI and Test formats.

The lack of penetration in the Proteas

attack, save Kagiso Rabada (3/85 in 23 overs), has been the real problem for the visitors.

In the three Tests so far, India have had three double centuries — Mayank Agarwal, skipper Virat Kohli and now Rohit — which tells the tale.

While debutant left-arm spinner George Linde (4/133 in 31 overs) was the most successful bowler, Yadav took him to the cleaners, scoring all his sixes off his bowling.

When South Africa batted under fading light, the Indian pacers were too hot to handle.

Shami looked ominous, extracting extra bounce as he struck off the second ball. Elgar tried to remove his bat but the ball kissed the gloves en route to Wriddhiman Saha's waiting hands.

De Kock was done in by a brilliant bouncer, failing miserably in his attempt to evade as Saha timed his jump to perfection.

Faf du Plessis and Zubayr Hamza survived the remaining three overs as debutant Shahbaz Nadeem bowled two tidy maidens under floodlights.

With light deteriorating quickly in this part of the world, the Indian bowling attack would like to take advantage of the pitch on which cracks are beginning to open up, and the uneven bounce could only make life more difficult for the beleaguered South African batting line-up.

## ‘Lot could have happened if I hadn’t cashed in on opportunities’

PTI ■ RANCHI

Rohit Sharma always knew that he had to make best use of the opportunities in his new role as a Test opener or else “a lot could have happened” as far as his stint in the longest format is concerned.

“Kafi kuch hone wala tha naahin toh kaafi kuch aap likh dete mere barein mein (A lot could have happened had I not performed and you guys (media) would have written a lot about me,” a satisfied Sharma said at the day end press conference.

“So it was about making most of the opportunities I got. I knew I had to make full use of it, otherwise media would have written against me. Now I know everyone will write good things about me,” he added.



Rohit has amassed 529 runs from four innings thus becoming the only fifth Indian opener to score 500-plus runs in a Test series.

“It was a good opportunity for me to open the batting. As I said during the Vizag Test, the communication between me and my team management was happening for a long time about opening the batting. So mentally, I was ready for it. I knew it could come at anytime.”

His double century came after India were left reeling at 39/3 in the first morning as he along with Ajinkya Rahane (115) staged a remarkable turnaround with a mammoth 267-run fourth wicket partnership, the highest versus South Africa.

“Speaking of this particular knock, I would say it was most challenging. I have not played much. I played only 30

Tests. In terms of what was thrown at me, I would definitely say it was probably the most challenging one,” the talented Mumbaier said.

While he has had a blockbuster start to his career as a Test opener, Rohit himself acknowledged that he has a long way to go.

“In Tests, it has its challenges. Having played only three Tests as an opener, I know I have long way to go. I am not reading too much into these three Tests. Of course, I will take a lot of positives but I am not reading too much into it.”

Talking about the challenge of opening the batting, he said, “Opening the batting is a different challenge to batting at Nos 6-7. It's just about how you prepare yourself, what you talk to yourself in your mind about what do you want to go out

there and achieve.

“Playing the first ball of the match, compared to facing a delivery after 30-40 overs is a different ball game altogether. There's nothing in particular that I've done in terms of technique.”

The 32-year-old is now eyeing to replicate the success overseas when the tour New Zealand next year.

“Wherever you play the new ball, you have to have some understanding of the basics of the game. Which ball you have to play and leave. In certain aspects of the game you have to be mindful of.

“I was allowing myself to take time rather than going after the ball straightaway. It's not a good idea with a new ball. You got to play with a little lower backlift. In overseas, of course, it's a different ball game. That's a challenge and I am awaiting.”



## Former players slam PCB for sacking Sarfaraz as captain

PTI ■ KARACHI

Pakistan's former stalwarts on Sunday lashed out at the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) for acting in haste in removing Sarfaraz Ahmed as captain in all three formats of the game.

Most of the former captains and players termed the removal of Sarfaraz on Friday as unjust. Not surprisingly the head coach and chief selector Misbah-ul-Haq and bowling coach Waqar Younis were also targeted and blamed for engineering the ouster of Sarfaraz.

The wicketkeeper-batsman is also unlikely to be part of the touring Pakistan T20 or Test squad to Australia later this month.

Batting great Javed Miandad said since Sarfaraz had gained considerable experience as a captain in the last two years, he should have been given time to regain his form instead of just sacking him.

“Azhar's appointment as Test captain is okay but if the Board wanted to appoint Babar as white-ball captain, they should have first groomed him as I fear the burden of T20 captaincy will affect his batting,” Miandad said.

Former Test batsman and ex-head coach and chief selector Mohsin Khan said, “He (Sarfaraz) took Pakistan to number one in T20 cricket and he is a fighter. This is a decision taken in haste and it could also affect the career of Babar.”

