

**ANALYSIS 7**  
END FOOD WASTAGE;  
FEED MILLIONS

**MONEY 8**  
BSE SEEKS EXPLANATION  
FROM INFOSYS

**SPORTS 12**  
DADAGIRI  
UNLIMITED

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

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Page 9



## BSNL, MTNL to be merged

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

Briefing reporters on decisions taken by the Cabinet headed by Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Telecom Minister Ravi Shankar Prasad said the government will put in Rs 29,937 crore for revival of the two state-owned telecom companies.

The revival package includes raising of Rs 15,000 crore sovereign bonds and monetising Rs 38,000 crore of assets in next four years.

## Congress to boycott TV debates today

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

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

Party spokesperson will also be available in AICC headquarters.

## Ram Mandir construction to begin in 6-8 months: VHP

NEW DELHI: With less than a month before the Supreme Court verdict on the Ayodhya title dispute, the Vishwa Hindu Parishad has given a time frame as to when Ram Temple's construction can begin. International Working President Alok Kumar said that in the next six to eight months, the building of the temple at the disputed site will begin.

"Since it is the temple of maryada purushottam, a person who set up and adhered to all the laws... we would also adhere to that. It may take six to eight months to complete the compliances," Alok Kumar said. The top court has already concluded heading arguments of both sides and expected to give the verdict before Chief Justice of India Ranjan Gogoi, who headed the Ayodhya case bench, retires on Nov 17.

## CM Jagan moots for disease-free state

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy is taking cautious measures to make AP disease-free state. He directed the officials concerned to implement a pilot project to provide nutritious food to women and children aged below six years in tribal and sub-plan areas.

The pilot project would be implemented in 77 tribal and sub-plan mandals in December by providing nutritious food worth Rs 1,062 per month to each pregnant woman and also for post-delivery care and by providing YSR Bala Sanjeevini kits which include meals and eggs for 25 days, 200 ml of milk, 2 kg of wheat flour in the first week, half a kg groundnut chikkis in the second week, half a kg of ragi flour and half a kg of jaggery in the third week and half-a-kg of sesame seed sweet meats in the fourth week.

Similarly, each child aged below six years would be provided with nutritious food worth Rs 560 every month for 25 days in a month in 77 tribal and sub-plan mandals which includes meals, eggs, 200 ml of milk and other dietary food.

As part of the pilot project, 36 tribal mandals have been identified with one in Srikakulam district, seven in Vizianagaram district, 11 in Visakhapatnam, 11 in East Godavari district and six in



The pilot project would be implemented in 77 tribal and sub-plan mandals in December by providing nutritious food worth Rs 1,062 per month to each pregnant woman

West Godavari district. In total, 41 sub-plan mandals have been identified as part of the pilot project including 19 in Srikakulam, six in Visakhapatnam, four in East Godavari, three in West Godavari, three in Prakasam, three in Kurnool, and three in Guntur district.

The Chief Minister conducted a review meeting with the officials concerned on the mid-day meal scheme and nutritious food for children. The Chief Minister directed the officials to ensure nutritious food as part

of the mid-day meal and also sought suggestions on improving the implementation of the scheme. He directed the officials to take the advice of experts in the field to improve the implementation of the scheme.

The Chief Minister held another meeting with women and child welfare and education ministers Taneti Banitha, Adimulapu Suresh and other officials. He said the scheme would be expanded to other areas after implementation of the pilot project.

## Naidu, Yanamala have embarked on false propoganda against govt: FM

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Finance Minister Buggana Ranjendranath on Wednesday lashed out at Opposition Leader Nara Chandrababu and senior TDP leader Yanamala Ramakrishnu claiming their comments 'mischievous' and 'misleading'.

Buggana said as per the India Innovative Index, Andhra Pradesh has secured the 10th rank, but Yanamala Ramakrishnu claimed that the State had fallen to the tenth rank. "This ranking has been given for the first time. Now, where is the question of fall in the rank? Besides, the ranking has been given based on the



data availability in the past five years," the Minister said.

The India Innovative Index is a survey conducted by NITI Aayog and the ranking is based on indicators such as enablers

This ranking has been given for the first time. Now, where is the question of fall in the rank? Besides, the ranking has been given based on the data availability in the past five years

—BUGGANA RANJENDRANATH, Finance Minister

and performance of every State in the country. It takes 10 years for assessment of enablers five years for performance, he explained. "I think Yanamala Ramakrishnu has not read the report properly," the Minister said. Buggana questioned the time frame for Ph.D programmes, establishment of labs and industrial clusters and told that the indicators were taken from the previous

government regime. The minister said the performance is ranked by indicators such as patents filed from the State, industrial design for origin and number of publications from the state. "Can all these be done in three months? The comments made by the Opposition Leader are mischievous," the Finance Minister said.

Continued on Page 3

## SAND POLICY

## Government issues fresh guidelines

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The State government has issued on Wednesday an order with fresh guidelines for implementation of new sand mining policy which came to effect on September 4.

As per the temporary guidelines, which will be in force for a period of three months, transportation of sand shall be for local use by means of bullock carts / tractors within the district con-



cerned. The district Collector shall furnish the list of streams, village-wise to all the village secretariats of the dis-

trict. The consumers of sand shall pay the amount to the Government account, as prescribed in the GO.

The In-charge of the concerned village secretariat shall appoint a village volunteer at the sand reach for supervision of the sand operations and ensure smooth functioning of the sand activity, duly maintaining registers for number of trips & quantity of sand transported from the reach.

Continued on Page 3

## Govt opens up fuel retailing to non-oil firms

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

The government on Wednesday opened up fuel retailing norms, allowing non-oil companies to set up petrol pumps to increase competition. Briefing reporters about the decisions taken by the Cabinet, I&B Minister Prakash Javadekar said the opening up of the fuel retailing will increase investment and competition.



## 'Capital will be finalised after committee report'

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Minister Botsa Satyanarayana on Wednesday said that the final place of state capital will be decided only after the expert committee releases its report. Responding to the allegations levelled against the state government by former chief minister N Chandrababu Naidu on the state capital, he questioned Naidu on the delay in constructions in Amaravati despite obtaining all necessary clearances. He fired at Naidu for borrowing Rs 1.65 lakh crore under the name of development but has done nothing in reality.

Botsa also accused Naidu of destroying established systems for his selfish goals. The loss caused to the state was more in the TDP rule compared to the loss caused due to bifurcation. He said capital does not belong to any particular community, but to all communities.

The people want a permanent state capital, while the government wants equal development of all districts.

He said that former chief minister did not draw his lessons in spite of tasting bitter defeat in the last elections.

Referring to Babu's remarks that YS Jagan suspended Amaravati fearing that it would make him even more popular, the minister dubbed them as ridiculous and ques-



The five-year rule of Chandrababu caused enormous loss to the state, which, Botsa felt, would not be able to be bridged so soon

tioned his actions during his five-year regime. He alleged that, Naidu could only build temporary structures in Amaravati by shelling down Rs 10,000 per square foot over and above the normal cost of Rs 3,000.

Moreover, Botsa also accused Naidu of passing off uncleared bills worth Rs 50,000 crore to the new regime. Chandrababu had forfeited his right to question Jagan's government on the state's development, he opined.

## AP's ride to Centre bumpy due to CBI cases on Jagan: Pawan Kalyan

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Jana Sena president Pawan Kalyan has levelled serious accusations against Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy and passed sweeping comments against him saying a person like Jagan who figured in CBI cases would not be able to do anything for the State because of the court cases. Addressing party leaders from Parakasam district at the Jana Sena office here on Wednesday, he said, the condition of so pitiable that Union Ministers could not be met and quoted the example of how Jagan had to confine one whole day of his Delhi tour to his rest house. It was so painful, he commented.

