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VIJAYAWADA, TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 17, 2019; PAGES 12 ₹3



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DD India will be available all over world

NEW DELHI: Doordarshan India will soon be available all over the world, Information and Broadcasting minister Prakash Javadekar said on Monday, asserting that credibility is the national broadcaster's unique selling proposition. Javadekar made the remarks at the celebrations marking the 60th Foundation Day of DD at the Doordarshan Bhawan here.

The minister highlighted the role played by Doordarshan in its journey of the last 60 years, reminiscing about the programmes and highlighting how the broadcaster has continued to enthral audiences over the decades.

Javadekar talked about the modern technological changes brought about by Doordarshan in adopting digital means and becoming available on phone through a mobile application.

Five die as car crashes into auto

VIJAYAWADA: In a major road accident, five members of a family were killed when an auto-rickshaw in which they were travelling collided by a car at Hanuman Junction in Krishna district on Monday. Two persons, who were grievously injured in the incident, have been admitted to a hospital. The police shifted the bodies to the hospital for post-mortem. A case was registered. Investigation is going on.

ED summons Chidambaram's ex-PS

NEW DELHI: The Enforcement Directorate (ED) has issued a fresh summons for appearance to a former private secretary of arrested Congress leader P Chidambaram in connection with the INX Media money-laundering case, officials said on Monday. They said K V K Perumal was grilled twice by the central agency in the recent past. He was now summoned to appear before the investigating officer of the case on September 18, they added. Perumal served as the private secretary to Chidambaram when the latter was the Union finance minister, the officials said. Some more information had been sought from Perumal and he had been summoned for the third time now, the officials said.

EX-SPEAKER KODELA COMMITS SUICIDE

SEELAM AROZIE
NAVEEN KUMAR
VIJAYAWADA

Former Speaker and six-time TDP MLA Dr Kodela Sivaprasada Rao committed suicide at his residence in Hyderabad on Monday. He is survived by wife Sasikala, daughter Vijayalakshmi and son Sivaramakrishna.

Death of Kodela was confirmed by the authorities of the Basavatarakam Hospital where he was shifted by his family members. Later Osmania Hospital after conducting autopsy confirmed the suicide of Kodela. The senior TDP leader courted controversies and drew a lot of criticism from the YSRCP government during the last six months. He faced a series of cases after YSRCP came to power in May. Cases filed against Kodela and his children are said to have disturbed the veteran leader who has taken the extreme step, succumbing to political turmoil. However, Rao's family members alleged that he took the extreme step following the numerous cases booked against him and the harassment he suffered. They told the police that he was under mental stress. Rao's body was shifted to government-run Osmania General Hospital for autopsy.

Continued on Page 3

- Authorities of the Basavatarakam Hospital confirmed the death of Kodela, where he was shifted by his family members
- The senior TDP leader courted controversies and drew a lot of criticism from YSRCP govt during the last 6 months
- In a political career spanning over 40 years, Sivaprasada Rao elected to the Assembly from Narasaraopet in 1983, 1985, 1989, 1994 and 2004-MLA. He won the Sattenapalli seat in 2014
- He served Home Minister during 1987-88 and Irrigation Minister during 1996-97. He lost the election to YSRCP's Ambati Rambabu in 2019 from Sattenapalli Assembly constituency



Supporters of former Speaker Kodela Sivaprasada Rao paying tributes to the late leader at NTR Trust Bhavan in Hyderabad on Monday

Botsa urges TS govt to probe Kodela's death

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Minister for Municipal Administration and Urban Development Botsa Satyanarayana has said that the Telangana government should order a thorough inquiry into the untimely death of former Speaker Kodela Sivaprasada Rao.

Speaking to the media, Botsa said, "A section of the media initially published reports stating that Kodela had died unable to bear revenge politics and after some time, they reported that he had suffered a heart stroke. We have doubts over Kodela's death so we are requesting the Telangana government to conduct a comprehensive inquiry."

He said if anything critical happens to a person in Hyderabad, first he would be shifted to NIMS, Care Hospital, KIMS or Apollo Hospital. But, here Kodela was admitted to Basavatarakam Hospital, which is a cancer clinic. "What is the reason behind it?" questioned Botsa. The minister further stated that YSRCP never does filthy politics against a late politician.



BOAT MISHAP



Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy addressing the media in Visakhapatnam on Monday. Telangana Minister Errabelli Dayakar is also seen

CM warns of strict action against erring officials

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy has warned of stringent action against the officials and agencies responsible for the boat tragedy on Sunday in East Godavari. So far, in the boat capsize, 12 are found dead, 33 are missing and 27 survived in Godavari river waters. Among the 72 in the ill fated people, 62 are tourists and the rest of 10 crew members.

While reviewing the boat accident that led to the major mishap at sub-collector's office here on Monday, the Chief Minister said the four-member committee has been formed comprising Special Chief Secretary (Irrigation), East Godavari District Collector, Chief Secretary (revenue) and Principal Secretary (tourism) as its members. The committee

will submit a report in three weeks and action would be initiated within 45 days, the Chief Minister stated. Earlier, the Chief Minister visited the government hospital here where the survivors are undergoing treatment. He assured them all possible help. He also announced Rs 10 lakh ex-gratia to those who lost their lives in the accident. So far, in the boat capsize, 12 are found dead, 33 are missing and 27 survived in Godavari river waters. Among the 72 in the ill fated people, 62 are tourists and the rest of 10 crew members.

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Cops foil BJP state chief Kanna's bid to enter Gurazala

PNS ■ GUNTUR

The police on Monday stopped the convoy of BJP State President Kanna Lakshminarayana at the Nandigama Cross Road in Sattenapalli mandal of Guntur district. The police took Kanna into custody and shifted him to Sattenapalle DSP's Office.

A large posse of security personnel was deployed to prevent BJP workers from going to Gurazala where the party's public meeting was scheduled to be held on Monday evening. Earlier, the police denied permission to BJP for holding the proposed public meeting citing law and order problems following recent political developments in the State.

The police imposed Section 144 and promulgated prohibitory orders under Section 30 of the Indian Police Act to prevent people from attending the meeting.

Later, Kanna Lakshminarayana alleged in his tweet that the YSRCP government was resorting to oppression by throttling democratic voices. He said the development had taken back seat during the Jaganmohan



BJP state chief Kanna Lakshminarayana was arrested at Nandigama cross road in Sattenapalli mandal of Guntur district on Monday

- A large posse of security personnel was deployed to prevent BJP workers from going to Gurazala where the party's public meeting was scheduled to be held on Monday evening
- Kanna Lakshminarayana alleged in his tweet that the YSRCP government was resorting to oppression by throttling democratic voices
- He said the development had taken back seat during Jaganmohan Reddy's tenure in the State.

Reddy's government in the State.

"Is there democracy in Andhra Pradesh?" he said and wondered if there is no right for the people to question the government.

The State government is

going ahead with vengeful activities instead of focusing on development. Illegal arrest of people belonging to Opposition parties has increased after YSRCP came to power in the State, he alleged.

Rajasthan mulls 75% quota for locals

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

JAIPUR: The Rajasthan government is mulling the possibility of providing 75 per cent reservation to local people in private jobs, an official said here on Monday. He said various government departments would hold a brainstorming session on it soon.

"The proposal is in the initial stage. A brainstorming session will be held with stakeholders in coming days," said Dr Samit Sharma, managing director, Rajasthan Skill and Livelihood Development Corporation (RSLDC).

He said the Andhra Pradesh government had recently passed a bill in the assembly, giving reservation to locals in private jobs. Madhya Pradesh Chief Minister Kamal Nath too had said that their government was mulling a law to ensure 70 per cent jobs to the local youth in the private sector.

Sharma said the Confederation of Indian Industries (CII); Department of Factories and Boilers; Department of Industries; and the Department of Labour besides the RSLDC would give their views on the proposal in the brainstorming session.

Praveen Prakash appointed Principal Secretary to CM

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Amaravati, Sep 16 (PTI): Praveen Prakash, an IAS officer of the 1994 batch, was on Monday appointed as Principal Secretary to Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister.

Chief Secretary L V Subrahmanyam issued a Government Order to this effect. Praveen is currently the Resident Commissioner of Andhra Pradesh in New Delhi. He has also been given full additional charge as Principal Secretary (Political) in the General Administration Department.

Ram Prakash Sisodia has been transferred as Principal Secretary, Tribal Welfare.

V Vinod Kumar (2015) has been transferred as Sub-Collector of Vijayawada, according to the Chief Secretary's order.

The state government also replaced the Head of Forest Force Md Illiyas Rizvi, who is of the Principal Chief Conservator of Forests rank. He has been posted as Principal Secretary of



Praveen has also been given full additional charge as Principal Secretary (Political) in the General Administration Department

Minorities Welfare Department.

N Prateek Kumar, Vice-Chairman and Managing Director of AP Forest Development Corporation, has been given additional charge as PCCF (Head of Forest Force).

Many languages are not India's weakness: Rahul

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Two days after Union Home Minister Amit Shah pitched for 'one nation, one language', and asked people to maximize the use of Hindi, former Congress President Rahul Gandhi on Monday slammed the move saying having many languages are not India's 'weakness'.

"Oriya, Marathi, Kannada, Hindi, Tamil, English, Gujarati, Bengali, Urdu, Punjabi, Konkani, Malayalam, Telugu, Assamese, Bodo, Dogri, Maithili, Nepali, Sanskrit, Kashmiri, Sindhi, Santhali, Manipuri... India's many languages are not her weakness," Rahul Gandhi tweeted. His remarks came amid the furore across the country over Shah's remarks of 'one nation, one language'.



TODAY

ALMANAC
Month & Paksham: Jyestha & Shukla Paksha Panchangam
Tithi: Ekadashi: 04:49 pm (Next Day)
Nakshatram: Chitra: 10:55 am
Time to Avoid: (Bad time to start any important work)
Rahukalam: 01:53 pm - 03:31 pm
Yamagandam: 05:45 am - 07:22 am
Varjyam: 04:23 pm - 05:56 pm
Gulika: 09:00 am - 10:38 am
Good Time: (to start any important work)
Amritakalam: 01:43 am - 03:17 am
Abhijit Muhurtham: 11:50 am - 12:42 pm

VIJAYAWADA WEATHER

Forecast: Partly Cloudy
Temp: 43/32
Humidity: 32%
Sunrise: 05:41
Sunset: 06:50
Current Weather Conditions Updated June 12, 2019 5:00 PM

Trump to join Modi at mega 'Howdy, Modi!' in Houston on Sept 22

PNS ■ WASHINGTON /NEW DELHI

Donald Trump will join Narendra Modi at the mega "Howdy, Modi!" Indian-American diaspora event in Houston on Sunday to reaffirm the Indo-US strategic ties, the White House has announced, a decision hailed by the Prime Minister as a "special gesture" by the US President to underscore the special bond between the two countries.

Emphasising the new bonhomie in the India-US ties under the Trump administra-



tion, this is for the first time in recent history that the leaders of the two largest democracies would be addressing a joint rally anywhere in the world. More than 50,000 Indian-Americans from across the US have registered for the September 22 "Howdy, Modi! Shared Dreams, Bright Futures" event to be held at the sprawling NRG Stadium in Houston, Texas. "Howdy", short for 'How do you do?', is a friendly greeting commonly used in southwestern United States.

Related report on Page 8

3 electrocuted while repairing borewell

PNS ■ KAMAREDDY

Three persons got electrocuted while trying to take out defunct borewell pipes at Yelugonda village of Machareddy Mandal in Kamareddy district on Monday. Aileni Lakshman Rao (70), Aileni Muralidhar Rao (50) and Immadi Satyanarayana (40) were trying to repair a borewell motor in the fields of Maragoni Swamy Goud. While trying to remove the pipes, one of them touched a live electric wire. All three, probably standing very close by or sticking to each other, got electrocuted and died on the spot. Farm owner Swamy Goud, who witnessed the incident, suffered a heart attack out of shock.

Wargaming Software 'ARNAV' developed

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

Wargaming Software 'ARNAV' jointly developed by the Institute of Systems Studies and Analyses (ISSA), a premier organisation of the DRDO, and Maritime Warfare Centre (MWC), Visakhapatnam, under ENC was formally inducted during the Diamond Jubilee Celebrations of ISSA in New Delhi on Monday.

Dr G Sathesh Reddy, Chairman DRDO and Secretary DoD R&D, was the chief guest. Vice-Admiral G Ashok Kumar, Vice-Chief of the Naval Staff was the guest of honour for the event where 'ARNAV' software was formally handed over to Commodore Sushant Dam, Director MWC (V). Cdr Paul S Ranjan and Cdr Srijeet Ghoshal of MWC(V) were



Officials of Institute of Systems Studies and Analyses (ISSA), a premier organisation of the DRDO, and Maritime Warfare Centre (MWC), Visakhapatnam, during the Diamond Jubilee fete of ISSA in New Delhi on Monday

also awarded commendation by the DRDO Chairman during the event for their contribution in the development of the software. ARNAV is an advance wargaming simulator meets the contemporary simulator-based wargaming requirement of the Indian Navy.

It is globally playable with multiple forces and all domain warfare such as surface warfare, air warfare, sub-surface warfare. ARNAV is playable over a secure naval network with other Maritime Warfare Centres and remote bases. The success of this project has

ARNAV is playable over a secure naval network with other Maritime Warfare Centres and remote bases. The success of this project has been achieved in record time at minimum cost. It infuses virtual equipment, environmental factors, merchant shipping and engagement results that realise the prime need of the Indian Navy to 'TRAIN AS WE FIGHT'. ARNAV provides a robust platform to develop integrate the future Artificial Intelligence and Virtual Reality modules for future warfare.

'Swachhata hi Seva' off to a grand start

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The Swachh Rail - Swachh Bharat campaign got off to a flying start on South Central Railway (SCR) - Vijayawada division with the commencement of the fortnight-long 'Swachhata hi Seva - Swachhata Pakhwara' on Monday.

P Srinivas, Divisional Railway Manager, Vijayawada, administered the Swachhata pledge to officers, staff and a large gathering of children from different schools. After the pledge, a cleanliness awareness rally was taken out from the Vijayawada Railway Stadium to Vijayawada Railway Station via RE Colony and Old Government Hospital.

Speaking on the occasion, P Srinivas, DRM, called upon the people to make India and Indian Railways clean and green. The DRM advised the officers and staff to voluntarily pledge 100 hours every week to clean station premises, offices and public spaces. He also instructed the staff to implement a ban on single-use plastic in letter and spirit. He appreciated the students, teachers and family members of railwaymen for gathering in large numbers, as well as the house-keeping staff, who put efforts day and night to keep the stations clean.

The Nukkad Nattak by students of SKCV School at the Waiting Hall on Platform 1 at the station was met with overwhelming response from the



Railway officials taking part in Swachh Rail-Swachh Bharat campaign in Vijayawada on Monday

■ P Srinivas, Divisional Railway Manager, Vijayawada, administered the Swachhata pledge to officers, staff and a large gathering of children from different schools

■ After the pledge, a cleanliness awareness rally was taken out from the Vijayawada Railway Stadium to Vijayawada Railway Station via RE Colony and Old Government Hospital

(Infrastructure, V Satyanarana, CMS, Ram Chandra Sahoo, Sr DENHM, P Nehemiah, Sr DPO, Sachin Bhalode, Sr DSC, Gajendra Kumar, SrDEE/TRD, Ramesh Gaikwad, DENHM, K Rajendra Prasad, DCM/In-charge PRO, CH Suresh, Station Director, V Venkateswarulu Naik, ADMO, other officers and staff participated in the rally and Swachhata campaign at Vijayawada Railway Station.

The ensuing Swachhata Hi Sewa - Pakhwara will see a host of activities, including Swachh awareness, cleanliness drive with the public, clean trains, clean stations, community day, clean workplace, clean residential premises, clean food, clean water, and clean toilets, among others.

huge crowd. G Sumana, Additional Divisional Manager, Operations, appreciated the play enacted by the students and briefed the gathering about the ill-effects of plastic and the need of awareness on it.

Dr V Satyanarana, Chief Medical Superintendent, Vijayawada, organised a multi-purpose health check up camp on Platform 1 for housekeep-

ing staff and distributed medicines free of cost. Later, a massive Shramdaan was taken up by railway officials on all platforms with the theme 'Plastic Free India.' Similarly, the Swachhata pledge was administered, along with Shramdaan by respective station managers and supervisors at various stations all over Vijayawada division. MVS Ramaraju, ADRM



TEDxVITAP ignites idea-focused thinking among students

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

VIT-AP University organised a day-long TEDxVITAP on Monday in which students and faculty, including 158 persons from across the country took part. The primary goal of the event was to bring together bright minds to deliver lectures that are idea-focused on a wide range of subjects to foster learning, inspiration and provoke conversations that matter.

The theme of the event was "The Misfits, Rebels and Genius". Diana Pundole, professional race car driver, Priyatham, caricature artist, Vivian Ambrose, filmmaker & photographer, Srikanth Srinivasan, Senior Director of NASSCOM, Bhumika Bhatia, portrait photographer, Abhishek Vasudev, professional bike racer, Dr. Manjula Anagani, Obstetrician & Gynaecologist, Sandeep Reddy and businessman Dr D Subhakar spoke.

Vice-chancellor of VIT-AP said that the event is a well-deserved break from the monotony of the college regimen and hopefully a much-needed reminder as to why students need to hustle.



■ Vice-chancellor of VIT-AP said that the event is a well-deserved break from the monotony of the college regimen and hopefully a much-needed reminder as to why students need to hustle

■ Students are the millennial living in the 21st century and with all the technological and philosophical advancements in their lives

students need to hustle. Students are the millennial living in the 21st century and with all the technological and philosophical advancements in their lives. However, they are the millennial, who live their lives dealing with anxiety, afraid to face reality, afraid of missing out, afraid of not reaching the pinnacle of lives, and yet too afraid to begin

making a change. Dr CLV Siva Kumar, Registrar, VIT-AP, said that the event promoted thinking out of the box and broadens the perspective of the students. Dr Sameer Gokarn, Coordinator, TEDxVITAP event, thanked VIT-AP University Vice-President Sankar Viswanathan, speakers, students, faculty and enthusiasts.