Former captain Rashid Latif minced no words in stating that the Board had erred by making Babar captain of the T20 side.

“He is a selfish player and we have seen this in international cricket and now in the national T20 championship. Sarfaraz is not a selfish captain and sacrificed his position many times for the team. He did not deserve this treatment,” he said.

Former skipper Moin Khan said he was shocked at the way the Board had treated Sarfaraz.

“He (Sarfaraz) has shown himself to be a fine captain and yes he was struggling a bit for form but when a senior player is under pressure you have to encourage and back him, not dump him like this,” Moin said.

He noted that Misbah and Waqar had never been fond of Sarfaraz and with them in charge, this sacking was expected.

Former Test pacer Aaqib Javed also criticised the Board for taking a strange decision.

“I don't know from where these decisions are coming but they make no sense at all to me. Sarfaraz should have been relieved as Test captain but the Board should have given him some time as captain of white-ball cricket.”

Another former captain Ramiz Raja, however, felt that the Board had taken a brave decision to appoint Babar Azam as T20 captain and said people defending Sarfaraz should accept his poor form in recent months as skipper.

“We were struggling in Test cricket, we did not reach semifinals of the World Cup. We lost to a Sri Lankan 'B' team in T20 cricket and his own form is on a decline. I think the Board acted properly by investing in a young player in the white-ball formats. If Babar develops into a good leader he can also become Test captain,” he said.

## ‘Big surprise’ says Murray as ex-world NO.1 reaches final

AFP ■ ANTWERP (BELGIUM)

Former world number one Andy Murray reached his first final in more than two and a half years and admitted it was a “big surprise”.

Murray, steadily rebuilding his singles game after career-saving hip surgery in January, defeated France's Ugo Humbert 3-6, 7-5, 6-2 to make the championship match at the European Open.

“It's been a big surprise to me. I'm happy to be into the final,” he told *Amazon Prime*.

“It's been a long road to get back to this point. I certainly didn't expect it to come so soon since I started playing again.” On Sunday, the 32-year-old Briton will tackle fellow three-time Grand Slam title winner Stan Wawrinka in the final.



Murray, now ranked a lowly 243, last reached a final in Dubai in March 2017 where he won the most recent of his 45 career titles.

He is now playing for the fourth successive week on tour having only returned to singles at Cincinnati in August.

Murray leads Wawrinka 11-8 in

head-to-head meetings.

“I think it will be a nice match to play,” added the Briton of Sunday's duel.

“Me and Stan have played a lot against each other. It is nice that we are both able to be back playing against each other in a final.”

Wawrinka earlier ended Italian teenager Jannik Sinner's fine run in Belgium, the Swiss veteran defeating the 18-year-old 6-3, 6-2 to reach his 30th career final.

Sinner was the youngest player to make the semi-finals of an ATP tournament since 17-year-old Borna Coric in 2014.

But he met his match in 18th-ranked Wawrinka, with the 34-year-old taking one hour and 59 minutes to edge closer to a first title since winning the Geneva Open in May 2017.

PTI ■ BENGALURU

Opener KL Rahul continued his good form as his stroke-filled 90 guided Karnataka to the semi-finals even as another out-of-favour opener Shikhar Dhawan's failure proved costly with Delhi exiting from another quarter-finals of the Vijay Hazare Trophy here on Sunday.

While Karnataka cruised to an eight-wicket victory over Puducherry in one of the quarter-finals, Delhi lost by six wickets to Gujarat via VJD Method in another last eight clash.

Put into bat, Puducherry crawled to 207 for 9 with Vikneshwaran MM Marimuthu top scoring with an unbeaten 58.

The Karnataka bowlers led by the vastly experienced Abhimanyu Mithun (2-35) ran through the Pondicherry top and middle order before Mariimuthu and Sagar Trivedi (54) tried to rally their innings.

Pondicherry were reeling at 41 for 6 at one stage before Mariimuthu and Trivedi pulled them out of trouble and gave the score some semblance of respectability.

The Karnataka bowlers kept striking at regular intervals to ensure that their opponents were restricted to a sub-par total. Leg-spinner Pravin Dubey (3-44) and seamer Vasuki Koushik (2-33) also shared the spoils.

In the second quarterfinal, Gujarat defeated Delhi by 6 wickets via the VJD method.

Put into bat at the Just Cricket ground, Gujarat dismissed Delhi for 223 in 49 overs as no Delhi batsman barring skipper Dhruv Shorey (91) showed any fight.

India player Shikhar Dhawan's horrendous form continued as he fell for a zero.

IPL specialist Nitish Rana (33) and young Himmat Singh (26) failed to convert their starts.

For Gujarat, pacers Chintan Gaja (3-27) and left armer Arzan Nagaswalla (3-75) were among the wickets.