To demand anything from Center for the AP, the CBI



Jana Sena president Pawan Kalyan releasing a poster on ensuing program in Visakhapatnam along with Nandendla Monohar

cases would come in the way, he said quoting Jagan's experience in his recent Delhi tour

as an example. Jagan had to return to state without achieving anything because of the

To demand anything from Centre for the AP, the CBI cases would come in the way, pawan said, citing Jagan's experience in his recent Delhi tour as an example

Continued on Page 3

## I-T raids unearth Rs 1,000 crore hawala money

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

In a massive search operation in Delhi, the Income Tax (I-T) department has unearthed hawala and other accommodation entries of more than Rs 1,000 crore.

The tax department has also found links to money laundering involving the business group engaged in e-governance projects and financial services.

"The search and seizure action has led to unearthing of several incriminating evidence establishing large scale tax evasion, hawala transactions and money laundering by the said taxpayer group," the tax department said in a statement.

The business group has presence across several cities in the country in India and also in Dubai.

## HUZURNAGAR BYPOLL

## Counting of votes today

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

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

Godown at Suryapet. The polling held on October 21 was incident-free and a good 84.76 per cent electors turned up for voting.

The bypoll, has been necessitated due to the resignation of state Congress president N Uttam Kumar Reddy following his election to Lok Sabha.

## Visakhapatnam's ancient icon comes down crashing

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The incessant rains caused due to the low pressure in the West Central Bay of Bengal destroyed the oldest monument of Visakhapatnam, the 2,000-year-old Buddhist Stupa atop Thotlakonda located on the Bhimili beach road. Experts of Archeological Survey of India did some renovation work in 2016 but the work proved to be substandard as it could not withstand three days down-pour. Taking serious view of the crash, INTACH activist Rani Sarma submitted a letter to the chief secretary KV Subrahmanyam on Wednesday demanding inquiry into the incident and requested him to take strict against the officials who ignored national conservation norms.

She further said, "In the last few years, she had been cautioning the State Government that they should not interfere with the ancient archaeological remains at Thotlakonda Buddhist site and if at all it felt some conservation measures are absolutely necessary, they should strictly conform to the National Policy for



Buddhist Stupa atop Thotlakonda hilllock then and now after rains damaged the structure. Original structure (inset)

Conservation of the Ancient Monuments, Archaeological Sites and Remains approved by the Union Cabinet in 2014."

"Unfortunately, the previous State government had chosen to subordinate the State Archaeological department to the State Tourism department and indiscriminately undertook construction activity, some of which even violated the provisions of AP Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Sites and Remains Act of 1960.

She said after she approached the high court, the state government stopped construction

activity," she said, adding, the then State government had deployed an inexperienced contractor to reconstruct some of the Buddhist archaeological remains and apparently in utter disregard to the national conservation policy.

The reconstruction work has cost the public dearly. The amount involved which has since become infructuous should be recovered from all the culprits against whom both departmental and criminal proceedings should be launched, Rani Sarma told the chief secretary.

## VJA airport's connectivity on the rise

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Vijayawada Airport is now one of the fastest developing airports in the country with its connectivity to major cities.

"We have connectivity to most of the cities now and it is the fastest developing airports in the country with over one million passengers using its services," said Vijayawada Airport Director G Madhusudana Rao speaking at an interactive session organised by AP Chambers in the city on Wednesday.

Additional services have been started to Tirupati, Hyderabad and Visakhapatnam. The authorities have also made a request to begin to and fro flights to Varanasi, Shirdi,



Gujarat and Pune from Vijayawada. The Airport Authority of India (AAI) has given a representation to the AP government regarding direct immigration for passengers, those who are travelling abroad

from Gannavaram Airport via Delhi.

He also discussed the progress of airport development/expansion, domestic and international connectivity, cargo handling, passenger amenities,

parking bay facilities, parking, security aspects, passenger transport facility to city, among others. M. Murali Krishna, Advisory Member, Gannavaram Airport, said that AP Chambers had played a major role on airport development since 2008. We took to the notice of the Ministry of Civil Aviation on issues related to runway, recruitment of staff and flight connectivity to major cities. "They have considered our request and supported the development of the Vijayawada Airport. Air passenger traffic has increased to 12 lakh from 50,000. We are in need of immediate connectivity to Dubai, European and Asian countries," he added.

**TODAY**

**ALMANAC**  
Month & Paksham: Ashwin & Krishna Paksha  
Tithi : Ekadashi: 10:18 pm  
Nakshatram: Magha: 01:18 pm  
Time to Avoid: (Bad time to start any important work)  
Rahukalam: 01:26 pm - 02:52 pm  
Yamagandam: 06:15 am - 07:41 am  
Varjyam: 08:32 pm - 09:59 pm  
Gulika: 09:07 am - 10:33 pm  
Good Time: (to start any important work)  
Amritakalam: 11:06 am - 12:34 pm  
Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:37 am - 12:23 pm

**VIJAYAWADA WEATHER**  
Forecast: Showers  
Temp: 27/23  
Humidity: 95%  
Sunrise: 06:11  
Sunset: 05:48  
Current Weather Conditions Updated October 23, 2019 5:00 PM

# Free IAS coaching centres come a cropper

K VIJAYA RAJU

Free IAS coaching appears to be a distant dream for SC, ST, BC, Kapu and Minority aspirants. What went wrong with free IAS coaching by the AP government?

After spending Rs160 crore, free IAS coaching has turned into a nightmare to most aspirants from these sections. Out of the 12,000 aspirants, not even one candidate has reached the inter-

view stage of IAS examination. Three reasons can be attributed to this monumental disaster. Firstly, wrong selection of IAS coaching institutions. Secondly, sub-standard coaching by these institutions and thirdly the phenomenal number of candidates selected for coaching and dandestine allocations to preferred institutions. Above all, most of the 50,000 candidates who took the screening test each year were non-serious. They were just interested in the nine-month stipend.

**After spending Rs160 crore, free IAS coaching has become a white elephant for its government. Out of the 12,000 aspirants, not even one candidate has reached the interview stage of IAS examination**

The TDP government blindly continued this system without any review for four years. More surprisingly, the YSRCP government promoted the person, who had contributed to this fiasco for three years, to a very important assignment. The result is that the goof-up continues with a new name - YSR Vidyanati. One good decision taken by Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan

Reddy is to halt the scheme for the current year. But, there seems to be no proper review of the scheme. "The YSRCP government will establish eight AP study circles

from Central Bank of India for Krishnapatnam Port Company," the official pointed out. While Krishnapatnam was a port in operation, Machilipatnam Port was never developed.

PIIC got a performance audit conducted on KIPL and found that loans taken from banks, by pledging the proposed SEZ land, were not used for the specified purposes.

According to reliable sources, the file is gathering dust and there is a paucity of funds and the lack of initiative. DSC and police constable recruitments will be the major announcements in January. The AP SC Corporation, which has played an important role last year in promoting coaching for SC students in a big way, is silent now and the present MD of the Corporation has not taken any steps despite many training institutions pressing for allotment of candidates for coaching. It's

time the YSRCP government wakes up and promotes coaching to all SC, ST, BC, Kapu and Minority students who are in need of coaching for two months before these competitive examinations by allotting at least 20 crore immediately. Only immediate positive action by the YSRCP government helps the weaker section students. After all, the Chief Minister is pro-poor.