Man commits suicide at in-law's house

PNS ■ ANANTAPUR

A man allegedly committed suicide at his in-laws house in Chennethalpalam mandal of Anantapur district on Sunday. According to police, Veeranjanyulu (32) from Kudair village in Anantapur district was married to Thulasamma from Namala Village and had a daughter.

Veeranjanyulu arrived at Namala a week ago to see his wife and daughter, who were at his in-law's house. Relatives found him hanging in a room early on Sunday morning and informed the police. The police registered a case of death under suspicious circumstances and started an inquiry into the case.

Govt keen to accord top priority to edu

PNS ■ KADAPA

Deputy Chief Minister Amzadh Basha said that Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy is keen on according top priority to education and medical sectors in order to promoting qualitative education in government colleges. The Deputy CM, who was in Kadapa for participating in the Freshers' Day programme organised in government girls college here on Monday, said students should utilise the opportunity properly as the government was allocating funds in a big way.

Pavitratsavams posters released



PNS ■ TIRUPATI

TTD Joint Executive Officer P Basant Kumar on Monday released the wall posters of annual Pavitratsavams at Sri Prasanna Venkateswara temple of Appalayagunta beginning from September 25-27 with Ankurpanam on September 24. The poster release event took place at his chambers in the TTD administrative building in which deputy executive officer Jhansi Rani, Agama advisor Srinivasacharyulu, superintendent Gopalakrishna Reddy and others were present.



World Ozone Day observed

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

The World Ozone Day was observed at the Sri Durga Malleswara Siddhartha Mahila Kalasala here on Monday.

Environmental Protection Forum Convenor V Srinivas, who spoke on the occasion, said it is the responsibility of all to save environment. The environment has given everything to us.

But, we are depleting and degrading it with our greed," he said. He explained the ill effects of depletion of Ozone layer on human beings.

It protects the human race by shielding them from the ultraviolet rays of the Sun, he added. College Director Dr T. Vijayalakshmi, Principal Dr. M. Nalini, Chemistry Department HOD Dr. S. Kalpana and others were among those present.

General Motors, TCS join hands for vehicle engineering

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

General Motors (GM) and Tata Consultancy Services (TCS) on Monday announced a new partnership under which the IT major would support the leading automaker in future vehicle engineering projects across global markets.

The new association builds on the 16-year-long relationship between the two companies, according to a joint statement by GM and TCS. Under the agreement, TCS will acquire certain assets at the GM Technical Centre India (GMTC-I) in Bengaluru and will partner with GM, supporting its global vehicle programmes with engineering design services over the next five years.

Over 1,300 employees of GMTC-I will transfer to TCS, including teams focused on propulsion systems, vehicle



engineering, controls development, testing, creative design, and special projects, the statement said.

"TCS has been an outstanding partner for 16 years. We are pleased to evolve our partnership even further, as we work to deliver on our commitment to create a world with zero crashes, zero emissions and

zero congestion," stated Dan Nicholson, GM Vice President Electrification, Controls, Software & Electronics.

Regu Ayyaswamy, TCS Global Head, Engineering and Industrial Services Practice, said that the company welcomes GMTC-I's talented engineers into the TCS family, and encourage them to take advan-

Under the agreement, TCS will acquire certain assets at the GM Technical Centre India (GMTC-I) in Bengaluru and will partner with GM, supporting its global vehicle programmes with engineering design services over the next five years

tage of the vast learning and growth opportunities available and realise their potential.

"Next generation automotive R&D is a key focus area for TCS, given the criticality of product innovation and connectedness in the Business 4.0 world. This new partnership with General Motors is a testament to our willingness to invest in the relationship for the longer term," said TCS Global Head, Manufacturing Business Group Sushel Vasudevan. The transaction and han-

dover are expected to be completed by the end of September.

Established in 2004 in Bengaluru, GMTC-I contributes to GM's global programmes across propulsion systems, vehicle engineering, controls development, testing, creative design and special projects.

It houses a design studio and an engineering center with state-of-the-art, in-house electronics hardware, as well as software testing and validation infrastructure.

Indian techie discovers Uber bug, bags Rs 4.6 lakh reward

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

Ride-hailing giant Uber that recently fixed a hacking bug found by Bengaluru-based cyber security researcher Anand Prakash paid him \$ 6,500 (nearly Rs 4.6 lakh) as a reward.

The bug allowed attackers to take over any user's Uber account, including those of

partners and Uber Eats users. As per media reports, the bug was present in the API request function of the app. According to Uber, it was immediately fixed through the company's Bug Bounty programme. They also said that they had paid over \$ 2 million to more than 600 researchers around the world, including those from India.

Cyber security researcher Anand Prakash started his career as a security engineer in Flipkart in 2014. In 2016, he founded AppSecure, a cyber security start-up, and has been featured in the Forbes '30 under 30 Asia' list

Prakash started his career as a security engineer in Flipkart in 2014. In 2016, he founded AppSecure, a cyber security

start-up and has been featured in the Forbes '30 under 30 Asia' list. He has worked with the Bengaluru-based foodtech start-up Freshmenu to make their platform secure. In 2015, Facebook awarded him \$ 15,000 as bounty for logging in without an account. A graduate in computer science from Vellore Institute of Technology,

Chennai, he also received \$ 5,000 from Uber for booking a free ride and \$ 4,700 from Tinder. He had earlier removed a bug that would let anyone ride for free for a lifetime in Uber.

Prakash has also participated in bug bounties for GitHub, Nokia, Soundcloud, Dropbox and PayPal in the past.

QuikrBazaar store launched in city



TV anchor Rashmi at the launch of QuikrBazaar store in Vijayawada on Monday

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Quikr launched its first QuikrBazaar store here on Monday. QuikrBazaar brings products such as furniture, electronics and appliances straight to the customers. All products are checked for quality and come with a full warranty and replacement guarantee from Quikr. They are convenient while also easy on the pocket.

Talking about the development, Sarath Chandra Gudlavallati, VP at QuikrBazaar, said: "There is a huge demand for quality tested, new, unboxed and refurbished products across the

country and some customers still prefer to 'touch and feel' the product before buying. With the launch of QuikrBazaar stores, we will be able to reach markets where customers don't have access to these products and bridge the gap between aspiration and affordability in Tier I, II and III cities."

The first few stores are already operational in Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Telangana and Karnataka. By the end of this year, QuikrBazaar plans to have 50+ such stores across the country to provide additional channel and increased accessibility for its consumers.

Capsule to analyse what gases you hide in your stomach

PNS ■ SYDNEY

Rather than laughing about it or feeling embarrassed, this is the time to take flatulence seriously as researchers have developed a non-invasive, gas-capturing capsule that can measure what kind of gases you have in your stomach and alert you if there is any problem.

The capsule can detect gaseous biomarkers as it passes through the gut, all the while transmitting the captured data wirelessly to the Cloud for aggregation and analysis. The purpose of the research is to lift the lid on the various gases of the gut and show how vital they are for human health, said the team from University of New South Wales in Australia (UNSW). "Interestingly, the gases in



most abundance throughout the digestive system -- nitrogen, oxygen, carbon dioxide, hydrogen and even methane - are odourless," said lead author and Professor Kourosh Kalantar-Zadeh. The study, published in Nature Reviews Gastroenterology & Hepatology, examined all avail-

able literature on gastrointestinal gases, their interactions with the microbiome of the gut, their associated disorders and the way that they can be measured and analysed.

The researchers examined each of the main gases that are found in the gastrointestinal system.

With the exception of nitrogen, the gases found in the intestines have also been linked with various gut diseases including malabsorption of food, irritable bowel syndrome (IBS), inflammatory bowel diseases (IBD) and even colon cancer, especially when the gas profiles deviate from the norm.

The research team is commercialising a revolutionary tool to analyse the gastrointestinal gases in vivo (within the body) in the form of an ingestible capsule loaded with gas-sensing technology.

Traditionally, testing and measuring of the various gases has ranged from the non-invasive in vitro - in the laboratory -- gut simulators and indirect breath testing through to colonic or small intestine tube-

insertion, a much more invasive method used to capture stool or gas samples.

The ingestible capsule can simultaneously detect oxygen and hydrogen concentrations as it moves through the gastrointestinal gut and wirelessly transmit the data to an external receiver.

"There is no other tool that can do what this capsule does," said Kalantar-Zadeh.

"In our early trials, the capsule has accurately shown the onset of food-related fermentation in the gut, which would be immensely valuable for clinical studies of food digestion and normal gut function," he added. According to the researchers, a trial is currently underway by Atmo Biosciences to test the commercial version of the capsule, the results of which will be detailed in a future research paper.

CAPSULE

Maiden IN-RSN-RTN trilateral exercise commences

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

A maiden trilateral exercise involving the Republic of Singapore Navy (RSN), Royal Thailand Navy (RTN) and Indian Navy (IN) commenced at Port Blair on Monday.

The five-day-long exercise is aimed at bolstering the maritime relationships between Singapore, Thailand and India, and contribute significantly to enhancing the overall maritime security in the region.

It would also work to strengthen the mutual confidence amongst the three navies in terms of interoperability and development of a common understanding of procedures.

Under the ambit of this exercise, formidable-class Guided Missile Stealth Frigate

RSN Tenacious and Guided Missile Frigate His Majesty's Thailand Ship (HTMS)

Kraburi would be exercising with Indian Naval Ships Ranvir, a Guided Missile Destroyer, Kora, a Missile Corvette and Sukanya, an Offshore Patrol Vessel, along with a P8L Long Range Maritime Reconnaissance aircraft.

During the harbour phase scheduled at Port Blair, professional exchange, sports fixtures and cross deck familiarisation visits would be organised.

For the sea phase scheduled from September 18 to 20, a host of surface and air operations involving Gunnery, Force Protection Measures and Communication drills would be conducted.

Besides fostering cooperation, the maiden IN-RSN-RTN Trilateral exercise would provide an opportunity to the participating navies to come together in a spirit of collaboration to nurture stronger ties.

First Consulate biz meet planned in city

■ The objective is to enhance the two way investment, trade and technology flow from these countries to Andhra Pradesh in the identified sectors

■ The initiative from AP Chambers is in sync with the spirit of 'Delhi Declaration-2018' to take forward the goals of the 'Act West' policy of ASEAN countries and 'Look East' policy of the Government of India

■ Around 100 delegates from the Chambers of Commerce, business and industry, and the government are expected to participate in the B2B meetings

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The AP Chambers in association with Government of Andhra Pradesh is set to organise the first Consulate Business Meet on in the city on September 18.

The event will be inaugurated by Minister for Industries M Goutam Reddy and Minister for Tourism Muttamsetti Srinivas Rao followed by an interactive business meet.

This is a unique initiative by the AP Chambers to bring together the Chambers of Commerce, business houses, exporters and importers of selective countries on a single platform to promote trade, business and investment among the participating countries.

The objective is to enhance the two way investment, trade and technology flow from these countries to Andhra Pradesh in the identified sectors. Around 100 delegates from the Chambers of Commerce, business and industry, and

the government are expected to participate in the B2B meetings. The initiative from AP Chambers is in sync with the spirit of 'Delhi Declaration-2018' to take forward the goals of the 'Act West' policy of ASEAN countries and 'Look East' policy of the Government of India.

In the current context of global and 'global' businesses, now is the time for strengthening the business bonding between the East and the West. True to its global status as the world's most dynamic State, Andhra Pradesh is the new hub of a business event of this size, scale and supremacy.

Foreign consulates from more than 20 countries, including France, Italy, Australia, Netherlands, Thailand, Iran, Rwanda, Belgium Columbia, Thailand, Germany will participate in this grand event, which will showcase the true potential of investment climate and proactive initiatives of the Government of Andhra Pradesh.

Boat mishaps in State claim 600 lives in two decades

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The State has witnessed the second largest number of boat mishaps after Tamil Nadu in South India. More than 600 people have lost lives in boat mishaps across the State in the past 20 years. Ironically, most of the mishaps took place in East Godavari, West Godavari, Krishna, Visakhapatnam and Srikakulam districts.

But despite the frequent boat accidents in the Godavari and Krishna rivers that have claimed several lives, no precautionary measures have been taken to prevent them.

The National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) suggests that between 2001 and 2015, a total of 8,775 incidents of boat mishaps were reported and 10,600 people had died in the country. The data also says that in the State alone, 490 people lost their lives in boat tragedies in the same period, and over 100 people died between 2016 and 2019.

Four States - Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Bihar and Chhattisgarh together accounted for more than 50 per cent of the deaths due to boat mishaps in the past one-and-a-half decade. Uttar Pradesh topped with 1,753 deaths followed by 1,665 in Madhya Pradesh and 1,216 in Bihar.

Tamil Nadu topped with 630 deaths in South India followed by Andhra Pradesh with 493 deaths, 447 in Karnataka, 386 in



■ A senior police officer said that the nexus between political leaders and boat operators in the State was the major reason for the majority of the deaths as private boat operators do not follow the rules prescribed by the Indian Registration of Shipping and Inland Vessels Act, 1917

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■ Uttar Pradesh topped with 1,753 deaths followed by 1,665 in Madhya Pradesh and 1,216 in Bihar

in Gooty mandal of Anantapur district in 2017. Nineteen persons drowned when a boat overturned in the Godavari near Manturu village in East Godavari district in May, 2018. Seventeen persons survived. Seven people drowned when a boat carrying 31 people, most of which were students, capsized in the Godavari river near Pasuvula Lanka village of East Godavari district in July 2018.

A senior police officer said that the nexus between political leaders and boat operators in the State was the major reason for the majority of the deaths as private boat operators do not follow the rules prescribed by the Indian Registration of Shipping and Inland Vessels Act, 1917.

Nexus between officials, boat owners alleged

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The boat that capsized in the River Godavari on Sunday leaving 12 dead is said to have had no clearance from the irrigation department. Of the total 72 people, who had been on the ill fated boat, 62 were tourists and the rest were crew.

The fitness of the boat had been cleared by Kakinada Port Officer Captain Dharma Sasta on Saturday. According to reliable sources, the boat was carrying a load of 72 people from Gandipochamma temple area to Papikondalu. As per the specifications, only 25 per cent of the total occupants should be permitted on the deck of the boat to maintain the weight balance.

But in this specific case, more than 70 per cent of occupants were allowed on deck. It is said that they were enjoying a dance number by two dancers, who were part of the crew engaged by the boat owners for entertaining the tourists.

When the boat was negotiating a dangerous curve en route to its destination, it tilted to one side due to high water velocity. This sudden tilt is said to have forced those on deck towards the same side in a span of a few seconds. By the time they noticed what was happening, the boat tilted further and capsized. The laxity and sheer negligence of officials concerned, as well as the corrupt practices of the boat owners is said to be the reason for this type of mishaps to happen in a span of one-and-a-half years.

Soft Bank team ready to invest in State

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

A delegation of Soft Bank met Minister for Industries and IT Mekapati Gautham Reddy at a Diplomatic Outreach Programme held at Lakeview Guest House in Hyderabad and said that they are ready to invest in electric vehicles industry. This will be confirmed within 15 days.

Gautham Reddy explained to the representatives about the development activities and favourable conditions for investments in the State.

He said Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy is giving importance to welfare and industrial growth in the State.

■ IT Minister Mekapati Gautham Reddy apprised the delegation of the new initiatives of the government like 75% reservation to locals in industries and establishing skill development centres to provide free training to the unemployed youth

■ He said that he would personally take the proposals of the Japanese delegation to the notice of the Chief Minister

■ ETA Electra Electronic Vehicles CEO Biju Thomas, Vishnu Group Vice-Chairman Ravi Chandran, representative of Deloitte Kaushal, Johnson & Johnson Vice-President and PR Agencies met the minister

The government would come up with a new industrial policy to promote industrial growth by next year. The IT Minister apprised

the delegation of the new initiatives of the government like 75% reservation to locals in industries and establishing skill development centres to

provide free training to the unemployed youth. He said that he would personally take the proposals of the Japanese delegation to the notice of the Chief Minister.

Gautham Reddy attended a series of meetings with various organisations. A delegation of Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI) met the minister.

ETA Electra Electronic Vehicles CEO Biju Thomas, Vishnu Group Vice-Chairman Ravi Chandran, representative of Deloitte Kaushal, Johnson & Johnson Vice-President and PR Agencies met the minister during the programme.

AWARENESS DRIVE ON HELMET USE



A BJP worker in Lord Ganesha's attire, along with a cop, creating awareness on helmet use at Satyam Junction in Visakhapatnam on Monday

NTPC Simhadri bags Safety Innovation Award

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

NTPC Simhadri was conferred with the Safety Innovation Award- 2019 by the Institute of Engineers on Monday. The award was received by the CGM, Simhadri Station, V Sudharshan Babu and AGM (Safety), L Kishore Babu in New Delhi on Monday. The NTPC was awarded for the innovative safety measures that they had deployed at the station with paramount priority, achieving the 'zero accident' target. Techniques ranging from educational and management control like discussing Concrete Filled Steel Tubular (CFST) observations, safety performance through lead and lag indicators, issuance of zone-wise safety certificates, screening of safety films and songs and safety induction were followed through.



CGM of Simhadri Station V Sudharshan Babu and AGM (Safety) L. Kishore Babu receiving the award in New Delhi on Monday

The award also took the 'Safety Park' to other engineering and enforcement measures into consideration. These included the use of hydraulic platforms for height works, safety challs, safety clearance for contractor's bills, and CCTV network monitoring among others. The finest practices were also implemented for overhauling safety like setting up of

safety control room, monitoring of Permit System to height works and grill openings, daily pep talks at the overhauling site as well as during training programmes, overhaul safety inspections, pasting of emergency number stickers on safety helmets for clear employee identification, and ensuring healthiness of EOT crane limit switches.

AS Raja Women's College observes World Ozone Day

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

An awareness programme on the preservation of the ozone layer was held during the World Ozone Day programme at AS Raja Women's College at MVP Colony on Monday. The programme was conducted under the guidance of Dr S Vijaya Kumar, President of Paryavarana Margadarsi Vaisakhi and JV Ratnam, founder of Green Climate Team. "There is an urgent need to observe the United Nations' International Day for the preservation of the ozone layer every year, commemorating the 1987 signing of the Montreal Protocol on sub-

stances that deplete the ozone layer. Every individual has to be aware of ozone layer protection," said GV Narayana Rao, Principal of the college.