While chasing, skipper Parthiv Patel (76) and his opening partner Priyank Panchal (80) put on 150 runs for the first wicket to take game away from Delhi.

Delhi did try to make a comeback but it was too little too late as Gujarat overhauled the target in the 37th over.

## Barua set to drag chess bosses to court

NAVIN UPADHYAY ■ NEW DELHI

India's second Grandmaster and Arjuna awardee Dibyendu Barua plans to bring a contempt of court plea against All India Chess Federation after a three-members AICF committee gave clean chit to the Federation joint secretary and Bengal chess Association suspended secretary Atanu Lahiri on a plethora of charges when the matter was sub-judice.

“This is clear case of contempt of court. The court is seized with the matter and had rejected Lahiri prayer against his removal as BCA secretary by the working committee of the BCA,” Barua told *The Pioneer*.

On October 15, late at night the AICF issued a report in which the three-member committee had given clean a chit to Lahiri.

Barua had accused Lahiri of routing huge amount of fund received from the state government to his own chess promotion company in a clear case of conflict of interest. Barua produced documents to show that Rs 23 lakh in cash was withdrawn from Lahiri's

company--Global Chess- in around 53 weeks.

Interestingly, the committee has dismissed this charge saying the routing of fund to a personal company didn't amount to misappropriation of fund and refused to treat it as a case of conflict of interest. “Since the fund does not relate to either the BCA or AICF, the question of any misappropriation of chess association fund does not Arise,” it said in its report.

This is a clear case of trying to deflect attention from the crucial charge that Lahiri used his position as the BCA secretary to divert fund to his company Global Chess—a clear case of conflict of interest.

And that is how it should have been treated by the committee instead of making an attempt to obfuscate the issue by talking about “misappropriation of funds.”

Barua also accused Lahiri of not allowing him to hold a youth tournament and banning two of India top players, Grandmaster Surya Sekhar Ganguly and Deep Sen Gupta, from taking part in Bengal Chess events. Lahiri also



barred under-9 national girls' champion Sneha Halder from playing in a tournament on disciplinary grounds.

Obviously, the committee had no intention to reach to the bottom of truth. Its members just met in Chennai without caring to visit West Bengal and meet the complainants and other stakeholders. The members did not care to meet the minister or secretary of the trial development department of West Bengal. The ministry had taken cognizance of Barua's complaint and terminated its agreement with Global Chess of Lahiri.

When a similar case of conflict of interest rocked the Indian cricket, there was so many hue and cries than an expert committee

consisting of people from outside the BCCI were roped into probe the matter. But in the case of AICF, the task was given to a chosen few who were colleague of Lahiri himself.

To begin with the composition of the committee itself looked suspect since the AICF secretary was kept out of it. As per AICF constitution any such committee must include the AICF secretary. This makes the committee itself illegal.

Secondly, Barua had also written to the AICF President PR Venketrama Raja expressing his reservation about the committee. The AICF President should have realized that Barua is not wood pusher but a chess player of repute who had brought much laurels to the country and played a stellar role in popularizing chess. If a player of his stature makes some plea, it must be taken seriously. Alas, Barua was treated with sheer contempt and nothing else. His letter to the AICF President had no impact and the committee remained unchanged.

The committee's finding flies in the face of the Court's proceed-

ings.

The Court's order clearly states the presence of a “prima facie” case even as it directed the AICF not to issue any direction to the BCA to hold election or take any other decision regarding the dispute.

The most intriguing things about the AICF clean chit to Lahiri on October 15 is that it came on the day when AICF central council met to discuss among others, the West Bengal affairs. The issue was foremost on the agenda, but AICF secretary Bharat Singh Chauhan announced that it would not be taken up because the matter was sub-judice. Only a few hours later, the AICF came out with the clean chit to Lahiri.

Why was not the report placed before the council? This is the question which has baffled the Barua camp.

“I never expected this committee to do any justice. I've never heard of such a farce. They confined themselves to Chennai and didn't even summon me to depose before them. Why didn't they summon Surya Sekhar Ganguly and other chess players, who were

banned by Lahiri?”

“I'm going to fight till the bitter end. We can't allow a handful of self seeking officials to destroy the dignity of this game,” he said.

Of later, the India chess has been in the news for all the wrong reasons. Charges of high-handedness, illegal dismissal of state associations, threats and abuses by officials against players and juniors, and allegation of sleaze have destroyed the image of a game which was once linked with ‘gentlemen’.

“The situation has become so grim that the day is not far when we will have some scandalous video involving some top officials out in open. That day we will have to hang our head in shame,” said a senior player.

“I don't blame the AICF president. He is gentleman. Since he is a top businessman of the country, I don't expect him to be involved in day to day affair of chess. Some people around him are taking advantage of the situation and trying to create a coterie. I hope the president will see through their design and do justice,”