(The author is a former Civil Servant)

**HEARING ON LAND GRABBING**  
SIT notification on October 26

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The notification for SIT hearing on land grabbing would be issued on October 26, said the chairman heading the SIT Dr K Vijay Kumar said while talking to the reporters after a review meeting he held with district officials here on Wednesday.

He said the team would receive petitions from the public from November 1 to November 7 at VMRDA auditorium from 10 am to 6 pm. He said the notification being issued in newspapers to create awareness among the public on the SIT and the purpose of its formation.

He said 13 teams would be formed to receive the petitions from the public and even old petitions submitted to former SIT would also be reviewed by the new committee. A box would be kept at the auditorium where people could put their suggestions.

"We will receive petitions from people belonging to 13 revenue mandals of the Visakhapatnam revenue division. Even tampering of private lands will also be accepted," Dr Vijay Kumar said.

## AP seeks details of loans secured by Krishnapatnam Infratech

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Andhra Pradesh government has reportedly requested the Centre to conduct a probe into the "fraud" committed by Krishnapatnam Infratech Private Limited in obtaining loans of Rs 1,900 crore from various banks and diverting the money for "other purposes".

A top official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said the state government is also obtaining details from banks on the loans they disbursed, mortgaging government allotted lands to different organisations for industrial development in the last few years.

As several banks were involved, the state government is said to have sought a probe by Central agencies to establish the complicity, if any, of the lenders, according to the official.

The Andhra Pradesh government on October 19 cancelled the allotment of 4,731.15 acres to Krishnapatnam Infratech Private Limited for setting up a multi-product special economic zone in SPS Nellore district as the promoter failed even after



● KIPL mortgaged 200 acres of the proposed SEZ land and obtained Rs 200 crore from ICICI Bank for Machilipatnam Port Limited



● Another 1,222 acres was mortgaged for a Rs 250 crore loan from Central Bank of India for Krishnapatnam Port Company

● AP government on October 19 cancelled the allotment of 4,731.15 acres to Krishnapatnam Infratech Private Limited for setting up a multi-product special economic zone in SPS Nellore district

10 years to get even a basic notification for it.

MPSEZ and using these lands as cash cows for its promoters other business needs while keeping the lands vacant and idle, depriving the local com-

munities from utilizing the lands for their needs," the order said.

Most of the money has been used for its promoters personal business purposes and no amount of the loan drawn by KIPL was spent towards development of MPSEZ, it added.

Highly-placed officials sources said the Andhra Pradesh Industrial Infrastructure Corporation detected KIPLs fraud back in the year 2016 and reported it to the state government.

The APIIC Board passed a unanimous resolution requesting the state government to initiate criminal action against KIPL promoters for committing the fraud by illicitly mortgaging government-allotted lands with banks and securing hundreds of crores in loans, but not utilising the money for specified purposes. "... but nothing happened," the top official said.

"The fraud angle is obvious. KIPL mortgaged 200 acres of the proposed SEZ land and obtained Rs 200 crore from ICICI Bank for Machilipatnam Port Limited. Another 1,222 acres was mortgaged for a Rs 250 crore loan

from Central Bank of India for Krishnapatnam Port Company," the official pointed out. While Krishnapatnam was a port in operation, Machilipatnam Port was never developed.

PIIC got a performance audit conducted on KIPL and found that loans taken from banks, by pledging the proposed SEZ land, were not used for the specified purposes.

"The (Navayuga) Group Companies got loans many times over and above the money invested in KIPL and utilized (it) for their own use, other than for the development of SEZ. This was also confirmed by the Balance Sheet of KIPL," a top official of APIIC revealed.

He said the financial institutions that extended loans never sought a no-objection certificate (NOC) from APIIC despite it being a clear responsibility while using the lands as collateral. "It only shows they (banks) knowingly and wilfully disregarded the covenants and conditions governing the transfer of land. Only one financial institution approached us for an NOC and we duly declined."



## Jagan: Krishna, Godavari canals to be pollution-free soon

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy here on Wednesday reviewed the measures being taken to make Krishna and Godavari canals pollution-free. He directed the officials to release water to the canals only after purification and to identify the areas where the canals need to be strengthened.



He directed the officials to identify places where purification centres have to be set up on the course of the canals. He said he would personally oversee the implementation of the

purification process. He introduced the representatives of the Gandipeta Welfare Society (GWS) to the officials, who have extensively participated in the purification process. The GWS representatives presented a video in the work they had done in Kannur in Kerala.

The Chief Minister directed the officials to take the guidance of the GWS representatives in the Mission Purification of Krishna and Godavari canals.

The Chief Minister said that a pilot project would be taken up for purification of the canals in Vijayawada

## Govt sleeping on boat mishap issue: Anuradha

PNS ■ GUNTUR

TDP official spokesperson Panchumarthi Anuradha vented ire at the state government for failing to trace the boat that was stuck underwater for more a month. Speaking to the media at the party state office in Guntur, Anuradha alleged that CM Jagan Mohan Reddy and Avanti Srinivas should be considered as suspects A1 and A2.

After 38 days, the team of Dharmadi Satyam could only extract the boat from the river. While no government was braving to extract the boat, only fishermen community members succeeded in getting the boat out of the river. This itself shows the inability of the state government, she alleged adding the government is sleeping on the issue instead of finding out about the reason for the mishap.

Jagan has never bothered to follow up on the boat



**While no government was braving to extricate the boat, only some fishermen community members succeeded in getting the boat out**

mishap issue for reviewing the place through aerial survey. There was no clarification given by the government on to why the boat has gone into flood water against the set rules.

## Engineer Ramya's body still remains elusive

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Even after salvaging the capsized boat at Kachchaluru in East Godavari district, body of sub-engineer Karukuri Ramya, 23, still remained elusive even after recovery of over eight bodies, trapped in the capsized boat Royal Vashista, during the past 48 hours.

Three bodies are yet to be traced in the boat tragedy incident that occurred on Engineers' Day on Sep 15. Even 39 days after the tragedy, the patients have no clue about the body and have been experiencing anxious moments. Ramya has a brother Raghu and her father works as a sub-station operator in electricity department, while her mother is a home maker. Ramya who did her B Tech job as sub-engineer in Kumuram Bhim Asifabad district recently. Along with her colleagues,



she set out for a tour of Papikondalu from Warangal, where she had gone as part of her office work, on the fateful day (Sep 15). The boat got capsized at Kachchaluru in Godavari River with nearly 70 passengers on board. Parents, considered that the body might have been washed away by flood waters, observed the last rites for Ramya on the banks of River Godavari on Sep 25.

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

include that of Ramya.

Officials told Ramya's parents and family members that there were four more bodies trapped in the boat which would be retrieved and duly sent to government hospital. Therefore, her family members and parents have been waiting near the hospital hoping to catch a glimpse of the body at least.

Ramya's parents Sudarsan and Bhulakshmi, brother Raghu and some other family members had gone to Rajahmundry but could not find Ramya's body on Tuesday as the boat was successfully salvaged. The officials could not examine the boat thoroughly as it was already dark.

## 4 more of Royal Vasista victims still to be traced

PNS ■ KAKINADA

In the tourist boat Royak Vasista capsized; four more bodies are yet to be traced on the 39 day of boat tragedy on Wednesday

According to details available, out of the total tourists in the ill fated boat, 26 were saved on the day of incident on 15 September. The bodies of 39 were traced at different places after the incident in the last five weeks.

In the latest development on Tuesday, seven bodies were recovered from the salvaged operation of Royal Vasista stuck in the boat.