The ozone layer was discovered in 1913 by French physicists Charles Fabry and Henri Buisson. Ozone's properties were explored in detail by British meteorologist GMB Dobson, who developed a simple spectrophotometer (the Dobsonmeter) that could be used to measure stratospheric ozone from the ground. Between 1928 and 1958, Dobson established a world-wide network of ozone monitoring stations, which continue to operate to this day.

Selfie craze kills one

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

The weekend trip turned tragic for a group of youngsters, who went to Sariya waterfalls in Jeenabadu of Anathagiri mandal in Vizag Agency on Saturday when one of them feared drowned.

According to delayed reports received here on Monday, the incident happened when the youngster slipped from a small rock while taking a selfie. The police said that the missing youngster was identified as Deepak Sai (25), a resident of Sivajipalem in Vizag city. One of his friends Manikanta, tried to rescue him, but in vain. The body is yet to be retrieved and search operations are on.

Locals say that Sariya waterfalls turned a death trap for the visitors as over 14 people died

while taking selfies only. In 2015, two youngsters A Sundara Rao and P Nani of Vizag, who went to the waterfalls drowned and died, while they were taking selfies. Sources said that the police installed warning boards and the local youth have been alerting the tourists about the dangerous zones at the spot. But, the visitors have been ignoring the warnings and losing their lives for the selfie craze. There was a proposal by the police and tourism department officials to notify 'No Selfie Zones' to prevent the selfie related deaths. But, the proposal was shelved by the authorities citing that lack of legal support.



at the spot in the past four years and most of them slipped from the rock into the waters,

Waltair division observes 'Swachhta hi Seva Pakhwada'

PNS ■ VISAKHAPATNAM

As per the directive of the Ministry of Railways, Waltair division is observing 'Swachhta hi Seva Pakhwada' in the division from September 11 and that will continue till October 2.

Divisional Railway Manager of Waltair Chetan Kumar Shrivastava offered Shramdan in the city on Monday leading and giving a message to the nation on removal of plastic waste.

A massive awareness campaign with participation from all stakeholders on plastic waste collection was organised on Monday after administering the pledge on Swachhta. Focus on plastic waste collection will continue throughout the Swachhta Pakhwada. The awareness rally and campaign



Waltair Division DRM Chetan Kumar Shrivastava and staff taking out a rally from Visakhapatnam Railway Station during the cleanliness fortnight in Visakhapatnam on Monday

was witnessed by staff, officers, stake holders, scouts and guides, RPF and passengers. ADRM (infra) Akshay Saxena, ADRM (Operations) P Ramachandra Rao, branch officers, union representatives

also took part in the awareness programmes.

Addressing a huge gathering, DRM Waltair urged everyone to make this Pakhwada a grand success and to give special focus on

cleanliness at railway stations and in trains throughout the 'Pakhwada'.

Earlier this week, the division has also organised awareness campaign on ban on single use plastic at railway stations and premises. In this connection, a street play (Nukkad Natak) was staged by the divisional cultural association at Visakhapatnam railway station. Cleanliness and green plantation programmes were organised in the division. A seminar is also organised on ill effects of usage of plastic and how to overcome the menace at the divisional office.

Apart from the awareness campaigns, the division also planned to conduct various programmes such as Shramdan- Intensive cleanliness activities at railway stations and railway localities.

Ex-Speaker Kodela commits suicide

Continued from Page 1

The DCP West Zone AR Srinivas said the cause of death would be known after the autopsy report. The Hyderabad city police has registered a case under Section 174 (suspicious death) of CrPc and began an investigation.

Hyderabad police commissioner Anjani Kumar said, "Banjara Hills ACP K Srinivasa Rao visited the residence along with a CLUES Team, and we are taking all precautions. A scientific investigation will be taking place."

He had his college education at AC College, Guntur and later did his MBBS from Guntur Medical College. He completed his MS from Kurnool Medical College. After the death of his youngest son in a road accident a few

years ago, he had to face a bitter experience due to embarrassment from his eldest son and daughter and the party leaders as well.

In a political career spanning over 40 years, Sivaprasada Rao elected to the Assembly from Narasaraopet in 1983, 1985, 1989, 1994 and 2004-MLA. He won the Sattenapalli seat in 2014. He served Home Minister during 1987-88 and Irrigation Minister during 996-97. He lost the election to YSRCP's Ambati Rambabu in 2019 from Sattenapalli Assembly constituency.

Meanwhile, condolences started pouring in for the departed TDP leader as the news of his demise spread across the country. Vice-President M Venkaia Naidu said the passing away of former Speaker Kodela Sivaprasada

Rao is unfortunate. He conveyed his condolences to the bereaved family.

Governor Biswa Bhushan Harichandan in a message conveyed his grief over the untimely demise of Kodela Sivaprasada Rao. The Governor said his services as the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly will always be remembered.

The Governor conveyed his deepest sympathies and heartfelt condolences to members of the bereaved family. Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy expressing grief over the death of Sivaprasada Rao, conveyed his condolences to the bereaved family members. "Siva Prasada Rao had a long political innings since 1983 and was a popular doctor. May his soul rest in peace," he said.

Poster on ARC Students' Clubs released

PNS ■ VIJAYAWADA

Chairman of APSSDC Challa Madhusudhan Reddy released a poster on ARC Student Clubs and Higher Education Cell, along with the Chairman, from partnering engineering colleges and ARC teams at APSSDC head office in Tadepalli on Monday. The club will provide an opportunity to ARC students to participate in national and international robotics competitions through its Robotics Cell as well as avail higher education opportunities in Europe. It will also organise industrial talks by experts working in world-renowned companies from Germany. Dr Om Sri, COO Indo Euro Synchronisation, Abhishek Reddy, Executive Director Annamacharya Group, Srirama Engineering College and various engineering college managements attended the programme in the first phase of APSSDC- ARC training.

WHAT EXACTLY HAPPENED...

- At 10 am on Monday, Kodela along with spouse had his breakfast. At 10.10 am he went into his room. After a while, his spouse followed him only to find that the room door was locked from inside. Her requests to open the door met with no response whatsoever. Therefore, she said that she had called her gunman, who barged into the room and broke open the rear door only to find Kodela hanging to a ceiling fan.
- He was rushed to Basava Tarakam Cancer Hospital around 10.40 am. Doctors at the hospital declared him brought dead at 10.50 am. The hospital intimated the death of Kodela to Banjara Hills police. Circle Inspector Kalinga Rao deputed SI Rami Reddy to the cancer hospital.
- The police confirmed it to be a suicide and enquired with the family members to ascertain facts. The police thoroughly examined his bed room, but did not find any suicide note. The dog squad, CLUEs team, Task force were deployed to probe into the death.

CASES AGAINST KODELA & KIN

- 08-06-2019 - Arvapalli Padmavati of Kesanapalli complained against Kodela's daughter regarding land encroachment
- 01.06.2019 - Kodela urged SP Jayalakshmi for grant of station bail because of foisting false cases against him as part of victimisation
- 19.6.2019 - Dr Kalyan Chakravarty filed a cheating case against the family for having defrauded him to the tune of Rs 4 lakh
- 10.8.2019 - Kodela son's Honda showroom was seized for default of tax due to RTO.
- 20.8.2019 - Kodela writes to Assembly Secretary offering to return Assembly furniture. Case registered against Kodela at Tulluru station
- 26.06.2019 - On a complaint by Venkayamma with one town police of Narasaraopeta town, a case was registered against Kodela under various sections
- 17.04.2019 - Case was registered against Kodela at the behest of YSRCP in Rajupalem PS charging him with trying to booth capture. He figured as A7
- 27.08.2019 - Attack on cotton trader Challa Ravindra Reddy at Khammam and Sattupalli
- Complaint against Sivaram for threatening builder Mallikarjuna Rao demanding him to pay commission
- 10.06.2019 - Complaint against Kodela's daughter by one Sekhar for collecting Rs 7 lakh from him promising him contract job.
- 29.08.2019 - Complaint against Sivaram on Ruita Hospital Lab equipment
- 11.06.2019 - Viranchita Resorts owner Vamsi Krishna lodges complaint against Sivaram for exporting Rs 2 crore in a land exchange deal
- 25.08.2019 - 30 laptops of DRDA were missing. Case registered against Sivaram by DRDA project director Yugandhar

REVENGE POLITICS BEHIND KODELA'S DEATH?

CASES AGAINST THE FORMER SPEAKER OF AP AND HIS CHILDREN OVER 'MISUSE' OF FURNITURE TOOK A TOLL ON KODELA

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Case filed against him for diversion of costly furniture of Assembly to his office could be one of the reasons that drove first Speaker of Andhra Pradesh, Kodela Siva Prasada Rao, to commit suicide. Subsequently, an agonised Kodela, claimed not committing a single mistake in his capacity as the Speaker while addressing media.

Stating that there is an inventory of Assembly articles, he alleged being targeted by the ruling YSRCP with its false propaganda accusing him of theft and misuse of official powers.

An anguished Kodela told media conference that he was being subjected to agony and harassment. In a clarification, Kodela said that he had written to YSRCP government

within a week of new government coming to power informing it that the Assembly furniture is with him and asked the government to come and take possession of it. In spite of issuing clarification, the ruling YSRCP was accused of branding him as furniture thief.

This apart, cases registered against his family members caused him agony, it was said. Cases were registered against him under Section 409 and 411 accusing him of diverting government furniture, his sons show-room's license was cancelled, 15 cases were registered against his daughter for having duped unemployed promising them jobs and a case was registered against his son in disappearance of laptops from NCP guest house. These cases took a heavy toll on him, it is alleged.

Kodela's death sparks political slugfest

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Close confidantes of former Assembly Speaker Kodela Siva Prasada Rao say that the former Speaker used to take them into confidence and say, "In the name of investigation of cases foisted against him, the YSRCP government was mentally torturing him by practicing the politics of victimization."

was reported to have remarked, "I never expected that the politics will become so mean."

"It was atrocious to subject me to torture out of vendetta. This government's objective appears to insult me and then subject to mental torture. Politics does not mean targeting and harassing political rivals. The Pulivendula faction tactics are being used against me", they said quoting Kodela as saying, "Their only objective is to corner me from all sides and subject me to severe agony. Allegations are being leveled against me to tarnish my image. This is political victimization," they further said quoting Kodela as saying.



Kodela Shiva Prasada's daughter Vijayalakshmi (middle) at their residence in Hyderabad on Monday

'Govt tortured my father'

Former Speaker of Assembly Kodela Sivaprasada Rao's daughter Vijayalakshmi said that her father was subjected to harassment ever since there was a change of guards in the government. He suffered

harassment for the past three months and was deprived of sleep, she said. "Even me and my brother Sivaram were not spared from the malicious campaign," she said. There were many speculations about my father's death, she said and

asked the people to spread good word about her father. Earlier, in a statement to the police, she said that her father's body was found hanging from ceiling in the first-floor of their house. She further said that there was no suicide note.



Sujana blames AP govt

BIP Rajya Sabha Member Sujana Chowdary on Monday described death of former speaker Kodela Sivaprasada Rao as painful and called him as Tiger of Palnadu. He held the state government indirectly responsible for the death of Kodela. Harassing political leaders was not justified. Recalling Kodela, he said that he used to always complain against the government for harassment meted out to him.

The elders in the state government should make an introspection on how far was it justified to file case against him after case against him was filed.

'An efficient leader'

Telangana TDP president L Ramana on Monday expressed his disbelief over the death of former speaker of the Andhra Pradesh Assembly Kodela Siva Prasada Rao.

Learning about admitting Kodela to Basava Tarakam Cancer Hospital, he said that he rushed to the hospital. To his dismay, the doctors at the hospital broke the news of Kodela's death.

He could clearly notice that Kodela was subjected to mental agony recent time. He described Kodela as an efficient leader in the party. He conveyed his heart felt sympathies to bereaved family members. He said he would pray to God that his soul would rest in peace.

Naidu blames government

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

Former Chief Minister N Chandrababu Naidu on Monday expressed shock at the death of former speaker of Assembly Kodela Sivaprasada Rao and maintained that he was not able to digest the news.

Responding to a call given by TDP founder NT Rama Rao, Kodela, gave up his medical profession and joined politics to rededicate himself to serve society. He became very popular as doctor of the poor. He grew in stature to become Minister. He served as Home Minister, Panchayat Raj Minister, Medical and Health Minister and worked as the first Speaker of the Assembly in Navayandhra Pradesh, he said recalling Kodela's political journey.

Chandrababu expressed concern over the fire brand leader committing suicide unable to bear with harassment meted out to him. At one time, he was fondly addressed as 'Palanadu Puli' when he goes on a tour of the region. He was a fearless man. Because of the victimization measures by the government, he took the extreme step out of agony. He apprehended insult by the government and sniffed out his life.

"Unable to bear with the insults heaped on him, Kodela consulted me," Chandrababu said adding that he had advised him to be bold.



'Clashing with CM's family never easy'

PNS ■ KHAMMAM

Former Minister Tummala Nageswara Rao on Monday expressed shock over the death of former Speaker of Andhra Pradesh Kodela Shiva Prasada Rao. In a message, he said that he was well aware of the fact that how difficult it was to clash with the family of the Chief Minister. Kodela began his career as a person and grew to become a force to reckon with.



The undisputed leader

- Kodela Siva Prasada Rao was one of the senior-most leaders of opposition TDP in Andhra Pradesh.
- Kodela Siva Prasada Rao became the speaker in 2014 after the bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh
- He served 5 years as the speaker of the Andhra Pradesh assembly.
- Kodela is 6 time member of the Andhra Pradesh Assembly.
- He had served as Minister for Home (1987-1988), Minister for Major & Medium Irrigation (1996-1997) and Minister for Panchayati Raj (1997-1999) in Andhra Pradesh.
- He won from Narsaraopet five times and Sattenapalli in 2014
- Kodela was a doctor and he graduated from Guntur Medical College
- He joined the TDP in 1983.



The doctor who was known as 'Tiger of Palnadu'

PNS ■ HYDERABAD

Former AP Assembly Speaker Kodela Siva Prasada Rao shares a special bond with the Basavatarakam Cancer Hospital, who supervised be its construction or its running from the beginning. As the cancer hospital's trust chairman, he played a pivotal role in the hospital extending valuable services to many cancer patients. He left his indelible mark on the hospital's functioning.

However busy schedule he used to have in politics, he used to devote time to his profession of practicing medicine, which was his passion. Having completed PUC from Loyola College, Vijayawada, Kodela completed MBBS from medical colleges in Kurnool and Guntur. Later, he did his MS course from Varanasi. Later, he started hospital in Narasaraopet and treated



The ex-Speaker share a special bond with Basavatarakam Cancer Hospital

patients free of cost and built up reputation for himself in the profession.

Recognising his services to the poor as a doctor, former Chief Minister NT Rama Rao invited him to join politics. NT Rama Rao entrusted responsibilities of setting up of Basavatarakam Indo-American Cancer Hospital and Research Institute. The hospital was built completely under his supervision. He was active in the managing the affairs of the hospital for several years. But, spreading of the

news about his death from the very hospital left one and all disturbed. His close confidantes, followers are finding it hard to swallow the news. Regarding him as Tiger of Palnadu, they wonder at how the fate could take him away from their midst. As a political leader, Kodela is aggressive, but he was so soft in his approach while practicing medicine, recall those who were acquainted with him. When called up, he was always accessible to people in his clinic.

Boat capsizes: CM conducts aerial survey

PNS ■ AMARAVATI

Andhra Pradesh Chief Minister YS Jaganmohan Reddy on Monday conducted an aerial survey of Sunday's boat accident site in Godavari River. The Chief Minister flew in a helicopter over Kuchuluru in East Godavari district where the boat with over 60 tourists capsized.

Accompanied by Home Minister Sucharita, Reddy took off from Vijayawada and took the aerial survey while on his way to Rajahmundry. Officials said 27 people were rescued while the search was on for the missing. The Chief Minister will hold a meeting later in the day with officials to review the rescue and relief operations.

The Chief Minister also visited the Rajahmundry Government General Hospital. About 24 persons survived from the tragedy were shifted to Rajahmundry Government General Hospital

(GGH), East Godavari Superintendent of Police Adnan Nayeem Asmi said. Telangana Minister Erraballi Dayakar Rao too visited the GGH and enquired the health

condition of the victims. While bodies of eight passengers were recovered from the river till Sunday night, another four were retrieved at the accident spot at Kachchuluru in East Godavari district on Monday morning. This included a six-month old child, the SP said. One heli-

copter of the Indian Navy and another of the ONGC have been pressed into service while eight boats were being used by NDRF and SDRF personnel to search for the people feared drowned. Crest gates of the Sir Arthur Cotton Barrage at Dowaleswaram have been shut to prevent the possibility of the

bodies from getting washed away downstream. The boat 'Royal Vasishtha' was on its way to the picturesque Papikondalu tourist spot in the middle of the river when it met with the accident, apparently on colliding with a large rock formation, at Kachchuluru. As many as 27 people survived the tragedy and were rescued by villagers of Tutugunta. The survivors

were taken to the area hospital in Rampachodavaram and government general hospital in Rajamahendravaram for treatment. Most of the tourists were from Hyderabad and Warangal in neighbouring Telangana and state CM announced an ex-gratia of Rs 5 lakh each to the bereaved families from his State and deputed Ministers to coordinate in the relief works.



Rescue teams search for missing persons at the accident spot in East Godavari district on Monday

SHORT READS



Pak violates ceasefire in J&K's Poonch, 4 soldiers injured

JAMMU: Four Army personnel suffered minor splinter injuries in mortar shelling by the Pakistan Army along the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir's Poonch district, officials said on Monday. "Pakistan initiated unprovoked ceasefire violation by firing of small arms and intense shelling with mortars in Balakote area of Mendhar sector around 2230 hours on Sunday," Army public relations officer Lt Col Devender Anand said. "Indian army retaliated befittingly." "Indian troopers suffered minor injuries in the Pakistani shelling and the injured have been evacuated to hospital where they are under treatment," he said in a statement. Officials said an Army column was on an ambush duty near the LoC when two mortar shells exploded near them around 12.30 am, causing injuries to at least four of them.