According to Royal Vasista boat mishap investigating officer and Rampachodavaram ASP Vakul Zindal, out of the seven traced in capsized boat on Tuesday, five were identified on Wednesday. The two remaining traced in the sal-

**In the latest development, seven bodies were recovered from the salvaged operation of Royal Vasista stuck in the boat**

vaged boat and one more recovered a day before on Monday, in total 3 of the recovered bodies are yet to be identified.

The bodies of the five out of seven traced in the ill fated boat, were handed over to kin of the deceased on Wednesday the ASP said.

Regarding the remaining, we are making efforts to identify them. As the three bodies are in badly decomposed state, we will conduct DNA test to identify the three unidentified if the situation warrants.

## Another case filed against ex-MLA Prabhakar

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Former TDP MLA Chintamaneni Prabhakar was arrested in one more case bringing the total tally of cases against him to 14. He has already been arrested in 13 cases and is currently in remand at Eluru jail. In the recent case, police filed an FIR against him for allegedly attacking Mr Joseph and abusing him in the name of caste.

On August 28, 2018, Prabhakar and his associates attacked and abused Mr Joseph, who belongs to Pinakadimi village of Pedavegi mandal. Joseph filed an SC/ST atrocity case against Prabhakar and others.

Mr Chintamaneni is A3 in this case, registered in Pedavegi police station. The case was registered after he informed the DSP that Chintamaneni and others threatened him to withdraw the case. The police brought Prabhakar to court and the judge has asked the police to keep him in remand until October 28.

VIJAYAWADA BULLION RATES	
<b>GOLD</b>	₹ 38,310 (10 gm)
<b>SILVER</b>	₹ 45,400 (1kg)
<b>CHICKEN RATES</b> ₹/KG	
Dressed/With Skin	₹131
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Broiler at Farm	₹90
<b>EGG RATES</b> ₹/100	
HYDERABAD	377
VIJAYAWADA	375
VISAKHAPATNAM	380
RETAIL PRICE	₹3.75

## TOEFL scores to be made available within six days of exam

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Students appearing for the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) will now be able to get their scores within six days of taking the exam as against the previous period of minimum 10 days.

The Educational Testing Services (ETS), which conducts the test, has also launched the official TOEFL app to help students register for the English language examination.

"As part of an effort to enhance test experience for students and its value to institutions worldwide we have reduced the score reporting time to six days," Executive Director of the TOEFL programme Srikant Gopal said.

Students can now download the TOEFL app through Apple app store or Google play store. The app will offer similar features to students' online accounts, including test registration, searching for test centres and finding open seats in a two-month period

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The users will be able to purchase comprehensive guides and link to free prac-

ture material, including a full-length practice test and TOEFL insider's guide online course scores, view score

reports from all valid test administrations, including best scores, and send additional score reports to designated institutions, Gopal said.

Requests for disability accommodations or health-related needs accommodations can also be made using the app and users will be able to view the status of current and past requests.

The ETS had earlier this year announced certain changes to TOEFL to "bring the test in sync with changing demands of educational institutions".

From August, the duration of the test was shortened by 30 minutes and the number of questions in three sections — reading, listening and speaking— reduced. The earlier duration of the test was

three-and-a-half hours. The ETS had in May also announced introduction of a feature called 'My best scores' which combines test takers' best scores for each section from all valid TOEFL scores from the previous two years.

The option allows test takers to show their best overall test performance to institutions making important admissions decisions.

The TOEFL, a global test for English language, is welcomed by more than 10,000 institutions in over 150 countries and is universally accepted in popular destinations like the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand, and by over 98 per cent of universities in the United Kingdom.

## Nine arrested for killing rowdy-sheeter

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The Anakapalle Town police on Wednesday solved the murder mystery of rowdy-sheeter K Rajesh by arresting nine persons.

The police said that that gang-rivalry was the result of Rajesh's murder. Among the nine arrested were Rowdy-Sheeter Dadi Krishna was the prime accused in the case.

The police said that Krishna and his team murdered Rajesh by beating on his head with a stick and they dumped the dead body near the Park Junction. "We will open rowdy-sheeters against the eight others, who involved in the murder case," said Anakapalle DSP Praveen Kumar.

**Krishna and his team murdered Rajesh by hitting on his head with a stick and they dumped the dead body near the Park Junction**

## INDIA-THE PHILIPPINES

# JOINT NAVAL SHOW TO BEGIN

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

As part of the Indian Navy's overseas deployment to South East Asia and Western Pacific, Indian Navy ships — Sahyadri and Kiltan — made a port call at Manila, the Philippines on Wednesday. The vessels will remain there till October 26.

The ships are a part of the Indian Navy's Eastern Fleet under the Operational Command of Flag Officer Commanding-in-Chief, Eastern Naval Command, based at Visakhapatnam. The port call is a demonstration of India's warm ties with Philippines.

Indian Naval Ships Sahyadri and Kiltan are the latest, indigenously designed and built multi-role Guided Missile Stealth Frigate and Anti-Submarine Warfare Corvette. The two ships are equipped with a versatile array of weapons and sensors, can carry multi-role helicopters and represent the 'coming of age' of India's warship building capabilities.

During the port call, there would be professional inter-



Indian Naval Ship Sahyadri seen entering Manila Port in Philippines on Wednesday

**Indian Naval ships 'Sahyadri' and 'Kiltan' are the latest, indigenously designed and built multi-role Guided Missile Stealth Frigate and Anti-Submarine Warfare Corvette**

actions between personnel of both the navies, official calls and interaction with dignitaries of the Republic of Philippines Navy. In addition, social engagements, visits by the local populace and various sports events are also planned during the visit. On

completion of the visit, Indian Navy and Republic of Philippines Navy ships would be undertaking a Passage Exercise at sea, to further build on the levels of interoperability between the navies to ensure peaceful and secure seas for all.

## School kids in awe of naval ships

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

City school students visited Naval ships as part of Navy Day celebrations. Despite inclement weather, the event received an overwhelming response with over 1,750 students from 33 schools visiting INS Ranvir, a destroyer and INS Karmuk, a missile corvette. The students were taken on a guided tour of the ships and

were briefed about the diverse weapons and equipment fitted onboard. The young visitors had the opportunity to interact with the men in white and experienced life in the Navy from close quarters. The students were also explained on various entry schemes to take up career in the Armed Forces in general and the Indian Navy in particular during the visit.



A naval officer interacting with school students in Visakhapatnam on Wednesday

## Adopt new techn in legal profession

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

"Technology is changing everything and even the profession of law," said Justice Rajasekhar Mantha, judge at High Court of Calcutta here on Wednesday.

He delivered a special lecture on "General Perspectives on Legal Studies — View of Bench and Bar in the New Millennium" conducted by GITAM Deemed to be University Law School. He observed that the lawyers who can identify important technological trends early, learn about new technology, implement them in their own practice or even focus on them as potential practice areas will become more competitive. While referring the Arbitration he said that legal professionals must acquire knowledge about technical aspects to successfully deal the cases.

He stressed on the importance of learning English and effectively communicating it in simple language. He also asked the students to learn as many Indian languages as possible for better understanding the cases. The judge told the students the importance of



**The Justice also gave examples of how to place facts in a chronological order and the importance of marshalling facts relating to the case**

learning the Civil Procedure Code, The Criminal Procedure Code and the Indian Evidence Act and advised the students to find out the "Why" behind any statute. He said that the CPC is Natural Justice in codified form. The Justice also gave examples of how to place facts in a chronological order and the importance of Marshalling of facts was to a case. He stressed on the fact that there is no short cut to success and that if one is good in one's subject one will definitely reach the pinnacle of success.

## Cyber crimes up by 51% in AP

SUMIT ONKA  
■ VISAKHAPATNAM

In a drastic increase in the cyber crimes in Andhra Pradesh, the number of cases registered in 2017 under the IT Act has gone up by 51.1 per cent to 931 as against 616 in 2016.

However, the cyber crime police claim that people are being cautioned to become careful while using the various mobile apps, internet, and matrimonial sites. Besides increasing the security of the net-works they are using.

Fraudulent transactions, extortion, and sexual exploitation were the most reported cyber-crimes in Andhra Pradesh. Cyber leaders led the number of reported cyber-crimes by a large margin, accounting for a total of 537 fraudulent transactions in the state in 2017.

The second most individually reported cases of cyber-crimes came in the form of extortion with 65 cases fol-

lowed by online sexual exploitation with 61 cases.

Personal revenge and political motives have been noted as the two more focused motives behind the cyber-attacks with 24 and 12 reported cases respectively in the state in 2017, throwing interesting insight into how to nature of cybercrimes differ among states.

The AP Police said that with the Internet and Social Media besides the e-commerce sites becoming a way of life, the number of cyber-crimes has been increasingly in AP. Compare to other cities, Vizagites were the most victims in the virtual frauds as over 60 percent of total cyber-crimes in AP were reported in Vizag city only. Admitting that the cyber-crimes have been posing a major challenge for police, Inspector of Cyber Crimes Police Station, V Gopinath said that cyber-crooks are coming with new means of duping the netizens through virtual frauds.

## Three held for murder of quack

**Visakhapatnam:** G Madugula police on Wednesday arrested three persons in connection with the murder of a quack, Ch Jagga Rao. The arrested persons have been identified as Marri Demudu and his two sons Marri Subba Rao and Marri Bhaskar Rao.

The police said that the trio murdered Jagga Rao and burnt his body to hide the evidences at Cherubayulu under G Madugula Mandal in Vizag Agency on October 18. The trio claimed that they killed Jagga Rao for the death of their relative Marri Murisi who died after he was treated by the quack.

## TTD gives its nod to Garuda Varadhi

**Tirumala:** The TTD gave its green signal at its governing body meeting held here on Wednesday for the construction of Garuda Varadhi here.

The meeting estimated the cost of the project would be around Rs 684 crore. The cost would be shared by the TTD and the Center in the ratio of 67:33 per cent. The meeting agreed to release Rs 100 crore to the project in the first phase.

## Low pressure-triggered rain cripples life in north AP



Commuters stuck in storm water at various places in Visakhapatnam on Wednesday. Photos: Tirupathirao G.

**Weather throughout October will not go dry over Andhra Pradesh and rains will continue until the end of the month**

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Heavy to very heavy rains lashed the coastal parts of Andhra Pradesh and there is a low pressure area which is persisting over Coastal Andhra Pradesh. Yelamanchili Mandal in Visakhapatnam recorded highest rainfall of 126mm (9pm on Wednesday).

The amount of heavy rainfall was visible in the Steel plant

area of Gajuwaka where people were wading through knee-deep water in some areas. An old building collapsed at Changalapaopeta near China Waltair area. It was an abandoned building. However, two bikes crushed under the debris of the building.

The rainfall triggered by the low pressures has put the Visakhapatnam, Vizianagaram and Srikakulam districts under

surplus rainfall received areas. Vizag has recorded 12% excess rainfall in the monsoon season so far while Vizianagaram and Srikakulam witnesses 6% and 2% more rainfall than normal. The heavy rain threw normal life out of gear confining people to their houses only.

The well marked low pressure area lies over westcentral Bay of Bengal off Andhra Pradesh coast.

It is very likely to move northnorthwestwards towards north Andhra Pradesh coast.

According to IMD predictions, rains will continue to lash the coastal parts of Andhra Pradesh for the next two days. The persisting low pressure area will initially move along the coast and eventually move inland over north coastal Andhra Pradesh. These rains are expected to continue until

October 24, reducing slightly on October 25 when the Low Pressure Area will move eastwards.

Meanwhile, the well marked low pressure area lies over eastcentral Arabian Sea and neighbourhood.

It is very likely to concentrate into a depression during next 12 hours and into a Cyclonic Storm during subsequent 48 hours.

## Naidu, Yanamala have embarked on false propaganda against govt: FM

Continued from Page 1

He said about seven indicators and 30 sub-indicators were taken into account while ranking the State performance. Not even one can be done in three months, he added.

"Although there is a huge financial crisis inherited by the previous government, within three months, we have increased the pension amount from Rs 1,000 to Rs 2,250. The YSR Rythu Bharosa scheme has been implemented before one year of the promised date. The government has been paying the pre-

mium and giving insurance to farmers. About 20 per cent of alcohol shops have been shut down. Women in the State are very happy for this," the Minister said. The current situation in the State is the result of the previous TDP government.

In 2014-15, the first year of TDP's government, it has given Rs 2,000 crore subsidy for the industries. In 2015-16, it has allocated Rs 290 crore budget but has given only Rs 26 crore. In 2016-17, it has allocated Rs 470 crore, but has released only Rs 292 crore. In 2017-18, the budget allocated was Rs 976 crore and released

only Rs 740 crore. In 2018-19, it has allocated Rs 3,500 crore and released only Rs 740 crore. The then government, in 2015-16, has evaded Rs 45 crore subsidy for Hindustan National Glass company. Of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals, Andhra Pradesh has secured the 17th rank in the zero hunger category. "To improve it, Chief Minister YS Jagan Mohan Reddy has introduced door delivery of packed rice in Srikakulam district and the same will be implemented throughout the State from March or April next year," he said.

## AP's ride to Centre bumpy due to CBI cases on Jagan

Continued from Page 1

In a severe tone, he lambasted Jagan for behaving one way when in opposition and another way upon coming to power, he observed.

However, he hastened to add that he had no personal differences with either Jaganmohan Reddy or his predecessor Chandrababu Naidu. He has equal respect for them, he claimed.

Referring to Kodi Katti case, what happened to Jagan who clamoured for CBI probe into it when in Opposition claiming to have no faith in AP police, but conveniently forgot about it upon coming to power, he said wondering why Jagan shelved the idea.

Jagan might have forgotten the case since he became the CM, but he did not, he said. He felt that

Jagan might have been suffering from amnesia to recall the demands he had made when in the Opposition.

On YS Vivekananda Reddy's murder case, there was no progress in the case investigation. Jagan, who had earlier demanded a probe by the CBI into the case, is apparently paying no attention to it, he commented.

Jagan rode to power in the state with a bumper majority of over 151 seats, he said and felt that he would remain in power for at least 20 years. Therefore, he said, he would not have to hit the roads again. But, the CM made him to hit the roads within 100 days of he coming to power, he remarked.

He highlighted the travails of house construction workers who have been facing severe problems because of sand shortage.

**Jagan might have forgotten the case since he became the CM, but he did not, he said. He felt that Jagan might have been suffering from amnesia to recall the demands he had made when in the Opposition**

There is shortage of sand in AP, but the sand from the state is crossing the state's borders, he observed.

There are no steps to check the sand mafia on the part of Jagan, he alleged. Then it was TDP leaders who encourage the sand mafia, now it was the turn of the YSRCP leaders, he explained.

The Power Star reiterated that he is going to embark on a huge

rally in steel city of Visakhapatnam on Nov 3 in support of construction workers. He sought support from one and all for the rally and for its success.

He condemned the attacks resorted to by Nellore Rural MLA Kotamreddy Sridhar Reddy against officials and journalists expressing concern over increasing such attacks during the YSRCP regime.

Discussing about measures to strengthen the party with the party rank and file, he said that he would not budge an inch unmindful of any number of hurdles that come his way.