Dreaded dacoit, aide killed in encounter with police in MP

SATNA: A 40-year-old dreaded dacoit, who was wanted in connection with several killings and robberies, and his accomplice were killed in an encounter with police in Madhya Pradesh's Satna district, police said on Monday. The gun-battle took place in Ledri forest late Sunday night when the police got a tip-off about their presence in the area, located around 65 km from here, they said. When the police closed-in on Babli Kol, who carried a reward of Rs 6.5 lakh on his head, and his aide Lovelace (32), who also carried a bounty of Rs 1.8 lakh, and asked them to surrender, they started firing at the security personnel. This led to an exchange of fire between the two sides. Inspector General of Police, Rewa, Chanchal Shekhar told reporters. When the guns fell silent, the police found bodies of Kol and his aide at the spot, he said.

Maha: Noted surgeon, cabbie killed in accident on Expressway

PUNE: A prominent city-based surgeon and his cab driver were killed and two other doctors injured when a bus hit them on the Mumbai-Pune Expressway near here in Maharashtra, police said on Monday. The mishap took place near Somatane village around 10.30 pm on Sunday when Dr Ketan Khurjekar (44), a spine expert, and two other orthopedic surgeons were on way to Pune from Mumbai in a cab, Talegaon Dabhade police station's inspector Kishor Mhasawade said. When the cab reached Somatane village, the driver stopped the vehicle on a roadside to replace one of its punctured tyre. After all of them came out of the vehicle, Khurjekar went to help the driver. While the cab driver was changing the damaged tyre, a private bus coming on that side hit all of them from behind, the official said.

Restore normalcy in Kashmir: SC asks Centre, J&K

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday asked the Centre and Jammu and Kashmir administration to make all endeavours to restore normalcy in Kashmir Valley as soon as possible but made it clear that the restoration would be on a "selective basis" keeping in mind national interest.

A bench headed by Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi and comprising justices S A Bobde and S A Nazeer, was told by Attorney General K K Venugopal about steps taken by authorities to restore normalcy in the state. The apex court asked Venugopal to file an affidavit indicating steps taken so far in the matter.

When the top court was told about the alleged "shut-down" of mobile and Internet services in Kashmir Valley, the bench said these issues could be dealt with by the Jammu and Kashmir High Court.

"Is it the same situation today? We are saying that if it is some local issue then it would be better if the high court dealt with it. It is simpler for the high court to know what is happening in the state in terms of the shutdown of mobile and Internet services," the bench said.

Advocate Vrinda Grover, appearing for petitioner and Executive Editor of Kashmir Times Anuradha Bhasin, told the bench that mobile, Internet services and public transport are not working in the Kashmir Valley and it would be difficult for them to approach the high court.

While Bhasin has sought removal of restrictions imposed on working of journalists in the state after scrapping of provisions of Article 370, some other petitioners



SC agrees to entertain plea against abrogation of Article 370

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Supreme Court on Monday agreed to entertain a petition filed by the Jammu and Kashmir People's Conference (JKPC) challenging the President's Rule imposed in the state and abrogation of provisions of Article 370, which gave special status to the state.

A bench comprising Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi and justices S A Bobde and S A Nazeer tagged the petition filed by JKPC along with peti-

tioner "do not appear to be genuine" as Kashmir-based newspapers are being published and the government has been offering all kinds of assistance to them.

However, the bench declined to entertain other fresh petitions on the issue of scrapping of Article 370

tions which have been referred to a five-judge Constitution bench for examining the legal validity of the Presidential order on abrogation of Article 370 from the state.

However, the bench declined to entertain other fresh petitions on the issue of scrapping of Article 370.

The bench said it is not going to multiply the petitions on the issue of Article 370.

It said people who want to argue on the issue can file impleadment application.



SC notice to Centre, J&K on plea for producing Farooq

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The Centre and the Jammu and Kashmir administration have been asked by the Supreme Court to respond to a plea seeking that former chief minister Farooq Abdullah, allegedly under detention following the scrapping of the state's special status, be produced before the court. A bench of Chief Justice Ranjan Gogoi and justices S A Bobde and S A Nazeer issued notice to the Centre and the state, and fixed Rajya Sabha MP and MDMK leader Vaiko's plea for hearing on September 30. Vaiko, who said he has been a close friend of Abdullah for the past four decades, has contended that constitutional rights conferred on the National Conference leader had been deprived of on account of "illegal detention without any authority of law". In his plea, Vaiko had said that authorities should allow Abdullah to attend a "peaceful and democratic" annual conference, being organised in Chennai on September 15, on the occasion of birthday of former Tamil Nadu Chief Minister C N Annadurai.

The actions of the respondents (Centre and Jammu and Kashmir) are completely illegal and arbitrary and violative of the right to protection of life and personal liberty, right to protection from arrest and detention and also against right to free speech and expression which is the cornerstone of a democratic nation," the plea has said.



HM Shah reviews JK situation

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Union Home Minister Amit Shah on Monday reviewed the security situation in Jammu and Kashmir amidst reports of around 230 terrorists waiting at terror launch pads in Pakistan occupied Kashmir to enter the country, officials said.

During the two-hour long meeting, also attended by National Security Advisor Ajit Doval and Cabinet Secretary Rajiv Gauba among others, the home minister was given a detailed presentation on the prevailing security situation in Jammu and Kashmir, particularly along the International Border and the Line of Control.

The home minister took stock of the situation and was briefed about the steps taken to maintain peace along border areas as well as in the Valley, a security official said.

The meeting came amidst report that around 230 terrorists were brought to terror launch pads by Pakistan to push them into Jammu and Kashmir.

Lieutenant General K J S Dhillon, General Officer Commanding, 15 Corps, which looks after the Kashmir Valley, had recently said there have been infiltration attempts from across the border. "The launchpads in PoK

The home minister took stock of the situation and was briefed about the steps taken to maintain peace along border areas as well as in the Valley, a security official said

have been full — tanzems including LeT, JeM, Hizbul and Al Badr, frequently come to Pakistani posts. Every day, there is firing. Attempts of infiltration are also made in Poonch, Rajouri and Jammu sectors," he had said.

Normal life remained affected in Kashmir Valley for the 43rd consecutive day on Monday following abrogation of Article 370 on August 5. Most of the shops remained shut and public transport was off the roads.

Internet services remained suspended across all platforms.

While landline across the valley were functional, voice calls on mobile devices were working only in Kupwara and Handwara police districts of north Kashmir.

Chidambaram turns 74, mocks government

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

Former Finance Minister and senior Congress leader P. Chidambaram, who celebrated his 74th birthday in Tihar jail, on Monday mocked at the Modi government's plan to achieve \$5 trillion economy mark by 2024 saying no country has achieved the GDP growth of 8 per cent without exports growing at 20 per cent a year.

Chidambaram, also said that the greetings from friends, party colleagues and well wishers remind him that he is 74-years young.

Chidambaram, who has been lodged in Asia's high security Tihar jail in connection with the INX media case,

in a series of tweets said, "I have asked my family to tweet on my behalf the following: My family have brought me greetings from friends, party colleagues and well-wishers. I am reminded that I am 74-years-old. Indeed I am, but at heart I feel 74-years young. Thank you all, my spirits have been lifted higher."

Slamming the government over its target of achieving \$5 trillion economy by 2024, the former Finance Minister said, "My thoughts today are about the economy. Just one statistic tells the story. Export growth in August was -- 6.05 per cent. No country has achieved GDP growth of 8 per cent without exports growing at 20 per cent

Chidambaram, also said that the greetings from friends, party colleagues and well wishers remind him that he is 74-years young



a year." "May God bless this country," he tweeted. His remarks came after India's exports during August fell nearly 6.1 per cent to \$ 26.13 billion, while GDP growth during April-June period fell to 5 per cent from 5.8 per cent in the preceding quarter.

On September 5, while being taken to Tihar jail, responding to questions over his judicial custody, Chidambaram said, "5 per cent" taking a dig at the country's GDP rate.

Chidambaram has been lodged in Tihar Jail since

September 5 after a Delhi court sent him to 14-day judicial custody in the INX media case.

Congress General Secretary K. C. Venugopal also greeted the senior party leader on his birthday saying he was sure that the vendetta politics of the government cannot defeat him. "Being challenged in life is inevitable, being defeated is optional. I am sure that the vendetta politics can't defeat you. Happy Birthday to P Chidambaram," he tweeted.

The Congress has described the arrest of its party leaders like Chidambaram, former Karnataka Minister D.K. Shivakumar as political vendetta by the Narendra Modi government.



PMO defines work areas for PK Mishra, Doval and Sinha

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Days after P K Mishra and P K Sinha were appointed as Prime Minister Narendra Modi's Principal Secretary and Principal Advisor respectively, the Prime Minister's Office has defined the work areas for the two officers, and also for National Security Advisor Ajit Doval. According to an order issued by the PMO, Principal Secretary Mishra will look into policy issues and matters relating to ministries of Personnel, Law, Appointments Committee of Cabinet and other appointments.

He will also look into issues related to the Cabinet Secretariat, listing of items for

the meeting of the Union Cabinet, anti-corruption unit, PMO's establishment and all important policy issues and matters, according to the order.

NSA Doval will look into all matters relating to national security and policy matters -- except appointments. He will also oversee policy matters relating to ministries of External Affairs, Overseas Indians Affairs, Defence, Space, Atomic Energy and the country's external intelligence agency Research and Analysis Wing. He will also be in charge of all policies and matters relating to National Security Council Secretariat and the National Authority for Chemical Weapons.

CBI at WB secretariat, for Rajeev

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

CBI officials on Monday went to the state secretariat and delivered letters for the chief secretary and home secretary in connection with former city police commissioner Rajeev Kumar not appearing before the agency for the ongoing probe into the Saradha scam.

Two officers of the CBI reached the state secretariat around 10.40 am and delivered the letters one for Chief Secretary Malay De and another for Home Secretary Alapan Bandyopadhyay.

The CBI, in the letters, sought to know the whereabouts of the police officer and the grounds on which he had gone on a month-long leave, a senior official at the state secretariat told PTI.

The agency also sought to know when Kumar would be joining duty, the official said.

The orders of the Calcutta High Court withdrawing protection against arrest to Kumar were also attached with the let-

ters. The CBI had served a fresh notice to Kumar on Friday asking him to appear before it on the following day. Kumar, who is now the additional director general of police in the Criminal Investigation Department (CID), failed to appear before the CBI sleuths after that. Secretariat sources said that the CBI, in the letters, has directed Kumar to appear before its officers by 2 pm on Monday.



Curfew lifted after Jamaat leader laid to rest in J&K's Kishtwar

PTI ■ JAMMU

Ghulam Nabi Gundana, a prominent leader of banned outfit Jamaat-e-Islami (JeI), was laid to rest on Monday amid a curfew in his home town in Jammu and Kashmir's Kishtwar, officials said.

However, the curfew was lifted within hours of Gundana's burial as the situation remained peaceful with no untoward incident reported during the 70-year-old JeI leader's funeral, which was attended by his relatives and neighbours, they added.

The curfew was imposed in Kishtwar town and adjoining areas late on Sunday as a precautionary measure to maintain law and order following the death of Gundana, a retired government teacher, at a hospital in Punjab's Ludhiana, where he was shifted recently for specialised treatment.

Gundana had undergone a surgery and was spared arrest during a major crackdown on the JeI leadership on March 2. He was also affiliated to the Hurriyat Conference.

Gundana was placed under house arrest, while three of his close associates were arrested during the crackdown.

The Centre has banned the JeI for a period of five years under anti-terror laws on the ground that it was "in close touch" with militant outfits



Gundana was placed under house arrest, while three of his close associates were arrested during the crackdown

and was expected to "escalate the secessionist movement" in Jammu and Kashmir.

"The situation in the curfew-bound areas remained peaceful and there was no report of any untoward incident during the funeral of the JeI leader. Hence, the curfew, which was promulgated as a precautionary measure to maintain peace, was lifted," Deputy Commissioner, Kishtwar, Angrez Singh Rama told PTI.

Officials said Gundana's body reached his home in the wee hours on Monday and his "Nimaz-e-Jinazah" (a prayer ceremony before burial) was held at the Jamia Masjid complex. The JeI leader was laid to rest at his ancestral graveyard near Choughan.

India spent nearly Rs 4Kcr on Swachh Bharat

IAN S ■ NEW DELHI

To make the Swachh Bharat Mission a success, India mobilised huge resources for information, education and communication (IEC) activities, with a new report estimating that the cash expenditure by the government, private sector, and the development community to be between Rs 3,500-4,000 crore in five years since the programme's launch.

Of this cash spend, around 20 per cent was spent by the erstwhile Union Ministry of Drinking Water and Sanitation, around 35 per cent by the state sanitation departments, around 25 per cent by other government ministries, and around 20 per cent by the private sector and the development sector collectively, said the report by consultancy firm Dalberg Advisors.



Under the Swachh Bharat Mission, the government has shown remarkable ability to leverage resources across the public sector, private sector, media, and civil society, to make sanitation a mass movement in India

of "exposures" created, and estimating the investment required if the government were to "buy" these exposures in an efficient market.

An average person living in rural India was exposed to between 2,500-3,300 SBM related messages over the last five years, according to the study titled "An assessment of the reach and value of IEC activities under Swachh Bharat Mission (Grameen)".

A large majority of these messages were routed via newly

constructed toilets, mass media, and the

Swachh Bharat logo. Other significant contributors included ambient media such as wall murals and hoardings, and other conventional channels such as inter-personal communication (IPC), digital media, and cinema.

Since the launch of the Swachh Bharat Mission on October 2, 2014, over 10 crore households toilets have been built in the country, leading to a significant improvement in

sanitation coverage and reduction in open defecation.

Since 2014, engagement from the top political and government leadership, especially the Prime Minister, induced catalytic participation across segments, giving the cause of sanitation consistent attention and focus.

This translated into a mission mode approach where a range of government ministries, private sector organisations, the philanthropic ecosystem, civil society, and the media and entertainment sector participated to bring sanitation messaging and awareness to citizens at significant scale.

When Modi visits the US later this month, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation will honour the success of Swachh Bharat that has transformed lives around the country.

Not Hindi *hain hum*

Amit Shah's proposal to make Hindi the unifying language is unworkable and threatens our federal plurality



Perhaps nobody could have articulated the difference between a transactional language and the tongue you are born with than the great Nelson Mandela himself, who was as rooted as global. "If you talk to a man in a language he understands, that goes to his head. If you talk to him in his mother language that goes to his heart," he said. Our Constitutional fathers understood this and despite their attempt at breaking the colonial shadow with a pan-India language — something which could be argued better during a

pure nationalist surge after Independence — couldn't make either Hindi or Sanskrit the preferred alternative. More than the political opposition that came from regional leaders, our predecessors, in their infinite wisdom, understood that language was more about culture, identity and one of the many concrete embodiments of "unity in diversity" than it was about a tool of communication. As a result, Hindi and all other languages were accorded official language status, a peerage of sorts. And may we say that this policy has neither affected inclusive development, nor changed the national narrative so far. So while English continued to be a link language of economic mobility and global engagement, each State, as is the nature of federal polity, conducted business in it as well as their own familiar words. Besides, language wars or the North versus South debates are well past their expiry date as even the UN has certified that mother languages are intrinsic to human development. These help establish our personalities and relationships with our families, society and the larger world outside, defining the way we express ourselves and establish our confidence. So Home Minister Amit Shah's bold claim that Hindi should be made the national unifier language and a voice to the world is not only ludicrously revisionist but defeats the civilisational idea of India, which functions as a beehive of plurality rather than as a smartcard monolith of "one India, one language." Of course, in the current swell of jingoism, nobody would want to listen to reason. Imagine if a Tamil-speaking farmer had to avail a Government scheme in the back of the beyond and is expected to not only read Hindi but understand the fine print and sign off, then it is all about unfair imposition, cultural dwarfism and centrist exclusivity over an empathetic embrace. The poor farmer will have no option but to rely on interlocutors and unnecessary bureaucratic inefficiencies. Similarly, howsoever much we may want to disown English, it has become our common connector, an asset for global empowerment, a social aspiration and the reason that the offshore business processing industry was one of the first to take off in India. How would one talk the language of science without peppering it with English? How would one change academic discipline in higher institutions where English is the accepted and entrenched medium of instruction? How would one score in the professional space of multinational companies where English is common currency? And rarely have Hindi-speaking people not chosen to pursue English.

By the same logic, the government machinery would be bound to use a single language as a working medium and that privilege would automatically be discriminatory to those officers whose mother tongue isn't Hindi. According to Article 343 of the Constitution of India, "the official language of the Union shall be Hindi in Devanagari script and (2) Notwithstanding anything in clause (1), for a period of 15 years from the commencement of this Constitution, the English language shall continue to be used for all official purposes of the Union for which it was being used immediately before such commencement." Schedule 8 allows reviewing the progressive use of Hindi but doesn't run down English or takes away the State legislature's right to opt for the language of use. Besides, it clarifies that all authoritative texts must be done in English as well. If anybody thinks that enforcing a language code would foster national integration, then one just needs to look back at how language riots in southern India have at one time threatened it instead. In the words of CN Annadurai, "if we had to accept the principle of numerical superiority while selecting our national bird, the choice would have fallen not on the peacock but on the common crow." Bollywood, often cited as a mass catalyst of the Hindi-speaking market, has only 43 per cent of our total box office revenue. The rest of the pie belongs to regional films. Let's not tinker with the avoidable. Homogeneity isn't always an asset.

War clouds

A drone and missile attack on the Abqaiq oil processing facility should send alarm bells ringing across the world



The shock of the drone and missile attack on the Abqaiq oil processing facility should worry everyone. Not only did it take offline half of Saudi Arabian oil production, the development highlights how critical infrastructure facilities can be targeted by drones from an "unknown" entity. Of course, now the spectre of another conflagration in the Persian Gulf looms large, especially after US President Donald Trump said his nation is "locked and loaded" and attributed the explosions to Iran's nefarious designs on American

interests. If this escalates, oil prices might rise dramatically even though the cooling global economy will possibly temper that. Although Saudi firms have affirmed that there would not be any shortage of supply, repairing reservoirs might take time and India would have to look for an alternative then. Early estimates show that around six per cent of global supplies could be hit. We have imported 19 per cent crude and disruptions could impact our volatile economy.

There are major lessons that India should take from all this. The first relates to protecting critical defence and infrastructural sites from drone attacks. As we learnt when the Gatwick Airport in London was shut down for almost a week, thanks to drones overflying the runways, precision strikes do not need to be fiery and violent to damage the economy. Nations will need to figure out how they will be able to combat drones which can do disproportionate economic damage. Analysing the images from Saudi Arabia, repairs will cost millions of dollars while the attack may have taken just a few thousand dollars to execute. It is also extremely puzzling why Saudi Arabia allowed one of its most critical infrastructure sites to be so poorly guarded and vulnerable. However, just as the Saudis will learn from this lapse, so should India. We must also be prepared for the worst possible outcome in the Middle-East, a war. The clinical nature of the attack makes it impossible to have been conducted by a "non-state" actor (to use Pakistan's favourite term). Any conflict in the region will send oil prices soaring, something the Indian economy, mismanaged to the point of disaster, does not need right now. However, citizens should be made aware of the consequences of such a possibility. This attack should also speed up development of alternative fuels and energy sources, which may not be a bad thing indeed. This is by far the worst shock to global supplies than when Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait in 1990 and the Islamic Revolution in Iran in 1979.

Perils of GM farming

Global agricultural firms have been spreading the myth that GMOs are needed to feed India when actually, the country needs agro-ecological systems to preserve its biodiversity



SANDHYA JAIN

Seventeen scientists, who consistently advocated Genetically Modified (GM) crops in India, are anxious to revive GMs despite the Centre's growing emphasis on organic farming and native cattle breeds to boost nutritional standards nationwide. The Paramparagat Krishi Vikas Yojana and the Rashtriya Gokul Mission are gaining popularity among farmers. Alarmed at the scale of soil degradation in the country, Prime Minister Narendra Modi, in his Independence day address, urged the farmers to reduce consumption of chemical fertilisers by at least 25 per cent.

Almost parallel to this plea, in *Current Science* (Vol 117, No 3, August 10, 2019), the scientists suggest that GM food crops, ie, Bt-Brinjal that was placed under a moratorium by the then Union Environment Minister Jairam Ramesh and GM-Mustard that was almost cleared for field trials when activists scuttled the attempt, be cleared for commercial cultivation. This activism seeks to reverse Dr MS Swaminathan's admission that green revolution technologies had harmed the environment and that Bt (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) and Ht (herbicide tolerant) crops are highly unsustainable (*Current Science*, Vol 115, No 10, November 25, 2018). The article created outrage in pro-GM circles.

Claiming that Bt-cotton made India a cotton exporting country, the proponents say the virtual ban on Bt-brinjal and GM-mustard is hurting India's food and nutrition security that is challenged by population growth, availability of land, water and human resources. They point out that major Western science academies insist there are no genotoxic effects in Bt and Ht crops. In 2016, the US National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine published a 420-page report on GM crops and observed, "Bt in maize and cotton from 1996 to 2015 contributed to a reduction in the gap between actual yield and potential yield under circumstances in which targeted pests caused substantial damage to non-GE varieties and synthetic chemicals could not provide practical control."

This report, the GM champions assert, states that Bt crop actually increased insect biodiversity on farms compared to non-Bt crop farms on which insecticide was sprayed. The report said the emergence of secondary pests and resistant pink bollworm in India is due to the non-implementation of the refuge strategy. A 2010 report of the European Commission noted, "biotechnology, in particular Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs), are not *per se* more risky than conventional plant breeding technologies."

GM backers claim that 147 original studies based on primary data from farm surveys anywhere in the world, reporting impact of GM soybean, maize or cotton on crop yields, pesticide use and farm profits



showed that on an average, GM technology reduced pesticide use by 37 per cent, increased crop yields by 22 per cent and increased farmer profits by 68 per cent. Regarding livestock, data from publicly available sources from 1997 to 2011, covering over 100 billion animals, did not reflect negative trends in livestock health and productivity from GM crop-feeds.

Pro-GM scientists doubt the finding of the World Health Organisation's International Agency for Research on Cancer that glyphosate is linked to cancer. The fact, however, is that Austria has already banned glyphosate and Germany has decided to ban it by the end of 2023 as part of an insect (bees, butterflies) conservation programme. Nearly 20 French mayors banned it from their municipalities in August 2019 in defiance of the national Government. Pro-GM scientists recommend GM technology in grains (golden rice) and vegetables, along with the risky gene editing technology. Ironically, they have been blocking the release of Bt-cotton hybrids/varieties developed by scientists of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (which have safer toxic limits than Monsanto) in

the past three years and are trying to influence Government policy for Monsanto/Bayer profits.

The scientists deliberately ignore the fact that the department-related parliamentary standing committee on Science & Technology, Environment & Forests (August 25, 2017) had categorically asserted that no GM crop should be introduced in India until the bio-safety and long-term effects are evaluated by an independent and transparent process. The standing committee discovered that not a single Government agency had ever conducted studies to assess the impact of Bt-Cotton on the environment, bio-diversity, bio-safety, ecosystem (soil), human and animal health.

A former Secretary of the Department of Biotechnology admitted that his department had no independent research on the impact of GM crops and most research was from the seed and insecticide companies, which cannot be relied upon. The department of health research also admitted that it had not examined the impact of GM crops on human health.

Environmentalist Vandana Shiva points out that the green revolution, based on chemicals and hybrid crops, devastated

India in myriad ways — from loss of agro-biodiversity to degraded soils to water emergency. In 2002, the Government legalised the illegal planting of Bt-cotton. Despite energetic marketing, hard official data proves that Bt-cotton has failed, trapped farmers in debt and is implicated in farmer suicides. Worse, Monsanto's HT Roundup Cotton, which has been planted illegally for over a decade, might be legalised.

Illegal planting of Bt-brinjal in many States is extremely dangerous as India has the world's greatest genetic diversity in brinjal (over 2,500 varieties, including wild varieties), which could suffer irreversible contamination. The motive is to gain access to our incredible germplasm. Global agricultural corporations are keen to control our agriculture with their seeds, chemicals and monoculture farming and are spreading the myth that GMOs are needed to feed India.

At a seminar, Beyond Corporate Driven Industrial Agriculture to Climate Resilient Agroecology (September 6, 2019), experts said India does not need genetic engineering as traditional plant breeding and

newer methods "outperform GE hands down." The world needs agro-ecology to overcome climate change and the vicious cycles of hunger, farming stress and poverty. Recent global scientific review (February 2019) warns that the steep decline in insect populations (40 per cent of insects could become extinct in the next few decades) could trigger the collapse of ecosystems worldwide. The main culprit is industrial scale, intensive agriculture with pesticides and fertilisers. Only agro-ecological systems preserve forests and sequester carbon by naturally removing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, locking it in plants and, thus, mitigate climate change.

Way back in 1940, Albert Howard (*An Agricultural Testament*) noted that Indian peasants led the world in agro-ecology. India must recover this native wisdom by preserving its biodiversity and seed sovereignty so that future generations are free of hunger and in harmony with humanity and nature.

(The writer is Senior Fellow, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library; the views expressed are personal)

SOUNDBITE

Nationalist Muslims vote for BJP but those who are in favour of Pakistan and are traitors think twice before voting for the BJP.

Karnataka Minister —KS Eshwarappa



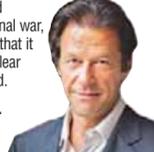
Everybody's always gonna comment about whatever seems intriguing and he's (Bradley Cooper) one of my best friends in the world.

Actor —Laura Dern



When two nuclear-armed nations fight a conventional war, there is every possibility that it could escalate into a nuclear war and impact the world.

Pakistan Prime Minister —Imran Khan



Why does a former J&K CM (GN Azad) need to seek permission from SC to travel to J&K? It shows that there is no normalcy in Kashmir.

AIMM leader —Asaduddin Owaisi



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Statements that divide

Sir — I love Hindi but imposing it as a national language and creating an unequal advantage for naturalised Hindi speakers is gross discrimination and cannot be a unifier. The Government, having no reform or development measures to boast of, is targeting people's sentiments. But this time, it has scored a self-goal that may cost it electorally in the future. The Congress' history in this regard should be instructive.

Bidyut Kumar Chatterjee
Faridabad

Raking controversy

Sir — The idea of "one nation, one language" mooted by Union Home Minister Amit Shah has expectedly been met with resistance, especially from the southern States. Parties from Tamil Nadu, Karnataka and Andhra Pradesh have been more vocal against the proposal and have accused Shah of running a "divisive agenda" and foisting the "RSS agenda on the country."

While a large number of people in the south do not under-

Accommodation is the key, not imposition

What can be achieved through persuasion should not be imposed through force. Hindi and south India have a peculiar relationship. It is a fact that people in this part of the country are increasingly becoming conversant with this language through Bollywood films and interactions with Hindi-speaking people. Nevertheless, most of us still suffer from the "typical southern slang." Early in June, the Modi Government was caught in the middle of a language storm. The draft National Education Policy had created a perception that Hindi was being made compulsory in all non-Hindi-speaking States. Such was the intensity of the backlash that it was forced to tweak the draft to allay fears. This time, Union Home Minister Amit Shah has test-fired a "one-language" mission, projecting Hindi as the singular choice that can unite the country. Shah should remember that the Constitution does not declare any single language as "national." Hindi is one of the 22 scheduled languages in the country and one of its two official languages at the national level, the other being English.

Many States are more comfortable with English as a link language. The Government should endeavour to ensure that people get quality education and access to speaking skills instead of raising non-issues

stand Hindi, it is gradually penetrating this region due to a number of factors like migration. Yet another reason for the spread of Hindi culture is Bollywood, which is becoming far more popular over there.

Even without any imposition, by far, Hindi as a language has made its presence far and wide. In 1971, 36.9 per cent of Indians spoke Hindi as a first language. In 2011, this increased to 43.6 per cent. In the long run, Hindi may

occupy primacy if the Centre does not force the language on the people. As of now, the English language is more acceptable, especially in the south than Hindi. The status of English as a medium of communication to non-



like linking language to pride and culture. Using one's native language is no greater marker of tradition or culture, it is a choice. In this globalising world, English opens many doors to students and workers. In countries in the region, there is a thriving industry imparting spoken English to those trying to secure jobs abroad. In India, people prefer a sub-standard English medium school to a vernacular one.

JS Acharya
Hyderabad

Hindi States has remained unchallenged until now. The idea of imposing Hindi on non-Hindi speaking people must be buried until people come forward to accept Hindi as the language of communication in lieu of English.

KV Seetharamaiah
Hassan

Diverting attention

Sir — At a time when the country is faced with an economic crisis, it is unfortunate that Union Home Minister Amit Shah has raked up the issue of nationalising the Hindi language. Maybe this is a tactic to divert people's attention from some of the most pressing concerns pertaining to the economy.

Undoubtedly, the call for unity is noble but to think that it can come only out of uniformity is flawed. The BJP's landslide victory must not make it lose its head and cause it to become arrogant, autocratic and non-amenable to reasoning.

Ravi
Via email

Send your feedback to: letterstopioneer@gmail.com

FIRST COLUMN

The magic of 370 SUVs

I wonder whether the tax department is taking note of the huge amounts being spent by the candidates for the Assembly polls



SHOBHIT MAHAJAN

The cavalcade seemed unending and 10 am on a Sunday morning is an unusual time to be stuck in a traffic jam. The reason, it turns out, is the huge number of Sports Utility Vehicles (SUVs) blocking the road. Each vehicle is adorned with big posters informing us that this is a rally for one of the prospective candidates for the upcoming Legislative Assembly elections due by the end of the year. The rally is to go to Rohtak to impress the party leader who has his own roadshow there. Young lumps wearing saffron T-shirts with the prospective candidate's photograph on it are energetically hanging out of the SUVs, a la Bollywood heroes. Going by the chaos and noise that is already being generated, I shudder to imagine what we are in for over the next few weeks.

I shouldn't have been surprised though. For the last couple of months, the whole of Delhi has been humming with election-related activity. The number of ticket seekers for the ruling party's nomination, since that seems a no-brainer, has been growing every day. And each of these prospects is outdoing the other by showering the electorate with incentives as well as plastering the whole city with their hoardings. T-shirts, clocks, badges, caps and saffron scarves are all the rage it seems. Each of these items helpfully has the benevolent donor's photograph along with of course our leader's picture — as if it was not enough to have his face ubiquitously staring at us from billboards publicising the Ujala Scheme, Ayushman Bharat and other sundry welfare programmes. It is the same story with hoardings — there is hardly an electricity pole, or a tree or even a fence left which does not carry multiple posters.

A novelty in this election is the use of the social media. Almost all of them have bought advertising space from Google and Facebook. Open a search page and there you have the smiling mug shot of one or more of these candidates promising to turn the dusty and dirty city into a paradise. Fortunately no one is promising to make the potholed roads as smooth as the cheeks of a baby as yet!

Incentives, hoardings and social media are not the only outlets being used to publicise and woo voters. Some candidates have found innovative methods of luring the electorate. Organising religious sermons and body-building contests seem passé—the latest one is religious tourism. One candidate organised an all-expenses paid trip to Vaishno Devi. Every day, for about a month, several air-conditioned Volvo busses would take people to the shrine. Their food, lodging and, of course, travel all taken care of. The busses carried huge banners with the suitably saffron-attired candidate's photograph. It remains to be seen whether those who earned some religious merit due to his benevolence would reciprocate on election day.

Then there is another candidate who is going about all this with a precision which would make a management guru proud. This gentleman started his campaign early—hoardings with his mustachioed face, suitably air-brushed to soften the obviously macho image have been all over the city for more than two months. The gentleman in question is the scion of an immensely wealthy family—his father, who incidentally has also unsuccessfully contested many elections, owns large swathes of property in and around the city.

The candidate has obviously hired an image consultant as well as a political strategist to appeal to different segments. Thus, for instance, a musical evening is organised with a popular singer to attract teenagers, while a programme honouring ex-servicemen with several mustachioed generals is held to buttress his patriotic credentials. Since one of the largest communities now in the city is from Poorvanchal, a gala extravaganza was organised recently with performances by all the leading lights of Bhojpuri cinema. This event was meticulously planned with camera cranes and mega sized projection screens to showcase the candidate while the audience of migrant Poorvanchalis waited patiently for their favourite stars to make an appearance. These and other events are then also advertised through ads in leading English dailies.

Needless to say, all this costs a large amount of money. Of course, the elections have not been announced and so the model code of conduct is a not in force. But I wonder whether the sleuths of the tax department are taking note of tens of crores which are being so obviously spent by the candidates? The next time I get an Income Tax notice to explain an income of a few thousand, I shall be recalling the ubiquitous mustachioed face! I am pondering all this while sitting in the traffic jam while the SUV cavalcade inches along. I notice that the cars are all numbered sequentially and there is another number too on each of them-370. It turns out that the candidate was so enamoured by the recent heroic acts of the present dispensation that he decided to take a caravan of 370 SUVs to welcome the leader. I thanked our founding fathers for restricting the number of Articles in the Constitution to 448 only.

(The writer is a Professor, Department of Physics & Astrophysics, Delhi University)

I WANT TO APPEAL TO PEOPLE TO PROMOTE THEIR NATIVE LANGUAGES BUT ALSO USE HINDI TO MAKE THE DREAM OF BAPU AND PATEL COME TRUE.

—UNION HOME MINISTER
AMIT SHAH

POINTCOUNTERPOINT



KARAN BHASIN



PRACHI JHAMB

IT'S PART OF THE SANGH PARIVAR'S PLAN TO LAUNCH A NEW BATTLEFIELD IN THE NAME OF LANGUAGE.

—KERALA CHIEF MINISTER
PINARAYI VIJAYAN

Recovery will take time

The pace of economic reforms indicates that the FM has grasped the problem and we should see a fiscal revival but it may have an impact only from the third quarter



There has been a lot of talk on the economic slowdown ever since we saw the first quarter growth results. The fact remains that the Finance Ministry has been working round-the-clock to address some of the critical concerns on the economic front both in the short and the long-term.

However, as is the case, most such measures are likely to have an impact only from the third quarter onwards. But the pace of reforms indicates that the Government has understood the different contours of the problem — and this should be a positive sign for economic revival.

As far as the second quarter is concerned, now is the time to look at the high frequency indicators and sit down to forecast economic growth. As with any forecasting exercise, it's important to keep in mind that most such exercises are subject to statistical errors and conditional on whatever information is made available at the time of the forecast. In all likelihood, we will update our forecast in the first week of October.

One of the authors had a forecast of 5.0-5.4 per cent of growth for the first quarter while another predicted 5.2-5.6 for the second quarter. Since then we've seen further weakening of consumption data, combined with less than encouraging automobile sales.

The automobiles industry makes up around seven per cent of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) but it has been in the news for slowing down tremendously, leading to loss of jobs and further impacting the slowdown in consumption. The data released by the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers (SIAM) on sale of all vehicles in India shows that the growth in sales fell the most post-2018. The data on private vehicles shows the same trend.

However, the data on commercial vehicles shows that growth was the slowest in 2016 and even though it recovered in 2017, growing at about 29 per cent, since then it has slowed down. The growth in sales of two-wheelers and three-wheelers has been falling since the first quarter of 2018. The fact that the automobiles sector is facing a slowdown shouldn't come as a surprise, given that it had a significantly higher growth in the preceding year. So, part of the slowdown is because of the high growth last year while the rest is explained by the Non-Banking Financial Companies' (NBFC) crisis, the shift to BS-VI emission norms and, of course, to the use of Ola/Uber.

Consequently, there is a need to re-imagine the automobile business and many leaders of the industry have expressed this sentiment over the last couple of weeks. Further, the low consumption growth is well reflected in the monthly Goods and Services Tax (GST) collection numbers which have only witnessed a modest growth on a year-over-year basis. Therefore, in all probability, growth in the second quarter is likely to be muted—but, from the third quarter onwards, we may see a swift recovery aided by several measures by the Finance Ministry.

Our forecast for the second quarter has modified since then as recent data show that growth in the second quarter may well continue to be low. Consequently, given that the first quarter



WHILE GROWTH MAY BE LOW FOR THE SECOND QUARTER, ECONOMIC RECOVERY MAY START FROM THE THIRD QUARTER AND WE MAY BE BACK ON THE SEVEN PER CENT PLUS GROWTH TRACK BY THE NEXT FINANCIAL YEAR. IN FACT, IF WE CONTINUE WITH THE SAME TRAJECTORY, THEN VERY SOON WE MAY JUST MANAGE TO PUSH OUR POTENTIAL GROWTH TO 8.5 AND SUSTAIN AN EIGHT PLUS GROWTH RATE FOR A PROLONGED PERIOD



figures were more towards the lower bounds of the forecast, based on recent data, our forecast stands at 4.9-5.3 per cent of growth for the second quarter.