He is not going to be cowed down by the electoral defeat. His objective is to enter public life to serve the people, he said adding that he had to forego many things as part of his yearning to do good to people.

"I need leaders who have national perspective and do not require those who fade away from public with just one electoral defeat", he said adding that he needs those who would be able to sail with him for at least 25 years.

Whether electoral successful or not, he claims to work for public good with the people's blessings, he said.

He is not the person who would adopt backdoor methods to ensure electoral victory. He claims to have always hold his head high and will not bow down before anyone just for political mileage.

If electoral victory happens to be his objective, he would have devised not just one but 100 strategies, he said with emphasis. Services of those who want to win elections with Pawan Kalyan's photograph are not needed for Jana Sena, but those with national perspective, he reiterated.

Those who are sailing with him are honest workers and have no lust for power, he said.

He has kept an eye on those who exit from the party and those who enter it. The mud has settled down with clear water coming up, he said.

## Govt issues fresh guidelines for sand supply

Continued from Page 1

The In-charge of the concerned Village Secretariat will issue transit form in Form-S 3, in duplicate, indicating time of 48 hours as the validity period, from the time of its issuance. The duplicate copy shall be given to the consumer for transporting sand duly retaining the original with him. The transit form will lapse irrespective of its usage after 48 hours and no refund or revalidation of the transit form will be considered. The transportation of sand by tractors shall not be allowed beyond 20 km radius of the local area. APMDC shall provide the

Form-S 3, transit form books with secured features to the Village Secretariats maintain the stock and issue of the books.

The sand intended should not be used for any commercial purpose and its use shall be limited to local needs. The consumers shall not stock the sand beyond their personal needs in any dumps and the Village Secretariat shall ensure it.

The Village Secretariat shall ensure that no machinery is engaged for excavation. It should be done manually as per A.P.Walta Act. The Village Secretariat shall periodically verify the end usage of the sand supplied, the order said.

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

UNION LEADERS SAY READY FOR TALKS WHENEVER GOVT INVITES THEM

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

PV KONDAL RAO  
■ WARANGAL

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

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

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

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

The employees, workers of opposition parties and others

## RTC staff attack bus in Medak

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

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

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

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

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

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

immense inconvenience to public.

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

PRAGATI BHAVAN SIEGE

## Case filed against Revanth for pushing aside cop

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

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

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

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



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



Agriculture Minister Niranjan Reddy at the meeting on Wednesday

## Minister asks agri officials to prep for procurement season

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

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

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

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

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

## Need stressed for more veggie markets in city

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

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

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

assured to resolve them.

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

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



The agriculture minister at the Bowenpally vegetable market

## Ginning mills told to co-op with farmers

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

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

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

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

them on behalf of the government.

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



Sanampudi Saidireddy

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

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

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

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

Responding to this, the TRS candidate giving vent to his ire said, "Stop overacting and talking the way you like. Do you consider yourself a hero? You always say outsider, outsider. Just calm down." As the video about the contestant's behavior became viral, several complaints were lodged against Saidireddy. The opposition accused Saidireddy of behaving in a high-handed manner with the SI since he is a ruling party contestant and felt that his behavior was justified.

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

## Cases to be booked against cracker traders

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

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

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



caught, criminal cases would be filed against the sellers.

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

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

The two consume pesticide after elders raise objection

PNS ■ MANCHERIAL

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

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

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

Venkatesh has two sons aged below eight years.

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

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

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



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

## Speaker highlights role of mines in development

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

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

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

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

advent of TRS government in Telangana state.

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

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

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

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

## Talasanani lays stone for two-bedroom houses

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

SHORT READS



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

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

**Burst eco-friendly firecrackers for 2 hours on Diwali: UP govt**

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

The aim is also to help in



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

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

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

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

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

on for two years," he said.

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

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



**Case against NCP polling agent**

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

PNS ■ PUNE

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ JAMMU

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

PNS ■ JAIPUR

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

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

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

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

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



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

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



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

PNS ■ SRINAGAR

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



**Exhibition to showcase rare, heritage textiles**

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

PNS ■ BENGALURU

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

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

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



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

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

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

PNS ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

In the suicide note, he purportedly mentioned that the police did not help him in tracing his daughter. After his death, Wadala GRP registered an offence of abate-



ment to suicide against five persons.

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

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

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

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

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

The accused have been

booked under various Indian Penal Code Sections, including 143, 145, 147 (rioting), 307 (attempt to murder), 326 (voluntarily causing grievous hurt by dangerous weapon), 353 (assault or criminal force to deter public servant from discharge of his duty), the Prevention of Damage to Public Property Act and the Maharashtra Police Act.

A police official on Tuesday said some mourners trailing the procession suddenly tried to block the road at Umarshi Bappa Chowk in Chembur.

As the police personnel tried to remove the protesters, some of them ran to a nearby under-construction building and hurled stones, injuring two police constables and an officer of Traffic Police, he said.

Eye-witnesses earlier claimed that people got provoked when a policeman shoved a woman mourner with a stick.

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

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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



per quintal last year.

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

## Criminal lapses

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

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

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

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

## Needlessly undemocratic

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



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

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

# Could we have won the war?

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



CLAUDE ARPI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## SOUNDBITE

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



**BCCI chief**  
—Sourav Ganguly

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



**Actor**  
—Kalki Koechlin

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



**UN Secretary-General**  
—Antonio Guterres

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



**Former president**  
—Pranab Mukherjee

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

### Tough times ahead

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

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

### The UN, its role and challenges

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

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



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

**Ganapathi Bhat**  
Akola

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

### Learn from Assam

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

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

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

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

**TK Nandanam**  
Chennai

Send your feedback to:  
letterstopioneer@gmail.com

**FIRST COLUMN**

## Hurdles in Ayushman Bharat

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



RAJEEV AHUJA

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

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

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

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

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

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

(The writer is a development economist)

**POINT COUNTERPOINT**

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

— WEST BENGAL BJP GENERAL SECRETARY

SAYANTAN BASU



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

—TMC SECRETARY GENERAL

PARTHA CHATTERJEE

# End food wastage, feed millions

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



MOÏN QAZI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Studies have shown that malnutrition and



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

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

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

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

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

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

ICDS and the PDS.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Innovation can break stranglehold of plastic

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



KOTA SRIRAJ

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

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

to pervade every aspect of our lives?

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

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



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

Though these are often erroneously promoted as biodegradable

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

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

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

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

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

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

(The writer is an environmental journalist)



**FOREIGN EYE**



**HOPE TRUDEAU LEARNS A LESSON**

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

CAPSULE



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

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



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

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

NON-DISCLOSURE OF WHISTLEBLOWER COMPLAINT

**BSE seeks explanation from Infosys**

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

One of its board members had received the complaints on September 30, according to Nilekani's statement submitted to the stock exchanges on Tuesday.

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

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



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

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

The exchange has sought clarification from Infosys for

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

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

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

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

not adhering to accounting standards.

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

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

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

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

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

NANDAN NILEKANI, Infosys Chairman



**Sensex ends 95 pts higher**

PTI ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

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

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



gained up to 2.55 per cent.

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

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

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

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

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

**Hyundai launches anniversary edition of Santro**

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

Commenting on the launch, HMIL National Sales Head Vikas Jain said: "The anniversary

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

edition will entice our customers and continue to strengthen Santro's legacy on the pillars of global technology, stylish design and world class features."

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

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

PTI ■ BENGALURU

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

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

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

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

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



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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

HDFC Life Insurance Company on Wednesday posted 7.5 per cent rise in standalone net profit to Rs 308.69 crore for the second quarter ended September 30. The company's net profit in the year-ago period stood at Rs 286.98 crore.