The silver lining is that the Index of Industrial Production (IIP) has shown a very healthy growth and while it covers only a very narrow scope of economic activity, it is a definite signal of revival. Consequently, it is very likely that the forecast is reversed upwards and growth may well be towards the upper limit of the forecast in contrast with the first quarter. What this essentially means is that there are early signs of economic recovery, which are indeed encouraging, given that we had bottomed out at five per cent.

For the third quarter, growth may well be between 5.8 to 6.2, but this is just a preliminary forecast as we wait to see the impact of the current announcements that have been made by Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman.

Some of these announcements have already been implemented and will have a definite positive impact on the economy. One of them relates to GST refunds for Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) which have been a concern since their introduction. The Government has recognised that there is a need to have a system for time-bound refunds and it has ordered that all existing ones be cleared within 30 days. Going forward, all refunds should be cleared within 60

days. This will have an immediate impact on addressing the working capital constraints in the MSME space which, in turn, will ensure that the system is infused with fresh liquidity. It is likely that this will have an impact as far as growth in this and the next quarter is concerned.

Similarly, the Government has tried to address concerns of the automobile industry by removing the ban from replacing current vehicles, which will try to absorb some of the accumulated inventories over the last couple of months. What is important is to also consider that the Government has committed to the expenditure as stated in the Union Budget and to the Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Management (FRBM) Act. This suggests that expenditure will continue as per plan and any revenue shortfall may be met through increased disinvestments. Both are again a positive sign for the economy — although one needs to further evaluate whether there's any difference between a 3.3-3.5 per cent deficit, especially during a time when growth has been slow.

Similarly, consolidation of banks, combined with several governance reforms and aggressive moves on the relaxation of external commercial borrowings for NBFCs and now even for affordable housing projects, are both progressive decisions that reflect India's demand for foreign capital.

For the first time, there's a pragmatic realisation that India is a capital-deficit country and the only way to

meet our need for investment would be to seek foreign capital. Luckily, low and negative yields elsewhere make India a no-brainer as far as movement of capital is concerned. Harsh Gupta — a hedge fund manager and a financial columnist — has worked extensively on this area as he's documented the need to be progressive in our outlook towards foreign finance.

It is important to have a progressive and pragmatic outlook towards addressing the current crisis. We need to simultaneously focus on reevaluating some of our previous policy choices and think hard on whether they've helped us meet our growth aspirations. The Finance Minister is doing the same with a strong commitment towards reviving economic growth and towards deep structural reforms. The three press conferences have given us a signal that Sitharaman means business and this fact itself makes us extremely optimistic about India's economic prospects over the near term.

While growth may be low for the second quarter, economic recovery may start from the third quarter and we may be back on the seven per cent plus growth track by the next financial year. In fact, if we continue with the same trajectory, then very soon we may just manage to push our potential growth to 8.5 and sustain an eight plus growth rate for a prolonged period.

(Karan Bhasin is a New Delhi-based policy researcher and Prachi Jhamb is a research associate with the Reserve Bank of India)

Right to live happy in the sunset years

With a gradual slowdown in India's population growth, it's imperative to cultivate 'social prescribing' for the elderly to better address their medical and emotional needs. Promoting healthy ageing can help reduce burden on healthcare services



KEWAL KAPOOR

For all the political discourse about a "population explosion," the truth is that India is witnessing a slowdown in its population growth and is expected to start reversing its numbers over the next two to three decades. With the Total Fertility Rate (TFR) down to 2.3 per woman, we are inching closer to achieving replacement levels of population growth. A slowing population automatically implies a higher number of the elderly as against the young. According to the Economic Survey 2019, the country as a whole will continue to enjoy the "demographic dividend" for a few more decades but some States will start transitioning to an ageing society as early as the 2030s. With declining fertility, reduction

in mortality and increasing survival at older ages, the shift in age structure from young to the old is expected to give rise to a major public healthcare burden. Unfortunately, we do not seem prepared to meet the requirements of this shift with little emphasis on improving our elderly care structure, health structure or building a social support system to address this.

The need is not limited to improving healthcare infrastructure and availability of caregivers for the aged but also to create innovative social solutions to enable the elderly population live better, happier and more productive lives. "Social prescribing" is a strategy that ageing countries are now incorporating in their policy to address the physical and mental health needs of senior citizens and finding a way to address the problem of loneliness.

In 2018, the British Government initiated a new strategy to address the growing problem of loneliness among the country's elderly. As part of this strategy that is expected to be fully in



place by 2023, physicians will be allowed and encouraged to refer people to partake in social activities and social groups to combat loneliness. The strategy is aimed at reducing the burden on the British health service and improving patients' quality of life. This approach will be supplemented by investing in community projects such as creating cafes, art spaces or gardens that can become the focal point of the

social prescriptions for the elderly.

This approach originates from the realisation that additional and the medical needs of the elderly mean we give them a good quality of life, happiness and greater social involvement. Currently, society treats the elderly with a peculiar redundancy. However, changing this approach could help convert a large experienced and wise population into valuable social capital, rather than just a healthcare burden.

Promoting healthy ageing can help delay the onset of disease and allow us to have a more productive population in its sunset years. Healthy ageing is essentially a process through which the elderly are enabled to optimise their physical and mental health and are able to take an active part in society. Community referrals are a mechanism to create and utilise social support structures for the elderly. For example, an elderly couple living alone in a city away from their children can enjoy a much better quality of life if they are a regular part

of a community exercise that allows them to pursue their passions and hobbies. This community referral system must also become an intrinsic part of the healthcare structure so doctors are able to refer their elderly patients to the communities held suitable for them.

There is scientific evidence to believe that staying socially active and relevant not only helps fight depression but also improves cognitive function and helps slow down decline in health. Joining communities and interest groups helps the elderly indulge in fruitful discussions, volunteer for social work and gives them hope and passion to live. Community groups can also be effectively leveraged to educate people to adopt healthy lifestyles that can enable them stay healthier longer.

This strategy cannot be achieved singularly by the Government. Rather, it needs active participation of innovative start-ups, social groups and volunteers to create a medical-social network requisite for social prescribing. Efforts are needed on multiple fronts to make this happen by creating community groups and social support networks to work in cohesion with doc-

tors and hospitals. Next come integrated awareness and training programmes, to prepare a workforce that can act as a vital link between doctors and community groups and can play the role of counselors for the elderly. Guidelines would have to be framed to help doctors recommend and refer patients to social networks apart from laying grounds for coordinated and community-referral system at the levels of villages, towns and cities. Last but not the least, we would need to engage the local population, students and volunteers to spread the activities of community groups. According to a 2017 report by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), around 12.5 per cent of India's population will be 60 years and older by 2030; by 2050 this will increase to one-fifth of the population. Integrating social prescription with the healthcare structure will not only result in a healthier ageing population but also have the potential to reduce the financial burden on healthcare services.

(The writer is director and creative strategist of an advertising and consulting agency)



FOREIGN EYE



CAMERON COST THE NATION DEAR

By the standards of everyday life, ex-British Prime Minister David Cameron seems an unremarkably decent man; by the standards of some of his colleagues, a kind and thoughtful one. But politicians should not be judged by the standards of everyday life. They should be held to higher ones, because it is in their power to make much more damaging mistakes than most people can.

(The Guardian editorial)

No significant progress on Zomato Gold issue, says NRAI

PNS ■ NEW DELHI

National Restaurant Association of India on Monday said no significant progress could be made on Zomato Gold issue in the meeting held with the company.

The discussions on eight central issues in the second meeting with key delivery aggregators Zomato and Swiggy were, however, mostly positive, it added.

"Follow up meetings with both Swiggy and Zomato on

the eight core issues were largely positive and talks have progressed well so far," NRAI President Anurag Katriar said in a statement.

Both aggregators have presented concrete roadmap and apprised NRAI of the progress made thus far. It also took note that since the desired changes are fairly large and significant, their total resolution may take some time, he added.

The association had raised critical issues such as deep discounting, data masking, high and uneven commission

charges with the delivery aggregators.

"However, no significant progress was made on the subject of Zomato Gold. NRAI remains steadfast in its belief that Zomato Gold in its current form is not acceptable in either dine-in or delivery segment," Katriar said.

The association also took note and appreciated that Zomato has put the contentious Infinity dining programme in abeyance till further notice, he added.

Commenting on the logout

The association had raised critical issues such as deep discounting, data masking, high and uneven commission charges with the delivery aggregators

movement in dining vertical, Katriar said: "NRAI has successfully concluded talks with Dine out, Gourmet Passport, Nearbuy and Magicpin and they are back in business and out of the purview of #Logout".

Talks with Eazydiner is also

fairly advanced and we expect an early resolution to that, he added.

"NRAI plays an important role in our continued efforts to enable restaurant partners to grow sustainably while benefitting from the latest tech-

nology interventions. Our recent discussions on the various projects have been well received and has brought us one step closer to achieving our combined goals," a Swiggy spokesperson said.

Stating that Zomato continues to engage NRAI on all issues faced by the industry, a Zomato Spokesperson said: "We continue to have discussions with NRAI on all issues faced by the industry and are focused on providing solutions sustainable for all participants".



Flipkart's 2GUD & Japanese brand MINISO announce partnership

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

E-commerce marketplace Flipkart on Monday announced a partnership between its independent value platform 2GUD and Japanese designer consumer products brand MINISO India, ahead of the upcoming festive season.

The agreement offers 2GUD online distribution rights for MINISO's products in India effective from this month-end, and will enable the brand to reach 2GUD's million-plus consumer base across the country, a Flipkart statement said.

MINISO India plans to bring their merchandise ranging from household and consumer goods and other non-durables to the 2GUD platform, with an initial strategy of going live with 60 curated products and scaling up the selection over the next few months.

"The partnership will allow MINISO to extend its reach beyond its existing brick-and-mortar stores, into Tier-2 and Tier-3 cities..." the statement said.

Saudi assures India of no oil supply shortage: Oil Min

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

India, the world's third-largest oil consumer, will not be hit by a reduction in production at its No. 2 supplier Saudi Arabia, the Oil Ministry said on Monday.

"Yesterday (September 15), Saudi Aramco officials informed the Indian refiners that there would be no shortage of supplies to them. Ministry of Petroleum and Natural Gas is closely monitoring the situation in consultation with Indian refiners and Saudi Aramco," it said in a statement.

A massive drone strike on the world's largest crude-processing facility operated by Saudi Arabia's Aramco has driven oil prices to their highest level in nearly four months.

The attack has knocked out over half of Saudi Arabia's production as it cut 5.7 million barrels per day or over 5 per cent of the world's supply.

India imports 83 per cent of its oil needs. Saudi Arabia is its second-biggest supplier after Iraq. It sold 40.33 million tonnes of crude oil to India in 2018-19 fiscal, when the country had imported 207.3 million tonnes of oil.

Oil prices surged the most on record on Monday, with Brent crude rising by as much



A massive drone strike on the world's largest crude-processing facility operated by Saudi Arabia's Aramco has driven oil prices to their highest level in nearly four months

as 19.5 per cent to USD 71.95 per barrel - the biggest gain in dollar terms since futures started trading in 1988.

US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) futures climbed 15.5 per cent to USD 63.34, the biggest intra-day percentage gain since June 1998.

Officials at state-owned oil refiners said Saudi Aramco has informed that there would not be any major disruption,

OPEC+ group members. A geopolitical risk premium will return to the oil price."

Commenting on the situation, Kotak Institutional Equities said the largest-ever disruption of crude production in Saudi Arabia may keep oil prices elevated in the near term.

"Global oil supplies may be adequately met through large inventories and strategic reserves; however, moderation in oil prices will depend on full restoration of Saudi's production, which may at least take a few weeks," it said, adding that any further escalation of geopolitical tensions in the Middle East region may add to the woes.

Spike in crude prices, even if temporary, will be negative for Indian oil marketing companies and positive for upstream PSUs and GAIL, it said.

"Any further escalation of geopolitical tensions in the Middle East region, which cannot be ruled out for now, may add to the woes of global oil supplies for now given lack of buffer from Saudi's significant spare production capacity," Kotak said.

Crude supplies from Iran and Venezuela have already been curtailed significantly amid sanctions from the US, it added.

CLE for increase in duty-free limit for leather garments to 5 pc

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Hailing the measures announced by the government to bolster exports, Council for Leather Exports (CLE) on Monday demanded an increase in duty free limit for leather garments to 5 per cent to help boost shipments of the sector.

CLE Chairman Panaruna Aqeel said India is the second largest global exporter of leather garments and enhancing the duty free limit will help achieve the top position.

"We are requesting for enhancement of duty free limit for leather garment exporters from 3 per cent to 5 per cent of FOB (freight on board) value of exports as this will help revive exports from this segment which has been showing decline of about 13 per cent this year," Aqeel said.

Aqeel also said easy and



timely availability of credit with affordable interest levels is extremely important for leather and footwear sector as this alone can help in tapping the huge opportunities available in global markets.

"In this context, the finance minister has announced major steps including measures to improve trade credit flows and transmission of interest rate cuts by banks, monitoring export finance through an inter-ministerial group in Department Of Commerce," he said in a statement.

46,000 General Motors auto workers strike in US

AFP ■ DETROIT

The United Auto Workers union began a nationwide strike against General Motors on Monday, with some 46,000 members walking off the job after contract talks hit an impasse.

The move to strike, which the Wall Street Journal described as the first major stoppage at GM in more than a decade, came after the manufacturer's four-year contract with workers expired without an agreement on a replacement.

Local union leaders met in Detroit "and opted to strike at midnight on Sunday," the UAW said on its Twitter account.

"This is our last resort," Terry Dittes, the union's lead negotiator with GM, told a news conference after the meeting. "We are standing up for the fundamental rights of working people in this country."

UAW officials said the two



sides remained far apart in the contract negotiations, with disagreements on wages, health care benefits, the status of temporary workers and job security.

"Our members have spoken; we have taken action; and this is a decision we did not make lightly," Ted Krumm, chair of the UAW's national bargaining committee, said in a statement.

"We are standing up for what is right," Krumm said. Hours before the strike

began, US President Donald Trump tweeted: "Here we go again with General Motors and the United Auto Workers. Get together and make a deal!" GM's last major strike, according to the Journal, was in 2007 when 73,000 workers at more than 89 facilities walked off the job for two days.

In a statement, GM said it was "disappointing" that the UAW's leadership had decided to call the strike, saying it had presented a "strong offer" in contract negotiations.

BHUSHAN POWER CASE

NCLAT to hear JSW Steel's plea on Oct 14

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

The National Company Law Appellate Tribunal will hear the plea of JSW Steel, which has emerged as the highest bidder for Bhushan Power & Steel Ltd, seeking immunity from the ongoing cases of money laundering against the latter on October 14.

It also directed impleading the Ministry of Corporate Affairs, the CBI and the Enforcement Directorate as party in the matter.

A three-member NCLAT bench headed by Chairman Justice SJ Mukhopadhyaya has also said it will decide over the payment of Rs 19,350 crore by JSW Steel to the Committee of Creditors (CoC) of Bhushan Power & Steel (BPSL) on the next date of hearing on October 14.

However, the bench declined to stay the order of depositing the amount within a month, which is October 5.

"We allow the appellant to implead Union of India through Ministry of Corporate Affairs and Enforcement Directorate as respondent No 3 & 4. The UoI may address the matter on behalf of CBI and SFIO," said NCLAT.

"Let notice be issued," it added.

During the proceedings, the CoC requested the appellate tribunal to direct for payment of the money. However, the bench said it would look into this issue on October 14 only.

Last week, Delhi-based principal bench of the National Company Law Tribunal (NCLT) approved Rs 19,700 crore bid of JSW Steel for debt-ridden BPSL.

Although, in its 138-page order, the NCLT allowed pro-



Although, in its 138-page order, the NCLT allowed protection to JSW Steel from criminal cases filed against the promoters, it was silent over the money laundering cases

tection to JSW Steel from criminal cases filed against the promoters, it was silent over the money laundering cases.

Under the insolvency proceedings, JSW Steel has emerged as the winning bidder for BPSL.

According to the resolution plan approved by the NCLT, Rs 19,350 crore will be distributed among financial creditors to settle their Rs 47,158 crore of admitted claims. The remaining Rs 350 crore would be paid to operational creditors to settle less than half of their Rs 733.76 crore admitted claims.

Banks will get 41.03 per cent of their outstanding dues as

compared to a liquidation value of between Rs 9,320-9,707 crore, it said.

JSW Steel will make an infusion of Rs 7,200 crore in BPSL for improving its operations.

BPSL was dragged to insolvency proceedings by lenders led by PNB after the company failed to pay loans within a stipulated time-frame.

The NCLT said criminal proceedings against the former founders of BPSL on alleged siphoning off of funds would not impact takeover by JSW.

"The criminal proceedings initiated against the erstwhile members of the board of directors and others shall not affect the JSW - H1 (highest) Resolution Plan Applicant or the implementation of the resolution plan," it had said.

It, however, did not grant JSW certain relief sought from statutory authorities under the Income Tax Act, and the RBI.

"We leave it open to the members of the CoC to file appropriate applications if criminal proceedings result in the recovery of money which has been siphoned off or on account of tainted transactions or fabrication," the NCLT said on charges against former promoters.

Purdue files for bankruptcy in bid to settle opioid cases

AFP ■ NEW YORK

Purdue Pharma is to file for bankruptcy in a settlement agreement that it hopes will provide more than \$10 billion to address the opioid crisis, the company said in a statement on Sunday.

The pharmaceutical giant whose prescription painkiller OxyContin is blamed for much of the US opioid addiction epidemic, is facing thousands of state and federal lawsuits.

The settlement, which is subject to court approval, will contribute Purdue's entire



value to a body established for the benefit of the claimants and the American people.

Purdue Chairman Steve Miller said the settlement will "provide billions of dollars and critical resources to communities across the country trying to cope with the opioid crisis."

Punjab decides to disinvest PSIDC stake in PACL

PTI ■ CHANDIGARH

The Punjab Cabinet on Monday decided to disinvest PSIDC's stake in Punjab Alkalies and Chemicals Limited (PACL), a move which is expected to generate around Rs 50 crore.

The amount realised from the move would be utilised to pay debt of Punjab State Industrial Development Corporation (PSIDC), an official spokesperson said after the Cabinet meeting, held under the chairmanship of Chief Minister Amarinder Singh here. "In a move expected to generate around Rs 50 crore, the Punjab government has decided to disinvest 90,90,000 shares of PSIDC in PACL," the spokesperson said.

The company, a major manufacturer of caustic soda and liquid chlorine, has been incurring heavy losses since 2009-10, with its net worth going in the red. The Board for Industrial and Financial Reconstruction (BIFR) registered PACL's reference as sick industrial company under section 15 (1) of Sick Industrial Companies (Special Provisions) Act, 1985 (SICA), the spokesperson said.

PSIDC had invested a sum of Rs 30.45 crore into equity capital of PACL by way of initial public issue and rights issue (subscribed on premium).

The equity share holding of PSIDC in PACL was around 42 per cent, which has now reduced to around 33.49 per cent due to restructuring of debt liabilities of financial institutions and public sector banks.

US experts hail Trump's decision to join 'Howdy, Modi!' event

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Top American experts on India have hailed President Donald Trump's decision on joining Prime Minister Narendra Modi for the mega diaspora event "Howdy, Modi!" in Houston on September 22 and jointly address a record crowd of more than 50,000 Indian-Americans.

On Monday, White House announced that Trump will participate in the "Howdy, Modi! Shared Dreams, Bright Futures," event with Prime Minister Modi.

The message will undoubtedly be one of strengthening the strategic partnership, as well as supporting Modi personally, the experts said.

"It will be a great opportunity to emphasise the strong ties between the people of the United States and India, to reaffirm the strategic partnership

between the world's oldest and largest democracies, and to discuss ways to deepen their energy and trade relationship," White House Press Secretary Stephanie Grisham said.

"The decision by President Trump to attend the event in Houston sends a strong message that the issue of Kashmir is a bilateral issue between India and Pakistan and Article 370 is an internal issue for India. It also sends a message that the Trump administration is not bothered by the noise created by Pakistan and its Prime Minister Imran Khan," Mukesh Agni president of US India Strategic and Partnership Forum told PTI.

"It is a win-win for both the leaders: For Prime Minister Modi the fact that President Trump has agreed to come and show support to the Prime Minister and to India that he



values this relationship. For President Trump that he gets a captive audience of Indian-Americans, a community that contributes significantly to political campaign," he said.

More than 50,000 Indian-

Americans from across the US have already registered for the mega diaspora event to be held at the sprawling NRG Stadium in Houston.

"It send a message globally that India-US relationship is

More than 50,000 Indian-Americans from across the US have already registered for the mega diaspora event to be held at the sprawling NRG Stadium in Houston

important and critical and by Pres Trump attending the event shows the further strengthening of the partnership," Agni said.

"Prime Minister Modi's visit is an opportunity to take the US-India relationship to new levels. President Trump travelling to Texas, along with a bipartisan Congressional delegation, signals the importance that the United States places on our strategic partnership with India," said Nisha Desai Biswal, president of US India Business Council (USIBC).

"I do not have a sense of whether this is entirely without

precedent or not (the fact of a foreign head of government addressing such a large crowd and the accompaniment of the US president). It does suggest a desire on the president's part to put forward a show of support for Modi, coming on the heels of a tough period on the trade front, and tensions over Trump's Kashmir mediation offer," said Alyssa Ayres from the Council on Foreign Relations.

"President Trump's decision to attend Modi's rally is a significant signal of the importance that this administration places on its relationship with

India," said Anish Goel from New America think-tank.

This signifies a further strengthening of US-India ties and comes at a critical time for both countries in the realms of trade and mutual security, said M Rangaswami, an eminent Indian American from the Silicon Valley, a top venture capitalist and philanthropist.

"It is frankly risky for any world leader to share a stage with President Trump. But Modi may well be able to use this event, and Trump's participation, to smooth the way for some modest substantive agreement on trade, or to divert attention from the gradually rising chorus of American concerns over India's policies in Kashmir," noted Joshua White, a former White House national security official under the previous Obama Administration.



Gaurang Shah, National Award winner for Best Costume Design for the movie *Mahanati*, speaks to weavers and handloom lovers about his life after *Mahanati*, his request to the state government to set up a school for weavers and others, reports V SATEESH REDDY



'MAHANATI INSPIRED ME TO POSTPONE RETIREMENT'

Grateful for the honour he has received for his work in the movie *Mahanati*, the National Award winning costume designer, Gaurang Shah, says that there is a lot more to be done for the revival of the handloom industry in the country. "I request the state government to set up a school for weavers in Telangana so that there can be an

exchange ideas and local materials among artisans from across India," says Gaurang Shah who had interacted with weavers and handloom lovers at a felicitation ceremony organised in his honour in the city recently. The self-taught textile and fashion designer has been working towards reviving the traditional textile design while contemporizing Indian handlooms using the versatile Jamdani weaving technique in collaboration with over 800 weavers in India. During the event, Shah was appreciated for his efforts in bringing handlooms into the modern era without compromising on the legacy and quality.

In order to take the audience back to the golden era of South Indian cinema, Shah and his team did a lot of research during pre-produc-

tion. The designer says his familiarity with Savitri's movies and the films during that era has helped him create costumes that won him so many accolades. "I am very happy for receiving a National Award for my first movie. I dedicate this award to my family, friends, my designer team and the weavers community. This is a big boost for me to create new things," says Shah.

Fifty-year-old Gaurang Shah added that he contemplated retirement from the field but the award inspired him to work for another 10 years. He shares, "After the success of *Mahanati*, I have been getting many movie offers. I feel that *Mahanati* was made for me and my work. If I get offers like this, I will definitely take up the work."

The government too seconded Shah's views. Jayesh Ranjan, IT Secretary, Government of Telangana, says, "Handloom industry needs to get more attention. Thousands of weavers depend on a designer and Shah's work is helping many weavers in the country. Handloom is a big chain industry

and many people form the chain; from weavers to suppliers. It is sad that not many youngsters are taking up this profession. We need to take action to inspire youth towards hand-

looms." With the support extended by the Telangana government for weavers in recent years, the count of weavers has been on the rise, the IT Secretary added.

"Designs have to be changed according to latest trends to attract people. In *Mahanati*, Gaurang promoted Gadwal sarees and received nationwide recognition. In the upcoming Lakme Fashion Week we are planning to highlight the Mahadevpur silk of the Karimnagar district," adds Jayesh Ranjan. Jayesh says for the 150th birth anniversary of Mahatma Gandhi on October 2, the central government plans to conduct a year-long event to promote handlooms in the country.

T Chiranjeevu, Commissioner and

Inspector General for Registration and Stamps, Government of Telangana says, "When I was the collector of Nalgonda in 2014, I heard about Gaurang Shah work through local weavers. In India, after agriculture, handloom industry is the biggest. Livelihood of more than 60 lakh people is dependent on this. We must have proper representatives in the handloom industry to help weavers."



Gaurang Shah

Ravindra Bharati resounded with applause for Ramya Subramanian, daughter of the chief economic advisor to the government of India, for her Arangetram performance. The young classical dancer speaks on her passion for dance and more, reports ANUSHKA PRADEEP

A classical debut to remember

Ramya Subramanian, daughter of Dr KV Subramanian, the Chief Economic Advisor to the Government of India, performed her debut classical dance (Arangetram) at Ravindra Bharati auditorium on Sunday. It was a mesmerising performance which moved the audience; a performance whose every element of Nrit, Nritya and Natana came together as perfection. Dancing to the melodious voice of Smt. Sweta Prasad, Ramya did not just play but lived the role of each character she performed. After the event, Ramya's dotting father, Dr KV Subramanian, beamed with pride and joy as he addressed

the gathering. "I am glad that my daughter who I have seen grow up in front of my eyes is now on her way on the ladder to artistic success," said the proud father.

Ramya has been learning Bharatanatyam for a decade now and is the 40th student of Shankarananda Kalakshetra which is run by renowned classical dancer, choreographer, and Padma Sri recipient Dr Ananda Shankar Jayant who is also a sought after motivational speaker. Her TED talk has been ranked as one among the 12 Incredible TED talks. Ananda has also conceptualised a Bharatanatyam app called Natyarambha which was launched in January 2017.

"I'm glad Ramya has made

her 'Ranga Pravesham' into the formal stage," Ananda said fondly about her student. The audience could feel the special bond between her and Ramya as the guru guided the shishya through the latter's debut performance in the packed hall.

"The learning of any art form is extremely beneficial for a student as it teaches them how to approach any subject even in the case of academics. Hence I urge SK Joshi, the Chief Secretary of the Telangana government, to take steps to integrate art into education," she said, gesturing towards the official.

The chief secretary of the Telangana government was the chief guest at the event. He commended Ramya's aesthetically top-notch performance by comparing her to "sakshath Saraswati" (as Saraswati herself). Commending the selection of various pieces for the Arangetram and in reference to her performance 'padam' in Kali Ragam, he humorously quipped, "Ramya's dance about Lord Krishna dancing on the hood of Kaliya in river Yamuna was brilliant, except that in today's age Kaliya might just be the pollution in river."

Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman also sent their messages of praise and blessing to the young dancer advising her to perform well in all aspects of life

without sidelining her passion.

Noted Bharatanatyam dancer Dr Chitra Visweswaran lauded Ramya's dance whilst also detailing on how art helps one understand one's own identity. "She moves like a feather on stage and she is grounded in nature. These are the qualities we all must imbibe in our own lives as well," she told the audience. Ramya's dance to 'Bharati Vandana', a song written by Rayaprolu Subba Rao, impressed Dr Chitra immensely and she commented on how gracefully it had depicted the Indian culture. "The piece on Bharat Mata and Bharatiya sanskriti was well timed as Ramya is about to embark on her journey to the USA soon. Her performance stands true to the bond she has with her country," she said. Ramya is leaving to US to join the University of Chicago.

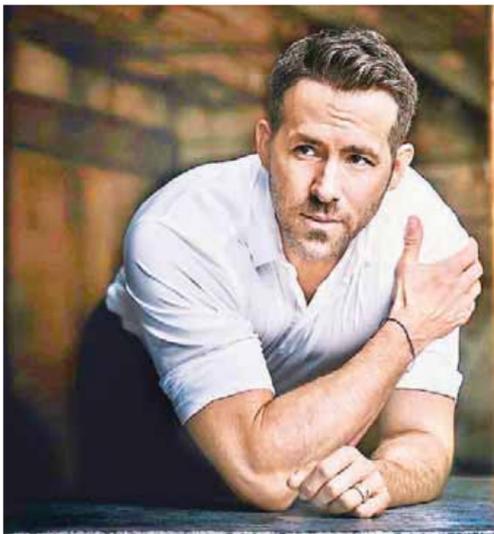
The 18-year-old Ramya, in a candid chat with the *The Pioneer*, spoke about how she developed her passion for dance from a very young age. "I have been learning classical dance since the age of four. I started training in the US initially and then for 10 years at the Shankarananda Kalakshetra where I learnt a lot not just about the art form but important charac-

teristic traits such as discipline and the guru shishya parampara." "My family has given me a lot of support and it was my mother who introduced me to classical dance which eventually blossomed into my own passion," she added. When asked about how she plans to balance her passion with academics, she said, "I am planning to do my Majors in economics and maths and eventually get a PhD. My motto in life has always been 'go with the flow'. I learnt dance for 10



Ramya Subramanian





REYNOLDS SNEAKS IN JAB AT JACKMAN IN BEST-WISHES POST

Actor Ryan Reynolds was full of praise for his friend Hugh Jackman as he celebrated the star being honoured with Australia's Companion of the Order title.

Jackman was awarded the highest of the four levels of the Order of Australia, and was joined by his wife of 23 years, Deborra-Lee Furness, for the ceremony by Governor General David Hurley in Australia's capital Canberra on September 13, reports *aceshowbiz.com*.

While *The Wolverine* star enjoyed the moment, Reynolds praised his friend on social media.

"Hugh is one of the finest, kindest, hardest working, generous and most talented people I've had the privilege to call my friend. There's nobody better," he wrote.

The *Deadpool* star later re-posted a photograph of Jackman after his win, joking in the caption: "None of this changes the unfortunate fact he's a complete b**tard."

The actors are longtime friends, and were famously involved in a friendly feud as Reynolds tried his best to convince Jackman to reprise his role as the popular Marvel Comics character one more time for a feature in a future *Deadpool* movie — after Jackman announced 2017's *Logan* would be his last outing as *Wolverine*.



LAURA DERN DEBUNKS BRADLEY COOPER ROMANCE RUMOURS

Actress Laura Dern has dismissed all dating rumours with actor Bradley Cooper and says they are just friends.

The *Big Little Lies* star and *A Star is Born* actor-director were seen dining together in New York City, weeks after Cooper's split from his longtime girlfriend Irina Shayk in June.

Dern says their relationship is strictly platonic. "We're amazing friends. We're so lucky. And we're family," she told *usmagazine.com*.

"I mean, everybody's always gonna comment about whatever seems intriguing, and he's the greatest human, and one of my best friends in the world," she adds. "So I don't blame anyone for having deep curiosity about his life cause he's spectacular."

Cooper and Shayk were in a relationship from 2015 to 2019 and share daughter Lea, two.

Dern shares two children with musician Ben Harper, to whom she was married from 2005 to 2013.

CHRIS HEMSWORTH TO REMAIN STAR OF THOR FRANCHISE

Chris Hemsworth will continue to be the star of the *Thor* franchise, assured director Taika Waititi, who directs the upcoming *Thor: Love And Thunder*.

Actress Natalie Portman, who essays role of scientist Jane Foster in the franchise, will be back in the upcoming fourth part as female *Thor*, but Hemsworth has nothing to worry about.

"It's Chris. It's a *Thor* film. He is *Thor*, it's a *Thor* film. She's (Portman) is in it," Waititi told *MTV News* when asked who will be the star of *Thor: Love And Thunder*.

Waititi's also squashed reports that he has completed the script.

"Oh that's cool! I never cease to surprise me! (the title page is complete)," he wrote on Twitter last month.

Thor: Love And Thunder, which also features Tessa Thompson, is expected to release in 2021.

NITESH TIWARI: I'D BE FOOLISH TO TAMPER WITH 'RAMAYAN'

Director Nitesh Tiwari, who is in the process of creating a three-part marathon feature film series on the *Ramayan* after *Chhichhore*, is very clear that in his treatment of the sacrosanct epic, there will be no distortions, no embellishments and no innovation. Tiwari said it would be foolish to make changes for the sake of creative liberties or revisionist flourishes.

"Given the times we live in, it'd be foolish to make changes in a scripture that is an integral part of every Hindu household. It's a flawless story. I'd be a fool to tamper with it. I am going to be completely faithful to the text. This will be the *Ramayan* exactly the way we know it," said Tiwari.

The filmmaker's assertion comes in the wake of last week's development, when a TV channel served a notice by the Ministry Of Information

and Broadcasting for spreading distorted religious information in their show.

After *Chhichhore*, the *Ramayan* series is Tiwari's most ambitious project.

Produced by Madhu Mantena, *Ramayan* is said to be the most expensive film project to have ever been made in India. Estimates suggest the budget could be over Rs 600 crore, and the project will take up the next two years of Tiwari's life.

"I am consumed by the idea of doing a large-screen version of this epic. The *Ramayan* is a part of almost every Hindu

household. I grew up with it as an essential part of my life, and for me making it into a film is an honour I only dreamt of. My prayers have been answered," said the filmmaker.

"We are doing it in three sections, as one feature film will be too lengthy. The three feature films will be released after the other with short gaps."

On casting Hrithik Roshan and Deepika Padukone as Ram and Sita, he observed, "That's the wishful casting of devotees of the *Ramayan*. I must say the casting sounds perfect, and it shows how keenly people are interested in the project. But the actual casting for me begins only when I've finished writing."



MALAIKA PERFORMS YOGA TO CULTIVATE UNIVERSAL LOVE, ACCEPTANCE

Monday morning seems to Bollywood's chosen time for yoga. While Shilpa Shetty focuses on the *Vrischikasana* (scorpion pose), another Bollywood hottie Malaika Arora has been trying to grasp the *Chamatkarasana*.

Malaika shared a picture of her performing the *Chamatkarasana* and wrote on Instagram: "We truly do believe in miracles. But miracles don't happen overnight, they take time, they take effort and they need for us to be open, but they are not impossible. Speaking of miracles, here is a variation of the *Chamatkarasana*, which helps us do just this!"

She also shared the benefits of the asana for yoga enthusiasts and wrote, "It truly is a miracle asana, which helps in both physical and psychological benefits."

- It meticulously combines the back bend and single hand balance.
- Physically, it

- opens the chest, shoulders and throat.
- Opens the hips and hip flexors.
- Stretches and strengthens the back.
- It cultivates feelings of universal love and acceptance."

She concluded with a gratitude message: "May all beings everywhere be happy and free, and may the thoughts, words, and actions of my own life contribute in some way to that happiness and to that freedom for all. Hello Universe, Hello new week!"

Malaika surely gives us fitness goals. At 45, her fitness and flexible body can serve as an inspiration for many. Also, she constantly reminds us that age is just a number!



Remakes come with a lot of pressure: HARISH SHANKAR

Writer-director Harish Shankar speaks to NAGARAJ GOUD about the reason to part ways with Dil Raju, difficulties that come with remakes and other thoughts

Writer-director Harish Shankar has invested close to 10 months on *Daagudu Moothalu* before he decided to put it aside to remake Tamil filmmaker Karthik Subbaraj's most-acclaimed work till date, *Jigarthanda*. *Daagudu Moothalu* was supposed to be a dual-hero project and Harish wasn't keen on compromising on the vision he had for it, a reason which drove him to part ways mutually with Dil Raju, who was attached to produce it. "Creative differences between a producer and a director are common. Raju *garu* wanted stars to headline *Daagudu Moothalu* while I was adamant on characters. His belief was that since I was at the helm, he felt the need to make it with stars. It's just that a common ground couldn't be reached," Harish sighs.

In fact, the producer-director duo who in the past has teamed up for *Ramayya Vastavayya*, *Subrahmanyam for Sale* and *DJ*, also considered remaking *Jigarthanda* four years ago. The remake, titled *Valmiki*, has now been produced by 14 Reels Plus, with Varun Tej leading the cast. The original tells the tale of an aspiring director (played by Siddharth) who targets a ruthless gangster (Bobby Simha) because he wants to make a violent gangster film. His discreet attempts to research the gangster fail miserably. Finally, when he gets caught snooping, things take a worst turn. "Every time Raju *garu* and I spoke about the film, we ended up discussing who would play Siddharth role in Telugu. We mullied over it multiple times but we didn't come close to make it. Last year, when I saw it again, the role of Bobby Simha piqued my interest. I wanted a star hero to play it and that's how association with Varun began," Harish shares.