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

**Bengaluru saw a 7 per cent dip in housing sales at Rs 28,160 crore from Rs 30,310 crore during the same period last year**

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

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

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

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

Bengaluru saw a 7 per cent dip in housing sales at Rs 28,160 crore from Rs 30,310 crore during the same period last year.

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

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



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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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



above the permissible levels.

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PTI ■ SINGAPORE

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

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

The recent tax cuts, government's progress in addressing



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

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

"There wasn't a single cause for the slowdown... there were many different causes at work including corporate and regulatory environmental uncertainties, the stresses in the non-bank financial sector, (and) stresses in the rural sector, among others," he said.

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

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

trade partnership agreement.

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

There is a need to take steps to invigorate the deliberation

## CELEBRITIES CREATING A

# NEW NICHE

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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



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

SACHIN DAKOJI



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

# Celebrating the JEWEL OF KASHMIR



**P**ashmina shawls, the pride of Kashmir, have always been the sign of royalty and the affluent. Most of the rare Pashmina shawls are stored in museums for future generations. In her first exhibition in the city, The Splendor of Kashmir, textile designer Varuna Anand is showcasing the various types of handlooms made by the craftsmen from Jammu and Kashmir, thereby highlighting its rich cultural heritage. "I studied textile designing in Delhi and used to make sarees. After my marriage, I moved to Kashmir where I noticed the differences between the shawls in

Delhi and the shawls from Kashmir. The quality of Kashmiri shawls is high compared to other parts of India. Pashmina is not for everyone as it is expensive. The product is designed for kings and businessmen. My husband encouraged me to start the business in 2011," Varuna Anand told *The Pioneer*, talking about her all-India tour to promote the shawls. The uniqueness of the handicraft comes from the fact that the wool used to make the shawl is derived only from a particular animal which lives only in Ladakh region. Varuna said that the kings of Jammu and Kashmir always loved the shawls and used to be a

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

VARUNA ANAND

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



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

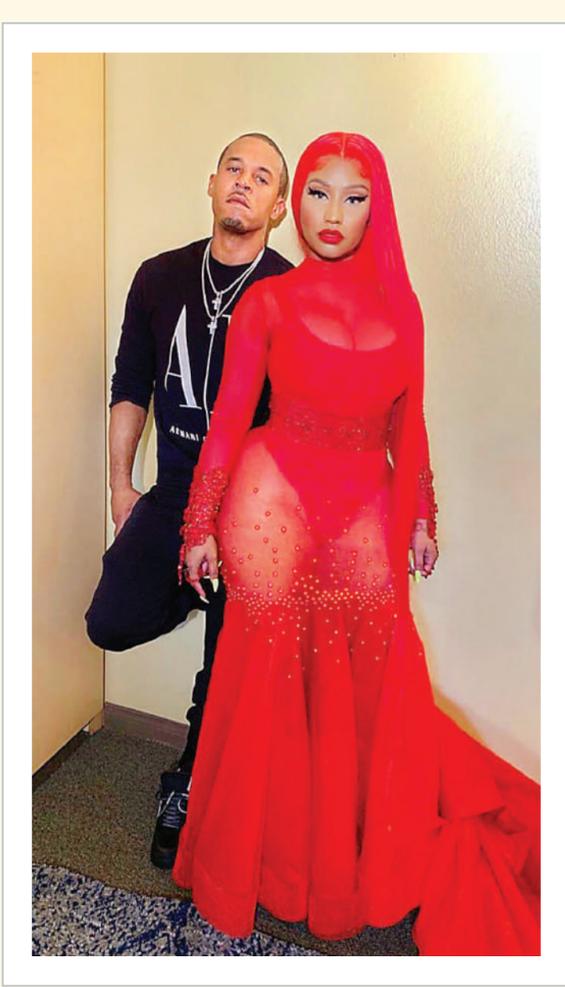
the exhibition had no proper audience to appreciate. The main reason is the price of the product. Common folk can hardly afford shawls that range from Rs 10,000 to some lakhs. With such exorbitant rates, when asked about how she plans to cater her products for everyone she said, "Till date,

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

# Rapper Cardi B in Fast & Furious 9

Rapper Cardi B has joined the cast of *Fast & Furious 9*, which brings back Vin Diesel as franchise mainstay, Dominic Toretto. It's the rapper's first movie part since her role of the stripper Diamond in *Hustlers*. The international actor star disclosed the film's casting on Tuesday in a post on his Instagram account with a video that showed him and Cardi on the UK set of the movie,

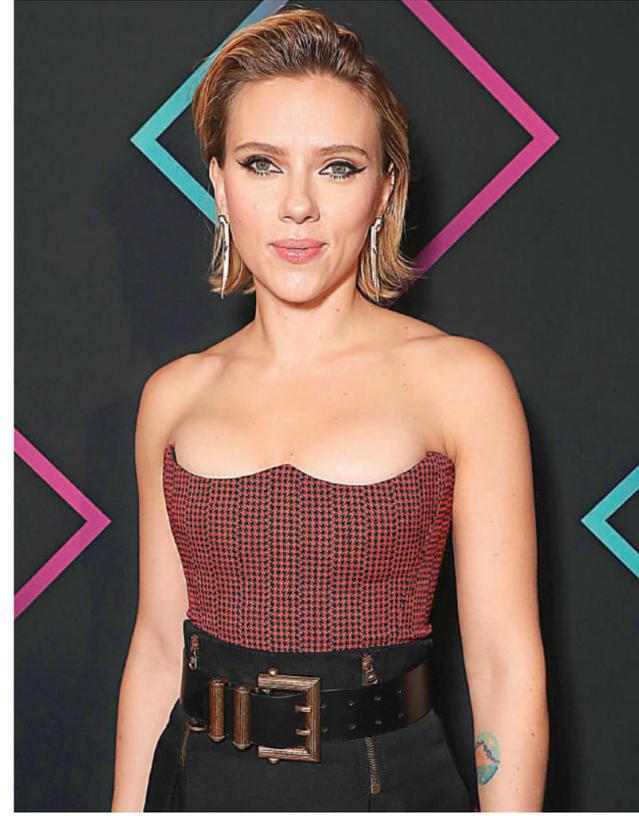
reports *variety.com*. "I'm tired, but I can't wait," Cardi B told Diesel's followers. "I ain't gonna front, I think this is going to be the best one." The news came a day after the announcement that Ozuna, one of Latin music's rising stars, had joined the cast and was also in talks to join the film's soundtrack. Justin Lin, who directed *Fast & Furious 6*, returns to direct the ninth installment with franchise.



# Scarlett Johansson got a closure with Black Widow

Actress Scarlett Johansson says she got a closure of sorts after doing the stand-alone movie *Black Widow*. Johansson's *Black Widow* aka Natasha Romanoff died in *Avengers: Endgame* this year. During an appearance on *The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon*, the actress asserted that her Marvel character is really dead. The actress said she had just finished filming *Black Widow*, a prequel, in London, reports *dailymail.co.uk*. The film is slated to release in 2020. She described shooting for *Black Widow* as a cathartic experience, especially since she had been grappling with her character's death. "It brought a closure to me that I needed, because I was kind of wiped out after that last one — emotionally

and literally," she said. Many fans didn't want to believe her character was gone. She acknowledged it, and said some had even tried to convince her that *Black Widow* existed in an alternate universe. "But no, I think death is the final thing," she added. *Black Widow* is set after the events of *Captain America: Civil War* but before the events of *Avengers: Infinity War*. The film will trace the story of Romanoff, who will confront her past. It is being reported that actor Robert Downey Jr will be back as the enigmatic superhero Iron Man in the Marvel Cinematic Universe with *Black Widow*. The characters will be back as *Black Widow* is a prequel taking place ahead of the events of *Endgame*. It's unknown how big Downey Jr's role in the film will be.