Valmiki, mired in controversies over its title, has the director's undivided attention right now as its days away from releasing in cinema halls. He is in the midst of locking running time now. "It is poised to have the longest running time for any of my movies till now because I'm coming with more content. There are only four songs while it doesn't boast off action sequences. Action has been limited to mere punches and a montage shot of a murder. That's it! Stunt choreographer was not required for more than three days," he avers.

For someone who has been in the industry for long, Harish knows how projects with big stars take shape. "Big projects usually

commence with a hero and a producer combination. Later, the director enters the picture. If the director is extremely successful, he will initiate the project in some cases. If you write a good script and then look-out for actors who are apt, the chances of the project going to sets are dim. Directors who take such a path are less. It's a healthy way to operate but then the industry doesn't function that way. When the producer asks you if you have a script in mind for the actor he will be associating next, it inadvertently hinders your creativity to a certain extent as you have to cater to the image and the fan base the actor cuts across," he reasons, citing the instance of his own *Daagudu Moothalu*, the script of which he penned first before taking across to actors. "I simply couldn't get the casting done."

Valmiki is Harish's second remake after *Gabbar Singh*. He even contemplated making *Special Chabbis* with Ravi Teja three years ago. According to him, all films are remakes. He contends that if a book or an eccentric personality inspires one to make a film, why not one particular film inspires other? "As a film lover, if I get an opportunity I'd love to remake any film that I love," he states, noting that while every film has its share of difficulties, coming to remakes, the pressure will be automatically high. "Making-wise it's easy because you have a reference point (of the original) but the pressure to get it right for the writer will be high. It's similar to that of appearing for an exam of which you have the marks sheet already. You have to reach the marks come what may. On top of it, you have to battle the feeling of 'Oh, I unnecessarily touched the remake'."

Upcoming, while he has a couple of ideas for his next directorial, he also has plans to produce films. Along with Krishna (Jawaan producer) and Mahesh Koneru (118 producer) and a couple of others, Harish wants to associate with content-rich cinema. "As I'm a writer and director, I can't devote time to production completely, which is why I've joined hands with Krishna and Mahesh. Work is in progress," he signs off.



GANG LEADER sets the cash registers ringing

The critics may be a divided house on *Gang Leader* but the *aam junta* seems to have lapped up it up. Opening on a decent note last Friday, the film has gained momentum in the weekend, witnessing 85-90 per cent footfalls across both the Telugu states. The fact that it's a clean entertainer meant

for families worked in its favour big time, opine trade observers. While it collected a share of Rs 6.24 crore on Friday, the weekend too remained on a steady note. Overall, it has minted a distributor share of 16.09 crore in the first three days. In comparison, *Jersey*, Nani's summer release, has collected a share of Rs 15.75 crore worldwide in its opening weekend. Trade notes that the film has managed to recover distributors 50 per cent of their share in the first three days itself. With word of mouth being strong, they are likely to enter into the profits zone as the week progresses.

WHILE THE FILM COLLECTED A SHARE OF RS 6.24 CRORE ON FRIDAY, THE WEEKEND TOO REMAINED BUOYANT

Directed by Vikram K Kumar, the film tells the story of four women and a child who approach a crime writer to seek vengeance on a mystery man who caused tragedy in their lives. While Nani played the gang leader, the four women and the child were played by Lakshmi, Saranya, Priyanka Arul Mohan, Shriya Reddy and baby Pranya. Mythri Movie Makers produced the film.

DISCO RAJA gets an international touch

After completing a Goa schedule of 15 days recently, the unit of Ravi Teja-starrer *Disco Raja* has now travelled to Europe for the filming of an action sequence. The new outing will commence from today in Iceland and will go on for a week mostly. *Fast and Furious 7* stunt masters have been roped in for the action block, which will be shot on a budget of somewhere around Rs 4-5 crore, the makers said in a statement on Monday. The sequence will last only for four minutes in the film.

Produced by Ram Talluri under his SRT Entertainments, *Disco Raja*, a scientific thriller set in 1980, co-stars Payal Rajput and Nabha Natesh, Tanya Hope, Sunil, Bobby Simha, Vennela Kishore and Satya. It will be opening in cinemas for Christmas.

THE NEW OUTING WILL COMMENCE TODAY IN ICELAND AND WILL GO ON FOR A WEEK OR SO



LAKSHMI MANCHU returns as host

It's time for some naughty T-Town revelations as VOOT, India's second largest Advertising Video on Demand platform is bringing Bollywood's leading chat show, *Feet Up with the Stars* in Telugu. Popular actress-producer Lakshmi Manchu, who is quite a successful host, will host the chat show. Speaking about playing host and confidante to celebs, Lakshmi Manchu, whose shows like *Prematho Mee Lakshmi* and *Memu Saitham* received good acclaim, said, "I am really excited to host the Telugu edition of *Feet Up with the Stars*. The show, its uber chic and casual format is very unique and a perfect setting to get your favorite celebs to get candid and share their secrets. It is going to be a fun ride where I bring the fans closer to their favorite celebrities. A lot of them are my friends and peers from the industry and I can't wait to have a fun conversation with them."

The Telugu version will start streaming from September 23.

A REGULAR TOLLYTOWN DO

The pre-release event of Harish Shankar's *Valmiki* was a typical Tollywood affair, wherein the cast spoke about the film and working with the director. Victory Venkatesh attended the do as the guest and it was mini reunion of sorts for him as posed with his *F2- Fun and Frustration* co-star Varun Tej for the shutterbugs. Pooja Hedge made heads turns in a cream coloured embroidered saree, while another Miranalini Ravi kept it simple.



Aussie's mission accomplished



Australia's cricket team poses for photographers with the Ashes Urn

AFP ■ LONDON

Australia captain Tim Paine said it was mission accomplished even though his team lost the fifth and final Ashes Test against England to draw the series 2-2.

The tourists came into the match at the Oval seeking their first series victory in England since 2001 but came up short, losing by 135 runs on Sunday.

But Paine said Australia, who won at Edgbaston and Old Trafford but lost agonisingly to a Ben Stokes-inspired England at Headingley, had achieved their main objective in retaining the urn.

"We're taking the urn home so that's certainly what we came to

WE CAN BE REALLY PROUD OF THE WAY WE'VE COME OVER HERE, WHICH IS A CHALLENGING PLACE FOR AUSTRALIANS TO COME AND PLAY AND WIN WE'RE TAKING THE URN HOME

do," he said.

"We're thrilled by that, a little disappointed by this game obviously, puts a bit of a dampener on it."

"We can be really proud of the way we've come over here, which is a challenging place for Australians to come and play and win," he added. "To win two Test matches pretty convincingly, should have won a third (at Headingley) — let that slip no doubt."

Paine said winning the first Test at Edgbaston, where Australia triumphed by 251 runs, had been crucial for his side's confi-

dence.

"There was so much talk about that being a fortress and how difficult a place it was going to be for us to start the series, probably by design, so for us to come over and win that first Test, and win it, in the end, quite convincingly gave us the belief that we could do it," he said.

And the skipper said he still felt he had a role to play in taking the side forward.

"We've still got a way to go," he said. "Obviously Steve (Smith) had an unbelievably good series and won us a couple of Tests by himself so we've got some parts that we need to improve."

"But if we click them into gear while we've got Steve at the height of his powers and with the pace attack we've got, in the next few years we're going to be a very hard team to beat."

"There's plenty of improvement in this side," Paine added.

"I still feel I've got a little bit to give in that space and we're always trying to develop more leaders within our group as well."

Smith, who scored 774 runs in just seven innings, said he was exhausted after a long tour, which also included the World Cup.

The former captain, who returned to international cricket in June after a ban for ball-tampering, received a standing ovation from the crowd in south London when he was out.

"It was a nice reception as I walked off," he said.

"It would have been nice if I'd had a few more runs under my belt in this game."

"I've given it my all since I've been here for the last four-and-a-half-months in every Test match that we've played and I didn't have much left to give today."

"I'm pretty cooked to be honest, mentally and physically. I'm looking forward to a nice couple of weeks' rest now before getting into the Australian summer."



Steve Smith poses with Ashes trophy

Twitter

Smith proud after summer of Ashes redemption

LONDON ■ (AFP)

Steve Smith returned to international cricket to a chorus of boos but he walked off the pitch at the Oval to a standing ovation after a summer of Ashes redemption.

The former Australia captain enjoyed a remarkable series in England, scoring a total of 774 runs in just seven innings and played a pivotal role in his side's two victories in the drawn series.

The catch by Ben Stokes that sent Smith on his way on Sunday ended an astonishing run of scores — 144 and 142 at Edgbaston, 92 at Lords, 211 and 82 at Old Trafford, and 80 and 23 at the Oval.

The 30-year-old made his official return to international cricket in June at the World Cup after serving a year-long ban for ball-tampering and was booed by the crowd in Bristol.

Smith had a decent campaign in the 50-over showpiece but did not set the world alight as Australia reached the semi-finals, where they were beaten by eventual champions England.

But he changed gear when the Ashes started, seemingly hungry to make up for lost time as he dominated the England attack, making two centuries in Australia's comfortable win in the first Test at Edgbaston.

Asked when he felt he was back to his best, an exhausted but "proud" Smith said it was after his first innings at Edgbaston, when he rescued his side, who had stumbled to 122-8.

"That was probably my favourite innings of the whole series that I played."

"The first Test match, as we know, is always incredibly important in an Ashes series and to sort of pull the team out of a bit of trouble at the time and give me that confidence straight up that I could slot back in and perform, that gave me a lot of confidence."

"It was a long 18 months out of the game and I've got a lot of people to thank, in particular my wife." Smith's series was interrupted after he was felled by a Jofra Archer bouncer in the second Test at Lord's, forcing him to miss three innings.

WINNING RETURN

But he returned at Old Trafford to make a monumental double century in another victory for Australia. His 80 in the first innings in the final Test at the Oval was his 10th consecutive fifty in Ashes Tests.

Australia were chasing 399 to win the series in London but it was always a tall order and Smith was unable to produce a miracle, falling for 23.

His run haul is fifth on the list of highest tallies in an Ashes series.

The man at the top of that list, inevitably, is his late compatriot Donald Bradman, who scored 974 in seven innings in 1930. But the fact that Smith is even in the same conversation as the man widely regarded as the greatest batsman in history is testament to his genius.

Smith, Cummins retain top position

PTI ■ DUBAI

India captain Virat Kohli has managed to hold on to his second position behind Australia's Steve Smith in the ICC Test Rankings for batsmen released on Monday.

Kohli, with 903 rating points, is 34 points behind Smith (937).

Besides former Australia captain Smith, compatriot Pat Cummins has also retained his one position in the ICC Test bowlers' rankings.

Both Smith and Cummins played key roles in helping Australia retain the Ashes.

The Ashes culminated with a 135-run victory for England in the fifth and final Test on Sunday. The series ended in a 2-2 draw with Australia retaining the Urn.

Smith's scores of 80 and 23 in the two innings in the final Test helped him remain at 937 rating points, an incredible effort since he



Pat Cummins and Steve Smith

started the series in fourth position with 857 points before his surge that came courtesy 774 runs in four Tests.

Cummins too is well clear of other bowlers as he enjoys a lead of 57 points over second-placed Kagiso Rabada after finishing as the top wicket-taker with 29 scalps. India's Jasprit Bumrah is in third place.

Other players from Australia to make notable gains are Matthew Wade and Mitchell Marsh.

Broad got into Warner's head, says Justin Langer

AFP ■ LONDON

Australia's cricket coach Justin Langer said David Warner allowed England paceman Stuart Broad to "get into his head" during a miserable Ashes series for the opener.

Warner ended with the unwanted record of the fewest runs scored by a Test opener across 10 innings of a series.

The 32-year-old, who registered a cumulative total of just 95, was dismissed seven times by Broad during the drawn contest and encountered jeers from home crowds following his role in the 2018 ball-tampering scandal.

Langer plans to persist with the experienced batsman heading into the Australian summer but expressed some doubt that he would fully recover from a dismal Ashes display.

"I've learned over a long period you never write off champion players, it doesn't matter what sport, you never write off champion players," said Langer, whose side retained the urn following the 2-2 draw.

"He had this series, it didn't go to plan, but he's seen how successful he's

I'VE LEARNED OVER A LONG PERIOD YOU NEVER WRITE OFF CHAMPION PLAYERS, IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT SPORT, YOU NEVER WRITE OFF CHAMPION PLAYERS

been and the impact he can have on Australian cricket teams winning, so I'm confident he'll come good."

"Actually, I'm hopeful he comes good. Talking frankly, I thought he let Stuart Broad get into his head and I think he thought way too much about it."

Langer feels Warner, who was the second-highest run scorer at the World Cup, will be pleased to be returning home.

"In this instance I don't think David solved the puzzle, and he'll be the first to admit that," said.

"He'll probably be very relieved (when) he gets on the Qantas flight knowing he doesn't have to face Stuart Broad for a while, I reckon."



Aus better team in Ashes: Ponting

LONDON ■ (IANS)

Former Australia captain Ricky Ponting believes Tim Paine's men were the better side in the recently-concluded Ashes series against England which ended in a 2-2 stalemate.

Australia retained the Ashes with a comprehensive 185-run victory in the fourth Test but let slip a golden chance to win their first Ashes series in England since 2001 as they conceded a 135-run loss in the tour finale at the Oval on Sunday.

"Australia will look at it as a series of missed opportunities," Ponting told cricket.com.au.

"I think they've clearly been the better team. They've clearly played better cricket throughout the series. They should have won at Headingley."

He also said that the 2-2 result was not a clear reflection of how the series was

played and how the visitors performed in the five-match rubber.

Australia were knocked out of the World Cup in the semi-finals by eventual champions England and retained the urn in England for the first time in 18 years.

Ponting said the efforts of Paine's side should be congratulated even though they didn't manage to win the coveted series.

"We shouldn't undersell how well Australia have played, and on the back of a pretty successful World Cup campaign," he said.

"The boys have been on the road for five months. Making a World Cup semi-final and retaining the Ashes 2-2, it's been a good few months for Australian cricket."

Australia will next face Sri Lanka in the three-match T20I series at home beginning October 27.

Sarfraz confident of good showing in World Test Championship



Pakistani batsmen walk into the ground

PTI ■ KARACHI

Pakistan's captain Sarfraz Ahmed is confident that his team is ready to make an impact in the ICC World Test Championship after struggling for form in this format in the last two years.

"After in-and-out performances in the last two years since the retirements

of Misbah-ul-Haq and Younis Khan, I think we are now ready to challenge other teams in the World Test Championship," he said.

Pakistan's first challenge will be a tour to Australia in November where they play two Tests followed by home Test series against Sri Lanka and Bangladesh. Pakistan is presently placed 7th among 12 Test teams in the ICC World Rankings and Sarfraz admitted his team had neither been consistent nor convincing in the longer format for a while now.

"We have struggled after losing Misbah and Younis and we are in a rebuilding process. But now I think our batsmen are ready to fill the gaps and take responsibility," he said.

"We have Shaan Masood, Imam-ul-Haq, Azhar Ali, Asad Shafiq, Haris Sohail and Babar Azam who have gone through the grind and can do well at the Test level. There is also lot of experience now behind Azhar and Asad."

PTI ■ NEW DELHI

Kuldeep Yadav and Yuzvendra Chahal — the famed 'KulCha' of Indian cricket — may not be the flavour of the season anymore but experts believe it is too early to write them off in the shortest format ahead of the T20 World Cup next year.

Both Kuldeep and Chahal, who had cemented their place in the two shorter formats with impressive performances over the past 24 months, have not been picked for two straight T20 series, including the ongoing home assignment against South Africa.

Ahead of the opening T20 in Dharamsala, captain Virat Kohli said the team is trying out the likes of Rahul Chahar and Washington Sundar as it is looking to bat deep and post 200 plus totals consistently.

Former India opener Aakash Chopra feels the decision to exclude Kuldeep and Chahal could be a double-edged sword.

"The idea is if you have that much depth in batting you bat a certain way. You can't bat conser-

'Too early to look beyond Kuldeep, Chahal'



Kuldeep Yadav and Yuzvendra Chahal chats during practice session

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vatively if you have that kind of depth. That is what England did. They changed the template completely. They focused on batting deep as they wanted to score 400 (in ODIs) and they achieved it many times," Chopra told PTI.

"It looks India is wanting to take the same aggressive approach

in T20s and there is nothing wrong in that. Now, they need to start showing the intent of scoring 220 consistently."

"Batting till 8, 9 and 10 is still ambitious (as you don't need them at all in a 20 over game) but if you are trying to score 220 it is fine," he explained.

Chopra felt if the team decides to compromise on its wicket-taking ability, then it to score more.

However, he foresees Chahal making a T20 comeback very soon. Chahal, at the moment, is only part of the ODI team while Kuldeep is part of both the 50-over and Test squads though not a sure starter in the eleven.

"Chahal will be back. Rahul Chahal is more or a bowler and Washington Sundar's batting at number 8 may not be needed anyway," Chopra added.

Kuldeep and Chahal's inclusion has become a talking point just like finger spinners Ravichandran Ashwin and Ravindra Jadeja, who where shown the door in the shorter formats following the 2017 Champions Trophy. Jadeja made a comeback but Ashwin couldn't.

Former India spinner Sunil Joshi, who is now a well-known spin coach, welcomed the move to try out youngsters before caution-

ing against the confusion the situation might create in the mind of the spinners.

"I would suggest that Kuldeep and Chahal should go back to domestic cricket when they are not on national duty. Finger spinner or wrist spinner is not the question here. It is about having the tactics to outclass the batsman besides technique and temperament," Joshi told PTI.

"Let's see how the young spinners do and ample opportunities should be given to them but at the same time if Chahal and Kuldeep are playing only one format it could disturb their rhythm. White ball cricket is all about rhythm."

"The conditions will be different in Australia for the T20 World Cup with the bigger grounds. Overspin will come in handy. All the spinners who are in the hunt should be told about their roles clearly else it might cause confusion in their minds," Joshi added.