# Nicki Minaj secretly weds Kenneth Petty

Rapper Nicki Minaj's fans were in for a shock when they read her latest Instagram post, where she has revealed that she has already secretly married Kenneth Petty. On June 21, Nicki had declared on radio that she and her boyfriend Kenneth had obtained their marriage license, according to a report in *spotboye.com*. She had added that they would get married within 90 days. Nicki's new Insta post has a video that confirms a secret marriage now.

"Onika Tanya Maraj-Petty 10.21.19," she wrote as caption with the video. The date refers to the fact that she shared the post on October 21. Onika Tanya Maraj is Nicki Minaj's real name. In the video, there are two mugs on a coffee table with 'Mr' and 'Mrs' imprinted on the side. Then there is a visual of two baseball caps that read 'Bride' and 'Groom' — one in white and the other black. Wishes poured in for Trinidad and Tobago-born rapper Minaj from her Hollywood friends shortly after she put up the post.

## FUN TIME

### ARCHIE



### CALVIN AND HOBBS



### GARFIELD



### REALITY CHECK



### SPEED BUMP



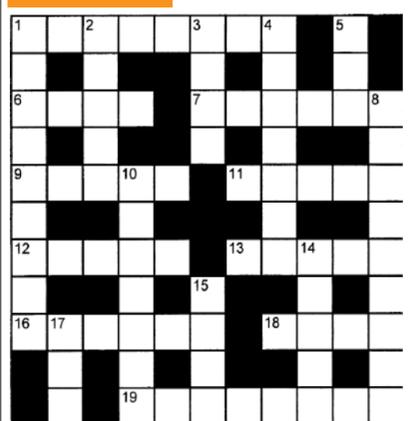
### NANCY



### GINGER MEGGS



### CROSSWORD



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

**DOWN**  
 1 Very unsafe  
 2 Repairs

**SOLUTION**

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

### SUDOKU

Yesterday's solution

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

Rules

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

# Life in a metro for ANAND DEVERAKONDA

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

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



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



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

DAMODARA ATTADA, DIRECTOR

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

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



## Buzz around Jr NTR-Atlee film gets louder

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

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

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

*Whistle*, he said, is dedicated to women. "It's an action-drama primarily that also revolves around football. It deals with women empowerment. I'm an emotional person in general and as a writer I believe in saying something to the society. Atrocities towards girl child stirred me to pen *Whistle*. I believe it will work big time in Telugu than Tamil. The emotions will resonate with everyone," he added.

Speaking about Vijay, he said, "I'm nothing without *Anna* (Vijay). He made me. I am where I am because of him."

— NG

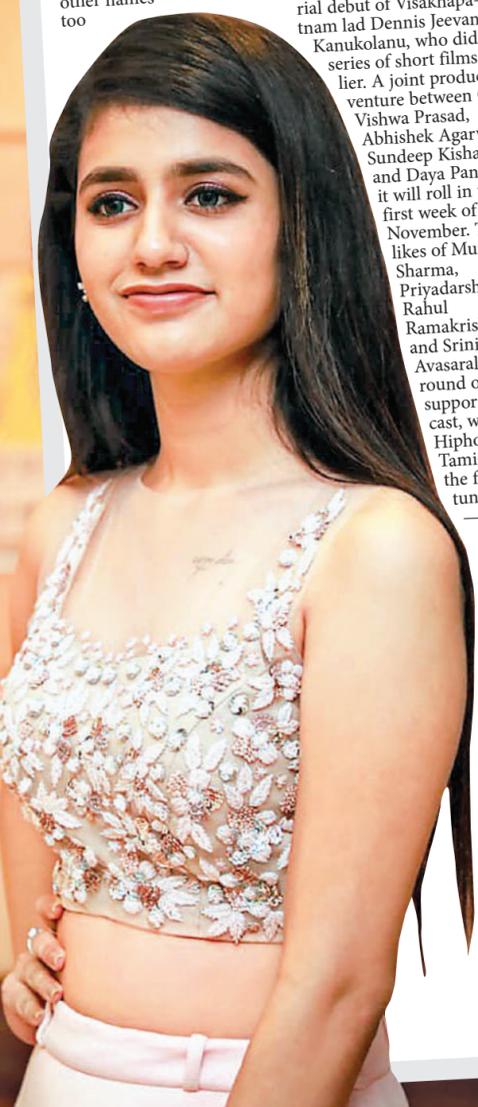


## Priya Varrier in talks for A1 EXPRESS

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

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

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



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

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

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

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



## NOW, THARUN TURNS TO EDITING

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

# Dadagiri unlimited

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

## Captain takes charge: Ganguly becomes BCCI president

PTI ■ MUMBAI

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

His appointment as the BCCI's 39th President was finalised last week. He succeeds C K Khanna, who was the interim head of the Board since 2017.

"It's an honour that I have been asked to take this role. It's a new start for the BCCI," said Ganguly, clad in his India blazer which was given to him during the time he served as India captain.

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

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

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

Mahim Verma of Uttarakhand became the new vice-president.

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

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



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

PTI ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

Hard to miss at his maiden press interaction after taking charge was the India blazer that he was wearing.

"I got it when I was captain of India but I did not realise that it is so loose. But

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

He reiterated his commitment to improving the domestic cricket structure.

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

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

## Maharaj's new team



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

PTI ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

"He is one of the greats of the game and India is proud to have MS Dhoni over a period of time. If you even sit down and take a note of what he has done, you say, 'Wow, MS Dhoni,'" Ganguly said.

Legends of the game have often had unceremonious exits and Ganguly knows it more than anyone else how it feels to fight speculations and criticism.

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

## Kohli is the most important man

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

PTI ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

PTI ■ MUMBAI

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

In case there is a question of dropping Dhawan, Mayank Agarwal could be a choice as reserve opener.

Deepak Chahar, Navdeep Saini and Khaleel Ahmed are expected to be the three frontline pacers.

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

PTI ■ DUBAI

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

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

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

With Mayanka Agarwal in



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

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

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

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

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

## K'taka, TN to play Hazare final

PTI ■ BENGALURU

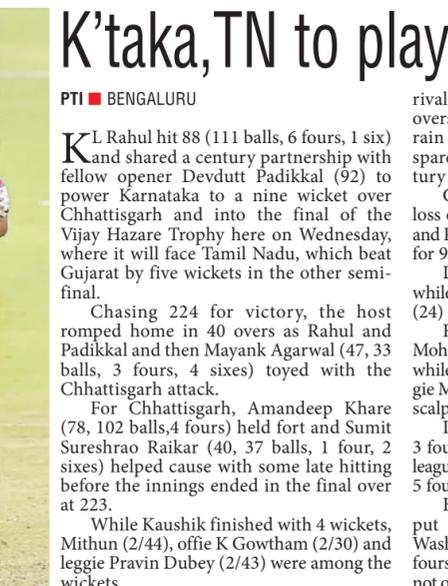
K L Rahul hit 88 (111 balls, 6 fours, 1 six) and shared a century partnership with fellow opener Devdutt Padikkal (92) to power Karnataka to a nine wicket over Chhattisgarh and into the final of the Vijay Hazare Trophy here on Wednesday, where it will face Tamil Nadu, which beat Gujarat by five wickets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

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

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

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

In the Tamil Nadu-Gujarat encounter, the Dinesh Karthik led side chased down the



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## SINGLES

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

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

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

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